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- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi

Security forces kill 18 terrorists in Balochistan, KP operations

■ Security forces killed 18 militants in separate operations in North Waziristan and Mastung, recovering weapons and ammunition as clearance operations continue in both areas.

STAFF REPORTER
QUETTA

Security forces have killed 18 militants in separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, according to security sources.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security forces carried out an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan under the Azm-e-Istehkam framework. The operation resulted in the killing of 13 militants, while their hideouts in North Waziristan and surrounding areas were targeted.



Security sources said the forces had been monitoring the movement of the militants before launching the operation and carrying out the action against their positions.

Separately, security forces conducted an operation against militants in Balochistan under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3.

According to security sources, five militants were killed in the areas of Siyapast and Killi Gashtari in Mastung.

A significant quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the militants killed during the operation, the sources said.

Search and clearance activities are continuing in the affected areas to locate any remaining militants. Security forces said operations would continue until the threat of militancy in the areas is eliminated.

A day earlier, five terrorists were killed and two others injured during a security operation in North Waziristan.

The operation was conducted after security personnel tracked the activities of militants in the region. Forces subsequently moved against suspected militant positions in North Waziristan and adjoining areas, the sources said.



Nobel Peace Prize haunted by the 'spectre' of Trump

Staff Reporter
Washington

Donald Trump's chances of winning the Nobel Peace Prize are seen as minimal, but his "spectre" will cast its shadow over Friday's announcement of the winner in Oslo, experts say.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee knows it will be under close scrutiny: since his return to the White House in January 2025, the billionaire Republican has campaigned intensively for the prize and hasn't hidden his disappointment at not winning it yet.The chances of him getting the nod are however undermined by his war against Iran, his territorial ambitions -- sometimes at the expense of allies, as in Greenland -- and his attacks on international cooperation institutions and the media.Even though he has not been lobbying as openly for the Nobel in recent weeks, Trump remains on everyone's minds.



Three remaining crew members of MT Honour 25 en route to Karachi: Dar

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Wednesday that the remaining three Pakistani crew members of MT Honour 25 were on their way back home and would soon be reunited with their families.

In a post on X, Ishaq Dar said Imran Ali, Husain Yousuf and Muhammad Yasin were scheduled to leave Addis Ababa later in the day for Karachi.

He said Pakistan's ambassador in Addis Ababa had met the three crew members and ensured that they were provided all necessary facilities and services during their stay in the Ethiopian capital.

Ishaq Dar said the Foreign Office and the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had made every effort to ensure the safe return of all Pakistani crew members.





Success of govt-PTI talks in jeopardy as KP CM Afridi, Achakzai walk away

WEB DESK
ISLAMABAD

There are doubts over the success of the third round of government, opposition talks and it is feared they may fail prior to their start as two key figures, KP CM Sohail Afridi and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mahmood Khan Achakzai, have refused to become members of the opposition's negotiating team,

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan had invited both Afridi and Achakzai to become part of the negotiating team in view of the fact that they are important stakeholders.

But while Afridi said he was busy in the long march, Achakzai showed his unwillingness to go to the speaker's chamber, saying he could not go to the chamber of a man who was a member of the Form-47 government.

"I am ready to go if there is a third venue for talks."

Sources disclosed that argumentation also took place between Barrister Gohar and Achakzai over the matter. But the latter did not show any flexibility and stuck to his point of view, they informed.Meanwhile, PTI's parliamentary party too has increased pressure on the leader of the opposition, saying he had been nominated by the former prime minister Imran Khan to lead the talks, and now he should not walk away.

On the other hand, official work in KP has come to a halt since the provincial chief minister is leading the long march and is visiting different areas of the province.

Department of Planning and Development's meeting could not be held at the CM's House due to Afridi's absence.



Govt considering all constitutional options for KP amid unrest, says Khawaja Asif

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD

Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that imposing governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be a last resort, adding that the government is making efforts to avoid reaching that point.

Speaking to media at Parliament House on Wednesday, Asif said that if no other option remained, the federal capital could not be left "at the mercy of anyone.

Govt doors for talks open, but state cannot be held hostage: Rana Sanaullah

■ Rana Sanaullah says the government remains open to talks but will not accept demands by holding the state hostage, while defending its counterterrorism policy.

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has said the government's doors for negotiations remain open, but no demand can be accepted by holding the state hostage.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Rana Sanaullah said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also tried to convince PTI to avoid prioritizing its personal political agenda over national interests.

He alleged that PTI's agenda had been to create political instability in the country and promote a culture of abuse in politics. He said political instability began in 2014, when PTI staged a 126-day sit-in in Islamabad, adding that the party had repeatedly attempted to march on the federal capital.



Rana Sanaullah said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources were being used for political purposes while customs and police personnel were being killed in the province. He said the government would not tolerate the KP government's conduct.

He claimed that PTI had been unable to gather even a few thousand people since launching its long march on October 4, alleging that organizers had earned millions of rupees under the pretext of the march.

The prime minister's adviser said the issue that caused a deadlock in negotiations was being presented incorrectly. He rejected the impression that the government's counterterrorism policy was being formulated without consultation, saying the policy was already in place and being implemented.

Qatar confirms ongoing Iran-US negotiations and exchange of messages



WEB DESK
TEHRAN

Talks between Iran and the United States are continuing through Qatari mediation, with messages also being exchanged between the two sides,

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said the negotiations were aimed at reaching a practical solution to the issues between Iran and the United States.

It said any agreement would need to take into account the concerns and interests of all parties involved.

Qatar also expressed support for the Makkah defence agreement between Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan.

The Qatari Foreign Ministry said the Makkah alliance would strengthen regional cooperation among countries in the region and contribute to protecting their resources and maintaining stability.

Qatar said it supported any measures taken by countries in the region to protect their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The ministry's comments came as diplomatic efforts continued to keep communication open between Iran and the United States, with Qatar playing a mediating role.

Pakistani troops already in Saudi Arabia across multiple domains: DG ISPR

■ Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif says Pakistani forces have been in kingdom for decades

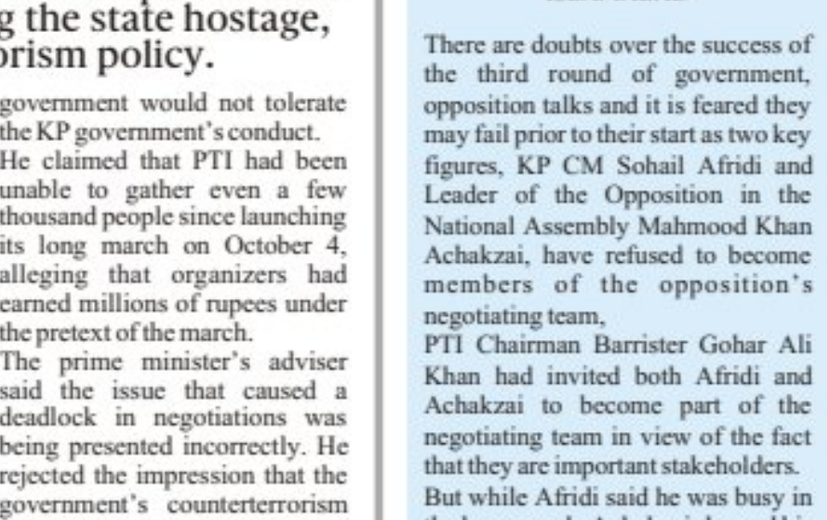
STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

Pakistani troops are already present in Saudi Arabia across multiple capabilities and domains, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General (DG) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Wednesday.

Asked by CNN whether Pakistani troops or personnel were already on the ground in Saudi Arabia as part of the Makkah alliance, the DG ISPR said the forces had been there for decades.

"Pakistani troops have been there for decades [...] in Saudi Arabia," Lt Gen Chaudhry said.

He said the Makkah alliance had not emerged "in a vacuum", pointing to the longstanding diplomatic, political, military and people-to-people ties between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye.



"So I can share with you that Pakistani troops, in multiple capabilities and domains, are already there," the DG ISPR said.

The remarks come after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments and ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh on Monday, according to a joint statement shared by Pakistan's Foreign Office.

The three countries said the deployment would take place under approved arrangements and in accordance with their respective national laws, with the measures aimed at enhancing readiness, military integration and collective capacity.

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye in August.

Under the agreement, an armed attack against one member is considered an attack against all.Speaking in an interview with CNN, the military spokesperson said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had maintained longstanding defence ties, with Pakistani troops having been stationed in the kingdom for decades.

Lt Gen Chaudhry said Pakistani personnel deployed in Saudi Arabia under the Makkah agreement belonged to different domains.

Scanned with CamScanner

Modern IT hub opens in Zhob to create new opportunities for Baloch youth

- A modern IT hub has been established in Zhob district of Balochistan, opening new opportunities for young people to develop digital skills and find employment in the technology sector.



SPECIAL REPORTER
QUETTA

A modern IT hub has been established in Zhob district of Balochistan, opening new opportunities for young people to develop digital skills and find employment in the technology sector.

the project has been completed under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative with the support of the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps Balochistan and the provincial government.

The channel reported that the new IT centre is aimed at promoting digital literacy in Zhob, a remote area of the province, and helping young people gain access to modern technology and skills.

The facility is expected to support the creation of new and better employment opportunities for young people in the area by providing access to modern IT facilities and training.The initiative is also being seen as an important step towards connecting communities in remote parts of Balochistan with the growing digital economy.

The establishment of the IT hub is expected to contribute to the development of a more skilled workforce and provide young people with greater opportunities to build careers in the technology sector.



Hon. Mussa Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania presenting a souvenir to Chairman Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on the sidelines of the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Arusha

Rain forecast across Islamabad and upper regions as new weather system approaches

- Rain and thunderstorms expected across parts of Punjab, KP, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan: Sarai Alamgir faces severe waterlogging after rain, damaging shops and disrupting daily life: Snowfall covers Naran and Babusar Top as cold weather hits Mansehra

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Metrological Department has predicted that rain is expected in Islamabad and upper regions,

According to the Meteorological Department, rainfall will occur in Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Narowal, Lahore and Sialkot.

Rain accompanied by thunderstorms is also forecast for upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Meteorological Department warned that heavy rain may occur in some areas and advises citizens to exercise caution.

Current river levels remain normal, and there is no flood situation in the major rivers.

Another westerly weather system is expected to affect Islamabad and the upper regions starting October 9.



The city of Sarai Alamgir was inundated following light rain; water accumulated to a depth of two-and-a-half to three feet in the main bazaar, causing severe difficulties for students and office-goers.

The accumulated water also entered shops, resulting in losses worth hundreds of thousands of rupees for the business community.

Weather in Karachi is partly cloudy and humid. Maximum temperature in the city expected to range between 33 C and 35 C.

South-westerly winds blowing at 7 km per hour and humidity level is at 85 percent.

Snowfall covers Naran and Babusar Top as cold weather hits Mansehra

Late-night snowfall has covered the tourist areas of Naran and Babusar Top in Mansehra district, turning the surrounding mountains white.

The snowfall created a striking winter scene across the upper areas, with snow covering the landscape.

The change in weather has also brought colder conditions to nearby mountainous areas as well as the plains, with temperatures falling across the region.

The local administration said all routes leading to the Kaghan Valley remained open for tourists.

Authorities said tourists could travel to the valley as normal, while the snowfall added to the area's winter scenery.

The snowfall comes as colder weather begins to spread across the upper parts of Mansehra and surrounding areas.

Aurat card nakaam raha! Saqib Chadhar fires back at Momina Iqbal in legal row

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



PML-N MPA Saqib Chadhar has hit back at actress Momina Iqbal in their ongoing legal dispute, claiming that the "aurat card" used against him failed after the Lahore High Court set aside an order for registration of a case against Momina's sister, Ramsha Iqbal.

Justice Abher Gul Khan announced the verdict on Tuesday after hearing Ramsha Iqbal's petition against the order. The court accepted her petition and set aside the decision directing registration of a case against her.

Speaking about the matter after the court's decision, Saqib Chadhar said that he had not wanted to speak earlier because he was waiting for documentary proof to be submitted.

During his conversation with reporters, Saqib was asked about the case and whether his lawyer had told him not to give any statement. He said he had no intention of speaking until the required documents were submitted.

Saqib then spoke about what he called the "aurat card" and claimed that it had failed. He alleged that Momina Iqbal was trying to use the issue against him and accused her of making false claims.

Saqib said that relationships can work and they can also end, but that does not mean a person should later publicly humiliate the other person. He said people can have relationships that do not last and that ending a relationship is a normal part of life.

Eight suspects arrested over alleged plan to disrupt peace in Kotli: Police

- Kotli police claimed eight suspects were arrested over an alleged plan to disrupt law and order under the guise of protest, with weapons recovered from them.

SPECIAL REPORTER
MUZAFFARABAD

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police officials in Kotli have claimed that certain elements planned to disrupt law and order and paralyse routine life in the city under the guise of a protest.

Addressing a news conference, police officials said meetings were held in different districts as part of the alleged plan. They said arrangements were made at a meeting in Kotli to provide weapons, transportation and local facilitators to the suspected elements.

According to police, pistols and other weapons were recovered from eight suspects arrested in connection with the case.

Police said the suspects carried out an action at Kala Dabb, during which a police constable was seriously injured and



was fighting for his life at a hospital in Rawalpindi. Post commander Naeem was also injured during the incident.

The officials said police responded to the action, cleared the road and brought the situation under control.

According to police, further information emerged during interrogation of the arrested suspects, on the basis of which additional action would be taken.

Police officials said Kotli city was allegedly the target of the suspects' next plan. However, they said certain sensitive details could not be disclosed until the completion of the investigation.

Police maintained that the arrested individuals were allegedly attempting to disrupt normal life under the guise of a protest. The officials warned that any attempt to disturb law and order would be dealt with according to the law..

FBR notifies new income tax rules for shipping companies

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has released a draft proposing further amendments to the Income Tax Rules 2002 including a new mechanism for filing tax returns electronically under Section 143 of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001.

Under the proposed system, non-resident ship owners, charterers and authorized shipping agents would be required to file their Section 143 returns electronically through the FBR's computerized IRIS system.

Relevant documents, certificates, statements and electronic records would also have to be submitted with the return.

The proposed rules have been issued for public feedback. Stakeholders can submit objections and suggestions to the FBR within seven days of the draft's publication in the official gazette.

The draft proposes linking IRIS with the Pakistan Single Window (PSW). Once a Vessel Information Report (VIR) is received through PSW, key vessel and shipping information would automatically be transferred to IRIS. The system would then generate a single electronic return against each unique VIR.

The return would include details of the relevant NTN holders, total voyage-related income and applicable tax payments.

TENDER NOTICE

The DIRECTOR GENERAL FARMS & FEED RESOURCES QUETTA invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-2627101204401 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB**

Tender Fee Not Required

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Animal Food & Medicine (Total Item(s) Count: 2)	100,000 PKR

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 2 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 4,000,000 in Previous 2 Years Turn over of at least 4,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive Must agree to serve the Contract within 30 days **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of amount 100,000 PKR specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 23 October, 2026during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 23 October, 2026till 10:30 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:30 AM Address: Office of Director General Farms and Feed Resources Brewery Road Near CASVAB quetta

Phone no: 0819213147Fax no: 0819213147
Email: dgffiddd@gmail.com

DIRECTOR GENERAL FARMS & FEED RESOURCES QUETTA

DPRQ/PRQ No.1783/7-10-2026

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TENDER NOTICE

TSE-2627101204773 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Deputy Conservator of Forests Mian Recreational Park Quetta invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2026 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates

Tender Fee PKR and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	survey and equipments	2,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 1,400,000 PKR Amount in3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Gurantee,Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 22 October, 2026during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 22 October, 2026till 10:30 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:30 AM **Address:** office of the deputy conservator of forest mianghundi recreational park quetta Phone no: 0819201137Fax no: 819201139
Email: deputyconservatorforestsmrpark@gmail.com

Deputy Conservator of Forests Mian Recreational Park Quetta

DPRQ/PRQ No.1779/7-10-2026

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Punjab local government elections proposed for April 2027 amid smog, fog concerns

- Punjab is considering holding local government elections in April 2027 instead of December or January due to expected smog and fog during the winter period.

SPECIAL REPORTER
LAHORE

The Punjab Local Government Department has started considering a proposal to hold local government elections in April 2027 instead of December or January.

According to sources, the School Education Department has proposed changing the election date due to the possibility of smog and fog in Punjab from December 15 to January 1.

Sources said the Punjab Local Government Department is considering holding the local government elections in April 2027. A detailed briefing on the proposal will be given to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz during a cabinet meeting.

According to sources, the schedule for the local government elections prepared by the Election Commission will also be presented at the cabinet committee meeting. The final decision regarding the election date will be subject to approval from the chief minister.

Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq has also confirmed that the School Education Department's proposal to change the date of the local government elections is under consideration. He said the chief minister would be briefed on holding the elections in April 2027 instead of December or January.

Officials said a final decision on the new election date, schedule and other administrative matters would be taken after consultation at the relevant forums.

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IMF taxes squeeze salaried class

The salaried class has paid Rs144 billion in income tax in this fiscal year, which is Rs90 billion more than the taxes paid by retail and realty sectors, highlighting a widening disparity under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme that has endorsed a 50% cut for real estate and a fixed tax scheme for retailers.

Official record of the past two fiscal years and provisional figures of the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year suggested that at the completion of two years of the IMF programme, the tax contribution of the salaried class had multiplied.

But the influential trading and real estate sectors remained largely outside of the net, with the IMF either endorsing tax concessions for them or keeping its eyes closed. The IMF executive board had approved the three-year $7 billion loan package in September 2024, and the Fund's staff is scheduled to complete its ongoing visit to Pakistan for the fourth review of the programme on Wednesday.

According to the FBR's provisional tax collection data, income tax collection from the real estate sector dived 38% to a mere Rs35.2 billion in the first three months of the current fiscal year. It was Rs22 billion less than the comparative period of the last fiscal year after the government cut income tax for the realty sector by 50%, which the IMF also endorsed.

In fiscal year 2024, the realty sector had paid Rs200 billion in income tax, which hardly increased to Rs236 billion in the last fiscal year, but it has now been halved. In the budget, the government reduced the advance tax on sale and purchase of immovable property by 50%. On the sale of property, three slabs have been merged, and a single rate of 2.75% has been introduced against 5.5%.

On the purchase of property, the tax rate has been reduced from 2.5% to 1.25%. Because of this steep reduction, the advance income tax collection on the sale of property decreased from Rs39.5 billion to Rs23 billion in three months, a reduction of Rs16.5 billion, or 42%.

Likewise, on the purchase of properties, the income tax collection dipped from Rs17.7 billion to Rs12.2 billion, a reduction of Rs5.5 billion, or 31%, according to these statistics.

Official data showed that withholding taxes paid by wholesalers and retailers almost remained stagnant during the first three months of the current fiscal year. The combined withholding taxes paid by wholesalers and retailers amounted to Rs18.4 billion during the first three months. These were Rs244 million, or 1.3%, more than the last fiscal year.

Wholesalers paid Rs6.2 billion in three months, down by Rs701 million, or 10%. Instead of using the data of wholesalers to go after the retailers, the Federal Board of Revenue introduced a fixed tax scheme that has miserably failed. The traders, after making promises to become tax return filers, stayed outside of the net amid a lack of political will to go after them.

Retailers paid Rs11.3 billion in income tax, higher by Rs945 million, or 8.3%, than the comparative period of the last fiscal year. The combined taxes paid by retailers and the real estate sector amounted to a mere Rs54 billion. It was Rs90 billion less than the taxes paid by the salaried class.

According to tax officials, the income tax collection from the salaried class amounted to Rs144 billion during the July-September period of the current fiscal year. It was higher by Rs13.4 billion, or 10.2%, compared to the same period of last year.

In the budget, the government claimed that it had given a Rs52 billion relief to the salaried class by up to 3% reduction in the tax rate and abolishing the 9% surcharge calculated on the basis of the highest tax rate of 35%. It also increased the applicability limit of the maximum tax rate of 35% from Rs4.1 million to Rs7 million annually.

The massive reduction in collection from real estate has widened the gap between income tax payments made by the salaried class and the real estate sector. Before the start of the IMF programme, the annual contribution of the salaried class was Rs391 billion, which within two fiscal years of the IMF programme increased to Rs629 billion as of June 2026.

The salaried class, like other middle- and lower-middle-income groups, is also adversely impacted by the government's decision to fully recover international oil prices, charge a petroleum levy of Rs80 per litre and climate support levy of Rs5 per litre. The daily price fluctuation is also causing a hike in fruit and vegetable prices.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had promised to substantially reduce the tax burden of the salaried class once the tax base was broadened. However, instead of increasing tax collection from the highly undertaxed sectors, his government has further slashed their burden.



By: Ishak Soomro

Pakistan Violence: 83% Rise in Fatalities During Third Quarter

Pakistan recorded an alarming 83 percent increase in violence-related fatalities during the third quarter of 2026, reversing the declining trend witnessed during the first and second quarters of the year. There was also a significant rise in deaths resulting from terrorism and counter-terrorism operations across the country.

According to a report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), the period from July to September 2026 witnessed a substantial increase in terrorism, counter-terrorism operations and other violent incidents. Balochistan emerged as the worst-affected province, with the number of fatalities increasing more than threefold compared with the second quarter. Nearly 88 percent of the national increase in violence-related fatalities was attributed to Balochistan.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) remained the second most affected province after Balochistan. Both provinces once again remained the main centers of terrorism and counter-terrorism operations in the country. According to the report, Balochistan and KP together accounted for approximately 98 percent of all violence-related fatalities recorded in Pakistan during the third quarter.

The CRSS report states that at least 1,415 violence-related fatalities were recorded across the country during the three-month period. These included civilians, security personnel and other individuals. A total of 585 violent incidents were reported, including terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations.

Balochistan recorded 829 fatalities, accounting for approximately 59 percent of the national total. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded 556 fatalities, representing more than 39 percent of the total. Together, the two provinces accounted for 1,385 deaths, or approximately 98 percent of all violence-related fatalities in the country.

Balochistan also recorded the highest number of violent incidents, with 186 incidents, representing more than 48 percent of the national total. KP

followed with 173 incidents, accounting for approximately 45 percent of all reported incidents.

The number of people injured also reflects the severity of the situation. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 376 people were injured, while 163 people were injured in Balochistan. Thus, the two provinces experienced not only the highest number of fatalities but also a significant proportion of injuries resulting from violence.

According to the CRSS, the increase in violence between the second and third quarters was the most significant quarter-on-quarter rise recorded since 2021.

An important feature of Pakistan's current security situation is that violence is not evenly distributed geographically. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue to bear the greatest burden of the country's security crisis. The available figures clearly indicate that the overwhelming majority of violence-related fatalities and incidents remain concentrated in these two provinces.

The situation requires not only an examination of military and security operations but also a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to continuing instability. Border conditions, activities of armed groups, local conflicts, weak governance, underdevelopment, limited employment opportunities and problems of trust between state institutions and local communities in certain areas also require serious attention.

At the same time, the interaction of these factors can vary from one area and incident to another. Therefore, policy responses need to take local circumstances into account rather than relying solely on a uniform national approach. The 83 percent increase in fatalities is not merely a statistical development. Behind these numbers are human lives lost, families devastated and economic activities disrupted. Every figure represents an individual tragedy as well as a wider social and economic cost. The CRSS report also indicates that a significant number of militants were killed during the third quarter. However, the continued loss of civilian and security personnel lives demonstrates that the law-and-order and security challenges remain serious. The report also examines attacks claimed by militant organizations. According to the CRSS, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for 13 attacks during the third quarter, in which 117 people were killed. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for five attacks, resulting in 34 deaths and 42 injuries.

The report also points to changes in the methods used in violent attacks. Vehicle-borne suicide attacks caused a combined 81 deaths and 204 injuries. Armed attacks resulted in 147 deaths and 116 injuries, while 58 incidents of firing caused 72 deaths and 18 injuries. Meanwhile, 16 drone attacks resulted in 13 deaths and 48 injuries. These figures demonstrate that violence in Pakistan is taking multiple forms and involves a range of weapons and attack strategies. The changing nature of attacks presents an additional challenge for security agencies and policymakers.

The third-quarter figures once again raise an important question: if the decline observed during the first two quarters could not be sustained, what additional measures are required to establish lasting peace and security in the country?

The human cost recorded during these three months—1,415 fatalities and 558 injuries—demands that Pakistan's security situation be treated not merely as a matter of quarterly statistics but as a long-term national challenge.

There is a need to integrate security policies with political, administrative and economic measures at both the federal and provincial levels. In sensitive provinces such as Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, effective security measures must be accompanied by greater attention to the concerns of local communities, basic public services, education, employment, development and the effective rule of law.

A sustainable response to violence requires more than a short-term security approach. It requires continued efforts to strengthen institutions, improve governance, address local grievances and expand economic and social opportunities.

The latest figures underline the urgency of such a comprehensive approach if Pakistan is to reverse the renewed rise in violence and move towards lasting peace and stability.



By: Ashfaq Ahmad

The Vaping Debate: Why Choice Alone Isn't Enough When Lives Are at Stake



Recent fabricated trends in Pakistan argue that vaping in Pakistan is a natural, grassroots movement that helps people quit smoking. It says policymakers should support this trend instead of banning it. This sounds reasonable at first. But a closer look shows the argument is built on weak evidence, and it ends up defending the vaping industry more than it defends public health.

The main point is that we should trust what smokers are already doing more than what health experts advise. But this is not how public health works, and it should not be. Smoking was once seen as a "personal choice" too. So was not wearing a seatbelt. When addiction and misleading information are involved, a person's choice is not always a safe guide. This is exactly why health experts and government bodies, not shopkeepers or biased surveys, must decide what is safe.

This matters even more for teenagers. Most teens do not start vaping after carefully studying health risks. They start because of social media influencers, peer pressure, and flavours designed to attract young people. If we make policy based on "what people are already doing," we are letting trends decide our health rules, including trends created by companies that profit from selling vapes.

Vape-favoured studies are being conducted only inside vape shops. This is a major problem. People who are already inside a vape shop, buying vapes, are likely to say good things about vaping. This kind of survey misses many important groups, i.e., people who tried vaping and went back to smoking cigarettes, people who now use both cigarettes and vapes together, which is very common and worse for health, not better, and non-smokers, especially teenagers, who never smoked before but started using nicotine through vaping. A question arises here that self-reported answers, taken in a shop, with no medical check-up and no follow-up are really reliable in health matters? Such tactics are very different from real clinical studies, and comparing them to organized quit-smoking programs is misleading.

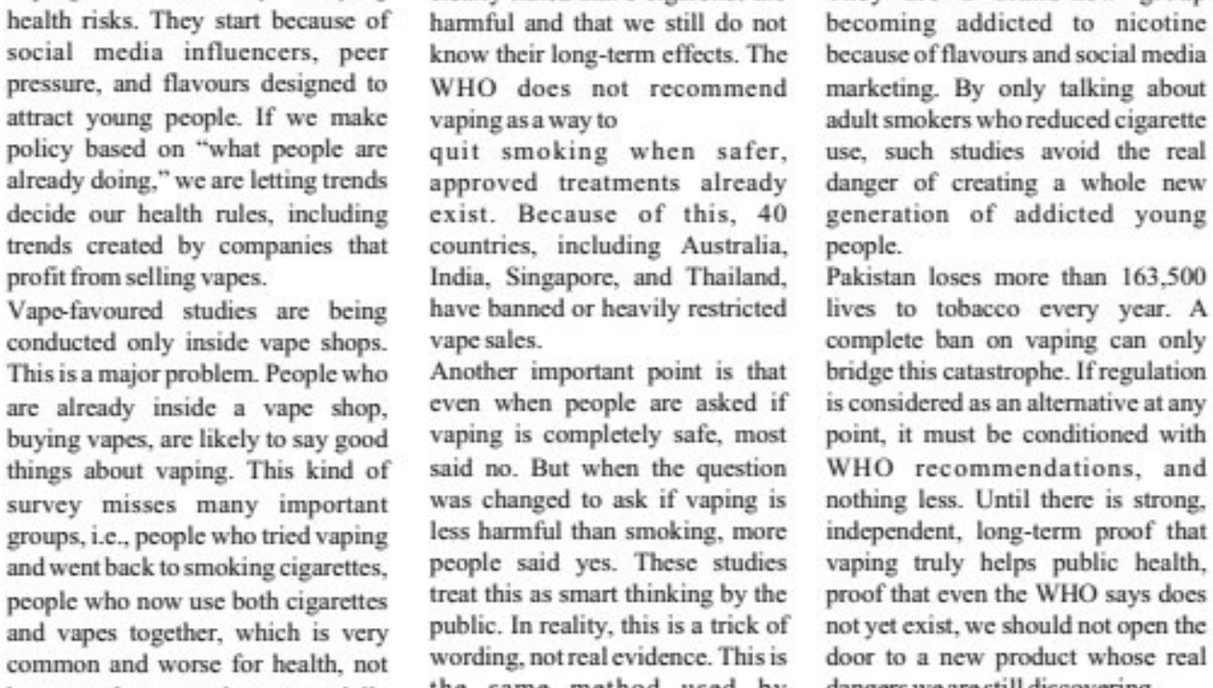
These studies serve as promotional material in which they talk about "experts," but do not mention what the WHO actually says. The WHO has clearly stated that e-cigarettes are harmful and that we still do not know their long-term effects. The WHO does not recommend vaping as a way to quit smoking when safer, approved treatments already exist. Because of this, 40 countries, including Australia, India, Singapore, and Thailand, have banned or heavily restricted vape sales.

Another important point is that even when people are asked if vaping is completely safe, most said no. But when the question was changed to ask if vaping is less harmful than smoking, more people said yes. These studies treat this as smart thinking by the public. In reality, this is a trick of wording, not real evidence. This is the same method used by companies to make a harmful product sound acceptable, not because it is truly safe, but because something else is worse. This comparison ignores the fact that vaping has its own serious health risks, including lung injuries and possible heart and breathing problems, that have nothing to do with cigarettes.

These studies barely discuss the fastest-growing group of vapers, which is teenagers and young people who never smoked before. These are not smokers trying to quit.

They are a brand-new group becoming addicted to nicotine because of flavours and social media marketing. By only talking about adult smokers who reduced cigarette use, such studies avoid the real danger of creating a whole new generation of addicted young people.

Pakistan loses more than 163,500 lives to tobacco every year. A complete ban on vaping can only bridge this catastrophe. If regulation is considered as an alternative at any point, it must be conditioned with WHO recommendations, and nothing less. Until there is strong, independent, long-term proof that vaping truly helps public health, proof that even the WHO says does not yet exist, we should not open the door to a new product whose real dangers we are still discovering.



A worker welds geysers at his shop as demand rises with the onset of the winter season.

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Pakistan, IMF yet to reach agreement on proposed auto policy

■ Pakistan and IMF talks on the new auto policy remain unresolved, with differences over electric vehicle sales tax. IMF seeks an 18% rate on EVs valued at up to $75,000.



Web DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have yet to resolve differences over the country's proposed new auto policy, according to sources in the Finance Ministry.The sources said the IMF continues to raise concerns about the proposed tax treatment of electric vehicles, with the government still undecided on whether to impose an 18% sales tax on electric cars valued up to Rs20 million. According to the sources, the IMF has proposed increasing the sales tax on an electric vehicle worth $75,000 from 1% to 18%. The Pakistani government has presented its position on the proposed auto policy during discussions with the IMF. Officials explained that the reduced sales tax on electric vehicles was intended to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly vehicles.

Pakistan also assured the IMF that vehicle values covered under the proposed scheme would remain unchanged for one year.

Sources in the Ministry of Industries and Production said discussions with the IMF on the new auto policy would continue, indicating that an agreement on the outstanding issues has not yet been reached.



Labourers are busy loading bags of rice onto a tractor trolley at a Rice Market.

Pakistan, IMF likely to reach staff-level agreement today as talks enter final

■ After the Staff Level Agreement, the IMF Board will approve the release of the tranche.

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are working to finalise a Staff-Level Agreement (SLA) this week as discussions on the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) enter their final stage,

The visiting IMF mission and Pakistani authorities have begun negotiations on outstanding issues, with officials hopeful that an agreement can be reached during the current round of talks.

After the Staff Level Agreement, the IMF Board will approve the release of the tranche.

According to officials familiar with the negotiations, the IMF mission is expected to conclude its visit to Islamabad on Wednesday today.

If both sides reach a consensus, the staff-level agreement could be signed within the ongoing week. Otherwise, discussions may continue virtually to resolve the remaining differences.

The agreement could pave the way for the release of approximately $1.2 billion under Pakistan's ongoing IMF programmes, including the $7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the $1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

Talks are also focusing on economic reforms, energy-sector challenges and targeted subsidies for low-income households.

The government has pledged to improve financial management at state-owned enterprises and address the growing gas-sector circular debt, estimated at Rs3.6 trillion.

Pakistan's economic outlook also faces risks from higher fuel prices and the ongoing US-Iran conflict, which could affect energy supplies and economic stability.

Pakistan has received a total of $4.6 billion from the IMF under the two programs so far, officials said.

Dollar holds losses As markets await Fed minutes, speakers

■ Dollar stays lower as European bond stress eases, while markets await Fed minutes and policymakers' comments for clues on the timing of further interest rate hikes.

Web Desk

TOKYO



The US dollar remained lower on Wednesday after stress in European bond markets abated and as eyes turned to the release of Federal Reserve minutes and speeches by its policymakers for signals on a potential rate hike.

The euro surged by the most in seven weeks in the prior session as French bond yields slid after the frontrunner in next spring's presidential election outlined plans to slash spending.

The yen weakened even after a dovish Bank of Japan board member said she would support interest rate increases.

Later on Wednesday, the US central bank is due to release ?minutes of its September 15-16 policy meeting when it raised interest rates to contend with inflation. Comments from Fed policymakers have come across ?as less hawkish following lower-than-expected personal consumption expenditures (PCE) data and jobs data last week.

"There seems to be a little bit ?less urgency on the Fed to hike rates after the softer PCE and then the nonfarm payroll reports recently," Gavin Friend, a senior markets strategist ?at National Australia Bank, said on a podcast.The dollar index , which measures the greenback against a basket of currencies, rose 0.03% to 101.94, following a 0.27% slide ?in the prior session. The euro eased 0.08% to $1.1249.

The Japanese yen weakened 0.19% against the greenback to 158.43 per dollar. Sterling dipped 0.08% to $1.3262.

Bond yields around the world have climbed in recent weeks due to xpectations of central bank rate hikes as well as concerns about government finances.

French debt is under growing pressure as politicians struggle to curb the budget deficit ?ahead of a divisive election in 2027. The calling of a snap election in Spain added to the recent stress on the euro.

The euro rallied sharply ?on Tuesday after far-right French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen raised her target for spending cuts to 140 billion ($158 billion) from 125 billion in savings originally planned if she wins power in ?2027.

The Bank of Japan's new policymaker Ayano Sato said in an interview with the Kyodo news agency on Wednesday that she supports the idea of raising interest rates in several stages.

The BOJ may signal this month that underlying inflation has roughly hit its 2% target, three people familiar with its thinking said, highlighting its readiness to raise interest rates again.

Expectations for a Fed rate hike later this month have retreated but markets are still anticipating more increases later in ?the year and next year.

In contrast ?to the recent call for patience ?from some Fed officials, Kansas City Fed President Jeff Schmid said on Tuesday that the central bank still needs to raise its policy rate further to lower inflation, even if higher long-term yields are weighing on activity in some parts of the economy.

Indian central bank hikes rates for First time in more than 3 years

● India's central bank hiked interest rates for the first time in more than three years on Wednesday as the Middle East conflict stokes inflation in Asia's third-largest economy and batters a weakened rupee.

Web Desk

KARACHI



India's central bank hiked interest rates for the first time in more than three years on Wednesday as the Middle East conflict stokes inflation in Asia's third-largest economy and batters a weakened rupee.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repurchase rate, the level at which it lends to commercial banks, would be raised by 25 basis points to 5.50 percent after a unanimous vote by a six-member panel.

In doing so, the RBI shifted gears to join several central banks around the world who have raised rates to curb price rises or boost their currencies.

Since the outbreak of the Iran war in February, the RBI has stood pat as it waited to assess the impact of volatile oil prices on the world's fastest-growing major economy.

But resilient GDP growth last quarter has allowed it to focus on higher costs in a country that imports most of its energy and has been hit by a weak monsoon that could result in a spike in food prices.

Retail inflation rose to 4.82 percent in August -- the third straight month that headline inflation breached the RBI's medium term target of four percent -- with data signalling that inflationary pressures had spread beyond food and transport.

Adding to the central bank's calculations is pressure on the Indian rupee, which has been at near record lows over the past week.

To stem the fall, the RBI has rolled out an array of moves to woo dollar inflows, including a deposit scheme for the Indian diaspora that raked in around $127 billion.

While the steps helped stop the rupee's losses, the currency has faced fresh challenges as foreign investors continue to dump Indian equities and crude hovers around $100 a barrel.

India, the world's third-largest buyer of oil, normally sources about half of its crude through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the beginning of the Middle East war.

Analysts say this makes India among the most vulnerable economies to a global energy shock, as higher crude and fertiliser prices drive up the import bill.

Digital payments surge in Pakistan as transactions rise 65pc: SBP

■ Pakistan's digital payment transactions rose 65% in FY2025-26, with digital channels accounting for 92% of 14.3 billion retail transactions processed through formal banking channels.

Web Desk

KARACHI

Digital payments continued to expand rapidly in Pakistan during fiscal year 2025-26, with the volume of digital transactions increasing by 65% year-on-year, according to the State Bank of Pakistan's annual Payment Systems Review.

The report showed that retail payments increased by 58% during the financial year, with the total value of retail transactions reaching Rs673 trillion.

Formal banking channels processed 14.3 billion retail transactions during FY2025-26, of which 13.2 billion were conducted through digital channels. As a result, digital payments accounted for 92% of total retail transactions, compared with 88% in the previous financial year.

Mobile phone-based payments recorded particularly strong growth. Their volume exceeded 11.1 billion transactions during the year, representing a 79% annual increase.

Internet banking also continued to gain ground, with around 300 million transactions recorded during FY2025-26. The volume of internet banking transactions increased by 15% compared with the previous year.

The country's digital payment infrastructure expanded alongside the increase in transactions. According to the State Bank, the number of point-of-sale (POS) terminals reached 337,791, installed at 295,367 merchant locations across Pakistan.

Card payments through POS terminals also increased. Around 1.5 million card payments were processed through POS terminals each day during the financial year, compared with approximately 1 million daily payments in the previous year.

The report also highlighted the growing role of digital banking in e-commerce. Account-based payments represented 96% of e-commerce payments processed through banking channels during the period.



The number of users of branchless banking mobile applications reached 99.1 million, while mobile applications operated by banks had 30.4 million users.

The State Bank said smartphones were increasingly being used for routine banking activities, reflecting a continuing shift in consumer behaviour towards mobile and digital financial services.

The growing use of digital payment channels is transforming the country's retail payment landscape, with consumers increasingly using mobile phones, internet banking and electronic payment facilities for everyday financial transactions.

The expansion of POS infrastructure and mobile banking services is also increasing opportunities for businesses to accept electronic payments, while the growing use of digital channels could support wider access to formal financial services.

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Vance says Iran must cut enrichment to end war

■ Vance says Iran must make meaningful nuclear enrichment cuts for peace, while uncertainty over Tehran's decision-making and rising war costs complicate US-Iran negotiations.



Web Desk

WASHINGTON/RIYADH

- US Vice President JD Vance said in an exclusive interview with Reuters that Iran ?must make a "meaningful" reduction in its nuclear enrichment capacity to satisfy US demands and end the countries' seven-month war, even as Washington was unsure how ?Tehran makes decisions in negotiations.

Vance, a longtime skeptic of US involvement in foreign wars, has taken a leading role in negotiating a settlement to the conflict and brokered a provisional peace agreement in June that quickly fell apart. The war has jolted global energy markets and become a political liability for President Donald Trump and fellow Republicans ahead of November midterm elections.

Speaking on Monday after a campaign trip in Alaska, Vance said ?any agreement would require Iran to reduce its nuclear enrichment capacity, rather than offer assurances of future nuclear drawdowns.

"If you don't want a nuclear weapon, then why ?do you need 60% enriched fuel? And if you want to show commitment to not building a nuclear weapon, don't build highly enriched ?fuel. That's a very basic threshold issue," Vance said."I think if they want to show a commitment to not building a nuclear weapon, they would do something meaningful on their enrichment capacity."

Iran and the US have exchanged proposals in recent weeks aimed at ending the war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy shipping route. Trump rejected Tehran's ?latest offer and has warned that military operations could intensify after the midterms.

Vance said the US remained open to an agreement but would require concrete Iranian nuclear concessions."We're not going to trade words for actions," Vance said.

UNCLEAR HOW IRAN MAKES DECISIONS: VANCE

Complicating matters, Vance said Washington is uncertain who makes decisions in Tehran.

Vance said the US was in talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi. But ?it was unclear how much authority they wield within Iran's power structure, he said, after joint US-Israeli strikes at the start of the war killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israelis mark three years since Hamas attack that set off Gaza assault



WEB DESK

JERUSALEM

Israelis will on Wednesday mark three years since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, triggering a military assault that destroyed much of Gaza, where conditions remain dire despite a year-old ceasefire that is ?meant to halt the war for good.

The attacks, during which militants killed 1,200 people and took 251 hostages to Gaza, marked the deadliest day in Israel's history. Israel's subsequent bombardment and ground operations have killed more than 74,000 people in Gaza, health authorities there say.

On Wednesday, Israelis will hold a vigil at the site of the Nova music ?festival near the Gaza border, where 348 young people were killed by militants during the attack.

They will also hold an event commemorating ?the anniversary at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv.

ISRAELI ELECTION 20 DAYS AWAY

The anniversary is the first for Israelis without ?any hostages still held in Gaza, with those dead and alive exchanged in swaps with Hamas for Palestinians held in Israeli jails. The remains ?of the last Israeli hostage were recovered in January.

It also comes just 20 days ahead of Israel's first election since the attack, a vote ?that is viewed as a referendum on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's long tenure in power.

Netanyahu has rejected blame for the security breach and resisted calls for an independent investigation. That has frustrated many in Israel, including families of those killed in the attacks, some of whom have joined the election race.A poll by the Israel Democracy Institute showed ?that 68% of Jewish Israelis said that the events of October 7 were a very central or fairly central element in their decision of ?which party to vote for.Lection polls show neither Netanyahu nor his main competitors would muster enough seats in parliament to form a coalition if a vote were held today.



Pakistan secures key diplomatic Gain as resolution includes cross-border water cooperation

■ The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution recognising the link between cross-border water cooperation and the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Web DESK

CAIRO

The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, with Pakistan securing an important diplomatic achievement by ensuring an explicit reference to cross-border water cooperation.

According to the report, Pakistan played an active role in retaining the reference to transboundary water cooperation in the final text of the resolution. India had attempted to remove the reference to cross-border water cooperation from the resolution.

The resolution was presented by Germany and Spain. Pakistan actively worked to ensure that transboundary water cooperation remained part of the final text.

The 47-member UN Human Rights Council adopted the resolution by consensus. For the first time, the resolution explicitly recognised that cooperation over transboundary water resources is directly linked to the realisation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Speaking on the occasion of the resolution's adoption, Pakistan's First Secretary Adeel Khokhar outlined the country's principled position on shared water resources.

He said that where water is shared, responsibilities are also shared, adding that cooperation over shared waters between neighbouring countries is not a matter of favour or concession but a shared responsibility.

Adeel Khokhar said no upstream country could use water as a tool of political pressure or influence. He stressed that water should be managed according to the principles of cooperation and mutual responsibility rather than being used as an instrument of political pressure.

Ukraine drone attack triggers huge tanker fire off Russia's Sochi

WEB DESK

MOSCOW



Ukraine struck an oil tanker off the southern Russian coast on evening, triggering a huge fire and black smoke cloud that blanketed parts of the resort city of Sochi.Both sides have heavily targeted commercial shipping around the Black Sea since the start of the conflict in 2022, with Russia in recent days hitting grain vessels carrying Ukrainian goods near the coast of EU member Romania.Russia's transport ministry said a Liberian-flagged tanker had been attacked by "naval drones" and that "crude oil is burning openly in the waters of the Black Sea." Firefighters could not tackle the blaze due to its intensity, but a crew of 23 — all Indian citizens — had been rescued, it added. Videos and photos circulated widely on social media from Sochi — a popular resort city of almost 500,000 people — showing bright orange flames out at sea and a thick column of black smoke billowing into the sky.Access to the coast and beaches was being restricted, the city's mayor said on social media. Ukraine says its attacks on Russia's oil infrastructure are fair retribution for Moscow's nightly barrages of its towns and cities.

UK Minister Stephen Doughty visits Pakistan to deepen bilateral ties

■ Meets senior political, military and civil society leaders during first Pakistan visit: Talks focus on trade, economic growth, regional security, Afghanistan and counter-terrorism

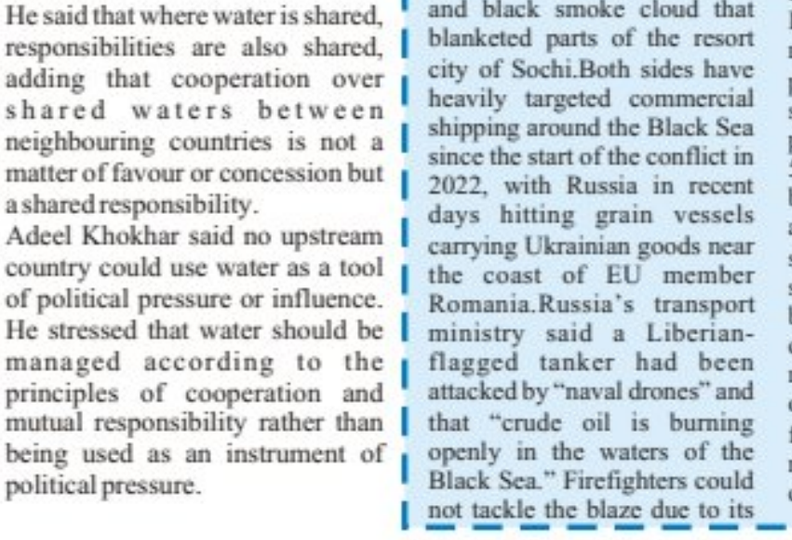
NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

UK Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan Stephen Doughty has concluded his first visit to Pakistan, holding talks with political leaders and representatives of civil society on strengthening bilateral cooperation.

During his visit, Doughty met senior Pakistani political leaders to discuss closer cooperation on shared priorities, including economic growth, trade, regional security, stability in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism.

The minister also held discussions with Pakistani and British education leaders on the next phase of cooperation between universities in the two countries.



The talks included plans to expand access to UK qualifications in Pakistan and strengthen links between institutions in areas including science, technology, engineering and mathematics, healthcare and technology.

More than 15,000 Pakistani students studied for UK qualifications in Pakistan through transnational education (TNE) in 2024-25, an increase of 83% over the past decade. Pakistan is now the fourth-largest host country globally for UK transnational education, with UK institutions accounting for around 65% of Pakistan's TNE market.

UK Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Stephen Doughty said:

"The UK and Pakistan share deep and historic ties, built on the connections between our people, businesses and institutions.

Syria, Saudi Arabia discuss reconstruction, investment

■ The discussions also focused attracting "qualitative investments" to Syria and expanding the role of Syrian and Saudi businesses in the energy, construction, industrial, agricultural and trade sectors

WEB DESK

DAVOS

Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed plans for Syria's reconstruction and attracting Saudi investment during talks Tuesday in Riyadh.

Sharaa extended an official invitation to the crown prince to visit Syria.

The kingdom's official news agency SPA shared photos of the meeting on US social media platform X, without disclosing further details.

The Syrian presidency said the meeting was also attended by Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani.

It said the two sides discussed relations between Syria and Saudi Arabia, and ways to further develop them in a manner that serves their mutual interests.

The Syrian Presidency's Media Directorate later said the talks focused on strengthening and developing relations across various fields and advancing political, diplomatic and economic cooperation in line with the interests of both countries.

The two sides also reviewed strategic plans and upcoming phases related to Syria's reconstruction, including rebuilding infrastructure and vital facilities damaged during the country's war, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency SANA.

The discussions also focused attracting "qualitative investments" to Syria and expanding the role of Syrian and Saudi businesses in the energy, construction, industrial, agricultural and trade sectors.

Sharaa invited Mohammed bin Salman to visit Syria, with the presidency saying the visit would build on diplomatic rapprochement and establish a new phase of Arab cooperation and coordination on regional and international issues.

They also exchanged views on the latest developments in the region and discussed several issues of mutual concern, with the aim of supporting regional security and stability, according to the statement.



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Nazish Jahangir Slams Sensational Headlines Over Interview Remarks

■ Actress Nazish Jahangir Says Simple Comments Are Being Taken Out-Of-Context

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani actress Nazish Jahangir has responded sarcastically to the headlines and social media discussions surrounding comments she recently made in an interview, suggesting that her words were exaggerated and taken out of context.

Taking to Instagram, Nazish expressed her frustration over what she described as the tendency to turn straightforward comments into sensational stories. In a cheeky reference to the understand the complete conversation before forming opinions or creating narratives around isolated remarks. She also criticized the practice of sensationalizing ordinary comments extent of the exaggeration, she wrote, "Main Bill Gates ki beti hun yeh nahi bataya main ne," which translates to, "I didn't say I'm Bill Gates' daughter."The actress went on to explain why she finds giving interviews in Pakistan frustrating. She said that simple statements are often taken out of context, reshaped and presented in ways that can create an entirely different impression.

Nazish urged people to understand the complete conversation before forming opinions or creating narratives around isolated remarks. She also criticized the practice of sensationalizing ordinary comments simply to attract attention through headlines.

The controversy emerged after a recent interview in which Nazish was asked about her preferences when it comes to marriage and choosing a life partner. She explained that she would want someone whose personality complements hers and with whom she could laugh, enjoy life and share a meaningful bond.

During the conversation, she was also asked whether she would consider marrying someone who had previously experienced heartbreak. Instead of viewing a painful past as a negative, Nazish gave the idea a more positive interpretation.She suggested that she would want to be someone who could help her future partner heal from previous emotional pain. Her comments about wanting to "fix" or heal a broken heart were subsequently highlighted across social media and entertainment platforms.

Excitement high for Wahaj Ali, Mahira Khan starrer 'Mitti De Baway'

■ Adding to the excitement ahead of the drama's release, audiences have already been treated to another project featuring the duo.

Web desk

ISLAMABAD



The entertainment industry has produced numerous hit on-screen couples that fans continue to celebrate. Now, another highly anticipated pairing is on the horizon as leading stars Wahaj Ali and Mahira Khan prepare to share the screen in their upcoming drama Mitti De Baway, with fans eagerly awaiting their on-screen chemistry.

Adding to the excitement ahead of the drama's release, audiences have already been treated to another project featuring the duo. Wahaj and Mahira recently appeared together in a newly released commercial, which quickly went viral and sparked widespread admiration for their pairing.

In the ad, Wahaj Ali and Mahira Khan play former lovers who reunite at a mutual friend's wedding. Their characters eventually patch things up over a dance sequence to the iconic song "Mera Piya Ghar Aaya."

The video has received an enthusiastic response online, with viewers praising both their dance moves and their onscreen chemistry.

Meanwhile, Mitti De Baway is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated Pakistani dramas of 2026. The period drama also stars Amar Khan and is written by Faiza Iftikhar and directed by Syed Wajahat Hussain.

The series will air on Green Entertainment.

While Green Entertainment has already unveiled Wahaj Ali's rugged, bearded look from the show, Mahira Khan's character appearance is still being kept under wraps, further building curiosity among fans. The drama is expected to premiere soon.

Verity Film Makes Major Change to Colleen Hoover's Story

■ Verity Adaptation Makes Major Changes to Colleen Hoover's Twisted Story

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



Colleen Hoover's highly anticipated thriller adaptation "Verity" has arrived in cinemas, bringing one of the author's darkest and most controversial stories to the big screen.

The film marks the fourth Hollywood adaptation of Hoover's work following "It Ends With Us," "Regretting You" and "Reminders of Him." Unlike her better-known romantic dramas, "Verity" takes a darker turn with a story filled with secrets, betrayal and psychological twists.

Dakota Johnson stars as Lowen Ashleigh, a struggling writer who receives the biggest professional opportunity of her career when she is hired to ghostwrite for celebrated author Verity Crawford, played by Anne Hathaway.

Verity is left paralysed after an accident, prompting Lowen to move into the Crawford family home and examine the author's unfinished work. During her stay, she also develops an attraction to Verity's grieving husband, played by Josh Hartnett.

While the film retains many of the disturbing revelations and betrayals from Hoover's novel, director Michael Showalter made a major change to the Crawford family by reducing the number of children.

Stream Indie Films

In the novel, Verity and her husband have twin daughters, Chastin and Harper, while their younger son is Crew. Chastin dies from a peanut allergy during a sleepover, while Harper dies six months later in a boating incident.

Lowen later discovers a manuscript that appears to be both a memoir and confession. In it, Verity admits that she favoured Chastin and resented Harper because of her husband's affection for their daughters. She ultimately blames Harper for Chastin's death and deliberately takes Harper and Crew onto a boat, intending to kill them.

The film removes Chastin entirely. Instead, the Crawfords have only two children, twins Harper and Crew. Verity takes both children onto the boat intending to kill them, but Crew survives because he can swim, while Harper drowns.

The change also alters Verity's character significantly. In the novel, Verity's relationship with Chastin suggests that she genuinely loved one of her daughters while neglecting the other. In the film, her hostility toward her children is portrayed as more extreme, with the story suggesting that she attempted to harm both children from an early age.



A minor fire broke out on the Mumbai set of Ranbir Kapoor's upcoming film Ramayana, with no injuries reported.



Ranveer Singh booked for 'offending' Hindu religious beliefs

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Police in Bengaluru have registered an FIR against actor Ranveer Singh at High Grounds Police Station because he allegedly offended Hindu religious beliefs and showed disrespect to Chavundi Daiva customs of coastal Karnataka.

The case was filed on Wednesday months after the incident that initially sparked controversy.

The complaint relates to an event held on November 28, 2025 during the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

During the event Ranveer allegedly mimicked a Daiva performance inspired by Rishab Shetty's film Kantara: A Legend Chapter 1.

The act reportedly drew sharp criticism on social media with many users accusing the actor of mocking a sacred ritual deeply rooted in the cultural and religious practices of coastal Karnataka. Ranveer issued a public apology through his Instagram Stories after receiving backlash because he wanted to show regret for his actions which hurt people while he made it clear that he did not mean to insult any group or tradition. The same incident which he apologized for has now turned into legal proceedings.

Alizeh Shah responds to singer Shazia Manzoor's remarks over her bridal ramp fall

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD



Alizeh Shah has revived discussion around her 2021 bridal ramp fall after publicly responding to singer Shazia Manzoor's recent remarks.

The controversy resurfaced after Shazia Manzoor responded to long-standing rumours alleging that she had deliberately caused the on-stage mishap during Bridal Couture Week.

The incident initially took place in December 2021 when Alizeh Shah walked the ramp for designer Nisa Hussain's bridal collection showcase.

Video footage from the event circulated rapidly online, showing Shah slipping while Manzoor appeared to be holding her arm. Years later, Manzoor dismissed the allegations in an interview, strongly denying any intention to harm the young television star.

She firmly stated: "I swear to God I didn't push her. She fell on her own." However, Alizeh Shah responded through social media with visible disappointment, suggesting seniority should not automatically shield individuals from accountability.

Study links weekly nightmares to accelerated ageing and early death

HEALTH DESK

ISLAMABAD



A new long-term study has raised serious concerns about the potential health impact of frequent nightmares.

Researchers found that people who experience nightmares every week face a much higher risk of premature death, highlighting sleep disturbances as a possible warning sign for overall health.

A recent study has found that people who suffer from nightmares on a weekly basis have a nearly three-fold higher risk of dying before the age of 75 compared to those who rarely experience them.

The findings are based on combined data from four large-scale, long-term studies conducted in the United States. Together, these studies closely followed the health outcomes of more than 4,000 individuals aged between 26 and 74. At the start of the research, participants were asked how often nightmares disrupted their sleep. This self-reported data formed the baseline for the analysis.Researchers then tracked participants over the next 18 years to monitor premature deaths. During this period, a total of 227 participants died before reaching the age of 75.

Results remain strong after adjustments

Even after accounting for common risk factors such as age, sex, mental health conditions, smoking habits, and body weight, the link remained strong.

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Abrar Ahmed loses top position, Hasan, Saim rise in new T20I rankings

● Former skipper Babar Azam drops four places to 45th with 544 points

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan's Hasan Nawaz and Saim Ayub have climbed the latest ICC T20I rankings, while spinner Abrar Ahmed has slipped from the top spot after the Asian Games 2026 campaign and the opening T20I between India and the West Indies.

In the T20I batting rankings, newly appointed Pakistan captain Sahibzada Farhan has retained third place with 818 points, while India's Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma remained at the top two positions respectively.

Saim Ayub has moved up one place to 38th with 566 points, while former Pakistan captain Babar Azam has slipped four places to 45th with 544 points.

Recently removed T20I captain Salman Ali Agha has also dropped three places to 48th.

Hasan Nawaz has made a remarkable 62-place jump to 48th with 536 points after his impressive 96-run knock against India in the Asian Games 2026 final, where he struck seven sixes.

Meanwhile, left-handed batter Fakhar Zaman has fallen 10 places to 82nd with 471 points.

In the T20I bowling rankings, Abrar has lost his position at the top, dropping to second place with 718 points. Afghanistan's Rashid Khan has reclaimed the number one spot, while Australia's Adam Zampa remains third.

Mohammad Nawaz has slipped four places from eighth to 12th with 645 points, while Salman Mirza has dropped seven places to 23rd with 623 points.

Shaheen Afridi has also fallen three places to 36th with 590 points.

Sufiyan Muqeem has retained 50th place with 546 points, while Saim Ayub has climbed eight places to 62nd.

Usman Tariq has dropped seven places to 63rd, while Shadab Khan has slipped two places to 77th.

The latest rankings reflect the impact of performances during the Asian Games and the opening T20I of the India-West Indies series.

Messi signs off in tears after one last Argentina master class

● Lionel Messi ended his 21-year international career with a goal and two assists as Argentina beat Benin 3-0 in a farewell match before 85,000 fans at the Monumental Stadium.

Sports Desk

MONTREAL

Lionel Messi delivered one last master class in blue and white as Argentina's captain brought the curtain down on his extraordinary 21-year international career by scoring one goal and setting up ?two others in a 3-0 friendly win over Benin.

The 39-year-old's final bow in front of more than ?85,000 fans at a packed Monumental stadium was less about football and more a national celebration of Messi's service to the national team.

Landmarks across the capital glowed with the team's sky blue and white colours, while fireworks lit up the skies above the heaving stadium ?as fans poured their hearts into a rendition of Argentina's national anthem.

"It's hard to talk," said Messi, ?whose family watched proudly from the stands alongside some of Argentina's World Cup winners of ?1978, 1986 and 2022.

"There are a lot of emotions, a lot of things going through my head. The first ?thing I think about is my old man," he added, referring to the recent death of his father. "It was a ?huge source of pride for me to wear this shirt all this time, more than 20 years.

"Not coming anymore is going to hurt a lot. I swear, I'd love to keep coming my whole life, because playing for Argentina is the most beautiful thing that ?can happen to you."

Hours earlier, a massive No. 10 shirt emblazoned with "Gracias" was unfurled



at the National Flag Memorial ?in Rosario, Messi's hometown.

As the team bus travelled from the training centre bearing his name, Messi wiped away tears as thousands lined ?the route.When ?the teams took the pitch, Benin's captain looked lost for words as he handed Messi a gift and letter during the pre-match handshake.

After a goalless first half, Messi supplied the assist for Nicolas Otamendi to tap home Argentina's opener. Otamendi shared 17 years with Messi in the national team, including four World Cups, and was also ending his international ?career.

Messi then set up Nico ?Paz, one of the ?players seen as a potential successor for Argentina's No. 10 shirt, to score the second goal.

In a fairytale ending, Messi converted a penalty for 3-0, his 126th international goal, prompting ?another round of "Messi, Messi" chants from the crowd.At the final whistle, teammates, opponents and ?the referee gathered ?around Messi for embraces before a drone show lit up the sky. Argentine singer Soledad Pastorutti, known as "La Sole", then sang her signature "Brindis" as part of a tribute to Messi and his journey with the national team.



Kane eyes Ronaldo record after matching England cap mark

SPORTS Desk

ISLAMABAD

Harry Kane refused to rule out catching Cristiano Ronaldo at the top of the international goalscoring charts after netting twice against the Czech Republic to celebrate his record-equalling 125th England cap.

The captain matched Peter Shilton's men's record at Wembley on Tuesday, scoring his 90th and 91st international goals in a 3-0 win -- and has no intention of retiring any time soon.

Ronaldo, 41, tops the global all-time charts with 146 goals for Portugal.

"We'll see how far we can get," said Kane, who is England's record goalscorer. "We're starting with 50-odd goals. It's an awful long way away right now but who knows I'm in great shape.

"I've said before that some of the players who I've played went into their late 30s and are still at the highest level and even 40s now. It's season by season with me. As long as I feel like I can help the team... I'll be around."

The striker said equalling former goalkeeper Shilton's haul of England caps was "beyond my wildest dreams", 11 years after his debut.

"Amazing, he deserves the stage, he deserves the praise," said England boss Thomas Tuchel, whose team won three of their four Nations League matches during the international break.

Kane, 33, who scored 79 seconds into his debut in 2015, said he had always demanded the highest standards of himself.

"I always had a lot of self-belief," he added. "I was always willing to maybe do more than others and just push myself.... I combined my talent that I had with a lot of hard work and self-belief and a lot of dedication."

And the former Tottenham player, in the running to win the Ballon d'Or in London later this month, said he still had room to improve despite his vast experience.

"I'm coming off the back of my best season ever as a player and I've started this season as good as I did last season," he said.

"I'm in a good place and for me right now, it's just pushing myself and seeing how far I can get."

Ronaldo opens door for Portugal return, apologises for walkout

■ "I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team," said Ronaldo in a statement.

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



Cristiano Ronaldo opened the door for a return to the Portuguese national team on Tuesday and apologised for his walkout, while also accusing coach Jorge Jesus of twice breaking his word.

"I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team," said Ronaldo in a statement.

After Jesus left the forward unused on the bench for a Nations League match against Norway. Then before the next game with Denmark said Ronaldo would not start and the 41-year-old walked out.

"I owe an apology to my national team teammates for having left the camp," wrote Ronaldo. "Despite the absolute breakdown of trust in the head coach's word... I shouldn't have done it. The responsibility is mine alone."

Ronaldo also apologised to supporters, while explaining his decision.

"I apologise to the Portuguese people once again, but a broken word has, for me, a defining impact," said Ronaldo.

"I felt that, from that moment on, my presence would only harm the group, and I did what I always said I would do if I didn't feel useful: I picked up my bags and left."

Ronaldo said new Portugal coach Jesus had initially presented him with a plan for the international window which included starting the opening and final games at home, but not travelling for the Nations League matches in Norway and Denmark.

The Al-Nassr superstar rejected that proposal, saying it would set a poor example for the captain to remain in Portugal while his team-mates travelled.

Ahead of the Norway game, Ronaldo said Jesus unexpectedly asked if he was fit to play 30 minutes. He agreed and warmed up from half-time, without being brought on.

"The head coach failed to keep his word to me," said Ronaldo, Portugal's most capped player and all-time top goalscorer.

Former Real Madrid and Manchester United forward Ronaldo said he spoke with Jesus after that and agreed with him that the coach would apologise in a news conference ahead of the Denmark game.

However Ronaldo said Jesus's subsequent press conference was completely different from what was agreed in their conversation, with an "aggressiveness" he had never previously experienced from the coach.

"It was the second time he failed to keep his word. I decided to leave the camp without waiting for any further broken promises," wrote Ronaldo.

The striker said he would serve any "suspension that is imposed" on him and accepted he should be punished for his actions.

"The consequence of this act of mine must be assessed and punished by the Portuguese Football Federation," he explained.



Child Protection Bureau claims 3rd position in Second Aitchison Under-14 Championship

Web Desk

QUETTA

On the directives of the Chairperson of the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, Sara Ahmad, 17 children from the Child Protection Bureau participated in the Second Aitchison Under-14 Athletics Inter-School Championship in Lahore,

The little athletes of the Child Protection Bureau claimed Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Asad Hanif win 400 meters race and claimed first position Mohammad Hassan won silver medal and Mohammad Furqan won Bronze Medal.

Nasir Zahid of Child Protection Bureau achieved first position in the 200 meters race and won Gold Medal.

Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Chairperson Sara Ahmad said that we are proud of our young champions from the Child Protection & Welfare Bureau who participated enthusiastically in the 2nd Aitchison U-14 Athletics Inter-School Championship.

Our talented children demonstrated remarkable determination, confidence, and sportsmanship, securing Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in different races and achieving an impressive Overall 3rd Position.



Iyer hits ton as India hammer West Indies in T20 opener

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD

Captain Shreyas Iyer struck his maiden T20 international century to lead India to a convincing eight-wicket win over the West Indies in the opening match With India chasing 172 for victory, Iyer hit an unbeaten 102 off 43 balls to steer his team home with 32 balls to spare in Lucknow. India lead the five-match series 1-0.With eight needed off 36 balls and Iyer on 95, Ishan Kishan handed his captain the strike, and the top-order batter reached his ton with a six and then took a single to complete the chase.

Iyer and the T20 team produced the win after they landed in India on Monday evening with an Asian Games men's T20 gold medal.

While they were in Japan, a completely different India squad, led by Shubman Gill, beat West Indies 2-1 in an ODI series.Swashbuckling Abhishek Sharma gave the hosts a brisk start in his 10-ball 21 before spinner Roston Chase got the left-hander caught out.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein then struck in his 100th T20 for the West Indies to send back Sanju Samson, caught and bowled for 11.



Karachi to host National Cycling Championship

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

The tenth edition of the National Road Cycling Championship will be held in Karachi from October 9 to 11, bringing together cyclists from across Pakistan to compete in men's, women's, junior, para-cycling and masters categories.

Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) said on Wednesday that the championship will begin at 9am on Friday at Bahria Town Karachi, with events continuing over three days. The closing ceremony and prize distribution will take place at 4 pm on October 11.

Cyclists representing Army, Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts, Gilgit-Baltistan, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Islamabad will take part, along with riders from other institutions and cycling teams.

Scanned with CamScanner



Inflation-hit people take to streets in Malakand to protest against KP govt

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

People in tehsil Dargai of Malakand have come out on streets to protest against inflation, unemployment, loadshedding and poor law and order situation in their area,

In this connection, Muttahida Trade Union and PPP held a protest demonstration in which hundreds of people participated.

The demonstrators burnt tyres to vent their anger at the PTI government in KP.

They demanded the KP government to take concrete steps to restore law and order in the province.

People in KP are generally not satisfied with the performance of the government.

People belonging to Swabi and other areas have said that there is no change in the province as there is a dearth of facilities at hospitals and the situation is also poor in other sectors.

They have lamented that the government has nothing to do with the wellbeing of the masses.

Maryam Nawaz meets Oman housing minister, discusses 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' housing

● Maryam Nawaz met Oman's housing minister in Muscat and discussed Punjab's housing initiatives, interest-free loans, urban planning and smart housing.

WEB DESK

MUSCAT



Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Oman's Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Dr Khalfan bin Saeed bin Mubarak Al Shueili, with the two sides holding detailed discussions on matters related to housing and urban planning.

The Omani minister warmly welcomed Maryam Nawaz Sharif and her delegation and congratulated her on receiving the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award. He also expressed keen interest in Punjab's 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' housing scheme.

Maryam Nawaz thanked the Omani minister for appreciating the Punjab housing scheme and briefed the delegation on its details. She also highlighted the 'Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar', 'Apni Zameen, Apna Ghar' and 'Apni Chhat, Mehfooz Chhat' initiatives.

The chief minister said the disbursement of loans to more than 200,000 people to build homes under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' within just 18 months was an extraordinary achievement. She said Rs260 billion in interest-free loans had been disbursed for the scheme, while installment recovery had also begun.

Maryam Nawaz said more than 125,000 families had shifted to their own homes under the scheme. She said merit and transparency were its distinguishing features and no recommendation was required to benefit from the programme.

The Punjab chief minister said she wanted to build 1 million homes under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar', but economic constraints were a hurdle. She said the target of building 500,000 homes for low-income people would be achieved within five years.

According to Maryam Nawaz, the scheme's recovery rate is above 99 percent due to the affordable monthly installment of Rs14,000. She said complete data from across Punjab had been compiled under the Punjab Socio-Economic Registry to determine housing needs.

Dr Khalfan said the large Pakistani community living in Oman was rendering valuable services. He said Oman was like a second home for Maryam Nawaz Sharif, as it was for every Pakistani.

The Omani minister said Oman had two housing loan models and provided housing grants to people earning less than $1,000. He said loans were provided through the Oman Housing Bank, but 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' was a better initiative because it offered interest-free financing.

Dr Khalfan said two separate departments were working on housing and urban development in Oman. He said urban planning in Muscat was being pursued through integrated planning and sustainable strategies to support the city's growing real estate industry.

He said urban development was being carried out through economic and environmental planning while considering the needs of every community and sector. He added that Oman was focusing on smart housing while keeping future requirements in view.

The Omani minister said Pakistani companies were rendering valuable services in Muscat's real estate sector.

ATC indicts Imaan Mazari, Hadi Ali Chattha in 2024 security breach case

● An Islamabad ATC indicted Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha in a barrier removal case despite defence objections over case copies and access to lawyers.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad indicted Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha in a case pertaining to removal of barriers, despite objections from the defence regarding non-provision of case documents and meetings with lawyers.

ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Supra presided over the hearing. Dr Shireen Mazari appeared before the court along with lawyers Eamil Khan Mandokhail, Zainab Janjua and others, while prosecutor Raja Naveed also appeared.

Zainab Janjua told the court that she had not been allowed to meet Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha despite a court order. She said copies of the case documents had also not been provided to them and that she had waited outside the jail for two hours.

She requested the court to produce Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha before it.

Judge Tahir Abbas Supra said he had reports from the jail before him. Zainab Janjua questioned why other prisoners were being brought from Adiala Jail but Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha were not being produced before the court.

The court subsequently indicted Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha, who were presented through video link. The court summoned prosecution witnesses for October 9.

Hadi Ali Chattha objected that he had not yet received copies of the case documents, arguing that charges could not be framed until the legal requirements were fulfilled.

Zainab Janjua also objected that neither Imaan Mazari nor Hadi Ali Chattha had received the copies, nor had they been allowed to meet their lawyers.



LHC allows pension attachment to recover minor children's maintenance

■ Move comes in the wake of heightened tensions following the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam

SPECIAL REPORTER

QUETTA

The Lahore High Court has laid down an important legal principle, ruling that a retired military officer's pension can be attached to enforce a final maintenance decree issued by a Family Court in favour of minor children.

The court clarified that maintenance for minor children is not an ordinary financial claim arising from a debt, but a legal and familial responsibility of the father. Therefore, legal provisions protecting pensions from attachment cannot be applied in a manner that prevents enforcement of a final maintenance decree issued in favour of minor children.

A bench comprising Justice Malik Javed Iqbal Venus and Justice Malik Waqar Haider Awan dismissed a constitutional petition filed by Muhammad Latif. Justice Waqar Haider Awan authored the eight-page written judgment.

The petitioner had challenged a September 17, 2019 decision of the Family Court Jaranwala, which had rejected his plea seeking removal of the attachment on funds in his pension account and cancellation of his non-bailable arrest warrants.

According to the judgment, the petitioner's former wife had filed cases seeking dissolution of marriage and return of dowry articles, while the minor children sought recovery of maintenance. The cases were consolidated, and on January 22, 2014, the Family Court ordered the father to pay monthly maintenance of Rs3,000 to each child, with a 10 percent annual increase. It also issued a decree for the return of dowry articles worth Rs248,570, excluding gold ornaments.

After appeals against the decision were dismissed, the decree became final. The decree-holders subsequently approached the court for enforcement, following which the Family Court issued non-bailable arrest warrants and initiated proceedings to attach funds available in the petitioner's pension account.

The legal question before the high court was whether the pension of a retired military officer could be attached to enforce a final maintenance decree in favour of minor children when pensions and certain military dues are protected from attachment under the Pension Act 1871, Pakistan Army Act 1952 and the Code of Civil Procedure.

Rising terrorism in KP must be curbed at all costs: PM Shehbaz

■ PM Shehbaz Sharif has called for urgent efforts to curb rising terrorism in KP, stressing that the province must be able to pursue development while acknowledging its people's sacrifices.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need to curb the rising terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying efforts must be made to ensure the province can progress alongside other parts of the country.

The prime minister made the remarks during a meeting with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam. The meeting covered matters concerning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

During the meeting, Amir Muqam briefed the prime minister on developments and ongoing matters in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Shehbaz Sharif directed relevant authorities to continue measures aimed at improving public welfare, development and the provision of basic facilities in both regions.

He said the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, along with the well-being of their residents, remained among the government's priorities.

Turning to the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the prime minister said the growing threat of terrorism had to be brought under control. He also expressed the government's desire to see the province achieve development comparable with other parts of the country.

Shehbaz Sharif acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the fight against terrorism and said their contributions were deeply valued.

Punjab issues COVID and influenza alert

WEB DESK

LAHORE

The Punjab government on Wednesday issued an alert to all chief executive officers (CEOs) and medical superintendents regarding COVID and seasonal flu across the province, In the alert, the Punjab government stated that hospitals' OPDs and other wards may witness a rush.

The Punjab government asked all the relevant officials to remain alert and ensure all available facilities to the patients.

The Punjab govt stated that the flu is more dangerous for pregnant women and patients with chronic illnesses.

The Punjab government appealed to citizens to wear masks, wash hands frequently, and avoid crowded places. Flu vaccination is the most effective prevention. Pregnant women and the elderly should be vaccinated on a priority basis.

Meanwhile, hospitals across Lahore are reportedly seeing an increase in patients experiencing fever, persistent cough, breathing difficulties, body aches, and flu-like symptoms, raising concerns over respiratory illnesses amid changing weather conditions.

The exact number of confirmed COVID-19 cases remains unclear, as government teaching hospitals are reportedly not conducting COVID-19 tests.

Claims of more than 2,000 patients within 24 hours have not been independently verified, and health authorities have not confirmed that all such cases involve coronavirus.

Health experts advise people with respiratory symptoms to maintain hygiene, wear masks in crowded or poorly ventilated places, and seek medical care if symptoms become severe.



A woman rides an electric scooter through a busy city street.

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