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Islamabad: November 20, 2026: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with members of the Turkish delegation led by Minister of Energy and Natural Resources H.E. Alparslan Bayraktat.



Federal Minister Musadik Malik arrives in India for SCO meeting

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister Musadik Malik has arrived in India to attend a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) forum, where he was received by Pakistan's Chargé d'Affaires, Saad Warraich.According to a Foreign Office spokesperson, a Pakistani delegation will participate in the SCO Forum on Dialogue of Civilisations in New Delhi. The delegation is visiting India from November 20 to 22 at the invitation of India's Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik will lead the Pakistani delegation and present Pakistan's position on the importance of dialogue among civilisations and the country's role in diplomacy.



LHC approves early hearing of plea challenging Aleema khan's detention

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Lahore High Court (LHC) has approved a request for an early hearing of a petition challenging the detention of Aleema Khan, sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, and her driver.

The court directed the registrar's office to fix the petition for hearing at an early date. The detention orders issued against Aleema Khan have also been challenged.

Justice Abhar Gul Khan heard the petition against Aleema Khan's detention. Her son, Shahrez Khan, had filed an miscellaneous application seeking an early hearing, which the court approved.

In the petition, Shahrez Khan named the Punjab government, the Home Department, Lahore Deputy Commissioner and other officials as respondents.

CDF Munir vows to eliminate terrorism, preserve hard-earned peace in KP

■ Field Marshal Asim Munir visited North Waziristan, praised security forces and KP Police for their sacrifices, and reaffirmed the resolve to eliminate terrorism and preserve peace in the province.

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI



Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir reaffirmed the unwavering resolve of the security forces, in close coordination with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), to decisively eliminate the menace of terrorism and preserve the hard-earned peace and stability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He made the remarks during his visit to Miran Shah in North Waziristan, according to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Upon arrival Field Marshal Asim Munir laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada to pay homage to the supreme sacrifices of the Shuhada of the Pakistan Army.

During the visit, COAS & CDF was given a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security situation, ongoing intelligence-based operations and measures being undertaken to consolidate the gains achieved through sustained counter terrorism efforts and ensure lasting peace and stability in the area.

COAS & CDF also interacted with officers and troops and appreciated their high level of preparedness, professionalism and unwavering commitment to the defence and security of the motherland.

While appreciating the brave police forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, COAS & CDF described the KP Police as a brave frontline force and expressed pride in their resilience and sacrifices against terrorism and Fitna al Khwarij.

Upon arrival, COAS & CDF was received by Commander Peshawar Corps.

Arrival of Oruc Reis marks new era of Pak-Turkiye strategic cooperation: Dar

■ Pakistan and Turkiye sign energy and minerals agreements as research vessel Oruc Reis begins offshore seismic work to assess oil and gas prospects in Pakistani waters in the future.

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Pakistan and Turkiye have signed several agreements to expand cooperation in offshore oil and gas exploration, mineral resource development and the energy sector as Turkish seismic research vessel Oruc Reis arrived at Karachi Port, marking a new phase in bilateral scientific and economic cooperation.

A welcome ceremony was held at Karachi Port to mark the arrival of the Turkish research vessel, where agreements covering energy and mineral development were signed between the two countries. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Turkish Minister for Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Sindh Governor Nihal Hashmi attended the ceremony along with other dignitaries.

Under the agreements, the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and Turkiye's MTA International signed a shareholders' agreement for the development of antimony resources in Pishin, Balochistan.

Another joint venture agreement was signed between Mari Minerals and Turkiye's MTA IC for the exploration and development of copper, gold and other mineral resources in Chagai, Balochistan.

A tripartite memorandum of understanding was also signed between the Geological Survey of Pakistan, Turkiye's MTA and MTAIC. The parties agreed to promote technical exchanges and strengthen institutional capacity for the development of mineral resources, further expanding cooperation between the two countries in the mining sector.

Pakistan strongly condemns Houthi attack on King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh

■ Pakistan condemned the Houthi attack on Riyadh's KAFD tower, reaffirmed support for Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and security, and called for an immediate end to aggression and regional peace.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan unequivocally condemned the attack by the Houthi militia on a tower at the King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD) in Riyadh.

This act of aggression constitutes a grave violation of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Office said in a press release on Friday.

The continued targeting of civilian infrastructure and economic facilities endangers innocent lives and poses a serious threat to regional peace and security.

Such reprehensible attacks must cease forthwith. Pakistan stands firmly with the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It supports the Kingdom's legitimate right to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to safeguard its citizens and residents.

Pakistan has been and will continue to make all efforts for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

In latest develoment, Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's In Yemen, Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV reported Saudi airstrikes ?on the capital Sanaa on Friday. There was no immediate comment ?from Saudi Arabia on the reported strikes.

Southern Saudi Arabia, which borders Yemen, has ?been repeatedly targeted by Houthi missile and drone attacks on military installations, airports and energy infrastructure.

The latest attacks came less than a day after Riyadh's tallest skyscraper, the headquarters of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund, was struck in a Houthi attack on Thursday.Houthi movement towards the kingdom's ?southern region, the Saudi-led coalition said on Friday, as cross-border attacks between the two sides showed no signs of abating.

Saudi Civil Defence also reported that drones had been intercepted in the southern region and issued early-warning alerts for ?several areas, including Jazan, Abha and Khamis Mushait, before announcing that ?the danger had passed.

Bilawal says PM Shehbaz has not been given time to focus on public issues



CITY REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has not been given the opportunity to focus on the issues faced by the public.

Addressing an event in Karachi on Friday, Bilawal remarked that every citizen in Pakistan is bearing the economic burden resulting from the conflict involving Iran.

He emphasized that providing relief to the public remains the top priority for the Pakistan Peoples Party.

He noted that, due to the conflict involving Iran, people across the globe—including in Pakistan—are grappling with inflation and economic hardships.

"Every Pakistani is carrying the economic weight of this conflict. The economic crisis has driven up the prices of diesel and fertilizers, and there is a risk that the public's difficulties will intensify until the conflict concludes," PPP chairman said.

He stated that the PPP is fully aware of the economic crisis, inflation, and unemployment plaguing the country.

Tarar says public opinion should determine creation of new provinces

■ Info minister says proposal should proceed only if public supports it, cites constitutional provisions for referendums

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Friday backed holding a referendum to determine public opinion on the creation of new provinces, saying the proposal should proceed only if people supported it.

Speaking to reporters outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Tarar said there was no harm in holding a referendum, adding that the Constitution provided for such a vote on matters of national importance or public interest.

He said people should be given an opportunity to express their views before any decision was taken, adding that the proposal should not be pursued if the public opposed it.

A referendum is a direct vote in which citizens are asked to express their views on a particular question. The idea of holding one on the creation of new provinces was floated by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who argued that it could help establish public opinion on the issue and settle the debate.

The information minister also said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had met the president, during which they discussed various matters and the ual understanding and consensus.

need to move forward through mutual understanding and consensus.

Responding to questions about an ECP hearing concerning his visit to Gujranwala, Tarar said he had travelled to his hometown at the invitation of the



District Bar Association's general secretary.

He said no election candidate had attended the event and that the invitation had been extended before the announcement of the election schedule. He added that the association's general secretary was also his colleague.The current debate over new provinces began on July 30, when Naqvi called for additional administrative units or provinces as part of a broader overhaul of the country's governance system. Naqvi argued that meaningful structural reforms were needed to improve governance, deliver justice and create opportunities for young people. The proposal quickly became politically sensitive in Sindh, where the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) strongly opposed any move to divide the province. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah rejected Naqvi's assessment that the governance system had collapsed and called the proposal outdated, warning that no bloodshed would be allowed over the creation of new provinces.The debate widened in August when Muttahida Qaumi Movement–Pakistan (MQM-P) backed the creation of new provinces and called for a national dialogue with political parties.

CamScanner

5,000 federal jobs announced for Balochistan youth

- According to officials, the recruitment process will begin across more than 100 departments operating under 13 federal ministries.

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



The federal government has announced 5,000 jobs for the youth of Balochistan under a special recruitment initiative aimed at addressing unemployment and increasing the province's representation in federal institutions.

According to officials, the recruitment process will begin across more than 100 departments operating under 13 federal ministries. The hiring will be carried out in phases, providing employment opportunities to eligible candidates from different districts of Balochistan.

The initiative, launched following the special interest and efforts of the Prime Minister and the Field Marshal, aims to create employment opportunities for local youth and reduce the need for them to relocate to other cities in search of jobs.

Officials said special instructions have been issued to ensure transparency and merit throughout the recruitment process. More than 100 members of federal committees and relevant authorities will oversee the selection process.

Furthermore, federal secretaries and committee members will visit various districts of Balochistan to participate in the recruitment process and ensure that candidates are selected strictly on merit.

The announcement has generated optimism among the province's unemployed youth. The initiative is being viewed as an important step towards reducing unemployment, strengthening the economic stability of young people and improving Balochistan's representation in federal government institutions.



French Ambassador Jean-Noël Poirier, Arts Council of Pakistan President Muhammad Ahmed Shah and Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab inaugurate the 4th International Art Exhibition, "The Canvas of Peace," on the 23rd day of the 3rd World Culture Festival Karachi 2026, organized by the Arts Council of

OUP conference brings education leaders together to discuss future of learning

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



Oxford University Press (OUP) Pakistan brought together school leaders, educationists and practitioners in Islamabad for its School Leaders' Conference 2026 in Islamabad.

Under the theme "Shaping Tomorrow: Navigating Change, Driving Impact," the two-day engagement provided separate platforms for educators from local and international examination board schools to deliberate on the changing educational landscape and the priorities shaping the future of learning.

The conferences explored the evolving responsibilities of school leadership, the integration of technology in education, future-focused skills development and the need to strengthen teaching and learning through effective pedagogical approaches. Discussions also examined how schools can balance innovation with sound educational practices while preparing students for the demands of a rapidly changing world.Welcoming participants, Arshad Saeed Husain, Managing Director, Oxford University Press Pakistan, said that educational transformation required a collective commitment from school leaders, teachers and the wider education community. "The challenges facing education cannot be addressed through incremental changes alone.

We need school leaders who can recognise emerging needs, support teachers in adapting their practices and place meaningful learning at the centre of every decision. The future depends on how effectively we prepare our schools and students for change," he said.

Elizabeth Munn, Managing Director, Education, Oxford University Press UK, joined the first day's programme for an interactive conversation on the changing priorities in education.

She emphasised the importance of combining educational innovation with a clear focus on learning outcomes. "As education continues to evolve, schools must remain focused on what matters most: enabling every learner to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to navigate an uncertain future. Technology and new approaches can create valuable opportunities, but their impact ultimately depends on how thoughtfully they are integrated into teaching and learning," she said.

The keynote sessions examined the changing demands on educational institutions and their leadership. Dr Nadeem ul Haque, former Vice-Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and Chairperson, RAC, addressed "Transformative School Leadership in Changing Times" for local board educators.

The programme also featured presentations by Oxford University Press specialists on emerging priorities in classroom learning. Shazia Asad, Senior Product Manager Mathematics, Oxford University Press Pakistan, explored "Mathematics in the Age of AI: New Imperatives and the Way Forward." Emma Baxter, Product Manager, Oxford University Press UK, discussed preparing students for the future through skills development, quality resources and pedagogical expertise. Dr Nicolas Brasch, international author and educator, examined student-centred and inquiry-based approaches to science education through his session.

Lahore tops global pollution rankings as Air Quality deteriorates across Punjab

SPECIAL REPORTER
LAHORE



Air pollution levels have surged across several cities in Punjab, with Lahore once again ranking as the world's most polluted city as the average air quality index (AQI) in the provincial capital crosses 400, raising concerns over deteriorating atmospheric conditions.

According to the latest figures, Lahore's average particulate matter concentration has exceeded 400, while Gulberg has emerged as the most polluted area, recording levels of up to 600. The air quality index on Burki Road has also climbed to 550, reflecting the worsening pollution situation in the city.

Meanwhile, the weather in Lahore is gradually turning colder, according to the Meteorological Department. The city's minimum temperature has dropped to 12 degrees Celsius, while the maximum temperature is expected to reach 27 degrees Celsius.

Weather conditions are likely to remain unfavourable for the dispersal of pollutants, as wind speeds have dropped considerably, increasing the likelihood of continued poor air quality.

Weather forecasters have also ruled out the possibility of rainfall in Lahore over the next few days, indicating that the prevailing atmospheric conditions are likely to persist.

Meanwhile, the intensity of smog remains high in other parts of Punjab as well. Multan has recorded particulate matter levels of 641, while Sargodha has reported a reading of 290, highlighting the widespread impact of air pollution across the province.

Buddhist Monastics offer recommendations for Pakistan's Gandhara Strategy

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

:International Buddhist monastics and scholars have offered recommendations for further strengthening Pakistan's Gandhara Strategy, emphasising improved infrastructure, greater community participation and enhanced international cooperation to preserve and promote the country's rich Buddhist heritage.

Buddhist Monastics offer recommendations for Pakistan's Gandhara Strategy

The recommendations were shared during the concluding session of the four-day Gandhara Strategic Dialogue 2026, held at the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division, Islamabad, which concluded on Friday.

The visiting Buddhist delegates stressed that developing Gandhara as a sustainable religious and cultural destination required improved transportation, visitor facilities, meditation halls and better arrangements for Buddhist pilgrims. They emphasised that religious pilgrims had distinct requirements from ordinary tourists, which should be considered in planning infrastructure and pilgrimage-related facilities.

Buddhist Monastics offer recommendations for Pakistan's Gandhara Strategy

The participants also highlighted the importance of involving local communities in heritage preservation, saying they should not only benefit economically from heritage-related activities but also understand the cultural and spiritual significance of historical sites and take pride in their legacy.

They also suggested exploring ecological restoration of selected Gandhara areas to reflect aspects of their historical natural environment.

Calling for stronger international engagement, the monastics emphasised diplomatic facilitation and closer connections with Buddhist communities, particularly in Laos and Bangladesh. They observed that Pakistan's Gandhara heritage offered significant opportunities to strengthen spiritual and cultural ties across South Asia, East Asia, the Himalayan region and Europe.

Appreciating the Government of Pakistan for hosting the Dialogue, the visiting delegates said the engagement had broadened their understanding of the country.

A monk from Thailand shared that he had dreamed of visiting Pakistan for nearly two decades, adding that his experience had given him a much more positive impression of the country than the limited references in Thai literature and perceptions formed abroad.

Responding to the recommendations, Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Asad Rehman Gillani said Pakistan was not the owner but the custodian of Gandhara's invaluable heritage, adding that its preservation for future generations was a collective responsibility.

He appreciated the insights shared by international delegates and said Pakistan also had an opportunity to learn from their experience in safeguarding religious relics and sacred heritage.

No harm in new provinces, administrative units: PTI

- He further stated that PTI would not become part of any new confrontation. He said the party should formulate a strategy to regain political space amid the prevailing circumstances.

SPECIAL REPORTER
PESHAWAR



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shaukat Yousafzai has said that the establishment of new provinces would not harm the country, arguing that smaller administrative units could deliver better governance and performance.

In his remarks, Yousafzai said that smaller provinces would be more effective in addressing administrative challenges. Referring to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's recent statement, he questioned the justification for the continued existence of the current parliament.

He further stated that PTI would not become part of any new confrontation. He said the party should formulate a strategy to regain political space amid the prevailing circumstances.However, Yousafzai added that, for the time being, PTI would adopt a wait-and-see approach and observe the unfolding political situation.



French Ambassador Jean-Noël Poirier addresses during the 4th International Art Exhibition, "The Canvas of Peace," on the 23rd day of the 3rd World Culture Festival Karachi 2026, organized by the Arts Council of Pakistan.

KP govt announces green rickshaw scheme with 50pc subsidy

- KP government plans a green rickshaw scheme, offering eligible individuals a 50% subsidy and four-year instalments to create jobs and promote eco-friendly transport.

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to introduce a Green Rickshaw Scheme to create employment opportunities and provide financial support to deserving individuals across the province.

According to Adviser to the Transport Department Asif Rafiq, eligible applicants will be provided green rickshaws through easy instalments over four years, with the provincial government covering 50 per cent of the total cost as a subsidy.

He said the initiative aims to improve employment opportunities for ordinary citizens while promoting modern and environmentally friendly transport across the province.

Asif Rafiq added that the government was taking steps to encourage sustainable transport, while an annual revenue target of Rs2 billion had been set for the Peshawar Mass Transit Bus Service.

The transport adviser directed officials to develop an effective strategy to increase revenue generated by the mass transit service.

He also called for practical measures to eliminate corruption and promote transparency within the Transport Department.

CamScanner

Tax split to widen informal economy

An independent economic think tank has faulted the government's decision to separately administer sales tax and income tax collections, saying the move will weaken a critical link in checking evasion and could increase the share of the informal economy.

The Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME) on Wednesday commented on the government's decision last week to reverse a 17-year-old reform, which at the time had been dubbed a US-style reform, of merging the collection of income tax, sales tax and federal excise under the Inland Revenue Service.



The 2009 move aimed to provide tax-related services under one roof and have a single taxman handle a company's sales tax and income tax matters to avoid duplication and evasion and facilitate compliant taxpayers.

However, last week, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) separated the sales tax and federal excise duty and the income tax departments within the Inland Revenue Service, said PRIME. The FBR posted Dr Muhammad Sarmad Qureshi as the first member of sales tax and federal excise duty and Muhammad Anwar as chief of these taxes. A separate stream of officers will also be posted from next month to operationalise the new administration mode.

PRIME said the FBR justified the move by stating the new structure would address the sales tax revenue gap, noting the FBR reported a 1.7% reduction in domestic sales tax in the last fiscal year compared to a 17% increase at the import stage. However, it said the division of tax departments would carry a cost for taxpayers, as a company's turnover appears on both its income tax and sales tax forms.

"A firm that hides sales to lower its sales tax is also hiding income. When one officer handles both, catching the first exposes the second. Separate officers break that link," PRIME said.

The FBR has undergone multiple phases of reforms over the past many years and took billions of dollars in loans. But nothing could succeed in increasing its tax-to-GDP ratio to 15%, which remained stagnant at 10.3% of GDP during the past two fiscal years.

PRIME said the separation of collection would increase the burden on compliant taxpayers. Manufacturers, importers and distributors already in the net will face two commissioners, two sets of notices and two interpretations of the same transaction. However, businesses outside the tax net will be immune from these effects, it added.

PRIME said the unification of administration mattered because the process reduced the incentive for non-compliant businesses to enter the tax net, according to the think tank.

However, tax authorities believed that under the unified regime, taxmen were not focusing enough on sales tax collection, which in turn contributed to a low effective sales tax rate and widespread evasion.

The institute argued that every increase in the cost of being a registered taxpayer widens the gap between the formal and informal economy. "Any business considering entering the tax net will now have to weigh the fact that it must report to two officers, which makes compliance more complicated than staying unregistered, where no compliance is required." The reform risks complicating compliance for the very businesses the FBR wants to bring into the tax net, it added.

Taxpayers already absorb frequent changes in tax rules. They now face uncertainty over who administers those rules as well, said PRIME. It said weak domestic sales tax collection is a product of fragmented value-added tax more than the organisational chart. Goods are taxed at federal and services at provincial levels, each with its own rates and returns, while exemptions and statutory regulatory orders break the chain further, said the think tank.

A harmonised value-added tax (VAT) on goods and services, with a unified lower rate and few exemptions, would do more for collection than another layer of administration, it added.

However, the World Bank has extended loans to convince both the federal and provincial governments to merge the sales tax returns of goods and services, but without a reasonable rate of success. The institute said everyone in the chain has to register, invoice and declare. Revenue leaks if one unregistered or non-compliant link breaks the chain.

An FBR review revealed that the decline in domestic sales tax is concentrated in electrical energy, cotton yarn and natural gas. These are sectors where collection moves with consumption, output and energy prices, factors that lie outside the FBR's administrative reach, it added.

"Reassigning officers will not change them," said PRIME.

Chairman FBR Rashid Langrial recently conducted tests of tax officers to gauge their knowledge of the sales tax.

Reportedly, very few officers can be trusted to decide a case on their own. About 15 of 150 officers could pass sales tax orders on their own signature, and 14 of 143 could pass income tax orders, according to the results compiled by the FBR and leaked to the media.Of the 139 officers who took both papers, only four could do so in both taxes. About half the cadre in each tax, 65 in sales tax and 72 in income tax, could prepare a notice or an order.

Casablanca 1994: When Collective Efforts Turned the Impossible into Possible

By: Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

An inspiring lesson from the past for the Kashmiri diaspora: collective action, timely diplomatic initiative and open channels of communication can produce outcomes that once seemed beyond reach.

Today, I came across a social media post by Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani, a distinguished jurist and President of the Jammu Kashmir Council for Human Rights (JKCHR), an NGO accredited with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). His post recalled some important developments surrounding the Seventh Islamic Summit, held in Casablanca, Morocco, from December 13 to 15, 1994.

Dr. Gilani referred to the important role played by the Kashmiri delegation in preparing a substantive OIC resolution on Kashmir, which called for urgent humanitarian assistance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He also recalled that aide-mémoires were presented to the heads of state attending the Summit.

His post brought back fond memories of an extraordinary diplomatic initiative in which a small group of Kashmiris, working together at a critical moment, helped secure an outcome that initially appeared almost impossible.

I was invited by Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid, the then Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to attend the Seventh Islamic Summit in Casablanca. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) had been formed in Kashmir just a year earlier, on March 9, 1993. I felt that it would be particularly significant if an APHC delegation could also participate in this important international gathering.

I subsequently learned that invitations had also been extended to Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Maulana Abbas Ansari, Sardar Mohammad Qayyum Khan, then Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan, then President of Azad Kashmir, and Khalid Hasan, a well-known journalist. I contacted Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who confirmed that the invitations had been received.

Although the Summit was scheduled to begin on December 13, I decided to arrive in Casablanca a day earlier. Soon after my arrival, I met one of the senior diplomats from Pakistan's Foreign Office. To my surprise, he was not even aware that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman of the APHC, would be attending the Summit.

The diplomat explained that securing a reference to Kashmir in the Casablanca Declaration would be extremely difficult. The usual practice was that all declarations and resolutions were drafted in advance by senior officials of the foreign ministries of OIC member states, approved by foreign ministers and ultimately adopted by the heads of state and government.

I impressed upon him that the Chairman of the APHC was attending an OIC Islamic Summit for the first time. It would be unfortunate if such an important occasion passed without any meaningful reference to Kashmir. He advised me to approach Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Chairman of Pakistan's Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, who was also attending the Summit.

Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani and I met Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and explained the importance of securing a meaningful reference to Kashmir. He immediately understood the seriousness of the situation. Without wasting time, he called Jalil Asghar Jeelani, who had been deputed by the Foreign Office to assist him, and asked him to arrange a meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Dr. Gilani and I subsequently briefed Prime Minister Bhutto. We emphasized that the presence of the APHC Chairman at the Summit should translate into tangible progress on Kashmir.

What happened next demonstrated the power of timely diplomatic intervention. We later learned that Prime Minister Bhutto had personally contacted the office of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco. Her intervention had a remarkable impact. Multiple resolutions on Kashmir, extending to twenty-one pages, were adopted, and the Kashmir issue became an important part of the Casablanca Declaration.

Most significantly, seven consecutive paragraphs, Items 53 to 59, were devoted to Jammu and Kashmir. The Declaration recognized the APHC as the "True Representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Item 58 was particularly significant. It welcomed the establishment of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir at the United Nations and called upon the Contact Group to continue its efforts to promote the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people in accordance with United Nations resolutions and to safeguard their fundamental human rights.

Two important institutional developments followed from this diplomatic initiative. First, the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir was established. Its membership included Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Niger, Morocco, the OIC Secretary General and the APHC, in accordance with the arrangements made at the time.

The inaugural meeting of the Contact Group was held at the heads-of-state level. It was chaired by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and attended by the President of Niger, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, OIC Secretary General Dr. Hamid Al-Gabid, representatives of Morocco and the APHC delegation. Crown Prince Abdullah addressed the Kashmir Contact Group in Arabic, with his remarks translated into English by Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister.

It was also decided that the OIC would convene three Contact Group meetings on Kashmir every year: one during the United Nations General Assembly in New York, another during the United Nations human rights proceedings in Geneva, and a third during the annual OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting.

This institutional arrangement provided Kashmir with a continuing platform for diplomatic engagement.

Cannibalism in Pakistan: A Legal Vacuum Behind One of the Country's Most Disturbing Criminal Cases

By: Hina Azam



Cannibalism, disgusting? Pakistan has witnessed many criminal cases over the years, but few have raised questions as serious as the cannibalism cases reported in Darya Khan, a town in Bhakkar District of Punjab. This incident, which first came to public attention in 2011 and resurfaced in 2014, drew international media attention.

This case involved two brothers, Mohammad Arif Ali and Mohammad Farman Ali, who were arrested in April 2011 after police discovered evidence that they had dug up graves and consumed human flesh. According to contemporary news reports, the discovery involved the remains of a woman who had recently been buried. The brothers were later arrested, convicted, and sentenced to two years in prison, with a Rs. 50,000 fine each, according to reports published at the time.

In April 2014, police once again raided their residence after receiving complaints from neighbours. This time, investigators discovered the remains of a young child who had been buried in a nearby graveyard. Police arrested one brother immediately, and later apprehended the other. The incident brought the brothers back into the national spotlight. In June 2014, an Anti Terrorism Court sentenced both brothers to 12 years of imprisonment each. Their prosecution just involved offences relating to the desecration of graves, destruction of property and spreading fear.

Now, what actually is the creepiest thing about all that? It's not the consumption of human flesh , it's not the disrespect of the dead and not even the murder. It's actually that there is not a single law against cannibalism till now.

In Pakistan, where burial traditions and respect for the deceased hold considerable religious and cultural importance, disturbing a grave is particularly offensive. When that expectation is violated, the consequences extend beyond the immediate criminal incident. The psychological dimension cannot be ignored. Though it would be incorrect to automatically classify every person involved in cannibalistic behaviour as mentally ill.

Section 297 of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, provides protection against the desecration of burial places and indignity towards human corpses. However, its failure to explicitly address cannibalism raises questions about the adequacy of Pakistan's existing criminal legislation. The Bhakkar incidents exposed the need to examine whether existing legal provisions are sufficient to address such extraordinary criminal conduct.

The Bhakkar incidents were not simply isolated criminal events. The recurrence of similar allegations involving the same individuals, even after imprisonment, exposed serious questions about the effectiveness of Pakistan's criminal justice response.The 2018 reports further intensified concerns about whether existing legislation was adequate to address such conduct. The question, therefore, is not merely how such incidents occurred, but why the legal and institutional response struggled to prevent their recurrence. Even after 12 years, no law still exists against this atrocious crime. When those brothers are released, what evidence is there that they will not repeat this grievous offence again?

Many countries, such as Botswana, Nigeria, and the United States-Idaho, have strict laws against this heinous act with explicitly deterrent punishments. Botswana specifically has section 201A, which addresses unlawful consumption of human flesh, body parts and human remains. Section 201 B- cannibalism- makes intentional consumption of human blood or flesh a criminal offence.

These cannibal brothers are released from prison on July 1, 2026. They are completely free now,back in their hometown. These two men are walking free today just because the parliament was too busy to pass a simple law against cannibalism in 15 years.

Are the authorities waiting for another cannibalistic incident to happen? The government's failure to close such a legal loophole is unacceptable.We need a proper solution for such atrocities; if this has caught attention, it doesn't mean that this isn't happening anymore.What are the governments actually doing? Why are they reticent about all these abominable acts?

If law cannot protect the dignity of the dead, then what exactly is it protecting? If lawmakers themselves recognised the need for punishments as severe as life imprisonment, what has prevented Pakistan from translating that recognition into effective legislation.

CamScanner



Karachi: November 20, 2026: Agreement signing between Pakistan and Türkiye to strengthen mineral cooperation.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb meets Pakistani community, business leaders in Singapore

■ Attacks on oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz and on Saudi energy facilities added to worries about regional oil flows.

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has met members of the Pakistani community and business leaders in Singapore to discuss Pakistan's economic reforms, investment opportunities and bilateral business cooperation,

The meeting was held at Pakistan House in Singapore during a dinner hosted by Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore, Rabia Shafiq.

During the interaction, the finance minister briefed the Pakistani community on government initiatives aimed at improving the country's economy and ensuring economic stability. He said the government remained committed to fiscal discipline, economic reforms and promoting investment.

Aurangzeb described overseas Pakistanis as a valuable national asset and important partners in the country's economic development. He urged the Pakistani diaspora to help present Pakistan as an attractive destination for investment.

The minister also highlighted investment opportunities in various sectors of Pakistan's economy and stressed the need to strengthen business connections between Pakistani and Singaporean business communities.

Discussing the government's privatisation programme, Aurangzeb said the privatisation of state-owned enterprises would help reduce the financial burden on the national exchequer, lower government expenditures and improve the performance of public-sector institutions.

Members of the Pakistani business community also shared proposals to promote investment in Pakistan and attract foreign investors.

The meeting further discussed opportunities to expand business relations and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Singapore.

PSX rallies as benchmark KSE-100 gains over 1,300 points in early trading

■ The benchmark KSE-100 Index rallied by more than 1,300 points, climbing to 177,762 points as buying activity picked up across key sectors

Business Reporter

KARACHI



Strong bullish momentum returned to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday as investors stepped back into the market at the start of the fourth trading session of the week.

During early trading, the benchmark KSE-100 Index rallied by more than 1,300 points, climbing to 177,762 points as buying activity picked up across key sectors.

The strong rebound follows a bearish session on Wednesday, when the index shed 1,223.41 points to close at the 176,294-point mark.

SECP orders transfer of unclaimed dividends to govt account

■ PSX opened higher on Wednesday as the KSE-100 Index gained 398 points to reach 165,500, recovering after falling 814 points to close at 165,151 in the previous session.

Staff Reporter

KARACHI



The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has directed all companies to deposit unclaimed or unpaid dividends, profits and interest into the federal government's account after a period of three years, Companies are required to transfer any dividends on company shares or Modaraba certificates that have remained unclaimed or unpaid for three years from the date they became due and payable, under Section 244 of the Companies Act, 2017.

Similarly, any profit or interest due on Term Finance Certificates (TFCs) or Sukuk that has remained unclaimed or unpaid for three years from the date of maturity of the instrument must also be deposited into the government account.

The SECP on Thursday directed companies to deposit such amounts into Account No. G1120G titled "Companies Unclaimed Instruments and Dividend and Insurance Benefits and Investors Education Account," maintained under the Public Account of the Federation.

The directive has been issued in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 40B of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Act, 1997, read with Section 510 of the Companies Act, 2017.

Companies are required to comply with the provisions of Section 244 of the Act and the Unclaimed Shares, Modaraba Certificates, Dividend, Other Instruments and Undistributed Assets Regulations, 2017.



Gold price plunges by Rs3,600 per tola in Pakistan

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The government has signed an agreement with the EY Middle East Consortium for financial advisory services to outsource Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport under its privatisation programme.

The agreement between the Privatisation Commission and the consortium marks a step towards involving the private sector in the operations and management of the country's two major airports.

Under the agreement, the EY consortium will provide comprehensive advisory services covering technical, financial, legal and environmental aspects of the outsourcing process.

The government plans to explore concession and management agreements to involve private operators in airport management. The initiative aims to improve operational performance, strengthen airport management and expand commercial activities at both airports. The advisory consortium will assist in developing the framework for private-sector participation and evaluating suitable arrangements for the two airports.

FTO uncovers multimillion-rupee sales tax fraud, orders nationwide crackdown on fake invoices

■ However, the FTO said the available technical evidence could not conclusively identify the actual perpetrators.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has uncovered a multimillion-rupee sales tax fraud involving fake invoices, unauthorised access to a taxpayer's account and serious weaknesses in the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) registration and digital security systems.

In a ruling on the case, the FTO directed authorities to initiate legal action against companies benefiting from fraudulent invoices, conduct criminal investigations and review companies involved in fake invoicing across the country over the past year.

According to the FTO, fraudsters gained unauthorised access to a taxpayer's account and filed fake sales tax returns for two tax periods, declaring supplies for which no actual business transactions had taken place.

The investigation found that virtual private network (VPN) connections were used in the fraud, with recorded internet protocol (IP) addresses traced to Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates.

However, the FTO said the available technical evidence could not conclusively identify the actual perpetrators.

The ruling revealed that a newly established company had benefited from suspicious transactions worth millions of rupees. The company obtained sales tax registration just one day after registering with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), without effective verification of its business viability and supporting documents.

The FTO said the company had uploaded the same document to fulfil different registration requirements, which the automated system accepted.

The company was also identified as a beneficiary in another case involving fake invoices.

The investigation further revealed that transactions purportedly involving the Ministry of Defence and the Sindh Health Department did not exist in the respective departments' records.

The FTO said the fraudulent transactions had also resulted in the utilisation of the complainant's existing input tax credit.

Highlighting regulatory weaknesses, the ombudsman said Rule 5 of the Sales Tax Rules, 2006, did not effectively cover all corporate entities.

Pakistan imports 55,417 tonnes of LPG ahead of winter season

■ The sixth vessel, Sea Shine, reached the port on November 18, carrying 21,866 metric tons of LPG.

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI



Pakistan has imported 55,417 metric tons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) through six vessels that arrived at Port Qasim between November 12 and 18, as authorities move to strengthen gas supplies ahead of increased winter demand, According to the import details, the first vessel, Gas RGA, arrived on November 12, carrying 1,621 metric tons of LPG. The second vessel, Victoria Kusan, docked on November 14 with 4,387 metric tons of gas. On November 16, the vessel Pacific Star One arrived at Port Qasim with 20,115 metric tons of LPG. Two more vessels brought a combined 7,428 metric tons of gas on November 17.

The sixth vessel, Sea Shine, reached the port on November 18, carrying 21,866 metric tons of LPG.

The increased imports are expected to improve LPG availability in the local market and strengthen supplies before the peak winter season. Rising demand for alternative fuels during colder months makes timely imports important for maintaining market supply.

Rana Tanveer orders cancellation of licences of fertiliser dealers overcharging farmers

■ Hussain questioned why dealers were charging higher prices when rates at the factory level remained stable.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain has ordered the immediate cancellation of licences of fertiliser dealers involved in profiteering, warning that farmers would not be left at the mercy of traders charging arbitrary prices during the wheat sowing season.

Chairing a high-level meeting of the Fertiliser Review Committee, the minister directed district administrations and fertiliser companies to strictly monitor prices and take legal action against dealers violating regulations.

The meeting reviewed the prices, supply, demand and availability of urea and diammonium phosphate (DAP) fertilisers across the country.

Hussain questioned why dealers were charging higher prices when rates at the factory level remained stable.

He said fertiliser companies must take full responsibility for their dealership networks and ensure that farmers received fertilisers at reasonable prices.

The minister criticised fertiliser companies for remaining silent over arbitrary pricing by their dealers, describing the practice as unacceptable.

He also expressed serious concern over weak monitoring and administrative negligence by district administrations.



Hussain directed the relevant authorities to strengthen market surveillance and take immediate action against dealers involved in overcharging.

During the meeting, officials briefed the committee that there was no shortage of DAP fertiliser in the country.

The minister warned that strict action would be taken against anyone creating artificial shortages or manipulating fertiliser prices.

He said ensuring uninterrupted fertiliser supplies at reasonable prices during the wheat sowing season was a government priority.

Hussain reiterated that the economic exploitation of farmers and illegal profiteering in fertiliser sales would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He directed fertiliser companies and district administrations to ensure effective price monitoring and take action against violators.

CamScanner

Houthi missile threat towards Riyadh causes damage, Saudi-led coalition says



Web DESK

Riyadh

A Saudi-led coalition said on Thursday it had dealt with a missile threat launched by Yemen's Houthis towards Riyadh, after a loud boom was heard in the Saudi capital, as the kingdom faces escalating attacks by the Iran-aligned group.

An initial assessment showed debris had fallen and material damage had been reported, the coalition said, adding that the extent of the damage was still being assessed. The Saudi Civil Defense agency earlier warned residents of a potential danger in the capital, without providing details. It later said the danger had passed.

The boom was heard shortly after Saudi state news agency SPA reported that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had met US Central Command chief Admiral Brad Cooper in Riyadh. The two discussed military relations and regional developments, SPA said.

Fighting between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis has intensified since the group captured strategic areas along Yemen's Red Sea coast last month, advancing ?towards the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key global shipping route for Gulf oil producers on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula from the Strait of Hormuz.

The renewed conflict between the two sides has shattered a 2022 UN-brokered truce that largely halted attacks between ?the Saudi-led coalition.



Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in a group photo with President of the Senate of Thailand H.E. Mongkol Surasajja and delegations in Bangkok

West presses Iran at IAEA to let Inspections resume at bombed nuclear sites

■ Iran has not granted the International Atomic Energy Agency access to those nuclear facilities since the military strikes against them in June 2025

Web Desk

VIENNA

The United States, Britain, France and Germany jointly pressed Tehran at a meeting of the UN atomic watchdog's board on Thursday to let inspectors return to its nuclear sites bombed by the US and Israel last year, accusing Tehran of "stonewalling".

Iran has not granted the International Atomic Energy Agency access to those nuclear facilities since the military strikes against them in June 2025.

While the strikes destroyed or badly damaged Iran's three uranium-enrichment plants known to have been operational at the time, Tehran has not said what happened to its stock ?of highly



enriched uranium, which included material close to weapons grade and remains unaccounted for.

"It should be of concern to all Members of this Board that for a year and a half, the Agency has lost continuity of knowledge regarding Iran's previously verified stockpile of high-enriched uranium," the four Western powers said in a joint statement to the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors.

The board is holding a quarterly meeting this week. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi informed it that the only inspections in the last quarter were at the undamaged Bushehr nuclear power plant.

"The DG has repeatedly made clear that there is no current technical reason preventing the Agency from accessing the affected nuclear facilities and that inspectors have been ready to return for a long time now," the four countries said.

"It is up to Iran to seize this opportunity, change course, and address the international community's long-standing concerns regarding its nuclear program," they added, referring to "Iran's stonewalling strategy".

The US and Israel have not launched major strikes on Iranian nuclear sites since their 12-day campaign last year, but the US has been at war with Iran for nine months and speculation about fresh strikes is mounting while talks on a negotiated solution are deadlocked.

Iran says the US and Israeli attacks caused the current standoff over inspections.

"The root causes of the impossibility of normal safeguards implementation in Iran are the ?acts of aggression and the continuing threats of renewed attacks at the highest political level of the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran," Iran said in a statement sent to member states on Wednesday.

Bangladesh deploys paramilitary as unrest grows over Hasina's return

■ Awami League party announced a week-long programme of protests and rallies to mobilise support for Hasina's return

Web Desk

DHAKA

Bangladesh stepped up security and deployed hundreds of paramilitary troops nationwide on Wednesday as the planned return of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sparked clashes, bomb blasts and arson attacks blamed on supporters of her banned party.

Hasina, who has lived in exile in neighbouring India since she fled Dhaka following violent protests demanding her resignation in August 2024, has requested a new passport and identity card, saying she plans to return in December.

But the government has so far rejected her request, leading to members and supporters of her Awami League party taking to the



streets in protest.

Last week, the party announced a week-long programme of protests and rallies to mobilise support for Hasina's return, culminating in a nationwide lockdown on November 19. Police have recorded dozens of crude bomb blasts and incidents of vehicles being torched in at least 28 districts over the last 10 days, with several police personnel and civilians injured, local media has reported.

Late on Tuesday, an activist of the

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

● The court said Myanmar had an obligation to compensate the Rohingya for the violations it had committed

Web Desk

THE HAGUE

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

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



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

The panel found "that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has committed genocide against the Rohingya group in Northern Rakhine State." Judges found that Myanmar's military carried out d mass executions of men and boys, committed widespread rape and sexual violence against Rohingya women and burned or razed hundreds of villages during so-called clearance operations. The military actively spread hate speech targeting the Rohingya population, they said.

The court's ruling is final and cannot be appealed.

Genocide has rarely been established in international courts, largely because prosecutors must prove a specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

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

Israel forces kill 3 Palestinians in fresh Gaza push

Web Desk

GAZA

Israeli tanks advanced in an area of the central Gaza Strip on Wednesday and the Israeli military said its forces were targeting Hamas infrastructure outside areas that Israel controls in the enclave.

Witnesses said some Israeli tanks rolled onto the main Salahudeen road, west of the Yellow Line that marks the boundary of the two-thirds of the Gaza Strip still under Israeli control despite a ceasefire that has lasted more than a year.

An Israeli airstrike near the army raid killed one person, Palestinian medics said.

The medics said separate Israeli airstrikes had killed two other people earlier in the day in Deir al-Balah and Gaza City.

An Israeli military spokesperson claimed the military was carrying



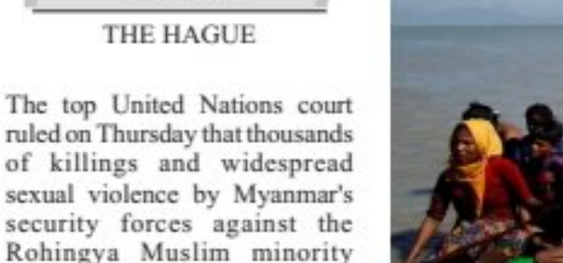
out an operation targeting "Hamas infrastructure" west of the Yellow Line in central Gaza and that it had struck a Hamas fighter in southern Gaza earlier on Wednesday.

The spokesperson had no immediate comment on other strikes.

An October 2025 ceasefire halted major fighting in the Israel-Gaza war but has not stopped Israeli attacks in Gaza.

Israel, which claims Hamas has recently been regrouping and rearming, has stepped up attacks against Hamas.

Ukraine says it hit 2 Russian oil refineries as Zelenskyy hails domestically made weapons



NEWS DESK

KYIV, Ukraine

Ukraine struck two oil refineries in southern Russia, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy praised the effectiveness of domestically produced weapons used to damage the key Kerch Bridge linking Russia to the occupied Crimean Peninsula.Both sides have continued their attacks as delegations await word on another round of U.S.-mediated talks. U.S. President Donald Trump says he plans to discuss the nearly five-year war with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday during a visit to China.Ukraine's General Staff said the strikes hit storage tanks at the Ilsky refinery and a processing unit at the Afipsky refinery, both in Russia's Krasnodar region.

Xi, Donald Trump and Putin begin unprecedented summit in China

■ Trump is bogged down by his war with Iran that has choked oil supplies and pushed up consumer prices worldwide, while an ascendant China is looking to strengthen its hand in East Asia

STAFF REPORTER

CHINA

The leaders of China, the United States and Russia kicked off their first trilateral talks on Thursday, aimed according to Beijing as "safeguarding world peace" but sparking alarm and derision elsewhere.

The meeting between Xi Jinping, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin in Shenzhen, which analysts expect to be heavier in symbolism than breakthroughs, comes with Russia's Ukraine offensive approaching the five-year mark.

Trump is bogged down by his war with Iran that has choked oil supplies and pushed up consumer prices worldwide, while an ascendant China is looking to strengthen its hand in East Asia.

The Kylin Villa summit has stoked fears that the three powerful men want to divide the globe into spheres of



influence, for example by making decisions impacting Ukraine over the heads of Kyiv or Europe.

Earlier Thursday, Trump and Putin held a meeting — their first since August 2025 — with the 80-year-old US president calling the Russian his "friend", who responded in English: "Nice to meet you."

Trump and Xi then came together — for the third time this year — for one-on-one discussions, with the US leader highlighting their "very special relationship".

The two men's talks were expected to touch on trade and potentially common rules for artificial intelligence, under the cloud of the Nvidia spy scandal.

"During this period, China-US relations have remained generally stable and improved, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries and injecting stability and certainty into the world," Xi said.

Putin, 74, and Xi, 73, held talks on Wednesday — their 50th meeting, the Chinese president said.

Beijing, Washington and Moscow have given different accounts of the agenda for the three-way meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Washington initially signalled that Ukraine was off the table, before Trump said the war would feature. Xi does not view the conflict as China's problem to solve. Trump said in his meeting with Xi however that both China and the United States were "looking to both help with respect to the war with Russia and Ukraine."

CamScanner

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

A Film Can Flop, a Woman Cannot: Meera

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Momal Sheikh Pens Emotional Birthday Tribute for Shahzad

Actress Momal Sheikh Celebrates Brother Shahzad With Emotional Birthday Tribute

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

South Asians & Diaspora

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



Tom Cruise Takes On Climate Politics In New Film

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

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Actors Cannot Avoid Public Attention: Zoya Nasir

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

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

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

How to choose the right pillow for better sleep

Experts say pillow choice should depend on sleeping position,

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD



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

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

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

Your sleeping position matters

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

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

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

How high should a pillow be for back sleepers?

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

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

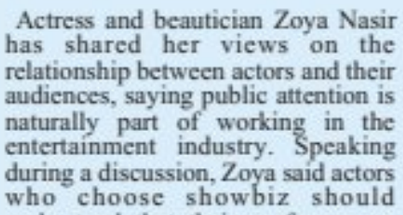
There is therefore no universal rule that all back sleepers should use a pillow of the same height. Side sleepers should consider shoulder width People who sleep primarily on their side may need to pay attention to their shoulder width when choosing a pillow.

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

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

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

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



WEB DESK

KARACHI

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

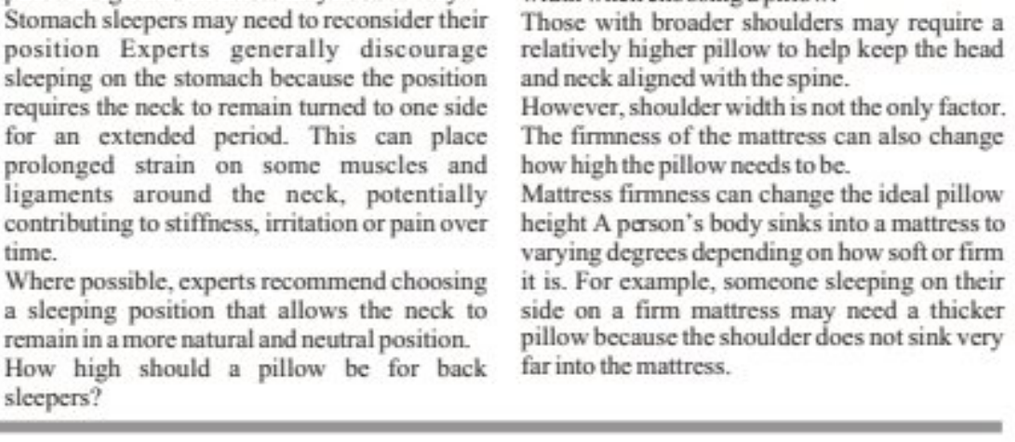
Taking to her Instagram handle, Naheed shared a video featuring herself delivering a blunt message about the drama's characters, particularly Abu Bakar, played by Sheheryar Munawar, and Zaryab, portrayed by DureFishan Saleem.

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

Eating disorders can worsen in isolation, survivor says

HEALTH DESK

ISLAMABAD



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CamScanner

Pakistan outclass Sri Lanka in second Test to win series 1-0

● Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said he was satisfied with team's win.



SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan sealed a crushing eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka Friday in the second and final Test in Rawalpindi to win the series.

Sri Lanka put up some fight to avoid an innings defeat on Thursday, but folded for 316 on the fourth morning Friday after adding just seven runs to their overnight total of 309-9.

Pakistan completed their first Test series win this year by reaching the slender 90-run target in 13 overs, with Aamer Jamal scoring 34 not out and Azan Awais an unbeaten 32.

Pakistan lost opener Tayyab Arif for 13 and Mohammad Taha for four, but there were no hiccups as Jamal hit the winning boundary off spinner Prabath Jayasuriya to seal the win.

The first Test, also in Rawalpindi, ended in a draw.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said he was satisfied with team's win.

"This is a new team with some new players, but they showed some good performances and winning always gives you satisfaction and confidence," he said.

"We are looking to create a positive environment so everyone has the fighting spirit alive regardless of what the match situation is."

Sri Lankan skipper Kusal Mendis said the 98-run first innings hurt his team.

"We have to improve in some areas when it comes to batting and fielding, but we bowled well in patches," he said.

The day began with Sri Lanka hoping to extend their 82-run lead and Milan Rathnayaka hitting a boundary, but the innings was done in the second over when Mohammad Abbas trapped Asitha Fernando lbw for two.



Nicholls leads fightback as New Zealand 140-5 in first India Test

SPORTS DESK

Islamabad

Henry Nicholls led a fightback with an unbeaten 66 as New Zealand recovered to 140-5 at tea on the opening day of the first Test against India on Thursday after losing four wickets in the first session. Nicholls strode to the crease in the first over in Wellington after captain Tom Latham's dismissal third ball to Jasprit Bumrah, who was playing his first Test for a year.

He was still there at the second interval having put on an unbroken 70 for the sixth wicket with Glenn Phillips, who was 42 not out.

Bumrah took his third wicket of the day soon after lunch, Tom Blundell for five, to leave New Zealand in trouble at 70-5 but India were frustrated by Nicholls and Phillips.

Nicholls has hit eight fours in his 135 ball stay so far and brought up his 50 with one of them, a pull forward of square.

Pakistan pacer Saqib Khan ruled out of second Sri Lanka Test

■ Saqib Khan has been undergoing treatment under the supervision of the team's medical staff.



SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan pacer Saqib Khan will not bowl further in the ongoing Test match against Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi due to a strain in his left hamstring,

Saqib Khan has been undergoing treatment under the supervision of the team's medical staff.

Saqib Khan left the field during the second over after dismissing Lahiru Odara at the start of Sri Lanka's second innings on Wednesday, a PCB spokesperson said.

Sri Lanka were 74-3 at the close of play on day two, with Dhananjaya de Silva and Pasindu Sooriyabandara were unbeaten on 24 and 18, respectively.

Chasing Pakistan's first-innings lead of 227, Sri Lanka lost three wickets for just 39 runs before Dhananjaya joined Pasindu Sooriyabandara to halt the slide. The pair put together an unbeaten 35-run partnership for the fourth wicket to steady the visitors' innings.

Saqib Khan, 31, bowled only 1.2 overs before limping off the field. The injury occurred during the third over of the game when Saqib dismissed opening batter Lahiru Udara and hurt himself while celebrating the wicket. Razaullah bowled the remaining balls of the over.

The right-arm pacer's shoe struck his ankle, forcing him to leave the field, with Razaullah completing the over.

Speaking at the end-of-day press conference, Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson also provided an update on the pacer's injury, saying that he was being closely observed by the medical staff. "We will find out and he is with the medics at the moment and it generally takes about 24 hours before you get informed about those kinds of things," he shared.

The right-hander also made a useful contribution with the bat, scoring 37 off 78 balls in Pakistan's first-innings, playing a crucial role with the bat to help his side build a substantial lead over Sri Lanka.

Saqib Khan has made headlines since making his Test debut, claiming seven wickets in the first innings of first Test and earning the player of the match award.

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

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

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

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

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

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

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



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

Talking to PCB Digital ahead of the tournament, head coach Ijaz Ahmed Jnr said: "Our focus has been on assessing the local conditions, particularly the pitches. We have worked across batting, bowling and fielding to prepare the players for the tournament. The experience of winning last year also gives us confidence heading into this event. "Although we are the defending champions, this is a new tournament and a different challenge. We will have to play good cricket to retain our title.

Pat Cummins defiant as 'Sandpapergate' roils Australian cricket

■ It came just days after Cummins held a 70-minute press conference to rebut the same allegations by Usman Khawaja in his autobiography, calling them "100 percent wrong".

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pat Cummins remained defiant on Thursday as his position as Australia Test captain was called into question after he was dragged back into the "Sandpapergate" scandal by Cameron Bancroft's explosive revelations.

Bancroft, a central figure in the 2018 ball-tampering plot in South Africa that rocked world cricket, dropped a grenade late Wednesday in a lengthy newspaper column by claiming the whole team knew what was going on.

It came just days after Cummins held a 70-minute press conference to rebut the same allegations by Usman Khawaja in his autobiography, calling them "100 percent wrong".

Bancroft was the player who used sandpaper during a Test in Cape Town to make the ball swing, with a Cricket Australia probe concluding only he, then-skipper Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner were responsible.



They were all sent home in disgrace and banned.

In a statement to several Australian media outlets, Cummins' manager Neil Maxwell said: "Pat's position hasn't changed in eight years. He's been consistent and adamant from day one. "Pat feels for Cam of course. He has been through a lot. We would urge people to again read Pat's interview transcript. There is nothing he hasn't answered. And that includes in response to what Cam has now said.

"Pat has rebuilt the Australian cricket team. That 24-year-old in Cape Town resolved to fix the team and spent eight years doing it," he added. Despite the defiance, calls are mounting for his position to be reviewed.

"Pat Cummins' future as Test captain should be placed under immediate review after Cameron Bancroft's stunning accusation that the skipper didn't tell us the truth," The Australian newspaper said in an opinion piece.

"Cummins' press conference in Sydney last week when he forcefully denied any knowledge of the plot to use sandpaper in a Test in 2018 could become the worst strategic move of his career."

National broadcaster ABC agreed with the sentiment, saying "his position as captain of the Australian Test team is now questionable", while the Sydney Morning Herald stated: "Cummins' captaincy in peril".

Cincinnati beat Griezmann's Orlando

■ Salt Lake edge Seattle 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI



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

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

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

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

The 23-year-old Spaniard last round-robin match in Turin on Friday.

Alcaraz said a near-five-month layoff with a wrist injury had reshaped his perspective, with the seven-times Grand Slam champion winning titles in Tokyo, Vienna and Paris after his return to action at the US Open in late August.

"The injury made me realise what's really important," Alcaraz said. "It's not winning or losing finals of tournaments. It's just about playing tennis. It's a gift every time I can step on the court and compete healthy.

"When you realise that, everything comes easier for me, because I enjoy and I don't feel stressful on a tennis court ... which means I can face problems in a different way.

"More calm, relaxed, and I'm thinking, 'OK, I'm going to still try my best tennis, I'm going to still try what I have to do' ... I think right now I'm more mature."

CamScanner



Naqvi provides 20 new vehicles to Islamabad Police SWAT Force

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has provided 20 new vehicles to the Islamabad Police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Force to enhance its operational capabilities and enable it to respond promptly to emergency situations.

A ceremony was held to hand over the vehicles to the SWAT Force on behalf of the Ministry of Interior. The vehicles were formally handed over to the force to support its operational activities.

During the ceremony, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected the newly provided vehicles and met with the personnel of the SWAT Force. He also decided to provide another 20 new vehicles to the force to further strengthen its operational capacity.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi said the provision of vehicles would further enhance the operational capabilities of the SWAT Force.

He said the SWAT Force would act as the first responder in any emergency situation and take immediate action to deal with such incidents.

The minister said the additional vehicles would support the force in carrying out its responsibilities and responding to emergencies.

Pakistan calls for regulating social media, AI, digital payments methods

● Ambassador Haider Shah says terrorist groups are able to use internet and dark web to recruit, organize, incite violence: New terror financing methods like crypto currencies, digital wallets evade conventional regulatory oversight: Our forces are combating terrorism emanating from Afghanistan

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Pakistan has called for regulating social media platforms, artificial intelligence and digital payments methods to prevent their misuse as terrorist groups are able to use internet and dark web to advance their operations,

"The changing nature of non-state actors and terrorism and their growing nexus with emerging technologies pose new challenges to national, regional and international peace and security, calling for holistic appraisal of these developments and strengthening of international cooperation."

Delivering national statement during the briefing by Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies of the 1267, 1373 and 1540 Committees of the UN Security Council on Friday, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Haider Shah maintained "We need regulation of social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and digital payment methods, primarily driven by commercial considerations, to prevent their misuse and proliferation of hate, online radicalization and exploitation of vulnerable youth, propaganda and disinformation."



He said "Terrorist groups are able to recruit, organize and incite terrorism by using the internet and dark web, resorting to new terror financing methods, including crypto currencies and digital wallets for anonymous payment methods that evade conventional regulatory oversight."

The envoy said as a frontline state in global efforts to counter terrorism, Pakistan has rendered invaluable sacrifices in its efforts to eradicate this menace, with over 90,000 casualties and billions of dollars in economic losses. Al-Qaeda was decimated largely due to Pakistan's efforts. In just the last three years, more than 4,700 innocent Pakistanis have lost their lives to terrorism emanating from Afghanistan."

He said "Our brave security forces and law-enforcement agencies are combating terrorism emanating from Afghanistan where entities like ISIL-K, TTP and its affiliates, BLA and the Majeed Brigade and ETIM are thriving under the patronage of their hosts and backed by our principal adversary and net destabiliser in the region."

Following is the text of Ambassador Haider Shah's statement:

"The global terrorism landscape has become diffuse and in a state of flux, transcending national boundaries and adapting itself to a world with new and emerging threats under the shadow of rapid technological advancement. The prevalence of prolonged unresolved conflicts, external interventions and root causes of terrorism, remain unaddressed, giving continued life to the threat of terrorism.

"As a frontline state in global efforts to counter terrorism, Pakistan has rendered invaluable sacrifices in its efforts to eradicate this menace, with over 90,000 casualties and billions of dollars in economic losses.

Pakistan issues visas to 3,000 Sikh pilgrims for Baba Guru Nanak's 557th birth

● Pakistan issues visas to around 3,000 Indian Sikh pilgrims for Baba Guru Nanak's 557th birth anniversary celebrations, scheduled across several religious sites.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has issued visas to around 3,000 Sikh pilgrims from India to attend celebrations marking the 557th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

Preparations for the religious celebrations have been completed, while the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued visas to the pilgrims.

The Indian pilgrims will arrive in Pakistan through the Wagah Border on November 22, where they will be received by officials. Special buses will transport them to Nankana Sahib, where they will visit various Gurdwaras on November 23.



The main ceremony marking Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birth anniversary will be held at Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib on November 24.

Religious rituals, including Bhog and Akhand Path Sahib, will be performed during the ceremony.

On November 25, the pilgrims will travel from Nankana Sahib to Hasan Abdal via Gurdwara Sacha Sauda in Farooqabad, where they will stay overnight at Gurdwara Panja Sahib. They will remain there on November 26 as well.

554th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak: 1,148 Sikh pilgrims arrive from India

On November 27, the pilgrims will visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Narowal, and stay overnight in the city. A kabaddi match will be organised at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib on November 28, after which the pilgrims will travel to Lahore and stay at Gurdwara Dera Sahib.

According to the schedule, the pilgrims will visit various Gurdwaras in Lahore on November 29 and 30 before returning to India through the Wagah Border on December 1.

Ahsan calls for integrating religious, modern education to promote research

■ Actor Shahood Alvi says his greatest achievement is keeping his family united, stressing that relationships matter more than wealth, fame and travelling the world.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the need to bridge the gap between religious and modern education through an inclusive education system to promote scientific research, innovation and national development.

Addressing a national conference titled "The Role of Islamic Madaris in a Changing World: Demands, Challenges, Opportunities and Reforms," organised by Jamiat Talaba Arabia Pakistan, he said Islam made no distinction between religious and worldly knowledge.Recalling the golden age of Muslim civilisation in Spain, the minister highlighted the contributions of Muslim scholars to science, astronomy and mathematics, saying that historical divisions and colonial-era educational policies had created a gap between religious and modern education.

He emphasised the need for an education system that combined Islamic values with modern sciences, research and innovation, while highlighting the importance of mother-tongue education in promoting creativity and critical thinking.

Acknowledging the role of Madaris in preserving Islamic scholarship, Ahsan Iqbal said education should promote knowledge, ethical conduct, social responsibility and scientific inquiry.

The Holy Quran encouraged reflection, observation and research, which were essential for intellectual and national progress, he added.

During the conference, representatives of Jamiat Talaba Arabia highlighted challenges faced by Madrasa graduates, particularly regarding access to higher education, recognition of academic qualifications and professional opportunities.

The minister assured the participants that their concerns regarding English-language examination requirements would be taken up with the relevant authorities.He also highlighted the establishment of nine Seerat Chairs to address contemporary challenges, including women's empowerment, water conservation and interfaith harmony. Stressing the importance of national unity, he cautioned against the threats posed by misinformation, extremism and terrorism. The minister called for constructive dialogue and educational reforms that could preserve the religious identity of Madaris while equipping their students with the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to Pakistan's social and economic development.

LHC restrains Sheikh Zayed Hospital from issuing appointment notifications

■ LHC has barred Sheikh Zayed Hospital from issuing final appointment notifications over alleged recruitment irregularities, including claims that unregistered candidates were declared successful.

Staff Reporter

LAHORE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) has barred Sheikh Zayed Hospital from issuing final appointment notifications for administrative positions amid allegations of irregularities in its recruitment process.

Justice Shireen Imran issued a written order while hearing a petition filed by Muhammad Akhtar and other applicants challenging alleged irregularities in recruitment for administrative posts at the hospital.

Advocate Zubair Kundi appeared before the court on behalf of the petitioners.

According to the petition, candidates were invited to take recruitment tests through the Central Testing Services (CTS) for various administrative positions at Sheikh Zayed Hospital. However, the applicants alleged that serious irregularities occurred during the testing and selection process.



The petitioners claimed that CTS declared certain candidates successful despite the fact that they had not even submitted applications for the advertised positions.

They further argued that the recruitment procedure lacked transparency and raised concerns over the fairness of the selection process.

The applicants requested the court to declare the entire recruitment process at Sheikh Zayed Hospital null and void and direct the authorities to conduct fresh appointments through a transparent procedure.

After hearing the petition, the high court issued an interim order restraining Sheikh Zayed Hospital from issuing final appointment notifications for the candidates.

Saad Rafique warns against creating smaller provinces without fundamental reforms

■ Saad Rafique urges fundamental democratic, judicial and civil service reforms before creating smaller provinces, warning against replacing political dynasties with new power structures.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Former federal minister and senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Saad Rafique has said that abolishing political dynasties should not lead to the creation of smaller political kingdoms under a single emperor, warning that such a system would neither function nor help the country progress.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, Rafique said the idea of fixing the country's dysfunctional governance system merely by creating smaller provinces was incomprehensible.

He said the creation of smaller provinces could be a positive step, but it would serve little purpose without fundamental reforms being introduced beforehand.

Rafique stressed that the government should first ensure transparent and representative democracy, end undemocratic interference in politics and the dominance of wealthy individuals, and create opportunities for the educated middle class to participate in politics.

Saad Rafique urges political parties to reform, respect public mandate

He also called for reforms in the civil service and judicial system.

The PML-N leader said smaller provinces could potentially be created amid the country's prevailing political tensions, terrorism, extreme poverty, a paralysed justice system, a controversial parliament and non-political interference, but warned that such an arrangement would remain unstable and create further complications.



Islamabad, November 20, 2026: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meets a high-level South African business delegation led by Dr. Gwen Malegwala Ramokgopa at the Ministry of Commerce to discuss enhanced bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation.

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