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Oman rescues 25 from burning ship, Iran halts tankers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

OMAN

Oman said on Friday it rescued 25 sailors from a merchant ship that was targeted and set ablaze, as Iran reported three oil tankers were halted crossing the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

Oman's navy "carried out an evacuation operation for 25 crew members of the merchant ship RITI, flying the Panamanian flag, after it was targeted, which led to a fire breaking out on board", Oman's Maritime Security Centre said in a statement.

Tehran has restricted maritime traffic through the strategic Strait of Hormuz since the Middle East war began on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran. The narrow strait, which normally carries one-fifth of global oil consumption, has become a focal point of the war with ships regularly coming under Iranian fire.

The crew members were provided with medical care, the Omani statement said, without giving details. The Marine Traffic ship-tracking website described the RITI as a crude oil tanker.

Earlier, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said three oil tankers had been halted after encountering unspecified "incidents" or hitting mines.

"Two offending oil tankers, one in the eastern part and the other in the western part of the Strait of Hormuz, which were attempting to pass through the unauthorised route, encountered incidents and were brought to a halt in the waters south of the strait," the IRGC said in a statement.

Iran has demanded that vessels use a designated route through the strait and coordinate their passage with the country's armed forces, labelling a southern corridor closer to Oman's shores as unauthorised.



PPP delegation meets opposition leaders — Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas — at the Parliament House in Islamabad.

PPP delegation meets opposition leaders in senate for talks

- Senior PPP and PTI figures sit together as the opposition chamber hosts a detailed meeting on Friday

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

A PPP delegation visited the Senate opposition leader's chamber on Friday. The team held a detailed meeting with Raja Nasir Abbas and Mehmood Khan Achakzai.

The visit drew attention in political circles. Meetings between rival parties often point to talks on shared issues.

Several PTI leaders were also present during the meeting. They included Senator Ali Zafar, Senator Noorul Haq Qadri and Hussain Ahmad Yousafzai.

Their presence made the gathering a joint session of both sides. It showed that the opposition camp took part in the discussion.

The PPP delegation had four members. Former Senate Chairman Nayyer Bokhari led the group.

He was joined by Senator Sherry Rehman. Senator Waqar Mehdi and Nadeem Afzal Chan also took part.

All of them are well known faces in national politics. Their joint visit gave the meeting extra weight.

The meeting was described as detailed. This suggests both sides spent real time on the issues before them.

No official statement has been shared yet about the topics discussed. Reports so far only confirm who attended and where the meeting took place.

Observers will now watch for any follow-up steps. A joint statement or a second round of talks may come in the next few days.

The Senate chamber of the opposition leader is a key place for such talks. It often hosts meetings between parties on sensitive matters.

For now, the visit shows that political contact between the parties is active. More details are expected as officials share updates.

The PPP delegation meeting is likely to stay in the news this week. Readers can expect further reports as the story develops.

PTI seeks equal representation

Meanwhile, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan demanded equal representation for the government and opposition on the electoral reforms committee.

He said any electoral reforms should be impartial and in line with the aspirations of the public.

According to the sources, the committee is expected to examine alleged rigging in the 2024 general elections as well as subsequent by-elections and elections in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

It would also seek to identify those responsible for electoral irregularities and recommend measures to prevent their recurrence, the sources added.

The committee's recommendations would subsequently be presented before parliament for approval.

Committee to comprise 30 members

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the National Assembly had already approved the formation of the electoral reforms committee and that the speaker would soon issue its formal notification.

Pakistan, Singapore discuss possible resumption of direct flights: Dar

- Singapore Foreign Minister Calls On COAS Asim Munir To Discuss Bilateral Cooperation

MUDASSAR IQBAL

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Singapore have discussed the possible resumption of direct flights to facilitate business, travel and people-to-people contacts, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday.

Speaking at a joint press stakeout with Singaporean Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan in Islamabad, Dar said the two sides had explored ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including closer economic ties and collaboration in technology, education and research.

Dar said the two countries had agreed to encourage greater cultural, academic and youth exchanges, adding that Pakistani professionals working in Singapore served as a valuable bridge between the two nations.



He said Pakistan had also reopened its Trade and Investment Office at its High Commission in Singapore to promote business-to-business ties and facilitate closer engagement between the business communities of both countries.

The two sides agreed to encourage exchanges of business delegations and strengthen links between their respective chambers of commerce, he added.

Meanwhile, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ at General Headquarters (GHQ) here on Friday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, evolving regional and global security dynamics and avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation were discussed, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Both sides exchanged views on regional peace and stability and underscored the importance of sustained engagement and cooperation in areas of shared interest.

The COAS underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relations with Singapore, emphasising importance of enhanced institutional linkages and constructive engagement for promoting regional peace, stability and security.

Security Forces Shoot Down Five Drones In Balochistan Attack

- Security sources say the drones targeted a check-post in Kharan district, and no loss of life or property was reported

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

QUETTA

Security forces have foiled a drone attack in Balochistan by shooting down five drones before they could hit their target. Security sources shared the details on Friday.

The terrorists tried to strike a security check-post in the Albat area of Kharan district. Sources linked the attempt to Fitna al-Hindustan, a group Pakistan calls an Indian proxy.

Security forces responded quickly. They destroyed all five drones before the drones could reach the check-post.

No one was killed or hurt. No property was damaged either, the sources added.

Earlier Drone Interception

This is not the first such incident. Last month, Pakistan shot down eight drones that entered its airspace from Afghanistan.

Sources said the air defence system detected all eight drones in time and stopped them. The system is run by the Pakistan Air Force along the Pak-Afghan border. Officials say it stays ready round the clock.



Rise in Cross-Border Militancy

Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in cross-border terror attacks since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have been hit the hardest.

Islamabad has often asked Kabul to stop militants from using Afghan land for attacks. Pakistan says the Taliban authorities have not acted against these groups. Kabul disputes this claim.

Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq in February 2026. This came months after both countries agreed to a ceasefire in October 2025 following border clashes.

CM Murad invites ASEAN countries to explore investment opportunities in Sindh

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday invited the Philippines and other ASEAN member countries to explore the vast investment opportunities available in Sindh, particularly in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals, information technology, energy, minerals, manufacturing, logistics and tourism.

He was talking to a high-level delegation of ASEAN ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomats led by Philippine Ambassador to Pakistan and Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, Dr Emmanuel R. Fernandez, at the CM House.

The delegation included Indonesian Ambassador Lt. Gen. (R) Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, Malaysian High Commissioner Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Myanmar Ambassador Mr Wunna Han, Thai Ambassador Mr Rongvudhi Virabutr, Indonesian Consul General Mudzakir M.A., Malaysian Consul General Mr Mohd Yunus Ibrahim, Thai Consul General Mr Surashete Boontinand, Head of the Vietnam Trade Mission Ms Nguyen Thi Diep Ha, Honorary Consul General of the Philippines in Karachi Dr Imran Yousuf, Deputy Head of Mission of Brunei Darussalam Mr Hj. Khairurrijal Hazim, and the spouse of the Philippine Ambassador, Ms Alicia Kalaw-Fernandez.

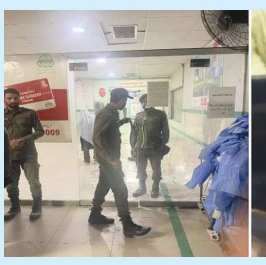
The Chief Minister was assisted by provincial ministers, Jam Khan Shoro, Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar, Special Assistant to CM Syed Qasim Naveed, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, and Secretary to CM Asif Jameel.

During the discussion, the participating ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomatic representatives shared their perspectives on strengthening engagement between Sindh and their respective countries. They emphasised the importance of expanding bilateral trade, promoting investment, enhancing cultural and educational exchanges, and developing closer institutional and people-to-people connections.

Imran's sister Noreen Niazi shifted back to Kot Lakhpat Jail after medical tests

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE





Noreen Niazi, sister of PTI founder Imran Khan, has been shifted back to Kot Lakhpat Jail after receiving medical care at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) in Lahore.

According to sources, she was taken to the hospital on the evening of October 28 after complaining of heart pain and high blood pressure.

Doctors examined her and carried out several medical tests, including a Troponin-T test, which helps detect heart damage caused by a heart attack.

The test results were normal.

Her ECG and other medical checks also showed satisfactory results.

Hospital officials said her blood pressure was brought under control with medication and her condition was stable.

Doctors also found that she did not need an angiography at that time.

After the medical examination and tests, Noreen was sent back to Kot Lakhpat Jail.

She is currently under preventive detention under the MPO in connection with PTI's protest march.

Her detention was extended for another 30 days in October.

Pakistan, Turkiye not confined to diplomatic ties but deeply rooted in brotherhood: Governor

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Governor of Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi attended and addressed a prestigious ceremony marking the National Day of the Republic of Turkiye as the chief guest.

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan, he extended heartfelt congratulations to the Turkish leadership and people, expressing confidence that the strong bonds of friendship, brotherhood and mutual trust between Pakistan and Türkiye would remain enduring.

Governor Nehal Hashmi observed that relations between Pakistan and Turkiye are not confined to diplomatic ties but are deeply rooted in friendship, brotherhood and a shared historical heritage.

He noted that the historical connections between the subcontinent and Turkey date back centuries. Both countries have consistently supported each other during difficult times and natural disasters, demonstrating their lasting friendship through practical solidarity.

He described the joint defence agreement concluded between Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia in Makkah as an important milestone for regional peace and stability. He expressed hope that cooperation among the three brotherly countries would contribute to promoting peace, security and stability across the region.

Khyber Star Talent Hunt to promote youth talent, regional languages: Kundi

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday directed that all languages spoken in the province, including Urdu and Saraiki, be included in the Khyber Star Talent Hunt Programme to ensure equal representation and promote the rich cultural diversity of the province.

He issued the directives while chairing a meeting on the proposed Khyber Star Talent and Cultural Promotion Programme attended by Adviser to the Governor on Information and Public Relations Samar Haroon Bilour, Secretary Information Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, Secretary Sports Muhammad Asif and officials of the relevant departments.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the objectives, implementation mechanism, selection process and other aspects of the programme.

Officials informed the meeting that the initiative aims to identify and promote the talent of young people while highlighting the culture, traditions and diverse languages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They said audition camps would be established in different districts of the province, while a committee comprising representatives of relevant departments would be formed to ensure transparency and maintain high standards in the selection process.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi directed that all regional languages, including Urdu and Saraiki, should be represented in the auditions.

SIU rejects reports circulating on social media of increase in extortion cases

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Karachi Police has rejected reports circulating on social media and in some newspapers claiming a 100 per cent increase in extortion incidents in the city, terming them contrary to official figures.

According to a clarification issued by the SIU/CIA Karachi on Friday, the number of extortion cases investigated by the unit declined from 178 in 2025 to 136 in 2026.

The statement said that 15 alleged extortionists were killed in police encounters during 2026, compared to six in 2025. Similarly, the number of suspects arrested in injured condition following police encounters increased from 16 in 2025 to 25 in 2026.

The SIU/CIA maintained that its figures showed a decline in investigated extortion cases alongside an increase in police action against suspects allegedly involved in the crime.

It said the Unit had continued indiscriminate action against extortionist elements and that the figures contradicted claims of a rise in extortion incidents in Karachi.



IHC extends stay against reallocation of government house, seeks replies from parties

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday extended its interim order restraining the allotment of a disputed government residence to any other person in a petition filed by an IHC Deputy Registrar seeking allotment of the house.

Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard the petition filed by Deputy Registrar Adnan Majeed Khan, during which the petitioner's counsel and an Assistant Attorney General appeared before the court.

The Assistant Attorney General sought additional time to submit a reply, which the court allowed.

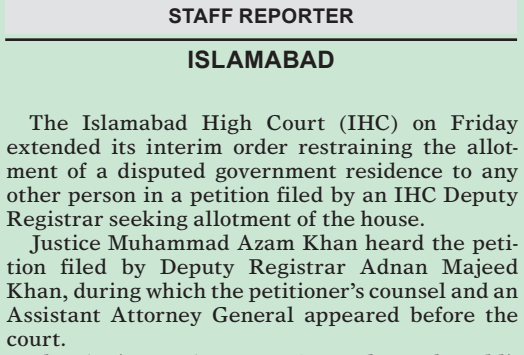
The court directed the relevant parties to submit their para-wise comments before the next hearing and adjourned the proceedings for two weeks.

The Deputy Registrar has challenged the approval to reserve the government residence for a specific officer pending its availability.

National security, sovereignty non-negotiable; says Barrister Daniyal

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry on Friday reiterated that no compromise would be made on Pakistan's security, sovereignty, and state stability, asserting that anti-state narratives aimed at destabilizing the country would not be tolerated.

Addressing a ceremony, Danyal paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the Armed Forces, stating that soldiers stationed on harsh battlefields, including Siachen, are guarding the nation's defense, ideology and sovereignty.

Referring to political dynamics, he pointed out contradictions in JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's political stance regarding opposition elements. He stressed that political leadership must maintain consistency and principled positions on critical matters of national security, avoiding double standards.

Highlighting diplomatic and economic achievements, the Parliamentary Secretary said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan achieved significant diplomatic milestones, citing defense agreements with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye as evidence of the country's expanding global footprint.

He further added that the PML-N government steered the country away from default through decisive economic measures, emphasizing that the party remains committed to performance, public service, and national reconciliation over political polarization.



HYDERABAD: Women select and purchase second-hand clothes from a vendor at a local cloth market.

Fire Tears Through Karachi Furniture Market Near Kamran Chowrangi Today

● Fire spreads to a nearby home, but no one is hurt. Traders say the market burned last year too

STAFF REPORTER

GULISTAN-E-JOHAR

A big fire broke out at a furniture market near Kamran Chowrangi in Gulistan-e-Johar, Karachi, on Friday. Firefighters brought it under control after a tough fight.

Officials said four fire tenders and a water bowser were used in the operation. Crews are now cooling the site so the flames do not start again.

The fire also reached a nearby home. Rescue 1122 said the blaze there was also put out. The chief fire officer confirmed that no one was hurt.

Chief Fire Officer Humayun Khan spoke to the media after the work ended. He said the fire was under control and that no lives were lost.

The cause of the fire is still not known. Officials have not yet shared how much money was lost.

What the Traders Say

Shopkeeper Asghar told the media that the market has 20 shops. He said the losses could reach crores of rupees.

He said the fire was reported to the Madadgar-15 helpline. But he claimed that firefighters took 15 to 20 minutes to reach the spot. By then, the flames had spread across the market.

Asghar also said the market had burned last year. He added that the shops were built on a commercial plot.

The same market was hit by a major fire on December 31, 2024. Geo News reported that more than 30 shops were burned. No one was hurt, and the cause was never found.

Fire Safety Under Question

Fire safety in Karachi has been in focus since the deadly Gul Plaza fire in January. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah ordered a fire safety check of major buildings across the province.



He also approved yearly safety checks of commercial buildings, which had stopped years ago.

WASA plans modern water management system with Korean consultants in Pindi

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi is working with South Korean water consultants K-Water to introduce a modern water management system aimed at reducing water losses, detecting pipeline leakages and improving water distribution across the city.

In this regard, a meeting was held between WASA officials and K-Water consultants to discuss the establishment of District Metered Areas (DMAs), under which different localities would be divided into designated water supply zones to monitor water inflow, consumption and losses.

The proposed system would use modern monitoring technology and water flow meters to identify leakage points, regulate water pressure and improve the efficiency of the existing distribution network. The initiative also aims to strengthen WASA's capacity for monitoring water supply and managing available resources more effectively.

Under the proposed arrangement, pilot DMA zones in Khayaban-e-Sir Syed are also envisaged, with the objective of improving water supply monitoring and ensuring more efficient distribution to households.

IGP Islamabad pins SP ranks on promoted police officers

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Capt (retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, along with senior police officers, pinned Superintendent of Police (SP) ranks on newly promoted officers and congratulated them on their departmental promotions.

According to an Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police official, the IGP appreciated the professional services of the promoted officers and extended his best wishes for their new responsibilities.

He said promotion was an important milestone in an officer's professional career and recognition of their abilities, performance and dedication to duty.

The IGP Sohail urged the promoted officers to make effective use of their leadership skills, professional experience and capabilities in their new positions.

He expressed the hope that the officers would perform their responsibilities with greater commitment and contribute to improving the overall performance of Islamabad Police.

CPO Pindi calls for coordinated efforts to prevent traffic road accidents

WED DESK

RAWALPINDI

City Police Officer (CPO) Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera held a coordination meeting to ensure measures to prevent fatal traffic road accidents and ensure effective enforcement of traffic laws across the district.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), and officers of the Traffic Police, Motorway Police and Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP).

The CPO stressed the need for close coordination among all relevant departments to prevent fatal road accidents, saying that effective cooperation between the Traffic Police, Motorway Police and PHP would help control traffic accidents.

He directed the authorities concerned to ensure strict enforcement of traffic laws on all major roads and intensify action against people driving vehicles and motorcycles without valid driving licences.

Punjab Assembly marks breast cancer awareness month, stresses early detection and screening



WED DESK

LAHORE

The Punjab Assembly (PA) marked 'Breast cancer awareness month' through a special awareness gathering organised under the leadership of the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), reaffirming its commitment to promoting breast cancer awareness, early detection and timely screening among women.

The gathering was held here on Friday under the leadership of MPA and Women Parliamentary Caucus Convener Ishrat Ashraf.

As part of the initiative, a pink ribbon was displayed to symbolize hope, courage and solidarity with those affected by breast cancer.

The gathering provided an opportunity to honour breast cancer survivors, remember those who lost their lives to the disease and highlight the importance of awareness, early diagnosis and access to appropriate healthcare.

Dr Omer Ayub, a qualified medical specialist, also delivered an awareness briefing on breast cancer, emphasizing the importance of recognizing potential warning signs, seeking timely medical advice and undergoing appropriate screening.

Senator urges JUI-F to exercise restraint in political remarks

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Senator Dr Afnan Ullah Khan on Friday urged that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to exercise restraint in his recent remarks, given his stature as an experienced, mature and seasoned politician.

Talking to the media outside Parliament House, he said that the state encompassed all institutions, including the government, judiciary and Parliament.

He said act of making derogatory remarks against the state was inappropriate, stressing the need to exercise caution while making such statements.

Commenting on statements regarding the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) , Senator Afnanullah said the party had consistently pursued a politics of confrontation and had contributed little to the country beyond political discord.

Punjab sets wheat cultivation target of 16 million acres for Rawalpindi Division

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani has said that the provincial government has set a wheat cultivation target of 16 million acres for Rawalpindi Division as part of a province-wide campaign to promote wheat production.

He was chairing a meeting at the Commissioner Office Rawalpindi on Thursday to review arrangements for promoting wheat cultivation and achieving the set targets. Punjab Agriculture Secretary Shakeel Ahmad Mian, MPAs Malik Iftikhar Ahmad and Malik Aitbar Khan, deputy commissioners of Rawalpindi Division, senior agriculture officials, farmers and other stakeholders attended the meeting.

The minister said the provincial government had proposed a wheat support price of Rs4,500 per maund, while the overall wheat cultivation target for Punjab had been set at 16.5 million acres for the current season.

He said field formations had been assigned special tasks to ensure wheat cultivation on areas exceeding the prescribed targets.

Highlighting the importance of wheat for national food security, the minister said government initiatives had made wheat cultivation a profitable activity for farmers.

He said a subsidy of Rs320 million was being provided to promote the use of certified seeds, while a bag of certified seed from the Punjab Seed Corporation was available at Rs7,000 after a subsidy of Rs800 per bag.

He further said an additional interest-free loan of Rs17 billion was being provided for the purchase of DAP fertiliser for 5 million acres.

Under the Kisan Card scheme, farmers were also being offered an additional interest-free loan of Rs3,500 per acre, benefiting around one million farmers.

Agriculture Secretary Shakeel Ahmad Mian informed the meeting that the Agriculture Transformation Plan was being implemented in the Potohar region.

Meat industry leaders urge authorities to establish modern slaughterhouse in Islamabad

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



President of the All Pakistan Jamiat-ul-Quresh Meat Welfare Association and a member of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board, Khurshid Ahmed Qureshi has called for the establishment of a modern, standardized slaughterhouse in Islamabad.

Speaking at a meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia, Qureshi said the absence of a slaughterhouse in the capital was making it difficult to ensure a reliable supply of hygienic meat that meets food-safety standards, said a release issued here on Friday.

He added that transporting livestock and meat to facilities outside the city increased operating costs, placing an additional burden on consumers. A modern slaughterhouse in Islamabad, he said, would improve access to clean meat and help boost Pakistan's meat exports.

Qureshi also appealed to Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi to direct the relevant authorities to take steps toward establishing the facility.

Akbar Zia said the project had been a longstanding demand of residents and the business community. He assured the delegation that ICCI would raise the issue at relevant forums and support efforts to secure the construction of a modern, standardized slaughterhouse.

United Business Group Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari attended the meeting, along with representatives of the Meat Association.

The delegation included Sardar Zaheer Ahmed, Abdullah Qureshi, Abdul Aziz Qureshi, Asif Rajput, Abdul Rehman Khan and Subhan Qureshi.



ISLAMABAD: A group photograph of Zafar Uddin Mahmood Special Representative of the Prime Minister on China Affairs and President of the Understanding China Forum, Jiang Zaidong Chinese Ambassador, Yu Tao Minister of State Chaudhry Armaghan Subhani and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi during the 2026 China-South Asia Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development Cooperation.

NPO stresses international regulatory compliance to boost pharmaceutical exports



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chief Executive Officer, National Productivity Organization (NPO) Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry on Friday emphasized the need to strengthen international regulatory compliance, improve quality standards and enhance technical capabilities to boost the global competitiveness of Pakistan's pharmaceutical and nutraceutical industry and expand its access to international markets.

Speaking at an industry dissemination seminar held at the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) office in Karachi, he highlighted the importance of technical capacity building, improved productivity and effective government–industry collaboration in promoting sustainable industrial development and export growth, said a news release.

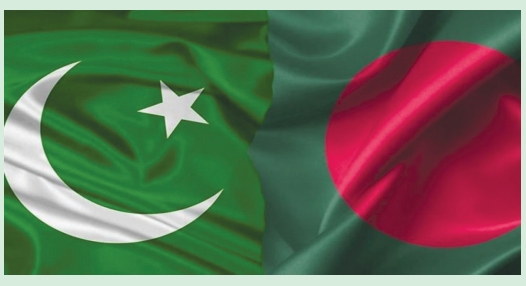
He briefed participants on the mandates, initiatives and services of NPO and the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Japan, and encouraged pharmaceutical manufacturers to benefit from their technical assistance, training and capacity-building programmes.

Chairman PPMA Adnan Hirani highlighted the significance of technical capacity building and industry-wide collaboration in enabling pharmaceutical companies to meet international regulatory requirements.

Seminar on Pakistan, Bangladesh Trade, Investment and Economic Relations held

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI



The Economic Diplomacy Forum (EDF), Pakistan, organized a high-level seminar aimed at strengthening trade, investment, economic cooperation and institutional linkages between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The event brought together senior diplomats, former ambassadors, government officials, prominent business leaders and distinguished representatives from various sectors.

A major highlight of the occasion was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Deputy High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in Karachi and the Economic Diplomacy Forum (EDF), Pakistan, marking an important step towards promoting closer institutional cooperation and economic engagement between the two brotherly countries.

The MoU was signed by Muhammad Sakib Sadakat, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh, on behalf of the Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Karachi, and Dr. Muhammad Farooq Afzal, Founder President of the Economic Diplomacy Forum, on behalf of EDF Pakistan.

The agreement provides a framework for cooperation in promoting bilateral trade and investment opportunities, facilitating business-to-business networking, organizing trade and investment seminars, conferences and business delegations, encouraging exchanges of economic and commercial information, and strengthening institutional and people-to-people contacts. Both sides will work towards identifying opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration and enhancing engagement between the business communities of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Addressing the seminar, Dr. Muhammad Farooq Afzal, Founder President of EDF, highlighted the importance of economic diplomacy as an effective instrument for strengthening bilateral relations.

Ahsan orders removal of bottlenecks, timely completion of NHA projects

● Ahsan Iqbal Directs Expediting Strategic Highway, Motorway Projects For National Economic Growth

MUDASSER IQBAL

ISLAMABAD



ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to remove bottlenecks, accelerate work on key national highways and motorways and ensure strict financial discipline.

He also warned that unjustified cost escalations, non-transparent claims and delays in development projects would not be tolerated.

Chairing a review meeting on NHA projects being executed under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), the minister said that public funds must be utilized transparently and efficiently, with accountability at every stage of project implementation, a news release said.

He directed the authorities to thoroughly scrutinize cost escalations, variations in construction quantities and rates, and additional claims submitted by contractors to prevent unnecessary financial burdens on the national exchequer.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that project monitoring should focus on actual physical progress, expenditure and completion targets rather than paper-work alone.

He directed the concerned authorities to prepare a comprehensive report on the status, financial requirements and implementation bottlenecks of key projects for submission to the Prime Minister to facilitate timely decisions.

Reviewing major projects, the minister was informed that the 216-kilometre Shandur-Gilgit Road project, costing Rs49,946.070 million, had achieved 67.33 per cent physical progress, while the 153-kilometre Chitral-Booni Mastuj-Shandur Road project, costing Rs17,783.193 million, had achieved 40 per cent progress.

He called for expediting work on these strategically important routes to improve connectivity and promote economic activity in remote areas.

The 273-kilometre dualization and rehabilitation of Karachi-Quetta-Chaman Road (N-25), costing Rs183,421.427 million, had achieved 19.25 per cent physical progress.

The minister stressed accelerating work on the Karachi-Kararo and Wadh-Khuzdar sections to strengthen regional connectivity and trade.

Regarding the Indus Highway (N-55), the 221.9-kilometre Shikarpur-Rajanpur Additional Carriageway Project, costing Rs44,703.890 million, had achieved 62 per cent progress.

The 121.5-kilometre Rajanpur-Dera Ghazi Khan section, costing Rs63,150.570 million, was awaiting letters of award due to land acquisition and resettlement issues, while the 208.19-kilometre Dera Ghazi Khan-Dera Ismail Khan section, costing Rs111,940.070 million, had been awarded, with contractors currently under mobilization.

The minister directed the authorities to resolve outstanding issues and expedite implementation of these projects.

He was also briefed that the 306-kilometre Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway (M-6), with a PC-I cost of Rs363,700 million, and electrical and mechanical works of the Lowari Tunnel, costing Rs33,250 million, were at the procurement stage.

Ahsan Iqbal directed the concerned authorities to remove procedural bottlenecks and accelerate procurement to ensure progress on these critical projects.

Reviewing the 210-kilometre dualization and improvement of the existing N-50 from Yarik through Sagu to Zhob, including the Zhob Bypass, costing Rs76,486.231 million, he was informed that the project had achieved 10 per cent physical progress. He called for addressing financial and administrative constraints to accelerate its implementation.

SBP raises collateral-free SME loan limit to Rs50m, announces financing initiatives

● SBP Governor Announces Enhanced SME Financing Limits, Reforms To Boost Economic Growth

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE



State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad has said that a significant increase in financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is among the government's key economic priorities, while agriculture, housing and exports are also receiving special attention.

He was addressing the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Friday. LCCI President Ali Hussam Asghar, Senior Vice President Sardar Usman Ghani, Vice President Chaudhry Khadim Hussain, SBP Deputy Governor Saleem Ullah, Executive Director Akhtar Javed, Chief Manager Ansar Iftikhar Butt, Senior Deputy Chief Manager Muhammad Tahir and EXIM Bank Chief Executive Officer Shahbaz Hussain Syed also spoke on the occasion.

Governor Jameel Ahmad said the limit for SME loans without collateral had been increased from Rs 10 million to Rs 50 million. The definition of SMEs had also been revised. The annual turnover limit for small enterprises had been raised from Rs 150 million to Rs 400 million, while that for medium enterprises had been increased from Rs 800 million to Rs 02 billion. Businesses with an annual turnover of up to Rs 02 billion could now benefit from SME financing facilities.

He said the government was taking measures to address the cost of doing business, taxation and energy-related challenges. The government's housing finance scheme was revised in March 2026. Before the revision, banks' outstanding housing finance stood at Rs 251 billion. Under the revised scheme, banks approved financing of Rs 521 billion for around 80,000 applicants within six to seven months. Under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Scheme, young entrepreneurs were being provided loans at mark-up rates ranging from zero to 07 per cent.

He said the SBP, in collaboration with SMEDA and commercial banks, had simplified the SME loan application form and reduced it to a single page. The SME Connect Portal would become operational on November 1, 2026, enabling entrepreneurs to submit loan applications online from their homes and track their progress at every stage.

Sharing SME financing figures, Governor SBP Jameel Ahmad said outstanding SME financing had increased from Rs 491 billion in June 2024 to Rs 691 billion in June 2025 and approximately Rs.1,110 billion in June 2026. The number of SME borrowers had also risen from 177,000 in June 2024 to 275,000 in June 2025 and around 325,000 in June 2026.

Gold prices decline by Rs5,100 per tola to Rs420,536

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Gold prices witnessed a decline in the domestic market on Friday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs5,100 to Rs420,536, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs4,373 to Rs360,541, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs4,009 to Rs330,507.

In the international market, the price of gold decreased by $51 to $3,980 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola declined by Rs238 to Rs5,530, while the price of 10 grams of 24-karat silver fell by Rs204 to Rs4,741.

The price of silver in the international market also registered a decline, decreasing by $2.38 to $50.52 per ounce, the association added.



CMDC reviews progress on debt market reforms

● Finance Minister Calls For Accelerated Reforms To Boost Corporate Debt Market Growth

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) on Friday was informed that corporate debt issuances reached Rs 291 billion during January–September 2026, following Rs 326 billion raised during 2025, representing a 30 percent increase over 2024.

The CMDC met with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in chair also reviewed progress on capital market reforms, with particular emphasis on deepening Pakistan's corporate debt market, expanding the issuer and investor base, improving market infrastructure and facilitating access to long-term financing.

The council reviewed progress on the reform agenda and implementation of decisions taken at its previous meeting, noting important developments in corporate debt issuance, listing facilitation, secondary-market trading and institutional investor engagement.

The Finance Minister appreciated the progress achieved by the relevant institutions and emphasized the need to build on this momentum through coordinated and time-bound implementation.

The council was informed that the market has also witnessed 12 new listed corporate debt issuances worth Rs 45.4 billion between February 2025 and September 2026, reflecting growing activity in Sukuk and other debt instruments.

The council underscored the importance of encouraging more public offerings and enabling a wider range of businesses to access capital market financing.

A key development discussed was the proposed Shariah-compliant Sukuk program of the National Grid Company of Pakistan Limited (NGC), with an aggregate program size of up to Rs 100 billion and an inaugural issuance of up to Rs 20 billion, with a tenor of up to 10 years.

The program is intended to be issued in tranches through public offerings listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), subject to the requisite approvals and market conditions. The Finance Minister welcomed the initiative as an important opportunity to demonstrate the potential of listed corporate debt instruments and encourage similar issuances by other entities.

The council noted progress on measures to simplify and facilitate corporate debt issuance. Dedicated Corporate Debt Market Desks have been established at the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and PSX to support potential issuers and provide market guidance.



Surplus power but persistent crisis

By Nayyar Hussain Mirjat

In the first week of October, a country with nearly 50,000MW of installed generation capacity could not keep its lights on. The national shortfall crossed 4,000MW, parts of Lahore went one hour on and one hour off, and some Karachi neighbourhoods reported outages of up to 18 hours.

The plants were there but the fuel wasn't. With the Strait of Hormuz shut and Qatar's LNG deliveries suspended, gas-fired plants simply sat idle.

This is Pakistan's power crisis in its new form. Decades of policy have solved the problem of too few megawatts. They have not produced electricity that is affordable, secure or financially sustainable. Consumers are paying a Rs1.11 fuel adjustment in their October bills, and another Rs2.56 per unit has been sought for November. Winter offers little relief: the government is weighing around ten spot LNG cargoes, costing well over $1 billion, to get through to February.

How we got here matters. The 1994 Power Policy opened generation to private investors, and 16 oil- and gas-based IPPs with 4,100MW followed. The 2002 policy added 13 more plants of 2,934MW, the 2006 renewable energy policy brought in wind and solar and the 2015 policy added 8,253MW of imported coal and RLNG capacity. Each round eased loadshedding. Each also deepened the system's reliance on imported fuel and long-term capacity contracts.

That reliance came at a price. When oil prices surged in 2006–08, generation costs soared, while IPPs continued to be paid for capacity as well as output. Distribution losses, weak recoveries, delayed subsidies and poor governance did the rest. Circular debt, entrenched by 2007, has never gone away. At the end of June, it stood at Rs1.675 trillion, above the ceiling agreed with the IMF. Consumers already pay Rs3.23 per unit to service the bank loan that cleared earlier arrears, and the IMF review, again on October 7, insists that no new debt be allowed to pile up.

By 2013, peak shortfalls of 5,000MW and more were stalling the economy, and energy became the centrepiece of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. CPEC's 14 completed coal, hydropower, wind and solar projects have added about 9,000MW, and the 4,000MW Matiari-Lahore line carries southern power to northern cities. Together they ended chronic shortages. And this year, when LNG vanished, CPEC's coal plants, both Thar-fired and imported, carried much of the load.

Yet the consumer crisis has deepened. High tariffs, sluggish industry and, above all, rooftop solar slowed grid demand. Pakistan now has an estimated 51GW of solar, producing nearly half as much electricity as the grid supplies. Solar is, therefore, a saviour and not the villain. When LNG cargoes stopped arriving, rooftop panels kept many homes, shops and farms going throughout the day while the grid faltered. Solar has cut fuel imports and is a rational response to expensive grid power. It is not the problem.

The problem is that reform has not kept pace. When better-off consumers lean less on the grid, fixed costs fall on fewer units. In 2024-25, grid demand grew just 1.7 per cent while consumer numbers rose 5.3 per cent. Distribution companies now seek Rs2.64 trillion in revenue for 2027, so most will raise average tariffs to meet the targets. Higher tariffs would push more consumers away, and the cycle tightens.

Breaking that cycle needs three things. First, treat circular debt as a governance problem; it is not merely driven by capacity payments. Capacity charges are a real burden and the recent renegotiations with certain IPPs revealed that contracts can be revisited. But distribution inefficiencies alone added Rs262 billion to the debt in 2025-26; as such, Nepra must put to the test the distribution companies' disputed prior-year claims one by one before they land on bills. Better recoveries, lower losses and the planned shift to targeted subsidies from January must be delivered, not just announced.

Second, sell the surplus megawatts, but at a fair price. CPEC 2.0 should help to use the additional capacity to power industry, special economic zones, EV charging and data centres. That means rationalising cross-subsidies, widening time-of-use pricing and offering industry tariffs that beat captive generation. But incentives must cover cost. The surplus worth selling is Thar coal-based power, hydropower, nuclear and midday solar power, and not imported LNG.

Third, upgrade the grid and build the market. It has finally started: the first 400MW competitive auction opened in September, the government notified uniform grid charges and bidders must add battery storage. But 800MW over five years is a pilot on a 50GW system. Rooftop solar, batteries and flexible demand should be brought in as grid assets through transparent pricing, modern metering and clear rules. And with hydropower down this autumn and a 22 per cent Rabi water shortfall forecast, climate resilience must be built into every plan.

Pakistan's next reforms should not be judged by the megawatts added. They should be evaluated on their ability to provide affordable, reliable, secure and climate-resilient electricity. October showed that capacity is not security. The task now is to turn the surplus megawatt base into an engine of industry and growth before more consumers decide they no longer need the grid at all.



By Asif Durrani

India: perils of another war



India is facing mounting political challenges as protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), joined by the Congress Party and other opposition groups, question the integrity of electoral institutions and the direction of the country's democracy. Simultaneously, concerns about the Modi government's treatment of religious minorities, particularly Muslims, are deepening social divisions.

Against this unsettled domestic backdrop, reports of India adopting a more muscular posture towards Pakistan raise the prospect of another dangerous military confrontation in South Asia.

The convergence of domestic polarisation, institutional distrust and regional tensions presents a serious challenge. Another war with Pakistan would not resolve India's internal problems; it could instead compound them while inflicting devastating costs on both countries. Many factors are contributing to India's deteriorating situation.

First, the controversy surrounding electoral integrity has become a test of Indian democracy. The current agitation centres on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demands that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar resign. Opposition parties and protesters allege that the exercise has excluded millions of eligible voters and undermined confidence in the Election Commission.

An October 2026 TIME report cited claims that more than 130 million voters had been removed from electoral lists. The Election Commission maintains that revisions are intended to eliminate duplicate, deceased and otherwise ineligible entries. However, the government has yet to clarify the allegations of politically motivated disenfranchisement of minorities or the opponents of the BJP.

The consequences warrant serious scrutiny: the accuracy of electoral rolls and the protection of citizens' constitutional rights are at the core of the issue. Excessive documentation requirements can disproportionately disadvantage poor people, migrants, women and marginalised communities. Transparent procedures, independent oversight and accessible appeals are essential to ensure electoral administration does not become a source of political exclusion.

The Congress Party's participation has broadened the agitation beyond a youth-led protest. Other parties may also join the agitation. The Modi government faces a major challenge in determining whether the controversy remains a manageable institutional dispute or develops into a wider crisis of political legitimacy.

Second, the BJP's majoritarian politics has already deepened India's social divisions since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. Critics believe that the growing influence of Hindu nationalism on the country's political discourse and institutions has pushed the minorities to the wall. Muslims, who constitute a substantial minority, have been particularly vulnerable, and their loyalty and place in Indian society have always been questioned.

The issue is not whether a majority has the right to elect its preferred government. It does. The issue is whether electoral victories confer the authority to weaken the rights of minorities or redefine national identity around one religious community.

If substantial sections of the population come to believe that their votes carry less weight, their rights receive less protection, and their identities invite suspicion, the resulting alienation could become a long-term source of instability.

Third, economic and political grievances could pose a broader challenge for the Modi government. The CJP initially drew attention through protests over education and unemployment before the movement expanded to questions of electoral integrity and constitutional accountability, posing a formidable challenge to the Modi government.

Young people struggling to find employment or secure educational opportunities may become more receptive to movements that challenge the credibility of established institutions. If their grievances converge with those of the urban poor, disadvantaged castes and religious minorities, the opposition could acquire a broader social base.

An independent review of disputed voter deletions, protection of peaceful assembly and a transparent response to allegations of institutional bias would help restore public confidence. Heavy-handed repression, by contrast, risks turning a political dispute into a more serious confrontation between the state and its citizens.

Fourth, to divert the attention of the people from the ongoing agitation, renewed military confrontation with Pakistan cannot be ruled out, which may introduce an even more dangerous dimension. The May 2025 conflict showed how rapidly a crisis between the two nuclear-armed neighbours can escalate. Following the April 2025 attack in Indian Occupied Kashmir, India launched Operation Sindoor on 7 May, striking targets it claimed were linked to militant activity. Pakistan responded militarily, and the confrontation escalated before a ceasefire was reached through President Trump's mediation.

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By Hina Ayra

The limits of crisis management

Pakistan's winter gas crisis is once again being shaped thousands of kilometres from Islamabad. QatarEnergy's extension of force majeure on LNG deliveries until November 5 has put pressure on Pakistan's energy planners just as seasonal demand begins to rise.

This exposes a deeper policy failure: Pakistan has spent years managing energy insecurity as a recurring emergency rather than building an economic system capable of absorbing external shocks. The US–Iran conflict and disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz are extraordinary events. Pakistan's vulnerability to them, however, partly stems from ordinary policy decisions that have accumulated over decades.

The numbers illustrate the scale of the exposure. Pakistan imported 36 LNG cargoes during the previous winter, of which 35 came from Qatar. Monthly imports rose from six cargoes in November 2025 to 10 in December, 12 in January 2026 and eight in February. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Economic Survey 2025–26 reported that imported LNG accounted for approximately one-fifth of national gas consumption during July 2025–March 2026. These figures reveal more than dependence on one supplier: they show how closely Pakistan's household energy security, electricity generation and industrial production are tied to a narrow international supply chain. The Centre for Strategic and International Studies has also highlighted that 7.5 million tonnes per annum of Pakistan's 8.4 million tonnes of active medium- and long-term LNG contracts are linked to Qatari projects.

Distinguishing a commercial disruption from an economic crisis is crucial. Qatar's LNG exports reportedly fell by 96 per cent by the end of August 2026, with only 18 cargoes shipped by then compared with 509 during the same period a year earlier. The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fifth of global LNG trade passed in 2025, has become a critical bottleneck. Attacks on energy infrastructure, the ongoing US–Iran confrontation and risks to commercial shipping have reduced delivery reliability, while damaged production facilities complicate any immediate return to normal operations.



Pakistan cannot resolve these constraints through procurement instructions alone. Even if a supplier has available gas, a cargo still requires a vessel, an acceptable route, a willing crew and insurance cover. Diplomatic assurances matter, but they cannot substitute for operational safety or commercially viable shipping arrangements.

The government's reported price threshold of $27 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) for spot LNG purchases illustrates the dilemma. Officials have warned that additional cargoes could cost around $29 per MMBtu. At those prices, replacement procurement can become fiscally and commercially difficult, particularly when the government must consider the impact on electricity tariffs, industrial costs and the public finances.

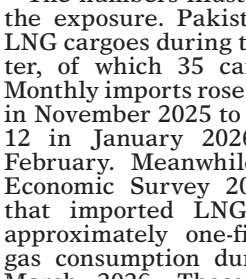
Pakistan's first priority must be a transparent, time-bound procurement strategy comparing alternative cargoes on a delivered-cost basis. Pakistan LNG Limited should assess offers from the US, Azerbaijan and other commercially viable suppliers, including delivery windows, shipping availability, insurance premiums, terminal compatibility and payment terms. Azerbaijan's state-owned SOCAR is a potential partner, given its previous deliveries to Pakistan under an agreement signed in July 2023. However, Azerbaijan should not be portrayed as an automatic substitute for Qatar. Available volumes, transport economics and delivery schedules must be established before any purchase is treated as a dependable source of winter supply.

The proposal to allow private companies to use unused capacity at Pakistan's LNG terminals deserves consideration, but its limitations must be acknowledged. Third-party access could improve utilisation of existing infrastructure and enable financially capable industrial consumers to procure their own supplies. It will not, by itself, increase global LNG availability or eliminate the premium imposed by a shipping crisis. Regulatory clarity is essential: Ogra should establish transparent access conditions, terminal charges, allocation rules and safeguards against preferential treatment. Private procurement should complement, not replace, a national supply-security strategy. Otherwise, the government risks creating an arrangement that benefits a small group of companies able to pay international prices while leaving less powerful consumers exposed to shortages.

The legal dimension also requires greater attention. Force majeure is not a universal permission to cancel contractual obligations whenever circumstances become difficult. Its application depends on the wording of the relevant agreement, the event covered, the causal link between that event and non-performance, and any notice, mitigation or other requirements the contract stipulates. Under English law, which governs many international commercial agreements, force majeure generally depends on an express contractual provision; frustration is a separate and narrowly applied doctrine.

The Strait of Hormuz also raises a wider question of international law. Armed conflict, attacks on vessels, maritime warnings and the withdrawal of insurance cover can make passage commercially or physically unviable even where the legal status of navigation is contested. Pakistan's engagement with Qatar, Iran and the US is therefore sensible, provided it focuses on concrete outcomes: safe passage arrangements, credible shipping windows, security assurances and coordination with vessel operators and insurers. Diplomacy should be measured by cargoes delivered and risks reduced, not merely by the number of official contacts made.

At home, the distribution of shortages will matter as much as the volume of imported gas. The government has indicated that domestic consumers should receive priority for locally produced gas, while regasified LNG will be prioritised for power generation and industry.



By Malik Mashhood

Centralising the mandate

Political inclusivity and democratic representation are regarded as sine qua non for polycentric governance, a framework that divides authority across multiple tiers of government rather than concentrating it at a single locus.

Hence, calls for new administrative units have recently dominated the country's political landscape. Most recently, groundwork for local government polls in the country's most populous province has also been laid, with the provincial administration proposing an April polling timeline.

Ostensibly, these measures indicate the polity's attempt to improve the overall governance apparatus, elevating people's issues and choices and bringing decisions that affect their lives closer to them, as is the core premise of a participatory democracy. However, while the state undertakes steps to enhance local inclusivity in one region, it has altered the governance architecture in another in a manner entirely antithetical to these ideals.

By imposing Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) alongside a state of emergency, the central government has left a population already deprived of local representatives without provincial representatives as well. This creates yet another fissure in the country's already fragile democratic order.

Soon after the federal cabinet recommended that President Asif Ali Zardari impose emergency and Governor's Rule in KP on October 11, the province saw its elected government collapse, bringing an end to a decade-long rule. Notably, the president approved the move under Articles 232 and 234 of the constitution of Pakistan, which permit the federal government to proclaim an emergency on account of internal disturbances and impose Governor's Rule owing to a failure of constitutional machinery, respectively.

The dissonance between the federal and KP governments commenced with disagreements over the latter's efforts to combat terrorism in the province, specifically its soft-line approach towards the Taliban. The impasse between the interlocutors deepened after they failed to reach common ground on counterterrorism strategies, a divide further compounded by the provincial leadership's demands to access the party's incarcerated chief, which had already prompted a protest march.

Since the decision was announced, civil society members, concerned about yet another blow to the people's mandate, have criticised the move. Conversely, those aligned with the state narrative view it as an opportunity to transform the province's socio-political and economic landscape. Proponents argue, first, that a federally backed governor's rule is a first step towards ending the menace of cross-border terrorism that has long undermined the state's writ across various districts; second, they contend it marks the beginning of a new era of technocrat-led development.

This stance is further augmented by claims that the decision aligns with constitutional provisions. Yet, while nothing in the constitution explicitly debars the federal government from taking such action, political leaders must recognise that invoking provisions rooted in colonial statecraft demands careful reflection. Such extraordinary powers must never be weaponised to serve personal vendettas.

For the PTI-led provincial government, this latest decision is a grim reminder that prioritising continuous political confrontation over good governance can ultimately backfire. When an administration fails to respect citizens' priorities, neglects pressing issues and instead indulges in the politics of agitation, it inadvertently paves the way for external intrusion.

Philippine President Marcos inaugurates assembly plant of "Pakistan's Sazgar Engineering Works Limited"



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WEST BANK

Manila

President of the Philippines, Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., inaugurated the assembly plant of Sazgar Engineering Works Limited, Pakistan, in Biñan City, Laguna for marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's automotive industry expansion into the Philippine market and strengthening bilateral economic ties.

With more than 35 years of experience in the automotive industry, Sazgar Engineering Works Limited is establishing its presence in the Philippines.

The company's product portfolio includes passenger and commercial three-wheelers, as well as electric vehicles, offering mobility solutions for individuals, businesses, and communities.

Highlighting the significance of the partnership, President Marcos said: "And that is why this is a partnership I am particularly proud of. Sazgar has been building vehicles in Pakistan for over three decades". By choosing the Philippines for its Assembly and Manufacturing "placed its confidence in our country." The President thanked the Company for choosing the Philippines.

President Marcos underscored the investment's potential to strengthen local manufacturing, create jobs, and open opportunities for local suppliers, while noting that electric three-wheelers would benefit drivers, enhance energy security by reducing dependence on imported fuel, and advance cleaner, more sustainable transportation.

The Ambassador of Pakistan to the Philippines, H.E Dr, Asima Rabbani congratulated Sazgar Engineering Works Limited on this landmark achievement, observing that the inauguration reflects the confidence of Pakistani enterprises in the Philippines' market. The ambassador said that this investment "demonstrates how business partnerships can strengthen the longstanding friendship between our two countries

The Ambassador further noted that Pakistani investors are already active in the Philippines in sectors including pharmaceuticals, automotive, and trucking. Sazgar's entry into the Philippine market further expands Pakistan's commercial presence and creates opportunities for investment, technology transfer, and private-sector collaboration.

The Ambassador emphasized that the venture represents a new beginning for Sazgar and a positive development in Pakistan–Philippines economic relations. The establishment of the assembly plant is expected to encourage further engagement between businesses in both countries and open new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation.

In his remarks, CEO Sazgar, Mian Asad Hameed, said, "We are proud to bring Sazgar to the Philippines, contributing to its industrial growth while strengthening Pakistan–Philippines friendship, economic cooperation, and shared prosperity"

The Embassy of Pakistan congratulates Sazgar Engineering Works Limited on this important achievement and wishes the company every success in its Philippine operations and future expansion across Southeast Asia.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan address Joint Press Stakeout at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Netanyahu Bloc Falls Short Of Majority As Israel Faces Tough Coalition Talks

- Likud stays the largest party, but no side reaches 61 seats, and Arab parties may decide who governs next

WEB DESK

ISRAEL

The Netanyahu bloc has finished ahead of its rivals in Israel's general election, but it is still far from a majority. Final results came out on Friday.

The prime minister's camp of right-wing and far-right parties won 53 of the 120 seats in the Knesset. A government needs 61 seats to rule.

His Likud party remains the biggest single faction, with 27 seats.

The opposition bloc, led by centrist Gadi Eisenkot, took 48 seats. That is five fewer than Netanyahu's side.

The Arab parties Raam and the Joint List won 19 seats together. This makes them possible kingmakers in the talks ahead.

With no bloc close to 61 seats, coalition talks could take weeks. If they fail, Israel may have to vote again.



Foreign funding claims

On Thursday, Netanyahu's camp pushed claims that Arab-Israeli groups took foreign money to sway the vote. No proof has been shown so far.

The claims centre on Raam, which allegedly got cash from Qatar to buy votes. Raam and Qatar both deny this. Qatar called the claims "ridiculous and dangerous."

Likud called it the "Raamgate scandal" and said the election had been stolen.

Raam leader Mansour Abbas denied any wrongdoing and said he welcomed an investigation. The Joint List said Netanyahu was running a campaign of incitement because he fears the growing power of Arab voters.

Officials try to calm tensions

The Shin Bet security service said it is looking into suspected irregularities. It added that it did not want to blame an entire community that voted lawfully.

The election commission's acting chief, Dean Livne, said any claim of widespread problems was "entirely groundless." Police arrested three suspects, but the commission called it an isolated local case.

Opposition fires back

Opposition figures said Netanyahu is trying to cast doubt on the result because he failed to win a majority. Left-wing candidate Yair Golan said he is trying to challenge the outcome.

Eisenkot said it was too early to know if anything happened at all. Even so, he said Likud had started an organised campaign to undermine the result.

What happens next

Joint List head Yousef Jabareen told AFP he is ready to work with the opposition to bring Netanyahu down. However, he said his party would not join a government with it.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, has long faced questions about Qatar. Two of his aides were arrested last year over alleged payments from the Gulf state.



Ambassador Tirmizi lays wreath at Victory Square memorial in Voronezh

NEWS DESK

VORONEZH

Ambassador of Pakistan to the Russian Federation, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, laid a wreath at the Memorial Complex at Victory Square in Voronezh, paying tribute to the soldiers and civilians who lost their lives during the Great Patriotic War. He was accompanied by First Deputy Chairman of the Government of Voronezh Region, Danil Alexandrovich Kustov.

The memorial honours those who defended Voronezh during the fierce battles of 1942–1943. The city endured immense destruction and loss of life before its liberation on 25 January 1943. Inaugurated in 1975, the memorial stands as a lasting tribute to their courage and sacrifice. Ambassador Tirmizi paid his respects to the fallen, acknowledging the enormous sacrifices made by the Russian people during the Second World War.

Trump's loan policy change leaves thousands of US veterans paying more

- Trump administration ended the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase (VASP) programme in 2025

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW YORK



United States (U.S.) President Donald Trump's administration has scrapped a federal loan relief program designed to help former service members struggling to keep their homes. The development has increased financial burden on ex-military personnels as around 15,000 US veterans' mortgage payments have increased by at least $150.

NPR published an investigation on Friday revealing that more than 700 ex-servicemen has observed a $1000 increase in their home loans since the government changed the rules.

The findings were based on previously unpublished data obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which oversees a mortgage programme for eligible military veterans.

The Trump administration ended the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase (VASP) programme in 2025, removing an option that allowed the government to purchase certain troubled mortgages and offer borrowers more affordable repayment terms.

The programme had been introduced to help veterans who fell behind on payments avoid losing their homes.

NPR found that 63% of veterans who received loan modifications faced higher monthly payments, compared with just 2% of borrowers whose modified loans were backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Loan modifications are generally intended to make repayment manageable for homeowners experiencing financial difficulties.

However, the closure of VASP left some veterans facing higher interest rates when their mortgages were restructured.

The administration has since introduced a separate partial-claim programme under legislation signed by President Donald Trump in July 2025.

Six killed in helicopter crash in Indian Himalayan state



WEB DESK

UTTARAKHAND

Six people were killed in a helicopter crash in the Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand on Friday, news agency reported, citing an official from the state's civil aviation authority.

The helicopter was flying from Badrinath, a prominent pilgrimage destination for Hindus located in the mountains, to Dehradun city, the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) said in a statement.

All six people on board the chopper, including five passengers and the pilot, were killed, ANI reported, citing UCADA's Chief Executive Officer Prateek Jain.

"The helicopter lost communication while it was flying over Joshimath valley. At the same time, the tracking system could no longer track the helicopter," the authority said.

The entire fleet of the operator, Trans Bharat Aviation, had been grounded "as a precautionary measure", it added.

Helicopter Crash In Bosnia Kills Four And Injures 11, Italy Says

- Eleven others were hurt when the EU mission aircraft came down in Brcko district, and officials have opened an investigation

NEWS DESK

BOSNIA



A helicopter crash in Bosnia has left four people dead and 11 others injured. The Italian defence ministry confirmed the news.

The aircraft was part of the European Union's peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fifteen people were on board when it went down.

Two of the dead were Italian army members. The other two belonged to the Volunteer Military Corps of the Italian Red Cross.

The ministry said all 11 injured people are getting medical treatment. None of them is in a life-threatening condition.

Italian news agency ANSA reported that the helicopter came down in Gorice, a village in Brcko district. Pictures shown by local media displayed a military transport helicopter lying overturned and broken into pieces.

The helicopter was serving under Operation Althea. This mission is run by the European Union Force and helps oversee the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Officials have not shared a reason for the accident. The defence ministry said an investigation is underway to learn exactly what happened.

Defence Minister Guido Crosetto spoke of deep sorrow. He said his thoughts go first to the families of the fallen and offered his personal condolences, along with those of the whole defence establishment.

He added that no words can ease such a heavy loss.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also shared her sympathy on X. She said her thoughts are with the victims, their families, and everyone who is living through hours of pain while serving a mission for peace and stability in the region.

The helicopter crash in Bosnia has shocked many people in Italy. More details are expected as investigators continue their work.

Pakistan warns it won't 'sit idle' under cross border terror onslaught from Afghanistan

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

Decrying a sharp spike in cross-border violence, Pakistan has warned that it cannot "sit idle" in the face of an externally backed terrorist onslaught originating from Afghanistan, where the human rights situation continues to deteriorate.

Speaking in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee during an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, Pakistani delegate Muhammad Jawad Ajmal said his country has the right to respond in self-defence against militant networks.

In this regard, he linked the ruling Taliban regime to the unimpeded regional operations of banned terrorist proxies, including the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and its Majeed Brigade, signalling a dangerous escalation in the tensions along the Pak-Afghan border.

Ajmal, a counsellor in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, was commenting on the Bennet's report which accused the Taliban of committing systematic violations against women and children in Afghanistan.

India releases 11 Pakistani fishermen

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Eleven Pakistani fishermen released from Indian custody have arrived in Karachi, marking their return home after being freed.

The released Pakistanis were initially brought to Lahore. The fishermen were then transported to Karachi in Edhi ambulances, while two others were received by their families in Lahore.

A total of 14 Pakistanis were released from Indian captivity, according to the available details. Of them, 11 fishermen reached Karachi, while two individuals were taken home by their families in Lahore.

Four fishermen from Karachi's Mauripur area also arrived in the city following their release from Indian custody.

One individual remains in Lahore

One of the released individuals, who is reportedly mentally ill, was kept in Lahore because his biometric data was unavailable. The individual could not be sent onward due to the absence of the required biometric information.

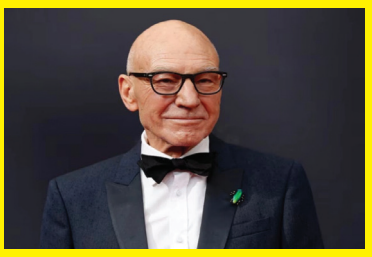
The fishermen returning to Karachi were transported from Lahore through Edhi ambulance services.

Patrick Stewart, Shakespearean actor turned 'Star Trek' and 'X-Men' star, dies at 86

● Stewart rose from a childhood in poverty to become a celebrated Shakespearean actor and global star

SHOW BIZ DESK

ENGLAND



Patrick Stewart, who rose from poverty in England to become an accomplished Shakespearean stage actor and then achieved global stardom as the erudite Captain Jean-Luc Picard in TV's "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and the telepathic Professor Charles Xavier in the "X-Men" movies, has died at the age of 86.

Stewart, knighted in 2010 by Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions to drama, died at his home in Los Angeles, according to a statement on his X account.

"We announce with great sorrow the passing of Sir Patrick Stewart yesterday at his home in Los Angeles, in the loving care of his beloved wife Sunny following a brief and poignant journey with Alzheimer's Disease and Lewy Body Dementia," it said.

Stewart became an actor at age 18 and gained acclaim on the stage as a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company beginning in the 1960s. But it was not until after he was hired at age 47 for "Star Trek: The Next Generation" - a TV series that ran from 1987 to 1994 as a sequel to the original 1960s "Star Trek" - that he gained mainstream fame, acting into his 80s.

"Make it so," his character Picard often said, instructing a subordinate to carry out a command, or sometimes deploying the similar catch phrase, "Engage."

It was a role he had debated even taking after his longtime friend and fellow Shakespearean Ian McKellen advised him to spurn "Star Trek" and remain in theater. Stewart did take the role and became both a fan favorite and an indispensable part of a lucrative sci-fi franchise, playing Picard not only in 176 episodes over seven seasons of that series but also in several "Star Trek" films and in the later streaming series "Star Trek: Picard" that began airing in 2020 when he was 79.

"As the seven seasons of TNG ("The Next Generation") went by, the distinction between Jean-Luc Picard and Patrick Stewart became thinner and thinner, until I couldn't know where he left off and I began. So much of what I believed and felt went into that show," Stewart told the Guardian newspaper in 2022.

Stewart also initially balked at being cast as the wheelchair-using mutant Professor X in the "X-Men" movies, based on the popular Marvel comic book character.

"I said, 'Look, I know this isn't science fiction, but it's fantasy, and I've done that.' But they persuaded me that it wouldn't be like 'Star Trek,' so I did it. And yet again I was proved wrong," Stewart told the Guardian.

He became a critical part of another big-money franchise starting with the first entry "X-Men" in 2000 and followed by several more.

Acting was safe space

Stewart was born on July 13, 1940, in the English town of Mirfield in Yorkshire. He was raised in poverty, with a father who he said returned from World War Two an alcoholic who suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome and physically abused Stewart's mother. Stewart recalled putting his body between his father and mother to try to protect her.

As a child, Stewart said, acting became a "safe space" after a schoolteacher introduced him to Shakespeare - specifically "The Merchant of Venice" - during a class when he was 12. He started losing his hair at age 17 and was bald by 19. He was embarrassed at the time, but eventually embraced it.





'It Ends With Us' crew disputes Blake Lively's claims in new doc: Report

● Blake Lively accused Justin Baldoni of sexual harassment and retaliation

SHOWBIZ DESK

NEW YORK

Blake Lively's account of Justin Baldoni's behaviour on the set of It Ends With Us is being disputed by the film's crew in a new documentary.

Filmmaker Andy Signore, who directed the docuseries It Ends With Justice, told NewsNation on October 28 that several people he interviewed were surprised by Lively's allegations.

"None of them saw that toxic, combative thing," Signore said.

"All the crew members were surprised when the lawsuit dropped."

According to Signore, those interviewed generally viewed disagreements on set as differences in working styles rather than evidence of widespread misconduct.

"Most of the crew felt very positive about Justin, very positive about Justin and kind of neutral and different toward Blake," he claimed, adding that he struggled to find people willing to publicly defend Lively.

The documentary also revisits disputes over a childbirth scene and the editing of sequences depicting domestic violence. Signore questioned Lively's account of the production and suggested the legal fight was part of a broader public relations effort.

"I think this was all a PR play for them," he said. "No, this was always a smear campaign against Justin."

Lively accused Baldoni of sexual harassment and retaliation in December 2024, allegations he denied. Both parties filed lawsuits, though the pair settled their dispute in May 2026 shortly before the case was supposed to head to trial.

Did Tara Sutaria cheat on Veer Pahariya? Janhvi Kapoor reacts

WEB DESK

MUMBAI

Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor has caught social media users attention with her witty dating advice for Veer Pahariya during a conversation with Karan Johar.

When asked what advice she would give Veer, Janhvi replied, "Never take her to a concert."

This answer prompted viewers to link her comment to the much discussed AP Dhillon concert incident involving Veer and Tara Sutaria.

The controversy dates back to December 2025, when Tara appeared on stage with singer AP Dhillon during his Mumbai concert.

Their friendly interaction, including a hug and a kiss on the cheek, quickly went viral.



However, videos showing Veer watching the performance also became a major talking point.

Many social media users speculated about his expressions and reaction.

Tara later pushed back against the online speculation, alleging that misleading narratives and negative public relations efforts were being used against her.

Veer also clarified that the clip of his reaction had been taken during a different part of the concert, disputing the impression created by the viral edits.

Reports of Tara and Veer's separation surfaced in January 2026, further fuelling online discussion.

However, neither the concert footage nor Janhvi's latest remark provides proof that Tara was unfaithful, and no confirmed link between the reported breakup and the concert incident has been established.

During the exchange, Janhvi also asked, "Did I win? I think I won," while Karan responded, "I mean... let's see. That your brother decides."

Rabia Javed surprises Zayb and Esra at 2AM

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



Rabia Javed made the wedding celebrations of Tamasha stars Zayb and Esra even more special by surprising the newlyweds with a cake cutting ceremony at around 2 am.

Despite having an early flight scheduled for 7 am, Rabia made time to celebrate the couple's special occasion.

She brought a chocolate cake decorated with the message "OMG!! NIKAH MUBARAK" and asked Zayb and Esra to cut it together.

The celebration became even more memorable as sparkling fountain candles lit up the cake and the newlyweds fed each other pieces.

The gathering ended with warm hugs, thankyous and affectionate goodbyes.

Ella Purnell returns as killer Rhiannon Lewis in 'Sweetpea' season 2 trailer

● Ella Purnell returns as killer Rhiannon Lewis in 'Sweetpea' season 2 as a copycat threatens to expose her crimes

WEB DESK

NEW YORK



Ella Purnell is returning as Rhiannon Lewis in the second season of Sweetpea, with Sky and Starz releasing a full trailer and new images ahead of the thriller's return.

The dark comedy picks up after the deadly events of the first season finale, following Rhiannon as she navigates new challenges in her personal and professional life. Now promoted at the local newspaper where she works, the former wallflower must also contend with a copycat killer who threatens to expose her crimes.

As Rhiannon's kill list grows, she begins questioning her identity and whether her ex-boyfriend AJ was right to describe her as a monster.

Purnell, known for her role in Fallout, will reprise her lead role in the series. New cast members include Rish Shah, who plays Rhiannon's romantic interest Gabriel, and Tamsin Greig as Liv, AJ's mother.

Taj Atwal joins the cast as Freya, Rhiannon's new boss at the Carnsham Gazette, while Jenny Walser plays Daisy, a new friend. Returning cast members include Jon Pointing, Jeremy Swift, Leah Harvey, Ingrid Oliver, Nitin Ganatra and Alexandra Dowling.

Based on C.J. Skuse's novel of the same name, Sweetpea is produced by See-Saw Films and fanboy in association with Sky Studios. Patrick Walters serves as an executive producer alongside Helen Gregory, Iain Canning and Emile Sherman. Purnell and Ella Jones are also executive producers.

Selina Lim, who leads the writing team for season 2, serves as co-executive producer alongside Emme Hoy, Simon Gillis and Natasha Heliotis. Lim is joined by writers Hoy, Anna Jordan and Laura Jayne Tunbridge.

Sweetpea season 2 is scheduled to premiere on Sky in the UK in November 2026, with its release on Starz expected in early 2027.

Ahsan Khan surprises fan in Orlando, her reaction wins hearts

WEB DESK

FLORIDA



Pakistani actor Ahsan Khan received a heartwarming welcome from an unexpected fan while visiting a store in Orlando, Florida.

A female cashier was visibly overwhelmed with excitement after recognising the actor at the checkout counter, repeatedly exclaiming, "Oh my God!" as she struggled to contain her happiness.

Ahsan responded warmly to the fan's reaction, describing it as "an overwhelming reaction" and gently encouraging her to relax.

He also thanked her for showing him so much love, turning an ordinary shopping moment into a memorable encounter.

The video has drawn attention for the cashier's genuine excitement and Ahsan's friendly response.

Ahsan Khan is a British-Pakistani actor, television host and producer who has made a name for himself in Pakistan's entertainment industry.

He is known for his performances in popular dramas such as Udaari, Dastaan and Alif.

With his versatile acting skills, he has portrayed a variety of characters on screen, earning recognition from audiences.

Besides acting, Ahsan has also worked as a host and taken part in social welfare initiatives, particularly those focused on children.

Mathira calls sugar daddy culture 'Ghatiya'

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI

Pakistani media personality Mathira has shared her views on sugar daddy relationships, describing the concept as "ghatiya" and pointing out the importance of self respect.

She said people who put a price on themselves and allow others to treat them like toys may choose that lifestyle, but warned that such a path does not lead to a good ending. Mathira also highlighted the importance of independence, saying people can find different ways to become self reliant.

Her comments mirror the value of maintaining dignity and building an independent life rather than depending on others in ways that compromise self respect.

Mathira Mohammad, popularly known as Mathira, is a Pakistani Zimbabwean television host, actress, model and media personality.

She gained recognition in Pakistan through music videos, television shows and her work in the entertainment industry. Known for her bold personality and outspoken views, Mathira often shares her opinions on relationships, social issues and showbiz.

Parishae Adnan says fashion industry dismissed her ideas before New York recognition

● Designer recalls years of criticism over her unconventional designs, calls for greater support for emerging talent

WEB DESK

NEW YORK



Parishae Adnan said Pakistan's fashion industry had been slow to embrace her unconventional ideas, recalling how senior designers dismissed her plans for a public beach fashion show before international audiences began taking notice of her work.

Speaking to Frieha Altaf on her podcast, the designer discussed the resistance she had faced throughout her career, the reception of her experimental approach to fashion and the economic anxieties confronting younger generations.

She also spoke about growing up as the daughter of renowned designers Amir Adnan and Huma Adnan.

"I have been doing this for years, and everyone looked at the clothes and thought, 'That's weird.' Now that it's in New York and people over there think it's cool, people here think it's cool too," she said.

"The funniest question I have been asked this entire time has been, 'How did you come up with this for the first time?' And I'm like, 'I have been doing this for 10 years; you guys just noticed. You used to bash me before.'"

Adnan recalled attending a gathering of senior designers a week before her first public beach fashion show, where her mother was discussing the upcoming event.

"My mother is, of course, my biggest fan. She was telling people about my show. What I thought was wild was that these extremely senior designers were like, 'Haha, that won't happen.' I was there. I was like, 'Okay, fine, got it.' But is that a thing to say to someone?" she said.

For Adnan, the encounter reflected a wider problem in an industry she believes remains reluctant to support unconventional ideas, particularly when they come from younger designers. "If a young designer comes to me now and says, 'What's the plan?', I'd say, 'Guys, this is the plan.' And there are so many cool designers starting now," she said.

Taking her work to New York

Adnan also discussed her approach to her recent international outing, where she closed the Flying Solo show at New York Fashion Week in September, debuting her brand House of Parishae's sustainable collection, Second Skin.

Atif Aslam and wife Sarah attend Farhana Bodi's Diwali party

WEB DESK

DUBAI

Pakistani singer Atif Aslam and his wife, Sarah Bharwana, were spotted celebrating Diwali at an exclusive gathering in Dubai hosted by Dubai Bling star Farhana Bodi.

The couple drew attention with their elegant traditional outfits as they joined celebrities and other high profile guests for the festive event.

Atif wore a cream coloured embroidered ensemble paired with a patterned shawl, while Sarah looked graceful in a maroon outfit featuring intricate gold detailing and statement jewellery.

The gathering brought together guests for an evening of festive celebrations, glamour and socialising.

Photos shared by a Pakistani entertainment page offered a glimpse of Atif and Sarah posing alongside Farhana Bodi and other attendees.

Farhana Bodi is an Indian origin fashion influencer, model and entrepreneur who lives in Dubai.

She became widely known after appearing in Netflix's reality show Dubai Bling, which follows the glamorous lifestyles of wealthy personalities in the city.

Atif Aslam is one of Pakistan's most popular singers, known for his soulful voice and hit songs in Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi.

He rose to fame with songs such as Aadat and later gained international recognition through his music in Pakistani and Indian films.

Some of his well-known tracks include Tera Hone Laga Hoon, Jeene Laga Hoon and Tajdar-e-Haram.



Pakistan Beat India By Four Wickets In Hong Kong Sixes Thriller

● Abbas Afridi and Khawaja Nafay power the Green Shirts to a memorable chase after an early loss to the UAE

STAFF REPORTER/ WEB DESK

HONG KONG



Pakistan beat India by four wickets in a thrilling Group C match at the Hong Kong Sixes 2026 on Friday. The win came at Mission Road Ground in Mong Kok and kept Pakistan's hopes of reaching the next round alive.

The result was a big relief for the Green Shirts. Earlier in the morning, they had lost their opening Group C match to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by just one wicket.

India batted first and were bowled out for 88 in their six overs. Shashank Singh was the star with a quick 40 off 11 balls. He hit two fours and five sixes.

Nitish Rana added 19 off 14 balls, with one four and two sixes. T Natarajan stayed not out on 12 off six balls, including two boundaries.

Rahul Tripathi scored nine off five balls. Rahul Tewatia and captain Krunal Pandya both fell for first-ball ducks.

Abdul Samad led the Pakistan bowlers with figures of 2/10 in one over. Ahmed Daniyal and Mohammad Shahzad took one wicket each.

Buy Maps

Pakistan began their chase with a bang. Captain Abbas Afridi smashed five sixes in a row in the first over, bowled by Krunal Pandya. The over gave Pakistan 31 runs.

Khawaja Nafay kept up the attack in the second over, bowled by Natarajan. He hit five boundaries, and the over cost India 28 runs. Pakistan crossed the 50-run mark with ease.

Shashank then struck back by removing Afridi. The captain had scored 35 off only eight balls, with one four and five sixes.

Nafay carried on hitting big shots. He made 41 off 12 balls, including two fours and five sixes, before Tewatia got him out.

Irfan Niazi then finished the match in style. He hit a six off the very first ball he faced.

Abdul Samad stayed not out on seven off three balls, which included a six. He helped Pakistan complete the chase and seal the win over their rivals.



PSL franchises agree on retention rules, auction terms, squad structures

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE

All eight HBL Pakistan Super League franchises convened at the Gaddafi Stadium Lahore on Thursday for a landmark tournament operations workshop that produced unanimous agreement on the core framework governing squads, player movement and the upcoming Player Auction for HBL PSL 12.

The workshop was led by PSL CEO Salman Naseer and marked the most substantive collective session between the league and its franchise partners in the current cycle.

Discussions were open, candid and wide-ranging - covering Direct Signings, Player Retentions, Trade Windows, Squad Sizes and Salary Caps. By its conclusion, all eight franchises had reached full agreement on every major operational parameter for the season.

Retentions: A date that matters

The deadline for franchise player retentions has been set for 13th January 2027, ten days before the Player Auction. The timing is deliberate. It falls after the completion of the National T20 Silver tournament and during the National T20 Gold - meaning franchises will make their final retention calls with a full set of Silver results behind them and live Gold performances unfolding in front of them.

A domestic player in form on 13 January could force his way into franchise thinking in real time.



Zverev ensures ascent to number one ranking with Vienna victory

SPORTS DESK

VIENNA

Alexander Zverev ensured he would overtake Jannik Sinner in the rankings and become world number one for the first time next week with a 6-4 7-5 victory over Tallon Griekspoor in the last 16 of the Vienna Open.

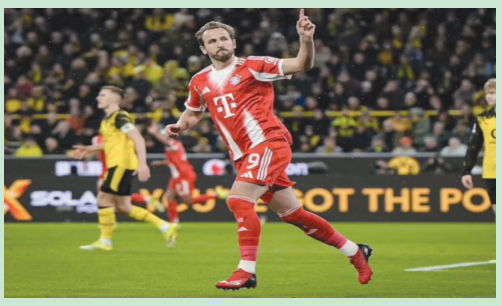
The 29-year-old, who has enjoyed a stellar season capped by titles at the French and US Opens, will become Germany's second men's number one after Boris Becker in 1991 when the new rankings are published on Monday.

Zverev's victory, which was sealed with an ace, was followed by a ceremony on court when he was joined by his team and Thomas Muster, the only Austrian to have topped the rankings, to mark the feat.

"[It is] very special. To have the feeling to be on the top of the world is amazing," said Zverev, who will be the 30th man to top the rankings since they were introduced in 1973.

"It's different than winning a tournament, winning a title, but it's such a special feeling to know that the number one is going to be next to your name when the new rankings come out."

Zverev would be the first to admit that injuries to Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz, who between them won every Grand Slam title in the 2024 and 2025 seasons, had eased his ascent to the top of the rankings.



Bayern brace for Dortmund showdown

SPORTS DESK

MUNICH

Bayern Munich host long-time foes Borussia Dortmund on Saturday after a rollercoaster week punctuated by coach Vincent Kompany's hospitalisation and Harry Kane's Ballon d'Or triumph.

Germany captain Joshua Kimmich, a mainstay in Bayern's midfield, has missed three games on compassionate leave due to the sudden death of his father.

Luis Diaz, Manuel Neuer, Jamal Musiala and Aleksander Pavlovic have all battled injury for the defending champions.

Bayern's issues have pushed what is usually the biggest match of the Bundesliga season into the background.

The only unbeaten teams after seven matchdays, Bayern and Dortmund sit level on points, with Saturday's hosts ahead on goal difference.

Dortmund coach Niko Kovac said Thursday his side, who have also battled injury issues this season, were "getting closer" to Bayern.

But Bayern's main task will be to shut out the noise and focus on the game.

'Highs and the lows'

After showing signs of illness in Bayern's 6-1 thumping of RB Leipzig, Kompany returned to the dugout for last week's 2-2 home draw with Arsenal, but collapsed on the training pitch two days later.

Later diagnosed with meningeal irritation, the Belgian was released after five days in hospital on Wednesday, but Bayern said it will likely be "weeks, not days" until he returns to work.

Charged with carrying Kompany's clipboard, assistant Aaron Danks hoped the waves of emotion would galvanise the side.

"You've seen the full extremes of life in the last week. The joys and highs for Harry, and the lows of some of the things we've had to go through in the last seven days," Danks said Tuesday.

Pakistan will bring its 'A Game' to Tri-Series Final, says Salman Ali Agha

● Salman Backs Pakistan To Deliver Best In Final

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistan batter Salman Ali Agha has expressed confidence that the national team will deliver its best performance in the final of the tri-nation cricket series, saying the players are fully aware of their responsibilities ahead of the decisive clash against Sri Lanka.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of Saturday's final, Salman said the team was hopeful of lifting the trophy, with preparations focused on improving areas that had not gone according to plan during the tournament.

He said the pitches used throughout the series offered different playing conditions, requiring the players to adapt their approach. The squad had worked hard during practice sessions and focused on addressing individual weaknesses in collaboration with the coaching staff.

"Hopefully, tomorrow's final will belong to Pakistan. All the players understand their responsibilities," Salman said.

Acknowledging Sri Lanka's performances in the competition, Salman said the opposition had earned its place in the final through good cricket. He added that Pakistan were keen to adopt a modern approach to the game and agreed with the coach's assessment that the team had yet to produce its best cricket in the series.

However, he backed the players to raise their performance levels in the final.

"The coach is right that we have not played our best cricket so far, but Pakistan will bring its A game to the final," he said.

Salman also described representing Pakistan as a matter of great pride, adding that his focus remained entirely on the match whenever he stepped onto the field.

Admitting that his personal performance had not been up to expectations, the batter said he would look to make a significant contribution in the final.

He also spoke about the pressure associated with captaincy, saying it was an unavoidable part of the responsibility but that he now felt less pressure than before.

Pakistan ready for Sri Lanka challenge in ODI tri-series final



SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

Shaheen Shah Afridi-led Pakistan will take on Kusal Mendis-led Sri Lanka in the final of the ODI tri-series at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Saturday, 31 October.

The toss will take place at 12.30pm PKT, while the first ball is scheduled to be bowled at 1pm.

The ongoing ODI tri-series is the fourth such tournament to be held on Pakistan soil, following the editions featuring Australia and South Africa in 1994, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in 2004 and New Zealand and South Africa in 2025.

Pakistan, who became the first side to qualify for the final of the ongoing tri-series after registering two wins against England and one against Sri Lanka, will be aiming to clinch their maiden ODI tri-series title on home soil.

In the batting charts, Pakistan's Salman Ali Agha is the leading run-scorer for the hosts with 158 runs from four outings in the tournament, including a century against fellow finalists' Sri Lanka in the opening match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Chopra targets return to training

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI

India's double Olympic javelin medallist Neeraj Chopra said his recovery from a ligament tear is progressing well and that he expects to resume training and rehabilitation within the next couple of weeks.

The 28-year-old Chopra ended his 2026 season prematurely after suffering the injury in training in August.

"My doctors advised me to rest because of the injury, and that's exactly what I did," Chopra said in comments shared by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Instagram on Friday.

The reigning world champion curtailed his season shortly after finishing runner-up at the Lausanne Diamond League meeting in August, at which he threw 88.05 metres.

Chopra won Olympic gold in Tokyo and silver in Paris.



Diana Shnaider hails Alex Eala's performance after beating her in Tokyo quarterfinal

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO

Diana Shnaider once again emerged victorious just a few days after their matchup in the Ningbo Open Round of 16, knocking out rival Alex Eala in a Tokyo quarterfinal showdown.

The Russian star was once again the spotlight at the Toray Pan Pacific Open campaign after crushing Filipina tennis ace by 6-2, 7-6 (5) and 4-6 on Friday afternoon in Tokyo.

Alex Eala was up against the world No. 13 Shnaider and put up a strong fight in the quarterfinals on Friday, October 30, 2026.

Speaking in a post-match on-court interview, the Russian trailblazer was all praise for the Filipina star, Alexandra Eala, claiming the match was of no less than a final's calibre.

"Yeah, honestly, I feel like this match deserved to be a final," Shnaider said.

Shnaider went on to praise Eala, adding, "It was an insane level of tennis from both of us. I didn't believe that I would be able to pull the death wind off, you know, because she played insane, but I was just trying to keep reminding myself to keep fighting for every point, and as you see on the score, it was a very tight second set."

"So, yeah, definitely just fighting for a point and that paid off," Shnaider said.

The on-court interview ended with Shnaider being asked what her game plan will be for her next match.

She smiled as she admitted, "No idea, guys. I just finished my match.

The only thing I wanna do is stretch, eat and do the recovery. That's all I want to do right now."

Diana Shnaider will now face 18-year-old Slovakian wild card Mia Pohankova in the semifinal clash, who has had a strong run in Tokyo.

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza creates history with record-breaking T20I century at 40

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI

Zimbabwe captain and brilliant T20 all-rounder Sikandar Raza produced a sensational batting performance at the age of 40, smashing a blistering century against Afghanistan in the second match of their three-game T20I series.

Raza scored an unbeaten 106 off just 56 deliveries at Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

His explosive innings featured nine sixes and five boundaries, showcasing his remarkable power-hitting ability.

Although Raza's magnificent knock was not enough to guide Zimbabwe to victory, he created history by becoming the first cricketer aged over 40 to score a century in men's T20 Internationals.

Before Raza's achievement, the record was held by a Gibraltar batter who scored a T20I century against Bulgaria at the age of 39 years and 272 days.

With this remarkable milestone, Raza once again demonstrated that age is no barrier to sporting excellence, proving that exceptional talent, dedication and hard work can produce extraordinary achievements even at 40.

MIT Solutions beat SBP by 51 runs to win President's Trophy Grade-I title

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE



MIT Solutions clinched the President's Trophy Grade-I title after defeating State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) by 51 runs in the final at Bagh-e-Jinnah Ground in Lahore on Friday, with captain Khalid Usman taking four wickets in the second innings.

Chasing a target of 237 runs, SBP resumed the fourth and final day at 165-7 but were bowled out for 185 as MIT Solutions secured the championship.

Mubasir Khan, who was unbeaten on 17 overnight, scored 32 with three fours before being dismissed. Mohammad Abbas added just one run to his overnight score and fell for six.

Left-arm spinner Khalid Usman led MIT Solutions' bowling attack with figures of 4-38 after going wicketless in the first innings.

Earlier, MIT Solutions were dismissed for 112 in their first innings, while SBP responded with 172 to establish a 60-run lead.

However, MIT Solutions recovered in their second innings, scoring 296 to set SBP a target of 237.

The team's bowlers then defended the target, dismissing SBP for 185 to complete a 51-run victory.

Fast bowler Aamer Jamal was named player of the final for his all-round performance. The former Pakistan Test cricketer finished with match figures of 8-71 and scored 55 runs in the second innings, helping MIT Solutions recover from their first-innings deficit.

Punjab approves Rs1.1bn for advanced CT scanners at three hospitals

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Punjab government has approved Rs1.10 billion for the procurement of state-of-the-art CT scanners for three major public sector hospitals to improve diagnostic facilities and strengthen healthcare services across the province.

According to details issued by the Health Department on Friday, Rs500 million has been sanctioned for the purchase of a whole-body multi-ultra-fast CT scanner for cardiac scans at the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC), Lahore.

Similarly, Rs300 million has been approved for replacing the outdated CT scanner in the Emergency Department of Lahore General Hospital (LGH) with a new 128-slice machine, while another Rs300 million has been allocated for the procurement of a 128-slice CT scanner for Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Rawalpindi.

Punjab Health Secretary Azmat Mahmood has granted administrative approval for all three projects.

The Health Secretary said that, in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the provincial government was undertaking historic healthcare initiatives worth billions of rupees for public welfare.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing high-quality healthcare facilities and modern diagnostic services to the people of Punjab.



QUETTA: Goats and sheep rummaging through a vast pile of garbage at Nawan Kali in Quetta on Friday highlight the negligence of local authorities. The refuse, mostly plastic and household waste, creates significant issues for commuters and residents, contributing to an unhygienic environment. This situation underscores the need for improved waste management in the area to mitigate health risks and enhance living conditions. The scene, captured on October 30, 2026, reflects broader challenges faced by urban areas dealing with inadequate waste disposal systems.

Ishaq Dar Backs Faster Development Across Azad Jammu And Kashmir

● The Deputy Prime Minister promises full federal support for roads, health, education, tourism and jobs for young people

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Khan and Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani held an important meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here on Friday, discussing matters relating to the development, economic stability and public welfare of Azad Kashmir.

During the meeting, the leaders deliberated on a wide range of issues, including accelerating the pace of development projects, political and economic stability, and the implementation of the PML-N government's development agenda. They also discussed measures being taken for the welfare of the common masses, promotion of tourism and completion of major highway projects across Azad Kashmir.

Dar, who also holds the foreign affairs portfolio, expressed full confidence and satisfaction over the tangible measures taken by the AJK government to address core issues in the region. He reiterated the federal government's resolve to continue its all-out support for the development and prosperity of the liberated territory and the socio-economic uplift of its people.

The Deputy Prime Minister also expressed his government's desire to further strengthen the deep-rooted and long-standing relations with the Kashmiri people. Expressing confidence in the initiatives taken by the political leadership, he stressed the need to pursue policies in line with the aspirations and expectations of the people of Azad Kashmir.

On the occasion, the AJK President and Prime Minister sought enhanced support from the federal government to effectively address the challenges faced by the regional government and ensure the timely implementation of its development priorities.

They highlighted the importance of close coordination between the federal and AJK governments to address public issues, improve infrastructure and create greater opportunities for economic growth.



FCC sets guidelines to prevent prolonged land litigation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Expressing concern over a delay of around 40 years in a case relating to land consolidation proceedings and its adverse implications for the proprietary rights of landowners, the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) issued guiding principles for revenue authorities, particularly the Punjab Board of Revenue, to prevent protracted litigation.

"Consolidation proceedings should be concluded expeditiously, within prescribed statutory timelines or within a reasonable period," observed FCC Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan.

The chief justice was heading a two-judge bench, also comprising Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, which, on a civil petition filed by Khaliqus Zaman, overturned the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench order of Sept 26, 2024, remanding the matter to the revenue authority.

Through its initial order, the high court had disposed of the writ petition through a consent order, which was later modified. During the hearing before the FCC, the petitioner's counsel argued that the LHC order was not a consent order, referring to a subsequent LHC order dated Nov 18, 2024, which rectified the original judgement by deleting the sentence "learned counsel for the respondents have no objection in this regard".



ATC grants interim bail to Taimur Saleem Jhagra in Radio Pakistan attack case

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Peshawar on Friday granted interim bail to former provincial minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra until November 4 in the Radio Pakistan attack case.

ATC Judge Wali Muhammad heard the bail application filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader, who was recently named in the case relating to the attack on the Radio Pakistan building during the May 9, 2023, protests.

During the hearing, the prosecution informed the court that Jhagra had been nominated in the case and that arrest warrants had recently been issued against him and other accused.

After hearing the arguments, the court approved Jhagra's application and granted him interim bail until November 4.

The case relates to the attack, vandalism and arson at the Radio Pakistan building in Peshawar during protests that erupted following the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan on May 9, 2023.

The anti-terrorism court had framed charges against 115 individuals in connection with the case on June 11, 2024.

In the latest proceedings, the prosecution informed the court that Jhagra had been named in the case through the investigation process.

Earlier, on October 28, the anti-terrorism court issued arrest warrants for several PTI leaders, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, former provincial ministers Taimur Saleem Jhagra and Kamran Bangash, PTI leader Irfan Saleem and party worker Amir Chamkani.

The arrest warrants followed the submission of a supplementary charge sheet by the prosecution.

The court subsequently granted Jhagra interim relief until November 4, when further proceedings in the case are scheduled.

Pakistan Railways digitizes ticket booking: Hanif Abbasi

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The National Assembly was informed that Pakistan Railways has digitized its ticket booking system, and Awam Express running from Peshawar will be upgraded to modern train standards from November 2, while Khyber Mail will be upgraded by the end of January.

During Question Hour on Friday, Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi told the House in response to questions by Aliya Kamran and other members that passengers no longer need to visit booking offices and can book tickets through the Rabta app on their mobile phones.

He said Pakistan Railways has installed 329 Point of Sale machines at its 236 booking centers, through which passengers can pay for tickets via different banks, Easypaisa, JazzCash and QR code. He said Pakistan Railways is trying to become at par with railway systems of developed countries in digitization.

On a supplementary question by Noor Alam Khan, the Federal Minister said the popularity of the train running in Quetta can be judged by the fact that passenger load of up to 190% has been recorded against its seating capacity.

He said Awam Express from Peshawar will be run according to modern standards from November 2, while Hazara Express and Khyber Mail are also being upgraded. Khyber Mail will be shifted to modern standards by end of January.

Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways is a joint asset of the whole country and there will be no discrimination between provinces in its development. The railway system connects all parts of the country.

On another supplementary question, the Minister said the decision of stops of Shalimar and other trains running under private management is taken by their management on a commercial basis; however, Pano Aqil Cantt Railway Station will be upgraded from Pakistan Railways funds.

Interior Minister Supervises Demolition Of Khanna Police Station In Islamabad

● Mohsin Naqvi says the government will clear all illegal occupation of state land, starting with its own departments

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Interior Minister supervises demolition of the Khanna Police Station building in Islamabad on Friday. The building stood on the green belt along Islamabad Expressway.

Mohsin Naqvi led the operation in person. It is part of a wider campaign against encroachments and illegal occupation of government land in the federal capital.

Speaking to reporters, he said official encroachments are being removed first. He explained that this step keeps the campaign fair and transparent.

"We are removing the encroachments from the greenbelt," he said. The police station building has now been levelled to the ground.

The police station has been moved to a rented building for now. A new site has been legally allocated, and a new building will be constructed there.

The Chief Commissioner Islamabad and the Inspector General of Islamabad Police took part in the operation. The Deputy Commissioner and other officials were also present.

Naqvi said no government body, private organisation or person can occupy state land. Land held by departments under the Interior Ministry is also being taken back.

He recalled that the FC camp office near the Marriott Hotel was demolished some time ago. He said action will continue without any discrimination.

The minister also shared plans for public services.

PA Speaker stresses enhanced parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan, UK

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



A delegation led by British High Commission Governance Adviser Lewis Evans called on Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan here on Friday.

During the meeting, matters relating to parliamentary relations, governance and the promotion of development cooperation were discussed.

The Speaker said that promoting parliamentary cooperation and strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom was an important need of the time.

He said that parliamentary cooperation and development partnerships were playing an important role in further strengthening ties between the two countries.

He added that the British Pakistani community was also contributing to stronger bilateral relations through trade and investment.

Emphasizing the importance of technical and policy-level cooperation, he said that such collaboration was essential for sustainable development in the region.

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said that the Punjab Assembly was playing an active role in strengthening the democratic system and promoting effective legislation.

The delegation included British High Commission Senior Political Adviser Awais Shah, Senior Programme Manager Siddiqa Batool and Programme Officer Irtiza Sajid.

OGDC Profit Jumps 53% To Rs58.5 Billion, Announces Record Dividend

● OGDC reports strong financial growth, increases oil and gas production, and announces a record first-quarter dividend of Rs5 per share

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDC) has reported a 53% increase in profit after tax, reaching Rs58.5 billion during the first quarter of the financial year 2026-27. The company also announced its highest-ever first-quarter dividend of Rs5 per share for shareholders.

The latest financial results show strong growth compared with the same period last year. OGDC recorded a profit of Rs38.3 billion during the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

The company's net sales revenue also increased by 38%, reaching Rs132.4 billion compared with Rs96.2 billion last year. Earnings per share rose to Rs13.60 from Rs8.91.

The Board of Directors approved the financial results during a meeting held in Islamabad. It also declared an interim cash dividend of Rs5 per share, compared with Rs3.50 per share announced in the same quarter last year.

The improvement in financial performance was mainly supported by higher oil and gas production and better market prices. However, production restrictions and the appreciation of the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar affected some of the company's earnings.

OGDC Increases Oil and Gas Production

OGDC reported growth in all three major production categories during the quarter.

Average daily crude oil production increased by 13.3% to 35,494 barrels. Natural gas production rose by 14.2% to 732 million cubic feet per day, while LPG production increased by 10.5% to 696 tons per day.

The company connected four new wells, Maru-3, Sono-10, Chak 63-5 and Bobi-11, to its production system.

It also installed electrical submersible pumps at four wells, adding 1,630 barrels of crude oil per day. In addition, OGDC completed 26 workover operations to maintain production and improve output from older fields.

Production Restrictions Affect Company Revenue

Despite production growth, OGDC continued to face restrictions imposed by SNGPL and UPL.

These restrictions reduced average daily production by 1,254 barrels of crude oil, 94 million cubic feet of natural gas and five tons of LPG.

The company estimated that these restrictions resulted in a revenue loss of Rs9.7 billion during the quarter. However, this was lower than the estimated loss of Rs19.3 billion recorded during the same period last year.

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