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Editor: Zahid Husain

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Punjab governor urges caution over creation of new provinces, calls for respect for Sindh Assembly resolution

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider has said the decision to create new provinces should not be taken in haste and must be based on a careful assessment of all aspects, including lessons learned from the merger of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Speaking in Attock, the governor said policymakers should examine the outcomes of the FATA merger before making decisions on the creation of new provinces.

He said there was no disagreement among the ruling coalition parties over the issue of a referendum, adding that the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had their respective positions on the matter.

Haider said the PML-N's position was based on constitutional considerations, while the PPP's stance reflected its party manifesto.

Referring to the Sindh Assembly's opposition to the creation of new provinces, the governor said its democratic mandate must be respected.

He rejected attempts to question the legitimacy of the Sindh Assembly, saying it had been elected through the votes of the people and was not an "assembly of Form 47".

The governor said the Sindh Assembly had passed a resolution opposing the creation of new provinces with a two-thirds majority.

He stressed that the resolution represented a democratic decision of the elected provincial assembly and should be respected.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan held a formal meeting with Paulo Rangel, Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad on Monday. The high-level diplomatic engagement focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. The discussions took place in an ornate, wood-panelled room, highlighting the importance of diplomatic ties. This meeting underscores Pakistan's continued efforts to foster international cooperation and engage with European nations. Such dialogues are essential for enhancing mutual interests and exploring collaborative opportunities in various sectors.

Bilawal urges political unity, reforms to restore public trust in state institutions

- PPP chairman calls for a democratic reset and greater transparency to eliminate corruption

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has called for political unity and reforms to restore public confidence in state institutions, saying the country must overcome divisions to tackle its economic and other challenges.

Addressing a Youth Card ceremony in Karachi on Monday, Bilawal said politicians must maintain public hope and confidence in the system, warning that if political leaders themselves became disillusioned, they could not expect people to trust it.

"Rulers should abandon the politics of hatred and division and focus on public welfare," he said, adding that the country could confront every crisis and disaster through unity but would fail if it remained divided.

He said restoring young people's confidence in the system required a "democratic reset", including the restoration of parliamentary supremacy and public trust in the judiciary.

Bilawal said the government and opposition must develop mutual trust, while the public should also have confidence in the system.



He stressed that political differences should be set aside in the national interest, particularly as the country faced dangerous inflation and difficult economic conditions.

The PPP chairman also called for the use of modern technology to improve transparency and close avenues for corruption, saying the system should be designed in a way that left no room for corrupt practices.

He said young people wanted a Pakistan free of corruption and that public services should be delivered without causing inconvenience to citizens.

Bilawal urged the government to prepare the country to face future economic challenges and take measures to protect people from an economic crisis.

Murad Launches Sindh Youth Card To Empower Youth

- Youth Card Offers Education Skills Employment To Turn Job Seekers Into Entrepreneurs

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

tSindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has stated that the Sindh Youth Card is a historic step toward empowering the youth, adding that the future of Sindh and Pakistan depends on the opportunities provided to the younger generation today, who are not merely the leaders of tomorrow but a vital force for progress, innovation, and change.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the Sindh Youth Card, the Sindh Chief Minister said that the Sindh Youth Card is not just a card, but a platform for opportunities, inclusion, and empowerment, representing a practical manifestation of the government's commitment to youth empowerment. He emphasized that the abilities and determination of young people—not their economic conditions or social background—should determine their opportunities.

Syed Murad Ali Shah noted that the visionary leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the foundation of youth empowerment. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is a champion of social justice, equal opportunities, and inclusive development, adding that empowering the youth is a core part of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision and his special focus on youth development is commendable.

The Sindh Chief Minister stated that the Sindh Youth Card will facilitate access to opportunities and facilities for young people, connecting them with



avenues for education, skill development, and employment. Providing facilities in the sectors of information technology, health, and sports is also among its objectives, he said, noting that removing obstacles in the path of youth is a top priority of the PPP government.

He remarked that every talented and hardworking young person deserves equal opportunities for success, and economic constraints or social background will not be allowed to hinder their progress. He added that the success of the Sindh Youth Card will not be measured by the number of cards issued, but by the opportunities created and the improved lives of the youth.

Murad Ali Shah stated that collaboration among the government, private sector, and civil society is essential to empower the youth. He praised the cooperation of Sapphire Consulting Services and JS Bank's subsidiary, Zindigi, with the Sindh government, stating that private sector partnership holds great significance in launching the Sindh Youth Card and that public-private partnerships can play a vital role in inclusive growth.

The Chief Minister said that the development of every young person from Karachi to Kashmore and Tharparkar to Larkana is the government's priority. Youth from all districts of Sindh, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Khairpur, and Thatta, will benefit from the Sindh Youth Card, ensuring that geographical location and financial circumstances do not impede their progress.

Rana Sanaullah hits back at Naqvi, says he mishandled debate on new provinces

- PM's adviser Sanaullah says matter of new provinces will now reach parliament as "controversial issue"

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has hit back at Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accusing him of mishandling the debate over the creation of new provinces and turning it into a controversy.

Speaking on Geo News programme "Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Saath" on Monday, Sanaullah said Naqvi should acknowledge his failure to handle the matter instead of reacting angrily to criticism.

Responding to Naqvi's recent warning to an "unnamed minister", Sanaullah said he was not someone who could be intimidated by threats.

He added that he would not have to hide his face, responding to Naqvi's remark that the minister he was referring to would be unable to show his face if he responded publicly.

Sanaullah said that Naqvi complicated the matter through irrelevant statements, saying it would now reach parliament as a controversial issue.

Naqvi had earlier issued a stern warning to an unnamed minister, saying he had patiently listened to the latter's criticism for the past two-and-a-half years.

"The day I comment on this minister, he will not be able to show his face," he had said while speaking.

The interior minister also defended businessmen who had been criticised by the minister, describing them as respectable citizens and among the country's highest taxpayers.

He questioned why political parties accepted billions of rupees in party funds from them if they considered them problematic.

The debate over the creation of new provinces has intensified in recent days, with political leaders from the ruling coalition expressing differing views on the proposal.

Pakistan, Portugal agree to deepen trade, investment, labour cooperation: Dar

- Strengthening bonds, both sides sign visa exemption and investment protection agreements, eyeing growth in agriculture and skilled labour

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan and Portugal have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, renewable energy, technology and labour mobility, as the two countries seek to expand economic and diplomatic ties, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Monday.

Addressing a joint press stakeout with Portuguese Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel in Islamabad, Dar said the two sides had discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues and agreed to take practical steps to enhance cooperation.

The Portuguese FM's visit comes as Pakistan and Portugal mark 77 years of diplomatic relations, established on November 7, 1949. Dar said bilateral trade remained below its potential and proposed establishing a Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation to identify barriers and pursue joint initiatives, according to a Foreign Office (FO) statement.

He also invited Portuguese companies to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan with the support of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The two sides discussed cooperation in agriculture, particularly olive cultivation and processing, drawing on Portugal's experience in the sector.

Dar called for the early conclusion of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on agricultural cooperation and the establishment of a joint working group. He also looked forward to a visit by Portugal's Minister of Agriculture and Maritime Affairs, José Fernandes, to Pakistan.

"Foreign Minister Rangel and I agreed that trade between our two countries falls short of its potential. I proposed a Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation to identify barriers to trade and take forward joint initiatives.

Minister inaugurates Casualty & Labor Room at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sanjawi

STAFF REPORTER

QUETTA



Balochistan Minister for Commodity Management Department and Chairman Balochistan Food Authority Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummar and Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Abdul Quddus Achakzai formally inaugurated the Casualty and Labor Room at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sanjawi, on Monday.

Focal Person Harnai Haji Baz Muhammad Dummar, Chairman Municipal Committee Sanjawi Haji Khan Muhammad Dummar, Assistant Commissioner Sanjawi Sher Shah Ghilzai and Medical Superintendent Dr. Noorul Baqi and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion.

On the occasion of the inauguration ceremony, Provincial Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummar said that providing quality medical facilities to the people at their doorsteps is one of the top priorities of the government.

He said that with the activation of the Casualty and Labor Room at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sanjawi, the people of the area, especially women and patients waiting for emergency medical assistance would get better facilities.

The hospital administration also briefed Provincial Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummar about the medical facilities, available resources and ongoing measures.

Atta Tarar calls Apna Ghar Scheme practical manifestation of PM's vision for public welfare

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday highlighted the successful disbursement of loans worth more than Rs 100 billion under the Apna Ghar Scheme which is a practical manifestation of the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for public welfare.

Addressing a ceremony held here at the Jinnah Convention Centre to mark the milestone of massive loans disbursement under the Prime Minister Apna Ghar Scheme, Tarar said disbursement of loans worth over Rs 100 billion is an outcome of effective policy framework which was worked out in consultation with all stakeholders. With public welfare as a prime objective of the programme, he said, the prime minister has chaired numerous meetings for the success of the programme. "People from across Pakistan are present at the ceremony today, who have fulfilled their dream of owning a home under the Prime Minister Apna Ghar Scheme," he remarked.

PPP, MQM-P leaders hold talks over planned Nov 29 rally

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



A Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) delegation has requested Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leaders to postpone their planned rally scheduled for November 29, citing concerns about law and order in Karachi.

The request was made during a meeting between the two parties' leaders at the Sindh Assembly on Monday. The PPP delegation included Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, Nasir Hussain Shah, Nisar Khuhro and Waqar Mehdi. MQM-P was represented by Farooq Sattar, Sindh Assembly Opposition Leader Ali Khurshidi and other members.

Speaking after the meeting, Farooq Sattar said the PPP had contacted MQM-P Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, who formed a delegation of party lawmakers to discuss their concerns about the rally.

Sattar said the PPP delegation requested that the November 29 rally be postponed, arguing that changing its date would be better for maintaining peace and order in the city.



IHC reserves verdict on petition against termination of 122 PARC employees

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday reserved its verdict after hearing arguments from both sides in a petition challenging the termination of 122 employees of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC).

Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro heard the petition filed by the affected employees.

During the hearing, the petitioners' counsel argued that the employees had neither been issued show-cause notices nor subjected to any inquiry before their termination. He maintained that if there were any complaints against the employees, a proper inquiry should have been conducted.

Additional Attorney General Rashid Hafeez requested the court to first decide the maintainability of the petition, arguing that it was not maintainable.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the court reserved its verdict on the matter.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



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

According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in Islamabad Circle from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, Mohra Noor Banigala, Melody, Kohsar Market, PTCL (Independent), Service Road East, Waris Vally, Khanna East, Chirah, Mustafa Tower, G-9/3, I-8/ Markaz, GOR, NEW I-10/2, Old United, PHA-II, Railway Road, Bhara Kahu-II, Bhara Kahu, Sunny Bank, Cecil, Dehla, Patriata, Angori, Kror, C.S.T, H-8/2, PHA, Faisal Masjid, Ayub Market, HC-I, HC-II, Suparco Chowk, T&T C-8, G-8/1, G-8, G-8 markaz, Marvi, G-9/4, Koral, UC Road, feeders. In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 08:00 am to 12:00 pm, F-Block, Feeder, from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, Tehmasma Abad, Dhoke Hukamdad, Sector 4, Cobe Line, F-Block, New Mulpur, Muzammil Town, Fazaiya Colony, KRL, AFOHS, Qayyumabad, A.P.H.S, Sadiqabad, Mangtal, Ihsan abad, Iqbal Road-II, Zafar ul Haq Road, Banni, Jamia Masjid, Jinnah Road, Gulshan Abad, Zeeshan Colony, Azizabad, New Race Course, Millatabad, Dhoke Chaudhrian, Capt: Amir Shaheed, Bhadana, Eighteen, Model Prison, Lakhoo Road, Benazir Butto S, CDL Colony, feeders. Similarly, in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, Swan Garden-II, Dhoke Farman, PAF, Rehmatabad, Takbeer-1, Adam Gee Road, Haider Road, Jail Park, Ex-Lawyer Colony D, Fauji Foundation Hospital, Mehboob Shaheed, Pindi Board, Car Chowk.

Consul Gen. inaugurates Pakistan Pavilion at Big 5 Global 2026

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Consul General of Pakistan in Dubai Hussain Muhammad, Monday, inaugurated 'Pakistan Pavilion' at Big 5 Global 2026 organized by Trade wing in coordination with TDAP at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

While speaking on the occasion, the consul general said that 05 Pakistani companies were participating under the umbrella of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

The Pakistan Pavilion featured electrical cables, lighting solutions, PVC pipes and doors, architectural aluminium products, electric fans, and laminated boards.

He noted that the exhibition gave Pakistani firms an opportunity to showcase innovations in building materials and technologies that support more sustainable construction.

Ali Zeb Khan, Trade and Investment Counsellor, and Muhammad Saleh, Press Counsellor, were present on the occasion, a press release said.

Ali Zeb Khan emphasised that the UAE's construction and real estate industry is an important pillar of non-oil economy, offering Pakistani firms the opportunities to connect with local and international buyers to explore urban diversification and expand Pakistan's exports of building materials, structures, marble, metals, architectural and interior finishes.

The 47th edition of Big 5 Global brings together 1,800 exhibitors and showcases advances in construction materials and technologies, supply chain solutions, urban planning and design, and facilities management.



HYDERABAD: A couple purchases warm clothes from a roadside vendor at Bacha Khan Chowk as the winter season sets in.

Margalla Avenue Extension Project 43 Percent Work Completed

● Sangjani Interchange Advances As Margalla Avenue To Ease Airport Access For Travellers

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Development work on the Margalla Avenue N5 to M1 Extension and Sangjani Interchange project, located in the Federal Capital Islamabad, is proceeding in full pace and overall, 43 percent of the development work has been completed so far.

In line with the direction of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, construction activities are continuing round the clock (24/7) on various sections of the project. Under the project, work on the approximately 2.7 kilometer long extension of the main road is proceeding rapidly across all sections within ICT limits.

Similarly, work on all loops and ramps included in the project has also entered the final stages. While work on the service road connected to the main road is also proceeding fast.

The structural work of the underpass included in the Margalla Avenue Extension project has been completed. Similarly, the concrete walls and footing slabs of the underpass have also been completed, while earthwork filling on the right and left sides of the underpass will be completed soon.

The pile work of Sangjani Interchange, a key component of the Margalla Avenue Extension project, has been completed, while steel fixing work is ongoing and piling work along with girder work has been completed and excavation work will also be completed soon.

Similarly, the pile work and excavation of abutments on both sides of the N5 Bridge have been completed.



Pakistan hosts IAEA Regional Workshop ahead of INSO 2027

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



A five-day regional workshop on Building Sustainable Nuclear Science and Technology Talent Ecosystems through the International Nuclear Science Olympiad opened at a local hotel in Islamabad.

Organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in collaboration with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), the workshop runs from November 23-27 and supports preparations for the fourth International Nuclear Science Olympiad (INSO), which Pakistan will host in 2027.

Trainers from 22 countries are participating in the workshop. Five IAEA experts will deliver lectures and share approaches to student selection, training and mentorship. Participants will exchange teaching methods and resources, including approaches suitable for schools with limited laboratory facilities.

Drainage system upgrade, footpath repair work accelerated in Rawalpindi

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has accelerated work on drainage system improvement and footpath rehabilitation across the city to address water stagnation and drainage problems.

Construction teams are replacing old and damaged drainage lines with concrete-lined channels to ensure smooth wastewater flow. Damaged footpaths are also being reconstructed to provide safe passage for pedestrians.

The work is underway on Jamia Masjid Road, Banni Chowk, Waris Khan, Pirwadhai, Rawal Road, Chandni Chowk, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed and Asghar Mall Road.

Inspection teams are regularly visiting project sites to check construction quality and ensure compliance with engineering standards. Central dividers are also being adjusted at congested points, while municipal teams are removing construction waste to facilitate traffic movement.

Free Hepatitis C screening available in three GB districts

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Free Hepatitis C screening, testing and treatment facilities have been made available at designated health centres in Nagar, Ghizer and Hunza districts of Gilgit-Baltistan under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C.

According to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, residents of the three districts can avail themselves of free screening and treatment services at the listed health facilities to facilitate early diagnosis and access to care.

The ministry has urged citizens to visit their nearest designated screening centre for free testing and share information about the facilities with family members and friends to encourage wider participation in the elimination programme.

For further information and guidance, citizens can contact the toll-free Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline 1166.

Mainly dry weather expected across most parts of country on Tuesday: PMD



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Mainly dry weather is expected across most parts of the country on Tuesday, with cold conditions likely in upper regions, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

In Islamabad and adjoining areas, dry weather is expected, with cold conditions during morning and night hours. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mainly dry weather is expected in most districts, with cold conditions in upper parts of the province. However, fog is likely to develop in Swabi and adjoining areas during morning and night hours.

In Punjab, dry weather is expected in most districts, with cold conditions during morning and night. Murree, Galiyat and adjoining areas are also likely to experience cold and dry weather. Fog or smog may prevail at isolated places in Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Okara, Khanewal, Multan, Khanpur, Kot Addu, Bahawalpur and adjoining areas during morning and night hours.

Most districts of Sindh are likely to experience dry weather, with cold conditions in upper districts during morning and night. Similarly, dry weather is expected in most districts of Balochistan, with cold conditions in northern districts during morning and night.

Hanif Abbasi announces girls hostel, Rs. 250m gymnasium at Arid University

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Monday announced that a well accommodated girls hospital would be constructed at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) to further ease female students' stay at the University.

Addressing at inaugural session of the Annual Students' Week, the minister also announced the construction of a Rs.250.0 million state of the art sports gymnasium. "An international-standard sports arena is being constructed at the campus", he announced adding that routes for 80 new green buses launching in the city will be aligned to facilitate commuting students.

Karachi's Ojha Institute Named WHO Collaborating Centre

● WHO Designation Is Major Win for Pakistan's Medical Research Sector

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The Ojha Institute of Chest Diseases (OICD) at Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS) in Karachi has been named a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Chest Diseases. It is an important step for healthcare and medical research in Pakistan.

Under this role, the institute will work with the WHO on an agreed technical program. The main focus is tuberculosis (TB) research, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve diagnosis. The partnership will also support specialized medical training and help build healthcare capacity across the region.

The institute is expected to help improve diagnostic facilities, promote scientific research and develop better ways to fight TB and other lung diseases.

Pakistan Stock Exchange Starts Week Higher, KSE-100 Gains 1,084 Points

● Cheaper fuel and softer oil prices bring buyers back to the market, while global stocks stay shaky after last week's tech selloff

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI



Pakistan Stock Exchange began the new business week on a positive note on Monday. Buyers returned to the market after oil prices eased and fuel costs fell at home.

At 10:20 am, the benchmark KSE-100 index was up by more than 1,084 points. It touched the 178,467 level, a gain of 0.61 percent.

The early rise came from buying across many sectors. Shares of HUBCO, PSO, MARI, OGDC, PPL and POL traded higher. Banking stocks such as HBL and MEBL also moved up.

These companies carry heavy weight in the index, so their gains helped push the market up.

Market experts say the previous week ended slightly lower. Political uncertainty weighed on investors. The talk of a referendum on creating new provinces made many traders cautious.

At the same time, lower global oil prices and cheaper fuel at home gave some support. This stopped the market from falling further.

Now, with fuel costs easing, investors seem more willing to take positions again. Lower energy prices can reduce pressure on businesses and households alike.

The global picture, however, is less calm. Stock markets in Asia slid after a heavy selloff in tech and chip shares last week. These companies sit at the centre of the AI boom.

Authorities in some countries moved to calm the markets. US stock futures rose in early trade on Monday. Nasdaq 100 futures bounced nearly 3 percent, and S&P 500 futures gained 2 percent.

Taiwan stocks steadied after the shock. South Korean shares fell about 4 percent to a 10-month low before finding some support.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Uganda's Minister of State for Agriculture Desire Muhooza cut the ribbon to inaugurate FoodAg Pakistan 2026 at the Karachi Expo Centre, accompanied by Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh.

Punjab Agri dept issues cotton off-season management plan

FINANCE REPORTER

MULTAN

The Punjab Agriculture Department on Monday issued an off-season management strategy to protect the next cotton crop from pink bollworm attacks through effective control measures during winter.

A department spokesperson said pink bollworm entered a dormant stage during November and December,surviving in attached bolls,fallen cotton bolls,crop residues and waste at ginning factories.

The emergence of moths from dormant larvae largely depended on temperature, and favourable conditions could trigger their activity,posing a threat to the next cotton crop.

The spokesperson advised farmers to collect unopened and infested cotton bolls after the final picking,spread them in sunlight until they opened,separate the cotton and destroy the remaining material.

Farmers were also advised to allow sheep and goats to graze in cotton fields after the final picking so that immature bolls could be consumed,helping eliminate pink bollworm larvae.

In fields affected by pink bollworm, fallen bolls should be destroyed and the land ploughed using a rotavator to eliminate larvae remaining in crop residues.

The spokesperson further advised farmers to cut cotton stalks and arrange them in small bundles with their roots facing downward to expose hidden larvae to sunlight. The bundles should be turned periodically to ensure effective pest control.

Cotton stalks should be cut at or below ground level, while fallen bolls,roots and weeds should be incorporated into the soil through rotavator or mouldboard ploughing.

"Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum," boosts economic ties and trade potential

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Islamabad on Monday hosted a high-profile "Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum," organized by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in collaboration with Portugal's Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (AICEP).

The event aimed to strengthen trade and investment cooperation between the two nations, unlocking vast untapped economic potential.

Currently, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Portugal stands at approximately US$ 250 million, a figure widely regarded as below its true potential. With an estimated 50,000-strong Pakistani diaspora in Portugal, there is significant opportunity to enhance economic and trade ties.

The forum brought together business leaders and industry representatives from both countries who discussed key sectors for collaboration, including aviation, textiles, information technology, aerospace, defense, manufacturing, electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, agriculture, and food processing. Potential investment opportunities were also identified in infrastructure, mining, ports and maritime, tourism, oil and gas, power, food security, and healthcare.

Bruno Paed Moreira, Executive Member of the Board at AICEP, highlighted Portugal's strategic position as a gateway for Pakistan to access the European Union and Portuguese-speaking countries, which represent a market of over 260 million people.

He emphasized sectors such as textiles, renewable energy, and logistics as promising areas for bilateral cooperation.

Chris Rous, Vice President of Africa AMADEUS, praised Pakistan's advancements in aviation and connectivity, noting Islamabad Airport's modern facilities and encouraging joint ventures in the aviation sector.

Flour Prices Soar In KP As Punjab Wheat Restrictions Squeeze Poor Families

● Millers in Charsadda say the ban on moving wheat and flour from Punjab is creating shortages, while shopkeepers hit by anti-encroachment drives face a second blow

STAFF REPORTER

KP



Flour prices soar in KP, and ordinary families in Charsadda are feeling the pinch. Open market rates keep climbing because curbs on moving flour from Punjab are still in place.

Many people hoped the restrictions would end after governor's rule was imposed. That has not happened, and local markets are under more pressure.

The Flour Mills Association Charsadda says the situation is getting worse. Its president, Murshid Ali Advocate, voiced deep concern over the continued restrictions.

He says the curbs have created an artificial shortage. As a result, prices keep rising without a break.

Poor and middle-class families are hit hardest. For many of them, flour is now becoming hard to afford.

Public and social circles have asked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to step in. They want quick action to ease the crisis.

Their demands are clear:

They want a transparent probe into the alleged wheat scandal, and action against those responsible. They also want the restrictions on wheat and flour supplies from Punjab lifted at once.

They further ask for a bigger quota of subsidised flour. Effective steps to steady prices in the open market are also on their list.

Small traders face a double burden. Many shopkeepers have already lost their shops in anti-encroachment operations across the district.

These traders now have no steady income. At the same time, the cost of basic food, especially flour, keeps going up.

Residents say governor's rule should bring real relief for the public. They believe it should help control inflation and support struggling families.

Instead, they say, poor shopkeepers are being pushed into deeper hardship. They urge the authorities to put public welfare first and protect the livelihoods of poor households.

Setback for ANP in Abazai

The Awami National Party has suffered a major setback in Abazai, in Tangi tehsil. Dozens of workers, including senior office-bearers, have quit their party posts.

Those who resigned include patron-in-chief Syed Ghareeb Shah Bacha and village council president Malik Tufail. Tangi tehsil vice-president Mukhtar Khan Durrani, youth wing secretary Zulfiqar Tareen and social media secretary Luqman Bacha also stepped down.

Several other office-bearers announced their resignations as well. They include general secretary Malik Sardar Ali, vice-presidents Masood Khan Mohmand and Haji Abdul Aziz, and additional general secretary Malik Faisal Khan.

The list also covers councillor Sardar Ali, joint secretary Ashraf Khan, finance secretary Malik Murad Ali, information secretary Qazi Haroonul Qadir, and culture secretary Malik Falak Naz. A women's joint secretary also resigned.

The former office-bearers blamed internal differences within the party. They said their next step will be decided after talks with workers.

Paulo Rangel In Islamabad To Boost Pakistan-Portugal Trade Ties

● Portuguese Foreign Minister Arrives in Pakistan for Visit



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

News DeskPortugal's Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel reached Pakistan on Sunday for a two-day official visit.

The Foreign Office said he came at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. Additional Secretary for Europe Ayesha Ali welcomed him on arrival.

During the visit, Rangel will hold delegation-level talks with Ishaq Dar and meet other senior Pakistani leaders. They will discuss bilateral ties and ways to deepen cooperation.

A business delegation is travelling with the minister to take part in the first Pakistan-Portugal Business Forum. The forum will let companies from both countries hold business meetings and look for partnerships and investment chances.

Talks will cover agri-food, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, information technology and textiles.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said both sides will review all areas of their relationship and look at ways to strengthen trade and economic links.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against Dollar

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.50, down from the previous day's close of Rs 276.51.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.80, respectively.

The Euro increased by Rs 0.47 to close at Rs 303.69, down from Rs 303.22 the previous day, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.73, while the British Pound went up by Rs 0.65 to Rs 362.92 from Rs 362.27 the previous day.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paisa each to close at Rs 75.27 and Rs 73.68, respectively.



Senate Panel Seeks Crop Status For Tobacco Growers

● Panel Demands Fair Prices And Simpler Tax Refunds To Protect Tobacco Growers

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI

A Senate Sub-Committee on National Food Security and Research on Monday called for recognizing tobacco as an agricultural crop, protecting growers from unfair pricing practices and streamlining taxation and refund mechanisms to promote exports.

The Sub-Committee, convened by Senator Aimal Wali Khan, reviewed the status of tobacco cultivation and measures to safeguard the economic interests of growers, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Senator Poonjo Bheel attended the meeting, while Senator Hidayatullah Khan participated as a special invitee.

Tobacco growers from four major producing districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa highlighted concerns over taxation, pricing mechanisms, quota allocation, company practices and utilization of the Provincial Development Cess.

The growers complained about high taxation and low prices offered by tobacco companies, alleging that companies were exploiting cultivators through unfair pricing practices while earning substantial profits.



They also questioned the utilization of the Provincial Development Cess collected from tobacco-producing areas in other

districts instead of benefiting the areas where it was generated.

Senator Aimal Wali Khan questioned the organization of a tobacco expo in Karachi rather than in the tobacco-producing districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stressing the need to promote the sector in its actual production areas.

The Sub-Committee also examined concerns regarding surplus tobacco and the allocation of company quotas, which growers alleged were being used to influence prices.

Representatives of tobacco exporters informed the committee that an advance tax of Rs390 per kilogram on GLT-threshed tobacco, processed to meet export-quality standards, was making Pakistani exports less competitive and creating difficulties for exporters.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) clarified that no tax or duty was imposed on tobacco exports, while advance tax applied only when GLT-threshed tobacco was consumed domestically. It said the tax was refunded upon export.

However, Senator Aimal Wali Khan expressed concern over the complicated refund mechanism and directed the FBR to provide details of tobacco exports, refunds issued and pending claims during the last five years.

Devolution over division



By Dr Naazir Mahmood

Pakistan's rulers have discovered a familiar remedy for an unfamiliar assortment of failures: redraw the map. With the economy struggling, democratic institutions weakened, courts increasingly vulnerable to political interference and ordinary citizens battling inflation and unemployment, the ruling establishment has found an apparently irresistible distraction.

The controversy has exposed growing tensions within the ruling coalition. Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, chairman of the PPP, has opposed any attempt to divide Sindh through political coercion or a referendum. Meanwhile, federal ministers and leaders of the MQM-P have enthusiastically promoted new administrative units. Their argument is deceptively simple: smaller provinces will improve governance. Unfortunately, neither Pakistan's history nor its constitutional experience supports such an uncomplicated proposition.

Bilawal deserves support for resisting this latest constitutional adventure. His warning that a forced division of Sindh could provoke bloodshed should be understood as an expression of concern, not an invitation to violence. The province has already paid an appalling price for ethnic and political confrontation. It does not need another experiment in social engineering. The proposed referendum is particularly troubling. Pakistan's experience with plebiscitary democracy offers three cautionary examples.

In 1960, General Ayub Khan organised a referendum through his carefully constructed system of Basic Democracies. Rather than permitting the population to choose freely between competing political alternatives, he sought endorsement from an electoral college of 80,000 local representatives. The exercise furnished a civilian-looking mandate for military rule. It did little to establish genuine democratic accountability. General Ziaul Haq improved upon this formula in December 1984. His referendum effectively conflated support for Islamisation with approval of his continuation as president for another five years. Official figures claimed almost 98 per cent support, despite widespread allegations of manipulation and opposition boycotts. Religious sentiment became the instrument through which an unelected ruler extended his authority.

General Pervez Musharraf repeated the performance in April 2002. Official results credited him with approximately 97.5 per cent support on a reported turnout of 71 per cent. Opposition parties and independent observers challenged the credibility of those figures, citing extensive irregularities and implausible participation claims. These episodes do not establish that every referendum everywhere is illegitimate. They establish something more pertinent: in Pakistan, referendums have repeatedly served



those already exercising extraordinary power. Their apparent simplicity makes them attractive to rulers seeking to bypass the untidy business of parliamentary deliberation, federal consent and political compromise.

That history makes the current enthusiasm difficult to understand. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has promoted a referendum as a democratic way to determine Pakistan's administrative future. MQM-P leader Farooq Sattar wants one before the beginning of 2027. Yet Article 239(4) of the constitution is unambiguous: changing a province's boundaries requires approval by two-thirds of the total membership of the assembly of the province concerned, alongside the prescribed federal constitutional-amendment process.

Article 48(6), which permits a referendum on matters of national importance, cannot simply extinguish these safeguards. A nationwide majority must not be used to override the constitutional rights of a federating unit. Democracy is not merely the counting of votes; it also requires respect for institutions, federal agreements and protections against majoritarian coercion. The MQM-P leadership should reflect particularly carefully on these principles. Karachi's grievances are real. Its deteriorating infrastructure, unreliable water supply, inadequate public transport, weak municipal institutions and unequal access to public resources deserve urgent attention. So do the frustrations of Hyderabad and other urban centres.

Yet separating Karachi from Sindh is not the only conceivable remedy, let alone the most sensible. The party's insistence on territorial division is politically myopic. It risks reopening ethnic fault lines that have caused enormous suffering. Karachi's history of violence between linguistic communities, political organisations and competing armed groups should inspire caution rather than constitutional adventurism. Sindh belongs to all its residents, whatever their language, ancestry or place of birth. Its Sindhi-speaking and Urdu-speaking populations have shared cities, educational institutions, workplaces, markets and neighbourhoods for generations. Their future lies in strengthening that coexistence, not converting administrative grievances into competing territorial claims.

Nor should anyone forget the human cost of past confrontations. From the linguistic disturbances of the early 1970s to the ethnic and political violence of the 1980s and 1990s, Sindh has endured too many funerals, shattered families and divided neighbourhoods. Pakistan has witnessed enough bloodshed elsewhere as well. Politicians should resist rhetoric that could encourage another generation to inherit those animosities.



By Dr Uzair Khaleeq Uz Zaman

Tech transfer under CPEC 2.0



Pakistan needs more than a way to measure technology absorption. It needs a mechanism to make technology transfer happen. In an earlier article, 'A tech scorecard' (October 20), I argued that Pakistan must begin measuring technological capability rather than simply counting agreements, investments and imported machinery. The central question was straightforward: after five years of a technology partnership, what can Pakistan do that it could not do before?

But that raises an equally important question. How do we create the conditions under which technology is actually transferred, absorbed and developed?

This is where CPEC 2.0 presents an important opportunity. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has entered a new phase, with greater emphasis on industrial cooperation, innovation, agriculture, human-resource development and business-to-business partnerships. The bilateral Action Plan (2025–2029) specifically encourages cooperation in artificial intelligence, advanced technologies, research, skills and industrial development.

The policy direction is promising. What remains is to translate these commitments into arrangements that make technology transfer commercially attractive, technically feasible and economically productive.

The first challenge is understanding that technology transfer is not a single transaction. It is a process of capability development.

Consider a Chinese enterprise establishing a manufacturing facility in Pakistan. The investment may bring machinery, production processes and technical personnel. However, Pakistani engineers may initially have little access to the underlying design knowledge, process parameters or proprietary software.

That is not necessarily a failure of the investment. It reflects the commercial reality that technology providers must protect their intellectual property while recovering development costs.

The solution, therefore, is not to demand unrestricted access to proprietary technology but to negotiate arrangements through which technological capabilities can progressively develop on mutually beneficial terms.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) recognises licensing, collaborative research and joint ventures as established mechanisms of technology transfer. Under CPEC 2.0, these instruments could be designed around staged technology licensing.

A Pakistani enterprise might initially acquire manufacturing and operational rights. As it shows technical competence, product quality and commercial viability, subsequent agreements could extend to process adaptation, component development, joint engineering or export-oriented production.

Such arrangements would provide Chinese companies with commercial incentives and intellectual-property safeguards while giving Pakistani firms a defined pathway towards greater technological capability.

The second challenge is Pakistan's ability to absorb what is transferred. Technology cannot be effectively transferred to enterprises that lack trained engineers, reliable testing facilities, quality-management systems or suitable domestic suppliers.

This is precisely where CPEC's Innovation Corridor should connect with its Growth Corridor. Imagine a Chinese manufacturer operating in a CPEC Special Economic Zone. Instead of functioning as an isolated production facility, it could become the anchor of a wider industrial capability network.

Pakistani SMEs could be identified for component manufacturing and supporting services. Universities could undertake applied research on production challenges. Technical training institutes could develop industry-specific competencies. Testing and certification institutions could help local suppliers meet international requirements. The result would be a shift from attracting individual investments towards building interconnected industrial capabilities.

International experience supports this approach. World Bank research on Vietnam's enterprise competitiveness and supplier linkages highlights the importance of structured supplier-development programmes, technical upgrading and stronger connections between foreign investors and domestic firms. For Pakistan, this could be particularly relevant to engineering goods, textiles, electronics, agricultural machinery and renewable-energy equipment.

Third, research collaboration must become more closely connected to industrial demand. Pakistan and China already have cooperation mechanisms involving research institutions, universities, joint laboratories and scientific exchanges. These provide an institutional foundation, but research partnerships should increasingly address specific technological challenges faced by industry. Similarly, agricultural research could prioritise technologies that improve productivity under Pakistan's local climatic, soil and water conditions.

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By Ghazi Salahuddin

Our learning poverty



How many ways do I agonise over the impoverishment of Pakistani society? I have been counting the ways in my columns, off and on. And this week, I have another thought to add to this list.

Incidentally, this lament is an extension of a few other issues that have caught my attention. But the overall reference is to our intellectual deprivations that, I believe, have undermined our capacity to make progress as a nation. One undeniable evidence of this failure is our ranking in various global surveys of social and economic development.

I became acutely aware of this deficit during a session of SPELT's 42nd International Conference last Sunday at Habib University in Karachi. SPELT, of course, is the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers. This year, the theme of the conference was: 'Bridging Language and Learning: Designing Equitable Practices for Diverse Classrooms.'

So, what further deepened my apprehensions about the future of Pakistan? Well, the extent of our learning poverty is, yes, 80 per cent. We have all been mindful of the poor state of our education. There are so many dimensions of this national tragedy. We have been talking about the number of children who are out of school and about the massive disparity between the facilities available to the elite and those available to common citizens. But isn't the insight that our learning poverty is 80 per cent a little hard to comprehend?

First, let me explain this rather recent concept of learning poverty. The World Bank defines it as the inability of children to read and understand a simple text by age 10. All children are expected to be able to read by the age of 10. This is crucial because "reading is a gateway for learning as the child progresses through school and university".

The point is that not all children enrolled in primary schools and who go through the drill of moving from one class to the next, higher class, can read and understand a simple, age-appropriate text. The terrifying finding is that 80 per cent of late primary-age children cannot read.

Think of what this means in the context of building human capital for social development. Does this not amount to losing the war before even setting foot on the battlefield? Consider also the fact that children grow and become adults. The situation may have remained the same for a number of years.

We have a measure of how disgraceful our educational performance is. According to the World Bank, learning poverty in Pakistan is 18.3 percentage points higher than the South Asian average and 16.6 percentage points higher than the lower-middle-income average. As I have noted earlier, we lag behind all South Asian countries.

Somehow, this state of affairs does not seem to be a matter of urgency for our rulers, who are breathlessly engaged in their own games of governance. The nation is currently engrossed in the political backlash over what PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said at the Karachi Press Club on Tuesday. Consultations at the highest level in the country have been held and political alliances are under strain.

One question that has not been posed is whether the quality of our primary education will improve if there are more provinces. Nor is there any debate on how the plight of the poor masses would be reduced with the establishment of new administrative units. It was initially said that the system of governance has collapsed. But what they seem to be protecting are the privileges and perks of those who preside over this system. We see on a daily basis, on our television screens, the pomp and show of the life they live.

Anyhow, I said that there are other related issues that are related to our learning poverty. I have long mourned our very poor reading habits. Leaving children aside, our educated citizens are generally averse to reading books. Comparison with other countries, including those of South Asia, would put us to shame in this respect, too. Books, libraries and a passion for reading among a sizable section of the population are, in my view, essential ingredients of progress and economic development.

People find it hard to believe when I quote numbers about books published and sold in many countries and royalties earned by prominent writers. These may be fairy tales for some of us. A snippet: The US military had sent 123 million copies of pocket-sized paperbacks – works of fiction – to American troops during the Second World War. Before that, American citizens had donated 18 million books for the troops.

This week, a book has created political turmoil in India. It is Sonia Gandhi's memoir, 'Belonging: A Journey of Love'. Over 200,000 copies of the book were sold in India within less than a week of its release on November 11. It has broken Indian publishing records as the fastest-selling book and has ignited a national debate. A large part of the book is devoted to Sonia's account of her love affair with Rajiv.

I am reminded of another memoir of another woman of substance. It is Michelle Obama's 'Becoming'. More than 14 million copies of the book that was published in November 2018 were sold worldwide and it was translated into dozens of languages.



By Tahseen Sayed

Before the next disaster hits

In 2009, I was visiting Barguna and Patuakhali in southern Bangladesh where, in 2007, cyclone Sidr had wreaked devastation. But I also saw cyclone shelters full of schoolchildren and volunteers roaming around, carrying megaphones.

An old woman told me, "When Bhola came, I lost many family members – now, water took my fishing pond, but my family was safe". The damage to crops, livestock and the breach of embankments was huge. Yet lives were saved.

In 1970, Cyclone Bhola killed more than 300,000 people. In 2007, the similarly intense Cyclone Sidr killed less than 4000. In 2020, Cyclone Amphan killed a few hundred and over two million people were evacuated to shelters.

How did this happen? Bangladesh prepared and built resilience. For over fifty years, it invested in close to 6000 km of coastal embankments – earthen walls along the coast with sluice gates. They are not permanent. But they protect paddy from storm surges and tides. The country has also built over 4000 dual-use cyclone shelters. Many shelters operate as a school for 300 days a year. When a cyclone comes, hundreds of people can be evacuated to one shelter with their livestock safely secured on the first-floor ramp.

Bangladesh built a multi-layered early warning system that relies on weather monitoring technology, a communication system and community volunteers. The Met department can now track a cyclone five days early. What happens after tracking is what matters. Bangladesh uses its most important resource: the community. Over 75,000 volunteers – half of whom are women – under the Cyclone Preparedness Program, with megaphones, bicycles and flags, go door to door.

Bangladesh made disaster preparedness an express national priority with Standing Orders on Disasters, a dedicated Permanent Ministry of Disaster Relief and Management, and a protected Climate Change Trust Fund. Governments changed, but the priority for resilience did not. The country remains highly vulnerable and suffers from frequent natural disasters. Over 30 per cent of its cultivable land is in coastal areas threatened by rising sea levels and salinity. But it has successfully saved lives and reduced post-disaster losses.

Now, contrast with Pakistan in 2022. The floods were the worst in recorded history, submerging one-third of the country. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment estimated total damages at over $14.9 billion and economic losses at about $15.2 billion. Over 1.1 million livestock died – the most precious asset of a village community. Over two million houses were damaged or destroyed and 13000 km of roads were damaged or washed out. Granted, it was a one-in-a-100-year flood. But could the damages have been less and losses reduced?

No shelters or raised platforms for livestock were ever built. Livestock did not die from rain. They died standing in water for 60 days without fodder. Forecasts and warnings existed, but they did not reach the rural level. Drainage networks in Sindh were heavily silted and were easily breached. Floodwater that should have drained to the sea in a few weeks was trapped for months, giving rise to waterborne diseases. Natural riverbeds were violated through unchecked construction of homes, hotels and roads in places like Kalam and Bahrain in Swat.

In 2022, our government lifted its head from a deep slumber. It made efforts to move from a reactive response to a technology-driven preparedness.

Bangladesh vows to arrest Hasina if she returns from India

- "We would like India to honour the extradition treaty and return her as a convict," says minister



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh will arrest and jail former prime minister Sheikh Hasina if she returns from India, a senior government minister said, as her plans to come home in December fuel political tension and renewed street violence.

Dhaka is instead seeking Hasina's extradition from India, where she has lived since fleeing Bangladesh in 2024, and expects New Delhi to comply with an existing extradition treaty, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam told Reuters.

India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In April, the ministry said it was examining Bangladesh's request to extradite Hasina.

Hasina faces a death sentence in Bangladesh, and her Awami League party is banned following the 2024 uprising that ended her long rule. The United Nations has said as many as 1,400 people were killed during the unrest.

Hasina fled Dhaka in August 2024 as protests demanding her resignation swept the country. She has since sought a new passport and identity card ahead of a planned return in December, requests the government has rejected.

"As soon as she tries to enter Bangladesh, she will be arrested. And she will be taken to jail, and the law will take its course," Obaed said in an interview on Sunday.

"We would like India to honour the extradition treaty and return her as a convict, and the law will take its course. She (Hasina) will have to face the music."

The standoff has brought Hasina's Awami League supporters out on the streets. The party this month announced a week of protests and rallies in support of Hasina's return, culminating in a nationwide lockdown on November 19.

Police have recorded dozens of crude bomb blasts and incidents of arson targeting vehicles in at least 28 districts over the past 10 days, with several police officers and civilians injured, according to local media.

Obaed called the violence a survival tactic by Hasina's "politically bankrupt political party."

Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, a senior Awami League official, said the current political establishment was responsible for the violence.

The minister said there had been no official discussions with India about sending an aircraft to bring Hasina back, adding that Dhaka wanted balanced ties with New Delhi that did not compromise Bangladesh's "dignity, self-respect and interests."

"India needs to decide what kind of foreign policy they need to adopt for Bangladesh," Obaed said.

Rohingya verdict

Dhaka is also stepping up diplomatic pressure on neighbouring Myanmar over the return of Rohingya refugees after the UN's highest court ruled that thousands of killings and widespread sexual violence by Myanmar's security forces against the Muslim minority in 2017 amounted to state-sponsored genocide.

Myanmar has criticised the ruling by the International Court of Justice said Rohingya would only be able to return "when situations permit".



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Honorable Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi meeting with President of the Court of Cassation of Türkiye Honorable Ömer Kerkez at Supreme Court.

Indonesia Factory Blaze Leaves 24 Dead As Rescuers Search For Dozens Still Missing

- Rescue teams work through unstable, burned structures at a confectionery plant in Banten while officials investigate the cause

WEB DESK

INDONESIA

A deadly factory blaze in Indonesia has killed 24 people, officials confirmed on Monday. Rescuers are still searching the burned wreckage for about 30 people who remain missing.

The fire broke out on Saturday evening in one building of the PT Fonusa Agung Mulia confectionery factory. The plant is in Cikande, Banten province, about an hour's drive from Jakarta.

Authorities have not yet found the exact cause. Said Iqbal, a presidential adviser on labour issues, told reporters that early reports point to a short circuit in an air conditioner.

He also said officials are checking whether the factory followed proper safety rules. He plans to summon the company's chief executive for questions.



The factory belongs to United Family Food. The company did not respond right away to a request for comment. It employs about 5,000 people and supplies many everyday goods to the local market. Its brands include Milkita candy and Lemonilo instant noodles.

CEO Steven Erwin Wijaya said about 300 people were at the complex for Saturday's shift.

The search went on through Monday, but the work is risky. Hot spots remain in the ruins, and the building is becoming less stable. Al Amrad, head of the Banten search and rescue agency, shared these dangers with reporters.

He said 29 people are confirmed safe, and five of them are in hospital. Rescuers have removed 24 body bags containing body parts. However, officials could not yet confirm the final death toll.

The fire was so fierce that victims cannot be identified by sight. Police official Wahyu Hidayati said teams are collecting DNA samples from relatives. She warned that this process could take weeks.

For now, families wait for news as rescuers keep searching the site. Officials say the investigation into the cause of the factory blaze will continue.

First Belt and Road Health Sci-tech Big-yard unveiled at University of Sargodha

NEWS DESK

BEIJING

The first Belt and Road Health Sci-tech Big-yard, under the Sino-Pak Biohealth Agriculture Overseas Sci-tech Demonstration Park, was officially inaugurated at the University of Sargodha on November 18, during a visit to Pakistan by a delegation from the Shaanxi Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Dryland Biological Resources and Green Smart Agriculture.

The concept of the Health Sci-tech Big-yard was first proposed by Zhang Lixin, Professor at Northwest A&F University and Chinese Director of the Shaanxi Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Dryland Biological Resources and Green Smart Agriculture. According to Zhang Lixin, the Health Sci-tech Big-yard at its core is an integrated seven-component platform encompassing talent development and training, joint laboratories, demonstration sites, contract farming, trade channels, supermarkets and dining tables, as well as health and wellness services incorporating cultural and artistic activities.

The initiative aims to bring together universities, research institutions, vocational colleges, leading enterprises, local government agencies, industry associations and Chinese diplomatic missions. It also promotes a holistic health framework linking healthy production environments, healthy plants and animals, safe and healthy end products, and human physical and mental well-being, CEN reported.

Portuguese Foreign Minister Applauds Pakistan's Efforts for Regional Peace in Islamabad

Paulo Rangel meets Ishaq Dar in Islamabad as both sides agree to boost trade, investment and cooperation at the UN

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Portugal's Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel has praised Pakistan's helpful role in promoting regional peace and stability. He shared these views during a one-on-one meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Monday, the Foreign Office said.

Rangel arrived in Islamabad a day earlier. He is on a two-day visit to Pakistan from November 22 to 23 at the invitation of Dar. During the trip, he will meet senior leaders of the country.

The two leaders talked about the long and friendly ties between their countries. This year, Pakistan and Portugal mark 77 years of diplomatic relations.

Dar stressed the need for more diplomatic contact, parliamentary exchanges and regular talks through the existing bilateral systems. Rangel said Portugal wants to make these ties even stronger. He also thanked Pakistan for its support at the United Nations.



The Portuguese minister also spoke kindly of the Pakistani community living in Portugal. He said their work helps bring the two nations closer.

Later, both sides held talks between their delegations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They looked at ways to grow trade and investment. They also discussed farming, especially olive growing and processing, as well as renewable energy and sea links.

The two sides spoke about setting up a Joint Ministerial Commission. They also talked about building closer business ties to help both economies grow.

Dar pointed to chances for cooperation in education, information technology, culture and sports. He also raised legal migration routes for skilled workers.

The talks also covered Pakistan-EU relations, including the GSP+ scheme. Both leaders agreed that dialogue, diplomacy and peaceful solutions to disputes remain very important.

Rangel is travelling with a business delegation for the first Pakistan-Portugal Business Forum. Companies from both countries will hold meetings to find new partnerships in agri-food, renewable energy, medicines, IT and textiles.

Tajikistan becomes 4th country to withdraw from ICC since US diplomatic push



WEB DESK

HAGUE

Tajikistan has become the fourth country to formally begin withdrawing from the International Criminal Court (ICC) since the US launched what it called a diplomatic push to "dismantle the court", the presidency of the court's governing body said in a statement on Monday.

Tajikistan joins Chad, Venezuela and Nauru, a tiny Pacific island nation formerly known as Nauru, which have also announced their withdrawal since the US called for countries to leave the court in July.

In March this year, the court criticised Tajikistan for failing to arrest Russian President Vladimir Putin, wanted by the ICC for alleged war crimes in Ukraine, when he visited Tajikistan in 2025.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced their exits the previous year, denouncing the court as an instrument of "neocolonial repression".

The statement also said the decision to withdraw does not release a state from obligations incurred while it was still a party to the treaty.

Modi offers flood-hit Nepal $1.6b aid package

NEWS DESK

NEPAL

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered a $1.6 billion "development cooperation" package to neighbouring Nepal on Monday in the wake of devastating Himalayan floods.

"We express our deep condolences for the loss of lives caused by the devastating floods in Nepal in August," Modi said, standing alongside his Nepali counterpart Balendra Shah in New Delhi.

"To support Nepal's reconstruction, and give fresh momentum to its long-term development, we announce a development cooperation package worth 240 billion Nepali rupees ($1.6 billion)," he said.

India did not immediately give specific details of what the development package included.



Shah was given a military honour guard parade at the presidential palace in New Delhi, on his first trip to a neighbouring country since taking office in March.

The rapper-turned-politician came to power following a wave of youth-led anti-corruption protests in September 2025.

Shah, 36, wearing his trademark sunglasses and dressed in black, was given a bear hug by Modi, 76, dressed all in white.

Unlike his predecessors, Shah had initially refrained from foreign visits since becoming prime minister.

His first overseas trip was to New York in September, where he addressed the United Nations General Assembly as Nepal reeled from a deadly tsunami-like flood, triggered by a high-altitude glacial mountain collapse, that killed more than 1,400 people and left 5,000 missing.

- 'Deal with future disasters' -

Nepal, a largely rural country that contributes little to global greenhouse gas emissions, estimates reconstruction will cost $4.78 billion.

Shah said it showed the "imperative to address the challenges of climate change through collective action".

In October, the United Nations' climate loss and damage fund agreed the modest sum of $20 million in aid to Nepal -- the maximum amount countries can request in a single application -- and the first time it has set aside money for any country.

Nepal, a landlocked Himalayan nation of 30 million people, has long had to balance its relations with its two giant neighbours, India and China.

'No national security risk': Nvidia reinstates Jensen Huang as CEO after affair scandal

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Nvidia on Monday reinstated Jensen Huang as chief executive after input from senior US government officials left its board confident he posed no national security risk, less than two weeks after the co-founder resigned due to an alleged spy scandal.

The board voted unanimously to bring Huang back as president, chief executive and board member, effective immediately, after a series of meetings left directors satisfied with his "candour and ability to lead," the company said in a statement.

Nvidia did not name the government officials it consulted or say what they told the board.

Nvidia shares surged on the news, jumping more than 25 per cent in premarket trading.

The decision came three days after US President Donald Trump publicly urged Nvidia to take Huang back, calling him "one of the truly most brilliant minds in the world" and saying he would "love to see Jensen be given a second chance."

Trump described Huang as "a good man" who "made some bad decisions," and said the company should rehire him "if they were smart." Huang had offered to return, but the board initially refused.

Iran says it will use all its tools to confront US naval blockade

WEB DESK

DUBAI



Iran will use all its tools to confront the US naval blockade, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said in a weekly news conference on Monday.

The US blockade on Iran-related oil exports was imposed on April 13, lifted in June after Washington reached a draft understanding with Tehran, then restored on July 14 after the agreement collapsed.

"We will definitely not tolerate it (the blockade) and we will use all our tools to confront this US aggression," Baghaei said.

The naval blockade ... is considered a military aggression," he added. "Iran has the right to use any available tool to defend itself in this regard."

TankerTrackers.com said last week that a tanker was loading Iranian crude oil in the Gulf via ship-to-ship transfer and could become the first vessel to successfully export the country's crude since the US reimposed the blockade in July.

Baghaei said on Monday that reports about Iranian ships loading oil are "speculations".

Sania Saeed, Sajal Aly's Mutual Admiration Wins Hearts On Social Media

● Mutual Respect Between Sania and Sajal Wins Social Media Praise

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Veteran Pakistani actress Sania Saeed and celebrated star Sajal Aly are winning praise from fans after a compilation of their heartfelt compliments about each other went viral on social media.

Sania recently reposted a reel on her Instagram story featuring clips from interviews in which both actresses expressed admiration for each other's acting skills. Sharing the video, the veteran actress added the affectionate caption "aww...pyari" and tagged Sajal Aly.



The compilation brought together their comments from different occasions, highlighting the mutual respect and appreciation they share despite belonging to different generations of Pakistani television.

During an interview, Sajal was asked to name her favourite actress. Without hesitation, she chose Sania Saeed, saying, "My most favorite would be Sania Saeed."

Sania, in turn, praised Sajal when asked about her own favourite actress. She particularly highlighted Sajal's exceptional emotional intelligence and said she had always enjoyed watching her performances.

The exchange has resonated with drama fans, who have appreciated the genuine admiration between the two performers. Their comments have also highlighted their shared commitment to powerful storytelling and memorable acting.

Both actresses have established themselves as prominent figures in Pakistan's entertainment industry through their versatile performances and acclaimed television projects.

Sania Saeed is currently receiving appreciation for her portrayal of Khushbakht Apa in the drama serial Dar-e-Nijat, while Sajal Aly has recently been in the news following reports of her departure from the upcoming serial Lahu, in which she was expected to appear alongside Bilal Abbas Khan.

The viral video has once again drawn attention to the importance of mutual recognition in the entertainment industry, with fans celebrating two accomplished actresses openly appreciating each other's talent.

Iqra Aziz charms fans with graceful transition reel

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistani actress Iqra Aziz has left fans in awe with a stunning transformation reel, giving a glimpse of her effortless charm and elegance after revealing that the idea came from her husband, actor Yasir Hussain.

Taking to Instagram, Iqra shared a 25-second video featuring a playful transition set to the classic Bollywood song Dekhta Hai Tu Kya from the film Kartoos.

The actress credited Yasir for the idea, writing in the caption, "My husband thought I should make this."

The reel begins with Iqra dressed casually in an oversized blue shirt layered over a white T-shirt, lip-syncing to the song while making playful expressions and gestures. She then covers the camera, revealing a completely different look as the transition takes her into a graceful pastel-pink embroidered saree paired with golden jhumkas and bangles.



Smiling and posing in the traditional outfit, Iqra completes the video with a cheerful wave and a flying kiss, leaving viewers impressed with her elegant transformation.

The post also caught Yasir Hussain's attention, as he joined the fun with a romantic comment that perfectly matched the song's lyrics.

"Mai tou muhabbat dekhta hun," Yasir wrote, turning the playful reel into a sweet exchange between the couple.

Known for her natural beauty and understated style, Iqra once again won appreciation for carrying both her casual and traditional looks with equal grace. The video offered fans a light-hearted glimpse into the couple's playful bond, with Yasir's suggestion becoming the inspiration behind the actress's latest Instagram moment.

The cheerful post comes shortly after Iqra shared an emotional tribute to her beloved pet dog Lucy, mourning her loss in a heartfelt Instagram post that drew messages of sympathy and support from fellow celebrities and fans.



Sanam Saeed says woman's 'naseeb' is bigger than marriage

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistani actress Sanam Saeed has shared a thought-provoking message about women's lives and their future, urging parents to look beyond marriage when praying for their daughters' good fortune.

Taking to her Instagram story, the actress reshared a message titled "Your Naseeb Is Bigger Than Marriage", challenging the deeply rooted notion that a girl's greatest blessing is finding a good husband.

The post pointed out how people often pray for a newborn daughter's good fortune by saying, "Allah isay achha naseeb ata farmaye," with the meaning of a blessed destiny frequently narrowed down to finding a suitable life partner.

Questioning this limited understanding, the message highlighted that having loving parents, gaining knowledge, earning halal rizq, finding sincere friends and having opportunities to help others are equally meaningful blessings.

It further emphasised that being guided towards Allah, having the ability to worship Him and finding peace within oneself are also among the greatest forms of good fortune. While a loving and emotionally secure marriage was acknowledged as a beautiful blessing, the post questioned why it should become the centre of a woman's entire destiny.

"A daughter's naseeb is not limited to the home she will marry into. Her life is filled with countless possibilities of Allah's blessings," the message stated.

It also encouraged parents to pray for their daughters' overall happiness and well-being rather than focusing exclusively on their future marriages.

The message concluded with a heartfelt prayer: "May Allah grant them a beautiful naseeb in every aspect of life. Ameen."

By sharing the reflection, Sanam brought attention to an important conversation about how society defines a woman's success and good fortune, reminding audiences that marriage is only one part of life, not the entirety of a woman's destiny.

Newlyweds Matty Healy and Gabriette Bechtel expecting 1st child: Report

● The 1975 frontman, 37, and the model, 29, tied the knot in July 2026 after three years of dating

SHOWBIZ DESK

LOS ANGELES

Matty Healy and Gabbriette Bechtel are expecting their first child together after just months of marriage.

Following weeks of speculation, People magazine confirmed, that Bechtel is pregnant. Photos obtained by the outlet captured the couple at Bristol Farms in West Hollywood, with Bechtel resting a hand on her baby bump.

Neither Healy, 37, nor Bechtel, 29, have officially announced the happy news.

The 1975 frontman first began dating the model in 2023. "He came to L.A., and we've been in love ever since," she recalled in an interview with HommeGirls at the time.



Healy proposed the following year, and the pair married at a private Los Angeles estate in July 2026. Bechtel wore a custom Matières Fecales gown for the ceremony before changing into a black reception dress.

Bechtel had previously shared her hopes of starting a family, telling British Vogue in 2024, "When I have kids, it's going to be: dinner every night — no phones — to celebrate the smaller things and recognise people's happiness."

Healy has previously been romantically linked to Halsey, Gabrielle Brooks, and Taylor Swift.

Ola Jordan appears in high spirits during a film premiere amid ex husband's new affair

SHOWBIZ DESK

LONDON

Ola Jordan appeared in high spirits during a film premiere as she was spotted for the first time since estranged husband James Jordan introduced his new girlfriend to his sister amid claims of his affair.

James, 48, who split from Ola in June, was seen on a night out with glamorous Russian dancer Polina Mayer and sibling Kelly Morgan on Thursday night, suggesting that his family approve of their 'closeness'.

And brushing aside the meeting, Ola was all smiles as she attended the European Premiere of Disney's Hexed at London's Odeon Luxe Leicester Square.The former Strictly pro, 44, flashed her legs in a black miniskirt, which she teamed with a matching black cardigan and black knee-high boots.

Ola, who accessorised her glam look with a black handbag, looked in good spirits despite the no doubt heart-breaking images of her ex and his new woman.



The pair appeared cosy as they were pictured outside London's Shoreditch Hotel this week with his sister. James looked sheepish as he and Kelly puffed on cigarettes while standing outside the venue, while Polina stood with her mobile phone glued to her ear.

He cut a casual figure in a khaki blazer and black jeans, while Polina opted for a chic midi dress and Kelly slipped into fishnet tights and tiny mini shorts.

The meeting came at a screening event for a film of James's Legends of the Dancefloor 2026 Tour Vegas: After Hours show which he stars in with Polina.

No doubt the pictures will break James's estranged wife Ola's heart after their 22-year marriage broke down in June.

A devastated Ola is said to have argued with James over the phone after he appeared on The Jeremy Vine show and broke his silence on the allegations that he had cheated on Ola with ballroom professional Polina, 34.

James and Ola have been co-parenting daughter, Ella, six.

Sheheryar Munawar Wins Praise For Dual Role In Dar-E-Nijaat

● Fans Applaud Sheheryar Munawar's Powerful Performance as Aman Gujjar

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani actor Sheheryar Munawar has received widespread appreciation for his portrayal of two contrasting characters, the charming Abu Bakar and the unsettling Aman Gujjar, in drama serial Dar-e-Nijaat. Viewers have praised his ability to bring two characters with sharply different personalities to life.

Sheheryar took to Instagram to share several Stories featuring appreciation from entertainment journalist Maliha Rehman and fans who lauded his performance. Maliha highlighted the striking contrast between his roles, describing his transformation from a "Disney-prince-like Abu Bakar" into the "sleazy Aman" as brilliant.

Reactions shared by the journalist also reflected how convincingly Sheheryar has portrayed the negative character. One viewer praised his facial expressions and attention to detail, noting that Aman's ability to make audiences uncomfortable



demonstrated the effectiveness of his performance.

Another fan said Sheheryar's portrayal was so convincing that, despite being drawn to the character, they felt like asking him to remove his hand from their shoulder. A third viewer praised his husky voice, body language and mannerisms, saying he had owned the episode as a man who believes he has control over everyone around him.

The actor also reshared a fan-made video featuring a humorous reaction to Aman's intimidating stare. The viewer joked in Roman Urdu that even watching him from the other side of the screen felt like being harassed by the character.

Responding to the comment, Sheheryar wrote, "That was the assignment ... I'll take the compliment," indicating that he considered the reaction a compliment to his acting.

In another Instagram Story, a fan compared his two characters, saying Sheheryar had first made audiences fall in love with Abu Bakar but was now making them want to throw slippers at Aman. The viewer also said his performance deserved an award. The actor reshared the post with a folded-hands emoji.

Jennifer Lopez recalls 'disappointing' experience filming with Ben Affleck

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Jennifer Lopez has one major regret about her 2024 documentary, The Greatest Love Story Never Told.

The documentary followed the pop icon as she independently produced her album, This Is Me... Now, and its companion musical film This Is Me... Now: A Love Story, based heavily on her reunion and marriage with Ben Affleck 20 years after the couple first got engaged.



But while she had full creative control over the musical projects, the documentary — produced by Affleck's production studio Artists Equity — was a different story.

"I allowed somebody else to be in control of it," Lopez, 57, said, on The New York Times' Popcast on November 19. "In hindsight, maybe not for me because I think it overshadowed the actual music project, which is all I really cared about. And so that, for me, was disappointing," she admitted.

Just months after the documentary was released, the couple got divorced in August 2024.

On Thursday's Popcast episode, JLo reflected on how far she has come since that era.

I was hired to protect Aishwarya from Salman Khan, says former bodyguard

WEB DESK

MUMBAI

Bollywood actor and bodybuilder Ketan Karande has revealed that he was hired as actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's bodyguard nearly 20 years ago, with the responsibility of protecting her from actor Salman Khan.

Speaking on a podcast, Ketan Karande said he had never publicly discussed the job before. Recalling his assignment, he said that his duties included escorting the actress from her residence to shooting locations and ensuring her security.



He also recalled an incident at a fashion show organised by filmmaker Vikram Bhatt, where he was accompanying Aishwarya.

'Hunger Games' prequel victorious in N. America box office debut

WEB DESK

LONDON

"Hungert Games: Sunrise on the Reaping," the sixth film based on Suzanne Collins's hit book series, vanquished the competition in its debut weekend at the North American box office, industry estimates showed Sunday.

With a haul of $120 million, according to Exhibitor Relations, the Lionsgate film almost tripled the opening weekend of the last entry in the dystopian action franchise, 2023's "Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes."

Analyst David A. Gross called the opening weekend figure "sensational" and "an excellent return" for the series, which revolves around a fight-to-the-death tournament of youths.

"Sunrise of the Reaping" is set more than 30 years after "Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes" and over two decades before the blockbuster first quartet of movies starring Jennifer Lawrence.

Joseph Zada, McKenna Grace and Whitney Peak star in the film, which has cameos from Lawrence and original series co-stars Josh Hutcherson and Woody Harrelson.

With $9.3 million, second place went to "I Play Rocky," a biopic from MGM about Sylvester Stallone's tough road to make the original Oscar-winning "Rocky" -- released 50 years ago this weekend.

Anthony Ippolito stars as Stallone, with Oscar-winning director Peter Farrelly ("Green Book") at the helm.

"This is an outstanding wide release for a fall Awards film," said Gross, who estimates it will be "very profitable" given its "reasonable" $28 million budget.

Third place went to Paramount's "Ebenezer," starring Johnny Depp as Charles Dickens's iconic misanthrope.



First National Kickboxing Championship Ends Successfully In Rawalpindi

● Hundreds of athletes from across Pakistan competed in weight categories and three belt title fights at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex

MUDASSAR IQBAL

RAWALPINDI



The first National Kickboxing Championship, organized by the Pakistan Bando Federation under the guidance of Grandmaster Muhammad Ashraf Tai, Presidential Award recipient and Chairman of the Pakistan Bando Federation, concluded successfully at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, Rawalpindi. Hundreds of athletes from across the country participated in the championship.

The event was organized by Ali Imran Rajput, President of the Islamabad Bando Association and Founder and Chief Instructor of Nishan-e-Haider Academy of Martial Arts International, who also served as the Chief Organizer.

The distinguished guests included Muhammad Riaz, Secretary General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bando Association; Raja Atif Loon of Elite MMA Rawalpindi; Raja Adnan, Boxer from Rawalpindi; Raja Khalid Saeed; and Muhammad Muzammil Sardar, Principal of International Islamic University Islamabad Schools, Bani Gala.

Coaches and officials from different cities also participated in the championship. The participants included Hidayatullah, Siraj and Sohail from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Kashan Abrar Kashi and Baseerat from Attock; Muhammad Ijaz from Chakwal; Chaudhry Qasim Ali Gujjar from Lahore; Adnan Aslam, Syed Taqi Sanwal and Ali Wakeel from Islamabad; Dr. Shehzad Ahmed from Mansehra; and Muhammad Saqib Mughal from Rawalpindi, who attended along with their respective athletes.

In addition to competitions in different weight categories, three prestigious belt title fights were also held. Athletes from Black Dragon Academy, Attock, won two of the title fights, while an athlete from The Master Academy, Rawalpindi, secured victory in the third title fight.

At the conclusion of the event, Chief Organizer Ali Imran Rajput presented honorary shields to the distinguished guests and instructors.

The guests also distributed medals and certificates among the successful athletes.



Peshawar to host opening match of PSL 2027, confirms Mohsin Naqvi

SPORTS REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has confirmed that matches of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2027 will also be hosted in Peshawar.

Addressing a press conference in Peshawar, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi congratulated the people of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, announcing that a tri-nation T20 tournament will also be organized in Peshawar during the third week of January.

Mohsin Naqvi stated that cricket fans in Peshawar have waited a long time for this moment, adding that the objective of bringing the PSL to Peshawar is to acknowledge the city's immense services to Pakistan cricket.

He expressed confidence that the people of Peshawar will welcome the league with the same passion and warmth they are famous for, noting that further steps will be taken for the revival of cricket, including the establishment of a separate cricket academy for the tribal districts.

PSL Chief Executive Officer Salman Naseer remarked that this is the moment the league, and particularly the fans of Peshawar, have been waiting for over the past 12 years, adding that the inclusion of a sixth venue for HBL PSL 12 is a significant milestone in the league's growth.



KP Governor Announces Name Change For Peshawar's Imran Khan Stadium

SPORTS REPORTER

PESHAWAR

KP governor announces that the Imran Khan Cricket Stadium in Peshawar will get its old name back. The government has decided to restore the name Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi shared the decision with the media. He said the stadium will not be named after any political personality.

He added that the provincial government is moving ahead with the name change. The step is meant to keep sports grounds free from politics.

The ground has a long and proud history in Pakistani cricket. It was originally named Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium and hosted many local and international matches over the years.

During the earlier PTI government, the stadium was renamed Imran Khan Cricket Stadium. That decision drew mixed reactions from cricket fans and political groups.

The provincial cabinet has also approved the new decision. This gives the move formal backing from the government.

According to sources, the current government has already issued instructions to the Sports Department. The department has been asked to take the needed steps for the name change.

However, sources say the final announcement has not been made yet. Officials are still working on the process, and an official notification is expected soon.

Many cricket lovers in Peshawar have welcomed the talk of restoring the old name. They say the stadium belongs to the people and to the game, not to any one leader.

Lance Morris Joins Multan Sultans For PSL 12 In Direct Signing

● Australian speedster signed through a direct deal, and Multan promise fans a thrilling fast bowling show

SPORTS REPORTER

MULTAN



Multan Sultans have signed Australian fast bowler Lance Morris for the 12th season of the Pakistan Super League. The franchise confirmed the news through a direct signing.

Morris is known as one of the quickest bowlers in world cricket. His pace has already troubled many top batters.

He has played international cricket for Australia. He also has plenty of T20 experience behind him.

In domestic and franchise cricket, Morris has played for the Melbourne Stars and the Perth Scorchers. He has also represented Western Australia.

Morris shared that he had thought about joining Multan before. Now, that plan has finally come true.

The franchise welcomed him warmly. Multan Sultans described him as one of the world's fastest bowlers.

Gohar Shah also spoke about the signing. He said Morris will make Multan's bowling attack much stronger.

Shah went even further with his prediction. He believes Morris will be the fastest bowler in PSL 12.

He also reminded fans of last season. Supporters enjoyed watching Nahid Rana bowl in PSL 11.

Pakistani scholar aims to break Indian weighted push-up record

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistani Doctor of Philosophy scholar Dr Tayyab Siddiqui has expressed his determination to break India's weighted push-up record by performing more than 71 push-ups in one minute.

Dr Siddiqui aims to complete at least 72 repetitions, with a target of reaching 75 to 80, to surpass the stated Indian benchmark.

He discussed his preparations and ambition to achieve international recognition by setting a new Guinness World Record.

The challenge involves performing decline push-ups while carrying an external weight of 35 kilograms.

Consistent technique, including proper movement depth, is essential for ensuring that each repetition counts.

Dr Tayyab Siddiqui previously secured a Guinness World Record by completing 103 plank jacks in one minute, surpassing the previous mark set by an American athlete.

He now aims to achieve another international milestone and bring more recognition to Pakistan.

Dr Tayyab Siddiqui is a Lahore based medical research scientist, lecturer and aesthetic physician with expertise in dermatology and anti-ageing sciences.

Will Jacks Ruled Out Of England's Australia Tour With Broken Hand

SPORTS REPORTER

MELBOURNE

England all-rounder Will Jacks will take no further part in the white-ball tour of Australia. He broke his hand during the first T20 international in Melbourne.

The injury happened in the 19th over. Jacks tried to catch a hard drive from Ben Dwarshuis off his own bowling. The ball hit his right hand with great force.

He walked off the field with blood coming from his hand. He looked upset and in clear pain.

Scans later showed a fracture. England confirmed the news in a statement late on Sunday. The team said Jacks has been ruled out of the rest of the tour.

This is a double blow for the player. Jacks was due to captain England for the first time in the fifth and final T20 international on December 2. He now loses that chance.

CAS International Squash Championship 2026 held in Islamabad

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

The CAS International Squash Championship-2026 is scheduled to be held from 24 to 28 November, 2026, at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad, featuring 24 players from eight countries. The 24-player line-up will comprise 08 Pakistani players and 16 international players representing Egypt, Malaysia, France, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium and Hong Kong, China. The international participation is expected to add to the competitive intensity of the event.

Pakistan Air Force has made longstanding contributions to the promotion of squash in the country through the development of sporting infrastructure, grooming successive generations of players and strengthening Pakistan's presence on the international squash circuit.

The recently concluded 23rd Asian Team Squash Championship-2026, successfully hosted at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad, saw Pakistan clinch the men's title, underscoring the impact of these efforts.



Adeel Raja, a karate fighter from Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, represented Pakistan at the 20th All-Open Asia Full-Contact Karate Championship held in Bali, Indonesia, where he secured third place. This achievement has brought honor to Pakistan on the international stage. The championship featured athletes from 33 Asian countries. Demonstrating exceptional skill and a high level of performance, Adeel Raja defeated competitors from Taiwan and Hong Kong to clinch the third position, proving his mettle. This significant accomplishment is being hailed as a moment of pride for both Azad Kashmir and the entire country. His success has sparked a wave of joy throughout Azad Kashmir—including in his hometown of Mirpur—while the sports community has lauded his achievement as an inspiring example for young athletes.



Lionel Messi Spared Red Card As Columbus Beat Inter Miami 3-0

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI

Lionel Messi has landed in a storm of debate after his angry throw-in at a Columbus player. Inter Miami lost 3-0 in their MLS Cup playoff opener.

Messi lost his cool just before half-time. He threw the ball hard at Columbus forward Gonzalo Tapia's face. Miami were already down 1-0 and playing with ten men.

Referee Allen Chapman showed yellow cards to both players. Messi stayed on the pitch.

Columbus coach Laurent Courtois was not happy with that call. He said everyone knows Messi deserved more than a yellow card. He called the whole thing "really sad."

The referee defended his choice after the game. Chapman told a pool reporter that the force used was negligible. He said the act did not reach the level of violent conduct.

Miami's night was already going badly. Tapia, the Chile international, scored an early penalty to put Columbus ahead. Miami were reduced to ten men soon after.

Columbus added more goals in the second half. Taha Habroune struck just after the break. Tapia then grabbed his second to make it 3-0.

The loss is a big blow for the reigning MLS champions. Columbus, the 2023 champions and seventh seeds, now lead the best-of-three series. They can knock Miami out with a win in Ohio next Friday.



New Zealand 206-5 At Tea, Fighting To Save First Test Against India

SPORTS DESK

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand 206-5 was the score at tea on day five in Wellington, as the hosts tried hard to save the first Test against India. They still trail by 146 runs and must bat one more session to avoid an innings defeat.

The home side played slowly and with great care. They scored only 49 runs in the middle session, but they lost just one wicket. That was a small win on a pitch that offered very little help to the bowlers.

Tom Blundell was the batter who fell. He made 15 runs before he nicked a faint edge off fast bowler Anshul Kamboj. Rishabh Pant took a sharp catch while standing up to the stumps. The umpire's decision was changed after a review showed the small edge.

Daryl Mitchell is not out on 24, and Glenn Phillips is not out on 19. These two will need to stay at the crease as long as they can. India need five more wickets in the last session to go 1-0 up in the two-match series.

Prasidh Krishna was the best Indian bowler on the day. He took 2 wickets for 22 runs from 17 overs. His line stayed tight, and the batters found it hard to score.

New Zealand began the morning at 119-2. India made a strong start by taking two wickets in the first session.

Devon Conway fell first for 65. He inside-edged a ball from off-spinner Washington Sundar onto his pads, and Pant dived to take a fine catch. The wind rose for the first time in the match, and it helped Sundar find some drift.

Rachin Ravindra followed soon after for 37. He faced 129 balls before he slashed Krishna to KL Rahul at gully. India bowled with great accuracy all day on a lifeless Basin Reserve pitch.

India had set up this position with a huge first innings. They declared at 720-9, a New Zealand Test record against them. Six of their top seven batters scored 50 or more. Rahul made 136, and Pant added 128.

FUUAST to hold entry tests for Admission-2027 on Nov 24

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Karachi, will conduct entry tests for admission to its test-based academic programmes for the 2027 academic session tomorrow, Tuesday, November 24, 2026, at its Gulshan-e-Iqbal Campus.

According to the university administration, the entry tests will be held for MBA (Weekend), BBA, Persian, Computer Science, Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence (AI) programmes. Candidates applying for both morning and evening programmes will appear in the entry test at 2:00 PM.

The entry tests will be conducted at designated examination centres located in A Block, BSc Block and BBA Block of the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Campus. All candidates are advised to carefully check the examination centre mentioned on their admit cards and reach the respective venue on time. They must bring their original CNIC and admit card with them.

The university administration has further announced that regular classes for morning and evening programmes at the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Campus will remain suspended on November 24, 2026, to facilitate the arrangements and smooth conduct of the entry tests.

The university administration has advised all candidates to strictly observe punctuality, follow the examination instructions and ensure that they bring all the required documents to avoid any inconvenience and facilitate the smooth completion of the entry test process.



KOTRI: The Indus River near Kotri, close to Hyderabad, is experiencing significantly reduced water levels, leading to an acute water shortage, as observed. This situation raises high risks of future water scarcity in the region. The current dry conditions, evidenced by the barren landscape and receding water inlets, underscore the urgent need for effective water management strategies. The issue highlights potential challenges for local communities relying on the river for their livelihoods and stresses the importance of sustainable environmental policies.

Customs Seizes Rs27 Million Liquor Consignment At Sukkur Barrage

● Total Seizure Reaches Rs42 Million as Customs Stops Karachi-Islamabad Truck

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Customs has stopped an attempt to smuggle foreign liquor and other goods worth Rs27.065 million from Karachi to Islamabad. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said the consignment and the vehicle were seized at Sukkur Barrage.

The FBR said the Directorate of Enforcement and Surveillance (DES) Sukkur Barrage team, under Customs Enforcement, Indus, stopped an Isuzu ELF NPR 130 truck with Sindh registration JW-4129. The truck was travelling from Karachi to Islamabad at about 10pm on November 20, 2026.



During a routine check, officials found a large amount of foreign liquor and other goods hidden inside. The bottles had no supporting papers. They were packed in double cartons so they would look like locally packed goods. The wine was hidden among Chinese-origin food items such as instant noodles, sauces, cooking oils, seasonings, snacks, drinks, rice products and dried spices.

The FBR said the goods are worth about Rs27.065 million and the truck about Rs15 million. This brings the total seizure to Rs42.065 million.

In a separate case, customs foiled an attempt to claim a tax exemption that was not allowed under the Gilgit-Baltistan Exemption Scheme. It happened at the Sost Regional Dry Port on November 16, 2026, and involved an altered Import General Manifest (IGM).

Officials spotted differences in an uploaded IGM while checking consignments under SRO 1/2026. The shipment was first imported by M/s Zain Enterprises, which had no valid GB exemption certificate. Checks showed the importer's name had allegedly been changed in the system to M/s Ajal Enterprises, a firm with an exemption certificate from the Gilgit-Baltistan government.

The FBR said an altered copy of the original IGM, reportedly created with artificial intelligence (AI) tools, was uploaded to support the claim. Customs held the consignment before it left the dry port. This stopped a short payment of Rs5.686 million in government revenue. The statement said the problem was found by comparing the original IGM with the uploaded record.

IHC Cancels Hearing In Emaan Mazari Barrier Case

● Emaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha Appeals Not Heard as Cause List Cancelled

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) did not hear the case of rights lawyer Emaan Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha on Monday, because the cause list was cancelled.

A division bench of Justice Raja Inaam Amin Minhas and Justice Ayaz Shaukat was due to hear their appeals and their pleas to suspend their sentences in the security breach case. The case is also known as the barrier removal case.



An Anti-Terrorism Court had earlier given each of them 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10 lakh. The case relates to the October 2024 incident in Islamabad in which barriers were removed amid a disturbance.

AJK University to award degrees to 7,773 graduates at 22nd convocation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) will award degrees to 7,773 students at its 22nd convocation on November 25 at the King Abdullah Campus in Muzaffarabad, with President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the university Dr Muhammad Najeeb Khan attending as chief guest, as the university has finalised arrangements for the ceremony.

According to a university press release issued on Monday received here, the convocation will recognise the academic achievements of graduates from various disciplines and programmes, including 48 gold medalists, 18 PhD scholars and 145 MPhil/MS scholars.

Of the total graduates, 5,204 will receive degrees in BA, BSc, MA, MSc and LLB annual programmes, while 1,366 students from on-campus BS and LLB programmes will be awarded degrees. Another 800 graduates belong to affiliated colleges, while 240 on-campus students will receive MA and MSc degrees.

The university has constituted various committees through the Registrar's Office to oversee arrangements and ensure the smooth conduct of the ceremony.

Preparations have been completed under the supervision of the Vice Chancellor.



The formal convocation ceremony will begin at 11am on Wednesday at the King Abdullah Campus and will be attended by members of the AJK government, former ministers, members of the Legislative Assembly, former vice chancellors, Syndicate members, departmental secretaries, senior university officials, deans, heads of departments, faculty members, graduates and their parents, among others.

A rehearsal for the convocation will be held at 2pm on Tuesday, November 24, at the same campus. All graduating students have been directed to attend the rehearsal.

Controller of Examinations Professor Dr Basharat Ahmed said online registration of all eligible students for participation in the convocation had been completed through the university's official portal, ajku.edu.pk.

The process of receiving applications for degree issuance at the Examinations Department's Degree Section had also been completed.

Maritime Technical Institute to be established in Gwadar under Pakistan-China Cooperation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Monday said that Pakistan-China cooperation will establish a new engineering and technology institute in Gwadar to train young people in specialised skills required by the port, shipping and maritime industries,

He was speaking at a pre-board meeting of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), where development projects and initiatives to strengthen technical education in the port city were reviewed.



Briefing the meeting, GPA Chairman Noorul Haq Baloch said the GPA, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI), University of Gwadar and China's Qingdao Harbour Vocational and Technical College had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish the Pakistan Overseas Engineering and Technology Institute in Gwadar.

Welcoming the initiative, Junaid Chaudhry said the agreement would lay the foundation for specialised maritime education, technical training and human resource development. He stressed that technical education should be aligned with the operational requirements of ports and the maritime industry.

Under the five-year cooperation framework (2026-2030), the partner institutions will collaborate on academic programmes, curriculum development, skills training, faculty development, joint research and practical learning.

The proposed curriculum will cover navigation technology, marine engineering, maritime safety, ship technology and port machinery to prepare students for the evolving needs of the shipping and maritime sectors.



Swat University VC calls on Dhaka University VC

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Vice Chancellor of the University of Swat, Pakistan Prof. Dr. Husnul Amin called on Dhaka University (DU) Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. A. B. M. Obaidul Islam on Monday at the latter's office of the university.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts of DU Prof. Dr. Md. Abul Kalam Sarker, Prof. Dr. Md. Nurul Amin of DU Islamic History & Culture Department, Associate Prof. A. K. M. Iftekharul Islam and Lecturer Md. Abdul Muhit of the same department were present on this occasion, said a press release.

During the meeting they discussed the possibilities of undertaking joint collaborative academic and research programs between the University of Dhaka and the University of Swat, Pakistan. Exchange of teachers, researchers and students between the two universities were also discussed in the meeting.

They stressed the need for sharing knowledge & research works among teachers, researchers and students of these two universities to enhance the qualities of researches.

They agreed to sign a MoU in this regard soon.



SMW5 Submarine Cable Repair Expected To Finish By December 6

● Pakistan's Submarine Cable Repair Expected by December 6

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Internet service provider Transworld Associates has said repair work on an affected international submarine cable is expected to be completed by December 6, 2026, as technical teams continue efforts to restore the system.

The company confirmed on Monday that repair operations were actively underway and that December 6 was the tentative completion date.

"Further to our earlier notice on Nov 18, 2026, repair operations for the affected international submarine cable system are actively underway," Transworld said in its latest update.

The company also announced a scheduled maintenance window during which its technical teams would work to resolve the existing cable fault. It added that alternative routing arrangements had been put in place to maintain connectivity throughout the maintenance activity.

The development follows an earlier announcement by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), which reported a fault in the SEA-ME-WE 5 (SMW5) international submarine cable system, located approximately 11 kilometres off Pakistan's coast.

The regulator warned that the disruption could result in intermittent internet connectivity and reduced service quality for some users.

According to the PTA, Transworld Associates was coordinating with the SMW5 consortium to identify the fault and establish an estimated restoration timeline.

The regulator also said internet traffic was being rerouted through alternative international links to minimise disruption and maintain continuity of services.

Meanwhile, global internet monitoring organisation NetBlocks reported a decline in connectivity across Pakistan, saying the situation was consistent with a fault in the SMW5 international subsea cable system.

The December 6 timeline remains tentative, while repair operations and alternative routing arrangements continue.

AIOU Russian University Host International Festival In Islamabad

● Festival Celebrates Iqbal Pushkin And Urdu Russian Languages To Strengthen Bilateral Ties

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in collaboration with Ural State Pedagogical University (USPU), Russia, organized the International Festival of Russian Language, History and Culture. The two-day festival opened today with two special academic and literary sessions, aimed at promoting linguistic, literary and cultural ties between Pakistan and Russia.

The festival was inaugurated by Mr. Gleb Shubin, the Cultural, Science and Education Attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Islamabad, Pakistan. He said AIOU and USPU are partners for long time to promote the Russian Language, culture and history of both countries. Today festival one of the activities arranged to strengthen the friendship and partnership of both the countries. He further said H.E. Mr. Albert P. Khorev, Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan thankful to AIOU and Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood for all the help and support for such events.

The first session featured a comparative analysis of the alphabets, scripts and phonetic characteristics of the Urdu and Russian languages. Renowned Pakistani Urdu scholar Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir and Russian educationist Prof. Roman Porozov, Associate Professor of the Department of Philosophy, Sociology and Cultural Studies, USPU Yekaterinburg, Russia.



The second session focused on the literary works and intellectual contributions of the national poets of Pakistan and Russia, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Alexander Pushkin. Speakers paid tribute to the literary and intellectual services of both great poets and highlighted their messages of humanity and shared universal values. Educationists affiliated with Russian universities also shared their perspectives during the session.

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