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Governor KP Seeks Foreign Investment For Mineral Sector

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said the province's vast mineral resources offered immense opportunities for foreign investment and stressed the need for transparent utilization of these resources to strengthen the economy, create employment and promote sustainable development.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Chief Executive Officer of UK-based Critical Minerals Tomorrow, Lee Constable, at KP House, Islamabad. The meeting discussed prospects for foreign investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's mineral sector, development of mineral resources and the establishment of potential joint ventures between the company and the provincial government.

The Governor said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was endowed with abundant mineral wealth that could attract significant international investment if managed in a transparent and effective manner. He said investment in the mineral sector would accelerate economic growth, improve living standards and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for people living in mineral-rich areas.

Welcoming the company's interest in investing in the province, Faisal Karim Kundi discussed various proposals for establishing a joint venture between the provincial government and the company. He said the proposed partnership should ensure mutual benefits for the provincial government, local communities and the Federal Government, adding that the Centre would also be taken on board to ensure effective coordination for future projects.

CM Murad reaffirms commitment to boost in Sindh's mineral sector

● Sindh plans emergency relief measures for drought-affected areas of Tharparkar

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday reaffirmed his government's commitment to promoting investment in the province's vast mineral resources, saying that the mineral sector has enormous potential to drive industrialisation, strengthen energy security, generate employment and accelerate economic growth. Presiding over a meeting at the CM House, the Chief Minister reviewed Sindh's coal and non-coal mineral resources, ongoing mining projects and opportunities for domestic and international investment. Mines and Minerals Minister Syed Sardar Shah briefed the meeting on the province's mineral reserves, existing operations, investment potential and the government's strategy for sustainable mineral development.

The Chief Minister said his government's vision was to unlock Sindh's mineral wealth through scientific exploration, responsible extraction, modern technology and value addition, ensuring that natural resources became a source of economic prosperity and improved livelihoods for the people. Sindh's Thar coalfield holds reserves of 175 billion tonnes, representing enormous potential for indigenous energy production and industrial development. The presentation also highlighted an estimated energy equivalent of 50 billion tonnes of oil equivalent (TOE) and coal-related gas-equivalent resources of 2,000 trillion cubic feet (TCF). The CM reviewed two major Thar coal mining and power generation projects developed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) early harvest programme. The Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), established under a public-private partnership, has a mining capacity of 11.2 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) and power generation capacity of 1,980 megawatts. The Sindh government holds a 54.7 per cent share in the company, while Engro and its associates hold 45.3 per cent. The provincial government invested Rs 12.9 billion in equity.

The Sino-Sindh Resources Limited (SSRL), established by Chinese investors, has a mining capacity of 7.8 MTPA and power generation capacity of 1,320 MW, with a private investment of over $2.6 billion. The project is also contributing to foreign exchange savings through coal import substitution.

Minister Sardar Shah briefed the CM on investment opportunities in a wide range of non-coal minerals, including granite, iron ore, marble, limestone, celestite, China clay, silica sand and lake salt. Granite deposits in Nagarparkar, Tharparkar, offer opportunities for dimension stone, decorative products and cutting and polishing industries. Iron ore deposits in Thatta, Jamshoro and Tharparkar have potential for steel-related industries, exploration and beneficiation.

Similarly, marble deposits in Thatta and Jamshoro offer opportunities for finished stone products, while limestone reserves across Khairpur, Dadu, Jamshoro, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Thatta and Karachi can support cement and construction industries. The province also offers investment opportunities in celestite in Jamshoro, China clay in Tharparkar, silica sand in Jamshoro and Thatta, and lake salt deposits in Dadu, Sanghar and Tharparkar, particularly in processing, refining, manufacturing and value-added products.



Islamabad: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressing the opening session of the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF-26), at Islamabad.

Imran Khan's Sisters Noreen, Uzma Released From Kot Lakhpat Jail

● The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) subsequently postponed the march until October 4

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Two sisters of former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan, Noreen Niazi and Uzma Khan, have been released from Kot Lakhpat Jail, according to sources.

The two were arrested on September 21, ahead of a planned long march towards Islamabad scheduled to begin on September 27. The march, announced by then Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, was intended to demand the release of Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, among other demands. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) subsequently postponed the march until October 4.

Noreen and Uzma's detention came a day after the arrest of their sister, Aleema Khan, on September 20. All three were detained under Section 3 of the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960, commonly known as 3-MPO, with their initial detention period set at 30 days.

The detention orders were challenged in the Lahore High Court on the same day, with a petition seeking immediate suspension of the notifications. However, the court rejected the request four days later.

ECP removes MQM-P chief's name from party list over failure to hold intra-party polls

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has removed the name of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) chief from its updated list of registered political parties over the party's failure to conduct intra-party elections within the prescribed deadline.

The ECP had given MQM-P until October to hold its intra-party elections.

Following the expiry of the deadline, the commission issued a show-cause notice to the party for failing to meet the requirement.

The name of the MQM-P chief was subsequently omitted from the ECP's updated list of registered political parties.

Former federal law minister Farogh Naseem has submitted the party's response to the Election Commission following the issuance of the show-cause notice.

PTI approaches FCC against governor's rule, emergency in KP

● Barrister Gohar enquires about Shah Mahmood Qureshi's health at PIC



STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has approached the Federal Constitutional Court against the imposition of governor's rule and an emergency.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has filed a petition seeking a review of the order issued on November 5, 2026, on petitions filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

The petition also requests that Barrister Gohar and other applicants be made parties to the proceedings and given an opportunity to present their position. It argues that the November 5 order affected proceedings on constitutional petitions pending before the Peshawar High Court.

The petition further seeks the release of the chief minister and speaker through the cases challenging the imposition of an emergency and governor's rule.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan arrived in Lahore on Thursday and visited the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) to inquire about the health of party leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

During the visit, Barrister Gohar met Qureshi, who is currently receiving treatment at the hospital, and asked about his health and well-being.

Pakistan Ready To Defend Saudi Arabia, Says ISPR Chief

● Ahmed Sharif Reaffirms Pakistan's Unwavering Support for Saudi Arabia

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan is prepared to take all necessary defensive measures to protect Saudi Arabia under the Joint Strategic Defence Agreement and the Makkah Joint Defence Alliance, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said.

In an interview with Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, the military spokesperson said the alliance's transition towards practical implementation would require steps to ensure the swift deployment of agreed forces and military capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

He said these measures would include raising operational readiness, strengthening military integration, sharing intelligence and coordinating exclusively defensive operations.

Chaudhry described Pakistan's commitment to Saudi Arabia's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity as "absolute and non-negotiable", adding that Pakistani troops were already stationed in the Kingdom and performing various duties, including defensive support, joint exercises and military manoeuvres.

He said Islamabad would continue providing the required assistance for defensive purposes, including military personnel, equipment, training and logistical support. However, he declined to disclose specific details about troop numbers, deployment locations or operational arrangements, explaining that such information was not made public by military alliances.

The ISPR chief said the move towards implementing the Makkah Alliance's commitments followed recent attacks on Saudi Arabia. He strongly condemned strikes targeting airports, cities and civilian and economic infrastructure, describing them as a threat to the Kingdom's sovereignty and security as well as regional stability.

Indian forces arrest Kashmiri youth in Baramulla

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Indian forces personnel have arrested a Kashmiri youth during a fresh cordon-and-search operation in Baramulla district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, personnel of the CICT Ftr Border Security Force (112/06 Battalion), 2 Rashtriya Rifles and 176 Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), during a joint operation, arrested a youth identified as Ghulam Jeelani in the Tangmarg area of the district.

Justifying the arrest, Indian forces claimed that two hand grenades had been recovered from the area. The operation was jointly conducted by Baramulla Police, CICT Ftr BSF (112/06 Battalion), 2 Rashtriya Rifles and 176 Battalion of the CRPF.

Meanwhile, continued military operations, arrests and searches by Indian forces have contributed to an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and tension across the occupied territory. Such operations, often accompanied by detentions and security restrictions, have raised concerns among local residents regarding personal security, freedom of movement and the treatment of detained youth.

PMIF 2026: Maryam Announces Placer Gold Found In Punjab

● Revenue from the provincial Mines and Minerals Department had risen to Rs40 billion in two and a half years

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Thursday there was significant evidence of placer gold in all five rivers of Punjab, particularly in Mianwali and Attock districts, and invited international investors to help develop the resource.

Speaking at Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26) in Islamabad, Sharif held up what she described as a sample of pure gold recovered from river sand and said surveys were still underway to quantify the deposits.

"We have significant evidence that there is sufficient quantity of placer gold," Sharif said. "It is pure gold, literally flowing in all five rivers, especially Mianwali and Attock, north and south of Punjab."

"However, we are conducting surveys to see the amount of gold that we have in the rivers. We are also looking for international partners and can turn this opportunity into shared prosperity," she said.



Maryam said the gold was found alongside sand and gravel containing rare earth and precious minerals that could be equal in value to the gold itself.

"There is so much that we can do with this wealth," she added.

She linked the claim to a broader push to formalise Punjab's mining sector, saying revenue from the provincial Mines and Minerals Department had risen from Rs10 billion when she took office to Rs40 billion in two and a half years.

"Pakistan is a pot of gold," she said. "All we need to do is to unearth it, to explore it and to turn it into tangible wealth."

Pakistan is hosting the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26) in Islamabad to attract foreign investment, promote global partnerships and unlock the country's vast mineral potential.

The two-day forum would bring together Pakistan's leadership, international mining executives, investors, policymakers and industry experts to explore investment opportunities in the country's minerals sector.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Chief of the Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir are among the key speakers.



Wildlife officials visit Peshawar Airport to discuss measures against illegal wildlife trafficking

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Wildlife officials from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visited Bacha Khan International Airport, Peshawar, to discuss measures aimed at preventing the illegal transportation and trafficking of wildlife through air travel.

The delegation included Project Director Green Pakistan Programme, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ayaz Khan; Conservator Wildlife Central Circle Peshawar, Muhammad Niaz; and DFO Wildlife Peshawar, Mrs. Manahil Wahab.

During the visit, Airport Operations Manager Zia briefed the officers on airport operations and various aspects of wildlife protection, particularly efforts to curb illegal wildlife trafficking.

The meeting focused on strengthening coordination between the Wildlife Department and airport authorities to ensure effective monitoring and prevention of the illegal transportation of wildlife through air routes.

The officials also discussed installing and displaying wildlife awareness and publicity materials in the airport's international and domestic lounges to educate passengers and discourage illegal wildlife trade.

On the occasion, Project Director Green Pakistan Programme Ayaz Khan presented a commemorative shield to Operations Manager Zia in recognition of his cooperation and support.



FIA nabs key suspect linked to organized fake apostille sticker fraud network

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has arrested another key suspect allegedly linked to an organized network involved in defrauding citizens through fake apostille stickers, marking further progress in an ongoing investigation into document forgery and fraud.

According to FIA Islamabad Zone on Thursday, the accused, identified as Qazi Faheem Younis, was arrested during an operation in Islamabad in connection with FIR No. 48/2026.

Initial investigations revealed that the suspect was allegedly an important member of an organised network involved in deceiving citizens through counterfeit apostille stickers.

The FIA said several suspects had already been arrested in the same case, while the latest arrest was part of continuing efforts to identify and apprehend other individuals associated with the network.

Investigators are examining the arrested suspect's alleged role in the fraudulent activities and tracing other individuals who may have been involved in preparing, supplying or facilitating the use of fake apostille stickers.

CDA upgrades security, infrastructure at Diplomatic Enclave

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is upgrading security infrastructure and public facilities at the Diplomatic Enclave, including the installation of a modern security system, construction of cycling and walking tracks and rehabilitation of roads.

CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf visited the Diplomatic Enclave on Thursday to review the progress of ongoing development, repair and upgradation works.

Officials briefed him that a modern smart security system, an under-vehicle inspection system and security barriers had been installed at Gate No. 2 to strengthen security arrangements at the entrance.

The renovation of the enclave's boundary wall has also been completed, while carpeting of deteriorated roads is underway and expected to be completed shortly.

The authority is also constructing cycling and walking tracks, approximately 10 feet wide, to facilitate the diplomatic community and residents and provide recreational opportunities.

Landscaping and horticultural work is progressing alongside the installation of modern streetlights to improve the area's overall appearance and infrastructure.



LARKANA: A farmer prepares traditional jaggery (gur) at his roadside setup on the outskirts of the city along Larkana-Khairpur Road.

CJP Consults Bar On E-Filing Family Cases Pilot

● Chief Justice Discusses Women Facilitation Centres With Bar

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) and Chairperson of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) Justice Yahya Afridi on Thursday held a consultative meeting with representatives of provincial bar councils, the Islamabad Bar Council and the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan to discuss the proposed e-filing pilot for family cases and the establishment of Women Facilitation Centres.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Bar Councils, along with office-bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

The participants reviewed draft e-filing templates developed under the proposed National Unified E-Filing and Electronic Judicial Record System for pilot implementation in family cases at selected judicial stations.

The chief justice asked each provincial bar council and the Islamabad Bar Council to nominate two members of the Bar to review the templates and suggest improvements before the launch of the pilot project.



Emphasising the importance of consultation with the legal fraternity, the CJP said the e-filing system should be practical, effective and user-friendly, reflecting the professional experience of practising lawyers and the needs of litigants.

The bar representatives appreciated the proposed e-filing initiative and the establishment of Women Facilitation Centres, observing that these measures could improve access to justice, particularly for women, and make the family justice system more accessible and responsive.

The consultation reflected a shared commitment to involving the legal fraternity in judicial reforms, using technology to improve court services and strengthening access to justice for women and children.

The meeting was held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan and attended by the Registrar of the Supreme Court, Secretary LJCP Capt. (Retd) Mushtaq Ahmad, representatives of the High Courts, architects, and officials of the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK).

The chief justice said judicial facilitation priorities for 2025-26 had focused on uninterrupted electricity supply to courts and bar associations, e-libraries with internet facilities, clean drinking water and women-centric facilities. He noted that these facilities had been provided to courts and bar associations across Pakistan, including Islamabad.

He identified the establishment of dedicated Women Facilitation Centres in all four provinces and Islamabad as a priority for 2026-27.

The proposed centres will serve as one-window facilities, providing women with guidance and support in a safe and accessible environment. They will include reception and guidance desks, waiting areas, hygienic washrooms, private consultation rooms, legal assistance, and spaces for mediation and alternative dispute resolution.

The facilities will also provide psychosocial support and referral services, accessible entrances and ramps for women with disabilities, and suitable spaces for interaction with children where required.

54th common training programme ASPs visit RPO office, briefed on regional policing

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) undergoing training under the 54th Common Training Programme visited the Regional Police Office (RPO) Rawalpindi, where Regional Police Officer Babar Sarfraz Alpa briefed them on the region's geographical and administrative structure, crime situation and various aspects of policing.

During the visit, the RPO provided an overview of the administrative boundaries of Rawalpindi Region, prevailing crime trends, law and order situation, crime prevention strategies, investigation procedures and operational responsibilities of the police.

Emphasising the importance of understanding local dynamics, Babar Sarfraz Alpa said effective policing required a thorough understanding of the nature of crime, regional circumstances and local challenges. He stressed that professional competence, effective supervision and timely action were essential to maintaining law and order.

The trainee officers also raised questions regarding policing practices, administrative matters, crime prevention, field command and their professional responsibilities. The RPO responded to their queries and shared practical insights from his professional experience.



Addressing the officers, he said police service was a significant national responsibility that required strong leadership, professional skills, adherence to the rule of law, merit and a commitment to public service. He emphasised that police officers must make impartial decisions, treat citizens with courtesy and respect, and use their authority to protect and serve the public.

The visit aimed to familiarise the trainee officers with the practical aspects of policing, the administrative framework of regional police and field command experience, enabling them to apply their theoretical knowledge effectively in the field.

Punjab Schools To Remain Open Despite Smog, Minister Confirms

● Punjab Government Rules Out Province-Wide School Closures Over Smog Concerns

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat has dismissed reports suggesting that schools across the province would be closed due to smog, confirming that all educational institutions will continue operating according to their regular schedules.

In a clarification posted on social media platform X, the minister said schools across Punjab remained open and urged parents, students and the public not to believe unverified reports circulating online.

The statement came amid growing concerns over deteriorating air quality and worsening smog in Lahore and several other parts of Punjab, which had triggered speculation about possible school closures and changes to school timings.

The provincial government has not approved any province-wide closure or additional school holidays in response to the smog situation. Officials have also ruled out proposals to shut educational institutions as part of the ongoing anti-smog measures.

Rana Sikandar Hayat urged students to follow the prescribed standard operating procedures (SOPs) and wear face masks to protect themselves from the harmful effects of smog.

Awareness session held on type 1 diabetes

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Department of Science and Humanities at FAST-NUCES Islamabad Campus has organized an awareness session on type 1 diabetes.

The session was held in collaboration with Meethi Zindagi to educate students about the disease, its symptoms, management and challenges faced by people living with the condition.

The session was arranged for students enrolled in the university's Civic and Community Engagement course, with a focus on promoting health awareness, early diagnosis and community support.

The participants were briefed on the nature of Type 1 diabetes, its symptoms and the importance of timely diagnosis and appropriate management to help individuals lead healthier lives.

The session also highlighted the social and emotional challenges faced by people living with Type 1 diabetes and emphasized the importance of creating an informed, supportive and inclusive community.

Through the interactive awareness initiative, students were encouraged to play an active role in spreading health awareness, promoting empathy and contributing to community welfare.

The initiative reflected FAST-NUCES Islamabad Campus's commitment to community engagement and social responsibility by equipping students with knowledge and encouraging their participation in public health awareness activities.

Technology, skills training centres proposed for Youth in Merged Districts

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



Prominent engineer and Chief Executive Officer of CES Group of Companies, Saleem ur Rehman met Dr Muhammad Irshad, Provincial Adviser on Industries and Commerce and proposed establishing modern technology and skills training centres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the support of European investors. He was accompanied by Amjad Aziz Malik, Administrator of China Window.

The proposal focuses on young people in the merged districts, particularly in areas recently designated as special districts.

Saleem ur Rehman proposed designing courses around the needs of local industries and the job market.

The centres could offer hands-on training in computing and digital technology, industrial machinery maintenance, solar system installation and modern manufacturing methods.

Partnerships with local industries could also give trainees practical workplace experience.

Zong Wins Fast Mode Award For AI Innovation

● Zong Launches Pakistan First AI Autonomous Network Platform

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Zong, Pakistan's Leading Technology Services Enterprise and a wholly-owned subsidiary of global technology leader China Mobile, has won the Operational Excellence Leader award for Innovation at The Fast Mode Awards 2026, for its AI-driven Self-Intelligent RAN Optimization Platform. Marking its second international recognition this year for AI-driven innovation, these accolades underscore a significant milestone in Zong's advancement towards intelligent, AI-enabled network operations and highlight the strength of its home-grown engineering capabilities in developing world-class technology solutions - further emphasizing Zong's leading position of network operations and technology innovation in Pakistan.



Developed in-house, the platform marks Pakistan's first deployment of Level 4 autonomous network operations on a live commercial network, representing a significant advancement in intelligent network management. Aligned with Zong's AI Enablement strategy, the platform autonomously detects congestion, execute corrective actions, and validates outcomes through an intelligent closed-loop mechanism. By transforming traditionally manual, multi-day optimization processes into automated, AI-driven operations, it enhances operational agility, optimizes network performance, and establishes a scalable foundation for more consistent and reliable customer experiences nationwide.

Commenting on the achievement, Zong's Chief Technology Officer, Mao Weiliang, said: "At Zong, we see AI and advanced technologies as fundamental to our technology leadership and the evolution of next-generation intelligent networks. Through our Self-Intelligent RAN Optimization Platform, we are taking AI beyond monitoring and recommendations to autonomous decision-making and execution, transforming network operations. Developed in-house, this innovation reflects our ability to translate advanced AI into real-world operational impact, demonstrating that world-class technology can be conceived, developed and deployed in Pakistan. It also marks an important step towards fully autonomous, self-optimizing networks at scale, delivering greater operational intelligence, network efficiency and superior customer experiences."

Through sustained investments in 5G, Artificial Intelligence and next-generation digital solutions, Zong continues to translate technological innovation into smarter networks, greater operational efficiency, and enhanced customer experiences. This achievement further reinforces its ambition to lead Pakistan's transition towards a Digital and Intelligent Future, bringing its brand promise of "Aisa Hai Future" to life through innovation, intelligent connectivity, and transformative digital possibilities.

Minerals, mining to drive Pakistan's sustainable economic growth: Finance Minister

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said the minerals and mining sector would play a crucial role in driving Pakistan's sustainable economic growth, boosting exports and attracting foreign investment.

Addressing the two-day Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26), he said the country had made significant progress towards macroeconomic stability and was now focused on achieving sustainable, export-led growth through structural reforms and investment in productive sectors.

Highlighting the government's economic achievements, the finance minister said Pakistan had reduced its twin deficit from around 12.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) a few years ago to 2.6 per cent by the end of June 2026. He said the fiscal deficit had reached a 22-year low, while the country had recorded primary surpluses for three consecutive years.

Oil Prices Dip 1% As U.S.-Iran Diplomacy Plans Emerge

● Fresh talk of Vance meeting an Iranian official ends a short rebound in crude, as Hormuz tensions keep traders on edge



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ASIAN TRADE

Oil prices slipped in Asian trade on Thursday as new U.S.-Iran diplomacy plans caught the eye of traders. A report said Washington wants more talks to end the long conflict.

The drop ended a short rebound. Crude had bounced from near two-month lows in the last session.

Brent futures fell 1.2% to $91.63 a barrel. West Texas Intermediate fell 1.1% to $85.55 a barrel.

The Wall Street Journal said on Wednesday that Vice President JD Vance is thinking about talks in person. He may meet a top Iranian security official.

Reports say President Donald Trump is open to the idea. Still, the talks are at an early stage, and nothing is final. The push comes after the November midterm vote. Vance largely blamed the war for hurting the Republican Party at the polls.

Both sides still disagree on two big issues. One is the Strait of Hormuz. The other is the naval blockade against Tehran.

Iran is believed to have kept attacking ships in Hormuz over the past week. Tehran also said no direct talks with the U.S. have taken place.

Ahsan calls for fast-tracking Nokundi-Gwadar Corridor to boost mineral exports

NEWS DESK

DUBAI



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday called for expediting the development of the Nokundi-Gwadar road corridor through coordinated efforts by the federal government, Balochistan government and mining companies to strengthen logistics connectivity and unlock Pakistan's mineral export potential.

During a meeting with a senior delegation of Barrick Mining Corporation, the minister highlighted the strategic importance of connecting Balochistan's mineral-rich areas with seaports through an efficient road and rail network to facilitate mineral exports and attract further investment.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan aimed to increase its exports to $100 billion under the National Economic Transformation Plan 2035, adding that the mining and minerals sector would play a significant role in achieving the target.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating investment and accelerating the development of critical infrastructure to support economic growth.

The minister proposed the immediate formation of a joint working group comprising the Ministry of Planning, National Highway Authority (NHA), Government of Balochistan and mining companies to finalize the corridor's technical requirements, feasibility, financing and implementation arrangements.

He also called for detailed topographical surveys and three-dimensional (3D) mapping to expedite the feasibility study for the missing link in the proposed corridor.

The Barrick Mining Corporation delegation welcomed the proposed collaboration and discussed technical requirements, logistics planning and coordination with relevant government authorities to develop the corridor in accordance with applicable regulations and approval procedures.

Global Mining Giants Meet Petroleum Minister As Ivanhoe Signs Copper-Gold Deal

● Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik holds talks with top mining and investment firms at PMIF, as new copper and gold exploration deal is signed in Balochistan

MUDASSAR IQBAL

ISLAMABAD

Global mining giants held important talks with Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum (PMIF). The meetings show that Pakistan wants more foreign investment and stronger global partnerships in its minerals sector.

The minister held separate meetings on the sidelines of the forum. He met John Thornton, Chairman of Barrick Mining Corporation, along with the company's senior team.

He also met Andrew Neilson, Chief Executive of Weir, a Scottish mining and engineering company. Mr. Neilson said Weir wants to do more in Pakistan. The company already works on the Reko Diq project and now looks for new projects.

Ibrahim El Gazzar, Head of Metals and Minerals (MENA) at Trafigura, also met the minister with his team. The Singapore-based company is keen on Pakistan's Zinc-Barite project. It also wants to explore chances in LPG, bonded storage and refinery sectors.

The minister also held talks with Mustafa Aksoy, CEO of Türkiye's Çalık Holding. A delegation led by Robert Friedland of Ivanhoe Mines met him as well.



Mr. Thornton said it is always a pleasure to visit Pakistan. His words reflect the company's steady ties with the country.

During the forum, the minister watched the signing of a deal between Ivanhoe Mines and Mari Minerals. The two firms will explore copper and gold deposits in Chagai, Balochistan.

Under this agreement, both companies will study the region's mineral potential. They also hope to find ways to develop its copper and gold resources.

The minister welcomed the rising interest of foreign companies. He said PMIF is a useful platform that brings investors and investment chances together.

He added that it helps build partnerships and unlock Pakistan's vast mineral wealth.

Sri Lanka Seeks $2b In Foreign Loans As IMF Bailout Nears End

● President Dissanayake says the island nation expects to complete its four-year IMF programme in March and is weighing a new deal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRILANKA

Sri Lanka seeks $2b in foreign loans next year as it wraps up its four-year International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake shared the plan on Thursday while presenting the 2027 budget in parliament.

The exact figure is $2.08 billion. The money could help fund the budget.

Dissanayake said the government expects to finish the 17th IMF programme successfully. The bailout ends in March.

He said he has not yet decided on a new deal with the IMF. A committee has been set up to study the matter.

Sri Lanka got the $2.9 billion loan in March 2023. The country had defaulted on its $46 billion foreign debt in April 2022 after a deep economic crisis.

Foreign debt payments will fall to $2.98 billion in 2027. This year the figure is $3.59 billion, and last year it was $3.70 billion. "We have the stability required for this debt servicing," the president said.



State revenue is forecast to slip slightly to 15.8 percent of GDP. It was 16.6 percent in 2026 and 16.7 percent last year.

The budget deficit is expected to widen a little to 4.5 percent of GDP. It stood at 3.7 percent this year and 2.3 percent last year.

The government has also raised the income tax threshold a little and widened the tax bands. Middle-income earners will see a small cut in tax rates. The top rate stays at 36 percent.

Dissanayake hopes to keep growth at 5.0 percent in 2027, the same as in 2025. Growth slowed to 4.2 percent in the second quarter of this year because of the Middle East war.

The IMF expects growth of 3.1 percent in 2026 due to higher global energy costs. Last month, it called the economy "remarkably resilient" after 11 straight quarters of growth.

The IMF also warned of downside risks. These include the Middle East war, global trade policy and El Nino.

FCCI welcomes restoration of rail link

FINANCE REPORTER

FAISALABAD



President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Arif Ehsan Malik has welcomed the decision by Pakistan Railways to restore the rail link between Faisalabad and Lahore, effective from November 15, 2026.

FCCI President urged the Ministry of Railways to introduce high-speed, non-stop trains on this route to accommodate the high volume of business commuters and cargo transit between the two industrial hubs.

Alongside the request for fast trains, the FCCI leadership strongly demanded the immediate dualization of the Faisalabad-Lahore track, emphasizing that a double-track system is essential to permanently eliminate operational delays and safely expand both passenger and freight traffic capacity.

He said that the rail link had been suspended since August 2026 due to extensive infrastructure damage including the collapse of the Massan Kalar Bridge near Sheikhupura caused by severe flooding.

He said that Pakistan Railways completed the reconstruction of the track and bridge infrastructure at an estimated cost of Rs.455 million.

The resumption of operations on the Shahdara-Sheikhupura-Faisalabad section is expected to recover key revenue streams for the state railway, which considers this corridor one of its most commercially viable routes, he added.

Pakistan And Malaysia Urged To Boost Trade, Investment And Economic Cooperation

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Malaysia have great chances to grow economic cooperation through trade, investment, industrial partnerships and closer people-to-people ties.

Speakers shared these views at the 5th Appreciation Awards Ceremony. The Pakistan Malaysia Friendship Association (PMFA) organised the event in Karachi.

Sindh Assembly Speaker Syed Awais Qadir Shah attended as Chief Guest. The newly appointed Consul General of Malaysia in Karachi also joined the event.

Members of the diplomatic community, business leaders and other guests were present as well.

Speakers said stronger contact between business groups of both countries can open new doors. They also stressed the role of schools, universities and commercial bodies in building deeper links.

PMFA President Shahid Jawaid Qureshi spoke about the long friendship between the two nations. He called it a bond of brotherhood built on shared values and mutual respect. He added that strong historical, cultural and religious ties keep the relationship alive.

He welcomed the Chief Guest and thanked him for his support.

He also praised the Sindh government for helping business activities grow. According to him, the government is encouraging foreign investment and building strong economic partnerships with other countries.

Guests agreed that both nations can gain a lot from working together. They said more trade visits, joint projects and student exchanges would help both sides move forward.



The ceremony ended with awards for people who have worked to strengthen ties between Pakistan and Malaysia.

Rewarded for staying small



By Nadeem Javaid

In Pakistan, growing a small business should be a sign of success. Yet expansion can bring higher taxes, unfamiliar reporting requirements and greater scrutiny before an enterprise is ready to manage them.

A business may find it safer to remain small than to expand. The real measure of policy should not be how many firms retain concessions, but how many become strong enough to outgrow them.

Across Pakistan, workshops, factories and service providers sustain families and create jobs. Yet the path from survival to competitiveness remains difficult. Credit is part of the problem. So are the rules that determine whether keeping records, entering formal markets and accepting larger orders actually pays. Perhaps not every business needs to grow, but policy should not make growth a disadvantage.

The World Bank Group's four pillars for micro, small and medium enterprises offer a useful way to understand this challenge. Its four interconnected pillars are Visible, Connected, Enabled and Funded. Visible means businesses have a recognised identity and reliable records. Connected means they can reach customers, suppliers, markets and digital networks. Enabled means they have workable rules, institutional support and the capabilities to compete. Funded means they can obtain suitable finance, increasingly based on verified transactions and cash flows rather than physical collateral alone. These pillars reinforce one another. Credit cannot compensate for a business environment that discourages firms from becoming visible in the first place.

Consider a manufacturer with steady orders but no land or building to pledge. Digital invoices, payments and sales histories could demonstrate the ability to repay a loan. Yet the same records may expose the firm to unpredictable tax demands or costly compliance. The entrepreneur faces a rational dilemma: document transactions to obtain credit or remain less visible to avoid uncertainty. When visibility carries a perceived penalty, the promise of data-based lending is weakened before a bank even considers an application.

This tension makes the mismatch between Pakistan's financing and tax rules important. Under the State Bank of Pakistan's July 2026 classification, annual turnover up to Rs30 million is micro, above Rs30 million to Rs400 million is small, and above Rs400 million to Rs2 billion is medium. The Federal Board of Revenue's special income-tax regime, however, covers qualifying manufacturers only up to Rs250 million in turnover.

Within that tax regime, qualifying manufacturers with turnover up to Rs100 million face a 7.5 per cent rate on taxable income; those above Rs100 million and up to Rs250 million face 15 per cent. Eligible businesses may instead elect final tax on gross turnover at 0.25 per cent or 0.5 per cent, respectively, subject to statutory conditions. Actual liabilities therefore depend on the applicable option and circumstances. Still, crossing Rs250 million ends eligibility for the special regime, and re-entry is restricted even if sales later fall.



A manufacturer with annual sales of Rs300 million is consequently still small for SBP financing purposes but no longer qualifies for the FBR's preferential manufacturing regime. This does not mean every expanding firm pays more tax or that both agencies need identical definitions. Their responsibilities differ: the SBP promotes responsible access to finance, while the FBR must protect revenue. The concern is whether the transition is clear and gradual to discourage firms from delaying expansion, dividing activities or concealing sales.

That question should be answered with evidence, not assumption. SBP and FBR could jointly examine anonymised turnover distributions, registrations, tax returns and credit records around the relevant thresholds. Do firms cluster just below them? What happens to borrowing, compliance and tax payments after they cross? Changing thresholds without evidence risks creating another concession.

Other countries offer lessons, though no ready-made solution. India's Udyam system gives enterprises a common registration identity and allows those entering a higher category to retain certain non-tax benefits for three years. Brazil's Simples Nacional simplifies taxes for eligible smaller firms but also illustrates how thresholds can create incentives to stay below a ceiling. A clear lesson for Pakistan is to make the journey from one category to the next manageable.

Pakistan needs an SME Graduation Framework built around two objectives: a coherent enterprise identity across institutions and a predictable route into ordinary taxation and compliance. A shared identifier could reduce paperwork without aligning tax and banking eligibility. Firms approaching a threshold should receive advance notice, accessible guidance and a reasonable adjustment period. Phased reporting and temporary, clearly costed assistance could ease the transition, while safeguards prevent artificial splitting of businesses to retain benefits.

The framework must also recognise that turnover is not profit. A retailer with thin margins, a manufacturer carrying costly inventory and a professional services firm may have very different capacities despite similar sales. Sectoral evidence should inform the rules and every concession should have a published fiscal rationale. Predictability, rather than indefinite preferential treatment, should be the objective.

Making firms visible also requires trust. Digital records used to assess creditworthiness should be handled under clear legal authority, with defined purposes, appropriate consent, oversight and remedies for misuse.

The Iran toll on Trump

By Nasim Zehra



The Democratic Party's victory in the November 2026 US Congressional elections is a huge political setback for President Donald Trump. His America abroad policies have become costly at home, with Washington set to have a divided government from January onward: a president with substantial authority over diplomacy and military operations, facing a Congress controlled by his opponents.

The result does not itself rewrite US policy in West Asia, but it does change the political conditions in which that policy will be debated, funded and defended. The compelling significance lies in the convergence of two forces that Washington had often kept apart: the human consequences of US policy in the region and its material costs for Americans. The US-Israeli February aggression against Iran soon drove up fuel costs. Gaza, meanwhile, had already made the consequences of US support for Israel impossible to treat as a distant or abstract issue.

Polling before the election found that voters regarded the Iran war and the Israeli-Palestinian situation as important, alongside the economy and gas prices. Hence, the kitchen-table price tag made foreign policy harder to keep out of domestic politics. The outcome proves that Israeli criticism, unlike in the past, can no longer be assumed to carry an electoral penalty for candidates. In fact, candidates who challenged US military support for Israel and spoke up for Palestinian rights won significant victories. That marks a change from a political context in which politicians could be censured or removed from influential roles for doing this. The voter was also accepting of the distinction between Jewish people and the Zionist Israeli state's policies laid down by several candidates.

What then are likely post-election consequences for the US's West Asia policy? The following eight are noteworthy: one, congressional scrutiny will rise; presidential control remains. Democratic control gives Congress greater capacity to investigate the administration, hold hearings, shape legislation and contest spending. It creates pressure points around arms transfers, military operations, sanctions and humanitarian assistance. But Congress's change of hands does not transfer complete control of foreign policy from the president. As commander-in-chief and president, Trump retains considerable authority over military and diplomatic decisions. In the immediate context, there will be more friction and oversight, not policy reversal. Republicans who have been mutely opposing the war may now be more vocal, especially those focused on the next elections, like VP Vance.

Two, unconditional support for Israel faces a more contested future. For decades, broad congressional backing for Israel will now be more openly contested, particularly by Democrats and younger voters. Pre-election polls showed declining public sympathy for Israeli policy, including military aid. The post-January Congress will question arms transfers, diplomatic protection and financial assistance on legal, political and moral fronts. Trump's Israel policy will face greater challenge.

Three, Gaza remains a test of US credibility. The political consequences of Gaza will endure beyond any ceasefire or temporary reduction in fighting. Washington's role in providing Israel with weapons and diplomatic cover has shaped how regional publics judge US claims to defend international law and civilian protection. A Congress willing to question those policies could press for clearer conditions on military assistance, stronger oversight of weapons use and more consistent humanitarian access. Whether those pressures become law is uncertain. But the debate will influence how Arab governments assess the domestic risks of being seen as aligned with Washington.

Four, the Iran war has become a strategic and domestic liability. The war has confronted Washington with a widening gap between military action and its benefits at home. US voters clearly see the Administration's failure to achieve stated war objectives. Most have concluded the war was not worth its cost. While these perceptions have not prompted policy change, the war is posing increasing political, military and financial difficulties for the US, making it one of the most unpopular in US history.

Five, diplomacy may gain urgency, but not necessarily coherence. The election raises the domestic cost of a prolonged conflict, strengthening the case for an off-ramp. It does not guarantee that Washington will adopt one immediately. The president may pursue negotiations while Congress pushes for tougher oversight, or the two branches may disagree on sanctions, funding and the terms of any settlement. This could complicate US signalling to Tehran and to regional partners. A durable agreement would need to address more than an immediate pause in fighting: it would have to reduce the risk of renewed attacks, restore secure maritime transit and provide a credible framework for the nuclear dispute. A ceasefire that leaves these issues unresolved may only postpone another confrontation. At the same time, making an offer acceptable to Iran, which continues to expand its diplomatic reach and partnerships, is critical.

Six, the Gulf states will reassess the value and limits of US protection. The conflict has exposed Gulf governments to direct security and economic risks, including attacks on infrastructure and disruption to commercial shipping. Their responses have differed: some have pressed for de-escalation, while others have taken a more confrontational posture towards Iran or sought closer defence cooperation. A more divided Washington may intensify questions about the reliability of US security commitments and the costs of hosting US forces. Gulf governments are unlikely to simply abandon their US partnerships. They may, however, diversify arms suppliers, deepen regional security arrangements and preserve channels to Tehran.

Seven, regional partners will watch what Washington can sustain. Israel, Iran and Gulf capitals will all read the election for signs of how long US policy can endure under domestic pressure. A Congress that questions the costs of war may make threats of escalation less credible, but it may also complicate efforts to negotiate a settlement. Israel will have to recognise the weakening of the uncontested US backing it has long enjoyed; Iran will meanwhile weigh whether domestic opposition limits Washington's willingness to continue fighting. Gulf states will look for assurances that any diplomatic arrangement protects their security and keeps maritime routes open.

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The Person Within Me, The Persona The World Sees

By Malik Muslim Raza Awan

Between conscience and social expectations, I have come to recognise a deeply personal kind of separation-



"Maaye ni, main kinnu aakhaan, dard vichhore da."

Mother, whom can I tell of the pain of separation?

Whenever I hear these words, I think of a separation that has accompanied me through my own life: the distance between the person I am within and the person I have learned to present to the world.

It is a difficult absence to explain. I am present in my daily life, fulfilling responsibilities, meeting people and carrying on conversations. Yet beneath that activity, a quieter part of me waits for attention. Sometimes I find myself missing who I am, even while going through the familiar motions of being myself.

The world knows my name and recognises my face. It also has expectations. Over the years, I have developed a persona that understands those expectations: when to speak, when to remain silent, what to reveal and what to conceal. That public self helps me function in society. But he does not always represent the person who lives within.

My inner self feels pure in his immediate response to life. He sees suffering and feels compassion before asking whether helping will bring any benefit. He recognises injustice without first checking the status of the person responsible. He wants honesty, fairness and affection without calculation.

He is also braver than the person I sometimes allow the world to see.

He can admit a mistake, acknowledge hurt and ask for love. He does not regard an apology as a loss of dignity. My outward self is more cautious. He thinks about reputation, relationships, family expectations and the consequences of disagreement. He fears being judged or misunderstood.

My inner self says, "Speak the truth." My outward self replies, "You do not understand what it might cost."

Much of my personal struggle lives inside that exchange.

There have been moments when I have smiled while hurting, agreed while unconvinced, or remained silent when my conscience asked me to speak. Sometimes the outward person tells a convenient lie. At other times, he offers a more persuasive explanation: that I had no choice.

But my conscience remembers the choice. It remembers the apology I could have offered, the kindness I postponed and the words I swallowed because they might have disturbed an otherwise comfortable conversation.

When the company leaves and the distractions end, those moments return. I may have explained my behaviour successfully to everyone else, yet something within me remains unsatisfied.

Still, I cannot dismiss my outward self without understanding his burdens. He carries responsibilities and must consider how decisions affect other people. Some of his caution comes from experience. Some of his fear comes from disappointment. The habits through which I conceal myself may once have helped protect me.

The difficulty begins when protection becomes a way of life, and concealment becomes so familiar that I struggle to recognise my own feelings.

In family and community life, questions of reputation can carry considerable weight. I can become preoccupied with what is expected of someone of my age, background and position. I can observe every custom and maintain every appearance, while quietly wondering where my own convictions belong.

There is a particular loneliness in receiving respect for an image that does not fully represent me. I want to be understood, yet I sometimes hide the feelings through which understanding might become possible.

The person within seems free of that concern with appearances. What fascinates me is that he also seems to contain every age of my life.

He is a child in his desire for uncomplicated affection. He wants to laugh freely, ask honest questions and trust without constantly preparing for disappointment.

He wants to feel valued without having to prove his usefulness.

He is a young man in his courage and hope. He still believes I can change. He questions why a fear I have carried for years should be allowed to govern the years ahead.

And he is an elder in his understanding of time. He knows that many arguments consume more peace than they deserve. He values a sincere conversation, a clear conscience and the opportunity to show kindness while it is still possible.

The child preserves my tenderness, the young man my courage, and the elder my perspective. Yet my public self sometimes listens more closely to passing opinions than to any of them.

This is the separation I hear in the kalam. Its words give expression to the pain of becoming distant from someone deeply loved. In my own reading, that longing reaches inward: how can I explain that the person I want to find has been living within me all along?

Listening to him requires care. Every inward feeling is not necessarily conscience. Anger, desire and wounded pride can also sound convincing. I have to become quiet enough to recognise the voice that asks me to be fair when fairness offers no advantage, and truthful when honesty is uncomfortable.

That voice has accompanied me throughout my life. I have sometimes ignored it, but I have never entirely silenced it.

As I grow older, the distance between my inward convictions and outward conduct feels increasingly important. My appearance changes, my strength changes, and the roles through which others recognise me will change as well. In my spiritual understanding, the body carries the soul through a temporary journey. I want to care for that body while also attending to the inner life entrusted to me.

I do not want to reach the end of the journey feeling that I maintained an acceptable appearance but rarely listened to myself.

Closing this distance begins with choices small enough to practise: admitting when I am wrong, expressing hurt without cruelty, questioning an unfair expectation, or allowing affection to become visible in my behaviour. Each asks my outward self to accept some discomfort in exchange for greater honesty.

It also requires patience. I cannot reconcile these parts of myself by condemning the person I became while trying to manage life's demands. I need to understand his fears and help him find the courage to live more openly.

Sometimes I imagine my inner self saying, "I know you are tired. I know you have responsibilities. But please stop leaving me behind whenever the world asks you to become someone else."

I want my answer to be reflected in the way I live.

Mother, whom can I tell of the pain of separation?

For me, those words now carry the longing to bring conscience and conduct closer together.

I want the person others meet to express more of the honesty, tenderness and courage I recognise within.

And when I sit alone, I want to feel at home in my own company.

Malik Muslim Raza Awan
Vancouver, Canada | November 2026

France Threatens EU Sanctions Over Alleged Iran Cyberattack On Supermarkets



WEB DESK

FRANCE

France threatens EU sanctions against Iran after accusing its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of a major cyberattack. The attack hit refrigeration systems in about 700 supermarkets across the country.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot called the October incident an unprecedented act of cyber sabotage. He said it targeted civilian infrastructure, not military or government sites.

Barrot said Paris will ask the European Union to impose sanctions on those responsible. France wants other EU members to stand with it on the issue.

The government also summoned Iran's ambassador to register a formal protest. This was a clear sign of how seriously Paris views the matter.

The attack caused real damage. Stores lost large amounts of food, and some equipment was harmed as well.

According to CNN, the hackers gained remote access to the refrigeration equipment. They then switched on defrost cycles, which pushed temperatures above safe levels in fridges and freezers.

Iran has strongly denied the accusations. Tehran also warned France against taking any retaliatory steps.

The row adds fresh tension to relations between Paris and Tehran. It also raises a wider worry about how easily hackers can reach everyday systems that people depend on.

US REFRIGERATOR HACKS

The sabotage of European supermarket fridges was preceded by at least one similar incident in the United States.

In August, refrigerators in at least six military commissaries went out of commission. Pentagon investigators are treating the malfunctions as a suspected cyberattack and are working with French officials, Reuters reported last month. A person familiar with the matter said that the Pentagon considers Iran a suspect in the August commissary hacks but that the investigation is still in progress.

Reuters could not establish how the military made its determination or whether it was also looking into other suspects. That the US military considers Iran a suspect in the commissary sabotage campaign was first reported last month by news website Nextgov, opens new tab.

The Pentagon said on Monday that it was "aware of speculation regarding a potential cyber incident" but it could not offer further comment for security reasons.

Iranian hackers allegedly have struggled previously to pull off hacks that trigger widespread disruption. The freezer sabotage was a notable exception, and this week it sparked warnings from US officials that more could be coming.

The hacks also appeared to have been easy to pull off, cybersecurity experts previously told Reuters. The firm behind many of the stricken units said that several were obsolete or were running outdated firmware, which could have made it easy for hackers to break in.

Saher Naumaan, a senior threat researcher at the cybersecurity company Proofpoint, said in an email that the cold-storage sabotage was less a measure of Iran's cyber prowess than of "how exposed these systems are."

Reporting by Gabriel Stargardter in Paris and Raphael Satter in Washington. Additional reporting by John Irish in Paris; editing by Chris Sanders and Will Dunham



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, poses for a group photograph with participants during the Celebrating Partnerships Appreciation 2026 ceremony at the High Commission of Malaysia.

UK Military General Praises Role Of Pakistani Soldiers Who Defended Britain

- Major General Karl Harris signs the Armed Forces Covenant with British Pakistani businessman Dr Tariq Sheikh on the eve of Armistice Day

NEWS DESK

UK

A UK military general praises role of Pakistani and Muslim soldiers who fought for Britain in the First and Second World Wars. Major General Karl Harris CBE of the British Army spoke about their service in what was then British India, today's Pakistan.

He made these remarks on the eve of Armistice Day. The event was the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant with Dr Tariq Sheikh, a British Pakistani businessman. Dr Sheikh is known as the biggest halal meat supplier in the UK and Europe.



The Covenant is the nation's promise to those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces. It also covers their families. It says they should face no disadvantage compared with other citizens.

Dr Sheikh signed for his company. General Harris signed for the Ministry of Defence. The deal aims to help soldiers, veterans and their families. It could open new job chances for them. It may also help veterans move into civilian careers. The company will give greater recognition to military service as well.

After the signing, the general spoke to the guests. He said Remembrance and the Armistice anniversary remind us how hard Britain's freedoms were won. He added that Britain has one Army, and it belongs to its communities as much as to those in uniform.

General Harris spoke about his own family. "We celebrate the history and heritage that we all share, whether that's the British Army or people from South Asian heritage. My maternal grandfather served in the Indian Army in Burma, and your relatives similarly served in that same theatre of war," he said. He called his visit a day of connection, community and celebration.

Dr Sheikh also shared his roots. He was born in Gujrat, in the Punjab, in Pakistan. His wife comes from Jhelum, nearby. He said anyone who knows the British Army knows those names. For a hundred years, Jhelum sent its sons into the British Indian Army.

He noted that the Pakistan Army was born from that same Army in 1947. Its regiments, discipline and pride are an inheritance, and it has honoured that inheritance ever since.

Dr Sheikh then spoke to young British Pakistanis. He told them this tradition is theirs. This is their country and their Army. He urged them to serve, join the reserves and send their children to the cadets.

Trump, Putin Lead Asia Summit Talks On Trade, AI, Security

- Three summits in five days will test global talks on trade, AI and security, from Manila to Shenzhen

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

World leaders are heading to Asia for a busy week of talks on trade, AI and security. Three summits will take place in just five days, and each one carries high stakes.

The Asean leaders' summit opens on Sunday in Manila. It is the final Asean gathering of the year. At the same time, French President Emmanuel Macron will attend a Francophonie summit in Phnom Penh.

The focus then shifts to the APEC conference in Shenzhen, China. Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to be a key figure there. India's Narendra Modi will join the Asean meeting. US President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney plan to attend both events.

Trump recently lost badly in the midterm elections. Even so, analysts say Asia will not see him as a weak leader. Siew Mun Tang, a former head of the Asean Studies Centre, said Trump still has two more years in office and can do a lot.



A Xi, Trump and Putin meeting

A proposed meeting between Xi Jinping, Trump and Putin will draw the most attention. Its agenda is still unclear. Putin wants to talk about Ukraine. Trump says the focus will be nuclear arms and ending the war in Iran.

Experts are cautious. Ryan Hass of the Brookings Institution said the symbolism will matter as much as the substance. He expects only broad principles, with no firm follow-up. Wang Wen of Renmin University also thinks talks may end without a breakthrough.

A hoped-for meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong Un looks unlikely, as Pyongyang has turned down repeated offers.

AI safeguards in focus

AI will be a hot topic at APEC. In September, Xi and Trump agreed to set up a channel to report AI incidents. Both countries share worries about bioweapons and attacks on key infrastructure.

Analysts say APEC could build on that deal. Still, one expert called a hotline cheap diplomacy, easy to announce and easy to ignore. A spying scandal involving Nvidia boss Jensen Huang may also cast a shadow over the AI talks.

Sea dispute and trade worries

In Manila, the Philippines is unlikely to sign a South China Sea Code of Conduct with China this year. A diplomat involved in the preparations expects no deal. Some experts say the code may have lost its purpose.

Trade will be a major topic at both summits, but relief from tariffs looks unlikely. A pause in the China-US trade war runs until January 10. Tension remains over Chinese rare-earth exports. Experts say tariff changes would be hard to reverse without new laws.

India Paid US Lobbying Firm $75,000 Monthly To Arrange Trump's Modi Post



WEB DESK

NEW DELHI

India paid US lobbying firms big monthly fees, and new filings now show what that money bought. A firm hired by the Indian government helped arrange Trump's social media post praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to US foreign agent records.

Mercury Public Affairs was paid $75,000 a month. Its filings list Trump's June post, which congratulated Modi on becoming India's longest-serving prime minister, among its activities.

The report was first published by The Indian Express.

Mercury has ties to people close to Trump. The firm was hired after his re-election. Bryan Lanza, communications director of Trump's transition team, is one of its core members.

Susie Wiles, Trump's outgoing chief of staff, was also a registered lobbyist with Mercury until late 2024.

A second firm, SHW Partners, is led by Trump aide Jason Miller. It disclosed that it arranged eight phone calls between Indian representatives and senior White House officials in May and June.

The firm described the calls as "political activities." They focused on India-US relations.

The May calls came before US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited India. Indian representatives spoke with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Deputy National Security Adviser Michael Needham and Under Secretary Gene Lange.

More calls followed in June. These included US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, Trump's policy assistant Walker Barrett and White House Communications Director Steven Cheung.

India first hired Miller's firm in April 2025. The Indian Embassy in Washington signed the deal at $150,000 a month. The contract was extended for another year in April 2026.

It ended on June 23, after Miller joined the Trump administration as a "special government employee."

The contract covered strategic advice, planning and government relations support.

It reached the US government, Congress, state governments, universities and think tanks.

US law requires agents of foreign clients to disclose their work. Under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, they must report their clients, their activities and their pay.

Hegseth Humbled By Cemetery Sentinel One Day After Impeachment Escape

- A Veterans Day photo stop near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier turned into a public reminder about respect, and Democrats were quick to react

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

Hegseth humbled at Arlington National Cemetery on Veterans Day, when a soldier firmly told the US Defence Secretary's group to be quiet..

The group had just left a Veterans Day ceremony attended by President Donald Trump. They then stopped near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Video of the scene spread fast on US television and social media. It shows people laughing and talking on the steps near the tomb.

Then a US Army sentinel spoke up in a loud voice. He reminded everyone that visitors must keep silence and show respect at all times.



CNN said the group included Hegseth's wife, Jennifer. It also named his chief of staff, Ricky Buria, and his deputy chief of staff, Patrick Weaver. Senior adviser Tami Radabaugh was also there. Reports say some of them were taking photos.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is one of the most solemn sites in the country. It honours unknown American service members who died in the two World Wars and the Korean War. It also holds an empty crypt for those missing from the Vietnam War.

The Pentagon defended the Defence Secretary. Chief spokesperson Sean Parnell told NBC News that Hegseth and the department have always honoured the sacrifice of troops.

Parnell added that the soldier had correctly and politely reminded everyone to behave with decorum on such a serious day.

Democrats did not accept that view. They linked the incident to wider concerns about Hegseth's leadership at the Pentagon.

The criticism came just one day after he narrowly survived an impeachment effort in the Republican-led House.

Congresswoman Gwen Moore of Wisconsin wrote on X that Hegseth keeps showing he is unfit for office. She said the scene showed disrespect for people in uniform.

Israeli Strike On Gaza Hospital Kills Six In Khan Yunis

NEWS DESK

GAZA

An Israeli strike on Gaza hospital Nasser killed six people and wounded nearly 30 others early Thursday, Gaza health officials said. It is the deadliest single strike since Israel's elections last month.

The hospital is in the southern city of Khan Yunis. Nasser Hospital confirmed the six deaths in a statement.

Civil defence teams said the bodies were pulled from the surgery ward. An AFP journalist at the scene saw a damaged staircase and an entire floor covered in broken concrete and medical equipment.

The Israeli military confirmed the attack. It said it targeted a senior Hamas fighter and other members of Hamas's armed wing. It claimed they were using the hospital as a command centre.

The military later named Mohammed Abu Ismail, a Hamas commander for the Khan Yunis brigade, as one of those killed.

Hamas denied the claim. It said Israel was telling "a false narrative" to justify its air strikes. Spokesman Hazem Qassem called the attack a war crime and blamed the US-backed Board of Peace for failing to stop it.

Paramedic Ezzedin Abu Sabha said the building was bombed by F-16 jets without warning.



James Su, chairman of EDI Media Inc. and chairman of Chinese American Film Festival and the Chinese American TV Festival (CAFF & CATF), addresses the opening ceremony of the 22nd CAFF & CATF in Los Angeles, the United States. The 22nd CAFF & CATF opened here on Tuesday, bringing together film and television professionals from China and the United States to promote cultural exchanges. This year's festivals received more than 500 film and television entries. Ten films won Golden Angel Awards.

Mahmood Aslam, Sahar Hashmi share playful on-screen banter

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



Senior Pakistani actor Mahmood Aslam and actress Sahar Hashmi have offered a look into their on screen relationship in the upcoming drama and shared a funny exchange about their characters.

In a video shared by Mahmood Aslam, the senior begins by talking about the interesting dynamics actors experience when working with the same co-stars in different projects.

He explains that while he plays the role of a loving father to Sahar in one serial, he is keeping a close eye on her in another.

He then introduces the actress as Sahar Hashmi, who joins the conversation and reveals that Mahmood plays her father in two projects, including the telefilm Viral Abba and another upcoming serial.

The two share light hearted banter as Sahar hints at what viewers can expect from their characters in the new project.

Mahmood with funny expressions, asks viewers not to troll him or complain about him online for keeping an eye on his on screen daughter.

Imran Ashraf shares emotional video of woman's regret

● Woman Reminds Viewers Parents Precious Before Too Late

SHOWBIZ DESK

LAHORE



Actor and television host Imran Ashraf has shared an emotional video from his show Mazaaq Raat, featuring a young woman delivering a heart-touching message about the importance of spending time with parents before it is too late.

In the clip, the woman describes her experience as "ek samajhdar pachtava" (a wise regret), recalling how she once believed she could conquer the world and make her parents proud through hard work and success.

She explains that whenever her father called her to join him for a meal, she would ask him to wait, insisting that she was busy working for their sake and did not have time.

However, when she finally found herself free and went to her father, calling out to him, she realised that he was no longer there.

Repeating the words "Samajhdar hoon na" (I am wise, right?), she reflected on the painful irony of prioritising work over spending time with the person she was working so hard for.

The woman said many young people make a similar mistake, believing that their efforts and achievements are a way of giving back to their parents while forgetting to give them their time.

She added that although she continues to work and now has time to spare, her father is no longer alive to share those moments with her.

Hina Tariq Shares Cryptic Message About Human Nature

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD



Pakistani actress Hina Tariq has caught social media users' attention after sharing a thought-provoking message about human nature, morality and the darker side of human behaviour.

The actress posted a video on her Instagram Story featuring an intense scene between a man and a woman, accompanied by a cryptic statement: "At some point, even monsters know the limit of their sins. Humans don't."

The message reflects on the darker aspects of humanity, suggesting that even monsters have boundaries when it comes to wrongdoing, while human beings can sometimes go beyond all limits.

Her post has sparked curiosity among followers, although the actress did not clarify whether the message was directed at anyone or inspired by a particular situation.

In another Instagram update, Hina extended birthday wishes to fellow actress Saima Qureshi, showering her with praise and affection.

Sharing a photograph of the two together, she wrote: "Happiest birthday to the beautiful soul and prettiest face I've ever met. Love u loads. May Allah fulfil all ur wishes @isaimaqureshi."

Hina Tariq is a Pakistani actress, model and digital influencer who initially gained popularity through social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok, before making her way into the television industry.

She has appeared in several Pakistani television dramas, including Bharam, Nafrat, Naqaab, Aye Dil Aazma Nahin and Bano.

'The inner child in me is screaming': Jamie Campbell Bower on joining 'Lord of the Rings' series

● New season jumps forward five years after events of season two and thrusts viewers into heart of Sauron's war against the Elves

WEB DESK

LONDON



British actor Jamie Campbell Bower said joining "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power" fulfilled a childhood dream as the cast gathered in London for the global premiere of the fantasy series' third season.

Speaking to Reuters, the "Stranger Things" and "Harry Potter" star recalled receiving the email offering him a role in the series.

"It felt like home. It felt very warm and loving," he said. "Of course, there's the inner child in me who watched the films growing up, who's screaming."

The new season jumps forward five years after the events of season two and thrusts viewers into the heart of Sauron's war against the Elves.

Co-showrunner JD Payne said the first two seasons focussed on introducing audiences to key characters and storylines across Middle-earth before bringing them together in season three.

"All roads lead to Sauron this season," Payne said. "He's forging the One Ring, and as a fan, seeing the volcano, seeing Charlie Vickers there with the hammer ... it's a really, really special moment."

Vickers, who plays antagonist Sauron in the series, said filming the forging scenes was physically demanding.

"It took a lot out of us. But then you just have to pinch yourself and be like, what an incredible job and incredible thing to be a part of," Vickers said.

One of television's most expensive productions, "The Rings of Power" is known for its expansive sets and large-scale world-building.

Welsh actor Morfydd Clark, who plays Elven commander Galadriel, said the number of people involved in bringing the fantasy world to life often goes unnoticed.

"It's a whole village," she said. "If you don't know what to do when you're leaving school, look into the types of things that are needed on a film set. You will find the perfect thing for you."

But for actor Cynthia Addai-Robinson, the enduring appeal of the series lies not in its battles or visual spectacle, but in the relationships at its heart.

"I think what keeps an audience engaged and coming back is the relationship between brother and sister, father and daughter, best friends, lovers. Even though it's fantasy, it feels very humanistic."

The series has also resonated beyond the screen since its debut in 2022.

Actor Ismael Cruz Cordova reflected on the role "The Rings of Power" has played in wider conversations about diversity, representation and fandom.

Jenna Dewan, Val Chmerkovskiy share message after shock 'DWTS' result



SHOWBIZ DESK

NEW YORK

Dancing With The Stars' Grammys Night ended with the elimination of a fan-favourite pair.

After nine weeks in the ballroom and just one week before the semi-finals, Jenna Dewan and her pro partner, Val Chmerkovskiy, said goodbye to the hit ABC dance competition.

Following their elimination, the beloved duo shared a video message on Instagram, thanking fans for their support throughout the season.

Dewan, 45, then turned to Chmerkovskiy, 40, to express her gratitude for their time together. "Thank you for great moments that we were able to share together on the dance floor," she told him. "Sadly won't be able to do any more. But that's okay, because we have incredible moments in our heart that we shared."

Chmerkovskiy reassured her that they could still "dance anytime" as friends, even outside the ballroom.

The pair's final performance was a jazz routine set to Janet Jackson's All For You. The song held special meaning for Dewan, who danced to it 24 years ago while touring as one of Jackson's backup dancers. Jackson even sent her a message of support ahead of the performance, recalling their "such fun times back in those days."

Despite earning 28 out of 30 points from the judges and two bonus points, Dewan and Chmerkovskiy landed in the bottom two alongside Tatyana Ali and Jan Ravnik.

Priyanka Chopra faces criticism over eating prawns at Diwali party

SHOWBIZ DESK

MUMBAI

Internationally acclaimed Indian actress Priyanka Chopra has faced criticism on social media after sharing pictures from her Diwali celebrations at her Los Angeles home.

Chopra posted photographs on Instagram, offering glimpses of the festive gathering hosted at her residence. One of the pictures showed the actress eating prawns.

The photographs quickly went viral, prompting criticism from some Hindu hardliners who objected to her eating meat during the religious festival of Diwali.

Some social media users also criticised her for using candles instead of traditional oil lamps, known as diyas, to decorate her home for the occasion. Despite living in the United States, Chopra continues to express her connection with Indian cultural traditions by celebrating various festivals.



Al-Shifa trust hosts global medical experts at 4th Research Conference



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

The Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital organised its 4th International Research Conference in Rawalpindi, bringing together a large number of local and international medical experts to discuss clinical research, advanced treatments and collaboration in the healthcare sector.

Addressing the conference, President of Al-Shifa Trust, Major General (retd) Rehmat Khan, called on OIC member countries to play an active role in strengthening clinical research systems.

He said rapid advancements in science and technology were transforming the healthcare sector, making stronger collaboration among hospitals, universities, regulatory bodies and research centres essential.

Director Research Umme Sughra and several international experts also addressed the conference.

During the event, participants shared recommendations on maintaining quality standards in clinical trials and research management.

Experts also presented proposals for establishing a strong and effective clinical research system in Pakistan.

Maya Khan reveals how she rejoined TV despite personal trauma

SHOWBIZ DESK

LAHORE



Pakistani television host Maya Khan has opened up about a traumatic experience from 2020, revealing that she was physically abused by her in-laws just a night before receiving an opportunity to return to television.

During a talk show appearance, Maya recalled how she was going through a difficult period after being away from the entertainment industry and struggling to find work.

She said that just when she was preparing to restart her career, she received a professional offer after a deeply distressing personal situation.

The television personality said that she had suffered physical abuse at the hands of her in-laws the night before she was due to rejoin television.

She said she was left severely injured, and medical examinations and legal procedures were carried out, including the preparation of medical reports within the required 12 hour period.

Recalling the moment she signed her new work contract, Maya said her hand was still injured and bandaged.

She remembered looking towards the sky and turning to Allah as she began another chapter of her professional life despite the circumstances.

Maya also addressed claims about her previous earnings, including reports that she used to receive Rs2.5 million per month for hosting morning shows.

She explained that her financial circumstances had changed significantly by 2020, when she had to accept work for Rs400,000.

She further looked back and told that how people at news channels would question television hosts salaries.

Maya said she had justified her earnings through her work, and also highlighted that she was among the first anchors to take programmes onto the streets and host live shows.

Karachi Blues, Sialkot Blues register wins as second round of Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Gold concludes

SPORTS REPORTER

KARACHI



Karachi Blues and Sialkot Blues registered wins on the fourth day of the second round of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Gold, while the remaining two fixtures ended in draws on Thursday. The third round will commence from Sunday, 15 November.

At the Diamond Cricket Ground in Islamabad, Karachi Blues defeated Multan by 275 runs. Resuming their second innings at the overnight score of 393-5, Karachi Blues declared at 407-5, with Saifullah Bangash unbeaten on 111. Chasing 406, Multan were dismissed for 130 as Mohammad Raza took four wickets for 42 runs and Abrar Ahmed picked up three for 14.

At Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi, Faisalabad resumed at 194-3 and were bowled out for 280, with Athar Mehmood and Hamza Nazar taking three wickets each. Mohammad Huraira then struck a century (105) as Sialkot Blues chased 187 to secure a five-wicket win.

At Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Lahore Whites resumed at 200-5 and reached 251-7, with Zain Bin Farooq scoring 103 and Tayyab Tahir remaining unbeaten on 70, as their match against Islamabad ended in a draw.

At National Ground in Islamabad, FATA resumed at 116-3 and finished on 222-5, with Mohammad Sarwar Afridi scoring 97, as their fixture against Peshawar Blues also ended in a draw.

Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Silver

Sialkot Whites defeated Karachi Whites by 54 runs on the fourth day of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Silver at Abbasia Sports Complex in Rahim Yar Khan.



Students from Government Girls Degree College and Early Learning Girls High School put all their strength into an intense tug-of-war competition during the 3rd Iqbal Day Sports Festival at Government Degree College Ground.

First Test: Rain, bad light cut short Day 4 as Pakistan extend lead over Sri Lanka

- Hosts reach 57-1 in their second innings, with Azan Awais and Mohammad Taha at the crease

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Pakistan stretched their lead over Sri Lanka to 45 runs despite losing opener Tayyab Arif early, before bad light and rain forced early stump on the fourth day of the first Test at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

The hosts made a steady start, with Tayyab finding the boundary twice in the opening overs. However, the right-handed batter was trapped LBW by Asitha Fernando for 11 off eight deliveries, leaving Pakistan at 15-1 after 2.2 overs.

Azan Awais and Mohammad Taha then joined forces at the crease and steadied the innings with a valuable partnership, helping Pakistan extend their overall lead. At lunch, Azan was unbeaten on 16, while Taha had contributed 12 as Pakistan continued their second innings.

The pair resumed after the interval and added further runs to Pakistan's advantage. However, deteriorating weather conditions, with bad light and rain, forced the players off the field, bringing the day's play to an early conclusion after 21.2 overs in Pakistan's second innings.

At the close of play, Pakistan were 57-1, holding an overall lead of 45 runs, with Azan unbeaten on 22 and Taha on 24.

Earlier, Sri Lanka responded strongly to Pakistan's first-innings total of 434-9, with Dhananjaya de Silva and captain Kusal Mendis sharing a mammoth 249-run partnership as both batters scored centuries.

The visitors suffered an early setback on the second day, losing two wickets for just 12 runs. Mohammad Abbas dismissed opener Pasindu Sooriyabandara for a seven-ball duck before debutant Saqib Khan claimed his maiden international wicket, removing Dinesh Chandimal for one.

Lahiru Udara and Kamindu Mendis steadied the innings with a 50-run stand before Saqib struck again, dismissing Udara for 42 off 52 deliveries, including seven boundaries, to leave Sri Lanka at 65-3.

De Silva and Kusal then took control, frustrating Pakistan's bowling attack with their commanding partnership. Kamindu also contributed with a crucial 90-run stand alongside De Silva, scoring 58 off 131 deliveries, including eight boundaries, before Mohammad Abbas dismissed him to leave Sri Lanka at 155-4 after 42 overs.

However, Pakistan staged an impressive comeback on the fourth morning as Sri Lanka added just 42 runs before losing their remaining six wickets to finish at 446.

Saqib struck in the opening over, dismissing the well-set De Silva for 167 off 246 deliveries, including 20 boundaries, to break the 249-run partnership. He removed Kusal in the following over for an impressive 119 off 202 balls, featuring 10 boundaries and four sixes.

The debutant continued his remarkable spell, dismissing Sonal Dinusha (20), Lahiru Kumara (0) and Asitha Fernando (4). Razaullah accounted for Milan Rathnayaka (12).

A First In China: Franchise-Based WCC Legends League Set To Launch In Shanghai

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI



Cricket in China has long held ambitions of reaching a wider mainstream audience, waiting for the right opportunity to accelerate its growth. That moment may now be approaching.

The World Championship of Cricket (WCC), in association with Dongyuehui Sports, is preparing to usher in a new era for the sport in China through the launch of a landmark franchise-based competition.

In a first for the country, a world-class, Eight-team Legends T20 franchise league is set to be introduced, representing a significant step in cricket's global expansion and opening exciting new possibilities for the game in China. The inaugural edition is planned for May 2027, bringing together some of the sport's most celebrated former international stars.

With the International Cricket Council (ICC) identifying new growth markets for the sport, the timing could not be more significant. Cricket's inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games provides additional momentum, creating an opportunity for China to accelerate its cricketing development and play a meaningful role in the sport's global growth story.

The foundation for this ambitious venture was established through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2026 between WCC and Dongyuehui Sports, operator of the Shaxi Town Cricket Centre in Taicang, Jiangsu Province. The agreement was signed by Praveen Sharma, Chairman of WCC, and Yonghui Tong, Chairman of Dongyuehui Sports.

Beyond hosting a marquee international competition, the initiative reflects a broader vision of making cricket a truly global sport by introducing it to new markets and audiences.



Man Utd sack manager Carrick, with Pochettino set for hot seat

SPORTS DESK

USA

Manchester United sacked manager Michael Carrick on Thursday after their worst-ever start to a Premier League campaign, with USA boss Mauricio Pochettino widely tipped to replace him.

Former United captain Carrick led the team to an impressive third-place finish last season, but they have taken just eight points from 10 games in the current campaign and are in the relegation zone. The club confirmed in a statement that it had parted ways with the 45-year-old, following mounting speculation he would be axed during the international break.

"After a disappointing start to the season, the club has come to the extremely difficult conclusion that a change is necessary in order to achieve our ambitions," United's statement said.

"Michael is, and always will be, a Manchester United legend. Just as he did as a player, he has conducted himself with the highest standards of dedication and professionalism throughout his time back with the club."



Pakistan Beat Bangladesh By Nine Wickets To Reach U19 Asia Cup Final

- Rizwanullah's five-wicket haul and fifties from Hayam Khan and Usman Khan power the defending champions into the title clash in Oman

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

OMAN

Defending champions Pakistan have reached the U19 Asia Cup final after a dominant nine-wicket win over Bangladesh. The match was played at the Al Amerat Cricket Ground in Oman on Thursday.

Pacer Rizwanullah was the star with the ball. He took five wickets, while Hayam Khan and Usman Khan hit fifties to finish the chase.

Bangladesh were bowled out for just 138 in 31.4 overs. Pakistan's bowlers worked well as a unit and kept the pressure on throughout the innings.

Opener Abdullah Al Muhi fought hard for Bangladesh. He top-scored with 50 off 45 balls, hitting four fours and two sixes.

Rakibul Hossain added 26 off 39 balls, while Ali Rafi made a quick 20 off 22 deliveries. Captain Farid Hasan scored 17, but the rest of the batters could not stay at the crease.

SK Jarif Siyam, Ahsan Al Mumin and Sheikh Atiqur Rahman scored one run each. Robiul Hasan Anik and Rubay Islam Rizon were out for ducks.

Rizwanullah ended with brilliant figures of 5/30 in eight overs. Mohammad Sayyam, Ali Raza, Hasnain Abbas Dar and Ahmed Hussain took one wicket each.

The target of 139 was never a problem for the Green Shirts. Usman and Hayam gave the team a flying start with a strong opening stand.

Hayam made 69 off 72 balls, with eight fours and a six, before he was dismissed. Usman stayed not out on 64 off 54 balls, including seven fours and two sixes.

Abdul Qadir remained unbeaten on eight as Pakistan won in only 21.5 overs. They lost just one wicket on the way.

With this result, Pakistan are now one step away from defending their title.

All eyes will be on the U19 Asia Cup final, where the young Green Shirts will look to finish the job.

Debutants Tayyab And Taha Hit Fifties As Pakistan Eye Strong First-Innings Lead

- Debutant Saqib Khan grabs seven wickets, but Sri Lanka still edge ahead by 12 runs in Rawalpindi

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Sri Lanka secured a slim first-innings lead of 12 runs against Pakistan on the fourth day of the Rawalpindi Test on Thursday. They were bowled out for 446, with debutant Saqib Khan taking seven wickets.

The visitors began Day 4 on 404-4. However, they lost their last six wickets for just 42 runs.

Dhananjaya de Silva top-scored with 167 runs, while captain Kusal Mendis added a fine 119. Saqib Khan was the star for Pakistan with seven wickets. Mohammad Abbas took two wickets, and Razaullah got one.

Sri Lanka had ruled Day 3 with the bat. De Silva and Mendis both scored centuries and showed great patience at the crease.

Mendis became the first Sri Lankan to score a century in his first Test as captain. He took over the role from De Silva before this series.

Their partnership also set a new record for Sri Lanka against Pakistan. It went past the 207-run stand by Thilan Samaraweera and Tillakaratne Dilshan in Lahore in 2009.

De Silva got a lucky break on 38, when Saud Shakeel dropped him off Razaullah. He made the most of it and hit 20 boundaries in his 246-ball knock. It was his 14th Test hundred, his fourth against Pakistan, and his second at this venue.

Pakistani Juniors Impress At J-30 World Junior Tennis Championships

- Usmani, Roman and Humayun top their groups, while Hajra Sohail moves into the girls' doubles last eight

MUDASSAR IQBAL

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan had a great day at the J-30 World Junior Tennis Championships in Islamabad. Muhammad Hassan Usmani, Hamza Roman and Ahtesham Humayun booked their places in the boys' singles quarterfinals.

All three finished at the top of their round-robin groups. Their strong play has given the home fans plenty to cheer about.

Hamza Roman beat his fellow Pakistani Abdul Basit 7-5, 6-2. Ahtesham Humayun defeated Japan's Soichiro Ishida 6-3, 6-4.

Muhammad Hassan Usmani was also in fine form. He beat Germany's Jakob Letsch 6-1, 6-4 and secured the top spot in his group.

Other Pakistani players won their third-round matches too. Amir Mazari beat Kazakhstan's Alshinhan Mukhamedkali 6-2, 6-2. Zoahib Afzal Malik defeated China's Daniel Alwadi 6-1, 6-4. Muhammad Shayan beat Haziq Aasim 6-3, 6-4.



There were some tough results as well. Thailand's Phasin Sinchalong beat Rayyan Khan 6-0, 6-1. Singapore's Brennon Ng won against Thailand's Tachatam Srisen 6-3, 6-4. Sri Lanka's Aahil Kaleel came back to beat Russia's Daniel Elias 1-6, 6-4 (10-7). Thailand's Napat Pattanalertphan defeated Sri Lanka's Rehan Gunawardhana 6-2, 6-1.

In the boys' doubles pre-quarterfinals, Amir Mazari and Belarus's Aliaksandr Viarsotski beat Jayin De Saram and Jakob Letsch 6-1, 6-3.



SUKKUR: Construction efforts are progressing swiftly on a new development project under the supervision of the local government department in Sukkur. The project, which commenced on Thursday, 12 November 2026, involves manual labour by a team of dedicated workers. This development is crucial for the region, aiming to enhance local infrastructure and support economic growth. The site features unfinished concrete pillars and beams, indicating significant structural work underway. Such projects are vital for regional advancement, providing employment opportunities and improving the local economy.

GB Seeks International Investment In Mining Sector

● Amjad Hussain Invites Investors To Explore Mineral Resources

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Advocate Amjad Hussain on Thursday invited international investors to explore the region's mineral resources, saying it offered significant potential in metals, precious minerals, dimension stones and placer gold.

Addressing the two-day Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26), he said Gilgit-Baltistan's mining sector remained largely unexplored and required investment to unlock its potential.

He said the region had introduced regulations and an online portal to facilitate investors in applying for mineral exploration and mining licences.

However, he identified poor connectivity and energy shortages as major challenges facing the mining sector in Gilgit-Baltistan.

He said these issues affected both local communities and investors and created hurdles in developing the region's mineral resources.

The chief minister said Gilgit-Baltistan offered a peaceful environment and welcomed international investment from all countries.

He said the region had liberal investment policies, including opportunities for public-private partnerships, particularly in the energy sector. Highlighting Gilgit-Baltistan's hydropower potential, he said investment in the sector could also help address Pakistan's wider energy crisis.

He stressed the need to prioritise hydropower projects and improve air connectivity to facilitate investors visiting Gilgit-Baltistan and exploring its mining sites.

He said infrastructure and connectivity challenges needed to be addressed to attract international investors and develop the region's mineral sector.

IGP Sindh reviews progress on construction of 40 additional model police stations

● Odho Orders Timely Completion Of Model Police Stations

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Javed Alam Odho on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the construction work, progress and completion targets of 40 additional model police stations being established across the province.

According to a Sindh Police spokesperson on Thursday, the meeting discussed in detail the establishment of the 40 model police stations approved by the Sindh government, progress on construction projects, release and utilisation of funds, expenditures and issues faced during implementation.

AIGP State and Management Amjad Sheikh and other relevant officers gave a detailed briefing and presentation on the budget allocated for the model police stations during the current financial year, release of funds, expenditures and ongoing construction activities.

The IGP directed all DIGPs to regularly visit the model police stations under construction in their respective districts and personally supervise the work to ensure timely completion.

He stressed that construction should be completed as soon as possible within the stipulated timeframe, adding that unnecessary delays or negligence would not be tolerated.

He directed that the buildings should be durable, of high quality and aesthetically designed to reflect the Sindh Police's modern, public-friendly and professional identity.



He also emphasised that no compromise should be made on construction standards and that the responsibilities of concerned engineers and officers be clearly defined to ensure the quality of construction materials and infrastructure.

The IGP said special attention should be given to modern and comfortable public facilities, including appropriate waiting areas, clean surroundings, separate facilities for women and senior citizens, and easy access for visitors.

He further directed that modern office facilities, suitable furniture, necessary equipment, lighting, water supply, cleanliness and other basic amenities should be incorporated into the construction plans.

Noting that the Sindh government had already provided funds for the projects, Javed Alam Odho called for expediting construction while ensuring the timely and transparent utilisation of allocated funds.

The IGP said the performance of SSPs in districts where model police stations had been completed should be appreciated, while explanations should be sought from concerned officers over delayed projects to ensure progress.

He also directed all relevant officers to prepare weekly progress reports on the construction projects and submit them to senior authorities to help achieve targets and promptly address any obstacles.

The IGP Sindh observed that model police stations were not merely new buildings but an important step towards making the policing system modern, public-friendly, transparent and service-oriented.

The meeting was held at the Central Police Office (CPO), Karachi. Additional IGPs of Karachi, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Special Branch, DIGPs of Headquarters and Finance, and other senior police officers attended in person, while DIGPs of West, South and East zones, divisional DIGPs of Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur and Larkana, along with district SSPs, participated through video link.

NAB director urges students to become Iqbal's shaheens & fight corruption

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Director Javed Ahmed Khan has called upon students and young people to become Iqbal's Shaheens, uphold the highest standards of integrity and wage a determined jihad against corruption, emphasizing that a corruption-free Pakistan can only be built through honesty, self-accountability and strong moral character.

Addressing students at a ceremony organized at AIOU in connection with the 149th birth anniversary of the Poet of the East, Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal, he said corruption was a major impediment to national development and its eradication required collective commitment, particularly from the younger generation.

He urged students to reject corruption in every form, neither indulge in dishonest practices themselves nor allow others to compromise integrity and actively contribute to building a transparent, responsible and corruption-free society.

He emphasized that Allama Iqbal's concept of the Shaheen symbolizes courage, self-respect, high aspirations and moral strength, qualities that young people must embody to become responsible citizens and play an effective role in national progress.

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof Dr Syed Muhammad Amir Shah said Iqbal's philosophy provides a powerful intellectual and ethical foundation for promoting self-accountability, honesty and character building among youth.

He said Iqbal regarded young people as the nation's most valuable asset and entrusted them with the responsibility of shaping its future.

Terrorist attack on Police Station foiled in DI Khan, RPO rewards brave Policemen



STAFF REPORTER

DERA ISMAIL KHAN

Terrorists attacked Bandkorai Police Station late at night with heavy weapons and rammed an explosives-laden pickup vehicle into its main entrance, damaging the boundary wall and mosque. However, alert police personnel mounted an effective response, repulsed the assault and thwarted the attackers' attempt to target the facility, with all policemen remaining safe, DIKhan police spokesman said.

Following the incident, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ghulam Mubashir Maken visited the police station to review the security situation, inspect the damage and appreciate the policemen who bravely confronted the attackers.

District Police Officer Ziauddin Ahmad, SP Counter Terrorism Department and SP Paharpur Iqbal Khan Baloch accompanied him during the visit.

The RPO received a detailed briefing on the attack and inspected the damaged portions of the police station building and mosque. He also awarded cash prizes to the police personnel for displaying exceptional courage, professionalism and commitment while defending the facility.

Appreciating their bravery, Ghulam Mubashir Maken said the personnel had demonstrated remarkable professionalism and determination under challenging circumstances, describing them as a valuable asset of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

He said such cowardly attacks could not weaken the morale of the police force, which remained committed to eliminating terrorism and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.

The RPO also lauded the local residents for reaching the police station and standing alongside the police during the attack, saying public support and strong police-community relations were essential to defeating terrorist elements.

Storms, heavy rain and smog threaten parts of Pakistan: NDMA warns

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Disaster Management Authority, through its National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), has issued a nationwide weather alert warning of heavy rain, thunderstorms, strong winds, fog, smog and possible snowfall across several parts of Pakistan, including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as adverse weather conditions are expected to affect multiple districts, particularly during the coming period.

According to the alert, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Punjab and the Potohar region are likely to receive rain accompanied by strong winds and thunderstorms. Heavy downpours are also expected at isolated locations in Potohar, Murree and the Galiyat region.

Meanwhile, dense fog and smog are likely to develop during nighttime hours in Narowal, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Lahore, Khanewal, Faisalabad, Multan, Kot Addu, Bahawalpur and adjoining areas, potentially reducing visibility and disrupting road traffic.

BISP Launches Payments Through Six Banks Nationwide

● BISP Introduces Interoperable System For Women Payments

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has formally launched the first disbursement of financial assistance to deserving women through six partner banks under its newly introduced interoperable payment system, allowing beneficiaries to receive their payments through multiple banking channels across the country.

Under the new system, beneficiaries will no longer be restricted to a single financial institution and can access their financial assistance through any of the participating banks, offering greater convenience, flexibility and freedom of choice.

Additional Secretary BISP Dr. Ismat Nawaz also attended the meeting.

The six banking partners included in the interoperable payment network are Habib Bank Limited (HBL), HBL Microfinance Bank, easypaisa, JazzCash, Bank Alfalah and the Bank of Punjab.

According to BISP officials, the launch of the first payment cycle marks an important step towards improving transparency in the disbursement process, eliminating long queues and unauthorized deductions, and ensuring dignified delivery of financial assistance to deserving women.

During the meeting, Senator Rubina Khalid appreciated the State Bank of Pakistan's patronage and pivotal role in developing the new system and bringing six banking partners onto a unified payment network.

She said the introduction of interoperability would enable deserving women to receive their payments according to their convenience and choice, while improving service delivery and promoting financial inclusion across the country.

The BISP Chairperson reaffirmed the programme's commitment to the welfare and financial empowerment of deserving women, adding that close coordination and cooperation with the State Bank and all partner financial institutions would continue to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the new payment system.

Pakistan Urges Global Action To Shield Climate Victims

● Pakistan Seeks Climate Finance At COP31 In Antalya

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan on Thursday called for stronger international climate financing, technology transfer and cooperation to tackle growing climate risks as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) hosted a high level session on technology-driven disaster management at the Pakistan Pavilion during the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye, bringing together senior government officials, climate experts and international development partners to highlight the country's shift from reactive disaster response to proactive, technology-enabled preparedness and anticipatory action, according to a press release received here.

Titled "Leveraging Innovative Technologies in Proactive Disaster Management", the session was led by NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Muhammad Hassan Khattak and attended by Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, SDPI Executive Director and NDRMF Board Chairman Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri, SilverLining Director of Science and Science Policy Dr Corinne Hartin, and Catholic Relief Services Chief of Party Rado Ravonjiarivelo.

The discussions highlighted Pakistan's growing reliance on technology, data and early warning systems to anticipate disasters, assess vulnerabilities and minimise their impact on communities and critical infrastructure.

Addressing the country's climate vulnerability, participants noted that Pakistan continues to face disproportionate climate risks despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions.

The devastating 2022 floods, which affected around 33 million people and caused more than $30 billion in damages and economic losses, were cited as a stark reminder of the urgent need to strengthen disaster preparedness and climate adaptation.

Chairman NDMA highlighted the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) as the country's central platform for real-time hazard monitoring, risk assessment, early warning generation and nationwide coordination of disaster preparedness.

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