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Govt, PTI holding 'off-the-record talks' over October 4 protest: Rana Sanaullah

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has said the federal government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are holding "off-the-record talks" over the party's planned protest march towards Islamabad on October 4.

Speaking to a private TV channel on Thursday, senior PML-N leader said the talks were underway with the PTI leadership.

The PTI had previously postponed its planned march to the federal capital from September 27 to October 4.

The party has said the protest is intended to demand the release of its founder, Imran Khan, and what it calls the restoration of constitutional supremacy.

Sanaullah said the government had made arrangements to prevent participants from entering Islamabad if the PTI leadership did not withdraw the proposed protest.



President Zardari calls meeting to review KP situation

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

President Asif Ali Zardari has arrived in Islamabad to chair a key meeting aimed at reviewing the current situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, The meeting is expected to discuss the prevailing situation in the province and related matters, sources said.

The situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has remained a key political and security concern, with tensions between the provincial and federal governments over governance, law and order, and other administrative matters. The issue has gained further attention amid ongoing political developments in the province. Sources further said that a meeting between President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also likely to take place. Spokesperson to the President Murtaza Solangi on Thursday issued a strong warning to the Afghan Taliban regime over its continued support to terrorist outfits by providing them with safe sanctuaries, training and logistical support.



Govt to digitize Red Book of most-wanted terrorists

Staff REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The federal government has decided to digitize the Red Book containing details of most-wanted terrorists,

According to officials, photographs of terrorists listed in the Red Book will be updated using modern technology, as many of the existing photographs are several years old.

AI technology will be used to generate images reflecting the possible current appearance of wanted suspects, officials said.

Information about highly dangerous terrorists will also be integrated into a modern digital system as part of the initiative.

The move is aimed at making the identification and tracking of most-wanted terrorists more effective through an updated digital Red Book.



'Dead' soldier appears alive: Pakistan Army exposes Indian false-flag operation

- DG ISPR details an alleged Indian false-flag operation, presenting a timeline and questioning claims surrounding a reported terrorist incident in IIOJK.

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry is holding an important press conference about "another false-flag" operation by India.

Addressing the media, DG ISPR said he would discuss what he described as a "so-called terrorist incident" and an alleged false-flag operation staged by India's political and military leadership.

Indian media had claimed that the individual allegedly killed in the incident was affiliated with the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and was serving in the Pakistan military. The reports, citing unnamed sources, identified the individual as Mohammad Asif. He presented a five-point timeline, stating that the sequence of events began on September 29.

Reading from a social media post by the Indian Army's Chinar Corps, the DG ISPR said that on the night of September 29, the Indian corps deployed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) claimed that, based on joint intelligence reports, the Indian Army, police and CRPF had launched an operation in the general area of Korag, Yousmarg.

He then referred to another Chinar Corps post, dated the morning of September 30, which claimed that Indian forces had recovered the body of a "Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist."

The military spokesperson said Indian news agency ANI later reported that the deceased had been identified as Mohammad Asif, who had allegedly been inducted into the Special Services Group (SSG).

The DG ISPR added that India's Ministry of Home Affairs and Press Information Bureau also repeated the same claims.

DG ISPR said that India later provided further details linking the alleged terrorist to a person named Asif Ilyas, whereas Muhammad Asif was sitting in front of the media.

Security force kill six terrorists in Balochistan, destroy hideouts in KP's Waziristan



CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Security forces have killed six terrorists in an intelligence-based operation in Balochistan's Kachhi district, while several militant hideouts were destroyed during a separate operation in North Waziristan.

The operation in an area of Kachhi targeted militants belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan. The terrorists were successfully targeted using quadcopters, the sources said.

A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the militants, while a clearance operation is continuing in the area to eliminate any remaining terrorist presence.

Separately, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan, where several hideouts belonging to militants were destroyed.

The operation also destroyed militant tunnels and led to the recovery of a large quantity of explosive material. Several terrorists were reportedly killed during the operation.

Explosive material recovered during the search operation was subsequently neutralised with the assistance of the bomb disposal squad.

Security forces remain committed to eliminating terrorism and establishing lasting peace.

Pakistan says strikes in Afghanistan killed 22 terrorists

- Pakistan says security forces killed 22 militants in strikes on two hideouts in Afghanistan, destroying weapons and ammunition. The Ministry of Information said the operation was based on intelligence

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Security forces have killed 22 terrorists in successful strikes at their hideouts at two locations in Afghanistan.The Ministry of Information has confirmed the development, stating that the strikes targeted hideouts of militants belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan. A large quantity of weapons and ammunition at the sites was also destroyed, the ministry said.

The ministry said the operation was carried out with a high degree of precision based on confirmed intelligence. It added that maximum precautions were taken to protect civilians and prevent civilian casualties.

The strikes were conducted as part of



Operation Ghazab Lil-Haq, with Pakistan continuing operations against terrorist hideouts and safe havens in Afghanistan.

The ministry said Pakistan faces a terrorism threat from Afghanistan and expressed concern over the country continuing to serve as a centre for terrorism. It said the safety and security of Pakistani citizens remained the government's top priority, adding that Pakistan had continued efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

PTI political committee approves October 4 long march

- KP CM Sohail Afridi will lead the march from the southern districts of the province

CITY REPORTER

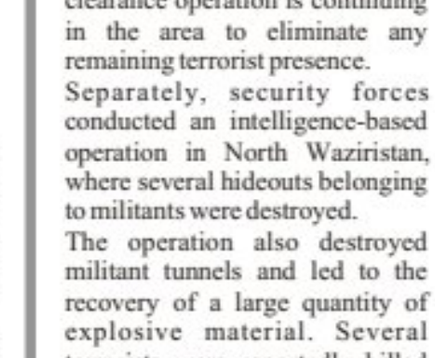
ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) political committee has approved a long march scheduled to begin on October 4, according to party sources.

The decision was taken during a meeting of the political committee chaired by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar, where participants discussed the proposed long march, possible federal government action against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and other political matters.

According to sources, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi will lead the march from the southern districts of the province.

The sources said the long march had evolved into an anti-government movement and would enter



Islamabad after several weeks of political activities. A decision on the final destination of the march would be taken later.

Senior PTI leaders have also given the chief minister the go-ahead to initiate the march, sources said.

The party leadership has decided that any federal action against the provincial government would be met with a public mobilisation. In case of an emergency or imposition of governor's rule, the party plans to stage a sit-in outside the Governor House, according to PTI sources.

PM Shehbaz prays 'partnership' with Field Marshal to last long

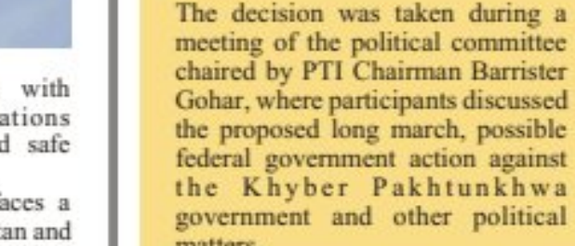
- Prime Minister warns exporters to deliver despite enjoying incentives: Finance Minister says govt wants to shift its borrowing away from banks to non-banks and retail investors

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has maintained that Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir has worked as a "great partner" in tackling the challenges Pakistan faces today, and he prayed that this partnership lasts long,

While virtually addressing the gong ceremony, organised by Arif Habib Corporation at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi on Thursday, PM Shehbaz Sharif said the government remained committed to achieving export-led, sustainable economic growth following the stabilisation of the economy.



Shebaz Sharif flayed some export-oriented industries for receiving incentives and government support over the past decades without delivering the desired results. "I do not want to name the export industries that have failed to deliver," he said, urging them to correct course and play their role in driving export-led and sustainable economic growth. The prime minister said successive governments had provided exporters with substantial support and incentives, "but prices of relevant products have gone up, while the quality has deteriorated".

Addressing the ceremony, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presented a comprehensive review of the ongoing reform agenda agreed under the IMF Extended Fund Facility. "The government has to show more fiscal discipline, and at the same time, we want to shift our borrowing away from banks to non-banks and retail investors," said Aurangzeb.

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41 Development Projects Approved in Dera Bugti Under BSDI



SPECIAL REPORTER
Dera Bugti/ Balochistan

A total of 41 development projects were approved in Dera Bugti district under Phase I and Phase II of the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI), of which 36 have been completed while 5 are in the final stages of completion.An allocation of Rs 766.31 million was made for these projects, through which steps were taken for the improvement of public welfare, basic amenities and infrastructure.The District Coordination Committee, which included FC Balochistan (North), civil administration and elected representatives, played a key role in monitoring these projects, which were launched keeping in mind the needs of the local people.Today, these projects are providing direct facilities to the local population, strengthening the foundation for development, prosperity and better quality of life in Dera Bugti.



A fish vendor cuts fresh fish for customers at his stall near Railway Chowk as demand for fish rises in the city

Nawaz Sharif, Maryam review Murree Development Plan

According to briefing, four major water supply schemes for Murree completed under the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

SPECIAL REPORTER
MURREE

A special meeting was held in Murree, presided over by Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif which reviewed Murree Development Plan project, reported 24NewsHD TV channel on Thursday.

The meeting was given detailed briefing by Mariyum Aurangzeb, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Murree Development Programme and she presented report on five major water supply projects in Murree.

According to briefing, four major water supply schemes for Murree completed under the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Completion of four major water supply projects has resulted in an additional 700,000 gallons of water for Murree.



Completion of the Donga Gali water supply project increased daily water availability from 50,000 gallons to 350,000 gallons.

Water supply projects completed in Dhar Jawa, Masot, and Khani Ghat.

December 2028 deadline set for the mega water supply project bringing water from the Jhelum River to Murree.Seven pumping stations to be constructed for the bulk water supply project from the Jhelum River to Murree.

A 29.6-kilometer pipeline to be laid for the Bulk Water Supply Project (BWSP) Completion of the BWSP will benefit a population of over 425,000 in Murree and Kotli Sattian. A water treatment plant will also be installed as part of the BWSP.Water supply to 96,000 households in Murree continues via water tankers. October 31 deadline set for the completion of the Rawalpindi-Murree-Kashmir (RMK) road construction and expansion projects Line.

Project for the formal construction, expansion, and repair of RMK Road, undertaken after nearly 40 years (since 1996).

Special measures have been taken to prevent landslides on RMK Road. Installation of streetlights and road furniture, along with the construction of road shoulders and Tuff-tile footpaths on RMK Road.

Construction to be started of the first lush green 'Hill View Park' on Murree's Mall Road.

Construction of Murree's first amphitheater on Mall Road following the removal of encroachments also be started. The Mall Road amphitheater will have a seating capacity of 600 people.

Political issues should be resolved through dialogue, not long marches: Kamal

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal has said that Pakistan cannot afford a long march, arguing that such protests have never produced any benefit or achieved their objectives in the past.

Speaking to the media ahead of PTI's planned long march, Mustafa Kamal said political issues could not be resolved through such protests.

He said dialogue and sitting together to discuss issues was the way forward, adding that a long march was not a solution to problems.

Commenting on petroleum prices, the federal minister said a change in government would not result in cheaper petroleum products.

Mustafa Kamal also spoke about the Pakistan-India conflict, saying that the war between the two countries in May had not ended and was continuing in what he described as a more dangerous form.

He said Pakistani soldiers were being killed on a daily basis and alleged that India, after losing the war, was now fighting a proxy war.

50 job seeking women deprived of mobile phones at Karachi farmhouse event

SPECIAL REPORTER
KARACHI



An event organiser allegedly fled with mobile phones of more than 50 women attending an event at a farmhouse in Gadap area here on Wednesday, prompting police action and orders for an immediate arrest.

According to police, the women had arrived at the farmhouse in two buses after being invited to what they were told was a job-related or corporate event. The organiser allegedly informed them that making videos with mobile phones was not allowed at the venue and collected their phones.

Police said the organiser subsequently left the farmhouse with the collected mobile phones. The farmhouse manager was taken into custody for questioning, and his statement was recorded.

According to the farmhouse management, they had been informed that a corporate event was being held at the venue and said they had not been paid for it.

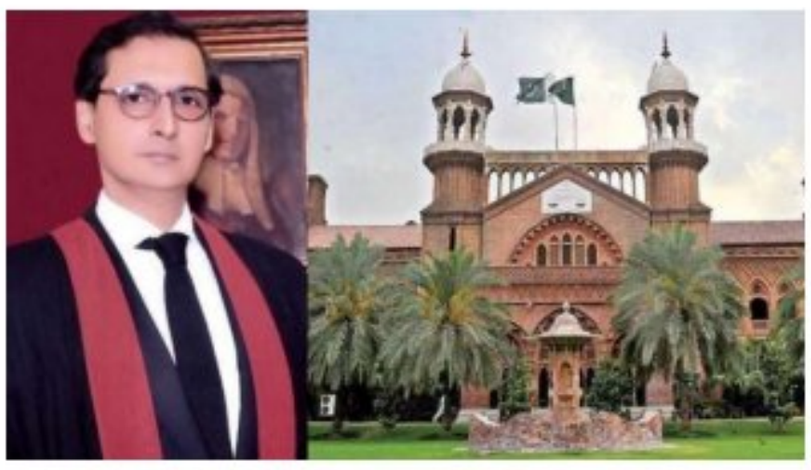
Management further claimed that a man identified as Salman left the premises with the mobile phones.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has reportedly taken notice of the incident and directed authorities to ensure the immediate arrest of those responsible.

Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident and efforts are underway to recover the stolen phones.

LHC sets aside EOBI orders over additional contribution demand

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



The Lahore High Court has ruled that the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) is bound to examine a company's records and details of its employees in accordance with law before demanding additional contributions.

Justice Javed Hassan issued the written judgment on a petition filed by Security Organizing System Pakistan (Private) Limited, setting aside the decision of EOBI's adjudicating authority and the order of its appellate board.

The company had contended that EOBI demanded additional contributions without examining its records as required under Section 12(1) of the EOBI Act. The petitioner argued that the company's records, returns and other documents were required to be examined before determining any outstanding amount.

According to the company, Section 12(3) could only be invoked when an employer failed to maintain records or provide the required information, making it difficult to determine the contributions payable in respect of insured employees. The company told the court that its monthly EOBI contributions for the relevant period had been paid and that records of those payments were available.

Despite this, the company argued, EOBI imposed additional liabilities without examining the available records and subsequently initiated recovery proceedings.

In its judgment, the Lahore High Court held that where a company's records are available and can be used to determine the contributions already paid and those payable, EOBI cannot directly assess liabilities under Section 12(3). The institution must first examine the available record and determine whether the legal conditions for applying Section 12(3) have been fulfilled.



People browse and purchase second-hand shoes from vendors at Landa Bazaar in the provincial capital

Court reserves decision on petition seeking FIR over PIMS tragedy

The judge directed the lawyer to provide the numbers of all five petitions and said he would issue an order on the FIR petition after reviewing the details

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



The District and Sessions Court Islamabad on Thursday reserved its decision on a petition seeking registration of a First Information Report (FIR) in connection with the PIMS incident.

Sessions Judge Raja Asif heard the petition filed by lawyer Riaz Hanif Rahi. During the proceedings, police urged the court to dismiss the plea seeking registration of a case.

Rahi argued that the PIMS incident was known to the public and had resulted in the loss of precious lives. He questioned the legal basis for the inquiry committee formed by the prime minister, arguing that an inquiry committee could not have legal standing without approval from the federal cabinet.

The petitioner's counsel further claimed that compensation of Rs5 million had been fixed as blood money for the deceased children, while a nurse had allegedly been awarded Rs10 million. He argued that the police were acting in accordance with government policy rather than the law.

During the hearing, Judge Raja Asif asked whether a similar petition had been filed before any other court.

Rahi clarified that no other petition seeking registration of an FIR had been filed, although five writ petitions had been submitted regarding action related to the incident.

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No more war impact, govt tells IMF

Pakistan has apprised the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the Middle East conflict will no longer impact its economic outlook, with inflation projected to slow down to 7.5% and the external sector remaining stable, but the global lender has urged it to adjust exchange and interest rate policies.

The federal government further informed the IMF that exports would hit $34 billion per dollar. Supported by a sustainable current account position and historic high foreign exchange reserves, the exchange rate is expected to remain broadly stable and is likely to limit imported inflation, according to the federal government's assessment.

The IMF was informed that if the situation normalised until October 2026 and the average Brent crude price stabilised at $80 per barrel in the current fiscal year, the projected inflation would remain



and foreign remittances would increase to $45.5 billion in the current fiscal year – better than the budget targets with no adverse impact on imports. It said that this would keep the external sector in a stable situation with the current account deficit remaining between $2.5 billion and $3 billion but significantly lower than the budget target of $3.6 billion.

In a briefing on the economic outlook for the current fiscal year, the federal government predicted a stable exchange rate instead of any devaluation and an easing of inflation in the second half of the year,

They said that the central bank in separate meetings also predicted a slowing inflation rate, stable exchange rate and a stable external account. The central bank is said to have informed the IMF that its policy rate at 11.5% was already appropriately tight to tame inflation.

The IMF's detailed response to the government and the central bank's macroeconomic forecast is expected in the next few days. But sources said that the global lender again urged the authorities to implement a market-based exchange rate regime and also appropriately tighten the monetary policy to tame inflation.

The sources said that neither the central bank nor the federal government saw any immediate need for adjustments in the exchange rate and interest rate policies.

They said that the IMF was informed that lower reliance on food imports would generate foreign exchange savings, strengthen the external position and reduce reliance on external financing.

The lender was further briefed that the exchange rate would remain stable.

The federal government's assessment was that a key factor in its forecast of slowing inflation was the exchange rate stability. The lender was told that during the first quarter of the current fiscal year, the exchange rate remained around Rs278 to a dollar, stronger than the budget assumption of Rs286 at 7.5%. If the oil price remains at around $100 per barrel till December, the projected inflation may increase to 8.2% for the fiscal year. The government has set the inflation target for this fiscal year at 8.2%, but it said that due to an anticipated moderation in global crude oil prices, improved agricultural output, exchange rate stability, effective administrative measures and a favourable base effect during the second half, the inflation is projected to remain within the 7% to 8% range, with the most likely outcome being around 7.5%.

Its assessment of taming inflation was that price pressures would remain elevated till December, but thereafter, they were expected to moderate gradually over the course of the year, reflecting improving domestic supply conditions and a relatively favourable external outlook.

Pakistani authorities were of the view that, supported by resilient remittance inflows, improving export performance and strong reserve buffers, the external sector was expected to remain stable in the current fiscal year. They informed the IMF that the current account deficit was now projected at around $2.5 billion to $3 billion, equivalent to 0.5-0.6% of GDP. The annual target is $3.6 billion.

Federal authorities have projected exports to peak at $34 billion, compared to the $32.5 billion budget target. They are of the view that an increasing trend in global rice prices is expected to support higher export earnings by at least an additional $300 million.

The fund has been apprised that imports of goods are projected at $69-70 billion, which is in line with the annual target and will not have any adverse impact. During the first two months of this fiscal year, the import bill of petroleum crude increased by 40.5%, while petroleum products declined by 26%. Similarly, LPG imports rose by 47%, while LNG declined by 28.6%.The federal authorities were of the view that the food import bill was expected to remain contained due to higher domestic production of both food and oilseed crops, particularly canola, sunflower and rapeseed. Likewise, remittances are projected to hit $45.5 billion in this fiscal year, which is better than the annual target and will have a positive

Graphic Health Warnings: A Powerful Message for a Healthier Future



By: Alishba Asif

Graphic Health Warnings (GHWs) are one of the most visible and effective ways of communicating the dangers of tobacco use. Found on cigarette packs and other tobacco products, these warnings combine clear text with powerful images to show the real health consequences associated with tobacco consumption.

Their purpose is simple: to inform people, remind users of the risks, discourage young people from starting, and encourage current users to consider quitting.

Tobacco use remains a major public health concern around the world. Many people begin using tobacco without fully understanding the long-term consequences.

Countering Attractive Packaging

Because tobacco products are often packaged in attractive designs and promoted in ways that can make them appear less harmful than they really are, health warnings provide an important counter-message. Every time a person reaches for a cigarette, the warning on the package can serve as a direct reminder of what tobacco can do to the body.

Unlike advertisements, which are designed to attract attention and create positive associations, graphic health warnings communicate an entirely different reality. Images showing damaged lungs, diseased organs, or other consequences of tobacco use can make health risks more understandable and immediate.

For people who may not respond to written information alone, visual messages can be particularly powerful.

Reaching People with Limited Access to Health Information

GHWs also play an important role in reaching people who may have limited access to health information. A health warning printed directly on a tobacco package travels wherever the product goes.

It does not require a person to attend a seminar, read a brochure, visit a health facility, or search for information online. The message is repeatedly displayed to the consumer and can also be seen by family members, friends, and others around them.

Influencing Young People's Perceptions

Another important benefit of GHWs is their ability to influence young people's perceptions of tobacco. Young people are particularly vulnerable to messages that make tobacco products appear fashionable, modern, or socially desirable.

that make tobacco products appear fashionable, modern, or socially desirable.

Strong health warnings can help challenge these perceptions by presenting tobacco use in the context of its genuine health consequences. When warnings are clear, prominent, and visually compelling, they can help prevent tobacco use from being viewed as harmless or normal.

Encouraging Current Users to Reflect

For current tobacco users, repeated exposure to health warnings can also encourage reflection. Quitting tobacco is not always easy, particularly because nicotine is addictive.

However, awareness is an important first step. A warning on a cigarette pack may prompt someone to think about their health, their family, their future, or the financial and emotional costs associated with continued tobacco use.

Even when a person does not quit immediately, the message can contribute to greater awareness and future motivation to quit.

The effectiveness of GHWs depends greatly on how they are designed and displayed. Warnings that are large, clear, understandable, and placed prominently on packaging are more likely to attract attention.

The use of appropriate images can make complex health information easier to understand. Regularly changing or rotating warnings can also help prevent people from becoming accustomed to the same message.

Bridging the Gap Left by Delayed Symptoms

GHWs are especially important because tobacco-related diseases often develop over many years. A person may not experience immediate symptoms after beginning to smoke, which can create a false sense of security.

The Natural Beauty of Pakistan



By: Shabana Mehmood

Pakistan is a land of immense geographic and climatic diversity, stretching from the towering peaks of the Karakoram and Himalayas in the north to the fertile plains of the Indus River, and culminating in the rugged plateaus of Balochistan and the Arabian Sea coast. This varied topography and complex geological framework bless the country with a wealth of natural resources. Among these, minerals and agricultural crops stand out as two of the most vital pillars of the nation's economy and its potential for future development. While agriculture has historically been the backbone of Pakistan's economy feeding its population and driving its export markets its vast, largely untapped mineral reserves offer a massive pathway to significant industrial and economic progress. This article explores the rich mineral deposits hidden beneath the earth and the diverse crops cultivated across the fertile plains of Pakistan. Pakistan is endowed with a vast array of mineral resources. The Geological Survey of Pakistan has identified over 50 different minerals that are currently being extracted. The province of Balochistan is the undisputed leader in this sector, housing an estimated 80% to 85% of the country's total mineral deposits. It is followed by significant reserves of distinct minerals in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and Punjab. Pakistan boasts substantial reserves of metallic minerals, which are crucial for industrial manufacturing and generating foreign exchange. The Chagai district in Balochistan, particularly the Reko Diq and Saindak areas, is home to some of the world's largest unexploited copper and gold deposits. The Reko Diq project alone is estimated to yield billions of dollars in revenue over its lifespan, positioning Pakistan as a major future player in global copper and gold markets. Essential for the steel industry, iron ore is found in various regions, including Kalabagh in Punjab and Dilband in Balochistan. Though historically underutilized, recent discoveries and investments are paving the way for greater extraction to meet domestic industrial

demands. Mined primarily in the Muslim Bagh area of Balochistan, chromite is a major export mineral for Pakistan. It is a critical component in the production of stainless steel and is heavily sought after internationally. The non-metallic mineral sector is highly active, providing essential raw materials for construction, agriculture, and energy. Pakistan is world-renowned for its pink Himalayan salt, mined primarily from the Khewra Salt Mine in Punjab. As one of the oldest and largest salt mines globally, Khewra produces hundreds of thousands of tons of salt annually, serving both as a major export commodity and a popular tourist attraction. The country possesses massive coal reserves, particularly in the Thar Desert of Sindh. The Thar coalfield is one of the largest lignite deposits in the world. To reduce its reliance on imported fuels, Pakistan is increasingly turning to these domestic coal reserves to fuel power generation. These materials form the foundation of Pakistan's robust cement industry. Found abundantly across all provinces, particularly in KPK and Punjab, limestone and gypsum are extracted in large quantities to satisfy both domestic construction demands and export markets. Natural gas has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's energy mix since the monumental discovery of the Sui gas field in Balochistan in the 1950s. The mountainous terrain of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan harbors a glittering treasure trove of precious and semi-precious stones. Pakistan is known for producing high-quality emeralds, rubies, sapphires, aquamarines, topaz, and tourmaline. Despite the immense value of these gems, the sector remains largely informal, requiring modernization in mining techniques, cutting, and polishing to realize its full economic potential. Agriculture is the lifeblood of Pakistan's economy. The sector contributes roughly 19% to 23% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs nearly 40% of the national Labor force. The vast Indus River system, supporting one of the world's largest contiguous irrigation networks, transforms the arid plains of Punjab and Sindh into highly productive agricultural lands. Pakistan's agricultural output is broadly categorized into staple food crops and cash crops. Ensuring food security for a population of over 240 million relies heavily on the successful harvest of key staples. As

the primary dietary staple, wheat is the most extensively cultivated crop in Pakistan. Sown in the winter (Rabi season) and harvested in the spring, it occupies the largest share of the country's arable land. Pakistan is a major global exporter of rice, particularly the highly aromatic Basmati variety, which commands a premium price in international markets. Grown during the summer (Kharif season), rice requires abundant water, making the irrigated plains of Punjab and Sindh the ideal cultivation zones. Serving dual purposes as food for human consumption and fodder for livestock and poultry, maize is an increasingly important crop. Advancements in hybrid seeds have significantly boosted maize yields in recent years. Cash crops are the engine of Pakistan's export economy and domestic industrial sector. Often referred to as "white gold," cotton is the most critical cash crop in Pakistan.



A potter gives the final shape and finishing touches to a traditional tandoor at his workplace near Railway Chowk

Scanned with CamScanner

Iranians stagger under soaring costs of seven months of war

● Those who can afford to bypass the usual ways of obtaining goods or services through the black market are finding it has become more pervasive



Web DESK

ISLAMABAD

Iran's leaders may radiate bullishness in their war with the United States, but life is becoming ever tougher for ordinary citizens unable to afford basic necessities or rent as a US blockade cuts the state's financial lifeline - oil exports.

From an engineer forced out of Tehran by high rent to a woman forced to stop smoking because of the price of cigarettes and carers struggling to buy medicines, all areas of daily life are affected.

"I'm forced to sell my items with a very small and negligible profit, yet I can't close my business because then I'd be unemployed," said Behnam Riazi, a restaurant owner interviewed on camera in Tehran.

Riazi cannot raise his prices because his customers cannot pay more - any most anyway buy only necessities now.

How far economic strains may push Iran towards diplomatic compromise is unclear, as it tightens its own stranglehold on Gulf energy exports through the Strait of Hormuz, driving up oil and gas prices in the US and around the world.

However, the latest burst of diplomacy was partly spurred by economic strains, US, Middle Eastern and Iranian sources said last week. Iranian officials have repeatedly expressed fears of unrest, and cracked down ruthlessly on rumblings of dissent.

In January, over a month before the US and Israel began their war on Iran, authorities killed thousands of demonstrators exasperated by years of cumulative economic distress.

But now, all those Reuters spoke to said they had too many daily worries to think about protesting.

Hediyeh, a housewife in her 60s in northern Iran, survives on her husband's civil service pension. She can barely afford medicine or even the adult diapers needed by her elderly mother, who has Alzheimer's disease.

She wanted to buy her grandson a new bag for his first day at school this autumn, but it cost five or six times what she had expected, and in the end she could only buy him a notebook and pencils.

Investor participation in economic growth more than doubled in 2.5 years: Finance

■ Finance minister said financial stability was essential for economic growth and stressed the need to make macroeconomic stability sustainable

Web Desk

KARACHI

Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that investor participation in Pakistan's economic growth has more than doubled over the past two and a half years.

Addressing a ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), the finance minister said financial stability was essential for economic growth and stressed the need to make macroeconomic stability sustainable and end the country's boom-and-bust cycle.

He said Rs60 billion had been disbursed under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar programme, while the banking industry had approved Rs340 billion for the initiative. The issue was no longer the availability of loans, he added, saying the banking sector had taken the lead and the supply side now needed to move forward.



Aurangzeb said the relevant stakeholders, including Arif Habib and ABAD, had a role to play in supporting the initiative, while REITs could serve as a bridge in this regard.

Recalling his first visit to the Pakistan Stock Exchange on March 29, 2024, he said the benchmark KSE-100 Index stood at around 67,000 points at the time, compared with nearly 170,000 points now. He said the factors behind the index's performance were important and needed to be understood.

The minister said the highest number of initial public offerings (IPOs) in the past 20 years were recorded last year, with 11 offerings. He added that investor participation had more than doubled in two and a half years, while Gen Z and millennials accounted for 85% of participation in the stock market over the past 12 months.

He said Turkish investors had shown interest for the first time in the privatisation of distribution companies (DISCOs). Responding to questions about foreign direct investment, Aurangzeb said such investments required time.

He said the economy had contracted three years ago and stressed that the government's role was to provide a conducive business environment, while the private sector should take the lead in economic activity.

Aurangzeb said the government must focus on sustaining macroeconomic stability and moving towards sustainable growth rather than relying on liquidity injections, warning that reviving an economy after a downturn was extremely difficult.

Oil prices barely changed as investors assess US-Iran peace talks and Gulf exports

■ Oil prices were nearly flat in Asia after September gains, as investors weighed stalled US-Iran talks, recovering Middle East exports, rising US crude



Web Desk

TOKYO

Oil prices were nearly flat in early Asia trade on Thursday, following the previous day's gains and steep monthly rises, as investors assessed the outcome ?of US-Iran peace talks and the outlook for Middle East crude exports.

Brent crude ?futures rose 12 cents or 0.1%, to $98.15 a barrel by 0045 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at $90.35 a barrel, down 7 cents, or 0.1%.

Both benchmarks rose about $1 a barrel on Wednesday. ?Brent recorded a monthly gain of around 14% in September, its biggest since July, ?while WTI increased by about 5% on the month.

"Although buying continued amid ?supply concerns as peace talks stalled, selling pressure also prevailed as Middle Eastern oil ?exports showed signs of recovery," said Toshitaka Tazawa, an analyst at Fujitomi Securities, citing Saudi ?Arabia's resumption of exports from its Red Sea port of Yanbu as a key factor.

A new catalyst, such as progress in peace negotiations, will be needed for WTI to break below the immediate support level ?of $88 a barrel, he added.

Qatar said on Tuesday it hopes that shuttle diplomacy between Tehran ?and Washington can lead to a breakthrough.

However, US President Donald Trump denied reports by Axios and CNN ?that cited ?US officials as saying he was willing to give Iran sanctions relief and release frozen Iranian funds in return for "concrete" steps by Tehran on its nuclear programme.

On Tuesday, Saudi Arabia resumed oil tanker loadings from Yanbu after restarting operations on its East-West Pipeline.

Goldman Sachs estimates Gulf ?oil exports, including "dark exports" ?involving ships operating ?with their location transponders turned off, have recovered to 23.3 million barrels per day over the last week, in line with their 2025 ?average, as exports doubled in September, it said in a note ?on Tuesday.

Also, ?OPEC+ oil-producing countries are likely to keep their oil production targets steady for November when they meet on Sunday, two people with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

Meanwhile, US crude inventories rose by ?922,000 barrels ?to 427.3 million barrels in the week ended September ?25, the EIA said, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 264,000-barrel draw. But fuel inventories ?fell sharply on strong seasonal and global demand.

Dollar gets lift from higher yields

● The dollar held near a two-month high as US Treasury yields rose, while major currencies weakened. Markets weighed inflation, Fed rate expectations and Middle East energy risks.

Web Desk

SINGAPORE

The dollar held near a two-month high on Thursday, supported by an extended rise in US Treasury yields partly driven by concerns over persistent global price pressures stemming from the Middle East war.

Data showing US inflation rose less than expected in August, along with downward revisions to July's reading, reduced expectations for a Federal Reserve rate hike this month . But a surge in euro zone inflation underscores the threat that higher energy prices continue ?to pose to the global economy.



Against the dollar, the euro was marginally lower at $1.1330 in the early ?Asian session. It clocked a loss of nearly 2.5% in September, the largest since July ?2025, pressured by Europe's debt and energy worries.

Sterling was flat at $1.3264 after having slid 2.1% last month, similarly weighed ?down by a stronger greenback. The dollar was perched near a two-month high against a basket of currencies and last ?stood at 101.48, after rising 2% in September.

"There's a little bit of comfort to be drawn from the (US PCE) numbers... I think the market's been right to moderate somewhat its expectations for a back-to-back Fed hike... but I don't think it necessarily means there ?aren't still more Fed hikes ahead," said Ray Attrill, head of FX strategy at National Australia Bank.

"(But) the ?US dollar seems to be showing more sensitivity, just at the moment, to what's happening with say, 10-year Treasuries, than it is ?on ?pricing for when the next Fed rate hike might come."

Global bonds suffered their largest monthly decline in years in September, pushing yields higher, due to a toxic mix of deteriorating government finances, a glut of issuances and rising inflation.

The scaling back of expectations for a Fed hike this month prompted a slight retreat in shorter-dated US Treasury yields, ?but 10- and 30-year yields ?still hit new highs ?overnight.

Elsewhere, the yen fell 0.2% to 157.82 per dollar, though it posted a gain of nearly 1.5% last month.

"The yen has been the strongest of the G10 currencies (in September), ?and the market's reluctance to be caught out by intervention is clearly having an ?impact," said ?Kit Juckes, chief FX strategist at Societe Generale.

Trump unveils $200b in US energy investments by South Korea

■ US President Donald Trump announced Wednesday $200 billion in South Korean energy investments, including $54 billion for a long-mooted Alaska LNG project that Seoul said had yet to be decided on.

Web Desk

Washngation

US President Donald Trump announced $200 billion in South Korean energy investments, including $54 billion for a long-mooted Alaska LNG project that Seoul said had yet to be decided on.

South Korea had previously agreed to invest $350 billion in the United States and increase purchases of US energy under a July 2025 trade deal with Trump that set 15 percent tariffs on imports from the East Asian nation.

Besides the Alaska LNG project and pipeline, the Trump administration announced a $22.3 billion natural gas-fired power project in Texas that would be backed by South Korea.

"The United States and Korea have agreed to commence working together on the 50 Billion Dollar ALASKA LNG PROJECT," Trump wrote on his Truth Social account Thursday, Seoul time.

"A huge 22 Billion Dollar, 6.4-gigawatt Natural Gas Fired Power Project in Encinal, Texas. This will bring tremendous new, reliable Power Capacity to Texas," he added.

The facility in Texas will provide 6,472 MW of energy to data centers also located in Encinal, a US Commerce Department statement said. It is expected to come fully online by 2032.

Seoul confirmed Thursday that both sides intended to "proceed with a $22.3 billion natural gas power facility" in Texas, dedicated to "supplying power to co-located data centers."

But it said the Alaska LNG project "will be considered on the condition that it is commercially viable and subject to relevant domestic legal procedures."

"No decision has been made regarding whether to invest in the project or the scale of any potential investment," South Korea's trade ministry said in a statement.

President Lee Jae Myung also said Thursday that Seoul would begin working on it on the "condition that 1) its commercial viability is confirmed and 2) it complies with South Korea's legal procedures."

Lee said last month that negotiations on the projects had been "very complex and difficult," adding he had found some terms "difficult to accept" without elaborating further. Beyond the Alaska and Texas projects, Trump said the two countries were "moving forward" with a $120 billion nuclear power programme to build eight large-scale reactors in the United States.

The figure includes $100 billion for construction costs and $20 billion in contingency reserves, the US Commerce Department said.



Scanned with CamScanner

South Korea's Lee urges North Korea to restore dialogue, pledges military buildup

- Pakistani batters chased down the modest target of 112 runs in the 12th over by losing only four wickets.



Web Desk

GYERYONG

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Thursday called on North Korea to help restore trust and resume dialogue, a day after Seoul and Pyongyang traded barbs over a landmine incident that South Korea's military and the UN Command said amounted to an armistice violation.

"I hope that the North joins us now on the path of restoring trust and resuming dialogue, following a long interruption," Lee said in ?an address marking the country's Armed Forces Day, adding that his administration would "consistently pursue practical measures to reduce military tensions between the two Koreas."

The comments came after Seoul's military and the UN Command said North Korea violated the Korean War armistice following a landmine blast last week that wounded three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, rejected the findings in a statement on Wednesday, accused Seoul of fabricating the ?results and warned of retaliation.

Lee reaffirmed his goal of securing the transfer of wartime operational control from the United States to South Korea, calling it part of a long-standing push for self-reliant national defence.

In a wide-ranging defence reform agenda, Lee also said ?in his speech that South Korea would build nuclear-powered submarines by the mid-2030s and upgrade missile defence capabilities, including AI-based command-and-control systems and high-energy laser interceptors.

US woman in hospital after execution 'failed'



WEB DESK

CAIRO/DUBAI

Tennessee woman Christa Pike was in a hospital Thursday after authorities "failed" to carry out her execution, her lawyers said, with witnesses reporting the convicted murderer was breathing despite the injections intended to kill her.

Just hours earlier the US Supreme Court cleared the way for Pike to be the first woman to die by lethal injection in the southern US state of Tennessee in 200 years.

Tennessee corrections officials did not publicly confirm the outcome of the execution, which included two injections of pentobarbital, or respond to an AFP query seeking information.

"Tonight the State of Tennessee once again failed to carry out a lawful execution," Pike's attorneys said in a statement. "Christa is being treated at a nearby hospital. We have not been informed as to her condition."

Pike was scheduled for execution at 10:00 am (1500 GMT) at the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, where witnesses including journalists were present for the administration of the injections.

"It appears this did not go how this was supposed to go," said investigative journalist John North of WBIR who was a witness at the execution site, adding "when we left the building, so far as we knew, she was probably still alive."

During the livestream, an ambulance with its lights flashing could be seen leaving the site of the execution, it's unclear if it was transporting Pike.The execution procedure went ahead hours after the US Supreme Court ruled that it could proceed, with liberal justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson all dissenting.

"The Court's decision. unnecessarily prevents that [lower] court from giving due consideration to Pike's claim," the dissenting justices wrote.

"Worse, the Court grants such extraordinary relief solely to allow the State to execute Pike before litigation over her conviction has properly run its course in the lower courts." - Mental health considerations -

The case has sparked debate over capital punishment for young criminals.



Minister, exporters agree on steps to reduce transportation costs

- Iran has been pressing ahead with arrests following a wave of protests, according to local media and monitors, as the country faces international pressure over a crackdown.

Staff Reporter

Islamabad

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, constituted a working group to examine potential arrangements to improve shipping connectivity, reduce transportation costs, and facilitate access for Pakistani exports to global markets.

He established the working group during the meeting with a three-member delegation of exporters, who met with the Federal Minister to apprise him of the difficulties arising from altered shipping routes in the region.

The delegation included Shahzad Asghar Ali, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Style Textile; Benedict Brunner, Vice President of Adidas Global; and Saqib Rafiq, Senior Director of Sourcing Operations at Adidas; while Syed Jarrar Haider Kazmi, CEO of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), participated in the meeting online.

The delegation explained that the longer shipping routes have increased both the cost and time required to transport Pakistani products to European and American markets.

This places Pakistani exporters at a disadvantage compared to regional competitors who enjoy relatively easier and direct access to key global markets.

The Federal Minister stated that if exporters could guarantee the availability of the required volume of cargo, the leasing or purchasing of container ships to facilitate them, thereby making the operation commercially viable, could be considered.

During the meeting, it was agreed to consider measures for reducing transportation costs and improving export linkages, including an assessment of the feasibility of a dedicated container ship proposal.

The delegation stated that they would present their proposals to the working group after consulting with other exporters.

US military cuts number of generals, admirals by 20 percent

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON



Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Wednesday that the United States has slashed the number of its generals and admirals by 20 percent, in a move he said is aimed at "accountability."Hegseth suggested the cuts targeted officers who failed to get on board with his efforts to ensure the military is focused on war-fighting rather than the "woke" policies of previous administrations, describing the reductions as an "accomplishment."

"The number-crunchers say we fired 10 percent of the generals and admirals across the force," Hegseth told troops at the Quantico military base, saying: "We've also reduced the overall number of general officer slots by an additional 10 percent.""So yes, 20 percent reduction across the board," he said. "The media calls that a purge. I call it accountability, and long overdue."The address to junior officers and enlisted personnel at Quantico came a year after a similar speech to top officers in which Hegseth said the US military was too fat.

Crown Prince warns Saudi Arabia will respond decisively to any threat to its security

- Crown Prince says Makkah Defence Pact aimed at promoting security and stability in the region: Gulf security and stability are indivisible

WEB DESK

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman delivered a firm message on Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to de-escalation and diplomacy while making clear that the country's security remains non-negotiable.

"We will not hesitate to respond decisively to any threat or attack aimed at undermining it," he said while inaugurating, on behalf of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman, the activities of the third year of the 9th session of the Shoura Council in Riyadh on Wednesday.

In annual royal address to the Shoura Council, the Crown Prince outlined the Kingdom's key domestic and foreign policy priorities.

The Crown Prince emphasized that Saudi Arabia possesses highly efficient human and military capabilities, capable of fully confronting and deterring threats, regardless of their source. "The attacks targeting all the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states underscore that Gulf security and stability are indivisible. We are working with our brothers to safeguard Gulf security, pursue strategic cooperation and economic integration, and continue implementing the vision of King Salman to enhance joint action in a manner that achieves the Shoura Council's objectives and fulfils the aspirations of its citizens," he said."In the context of our contributions to strengthening regional stability, sparing it the consequences of tension and conflict, and coordinating efforts, the "Makkah Defence Pact" was formulated by Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan. This pact stems from our joint efforts to play our role in promoting security and stability in the region," he said while appreciating the support of friendly nations for the Kingdom and their contributions to enhancing security and stability.



The Crown Prince reiterated Saudi Arabia's monumental role in safeguarding global energy security in the context of the current energy crisis. "Today, the world faces an energy crisis with potentially far-reaching consequences. The Kingdom has been a vital safeguard for global energy security, maintaining oil supplies to international markets.

Rubio tells Iranian delegation to leave US after talks stall

- A US official said Rubio ordered the Iranian delegation to leave because the UN General Assembly had concluded and the delegation had "overstayed their welcome".

WEB DESK

DAVOS

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio ordered the Iranian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly to leave the United States immediately after diplomatic negotiations between Washington and Tehran stalled, according to a US official and another source familiar with the matter.

Among those instructed to leave New York was Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, Rubio's counterpart in the diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the conflict.

The move came after Qatari mediators made efforts to bridge differences between the United States and Iran but failed to achieve a breakthrough, with neither side prepared to make significant concessions.

A US official said Rubio ordered the Iranian delegation to leave because the UN General Assembly had concluded and the delegation had "overstayed their welcome".

According to the official, the White House initially believed on Monday morning that progress could be made in talks with Iran later in the day. By the afternoon, however, negotiations had reached a stalemate.

Later Monday evening, the US mission to the United Nations informed the Iranian mission that Araghchi's delegation was required to leave New York immediately, the official said.

The Iranian delegation, including Araghchi, subsequently travelled to the airport several hours later and boarded a flight from New York to Doha at 1:20am on Tuesday.



A second source confirmed that Washington had demanded the Iranian delegation leave the country, while noting that Araghchi had already been scheduled to return to Tehran on Monday night.

The expulsion order represented an unusual diplomatic rebuke and highlighted the deep mistrust between Washington and Tehran as efforts to negotiate an end to the war have failed to produce an agreement.

Qatari mediators are continuing discussions with both sides over a compromise proposal, according to regional sources.

US President Donald Trump, when asked about the prospects of reaching an agreement with Iran, said on Wednesday that Washington may have to consider military action, adding that the United States would have to decide whether to pursue a deal or "blow 'em up".

The latest developments come as diplomatic efforts continue amid uncertainty over whether Washington and Tehran can reach an agreement through mediation.

Scanned with CamScanner

Meera Hits Back at Critics Over Psycho's Box-Office Performance

A Film Can Flop, a Woman Cannot: Meera

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



Veteran Pakistani actress Meera Jee has responded to critics who appeared to judge her career success based on the box-office performance of her latest film Psycho, shifting the focus from commercial figures to resilience, self-worth and perseverance in the entertainment industry.

Taking to Instagram, the Lollywood star shared a series of posts featuring her portraits alongside messages about failure, success and the people who remain supportive during difficult times.

One of the posts read: "They call me flop because my film Psycho didn't make 100 crores. I call myself brave because I survived the people who left me after it."

In another message, Meera wrote: "A film can flop, a woman cannot."

Through the posts, the actress appeared to challenge the re club", entertainment industry's increasing focus on major box-office figures, particularly the coveted "100 crore club", as a measure of an actor's success.Rather than allowing a film's commercial performance to define her career, Meera turned e attention towards her personal journey and the resilience required to continue after people in her circle allegedly distanced themselves following the film's performance.

One of the posts featured an intense close-up portrait of Meera looking directly into the camera. She wore a navy-blue blazer with bold red lipstick and dark eyeliner, complemented by statement gold heart-shaped earrings featuring ruby-toned embellishments.

Known for her longstanding career in Pakistani cinema, Meera has remained a prominent figure in the entertainment industry despite facing criticism and experiencing professional highs and lows over the years.

Momal Sheikh Pens Emotional Birthday Tribute for Shahzad

Actress Momal Sheikh Celebrates Brother Shahzad With Emotional Birthday Tribute

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



Pakistani actress Momal Sheikh has shared an emotional birthday tribute for her brother Shahzad Sheikh, describing him as her strength, safe place and source of peace.

Momal took to Instagram to share a series of pictures of the siblings, including childhood memories and recent family moments, along with heartfelt messages for Shahzad on his birthday.

In one of her Instagram stories, Momal described her brother as someone who has always stood by her during difficult times. She said his presence gives her comfort and thanked him for consistently being there for her.

Reflecting on their bond, the actress said some relationships do not require many words because the connection simply exists. She expressed gratitude for having Shahzad as her brother and wished him a happy birthday.

Momal continued her tribute by thanking Shahzad for listening to her, supporting and protecting her, and making her laugh. She said he had given her everything a brother could give his sister and added that, although she may not express it often, she loves and appreciates him more than words can describe.

The actress also shared more pictures showing different stages of their lives, from childhood memories to recent family gatherings.

In her final message, Momal offered prayers for Shahzad's future, asking Allah to bless him with great success, open every door for him and turn his dreams into reality.

She also prayed for his happiness, protection and good health, saying she wanted to see her brother achieve everything he had wished for and more.

South Asians & Diaspora

Momal and Shahzad Sheikh are the children of veteran Pakistani actor Javed Sheikh. Both siblings have established careers in Pakistan's entertainment industry



Tom Cruise Takes On Climate Politics In New Film

Taking to Instagram, Nadia posted a heartfelt video of herself watching Alyzeh's graduation ceremony on television.

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Hollywood star Tom Cruise is taking on one of his most unconventional roles in decades with Digger, a dark comedy that explores climate change, corporate power and environmental concerns.

Directed by Mexican filmmaker Alejandro González Iñárritu, the film reportedly carries a $130 million budget and marks a major departure from Cruise's familiar action roles. He plays an ageing mining and oil tycoon facing an environmental crisis while confronting criticism over his wealth, business practices and personal choices.

Cruise described the role as one of the most challenging characters of his career, telling GQ that the part brings together many of the skills he has developed throughout his career.

The film premiered in London on September 22, with early online reactions appearing mixed. The combination of dramatic performances and Iñárritu's satirical treatment of billionaires, climate activism and political messaging could make the film a divisive release.

Cruise is best known for action franchises including Mission: Impossible, Top Gun and Jack Reacher. He is also set to appear in a follow-up to Days of Thunder later this year.

Film critic and author A.S. Hamrah told AFP that Cruise's last major dramatic roles that fully showcased his range came largely during the 1990s. He pointed to films including Magnolia and Eyes Wide Shut as examples of Cruise taking on more complex dramatic material.

Hamrah also suggested that working with an acclaimed filmmaker such as Iñárritu could give Cruise an opportunity to explore a different side of his acting career.

Cinema consultant Shawn Robbins similarly described Digger as a departure from the typical Cruise blockbuster. He noted that although younger audiences may primarily associate Cruise with action and high-risk stunts, the actor has previously taken on unconventional roles in films such as Vanilla Sky and Jerry Maguire.The film's environmental and political themes could also attract attention during awards season. Hamrah suggested that Cruise may share concerns about climate change and environmental issues.



Actors Cannot Avoid Public Attention: Zoya Nasir

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

Actress and beautician Zoya Nasir has shared her views on the relationship between actors and their audiences, saying public attention is naturally part of working in the entertainment industry. Speaking during a discussion, Zoya said actors who choose showbiz should understand that their performances and characters will be watched, discussed and recognised by audiences. She questioned the idea that actors can enter the entertainment industry while completely avoiding attention or recognition. According to her, an actor's work needs to connect with viewers, and it can be difficult for a performance to have an impact if audiences do not recognise the person delivering it.

Zoya explained that the very nature of "show business" involves presenting one's work to an audience. For this reason, she believes public interest and attention are an unavoidable part of an actor's professional life.She also highlighted the important role audiences play in an actor's career, saying viewers contribute significantly to an actor's public identity and professional success.At the same time, Zoya acknowledged that actors can experience difficult days and may occasionally encounter people who communicate or behave inappropriately.

How to choose the right pillow for better sleep

Experts say pillow choice should depend on sleeping position,

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Getting a good night's sleep is not only about having a comfortable bed or maintaining a regular bedtime. Choosing the right pillow can also affect neck support, spinal alignment and overall comfort. Experts say there is no single pillow type or height that works for everyone. Instead, the right choice depends on factors including sleeping position, body shape, shoulder width and the firmness of the mattress.

Physiotherapy expert Dr Chris McCarthy says he does not like travelling without his preferred pillow. Even when staying at hotels, he often rearranges the available pillows to get the support his neck needs.

According to McCarthy, an unsuitable pillow can contribute to discomfort, neck stiffness and pain. This is why people should consider how they sleep rather than choosing a pillow simply because it feels soft or looks comfortable.

Your sleeping position matters

Most people sleep in one of three basic positions: on their side, on their back or on their stomach. Each position places different demands on the neck and spine, meaning pillow height and firmness may need to vary.



Stomach sleepers may need to reconsider their position Experts generally discourage sleeping on the stomach because the position requires the neck to remain turned to one side for an extended period. This can place prolonged strain on some muscles and ligaments around the neck, potentially contributing to stiffness, irritation or pain over time.

Where possible, experts recommend choosing a sleeping position that allows the neck to remain in a more natural and neutral position.

How high should a pillow be for back sleepers?

For people who sleep on their backs, the ideal pillow height depends partly on the natural shape of the neck and upper spine.

Some people may have a more pronounced curve in the neck and upper spine and could find a relatively thicker pillow more comfortable. Others with a flatter posture may prefer a thinner pillow.

There is therefore no universal rule that all back sleepers should use a pillow of the same height. Side sleepers should consider shoulder width People who sleep primarily on their side may need to pay attention to their shoulder width when choosing a pillow.

Those with broader shoulders may require a relatively higher pillow to help keep the head and neck aligned with the spine.

However, shoulder width is not the only factor. The firmness of the mattress can also change how high the pillow needs to be.

Mattress firmness can change the ideal pillow height A person's body sinks into a mattress to varying degrees depending on how soft or firm it is. For example, someone sleeping on their side on a firm mattress may need a thicker pillow because the shoulder does not sink very far into the mattress.

Zaid Ali's mother faces backlash over 'Dare Nijaat' marriage commentary



WEB DESK

KARACHI

Digital creator Naheed Noor, mother of Pakistani-Canadian YouTuber Zaid Ali, has sparked a heated online debate with her unfiltered take on the hit drama Dare Nijaat, questioning whether the show's understanding protagonist reflects the realities of relationships and marriage in society.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Naheed shared a video featuring herself delivering a blunt message about the drama's characters, particularly Abu Bakar, played by Sheheryar Munawar, and Zaryab, portrayed by DureFishan Saleem.

"Abu Bakar jaisay larkay sirf dramon mein hotay hain. Jis din tum ne Zaryab jaisi harkat ki, toh koi chaprasi bhi qubool nahin karega," she said, suggesting that men like Abu Bakar exist only in television stories and that women who make choices similar to Zaryab would face rejection in real life. Her remarks came in reference to Dare Nijaat, the Umera Ahmed written drama currently airing on ARY Digital. The show's central storyline revolves around Zaryab, Zamil and Abu Bakar, with Abu Bakar emerging as a compassionate and principled character in Zaryab's life.

Eating disorders can worsen in isolation, survivor says

HEALTH DESK

ISLAMABAD



Eating disorders can thrive in isolation, making it harder for people affected by them to talk about their struggles or seek support, according to experts and people with lived experience.

Anna Bennett, a 30-year-old woman from Jersey, said asking for help can be one of the most difficult but important steps towards recovery Bennett contacted Jersey Eating Disorders Support in 2020 after developing problems with binge eating while trying to lose weight. She has since received support from the organisation through different stages of her recovery and has now been appointed its first ambassador.

Weight-loss attempt developed into an eating disorderBennett said her difficulties with food began when she decided to lose weight in 2020. What initially felt like a healthy lifestyle change gradually became a complicated relationship with food and eventually developed into binge-eating problems.

She said she had previously known little about eating disorders beyond conditions involving extreme restriction or purging.

After a friend encouraged her to seek help, Bennett contacted Jersey Eating Disorders Support and met its founder, Karen Dingle.

She initially found attending support meetings difficult, worrying that she might face criticism or judgement from people she did not know. Instead, she said, the expeience made her feel as though she had found a family. ecovery is not always a straight path

Bennett's recovery was also affected by major personal losses. Her mother died from cancer in August 2025, while her father died in December 2025 after developing a severe blood infection.

Scanned with CamScanner

Pakistan beat Bangladesh to set up Asian Games cricket gold

● India ease past Sri Lanka by securing 124-run victory in semi finals after Pakistan defeat Bangladesh

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan defeated Bangladesh by six wickets in the first semi-final of the Asian Games men's cricket competition at Korogi Sports Club, Nisshin, on Thursday, booking a final clash with arch-rivals India.

Set to chase a daunting 112-run target in 13 overs, the Green Shirts comfortably knocked the winning runs for the loss of four wickets and three balls to spare.

The Green Shirts, however, got off to a contrasting start to the pursuit as they lost captain Sahibzada Farhan (one) in the first over with just six runs on the board.

His opening partner Maaz Sadaqat, who made a spirited start to his knock, which saw him smash two fours and a six, followed suit in the next over as he fell victim to Nasum Ahmed after scoring a seven-ball 15. n defeat Bangladesh

Indias Jasprit Bumrah (right) bowls as Pakistans Sahibzada Farhan watches during the Asia T20I Cup 2025 Super Four match between India and Pakistan at the Dubai International Stadium in Dubai on September 21, 2025. —



AFP India's Jasprit Bumrah (right) bowls as Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan watches during the Asia T20I Cup 2025 Super Four match between India and Pakistan at the Dubai International Stadium in Dubai on September 21, 2025. — AFP

Pakistan chase down 112-run target with three balls to spare.

Sufiyan Muqeem takes three wickets for Pakistan in semi-final.

Abdul Samad, Hasan Nawaz share unbeaten 69-run partnership.

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Mohammad Rizwan sends third letter to NCCIA, seeks clarification on allegations

● Rizwan confirmed that he had received the agency's notice and would appear before the NCCIA on October 2 to join the inquiry

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan has written a third letter to the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), seeking further details and clarification regarding the allegations being investigated against him.

In his letter, Rizwan confirmed that he had received the agency's notice and would appear before the NCCIA on October 2 to join the inquiry.

Rizwan sought clarification over the scope of the investigation, noting that the first notice had referred to allegations involving online betting and gambling. He said the agency had also mentioned a provision concerning electronic fraud under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 before the court.



However, he pointed out that the latest notice did not mention online betting or gambling, asking the agency to clarify the situation.

Rizwan asked whether the inquiry was still related to online betting or gambling and which specific provisions of PECA 2016 were applicable to the investigation. He also requested written details if the scope of the inquiry had been changed after the initial notice.

The cricketer further asked whether the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit or any other relevant cricketing body had been informed about the allegations. He also sought clarification on whether the NCCIA had obtained information from or contacted the PCB or ICC.

Regarding his mobile phone, Rizwan said the device was currently with the NCCIA and that he had provided its password during his first appearance and while in England. He said the device had subsequently been reopened and examined in his presence.

Rizwan claimed that he had not been provided with a receipt for the seizure of his phone, a warrant, custody record or any written document explaining the agency's continued possession of the device.

He asked the NCCIA to clarify whether any further personal cooperation was required from him for the forensic examination and requested that the examination be completed without delay and his mobile phone returned.

Rizwan said he had still not been informed clearly about the allegations against him, adding that he was ready to fully cooperate with any lawful investigation.

India's Shubman Gill creates history with fastest ODI double century

■ His second 200 came in spectacular fashion, with the right-hander hitting 24 fours and seven sixes as India chased a daunting target of 406



SPORTS Desk

ISLAMABAD

Indian captain Shubman Gill produced a breathtaking display of batting in Guwahati on Wednesday, smashing a record-breaking double century against West Indies and becoming only the second batter after Rohit Sharma to score multiple ODI 200s.

Gill reached the landmark in just 117 balls, making it the fastest double century in ODI history.

His second 200 came in spectacular fashion, with the right-hander hitting 24 fours and seven sixes as India chased a daunting target of 406. Gill had previously scored an ODI double century against New Zealand in Hyderabad in 2023.

He added another milestone to his remarkable innings by bringing up his 11th ODI century in only 62 balls, with five sixes and 10 fours.

The century was his second in successive ODIs and his third consecutive hundred in ODIs played in India.

Only Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers, with four consecutive centuries each, have achieved a longer streak in the format on Indian soil.

Gill's 62-ball century also set a new record for the fastest ODI hundred by an Indian captain, surpassing the mark previously held by Rohit Sharma, who reached the milestone in October 2023.

The India skipper had already played a key role in the opening ODI, scoring 110 from 108 balls.

In the second match, he built a huge opening partnership with Rohit, with the stand reaching 192 when Gill completed his century.

West Indies had earlier piled on 405 for seven, their highest-ever ODI total, on a flat Barsapara Cricket Stadium pitch.

John Campbell led the charge with 101 off 68 balls, while captain Shai Hope scored 104 from 94 deliveries.

Amir Jangoo then smashed 114 off 77 balls, including 13 fours and three sixes.

For India, Kuldeep Yadav was the standout bowler with two wickets for 65 runs.

Marsh hails improvements after Australia win final one-day international

■ South Africa, who won the first two matches to clinch the series, were struggling on 145 for four at the stoppage, well short of the required rate.

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Australian captain Mitchell Marsh hailed the improvement shown by his team after they were convincing winners of the third and final one-day international against South Africa in Potchefstroom on Wednesday.

Australia won by 45 runs according to the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method after South Africa's reply to Australia's 322 for nine was ended by rain after 28 overs.

South Africa, who won the first two matches to clinch the series, were struggling on 145 for four at the stoppage, well short of the required rate.

"I thought the batting in particular showed some real improvement, especially from a few of our young guys," said Marsh. "It was a disappointing series but nice to finish with a win." Marsh said there were encouraging signs looking ahead to the 2027 Cricket World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

"It's gradual improvement. We have some guys that haven't a lot of experience at this level and in particular playing in South Africa against a team that plays very well at home."

Marsh said he was sorry the match had not gone the distance which seemed a fair comment because Ryan Rickelton, on 71 not out, was the last remaining specialist batsman after Tony de Zorzi injured a hamstring while fielding and was ruled out of the rest of the match.

South Africa, having already won the series, rested key players in captain Temba Bavuma, batsman David Miller and bowlers Marco Jansen and Keshav Maharaj.

Australian Test captain Pat Cummins returned for his first one-day international since November 2024.

Marsh and Travis Head again gave Australia a fast start after stand-in captain Aiden Markram won the toss and sent them in, putting on 78 for the first wicket off 53 balls. Unlike in the first two matches, there were solid contributions down the Australian batting order, anchored by Alex Carey's 74 off 88 balls.





China edge Pakistan 2-1 in Asian Games women's squash team championship

Web Desk

NAGOYA

China secured a significant 2-1 victory over Pakistan in the women's team championship round-robin match at the Asian Games in Nagoya.

China's 14-year-old Yin Ziyuan and Liu Ziyi delivered straight-game victories to seal the tie for the hosts, while Pakistan's Sana Bahadar produced a commanding performance to claim the country's only win.Liu Ziyi defeated Mahnoor Ali 3-0, winning 11-4, 11-8, 11-2. Pakistan levelled the tie through Sana Bahadar, who beat Zhang Yuning 3-0. Sana dominated the contest 11-7, 11-9, 11-2.

The deciding match saw 14-year-old Yin Ziyuan defeat Sehrish Ali 3-0.

Yin won the opening game 11-3, dropped the second 7-11, but recovered to take the third 11-3 and secure China's 2-1 victory.

The result marked an important win for China in the women's squash team competition as the round-robin stage continues in Nagoya. Browse Topics



Babar Azam throws fan's phone away during selfie rush

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan cricket captain Babar Azam was surrounded by spectators during a President's Trophy Grade-I match at Diamond Ground in Islamabad on Tuesday, September 30. A large number of spectators entered the ground and attempted to take selfies with the star batter. Amid the rush, Babar took a mobile phone from one of the fans and threw it away.

The incident took place during the match between Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Babar eventually managed to make his way through the crowd and reach the pavilion. Following the incident, Islamabad Police increased security arrangements at the ground to control the gathering and prevent further disruptions.

The incident occurred as spectators gathered around the Pakistan captain during the domestic tournament match.



PCB unveils ticket sales for Sri Lanka series and tri-series

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

The tickets for the upcoming T20I series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will go on sale online from Saturday, 3 October, the PCB announced on Thursday, The three-match T20I series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be staged at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from 9 to 13 October.

The tickets will be available online at pcb.tcs.com.pk from 3pm onwards on Saturday.

Physical tickets will be available at TCS Express Centres from Monday, 5 October from 3pm onwards. Details about Express Centres will be shared in due course.

For the first and second T20Is, general tickets will be available from Rs300, while first-class tickets will be available from Rs500. Premium tickets will be available from Rs700, while VIP tickets will be available from Rs1,000 for both matches.

For the third T20I, general tickets will be available from Rs200, while first-class tickets will be available from Rs400. Premium and VIP enclosure tickets will be available from Rs600 and Rs800, respectively.

For the T20Is, PCB Gallery and Platinum Box/Seat tickets will also go on sale (details attached). Tickets for the ODI tri-series, featuring hosts Pakistan, England and Sri Lanka, will be available online from Saturday, 10 October from 3pm onwards at pcb.tcs.com.pk.

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State Minister for Energy (Power Division) Abdul Rehman Khan Kanju, Provincial Minister for Irrigation Muhammad Kazim Ali Pirzada and MNA Punjab Hamza Shahbaz Sharif offer Fateha for the departed brother of former MPA Sultana Shaheen at her residence on the occasion

Sindh Cabinet extends Mir Raza Commission's term until October 15

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



The Sindh Cabinet on Thursday approved an extension of the term of the judicial commission investigating the murder of young Karachi entrepreneur Mir Raza Ali, allowing the panel to continue its proceedings until October 15.

the commission, headed by Sindh High Court Justice Umar Sial, had requested additional time to complete its inquiry and prepare its final report. Its original one-month mandate expired on September 27, after which its proceedings were temporarily adjourned while the extension awaited formal approval.

The extension will allow the commission to complete the remaining proceedings and examine outstanding matters linked to the investigation into Mir Raza's death. The panel has been looking into the circumstances surrounding the case, including the investigation and medico-legal aspects.

Before the cabinet's approval, the commission had adjourned its proceedings until October 2 because the request for an extension was still pending. The provincial government had informed the commission that Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had approved the summary and forwarded it to the cabinet for a final decision.

The commission had also indicated that, if the extension was approved, fresh notices would be issued to remaining witnesses and questionnaires would be sent to senior police officers. If the extension had not been granted, the panel would have prepared its report on the basis of statements already recorded.

The judicial commission was constituted to examine the circumstances surrounding Mir Raza's death and determine whether the investigation was conducted properly and in accordance with the law. It was also tasked with examining any possible negligence, professional misconduct or other lapses by police, medico-legal officials or other authorities.

Mohsin Naqvi calls for modern, technology-driven police training

● Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called for modernising police training, directing upgraded equipment, expert faculty and digital policing and AI modules to improve the force's standards.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has stressed that bringing police officers' training in line with modern requirements is essential to further improve the standards of the police force.

Naqvi made the remarks during a visit to the National Police Academy, where he inspected ongoing development and upgradation projects and reviewed progress on the academy's improvement plans.

The interior minister also visited model rooms prepared for trainee officers. He chaired a meeting during the visit to assess progress on various upgradation projects at the academy.

Naqvi directed that the conference room and auditorium be reconstructed and instructed officials to ensure that all projects are completed within the timelines, with proper planning and high standards.

He said the Minister of State for Interior was reviewing the academy's upgradation projects on a daily basis.

The interior minister also directed officials to provide trainee officers with modern training equipment similar to that used by SWAT teams. He further called for the hiring of highly qualified and experienced faculty for the Mid-Career Management Course.

The meeting also decided to recommend the inclusion of modern modules on digital policing and artificial intelligence in the MCMC curriculum.

Naqvi said police officers' training must be aligned with the requirements of the modern era to further improve the quality of the police force.

The Commandant of the National Police Academy, officials from the Capital Development Authority and other relevant authorities were also present during the visit.

Pakistan's public debt jumps 7.7% to Rs86.72 trillion

■ The Ministry of Finance's Debt Management Office (DMO) said the slower pace of debt accumulation was supported by fiscal consolidation, a

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan's total public debt rose 7.7 percent to around Rs86.72 trillion by end June 2026, compared with 13 percent growth a year earlier, while the public debt-to-GDP ratio declined to 68.3 percent from 70.6 percent, according to the Annual Debt Review Fy2026,

The Ministry of Finance's Debt Management Office (DMO) said the slower pace of debt accumulation was supported by fiscal consolidation, a federal primary surplus of Rs2.185 trillion and a 22 percent reduction in interest expenditure during fiscal year 2026.

The review showed that domestic debt increased 9 percent to Rs59.441 trillion, while external debt rose 6.8 percent to USD 98.075 billion during the year. Total public debt stood at USD 312 billion in dollar terms.

Interest expenditure declined to Rs6.948 trillion in fiscal year 2026 from Rs8.887 trillion in the fiscal year 2025, registering a 22 percent reduction. The federal fiscal deficit consequently narrowed sharply to Rs4.763 trillion from Rs7.089 trillion, while the federal primary surplus increased from Rs1.798 trillion to Rs2.185 trillion.

The report said fiscal consolidation continued to strengthen, with net federal revenues increasing 6 percent year-on-year to Rs10.52 trillion, while total non-interest expenditure grew by only 2.3 percent compared with 15 percent in FY25.

Under the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act definition, total government debt stood at Rs77.168 trillion, equivalent to 60.8 percent of GDP, down from 64.2 percent at end June 2025.

The government financed 75 percent of the federal fiscal deficit through domestic borrowing and 25 percent through external sources during fiscal year 2026. Net external financing increased to Rs1.177 trillion, while net domestic financing stood at Rs3.586 trillion.

The domestic debt portfolio also underwent significant changes.

Murad Ali Shah stresses industrialists' role in economic growth

■ He has urged industrialists to stay away from politics and concentrate on promoting industrial development and economic growth

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has urged industrialists to stay away from politics and concentrate on promoting industrial development and economic growth.

Addressing an award and dinner ceremony hosted by the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), the chief minister said the Sindh government's development projects in Korangi, particularly in the industrial area, had been appreciated by the business community.

Murad Ali Shah said the construction and rehabilitation of roads, bridges and other infrastructure in Korangi's industrial areas reflected the provincial government's efforts to improve facilities for industries.

He said the government had also established a school for children with autism in Korangi and would soon provide a snorkel to KATI. He added that work on the Yellow Line project would be carried out in consultation with representatives of the industrial community.

The chief minister said the Sindh government had taken several measures to improve law and order in Korangi in consultation with industrialists.

Referring to the security situation in the Katcha areas, he said the issue had been a major concern for the provincial government, but peace had eventually been restored.

Murad Ali Shah also assured the industrial community that the water shortage affecting the Korangi industrial area would be addressed soon.

Pakistan, Russia bolster anti-graft cooperation with MoU set for Nov 6 signing

■ A key development discussed during the meeting was a planned Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NAB and the Office of the Prosecutor General of Russia.



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ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Russia are set to deepen cooperation against corruption and money laundering, with NAB Chairman Lieutenant General (retd) Nazir Ahmed and Russian Ambassador Albert P Khorev discussing institutional collaboration ahead of a planned anti-corruption MoU signing in Moscow on November 6, 2026,

During the meeting on Thursday, both sides discussed institutional transparency and the anti-corruption framework, with a focus on improving cooperation to tackle corruption and money laundering.

A key development discussed during the meeting was a planned Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NAB and the Office of the Prosecutor General of Russia. The agreement is scheduled to be signed in Moscow on November 6, 2026.

The proposed MoU will focus on effective measures against corruption and money laundering and is expected to strengthen coordination between the relevant institutions of the two countries.

Ambassador Khorev reaffirmed Russia's commitment to maintaining constructive dialogue with Pakistan and further promoting institutional cooperation between the two sides.

The planned agreement reflects the two countries' commitment to strengthening cooperation against corruption at both the political and institutional levels.



Women participate in a road safety awareness scooter rally organized by the Road Safety Club at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad in collaboration with City Traffic Police

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