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Three Afghan nationals killed, four injured in Nushki shooting

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

QUETTA

Three Afghan nationals were killed and four others injured when security personnel opened fire on a vehicle that allegedly failed to stop at a checkpoint in the Kishangi area of Nushki on the Quetta-Taftan Highway.

According to sources, security personnel opened fire on a suspicious Fielder car after its driver allegedly ignored instructions to stop.

Three occupants died on the spot, while four others sustained injuries in the firing.

Sources said more than 10 Afghan nationals were travelling in the vehicle at the time of the incident.

Two of the deceased were identified as Dawood Khan and Bilal, while the injured were identified as Abdul Rahman, Abdullah, Asrar Khan and Izhar.

The bodies and injured were shifted to Civil Hospital Nushki.

Further investigation into the incident is underway.

Separately, security forces arrested 62 Afghan nationals during operations along various routes in the Nokkundi area.

Security sources said the arrests were made as part of an ongoing crackdown against Afghan nationals residing illegally in the area.

They said security checks had been intensified at several locations to identify individuals staying without legal documentation.

The arrested Afghan nationals will be handed over to police for further legal proceedings, the sources said.



Punjab CM approves installation of 5,000 solar panels in Cholistan

- Maryam offers Punjab's skills training model for AJK development

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the second phase of the CM Solar Panel Scheme, increasing the target from 90,000 to 100,000 solar panel recipients to provide relief to electricity consumers, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

Chairing a special meeting on energy projects in Lahore on Thursday, the chief minister also approved a pilot project to install 5,000 solar panels in Cholistan.

During the meeting, Maryam Nawaz directed officials to prepare a plan for generating energy and biofuel from solid waste in collaboration with the Suthra Punjab initiative. She also gave initial approval to a pilot project aimed at generating energy from 3,000 tonnes of waste.

The chief minister ordered energy audits of all major hospitals across Punjab and directed officials to install electrical panels according to their energy requirements.

The meeting also reviewed projects to produce bioenergy and biofuel from animal, agricultural and solid waste. A report was presented on a proposed biorefinery project in Nankana Sahib using rice husks and other crop residues.

Officials also discussed commercial-scale biogas plants, private dairy-based projects and community-based biogas facilities across the province.

The meeting gave initial approval to shifting 40 water supply sites in Cholistan to solar energy.

During the briefing, officials said the first phase of the CM Solar Panel Scheme had received more than 350,000 applications, while 89,869 people had received solar panels, helping them reduce their electricity bills by around one-third.

The briefing further revealed that 76 schools across Punjab had been shifted to solar energy under a pilot project.

Officials said Punjab had the potential to generate 7.15 billion cubic metres of biogas annually from 490,000 tonnes of animal waste. They added that around 1.6 billion units of electricity could be generated from animal, agricultural and solid waste.

Provincial Minister Faisal Khokhar and the Energy Department secretary briefed the meeting on ongoing and proposed projects.

A public survey conducted by the Energy Department also highlighted positive feedback from beneficiaries, with some consumers reporting that their electricity bills had nearly halved after receiving solar panels.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has offered to share Punjab's skills development model with Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), saying market-oriented training programmes can create employment opportunities and help people become financially self-reliant.

Addressing a special meeting in Muzaffarabad on AJK's 100-day development plan, she said the government's responsibility went beyond launching development projects and included ensuring effective service delivery, remaining accessible to the public and promptly resolving their problems.

She said 500,000 people had received IT training in Punjab over the past two and a half years, with many securing employment abroad. The provincial government had also provided financial assistance, including support for travel expenses and visa processing.

Maryam said Punjab had designed its skills development programmes after assessing international job market requirements, enabling participants to acquire market-oriented skills within six months and earn a respectable livelihood, either in their own areas or abroad.

ASEAN praises Pakistan mediation in US Iran conflict

- Southeast Asian bloc weighs Pakistan's partnership bid, secretary-general says



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Dr. Kao Kim Hourn on Thursday acknowledged Pakistan's efforts to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Iran.

The ASEAN Secretary General's remarks came during talks between Pakistan and ASEAN led by Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar who stressed diplomacy, multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Briefing the ASEAN delegation on Pakistan's perspective, DPM Dar voiced deep concern over the conflict in the Gulf and its consequences for energy security, maritime trade and global supply chains.

He said attacks on ships and critical infrastructure, and disruptions to navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab Strait, had repercussions far beyond the region. They raised transport and energy costs, fed inflation and created added pressure on households and businesses, he said, underlining the urgency of de-escalation and negotiated settlement.

The deputy prime minister recalled that Pakistan had persuaded both Washington and Tehran to exercise restraint and brought them to Islamabad, where they held a 21-hour marathon session on April 10-11.

Hamza Shehbaz holds talks with US envoy Natalie Baker

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



An important meeting was held between US Charge d'Affaires Natalie A Baker and former Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz, MNA, in Islamabad on Thursday.

According to the report, the talks centered on strengthening bilateral ties and addressing key regional issues. Both officials exchanged views on the overall trajectory of Pakistan-US diplomatic ties.

Discussions highlighted avenues for expanding trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two nations. The two leaders reviewed ongoing regional developments and stability.

The PML-N leader Hamza Shehbaz felicitated Natalie Baker on her recent nomination to lead the US Embassy Islamabad, and serve as the official US Ambassador to Pakistan. He expressed the optimism that US Ambassador's vast diplomatic experience would help further cementing Pak-US relations.

Govt, Jamaat-e-Islami discuss expansion of fuel subsidy scheme

- Liaquat Baloch says talks with government conclude, PM meeting to finalise fuel price relief

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has discussed expanding the existing fuel subsidy scheme with a Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) delegation, with a final round of talks scheduled to take place in the presence of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan, the follow-up meeting in Islamabad focused on petroleum prices and the possibility of extending the subsidy scheme to provide relief to more citizens.

The JI delegation was led by Liaquat Baloch and included Syed Farasat Shah, Inayatullah and Zia-ud-Din Ansari.

Dar said reducing the financial burden on ordinary citizens and protecting public welfare remained among the government's top priorities.



He said reforms in the government's petroleum policy and fluctuations in international prices had contributed to a significant reduction in fuel prices.

The deputy prime minister said petrol prices had fallen by Rs 133 per litre and diesel prices by Rs 162 per litre since April 2026.

Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Deputy Emir Liaquat Baloch said negotiations with government committees had concluded and matters concerning a reduction in petroleum product prices would be finalised during a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on November 24 or 25.

Addressing a press conference, Baloch said he had been due to convey his final position on the draft agreement submitted to Ishaq Dar and other members of the government committee. He said the party had informed the government that its sustained protests were against increases in petroleum prices, demanding that the government control prices and provide relief to the public.

He described the LPG crisis as a result of government incompetence, saying the risks had been evident but timely measures were not taken. The government had informed the party that arrangements had been made for LNG and LPG supplies, with one cargo having arrived and another expected the following day.

New Provinces Need Political Consensus Says Punjab Speaker

- Speaker Questions PPP Stance On Punjab Sindh Division Debate Demands Clarification Today

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Wednesday called for a broad political debate on the creation of new provinces, equitable distribution of resources and governance reforms, saying that seeking public opinion on the issue was not prohibited by the Constitution.

Addressing a press conference at the Punjab Assembly here, he said the creation of new provinces was ultimately a matter for the assemblies to decide, while a referendum could provide an opportunity to ascertain the people's opinion. He said if the people opposed the creation of a new province, it could not be established, while public support would require political leadership to move forward in accordance with constitutional procedures.

The speaker said the debate should not be treated as a forbidden subject and all political parties should openly discuss the issue to develop a consensus.

Referring to the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) position, he said the Punjab Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution regarding the division of Punjab, whereas the PPP had staged a walkout when the division of Sindh was discussed. He questioned why a political party supported the division of one province but opposed the other, urging the PPP leadership to clarify its position. He said the matter was part of the assembly's official record and he was not making any statement without documentary evidence.

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said the discussion on new provinces had emerged from wider concerns raised by civil society regarding unequal distribution of resources, differences in per capita development expenditure between major and smaller cities, bureaucratic reforms, governance and devolution of powers to local governments.

Medical checkup of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi completed at Adiala Jail

- Imran Khan Alleges Isolation Vision Loss In Letter To Chief Justices Today

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



The medical checkup of the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi has been completed at Adiala Jail, following which the medical team departed from the facility on November 19, 2026.

According to sources, the medical team included Dr. Nadeem Qureshi, Dr. Arif, and other medical staff, who were assisted by the jail hospital's medical personnel during the examination.

Sources further stated that the doctors checked the blood pressure, body temperature, and eyes of both individuals before concluding the visit and leaving the prison.

Imran Khan writes detailed letter to CJP

The medical examinations were conducted days after Imran Khan sent a detailed letter to the chief justices through his lawyer, Barrister Salman Safdar, raising concerns about his prison conditions, health, alleged violations of his legal rights and non-implementation of court orders.

According to the letter, Imran Khan had instructed his lawyers, Barrister Salman Safdar and Latif Khosa, to prepare the letter during a three-hour meeting at Adiala Jail.

In the letter, the PTI founder said he was writing as an ordinary prisoner rather than a former prime minister or political leader.

He claimed that he had been kept in complete isolation since December 20, 2025, with no contact with the outside world, and was confined to his cell for 22 hours daily, which he described as a violation of prison rules.

Imran Khan also claimed that he had lost 85 percent of the vision in his right eye. He said he had been allowed to meet his lawyer only four times in a year.

He further stated that prolonged isolation and lack of human contact had badly affected his mental health. According to the letter, the jail medical board had also recorded his anxiety and recommended contact with his family.

Barrister Gohar urges PPP to return PTI's reserved seats

STAFF REPORTER

SIALKOT



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan said political rivals had also acknowledged that the party's founder was a political prisoner. He added that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had admitted the party was forcibly and unlawfully deprived of its election symbol in the 2024 general elections.

Speaking to the media while offering condolences over the death of the brother of MNA Aslam Ghuman, Barrister Gohar urged the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to play its role in ending governor's rule. He said PTI had invited the PPP to attend its All Parties Conference, adding that it remained to be seen whether the party would participate.

He said 77 reserved seats allocated to PTI had been distributed among other political parties, including 14 seats that had gone to the PPP. These comprised four National Assembly seats, six in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, two in the Punjab Assembly and two in the Sindh Assembly.

Barrister Gohar said that if Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was serious about his position, he should first ensure the return of PTI's reserved seats and ask his party's lawmakers to resign from the seats taken from PTI.



DIG Headquarters Holds Welfare Meeting Directs Prompt Resolution

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

According to the details, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Headquarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq held a welfare meeting at his office, where police officers and officials presented their personal, financial and departmental concerns.

DIG Headquarters listened to their issues attentively and issued necessary directions to the concerned officers to ensure their resolution on a priority basis.

He said that police officers and officials are a valuable asset of the force and that their welfare, timely resolution of legitimate concerns and provision of better facilities remain important departmental priorities.

He directed the concerned officers to process all applications promptly and in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations to ensure timely relief.

Punjab MBBS Merit List Announced, Open Merit Cutoff Set At 93.297%

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



The University of Health Sciences (UHS) has announced the first selection list for MBBS admissions to government medical colleges across Punjab, setting the minimum open merit cutoff at 93.297 per cent.

According to a private news channel, King Edward Medical University (KEMU), Lahore, emerged as the most competitive institution, recording the highest closing merit of 95.3697 per cent.

Allama Iqbal Medical College secured the second-highest closing merit at 94.875 per cent, followed by Services Institute of Medical Sciences at 94.3917 per cent.

Nishtar Medical College Multan recorded a closing merit of 94.1889 per cent, while Rawalpindi Medical College stood at 94.0131 per cent. Ameer-ud-Din Medical College Lahore recorded 93.8972 per cent.

Punjab Medical College Faisalabad and Fatima Jinnah Medical College Lahore registered closing merits of 93.7121 and 93.7106 per cent, respectively.

Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawalpur closed at 93.5636 per cent, while Gujranwala Medical College and Sahiwal Medical College recorded 93.5045 and 93.4773 per cent, respectively.

Other institutions included Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Medical College Sialkot (93.4717 per cent), Nawaz Sharif Medical College Gujrat (93.4394 per cent), Sargodha Medical College (93.4227 per cent) and D.G. Khan Medical College (93.3694 per cent).

Sheikh Zayed Medical College Rahim Yar Khan recorded 93.3583 per cent, followed by Narowal Medical College at 93.3561 per cent and Maryam Nawaz Sharif Medical College Mianwali at 93.3121 per cent.

CDA chairman reviews renovation work at Islamabad markets

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf on Thursday reviewed ongoing uplift and renovation work at F-7 Markaz and Jinnah Super Market, directing officials to ensure timely completion of projects while maintaining quality standards.

During his visit, the chairman was briefed that renovation work at Jinnah Super Market up to Bhitai Road had been completed, while the remaining work was expected to be finished soon.

He was informed that improvements included the installation of new footpath tiles, decorative lighting, electricity poles and benches, besides landscaping and horticultural work in open spaces to facilitate shoppers and visitors.

Sohail Ashraf was also briefed on development activities in other commercial centres of the capital. The upgradation of Kohsar Market has been completed, while work is underway at F-6 Markaz and Aabpara Market.

The chairman was further informed that parking facilities were being improved and damaged roads were being repaired in phases, with work continuing round the clock to expedite completion.

He directed the concerned officers to strictly follow the stipulated timelines and ensure that all projects met the required quality and design standards.

Sohail Ashraf said the renovation and upgradation of Islamabad's commercial centres would be undertaken in phases to improve the city's infrastructure and overall appearance.



LAHORE: Pakistan Masiha Millat Party Chairman, Aslam Pervaiz Sahotra, addressed the media at a press conference held at Lahore Press Club on Thursday, focusing on a protest initiative. The event featured a large banner highlighting the word "Protest" in Urdu, underscoring the significance of the gathering. Sahotra, accompanied by six associates, discussed the party's stance on pressing issues. This assembly is crucial as it reflects the party's commitment to advocating for change and addressing public grievances. The conference was well-attended, drawing attention to their cause.

Graduation Ceremony Held At PAF Academy

● Naval Chief Graces PAF Academy Graduation As 108 Cadets Graduate In Risalpur

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Graduation Ceremony of 153rd GD(P), 99th Engineering, 109th Air Defence (Charlie & Delta) and 136th Combat Support Courses was held at PAF Academy Asghar Khan, Risalpur. Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while General Rafet Dalkıran, Commander Turkish Air Force, also witnessed the ceremony. Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, was also present at the occasion. Upon arrival, the Chief Guest was received by Air Vice Marshal Hasan Faisal, Air Officer Commanding, PAF Academy Asghar Khan.

Addressing the graduating cadets, the Chief Guest congratulated them on successfully completing their demanding training and commended their impressive parade and high standards of training. He also acknowledged the presence of the Commander Turkish Air Force, describing it as a reflection of the longstanding bonds of brotherhood between the two countries.

Recalling Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's visit to the Academy 78 years ago, the Chief Guest highlighted his vision of a strong and efficient Air Force, stating, "A country without a strong Air Force is at the mercy of any aggressor." He observed that Pakistan Air Force had remained steadfast in upholding this vision throughout its history, adding, "The Quaid's Air Force had upheld the promise of being Second to None."

Referring to Marka-e-Haq in May 2025, Chief of the Naval Staff lauded the outstanding operational performance of Pakistan Air Force, particularly its successful conduct of multi-domain operations through indigenous capabilities. Recalling the events he stated, "When the enemy came on the night of 6th and 7th May 2025, it came with its finest aircraft and its loudest boasts; by sunrise those boasts lay in the fields beyond our borders."

DIG Islamabad Promotes Public Relief and Anti-Drug Awareness

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



According to details, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem is overseeing initiatives to address citizens' complaints promptly and protect young people from drug abuse.

In this regard, he held an open court at his office, heard citizens' complaints and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for their prompt resolution. He said that resolving public complaints on merit is a top priority and citizens can approach the open court directly without any recommendation. Open courts are being held daily at the DIG Office to ensure timely relief.

Meanwhile, Islamabad Police organized an anti-drug awareness seminar at Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/4. The SHOs of Kohsar and Women Police Stations briefed students on the harmful physical, psychological and social effects of drug abuse and urged them to stay away from drugs.

DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem said that public outreach and awareness initiatives in educational institutions would continue to ensure citizens' relief, protect the younger generation and promote a drug-free society.

Cengiz Energy, leading Pakistani business consortium sign strategic MoU for power distribution privatization

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Cengiz Energy has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a consortium of five leading Pakistani business groups to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's power distribution sector.

The Pakistani consortium comprises Artistic Milliners (Pvt.) Ltd., Fatima Group, Lake City, DIN Group and Fazal Group.

The strategic partnership is aimed at jointly pursuing opportunities under Pakistan's ongoing power sector privatisation programme, particularly involving Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO).

Longer Daytime Naps Linked To Higher Death Risk

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Longer and more frequent daytime naps may indicate underlying health problems in older adults, with morning napping associated with a 30% higher risk of death compared with afternoon naps, according to a new 19-year study.

Researchers from Mass General Brigham and Rush University Medical Center analysed the sleeping habits of 1,338 older adults and found that both the duration and frequency of daytime naps were associated with mortality risk.

The findings, published on November 16 in JAMA Network Open, suggest that monitoring daytime sleeping patterns could help identify early signs of declining health.

Longer naps associated with increased mortality risk

According to the study, every additional hour of daytime napping was associated with a 13% increase in the risk of death. Similarly, each additional nap per day was linked to a 7% rise in mortality risk.

Morning napping showed an especially notable association. Participants who regularly took naps in the morning had a 30% higher mortality risk than those who napped in the afternoon.

However, researchers found no increased mortality risk associated with irregular napping schedules, suggesting that changes in nap timing from one day to another were not necessarily linked to poorer health outcomes.

Researchers monitored sleeping patterns

The research team used data from the Rush Memory and Aging Project, a long-term study launched in 1997 to investigate memory, cognitive abilities and neurological decline among older adults.

Starting in 2005, participants wore wrist activity monitors for 10 days to record periods of rest and movement. Researchers used the collected data to evaluate nap duration, frequency, timing and daily variations.

The team then compared these sleeping patterns with mortality records collected over a period of up to 19 years, ending in 2025.

Lead author Chenlu Gao said previous studies had largely relied on participants' recollections of their sleeping habits, often overlooking important details such as nap timing and consistency.

Daytime napping may indicate underlying health problems

Researchers emphasised that the findings establish an association between daytime napping patterns and mortality rather than proving that naps directly cause premature death.

Instead, excessive daytime sleep may reflect underlying medical conditions, chronic illnesses, sleep disturbances or disruptions to the body's natural sleep-wake cycle.

Peshawar Northern Bypass to be operational within two months: Aleem Khan

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday said the Peshawar Northern Bypass, which had remained stalled for 18 years, would be completed and made operational within the next two months, with Rs5 billion allocated from the National Highway Authority's (NHA) own resources to address its funding shortfall.

IGP Islamabad Meets Young Chess Prodigy

● Sohail Pledges Coaching For Young Chess Prodigy Abdul Rehman From Quetta

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry met eight-year-old Abdul Rehman, a talented young chess player from Quetta, Balochistan. DIG Security Rana Umar Farooq, along with the child's father and brother, was also present on the occasion.

The IGP Islamabad appreciated Abdul Rehman's exceptional chess skills and described him as a highly intelligent and talented child currently studying in the second grade. He said that meeting gifted young children was a matter of great pleasure for him. He added that he had seen Abdul Rehman playing chess and defeating experienced players.

IGP Islamabad also appreciated DIG Security Rana Umar Farooq for recognizing the children's abilities and bringing their talent to light.

He assured the family that Islamabad Police would take all possible practical measures to encourage and support the young chess player. Efforts would also be made to highlight Abdul Rehman's talent through the Pakistan Chess Federation, relevant organizations and other forums. Islamabad Police would arrange professional chess coaching and financial assistance to support his development and participation in chess competitions.

Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry expressed confidence that Abdul Rehman would one day make his parents and the country proud. He said that inviting gifted children to his office was aimed at encouraging, supporting and providing them with opportunities to develop their abilities.

LPG Price Drops In Karachi After Ship Docks At Port

● Households and small businesses get relief as gas rates fall by Rs100 per kilogram, with more cuts possible if supply stays steady

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI



LPG price drops in Karachi after a ship carrying gas reached the port. The fall of Rs100 per kilogram has brought some comfort to people who were tired of rising fuel bills.

Before this change, the retail rate stood at around Rs550 per kilogram. It has now come down to about Rs450 per kilogram.

The new stock has helped ease the shortage in the market. When supply improves, prices usually become more stable, and this seems to be the case here.

Sellers say more relief may follow. If gas keeps arriving without delay, the rate could fall further in the coming days.

Not long ago, the situation looked much worse. LPG had climbed to Rs600 per kilogram in Karachi. The jump came after supplies from Iran were suspended, which left the market short of gas.

That sharp rise hit ordinary families hard. Many homes depend on LPG for daily cooking, especially in areas where pipeline gas is not available.

Small businesses also felt the pressure. Roadside food stalls, small restaurants and tea shops use LPG every day, and higher gas costs cut into their already thin profits.

For now, the lower price is a welcome step. A drop of Rs100 may look small on paper, but for a household with a tight budget, it makes a real difference each month.

Still, the future depends on steady supply. If shipments are delayed again or imports face new problems, prices could rise once more.

Consumers hope the relevant authorities will keep a close eye on the market. They also want strict checks so that no dealer charges more than the fixed rate.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State / SAPM on Digital Media Fahd Haroon with the head of the visiting Turkish delegation, Prof. Ferhat Pirinççi, Deputy Head of Communications at the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Dr. İrfan Neziroİlu, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Pakistan, Ms. Ambreen Jan, Chairperson PEMRA, and other members of the Turkish delegation and Pakistani officials.

Cost of digital nano loans cut sharply



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has reduced the maximum cost the lenders can charge for digital nano-loans, lowering the annual percentage rate (APR) cap from 274 per cent to 90pc for new borrowers and 70pc for repeat borrowers.

The measure aims to strengthen borrower safeguards and promote responsible lending practices.

The SECP is also working on a digital repository of nano-loan borrowers that would allow lenders to check a borrower's existing loans before approving further credit. If a borrower is struggling to repay, other lenders could take that into account and exercise caution before lending more.

The SECP has issued circular no. 26 of 2026, amending its earlier circular no. 12 of 2024 to rationalise the maximum permissible APR on digital nano-loans. The revised requirements apply to loans of up to Rs50,000, with a maximum repayment period of 90 days.

The new limits translate to a maximum daily cost of about 0.2466pc of the loan amount for a new borrower and 0.1918pc for a repeat borrower, which amounts to approximately Rs24.66 and Rs19.18 per day, respectively, on a Rs10,000 loan.

Lint price gap hits record Rs3,000 per maund

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistan's cotton sector faces an unprecedented quality crisis, widening the price gap between low- and high-grade lint to a historic Rs3,000-plus per maund. Meanwhile, national cotton arrivals rose 5.66 per cent year on year to 5.13 million bales by Nov 15.

According to the fortnightly report issued by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) on Wednesday, ginning factories across the country received 5,131,174 bales up to Nov 15, compared with 4,856,505 bales in the corresponding period last year, an increase of 274,669 bales.

However, arrivals during the first half of November slowed to 388,544 bales, down from 419,249 bales in the same fortnight last year, signalling that the season is entering its concluding phase.

Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsanul Haq noted that abnormal temperature spikes and environmental pollution from sugarcane cultivation in traditional cotton zones have severely degraded fibre quality this year, sharply restricting the availability of high-grade lint for domestic textile mills.

Because of this quality gap, domestic lint prices are currently between Rs15,500 and Rs18,500 per maund, marking the first time in the country's history that a quality-based price differential exceeding Rs3,000 has emerged. Meanwhile, superior-grade Balochistan cotton has surged to Rs19,300 per maund.

Sajid Mahmood, Head of the Technology Transfer Department at the Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) in Multan, corroborated the impact of adverse weather, explaining that temperature fluctuations have compromised critical fibre characteristics, particularly staple length and strength.

While market prices have remained relatively stable amid steady but limited trading, Mahmood emphasised that quality variations are strongly influencing textile mills' purchasing decisions.

EY Consortium Signs Pact For Karachi, Lahore Airports

● Private Sector To Bring Over Five Hundred Million Dollar Investment Each Airport

MUDASSER IQBAL

ISLAMABAD



lahore

The Privatisation Commission and a consortium led by Ernst & Young (EY) Middle East on Thursday signed a financial advisory services agreement (Fasa) for the outsourcing of Karachi and Lahore airports.

In August, the commission had approved the appointment of a financial adviser for the outsourcing of both airports, mentioning a "consortium led by EY-Parthenon as the top-ranked interested party".

It also constituted a negotiation committee to finalise the Fasa with the successful consortium.

"The Privatisation Commission and a consortium led by EY Middle East signed a Fasa today in Islamabad for the outsourcing of Jinnah International Airport, Karachi and Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore," according to Thursday's press release issued by the commission.

"The transactions envisage bringing in private sector expertise for the operation, management, commercial development and optimisation of both airports through a concession/management contract," the commission underlined.

Under the Fasa, the EY Middle East-led consortium would provide "comprehensive transaction advisory services, including technical, financial, legal, environmental and commercial expertise, to support structuring and implementation of the transactions in accordance with international best practices through a transparent, competitive and market-driven process".

The commission termed the signing an "important milestone" in the government's privatisation programme.

The press release said the signing reflected the government's commitment to "enhancing efficiency, service quality and long-term sustainability of both airports through private sector participation while ensuring transparency, competitiveness and value for the people of Pakistan".

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Privatisation Commission Chairman Muhammad Ali, along with senior officials of the commission, witnessed the signing ceremony.

The EY team was represented by Andre Olivenca of EY International and Zeeshan Hussain, the statement added.

In December 2022, the government, under the premiership of Shehbaz Sharif, decided to outsource the management of the Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports under a public-private partnership.

Earlier this year, the outsourcing operation for these airports shifted from a government-to-government (G2G) mode to an open bidding process due to high investor interest, aiming for transparency and fair competition.

Both Karachi and Lahore airports are expected to attract over $500 million each in fresh investment.

In October, PM Shehbaz also approved the ex¬¬pansion of Allama Iqbal Inter¬na-tional Airport and Jinnah International Airport to improve facilities for passengers.

SECP Slashes Mobile App Loan Rate Cap To 90% From 274%

● New digital nano-lending rules also set a lower 70 percent ceiling for repeat borrowers and ban hidden charges

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The SECP slashes mobile app loan rates in a major move to protect borrowers in Pakistan. The regulator has cut the maximum yearly rate from 274 percent to 90 percent, Mettis Global reported on November 18.

The change comes through revised digital nano-lending rules. These rules aim to make small online loans fairer and easier to understand.

Repeat borrowers get even better terms. For them, the ceiling is only 70 percent a year. Lenders must apply this lower rate automatically, so borrowers do not need to ask for it.

The cap covers markup and every other loan-related fee. This means lenders cannot add extra charges to push the real cost higher.

There is another safeguard. The total cost a borrower pays, apart from the original amount, cannot go above the principal itself.

Loan size is limited as well. A nano-loan can be up to Rs50,000 and can run for a maximum of 90 days.

A borrower can also hold only so much debt. The combined nano-loans from non-bank finance companies cannot exceed Rs100,000.

The rules close some old loopholes too. Lenders can no longer compound the cost, and they cannot roll over a loan automatically.

If a borrower asks for an extension, the lender must share a fresh cost disclosure first. This helps people see exactly what they will pay before they agree.

Borrowers also get some breathing room. Late charges can start only after three days have passed since the loan's maturity date.

Lenders now have a short deadline. They have 15 days to update their products and documents. They must then file a compliance certificate within 30 days.

Many people in Pakistan use mobile loan apps for quick cash. Until now, high rates and unclear fees left many of them struggling to repay. The new limits should reduce that burden and bring more clarity to the market.

Used medical equipment traders warn of closures over tougher licensing rules

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistan's pre-owned medical equipment industry has urged the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to reconsider recently introduced restrictions, warning that the new requirements could threaten thousands of small businesses and increase healthcare costs across the country.

The Pakistan Pre-Owned Medical Devices Association (PPMDA) has called for an immediate review of regulations governing the local refurbishment of used medical devices, arguing that the measures could make it increasingly difficult for small traders to continue operating. The demand was raised during a consultative meeting attended by PPMDA President Ikramullah Khan and Executive Committee members Khalid Rafiq Chaudhry, Masroor Ahmed Khan, Abdul Wahab Rafiq, Abdul Rehman Nawab, Tahir Jaleel, Asif Zaidi and Abid Mahmood.

The Association urged DRAP to revisit the rules in consultation with industry representatives and other small business stakeholders, stressing that thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) rely on the pre-owned medical equipment trade for their livelihoods.



Tobacco-Leaf Purchasing Market Faces Serious Gaps In Farmer Protection Rules

● A new IPOR study of 1,200 farmers shows weak compliance with PTB rules, low prices and risky cash deals

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The tobacco-leaf purchasing market in Pakistan has serious gaps, according to a new study by the Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR). The study says many buyers are not following the rules set by the Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB).

The report is titled Assessment of Tobacco-Leaf Production, Marketing and Purchasing Practices in Pakistan. It surveyed 1,200 tobacco farmers in Swabi, Mardan and Charsadda. The team looked at buying deals, prices, payments and rule compliance.

PTB rules say buyers must follow the government's weighted average price. This protects farmers from unfair rates. Companies and dealers must also meet their announced buying quotas, including any extra quantity PTB assigns.

The field results show a different picture. About 45% of farmers had no written agreement before planting. Another 52% sold their crop to buyers with whom they had no written deal.

Prices also varied a lot. Farmers selling to multinational companies got PKR 720 per kilogram on average. Other companies paid PKR



559, while dealers paid only PKR 471.

Among farmers who struggled to sell outside formal deals, 85% were offered less than the official PTB price.

Payment methods raised more worries. Among farmers in non-contracted deals, 52% were paid in cash, and 36% were paid on the spot. In many cases, tobacco was bought directly without reaching buying depots.

This creates a parallel grey system outside PTB oversight. It also makes tracking the leaf very hard.

The timing matters. The government is working to stop illicit tobacco trade. Gaps at the start of the supply chain can let tobacco leaf slip into undocumented and illegal channels.

IPOR Executive Director Tariq Junaid said the real problem is weak compliance. He explained that trading outside formal deals through third-party buyers leaves farmers uncertain and at risk of getting less than the PTB price. He called for stronger enforcement of existing rules.

The study also found that 62% of farmers want more purchasing agreements or higher buying quotas from multinational companies. This shows a clear wish for a clear and regulated system.

Junaid added that buyers must be more accountable. He said stronger oversight of quotas and easier access to formal agreements are key to protecting farmers and keeping the market fair.

The main recommendation is simple: follow the current PTB laws more strictly. Better accountability, traceable transactions and a transparent market would protect both farmers and government revenue.

A Deeply Religious Yet Godless Society



By Malik Muslim Raza Awan

Fatima Asghar was thirteen when she died. Police say she had been working at the official residence of a senior FIA officer in Islamabad. Her death remains under investigation.

In Islamabad, the Domestic Workers Act prohibits anyone under sixteen from working in a household in any capacity. Fatima was three years below that minimum. How did a thirteen-year-old come to work in an official residence in the city from which Pakistan is governed? Who was supposed to notice, and who had the authority to do something about it?

How many girls are working behind closed doors?

Islamabad's 2023–24 survey estimated that 15,180 children aged five to seventeen were in child labour across the capital territory. Among girls aged twelve and thirteen, 1.9 percent were in child labour. The survey groups those two ages together and covers different kinds of work, so it gives us no separate count of thirteen-year-old girls employed in private homes. About one in five children in child labour in the capital territory reported abuse at work.

Across Pakistan's four provinces and Islamabad, surveys conducted between 2019 and 2024 add up to about 8.6 million children in child labour, including about 6.6 million in hazardous work. Those estimates come from different survey years. Worldwide, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF estimated that nearly 138 million children were in child labour in 2024, including 54 million in hazardous work.

What Rs30,000 a month asks of a father

Imagine a father earning Rs30,000 a month. The electricity bill is due, there is barely enough flour left in the house, and he needs petrol or bus fare to get to work tomorrow. He can ask the grocer for another week. He can put off buying shoes. A doctor's fee and a trip to the pharmacy can undo whatever arrangements he has made. Even a wedding in the family leaves him wondering whether he can afford to go and how he will explain his absence if he stays home.

Then someone offers his son work at a mechanic's shop. Someone else says his daughter can earn a little cleaning houses. A father who once imagined seeing his children finish school begins to count what each of them might bring home. He tells himself the boy will learn a trade and the girl may get a meal where she works. After enough evenings spent wondering how to feed them, he can barely afford to think beyond the next one.

This is one of the cruellest things poverty does to a parent. It makes him count how much it costs to feed the children he loves, then count on those same children to feed the family. When his son brings home his first wages, he may feel relief before he feels anything else. There is flour in the house again. By morning, the boy is expected back at the workshop.



Two childhoods on the same street

Across Pakistan, one child leaves home with a schoolbag while another opens the shutters of the workshop where the first child's family gets its motorcycle repaired. A mother pays for her daughter's tuition while a girl of the same age washes dishes in her kitchen. One girl is asked what she wants to become. The other is asked why she is taking so long.

Sometimes we say the girl is like one of the family. Would we let one of our own children miss school to do her work? Would we expect our own daughter to spend the night in an employer's house? The girl's father may sincerely thank us for giving her work. The money will buy dinner. What could she safely say, though, if the people she needed to complain about were the people her family depended on for her wages?

Whose cry do we answer?

At school, many of us heard the story of Muhammad bin Qasim coming to the rescue after a woman cried out for help. I question the certainty with which that story was taught. There was little room to ask where history ended and legend began. Yet the lesson we were expected to learn was plain. When someone cries out against injustice, those with the power to help should answer. Today, we can hear a mechanic call a boy for a spanner every week and ask only when our motorcycle will be ready.

A wage tells us little about how free a worker is. Can she refuse a task? Can she go home? Can she report mistreatment without fearing what will happen to her family? When someone is compelled to work and prevented from leaving, we have to speak plainly about forced labour. Pakistan's Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labour and guarantees free and compulsory education from five to sixteen. Those protections have to reach the children whose workplaces are somebody else's homes.

What it takes to bring a child back to school

Tell the father on Rs30,000 to take his children out of work, and he has every right to ask how he will feed them tomorrow. A family can feel the loss of those wages by dinner. Support has to reach the household while the children return to class. A girl who has missed years of lessons needs a way to afford the journey to school, the supplies she needs and the help to catch up.

Households that can afford to hire adults should pay adults to do the work. Islamabad's authorities should explain how they check for underage employment in private and official residences and how a child can report abuse in confidence. They should also find out how many girls under sixteen are working in homes across the capital and whether those girls are attending school.



By Ghazi Salahuddin

Cracks in the family



What is the truth about the family in Pakistan, in a general sense? I don't know if I'm asking the right question, but I'm concerned about a society that seems to be falling apart, and this turmoil is often attributed to the breakdown of our traditional family values.

We have seen reports in recent weeks that portray the plight of our women in their struggle for more autonomy and for a life of dignity. In many such cases, it is their own family that stands in the way. Does that mean that the traditional family is unable to evolve to be able to protect its women in a changing society?

Actually, these thoughts have been prompted by specific cases of violence against women as well as violent deaths of members of a family, including little children, that looked like a collective suicide. There is also ample evidence of mental health issues in middle-class households that are afflicted with economic and emotional deprivation. A large number of people feel isolated and abandoned by whatever support system that a society is expected to provide.

As I suggested at the outset, I do not have the expertise to present a credible analysis of the social conditions that I find alarming. I have still picked this topic because I see little concern on the part of the rulers to take any notice of a crisis that, I dread, is morphing into a national disaster.

I do not intend to assemble together many stories of violent crimes, mainly affecting women, to verify a surge in social disarray. It is there, in the air. But let me refer to just two high-profile cases that have created a buzz. In both cases, smart, graceful and professionally accomplished young women were murdered. And the most significant feature of the crimes was that they were killed in their own houses and, allegedly, their husbands were involved.

Yes, I am talking about Rabia Ahsan and Hina Javed. You may have seen their faces a number of times in the mainstream as well as on social media. Rabia Ahsan was a well-known TV anchor, and only a week ago, she was shot dead in her home in Rawalpindi. Her husband was arrested by the police as a suspect.

There are bound to have been endless conversations about this murder in living rooms, on dinner tables and in intimate gatherings across different locales. It would be interesting to get some idea of the opinions that must have been expressed. Would someone have said that a working woman does not a happy family make? In some places, they may have discussed the nature and problems of gender equality in Pakistan.

The story of the other victim of violence is more complex and though the incident took place in late August, the total picture has not really been revealed. Hina Javed was a digital media expert and was found murdered and tortured in her apartment, also in Rawalpindi.

Initially, the police detained her husband, father-in-law and a domestic servant. But the Crime Control Department (CCD) of Punjab later cleared the husband and father-in-law for lack of evidence. Hina's family has disputed the husband's exoneration and has taken certain legal steps to get, as they claim, justice for Hina.

There are, of course, other stories that have not been talked about as widely. I had detected elements of a detective story in the murder of a young man by his own elder brother who had secretly returned from Saudi Arabia. This happened in Gujrat last month. The motive was a share in property, which did not appear to be of much value.

Now, there has always been a lot of talk about how our society has an edge over Western societies that supposedly generate moral degradation and individualism. Is there a touch of romanticism in this belief? But the institution of the family is certainly a bulwark against the kind of alienation that individualism breeds. Besides, the new emphasis on wellness has underlined the value of strong relationships.

It is possible to argue that the concept of gender equality and the fundamental human rights of women should dictate meaningful amendments to what we consider our family values. In our traditional segments of society, empowerment of women is seen as a sinful Western idea. Various other realities have emerged in the inescapable process of social change. One example: caring for aged parents is an imperative in our traditional family structure. But with grown-up children of countless well-to-do families settled abroad, this is not possible.

Finally, however, it is the status of the young women that is not yet synchronised in our family system. It is surprising that our traditional leaders, potentially obscurantists in their minds, have not lifted a finger against the practice of 'honour killing'. There is no end to incidents of 'karo kari' taking place even in urban communities. It is the family that turns against its own child.



By Dr Naazir Mahmood

The many lives of development



Muhammad Nazar Memon's autobiography in Sindhi, 'Jakhorh Jaari Aa' (The Struggle Continues), offers an account of a Pakistani development professional whose career has taken him from the uncertainties of early employment to the complicated worlds of education, international development, humanitarian assistance and community welfare.

I have often wondered why Pakistan, a country overflowing with ambitious development plans, produces so little development commensurate with its ambitions. Governments announce programmes, donors finance interventions, consultants prepare reports and officials attend conferences, yet the distance between a polished policy document and a village without functioning schools or basic healthcare remains stubbornly large. Memon's experiences provide an opportunity to examine that distance through the life of someone who spent decades trying to narrow it.

The memoir follows a career shaped less by a predetermined ambition than by changing circumstances, institutional opportunities and an apparently persistent desire to remain useful. Its early chapters take readers through education, unemployment, banking and the uncertain beginnings of professional life. Subsequent chapters trace Memon's association with international organisations, including Unicef, and development initiatives focused on health, education, social mobilisation and rural poverty.

The title deserves attention. The Sindhi word 'jakhorh' conveys sustained effort, struggle and perseverance. Unlike the language of achievement favoured by corporate memoirs, it suggests something unfinished. The struggle continues because the problems that prompted it have not disappeared. That is a more convincing premise than the familiar autobiographical promise that determination inevitably produces triumph.

Memon's account begins in a Pakistan where education could open doors but could not guarantee employment. His movement through early professional uncertainty, including banking, reflects a generation that entered the labour market before development became a substantial employment sector. The contrast between conventional employment and the more demanding responsibilities of social development gradually becomes one of the memoir's defining themes.

A particularly interesting dimension is the role of chance. Careers are often reconstructed retrospectively as orderly progressions towards inevitable destinations. In reality, they frequently depend on unexpected encounters, sympathetic colleagues and opportunities that appear almost accidentally. Memon's professional journey appears to acknowledge this less flattering but more realistic understanding of success.

The expansion of development organisations in Pakistan during the late 20th century provides the broader setting. International agencies acquired considerable influence over the country's education, health, population and social-welfare policies. They brought resources, expertise and organisational practices that domestic institutions often lacked. They also introduced a development vocabulary in which communities became beneficiaries, social problems became projects and progress became measurable through indicators.

Memon's work with Unicef provides a window into this changing landscape. His recollections touch upon community-level programmes, administrative responsibilities and efforts to connect institutional objectives with local realities. These experiences expose a familiar contradiction: development organisations increasingly recognised the importance of community participation while remaining accountable primarily to governments and donors. Participation, after all, is easy to praise and considerably harder to practise.

The memoir's references to education and health programmes are especially revealing. Pakistan's social indicators have long suffered not simply from inadequate resources but from the uneven functioning of institutions. Schools can be built without producing learning; health facilities can be established without delivering reliable treatment. Effective development requires more than infrastructure. It demands competent administration, social trust, political commitment and continuity.

Memon's professional movement across Pakistan also reminds readers that the country cannot be understood through Islamabad alone. His experiences connected with Peshawar, Karachi and rural Sindh suggest how profoundly geography shapes opportunity. A policy that appears straightforward in a federal office may become complicated by local hierarchies, fragile public institutions and competing interests.

His association with Afghan refugee-related work introduces another dimension. Humanitarian assistance operates at the intersection of compassion, politics and international power. Refugees are not merely recipients of aid. They are people whose lives have been disrupted by decisions frequently made far beyond their control. The administrative machinery established to assist them must consequently negotiate between human need and political circumstance. Such experiences give Memon's story significance beyond an individual professional record.

It was around the middle of these recollections that I found myself thinking about the development professionals I have encountered over the years. Some possessed an impressive command of institutional vocabulary, but surprisingly little understanding of the people their programmes were intended to serve. Others, less articulate and rarely celebrated, understood that effective development depended upon listening patiently, negotiating differences and returning repeatedly to problems that refused to disappear.

Memon's memoir invites readers to consider which kind of professional ultimately makes a difference. His international experiences add another layer. Accounts of visits and assign-



By Farhan Bokhari

Elite gone wild

The case of a young man killed by a lion on a farmhouse outside Lahore says much about Pakistan's fast-growing culture of the elite and their visible rejection of the writ of the state.

The case emerged last Thursday during a visit by a 'TikToker' to a farm outside Lahore to film a 'pet' lion kept in captivity. The circumstances reportedly suggest an unexpected attack by the lion on a low-paid employee at the farm by the 'out-of-control' animal, which inflicted lethal injuries upon the victim.

Two aspects of this horrible incident must immediately raise anxiety over this terrible event. First, the attack was initially reported to the police as a case of a dog bite before investigators quickly learned of a lion attack at the centre of the crime. But the second aspect must trigger powerful questions about a possible attempt to hush up the case, as the suspect was 'forgiven by the family members of the victim'.

The matter must not be put to rest simply on the basis of the two parties the owner of the farmhouse and the family members of the victim reaching an out-of-court settlement. The seriousness of this incident requires the government prosecutor to immediately follow up with an urgent court appeal, seeking the arrest of the farmhouse owner to prevent his escape and avoid prosecution. Simultaneously, the government of Punjab must also closely examine provisions such as the suspect's compliance with the requirement for a licence to hold wild animals such as lions or other wild cats. For too long, social media posts have been abuzz with accounts of visibly influential citizens playfully spending time with their so-called pets, mostly big cats. Almost all such cases involve keeping the wild cats either on urban farms or within very spacious urban upper-class neighbourhoods.

Besides, it is also imperative to look into the manner and extent of payment made for the import of wild creatures, and whether the payments were legitimately earned after settling the required income tax dues.

The case must immediately prompt a nationwide search for other so-called farms, established on the mere pretext of flashing wealth through mechanisms including wild animals kept as pets. On and off over the years, cases of prominent politicians have come to light on this front too. The people in question have bragged about paying many thousands of US dollars for stuffed lions brought from Africa, now prominently displayed in their affluent homes or farmhouses among other trophies as evidence of affluence.

This case must highlight the matter of Pakistan's capture by its elite. In past decades, Pakistan's elite have increasingly taken charge of vital aspects of authority of the state. In the extreme, such elites have built up parallel authority structures that have challenged the writ of the state.

As successive governments have themselves abdicated their responsibilities once at the centre of statecraft, wealthy citizens and their paraphernalia have emerged as alternative power centres. It was therefore hardly surprising that the lion attack was initially reported as an attack by a dog. Although it is impossible to tell the sheer number of past cases shoved under the carpet in a similar manner as attempted first last Thursday, Pakistan must wake up to the overall and very powerful reality of the elite capturing the state.

Meanwhile, the matter of how the payment for the purchase of the lion was made sits at the centre of a powerful challenge that has weakened the foundations of Pakistan. For too long, Pakistan has failed to clamp down hard enough on rampant tax evasion that has vigorously jolted the country's very foundations.

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Top UN court finds Myanmar committed state-sponsored genocide against Muslim Rohingya



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ROHINGYA

The highest United Nations court ruled on Thursday that thousands of killings and widespread sexual violence by Myanmar's security forces against the Rohingya Muslim minority population in 2017 amounted to state-sponsored genocide.

The decision, seven years after the case was filed by predominantly Muslim Gambia, marked only the fourth time since the Nazi Holocaust that an international court ruled that the legal threshold to prove genocide had been met. It was the first time the court held a state responsible for genocide.

"The court finds that Myanmar's security forces killed thousands of Rohingya civilians, perpetrated widespread acts of sexual violence as well as acts of extreme violence against children and attacked fleeing Rohingya," presiding Judge Yuji Iwasawa said in a reading of the decision.

The panel found "that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has committed genocide against the Rohingya group in Northern Rakhine State."

Myanmar's government did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

Judges found that Myanmar's military carried out mass executions of men and boys, committed widespread rape and sexual violence against Rohingya women and burned or razed hundreds of villages during so-called clearance operations. The military actively spread hate speech targeting the Rohingya population, they said.

The court's ruling is final and cannot be appealed. Genocide has rarely been established in international courts, largely because prosecutors must prove a specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

The decision by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or World Court, is expected to have repercussions far beyond Myanmar, including for South Africa's 2023 case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

The first major decision by the court in more than a decade on the application of the 1948 Genocide Convention will be pored over by legal experts for clues to how the bench assessed state responsibility in the alleged commission of international crimes.

Both Israel and Myanmar deny genocide and say their forces responded legitimately to attacks by armed groups.

In a major legal victory for Gambia, the court found the state responsible for genocide resulting from a military offensive that drove at least 700,000 Muslim Rohingya from Buddhist-majority Myanmar.

A panel of 15 judges said "the only reasonable inference that can explain Myanmar's actions is an intention to destroy a substantial part of the protected group namely the Rohingya population in Northern Rakhine state," meeting the legal threshold for genocide.

The court said Myanmar had an obligation to compensate the Rohingya for the violations it had committed, to be determined at a later date.



BANGKOK: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani receiving souvenir at the Save The Children Policy Dialogue.

Historic Xi-Trump-Putin Meeting: Xi Calls For Elimination Of Nuclear Weapons

● Xi Jinping, Trump and Putin Hold Historic Trilateral Meeting, Chinese President Calls for Nuclear Disarmament

WEB DESK

BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for a world free of nuclear weapons, urging their complete elimination and a ban on their possession.

The remarks came during a trilateral meeting between US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Shenzhen, China, on Wednesday, where the three leaders stressed their shared responsibility for global peace and security.

Addressing the meeting, Xi said nuclear weapons should be completely banned and destroyed to build a nuclear-free world.



He also called on China, Russia and the United States to act as partners and friends, urging them to encourage parties involved in conflicts to engage in dialogue and resolve disputes through political means.

US President Donald Trump said peace could never be achieved by wasting opportunities for peace, adding that the three countries were in a significant position to negotiate reductions in nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said constructive cooperation between Russia, China and the United States could help strengthen global stability.

UN could soon be leaderless as race to succeed Guterres stalls

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON

With under two months left in Antonio Guterres' term as UN secretary-general and no agreement on a successor, the world body faces a once-unthinkable possibility: it could soon have no leader.

The United Nations Security Council is expected to hold another secret ballot this week to pick the next UN chief, but after eight rounds of voting, the council's five veto-wielding members have not agreed on a successor. Officials are scrambling to draft contingency plans in case no one is at the helm when Guterres steps down on December 31.

The failure to pick a successor, analysts say, is partly the result of a long, opaque selection process built on secret ballots that exemplifies the slowness and gridlock the next secretary-general will be expected to cure.

The council required six rounds to select Guterres in 2016.

More fundamentally, observers say, the stalemate exposes a decline in the veto-wielding powers' willingness to compromise, exacerbated by a US administration that increasingly sidelines the UN and is distracted by its own foreign entanglements.

"What is worrying is how late in the year this is and what it means for pulling together a team," said Shamala Kandiah Thompson, executive director of Security Council Report, a think tank that monitors the council.

Pakistani Culture Shines At Perth Basant Festival 2026

● Rich Display Of Pakistani Traditions, Music And Cultural Heritage Promotes Community Harmony

STAFF REPORTER/ WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



The Perth Multicultural Basant Festival 2026, organised by the Pakistan Youth Association of Western Australia, concluded successfully, attracting more than 15,000 participants. The remarkable attendance made the festival one of the major cultural gatherings organised by the Pakistani community in Western Australia. Renowned Pakistani singer Humaira Arshad was among the major attractions of the event, delivering an outstanding performance that received an enthusiastic response from the audience.

Held at the prominent Langley Park in Perth, the festival showcased the richness and diversity of Pakistan's cultural heritage. Colourful kites, traditional attire, authentic Pakistani cuisine, musical performances, cultural displays and specially arranged recreational activities for children remained among the key attractions. Besides Australians of Pakistani origin, individuals and families from various nationalities and cultural backgrounds also attended the festival in large numbers, reflecting the spirit of multiculturalism and community engagement.

A major highlight of the festival was the captivating performance by renowned Pakistani singer Humaira Arshad. Through her melodious voice and popular songs, she enthralled the audience and received widespread appreciation. Her performance added to the vibrancy of the occasion and provided attendees with an opportunity to experience the richness of Pakistani music.

The festival was organised with the objective of strengthening the connection of overseas Pakistanis with their national identity, cultural traditions and heritage, while promoting Pakistan's positive image within Australia's multicultural society. The event provided an effective platform to highlight different aspects of Pakistani culture and introduce the country's traditions, hospitality and cultural diversity to other communities.

Family home of former Bangladesh leader Yunus set on fire



WEB DESK

CHITTAGONG

Arsonists set fire to the family home of Bangladesh's former leader and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus in the port city of Chittagong, police said Thursday.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the blaze, which took place during a period of heightened violence in the country ahead of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's planned return in December.

"Miscreants set fire to the eastern side of the house. The area was being used as a storeroom," Chittagong Metropolitan Police spokesman Aminur Rashid said, adding there were no casualties in the blaze, which took place late on Wednesday.

Yunus, who led an interim government after a student-led uprising ousted Hasina in 2024, has faced hostility from supporters of her now-banned Awami League party.

Grameen Bank, set up by Yunus, says 22 of its branches have been subject to arson attacks in the last few days.

Skyscraper In Riyadh Damaged As Houthi Missile Attack Hits Capital

● Witnesses say windows were blown out across several floors of the Public Investment Fund Tower, as Saudi Arabia reports fresh attacks from Yemen's Houthis

NEWS DESK

RIYADH

A skyscraper in Riyadh was damaged on Thursday, just as Saudi Arabia said it faced fresh attacks from Yemen's Houthi group. The building houses the headquarters of the country's sovereign wealth fund.

Early in the morning, journalists from AFP in the capital heard a loud blast. Soon after, civil defence officials warned people about possible danger. A few minutes later, they said the danger had passed.

The Saudi-led military coalition said it had stopped a missile fired by the Houthis towards Riyadh. Coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki said early checks pointed to



falling debris. He added that teams were still counting the material damage.

Later, witnesses said the Public Investment Fund Tower had been hit. One source said the front of the building was damaged across several floors. Two others confirmed it.

The tower is 80 storeys and 385 metres high. It is the tallest building in the King Abdullah Financial District. The area is a symbol of Saudi Arabia's big economic plans. It is home to the stock exchange and offices of global firms such as Goldman Sachs.

The fund is led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. It manages more than $900 billion in assets. It also plays a key role in helping the kingdom move away from its reliance on oil. The latest fighting could put those plans at risk.

The coalition also said it stopped five ballistic missiles aimed at the southern region, which shares a border with Yemen.

Attacks have grown in recent weeks. The Iran-backed Houthis have hit airports, energy sites and military bases. In October, an attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh killed 14 people and wounded hundreds. Flights were stopped for two weeks.

Saudi Arabia has answered with air strikes on Houthi areas in Yemen. On Thursday, Houthi media said another strike hit a shoe and textile factory in Sanaa.

Afghan Freedom Front rejects Taliban leader's power-sharing offer

WEB DESK

AFGHANISTAN

The Afghan Freedom Front (AFF) has rejected Taliban supreme leader Sheikh Hibatullah Akhundzada's offer inviting opponents to return to Afghanistan and share power, saying its struggle is aimed at securing freedom and equal rights for the Afghan people.

According to Afghan media, AFF leader General Yasin Zia dismissed the invitation, describing it as a consequence of mounting military pressure from resistance forces.

He said the Afghan Freedom Front was fighting to secure freedom, equality and the right of Afghan citizens to determine their own future.

General Zia said the movement's objective was not merely to participate in power but to ensure that the Afghan people had the authority to decide their country's political future.

He said the Afghan people must be allowed to determine their own system of governance and exercise their right to self-determination.

The response came after Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada invited opponents of his administration to return to Afghanistan and participate in power-sharing arrangements, according to Afghan media.

SHC allows Afghan medical students to continue their studies

WEB DESK

KJARACHI



Extending stay on the petitions filed by more than 30 Afghan students against the notice issued to them by the Dow University of Health Sciences in light of the orders given by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to send Afghan students studying at Pakistan's medical colleges back to their country until May 2027, the constitutional bench of the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday allowed the students to get on with their studies.

The students had moved the bench through Jibran Nasir Advocate and Iftikhar Shah Advocate.

Speaking on the occasion, Advocate Jibran said that his clients were the students of MBBS (final year). "They had got admissions in the programme under the Allama Iqbal Scholarships for Afghan citizens," he said, adding that the students had study visas with them.

The lawyer told the bench that the Dow University had provided a list of Afghan students to the police so that they could be expelled from the country in line with the PMDC orders.

Adnan Siddiqui pays tribute to Talat Hussain, recalls Pakistan's golden era of television

● Actor remembers veteran artists whose talent, craftsmanship helped put Pakistan's drama industry on international map

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Actor Adnan Siddiqui has paid tribute to legendary actor Talat Hussain, sharing a throwback photograph with him on Instagram and remembering an era that left a lasting impression on the country's entertainment industry.

Reflecting on the photograph, Siddiqui admitted that he could no longer recall the circumstances in which it was taken, but explained why it remained meaningful to him.

"I honestly don't remember where this photograph was taken, and that hardly matters. What matters is that I had the privilege of sharing the frame with the legendary Talat Hussain Sahib," he wrote.



The actor also looked back on the early years of his career, when he had the opportunity to work alongside some of the country's most respected names in television and film.

"I often feel that actors of my generation were incredibly fortunate. We had the opportunity to work alongside some of the finest directors, actors, and writers this country has ever produced, individuals whose talent, vision, dedication, and sheer craftsmanship played a pivotal role in putting Pakistan's television and drama industry on the international map," he said.

He went on to describe what distinguished those artists and the example they set for those who followed them.

"They were artists who believed in the craft, respected the art of storytelling, and, most importantly, set extraordinarily high standards for those who followed," he added.

Reflecting on the industry's present-day success, Siddiqui shared his thoughts on the influence of those who came before him.

"I genuinely believe the strong foundations they laid and the high standards they set are among the reasons our drama industry continues to flourish today, producing one blockbuster after another and earning recognition beyond imagination," he wrote.

Siddiqui also expressed how fortunate he felt to have been part of it. "Looking back, I realise how privileged we were to witness and be part of that era," he said.



Anne Hathaway's baby No. 3 gets a gender reveal from unexpected source

SHOWBIZ DESK

LOS ANGELES

Anne Hathaway has welcomed a baby girl, with The Devil Wears Prada 2 costume designer Molly Rogers revealing the sex of the actress's third child in a social media post.

Rogers shared the news through her Instagram Stories, congratulating the Oscar-winning actress on her latest addition. Alongside a photograph of a teddy bear dressed in a patchwork jumper and bucket hat, the designer wrote, "A baby girl!"

Hathaway, 44, has not personally confirmed the birth or publicly disclosed her newborn's sex. News of the arrival emerged earlier this week after the actress was spotted carrying a newborn in New York City.

The actress shares two sons, Jonathan, 10, and Jack, 6, with her husband, Adam Shulman. The couple, who married in 2012, announced in June that they were expecting their third child.

Speaking about her pregnancy in July, Hathaway described the experience as a blessing, acknowledging that conceiving in her 40s had not been something she took for granted. She also discussed the challenges of fertility and her previous miscarriage in 2015.

In a 2024 interview with Vanity Fair, Hathaway revealed that she had experienced a miscarriage while performing in an off-Broadway play that required her to portray childbirth onstage every night. She later explained that being open about her subsequent pregnancy was important to her because of the women who might be experiencing similar struggles.

During her third pregnancy, Hathaway continued promoting several upcoming projects, including The Devil Wears Prada 2, The Odyssey, The End of Oak Street and Verity.

In September, she told Entertainment Tonight that she planned to step away from the spotlight after the release of Verity on October 2 to spend time away from public appearances.

Hadi's secrets raise questions as Mahnoor senses trouble in Rutba

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Drama Rutba takes a tense turn as Hadi's growing closeness with Sheely and his unexplained behavior raise questions about his loyalty, while his pregnant wife Mahnoor begins sensing that he is hiding something from her.

Written by Umera Ahmed and directed by Haseeb Hassan, Rutba explores the connection between personal relationships, power, corruption and the challenges within the police system. Talha Chahour plays ASP Hadi, while Hiba Bukhari portrays his wife, Mahnoor. Mehwish Hayat appears as Sheely, whose presence has become a source of growing tension in their lives.

In the latest episode, Hadi appears increasingly troubled by his actions and the situation involving Sheely. His behavior suggests that he is struggling with guilt, while Mahnoor senses that something is wrong. Although she tries to support her husband, her pregnancy and his unexplained behavior leave her emotionally exhausted.

The episode also brings the mystery surrounding former ASP Feroz's death back into focus. His wife is still searching for answers and questions the claim that he died by suicide. Hadi takes an interest in the case and asks for the investigation file, despite facing resistance from those who would rather leave the matter alone. The conversation raises further questions about whether Feroz's death was properly investigated.

Meanwhile, Hadi remains uncomfortable with the gifts and favors coming from influential people. He makes it clear that he does not want such items accepted by his family without his permission. However, his own decisions and growing involvement with Sheely create a troubling contrast with the principles he once stood for.

With Mahnoor becoming increasingly aware that her husband is hiding something and the investigation into Feroz's death gaining attention again, Rutba has left its central characters facing difficult questions.



The coming episodes may reveal whether Hadi can repair his relationship with Mahnoor and uncover the truth behind the former officer's death.

Waseem Badami takes hilarious dig at Iqrar-ul-Hassan over friendship

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistani television host Waseem Badami leaves Iqrar-ul-Hassan laughing as he shares three funny signs of a sincere friend.

While talking about friendship, Waseem said that a sincere friend is someone who gets you into trouble with court visits, makes you face embarrassing situations and even changes your sleeping routine.

He further joked that if someone is used to waking up at 2pm, a true friend will make sure they get out of bed by 9am. His hilarious remarks had Iqrar laughing as he stood beside him.



Through his funny explanation, Waseem suggested that a sincere friend is not necessarily someone who always makes life easier. Instead, such a friend may drag you into unexpected situations, embarrass you and disturb your routine.

Iqrar's laughter added to the moment, making their friendly exchange even more entertaining.

The two anchors' humorous interaction showed their easy-going friendship and left viewers with a funny take on what it means to have a sincere friend.

From health battle to AI, Shafqat Amanat shares his thoughts

● Legendary singer speaks on his fight with multiple myeloma, exhorts those afflicted with disease not to lose hope

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Renowned Pakistani singer Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan has spoken about his battle with multiple myeloma, revealing that the disease was diagnosed at an early stage and that he began treatment in Karachi.



Speaking at a press conference in Karachi ahead of an upcoming mega concert, the singer said he decided to share his health condition publicly to raise awareness and encourage people facing similar challenges not to lose hope.

Ali explained that there were two main reasons behind disclosing his diagnosis: to reassure patients that they should not panic if diagnosed with the disease and to highlight that treatment is also available in Pakistan.

He appreciated the doctors, medical staff and hospital management involved in his treatment, acknowledging their efforts and professionalism.

Emphasising the importance of early diagnosis, the singer advised people not to ignore persistent pain or other unusual symptoms in their bodies.

"I have been fortunate that it was diagnosed at the right time. We started the treatment in Karachi," he said.

During the press conference, Ali also discussed the changing landscape of Pakistan's music industry and the importance of collaboration among musicians.

He said several leading musicians, including Manu, Gambhi, Ahsan, Shahid, Rahat, Asif Ali and Mikhail, had contributed their efforts to the upcoming concert, describing it as a one-of-a-kind musical experience.

Highlighting the need for artists to work together, he said collaboration had become increasingly important at a time when artificial intelligence was also making its way into music production, with people even releasing songs created through AI.

He further noted that musicians had worked hard to reshape familiar songs for the concert, giving audiences a refreshed musical experience.

Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan belongs to the Patiala Gharana tradition of music. He was the lead vocalist of the Pakistani pop rock band Fuzön until 2006 and is a prominent playback singer in the Pakistani television industry. The youngest son of noted classical vocalist Ustad Amanat Ali Khan, Ali started his musical training at the age of four under the tutelage of his uncle, Ustad Bade Fateh Ali Khan, who was widely regarded as the foremost exponent of Hindustani classical music in Pakistan.

Ali rose to prominence in both India and Pakistan with the lead single "Aankhon Ke Saagar" and the song "Khamaj" (also known as "Mora Saiyaan") from Fuzön's debut album, Saagar (2002).

Ainy Jaffri says kindness, not criticism, is the key to changing minds

● Actor discusses religious questioning, women's choices, marriage & importance of understanding differing perspectives

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Actor Ainy Jaffri believes that changing someone's behaviour requires love and compassion rather than criticism or judgement. Reflecting on the message of Dar-e-Nijaat, she spoke about the importance of communicating disagreements respectfully and allowing people the space to question ideas without feeling attacked.

In a recent interview, Jaffri discussed the lessons behind the drama and her views on religious interpretations, women's clothing, marriage and personal freedom.

Speaking about Dar-e-Nijaat, the actor explained what she believed viewers could take away from the drama. "What you can learn from the show is that you can change someone with love. That's the only way you can change someone."

She also addressed how people should approach others when they disagree with their choices. "I think what it teaches us is that we shouldn't offend each other. If you don't like what someone is wearing or doing, there's a certain way to go about things. You would say it lovingly, like Abu Bakr or his mom does," she said.



Another major part of the conversation centred on women's clothing, modesty and the scrutiny women faced over their appearance.

Jaffri questioned why society so frequently directed its frustrations towards women. "People don't know where to take out their frustration, so people go on the softer gender and put it on them and what they are wearing."

She also referred to the Quranic instruction for men to lower their gaze, questioning why the responsibility of modesty was so often placed on women. "People forget that it says in Quran to lower your gaze."

Expressing her frustration with the attention given to women's clothing, she added: "Why are people so concerned? You know when people question clothing, I don't understand it."

The discussion also turned to the hijab, religious interpretations and the extent to which personal choices should be influenced by family or society.

Jaffri recalled hearing different women's perspectives on wearing the hijab and raised questions about Austria's restrictions on headscarves for girls under the age of 14. She said she wanted to understand the reasoning behind such laws, particularly when questions of age, personal choice and parental influence were involved.

Dananeer Mobeen draws a real vs reel-life contrast as 'Hurmat' faces her mother's wrath



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani actress Dananeer Mobeen has highlighted the striking difference between her loving real-life bond with her mother and her character Hurmat's tense relationship with her on-screen mother in drama Hurmat, while sharing her thoughts on the art of acting.

Dananeer reshared a reel originally posted by Galaxy Lollywood, titled "Hurmat With Her Mother in a Parallel Universe". The video humorously compares a happy moment between Dananeer and her real-life mother with the tense scenes featuring Hurmat and her mother, Nafeesa, played by Uzma Hassan, in the drama.

Reacting to the reel, Dananeer reflected on how acting requires performers to portray emotions and situations they may never have experienced themselves. She explained that actors sometimes have to make unfamiliar experiences look completely believable, describing this ability as the true art of acting.

The actress also shared loving words for both her real-life mother and her on-screen mother. Calling her own mother her "forever love", she praised Uzma Hassan as an incredible co-star and appreciated her love for animals.

The post comes as Hurmat continues to attract attention for its intense family drama. Dananeer plays the title character, whose relationship with her mother has become increasingly strained following her changing attitude and growing involvement with Zeeshan.

In the recent episodes, Nafeesa confronts Hurmat over her choices and her growing closeness to Zeeshan. Their heated exchanges highlight the emotional distance between them, as Nafeesa struggles to make her daughter understand the consequences of her actions.

The latest developments have also divided viewers on social media. Many have expressed sympathy for Nafeesa, believing that she has been left struggling because of Hurmat's behavior. Some viewers have criticized Hurmat for the way she treats her mother and former fiance, Tabish, while others believe her difficult upbringing should also be considered before judging her actions.

Hania Aamir to lead Saim Sadiq's next film

WEB DESK

DUBAI

Most popular and bubbly actress of Lollywood Hania Aamir, is set to take the lead role in filmmaker Saim Sadiq's upcoming film, with shooting reportedly already underway.

Saim Sadiq, who previously earned recognition for directing Joyland, is returning with a new cinematic project featuring Hania in the lead role.

While details about the film's storyline, cast and release plans have yet to be revealed, further updates about the project are expected to emerge soon.

Hania Aamir is one of Pakistan's most popular actresses, known for her growing popularity among audiences.

She began her acting career with the film Janaan in 2016 and soon transitioned to television, where she appeared in dramas including Titli, Anaa, Ishqiya and Dil Ruba.

Her popularity grew significantly with Mere Humsafar, which introduced her to a wider international audience. She later starred in hit projects such as Mujhe Pyaar Hua Tha and Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum.

Alongside television, Hania has also appeared in films including Na Maloom Afraad 2, Parwaaz Hai Junoon and Parde Mein Rehne Do.

On the other end, Saim Sadiq is a Pakistani filmmaker and screenwriter who gained international recognition for his creative storytelling and work exploring social realities and human relationships.

He studied filmmaking and began building his career through short films, with Nice Talking to You among his early projects.

He later gained attention with Joyland, his debut feature film, which earned acclaim at international film festivals, including the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Jury Prize in the Un Certain Regard section.



Pakistan Tightens Grip On Rawalpindi Test As Sri Lanka Lose Five Wickets

● Visitors lose five wickets and still trail by 60 runs at lunch on day three in Rawalpindi

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Pakistan tightens grip on the second Test against Sri Lanka at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday. The visitors lost five wickets and still trailed by 60 runs at lunch on day three.

Sri Lanka reached 167 for five in their second innings. They are still behind and need a lot more runs to make Pakistan bat again.

On Wednesday, Pakistan's fast bowlers put the home side close to a series win. Sri Lanka ended the day at 74 for three.

Saqib Khan, Aamer Jamal and Razaullah took one wicket each. Their pace and discipline kept the visitors under pressure all day.

Pakistan had scored 325 in their first innings at Pindi Stadium. That gave them a big lead of 227 runs.

The lead came after Pakistan's bowlers bowled Sri Lanka out for just 98 on Tuesday. It was a poor batting show from the tourists.

At stumps on day two, Dhananjaya de Silva was on 24 and Pasindu Sooriyabandara was on 18. Sri Lanka still needed 153 runs to avoid an innings defeat.

Saqib struck early in the fourth over. He sent back Lahiru Udara for seven runs.

Razaullah then trapped the experienced Dinesh Chandimal leg-before without a run. It was a big blow for Sri Lanka.

The score fell to 39 for three when Kamindu Mendis was caught in the slips off Jamal. He made 16 runs.

Even so, Sri Lanka have not given up. Lahiru Kumara said the team still has batters who can fight.

He also said the way the two batters played in the last session gives the side hope.

For now, Pakistan hold the upper hand. A few quick wickets after lunch could end the match and seal the series.

Sri Lanka's Kumara acknowledged that his side had conceded too many runs in the final session of Pakistan's innings but remained hopeful of a response from the batters.

He said the team had confidence in its batting line-up and believed the players could perform better on the third day, adding that Pakistan's batters had played well against the plans Sri Lanka had devised.

Hesson, meanwhile, cautioned against reading too much into the contest so far, noting that six Pakistan players had played either their first or second Test.



Pakistan Shaheens begin ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars campaign against UAE on Friday

SPORTS DESK

DOHA

Defending champions Pakistan Shaheens will begin their campaign in the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026 against UAE on Friday, 20 November at the University of Doha for Science and Technology in Doha, Qatar.

The 50-over tournament, featuring eight teams, commenced today and will run until 29 November. The 15-member Pakistan Shaheens squad will be led by Abdul Samad.

Afghanistan 'A', Bangladesh 'A', Hong Kong and Sri Lanka 'A' are placed in Group A, while Pakistan Shaheens, India 'A', UAE and Nepal form Group B.

Following their opening fixture against UAE, Pakistan Shaheens will face India 'A' at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium on Sunday, 22 November. Shaheens will conclude their group-stage fixtures against Nepal at the same venue on Tuesday, 24 November.

The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals, scheduled to be played on 26 and 27 November, while the final will take place on Sunday, 29 November.

Talking to PCB Digital ahead of the tournament, head coach Ijaz Ahmed Jnr said: "Our focus has been on assessing the local conditions, particularly the pitches.



Pak players continue impressive performances in J-30 Pakistan World Jr Tennis C'ships

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani players continued their impressive performances, securing two places in the singles semi-finals and as many in the doubles semifinals of the J-30 Subh-e-Nau Pakistan World Junior Tennis Championships 2026 here at the PTF Tennis Complex on Wednesday.

In Singles, Zohaib Afzal Malik defeated fellow Pakistani Abdul Basit 6-4, 6-7(1), 6-2, while Ahtesham Humayun overcame Amir Mazari in a thrilling three-set encounter, winning 7-5, 6-7(4), 7-5.

In Doubles, Amir Mazari and Omar Jawad Malik defeated Ahtesham Humayun and M. Hassan Usmani 3-6, 6-3, (13-11), while Hamza Roman and Zohaib Afzal Malik secured their semi-final place with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Abdul Basit and Haziq Asim.

The participating countries include Russia, Hong Kong, China, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Serbia, Australia, Spain, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Japan and Pakistan.

Ms. Shahida Kauser Farooq, Chairperson of Subh-e-Nau and Tournament Director, visited the PTF Tennis Complex today to witness the ongoing championship matches and interact with the participating players.

Palestine Player Faces Racism Complaint From India Over Alleged Gesture

● India's football body asks the AFC to review the incident from the U-17 Asian Cup qualifier, while the player denies any racist intent

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI



The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has filed a complaint with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) against a Palestine player over an alleged racist gesture. The incident happened during India's 4-1 win in the Under-17 Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers.

The match was played on Tuesday in Group E. Videos on social media show the Palestinian player making a gesture towards India captain Dallalmoun Gangte. Many people believe it suggested that Gangte smelled bad.

The AIFF asked the AFC to look into the matter. It wants the AFC to check the match footage and take proper action under its rules.

In a statement on X, the AIFF called racism a very serious issue. It said such behaviour goes against the core values of football, which are respect, equality, fair play and sportsmanship.

Palestine midfielder Taha Soueidan has rejected the claims. He said he had no racist intent behind the gesture. He added that he went to Gangte after the match to explain his actions.

In an Instagram post, Soueidan said the gesture was a spontaneous reaction. He explained that he was uncomfortable because of the high humidity in Malaysia, which he is not used to.



Sixers Remain NBA's Clutch Kings After Late Threes Beat Magic

SPORTS DESK

PHILADELPHIA

The Sixers remain NBA's toughest closers in tight games after a 121-116 comeback win over the Magic on Wednesday, November 18, 2026.

The night did not start well for Philadelphia. Orlando came out hot from deep and built a 17-point lead in the first quarter.

The Magic kept shooting well all night. They made 19 of 38 three-pointers, which is 50 percent. That is usually enough to win, but not this time.

The Sixers refused to panic. They worked hard on defense and cut the gap step by step.

Jabari Walker gave them their first big lift. His corner three with 5:07 left put Philadelphia ahead 107-106.

Joel Embiid then made two free throws with less than four minutes to go. That gave the Sixers a 112-111 lead.

Orlando answered when Jalen Suggs hit a three. But VJ Edgecombe fired right back with a triple of his own, and Philadelphia led 114-112.

In the final two minutes, LeBron James and Anfernee Simons also hit shots from beyond the arc. Those shots sealed the win.

Embiid led the way with 26 points, 6 rebounds and 7 assists. James added 22 points and 6 assists.

Both stars had to carry a heavy load. Tyrese Maxey and Brown were out, so the team needed everyone to step up.

The win moves the Sixers to 13-3 this season. They are also a perfect 11-0 in games that were within five points with five minutes left.

That record shows how calm the team plays when pressure is high. They stay patient, trust each other and take the right shots.

For fans, this was a night to remember. The Sixers were down big, yet they never gave up.

Next, Philadelphia will face the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday, November 21, 2026. Another tough test is waiting.

If the team keeps closing games like this, the Sixers remain NBA's team to beat late in games.

Karachi Blues And Sialkot Blues Win On Final Day Of Quaid-E-Azam Gold Round

● Peshawar Blues stay on top of the table with 61 points as Multan, Sialkot Blues and Karachi Blues chase closely before round four

SPORTS REPORTER

KARACHI

Quaid-e-Azam Gold third round ended with wins for Karachi Region Blues and Sialkot Region Blues on the final day. Both teams ended their matches in strong style.

The fourth round of the Gold and Silver categories will begin on Saturday, 21 November.

Karachi Blues beat Islamabad Region by 256 runs at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. Islamabad were chasing 391 to win.

The chase never found its feet. Islamabad were bowled out for just 134 runs.

Mohammad Raza led the attack with four wickets for 37 runs. Mir Hamza supported him with three wickets for 36.

Earlier, Karachi Blues scored 378 in the first innings. Omair Bin Yousuf hit 148 and Mohammad Raza added 117. In the second innings, Abdullah Fazal made 153 before the side declared at 342 for five.

At Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Sialkot Blues beat FATA Region by 80 runs. FATA needed 385 to win.

FATA fought hard and reached 304 before being bowled out. Kashif Noor scored 107 and Fawad Arshad made 67.

Athar Mehmood took four wickets for Sialkot. Hasan Ali also took three important wickets.

Jepchirchir gets 3-year ban for doping

SPORTS DESK

NAIROBI

Reigning marathon world champion Peres Jepchirchir has been banned for three years for doping, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) said on Thursday, in the latest blow to the reputation of Kenyan athletics.

The highly decorated 33-year-old Jepchirchir, who also won Olympic gold in the Covid-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, was suspended after an out-of-competition sample showed traces of the banned blood booster EPO.

The AIU confirmed she had been given a full ban for three years from October 20. Two other Kenyan runners were banned. Veronica Loleo, half-marathon silver medallist at the World Road Running Championships in 2026, was given three years for the same offence.

And Ronald Korir, a fourth-place finisher in the 2023 Berlin Marathon, received a six-year ban after he was unable to explain abnormalities in his Athlete Biological Passport.



Islamabad wrestlers win gold, two silver medals at National Qazaq Kuresi Championship

SPORTS DESK

WELLINGTON

Islamabad wrestlers delivered an impressive performance at the 1st National Qazaq Kuresi Wrestling Championship, winning one gold and two silver medals in the individual competitions.

Bakhtawar claimed the gold medal in the under-77kg category, while Amara and Hajra secured silver medals in the under-52kg and under-60kg categories, respectively.

Other Islamabad wrestlers who represented the capital in different weight categories included Hamza Bhatti (over-100kg), Umar Khan (under-60kg), Ehtisham Tariq (under-50kg) and Ayesha Ashraf (under-70kg).

The championship featured more than 200 male and female wrestlers competing in nine weight categories, with teams from Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Police, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir participating.

Islamabad also secured the overall third-position trophy in the championship, which was received by General Secretary Islamabad Qazaq Kuresi Muhammad Zeeshan Rashid and Bushra Adnan on behalf of the team. Secretary General Pakistan Qazaq Kuresi Federation Major Naveed Afzal appreciated the efforts of Muhammad Zeeshan Rashid for promoting the sport in the federal capital and congratulated the Islamabad wrestlers on their achievements.

The Islamabad Qazaq Kuresi Association expressed its resolve to continue promoting the sport and providing young athletes with opportunities to excel at national-level competitions.

Alcaraz calm over hamstring scare at ATP Finals after injury-hit season

SPORTS DESK

TURIN

Carlos Alcaraz said he was still feeling a hamstring problem that he picked up in his ATP Finals victory over Daniil Medvedev, but a recent spell on the sidelines had taught him to stay composed when his body throws another obstacle in his path.

The world No. 3 needed a medical timeout to have his left thigh strapped midway through his meeting with Medvedev in the season finale on Wednesday, but completed a 6-2 6-4 win.

"I feel it a little bit," Alcaraz said. "I'm not going to lie. But, you know, unfortunately I was playing great and suddenly I felt a little problem of my hamstring.

"I could play really good tennis since that moment till the end of the match. I was focused on other things. I was trying to stay relaxed, to move not too aggressive. I'm thinking about being aggressive and thinking about my shots all the time.

"Right now I'm just feeling okay. We'll see with my team, with my physio, but I think the rest of the day and tomorrow is really going to be important days ahead of me."

The 23-year-old Spaniard reached the semifinals and will continue his quest for a maiden ATP Finals title.

Pakistan Eye Series Win After Sri Lanka Slump In Second Test Rawalpindi

● Pace trio rattles the tourists as hosts lead by 227 runs on day two of the second Test

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Pakistan eye series win after Sri Lanka crumbled again on day two of the second Test in Rawalpindi. The tourists ended the day on 74-3, still trailing by a huge margin.

Pakistan's fast bowlers set the tone with the ball. Saqib Khan, Aamer Jamal and Razaullah took one wicket each to leave Sri Lanka in deep trouble.

The hosts had earlier posted 325 in their first innings at Pindi Stadium. This gave them a big lead of 227 runs, after the home pacers had bowled Sri Lanka out for just 98 on Tuesday.

At stumps, Dhananjaya de Silva was batting on 24 and Pasindu Sooriyabandara on 18. Sri Lanka still need 153 runs to avoid an innings defeat. Saqib struck early in the fourth over and removed Lahiru Udara for seven. Razaullah then trapped veteran Dinesh Chandimal leg-before for a duck.

Kamindu Mendis added 16 runs before he was caught in the slips off Jamal. That made it 39-3 and put the tourists on the back foot.

Earlier in the day, Lahiru Kumara claimed his second five-wicket haul with figures of 5-95. Even so, Pakistan added 204 runs to their overnight score of 121-3.

Winter Skincare: Simple Tips To Prevent Dryness And Protect Skin

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Cold and dry winter weather can leave the skin flaky, irritated and dehydrated. However, making a few simple changes to daily skincare habits can help retain moisture, maintain healthy skin and protect its natural barrier.

According to Healthline, using a humidifier can help maintain moisture levels in indoor air, particularly during the cold and dry winter months. Drinking enough water and staying properly hydrated may also support overall skin health.

Try Skin Serums

Choosing the right moisturiser is equally important. Products containing ceramides, hyaluronic acid, glycerin and urea can help the skin retain moisture and prevent excessive dryness.

People with sensitive skin should avoid moisturisers containing fragrances, dyes, alcohol or denatured alcohol, as these ingredients may cause irritation.

Applying an emollient before bedtime is another useful skincare habit. It gives the skin time to absorb the product and helps replenish lost moisture and natural oils.

Avoid hot water when washing

Frequent washing of the face, hands and body can remove the skin's natural oils. Hot water strips away these oils more quickly than lukewarm water, potentially damaging the skin's protective barrier.

Using lukewarm water, generally around 37°C, is therefore a better option for washing during winter.

Choose gentle exfoliation Exfoliation helps remove dead skin cells and leaves the skin feeling smoother.



View of construction works of development project of the Parking Plaza is underway under the supervisor of local government department, at Neela Gumbad area in Lahore on Thursday.

Pakistan Türkiye Urged To Counter Cyber Disinformation Threats

● Forum Highlights Five Billion Dollar Trade Target And Makkah Accord Security Vision

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Speakers at a public forum have called for closer bilateral coordination between Pakistan and Türkiye to counter growing threats from cyberattacks, disinformation and hybrid warfare, stressing the need for stronger institutional and security cooperation.

The call was made at a STRATCOM Public Forum titled "Reshaping Regional Security Architecture: Strategic Partnership and Multilateral Cooperation from a Türkiye-Pakistan Perspective", organised jointly by the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications and the Embassy of Türkiye in Islamabad, said a press release.



In his opening remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG, ISSI, highlighted the deep-rooted historical, cultural and strategic bonds between Pakistan and Türkiye, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening cooperation in defence, security, trade, technology and regional connectivity, as well as promoting regional peace, stability and a balanced international order.

Ambassador Irfan Neziroglu, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, emphasised the unique people-to-people bonds underpinning bilateral relations. He stressed the need to counter disinformation, strengthen information resilience and explore opportunities arising from growing trade ties and Turkish investment in Pakistan.

Professor Dr. Burhanettin Duran, Head of Communications, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, highlighted the growing importance of strategic communication amid geopolitical and technological transformations. He underscored the challenges posed by disinformation and digital manipulation, emphasising international cooperation, information integrity and public trust, while highlighting the STRATCOM Summit's role in fostering dialogue and societal resilience.

A panel discussion followed, moderated by Dr. Hayati ÜNLÜ, Faculty Member, Turkish National Defence University.



Tarar condoles with journalist Babar bin Atta over mother's death

STAFF REPORTER

MARDAN

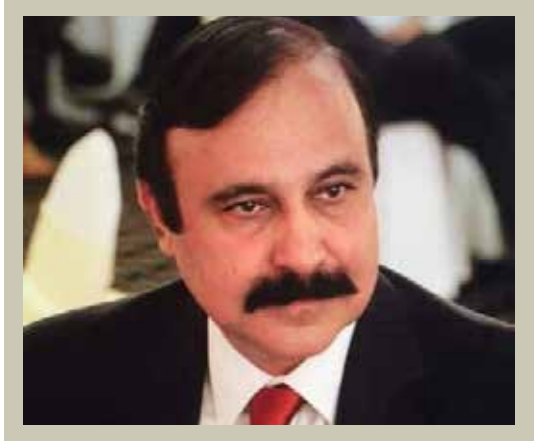
Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar visited the residence of senior journalist Babar bin Atta in Mardan to offer condolences over the death of his mother.

The minister expressed heartfelt sympathy with Babar bin Atta and his family, saying that the death of a mother was an immense personal loss.

He said the departure of a mother, an unparalleled blessing, left an irreplaceable void in the lives of her children, while her prayers and affection remained a priceless asset throughout their lives.

Attaullah Tarar said he shared the grief of Babar bin Atta and his family and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the departed soul eternal peace, place her in Jannat-ul-Firdous and give the bereaved family the strength to bear the loss.

Prime Minister's Media Coordinator Badar Shahbaz Waraich also accompanied the minister during the visit.



Dr. Tariq urges PTI to join electoral reforms committee, submit proposals

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Thursday urged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to join the electoral reforms committee and present its proposals and concerns through the parliamentary forum.

Talking to the media at Parliament House after meeting PTI Chief Whip Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar, the minister said they had discussed the formation of the electoral reforms committee.

He said the government and its allied parties had submitted all their nominations for the committee, while its formation was pending due to the opposition's failure to submit its nominations.

He urged the opposition to finalise its nominations at the earliest, adding that the National Assembly speaker would issue a notification for the committee's formation as soon as the names were received.

Dr Tariq Fazal said if PTI wanted to return to mainstream politics, it should become part of the electoral reforms committee.

Instead of expressing its reservations on talk shows, the party should present its position before the committee, he added.

He said the committee would provide PTI an opportunity to address its concerns regarding the next general elections.

The minister assured that PTI's constructive proposals would be incorporated into the final draft of electoral reforms.

He said the committee could also discuss the prevailing political situation, besides matters relating to the next general elections.

The government was providing PTI with a platform to present its position and proposals on electoral reforms, he added.

Jazz, Xiaomi Pakistan join hands to expand affordable 5G device access in Pakistan

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Jazz, Pakistan's leading connectivity provider from JazzWorld, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Xiaomi Pakistan to introduce the new affordable REDMI 17 5G smartphone in Pakistan.

The collaboration marks another step in Jazz's efforts to broaden its range of 5G-enabled smartphones, giving customers greater choice as the country transitions toward next-generation connectivity.

Powered by a Snapdragon 4 Gen 5 processor, the device features a 6.9-inch display, a 50MP AI camera system, and a 7,500mAh battery with 45W fast charging, combining 5G connectivity with practical features designed for everyday use.

The REDMI 17 5G will be available through both upfront payment and Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) options (subject to eligibility criteria, applicable charges, and terms and conditions), making smartphone ownership more accessible for customers. Jazz Postpay customers can purchase the device in 12 monthly installments. Alternatively, customers can purchase the device using their credit cards through Jazz E-stores and experience centers.



Asad Maqbool, Head of Jazz Consumer Growth, Jazz GSM, said, "Expanding 5G coverage is only one part of the equation. Making compatible smartphones affordable is equally important to ensuring that more Pakistanis can benefit from next-generation connectivity. Our partnership with Xiaomi adds another option to our device portfolio, with flexible payment plans designed to ease the financial burden of upgrading to 5G."

905 Promotions Mark Major Welfare Boost In Islamabad Police

● IGP Sohail Chaudhry Elevates 905 Officers On Merit Basis

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry has promoted 203 officers and officials of Islamabad Police to the next ranks. The latest promotions include 90 Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs), 107 Sub-Inspectors and 6 Lower Division Clerks (LDCs).

Earlier, 702 officers and officials had also been promoted under the leadership of IGP Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry. These promotions included 10 Superintendents of Police (SPs), 33 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs), 6 Inspectors, 37 Sub-Inspectors, 258 ASIs, 356 Head Constables and 2 Upper Division Clerks (UDCs).



On the occasion, DIG Headquarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq and DIG Law and Order Muhammad Atiq Tahir, along with other senior police officers, pinned the new ranks on the promotions at Police Lines Headquarters. Family members of the promoted officers and officials were also specially invited to the ceremony to share in this memorable achievement.

Congratulating the promotes, senior police officers said that departmental promotions are a fundamental right of officers and officials and a recognition of their dedication, service and professional capabilities. They emphasized that promotions bring greater responsibilities and urged the officers and officials to perform their duties with even greater commitment, honesty and dedication.

RTPP Report Calls Play Essential Development Infrastructure Today

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Right To Play Pakistan (RTPP) launched its annual report here at a local hotel on Thursday, demonstrating how structured, play-based learning is driving measurable systems change across Pakistan's education, child protection, and youth employability landscape.

Featuring keynote remarks by Jessie Thomson, Global President and CEO of Right To Play International, alongside a comprehensive impact overview by Ali Khayam, Country Director of Right To Play Pakistan, the event convened senior government officials, diplomatic missions, civil society leaders, and private-sector partners to celebrate 25 years of global impact and chart the future of child-centered education in Pakistan, said a press release.

Speaking at the launch, Global President and CEO Jessie Thomson underscored Pakistan's leadership as a global hub of evidence and innovation for Right To Play's worldwide mission across 47 countries. "Across the world, we see that when children are given safe spaces to play, learn, and lead, entire communities transform. Pakistan stands at the forefront of this movement—proving that integrating play-based pedagogy into public education systems doesn't just keep children in classrooms; it builds resilience, reduces violence, and equips young people—especially girls—with the agency to shape their own futures."



Senate Acting Chairman Calls For Unity Youth Empowermen

● Syedaal Khan Nasar Emphasizes Public Welfare Youth Skills And National Development Today

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Acting Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar on Thursday emphasized the need for public-oriented legislation, national unity, youth empowerment and improved basic facilities, saying Pakistan's progress and prosperity required collective efforts and cooperation among all segments of society.

He expressed these views during a series of meetings with Senator Nasir Butt, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works, Jahanzaib Nasir from Quetta, Rao Amanat Ali, parliamentarians, tribal elders, journalists, lawyers, civil society representatives and other prominent personalities.



Discussions focused on the country's overall political, social and economic situation, public welfare, national development, youth empowerment and issues faced by journalists.

During his meeting with Senator Nasir Butt, matters relating to effective legislation, parliamentary affairs and residential facilities for government employees were discussed.

The Acting Chairman emphasized that legislation should primarily address public needs, improve service delivery and ensure tangible benefits for ordinary citizens.

In his meeting with Jahanzaib Nasir and his delegation, issues confronting Balochistan, particularly water supply, healthcare, education and information technology, came under discussion.

The Acting Chairman assured the delegation that relevant authorities would be approached to address public concerns and improve basic facilities.

He also expressed his intention to visit Balochistan soon and announced that focused efforts would be made to bring positive changes in various sectors of the province.

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