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Governor Calls For Quality Learning Stronger Governance

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has chaired a special briefing at the Governor House on the performance of the Education Department and the overall state of the province's education sector, stressing the need for improved governance, transparency and quality education across schools, colleges and universities.

The briefing was attended by Adviser to Governor on Education Dr Syed Aamir Abdullah, provincial advisers, secretaries of various departments, senior government officials and media representatives.

Dr Syed Aamir Abdullah gave a comprehensive presentation on the current status of the education sector, ongoing reforms, administrative measures and future development plans. A question-and-answer session followed the briefing, during which he responded to queries from the participants.

The participants were informed that the provincial government was implementing wide-ranging reforms to improve the education system, strengthen governance, enhance institutional performance and expand access to quality education. Administrative reforms, financial discipline and digitalisation have been prioritised in both the Elementary and Secondary Education Department and the Higher Education Department.

According to the briefing, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 34,848 public schools with around 5.96 million students and 187,159 teachers. However, 44,747 teaching posts remain vacant, including 8,837 in the merged districts.

CM vows strict punishment for those involved in child abuse, exploitation

● Matyam vows to promote Islamic art, preserve cultural heritage

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister(CM),Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday announced the introduction of a new law and establishment of speedy courts to ensure effective protection of children and women and award exemplary punishment to those involved in their exploitation and abuse.

In her message on the World Day for the Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation,Abuse and Violence, she said protecting children's rights was an important step towards building a safe society,adding that effective measures were essential to ensure their safety, dignity and a better future.

She said that making children safe from sexual exploitation,abuse and all forms of violence was a collective responsibility of society.

Abuse and violence against children were not merely crimes but also went against basic human values, she added.

The CM said the Punjab government was taking measures to protect children through Safe City cameras and panic buttons.

Virtual Centers for Child Safety had also been established to provide protection to children.

She said more than 100,000 missing and abducted children had been safely reunited with their families in Punjab.

CM Maryam Nawaz said elements involved in crimes against children were enemies of society and must face strict legal action.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said the Punjab government was committed to promoting Islamic art and culture and preserving the province's historical heritage.

In a message on the occasion of World Islamic Art Day, she paid tribute to artists, calligraphers and architects associated with Islamic art, acknowledging their contribution to preserving and promoting the rich artistic traditions of Muslim civilisation.

She said Islamic art was a remarkable blend of culture, civilisation and spirituality, adding that Islamic architecture, calligraphy and intricate designs had earned global recognition for their distinctive identity.

The chief minister said the provincial Information and Culture Department was playing an important role in promoting Islamic art, calligraphy and other traditional art forms. She appreciated artists who, through colours, lines and patterns, conveyed the universal message of Islam, describing Islamic art as an effective means of introducing younger generations to their cultural and civilisational heritage.

The chief minister said Islamic calligraphy and architecture were important components of the world's cultural heritage and reflected the grandeur of a Muslim civilisation spanning centuries. She also acknowledged the role of artists in promoting messages of peace, beauty and creativity across the world.

The chief minister reiterated her resolve to protect the artistic legacy of Islamic art and ensure its transmission to future generations.





In a message for World Islamic Art Day, the Punjab chief minister praised artists, calligraphers and architects and said the province would protect Islamic art traditions for future generations.

Malik Ahmad Khan Questions PPP Over Sindh Division

● Speaker Demands Debate On New Provinces Creation Now

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has called for continued debate on the creation of new provinces, questioning the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) position on the division of Sindh in light of its past support for a resolution concerning the division of Punjab.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Malik Ahmad Khan questioned the basis for warnings of bloodshed over the proposed division of Sindh and asked how discussing the creation of new provinces could be considered unconstitutional.

He said discussions on establishing new provinces should continue, adding that the Constitution provided a mechanism for holding a referendum. He also praised President Asif Ali Zardari, saying his strength lay in listening to different viewpoints and resolving issues through dialogue and negotiations.

The Punjab Assembly speaker pointed out that the PPP had voted in favour of a resolution concerning the division of Punjab. He questioned why the party would oppose the division of Sindh after supporting a similar proposal regarding Punjab.

Punjab theatre bill aims to revive family entertainment: Azma Bokhari

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has rejected opposition criticism of the proposed theatre bill, saying the legislation seeks to regulate theatre activities and restore the art.

Speaking during a Punjab Assembly session, Bokhari said theatre performances must be monitored to ensure their content reflects societal values and moral standards.

She said theatre had become exclusive to a particular segment of society and expressed a desire to revive family-oriented productions similar to those staged during the eras of Sohail Ahmed, Waseem Abbas and Amanullah Khan. Bokhari noted that established performers were reluctant to work in the current theatre environment, questioning why Sohail Ahmed had left stage theatre and why Khalid Abbas Dar was unwilling to return. She also raised concerns about children being exposed to inappropriate performances and said several countries had dress codes for theatre artists.

PM Shehbaz Inaugurates Rathoa Haryam Bridge In AJK

● Federal Government Fully Committed To AJK Development Prosperity



STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

MUZAFFARABAD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Wednesday, reiterated that the Federal Government was fully committed to the development, prosperity, and provision of better facilities to the residents of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The prime minister inaugurated Rathoa Haryam Bridge in AJK by unveiling the plaque.

President, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Naqi and Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani also participated in the ceremony, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. On the occasion, the prime minister said the completion of the Rathoa Haryam bridge is a major milestone for development and prosperity in the region, adding the construction of the bridge would ease commuting and transportation between Mirpur and its surrounding areas.

PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif also resolved to implement further significant uplift projects for the progress, prosperity and welfare of the people of AJK, like Rathoa Haryam bridge.

IHC Orders Medical Treatment For Bushra Bibi Amid Concerns Over Eyesight

● Islamabad High Court Directs Adiala Jail to Provide Bushra Medical Care

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed Adiala Jail authorities to ensure proper medical treatment, specialist care and all necessary healthcare facilities for Bushra Bibi, wife of former prime minister Imran Khan, after her lawyer warned that she could lose her eyesight if her condition deteriorated.

The directions came during the hearing of appeals filed by Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi against their convictions in the £190 million corruption case. A two-member bench headed by IHC Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar heard the matter, which also involved exchanges between the judges and defence lawyers over medical concerns and delays in presenting arguments.

Bushra Bibi's counsel, Sardar Latif Khosa, submitted a fresh application highlighting what he described as a serious deterioration in his client's health, particularly her eyesight. He told the court that her condition was becoming increasingly concerning and warned that she could potentially lose her vision.

Chief Justice Dogar questioned why the defence had not yet started arguments on the main appeals. He recalled that the court had already given the lawyers time to consult their clients after they had requested an opportunity to do so before proceeding.

Khosa said he was ready to present arguments but stressed that his latest application concerned an urgent medical matter. He maintained that Bushra Bibi's eyesight was at risk and urged the court to take her health condition into consideration.

The bench assured the lawyer that Bushra Bibi would receive medical treatment in accordance with prison rules. The chief justice also noted that an earlier application concerning her health was already pending and said the court would issue appropriate directions.

Sindh Assembly passes bill to amend Anti-Terrorism Act

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



The Sindh Assembly has passed a bill seeking amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, introducing a new mechanism for allocating cases among anti-terrorism courts and revising the procedure for appointing their judges.

Under the proposed amendments, areas having more than one anti-terrorism court will have a designated presiding judge to oversee the distribution of cases.

According to the bill, all cases within the relevant jurisdiction will initially be filed before the designated judge, who will have the authority to hear cases personally or transfer them to another anti-terrorism court judge.

The amendments also allow cases to be transferred to another anti-terrorism court before the framing of charges. However, such transfers will be made individually rather than in batches.

The bill also changes the procedure for appointing judges to anti-terrorism courts.

Under the revised mechanism, if consensus on a panel of nominated judges is not reached within 10 working days, the Home Department will forward the panel to the provincial government for further action.

The legislation aims to streamline case distribution and introduce a revised administrative mechanism for the functioning of anti-terrorism courts in Sindh.

Pakistan conducts successful launch of Fatah-3 supersonic cruise missile

● Weapon system equipped with advanced navigation and propulsion systems, says ISPR

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan Army has conducted a successful launch of Fatah-3 supersonic cruise missile, marking another significant milestone in the advancement of national defence capabilities, the military's media wing said in a statement on Wednesday.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the weapon system is equipped with advanced navigation and propulsion systems and is capable of engaging targets at long range with high precision and lethality at supersonic speed.

"Fatah-3 will significantly enhance the operational flexibility and strike reach of the Pakistan Army's Rocket Force Command, further strengthening the country's overall conventional deterrence and defence posture," it added.

The launch was witnessed by Commander Army Rocket Force Command and senior officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces, along with scientists and engineers, said the ISPR.

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir and the services chiefs commended the successful launch of Fatah-3. They appreciated the dedication and commitment of all those who contributed towards achievement of another significant milestone in development of national defence capabilities of Pakistan.



Pakistan's first astronaut to fly to China's Tiangong Space Station on Shenzhou-24 Mission: SUPARCO

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's space programme and Pak-China strategic partnership have achieved a historic milestone as Pakistan's first astronaut is set to travel to space aboard China's Shenzhou-24 mission soon, a spokesperson for the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) said on Wednesday.

The China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) has formally announced the launch of a Pakistani astronaut to the Tiangong Space Station aboard the Shenzhou-24 spacecraft, marking a significant step in Pakistan's human spaceflight programme.

The Pakistani astronaut will participate in the mission as a payload specialist and become the first foreign astronaut to visit China's Tiangong Space Station, the SUPARCO spokesperson said.

Two Pakistani astronaut candidates, Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud, have successfully completed their space training in China. One of the two candidates will be selected to undertake the historic mission, the spokesperson added.

The Chinese space agency has also unveiled the official logo of the Shenzhou-24 mission, featuring Pakistan's national flower, jasmine, as a special symbol of the enduring friendship, close cooperation and partnership between Pakistan and China, extending from Earth to space.

The milestone represents a major advancement in Pakistan's human spaceflight programme and its journey towards space exploration, the spokesperson said.



FAISALABAD: A vendor is frying potato chips for customers at his roadside setup.

Chairman CDA Visits National Police Academy Project Site

● Police Academy 96 Percent Complete, Finishing Work Underway

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf visited the under construction National Police Academy project in Sector H-11, Islamabad and conducted a detailed inspection of the construction work.

Relevant senior officers, while briefing Chairman CDA on the progress made so far in the National Police Academy project, said that the Police Academy Building comprises 11 floors, including the basement and ground floor and for the first time in CDA's history, this state-of-the-art 11 storey building is being constructed specifically for the training of police personnel.



During the briefing, it was said, in line with the directions of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, the state-of-the-art National Police Academy project has been completed in a record period of just 15 months. During the briefing, it was said that the 11 storey building includes the construction of 126 rooms as well as a jogging track, rappelling towers and obstacles for the trainee officers.

While briefing Chairman CDA, it was said that overall, more than 96 percent of the development work of the National Police Academy project has been completed and the finishing work of the under construction National Police Academy building has entered its final stages.

On the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, work is being carried out 24/7 to complete the remaining finishing work of the building. During the briefing, it was apprised that the construction of a 7.442-meter long track and landscaping work in the Police Academy are continuing at a fast pace, while on the same track, rock cutting, track earthwork, stone pitching and curbstone work have been completed.

During the briefing, it was said that the civil work of two rappelling towers included in the National Police Academy project is near completion. Furthermore, the installation work of various obstacles for better physical training of trainee officers included in the project is ongoing. During the briefing, it was further said that on the instructions of the Chairman CDA, 24/7 construction work is continuing at a fast pace to complete the remaining construction work of the National Police Academy Project.

Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf, while directing to ensure the provision of all high-quality training facilities at the National Police Academy, said that the completion of the Police Academy building and other works will provide high quality professional training facilities to trainee police officers in the Federal Capital Islamabad.



IGP takes notice of trader's killing during robbery in Mehar

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Javed Alam Odho has taken notice of the killing of a young trader, Sanaullah Khuhso, during a robbery in Mehar, Dadu district, and sought detailed reports from the Deputy Inspector General of Police Hyderabad and Senior Superintendent of Police Dadu.

According to a Sindh Police spokesperson on Wednesday, the IGP directed the concerned officers to utilise all available resources for the immediate arrest of those involved in the incident.

He also instructed police to make full use of modern investigative tools and technical resources to identify and apprehend the suspects.

Javed Alam Odho directed the officers to conduct a transparent and effective investigation into all possible aspects of the incident and keep him regularly informed about the progress.

DG NCCIA reviews performance of all circles, orders speedy disposal of pending cases

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Director General National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, on Wednesday chaired an in-person and Zoom meeting with officers of all NCCIA circles across the country, directing them to ensure timely disposal of pending cases, improve investigation standards and provide prompt relief to cybercrime victims.

An NCCIA spokesperson said the meeting reviewed the overall performance of NCCIA circles nationwide, ongoing investigations, pending cases and progress on inquiries.

The spokesperson said detailed discussions were held on timely disposal of pending cases, improving the quality of investigations and ensuring transparency throughout the investigation process.

The meeting also focused on the prompt resolution of public complaints, timely relief to victims and priority-based action on complaints received by the agency.

DG Rizvi said providing effective relief to citizens, transparent investigations and timely justice remained among the agency's top priorities.

He emphasized that improving investigation standards and addressing public grievances without unnecessary delays were essential to strengthening the agency's performance.

The DG Rizvi reaffirmed his commitment to improving public confidence in NCCIA through timely disposal of pending cases, effective complaint handling and transparent investigations.

Ulema Council Urges Parties To Strengthen National Unity

● Ulema Council Urges Unity, Support For Pakistan Leadership



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Ulema Council has urged all political and religious parties to rise above mutual differences and strengthen national unity and solidarity in view of the sensitivity of prevailing national and international developments.

The Council said Pakistan's leadership was making important efforts to promote global peace and unity among the Muslim Ummah, which deserved the full support and backing of the entire nation.

In a joint statement, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, along with Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Tahir Aqeel, Maulana Sultan Mahmood Zia, Maulana Abu Bakr Sabri, Maulana Zulfiqar Ahmed, Maulana Muhammad Shafiq Qasmi, Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq and Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, expressed deep concern over the prevailing regional and international situation.

They said attacks by Houthi militants against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, particularly Makkah and Madinah, the conflict between Iran and the United States, and Iran's attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait were matters of serious concern for the Muslim Ummah and peace-loving communities across the world.

The Pakistan Ulema Council leaders emphasized that the efforts being undertaken by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, in coordination with Saudi Arabia and other leadership of Islamic countries, to promote international peace and unity among Muslim nations required strong national solidarity within Pakistan.

They stressed that political and religious leadership must recognize that certain anti-Islam and anti-Pakistan forces operating at the international level do not want Pakistan to play a prominent role in bringing Muslim countries closer and contributing to global peace.

They warned that internal divisions and political instability only serve the interests of such forces and undermine Pakistan's efforts to promote unity and stability at the international level.

The Pakistan Ulema Council leaders called upon all political and religious parties to promote mutual respect, dialogue and understanding, setting aside differences in the broader national and collective interests.

They further urged to stand united in supporting Pakistan's leadership in its efforts to safeguard the sanctity of the Haramain Sharifain, strengthen unity among Muslim nations and advance the cause of global peace.

Ambassador Dr Oumer Holds Productive Meeting With Speaker

● Ethiopia Pakistan Discuss Stronger Parliamentary Trade Cultural Ties

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

H.E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Wednesday held a productive meeting with the Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly, H.E. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, at the Parliament House, Islamabad.



The two sides discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations by enhancing cooperation across various areas including parliamentary diplomacy, trade, investment, culture and tourism. They also emphasized the importance of strengthening parliamentary relations, encouraging exchanges of high-level delegations and identifying new areas of mutual cooperation.

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Oumer reaffirmed the deep-rooted and long-standing bilateral relations between the two nations, highlighting their shared history, culture, and values.

Emphasizing Ethiopia's strategic positioning as the seat of the African Union, the Ambassador noted that Pakistan can leverage its relations with Ethiopia to significantly increase its footprint across Africa.

The Ambassador reiterated his commitment to further strengthen the two countries bilateral relations by encouraging exchange of high-level delegations to further increase their cooperation across various areas.

The Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly said Pakistan attached great importance to its friendly relations with Ethiopia, adding that both countries had extensive opportunities to enhance trade, investment and economic cooperation.

Two-days int'l conference at NUML calls for people-centred, output-driven CPEC 2.0

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The two-day international conference on "CPEC 2.0 and Pakistan-China Strategic Partnership" concluded at NUML on Wednesday, with experts calling for a more people-centred, output-driven and inclusive approach to the next phase of CPEC.

Rector NUML, Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (retd), DG NUML Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Deans, Directors, faculty members and a large number of students attended the closing ceremony.

The conference highlighted that the success of CPEC 2.0 will ultimately be measured by the people-centric connectivity and benefits. The conference identified tourism, language learning, cultural exchanges and academic linkages as practical tools for strengthening ties between Pakistan and China, while stressing the importance of shaping positive and informed narratives around CPEC.

Aurangzeb Vows To Double SME Financing By 2028

● Pakistan Targets Rs2tr SME Financing By June 2028

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday highlighted Pakistan's reforms to expand financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), targeting an increase in lending to Rs two trillion by June 2028, while promoting digital financial inclusion, private investment and technology-driven financing solutions.

Addressing the Ministerial Dialogue on SME Growth, Jobs and Competitiveness at the Global SME Finance Forum 2026 in Singapore, held during the ongoing Singapore Fintech Festival, the minister underscored the vital role SMEs played in Pakistan's economy, accounting for 90% of businesses, 40% of GDP, around 20% of exports and approximately 78% of non-farm employment.

He observed that the sector's contribution could be significantly greater with improved access to finance and a more enabling business environment, said a press release issued by finance ministry here.

Highlighting the government's financing ambitions, he outlined the target of increasing SME financing to Rs two trillion by June 2028, almost double the current level.

He emphasised the need to move beyond conventional, collateral-based lending towards technology-enabled, data-driven and inclusive financing solutions, supported by stronger participation from banks, fintech companies, development finance institutions and private investors.

Aurangzeb highlighted the SME Connect Portal, launched by the State Bank of Pakistan on November 1st, as an important step towards facilitating SME registration, improving access to financing, enabling application tracking and enhancing transparency in banks' responses and processing times.

He stressed the importance of accessible working capital and



long-term financing to strengthen the productive capacity of SMEs and help them compete in international markets. He also emphasised the role of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) in building the capacity of businesses to better understand and manage their balance sheets and disclosures, enabling them to become more financially prepared and attractive to lenders and investors.

Emphasising the role of technology, the Minister identified fintech solutions, digital payments, alternative credit assessment and digital lending as important tools for widening access to finance, particularly for businesses that lack conventional collateral. He also called for greater use of risk-sharing mechanisms to facilitate lending to SMEs.

He also highlighted the potential for engagement with Singapore's financial technology ecosystem, including through the Global Finance and Technology Network (GFTN).

The Minister called for greater mobilisation of private capital and stronger partnerships with development finance institutions, international financial institutions and investors through credit guarantees, risk-sharing arrangements, blended finance and technology transfer.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to developing an inclusive, competitive, digitally enabled and export-oriented SME ecosystem, the Minister emphasised that international partnerships, innovation and private-sector investment would be essential to unlocking the sector's full potential.

The Minister also visited the Singapore FinTech Festival, where he inaugurated Ignite's Pakistan Pavilion and interacted with Pakistani companies including Tax Nerd Pakistan, Ping Up, Bagh-e, Fortanixor Technologies, and Lendverse / Tawha Technologies. Representatives of the participating companies briefed him on their respective products, services and innovative fintech solutions.

Gold prices decline by Rs10,000 per tola

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The prices of gold witnessed a sharp decline in the local market on Wednesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs10,000 to settle at Rs398,936, 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 Rs8,573 to Rs342,023, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs7,859 to Rs313,532.

In the international market, the price of gold decreased by $100 to $3,764 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola fell by Rs180 to Rs5,048, while the price of 10 grams of silver declined by Rs155 to Rs4,327.

The price of silver in the international market also decreased by $1.80 to $45.70 per ounce, the association added.

Pakistan's freelancer export earnings hit record $210 mln in October



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Advisor to the Finance Minister, Khurram Schehzad on Wednesday said Pakistan's freelancers' export earnings had reached an all-time monthly high of US$ 210 million in October, registering a 53 per cent increase year-on-year.

In a post on his official handle on X, Schehzad shared that freelancers' export earnings during July-October of the ongoing fiscal year 2026-27 (FY27) had surged to US$ 760 million, compared with US$ 515 million in the corresponding period last year, reflecting a growth of 47 per cent.

He said freelancers had also recorded historic annual export earnings of US$ 1.76 billion in FY26, highlighting the growing contribution of Pakistan's digital workforce to the country's services exports.

According to the figures shared by the advisor, if the current growth momentum continues, freelancers' annual export earnings could surpass US$ two billion in FY27.

Schehzad said Pakistan's freelancers were emerging as an important contributor to services exports, helping expand the country's digital presence in international markets, strengthen foreign exchange inflows and create new economic opportunities for the youth.

Govt Developing National Policy To Transform Marble Industry

● Haroon Unveils Marble Policy 2026-29 To Boost Exports

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Adviser to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday said that the government is developing a comprehensive Marble Policy 2026–29 to modernize marble and granite industry, improve mining and processing standards, promote value addition and boost exports.

He spoke at a meeting with representatives of the Marble Association and discussed developing Pakistan's marble and granite industry and formulating a comprehensive national model policy to make the sector globally competitive, a news release said.

The meeting was attended by the coordinator to the prime minister for industries and production and commerce Rana Ihsan Afzaal ,the Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Stone Development Company (PASDEC), Chief Executive Officer of the National Productivity Organization (NPO), Additional Secretary Industries and representatives of the marble industry.

Haroon said that the proposed policy would focus on modernising the industry through advanced technology, efficient mining practices and value addition. It would cover the entire value chain, from quarrying and extraction to processing, finishing, polishing and exports.



The adviser said that Pakistan possessed enormous potential in marble and natural stone resources, offering significant opportunities for investment, industrial development and export growth. However, he stressed that realising this potential required a shift towards scientific mining practices, modern processing technologies and internationally competitive production standards.

"Our priority is to prevent the wastage of valuable raw materials, introduce modern mining techniques and improve the overall quality and productivity of the industry," he said.

The adviser highlighted the need to equip the marble industry with modern machinery, skilled manpower, quality testing laboratories and effective certification facilities.

He said that sustainable access to raw materials, scientific quarrying methods and advanced processing technologies would be essential for strengthening the sector and improving the quality of Pakistani marble and granite in international markets.

He further stated that the proposed policy would also address the infrastructure and logistics requirements of the industry, including road and rail connectivity, port facilities and other transportation arrangements necessary to facilitate the movement of raw materials and finished products.

Highlighting the importance of international engagement, the adviser said that Pakistan needed to strengthen its links with international buyers, investors and technology providers to expand market access for its marble and granite products.

He observed that the upcoming visit of Italian experts to Pakistan would provide an important opportunity to assess the industry's potential, technological requirements and investment prospects.

He said that the visiting Italian experts would be facilitated in visiting mining and processing centres to gain first-hand insight into the industry's existing capabilities, challenges and areas requiring technological improvement.

The adviser urged all stakeholders of the marble industry to present their recommendations through a coordinated and unified approach.

He assured the participants that every viable proposal from the industry would be considered for inclusion in the policy or taken up for further consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

Haroon also stressed the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the marble and granite sector by improving their access to financing, modern machinery and advanced technologies.

He encouraged industry representatives to benefit from available government facilities, including export finance schemes, particularly for projects with strong export potential.

Discussing initiatives to promote Pakistani marble in international markets, the Advisor said the Government would work on a proposal to organise an international marble exhibition that brings together miners, processors, exporters, international buyers, and investors.

He directed that a committee comprising all key stakeholders be constituted to develop a comprehensive proposal for the proposed Marble Expo. The committee was asked to submit actionable recommendations within one week, ensuring effective participation of the entire value chain, including quarry operators, processors, exporters and international buyers.

APTMA seeks easier access to export financing in meeting with finance minister

NEWS DESK

DUBAI



The All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) has called for easier access to export financing facilities to improve the textile industry's production capacity, investment and competitiveness in international markets.

The demand was made during a meeting between newly elected APTMA office-bearers, led by Chairman Asad Shafi, and Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani.

The meeting discussed challenges facing the textile industry and measures to increase exports, attract investment and strengthen the sector's global competitiveness.

APTMA representatives called for making the Export Finance Scheme and Long-Term Financing Facility more accessible and effective for exporters.

The meeting also reviewed the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) production monitoring system and discussed measures to promote Pakistani textile brands in international markets.

Both sides agreed on the need to encourage value addition in the domestic textile industry to strengthen its position in the global market.

Kayani highlighted the textile sector's importance to national exports and economic activity.

The meeting also agreed to maintain regular communication between the government and private sector to address challenges facing the textile industry.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to developing the textile sector and promoting export-led economic growth.

Commerce Minister, HBL CEO discuss SME financing, regulatory reforms, global trade expansion

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a meeting with a delegation led by Muhammad Nassir Salim, President and CEO of Habib Bank Limited (HBL), to discuss SME financing, digital banking, export facilitation and expansion of Pakistan's trade in key international markets.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan emphasized the need to bring Pakistan's largely informal SME sector into the documented economy to improve access to institutional financing, enhance product quality and strengthen export competitiveness, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

He stressed that compliance with international standards, quality assurance and traceability were increasingly important

for Pakistani businesses competing in global markets.

The Minister also highlighted the Government's efforts to simplify business regulations, remove overlapping licensing requirements and reduce unnecessary administrative hurdles to encourage investment and industrial growth.



The HBL delegation shared its perspectives on SME financing, digital financial services and the challenges faced by banks in financing undocumented businesses. Both sides discussed measures to strengthen financial inclusion and promote digital transactions and greater economic formalization.

The Minister highlighted emerging trade and investment opportunities across Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, and noted that the Ministry of Commerce was developing country-specific and sector-wise strategies to diversify Pakistan's exports and identify new markets.

He underscored the importance of banking-sector support in providing trade finance, facilitating international transactions and enabling Pakistani exporters to enter and expand in overseas markets.

It was also agreed that the Ministry of Commerce would support HBL in strengthening trade-related banking and financing linkages with Pakistan's key trading partners, including Bangladesh, China, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

PSX stays bearish, loses over 1,223 points

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its bearish trend on Wednesday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index losing 1,223.41 points, a negative change of 0.69 percent, to close at 176,294.33 points against 177,517.74 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 742.121 million shares, compared to 839.224 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs25.975 billion, up from Rs20.158 billion a day earlier.

Meanwhile, total market capitalisation decreased to Rs19.198 trillion from Rs19.290 trillion recorded in the previous session.

Out of 502 companies that traded in the ready market, 179 posted gains, 285 suffered losses, while 38 remained unchanged, reflecting a negative trend in the market.

WorldCall Telecom led the volume chart with 68.692 million shares, followed by Cnergyico PK with 68.508 million shares and PIA Holding Company with 47.820 million shares.

Among the top gainers in the ready market, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs283.67 to close at Rs26,500.00, while Khyber Textile Mills Limited advanced by Rs67.12 to settle at Rs1,946.88. On the losing side, Pakistan Services Limited declined by Rs40.30 to close at Rs1,366.03, while Sazgar Engineering Works Limited fell by Rs30.13 to Rs1,461.41.

Govt Reforms Deliver Largest LPG Shipment Ever Received

● SLL Receives Record 15,000-Ton LPG Cargo In Pakistan

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Government's deregulation efforts in the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) sector have started delivering results, with SSGC LPG Limited (SLL) importing a record 15,000 metric tons LPG cargo, the largest of its kind which berthed at Engro Vopak Terminal Limited (EVTL).

The shipment marks the first major import under the new LPG guidelines aimed at ensuring the availability of LPG at affordable rates for the public.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, the government has transformed the LPG pricing regime to enable state-owned enterprises to play a leading role in securing LPG supplies. Previously, formal sector companies had exited imports due to regulatory constraints that prevented them from recovering procurement costs.

Government has directed state-owned companies to lead LPG imports and strengthen the country's supply chain especially in winter.

The increased influx of LPG



is expected to further improve market availability, ease supply constraints and help bring prices down through greater product availability. It will also enhance supplies to hilly, remote and far-flung areas, particularly during the peak winter season.

A welcome ceremony was held at Port Qasim to mark the arrival of the shipment, with Special Secretary Petroleum Mirza Nasir ud Din Mashood as the chief guest. Managing Director SLL, Jawad Ali Khan, Senior Executive Director (LPG) OGRA Sarmad Aslam, and other senior officials were present at the occasion.

Speaking at the ceremony, Special Secretary Petroleum Mirza Nasir ud Din Mashood said that the Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Petroleum had directed to take effective measures to ensure LPG availability to the public. He said the arrival of the record shipment marked a new era for the LPG sector and would further strengthen the country's supply chain. He congratulated MD SLL on this achievement.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) EVTL, Syed Ammar Shah said that Government's policy initiatives have opened the sector for new investors and it was a step in the right direction. Senior ED OGRA Sarmad Aslam said that Government's efforts were bearing fruit and will help transform the sector.

The landmark import is expected to be followed by more shipments in the coming weeks, ensuring improved LPG availability in the open market at more affordable rates and strengthening supplies across the country.

The Count That Was Never Taken: What The 1947 Record Says About Jammu



By: Muhammad Waleed Akhtar

Amanullah Khan Naqshbandi was travelling with a convoy of Muslim migrants out of Jammu on 5 November 1947 when it was attacked. He survived. Seventeen of his relatives did not. His account is one of the few places where their deaths are written down at all. There is no official list that carries their names, no register of the villages emptied around them. Every 6 November, families across Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and the diaspora mark the anniversary, and every year they do it without a record to point to.

What is missing from 1947 in what is today Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is not testimony. It is a count. No government, before or after the Maharaja's accession, set out to establish how many people were killed, how many fled and how many simply disappeared from the record. That uncertainty has too often been mistaken for proof that little happened.

The 1941 Census of India gives the only firm baseline. Jammu Province, as the census defined it, held 1,981,433 people, of whom 1,212,405, or 61.19 percent, were Muslim. In Jammu district alone, Muslims numbered 158,630, about 37 percent of the population. By 1961, the first full census taken after Partition, the district's Muslim share had fallen to 51,690 people, roughly 10 percent. No census was held in the state in 1951, which is precisely the year a count closest to the violence would have told us the most.

Contemporaries wrote down what they saw. Horace Alexander, a Quaker relief worker who spent the last months of 1947 among refugees in Punjab and Kashmir, wrote in The Spectator on 16 January 1948 that Hindus and Sikhs in the Jammu area had driven thousands of Muslim neighbours from their homes, "apparently with at least the tacit consent of State authority." Some two hundred thousand, he added, were "not accounted for." On 10 August 1948, The Times of London reported that 237,000 Muslims in the eastern districts had been "systematically exterminated, unless they escaped to Pakistan along the border," naming Dogra state forces, aided by Hindus and Sikhs, as responsible.

Read exactly, the two reports do not describe the same thing. Alexander wrote of people unaccounted for. The Times wrote of people killed or fled. Later writing often folds both figures into a single death toll that neither source gives. Christopher Snedden, among the more careful historians of the period, has placed the number of Muslims killed in the province somewhere between 20,000 and 100,000. A range that wide is not a failure of research. It is what happens when nobody set the 1941 population against the dead, the missing and the displaced while it was still possible to do so.

There were reasons the count was never taken. By early October 1947 the Maharaja's administration had placed the leading local newspapers under pre-censorship, barred papers from outside the state, and interned the Associated Press correspondent. After the accession, neither the Government of India nor the new state administration ordered a public inquiry into the killings. Horace Alexander and Richard Symonds did investigate specific incidents at the request of the Indian and Pakistani governments, and Gandhi acknowledged the killings publicly before the year was out. Neither effort produced a casualty register, a judicial finding or an archive a historian can walk into today.

Other states facing comparable crimes have chosen differently. Argentina's National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons documented 8,960 cases within a year of being established in 1983. The United Nations Updated Set of Principles on combating impunity treats the right to know and the preservation of archives as obligations that do not expire with the event. India, as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is bound by Article 2(3) to provide an effective remedy. None of this can be applied backward to punish 1947. It can be applied to the choice, still being made today, to keep the record closed.

What would change this is not dramatic. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Home Ministry could declassify their holdings from 1947 to 1950. The Alexander-Symonds report could be published in full rather than cited secondhand. The files of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan could be opened to researchers. An independent historical commission could begin recording survivors and their children while some are still alive to speak. None of this requires resolving the political dispute over Kashmir first. It requires only the will to look.

Naqshbandi's seventeen relatives are still counted only by the people who loved them enough to remember. A government that can commission a census of a province can commission a count of its dead. Seventy-nine years after Jammu, the absence of that count is no longer a gap in the record. It is the record.

The author is a graduate in International Relations from the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and is currently serving as a Research Fellow at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Islamabad.

Kashmir At 78: Broken Promises, Endless Repression And The World's Failure

By: Muhammad Ibrahim Bhatti



Seventy-eight years after the Kashmir dispute reached the United Nations, the promise of self-determination remains unfulfilled, while repression continues to define everyday life in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Instead of honouring its international commitments, India has intensified military operations, arbitrary arrests, home demolitions and restrictions on political dissent. The developments of November 2026 expose a painful contradiction: a state that claims democratic legitimacy continues to deny millions of Kashmiris the right to decide their political future. The question is no longer how long Kashmiris must wait for justice, but how long the international community will continue to look away.

November carries a particular weight in this betrayal. In November 1947, the Kashmir dispute was brought before the United Nations, placing the future of the territory on the international agenda. The Security Council subsequently adopted resolutions calling for a free and impartial plebiscite so that Kashmiris could decide their political future. Jawaharlal Nehru also made public commitments to allow the people of Kashmir to exercise this choice. Yet, seventy-eight years later, the promise remains unfulfilled. India has refused to implement these commitments while maintaining a massive military presence in the territory. The question is unavoidable: if India's claim enjoys the consent of the Kashmiri people, why has it never allowed them to express that consent through a plebiscite?

This denial of political choice has also shaped India's security response in the region. Whenever an attack occurs in IIOJK, India immediately points the finger at Pakistan. However, this narrative raises serious questions that deserve independent scrutiny. How do such attacks take place in a territory under extensive military surveillance and security control? More importantly, why do their aftermaths so often bring intensified cordon-and-search operations, mass arrests and reports of civilian killings? Security concerns cannot justify collective punishment or the indiscriminate targeting of a population. Nor should every demand for political rights be reduced to a security threat. The central issue remains unchanged: Kashmiris continue to seek the right to decide their future, while the political and human costs of denying that right continue to mount.

Pakistan's position has never wavered and never will. The Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made it permanent when he declared Kashmir the jugular vein of Pakistan — not rhetoric, but an existential truth that every generation of Pakistan's leadership has reaffirmed. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told the AJK Assembly: Kashmir will become part of Pakistan. At the UN General Assembly he demanded implementation of Security Council resolutions. Field Marshal Asim Munir has stated that the people of IIOJK will see a new dawn of freedom, and that Pakistan's bond with Kashmir is one of faith, history and blood that no occupation can sever.

Pakistan raised this cause before the world in 1947. It is raising it today. It will raise it tomorrow. As long as a single Kashmiri remains under occupation, Pakistan will not be silent.

The world has watched for 78 years. It has passed resolutions, held debates and done nothing that costs India anything. Every year of silence is a year India reads as permission to raid more homes, kill more youth and bury more plebiscite demands under military boots. November 2026 is another anniversary of a promise made and broken.

November 1947: The Forgotten Massacre Of Jammu

By Zainab Noor



The massacre of Muslims in Jammu in November 1947 was not simply an episode of communal violence, it raises disturbing questions about the role of the authorities entrusted with protecting innocent civilians. On 6 November, around seventy truckloads of Muslim families were escorted by Dogra troops from Jammu towards Sialkot, only to be ambushed a few miles outside the city. A report published in the Civil and Military Gazette on 18 December 1947 stated that armed Sikh groups, state forces and RSS volunteers attacked the convoy. Of the 4,000 Muslims who had departed, only 900 reportedly reached Sialkot. The promise of safe passage had turned into a death sentence. The scale and circumstances of the violence point to something far more organised than spontaneous communal clashes. A 1948 West Punjab report, based on refugee testimonies, documented at least 90 anti-Muslim incidents between 8 August and 12 December 1947, with 118,459 deaths claimed. State complicity cannot be dismissed without investigation, particularly when state forces themselves feature in accounts of the attacks. Yet no independent inquiry was ever conducted to establish the truth or hold those responsible accountable.

Determining the death toll is the most controversial aspect of the topic. On August 10, 1948, the Times of London reported that 237,000 Muslims were "deliberately killed," but there was no evidence provided for this figure, and it conflates death and escape. According to historians and authors like Ian Copland and Christopher Snedden, the number of deaths could be from 20,000 to 100,000, while the number of displaced people is between 200,000 and 500,000. even the low estimate is still a collective heinous act.

The demographic shift is evident. According to the census conducted in 1941, Muslims constituted around 61 percent of population of Jammu province. In the parts of Jammu administered by India, that percentage decreased to almost 38 by the year 1961. In Jammu district the percentage of Muslims dropped from 40 to approximately 7 by 2011. such a significant change cannot be accounted for by migration only; it has changed who holds power in Jammu province.

No one was held responsible. There was not a commission to look at the incident, there was no trial of the official, besides there was no state for the victims to ask for justice. The question was raised by Pakistan diplomatically, but indignation without courts leaves no trace. Without accountability, the massacre became the new norm.

The link with the present is not poetic. Instead of a rifle and mob, a pellet gun has been used. According to the UN human rights report for 2018, the state commission for human rights stated that 1,726 people were injured by pellets in 2016, including 728 people with eye injuries. The official statistics say 17 people died due to pellets from July 2016 to August 2017.

The act of disappearing has become the present-day counterpart of lost caravans. The same UN findings mention about forced disappearances and Kashmiri society talks about half-widows who have husbands who disappeared in custody. Counted numbers are disputed and the UN is denied access. In 1947 families waited for their trucks to arrive but today what they wait for are men to return. The same sorrow but this time against the law. The greatest commonality is the loss of property, companies, means of existence, and families with the ensuing silence. The inability to name one's loss means that the loss will continue causing sorrow through generations. The unarticulated grief does not die. Being realistic means admitting what was not useful. Neither resolutions nor speeches brought back the missing and neither Islamabad, nor Delhi prioritized Kashmiris. However, there are still options left—recording, international independent investigation, monitoring access and putting pressure.

This is not about flags at all. It is about a mother in Jammu, 1947, and a mother in Srinagar, searching for a loved one who hasn't returned home. For the widow, half-widow, orphan and the family without a home, geographic boundaries mean little. But how long must these mothers wait, these people who suffer neither as Indians nor as Pakistanis, but merely because they have lost husbands, children, homes and mouths to feed?

The author is a student of International Relations at International Islamic University Islamabad and is serving as a researcher at Kashmir Institute of International Relations.

Allama Iqbal As The Poet Of The East (Part II)

By Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhanvi

Zarb-e-Kalim, in turn, gives forceful articulation to his criticism of contemporary civilisation and its moral and cultural deficiencies. His Persian compositions, including Asrar-e-Khudi, Rumuz-e-Bekhudi, Payam-e-Mashriq, Zabur-e-Ajam, and Javid Nama, constitute major landmarks in his creative and philosophical inheritance.

Within these works, the individual and the community, the universe and the spirit, the historical destiny of nations, and the future of humanity are examined within an expansive philosophical framework. His celebrated poems Shikwa and Jawab-e-Shikwa are particularly significant in this regard. In them, Iqbal approaches the decline of Muslim civilisation not merely through the prism of external conspiracies or historical misfortunes, but also through an examination of internal weakness, moral deterioration, practical inertia, and estrangement from the original purpose of collective existence.

The political dimension of Iqbal's intellectual achievement found a particularly consequential expression in his Presidential Address at the Allahabad Session of the All-India Muslim League in 1930. On that occasion, he advanced the conception of a consolidated political unit comprising the Muslim-majority regions of north-western India. This proposal subsequently acquired considerable significance in the intellectual evolution of the Pakistan Movement. It would, however, be a serious misinterpretation to confine Iqbal's conception of the Muslim community to the attainment of territorial sovereignty or the acquisition of political authority. His vision of the Millat was founded upon a more comprehensive moral and civilisational ideal. He envisaged Muslims as a collective entity whose cohesion would derive from the principles of Divine Unity, equality, fraternity, justice, and ethical responsibility. In his understanding, the distinctive character of Islamic civilisation could become fully manifest only when its moral and spiritual principles found practical expression within the institutions of society, the organisation of economic life, and the exercise of political authority.

Another defining feature of Iqbal's stature as the Poet of the East is his recognition of the necessity for an intellectual dialogue between Eastern and Western civilisations. He neither regarded every inherited Eastern tradition as inherently worthy of unquestioning preservation nor accepted every Western innovation as conclusive evidence of civilisational superiority. His aspiration was directed towards a discerning synthesis in which modern science, empirical investigation, intellectual inquiry, independent reasoning, and creative thought might advance in harmonious association with spiritual values and moral consciousness. His intellectual legacy therefore retains a remarkable capacity to illuminate contemporary questions concerning artificial intelligence, scientific transformation, economic inequality, cultural identity, and the changing configuration of global power. The relevance of his thought to these subjects does not arise from any presumption that he anticipated every subsequent technological development, but from the enduring philosophical principles through which he examined the relationship between human potential, knowledge, ethical responsibility, and civilisation.

Iqbal passed away in Lahore on 21 April 1938; yet the intellectual inheritance he bequeathed to posterity has never remained confined within the boundaries of a particular historical period, geographical region, or linguistic tradition. The proper observance of his legacy requires considerably more than commemorative ceremonies, formal addresses, and the ceremonial recitation of familiar verses. It demands a serious and critical engagement with his intellectual contributions, their scholarly interpretation, and their meaningful application to the circumstances of contemporary life. The deficiencies of academic research in our universities, the erosion of ethical standards in society, the intellectual uncertainty confronting younger generations, and the persistent absence of purposeful action in collective affairs all render Iqbal's message particularly worthy of renewed consideration. His poetry reminds us that the destiny of nations is not fashioned merely through recollection of ancestral achievements or the glorification of historical accomplishments. It is shaped through the disciplined pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of character, confidence in one's intellectual and moral capacities, and an unwavering commitment to constructive endeavour.

Iqbal deserves the title of the Poet of the East because he did not merely present the Orient with a magnificent reflection of its historical grandeur; he challenged it to undertake an honest examination of its present condition, rediscover the sources of its intellectual strength, and assume responsibility for the creation of its future. His enduring message is that a civilisation cannot sustain its vitality through the remembrance of former greatness alone. Living nations must possess the intellectual courage to confront the questions of their own age and the creative capacity to formulate answers worthy of the generations that are to follow. It is in this union of spiritual conviction, philosophical inquiry, moral purpose, and the aspiration towards collective regeneration that the enduring greatness of Allama Iqbal resides.

The writer is a recipient of the Sanad-e-Imtiaz and a distinguished senior analyst, scholar, and PhD holder. He currently serves as the General Secretary of the Pakistan Federal Union of Columnists and Creators (Sindh).

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Deutsche Bank's 15m Documents Leaked, Exposing Links To Epstein And Russia

● Huge leak of internal bank records raises new questions about Deutsche Bank's compliance checks, its Russia plans and the 2017 data exposure of 1,586 customers

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON



Deutsche Bank's 15m documents leaked, and the files are now shining a light on the bank's dealings with Russian billionaires, Jeffrey Epstein and US President Donald Trump.

The Financial Times says two trusted sources gave reporters a vast set of internal records. These include emails, board meeting minutes, financial probes, monitoring files and staff chats.

More than 200 journalists from over 50 media groups worldwide spent several months studying the papers.

The probe found that the bank, led by chief executive Christian Sewing, planned to grow its business in Russia. This came even though staff had raised worries about following banking rules.

The files also show the bank handled about $600 million in suspicious payments linked to Epstein. These transfers do not prove a crime on their own. Still, they raise serious doubts about how well the bank watched its own accounts.

Another key finding goes back to 2017. A staff member mistakenly sent a link to an outside person. That link held the financial details of 1,586 clients, including Donald Trump.

Bank leaders reportedly chose to keep the matter quiet. They did not tell the White House about the exposure.

After the news broke, Deutsche Bank shares fell by around six per cent in trading.

The bank has responded by saying the problems in the files are several years old. It added that it spent €7 billion between 2019 and 2025 to upgrade its monitoring and compliance systems.

Russian Military Transport Aircraft Crashes In Siberia, Killing 19

WEB DESK

RUSSIAN

A Russian military transport aircraft crashes in Siberia, and all 19 people on board have died. The plane was an An-12. It went down in the Kemerovo region.

Russia's Defence Ministry confirmed the news. State news agencies RIA and Interfax shared the details.

The plane was on a scheduled flight at the time. It fell in an empty area near the village of Yagunovo. No one on the ground was reported hurt.

The ministry said the first sign points to a technical fault. RIA quoted this early view. Officials have not named it as the final cause.

A team from Russia's Aerospace Forces is now at the crash site. They want to learn exactly what happened. Interfax reported that their work is still ongoing.

Governor Ilya Seredyuk spoke in a video message from near the scene. He said the plane was passing through the region when the accident happened. His main goal now is to help the investigators and rescue teams.

Emergency crews put out the fire at the site. They are also helping with the investigation.

The An-12 is an old Soviet-era plane. Ukraine's Antonov design bureau built it in the 1950s. It has four engines and uses propellers. Its main job is to carry soldiers, heavy gear and cargo.

Interfax said the plane can carry up to 20 tonnes. It can also drop people and supplies by parachute. A normal crew has six people.

The first An-12 flew in December 1957. More than 1,000 were built over the years. Some countries still use the plane for military and cargo work.

For now, the cause of Tuesday's crash is not confirmed. The investigation will decide what went wrong.



MANILA: Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, in a group photo with global delegates and ministers on the occasion of the 2nd Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in Manila, Philippines.

Mohsin Naqvi Meets Chinese Envoy To Boost Security Ties In Islamabad

● Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and the ambassador agree on language training, closer security ties and a new center

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Chinese envoy to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, met Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad on Wednesday. The two leaders held a detailed meeting on security matters.

They talked about ways to improve teamwork between the law enforcement agencies of both friendly countries. Both sides agreed that closer coordination is needed.

A key decision was made during the talks. Chinese language experts will travel to Pakistan to teach Chinese to members of the Special Protection Unit.

This step will help officers communicate better with Chinese nationals working in Pakistan. It will also make daily cooperation easier and smoother.

The Chinese envoy also made a strong promise. He said China will give full support to set up a Law Enforcement Center in Islamabad.

The center will follow the standards of a Chinese enforcement center. It is expected to improve training, planning and security work in the capital.

During the meeting, the ambassador praised Mohsin Naqvi for his role. He said the minister helped strengthen relations and solved pending issues on time.

Such words show the trust between the two countries. Pakistan and China have long worked together on security, trade and development.

Several senior officials also attended the meeting. They included Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and Federal Interior Secretary Mohammad Khurram Agha.

National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency Director-General Nasir Rizvi was also present. His presence showed the focus on cyber crime and modern security needs.

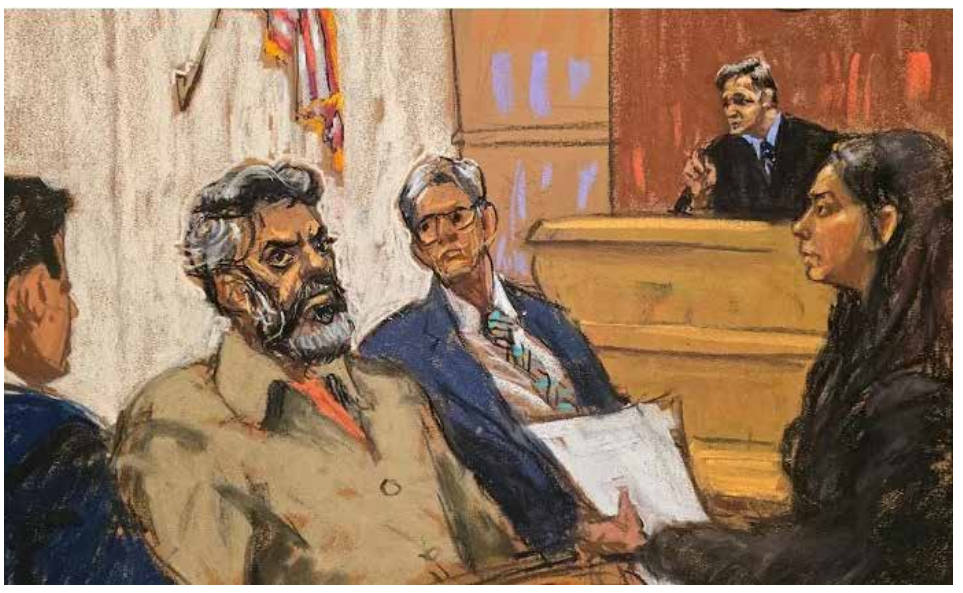
The meeting ended on a positive note. Both sides said they will keep working together to make their ties even stronger.

US Judge Sentences Asif Merchant To 27 Years Over Trump Murder Plot

● Pakistani national found guilty of an Iran-directed plan to kill Donald Trump, Joe Biden and Nikki Haley during the 2024 election campaign

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON



A US judge sentences Asif Merchant to more than 27 years in prison for plotting to kill President Donald Trump and other top politicians. The Pakistani national, aged 48, received a 330-month term from Judge Eric R Komitee. The US Department of Justice announced the sentence.

A federal jury found Merchant guilty in March. The charges were attempting an act of terrorism across national borders and murder for hire.

What prosecutors said

Prosecutors said Iran directed the plan. They said Merchant wanted to take revenge for the 2020 US killing of Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani.

The possible targets were Trump, then-president Joe Biden and former US ambassador Nikki Haley. All three were in the 2024 election race at the time.

How the plot fell apart

Merchant began working with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in late 2022 or early 2023. He learned spy skills and travelled to Iran several times to meet his handler.

He reached the United States in April 2024. He approached an acquaintance in New York for help, but the man told the authorities and became an informant.

Merchant then met men he thought were hired killers. They were actually undercover US officers. He paid them $5,000 in advance.

Police arrested him in Richmond, Texas, on July 12, 2024, while he was trying to leave the country. No attack took place.

Merchant told the court he acted under pressure. He said he feared for his family in Tehran. He also said he never got orders to kill a specific person.

Prosecutors did not accept this. They pointed to his anti-American and anti-Trump social media posts. The judge said he understood Merchant's worry for his family, but also found that he wanted to harm the United States.

Pakistani officials looked into the case after his arrest. Sources told Geo News that he had no criminal record in Pakistan. The Foreign Office said it was in touch with US authorities.

Iran has denied plotting attacks on US officials.

Kuwait Reports Drone Attacks As Iran And US Trade Strikes Over Qeshm, Bahrain

● Tensions rise across the Gulf as Iran and the United States exchange strikes, tankers hit mines in Hormuz, and peace talks stay stuck



WEB DESK

KUWAIT

Kuwait reports drone attacks as Iran and the United States trade strikes, pushing tensions in the Gulf even higher. A peace deal still looks far away.

Kuwait's army shared a short statement on X on Tuesday. It said any explosion sounds people heard came from air defence systems stopping hostile attacks. The army asked the public to follow safety advice. It did not say where the drones came from, or if anyone was hurt.

The latest round began when Iran said it sent drones at a US radar system in Bahrain. Iran's Revolutionary Guard called it a "precision operation". It said the move was a reply to repeated US drone flights over Iranian airspace.

US Central Command said the drones were stopped. It said no US equipment was damaged and no personnel were hurt. Bahrain also said its air defences worked, and loud blasts were heard over the capital, Manama.

Hours later, the US struck Iran's southern island of Qeshm in the Strait of Hormuz. A US official said the target was a missile launch site. Iranian media reported five to six explosions there.

A local Iranian official said the strikes caused no harm to homes, shops or public buildings. He said the situation was under control and relief teams stayed on alert.

This was the third Iranian drone attack on Bahrain in five days, after several quiet weeks. Reports say Friday's strike was the first on a Gulf country since early September.

Trouble at sea adds to the worry. Iran's armed forces said three oil tankers hit naval mines while crossing the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday. The US military says it has cleared the main routes.

A fourth ship, the Tara Gas, was hit on Monday near Khasab in Oman. The blast caused a fire in its engine room.

The strait normally carries about a fifth of the world's oil. Since the war began on February 28, Iran has tried to limit traffic there. The US has answered with a naval blockade of Iranian ports and has escorted tankers.

For now, every new strike makes a deal harder to reach. Gulf states and shipping firms are watching closely.

Alaska Democrat Flips Senate Seat After Tight Two-Week Vote Count

● Mary Peltola defeats Republican Senator Dan Sullivan, giving Democrats a 56-44 Senate majority after a midterm that dealt President Trump a major setback

WEB DESK

LOS ANGELES



In a big win for her party, an Alaska Democrat flips a US Senate seat as Mary Peltola defeats Republican Senator Dan Sullivan. The official count was finished on Tuesday.

Peltola won 50.12% of the vote. She received 144,302 votes, while Sullivan received 131,844.

Her win was the last open Senate race of the midterms. It gives Democrats a 56-44 majority in the chamber.

The count took two weeks. Many voters live in remote villages, so their ballots took longer to arrive.

Peltola said she would stand up to what she called a rigged system in Washington. She promised to fight corporate greed, lower costs and put Alaska first.

The race was not without drama. The New York Times reported that Peltola's aides had recruited another man named Dan Sullivan to run. The aim, it said, was to pull votes away from the Republican senator.

Peltola has denied knowing anything about the plan. Senator Sullivan accused her campaign of misleading voters.

President Trump also criticized the race. He called the second Dan Sullivan a decoy and asked for votes to be merged to help the senator.

That would not have changed the result. Daniel J Sullivan Jr won 4,760 votes and Gerald Heikes won 6,105. Even if those votes were added to Sullivan's total, Peltola would still have won.

The Trump administration also asked a court to block certification. A federal judge dismissed the request before the election. US Attorney Michael Heyman said federal investigators are still looking into the race.

Peltola is now one of the first two Native American women elected to the Senate. She will serve alongside Minnesota Senator-elect Peggy Flanagan.

Democrats also control the House. Together, they can block bills, open investigations and challenge Trump's appointments.

At UN, Pakistan warns food crises hit import-reliant nations far beyond conflict zones

NEWS DESK

UNITED NATIONS

Pakistan has told an informal meeting of the United Nations Security Council that food crises spill far beyond conflict zones to hit developing, import-dependent countries, urging practical steps for steady food and fertilizer access alongside climate-resilient agriculture.

Speaking in a debate on Food Diplomacy and Conflict-Induced Food Insecurity, Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, highlighted a dangerous feedback loop in which armed conflicts, including foreign occupation, drive mass hunger, while hunger and economic desperation fuel renewed or protracted instability.

"The challenge before us is therefore not merely to respond to food crises, but to prevent them, and to address the underlying conditions that give rise to them," he added.

Wednesday's 15-member Council's meeting was convened by Greece under Arria-Formula format named after a former Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN, Diego Arriva.

Arria-Formula meetings are informal that enable Security Council members to have a frank and private exchange of views on relevant subjects.



Aiman Khan, Muneeb Butt honoured at British Parliament

● Couple earn recognition in London for contributions to drama, promotion of Pakistani culture abroad

SHOWBIZ DESK

LONDON

tActors Aiman Khan and Muneeb Butt received special recognition at the British Parliament in London for their contributions to drama, entertainment and the promotion of Pakistani culture internationally.

Both Aiman and Butt also shared videos from the event, including clips of their speeches, expressing gratitude for the honour and the affection they received from the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom.

Addressing the gathering, Aiman thanked those who attended the event and said she felt blessed to have received the recognition. "I am really happy and feeling blessed that we are here and have received this award.

Just like people love us in Pakistan, we have gotten that same love in the UK," she said.

The actor also credited her husband for the achievement saying, "Thank you Muneeb, we have won this award because of you. We are a power couple!"

Butt also expressed gratitude for the support and affection the couple received. "I have no words to express how blessed and happy I am for the love you all have given us," he said.

The actor also shared an interesting reflection following his visit to the British Parliament, revealing that the experience had sparked in him a growing interest in politics.

Sharing his interaction with a member of parliament, Butt stated, "We also visited the parliament today and I was sharing my thoughts with the honourable MP. I have also been getting more interested in politics."

The couple's recognition highlighted the reach of Pakistani entertainment beyond the country's borders, with their work in television contributing to the growing international visibility of Pakistani drama and its artists.

Faran Tahir says Dar-e-Nijaat's parenting lessons are not just for daughters, but sons too

● Actor says drama reflects societal realities, highlights importance of trust and guidance in parenting

SHOWBIZ DESK

NEW YORK

Actor Faran Tahir emphasised that the message of Dar-e-Nijaat was not limited to the upbringing of girls but also concerned how parents raised, guided and supported all children, regardless of gender.

In a recent interview with BBC Urdu, Tahir discussed the drama, its portrayal of parenting and the lessons he hoped audiences took away from the story. Addressing the possibility of viewers interpreting the show's message as being exclusively about raising daughters, the actor stressed that the discussion was about the upbringing of children in general.

"There are some places where I hope people do not think that only girls should be raised in a different way. In the story, I have three daughters but the message is not that girls should be treated a certain way and boys should be left alone," he said.



"The discussion is on the upbringing of children. We are not saying what Zamil has done is correct and it is only on Zaryab," he added.

Elaborating on the balance parents must maintain, Tahir said, "It is important to trust kids but also to guide them. It is also important to give them structure."

He added that the drama reflected realities within society that people may not always openly acknowledge, noting that viewers understood there were people who had a parenting style similar to what was shown in the drama.

Tahir also discussed Abubakr's influence on Zaryab, describing it as a calming one. "From the parents' perspective, if someone is coming into her life which will give her peace and calmness, maybe then that is a good thing," he added.

However, the actor was careful not to present Abubakr as a flawless character, noting that he, like anyone else, had the capacity to make both good and bad decisions. "Abubakr also has choices within himself. He is human. He is trying to make good choices. There is an ability for him to make bad ones too," he said.

For Tahir, the distinction lay in understanding the nature of the story being told. "We are telling a story. There is a lesson to be learned on goodness. It is not a documentary," he said, suggesting that the drama aimed to explore human behaviour and offer audiences something to reflect upon rather than serve as a literal representation of every situation.

We forget to raise our sons properly while raising daughters: Nida Yasir

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



Pakistani personality Nida has pulled attention to an important issue in family upbringing, pointing out that parents often put more effort into raising daughters while overlooking the moral training and guidance their sons also need.

Speaking on her morning show, Nida explained that girls are taught from an early age how to behave, speak, walk and carry out household responsibilities.

They are often reminded to learn cooking, washing dishes and other domestic tasks so they can manage their future married lives.

She noted that parents devote considerable time and attention to preparing their daughters for life after marriage, hoping to hear appreciation from their in-laws for their upbringing.

However, during this process, they sometimes forget that their sons also need proper guidance and character-building.

Nida directed at rais boys should receive the same attention as raising girls.

She said sons need love, care, affection, discipline and proper moral training rather than being allowed to grow up without the guidance that parents carefully provide to their daughters

Nida Yasir is a well-known Pakistani television host, actress and producer who has been part of the entertainment industry for many years.

Indian media praises Abu Bakar as women's ideal man



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani drama Dar-e-Nijaat has caught the attention of audiences apart from Pakistan, with its character Abu Bakar becoming a popular topic of discussion on social media.

Indian media outlet India Today, has also taken notice of the character's growing appeal, questioning why he is turning into every woman's dream man.

Portrayed by Sheheryar Munawar Siddiqui, Abu Bakar has emerged as the latest fictional green flag for many viewers.

According to India Today, at a time when dating disappointments, complicated relationships and situationships are widely discussed online, audiences are increasingly drawn to Abu Bakar's caring nature and healthy approach to communication.

The character's popularity shows how strongly viewers have connected with his on-screen personality.

His relationship with Zaryab, played by Durefishan Saleem, has also become one of the major attractions of the drama.

Isha Noor reveals how reading Holy Quran inspired her to leave showbiz

SHOWBIZ DESK

DUBAI

Beautiful former actress Isha Noor has opened up about her spiritual transformation and the decision to step away from the entertainment industry and divulge how reading the Quran with translation changed her perspective on life.

Sharing her journey, Isha explained that she began reading the Quran with translation during a difficult period.

The experience made her feel closer to Allah and helped her find clarity about the direction she wanted her life to take.

Recalling the impact of this experience, she said, "I started reading the Quran with translation, and I felt as though Allah was talking directly to me."



'Jo Bachey Sang Samait Lo' trailer launch set for November 24 in Karachi



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistan's upcoming Netflix series Jo Bachey Sang Samait Lo is gearing up for its grand trailer launch, scheduled to take place in Karachi on November 24.

Produced by Momina Duraid, the project has been announced as Pakistan's first official Netflix series and has already drawn attention for bringing together some of the country's biggest stars.

The series features an impressive ensemble cast, including Fawad Khan, Hamza Ali Abbasi, Bilal Ashraf, Ahmed Ali Akbar, Ahad Raza Mir, Mahira Khan, Iqra Aziz, Maya Ali, Hania Aamir, Sanam Saeed, Azaan Sami Khan and Yumna Zaidi. Based on Farhat Ishtiaq's bestselling Urdu novel, the project brings a popular literary story to the screen with a large lineup of established actors.

Talking about the series creator, Momina Duraid is one of Pakistan's leading television and film producers, known for creating some of the country's most popular dramas.

She runs MD Productions, the company behind hit serials such as Humsafar, Zindagi Gulzar Hai, Dastaan, Shehr-e-Zaat, Suno Chanda and Yakeen Ka Safar.

She has also worked in films, including Bin Roye, and has played an important role in shaping Pakistan's entertainment industry through her successful productions.

TikToker Mr patlo's arrest challenged in Lahore High Court

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

The arrest of TikToker Anwar Mahmood alias Mr Patlo has been challenged in the Lahore High Court (LHC).

Justice Ali Zia Bajwa heard the petition filed by Anwar Mahmood alias Mr Patlo and his brother, Muhammad Kashif.

During the hearing, the court directed the concerned Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) to present the case record at the next hearing scheduled for tomorrow.

The petitioner's counsel informed the court that Mr Patlo and his brother had earlier obtained interim pre-arrest bail in the case, but their bail applications were dismissed for non-prosecution due to their detention in police custody.

The petitioners requested the court to restore their interim bail applications, which had been dismissed for non-prosecution.



Ralph Fiennes pokes fun at Robert Pattinson's James Bond news

● 'Harry Potter' co-star Ralph Fiennes teases Robert Pattinson over new casting



WEB DESK

LONDON

Ralph Fiennes might still see Daniel Craig as his James Bond, but he cannot help and admit that Robert Pattinson is capable of breathing life into any character.

The 63-year-old English actor playfully teased his Harry Potter co-star when asked about who could play his iconic Voldemort in the HBO series.

"Maybe they'll offer it to Robert Pattinson," Fiennes quipped, sending fans wild on social media.

Taking to X, fans wrote, "jokes apart he would make a decent voldemort," and "'AI is stealing human job,' and its Robert Pattinson," joked another.

A third chimed in, "cedric getting killed by voldemort then coming back 20 years later to play voldemort is the longest revenge arc ever," and "we're laughing but this could actually happen," noted one.

Hira Mani faces mockery over live singing

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



Pakistani actress Hira Mani has drawn criticism after a video of her singing at the Punjabi Spring Festival in Melbourne, Australia, circulated on social media.

Some viewers questioned her vocals, while one even compared her performance to internet sensation Chahat Fateh Ali Khan.

Hira attended the event with her husband, actor Salman Saqib Sheikh, popularly known as Mani. She took the stage to perform as audience members recorded the moment on their phones.

The clips soon attracted sarcastic comments from viewers. One social media user wrote, "Hira, you need to change your doctor," while another commented, "I feel Chahat Fateh Ali Khan is better than this." A third user remarked, "Money makes you do all of this."

Some viewers also discussed her stage outfit, a mauve-purple saree paired with a deep-neck blouse. However, much of the criticism focused on her singing, with commenters claiming that her vocals did not match the backing music.

Hira Mani has built her acting career through popular television dramas, including Do Bol and Mere Paas Tum Ho. She has also pursued singing in recent years and released tracks such as Sawaari for Kashmir Beats.

The Melbourne performance has added to the online discussion around Hira's singing, as clips from the event continue to draw comments from viewers.

Portugal Beat Wales 3-2 As Forbs Wears Ronaldo's Famous No. 7

SPORTS DESK

PORTUGAL



Portugal finally have a reason to smile again. The team beat Wales 3-2 in the Nations League. It was their first win since Cristiano Ronaldo retired from international football.

The hero was Carlos Forbs. He wore the famous No. 7 shirt, with a line across the number as a tribute to Ronaldo. He scored the winning goal in the 70th minute.

"It's a special feeling; I won't forget today," Forbs said. It was his first goal for his country. He added that the shirt did not feel heavy on his shoulders.

The 22-year-old plays for Club Brugge in Belgium. He is very different from Ronaldo. All three of his Portugal games so far have come from the bench.

The match was full of action. Bruno Fernandes gave Portugal the lead with a lovely curling shot. Wales hit back within two minutes through David Brooks.

Sorba Thomas then put Wales ahead just before half-time. Portugal replied quickly, and Pedro Neto made it 2-2.

Forbs then used smart movement to find space and score with a low shot. Later, Neto was sent off for two reckless tackles in two minutes. Even so, Wales struggled to create chances.

The win was important after a 4-1 home loss to Denmark on Saturday. Defending and discipline were still problems for Portugal, but there were many more positives this time.

Portugal finished top of their group with five wins from six games.

They will now face a runner-up from another group in the quarterfinals next March. The draw takes place on Friday.

Ronaldo ended his career as the all-time leader in men's international football. He made 234 appearances and scored 146 goals. He announced his retirement on Nov. 5.



RAWALPINDI: A large number of students are watching the second Test cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka on the second day at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Bangladesh's Litton Das Breaks World Record With Eight Test Dismissals

● South Africa take a 157-run lead on day four of the first Test, despite a historic show behind the stumps

SPORTS REPORTER/WEB DESK

BANGLADESH



Bangladesh's Litton Das wrote his name into cricket history on Wednesday. He took eight dismissals in a single Test innings, a new world record.

Sadly for his team, the record did not stop South Africa from grabbing a big lead. The visitors finished the first innings on 557, which put them 157 runs ahead of Bangladesh's 400.

Das had already taken six catches earlier in the innings. On day four, he added two quick stumpings to reach eight.

His first victim was Ryan Rickelton. The South African went for a big shot against off-spinner Mehidy Hasan and missed. Das whipped off the bails.

Kagiso Rabada was next. He also tried to hit Mehidy out of the ground and was stumped in the same way.

The old record was seven dismissals. It was shared by Wasim Bari, Bob Taylor, Ian Smith, Ridley Jacobs and Joshua Da Silva.

There was one sour note for Das. He dropped Rickelton on nought on Monday, and the batter went on to score 102.

Rickelton and Rabada put on 117 for the eighth wicket. Rabada hit a career-best 72 in that stand.

South Africa scored 171 runs for their last three wickets in 34.1 overs. That long morning session hurt Bangladesh badly.

Last man Dane Paterson then smashed a quick 29. He added 45 runs with captain Temba Bavuma for the final wicket.

Bavuma finished unbeaten on 68. He had retired hurt on 49 on Tuesday with a calf injury but came back when Rickelton fell.

Bangladesh now have a lot of work to do. They will need a strong second innings to stay in this Test.

England Women Name Captains For Winter Tour Of India

● Ryana MacDonald-Gay, Kira Chathli and Grace Scrivens will lead the side in three formats, while injuries force two changes

SPORTS DESK

ENGLAND



England Women have named their A squads for the upcoming tour of India, and three players will take charge as captains.

Ryana MacDonald-Gay will lead the team in the T20 matches. Kira Chathli will captain the side in the 50-over games. Grace Scrivens will take the armband for the four-day match.

The tour starts on 30 November and finishes on 22 December. All games will be played in Pune and Mumbai.

Two Injury Changes

Issy Wong is still recovering from a stress injury in her right foot. Because of this, Alexa Stonehouse of Warwickshire takes her place in the four-day squad.

Wong will not be replaced in the white-ball squads.

Emma Lamb has pulled out of the 50-over and four-day squads after back surgery. Durham's Grace Thompson comes in to replace her in both.

Who Is in the Squads?

The T20 squad has 15 players. They are Hannah Baker, Grace Ballinger, Kira Chathli, Tilly Corteen-Coleman, Lauren Filer, Jodi Grewcock, Bess Heath, Niamh Holland and Emma Jones.

The list also includes Ryana MacDonald-Gay, Charis Pavely, Grace Potts, Jemima Spence, Grace Thompson and Mady Villiers.

The 50-over squad has 16 players. Katie George, Grace Scrivens and Ellie Threlkeld join the group, while Emma Jones and Jemima Spence are not included.

The four-day squad also has 16 players. It includes Katie George, Grace Scrivens, Ellie Threlkeld, Alexa Stonehouse and Grace Thompson.

Players in All Three Squads

Five names appear in every squad. Lauren Filer, Tilly Corteen-Coleman, Mady Villiers, Jodi Grewcock and Charis Pavely will all play across the whole tour.

Pakistan Struggle Against Sri Lanka Despite Extending Lead In Second Test

● Lahiru Kumara leads the attack as hosts slip to 221-7 in Rawalpindi, holding a 123-run lead

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Sri Lanka's fast bowlers kept up the pressure on day two of the second Test in Rawalpindi. Pakistan were 221-7 after 69 overs, with a lead of 123 runs.

Pakistan began the day on 121-3 in 37.2 overs. They lost four more wickets in the first session, and the visitors held a firm grip on the match.

Lahiru Kumara was the star of the morning. He removed Azan Awais for 47 off 104 balls, so the young opener missed out on his first Test fifty.

Saqib Khan and Saud Shakeel then tried to rebuild. They added 50 runs for the fifth wicket and took the hosts past 150.

Kumara struck again soon after. He dismissed Shakeel for 24, which left Pakistan on 178-5. Saqib fell on the same score for 37 off 78 balls, and it was Kumara's fourth wicket of the innings.

Salman Ali Agha and Ghazi Ghori then played with more freedom. Together they pushed Pakistan past 200 and stretched the lead beyond 100.

Asitha Fernando ended Salman's stay for 21 off 26 balls. Pakistan were 219-7 at that point. Ghazi Ghori remains not out and will bat with Aamer Jamal after the break.

On day one, Pakistan's bowlers did the early damage. They bowled Sri Lanka out for just 98. Kusal Mendis top-scored with 32, while Mohammad Abbas, Aamer Jamal and Razaullah took three wickets each.

Pakistan's openers Azan Awais and Tayyab Arif then put on 80 runs. Tayyab made 46 before Fernando broke the stand. Prabath Jayasuriya removed Mohammad Taha for eight, and Kumara dismissed captain Babar Azam for eight.

Cricket Australia Rules Out New Probe Into Ball-Tampering Scandal

● Board promises an independent forum so players can share their own story of the 2018 Cape Town Test

SPORTS REPORTER/ WEB DESK

AUSTRALIA

Cricket Australia has ruled out reopening its investigation into the 2018 ball-tampering scandal. Instead, the board will set up a new forum where players can tell their own story.

The decision came on Wednesday. It follows a tense week for the game.

The old wounds from the third Test in Cape Town opened again last week. Usman Khawaja released his autobiography, and it made a bold claim.

Khawaja wrote that the whole team knew about the plan to rough up the ball with sandpaper. He said the aim was to make the ball swing.

The official probe found something different. It said only three people knew: then-captain Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

Warner has backed Khawaja's version. Over the weekend, he called the investigation "a shoddy" one and said some players were never interviewed.

Chief executive Todd Greenberg spoke in Hobart ahead of the one-day match against England. He called the past week an "incredibly difficult and uncomfortable time" for everyone involved.



College Football Playoff Rankings: Notre Dame Drops One Spot To No. 6

WEB DESK

TEXAS

Notre Dame fans got fresh news from the College Football Playoff committee. The Fighting Irish moved down one spot to No. 6.

The drop came even after a 41-7 win over Boston College. Notre Dame is now 9-1 on the season.

Texas took the No. 5 spot after a close 22-21 win over LSU. That small move pushed the Irish back by one place.

Georgia stays at No. 1. Utah is second, followed by Alabama and UCLA. Miami is right behind Notre Dame at No. 7. Indiana, Tennessee and BYU complete the top 10.

Latest College Football Playoff Top 25

1. Georgia
2. Utah
3. Alabama
4. UCLA
5. Texas
6. Notre Dame
7. Miami
8. Indiana
9. Tennessee
10. BYU
11. Wake Forest
12. Texas Tech
13. Oregon
14. Ohio State
15. Iowa
16. Kentucky
17. Boise State
18. USC
19. Arizona
20. Houston
21. South Carolina
22. Oklahoma
23. Louisville
24. Florida
25. Ole Miss

Ohio State was the biggest mover, jumping six spots to No. 14. Oregon rose three places to No. 13, and Wake Forest climbed two spots to No. 11.

What No. 6 Means for the Irish

The news is still good for Notre Dame. In the 12-team format, any team that finishes in the top 12 of the final rankings makes the playoff.

Dhoni Ends IPL Career, Becomes Chennai Super Kings Mentor For 2027

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI



Dhoni has ended his 19-year playing career in the Indian Premier League. The cricket legend will now serve as team mentor of Chennai Super Kings for the 2027 season.

The franchise announced the decision today. It came just three hours before the deadline for releasing and retaining players ended.

The next IPL player auction will take place in Goa on December 16.

Dhoni had hoped to play his final match in front of Chennai's passionate fans at Chepauk. That wish will now remain unfulfilled. CSK owner N Srinivasan paid tribute to the former captain. He said it was impossible to imagine the franchise without Dhoni.

Srinivasan said Dhoni and the team had shared nearly two decades of success, challenges and tough moments. He added that mutual trust was the base of their strong bond.

He also said that insisting on Dhoni's place in the CSK squad in 2008 was one of his best decisions. According to him, Dhoni will always remain an important part of the team because of his achievements, personality and character.

"Chennai Super Kings will always be his home," Srinivasan said.

The 45-year-old Dhoni will work with a new coaching staff next season. Former Indian fast bowler Zaheer Khan has been named head coach. Albie Morkel, Garrett Baty and Sriram Sridharan will be assistant coaches.

Mohit Sharma will take charge as bowling coach, while James Foster will handle fielding.

The franchise has changed its coaching setup after missing the playoffs in the last three seasons. Dhoni's role as mentor is seen as a key part of the plan to return to winning ways.



SARGODHA: A farmer is traditionally spreading wheat seeds in his field during the sowing season.

Sehat card relaunched for journalists in Islamabad: Mustafa Kamal

● Health minister reviews progress on medicines tracking system

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Health Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday announced the relaunch of the Sehat Sahulat Card for journalists in Islamabad, under which free treatment will be provided at 15 private hospitals.

Speaking to media at the National Press Club after inaugurating a hepatitis screening camp, organized in collaboration with Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital, the Minister said focal persons will be appointed at PIMS and Polyclinic to facilitate journalists, while facilities at both hospitals are being improved.

He said the CEO of the Sehat Sahulat Programme and representatives of relevant institutions will visit the National Press Club on Wednesday to brief journalists on the procedure.

The Minister also announced a major national hepatitis elimination drive, saying the government will screen 70 million people across Pakistan and provide free treatment to those testing positive.

He said a test worth Rs 7,000 is being provided free of cost, while medicine worth Rs 68,000 will also be provided free to Hepatitis C patients across Pakistan. The programme has started from Islamabad, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, with digital devices provided to operators and an agreement signed with NADRA.

Mustafa Kamal said Pakistan has the highest number of Hepatitis C patients in the world. The disease usually shows its effects after 20 years and can turn into liver cancer if not treated in time.

He said the government is following Egypt's successful model, and treatment is possible within three months if a person tests positive.

Meanwhile, Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal has reviewed progress on the implementation of the medicines track and trace system, stressing the need for effective digital monitoring and transparency in the pharmaceutical supply chain.

The review was conducted during a meeting chaired by the federal minister, where officials of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) briefed participants on the system's implementation, digital monitoring, supply chain transparency, and measures to prevent counterfeit and substandard medicines.

Mushahid Chairs Global South Conference In Russia Successfully

● Senator Terms PM Visit Excellent For Bilateral Ties



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan was honoured at the biggest political conference of Global South with 300 representatives from 72 countries in the Russian capital, where Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed was invited to chair the opening plenary session as well as the concluding session of this historic gathering.

The conference, hosted by the ruling 'United Russia' Party, was presided over by the former President of Russia and Party head Dmitri Medvedev, said a press release issued here.

Senator Mushahid Hussain also held a meeting with Dmitri Medvedev who conveyed good wishes for the people of Pakistan.

In his keynote address, Senator Mushahid Hussain referred to Russia as a "good friend" of Pakistan with whom Pakistan had a common worldview and shared interests as integral partners in Eurasia.

He said that the upcoming visit of the Pakistan Prime Minister to Russia would be an excellent opportunity to reset Pakistan's ties with Russia.

He said that Pakistan looks forward to warmly welcoming President Putin to Pakistan during the 2027 summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Islamabad.

Reviewing the changing global scenario, which Senator Mushahid Hussain termed as a period of transformation, turbulence and transition, he referred to three new realities that were clearly apparent, the retrenchment of the West with decline and division apparent among Western countries, the rise of China and the resurgence of Middle Powers like Pakistan which are now playing a pivotal role in peacemaking and bridge-building among regions.

He specifically cited Pakistan's role in hosting Iran and the United States in Islamabad, brokering a ceasefire on April 7 and hosting the Islamabad MOU of 17 June between Iran and the United States which he termed as the pathway to durable peace, stability and security in the region.

Welcoming the historic meeting scheduled in the China city of Shenzhen on 19 November between President Xi Jinping, President Putin and President Trump, he said this was the first such meeting of the Big-3 since the February 1945 meeting of the then Big-3 in Yalta which included Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

He said the big difference today is that the Big-3 includes an Asian giant like China which clearly shows the huge transformation in global power politics where the United States is no longer the sole super power and today's world is now multipolar.

Senator Mushahid Hussain termed the decline of the West as irreversible and the rise of China, the Global South and Middle Powers as unstoppable.

He ended his speech with a clarion call for building a better, peaceful and prosperous tomorrow with no overlords and no underdogs, which resonated well with the large, diverse and distinguished audience that included representatives of regional countries like Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Indonesia, Turkey, China, India, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and a large number of representatives from Africa and Latin America.

Senator Mushahid Hussain was also invited to attend a special meeting of the Standing Committee of the Movement for "Freedom of Nations" which was personally chaired by Dmitri Medvedev and participated by other top regional leaders as well.

Senator Sitara Ayaz, Secretary General of International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) also attended the conference.

PTI founder directed lawyers to adopt delaying tactics instead of arguing in £190m case: Dr. Tariq

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder had instructed his legal team to adopt delaying tactics instead of arguing the case on merit.

Speaking to the media at Parliament House, the minister said the Islamabad High Court was hearing the case related to the PTI founder's conviction in the £190 million corruption case.

He said there were strong chances that the sentence awarded to the PTI founder would be upheld by the Islamabad High Court.

He added that the trial court had awarded the sentence after considering all the evidence.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said politics was being played over the PTI founder's health, adding that excuses were being made at times over the unavailability of preferred food and at other times over the choice of doctors.

He also described as absurd the allegations that a snake had emerged from Bushra Bibi's cell, saying such allegations were part of a false narrative aimed at influencing judicial proceedings.

The minister said the PTI founder's legal team had turned into a "drama team" and wanted to prolong the case.

However, he maintained that no matter how many delaying tactics were employed, the case would be decided on merit.

He said that even if politics were played over the PTI founder's health, the courts would continue proceedings in accordance with the law and merit.

Referring to the PTI founder's letter to the chief justices, the minister said it was also an attempt to influence judicial proceedings.

He added that efforts were being made to secure an NRO for the PTI founder.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry urged the PTI founder's lawyers to present solid legal arguments and debate the evidence and merits of the case before the court.

He said the tactics being employed to influence judicial proceedings would not succeed.

Pak Water and Environment Expo 2026 opens in Islamabad

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The two-day Pak Water and Environment Expo 2026, featuring an exhibition and conference, kicked off here on Wednesday, bringing together industry professionals, manufacturers, suppliers and technology experts to showcase innovative solutions for water treatment, wastewater management, recycling and renewable energy.

Director General Water, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Sardar Khan Zimri, inaugurated the event by cutting a ribbon and visited stalls set up by leading water treatment companies.

The expo aims to promote modern technologies and sustainable solutions to address challenges facing Pakistan's water and environment sectors.

The conference, held alongside the exhibition, featured the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) as its knowledge partner.

Addressing the conference, Prof. Dr. Imran Hashmi of the Institute of Environmental Sciences and Engineering (IESE), School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (SCEE), NUST, highlighted the importance of smart water quality monitoring and public health risk assessment, emphasizing opportunities for research, technology development and industrial collaboration to improve water safety.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arshad, Associate Dean, IESE, NUST, discussed the impact of rapid urbanization on water quality, particularly emerging contaminants and their implications for environmental sustainability.

Ayaz Calls For Stronger Pakistan-US Trade, Economic Ties

● Speaker Ayaz Urges Stronger Pakistan-US Trade Economic Ties

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Wednesday emphasized the need to further strengthen trade and economic relations between Pakistan and the United States, stressing enhanced engagement between the business communities of the two countries to promote bilateral trade and investment.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the American Business Council at Parliament House.

Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiani was also present.

Welcoming the delegation, the Speaker appreciated the business community's role in strengthening Pakistan-US economic relations and said Pakistan offered vast opportunities for trade and investment across various sectors.

He underscored the importance of exploring these opportunities through stronger business-to-business engagement, institutional linkages and expanded commercial partnerships between the two countries.

Ayaz Sadiq also briefed the delegation on Pakistan's parliamentary system and legislative procedures, highlighting Parliament's role in facilitating economic and commercial activities.

He said creating a conducive environment for trade and investment was among the government's key priorities, adding that investor-friendly policies had been introduced to facilitate the business community and encourage both domestic and foreign investment.

Emphasizing the need for sustained engagement and mutual cooperation, the Speaker called for strengthening institutional and business-to-business linkages to unlock the full potential of bilateral economic relations.

Reaffirming Parliament's commitment to supporting the business sector, he assured the delegation of all possible cooperation through legislation to address business-related concerns and safeguard the interests of the business community.

He said Parliament would continue to play an effective role in promoting economic and commercial activities, while parliamentary cooperation and sustained dialogue remained essential to further consolidating Pakistan-US relations.

Describing overseas Pakistanis as a valuable national asset, Ayaz Sadiq highlighted their significant potential to contribute to the country's economic growth and development.

The American Business Council delegation thanked the Speaker for the warm welcome at Parliament House and appreciated his keen interest in addressing the concerns of the business community.

Failing Sewers Fuel Global Superbug Crisis, Threaten

AOPDA Warns Toxic Sewers Accelerate Antimicrobial Resistance Crisis

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Failing sewers fuel global superbug crisis, threaten public health: AOPDA

LAHORE

The Asia & Oceania Post-Doctoral Academia (AOPDA) has issued a global public health warning about deteriorating sewage infrastructure, describing unlined open drains and leaking sewer networks as a ticking "Toxic Time Bomb" accelerating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through polluted air and contaminated groundwater.



Issued on Wednesday in connection with World AMR Awareness Week 2026 (November 18–24), being observed under the theme "One Health, One Action: Prevent AMR Now", the warning identifies untreated wastewater as a largely overlooked environmental driver of the global superbug crisis, particularly across rapidly urbanising regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where more than 80 per cent of wastewater is reportedly discharged without adequate treatment.

Building upon two decades of interdisciplinary research by Prof. Dr. Aurangzeb Hafi, Principal Investigator of AOPDA, the assessment identifies ecologically incompatible sewage infrastructure as a major component of what he terms a "Lethal Tetragonal Pollution System", simultaneously contaminating water, air, soil and the human body.

The warning assumes particular significance as bacterial AMR contributes to an estimated 4.71 million deaths annually worldwide and could directly claim more than 39 million lives by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the projected burden falling on low- and middle-income countries.

According to Prof. Hafi's research on the Sewage-Hydrotoxicity-Health Nexus, open sewage channels and deteriorating sewer networks facilitate resistance through two interconnected pathways: atmospheric contamination and subsurface groundwater pollution.

Unprotected drains accumulate clinical waste, industrial heavy metals, microplastics, pesticides and disinfectants, creating conditions conducive to the persistence and spread of resistant microorganisms. Open sewage channels release hydrogen sulphide, ammonia and fine particulate matter, including PM2.5 bioaerosols

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