THE
# DESTINATION
NEWS THAT TRAVELS

ABC Certified Vol . 5 No . Issue 15 Pages 8 Rs . 25

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Wednesday | 25 November, 2026 | 14 Jumadi-ul-Akhirah, 1448ah | Karachi | www.dailythedestination.com | Regd. No. 34303



## People Remain The Prime Minister's Top Priority In Every Meeting: Tarar

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has said that the creation of new provinces should be based on public opinion, stressing that the proposal should proceed if people support it and be set aside if they oppose it.

Speaking to the media, Tarar said a nationwide debate was already underway to gauge public sentiment on the issue. He added that the matter would be presented before Parliament at an appropriate time.

The minister said the government wanted political stability and urged political leaders to prioritise public service and effective delivery instead of engaging in political point-scoring.

He maintained that the people should have the final say on the creation of new provinces, rather than political parties imposing their positions on the matter.

Commenting on social media regulation, Tarar stressed the need for improved coordination with digital platforms. He said discussions with social media companies were ongoing and that the situation could improve considerably if the platforms aligned their policies with Pakistan's laws.

He added that cooperation between the government and social media companies was essential to strengthen coordination and address issues concerning the platforms.

# Oman's National Day Celebrated with Grandeur in Karachi

● Karachi Celebrates Oman National Day Strengthening Pakistan Oman Brotherhood And Diplomatic Ties

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The National Day of the Sultanate of Oman was celebrated with great enthusiasm and dignity at a prestigious ceremony in Karachi, highlighting the longstanding bonds of friendship, brotherhood and cooperation between Pakistan and Oman.

Consul General of the Sultanate of Oman in Karachi, H.E. Eng. Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari, warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi attended the ceremony as special guests. The dignitaries, along with the Omani Consul General and other distinguished guests, cut a cake to mark the National Day of the Sultanate of Oman.

The ceremony was attended by British Deputy High Commissioner Alison Blackburn, Qatar's Consul General Naif Shaheen Al-Sulaiti, Russian Consul General Andrey Viktorovich Fedorov, Chinese Consul General Feng Dehang, German Consul General Thomas E. Schultze, Japanese Consul General Masaru Hattori, Malaysian Consul General Yunus Ibrahim, Sri Lankan Consul General Sanjeewa Pathirana and South Korean Consul General Joohun Kim.

Consuls General and diplomatic representatives from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Afghanistan also attended the celebration.

Other prominent guests included Sindh Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, Inspector General of Police Sindh Javed Alam Odho, Prime Minister's Coordinator Fahd Haroon, Honorary Consul General of Côte d'Ivoire Fazal Kareem Dadabhoy, Honorary Consul General of the Philippines, Iqbal Baig, representing Morocco, Member of the National Assembly Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, and Greenwich University Vice Chancellor Seema Mughal.

The gathering brought together senior government officials, members of the diplomatic community, academics and distinguished personalities, reflecting the strong diplomatic ties and enduring friendship between Pakistan and the Sultanate of Oman.

The celebration reaffirmed the commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations, promoting people-to-people contacts and expanding cooperation between the two brotherly countries.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi, Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, Consul General of Oman H.E. Eng. Sami Abdullah Salim Al Khanjari and other dignitaries cut a cake to celebrate the National Day of the Sultanate of Oman in Karachi.

## Petroleum dealers threaten nationwide shutdown over fuel pricing mechanism

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has threatened to shut petrol pumps nationwide if the government fails to introduce a 30-day petroleum pricing mechanism, warning that frequent price revisions are depleting dealers' working capital.

Addressing a joint press conference at the Karachi Press Club on Monday, association representatives gave the government 15 days to resolve the issue.

They said daily adjustments in petroleum prices were putting increasing financial pressure on petrol pump owners, warning that a depletion of working capital could disrupt fuel supplies and potentially trigger a law-and-order situation.

The association demanded an immediate increase in dealers' profit margins to 8% and claimed that refineries had reduced petrol and diesel supplies, with one refinery reportedly suspending diesel supplies altogether.

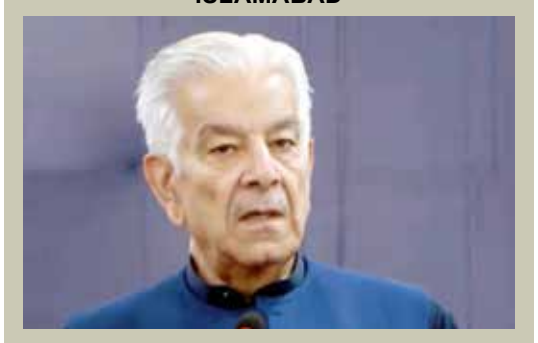
The representatives said petroleum dealers collectively contribute Rs5.74 billion to the national exchequer daily, adding that the government had previously promised to increase their margins and should fulfil its commitment.

PPDA Chairperson Malik Khuda Bakhsh said frequent petroleum price adjustments had become unbearable for dealers, warning that continued financial strain could force petrol pumps to close.

## Khawaja Asif comes out in support of Rana Sanaullah amid political row

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday came out in support of Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, praising his political resilience, wisdom and loyalty to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

In a post on social media platform X, Asif said, "Rana Sanaullah is a credible and respected political worker. In fact, a political worker deserves even greater respect than a political leader."

Referring to the political challenges faced by Sanaullah, Asif said he had stood up to the powerful "tyrants" of his time and endured immense oppression and hardship under the governments of former military ruler Pervez Musharraf and former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan.

However, neither, he said, had succeeded in breaking his spirit.

Asif also praised Sanaullah's political insight, foresight and loyalty, describing these qualities as an invaluable asset to the party.

Concluding his message on a personal note, the defence minister wrote, "May you always keep smiling and thriving."

Earlier today, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took note of the war of words between the PML-N leaders and advised them to resolve their differences through dialogue.

The debate over the creation of new provinces has triggered differences within the federal government, particularly between Interior Minister Naqvi and senior PML-N leader Sanaullah over the handling of the politically sensitive issue.

## Naqvi sets four red lines for social media, warns of action against violations

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday asserted that freedom of speech should not become a shield for those who cross "red lines".

He made the remarks while addressing a seminar organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

At the outset of his speech, the minister said that there were four "red lines" for the state: terrorism, hate speech, incitement to violence and sexual exploitation of children.

"On these four points, there is no compromise. Pakistan has paid for terrorism in blood. As interior minister, I have attended the funerals of martyrs. And very often, the hate that killed them began on a mobile phone," he said.

He alleged that only 47 per cent of the complaints made by the Counter Terrorism Department were acted upon by social media platforms.

## PM Shehbaz congratulates CDF Asim Munir on Malaysia hall of fame induction

● Malaysia Honours Asim Munir, PM Shehbaz Extends Congratulations

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir on his induction into the Hall of Fame at Malaysia's National Defence Studies Centre.

"This distinction also reflects the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Malaysia," the premier said on X.

"Field Marshal's resolute leadership during Marka-i-Haq, unwavering commitment to national defence, invaluable contributions to promoting peace, and enhancing Pakistan's standing internationally makes this honour truly befitting," he added. CDF Munir is on an official visit to Malaysia. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the visit aims to further strengthen bilateral defence and military cooperation between the two countries.

On Monday, ISPR said CDF Munir would also visit the National Defence Studies Centre, where a formal ceremony would be held to induct him as the 21st member of its "prestigious" Hall of Fame.

According to PM Shehbaz, the recognition belongs equally to the "brave" men and women of Pakistan's armed forces, "whose courage, dedication and sacrifices safeguard our beloved homeland, and to the people of Pakistan, whose resilience and unwavering support remain our greatest strength".

In a meeting with Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim on Monday, CDF Munir reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral defence ties in Putrajaya. CDF Munir also held a meeting with Malaysian Defence Minister Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin.

## PM Directs Ministers To Stop Public Criticism Amid New Provinces Debate

● Stop Public Spats, Focus on Development, PM Tells Ministers

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken notice of recent statements by federal ministers and government representatives amid an escalating debate over the creation of new provinces, directing cabinet members to refrain from making political remarks against one another.

In a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Tuesday, the premier said the federal government's primary focus was on public welfare projects, adding that Pakistan was moving from economic stability towards sustainable growth.

"By the grace of Allah, Pakistan has also achieved several important successes at the international level and on the diplomatic front," he said, reiterating that the government had consistently promoted the politics of development and progress.

Shehbaz directed federal ministers to avoid making public statements against their colleagues and stressed that differences within the cabinet should be resolved through mutual understanding and consensus.

"Statements by federal ministers against one another create a negative impression and divert attention from the politics of development and progress," he said.

The prime minister said members of the federal cabinet were performing well and should remain focused on public service and development initiatives.

He also urged representatives of provincial governments to avoid confrontational remarks and encourage constructive dialogue.

"Statements against one another must stop completely. It is our collective responsibility to play our full role in ensuring political stability," he added.

Dispute over creation of new provinces

The prime minister's intervention comes amid growing tensions among ruling coalition leaders over proposals to create new provinces, particularly following recent remarks by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah.

A day earlier, Sanaullah criticised Naqvi over what he described as his handling of the debate, while the interior minister issued a warning to an unnamed minister over repeated criticism.

## PPP may eventually back referendum on new provinces: key official

● Bilawal Bhutto chairs PPP workers meeting in Multan

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD/MULTA

Despite its publicly stated opposition to the proposed referendum on the creation of additional provinces, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) may eventually agree to participate in the process, with influential government circles expressing confidence that the party could ultimately support both the referendum and the broader proposal for administrative restructuring.

A senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, indicated that the PPP's current opposition, including the position articulated by its chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, may not necessarily translate into a sustained political confrontation over the issue. According to the official, the expectation is that the PPP will eventually come around to the idea of a referendum and subsequently agree to the proposed expansion in the number of provinces.



The authorities' apparent calculation rests partly on the expectation that a referendum could produce a public mandate in favour of creating more provinces. While political parties may have reservations about the proposal, particularly given its potential political and electoral implications, there is an expectation in government circles that ordinary voters could be more receptive to the idea.

The distinction between the positions of political parties and public opinion is likely to become a central factor in the emerging debate. Supporters of administrative restructuring argue that smaller provinces could improve governance, bring government closer to citizens, facilitate service delivery and address longstanding regional grievances.



# NCCIA crackdown: College bomb threat, family blackmail and child exploitation suspects arrested

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested several suspects in separate operations involving threats to an educational institution, family blackmail, child abuse material and online harassment, including a 17-year-old student apprehended in Lahore following a tip-off originating from the artificial intelligence (AI) platform Claude.

According to details compiled by APP on Tuesday from information released by NCCIA and a media briefing by Additional Director NCCIA Lahore Atif Ameer, the agency carried out operations in Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Gujranwala and Karachi against individuals allegedly involved in various cybercrimes.

The NCCIA Lahore launched an inquiry after receiving information through an international cooperation channel regarding bomb and arson threats made against a college through an AI platform.

The platform had revoked access to the account for violating its policies against violent threats and shared the relevant information with authorities through an international cooperation channel.

The NCCIA technical team conducted an analysis of the account and traced its Internet Protocol (IP) records to Lahore, where the 17-year-old student was subsequently arrested.

A mobile phone was seized for technical examination, while the suspect reportedly admitted during preliminary questioning to sending the threatening messages.



# FIA holds open court for visa fraud victims, assures swift action

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone held an open court in Rawalpindi to directly hear complaints of citizens who fell victim to visa fraud and scams involving overseas employment.

An FIA official told on Tuesday that the open court was conducted by Additional Director Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Rawalpindi Nadeem Zafar under the special directions of the Director FIA Islamabad Zone.

During the session, Nadeem Zafar listened to the grievances of affected citizens and assured them that their inquiries and cases would be dealt with on a priority basis.

He warned that strict legal action would be taken against individuals involved in visa fraud and that no one found involved in such fraudulent activities would be spared.

The citizens appreciated the initiative, describing it as a public-friendly step by FIA Islamabad Zone.

The complainants said such forums facilitated access to justice and helped restore public confidence by providing citizens with direct access to senior FIA officials.

# LHC directs formation of special teams to trace missing women in Punjab

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday directed to constitute specialised investigation teams for tracing and recovering missing women across the province.

Chief Justice Aalia Neelum issued the directions while hearing a petition filed by Salma Bibi, who approached the court seeking the recovery of her daughter.

Inspector General of Police Punjab Rao Abdul Kareem appeared before the court in compliance with its earlier order and submitted a progress report on efforts to trace missing women.

According to the report, more than 3258 cases involving missing women were reported between 2021 and 2025, of which 387 cases remain unresolved.

The report further stated that 21,956 cases of missing women were registered in 2026, with 1,781 cases still pending resolution.

In response to a query from the chief justice, the IG Punjab said that the highest number of missing women cases had been reported in Lahore.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the performance of the investigation wing in Lahore, the chief justice observed that it was not working satisfactorily and directed that the investigation team in the provincial capital be replaced.



KARACHI: The Town Municipal Corporation oversaw an anti-encroachment operation at Nizamabad Multi Chowk Paper Market in Karachi on Tuesday. The initiative aimed to remove illegal structures, promoting urban regulation and reducing congestion in the bustling market area. The operation involved clearing rubble and debris, with municipal workers actively demolishing unauthorised constructions. Such drives are essential for maintaining city order and ensuring public spaces are accessible. This effort reflects ongoing municipal efforts to tackle encroachment issues across urban centres in Pakistan.

# Bangladeshi Media Delegation Discusses Bilateral Ties In Pakistan

● Visiting Delegation Highlights Shared Fight Against Disinformation And Indian Propaganda In Region

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A 13-member Bangladeshi media delegation visiting Pakistan has held a series of engagements with government officials and media organisations, focusing on bilateral relations, press freedom, digital disinformation and the role of media in shaping public narratives.

The delegation, which arrived in Pakistan on November 23 for a visit scheduled to continue until December 1, comprises representatives of newspapers, television channels, digital media organisations and the journalists' community.

During a visit to the External Publicity (EP) Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday, the delegation was briefed on the department's mandate, functions and role in projecting Pakistan's perspective at the international level.

The head of the delegation appreciated the efforts of the EP Wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR)



and other state media organisations in developing and communicating the country's national narrative, particularly during the Pakistan-India conflict.

The briefing covered Pakistan's print, electronic and digital media landscape, facilitation of foreign journalists and measures to counter misinformation and disinformation. EP Wing officials also responded to questions about media facilitation, narrative building and communication during security-related developments.

Sharing their perspectives on the media landscape in Bangladesh, delegation members said the situation had changed over the past two years, with journalists enjoying greater freedom than before. They also referred to Indian propaganda in Bangladesh, noting that both countries faced similar challenges in countering disinformation and hostile narratives.

The visiting journalists also appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, particularly its efforts to facilitate negotiations in the US-Iran-Israel conflict.

At the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the delegation received a briefing on the country's disaster preparedness, risk reduction and emergency response mechanisms. Officials explained how satellite imagery, remote sensing and data collection were being used to monitor potential hazards and facilitate timely interventions.

The delegation was also informed about the NDMA's Disaster Research Hub, National Disaster Volunteer Pool and collaboration with academic institutions to strengthen disaster research and preparedness. The discussion covered early warning mechanisms, the adoption of best practices and community-based disaster response.

# Over 13 Million Passengers Use Islamabad Public Transport

● EV Feeder Buses Carry Six Million Passengers Across Islamabad In Three Months

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

More than 13 million passengers used Islamabad's metro and electric feeder bus services over the past three months, with daily ridership exceeding 150,000.

The authority operates 210 buses on 21 routes across the federal capital, offering passengers an affordable fare of Rs50 per journey.

According to figures released by the CDA on Tuesday, the Orange Line service carried more than 1.068 million passengers during the three-month period, while the Blue Line recorded over 1.071 million passengers.

The electric vehicle (EV) feeder bus service accounted for the largest share of ridership, transporting more than 6.091 million passengers through 160 buses operating on various routes across the city.

The CDA said its Command and



Control Centre and Depot at Zero Point were fully operational to improve monitoring and coverage of the public transport network.

The authority added that the system was being monitored round the clock through a digital dashboard, while 36 charging units at its new electric bus depot were also operational.

CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf said the authority was utilising all available resources to provide reliable, affordable and accessible public transport facilities to residents of the capital.

# IESCO notifies power suspension programme

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday 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 08:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Orchad Scheme, Scheme-II, Feeders, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Orchard Scheme, Aabpara, F-6/2, G-8/4, Zia Masjid, Kund Rajgan, Highway, Athal, F-10/1, G-10/4, I-8/4, I-10/1, I-11/3, G-11 Markaz, NPF, Shah Pur, Pindi Point, Kohallah, Saidpur, Kotli Sattian, Industrial-II, feeders.

In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 08:00 AM to 12:00 PM, WASA, A-Block, feeders, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Wasa, Hamza Camp, Khurram Colony, Kurri Road, Khanna Road, Service Road, Nawaz Colony, A Block, Iqbal Road, Gulzar Shaheed, Dhoke Khabba, Tehmasma Abad, Bagh Sardaran, Sarafa Bazar, Gawalmandi, Major Masood, Madina Colony, People Colony, Race Course, Officer Colony, Ameer Hamza Cly, P&T Wani, Jhangi, EME Complex, CWO, Pind Hoon, Noon, Mohan Pura, Jinnah Camp, Azharabad, feeders. Similarly, in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, New GHQ, Humayun Road, V.I.P, Rawalpindi-III, Bank Road, Jhangir Road, Kot Jabbi, Mohra Nagial, Murree Brewery, Dheri Hassanabad, Gulshanabad, Gulshan E Fatima, Girja-I, Jhawara, Chountra, Rawat, Narh, Nara Matore, New Choa Khalsa, Chowk Pindori, Khawaja, New Kalyam, Bhair Kalyal, Nishan-e-Haider, Mahoota, Feeders.

# SSP Investigation holds open court at Police Lines Headquarters to address public grievances

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



RAWALPINDI

Senior Superintendent of Police SSP Investigation Saifullah held an open court at Police Lines Headquarters to address public complaints and issued directions to the concerned officers for their prompt resolution.

During the open court, the SSP listened to citizens' complaints and marked applications to the relevant officers, directing them to ensure legal action within the stipulated timeframe.

He instructed the officers to ensure the timely resolution of public grievances, warning that no negligence in addressing citizens' problems would be tolerated.

He further directed that the best possible service delivery be ensured at police stations at all times.

The SSP said that, in line with the vision of the Punjab Chief Minister, the protection of citizens' lives and property and the provision of public facilities remained the top priorities, and all necessary measures were being taken in this regard.

# PCFHI provides free treatment to dog-bite victims

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pak-China Friendship Hospital Islamabad (PCFHI), managed by the Indus Hospital & Health Network, is providing prompt emergency care and completely free treatment to dog-bite victims, anti-rabies vaccines and costly immunoglobulin injections.

According to hospital sources, the hospital's emergency team, led by Senior Registrar Dr. Rehan Shafique and Senior Medical Officer Dr. Saif-ud-Din, along with clinical staff, provided immediate medical attention to dog-bite patients arriving at the facility.

Unlike many other healthcare facilities in Islamabad, the hospital is offering the complete course of dog-bite treatment, including anti-rabies vaccination and immunoglobulin injections, free of charge.

Patients and their families have appreciated the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of National Health Services for ensuring access to these essential, life-saving medicines without any financial burden, they added.

# Heavy Taxes, Inflation Hit Business Confidence In Pakistan, Survey Shows

● OICCI Survey Shows Foreign Investor Confidence Falls 55 Points Amid Worsening Conditions

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Business confidence in Pakistan has witnessed a sharp decline, falling 36 percentage points from positive 13 percent to negative 23 percent, according to the latest survey released by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI).

The survey also revealed a significant drop in foreign investors' confidence, which declined by 55 percentage points from positive 28 percent to negative 27 percent.

Conducted across Pakistan during September and October 2026, the survey covered the manufacturing, services, retail and wholesale sectors. The participating businesses collectively represent approximately 80 percent of Pakistan's GDP.

According to the findings, growing global political tensions, instability in the Middle East and domestic economic pressures were among the major reasons behind the decline in business confidence.

The retail and wholesale sector recorded the steepest decline, with business confidence falling 45 percentage points to negative 25 percent.

Confidence in the manufacturing sector dropped by 34 percentage points to negative 25 percent, while the services sector witnessed a decline of 31 percentage points, bringing its confidence level to negative 17 percent.

The survey also highlighted weakening expectations regarding investment, employment and business expansion.

Investment confidence fell from positive 2 percent to negative 14 percent, while employment expectations declined by 23 percentage points to negative 6 percent.

Expectations for business expansion also dropped by 27 percentage points, although they remained slightly positive at 3 percent.

The survey found that the percentage of businesses describing their operating conditions as negative over the previous six months increased from 47 percent to 78 percent.

# PRA Chief Reviews Revenue Targets And Divisional Performance

● PRA Orders Weekly Review To Broaden Tax Net And Catch Unregistered Businesses

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE




Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) chairperson Moazzam Iqbal Sipra chaired a meeting to review monthly revenue targets and the overall performance of divisional commissionerates, here on Tuesday.

The meeting was briefed in detail on revenue collection, achievement of assigned targets and monthly performance across the PRA divisions.

The meeting reviewed ongoing initiatives to broaden the tax net, register new businesses and enhance revenue collection from various sectors. Participants were also briefed on progress regarding installation of Electronic Invoice Monitoring System (E-IMS) across different sectors, its effective functionality and the use of digital monitoring to ensure transparency in tax collection.

Chairperson Moazzam Iqbal Sipra directed that the performance of sectors falling short of their assigned revenue targets be reviewed on a weekly basis and effective strategies be devised to improve collections. He emphasized that increasing revenue from new sectors and preventing irregularities in the tax payment system were essential priorities.

He directed all divisional commissionerates to accelerate surveys and field monitoring to identify unregistered businesses and bring a greater number of businesses into the tax net.

He further instructed that pending recovery cases be addressed on a priority basis through special measures, stressing that negligence in achieving revenue collection targets would not be tolerated.

The PRA Chairperson also highlighted the importance of encouraging businesses to adopt digital practices and making effective use of modern technology to promote the digital economy and ensure transparency in the tax system.

# Gulf capital, Chinese technology offer new investment opportunities for Pakistan: SCB




FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan can tap new investment opportunities by leveraging growing interest from Gulf investors and the international expansion of Chinese companies through a combination of Gulf capital and Chinese technological expertise, senior officials of Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) said.

Speaking at a media roundtable here on Tuesday, Vera Zhan, Executive Director, China Corridor, Middle East and Pakistan, Standard Chartered, said the bank was well positioned to connect Gulf investors with Chinese technology and supply chain providers to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan.

She said investment projects, particularly in sectors such as minerals and mining, had distinct challenges and requirements, necessitating tailored financing solutions. Zhan noted that Chinese companies were increasingly looking towards emerging markets to diversify their supply chains amid global geopolitical uncertainty, creating opportunities for Pakistan to attract investment and strengthen its industrial base.

Jeff Dapeng Wang, Regional General Manager, North and City General Manager, Beijing, and Head, North China Corporates, Standard Chartered, said Chinese investment opportunities in Pakistan extended beyond the automotive sector, with consumer goods and healthcare also offering significant potential.

# Jam Kamal Invites Global Investors To Explore Agri-Food

● FoodAg 2026 Brings 826 Buyers From 75 Countries To Connect Pakistani Producers

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI



Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, emphasizing the country's potential as a major player in the global agri-food market, invited international investors and business communities to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's agriculture and food sectors, particularly in processing, packaging, branding and livestock.

The Federal Commerce Minister was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the fourth edition of International Food and Agro Exhibition (FoodAg) Pakistan 2026, organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) at Sindh Governor House late Monday night.

The ceremony was attended by Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nihal Hashmi, Coordinator to PM for Industry and Commerce Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan, members of parliament, foreign diplomats and business delegates as well as leadership of REAP, FPCCI, KCCI, LCCI and other trade and industrial associations and chambers.

The Federal Commerce Minister, at the occasion, welcomed international delegates and visitors and conveyed the special regards of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Highlighting Pakistan's rich agricultural heritage, the federal minister observed that the region had sustained agricultural production for nearly 4,000 years, owing to the Indus River and the ancient Indus Civilization.

He noted that the global agricultural landscape was continuously evolving, with changing market dynamics, emerging ideas and new requirements shaping international trade. He emphasized the importance of incorporating global experiences, suggestions and innovations into Pakistan's trade exhibitions.

Jam Kamal highlighted that FoodAg provides an important platform for connecting international buyers with Pakistani producers, particularly small-scale businesses that otherwise face difficulties in accessing international markets. He stressed that smaller businesses, including those operating in smaller cities, should have the same opportunities to connect with international buyers as businesses in major commercial centres.

Emphasizing the growing importance of sustainability and regulatory compliance in international trade, he noted that global buyers increasingly require detailed information about every stage of production, while new laws and regulations were becoming essential considerations for exporters. He underscored the need for Pakistani producers to adapt to these changing requirements to remain competitive in international markets.

The Federal Minister also identified emerging opportunities in olive oil, aquaculture, pink salt and meat processing, while highlighting Pakistan's competitive advantage in the global halal food market as a Muslim-majority country. He observed that halal food requirements were expanding across international markets, including countries such as Hong Kong. He further highlighted Pakistan's role in facilitating regulatory requirements for around ten countries through the presence of relevant regulatory bodies.

Underscoring the importance of value addition, the Minister stressed that Pakistan must enhance the value of its agricultural products before exporting them. He invited international investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's agricultural economy, particularly in processing, packaging and livestock. Referring to changing global market conditions over the past eight months, he emphasized the need for greater international collaboration and partnerships.

Highlighting Pakistan's geographical and climatic advantages, including its four seasons, diverse landscapes and connectivity with Central Asia, the Minister expressed hope for stronger cooperation with international partners and investors, saying that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was ready to assist the investors in the identified sectors.

Earlier, Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi, addressing the gathering as Guest of Honour, appreciated the efforts of TDAP and the Federal Minister for Commerce in bringing international buyers and stakeholders together in Karachi. He described the initiative as a shared vision to provide an international platform for Pakistan's agricultural and food products. He observed that Pakistan was an agricultural country renowned for the quality of its agricultural produce, while its cuisine was equally recognized for its vibrant and diverse food culture.

# Abhi Microfinance Bank makes debut on PSX under Ticker symbol ABHI

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI




Abhi Microfinance Bank officially commenced trading on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Tuesday under the ticker symbol 'ABHI', marking a significant milestone in the evolution of Pakistan's financial services sector.

The occasion was marked by a Gong Ceremony at PSX, attended by Commissioner, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Zeeshan R. Khattak; Chairman PSX, Ruhail Muhammad; Managing Director and CEO PSX, Farrukh H. Sabzwari; Chairman Abhi Microfinance Bank, Atif Riaz Bokhari; Co-Founder and CEO of Abhi (Pvt.) Limited Omair Ansari; along with representatives and senior management of CDC, NCCPL, Arif Habib Limited, Topline Securities, Growth Securities, PSBA, investors representing Vostok Emerging Finance (VEF) and Speedinvest, and members of the financial community. The successful listing, according to a statement issued here, follows the Bank's Initial Public Offering (IPO), which comprised 132 million ordinary shares, with 75% allocated to institutional investors through book building and 25% to the general public.

The book-building portion was oversubscribed by 1.6 times, while the public subscription achieved 100% subscription, it stated, adding that the shares were offered at the Strike price of PKR 15.50 per share. The IPO raised Rs 2.05 billion and attracted participation from institutional, retail and foreign investors.

Farrukh H. Sabzwari, welcoming the Abhi Microfinance Bank to the PSX, stated that the ceremony marked the 14th listing of the current calendar year and the 6th of the fiscal year, reflecting the continued momentum of Pakistan's capital market.

Abhi's journey highlights the innovation taking place within Pakistan's financial services sector, he said and added that with continuous growth of Pakistan's capital market while maintaining strong disclosure standards, the transparency and investor protection remained critical to ensuring informed investment decisions and sustained market development.

# Strong Families Key To Ending Gender-Based Violence, Says PPAF CEO

● The campaign would also provide platforms for communities and partner organisations to share experiences

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD




Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Barech has emphasised that strong families, empowered women and cohesive communities are essential to building a peaceful, inclusive and violence-free Pakistan.

In an exclusive interview with the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) on Monday, Barech said PPAF would launch 396 community-based activities across 126 districts nationwide from November 25 to December 10 under its Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan Campaign, marking the United Nations' 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Titled "Strong Families Make Strong Societies," the nationwide campaign will cover all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad, aiming to challenge harmful social norms, promote gender equality and strengthen community resilience. Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad, aiming to challenge harmful social norms, promote gender equality and strengthen community resilience.

Barech said sustainable peace required more than responding to violence after it occurred, stressing the need to address deep-rooted attitudes, discriminatory practices and inequalities that contribute to gender-based violence.

He said families were the foundation of social transformation, where values of mutual respect, equality, tolerance and shared responsibility were developed. The Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan Campaign, he added, aimed to strengthen family institutions, empower women, engage young people and promote a culture of dignity and non-violence.

Referring to the initiative's broader development objectives, the PPAF chief said the campaign built on the outcomes of the organisation's two-day International Conference on Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth, held under the theme "From Poverty to Prosperity."

He said the conference highlighted women's empowerment, youth engagement, social cohesion and equal opportunities as key drivers of sustainable poverty reduction and national development.

The campaign will be implemented through partnerships involving federal and provincial governments, the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and other relevant institutions and organisations.

# Rupee gains 03 paisa against Dollar

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD




Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.47, down from the previous day's close of Rs 276.50.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.30 and Rs 280.00, respectively.

The Euro decreased by Rs 1.87 to close at Rs 301.82, down from Rs 303.69 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 came down by Rs 2.09 to Rs 360.83 from Rs 362.92 the previous day.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 75.27 and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paisa to close Rs 73.67.

# Huawei Recognized Market Shaper In Gartner AI Storage

● Huawei Only Non-North American Vendor Ranked Furthest On Market Disruption Potential Axis

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD




Huawei has been recognized as a Market Shaper in the November 2026 Gartner Emerging Market Quadrant™ for AI Data Storage, placed furthest along the axis of Potential for Market Disruption.

According to the Gartner report, Huawei is also the only non-North American vendor in that quadrant.

Focusing on fast-moving, fast-evolving emerging markets, in our view, the Gartner Emerging Market QuadrantTM report helps technology leaders and providers properly understand these markets, evaluate potential cooperators, and make technology procurement decisions.

This report marks the first time Gartner has systematically evaluated AI Data Storage as an independent category.

Market shapers are the companies most likely to drive substantial change — if not significant disruption — in an emerging market. They combine strong disruptive capabilities with the operational capacity to bring them to market effectively.

The report outlines some key capabilities required for a Market Shaper in the emerging market of AI Data Storage, including deep hardware/software co-design, proprietary offloading technology, specialised SSD management, GPU protocol acceleration and passthrough, scalable distributed namespaces, large-scale vector indexing, persistent shared KV cache, and content-aware data preparation engines.

Committed to technological innovation, Huawei has launched various products and solutions for AI, including the AI Data Lake Solution, OceanStor A Series AI Storage, and OceanStor M Series Context Memory Storage. Its comprehensive AI-ready product portfolio, proven ability to turn innovation into real-world value, and large-scale global delivery and service capabilities have earned broad recognition.

# New Generation, Same Rivalry: Pakistan's Young Guns Outshine India A In Doha (PART-I)

By Mudassar Iqbal

## Pakistan A Rule Doha! Ali Raza's Fiery Spell, Hasan Nawaz's All-Round Brilliance and Harshit Rana's Aggression Mark 48-Run Win Over India A




The cricket rivalry between Pakistan and India has always generated extraordinary excitement, emotions and anticipation among fans. Whenever these traditional rivals meet on the field, the contest goes beyond bat and ball. Every wicket, boundary and six sends emotions soaring among millions of supporters. The DP World Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026 encounter at West End Park International Cricket Stadium in Doha on November 22 was no different. Pakistan A defeated India A by 48 runs, secured a place in the semi-finals and showcased the remarkable potential of its emerging cricketing talent.

Pakistan's victory was not merely a 48-run margin on the scoreboard; it was also an encouraging message about the future of Pakistan cricket. The toss controversy, Indian fast bowler Harshit Rana's excessive aggression, the confidence of Pakistani batters, heated exchanges between players and Ali Raza's decisive bowling made this an absorbing encounter.

The match began with an unusual situation at the toss. Pakistan captain Abdul Samad called heads, but the initial decision was incorrectly announced as tails. Samad immediately pointed out the mistake, and the decision was subsequently corrected in Pakistan's favour. The incident sparked considerable discussion on social media. Some supporters criticised the handling of the toss, while others raised questions about transparency. However, there was no verified evidence of deliberate cheating or match manipulation. Nevertheless, the Pakistani captain's insistence on getting the decision corrected was noteworthy.

Batting first, Pakistan posted an impressive 313 runs before being bowled out in 49.2 overs. Openers Shamyl Hussain and Maaz Sadaqat provided an excellent start, putting the Indian bowlers under pressure from the outset and adding 66 runs for the first wicket. Shamyl scored 33 off just 23 balls, demonstrating an attacking approach that immediately challenged India's bowling plans. Meanwhile, Maaz Sadaqat played a responsible innings of 59 off 63 deliveries, showing that he possesses not only attacking ability but also the temperament to adapt his batting according to the situation.

Maaz's confidence, shot selection and composure were particularly impressive. He refused to be intimidated by the Indian bowling attack and provided Pakistan with a solid foundation. His consistent performances are encouraging signs for Pakistan cricket. The young opener demonstrated that Pakistan has talented players capable of taking responsibility in high-pressure encounters.

Hasan Nawaz then showcased his class with an outstanding innings of 79 off 82 balls. His batting reflected patience, confidence and the ability to accelerate when required. He played a crucial role in stabilising the innings and taking Pakistan towards a formidable total. Farhan Yousaf also made a valuable contribution, scoring 56 off 48 deliveries.

His half-century helped Pakistan cross the 300-run mark and put India under further pressure.

One aspect of the match that deserves particular attention is the conduct of Indian fast bowler Harshit Rana. His behaviour attracted almost as much attention as his bowling. His repeated verbal exchanges with Pakistani batters, aggressive send-offs after taking wickets and attempts to engage opponents in confrontations added tension to the contest. His send-off to Shamyl Hussain following his dismissal and subsequent exchanges with other Pakistani players, including Hasan Nawaz, became talking points.

There is nothing wrong with a fast bowler displaying aggression. Putting pressure on a batter, celebrating a wicket passionately and showing commitment to the team are all natural elements of competitive cricket. However, when aggression turns into unnecessary provocation and personal exchanges, it becomes a matter of concern. A talented young bowler like Harshit Rana is expected to channel his energy into disciplined bowling, rather than becoming involved in repeated confrontations that detract from the spirit of the game.

Interestingly, Rana's aggressive approach did not translate into particularly economical bowling figures. He conceded 77 runs in his 10 overs while taking two wickets, recording an economy rate of 7.70. Although two wickets were a contribution, he proved expensive against a Pakistani batting line-up that managed to score freely. Shamyl Hussain, Maaz Sadaqat, Hasan Nawaz and Farhan Yousaf maintained their focus and responded through their batting rather than getting distracted by verbal exchanges.

This is an important lesson in professional cricket: the best response to provocation is performance, not confrontation. Rana's aggression may have added intensity to the contest, but his bowling figures also reflected the difficulty he faced in containing Pakistan's batters.

Chasing 314, India A suffered an early setback as Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was dismissed for 11 and Ayush Badoni returned to the pavilion without scoring. Pakistan's bowlers had immediately put India under pressure.

# Hainan's Wuzhishan Promotes Rainforest Tea Industry, Boosts Rural Incomes And International Cooperation

By: Zafar Hussain



Nestled in the tropical rainforest mountains of China's southern Hainan Province, Wuzhishan is developing its distinctive large-leaf tea industry by combining ecological conservation, modern agricultural technology, cultural tourism and international market cooperation.

During a visit to the Wuzhishan Yingge Jinghong Ecological Organic Tea Plantation, visitors explored how the region is transforming its natural ecological advantages into an emerging agricultural industry while creating new economic opportunities for local communities.

Located within the Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park, the plantation lies in the core production area of Hainan Rainforest Large-Leaf Tea, at an altitude of more than 650 metres above sea level. Covering approximately 648.67 mu, or 43 hectares, it cultivates indigenous wild large-leaf tea varieties native to the Wuzhishan region, with tea trees averaging around 40 years of age.

Lu Xiangming, a staff member of the Publicity Department of the Wuzhishan Municipal Party Committee, briefed visitors on the plantation's development, highlighting its organic cultivation practices, rainforest environment and integration of tea production with tourism.

The area's mountainous landscape, abundant rainfall, frequent mist, distinctive temperature variations and mineral-rich acidic soil provide favourable conditions for producing rainforest tea with a distinctive flavour.

Operated by the Wuzhishan branch of Hainan Yinggeling Jinghong Tea Co., Ltd., the plantation follows an integrated business model covering cultivation, processing, research and development, and marketing.

The company combines traditional tea-making techniques with modern intelligent processing facilities and maintains a production traceability system to monitor quality throughout the supply chain. It also holds organic certification and export qualifications, with quality management practices benchmarked against international standards.

Tea industry driving rural revitalization

Under a cooperative development model involving enterprises, cooperatives and farming households, companies provide tea seedlings, technical training and guaranteed purchasing arrangements, enabling farmers to participate more actively in the industrial supply chain.

The local government has also introduced measures to protect traditional tea resources, promote organic cultivation and strengthen product quality standards.

A distinctive tea variety with scientific potential Hainan's large-leaf tea is also attracting scientific attention because of its distinctive genetic characteristics.

According to the municipal report, research findings released in May 2024 identified a genetic background different from traditional large-leaf and small-leaf tea varieties, with the researchers recognizing it as a distinct species within the Camellia genus.



By Syed Mujtaba Rizwan

# Apna Ghar Programme: Turning the Dream of an Ordinary Citizen into Reality, Strengthening Economic Stability and Taking an Important Step Towards a Prosperous Pakistan (PART-I)



Every human being has a dream that represents security, peace of mind and dignity. That dream is to own a home. A place where one can live peacefully with one's family, where children's future is secure, and where the burden of monthly rent no longer remains a constant concern. In a country like Pakistan, where inflation, limited incomes and rising property prices have made homeownership an enormous challenge for ordinary citizens, owning a house has increasingly become an unfulfilled aspiration for many middle- and low-income families. In these circumstances, the Prime Minister of Pakistan's Apna Ghar Programme has emerged as an important government initiative aimed at providing affordable housing facilities to low-income families purchasing their first home.

The Apna Ghar Programme is not merely a financial scheme; rather, it represents a broader social and economic vision aimed at helping ordinary citizens move from rented accommodation towards owning their homes. Its importance lies in the fact that a significant proportion of Pakistan's population, despite having regular sources of income, cannot accumulate the substantial amount required to purchase a house. High financing costs, strict banking requirements and substantial down payments have traditionally remained major obstacles. Keeping these challenges in view, the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme has introduced a financing mechanism through collaboration between the government, banks and relevant financial institutions to provide housing loans on easier terms.

Launched in April 2026, the programme has demonstrated encouraging progress in the performance report issued up to November 13, 2026. According to the report, more than Rs112 billion has been disbursed in the form of affordable housing loans, while financial assistance amounting to approximately Rs560 billion has been approved. So far, around 19,000 families have directly benefited from the programme, while another 94,000 applications are at different stages of the approval process. These figures indicate that the initiative has attracted considerable public attention during its initial months and generated renewed activity in Pakistan's housing finance sector.

The most significant feature of this programme is its focus on low-income individuals purchasing their first home. Applicants must possess a valid national identity card, be first-time homebuyers and have a regular source of income. The objective is to reach salaried individuals, small business owners and citizens who, despite limited financial resources, wish to secure permanent accommodation for their families.

Under the scheme, eligible applicants are being offered financing at a fixed profit rate of five percent for the first ten years. This means that the government will bear the difference between the prevailing bank financing rate and the subsidised five percent rate payable by the borrower. This arrangement is expected to reduce the burden of monthly instalments on beneficiary families. Furthermore, full ownership of the property can be secured after twenty years, subject to the applicable financing terms. Banks can finance up to 90 percent of the property cost, while the applicant is required to contribute the remaining 10 percent. A period of fifteen days has also been prescribed for loan approval to minimise unnecessary delays and bureaucratic complications.

Another important aspect of the programme is that the government is not directly extending loans to citizens. Instead, a financing mechanism has been established through commercial banks and financial institutions.

By Azhar Ahmad

# The Shifting Sounds Of The Walled City And Beyond: Exploring The Rich Dialects Of Lahore



To truly understand Lahore, one must listen to it. Beyond the historic architecture and the rich culinary traditions, the soul of Punjab's capital resides in its language. While Punjabi is the historic mother tongue of the region, Lahore does not speak with a single voice. Instead, it possesses a fluid linguistic landscape where geography, history, and social class shape distinct local dialects, creating a fascinating auditory map that evolves from the narrow alleys of the Walled City to the wide avenues of the modern suburbs.

At the core of Lahore's linguistic identity is the Majhi dialect, historically recognized as the standard form of Punjabi. Characterized by its melodic tones, rich vocabulary, and soft pronunciation, Majhi in Lahore has acquired a unique flavor often referred to simply as "Lahori Punjabi." It is a dialect defined by its warmth and an innate sense of humor. Words like Bhaji (brother) or expressions of hospitality are delivered with a distinct cadence that is instantly recognizable across Pakistan.

However, step inside the historic thirteen gates of the Walled City (Androon Shehar), and the language takes on a completely different texture. The Old Lahori dialect is raw, rhythmic, and intensely expressive. Here, Punjabi is spoken with a rapid fire delivery and infused with colorful slang, idioms, and theatrical emphasis. The vernacular of the Walled City is deeply communal; it is a dialect born of closely packed neighborhoods where street theater, storytelling, and daily commerce blend into one. In these quarters, linguistic sub-dialects even vary slightly from one bazaar to another, preserving old vocabulary that has long been forgotten in the outer city.

As one moves away from the center toward neighborhoods built in the mid to late 20th century, such as Samanabad and Model Town, a visible linguistic shift occurs. Here, the dialect reflects the post partition migration and urbanization. It is a more regulated, urbanized Punjabi, deeply influenced by Urdu, the national language. In these areas, code switching between Punjabi and Urdu languages is common, serving as a bridge between generational identities.

In stark contrast lie the modern expanses of Gulberg, Defense (DHA), and Bahria Town. In these socioeconomic hubs, a newer linguistic phenomenon has taken root. The youth predominantly speak Urdu or English, giving rise to a distinct contemporary dialect often colloquially dubbed "Burglish" or "Lahori Urdu." This dialect is marked by a unique accent, English loanwords, and a specific sentence structure that sets it apart from the Urdu spoken in Karachi and Islamabad. Yet, even among the English-fluent elite, Lahori Punjabi slang stubbornly breaks through, proving that the city's root language is impossible to completely erase.

Lahore's dialects are more than just a means of communication; they are a living archive of the city's social evolution. While some cultural purists worry that the rapid expansion of the city and the dominance of Urdu and English languages among the younger generation might dilute the traditional Majhi dialect, the vernacular of Lahore has always been resilient. It adapts, absorbs, and survives, ensuring that the voice of Lahore remains as vibrant and diverse as the city itself.

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# China unveils 15 landmark Brain-Computer Interface achievements as global industry expands

NEWS DESK

BEIJING



China unveiled 15 landmark brain-computer interface (BCI) achievements at a conference in Beijing, showcasing advances in neural signal acquisition, implantable devices, medical rehabilitation and industrial applications, as a new report highlighted the rapid expansion of the global BCI industry.

The achievements were released at the 2026 Brain-Computer Interface Conference, held in Changping, Beijing, from November 19 to 22.

Together, the results span both invasive and non-invasive interfaces, as well as applications in neurological rehabilitation, cognitive assessment, human-machine interaction and workplace safety.

The conference also released the Research Report on the Innovative Development of Brain-Computer Interfaces (2026), compiled jointly by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology and the Brain Computer Interface Industrial Alliance, CEN reported.

According to the report, the number of BCI companies worldwide reached 1,175 in 2026. In China, three major urban clusters, the Yangtze River Delta, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, host 390 BCI companies, accounting for 77.4 percent of the national total.

The report identifies a shift in the industry's technological development, from single-direction neural signal reading towards multimodal systems and AI-native integration.

# Pakistan's space dreams take flight as first astronaut departs Wednesday: Ahsan

NEWS DESK

JIUQAN



As Pakistan's first astronaut Muhammad Zeeshan Ali is set to depart for space as the first foreign guest aboard the Chinese space station on Wednesday, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has hailed it as a historic and proud moment for the entire nation.

The minister, who virtually attended a media briefing at China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center ahead of the mission's launch, said that it would turn Pakistan's dream into reality.

The televised briefing showed the minister waving to the Pakistani astronaut and conveying best wishes for the historic mission.

Ahsan Iqbal said the sky was no longer the limit for Pakistan, but a starting point for the younger generation to aspire to greater heights.

He said that Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud had successfully completed their rigorous space training, bringing pride to the nation. However, one of them was shortlisted for the mission.

He said Pakistan's historic space mission carried a message for the younger generation that no destination was beyond reach through knowledge, determination and perseverance.

Highlighting the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China, he said their bond was higher than the Himalayas and the historic space mission would take bilateral cooperation beyond the skies.

Ahsan Iqbal said Muhammad Zeeshan Ali is set to carry the dreams, hopes and prayers of the entire Pakistani nation when he departs for space on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State / Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, Fahd Haroon, in a meeting with the Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, H.E. Alexandra Berg von Linde, in Islamabad.

# Hasina Asks Bangladesh For December 16 Victory Return

● Dhaka Warns Hasina Can Only Return In Handcuffs After Death Sentence Conviction

NEWS DESK

DHAKA



Bangladesh's fugitive former prime minister Sheikh Hasina said on Tuesday she wants to return to the country on December 16, with Dhaka warning she could only come home in handcuffs.

Hasina, 79, has vowed repeatedly to return from India in December, despite being sentenced to death in absentia for crimes against humanity over a deadly crackdown during the 2024 uprising that ousted her.

She has insisted on going back to Bangladesh despite Dhaka authorities saying she would be hanged if she returned, and that she had no further legal recourse after missing the deadline to appeal against her conviction.

"She has... indicated that her return will be on Bangladesh's Victory Day on December 16," Hasina's spokesman Syed Mozammel Ali told AFP on Tuesday.

Victory Day is a national holiday marking the 1971 surrender of Pakistani forces, which paved the way for Bangladesh's independence.

Hasina's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then became Bangladesh's founding president.

Hasina fled to India as crowds stormed her palace in August 2024, with the ousted leader now asking Dhaka to arrange an aeroplane to bring her home, Ali said.

"She now calls upon the government to arrange for her air transport from Delhi back to Dhaka," he said, adding that it was "the responsibility of the government to make possible her return to Bangladesh on Victory Day on December 16".

Dhaka has sought her extradition from India, which says the request is under legal review.

"Sheikh Hasina's desire to return to the country on December 16, and the reality of the situation are not the same," Humaiun Kobir, Dhaka's junior foreign minister, told reporters on Tuesday.

"If she were to return, she can only come as a prisoner in handcuffs," he said.

Hasina's lawyers had applied for a Bangladeshi passport and national identity card through the country's high commission in New Delhi, she said. Many Bangladeshis want to see Hasina hanged, while others fear her return could galvanise her supporters and trigger a fresh confrontation between rival camps.

Kobir accused Hasina's loyalists from her Awami League party -- whose activities have been banned -- of being behind a spate of petrol bomb attacks.

"The attacks have failed to intimidate people," he said.

At least four people have been killed in political violence since mid-November, including three party activists and a bus worker who died when his vehicle was torched, according to Bangladeshi media reports.

# Israeli Strikes In Gaza Kill Seven Including Official

● Seven Killed Despite Ceasefire As Over 1650 Palestinians Die Since Truce Began

WEB DESK

GAZA



Israeli airstrikes in Gaza on Tuesday killed seven people, including Hamas's director of internal security, Palestinian officials in the territory told , despite a ceasefire in place since last year.

Israel's military said it had struck a senior Hamas official.

Gaza's interior ministry said an airstrike in Gaza City killed Brigadier General Naeem Abu Nahal, director-general of the Internal Security Service.

Mahmoud Bassal, spokesman for Gaza's civil defence agency, told AFP that several other people were in critical condition following the same strike in Gaza City's Rimal neighbourhood.

The strike comes as talks are underway in Israel to form a new government after October legislative elections produced no clear winner.

Centrist Gadi Eisenkot wants to form a coalition to end caretaker prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's long tenure.

But Netanyahu, who has staked his reputation on ensuring security for Israel after the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, remains in charge of military operations while negotiations continue.

Police station strike

Bassal said earlier on Tuesday that three people, including a 17-year-old, had been killed in a separate Israeli airstrike near Gaza City.

Three more were also killed in a third airstrike on a police station in the Al-Mawasi area in southern Gaza, he added.

Gaza's police force said two policemen aged 23 and 33 were among the dead.

It condemned the strike as "part of an ongoing campaign targeting the police apparatus".

Israel's military said it "struck terrorists in the area" of the police station, but did not confirm the strike that killed the 17-year-old.

Israel and Hamas regularly accuse each other of violating the ceasefire that came into effect in October 2025, after two years of war triggered by the October 2023 attack.

# Five women killed each hour by relatives in 2025: UN



STAFF REPORTER

UN

More than 47,000 women and girls, or around five per hour, were killed by relatives around the world in 2025, a figure broadly unchanged from previous years, according to a UN report published on Tuesday.

The number of women and girls killed by an intimate partner or a family member has fluctuated between 45,000 and 51,000 over the past several years, according to estimates by UN Women and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

Of the 78,000 women and girls who were victims of intentional homicide last year, around 60% were killed by an intimate partner or family member, the report said ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The estimated 47,000 victims represent 129 women and girls killed every day. The figure was calculated using an analysis of statistics from 122 countries and territories.

While women accounted for 19% of homicide victims worldwide in 2025, 60% of them were killed in the private sphere. By contrast, 11% of male homicide victims were killed in such circumstances.

The UN stressed the "urgency of ensuring that the prevention of domestic violence addresses intimate relationships, as well as relationships in wider family structures."

No region was completely safe, but Africa once again recorded the highest number of women and girls killed by intimate partners or family members, at 22,100.

Asia followed with 15,100 victims, ahead of the Americas with 7,400, Europe with 2,100 and Oceania with 300.

The report also noted that while homicide rates have fallen globally, rates of femicide have declined more slowly, particularly in the Americas and Europe.

This suggests, according to the UN, "that these crimes are deeply rooted in social norms and gender stereotypes," adding that it points to barriers in accessing the justice system.

Femicide refers to the gender-related killing of women and girls. Beyond murders committed by intimate partners or family members, the term can also encompass certain killings linked to organised crime, forced labour or human trafficking.

However, data on femicides committed outside the private sphere remain very limited, the report said, making it impossible to measure the scale of the phenomenon at the regional or global level.

# Pakistan, Russia to strengthen trade & connectivity ahead of PM Shehbaz's Visit: Ambassador Tirmizi

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW

Ambassador to Russia Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Monday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's upcoming visit to Russia will focus on expanding economic, trade, cultural, educational and people-to-people ties, with around 15 to 16 agreements expected to be signed.

In an interview with Sputnik's newly launched Urdu service, Ambassador Tirmizi said the visit would seek concrete, long-term economic outcomes rather than remain limited to diplomatic engagements. He highlighted proposed cooperation in railway connectivity, direct flights, banking and payment mechanisms, information technology, artificial intelligence and tourism.

The ambassador said Pakistan and Russia were working on plans for a railway connection between Islamabad and Moscow, potentially through Quetta and Iran. He noted that improved rail connectivity could significantly reduce transportation costs and facilitate bilateral trade.

He also stressed the need to restore direct air links, simplify visa procedures and explore banking arrangements, including trade in Pakistani rupees and Russian roubles, to address payment-related challenges.

# Bangladesh garment wage talks seek to narrow gap

WEB DESK

BANGLADESH



Bangladesh's garment factory owners offered to increase minimum wages by around a quarter on Tuesday, falling short of workers' demands as both sides sought a breakthrough in wage negotiations.

The South Asian nation, the world's second-biggest garment exporter behind China, has seen widespread protests since October by workers demanding higher pay.

Angry workers in the industrial district of Gazipur blocked highways leading to the capital Dhaka on Tuesday.

Workers carrying sticks clashed with security forces, who fired tear gas to disperse them.

"The gap between the offer and the demand has narrowed," wage board chairman Judge Syed Azad Subhani told reporters, adding that talks would continue into the evening.

Strikes have continued at several of the more than 4,000 factories in the country, with a trade body estimating hundreds of millions of dollars in losses and damages due to the prolonged disruption.

Workers initially demanded a minimum monthly wage of 30,000 taka ($240), up from the current 12,500 taka.

Subhani said that on Tuesday, worker representatives demanded 22,000 taka, while factory owners offered 15,700 taka. "The workers' representative is not satisfied," Subhani said.

Workers say their pay has failed to keep pace with rising costs of food, housing, transport and healthcare.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said on Sunday that protests had cost the industry an estimated $428 million in losses, while orders worth $254 million had shifted to other countries.

# Waheed Murad remembered on 43rd death anniversary as Pakistani cinema's iconic Chocolate Hero

● From 'Armaan' to 'Ko Ko Korina', Murad left an enduring mark on Pakistan's film and music industries

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

**KARACHI**

Legendary Pakistani film actor Waheed Murad is being remembered on his 43rd death anniversary on November 23, as film enthusiasts and admirers pay tribute to the man whose charm, acting talent and unforgettable screen presence helped shape the country's film industry.

Fondly known as the 'Chocolate Hero', Murad remains one of the most celebrated personalities in the history of Pakistani cinema. His contribution extended far beyond acting, as he also established himself as a successful film producer, screenwriter and director, leaving behind a remarkable body of work that continues to influence generations.

Born on October 2, 1938, in Karachi to Nisar Murad and Shireen Murad, Waheed Murad grew up in a family connected to the film industry. His father was a prominent film distributor, giving him early exposure to cinema and its workings.

Unlike many aspiring actors of his time, Murad also had a strong academic background. He attended SM Arts College before completing a master's degree in English literature from the University of Karachi.

His education, refined personality and interest in literature distinguished him from many of his contemporaries. He became known for his sophisticated appearance, expressive eyes, stylish hairstyle and natural dialogue delivery.

Although he came from a family associated with the film business, he went on to



establish his own identity through creativity, hard work and an understanding of filmmaking.

Murad's association with cinema began behind the scenes before he established himself as one of the industry's leading actors.

In 1960, he launched his production banner, Film Arts, becoming one of the youngest film producers in Pakistan. His early productions included Insaan Badalta Hai (1961) and Jabse Dekha Hai Tumhen (1963).

His acting career gained momentum with Aulad (1962), while Heera Aur Pathar (1964) proved to be a major turning point. The film established him as a leading man and earned him a Nigar Award for Best Actor. His performance demonstrated his ability to portray characters with emotional depth, rather than relying solely on his appearance and screen appeal.

Over the following years, Murad became a household name, particularly during the golden era of Pakistani Urdu cinema in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the most significant milestones in his career was Armaan (1966), a film in which he served as producer, actor and writer. Directed by Pervez Malik, with music composed by Sohail Rana and lyrics penned by Masroor Anwar, the film became a landmark production in Pakistani cinema.

Its popularity was further strengthened by memorable songs, particularly Ko Ko Korina, sung by Ahmed Rushdi. The track became an enduring part of Pakistan's musical heritage and is widely regarded as an important milestone in the development of Pakistani pop music.

Murad's achievements as a filmmaker were not limited to Armaan. Through Film Arts, he produced 11 films, several of which became important entries in Pakistani cinema.

# 'Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo' locks Netflix debut

● After months of anticipation, 'Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo' is finally ready to make its Netflix debut

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

**LAHORE**




The wait is finally over for fans of "Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo", as Pakistan's much-anticipated first Netflix original series is officially set to premiere on December 4, 2026.

The release date was revealed alongside the series' first official poster, which features its star-studded ensemble cast. Actors from the project, including Fawad Khan, Mahira Khan, Hania Aamir, Ahad Raza Mir, Iqra Aziz, Sanam Saeed, Hamza Ali Abbasi and Maya Ali, took to their respective social media accounts to share the poster with the same announcement.

The caption accompanying the poster read: "Three generations. Six love stories. One question: Is the love we carry enough? Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo - All The Love Our Hearts Carry premieres December 4, only on Netflix."

The announcement has renewed excitement among Pakistani drama enthusiasts, particularly those who have been waiting to see the much-loved literary story brought to the screen. The series has remained under wraps for a considerable period, with its release repeatedly awaited by fans eager to see the impressive lineup of actors share the screen.

Based on Farhat Ishtiaq's bestselling Urdu novel of the same name, the series is directed and produced by Momina Duraid.

# Pakistani singer Mohsin Raza Khan, known as Bunny, dies aged 74

● He died before Fajr prayers on Monday; doctors at Karachi's Jinnah Hospital declared him dead

SHOWBIZ DESK

**KARACHI**



Pakistani singer Mohsin Raza Khan, popularly known as Bunny, has died at the age of 74, his close friend Dr Shafqat Ali has confirmed.

Dr Ali said Bunny died early on Monday morning, before Fajr prayers. He was taken to Jinnah Hospital in Karachi, but doctors declared that he had already passed away.

His body is currently being kept at the Chhipa morgue at the FTC area in Karachi.

Dr Ali said the arrangements for Bunny's funeral and burial were being finalised, as his son, Chengiz, is based in London. The family has informed him about his father's death, but has yet to receive confirmation regarding his arrival in Pakistan.

According to Dr Ali, Bunny had expressed a wish to be buried beside his father. His father's grave has been located at the Gizri Phase IV cemetery, where the singer is expected to be laid to rest.

Dr Ali said the family was waiting to hear from Bunny's son before proceeding with the burial. He added that no family members or relatives were present with the singer at the time of his death.

Bunny had been diagnosed with tongue cancer around 30 years ago and had been living with his neighbours, Dr Ali said.

# Pakistan's Misbah Arshad showcases Markhor-inspired national costume at Miss Universe 2026

● Pays tribute to the country's national animal with a flag-bearing ensemble celebrating its wildlife heritage

WEB DESK

**PUERTO RICO**



Miss Universe Pakistan 2026 Misbah Arshad has brought Pakistan's national identity to the international stage with a striking Markhor-inspired national costume at the 75th Miss Universe competition in Puerto Rico.

Arshad presented the ensemble during the National Costume Show at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot, where contestants showcased outfits representing their countries' cultures, heritage and national symbols.

Inspired by the Markhor, Pakistan's national animal, the costume draws on the mountain goat's distinctive appearance and its association with strength and resilience. One of its standout features is a cape bearing the Pakistani national flag, adding an unmistakable national touch to the ensemble.

The look celebrates the Markhor as a symbol of courage, survival and national pride, while drawing international attention to Pakistan's wildlife and natural heritage.

Recognised for its impressive spiral-shaped horns, the Markhor is native to mountainous regions of Central and South Asia. In Pakistan, the animal is closely associated with the northern areas and has become an emblem of the country's natural identity.

Its conservation story adds another layer of significance to the tribute. Once threatened by poaching and habitat pressures, the species has benefited from conservation initiatives and the involvement of local communities in efforts to protect its population.

Born in Lahore, Misbah Arshad is a Pakistani model and beauty pageant titleholder who has previously lived in Islamabad and is currently based in Munich, Germany. She studied psychology at the University of Hagen.

Arshad entered the international pageant circuit after winning Miss Pakistan World 2023. She went on to represent Pakistan at Miss Aura International 2023 in Turkey, Miss International 2023 in Japan and Miss Supranational 2024 in Poland.

Crowned Miss Universe Pakistan 2026 in August, she is now representing the country at the 75th edition of the international competition. She has also highlighted girls' education and empowerment as causes close to her heart.

Pakistan has participated in Miss Universe every year since making its debut in 2023. Arshad's Markhor-inspired ensemble continues that presence by placing an element of the country's wildlife heritage at the centre of the international pageant.

# Meera offers financial help as Laila plans to buy jeep



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

**LAHORE**

Stunning actress and reality TV personality Laila has opened up about her earnings from Tamasha 5, and revealed that she plans to purchase a white Jeep once the show's payment reaches her account.

During a podcast conversation, Laila shared that she intends to build a house from scratch and buy a new vehicle with the money she earned from the reality show.

Although she did not disclose the exact amount, she described her earnings as very good.

Laila explained that her payment was calculated on a daily basis for the 63 days she spent in Tamasha 5.

Discussing her plans, Laila said she had decided to buy a white Jeep as soon as she received the payment.

She also indicated that her earnings from the show were considerably higher than its winning prize, which had reportedly come down from Rs1 crore to Rs47 lakh.

During the conversation, Laila further revealed that actress Meera had promised to help her financially if she fell short of the amount needed to purchase the vehicle.

According to Laila, Meera offered to give her Rs10 lakh to Rs15 lakh if required.

# Mansha Pasha returns to television with new drama 'Blind Love'

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

**LAHORE**

Actor Mansha Pasha is set to return to television with a new drama, Blind Love, marking her latest screen appearance after an extended gap from regular television work.

The announcement was shared on social media, introducing the project with an intriguing description: "When love becomes an obsession, trust turns into a dangerous game."

Directed by Babar Qayyum and written by Shaista Tariq and Ali Saeed, Blind Love also stars Srha Asghar and Faraz Farooqui.

While the makers have kept much of the storyline under wraps, the promotional material points towards an emotionally charged narrative revolving around obsession, fractured trust, deception and betrayal.



# Anmol Baloch reacts to rival dramas outshining 'Nashtar'

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

**KARACHI**



Pakistani actress Anmol Baloch has shared her perspective on the comparatively lower buzz surrounding her drama Nashtar, which is airing alongside popular serials such as Mitti De Baaway and Dar-e-Nijat.

During a recent interview, the actress was asked whether she felt Nashtar was being overshadowed by its competitors despite receiving a positive response from viewers.

Responding to the question, Anmol acknowledged that while the drama was being watched by audiences, it had not generated the level of conversation some might have expected. She attributed this largely to the timing of its release, explaining that several strong productions had arrived around the same time, each offering something different to viewers.

However, the actress made it clear that the situation did not bother her, insisting that she was happy to see other dramas receiving appreciation. Rather than viewing their popularity as competition, she considered the emergence of distinctive stories a positive development for the entertainment industry.

Anmol particularly praised the variety brought by projects such as Mitti De Baaway and Dar-e-Nijat, pointing out that Pakistani television had long relied on a limited range of storylines that were repeatedly recycled with minor changes.

According to the actress, the introduction of narratives exploring different subjects, including narcissistic personalities and religion, signals that the industry is gradually moving beyond conventional hero-heroine romances and repetitive family conflicts.

She further expressed happiness that Pakistani dramas are reaching international audiences, including viewers across the border, adding that the industry is evolving through its willingness to experiment with fresh scripts and unconventional themes.

The actress also expressed her interest in being part of similarly meaningful projects in the future, making it clear that her priority is not how much attention one drama receives compared with another, but the overall progress of Pakistani storytelling.

Her remarks have highlighted a refreshing perspective on the competitive television landscape, where the success of one production does not necessarily have to come at the expense of another.

# Kinza Hashmi in awe of Samina Ahmad's timeless beauty

SHOWBIZ DESK

**KARACHI**



Pakistani actress Kinza Hashmi has expressed her admiration for veteran star Samina Ahmad after sharing a nostalgic video tracing the latter's remarkable journey in the entertainment industry, taking viewers back through different eras from 2026 to the 1970s.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Kinza reposted the video featuring Samina Ahmad's transformation through the decades, highlighting her changing looks and enduring presence on screen.

The tribute offered a glimpse into the veteran actress's long-standing association with the industry and the many years she has spent entertaining audiences.

Adding a heartfelt touch to the post, Kinza captioned it, "Oh my heart," accompanied by a heart-eyes emoji. Her brief yet affectionate reaction reflected her admiration for Samina and the emotions stirred by revisiting the veteran actress's extensive career.

Samina Ahmad has remained a familiar face in Pakistani entertainment for decades, earning recognition for her versatility and memorable performances across television and film. Her journey from the 1970s to the present day stands as a reminder of her enduring contribution to the industry.

The two actresses have also shared screen space, including in the 2015 family drama 'Maikay Ko De Do Sandes', giving Kinza an opportunity to work alongside the veteran performer.

Meanwhile, Samina Ahmad recently received an Honorary Award at the 10th Pakistan Excellence Awards in October 2026, recognising her long-standing contribution to the entertainment world.

On the professional front, Kinza Hashmi has also been making headlines following reports linking her to Mohabbat, an upcoming film by Bangladeshi director Himel Ashraf, reportedly featuring her opposite actor Shakib Khan.

# Babar Azam makes history in ILT20 debut in Sharjah

SPORTS DESK

SHARIJAH



Pakistan batting icon Babar Azam made an immediate impact on his ILT20 debut, smashing 86 off 51 balls to guide Desert Vipers to a six-wicket victory over Sharjah Warriors at Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Monday night.

The Pakistan batter, who was signed by the Vipers for his base price of $80,000 at the Season 5 auction, was named Player of the Match after producing an innings that included 13 fours and two sixes.

His 13 boundaries set a record for the most fours in an innings in ILT20 history, with the league confirming the achievement. Babar reached the milestone in his first appearance in the UAE competition.

In the first innings, Sharjah Warriors opener Paul Walter had matched Alishan Sharafu's 2024 record of 11 fours in an innings in ILT20. However, Babar broke the record few hours later.

The atmosphere inside Sharjah Cricket Stadium also reflected his popularity. Despite playing at the home ground of Sharjah Warriors, Babar received loud support from spectators, with fans heard chanting his name during both the innings.

The two sixes were another significant part of his performance. They marked the first time Babar had cleared the boundary in 12 matches, ending a lengthy run without a maximum.

His previous six had come during the third Test of Pakistan's tour of England, played from September 9 to 13. Since then, he had accumulated 338 runs for Pakistan and his domestic side, Oil and Gas Development Company Limited Cricket Team, without hitting a six.

Babar came close to scoring a century on his ILT20 debut but fell for 86. He was dismissed by Adam Milne after mistiming a delivery, with Walter completing the catch.




**Players from the Larkana and Sukkur boards compete during the Pakistan Inter-Board Girls Badminton Championship 2026, organized by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Larkana at the Officers Club.**

# Bodybuilding Field Competition And National Karate Championship Inspire Young Athletes

● Ek Gym and Martial Arts Academy students show strength, discipline and confidence at local and national events

MUDASSAR IQBAL

SOHAWA



Bodybuilding Field Competition and National Karate Championship have become a proud moment for Ek Gym and Martial Arts Academy. Young athletes took part with great energy and showed what hard work can achieve.

The academy works to promote a healthy lifestyle, fitness, discipline and sports among young people. Its teams joined many sports events and national competitions this year, which is a strong step forward.

A bodybuilding competition was held to guide young people toward positive activities. Participants showed their training, strength and self-control in front of the audience.

The main goal was simple. Organizers wanted to raise awareness about health and fitness. They also wanted to move young people away from unhealthy habits and toward exercise and sports.

Another aim was to help build an active and healthy society. Many young people said that regular training also makes them feel calm and confident.

Students of the academy also took part in the 10th National Karate Championship 2026. The event was held in Sohawa, in Jhelum district, under the national federation.

Haiqa Khan was among the players who competed at this national level. Events like this give young athletes a chance to show their talent and learn from other players.

From bodybuilding to karate, the academy's work shows that training is about more than muscle. It also builds self-confidence, patience, hard work and discipline.

Sports experts say that bodybuilding and martial arts help young people stay active. They also support personality growth and teach respect and focus.

The academy has promised to keep creating more chances for young people in sports and healthy activities. It also plans to send more students to national competitions.

# Brentford Thrash Ten-Man Everton To Move Up To Sixth Place

● Red card for Tarkowski and a Janelt thunderbolt leave David Moyes' side beaten 4-0 on a night to forget

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI



Everton came into this Premier League clash chasing a third straight win. Instead, they left with a heavy defeat. Brentford were the better side from start to finish.

A win would have lifted the Toffees to fifth in the table. That hope faded quickly in a poor first half.

The night began on a happy note for David Moyes. He was taking charge of his 593rd game for Everton, a club record. Sadly, his team could not mark the day with a good display.

Brentford took the lead in the 23rd minute. Jaidon Anthony found Lewis-Potter inside the box, and the full-back hit a shot. It took a deflection and left Jordan Pickford with no chance.

Just two minutes later, Lewis-Potter struck again. His first effort was blocked, but his second hit Thierno Barry and flew into the net.

Brentford kept pushing, and Everton struggled to cope. Things got worse five minutes before the break. James Tarkowski slid in to clear the ball but caught Yehor Yarmolyuk on the shin.

The referee, Craig Pawson, first showed a yellow card. The video assistant referee then asked him to check the replay. After a look at the screen, he changed it to a red card. It was the first red card of Tarkowski's Premier League career.

Everton had one good chance before half-time. Barry sent in a powerful header, but Caoimhin Kelleher made a fine save.

The visitors played better after the break. Still, Brentford needed one more goal to settle the game.

That goal came midway through the second half. Vitaly Janelt hit a stunning shot from 30 yards that no keeper could stop.

Fabio Carvalho then added a fourth late on. It was only his second Premier League appearance of the season, and the ball went in off his knee.

It was a fine night for Brentford and a painful one for Everton. Moyes will now hope his players can bounce back quickly in the next Premier League match.

# 15-Year-Old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Smashes 204 Off 53 Balls Against UAE

● India A chase down 250 in just 14.2 overs as the teenage star rewrites List A cricket records in the Asia Cup Rising Stars

SPORTS DESK

DOHA



15-Year-Old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi lit up the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars with an innings that fans will talk about for years. He hit 204 runs off only 53 balls against the UAE.

His knock led India A to a huge seven-wicket win. The match was over in the blink of an eye.

UAE batted first and scored 249 for 8 in their 50 overs. It looked like a fair total on a good day for batting.

Harpreet Singh Bhatia was the pillar of that innings. He made a fine 130 off 144 balls. Basil Hameed stayed not out on 36 and helped push the score near 250.

India A did not wait long to reply. The chase was done in just 14.2 overs, with the team finishing on 254 for 3.

That left them 214 balls to spare. It is hard to remember a chase this fast.

Sooryavanshi was the hero. He hit a century in only 28 balls and reached 200 in just 52 deliveries.

He struck 28 sixes in his innings. His strike rate was 384.90, and the UAE bowlers had no answer.

Rinku Singh gave strong support at the other end. He remained not out on 27 off 19 balls and finished the game in style.

For UAE, Arshad Khan was the best bowler. He took four wickets for 43 runs, but it was not enough to stop the storm.

This innings has set new marks in List A cricket. It also shows why so many experts see Sooryavanshi as a bright future star for India.



# Mountain twin fighters Manisha, Maliha honoured for International MMA achievements

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A special ceremony was held here at the National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad to honour national MMA heroes Manisha Ali and Maliha Ali, collectively known as the Mountain Twin Fighters, for their outstanding international achievements, unwavering determination, resilience, and contributions towards empowering women in sports.

The ceremony was attended by Rector NUTECH Lieutenant General (Retd.) Moazzam Ejaz, CEO ACTIVIT and Director National Hospital DHA Lahore Rd. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed, ACTIVIT Brand Ambassador Moazzam Khan Klair, Dr. Nabeel Ahmed, Amjad Khab and other distinguished guests, said a press release.

During the ceremony, the Mountain Twin Fighters were honoured for their outstanding achievements in representing Pakistan internationally.

Manisha Ali secured a gold medal and became World Champion at the IMMAF Angola Opens, while Maliha Ali secured a bronze medal at the IMMAF World Championships in Georgia. Their remarkable accomplishments were celebrated as inspiring examples for the younger generation, particularly aspiring female athletes.

Addressing the ceremony, Manisha Ali reaffirmed her commitment to bringing further glory to Pakistan on the international stage and encouraged more women to pursue sports.



# Cubs Sign Trevor Rogers To 5-Year, $120M Deal As Rotation Revamp Begins

SPORTS DESK

CHICAGO

In a big move for Chicago, the Cubs sign Trevor Rogers to 5-year deal worth $120 million, ESPN reported on Monday night. The left-hander was one of the best pitchers on the market this winter.

Rogers is 29 years old. He gives the Cubs a strong arm at a time when they badly need one.

Last season, he went 10-11 with a 4.03 ERA for the Baltimore Orioles. That was a step back from 2025, when he posted a tiny 1.81 ERA in 18 starts.

Rogers was drafted by the Miami Marlins in 2017. He spent the first five years of his career there. Baltimore then traded for him in July 2024.

Over seven seasons, he has a 3.88 ERA. Every one of his appearances has come as a starter.

The deal is a big one in team history. It becomes the third-richest free-agent contract for a pitcher in Cubs history. Only Jon Lester (six years, $155 million) and Yu Darvish (six years, $126 million) earned more.

The Cubs clearly needed help. Rogers instantly becomes the No. 1 starter because the rotation is thin right now.

Shota Imanaga, David Peterson, Kevin Gausman and Clay Holmes are all free agents. Justin Steele, Ben Brown and Cade Horton are still recovering from injuries.

There is a price to pay. Rogers turned down the Orioles' qualifying offer. Because of that, the Cubs must give up their second- and fifth-highest picks in next year's amateur draft. They also lose $1 million in international signing pool money.

Still, the team gets a young lefty with real upside. His 2025 season showed what he can do when everything clicks.

Fans will now hope he can find that form again at Wrigley Field. If he does, this signing could turn out to be a smart bet for the Cubs.

# Australian Ball-Tampering Began In Durban Test, Claims AB De Villiers

SPORTS DESK

AUSTRALIA



Special Correspondent/Web Desk

The Australian ball-tampering debate has taken a fresh turn. Former South African batsman AB de Villiers says the cheating started earlier than anyone has admitted.

He made the claim in a post on his YouTube channel. According to him, it began in the first Test in Durban, not later in the series.

The scandal ended in Cape Town in 2018. Cameron Bancroft was caught using sandpaper in the third Test, and the world saw it on camera.

Bancroft recently wrote that sandpaper was first used in the second Test in Port Elizabeth. De Villiers disagrees with that timeline.

"It started in Durban, by the way, not in PE," he said. He added that he is happy for people to quote him.

He believes the footage backs him up. "Go look at the footage," he said, adding that he has no doubt in his mind.

De Villiers also pointed to the ball itself. South Africa lost that first Test, and he says the ball reversed far too early at Kingsmead. He has played plenty of cricket there and knows what is normal.

He does not care whether it was sandpaper or a nail. For him, the point is simple: they were caught, and everyone knew.

He also said the Australian bowlers must have known. Reverse swing does not happen by chance, and these were not rookies. The bowlers have denied any involvement.

His comments follow a storm in Australia this month. Usman Khawaja claimed the whole team knew about the plan to change the ball's flight.

Captain Pat Cummins has strongly denied knowing anything. Cricket Australia gave him its "unanimous support" on Saturday and rejected any doubts about his integrity.




HYDERABAD: MNA Syed Waseem Hussain hands over a cheque to a family affected by the Paretabad cylinder blast during a financial assistance distribution ceremony held at Dialdas Club.

# Lowari Tunnel Key To Regional Connectivity And Tourism

● Aleem Khan Orders NHA To Expedite Lowari Tunnel Renovation And Improve Safety

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to expedite renovation, maintenance and rehabilitation work at Lowari Tunnel, as well as ongoing development work on NHA's N-45 highway in Chitral.

He said highways in the northern areas, particularly Lowari Tunnel, serves as a gateway to China, Afghanistan and other countries while an improved road network in Chitral would significantly promote tourism from across the country, said a press release.

The minister issued these directions during his one day visit to Chitral, where he chaired meetings with senior NHA officials and reviewed the progress of ongoing development projects. He also inspected the N-45 highway and various construction sites, directing the authorities to ensure their timely completion.

Expressing concern over delays in the Mastuj, Shandur and Chitral–Kalash Road Projects, he directed the authorities to ensure the provision of the best possible travelling facilities to the people of Chitral. He emphasized that the public should be able to see and experience that NHA is working to facilitate them and improve infrastructure.

He said that making the difficult and challenging routes of the northern areas more accessible was essential for the country's economy and regional development.



Aleem Khan stated that N-45 was a vital highway for the development and prosperity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stressed the need to improve the pace and quality of ongoing work on the 309-kilometre-long national highway connecting Nowshera with Chitral. During his visit, local elders brought public complaints regarding NHA to the attention of the minister.

Taking serious notice, Abdul Aleem Khan directed the concerned authorities to provide immediate relief and resolve public grievances on priority basis. He assured the local representatives that he would personally supervise efforts to address transportation issues and road-related concerns in Chitral.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that he was visiting ongoing development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan to ensure better travelling facilities for the people.

On the occasion, former Member of the National Assembly Shahzada Iftikhar Uddin and local elders warmly welcomed the minister and presented him with a traditional Chitrali cap and gown. The Federal Secretary for Communications, Chairman NHA and local officials also gave a detailed briefing on ongoing projects, their progress and related challenges.

Meanwhile, before arriving in Chitral, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited Lowari Tunnel where he conducted a detailed review of ongoing NHA development and construction work and inspected the interior and exterior sections of the Tunnel. He issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials on the spot.

Expressing concern over past traffic accidents at Lowari Tunnel, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan directed that effective, modern and sustainable measures be taken to prevent accidents, with particular emphasis on improving traffic management during snowfall.

# Ashrafi Calls For National Unity Stronger Saudi Ties

● Ashrafi Announces Resolution Of Longstanding 26-Year Madrasa Registration And Bank Account Issue




STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and President Wafaq-ul-Madaris wa Jame'at al Deeniya Pakistan Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has called for national unity, further strengthening of relations with Saudi Arabia and collective efforts to safeguard the sanctity of Haramain Sharifain, saying Pakistan's stability is closely linked to unity across the Muslim world.

He made these remarks while addressing a ceremony held at the auditorium of Zaid Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, in honour of students who secured prominent positions in the annual examinations of the Board of Islamic Education. Leaders of the Muttahida Madaris Council, religious scholars and Mashaikh, and members of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee were also present.

Ashrafi announced that the longstanding 26-year issue concerning the registration of religious seminaries and the opening of their bank accounts had been resolved. He said, "Alhamdulillah," the registration of religious seminaries had commenced in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad under both the Directorate General of Religious Education (DGRE) system and the Societies Act, while bank accounts for seminaries were also being opened.

Describing the development as the result of efforts by the present state leadership, Ashrafi said Allah Almighty had enabled them to resolve this longstanding issue. He appreciated the role of the Muttahida Madaris Council, all federations of religious seminaries and the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee in this effort.

He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the Muttahida Madaris Council, all madrassa federations and other national elders who contributed to resolving the matter.

Highlighting the importance of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations, Ashrafi referred to the Saudi leadership's resolve to demonstrate patience and restraint despite challenges and not allow tensions to become a source of division within the Muslim Ummah.

He said relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were founded on mutual respect, religious bonds and a shared commitment to peace and stability.

He said Pakistan had an important responsibility in bringing Muslim countries closer and helping reduce tensions in the region. Referring to the situation in West Asia and Palestine, he appreciated the humanitarian and diplomatic efforts of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, and called for greater collective support for the people of Gaza and oppressed communities across the Muslim world.

Ashrafi said the sanctity of Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah united Muslims beyond sectarian and national boundaries. He observed that the Holy Kaaba was the Qibla of all schools of thought in Islam; therefore, Muslims should rise above sectarian differences and unite to safeguard the dignity and sanctity of Haramain Sharifain.

Speaking about Pakistan's defence capabilities, he expressed gratitude for the role of the armed forces in defending the country and said national security institutions must be respected. However, he stressed that every response to threats must be undertaken within the framework of state discipline and the established chain of command.

# Second int'l qirat competition begins, 13 countries participate on first day



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Second International Qirat Competition commenced on Tuesday with distinguished Quran reciters from 13 countries presenting recitations of the Holy Quran on the first day of the three-day international event.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf said it was an honour for Pakistan to host the international competition.

He said the event was not merely a competition but also reflected the country's commitment and devotion to the Holy Quran and the promotion of its teachings.

The minister said the government considered the teaching, promotion and protection of the Holy Quran a national responsibility.

He highlighted that legislation had been introduced to eliminate printing and publication errors in the Holy Quran, while measures had also been taken to implement standardised copies across the country.

He further said that national-level Hifz and Qiraat competitions were being organised to encourage young Huffaz and Qaris, while digital initiatives were also underway to preserve the scholarly heritage of the Holy Quran and Seerat.

On the first day, Qaris from Cameroon, Germany, Iraq, Tanzania, Türkiye, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Togo, Tunisia and Ethiopia presented their recitations of the Holy Quran.

Reciters from 19 more countries, including Indonesia, Iran, Bangladesh, France, Gambia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Palestine, the Philippines, Egypt, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Chad and Uzbekistan, will present their recitations tomorrow.

# CJP, former Swiss President discuss criminal justice reforms, access to justice

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and former Swiss President Ruth Dreifuss on Tuesday discussed criminal justice reforms, prison overcrowding and measures to improve access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Ms. Dreifuss, former President of the Swiss Confederation and a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, called on the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court along with Chairperson of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Rabiya Javeri Agha and other members of the delegation.

The discussions focused on protecting the rights of women, children and persons with drug dependence, besides addressing barriers to accessing justice and challenges arising from overcrowding in prisons.

Ms. Dreifuss expressed particular interest in the National Prison Reform Action Plan, jointly developed by the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee and the NCHR, especially its measures aimed at reducing pre-trial incarceration and promoting alternatives to imprisonment.

The delegation also proposed specialised capacity-building programmes for district judiciary officers through the Federal Judicial Academy to strengthen their ability to address challenges within the criminal justice system. The proposal was welcomed by the Chief Justice.

# Speakers Demand Balanced Regulation For Stronger Digital Accountability

● Minister Says Platform Bans Must Remain Last Resort Amid Online Threats Debate

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Speakers at an international seminar on Tuesday called for stronger accountability of social media platforms and balanced, risk-based regulation to counter disinformation, extremist content and other online threats without undermining freedom of expression, innovation and the digital economy.




They were speaking during the second session, titled "Global Platforms and Local Laws: How to Ensure Digital Accountability," of the seminar on Social Media Platforms (SMPs) and the Post-Truth Era, organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and moderated by senior journalist Fahd Hussain.

While speaking in the event Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja called for improved coordination with social media platforms and specialised regulatory institutions to address online threats, harassment and security-related complaints.

She said gender-related issues, particularly online harassment and targeted campaigns against public figures, also required serious attention and proper contextualisation to ensure effective responses from social media platforms.

The minister pointed out that differences between local laws and social media platforms' community guidelines often created challenges in addressing harmful online content.

She said complaints needed to include relevant legal provisions and sufficient local context, as submitting a large number of complaints without proper explanations could reduce the likelihood of appropriate responses.

Shaza Fatima said specialised institutions, including the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), could play an important role in providing expertise and improving coordination with social media platforms.

Emphasising the need for proportionate regulatory measures, she said banning or shutting down digital platforms should remain a last resort, with awareness, engagement and other corrective measures considered first.

The minister said technology offered enormous opportunities in artificial intelligence, manufacturing, trade and services, and Pakistan could not afford to restrict innovation while addressing emerging threats.

She said the country's technology exports had exceeded $4.6 billion, adding that the government wanted to protect the growing technology industry while ensuring data privacy and national security.

# Bagh Student Tahreem Shahzad Secures Second Position Nationwide

● Class Eight Student Wins Second Place With AI Kashmir Tourism App Nationwide

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BAGH

Students from all over Pakistan participated in the national competition "Junior CEO" organized by the Aga Khan Board, Karachi, held in Islamabad. In this competition, students presented new business ideas which were ranked by the judges.

Four students from Bagh Grammar School, Bagh participated in the competition, out of which Tahreem Shahzad, a student of Class 8th, secured 2nd position in all of Pakistan, bringing pride to Bagh and Azad Kashmir.

Tahreem Shahzad has developed a tourism application named "AI Kashmir Tourism", in which she has added complete details of all picnic spots across Kashmir.



This application will prove to be very helpful for tourists coming from all over the world.

To acknowledge this remarkable achievement, MTBC and Bagh Grammar School arranged a Heli Ride from Islamabad to Bagh and organized a grand ceremony, in which the company's Divisional Resident, Ms. Lorain, participated as a special guest.

The speakers appreciated Tahreem Shahzad's hard work, talent and vision, and said that the daughters of Kashmir can prove themselves across Pakistan if given the opportunity.

Publisher Muhammad Mudasser Iqbal Office No 1 Mashraq Press Building 106 Court Road, Printed by Khurram Printing Press 5-8-ID Demelo Road Gobind Gava Building Pakistan Chock Karachi