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Terror-crime nexus exposed in KP as slain militant identified as Afghan national

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Evidence has emerged of an alleged nexus between illegal gold mining and terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a militant killed in an attack on police identified as an Afghan national.

Significant evidence has surfaced regarding alleged links between illegal gold mining, reportedly carried out under the patronage of the previous provincial government, and terrorist activities in the province.

On November 11, police personnel were martyred in an attack by militants belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij during an operation against an illegal gold mining mafia in Kohat.

According to intelligence sources, one of the Fitna al-Khawarij militants killed in the retaliatory operation by security forces has been identified as an Afghan national, while the identification of four others is still underway.

An earlier photograph of the identified Afghan militant showed him serving as a personal guard to an Afghan Taliban leader in Kabul.

Meanwhile, intelligence agencies are analysing photographs and available information about the remaining militants to establish their identities.

Separately, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor has claimed that 80 per cent of the province's illegally mined gold was being transported to Afghanistan.

Sindh CM Murad calls for global action against climate change

● MQM-P demands Sindh CM's resignation, accuses PPP of governance failures

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ANTALYA



Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has called for united global efforts to address the severe impacts of climate change, saying Pakistan and the international community must take joint action.

Addressing the COP31 conference in Antalya, Murad Ali Shah said climate change was causing serious damage not only to human lives but also to national economies.

He said Pakistan was among the countries facing significant climate risks and was one of the nations severely affected by climate change.

The chief minister said recent floods had affected millions of people across Pakistan, while homes, farmland and schools in Sindh had also suffered extensive damage.

He said the economic losses caused by climate change and growing threats from natural disasters required proactive measures to mitigate their effects. National efforts alone were insufficient, and the international community needed to adopt a joint strategy to address the challenge.

Murad Ali Shah said the provincial government had launched a Green Initiative Programme on an urgent basis to address the impacts of climate change and promote environmentally friendly measures. He stressed that timely planning and effective action were essential to reduce losses caused by natural disasters.

He said the Sindh government had undertaken extensive measures to rehabilitate flood victims and built millions of homes for affected families. To ensure transparency in financial assistance, relief funds were transferred directly into the beneficiaries' bank accounts.

The chief minister said Sindh was ready to share its experiences in tackling climate change with the world. He described the expansion of mangrove forests along the province's coastline as an example that could be followed internationally.

He said developing countries were bearing the greatest burden of climate injustice, despite the need for collective global efforts to address the effects of climate change.

Proposing a tree-planting campaign, Murad Ali Shah said the Sindh government was giving special attention to promoting clean and renewable energy to reduce environmental pollution and ensure sustainable development.

He reaffirmed the need for coordinated and joint efforts to address climate change, rehabilitate affected communities and minimise the damage caused by natural disasters in the future.

Meanwhile, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has renewed its demand for the immediate resignation of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, accusing the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government of administrative and financial mismanagement.

In a statement, an MQM-P spokesperson said Murad Ali Shah had failed to manage the province's administrative and financial affairs despite holding the chief minister's office for 10 years.

The spokesperson criticised the PPP's governance record, saying the party had ruled Sindh for 18 consecutive years and approximately 30 years over the past five decades.

The spokesperson claimed that 48 per cent of children in interior Sindh were not achieving age-appropriate physical and cognitive development because of the provincial government's failure to address their needs.

The spokesperson said the proportion of out-of-school children had reached 44 per cent in several districts of interior Sindh.

Governor meets Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Ameer Munim Zafar

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Governor of Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi met a delegation led by Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Ameer Munim Zafar Khan at Governor House.

The meeting was attended by City Council Opposition Leader Saifuddin, MPA Farhan Farooq, Muslim Pervez, Rana Anwar, Principal Secretary Dr Syed Saif-ur-Rehman and Prime Minister's Youth Programme Sindh Coordinator Dr. Fahad Shafiq.

Discussions focused on law and order in the city, strengthening democracy and promoting mutual cooperation. The participants agreed on working together, fostering mutual respect and promoting the principle of "Live and Let Live" across Karachi.

The meeting also covered the federal government's ongoing development projects, including K-IV and the Green Line. The need to effectively raise public concerns at provincial and local government forums to address citizens' issues was emphasised.



The participants also discussed the restoration and development of Karachi's infrastructure and accelerating ongoing development projects. They expressed their commitment to joint efforts to ensure the provision of basic facilities at citizens' doorsteps and provide maximum relief to the people.

The Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi stated that addressing public grievances and improving the quality of life of citizens is a shared responsibility.

Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi Ameer Munim Zafar Khan remarked that Jamaat-e-Islami remains actively engaged in highlighting public issues and working towards their resolution.

Salik Hussain Sends Defamation Notices To Maryam Nawaz, Azma Bukhari

● Salik Hussain Vows to Continue Raising Public Interest Issues

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain has sent legal notices seeking action for alleged defamation to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Provincial Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, declaring that such measures will not silence him.

According to media reports, Chaudhry Salik Hussain confirmed that he had dispatched two formal legal notices through his lawyer, one addressed to Maryam Nawaz and the other to Azma Bukhari.

The federal minister said attempts to intimidate him through legal proceedings would neither stop him from speaking out nor prevent him from raising issues concerning public welfare and the wider national interest.

Criticising the Punjab government, Salik Hussain alleged that the province was facing serious problems of mismanagement and corruption. He said the government should focus on accountability and explain its position on these issues rather than resorting to what he described as intimidation tactics.

He reaffirmed his commitment to transparency and accountability, adding that he would continue raising matters affecting the public interest and would not compromise on people's rights.

The federal minister confirmed sending both notices but did not disclose their contents, the compensation amount sought or details of the allegations.

The submission of his response to Maryam Nawaz's legal notice and the issuance of counter-notices to the chief minister and Azma Bokhari mark a further development in the ongoing legal dispute between the two sides.

Sharjeel Memon Warns Parties Against Violence During Political Protests

● Sindh Minister Defends Government Welfare Projects, Criticises MQM Leadership

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has warned that no political party will be allowed to disrupt public peace under the pretext of holding protests.

Speaking to the media in Karachi on Monday, the minister said peaceful demonstrations were a democratic right of every citizen, but warned that violence, vandalism and hooliganism on public roads would not be tolerated.

He said the Pakistan Peoples Party had never resorted to political vandalism and maintained that protests should remain peaceful and within the law.

Sharjeel Memon also issued a warning to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), saying it would not be allowed to take up arms again. He alleged that politics in Karachi had previously been conducted through weapons and intimidation.

The minister criticised MQM's leadership for opposing public welfare initiatives launched by the Sindh government, saying such projects were intended to benefit the people.

Commenting on press freedom, Memon said the Sindh government respected the independence of the media.

He added that filing complaints against inaccurate or baseless reports was a legitimate right.

He further said he had personally intervened to request the reinstatement of a dismissed journalist to prevent the individual from losing employment.

Pakistan Wants Peaceful And Stable Afghanistan, Says Ishaq Dar

● Ishaq Dar Highlights ECO's Role in Regional Economic Cooperation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has reiterated Pakistan's desire to see a peaceful, prosperous and stable Afghanistan that is fully integrated into the regional framework and maintains friendly relations with all its neighbouring countries.

Addressing the 30th meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Ishaq Dar stressed that meaningful regional progress would require Afghan authorities to address the legitimate security concerns of neighbouring countries.

He said tackling terrorism and ensuring a secure and stable environment were essential for strengthening regional economic cooperation and sustaining long-term partnerships. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continuing diplomatic engagement to encourage dialogue, reduce tensions and promote lasting regional stability.

The deputy prime minister also highlighted the growing importance of regional connectivity amid prevailing geopolitical uncertainties and rapid technological advancements, stressing the need to strengthen cooperation among ECO member states.



He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the principles, objectives and vision outlined in the ECO Charter, noting that the country, as a founding member, attaches considerable importance to regional collaboration.

Ishaq Dar said the organisation's core principles were based on the sovereign equality of states, mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs and cooperation guided by shared interests. Highlighting the region's strategic importance, he observed that its location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia offered significant opportunities for trade and economic development.

Hamid Mir Named Among World's 500 Most Influential Muslims

● Hamid Mir Recognised for Contributions to Journalism and Press Freedom

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Senior Pakistani journalist, columnist and television anchor Hamid Mir has been included in the prestigious list of the world's 500 most influential Muslims, published by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Jordan.

Hamid Mir began his journalism career with Daily Jang in 1987 and joined Geo News in 2002. Over the years, he has earned recognition for his fearless journalism, investigative reporting and consistent efforts to defend press freedom and human rights.

He is among the few journalists who managed to interview Osama bin Laden following the September 11, 2001 attacks, making his reporting internationally significant.

Despite facing serious threats, security challenges and difficult circumstances throughout his career, Hamid Mir has continued to raise his voice on important national and international issues, establishing himself as a prominent figure in the media industry.

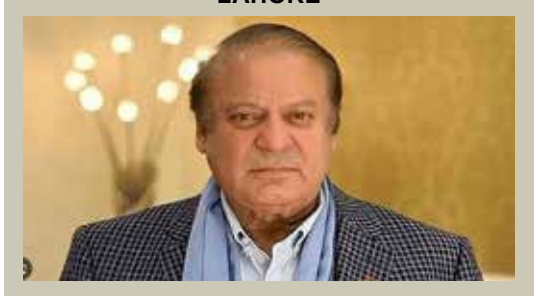
In recognition of his contributions to journalism, he has received several prestigious honours, including the Hilal-e-Imtiaz, one of Pakistan's highest civilian awards, and the SAARC Lifetime Achievement Award.

The list of the world's 500 most influential Muslims also features Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have also secured prominent positions.

Nawaz Sharif reviews development projects in Lahore

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Former Prime Minister and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif visited the Chief Minister's House on 90-Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam in Lahore on Monday to review ongoing development projects in the city.

During the visit, officials briefed Nawaz Sharif on development work underway in different areas of the Walled City, including Neela Gumbad.

He reviewed the progress of the projects and will also visit the sites of ongoing development work.

Earlier, in June, the chief minister directed the authorities to expedite work on the facility.

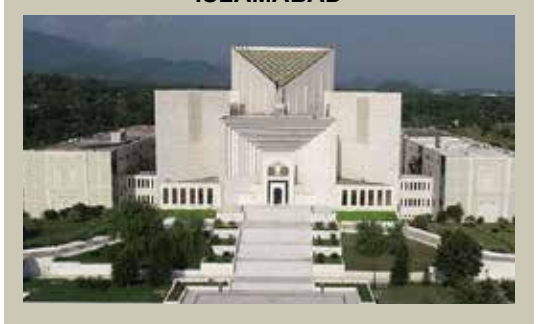
In her statement, CM Maryam said the observatory would strengthen weather forecasting, early warning systems and flood prediction, helping improve the province's preparedness for climate-related disasters.

The facility would also house environmental data resources and research laboratories, providing young climate scientists with opportunities for learning and research, she added.

Supreme Court confirms bail to four in human placenta trade case

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Supreme Court of Pakistan granted on Monday post-arrest bail to four accused including three nationals in an illegal human placenta trading case. The court ordered the four accused to submit Rs 10 million surety bond along with two local sureties to confirm their release.

Two-member bench comprising Justice Shahzad Ahmad Malik and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi observed the matter requires further inquiry, specifically noting that human placenta is generally considered waste material.

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Human Organ Transplant Authority (HOTA) in June 2026 during raids at houses F-7 and E-11 sectors, Islamabad rounded up five suspects (three Chinese nationals and two Pakistani citizens) and seized 400 to 500 kilograms of dried human placenta.

An investigation report claimed the accused bought placentas from hospital workers in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Peshawar for export to Vietnam to manufacture high end anti-aging and cosmetic injections.



Pandorian Model Graveyard Work Continuing At Fast Pace

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

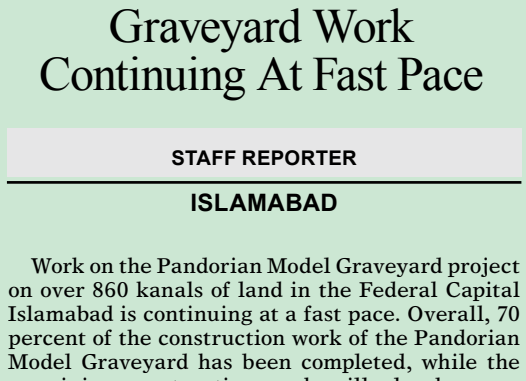
Work on the Pandorian Model Graveyard project on over 860 kanals of land in the Federal Capital Islamabad is continuing at a fast pace. Overall, 70 percent of the construction work of the Pandorian Model Graveyard has been completed, while the remaining construction work will also be completed within the current year.

All obstacles in the Pandorian Model Graveyard project are being removed on a priority basis. In this regard, action is being taken against illegal constructions and encroachments and 95 percent of Government land has also been vacated. Under the project, a spacious parking area adjacent to the model graveyard is also being constructed. The construction of the boundary wall of the model graveyard is also in its final stages.

Grey structure of the admin block of the Pandorian Model Graveyard has been completed. The most important part of the project, the roofing and finishing work of the funeral hall (Janazah Gah), is continuing at a fast pace.

To ensure proper lighting arrangements in the graveyard, light poles have also been installed, while utilities work has also been completed up to 50 percent.

In line with the direction of Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, environmentally friendly tree plantation and modern permanent lights will also be installed in the Pandorian Model Graveyard. On the direction of the Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, the relevant teams are busy day and night to ensure the completion of the project.



PMDC Sets February 8 Deadline For Doctors' Registration Renewal

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has issued an important advisory directing all registered doctors to renew their professional registration and practice licences by February 8, 2027.

According to the advisory, doctors who fail to complete the renewal process within the prescribed deadline may face regulatory action.

The PMDC has further warned that the names of medical and dental practitioners who fail to renew their registration for 10 consecutive years will be removed from the council's official register.

The council has urged all registered medical and dental professionals to complete the renewal process before the deadline to avoid penalties or other regulatory consequences.

Doctors have been advised to ensure their registration remains valid to continue practising in accordance with the council's requirements.

RWU students clinch top positions at Pintech Expo

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Students of Rawalpindi Women University (RWU) have secured first and third positions in the Health, Medical and Biomedical Sciences category at the Honhaar Punjab Innovation and Technology Expo 2026 in Lahore, winning cash prizes of Rs 5,00,000.0 and Rs 75,000.0, respectively.

The two-day expo, organized by the Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) on November 14 and 15, featured 388 projects from 35 universities, showcasing research-based innovations and technological solutions developed by students, said a press release.

The first-place project focused on developing an innovative wound dressing using honey, herbal ingredients and nanotechnology. The biodegradable dressing is designed to support wound healing and assist in the treatment of skin infections, acne and diabetic ulcers. It also offers potential benefits in reducing pain, scarring and dependence on antibiotic treatments, while providing an affordable option for wound care.

The third-position project introduced a biodegradable thin-film sheet as an alternative to conventional plastic packaging. The material is designed to decompose naturally without leaving harmful residues or microplastics, offering a sustainable solution to plastic pollution and its environmental and health implications.



LARKANA: A vendor arranging and displaying items made of palm leaves on his handcart to attract customers on Railway Station Road.

Abbasi Announces Parking Plazas, Tax Relief For Traders

● Hanif Abbasi Vows Relief Package For Rawalpindi Traders

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, on Monday announced the construction of dedicated parking plazas, one in Commercial Market and another in Raja Bazaar at the former Tehsil Office site, to resolve severe commercial parking and civic issues in the garrison city.

Addressing a Grand Traders Convention in Rawalpindi, Hanif Abbasi assured the business community that all trader-related grievances, including arbitrary shop-closure timings and taxation concerns, will be systematically addressed through a comprehensive relief package. He highlighted that he had personally intervened with the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi to resolve premature market closure issues.

Highlighting the government's development agenda, Abbasi said that unprecedented infrastructure projects are transforming Rawalpindi, highlighting state-of-the-art liver and kidney transplant facilities as a testament to public health progress.

Regarding commercial infrastructure, he announced that a parking plaza will be built in Commercial Market and another at the former Tehsil Office site in Raja Bazaar. He also pointed to a dedicated motorcycle plaza at the former Rex Cinema location.

Acknowledging traders' grievances regarding water supply, sanitation, and municipal taxation, the Minister remarked that civic services must correspond with taxes, assuring that sanitation and water supply issues will be resolved on a priority basis.

He also noted that he has discussed traders' concerns regarding access around the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium with Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, requesting expedited completion of stadium development works.

Paying tribute to the business community for their political and personal steadfastness during times of hardship, Abbasi declared Shahid Ghafoor Paracha as the authentic representative of Rawalpindi traders, reaffirming his lifelong association and solidarity with the mercantile community.

He also lauded country's civil and military leadership for their efforts on global fronts towards regional peace and stability. He highlighted that the mention of PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir among the top 500 Muslim leaders is a moment of pride for the nation and termed it as global acknowledgement.

Senior parliamentarians, including Tahura Aurangzeb, Ziaullah Shah and others, also attended the grand traders convention.

N-5 Lodhran-Multan Road To Complete In Six Weeks

● Aleem Khan: N-5 Road Completes In Six Weeks



STAFF REPORTER

MULTAN

Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday announced that the N-5 Lodhran-Multan road project would be completed within the next six weeks,providing improved travel facilities to the people of South Punjab,particularly residents of Lodhran and Bahawalpur.

Talking to the media,the federal minister congratulated the people of South Punjab on the expected completion of the project,saying commuters had been facing considerable difficulties due to the poor condition of the highway.

He appreciated the efforts of the National Highway Authority (NHA) in completing the project and said its completion would provide significant relief to the public.

He added that streetlights would also be installed along the highway while green belts and other beautification measures would be introduced to improve its overall appearance.

Regarding the Layyah-Taunsa Bridge project, Abdul Aleem Khan said the bridge had already been constructed, while the approach roads on both sides were incomplete.

He said work on the connecting roads was now being completed.

Speaking about the creation of new provinces, the federal minister said his party had a clear stance in favour of establishing both South Punjab and Bahawalpur provinces.

Islamabad to get 860-kanal graveyard amid shortage of burial space

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is developing an 860-kanal graveyard in Pandorian to address the growing shortage of burial space in the federal capital, with 70 per cent of the project completed so far.

The authority expects to complete the remaining construction work by the end of this year, providing residents with an additional facility for burials.

According to a CDA spokesperson on Monday, 95 per cent of government land earmarked for the project has been retrieved, while action against illegal constructions and encroachments is under way to clear the remaining land.

The project includes a spacious parking area, a boundary wall, an administrative block and a funeral hall (Janazah Gah). The grey structure of the administrative block has been completed, while roofing and finishing work on the funeral hall is in progress.

Light poles have been installed across the site, while utility-related work is around 50 per cent complete. The authority also plans to introduce environmentally friendly plantation and permanent lighting arrangements.

Pakistan Reports Significant Decline In Polio Cases During 2026

● Over 24 Million Children Vaccinated in Latest Polio Campaign

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan has witnessed a significant decline in polio cases in 2026 compared with the previous year, according to official documents released on Monday.

The country reported 30 polio cases between January and November 2025. However, the number dropped to just nine during the corresponding period in 2026, reflecting progress in efforts to eradicate the crippling disease.

According to the report, Pakistan successfully conducted two nationwide and three smaller-scale polio vaccination campaigns during the current year.

The latest vaccination campaign was held from November 2 to 8 in 97 selected districts across the country. During the drive, more than 24 million children under the age of five were administered polio drops.

More than 200,000 polio workers participated in the campaign, visiting households across the targeted areas to ensure children received the vaccine.

Health authorities are preparing to launch another nationwide polio vaccination campaign in mid-December. The upcoming drive aims to vaccinate more than 45 million children across Pakistan.

Authorities continue to intensify vaccination efforts to protect children against the virus and prevent its further spread.

Three Suspected Dacoits Killed In Police Encounter In Faisalabad

STAFF REPORTER

FAISALABAD



Three suspected dacoits were killed in an alleged police encounter in Faisalabad on Monday, police said.

According to details, the encounter took place in Chak No. 12, within the jurisdiction of Chak Jhumra Police Station. SHO Chak Jhumra Rizwan Shoukat had established a police picket when officers intercepted six suspicious individuals riding motorcycles.

Upon spotting the police party, the suspects allegedly opened fire. Police retaliated, leaving three suspects critically injured. They were shifted to a hospital, where they later succumbed to their injuries.

Police identified two of the deceased as Imran and Shoukat, while efforts are underway to establish the identity of the third suspect.

The bodies were subsequently shifted to the hospital mortuary for post-mortem examinations.

Police officials claimed that the deceased suspects were involved in more than 27 robbery incidents over the past six days. They also allegedly opened fire on personnel of the Dolphin Force. Meanwhile, police have launched a search operation to arrest the remaining accomplices involved in the criminal activities.

Pakistan Stock Exchange Gains Strongly As Investors Buy Across Major Sectors

● KSE-100 climbs above 179,000 points while global markets stay mixed ahead of Nvidia earnings

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistan Stock Exchange began the week on a bright note on Monday, as investors kept buying shares in many major sectors.

By 1:07pm, the benchmark KSE-100 Index was trading at 179,596.62 points. That was a rise of 1,722.75 points, or 0.96%, from the last close.

Buyers showed strong interest in several areas of the market. These included car makers, cement firms, commercial banks, oil and gas explorers, oil marketing companies and power producers.

Many heavyweight stocks helped push the index higher. HUBCO, MARI, OGDC, POL, PPL, HBL, MEBL, NBP and UBL all traded in positive territory.

Global markets, however, looked mixed. Asian shares slipped after a choppy week, as investors reacted to a leadership change at Nvidia and waited for its next earnings report.

Japan's Nikkei index fell 0.6%, and South Korea's benchmark lost 0.2%. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan also eased 0.1%.

US stock futures moved the other way. S&P 500 futures rose 0.3%, while Nasdaq futures gained 0.5%.

Investors are now watching the artificial intelligence (AI) sector closely. Nvidia's earnings and Anthropic's expected initial public offering (IPO) will show whether the AI-led rally can keep its speed.

Analysts expect Nvidia to report 90% earnings growth on revenue of $109 billion for its fiscal third quarter. The results are due on Tuesday. Traders also want to know if the company will keep a positive outlook for next year under its new management.



Political news is also in focus this week. US President Donald Trump is expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the APEC forum in Shenzhen. The leaders may discuss nuclear arms cuts and the US-Israeli war against Iran.

Wheat prices surge in Punjab, pushing up flour rates

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE



Flour prices have surged in Punjab following an increase in wheat prices in the open market.

Wheat prices have reached Rs5,900 per maund across Punjab, while rates in Lahore have climbed to Rs5,750 and those in Rawalpindi and Islamabad to Rs5,920.

Following the increase in wheat prices, the wholesale rate of a 15-kilogram flour bag has risen to Rs2,500 in Lahore and Rs2,650 in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Pakistan, Finland agree to enhance cooperation in energy, minerals sectors



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Finland have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy and minerals sectors, with a focus on promoting foreign investment and modern mining technologies.

The agreement came during a meeting between Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Finnish Deputy Minister Jarno Syrjälä in Islamabad.

During the meeting, Syrjälä said Finland was encouraging more Finnish companies to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan.

Ali Pervaiz Malik said the government was undertaking deregulation and reforms in the petroleum sector to improve its performance and attract investment.

He said developing Pakistan's minerals sector and promoting modern mining technologies were among the government's key priorities.

The minister said strengthening regulatory bodies was an important component of the ongoing reform process.

He said measures were also being taken to diversify the energy sector and create opportunities for foreign investment.

Pakistan inflation expected to ease to 5-7% target range in FY27: SBP

● Central bank projects 3.5-4.5% GDP growth, with current account deficit projected at 0-1% of GDP

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's consumer price inflation is expected to gradually ease towards the medium-term target range of 5% to 7% during financial year 2027, the country's central bank said on Monday.

Real GDP growth will remain in the range of 3.5% to 4.5%, the bank said in a yearly report, which added that the country's current account deficit was likely to be in the range of 0 to 1% of GDP in the financial year.

It projected the fiscal deficit to range between 3.0%-4.0% of GDP.

In its Annual Report on the State of Pakistan's Economy for fiscal year 2025-26, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said the country's economy demonstrated resilience against domestic and global economic shocks, recording improvements across key macroeconomic indicators.

The central bank attributed the improvement to a prudent monetary policy stance, continued fiscal consolidation and economic reforms under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

It said Pakistan managed to safeguard its macroeconomic stability despite challenges arising from shifting US trade tariff policies, monsoon flooding at the start of the fiscal year and the outbreak of the Middle East conflict in late February 2026.



The report noted that real GDP growth increased during FY26, supported primarily by a rebound in large-scale manufacturing, which has strong linkages with the agriculture and services sectors.

The recovery in economic activity also resulted in a volume-led expansion in imports, while unfavourable global economic trends constrained exports.

However, strong growth in workers' remittances helped contain the current account deficit at 0.1% of GDP during FY26, the SBP said.

Significant foreign exchange purchases by the central bank, alongside a reduction in forward liabilities, also led to a notable improvement in its foreign exchange buffers.

Sustained official inflows, successful Eurobond and Panda bond issuances, and steady inflows into Roshan Digital Accounts further supported the country's foreign exchange reserves.

The report said continued fiscal consolidation by the government and a substantial decline in interest payments contributed to a considerable improvement in fiscal outcomes during FY26.

Prudent monetary and fiscal policies also helped contain the average national consumer price index (CPI) inflation close to the upper bound of the medium-term target range of 5%-7%.

This was achieved despite an energy price shock stemming from the Middle East conflict, which pushed year-on-year inflation into double digits from April 2026 onwards.

FY27 outlook

Looking ahead, the SBP said Pakistan entered FY27 on a relatively stronger macroeconomic footing, with sustained improvements in key economic indicators also prompting upgrades to the country's sovereign credit ratings.

The central bank expects the gradual recovery in domestic demand to continue, while recent fiscal measures are likely to provide further support to economic momentum.

However, worsening El Nino conditions pose risks to the agricultural outlook.

The latest information, nonetheless, indicates an increase in the output of key Kharif crops, including sugarcane, rice and maize, compared with the previous year.

Improved performance in commodity-producing sectors is expected to drive an expansion in services, supporting the SBP's projection of real GDP growth at 3.5%-4.5% in FY27.

Kisan Ittehad demands judicial probe into farmers' losses, wheat imports

FINANCE REPORTER

MULTAN



Pakistan Kisan Ittehad President Khalid Mahmood Khokhar has demanded the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the agricultural crisis and losses suffered by farmers, accusing the government of failing to protect the sector.

Addressing a press conference in Multan, Khokhar said farmers had suffered losses amounting to hundreds of billions of rupees due to problems affecting major crops, including cotton and sugarcane.

He said agriculture had been devastated and the government's performance in addressing the sector's problems was zero.

Khokhar said sugarcane growers were facing severe financial difficulties as production costs had increased several times while sugarcane prices remained unchanged from last year.

He said farmers were uncertain about when sugar mills would begin operations and when they would receive payments for their produce.

He criticised the government's sudden instructions to operate sugar mills and alleged that the failure to export sugar on time was deliberate.

Khokhar also demanded a judicial inquiry into wheat imports, alleging that the decisions had been made with malicious intent and caused significant losses to farmers.

He said agriculture was no longer a profitable business in Pakistan because rising production costs and inadequate prices had placed farmers under severe financial pressure.

The Kisan Ittehad president criticised the exclusion of farmers from agricultural policymaking and said their concerns were routinely ignored.

He said other countries used futures marketing systems and formulated agricultural policies covering 10 to 20 years, while Pakistan lacked even a consistent one-year agricultural policy.

Khokhar appealed to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to intervene and protect farmers from further financial losses.

Consistent industrial policy, structural reforms vital for economic revival: Zikria Akbar Zia

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Muhammad Zikria Akbar Zia, on Monday urged for fixing its domestic economic structure, promoting industrialization and ensuring consistent long-term policies to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Speaking during a roundtable discussion titled ' Indo-US Economic Relations: Prospects and Opportunities for Pakistan ' hosted by the Institute of Strategic Institute Islamabad (ISSI) he observed that Pakistan's economic challenges largely stem from structural weaknesses, policy inconsistency and over-reliance on short-term financial arrangements.

He emphasised that industrial projects require long-term planning, as investors need several years to establish production facilities and recover their investments, said a press release.

He strongly advocated a strategic partnership with China through joint ventures, technology transfer and collaboration



with local manufacturers.

He said Pakistan should attract Chinese companies to establish partnerships with domestic businesses rather than setting up completely independent operations.

Criticizing blanket subsidies and sector-specific incentives, he said these policies often benefit influential business lobbies instead of delivering relief to consumers or strengthening the wider economy.

He advocated replacing institutional subsidies with targeted income support for deserving households and ensuring a level playing field across industrial sectors.

He also called for strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs), describing them as essential drivers of sustainable economic growth.

Genuine ease of doing business, he maintained, would become possible when small businesses could operate without excessive regulatory hurdles, high borrowing costs and policy uncertainty.

Highlighting the importance of professional trade diplomacy, he urged to appoint commercially experienced professionals as trade officers abroad to identify business opportunities, facilitate investors and promote Pakistani exports.

He added that effective international trade required stronger business-to-business engagement rather than relying exclusively on government-to-government arrangements.

Concluding, Zikria Akbar Zia urged policymakers to move beyond short-term economic management and formulate a comprehensive, predictable and long-term industrial policy, warning that continued policy inconsistency, excessive incentives and neglect of domestic manufacturing would undermine Pakistan's economic prospects.

Pakistan Govt Debt Drops Rs936 Billion During July-September Of FY2026-27

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan govt debt went down by Rs936 billion in the first three months of the current fiscal year. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) shared this in its latest report. Total debt stood at Rs82.658 trillion at the end of September 2026.

This is a fall of 1.12 per cent from July to September. It is a small but welcome drop for the country's finances.

Domestic debt saw the biggest change. It fell by 2.75 per cent during the quarter and reached Rs57.758 trillion. This shows the government borrowed less money from local sources.

External debt moved in the opposite direction. It grew by 2.89 per cent and reached Rs24.9 trillion by the end of September. So, the government relied a little more on foreign loans.

In simple words, local borrowing went down while foreign borrowing went up. The two trends balanced each other, but the total still came down.

Even after this drop, the debt burden remains very high. At Rs82.658 trillion, it is still a heavy load for the economy.

Experts often say that lower borrowing is a good sign. However, the country needs steady income growth to keep the debt under control.

The next quarterly report from the SBP will show whether this trend continues. Many people are watching these numbers closely.

Punjab Takes Historic Measures To Accelerate Industrial Growth

Shafay Hails Historic Steps For Punjab Industrial Growth

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE

Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain on Monday said the Punjab government had taken historic measures to promote investment and accelerate industrial development in the province.

He was addressing the concluding ceremony of the three-day 10th Pakistan Industrial Exhibition 2026,held at the Expo Center Lahore.

The exhibition was jointly organized by Everest International Expo (Pvt.) Ltd. and COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus with more than 150 local and international companies showcasing their products.

The provincial minister also visited various stalls and took keen interest in the products on display.

Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said such exhibitions played an important role in promoting industrial,commercial and economic activities.

He said historic measures had been taken over the past two and a half years to accelerate industrial development



and attract investment in Punjab.

He said the decades-old practice of using industrial estates for real estate business had been permanently discontinued,adding that plots allotted in industrial estates were now being utilized rapidly for establishing industrial units.

The provincial minister said the Punjab government had introduced a new industrial policy to further accelerate industrialization,under which industrial plots could be acquired on leases ranging from 30 to 50 years for setting up industrial units.

He said interest-free loans under the Chief Minister's Asaan Karobar Finance Scheme were being provided to facilitate entrepreneurs.

Another major initiative had also been launched to promote exports and industrial growth,under which easy-term loans of up to Rs.1 billion were being offered for large-scale industries while interest-free loans of up to Rs.100 million were also available.

He added that industrial estates were gradually being shifted to solar energy,saying increased investment would generate more employment opportunities.

Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said that several electric motorcycle manufacturing plants were already operational in Punjab while lithium battery manufacturing units were also being established.

The boom-bust trap

By Zulfiquar Rao



Between 2018-19 and 2024-25, Pakistan's national poverty rate rose from 22 per cent to 29 per cent, according to the World Bank, the sharpest reversal since the 1990s.

Some 72.6 million Pakistanis now live below the national poverty line, around 25 million more than six years earlier. Real wages fell by around 3.4 per cent a year over those six years, and more than half of the rise in poverty came from a worsening distribution of consumption.

The finance ministry responded by disputing the World Bank's decision to group Pakistan with the Middle East and North Africa. That is an argument about averages, not about why Pakistan's own poverty rate rose. Nor can the rise be blamed on Covid-19 and the 2022 floods alone. India faced the same pandemic and comparable climate shocks, yet continued to reduce extreme poverty. The difference lies in how Pakistan's economy has been managed for three decades.

Every government since the early 1990s has followed the same script. Growth is pushed up through consumption, imports and cheap credit, financed by remittances, foreign borrowing or a geopolitical windfall. The current account deficit widens, reserves drain and the rupee comes under pressure. The government then turns to the IMF, raises interest rates, devalues the currency and cuts development spending. Growth collapses, inflation spikes and the burden falls on those least able to bear it.

In the 1990s, elected governments alternated in power and each IMF programme was abandoned midway. Official poverty rose from about 26 per cent in 1990-91 to 34 per cent by 2001-02. The post-9/11 boom of 2002-07, fueled by aid, debt relief and consumer credit, delivered growth of 7.0 per cent but ended in the 2008 crisis and another IMF programme. The 2013-18 expansion, driven by CPEC-related imports and an overvalued rupee, ended in the 2019 Extended Fund Facility. The post-Covid stimulus of 2021-22 took growth above 6.0 per cent, and was followed by the 2022-23 crisis, when inflation peaked at about 38 per cent and the country came close to default.

Each bust erases a large share of what the preceding boom delivered. Poverty did fall substantially between 2001 and 2018, from 64 per cent to 22 per cent on the World Bank's revised measure. But the gains rested on remittances, urban migration and transfers rather than on productive jobs. They left tens of millions vulnerably hovering just above the line. When inflation erodes real incomes by a third in two years, those households slip back below the poverty line. A cycle that lifts people slowly and pushes them down quickly keeps adding to the ranks of the poor and the near-poor.

Why does the cycle repeat? Because the policies that produce it serve those who shape them. The root lies in a narrow tax base. The tax-to-GDP ratio has stayed at 9-12 per cent for three decades. Retail, real estate and agricultural income remain lightly taxed, while salaried workers, formal manufacturing and indirect taxes on consumption carry the load. A state that will not tax its wealthy borrows instead, and debt servicing now absorbs most of federal net revenue, forcing cuts in development spending in every squeeze.

We see unbridled elite capture of energy and trade policy. Power purchase agreements signed from 1994 onwards, with guaranteed dollar-indexed returns and capacity payments, produced circular debt and some of the region's highest industrial tariffs. Tariff protection and SROs for favoured sectors make import substitution more profitable than exporting. Exchange rate management plays its own role. Governments have repeatedly defended an overvalued rupee for political reasons, burning reserves, only to devalue sharply when the forex reserves completely run out. Each devaluation feeds inflation, which hits the poor hardest.

Changes of government, often engineered, ensure institutional discontinuity, as policies are reversed and reforms abandoned midway. The 18th Amendment devolved functions to the provinces, but the provinces have not devolved resources to elected local governments. BISP has expanded, but transfers have not kept pace with inflation, and the programme remains a cushion rather than a route out of poverty. Climate shocks, from the 2010 and 2022 floods to the 2025 monsoon, deepen each bust because recovery is financed by borrowing rather than planned into budgets.

Beyond flawed fiscal and economic policies, the neglect of human capital and population is perhaps the biggest challenge for Pakistan's sustainable economic growth. Population grew at 2.55 per cent a year between the 2017 and 2023 censuses. Some 40 per cent of children are stunted, and 75 per cent cannot read a simple story by the end of primary school. Fewer than one in four women participate in the labour force.

Pakistan's population is young, with 60 per cent under 30. An economy growing at 3-4 per cent cannot absorb the two million young people entering the labour market each year. A demographic dividend that is not employed becomes a demographic liability. The human capital losses are intergenerational. Stunting cannot be reversed in adulthood, and children who do not learn to read by age ten rarely catch up. Today's deprivation shapes the workforce of the 2040s.

Skilled emigration is at record levels, draining the professional middle class that sustains institutions. Lagging districts in Balochistan, southern Punjab and rural Sindh become fertile ground for crime, militancy and provincial grievance. The legitimacy of the state erodes when citizens see no link between taxes, public services and their own prospects. And an economy that lives on rollovers and IMF tranches cannot set its own priorities.

What must be done is not new. What has been missing is the political will to impose costs on powerful constituencies. Pakistan has to break the cycle itself. A binding fiscal rule that caps the primary deficit and saves windfalls, an independent State Bank and a market-determined exchange rate would ensure that imbalances are corrected early and gradually.

The long road back to 1.5C

By Saleem Shaikh



The world has entered a more difficult phase of the fight against climate change.

The goal of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, once central to international climate negotiations, is increasingly out of reach. The challenge now is to limit how far temperatures rise beyond that threshold, how long they remain there and the damage caused in the process.

The latest Emissions Gap Report 2026: The Point of Return, published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) last month, highlights the scale of the task. It estimates that global greenhouse gas emissions must fall by 18 per cent by 2030, 45 per cent by 2035 and 69 per cent by 2040, compared with 2025 levels, if the world is to return to 1.5C by the end of the century.

The prospect of returning to that threshold has not disappeared altogether. But it will require unprecedented and sustained reductions across virtually every major sector of the global economy.

According to the report, even the lowest-emissions pathway could see global temperatures peak at 1.7C to 1.8C above pre-industrial levels around the middle of the century before gradually declining towards 1.5C by 2100. A pathway offering roughly a 50 per cent chance of achieving that return remains possible, but the margin for delay is narrowing.

This represents a fundamental shift in the climate challenge. The priority is no longer simply to prevent the 1.5C threshold from being crossed. It is also to minimise the overshoot and the period during which temperatures remain above it.

The distinction is significant. Every additional fraction of a degree increases the pressure on ecosystems, biodiversity, food systems and human settlements. For countries with limited resources and high exposure to climate hazards, the consequences can be particularly more adverse.

The widening gap between climate commitments and what science demands remains one of the most troubling findings of the report. Even if governments fully implement their existing nationally determined contributions (NDCs), global emissions would decline by only 5-8 per cent by 2030 and 11-15 per cent by 2035, compared with 2025 levels.

Under current policies, the world is heading towards approximately 2.8C of warming by the end of the century. Full implementation of existing NDCs could bring this down to around 2.6C, while even the most optimistic scenario, incorporating additional net-zero targets, would still leave warming at approximately 2.1C.

By Tahseen Sayed

Make polluters pay



At every community meeting I attended in Bangladesh, and at every minister's meeting in the Caribbean, I heard the same sentence: "Climate change is not of our making, but we are paying for it". They are right.

Just take greenhouse gas emissions. Bangladesh emits less than 0.5 per cent of global emissions. The 18 Caribbean countries I covered as World Bank regional director emit less than 0.5 per cent. Pakistan, which is highly climate vulnerable, emits less than 1.0 per cent. Yet these are countries where cyclones/hurricanes wreak havoc: a single hurricane in 2017 wiped out over 200 per cent of Dominica's GDP in one night, and Pakistan's 2022 floods brought one-third of the country under water.

This is why the Bridgetown Initiative, launched by Barbados PM Mia Mottley in 2022, resonated with affected countries. She announced what was known to all but was not being acknowledged: that the post-World War II global financial system spearheaded by Bretton Woods institutions was built for a world that no longer exists. She demanded that wealthy industrial nations pay for the damage they caused. A chorus of voices joined her in support of financial resilience.

The world did listen during COP27 in 2022 and a historic Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage was created, with the promise that polluters would begin to pay damages. This was a financial and moral victory.

But three years later, what do we have? More drama than action. While pledges of over $800 million were made to the Fund, disbursements are a trickle. Nepal – 29 million population – received approval of $21 million after its catastrophic flash floods in 2026. Disbursements will be made only after a detailed proposal is approved by the Fund. While establishment of the Fund is laudable, it has no fast-payout window and no scale.

Compare this with what Jamaica – population less than three million – accomplished on its own. In 2021, Jamaica became the first small island state to sponsor a parametric CAT Bond, established with support from the World Bank. Jamaica renewed it in 2024 for $150 million, paying the premium from its own budget. When Category 5 Hurricane Melissa made landfall in October 2025 – the first Category 5 to hit Jamaica since records began over 150 years ago – all parametric triggers were met. Within 30 days, $150 million payout was in Jamaica's Treasury. Along with the payout from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), the country could restore electricity in affected areas without emergency borrowing. In 2026, Jamaica renewed the CAT Bond again, raising it to $200 million, as there were enough investors.

Jamaica, with a population of less than three million, received $150 million automatically in 30 days. Nepal, with a population of 29 million, received approval for over $21 million but still has no disbursement. It is a powerful lesson: timely payouts for financial resilience are possible.

The small Caribbean Island of Grenada showed another aspect of financial resilience. After Category 5 Hurricane Ivan hit the island in 2004, it became the first country in the world to insert a 'hurricane clause' into its sovereign bonds: if a hurricane causes over $15 million in losses, debt payments would automatically pause. When Hurricane Beryl hit in 2024, Grenada became the first country in the world to trigger that clause, showing the necessity of Climate-Resilient Debt Clauses.

Behind these headways in financial resilience was the Caribbean's first innovation: a regional CCRIF created in 2007 with World Bank support – the world's first parametric insurance facility. If the parametric triggers are met, payouts are made within 14 days. When Hurricane Maria hit Dominica, CCRIF payout was $19 million within 14 days. Jamaica received $92 million within 14 days after Hurricane Melissa passed. CCRIF has paid over $300 million since its creation.

By Javaid Jehangir

Restoring the social contract



There appears to be a growing disconnect between citizens and public institutions in Pakistan, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of governance and the credibility of the state.

Functional government institutions are the foundation of good governance, but their significance extends beyond administrative efficiency. They shape the relationship between citizens and the state and largely determine the extent to which ordinary people trust government and its ability to protect their rights, address their concerns and deliver essential services.

So, are Pakistani citizens and taxpayers satisfied with the performance of public institutions? Do they believe these institutions operate fairly, uphold rule of law and deliver services without discrimination, unnecessary delays or the influence of personal connections?

The performance of government institutions is central to the legitimacy of the state and the strength of the social contract. When institutions function efficiently, act transparently and treat citizens fairly, they reinforce public confidence in government. However, public perception of government institutions today remains largely negative, reflecting their persistent failure to meet citizens' expectations. This failure stems from weaknesses in both policymaking and implementation. Policy decisions are often influenced by elite capture, with powerful interest groups shaping public policies to protect their own interests rather than serve the broader public good.

At the implementation level, institutional performance is undermined by incompetence, corruption and a lack of professionalism. Consequently, citizens frequently face difficulties accessing public services, administrative indifference, unnecessary delays in decision-making and arbitrary or inconsistent application of rules. Such experiences generate frustration, erode confidence in the state's ability to fulfil its responsibilities and create a growing sense of alienation from the governance system.

When this disconnect becomes persistent, it is no longer merely a governance problem but a challenge to the credibility and authority of the state itself. It also weakens the social contract, founded on the state's obligation to protect citizens' rights, provide essential services and manage public affairs fairly, efficiently and in the public interest.

Institutional deterioration in Pakistan gained considerable momentum during the 1990s, largely due to political instability, frequent changes of government and the growing politicisation of the bureaucracy. Political rivalry and confrontation between the country's two major political parties further aggravated the situation. Successive changes in government disrupted administrative continuity and weakened public institutions' capacity to formulate and implement consistent, long-term policies.

Meanwhile, the politicisation of the bureaucracy, which began in the 1980s, became increasingly pronounced. Political considerations began to influence appointments, postings, transfers and administrative decisions, compromising the neutrality and professionalism of the civil service.

As a consequence, institutional systems and established procedures increasingly gave way to personalised decision-making. Administrative actions became dependent more on the preferences and approval of individual office-holders than on established rules and institutional processes. This undermined organisational capacity, weakened institutional autonomy and created a culture in which continuity, merit, and professional competence were often subordinated to political and personal considerations. The long-term consequences of this transformation continue to be reflected in the performance of public institutions.

An equally damaging consequence of institutional weakness is the growing dependence on informal channels to obtain services and resolve legitimate problems. When formal procedures become excessively complicated, unpredictable or time-consuming, citizens increasingly resort to personal connections, political influence, bribery and other means of bypassing established systems. Such practices gradually become normalised, undermining merit, transparency, accountability and rule of law.

A vicious cycle emerges in which institutional weaknesses encourage corrupt practices, while these practices further erode institutional credibility and effectiveness. Ultimately, citizens begin to see personal influence rather than entitlement under the law as the more reliable way to deal with government.

The question, therefore, is how Pakistan can reverse this trend and restore public confidence in its institutions. The challenge cannot be addressed merely through administrative restructuring, introducing additional rules or adopting modern technology.

It requires a fundamental transformation in institutional culture, management practices and the professional conduct of public officials.

The first priority must be a shift in the prevailing bureaucratic mindset from authority and control towards public service and facilitation. Government institutions exist to serve citizens, not to exercise authority over them.

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Hasina Plans December Return To Bangladesh, Defying The Threat Of Death

WEB DESK

BANGLADESH



Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina says she will go home in December, even with the threat of death hanging over her. The 79-year-old made the pledge in an email interview with AFP on Monday.

Hasina fled to India in August 2024. A student-led uprising had ended her 15 years in power. She has lived in hiding ever since.

Last year, a Bangladeshi court found her guilty of crimes against humanity. The case was linked to a deadly crackdown on protesters. She was sentenced to death in her absence.

"I am fully aware of the risks I face if I return," she said. "But I have made my decision, and no threat of death will keep me away from my own country."

Her words came just days after Bangladesh said she would face execution if she came back. Officials also said she has no legal options left, because she missed the deadline to appeal.

Hasina has often rejected the trial as unfair. She called the government's stance "contradictory". She said officials demanded her return for months, but now seem more interested in threatening her.

Dhaka has asked India to send her back. India says the request is under legal review. Hasina said she would not ask India for help. She said she would return of her own free will.

She also denied that her Awami League party was behind recent petrol bomb attacks. The party's activities are now banned.

Hasina faces many other charges, including corruption. She says more than 600 false cases have been filed against her. Her lawyers have applied for a passport and national ID card through the Bangladesh high commission in New Delhi.

"I do not wish to die," she said. "But if death is the price I must pay for returning home, I am prepared to face it."

Analysts say her promise may be an effort to stay politically relevant and keep her supporters loyal.

Xi-Putin-Trump Meeting In Shenzhen Called "Groundbreaking" By China's Foreign Ministry

WEB DESK

BEIJING

Xi-Putin-Trump meeting is set to make history this week. China says the three-way talks will help promote world peace and stability.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet on Thursday. The venue is Shenzhen, the southern Chinese city hosting this week's Apec summit.

On Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning spoke to reporters in Beijing. She said it would be the first face-to-face meeting among the three heads of state.

She described the talks as being of "groundbreaking significance." The leaders will share views on keeping the world safe and keeping ties between major powers steady.

Mao said the three countries carry an important duty in today's world. In her view, they should work together to tackle global problems.

She added that better communication helps all three nations. Managing differences and calming tensions, she said, serves everyone's interests. It also meets what the wider world expects.

However, Mao did not share what is on the agenda for the meeting.



The Embassy of Pakistan held an event inviting Pakistani professionals in France, including members of academia, engineers and IT professionals, for an interaction with Ambassador Mumtaz Zahra Baloch. During the session, the participants shared ideas to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and France including in education, culture, science and technology. Ambassador also inquired about consular issues faced by Pakistani professionals in France and assured them of Mission's full support in resolving these issues.

ECO Must Become Dynamic Platform For Regional Connectivity

● Masood Khan Urges ECO Revival For Economic Integration

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Sardar Masood Khan, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Monday said Pakistan's chairmanship of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) presents a rare opportunity to revitalise the regional body, translate its longstanding vision into practical initiatives and strengthen economic connectivity among its ten member states.

In an interview, Khan observed that although the ECO was established in 1985 by Pakistan, Türkiye and Iran, and subsequently expanded in 1992 with the inclusion of seven additional members, the organisation had not evolved to the extent of its considerable potential. Its ten member states collectively represent a significant geographical area, a substantial population and an estimated nominal GDP of approximately $3 trillion.

Their geographical contiguity and existing infrastructure provide a strong foundation for regional trade, transportation and economic cooperation.

He described Pakistan's forthcoming two-year chairmanship, alongside the leadership of Secretary General Ambassador Asad Majid, as an important opportunity to give the organisation renewed direction. The priority, he stressed, should be to move beyond ceremonial meetings towards measurable outcomes, stronger institutions and a practical regional connectivity agenda.

Khan said Pakistan's growing international diplomatic standing, particularly its recent role in facilitating efforts to end the conflict between Iran and the United States, provides additional credibility and an opportunity to exercise constructive regional leadership. He emphasised that strengthening the ECO also aligns with Pakistan's own national objectives of expanding connectivity and emerging as a major economic power over the coming decades.

Addressing Afghanistan's place in regional integration, Khan said its participation in the ECO economic ecosystem was essential for the long-term prosperity of the region. However, he expressed concern over the Afghan Taliban authorities' policies and the use of Afghan territory by terrorist elements targeting Pakistan. He noted that alternative trade corridors were already emerging through China's Xinjiang region and Iran, while an Afghanistan-based corridor remained the ideal route for connecting Central Asia with South Asia.

He emphasised that regional connectivity should encompass energy supplies, transportation, merchandise trade and services, creating multiple routes for economic cooperation.

On insulating regional economies from geopolitical rivalries, Khan called for institutionalising trade links, increasing intra-regional commerce and consolidating existing bilateral agreements. He highlighted Pakistan-Türkiye cooperation in defence production, business and education as examples of the broader partnerships that could strengthen the ECO.

Saudi-Led Coalition Shoots Down Four Houthi Drones Near Makkah And Madinah

● Houthi forces also advance toward Aden as fighting grows across Yemen and the Saudi kingdom

WEB DESK

SAUDI ARABIA



The Saudi-led coalition shoots down four drones launched by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis over the Makkah and Madinah regions. The coalition said all four were destroyed before they could cause harm.

Coalition spokesperson Maj-Gen Turki Al-Maliki said two of the drones were stopped in the Madinah region. He shared the details in separate statements.

Earlier on Sunday, the coalition said it destroyed two ballistic missiles fired toward Riyadh. A civil defence alert sounded at 4:08 am, warning residents of an incoming threat. Three loud explosions were heard before authorities gave the all-clear.

The coalition also stopped three drones aimed at the Eastern Province. The area holds most of the kingdom's oil and gas reserves and the Aramco headquarters.

The latest attacks follow a series of Houthi strikes on Saudi airports, military sites and energy facilities. A recent attack damaged an Aramco administrative building in Riyadh's financial district.

Houthis move closer to Aden

On the ground, the Houthis are advancing on Aden, the temporary seat of Yemen's recognised government. Sources told AFP they were just 60 kilometres from the city.

The group took control of two districts in Lahj province. Government forces said they were moving troops away from the Red Sea coast to protect Aden and nearby areas.

Houthi military sources said their fighters then took over the Red Sea areas left behind. These stretch more than 150 kilometres from Dhubab to near Khor Amira.

Prisoner release and rising toll

On Sunday, the Houthis freed 600 members of government forces, according to the Red Cross. They called it a humanitarian step.

A Houthi missile attack also killed eight people near Aden and wounded 12 others. The United Nations says more than 1,600 people have died and over 300,000 have been displaced since fighting resumed in July.

The UN refugee agency said it was gravely concerned about clashes near the Kharaz refugee camp. About 9,600 refugees are at risk there.

Trump's Tariffs Cast Shadow Over APEC Summit In Shenzhen

● Leaders from 21 Pacific Rim economies meet in China, but trade tensions and rivalries limit hopes for big results



WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

Trump's tariffs cast shadow over this week's APEC summit in Shenzhen, China. Leaders from 21 Pacific Rim economies have gathered, but expectations are low.

APEC members make up just over half of global trade. The group includes the United States, China, Japan, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Indonesia.

Experts say rivalries are getting in the way. Deborah Elms of the Hinrich Foundation said China hosting a group with both the US and Russia has not worked well. She noted that even simple topics are now harder to agree on.

The US also sent a weaker signal earlier. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent skipped the APEC finance ministers' meeting in Hong Kong in October. Elms said this cost members a chance to meet a key US official.

She also pointed to changes by China. Some meetings were moved online, and timings of key events were confirmed very late.

Tariffs Remain Despite Midterm Loss

The Democrats won both houses of Congress in the November 3 midterm elections. Even so, there is no sign that Trump will ease his tariffs.

The US Supreme Court struck down many of his duties in February. Since then, Washington has set new tariffs of up to 12.5 percent on 60 economies. It cited weak action against forced labour. Duties on steel, cars and timber also remain.

Joshua Kurlantzick of the Council on Foreign Relations said Trump is "doubling down." He added that Congress can do little to stop him.

Many countries now want to rely less on the United States. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada has finished talks on a free-trade deal with the Philippines. A wider deal with ASEAN is also in the works.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva shared a similar view in Manila. He said Brazil chose to find new partners instead of begging for pity. Trade with Indonesia and Vietnam rose 15 and 13 percent.

The RCEP trade pact has also set long-term tariff cut goals. However, analyst Nick Marro said its weak enforcement may offer middle powers only limited protection.

Iran FM Araghchi Arrives In Islamabad For 30th ECO Meeting

● Iran's top diplomat leads a political-economic delegation and will hold talks with regional counterparts and Pakistani leaders

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Iran FM Araghchi reached Islamabad early Monday to take part in the 30th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Council of Ministers meeting.

Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi came with a political and economic delegation. Pakistan is hosting the two-day gathering of ECO foreign ministers, which began on Sunday.

Additional Foreign Secretary Muhammad Tariq Wazir received him at the airport. Officers of the Foreign Ministry and Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghaddam, were also present.

During his stay, the Iranian minister will attend the ECO session and deliver a speech. He will also meet some of his counterparts from other member states.

Talks with senior Pakistani government officials are also on his schedule. Both sides are expected to discuss ways to improve ties and regional cooperation.

After Islamabad, Araghchi will travel to Muscat, the capital of Oman.

This is the third time Pakistan has hosted the ECO foreign ministers' meeting. Earlier meetings took place in Quetta in 1993 and in Islamabad in 2017.

Other leaders have also arrived for the event. Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin landed in Islamabad and was welcomed by Foreign Office Spokesperson and Additional Foreign Secretary Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan.

Uzbekistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Bobur Masudovich Usmanov also reached the capital. Senior Foreign Ministry officers received him at the airport.

Eisenkot Rejects Netanyahu's Offer, Says Unity Government Is A Trick

NEWS DESK

ISRAEL

Eisenkot rejects Netanyahu's offer to form a national unity government, calling it a political trick. The Israeli opposition leader says Netanyahu knows he has lost the election.

Gadi Eisenkot is now holding talks with political parties. The Israeli president asked him to form the new government after the vote.

He has the support of 67 members of parliament. This gives him a strong base to move forward.

Turkish broadcaster TRT reported his words. "These tricks will not work on the people of Israel or me," he said.

A day earlier, Netanyahu shared a video message. He said his Thursday meeting with Eisenkot made him believe Israel needs a unity government. He said it would protect the country and remove the threat from Iran for good.

Netanyahu also criticised Eisenkot's plan for a minority government. Eisenkot calls it a national emergency government.

Under this plan, 48 members of his alliance would vote in favour. The 46 lawmakers who back Netanyahu would vote against it.

The other 26 members come from Arab and ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties.

‘Young Stunners’ bring Karachi’s chaos to Coke Studio Nu.WAV

● Duo presents ‘Diwanay Dil’ with singer Sabaat Batin, producer Jokhay

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Coke Studio Nu.WAV has concluded its six-song series with Diwanay Dil, bringing together Young Stunners, singer Sabaat Batin and producer Jokhay in a track that draws inspiration from Karachi’s restless energy and everyday chaos.

Featuring Talha Anjum and Talhah Yunus of Young Stunners alongside Sabaat Batin, the song blends contemporary Urdu hip-hop with live instrumentation. Its creation began with a simple guitar riff by Jokhay, which gradually developed into a full composition with drums and additional musical elements. Rather than extensively reworking the initial idea, the producer chose to retain the spontaneity of the original session.

The music video takes the same unpredictable energy to the streets of Karachi. Directed by Talhah Yunus and Wali Baloch, it is set beneath the city’s Lilly Bridge, where an unusual traffic jam brings together an assortment of characters.

The storyline follows Talha Anjum as he attempts to reach a film shoot, while a groom, commuters, rickshaws and buses remain stuck in the congestion. The increasingly bizarre scene includes a superhero, a gorilla and dancers, turning a familiar urban problem into an exaggerated cinematic spectacle.

The video also shifts to a film set, where the distinction between the production and the story gradually blurs. Sabaat Batin’s appearance in a rickshaw draws on his own journey as an emerging musician travelling to studios before finding recognition.

Speaking about the release, Coke Studio Nu.WAV Executive Producer Kamal Khan described the film as an expression of Karachi’s character, with its traffic, unexpected encounters and larger-than-life moments. He said the track brought together the individual energies of its performers and offered an appropriate conclusion to the series.

Young Stunners, formed in 2012, have played a significant role in taking Urdu hip-hop from Pakistan’s underground music scene to a wider regional audience. The duo is known for tracks including Gumaan, Afsanay, Quarantine and Two Tone.

Sabaat Batin, who hails from Munianwala near Faisalabad, developed his music independently before gaining widespread attention with Gal Sun. Meanwhile, Jokhay has established himself as one of the prominent producers in Pakistan’s hip-hop scene, particularly through his long-standing collaborations with Young Stunners and his album



Durefishan opens up about love, heartbreak, healing and Pakistani TV

● Actor discusses emotional vulnerability and the criticism surrounding her character’s decisions in ‘Dar-e-Nijaat’

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Actor Durefishan Saleem has opened up about the emotional complexities behind her character Zaryab in the popular drama Dar-e-Nijaat, addressing the criticism surrounding her decisions, the audience’s response to her relationship with Sheheryar Munawar’s character Abu Bakr and the questions the story raises about love, self-worth and healing.

In an interview with Khaleej Times, she discussed the emotional uncertainty that shapes Zaryab’s journey, explaining why portraying a character does not necessarily mean endorsing every decision she makes. The actor said she was particularly drawn to the human reality of how heartbreak can affect a woman’s sense of identity and self-worth.

“With Zaryab, I was interested in the very human reality of what happens when a woman is shattered by someone she loves. She may begin to blame herself, lose sight of her own worth or struggle to recognise the person she has become. That doesn’t mean the story is endorsing her suffering; it may simply be trying to understand it,” she added.

Durefishan said that an actor’s responsibility was to portray a character honestly rather than dictate how audiences should perceive her. “I don’t think an actor’s job is to tell the audience what to think. It’s to bring a character to life honestly enough that people feel compelled to think about her for themselves,” she added.

The conversations surrounding Dar-e-Nijaat have extended beyond the drama itself, with viewers debating Zaryab’s decisions and the nature of her relationship with Abu Bakr.

According to Durefishan, the audience’s engagement reflects something deeper than an interest in fictional characters. “People aren’t just watching Zaryab and Abu Bakr; they’re negotiating their own beliefs about love, pain, healing and what people deserve from one another,” she said.

She also defended Abu Bakr’s portrayal, particularly the kindness and emotional maturity that have led some viewers to question whether such a character is realistic.

“He represents a kind of gentleness that audiences don’t always get to see. People may find him too good to be true, but I don’t think kindness, patience and emotional maturity should be considered unrealistic,” she added.

Former singer Shazia Khushk surprises fans with new life in Karachi

● She reveals why she left singing and chose a new path

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Former famous singer Shazia Khushk has surprised social media users with her new look and a very different life after leaving the music industry in 2018.

The singer, who had been away from the public eye for some time, recently appeared in an interview with a journalist that has gone viral on social media.

In the interview, she was seen selling artificial jewellery and handmade traditional clothes at a stall in Karachi.

Shazia has also adopted full Islamic veiling.

She said she left singing in 2018 for the sake of Allah and Islam and has no plans to return to the music industry.

She shared that the death of famous singer Junaid Jamshed deeply affected her.

During that difficult time, she decided to leave music and follow a different path in life.

With time, she found the strength to move forward and adopted Islamic veiling, she added.

Shazia also said her twin children live abroad, but she never feels alone because she believes Allah is always with her throughout her life and journey.

Urwa Hocane highlights lasting impact of childhood trauma

● Actor urges adults to avoid fear-based behaviour and create emotionally secure environments for children

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Actor Urwa Hocane has stressed the importance of protecting children emotionally, drawing attention to how frightening experiences during childhood can leave lasting psychological effects.

The actor recently reshared a video on Instagram, featuring religious scholar Nouman Ali Khan discussing how adults sometimes use fear as a form of entertainment when interacting with children.

The discussion highlighted seemingly harmless remarks and threats, such as telling children they cannot do something or that they will not be taken home if they misbehave, and how such experiences can leave lasting emotional scars.

Reacting to the video, Hocane shared a heartfelt reflection on how childhood experiences can shape people well into adulthood, revealing that the discussion resonated with her own memories.

“This made me teary-eyed. This was so important for me to hear to heal my inner trauma. I can remember so many incidents in my life as a child where adults didn’t act like adults, and such incidents have shaped so many of us grown-ups in more ways than we can elaborate on and pay attention to,” she wrote.

She stated that the discussion also resonated with her perspective as a parent, saying it made her more conscious of the importance of not repeating such patterns.

“Glad I always thought about this even as a parent today, and my inner child truly feels validated today after hearing this. We all must become mindful and not repeat these patterns so we protect our children better! Thank you for sharing this!” she added.

Her response highlighted behaviour that is often dismissed as harmless fun or a way of disciplining children. Threatening children with abandonment, punishment or rejection, even jokingly, can make them feel insecure and distressed, while experiences adults may consider insignificant can remain deeply ingrained in a child’s memory.

Hocane’s emphasis on being mindful of such behaviour also drew attention to the responsibility parents and caregivers have in creating emotionally secure environments. Children need guidance and boundaries, but these should be established without making them feel threatened or unsafe.

Kids’ Choice Awards honour Chris Pratt, BTS

● Actor crowned ‘King of Comedy’ as boyband takes home favourite album, Spider-Man wins favourite movie

SHOWBIZ DESK

LOS ANGELES



The Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards honoured Chris Pratt with the “King of Comedy” title, while South Korean boy band BTS took home favorite album for ARIRANG and Spider-Man: Brand New Day won favourite movie.

BTS also secured the award for favourite music group, their fifth time in this category, as well as a win for favourite song with Swim. Tom Holland and Zendaya gained the best male and female actor awards for their roles in Spider-Man: Brand New Day.

The event, which was hosted by pop singer Alex Warren and took place at Television City in Los Angeles, aired on CBS for the first time in addition to Nickelodeon. It was also streamed live on Paramount+ for premium subscribers.

“I love kids!” Pratt said on stage while accepting the award, which celebrates a performer’s outstanding comedic work across film, television and other entertainment.

“I have four kids of my own, and them being born was the greatest thing that ever happened to me, until tonight!” he joked.

Shifting to a more serious tone, Pratt later spoke about the importance of loving and appreciating teachers and of using comedy to cope with life’s challenges.

During the ceremony, Jamie Miller performed Babydoll, while Ashe performed Stop The Wedding!.

The annual fan-voted ceremony honours celebrities and franchises across film, television, music and video games. Winners receive the show’s signature hollow orange blimp trophy, and the ceremony is known for its slime-filled stunts and celebrity soakings.

Skydance, the parent company of CBS and Nickelodeon, has continued to expand its media portfolio. Paramount and Skydance merged in 2025, and the company acquired Warner Bros Discovery in October 2026.

Yumna Zaidi is all praise for Amar Khan

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani actress Yumna Zaidi has won hearts with her heartfelt appreciation for fellow actress Amar Khan, acknowledging her remarkable contribution to their ongoing project ‘ Miti de Baway’ and praising her exceptional talent.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Yumna reshared a reel featuring Amar and penned a beautiful note highlighting the depth and value she brings to the project. The actress wrote, “You are revealing your massive value to this project.”

Going beyond appreciating her performance, Yumna described Amar as a rare talent, emphasising that she possesses a unique depth that reveals itself in every frame. Her generous words reflected the admiration she holds for Amar, not just as a co-star but also as an artist.

Amar Khan was equally touched by the appreciation and reshared Yumna’s story with a heartfelt response.



Anthony Mackie hints at a bigger future for Captain America in the MCU

● Anthony Mackie wants two more Captain America films, saying Sam Wilson deserves a complete story arc in the MCU

WEB DESK

MIAMI

Anthony Mackie has expressed interest in returning for two more solo Captain America films, saying Sam Wilson deserves a longer story arc in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

The actor discussed the possibility during an appearance alongside co-star Jamie Dornan at a panel for their upcoming series 12 12 12. Speaking with Josh Horowitz on the Happy Sad Confused podcast, Mackie said he believed every Marvel character deserved multiple solo films.

“I think every character deserves a second film. I think with Cap, well, it’s been proven, every character deserves three films,” he said, adding that he would welcome the opportunity to make two more movies to complete Sam Wilson’s journey.

Mackie made his MCU debut as Sam Wilson, also known as Falcon, in 2014’s Captain America: The Winter Soldier. He later appeared in several Marvel films, including Avengers: Age of Ultron, Captain America: Civil War and Avengers: Endgame.

Steve Rogers passed the Captain America shield to Sam at the end of Endgame, a transition explored further in the 2021 Disney+ series The Falcon and the Winter Soldier. Mackie subsequently led his first solo film as the superhero in 2025’s Captain America: Brave New World.



The actor is set to reprise the role in Avengers: Doomsday, scheduled to arrive in cinemas on December 18, 2026. According to Empire, Sam will lead a team featuring Joaquin Torres, Scott Lang, Shang-Chi and Thor.

Mackie’s comments suggest he remains interested in continuing as Captain America beyond the upcoming Avengers film. However, Marvel Studios has not officially announced a second Sam Wilson solo movie or confirmed plans for a new trilogy.

Zara’s latest story fuels speculation over friendship with Sajal

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Pakistani actress Zara Noor Abbas has caught fans’ attention with a cryptic Instagram Story featuring Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan and a thought-provoking quote, sparking curiosity about what prompted her latest social media post.

Taking to Instagram, Zara shared a picture of Shah Rukh Khan alongside a quote that read, “Someday, somewhere, anywhere, unfailingly, you’ll find yourself, & that, & only that, can be the happiest or bitterest hour of your life.”

The thought-provoking words suggest that everyone eventually reaches a moment of self-discovery, when they are forced to confront their true selves, past choices and the realities of their lives. While such a realisation can bring happiness and peace, it can also become a difficult moment of reflection.

Although Zara did not offer any explanation behind sharing the quote, her post has attracted attention, particularly amid renewed curiosity surrounding her relationship with fellow actress Sajal Aly.

The two actresses were once known for their close friendship, but their apparent distance and social media unfollowing had previously sparked speculation about a fallout. However, fans recently noticed that Zara and Sajal had started following each other again on Instagram, giving rise to hopes of a possible reconciliation.

Zara’s latest cryptic post has now added another layer of curiosity, with fans potentially wondering whether the quote has any connection to the renewed attention surrounding their friendship. However, the actress has not indicated that her post is related to Sajal or their past differences.



Jockeys race neck and neck down the track at the Lahore Race Club Winter Meeting, with Pakistani Queen leading the field.

Pakistani Queen Wins Makkah Joint Defence Cup At Lahore Race Club

● Son of Gujrat and Mera Sultan finish second and third as the Winter Meeting brings seven thrilling races

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani Queen wins the Makkah Joint Defence Cup, the main race of the Winter Meeting at the Lahore Race Club. The horse crossed the finish line first after a close and exciting contest.

Son of Gujrat came second in the race. Mera Sultan took third place and also received loud cheers from the crowd.

The Lahore Race Club organised the Winter Meeting with seven races in different categories. Horse racing fans came to enjoy a full day of speed, skill and excitement.

The jockeys showed great talent on the track. They rode their horses at full speed and pushed hard to stay ahead of their rivals.

The Makkah Joint Defence Cup was the highlight of the day. Several riders stayed close to each other for most of the race, but Pakistani Queen found extra strength at the end and took the win.

Another big race of the day was the November Cup. Bella Two claimed the first position in this race.

To Maro Land finished second in the November Cup. Queen of Farah came third and completed the top three.

Other winners of the day included Jatt Gee, Zaman Sahib, Talent Again, Eden Queen and Mr Sardar. Each of these horses won its own race and made the meeting more enjoyable.

The event gave racing fans many close and thrilling contests. Every race brought new energy to the track, and the crowd stayed excited until the last race.

The Winter Meeting once again showed how popular horse racing is in Lahore. Fans now look forward to more such events at the Lahore Race Club in the coming days.

Pakistan Shaheens off to Doha to play ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026

SPORTS DESK

OMAN



Pakistan Shaheens departed from Karachi for Doha, Qatar in the wee hours of Monday to participate in the 50-over ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026, scheduled from 19 to 29 November.

The 15-member squad led by Abdul Samad will be joined in Doha by Ali Raza and Farhan Yousuf, who recently featured in the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup in Oman.

Defending champions Pakistan Shaheens are placed in Group B alongside India 'A', Nepal and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They will begin their campaign against UAE on 20 November, followed by matches against India 'A' on 22 November and Nepal on 24 November.

Ja'Marr Chase Makes History As Bengals Crush Steelers On Sunday Night Football

● Bengals star finishes with 11 catches and 231 yards in a 38-18 Week 10 win

SPORTS DESK

BANGLADESH

Sunday Night Football delivered a big show as Ja'Marr Chase wrote his name in the NFL record books. The Cincinnati Bengals beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 38-18 in Week 10.

Chase led the way with 11 catches for 231 yards. It was one of the best nights of his career.

Bengals beat writer Jay Morrison shared a stat on X on November 15. He noted that Chase's 230 receiving yards are the third most in NFL history for a player with no receiving touchdown in that game.

The night also put Chase in rare company. He now has three career games with 225 or more receiving yards. That ties him with Julio Jones, Calvin Johnson and Jerry Rice for the most in league history.

Chase will turn 27 next March. This season he has 64 catches for 878 yards and seven touchdowns. He is on pace for the second-best yardage total of his career.

The win was a strong statement for Cincinnati. The Bengals controlled the game and left the Steelers with few answers.

Pakistan Hockey Team Announces 18-Member Squad For Azlan Shah Cup

● Imad Butt and goalkeeper Munib dropped as Abu Bakar takes charge of the side

SPORTS REPORTER

KARACHI

Staff Reporter/Web Desk

The Pakistan hockey team has announced its 18-member squad for the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2026. The list came after the national training camp and includes several surprising changes.

Former captain Imad Butt has been left out of the squad. He had already lost the captaincy earlier. Since the new PHF setup began, this is the first time he has missed national selection.

Goalkeeper Munib has also been dropped again. He played well in the Nation Cup and won the best goalkeeper award in Russia, where he also led Pakistan. Even so, he did not make the final list.



Abdullah Ishtiaq and Waqar will now guard the goal. Abu Bakar has been named the new captain of the side.

Pakistan Squad

Goalkeepers: Abdullah Ishtiaq, Waqar

Defenders: Abu Bakar (captain), Sufyan Khan, Muhammad Abdullah, Nadeem Khan

Midfielders: Moin Shakeel, Hammaduddin, Samiullah, Muhammad Imad, Zakaria Hayat, Umar Mustafa

Forwards: Rana Waheed, Ghazanfar Ali, Ahmed Nadeem, Abdul Rehman, Hanan Shahid, Afraz

The 32nd Sultan Azlan Shah Cup will be played in Ipoh, Malaysia, from November 20 to November 28. Pakistan, Malaysia, Australia, South Korea and the United States are expected to take part.

Pakistan's Match Schedule (Pakistan time)

- November 20: Pakistan vs South Korea, 2:15 PM
- November 21: USA vs Pakistan, 12:00 PM
- November 23: Pakistan vs Australia, 2:15 PM
- November 24: South Korea vs Pakistan, 12:00 PM
- November 26: Malaysia vs Pakistan, 4:30 PM

After Tendulkar Six, Princess Kate Could Take On Wasim Akram And Shahid Afridi

● The royal's fearless batting stunned fans and sparked talk about a possible match against Pakistan's cricket stars

SPORTS DESK

LONDON

Princess Kate has shown the world that she is much more than a royal. She loves sport and plays many games with real joy and skill.

Football, hockey, tennis, rowing, swimming and table tennis are all part of her active life. She plays each one with strength, grace and a winning spirit.

Cricket may be her most surprising game. During a street cricket event in India, she hit a ball from Sachin Tendulkar for six.



The Prince and Princess of Wales were in India to start William's Earthshot Prize visit. They played with cricket legends, and Kate's big shot became the highlight of the day.

Tendulkar himself clapped for her. Moments later, she hit another ball from Prince William high into the air, and everyone was left amazed.

Her green and white outfits during the trip also caught the eye of fans online. Some believe the look hints at her next challenge. There is no official word to support this idea.

Now the talk has moved to Pakistan. Some fans guess that Kate may one day face Wasim Akram or Shahid Afridi, two names loved by cricket fans everywhere.

The royals have not announced any such match or visit to Pakistan. Still, interest has grown since King Charles welcomed the Pakistan cricket team in the UK during their series against England.

India's Jay Shah Re-Elected ICC Chairman For A Second Term

SPORTS DESK

MUMBAI



India's Jay Shah has been elected unopposed for a second term as chair of the International Cricket Council. The ICC announced the news on Monday after its board meeting in Bali.

Shah first took the role in 2024 and became the youngest ICC chair ever, at just 35 years old. Before that, he served as secretary of the Indian cricket board.

His new two-year term comes at a big moment for the sport. Cricket will return to the Olympics at the 2028 Los Angeles Games, and Shah will lead the ICC through that journey.

Shah thanked the ICC board for trusting him again. He said serving as chair is both a privilege and a responsibility. He also promised to keep working with member boards to help cricket grow around the world.

He described this period as one of the most exciting in the history of the game. In his view, the Olympics give cricket a rare chance to reach new audiences and inspire young players and fans.

Shah also said the ICC's job goes beyond running good tournaments. He wants to build a stronger and more lasting future for the sport. That means keeping fans, players, commercial partners and other key groups at the center of every decision.

Richard Thompson, chair of the England and Wales Cricket Board, also welcomed the decision. He said Shah's steady leadership matters at a time when the game is changing fast.

Thompson stressed the need to improve the international calendar. He also wants to protect bilateral cricket and keep major events at the heart of the sport.



Rashid, Waqar and Khurram advance in doubles at ITF Masters MT700 in Pattaya

SPORTS REPORTER

PATTAYA

Pakistan's senior tennis players continued their impressive run at the ITF Masters MT700 Tennis Tournament being held at the Royal Cliff Hotel, Pattaya, Thailand, as Rashid Ahmad Malik and Khurram Imtiaz advanced to the Men's 55+ Doubles quarterfinals, while Waqar Nisar secured a place in the Men's 70+ Doubles semifinals.

In the Men's 55+ Doubles, Pakistan's Rashid Ahmad Malik, partnering Germany's Axel Hampe, overcame a spirited challenge from Yurri Kudinov (Russia) and Patravut Sangcharoen (Thailand) to register a 7-5, 6-2 victory.

The opening set witnessed intense competition, with Malik displaying his experience and composure on crucial points. Well supported by Hampe, Malik raised his game at decisive moments, countering his opponents' aggressive play to seal an impressive victory and a quarterfinal berth.



Uzaam Arif Secures Third In Global Cybersecurity Competition

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Uzaam Arif, a promising student from Fateh Jang, has secured third place in a global cybersecurity competition held in China.

The event saw the participation of 220,000 students from 2,000 universities across 100 countries—a significant achievement for Pakistan in the field of detecting and countering cyberattacks.

Uzaam Arif completed his Bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity from the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (FAST), Islamabad. He participated in the 2026 Huawei IT competition alongside his team.

This international event, organized by Huawei, brings together students from various universities and countries worldwide to develop solutions for real-world problems by leveraging advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence.

For this competition, his team developed a project titled "Root Hunter," designed to detect and investigate cyberattacks, as well as to automate the response process for cybersecurity incidents. To reach the global final, the team had to navigate three distinct stages.

First, they submitted their project along with its technical documentation. The initial, national-level round took place at FAST University, where approximately 75 teams presented their projects; among them, his team's project was selected. Subsequently, a national-level competition was held between projects chosen from various universities, with the goal of selecting the top three teams from across Pakistan. Azam Arif's team was among those selected, thereby qualifying them for the next stage. The following stage was the regional round. Huawei established various regions, grouping South Asia and the Middle East into a single region. At this stage, participants were required to present their projects online. Their team secured second place in this regional round, qualifying them for the global finals.

The global finals were held in Shenzhen—a highly advanced city in China—featuring teams selected from various countries and universities worldwide.

Representing Pakistan, their team achieved third place in the 'Innovation Track.' This year, the competition saw the participation of over 220,000 students and faculty members from more than 100 countries and 2,000 universities and institutions; ultimately, only 177 teams from 49 countries reached the global finals.



LARKANA: SHEPHERDS ARE GUIDING A HERD OF SHEEP ON BYPASS ROAD.

BISP Approves Inclusion Of Never-Married Women over Aged 45

● Rubina Khalid Announces Digital Wallets For BISP Women

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid, has said that the BISP Board has approved the inclusion of never-married women aged 45 years or above in the Programme. These women will also be eligible to receive financial assistance from BISP, subject to fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria. She expressed these views while addressing a press conference in Lahore.

Senator Rubina Khalid said that out of more than 10 million beneficiary families across the country, around 5 million belong to Punjab. These figures clearly reflect that BISP is a national social welfare programme providing support to eligible families across the country, irrespective of their political affiliation.

Speaking about the new digital payment system, the Chairperson BISP said that, under the guidance of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, digital mobile wallets and an interoperable payment system have been introduced to ensure convenient and transparent payments to beneficiary women. Through 1LINK, six partner banks, JazzCash, Easypaisa, Habib Bank Limited, HBL Microfinance Bank, Bank of Punjab and Bank Alfalah, have been connected to this system. Women will no longer be restricted to a specific payment centre and will be able to withdraw their payments from any authorised agent or retailer of the partner banks across the country, according to their convenience.

She said that free SIMs have been provided to beneficiary women and digital wallet accounts have been activated in their names. They will receive SMS notifications when funds are credited to their accounts and when they withdraw their payments. Women should keep their mobile phones, SIMs and bank messages secure. In case of any unauthorised deduction or fraud, they should lodge a complaint with the concerned bank or the nearest BISP office.

The Chairperson thanked the State Bank of Pakistan, particularly its Governor, for providing guidance and support in the development of this system. She emphasised that the payments received by beneficiary women are their rightful entitlement and that strict action would be taken against those involved in unauthorised deductions or corruption. She added that banks would now be held accountable for any unlawful deductions.

Most Privileged Prisoner: Imran Khan's Health Claims Rejected

● Minister: Khan Letter To Judges Is NRO Plea

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has rejected former prime minister Imran Khan's allegations about his health and prison conditions, describing his open letter to the country's top judges as an attempt to seek an NRO.

The minister said the claims made by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder were contrary to the facts, arguing that Khan was receiving all necessary facilities in prison. He also dismissed allegations of inadequate medical care, prolonged solitary confinement and restrictions on access to books and television.

Speaking to the media at Parliament House, Chaudhry said Khan was not being held in prison as a result of political victimisation but was serving a sentence in the £190 million Al-Qadir Trust case.

He maintained that the case was supported by clear and substantial evidence, alleging that £190 million, which should have been deposited into Pakistan's national treasury, was instead transferred elsewhere. In return, he claimed, land measuring 450 kanals was gifted to the person involved.

The minister said Khan could obtain relief through the courts and accused him of seeking concessions after repeatedly criticising others over the issue of an NRO.

Medical claims disputed

Chaudhry rejected Khan's allegations that prison authorities had failed to provide appropriate medical facilities or implement court orders concerning his treatment.

He also disputed claims that the former prime minister was kept in solitary confinement for 22 hours a day without access to books, television and other facilities.

According to the minister, Khan was being provided with all necessary amenities, including meals prepared according to his preferences.

Describing him as Pakistan's most privileged prisoner, Chaudhry said his health was monitored regularly, with medical specialists examining him every week. He added that whenever specialists considered it necessary, Khan was taken outside prison for medical examinations at well-equipped healthcare facilities.

The minister said the former prime minister had been taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad eight times for medical examinations and treatment.

He further claimed that doctors had assessed Khan's overall health as satisfactory. A doctor from London, who also practises in Pakistan, had been called to examine his blood pressure, which was also reported to be satisfactory, according to Chaudhry.

The government, he added, considered it its responsibility to ensure Khan received appropriate medical care and would continue to fulfil that obligation.

Khan's letter to judges

The minister's remarks came after Khan appealed to the chief justices of the Supreme Court, Federal Constitutional Court and Islamabad High Court for urgent medical treatment for himself and his wife, Bushra Bibi.

In his open letter, shared on X by his lawyer Barrister Salman Safdar on Monday, the former prime minister raised concerns about his deteriorating health, alleged restrictions on access to medical care and what he described as prolonged solitary confinement at Adiala Jail.

Imran Khan flags brain haemorrhage, heart attack risk in letter to CJP

Khan claimed he was being kept in isolation for up to 22 hours a day and denied regular access to his family, lawyers, books and television. He also alleged that he had been allowed to meet his lawyer only four times during the year, while Bushra Bibi had met her legal counsel just once.

The PTI founder said the restrictions had affected his physical and mental health, adding that the prison's medical board had recorded his anxiety and recommended more frequent contact with his family, reading material and television.

He also raised serious concerns about his wife's eyesight, claiming that she suffered a retinal detachment in April and underwent eye surgery before being returned to solitary confinement.

According to Khan, Bushra Bibi's eyesight had deteriorated further, and she might require another operation to prevent permanent loss of vision. He alleged that her medical records had been withheld and that she had not been allowed access to doctors of her choice.

Dry weather expected across most parts of country on Tuesday: PMD



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

tThe Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly dry weather across most parts of the country on Tuesday, with cold conditions expected in upper regions.

According to the weather forecast issued by the PMD on Monday, Islamabad and its surrounding areas are likely to experience dry weather, with cold conditions during morning and night. Strong winds are also expected in the afternoon.

Most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are likely to experience dry weather, while upper districts will remain cold. Similarly, dry weather is expected in most districts of Punjab, with cold conditions during morning and night. Murree and Galiyat are also likely to experience cold and dry weather.

The department has forecast strong winds in upper districts of Punjab during the afternoon. Fog and smog are likely to occur at isolated places in Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Okara, Kasur, Faisalabad, Jhang, Khanewal, Multan, Khanpur, Kot Addu, Bahawalpur and adjoining areas during morning and night.

Most districts of Sindh are expected to experience dry weather, while mainly dry conditions with cold weather in northern districts are likely in Balochistan. During the past 24 hours, dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country, while upper regions experienced cold conditions.

Leh recorded the lowest temperature at minus 9 degrees Celsius, followed by Ziarat at minus 3 degrees, Kalat and Babusar at minus 2 degrees, while Astore, Gupis, Kalam and Skardu recorded minus 1 degree Celsius.

The minimum and maximum temperatures recorded in major cities were Islamabad 8/26C, Lahore 14/28C, Karachi 22/34C, Peshawar 8/28C, Quetta 0/20C, Gilgit 1/19C, Muzaffarabad 10/25C, Skardu minus 1/12C, Murree 5/16C, Faisalabad 13/28C and Multan 13/29C.

OGRA cuts petrol, diesel prices by Rs 2 per litre

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) announced on Monday a reduction of Rs 2 per litre in petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) prices, effective November 17.

In a press release, OGRA said the price of petrol had been reduced from Rs 330 to Rs 328 per litre.

Similarly, the price of high-speed diesel has been cut from Rs 360 to Rs 358 per litre.

OGRA said the revised prices were set under the pricing mechanism approved by the federal government.

Pakistan First Parliament To Condemn Attack On Iran

● Ayaz Reaffirms Pakistan Commitment To Regional Peace, Dialogue

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has reiterated that Pakistan has always advocated peace, stability and dialogue in the region, emphasizing that the Parliament of Pakistan was the first legislature in the world to condemn the attack on Iran through a unanimous resolution.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Head of the Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Iranian Parliament, Mr. Fada Hossein Maleki, who called on him at Parliament House on Monday.

The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing parliamentary cooperation, expanding trade and economic ties, and promoting regional peace and stability.

Ayaz Sadiq highlighted the longstanding parliamentary relations between Pakistan and Iran and stressed the importance of sustained engagement and closer cooperation between the two legislatures.

He also appreciated the role of the Pakistan-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group in promoting regular interaction and strengthening institutional ties between parliamentarians of the two countries.

The Speaker said Pakistan and Iran enjoyed historic, brotherly and cordial relations, offering vast opportunities to further expand economic and trade cooperation.

He emphasized the need to increase bilateral trade volume and explore new avenues for investment and economic partnership.

Highlighting the strategic significance of Gwadar Port, he said the facility offered considerable opportunities for Iran and other regional countries to enhance trade, connectivity and economic integration.

On regional security, Ayaz Sadiq described terrorism as a common challenge confronting both countries and called for coordinated efforts to effectively address the threat.

He also underscored Pakistan's constructive role in facilitating dialogue and mediation to help end the war and restore regional peace, noting that the country's diplomatic efforts had received international recognition.

The Speaker further highlighted Pakistan's initiatives to bring Saudi Arabia, Iran and Türkiye onto a common platform to address regional challenges through dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan Agree To Expand Bilateral Trade, Investment

● FPCCI, Turkmenistan Chamber Vow Stronger Economic Cooperation Ties

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh, and Chairman of the Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce, Gurdov Mergen Meretdurdyevich have agreed to strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan through enhanced business cooperation, investment partnerships and regular exchanges of business delegations.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between the two business leaders in FPCCI house here, which focused on exploring new avenues of trade, investment and institutional collaboration between the business communities of the two brotherly countries.

Both sides also agreed to enhance cooperation between the FPCCI and the Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce, with particular emphasis on establishing stronger institutional linkages, facilitating business-to-business contacts and promoting joint investment initiatives.

During the meeting, Atif Ikram Sheikh highlighted the significant potential for expanding bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in energy, renewable energy, textiles, agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Turkmenistan needed to take concrete and coordinated measures to translate their existing economic potential into tangible trade and investment opportunities.

President FPCCI proposed organizing joint investment forums and signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between business organizations of the two countries to provide a structured framework for long-term cooperation.

The FPCCI president stressed that regular exchanges of business delegations could play an important role in strengthening institutional cooperation and enabling entrepreneurs to identify viable business opportunities.

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