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Kundi Stresses Improved Healthcare Delivery In KP Province

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday chaired a special briefing at the Governor House on the province's health sector, where Adviser to the Governor on Health Lt Gen (R) Nigar Johar presented a comprehensive overview of the existing healthcare system, key challenges and the government's short and medium-term reform agenda aimed at improving public health services.

The briefing was attended by provincial advisers, senior civil officers and representatives of the media. Lt Gen (R) Nigar Johar informed the participants about the current state of public hospitals and healthcare centres, shortage of medical staff, maternal and child health indicators, immunisation coverage and ongoing and proposed reforms in the health sector.

According to the briefing, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has an estimated population of 31.89 million, with 81 per cent living in rural areas and 19 per cent in urban centres. The provincial health department has a workforce of 30,697 healthcare personnel, including 8,024 doctors, 3,970 nurses, 8,252 paramedics and 10,451 Lady Health Workers.

The province has 18,432 hospital beds in the public sector, while the World Health Organization recommends 18 beds per 10,000 population. The briefing noted that additional investment is required to increase hospital capacity, healthcare facilities and human resources in line with population growth.



PM Shehbaz, CDF Asim Munir Share Top Spot On Muslim 500

- Makkah Defence Pact Cited Behind Joint Top Ranking of Muslim Leaders

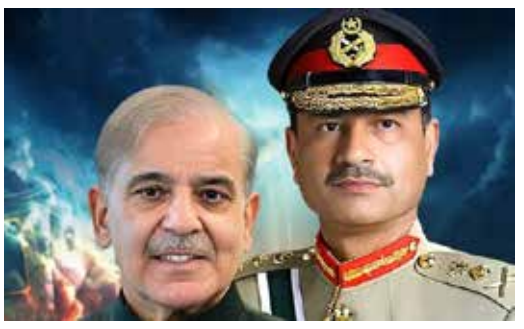
MUDASSAR IQBAL/WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have jointly secured the top position in the 2027 edition of The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, alongside Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The annual publication, compiled by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, has identified the world's 500 most influential Muslims. According to the report, this is the first time that multiple individuals have jointly secured the top position.

The publication attributed the unprecedented ranking to the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a significant development in cooperation among Muslim countries.



It said the agreement, signed on August 7, 2026, and activated during an emergency summit in Riyadh, brought together Saudi Arabia's economic strength, Türkiye's technological and manufacturing capabilities, and Pakistan's military power under a collective defence arrangement.

The report described the pact as being based on the principle of "one for all, all for one", adding that it had reshaped regional political dynamics.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei secured fourth place, followed by Jordan's King Abdullah II at fifth. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani was ranked sixth, while Pakistani religious scholar Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Usmani secured seventh position.

United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was placed 12th, while Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ranked 22nd. Another prominent Pakistani religious scholar, Maulana Tariq Jameel, secured the 32nd position.

Liverpool footballer Mohamed Salah was ranked 39th, followed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at 45th. New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani secured the 49th position.

The publication also highlighted Pakistan's economic and diplomatic challenges over the past year, noting that the country had navigated economic stabilisation efforts, regional security pressures and the task of maintaining diplomatic balance among major global powers.

Bilawal urges govt to respect opposition's role in democracy

- Condemns political victimisation of Fazlur Rehman

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Sunday spoke to Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and condemned the "government's actions" against him.

The telephone conversation comes as tensions have remained high between the JUI-F chief and the PML-N-led federal government over the past month. On Sunday, Fazl's party also held street protests in several cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against "propaganda" directed toward the party and its leadership.

According to a statement issued by PPP, Bilawal and Fazl exchanged views on the country's political situation.

The Bhutto scion — whose PPP is an ally of the ruling coalition — "condemned the government's actions and political vengeance" targeting the JUI-F.



"The government should tolerate the opposition's criticism," Bilawal was quoted as saying in the statement. He highlighted that the opposition had an "extremely important role in democracy and a parliamentary system".

Speaking to Fazl, Bilawal said the "government should refrain from such actions that weaken democracy and the Parliament".

The PPP chairman has recently been calling for political unity in the country, urging the prime minister to take measures to build trust with the government's allies and the opposition.

His criticism followed opposition to the federal government's consideration of imposing governor's rule and an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) governs.

Fazlur Rehman also accused the federal government of failing to honor previous commitments made during his efforts to mediate between the center and the provincial administration.

In response, federal officials have defended their position, citing what they describe as the provincial government's lack of cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts. A PPP-backed governor currently heads the province.

President Urges Pakistanis To Help Build Tolerant Society

- Zardari Calls For Society With Dignity, Equal Citizenship

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



President Asif Ali Zardari called upon all Pakistanis to help build a society where every person can live with dignity, practise their faith without fear and express a different opinion without facing hatred or violence.

In a message on the occasion of International Day for Tolerance (16 November 2026), he said, "Our strength as a nation lies in our ability to live together with respect, united by our shared citizenship and our hopes for Pakistan."

"Islam teaches compassion, justice and respect for human dignity. These values also find clear expression in the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In his historic address of 11 August 1947, he declared: We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State," he added.

He said, "Article 25(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan gives this principle an unequivocal guarantee: All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law. These words must guide the conduct of every public institution and be reflected in the daily experience of every citizen."

He said, "Pakistan belongs equally to all its people. Our non-Muslim citizens have helped build this country through their service in education, healthcare, public life, the armed forces and countless other fields. Their place in Pakistan rests on equal citizenship. Every child must feel safe in the classroom, every family secure in its neighbourhood and every worshipper protected in a place of worship. Equal citizenship must be a lived reality for every Pakistani."

"Tolerance also requires us to respect differences of language, culture, belief and political opinion. In a democracy, disagreement must be met with reason and dialogue."

Jamaat-e-Islami Can Bring Systemic Change Pakistan: Hafiz Naeem

- Hafiz Naeem: JI Only Option For Systemic Change

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has said that Jamaat-e-Islami is the only viable option for bringing systemic change in the country, expressing confidence that the party will soon emerge as a major parliamentary force nationwide.

Addressing the All Punjab Gathering of Office-Bearers in Lahore, he said Punjab, with more than half of Pakistan's population, played a decisive role in national politics. He added that greater political awareness among the people of the province could pave the way for genuine change across the country.

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said the time had come for Jamaat-e-Islami to establish itself as a major political party in Punjab, arguing that traditional political parties had failed to offer practical solutions to the basic problems faced by the public.

Criticising the existing political and electoral system, he alleged that the country's political, social and economic structures were controlled by a handful of influential groups. He accused powerful circles of manipulating election results through practices such as disrupting the Result Transmission System (RTS) and installing governments through Form 47.

He further alleged that the establishment had repeatedly brought electable candidates into different political parties to influence the country's political landscape.

The JI chief said personality-based politics, feudalism and capitalism had deeply affected the political system, with rival parties prioritising personal and group interests over public welfare.

He maintained that the absence of an effective system of justice remained a major national challenge, adding that establishing a just social order was among Jamaat-e-Islami's fundamental responsibilities.

Gatherings in KP's Bajaur, Lakki Marwat, Swabi, Tank banned for 30 days

STAFF REPORTER

BAHAUR/LAKKI MARWAT/SWABI



The district administrations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur, Lakki Marwat, Swabi and Tank on Sunday imposed Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) for a month, banning public gatherings and several other activities amid the prevailing law and order situation.

In Bajaur, the district administration prohibited all kinds of political gatherings, "hate speech" against the state and the display of arms and weapons for 30 days.

The notification formalising the restriction, seen by Dawn, said Bajaur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Adnan Farid Afridi approved the restrictions in view of the law and order situation, citing the need for additional measures to safeguard public life and property and maintain peace.

The notification further stated that law enforcement agencies were required to remain more vigilant to avert any "unpleasant mishaps" while also enhancing security at the district's entry and exit points and discouraging and disallowing "unauthorised gatherings" in public places.

"Sufficient grounds exist to believe that immediate preventive measures are required to be taken," the notification added.

The notification stated that the order would come into force on Nov 15 (Sunday) and remain in effect until Dec 15, unless modified or withdrawn.

PPP leader Faryal Talpur meets Punjab governor

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Women Wing President Faryal Talpur met Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor's House on Sunday.

The meeting centered round political situation of the country, party's restructuring in the province.

Faryal eulogized the governor for turning the governor's house into a public place and said party representatives, workers and jiyalas should not feel themselves neglected or ignored rather they must spread to every nook and corner of the province and convey message of the party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto.

The governor said her visit to Punjab would significantly boost morale of the PPP workers and help organize the party at grass roots level in the province.

Faryal also held a meeting with the party's divisional and district level women office-bearers and workers.

Provinces Provide Rs57.46bn Grants To Centre First Time

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



For the first time in Pakistan's history, provinces have provided the federal government with grants worth Rs57.46 billion.

The grants were extended by the provinces to the federal government during the first quarter of the current fiscal year, under Article 164 of the Constitution, the documents revealed.

In an unusual financial arrangement, the provinces are providing grants to the Centre this time, rather than receiving financial assistance from the federal government, sources said.

Under the current fiscal year's budget agreement, the provinces had committed to providing a total grant of Rs1.035 trillion to the federal government, according to sources.

Punjab is expected to contribute Rs555.7 billion, followed by Sindh with Rs263.7 billion. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will provide Rs157 billion, while Balochistan's contribution is estimated at Rs58.6 billion.

Sources said the grants are being calculated from additional revenue generated by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) beyond its revenue collection for the previous year.



SSP Zain directs swift investigation of serious crime cases, using modern technology

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigations Islamabad Zain Asim has directed investigation officers to complete pending cases of robbery and other serious crimes on merit, ensure timely submission of challans to courts and use modern technology to strengthen investigations.

An ICT Police official told APP on Sunday that SSP Zain issued these directions while chairing a meeting attended by investigation officers from across the federal capital to review progress on cases under investigation. During the meeting, SSP Zain reviewed robbery and other serious crime cases and directed officers to complete investigations without unnecessary delay. He stressed that challans should be prepared on the basis of solid evidence and submitted to the relevant courts to help ensure the conviction of offenders.

HEC advises universities to Uphold Merit in administrative appointments

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has advised the universities to ensure merit and institutional integrity in faculty and administrative appointments by properly presenting the proceedings of Selection Boards before their Syndicates or other relevant statutory forums for detailed deliberation and decision-making.

In a letter addressed to Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of universities, HEC has emphasized circulation of agendas of Syndicate and other relevant statutory forum meetings among members promptly, so that the members have sufficient time for due deliberations. The letter reads: "The Commission is committed to ensuring that appointment decisions are made through the prescribed statutory forums in a manner that upholds merit and institutional integrity."

The letter underlined that HEC is mandated to guide institutions in establishing minimum standards for good governance and management to provide guidelines regarding minimum criteria and qualifications for appointment and promotion of faculty and to review their implementation, and to cause evaluation of the performance of institutions.

HEC has further stressed the need for ensuring no compromise on the integrity and transparency of decision-making in appointments to faculty and administrative positions, warning that any omission "is viewed with serious concern by the Commission."

The letter reads: "All universities are advised to ensure that such important and significant agenda items are shared with the members of the Syndicate and other relevant statutory forums strictly in accordance with the timelines prescribed in the Statutes of the university. Members of the Syndicate and other statutory forums shall be given sufficient time to review the agenda items and to prepare adequately for the meeting date and time."

Railways to add 36 locomotives to operational fleet by 2027

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Railways is planning to bring up to 36 non-operational locomotives back into service by June 2027 in a bid to improve train operations, facilitate passengers and enhance the department's revenue.

"Pakistan Railways currently has a fleet of 439 locomotives, of which 267 are operational while 172 remain non-operational," an official in the Ministry told APP.

He said the department was taking several measures to restore out-of-service locomotives to operational condition to strengthen its capacity and generate additional revenue.

Giving details, the official said that 16 non-operational locomotives were expected to become operational by February 2027, while another 20 locomotives would be available for service after major overhauls by the end of 2026.

The official said that one accidental locomotive, bearing No. 9021, was also expected to be restored after necessary repairs and fitment by June 2027.

Regarding the modernization of the existing fleet, he said that a PC-I for the modernization of 35 locomotives had been submitted to the MPD&SI and the Ministry of Planning; however, it had not yet been considered.

Meanwhile, he said Pakistan Railways has also contacted the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to explore the restoration of 69 locomotives, with efforts underway to bring them back into operation.

He said the restoration of these locomotives is expected to improve the availability of engines, strengthen train operations and help Pakistan Railways increase its passenger and freight earnings.

To a question, he said to enhance on-board passenger facilitation, state-of-the-art dining cars and modern coaches have been introduced on Shalimar Express, Pak Business Express, and Islamabad Express. LED screens with preloaded programs and water dispensers have been installed, while comprehensive janitorial services are now provided on all trains, he added.



HYDERABAD: Provincial Minister for Food Makhdoom Mehboob Zaman visits a stall at SABS University of Art, Design and Heritages, Jamshoro, on the occasion of the 21st Degree Show.

Agriculture Department Takes Action Against Fake Fertilizer Sale

Several Booked For Fake Fertilizers In Gujar Khan

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

The Agriculture Extension Department, Gujar Khan, has taken action against individuals involved in selling counterfeit fertilizers to farmers and has registered FIRs against several people.

Assistant Director Agriculture Extension Gujar Khan, Abdul Rasheed Saqi, sent fertilizer samples collected from Punjab Khil Godown Daultala, Natha Mor, Abid Hussain, Warsi Mobile Shop Habib Chowk Qazian, Usama Khushnood Ali, Al-Maida Dairy Milk Shop Butt Market Islam Pura Jabbar, Muhammad Shahbaz Banaras and Sajjad Banaras to a laboratory for testing.

After laboratory reports confirmed that the samples were substandard and counterfeit, the Agriculture Department took immediate action and had FIRs registered against the individuals concerned.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, Assistant Director Agriculture Extension Gujar Khan Abdul Rasheed Saqi said that no leniency would be shown to those involved in selling fake fertilizers. He said such elements not only damage farmers' hard work and financial investments but also adversely affect the country's agricultural production.

He warned that if the mafia involved in manufacturing and selling counterfeit fertilizers was not eliminated today, it could pose a major threat to country's food security in the future. He added that the country could not afford to leave future generations with a Pakistan facing food shortages.

He made it clear that the illegal trade



of counterfeit fertilizers would not be tolerated under any circumstances in Tehsil Gujar Khan and that legal action against those involved would continue.

He appealed to landowners, farmers and growers to purchase fertilizers only from authorized and registered fertilizer dealers. He advised them to avoid buying fertilizers from private residences or unrelated general shops and to always obtain a receipt when making a purchase.

He further urged citizens to immediately inform the Agriculture Department if they came across any incidents involving the sale or hoarding of counterfeit fertilizers so that timely action could be taken.

Abdul Rasheed Saqi added that the doors of Agriculture Department offices were open to every farmer. Field Assistants and Field Investigators were present in different areas of the tehsil, while he himself remained available in the field to guide farmers and resolve their problems.

World olive day to be observed in Pakistan on November 26



STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Like other countries around the world, Pakistan will observe World Olive Day on November 26, while the country has achieved another milestone by securing membership of the International Olive Council (IOC) for the first time this year.

The Government of Pakistan and Italy are continuing their cooperation to promote olive cultivation in the country. The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM Bari) and the Punjab Government are playing key roles in these efforts.

The Potohar region, parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and certain areas of Balochistan have been identified as suitable for olive cultivation, with significant potential for the development of this sector.

Under the Olive Culture Scale-Up Project, supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, olive growers and individuals associated with oil extraction units are being trained in modern cultivation techniques, fruit harvesting and olive oil production. The project is being implemented by CIHEAM Bari in collaboration with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

According to a six-year study published in the Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Research in November 2026, researchers examined eight different harvesting periods for the Arbequina variety of olives in Chakwal, Kallar Kahar and Talagang. The findings revealed that olives harvested in mid-November produced the highest average oil yield.

The research findings are expected to provide valuable guidance for improving olive production and increasing farmers' incomes.

FIA books 8 deportees from Türkiye over work visa violations

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration Islamabad has registered a case against eight Pakistani nationals deported from Türkiye for allegedly violating the conditions of their work visas by taking up employment at unauthorised locations.

An FIA official told on Sunday that the eight individuals had travelled to Türkiye on work visas but allegedly started working at places other than the companies for which their visas had been issued.

During initial investigations, it was revealed that Turkish police arrested the individuals and sent them to jail before deporting them to Pakistan.

The official said a case had been registered against the eight individuals under Sections 3 and 4 of the Passport Act, 1974.

He added that further investigations were underway to determine the possible involvement of other individuals or agents in the case.

Islamabad markets get facelift, focus shifts to pedestrian facilities

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is upgrading commercial centres across the federal capital, with a focus on improving pedestrian facilities, lighting and public spaces alongside renovation of roads and other civic infrastructure.

The facelift programme covers Kohsar Market, F-7 Markaz's Jinnah Super Market and Aabpara Market, with the authority completing major portions of work at the first two locations.

According to the CDA, upgradation work at Kohsar Market has been completed, with finishing work under way. At Jinnah Super Market, work extending up to Bhittai Road has been completed, while the remaining portion is expected to be completed soon.

The project includes reconstruction of footpaths and installation of decorative electric poles and lighting to improve facilities for pedestrians and visitors.

Renovation work is also under way at Aabpara Market, where landscaping and horticulture are being carried out alongside improvements to sewerage and parking facilities.

The authority is also undertaking patchwork on damaged roads in the commercial centres and installing benches and dustbins to improve public convenience.

CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf has directed the relevant departments to complete the projects within the stipulated timelines while ensuring construction quality.

National interests must prevail over political, personal considerations: Hanif Abbasi

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has said that the flood-damaged Faisalabad-Lahore railway section has been restored in 45 days through the dedicated efforts of Pakistan Railways employees, highlighting the government's commitment to improving railway infrastructure and services across the country.

Addressing a ceremony on Sunday to mark the restoration of the section, the minister said national interests must always take precedence over political and personal considerations, adding that Pakistan's stability and security should never be compromised.

He said around 1,500 feet of railway track between Faisalabad and Lahore



had been washed away by floods on July 27, 2026. Following the completion of necessary formalities, including the appointment of consultants, preparation of a feasibility report and arrangement of funds, restoration work formally began on September 23. Although the initial completion period was 60 days, the project was completed in just 45 days with the cooperation of a private company.

The minister paid tribute to railway workers, particularly labourers, describing them as the real heroes of the restoration project. He announced special cash rewards for all workers involved and appreciated the contributions of CEO Railways Muhammad Hafeezullah, AGM Infrastructure Hammad Mirza, Chief Engineer Irfanul-Haq, Divisional Superintendent Lahore Inamullah and M/s Habib Construction.

He said the restored section would facilitate the resumption of Shalimar Express, Karakoram Express, Badr Express, Ghouri Express and Ravi Express, in addition to Goods Train 503.

Abbasi said Pakistan Railways was pursuing a comprehensive revival plan focused on improving workshops, locomotives, passenger facilities, freight operations and railway infrastructure. The department was currently operating an average of nine trains daily, while a plan had been sought to increase the number to 14. A target had been set to operate 14 trains between January 10 and 20.

Regarding locomotive rehabilitation, he said 43 GEU-43 locomotives had been operating with only two or three traction motors instead of the required six, affecting their capacity to haul 3,400 tonnes. He announced that all 43 locomotives would be made fully operational with the required traction motors by December 15.

The minister said a comprehensive technical assessment of passenger coaches had been completed to identify and rectify defects, while similar inspections would now be carried out of rolling stock, particularly freight trains and their tracks.

Highlighting the revival of railway workshops, he said the CDL Workshop had remained closed for the past 15 years, while its wheel machine had been out of order since 2007-08.

UK Experts Working With Pakistan To Explore Minerals

● Jane Marriott Highlights Pakistan's Vast Mineral Investment Potential

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott has highlighted the country's vast mineral investment potential, saying British geological experts are collaborating with Pakistani teams to identify and map its mineral resources.

In an exclusive interview with Dunya News, Marriott said determining the location of key minerals and assessing the ease or difficulty of their extraction were essential steps before launching any mining project.

She said the British Geological Survey and geoscience teams were working alongside Pakistani counterparts to conduct research and preliminary assessments of the country's mineral reserves and explore ways to utilise them.

Marriott noted that several major British companies, including the Weir Group, were also involved in the sector and linked to Barrick Gold's supply chain for the Reko Diq project.

Referring to the Pakistan Minerals Investment Summit, she said she had attended its third edition and witnessed the event expand in scale and significance each year, evolving into an internationally recognised platform for investment and engagement in the minerals sector.

The high commissioner said the United Kingdom was already among Pakistan's largest investors, with more than 200 British companies operating in the country. She added that the UK's five largest companies collectively contributed around one per cent to Pakistan's GDP.

However, she said the UK was particularly keen to explore opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).



RAWALPINDI: A vendor busy extracting pomegranate juice for customers at his stall in Pirwadhai.

European ships ordered out as EU-Mauritania fishing deal expires



WEB DESK

EUROPE

A fishing partnership agreement between Mauritania and the European Union giving European vessels access to the African nation's waters has expired, AFP learned Sunday from sources on both sides.

A statement from Mauritania's coastguard issued on Saturday said the existing sustainable fishing agreement expired at midnight and all European vessels had to quit the country's fishing waters.

European sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP Sunday that the EU had warned member states the agreement was about to expire but that talks were ongoing to try to renew it.

The now-expired agreement between Mauritania and the EU granting European fishing vessels access was worth around 57.5 million euros ($63 million) a year.

With an Atlantic coastline of nearly 800 kilometres (500 miles), Mauritania is a major exporter of fish, which is a major industry for the country.

It has some of the richest fishing waters in the world, which have notably attracted the attention of European trawling vessels.

Sindh cotton experiment faces winter test

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistan's cotton and textile supply chain is at a critical juncture, caught between grassroots climate adaptation in the fields of lower Sindh and widening statistical discrepancies in official crop reporting.

The decision by growers in Sindh's coastal districts of Thatta and Sujawal to begin cotton sowing in the second week of November marks an unusual departure from the country's conventional agricultural calendar.

However, whether this farmer-led experiment translates into commercial relief for the domestic textile industry depends as much on agronomic resilience through the winter as on resolving data distortions that are currently clouding market pricing.

Traditionally, cotton sowing in Punjab takes place between May and June, while Sindh begins in February and March — a cycle that exposes the crop to peak summer heat stress and post-monsoon pest attacks, particularly from the pink bollworm. By utilising land cleared after the paddy harvest and intercropping directly into standing tomato fields, growers in coastal Sindh are attempting a multi-season model.

Dr Tasawwar Hussain Malik, a plant breeding and genetics specialist at the Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) in Sakrand, notes that while the initiative originated with farmers, CCRI researchers are closely monitoring the fields and conducting parallel trials to assess the viability of "off-season" planting in frost-free pockets of lower Sindh, where winter temperatures remain comparatively mild.

If the November-sown crop matures through winter and yields lint by February and March, domestic spinners could see fresh arrivals months ahead of the traditional August peak. Such an early injection of raw material would bridge the annual inter-season supply gap and curb reliance on costly imported lint.

Education Key To Pakistan's Progress, Says BOI Minister

● Minister Urges Graduates To Build Future In Pakistan

MUDASSER IQBAL

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Sunday said education was the only way forward for Pakistan, urging graduates to play their role in national development and build their future in the country.

Addressing the convocation ceremony at FAST University Chiniot, the minister said all countries that had achieved remarkable economic progress had done so through education, investment in human capital and the development of knowledge-based economies.

Citing China as an example, he said its emergence as one of the world's largest economies was largely driven by investment in education and human resource development.

He assured graduating students that their future was secure and promising in Pakistan, adding that international institutions were projecting the country to become a member of the G20 within the next 20 years.

The Minister said global institutions were also anticipating Pakistan's economic growth and its emergence as a prominent player on the international stage.

Qaiser said the present government was working to transform Pakistan's geographical and diplomatic significance into tangible economic opportunities, creating new avenues for investment, growth and employment.

Addressing the graduates, he urged them not to lose hope or consider leaving Pakistan as the only option for a successful future.

The Minister said that Pakistan offers excellent opportunities for the bright future of its young generation," he said, assuring students that they would not be disappointed if they chose to build their careers and contribute to national progress.

Recalling his efforts to establish FAST University in Chiniot, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said setting up the institution in the city had been his long-standing dream.

He said approximately 3,000 students were currently enrolled at FAST University Chiniot, reflecting the growing importance of quality higher education in the region.

The minister also recalled the establishment of Islamia High School in Chiniot in 1901, saying many of its graduates had gone on to achieve prominent positions in different fields.

He expressed confidence that graduates of FAST University would make significant contributions to Pakistan's future development, economic progress and national service.

BOI Minister urged the graduating students to use their knowledge, skills and professional capabilities to address the country's challenges and contribute to a prosperous Pakistan.

FBR Integrates 14,078 Tier-I Retailers With POS System

● FBR Links 38,259 Branches To Point Of Sale

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has integrated 14,078 Tier-I retailers, textile and leather retailers, and restaurants with its Point of Sale (POS) system as of November 1, 2026.

The system is used to document transactions of Tier-I retailers, hotels, and restaurants and the number of integrated branches and outlets across these categories reached 38,259 during the same period.

A total of 12,302 Tier-I retailers were registered with the POS system, with 25,580 of their branches integrated.

Around 1,212 restaurants were registered, and 1,908 restaurant branches were linked to the system of the FBR. The FBR also registered 564 textile and leather retailers, with 10,771 of their branches integrated with the system.

Yesterday, FBR made it mandatory for all registered tea manufacturers, blenders and packers to install electronic production monitoring systems by December 10, requiring every retail pack to be digitally recorded before leaving factory premises.

The directive, issued under Sales Tax General Order (STGO) No. 35 of 2026, covers black, green, flavoured and instant tea, tea bags, extracts and premixes containing milk powder or sugar. It also applies to toll and contract packers and covers all retail packaging formats, including sachets, pouches, cartons, jars and tins.

Under the new system, manufacturers must install barcode scanners, counting sensors and other equipment on every packing line to record production.

Each pack must carry a unique, machine-readable barcode identifying its brand, blend, weight and packaging type. Production data will be transmitted to the FBR in real time through authorized vendors.

The FBR has identified 14 registered manufacturers and packers, including Tapal Tea, Mezan Tea, Kohistan Foods and Islamabad Tea Company.

Chief Commissioners Inland Revenue have been directed to appoint focal persons to oversee implementation and coordinate with manufacturers and vendors.

Sales tax gets new enforcement structure to cut collection gap

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

After 17 years of integration, the government has decided to reverse the functional integration of sales tax and income tax collection, acknowledging that the sales tax revenue gap has widened to Rs3.4 trillion amid weak enforcement and poor revenue collection.

The decision marks a major reform in tax administration, providing for the selection of officers within the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) and the separation of functional responsibilities, including tax collection and legal matters, to address persistent weaknesses that have contributed to the revenue gap, senior tax officials told.

At the chief commissioner level, the administrative structure for sales tax and income tax will remain unchanged for now. However, functional separation will begin at the commissioner level and extend to subordinate officers, with dedicated officials assigned exclusively to sales tax matters.

A dedicated member for sales tax and federal excise duty will report directly to the FBR chairman. The new member, with three chiefs and their teams, will give sales tax and federal excise duty continuous attention through data analysis, operations, and follow-up on selected cases.

Within each chief commissioner's jurisdiction, separate sales tax zones will be established, headed by commissioners and supported by additional deputy and assistant commissioners. The restructuring will begin at Large Taxpayer Offices on Dec 1, followed by Corporate Tax Offices and Regional Tax Offices. The transition is expected to be completed within two months.

IMF Urges Pakistan To Phase Out Fuel Subsidy

● IMF Wants Fuel Support Limited Temporary Within Budget

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reiterated its demand for Pakistan to phase out its fuel subsidy scheme, stressing that any future government support in response to rising oil prices must be limited, temporary and accommodated within the current fiscal year's budget.

An IMF spokesperson told Arab News that the existing fuel support programme should be phased out because of its broad targeting. The spokesperson said any future assistance, if international oil prices rise unexpectedly, should be directed towards deserving groups through established social protection programmes and remain within the FY27 budgetary limits.

Pakistan introduced the fuel subsidy scheme in September to protect low-income motorists from rising petroleum prices amid the US-Iran war. Under the programme, motorcycle and rickshaw users receive weekly petrol vouchers worth Rs500 ($1.80), while owners of vehicles with engine capacities of up to 800cc get a discount of Rs100 ($0.36) per litre on a maximum of 10 litres every 10 days.



The IMF had also called for the programme to be phased out promptly in a statement last month, citing its high cost and broad coverage.

Pakistan is pursuing a transition from economic stabilisation towards growth under the IMF's $7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme. The spokesperson said Pakistani authorities had committed under the programme to align domestic petroleum prices with international rates while protecting the most vulnerable segments of society.

Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, State Minister for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani and Finance Adviser Khurram Schehzad did not respond to Arab News' requests for comments on the IMF's latest position.

Like several other countries, Pakistan increased petroleum prices following the US-Israel war on Iran, which began in February. Petrol prices reached a record Rs458.41 per litre on April 3 before gradually declining to Rs330 per litre as regional tensions eased.

Significant economic pressures

The IMF spokesperson described the ongoing Middle East conflict as a significant challenge for Pakistan because of its dependence on oil and gas imports from Gulf countries.

Disruptions to international shipping routes, particularly through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz following Iran's blockade, have raised concerns about economic growth in developing countries, including Pakistan.



The Hidden Economic Cost Of Smog In Pakistan

By: Sania Shahzad and Dr Shahzad Kouser

Dirty air works like an unbudgeted tax on wages, household savings, business output and public services. Its heaviest burden often falls on workers least able to absorb a sick day

For a daily-wage worker, the economics of smog needs no model. A day spent recovering from illness is a day without earnings. A clinic bill can consume money set aside for food or school fees. If a child becomes ill, another family member may also have to stop working. Add those shocks across households and businesses, and smog becomes much more than a change in the colour of the winter sky.

Pakistan recorded the world's highest national annual average PM2.5 concentration in IQAir's 2025 country comparison: 67.3 micrograms per cubic metre, or 13.5 times the World Health Organization's annual guideline of 5. That annual figure is not a measure of winter smog alone, but it shows the depth of exposure underlying each seasonal emergency. As shown in Figure 1, this places Pakistan's annual exposure far above the WHO guideline.

Figure 1. Annual average PM2.5 concentrations in 2025. IQAir combines regulatory monitors and validated low-cost sensors; country coverage and monitor density vary.

Electricity tariffs, taxation and borrowing costs recur in Pakistan's economic debate because they are visible and relatively easy to count. Dirty air also raises the cost of making goods, moving people, learning and earning. Yet much of that burden is dispersed across clinic receipts, lost shifts, delayed deliveries, cancelled classes and reduced productivity. It rarely appears as a single line in a household budget or business account.

The broadest World Bank estimate illustrates the scale. It valued health damage from ambient and household PM2.5 in Pakistan at US$24.8 billion in 2019, equivalent to 8.9% of GDP. Ambient pollution accounted for US$11.9 billion and household pollution for US$12.8 billion; illness represented 18% of the total estimated cost, with premature mortality accounting for the remainder. These estimated losses are summarised in Figure 2.

That figure requires careful interpretation. It is a welfare estimate of mortality and morbidity, not a bill payable by the treasury, a forecast of current GDP, or a calculation confined to winter smog. Its value is to make visible a set of losses that conventional economic debate often misses.

Figure 2. World Bank health-damage valuation for 2019. The GDP-equivalent measure uses purchasing-power-parity methods; the dollar values shown are current US dollars

The immediate burden is intensely practical. A worker without paid sick leave faces a direct trade-off between recovery and income. Treatment, transport to a clinic and medicines



arrive as cash expenses while earnings may be falling. A child's illness can create a second shock when a parent or sibling stays home to provide care.

This is why the same pollution episode can have unequal financial effects. A salaried employee with sick leave, savings and access to remote work has more protection than a street vendor, loader, construction worker or driver. For households living close to their weekly cash-flow limit, even a short interruption can force spending cuts or new debt. Smog therefore acts not only as a health risk but also as a mechanism that can deepen financial insecurity.

"A sick day can mean lost wages; a child's sick day can mean two incomes disrupted."

For employers, the cost appears through absenteeism, lower productivity and interrupted operations. Outdoor workers face direct exposure, while poor visibility and emergency restrictions can complicate transport and commerce. Firms may also pay for masks, air filtration or altered shifts. Small businesses with thin margins and little spare labour have fewer ways to absorb these disruptions.

Punjab's 2024 smog emergency showed how quickly health protection can spill into the working week. Authorities closed schools across affected districts and directed half of Lahore's government employees to work from home. Doctors reported a surge in patients with respiratory complaints. Later in the same episode, officials said hospitals were receiving nearly 70,000 respiratory-related patients a day and deployed mobile clinics.

Closures and work-from-home directives can be necessary to reduce exposure; their disruption is not an argument against protecting health. It is an argument for treating cleaner air to avoid repeated emergency costs in the first place.

School closures protect children during hazardous episodes, but they can also interrupt learning and create childcare problems. When a child stays home, a caregiver may lose paid working hours. Households without reliable internet or suitable devices face additional barriers to remote learning. The resulting costs are distributed unevenly and may persist beyond the smog episode itself.

Schoolchildren walk through air pollution in Lahore. Image: Undark, 2018; rights remain with the original publisher.

The longer-term concern is the accumulation of health and educational setbacks. World Bank modelled estimates put Pakistan's mean annual PM2.5 exposure at 58.4 micrograms per cubic meter in 2023—little changed from 58.5 in 1990.



By Faisal Aziz Gill

Digitalization, Crypto And Rethinking Pakistan's Identity Architecture

Experts say separating telecom connectivity from national digital identity can protect mobile wallets, reduce fraud and support safe crypto growth.

Pakistan's telecom sector has been a cornerstone of digital expansion. Mobile connectivity widened access, reduced transaction costs, and enabled the rise of branchless banking and mobile wallets. As digital services deepen and financial activity migrates to mobile platforms, however, a structural weakness has become increasingly visible: Pakistan continues to treat telecom connectivity as a substitute for digital identity. This conflation was never intentional, but it has become a growing constraint on trust, scale, and long-term digital growth.

Across banking, payments, and mobile wallets, SIM cards have gradually assumed an unintended role as identity proxies, used for authentication, account recovery, and access control. SIMs were designed to connect devices to networks, not individuals to systems of value. Expecting them to perform both roles is no longer viable in a mature digital economy. The challenge Pakistan faces is not unique, but most advanced digital economies have already resolved it through deliberate structural separation.

In the European Union, financial access is anchored in state-grade digital identity frameworks under the electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services Regulation (eIDAS), reinforced through device-based authentication, while SMS-based verification has been explicitly downgraded due to its vulnerability. Singapore relies on its national digital identity system, SingPass, as the primary trust anchor for financial and government services, using telecom data only as a contextual risk signal. The United Kingdom and Australia have followed similar paths, moving away from SIM-centric security models and treating SIM-swap events as indicators of potential fraud rather than legitimate authentication. Across these systems, a consistent principle applies: SIMs enable access, while digital identity secures value. Pakistan has yet to formalize this separation, and the regulatory and economic cost of delay continues to rise.

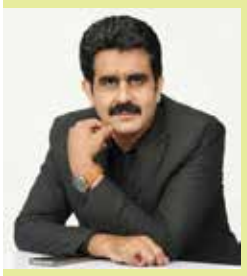
SIM cards are transferable, replaceable, and commercially issued, with lifecycles optimized for speed and availability rather than assurance. These characteristics make them effective tools for connectivity but unsuitable foundations for identity. When possession of a SIM is treated as proof of identity, digital platforms inherit structural fragility by design. The resulting failures—account takeovers, recovery abuse, and agent-level manipulation—are often framed as enforcement gaps, when they in fact reflect a deeper design flaw: reliance on the wrong trust anchor. No degree of supervision can compensate for an identity model that was never designed to secure financial value.

Pakistan's push toward digitalization and mobile wallets has been a success story. Millions now rely on mobile platforms for payments, savings, and everyday transactions. Yet this success has also exposed the limits of SIM-based trust. As transaction volumes rise and wallets begin to store real value, identity assurance becomes the binding constraint. Without a financial-grade digital identity, mobile wallets face higher fraud losses, increased customer churn, regulatory hesitation to expand use cases, and growing international credibility concerns. In contrast, countries that anchored wallet ecosystems to national digital identity systems were able to scale safely, introduce new services, and attract long-term investment.

In modern digital states, identity is treated as public infrastructure rather than a feature embedded in private platforms. A mature framework separates three functions with precision: digital identity anchored in a state-grade system, connectivity delivered by telecom networks, and risk signaling, where telecom events inform safeguards without conferring authority. For Pakistan, this requires a coordinated national approach. NADRA becomes the root provider of digital identity—biometric, verifiable, and reusable across public and private services—while telecom operators, under PTA oversight, remain providers of access and identity-related risk signals rather than guarantors of identity itself. Banks, mobile wallets, and digital platforms then bind accounts to digital identity and secure devices instead of phone numbers, with regulators and enforcement agencies overseeing compliance through clear legal frameworks without expanding surveillance. Any such transition must be phased and inclusive, recognizing differences in digital literacy, device access, and regional connectivity so that citizens are migrated gradually rather than excluded abruptly. This is substitution, not disruption: replacing a fragile trust model with a durable one while preserving institutional boundaries and commercial roles.

For the telecom sector, separating identity from connectivity is not a threat but a strategic release. Over time, mobile networks have been pulled into identity and financial risk domains they were never designed to manage, exposing operators to reputational pressure, customer disputes, and implicit liability for downstream failures. A clear separation restores balance. Telecom operators are relieved of unintended identity responsibility and can refocus on growth areas that modern markets reward, including data services, digital platforms, enterprise solutions, internet-of-things connectivity, cloud services, and fintech partnerships.

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By Mudassar Chuhdary

Pakistan Vs India U19 Cricket: Why Does India Produce International Stars While Pakistan Struggles To Retain Its Young Talent?



There has always been enormous cricketing talent on both sides of the border. India and Pakistan have produced some of the greatest cricketers in the history of the game. However, when it comes to developing young players and turning junior prospects into established international performers, an important difference can be seen in the way their cricketing systems operate.

The real question is not which country has more natural talent. It is which country has built a stronger pathway to identify, develop and retain that talent.

India has gradually established a more structured approach to youth development. Its Under-19 programme is not simply about winning junior tournaments; it is also intended to prepare players for the demands of professional and international cricket. Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Yuvraj Singh, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal are among the prominent names associated with India's successful transition from junior and domestic cricket to the international stage. Their success, however, cannot be credited to Under-19 cricket alone. It reflects a wider system of competitive domestic cricket, professional coaching, fitness support and opportunities to progress.

One of India's major strengths is the availability of a relatively clear pathway after Under-19 cricket. Young players can move into the Ranji Trophy, India A programmes, the National Cricket Academy and the Indian Premier League. These platforms expose them to experienced professionals, challenging conditions and the pressure of high-level competition. They learn not only how to score runs or take wickets but also how to manage difficult situations and maintain consistency.

The Indian system is not without weaknesses. Competition for places is intense, expectations are extremely high and the growing influence of franchise cricket can create pressure at a very young age. Not every Under-19 star becomes an international regular. Some talented players struggle to secure consistent domestic opportunities, while others find it difficult to manage early fame and expectations. Nevertheless, India's advantage lies in the depth of its domestic structure and the number of competitive opportunities available to young cricketers.

Pakistan's situation is different, although the country has never lacked natural cricketing ability. Pakistan has a proud tradition of producing exceptional batters and fast bowlers, and its youth teams continue to reveal promising players. Names such as Ali Raza and Farhan Yousaf reflect the potential within the country's junior cricket structure. The bigger concern is what happens after these players complete their Under-19 careers.

For many young Pakistani cricketers, the transition into senior professional cricket remains a difficult stage. They need regular first-class opportunities, Pakistan Shaheens tours, professional contracts, specialised coaching and individual development plans. Without these elements, even a highly talented player can lose direction. The Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and other domestic competitions provide an important foundation, but their real value depends on whether emerging players receive consistent opportunities to compete and improve.

Another concern is the tendency to promote certain young players to international cricket too early. A teenager performs well in a junior tournament, attracts attention and suddenly finds himself under pressure to deliver at the highest level. If he fails in his first few appearances, he may be dropped before receiving enough time to adjust. At the same time, other talented players are left waiting in domestic cricket without a clear development plan. Both approaches can damage careers.

Modern cricket also demands much more than natural ability. Strength and conditioning, biomechanics, nutrition, mental preparation, technical coaching and injury management are now essential parts of a professional cricketer's development. Pakistan has historically been famous for producing outstanding fast bowlers, but young pacers need carefully managed workloads, fitness programmes and injury-prevention support if they are to enjoy long and successful careers.

Administrative instability is another issue that cannot be ignored. Frequent changes in management, coaching staff and selection policies can make it difficult for young players to understand what is expected of them. A cricketer needs a clear plan after Under-19 cricket: which competition he should play, what skills he needs to improve and how his progress will be evaluated. Long-term development should not be abandoned every time a new administration takes charge.

Pakistan must pay particular attention to players between the ages of 19 and 23. This is arguably one of the most important periods in a young cricketer's career. It is the stage at which potential must be converted into professional performance. Regular first-class cricket, a consistent Pakistan Shaheens programme, modern facilities at the National Cricket Academy and individual performance monitoring should become central parts of the development strategy.

Pakistan does not need to copy every aspect of India's model. The two countries have different resources, domestic structures and cricketing environments. However, Pakistan can learn from India's emphasis on competitive depth, professional preparation and continuity. It must develop a system that suits its own conditions while providing young cricketers with the support they need.

The success of an Under-19 programme should not be judged only by the number of Asia Cups or World Cups won. A far more meaningful measure is how many players graduate into successful senior professionals and become regular contributors to the national team.

Pakistan has the talent, the passion and the cricketing heritage. What it needs is a system that does not abandon promising youngsters after their junior careers. Young players must be allowed to learn from failure, improve through regular competition and progress on merit rather than being judged by one tournament or a handful of international performances.

Ultimately, India's biggest lesson is not simply that it wins junior trophies. It is that its wider cricketing structure offers young players multiple routes towards professional success. Pakistan must adopt the same long-term mindset.

The objective should not be limited to winning the next Under-19 World Cup. It should be about building the next generation of Pakistan's national team.

A trophy brings temporary happiness, but a properly developed international cricketer can make a nation proud for many years.

Mudassar Chuhdary
Editor / Sports Journalist

Iran Claims Six-Drone Attack On US Air Defence Radar In Bahrain

● The IRGC claimed that its Aerospace Force launched six drones at the American radar facility



NEWS DESK

TEHRAN

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has claimed that it targeted a US air defence radar installation at the Al-Rifaa helicopter base in Bahrain with six drones, according to Iranian state media.

In a statement carried by the IRGC-affiliated Fars News Agency on Sunday, November 15, the Guards said the attack was part of what they described as the second phase of their response to US military actions against Iran.

Bahrain's military said it intercepted the attacks, "preventing them from reaching their intended targets". The foreign ministry said air defence systems shot down Iranian drones.

"It's exactly what I was hoping wouldn't happen: Iranian attacks starting again, with all the worry and uncertainty that go with them," resident Hayat Ibrahim, 65, told AFP.

Iran also fired drones at Bahrain on Friday — the first strikes since September against countries in the energy-rich Gulf, which has been heavily targeted in the eight-month war.

Explosions could be heard around 4am (6am PKT) on Sunday, an AFP journalist said, with residents reporting a second series of blasts around 6:30am.

The interior ministry, posting on X, called on "residents to remain calm, proceed to the nearest safe location, and follow news through official channels".

Mohammed Abdallah, a shopkeeper in the capital, Manama, heard the strikes overnight. "I was hoping this period was behind us and wouldn't happen again," he said.

'Settling scores'

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the drones targeted a US radar system at a helicopter base, according to a statement carried by the Iranian state broadcaster.

"The US air defence radar system at the Al-Riffa helicopter base in Bahrain was targeted by six drones belonging to the IRGC Aerospace Force," the Guards said in a statement posted by the state broadcaster on Telegram.

"The Strait of Hormuz is closed, and any aggression by the American enemy will be met with an even harsher and more forceful response," it added.

Bahrain "rejects turning its territory into an arena for settling scores and holds Iran fully responsible for these attacks", a foreign ministry statement said.

During more than eight months of war, Iran has restricted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz oil trade route and struck infrastructure including airports, seaports, energy facilities, and US assets across the region.

The Gulf countries have weathered thousands of Iranian drones and missiles since the war began on February 28.

On Friday, following this month's US strikes on Qeshm island in Hormuz, the Revolutionary Guards said their forces targeted a US early warning radar system in Bahrain.

The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said it shot down two Iranian drones in Friday's attack, reporting no casualties or damage.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan, meets a delegation of Turkmenistan led by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov.

Pakistan, Egypt Discuss Regional And International Situation

● DPM Ishaq Dar, Egyptian Counterpart Discuss Regional and Global Developments

NEW DESK

ISLAMABAD



Pakistani and Egyptian foreign ministers on Sunday discussed the latest regional and international developments and efforts to advance peace, the Pakistani foreign ministry said, with both figures reaffirming commitment to closer cooperation on regional issues.

Egypt and Pakistan are members of the Regional Four, or R4, group with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, and have been coordinating closely on regional issues, including the United States-Iran war, Israeli attacks on Gaza, and Houthi strikes against Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday held a telephonic conversation with his Egyptian counterpart Dr. Badr Abdelatty and exchanged views on regional and international developments, according to the Pakistani foreign office.

"Both Ministers underscored the importance of strengthening coordination on regional issues and advancing efforts for peace and stability," the foreign office said.

They also discussed the forthcoming R4 and R4+E4 meetings in Europe. The E4 group includes Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Germany.

"Both ministers agreed to maintain close contact and continue consultations on matters of mutual interest," the Pakistani foreign office said.

The foreign ministers of R4 and E4 groups last month met in Istanbul to discuss Middle East tensions as Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis intensified attacks against Saudi Arabia, amid renewed fears of a wider regional conflict after reports that US and Israeli forces had drawn up plans for possible strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities, energy infrastructure and missile capabilities.

They discussed the US-Iran conflict, Israel's war against Palestinians, the need for a two-state solution, Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, Bab El Mandab and the Black Sea, according to a joint statement.

"The ministers agreed on the urgent need to address regional conflicts through dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation," read the joint statement shared by Pakistan's foreign office.

"In accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions, they emphasized the need for finding lasting negotiated solutions to all outstanding conflicts."

Tehran accuses Washington of military aggression and war crimes against Iran

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei has accused the United States of admitting to war crimes after the US Secretary of State allegedly threatened to starve the Iranian people through a blockade.

In a statement posted on X, Baqaei said Washington was unwilling to learn from its past failures, claiming that the war against Iran had been a major factor behind the US electoral defeat.

He added that the American administration was promoting a narrative of victory to conceal its military and political failures.

Baqaei said the United States had imposed extensive economic sanctions on Iran and unilaterally withdrawn from the nuclear agreement.

He also cited the 1953 overthrow of Iran's government, which he said was orchestrated with CIA support, and accused Washington of attacking Iran twice in less than nine months.

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, the United States launched military operations against Iran while diplomatic negotiations were underway.

He further alleged that American strikes targeted Iran's Supreme Leader and senior officials, while women and children were also killed or injured.

Baqaei also accused Washington of destroying critical Iranian infrastructure and assassinating former Iranian military commander General Qassem Soleimani.

Trump Proposal To Include Russia In European Security Framework

● European Leaders Insist on Role in Continent's Future Security

NEW DESK

PARIS



The Trump administration has proposed including Russia in a new European defence and security framework following the end of the war in Ukraine, a suggestion that has sparked concern among several European countries.

According to a French newspaper, the future of Europe's security architecture was discussed during talks involving the United States, Russia and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi.

The report said the head of Russia's negotiating delegation welcomed the American proposal, describing it as a positive development for Moscow. Russia's Foreign Ministry has also offered to negotiate new defence agreements with European countries. However, no concrete agreement on a new European security framework emerged from the Abu Dhabi discussions.

Reacting to the proposal, European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Europe already had an established security architecture, arguing that the central problem was Russia's failure to honour existing agreements.

Germany's foreign minister has also called on Moscow to respect its previous international agreements and obligations.

Meanwhile, at a meeting in Dublin on November 13, leaders from around 40 European countries stressed that decisions concerning Europe's future and security must not be made without the involvement of European nations themselves.

European countries have maintained that they are open to dialogue with Russia but insist that any new security agreement must safeguard European security, Ukraine's sovereignty and the NATO defence framework.

ECO Member States FMs, Heads of delegations arrive in Islamabad



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Foreign Ministers/Ministers and heads of delegations of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Sunday, keep arriving here to participated in the 30th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting.

Deputy Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Ahmad Saidmurodzoda, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Arman Issagaliyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Head of Delegation were among the dignitaries that arrived here.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkiye and Head of Delegation, Musa Kulaklikaya and Elnur Mammadov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Head of Delegation, also arrived, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Taliban Authorities Ban Cricket Coverage On Kandahar Radio

● Kandahar Radio Stations Ordered To Stop Cricket Coverage

NEWS DESK

AFGHANISTAN



The Taliban authorities have banned radio stations in southern Kandahar from airing content related to cricket, a rapidly growing sport in Afghanistan, two broadcasters and a provincial source told.

The government has shown support for the game, hosting cricket matches during the August anniversary of its return to power.

But the provincial Information and Culture Department told radio stations on Saturday that anything related to cricket is no longer allowed.

A source from that department, who requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media, confirmed that "cricket coverage is banned".

"Both commentary and news coverage, or even reporting about their winning result, is also banned," he told AFP, without providing further details.

The head of a local radio station told AFP: "We received a call from Information and Culture, and we were told that we can't cover cricket on the radio anymore."

The manager of another Kandahar radio station confirmed the directive, saying that the authorities called and said "Anything related to cricket is banned for now".

Both broadcasters spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

Afghanistan's cricket board did not respond immediately to an AFP request for comment on the decision in Kandahar, which is home to the country's supreme leader.

The Taliban authorities have restricted some sports in Afghanistan -- outlawing mixed martial arts -- but has allowed men and boys to continue playing cricket.

Women and girls, however, are banned from gyms and sport more broadly as part of rules severely limiting their access to public life.

The men's cricket team is currently playing the second Test against Zimbabwe in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

UK's Prince William to be joined by wife Kate for visit to India

WEB DESK

LONDON

Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, will undertake her biggest foreign trip since having treatment for cancer when she joins her husband Prince William in India for his annual Earthshot Prize awards this week.

Heir-to-the-throne William, 44, and Kate are flying out for a series of events across Mumbai during a three-day visit that includes Tuesday's awards ceremony.

For Kate, 44, the trip marks her most high-profile overseas visit since she had preventative chemotherapy for an unspecified form of cancer in 2024. While she is now in remission, she says the illness still impacts her life.

William, who, like his father King Charles, has made campaigning on the environment one of his biggest causes, founded the Earthshot Prize in 2020 with the aim of finding solutions to climate change. It awards five winners £1 million ($1.3 million) each to scale up their projects.

"For the prince, Earthshot is ultimately about replacing pessimism with possibility," a spokesperson for the couple's office at Kensington Palace said. "It is about demonstrating that while the environmental challenges facing our planet are serious, the ingenuity, determination and creativity being applied to solving them are every bit as powerful."

South Korea probes top exam scorer after AI cheating confession

WEB DESK

SOUTH KOREA



South Korean police on Sunday said they had launched an investigation after the top scorer in a national tax accountant exam admitted to using artificial intelligence to cheat.

The candidate, who ranked first in both rounds of the qualification exam held in April and July, confessed through his lawyer that he used AI to obtain answers during the tests.

His score of 397.5 out of 400 points in the first round, with only one wrong answer out of 160 questions, had sparked accusations that he cheated using smart glasses, which he initially denied.

"We received a written confession through the test taker's lawyer this morning regarding cheating on the tax accountant exam," the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency said, adding the case had been assigned to investigators.

In a video posted on his lawyer's YouTube channel, the candidate said he "deeply regretted" what he had done.

"I used a miniature camera to photograph the exam questions and sent them to AI, then checked the answers on my smartphone," he said.

French muralist invites visitors to become part of his art

● Featuring unique interactive concept, renowned artist Chifumi's exhibition opens in Karachi

SHOW BIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



French muralist Chifumi believes art is a powerful medium of communication that allows people to express themselves and connect beyond language barriers.

Speaking to Chifumi said travelling to different countries and experiencing diverse cultures had been a major source of inspiration for his work. He added that Pakistani culture particularly attracted him, especially its traditional clothing, food and the hospitality of its people.

Chifumi's retrospective exhibition, titled Chifumi – Vous Laissez La Main (Let's You Take the Lead), opened at Alliance Française Karachi on Thursday, November 12, offering visitors an opportunity to become active participants rather than simply observe the artwork.

The exhibition came with an interactive concept, encouraging visitors to pick up paintbrushes and add colours to murals drawn directly on the exhibition room's walls.

Explaining the idea behind the exhibition, Chifumi said he had deliberately left his drawings unfinished so people could complete them using their imagination and preferred colours.

"We have only drawn the outlines and left the murals for people to complete. We want everyone to participate, choose their favourite colours and add whatever they like," he said.

He explained that the purpose was to turn the exhibition into a shared creative experience, allowing visitors from different backgrounds to contribute to the artwork.

Recalling his previous visit to Pakistan last year, Chifumi said he had also worked on a mural painting at the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi. Returning to the country this year, he brought another opportunity for people to engage with mural art through a more participatory approach.

Speaking about his experience in Pakistan, he said he had thoroughly enjoyed his visits and was particularly impressed by the warmth and hospitality of Pakistani people.

Chifumi has become most well-known for his majestic and intricate large-scale murals that are scattered across the globe. His unique style of art blends mythological stories, ethnic paterns and hands signs communications. His passion for using his creative voice to raise awareness for important societal and environmental issues has also built him a reputation for being an engaged artist, driven by a desire make an impact. Born in France, Chifumi moved to Cambodia after he graduated from art school; a move that sparked a lifelong fascination with Asian ancient heritage and mythology.



Khushhal Khan addresses Ramsha's showbiz exit, hits back at critics

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani actor Khushhal Khan has addressed the controversy surrounding his marriage to actress Ramsha Khan during an interview with entertainment journalist Hassan Choudhary. The actor discussed the criticism surrounding their relationship, rumours about Ramsha leaving the entertainment industry, and the online trolling targeting their Pashtun heritage.

During the conversation, Khushhal made it clear that his priority was the happiness of his family. Addressing the public scrutiny, he said, "I'm responsible for my family as long as they are comfortable and as long as she is happy. That's all that matters."

He maintained that Ramsha had the freedom to make her own personal and professional decisions, stressing that their relationship did not require public approval.

He also called out the double standards surrounding celebrity relationships, pointing out that people often advocate individual freedom but become critical when celebrities make choices that do not align with public expectations. Despite the criticism, he maintained that the couple were happy and grateful for their life together.

'Khush hain, Alhamdulillah, Allah ka shukar hai,

The actor also addressed rumours suggesting that he had pressured Ramsha to leave the entertainment industry following their marriage. He dismissed the speculation, making it clear that her decision to step away from social media and public attention should not be interpreted as something imposed upon her.

Khushhal further revealed that the couple had faced intense online trolling, including racist remarks targeting their Pashtun heritage.

'Who am i to dictate anybody's personal decision? she has decided this on her own' he added.

He condemned the hostility directed towards their community, highlighting how discussions about their marriage and Ramsha's career had turned into an opportunity for ethnic prejudice.

Addressing the continued curiosity of fans and critics, Khushhal expressed confidence that people would eventually understand their decisions with time.

Hailey Bieber Shares Son Jack's Adorable Keyboard Moment

● Justin Bieber's Son Jack Blues Develops An Interest In Music

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

American model and entrepreneur Hailey Bieber has delighted fans by sharing a heartwarming glimpse of her son, Jack Blues, as he shows an apparent interest in music.

On November 12, the Rhode Beauty founder posted a video of the toddler playing with the keys of a keyboard. Dressed in a salmon-coloured sweatsuit, Jack was seen leaning against a coffee table while exploring the instrument.

Sharing the clip, Hailey added the words "Sorry" and wrote, "Blues loves the keys," hinting at her son's growing fascination with music.

Jack's interest in music may not come as a surprise, as he has been exposed to his father Justin Bieber's musical career from an early age. Earlier this year, the toddler was seen cheering on his father as Justin prepared for his headline performance at Coachella 2026. He also sported a temporary "Bieberchella" tattoo during the occasion.

Hailey has previously spoken about the joys of motherhood and watching her son grow. In an interview in April, she described how exciting it was to see him experience different aspects of life for the first time.

"They grow so fast, and they change so much, and there's always so much excitement," she said, adding that watching her child discover the world made her feel as though she was experiencing it all over again.

The model, who recently celebrated her eighth wedding anniversary with Justin, has also expressed her desire to have more children.



However, she said she was taking things one step at a time.

While the couple generally keep their family life private, they occasionally share special moments with their son, giving fans a glimpse into their journey as parents.

Amar Khan Mother's Hilarious ChatGPT Debut Goes Viral

Fareeha Jabbar Asks ChatGPT About Popular Pakistani Drama

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistani actress Amar Khan has left fans laughing after resharing a hilarious video of her mother, veteran actress Fareeha Jabbar, interacting with ChatGPT for the first time. Originally shared by Amar's brother, on his Instagram account, the video features their mother asking the AI chatbot about the most popular Pakistani drama currently on television.

Faiq introduced the clip with the caption, "I introduced my mother to ChatGPT for the first time," capturing Fareeha's amusing attempt to interact with the technology.

In the video, Fareeha asks ChatGPT to name Pakistan's biggest hit drama nowadays.

As the chatbot begins responding in Urdu, the veteran actress asks it to speak in Urdu, leading to an entertaining exchange. When ChatGPT asks whether she is looking for a hit drama, Fareeha responds with an enthusiastic "Yeah, yeah!"

The chatbot then names Mitti De Baway as one of the most popular dramas in Pakistan, making the interaction even more amusing given Amar's own association with the show.

Taylor Swift reflects on witnessing changing music industry for 20 years

● Taylor Swift speaks about experiencing different eras of music after 20th anniversary of career



WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Taylor Swift just marked her 20th year in the music industry as her Debut album turned 20 this year, which means she has experienced the music industry evolving with technology firsthand.

During a new interview, the Grammy winner, 36, was asked to comment on these changes and she said, "Many of the changes I experienced during my 20 years in the music industry had to do with distribution. At first, your albums were mainly released on CD or through iTunes; then came streaming and, in addition, trends emerged such as the return of vinyl, people became interested in it again."

The Opalite hitmaker continued, "We have all been trying to find out the best way to get our music to the ears of our followers, looking for a way that is close and suitable for them. Honestly, whatever way my fans want to listen to my music - as long as I feel comfortable from an ethical point of view - I will try to inform myself, investigate and find a way to make it happen, to offer them a quality experience. On the other hand, lately there has been a lot of talk about technology and musical creation. I try to be optimistic about it, based on what I observe in the world."

Swifties shared the comments all across social media, and wrote, "It's nice to read the musings of an articulate musician."

Another added, "That's her secret. She listens to her fans, gives them what they ask of her, that's why she's successful! Queen!" and "does she know she's the reason why vinyls are back??" chimed in a third.

More noted, "I admire her awareness so much. Jack Antonoff was right, she really is the hardest working person with this much talent."

While one joked, "Give us the Evermore Long Pond sessions diva! Make it available in vinyl, cd, etc, it's the ethical thing to do! PLEASE!" and "She's mother," added someone.

Vivienne Jolie reveals eating disorder hospitalisation through personal art exhibition

● Angelina Jolie's daughter shares details of her 2026 hospitalisation through paintings inspired by her treatment

WEB DESK

LOS ABGELES



Vivienne Jolie, the 18-year-old daughter of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, has revealed that she was hospitalised for an eating disorder earlier this year. She shared details of her experience through a personal art exhibition in Los Angeles.

In an artist statement titled "The Tulip Field", which accompanied her paintings, Vivienne opened up about her mental health struggles and treatment.

"Like many, I have struggled with mental health. I have also struggled with an eating disorder," she wrote.

She explained that she was hospitalised at the beginning of 2026, adding, "At the beginning of this year, I was hospitalized for my ED. I was angry, sick, and very alone."

Vivienne credited the kindness of fellow patients and hospital staff with helping her through the experience. "Eventually, however, the kindness and warmth of the kids and staff at the hospital broke down the walls I had built so high," she wrote.

She described the period as both difficult and transformative, saying, "It was the worst and best time of my life, and I am better for it."

Her exhibition, "The Tulip Field: A Gallery on Patience of Patients", ran from November 2 to November 8 at Forager Crafts in Los Angeles. The paintings were inspired by memories from her hospital stay, with titles drawn from journal entries she had written during treatment.

K-pop's Stray Kids to take 'RUN IT' tour to North America and Europe in 2027



WEB DESK

EUROPE

Members of the K-pop group Stray Kids are set to perform at some of the biggest venues of their careers as their extended "RUN IT" world tour moves into more stadiums across North America and Europe in 2027.

The North American leg opens in Seattle on May 16, 2027, with the tour, also set to include shows in Vancouver, Los Angeles, Paris, London and Barcelona, among others, culminating in a summer performance at the San Siro Stadium in Milan.

Alongside previously announced shows in Asia, Stray Kids is due to perform in a string of stadiums, according to the schedule from promoter Live Nation Entertainment Inc.

"We're just really glad that we have the chance and opportunity to go further out and show our performances to the people that are waiting," Bang Chan, who leads the eight-member boy band, said in an interview in Seoul.

The tour comes after the group has set a series of commercial milestones that put it alongside some of the world's top touring and recording acts.

In August 2026, Stray Kids became the first act to see all nine of its chart entries go straight to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with its mini-album "THIS & THAT."

In 2027, the group will play larger venues in several regions than it did on the 2025 tour.

Stray Kids will also have to perform without Lee Know, who is due to become the first member to enlist for mandatory South Korean military service in early 2027.

Australian members Bang Chan and Felix expressed nostalgia for Sydney, where both grew up, and said they missed hanging out on some of the city's beaches.

Bang Chan said he was open to future collaborations, highlighting the Sydney-based hip-hop collective 1300 as a potential creative partner.

"We're always open, so just give us a call. We could be down to make something," said Bang, the Stray Kids leader.

Even as the group faces a packed year-end schedule, member Hyunjin said he hoped to make time for a party at Christmas as well as some quieter moments.

"At Christmas, I want to put on a coat, wrap a scarf snugly around my neck, and walk through the snow listening to carols," Hyunjin said.

Shah Rukh Khan Reveals Gauri's Control Over Mannat Mansion

WEB DESK

MUMBAI

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has shared an amusing insight into his personal life, revealing that he has very little say in the day-to-day decisions concerning his luxurious Mumbai residence, Mannat.

According to Indian media reports, the actor recently attended an event in Dubai, where filmmaker Karan Johar, who was hosting the gathering, asked him what he was not allowed to do in his own home.

Responding humorously, Shah Rukh said that he was practically not allowed to do anything in his house.

The Jawan star explained that Mannat essentially belongs to his wife, Gauri Khan, who makes the decisions regarding almost everything, including Wi-Fi, food, drinks, colour schemes, paintings, staircases, lighting and furniture.

Praising his wife's efforts, Shah Rukh described their home as a wonderful place and acknowledged Gauri's contribution to making it special.

The actor also opened up about the emotional significance of owning a home. Recalling that he lost his parents at a young age, Shah Rukh said he did not have a home of his own before marrying Gauri.

He explained that owning a house had always been one of his biggest dreams, making Mannat particularly meaningful to him.

Shah Rukh added that although he deeply loves his films, family and professional work, having a place he can genuinely call his own holds a special position in his heart.



Arshdeep Singh Leads India To 22-Run Victory Over New Zealand In Fifth ODI

● New Zealand Suffer First Home ODI Series Defeat in Seven Years

SPORTS DESK

MUMBAI

India defeated New Zealand by 22 runs in the fifth and final One-Day International on Sunday to clinch the series 3-1, with paceman Arshdeep Singh delivering an impressive bowling performance to secure the victory.

Chasing a target of 210 to level the series, New Zealand struggled to maintain momentum and were bowled out for 187 in the penultimate over. The defeat marked their first home ODI series loss in seven years.

India's pace attack capitalised on favourable conditions in Mount Maunganui, with Arshdeep leading the effort by taking three wickets for 30 runs in his 10 overs. He finished the low-scoring series with eight wickets.

The 27-year-old struck early, dismissing Will Young, who had scored a century in the fourth ODI, for 22 and Nick



Kelly for 24 to put New Zealand under pressure.

Arshdeep returned later to remove all-rounder Kristian Clarke for 16, ending New Zealand's hopes of a successful chase. Dean Foxcroft top-scored for the hosts with 31 runs, but their batting line-up failed to build the partnerships needed to reach the target.

Earlier, New Zealand bowlers Jacob Duffy and Mitchell Santner claimed three wickets each as India were dismissed for 209 in 42.1 overs.

India had slipped to 34-3 after losing star batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli cheaply. However, Axar Patel and Ishan Kishan scored 46 runs each to help their side recover and post a competitive total.

Batting proved challenging throughout the series, with bowlers largely dominating proceedings.

India had taken a 2-0 lead by winning the first two rain-affected matches, while the third ODI was abandoned due to rain. New Zealand bounced back strongly in the fourth match on Friday, dismissing India for just 89 runs before securing a massive 244-run victory.

Indian captain Shreyas Iyer praised his team's ability to adapt to changing weather and pitch conditions in New Zealand, following their 3-2 victory in the preceding T20 series.

"We've been faced with a lot of challenges. Today we had belief, even though we didn't get that many runs," Iyer said.

He added that the series had been difficult for batters and praised the bowlers for delivering when it mattered most.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner said his team had initially believed the target was achievable but acknowledged that the pitch played differently than expected.

He praised India's pace attack for consistently taking wickets during the middle overs and highlighted Arshdeep's timely return to the attack.



PSL, a gold mine waiting to be tapped

SPORTS REPORTER

KARACHI

"What should we do if one of the PSL teams is not selling?"

One day in 2015, when Najam Sethi, then chairman of the PCB Executive Committee, posed this question to his colleagues at Gaddafi Stadium, no one had an answer. At that moment, a name came to Sethi's mind: Nadeem Omar.

He immediately contacted him and explained the importance of the league for the country and its people, persuading him to buy a team.

Although Nadeem Omar was initially reluctant, and some of his associates also advised him against the move, he eventually agreed following Sethi's insistence.

Omar was already regarded as one of the most prominent figures in Karachi cricket, yet he was allocated the Quetta Gladiators franchise.

The deal was finalised at an annual fee of $1.1 million, at an exchange rate of Rs170 to the dollar, equivalent to more than Rs190 million in Pakistani currency. The most expensive franchise at the time was Multan Sultans, which had been sold for $6.3 million.

Quetta Gladiators became the cheapest franchise in the PSL.

However, compared with teams carrying the names of larger cities, they also had fewer commercial opportunities. As expected, the franchise initially suffered losses. But as the PSL grew into a successful competition, the Gladiators also began making modest profits.



Saira Jabeen ruled out of ICC Women's Emerging Nations trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistan women's cricketer Saira Jabeen has been ruled out of the remaining matches of the ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy due to a thumb injury.

According to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Saira injured her right thumb during a training session on November 11.

An X-ray confirmed a fracture in the bone of her right thumb, making her unavailable for the rest of the tournament.

The PCB has added Umaima Sohail to the national squad, and she will represent Pakistan in the remaining matches.

Saira will return to Pakistan for further medical examinations and rehabilitation.

She will begin her recovery programme at the National Cricket Academy under the supervision of the PCB's medical team.



Denmark thrash Portugal 4-1 on night of Ronaldo tributes

SPORTS DESK

PORTUGAL

Portugal's first match since Cristiano Ronaldo's international retirement ended in a crushing 4-1 home defeat by Denmark in the Nations League, with Rasmus Hojlund scoring twice as a night of tributes in Braga turned sour for Jorge Jesus and his players.

Norway beat Wales 3-1 in Oslo in the other League A Group Four match, with Antonio Nusa and Andreas Schjelderup scoring before Erling Haaland's late penalty sealed victory.

Portugal remain top on 12 points, three ahead of Denmark, with Norway third on six and Wales bottom on three. One round of league-phase matches remains, with Wales hosting Portugal and Denmark at home to Norway on Tuesday.

In front of a packed stadium, Portugal's players wore shirts bearing Ronaldo's name and number seven during the national anthem.

Supporters unfurled a banner reading "Obrigado, capi7ão" — "Thank you, captain" — alongside images of him lifting the European Championship and Nations League trophies.

Ronaldo announced his international retirement on social media last week following a public falling-out with manager Jesus.

DENMARK RUN RIOT

Portugal dominated much of the first half in pouring rain but fell behind shortly before halftime.

Hojlund had a header ruled out for a foul by Joachim Andersen in the build-up before another aerial effort struck Ruben Dias' hand. Following a VAR intervention and pitchside review, the referee awarded a penalty which Denmark captain Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg drove into the top-right corner shortly before halftime.

Hojlund doubled Denmark's advantage five minutes after the interval, slipping behind the defence to meet a cross from the right with a powerful volley.

The striker scored again seven minutes later, cutting inside Renato Veiga on a counter-attack before firing a right-footed shot past Diogo Costa from the edge of the box.

ICC Unveils Global Cricket Events Roadmap Until 2035

● ICC Announces T20 World Cup 2028 Hosts Australia

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

Bali

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced its roadmap for major global cricket events until 2035,

including a series of event schedules, competition formats and qualification frameworks.

The decisions were taken at the ICC Board's meeting in Bali, Indonesia, today, where members approved the schedule and qualification formats for several major events.

According to the details, the T20 World Cup 2028 will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand from October 12 to November 12.

India will host the Champions Trophy 2029 from October 9 to 28.



The ODI World Cup 2031 will be jointly hosted by India and Bangladesh.

The tournament will run from October 9 to November 23.

The ICC has also announced that the World Cup 2027 qualifying tournament will take place from February to March, with 10 teams taking part. The top four teams will qualify for the main event.

Meanwhile, the qualifying tournament for the men's cricket event at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics will be held in the United States from February 5 to 13, 2028.

Mohammad Yousaf, Sana Mir inducted into PCB Hall of Fame

● Sana becomes first woman cricketer to be inducted into PCB Hall of Fame

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE

Former Pakistan batting great Mohammad Yousaf and former women's team captain Sana Mir have been inducted into the PCB Hall of Fame for 2025 in recognition of their valuable contributions to Pakistan cricket.

In a statement, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that Sana, who became the first Pakistan woman cricketer to be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2025, was automatically included in the PCB Hall of Fame in line with the cricket board's induction criteria.

Yousaf was selected through a voting process involving PCB Hall of Famer Zaheer Abbas, former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja, former Test cricketer Bazid Khan, former Pakistan women's captain Urooj Mumtaz, and cricket journalists and analysts Saleem Khaliq and Sohail Imran.

The two former cricketers join an illustrious list of PCB Hall of



Famers comprising Abdul Qadir, AH Kardar, Fazal Mahmood, Hanif Mohammad, Imran Khan, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Javed Miandad, Misbah-ul-Haq, Mushtaq Mohammad, Saeed Anwar, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Younis Khan and Zaheer Abbas.

Yousaf represented Pakistan from 1998 to 2010 and was widely regarded as one of the finest batters of his generation. He scored 17,300 runs in 381 international matches, including 39 centuries and 97 half-centuries.

His most memorable year came in 2006 when he scored a world-record 1,788 runs and nine centuries in Test cricket, surpassing Sir Vivian Richards' 30-year-old record for the most Test runs in a calendar year.

Ciryl Gane downs Josh Hokit to retain UFC heavyweight title

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK

UFC heavyweight champion Ciryl Gane of France successfully defended his title for the first time, sweeping the scorecards 48-47, 48-47, 48-47 against Josh Hokit in the main event of UFC 334 at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Round 1 saw Gane (15-2) get up quickly from an early takedown by Hokit (10-1), then land a few sharp jabs, uppercuts and an overhand right as he countered Hokit's forward pressure.

Hokit did, however, close the round with a slam with just over 30 seconds remaining. Hokit came back in Round 2. After Gane stuffed an early single-leg attempt,

Hokit pushed forward with determination, trading heavy right hands and clinching along the fence in a very physical exchange. Hokit carried that momentum into Round 3 with a scramble takedown, then worked Gane over with several clinch elbows and foot stomps before flashing him the middle finger at the bell.



Andreeva beats Pegula, will face Svitolina in WTA Finals championship match

SPORTS DESK

CALIFORNIA

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva extended her unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, dispatching American Jessica Pegula 6-3 6-4 to reach the final, where she will face a resurgent Elina Svitolina.

Andreeva's heavy groundstrokes, strong serving and tireless defense were too much for the American in their first career meeting, played under sunny skies in the California desert.

"It was a tough match," Andreeva said. "You have to work hard to win a point against her. She is going to leave everything out there and make your life complicated, so I wanted to make her life complicated as well today."

The opening set was tight until Andreeva pounced on a looping shot from Pegula and drilled a forehand winner to break serve for a 5-3 lead.

Pegula, backed by a supportive crowd, earned break points as Andreeva served for the set, but shanked an overhead and Andreeva took the set two points later when her opponent's backhand found the net.

Pegula broke to grab a 3-1 advantage in the second set but the lead would prove short-lived. Andreeva broke straight back with a deft volley and broke again to lead 4-3. The tournament's third seed ultimately sealed the win when a Pegula backhand sailed long on match point.

Andreeva, making her WTA Finals debut, has not dropped a set in four matches at the event.

SVITOLINA SHINES

She will face sixth seed Elina Svitolina in Sunday's final after the Ukrainian needed just over an hour to cruise past Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova 6-2 6-1 in Saturday's other semi-final.

Despite strong sun shining in her eyes, Svitolina delivered a crosscourt backhand winner to claim the first set.

She raced out to a 5-0 lead in the second and raised her arms in triumph and beamed a smile after Noskova's forehand went wide on match point.

Australia Defeat New Zealand To Win Fourth Consecutive World Cup

● Kangaroos Extend World Cup Dominance with Victory Over New Zealand

SPORTS DESK

SYDNEY

Australia continued their dominance of international rugby league with a commanding 32-12 victory over New Zealand on Sunday, securing their fourth consecutive Rugby League World Cup title and reaffirming their position as the sport's leading nation.

The hosts established a 24-6 halftime lead in front of a sold-out crowd at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium and maintained their intensity throughout the contest to overcome their long-time rivals.

Liam Martin and Jack Bostock scored two tries apiece, while Bradman Best and Tom Trbojevic also crossed the line in a fast-paced encounter. Australia's superior fitness in the humid conditions proved decisive.

"Any time we come up against you, it's the pinnacle of our game," Australia captain Isaah Yeo said



while acknowledging New Zealand's efforts.

Praising his teammates, Yeo said the squad had immense confidence in its ability and expressed satisfaction at delivering its best performance in the final.

"World champions for the next four years," he added.

The defeat denied New Zealand their first World Cup title since 2008, when they defeated Australia in Brisbane. That remains the last occasion a team other than the Kangaroos lifted the trophy.

Australia have now won 13 of the 17 Rugby League World Cups held since the tournament began in 1954. The Kangaroos have also recorded 23 consecutive victories in the competition, underlining their remarkable consistency.

New Zealand captain James Fisher-Harris congratulated Australia after the defeat, describing them as the benchmark of international rugby league.

"Sorry we couldn't get it done tonight," he said, adding that New Zealand were still striving to match Australia's standards.

The Kiwis performed an emotional haka before the final, hoping to avenge their 24-22 defeat to Australia in the tournament's opening match more than a month earlier.

COMSATS university introduces major reforms during first year in office of rector

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

COMSATS University Islamabad has introduced major academic, administrative and institutional reforms during the first year of the tenure of its Rector, Prof. Dr Raheel Qamar.

According to press release on Sunday, these reforms including recommendations for 467 appointments and 438 promotions, the introduction of compulsory Artificial Intelligence (AI) courses across all degree programmes, and extensive digitalisation of university operations.

To mark the completion of his first year in office, Prof. Dr Raheel Qamar, accompanied by Controller of Examinations Dr Sajjad Madni, met a delegation of journalists and briefed them on the university's performance and key achievements.

According to the university's first annual performance report, covering the period from October 27, 2025, to October 26, 2026, the administration undertook a series of reforms across all seven campuses under its Green Transformation initiative, aimed at improving institutional efficiency, transparency, academic standards and resource utilisation.

The Rector said that the transition towards digital systems had resulted in estimated savings equivalent to more than seven million printed pages.

At the 44th meeting of the Academic Council, an agenda comprising over 12,000 pages was presented digitally.

The initiative alone reportedly helped save approximately 700,000 printed pages and 700,000 litres of water, while avoiding carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to 9.1 tonnes.



HYDERABAD: The Endowment Fund Trust for Preservation of the Heritage of Sindh is supervising the renovation of the Sadho Himandas Mir Chandani Water Trough on Risala Road. Built in 1920 by Sadhooram Himandas in memory of his brother Esardas, this historic sandstone monument is undergoing restoration to preserve its intricate carvings and structural integrity. The project highlights efforts to maintain cultural heritage, ensuring the trough's legacy endures for future generations. The work commenced on Sunday, November 15, 2026, and is part of broader heritage conservation initiatives in Sindh.

AJK Govt Committed To Protection Of Forests: Waqar

● Waqar Noor Says Forests Are Valuable National Asset

STAFF REPORTER

MUZAFFARABAD



Azad Kashmir Minister for Forests, Wildlife and Fisheries Waqar Ahmed Noor has said that forests were a valuable national asset of Azad Kashmir and their protection was a collective responsibility.

The minister was chairing the departmental review meeting to assess the overall performance of the Forest Department, ongoing development projects and forest management initiatives.

He directed the concerned officials to ensure effective implementation of the Forest Management Plan, accelerate the tree plantation campaign and take strict action against illegal tree cutting.

He emphasized the need to involve local communities in forest conservation efforts to ensure sustainable development and long-term protection of forest resources.

The minister directed the officers to personally visit the field and monitor the progress of ongoing activities. He also instructed that every employee should personally undertake model tree plantation along both sides of roads and ensure proper protection and maintenance of the planted trees.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Forests Ansar Yaqub, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Dr Sardar Iftikhar Ahmed, Chief Conservator of Forests Regional Malik Asad Mahmood, Chief Conservator of Forests Development Raja Zahid Hussain, Forest Officers Mir Naseer and Irtaza Qureshi, and Divisional Forest Officers Muqarrab Khan, Sardar Waqas Ali and Owais Javed.

During the meeting, Divisional Forest Officer Owais Javed gave the minister a detailed briefing on forest management and various departmental initiatives. The briefing covered forest conservation, progress on the tree plantation campaign, measures to prevent illegal logging, the Forest Management Plan, development schemes and the challenges facing the department.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the minister appreciated the performance of the Forest Department and expressed the hope that it would continue working with the same commitment and dedication towards the conservation and development of forests.

CJ Briefs 25 Officers Selected For China Training

● 25 Top Judicial Officers To Train In China



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Justice Yahya Khan Afridi, on Sunday briefed the first batch of 25 top-performing judicial officers selected from across the country for a bilateral judicial exchange and training programme in China, aimed at recognising professional excellence and strengthening the capacity of the district judiciary.

The pre-departure briefing was held to acknowledge the dedication, professionalism and outstanding performance of judicial officers, particularly those serving in underserved, remote and conflict-affected areas under challenging circumstances, said a press release.

The judicial officers have been nominated in consultation with the respective High Courts. The delegation represents Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, and also includes officers serving at the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Federal Judicial Academy.

During the interaction, the Chief Justice appreciated the professionalism and resilience of the selected officers and described them as ambassadors of Pakistan's judiciary.

He urged them to uphold the dignity and values of the judicial institution while gaining insights into China's judicial practices, technological advancements and case management systems.

He emphasised that exposure to international judicial systems would broaden their professional perspectives and introduce them to innovative approaches in adjudication, court administration and institutional efficiency.

He encouraged the participants to translate their learning into practical improvements in the administration and delivery of justice in their respective jurisdictions.

Houthi Attempts To Attack Haramain Sharifain Unacceptable: Ashrafi

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, has said that Houthi rebels have so far made seven attempts to attack Makkah Mukarramah and four attempts to attack Madinah Munawwarah, which are extremely alarming and condemnable.

He, in a video statement, strongly condemned these attempts and paid tribute to the vigilance of the Saudi defence forces and their operations to foil the attacks.

He said the recent attempts to target Saudi Arabia through two ballistic missiles, three cruise missiles and four drones were also extremely alarming.

Ashrafi said the protection of Haramain Sharifain is a matter of faith and belief for the entire Muslim Ummah and is our red line.

He said the Government of Pakistan, the Pakistani people, Muslim scholars and religious leaders, and Muslim governments consider the Houthis a terrorist and rebel organization that is carrying out attacks against the government and people of Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

HEC Trains Representatives From 40 Universities On Rankings

● 40 Universities Join HEC QS Rankings Capacity Programme

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan organised a one-day capacity-building programme on QS World University Rankings at the National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF), Islamabad.

The programme brought together representatives of 40 universities from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and surrounding cities, grouped into two cohorts.

The initiative aimed to strengthen the capacity of Pakistani universities to understand international ranking methodologies, meet data reporting requirements, and improve institutional preparedness for effective participation in global university rankings.

It forms part of HEC's nationwide capacity-building initiative to encourage greater participation and improve the international visibility and competitiveness of Pakistani higher education institutions.

In his opening remarks, Syed Naveed Hussain Shah, Director General, HEDR Division, HEC, emphasised the importance of international university rankings in enhancing Pakistan's global academic standing.

He noted that while several Pakistani universities have demonstrated encouraging performance, broader participation and sustained institutional efforts are essential to improving the country's representation in global rankings. He reaffirmed HEC's commitment to supporting universities through coordinated initia-

COP31: Pakistan proposes virtual green university, fund for climate innovators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ANTALYA

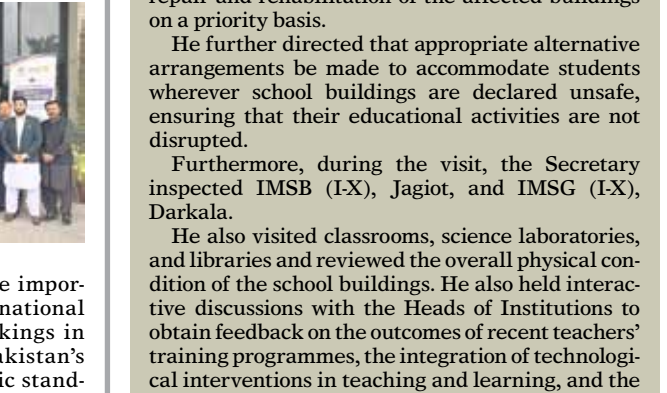
Pakistan has proposed establishing a virtual green university through international academic partnerships and launching a dedicated fund to support youth-led climate innovations, as it seeks to translate climate knowledge and research into practical solutions.

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik presented the proposals while addressing a session titled "From Learning Campuses to Climate Solutions: Advancing Climate Resilience Through Education, Innovation and Partnerships", organised in collaboration with the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye.

Emphasising the need to move beyond climate conference resolutions towards practical outcomes, the minister said Pakistan wanted to build an international platform where students, researchers and academic institutions could collaborate on climate-related challenges and develop solutions relevant to their societies.

Under the proposed virtual green university framework, he invited international academic institutions to collaborate with Pakistan through joint research programmes, faculty and student exchanges, seminars and virtual research centres.

He said the initiative could bring together scholars, experienced researchers and graduate students, particularly from developing countries, to generate knowledge and develop locally relevant solutions to climate challenges.



Dr Malik also offered Pakistan's research facilities, glacier-related data and support for primary research to international scientists interested in studying mountain ecosystems and the changing cryosphere.

He said mountain regions were among the first to experience the impacts of changes in the cryosphere, warning that developments in these areas could have consequences for downstream plains in the coming years.

The minister invited international researchers to work with Pakistani institutions on glacier studies, saying the country was prepared to facilitate collaborative research and make relevant data and academic resources available.



Cuba offers 11 scholarships for Pakistani students, 10 in Medical Sciences

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Government of Cuba has offered 11 undergraduate scholarships for Pakistani students for 2027, including 10 in Medical Sciences and one in the General Category, in a major boost to educational cooperation between the two countries.

The offer was discussed during a meeting between Executive Director, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Prof Dr Zia Ul Haq and Ambassador of Cuba to Pakistan, H.E. Mr Damian Cordero Torres, at the Cuban Embassy in Islamabad.

The meeting focused on the placement of Pakistani scholars in Cuba under the 2027 scholarship batch. The Cuban Ambassador briefed on the academic performance of Pakistani medical students enrolled at Cuban institutions and shared the proposed timeline for the upcoming batch.

Prof Dr Zia Ul Haq appreciated the Government of Cuba for its continued support and generous scholarship opportunities for Pakistani students in medical sciences. He also highlighted the potential to extend these opportunities to students from underserved and underdeveloped regions of Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan is providing partial financial support to the selected scholars through monthly stipends during their studies in Cuba.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of both countries to strengthening educational cooperation and expanding access to higher education opportunities for Pakistani students.



Education Secretary orders urgent repair of dilapidated schools in Nilore

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Nadeem visited various educational institutions functioning under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) in Nilore Sector, Islamabad, where he expressed serious concern over the deteriorating condition of school buildings.

Taking notice of crumbling structures, inadequate sanitation facilities and damaged boundary walls posing a risk to students and staff, the Secretary directed the concerned authorities to initiate immediate remedial measures and ensure repair and rehabilitation of the affected buildings on a priority basis.

He further directed that appropriate alternative arrangements be made to accommodate students wherever school buildings are declared unsafe, ensuring that their educational activities are not disrupted.

Furthermore, during the visit, the Secretary inspected IMSB (I-X), Jagiot, and IMSG (I-X), Darkala.

He also visited classrooms, science laboratories, and libraries and reviewed the overall physical condition of the school buildings. He also held interactive discussions with the Heads of Institutions to obtain feedback on the outcomes of recent teachers' training programmes, the integration of technological interventions in teaching and learning, and the effective utilization of science laboratories.

As part of his visit, the Secretary also inspected two educational institutions where renovation and rehabilitation work is being carried out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) under the directions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. These included IMSB (I-X), Herno Thanda Pani, and IMSG (I-V), Herno.

The Secretary appreciated the pace and progress of the ongoing rehabilitation work being undertaken by CDA. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the timely completion of the projects in accordance with the required standards so that students may benefit from improved educational facilities.

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