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Govt moves to end LPG monopolies, abolish discretionary quota system: Tarar

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said the government was taking measures to promote competition in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sector by ending monopolistic practices and abolishing the long-standing discretionary quota system.

Addressing a news conference alongside Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed the introduction of a merit-based and transparent system in the LPG sector to ensure fair competition and facilitate consumers.

Tarar termed the initiative a historic step, saying no previous government had attempted to dismantle the monopoly of a few individuals and introduce a competitive mechanism based on merit. He said the government had also taken an unprecedented initiative by transferring profits generated by oil refineries to the public for the first time in the country's history.

Highlighting the government's response to the global energy crisis, the minister said the prime minister had prioritised public interests and taken measures to prevent additional financial burdens on consumers.



Govt, JI to prepare working paper on petroleum levy, relief package

CITY REPORTER

Lahore

The government and the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) will prepare a working paper by tomorrow regarding their final round of talks aimed at abolishing petroleum levy and deciding relief measures for public, Addressing media men after holding talks with the government delegation in Islamabad on Tuesday, JI Deputy Amir Liaquat Baloch said the government will complete its working regarding the petroleum levy and relief package tonight and the JI will finalise it tomorrow. "The talks have now reached the culminating stage," he added.

Liaquat Baloch said the government has agreed to give relief the agriculture sector and the 1000cc cars.Earlier, the federal government and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) held another round of dialogue at the Foreign Office in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss gradual withdrawal of the petroleum levy and economic relief measures for the public.



Salman Akram Raja says meeting with Imran Khan was legal necessity

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salman Akram Raja has said the meeting with party founder Imran Khan at Adiala Jail was a procedural necessity rather than a favour, Speaking to the media at Factory Naka on Adiala Road, Salman Akram Raja said the meeting had become necessary because cases against the PTI founder were not progressing.

He said Barrister Salman Safdar had informed the court that he would not present arguments until he was allowed to meet Imran Khan.

Raja said the meeting was primarily legal in nature and that the party would decide its future legal course of action after consultations.



Federal Ministers Attaullah Tarar and Ali Pervez Malik are addressing a press conference in Islamabad on November 3, 2026.

17 terrorists killed in two Balochistan IBOs, soldier martyred: ISPR

- Operations conducted in Kachhi, Kharan on reported presence of terrorists

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Security forces killed 17 terrorists in two intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan's Kachhi and Kharan districts, while a soldier was martyred during an exchange of fire, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were conducted on November 1 following reports about the



presence of terrorists belonging to what it described as the Indian proxies "Fitna Al Hindustan" and "Fitna Al Khawarij".

In Kachhi district, security forces carried out an IBO in the Sanni area, where they thwarted an attempt by terrorists to establish a roadblock in the city through "proactive action", the statement said.

Ten terrorists were killed during the operation, while weapons and ammunition were also recovered, according to the ISPR.

In a separate operation in Kharan district, security forces busted a terrorist hideout, leading to an intense exchange of fire in which seven terrorists were killed.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered during the Kharan operation.

However, Sepoy Hikmat Ullah was martyred during the exchange of fire, the military's media wing said. The 25-year-old soldier belonged to Karak district.

The ISPR said sanitisation operations were underway to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

It added that security forces and law enforcement agencies would continue their counterterrorism campaign under the "Azm-e-Istehkam" initiative approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan to eliminate foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country..

Gohar calls for easing political tensions, says dialogue is needed



CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has called for reducing political tensions, saying the country, nation and democracy require efforts to ease the current strain.

Speaking to the media, Gohar said Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had his own party and political position. He said he had told Rehman in the National Assembly that some words in his speech should not have been used. Gohar added that the government's response had also been inappropriate.

He said Salman Safdar had met PTI founder Imran Khan for the first time since April 8, after a gap of 380 days, calling the meeting a positive development. Gohar said restrictions on meetings had contributed to the high level of tension.

He said denying a prisoner access to family for 15 days amounted to a human rights violation. Regular meetings, he added, could have improved the situation and prevented such tensions, as well as the possibility of an emergency or governor's rule.

Gohar denied that his name had been finalised for a meeting with Imran Khan.

Pakistan successfully tests first indigenously developed Fa'az air-to-air missile

- Missile features advanced terminal guidance system to engage targets at longer ranges

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has successfully conducted the flight test of its first indigenously developed Fa'az air-to-air missile, marking a significant advancement in the country's aerospace and defence capabilities, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

According to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the missile is equipped with a state-of-the-art terminal guidance system and is capable of engaging enemy aerial targets at longer ranges.

The Fa'az missile is expected to enhance the operational flexibility of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and further strengthen the country's overall defence posture, the statement said.

It added that the successful flight test demonstrated the technical maturity, innovation and self-reliance achieved by Pakistan's defence industry.



Senior officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces witnessed the launch alongside scientists and engineers involved in the development of the advanced weapon system.

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as well as the services chiefs, congratulated the scientists and engineers on the successful test.

The development follows the Pakistan Army's successful test launch of the extended-range version of the Fatah-2 hypersonic ballistic missile on October 13, 2026.

CM Maryam seeks Rs5bn in damages from ally Salik over Punjab corruption claims

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has sought Rs5 billion in damages from federal minister and political ally Chaudhry Salik Hussain over his allegations of corruption in Punjab, according to a legal notice served on the minister.

The six-page notice, issued on Maryam's behalf by Additional Advocate General Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Nawaz, relates to remarks made by Salik during an interview with a private television channel on November 2.

Salik had said he did not possess evidence but heard stories about corruption in Punjab every day, as per the notice. He further remarked that corruption-related files had filled "entire cupboards" in the province, the notice mentioned.

The notice disputes the assertions, maintaining that Salik had failed to identify any document, official inquiry, audit observation, investigation, complaint or other verifiable source to substantiate his remarks.

It calls upon the recipients to withdraw the disputed allegations and publish an "unconditional and unequivocal apology and clarification" with prominence equivalent to that given to the original remarks.

The notice also seeks removal or correction of the disputed portions of the interview and related material, besides demanding Rs5 billion in damages over what it describes as harm caused to the chief minister's reputation.

The recipients have been given seven days to comply with the demands, failing which the chief minister could initiate legal proceedings, including under the Punjab Defamation Act, 2024.

US strikes Iran's Qeshm Island as IRGC claims downing of two more US MQM-170 drones

- JD Vance says the US and Iran have made progress toward a negotiated settlement

WEB DESK

TEHRAN

The US carried out strikes on Iran's Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz, a US official said on Monday. The strikes, earlier reported by the Wall Street Journal, appeared to be limited and were not a resumption of major combat operations, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Another official said the strikes were defensive measures against Iranians



using surface-to-air missiles against US assets.

The Pentagon referred a request for comment to the US Central Command, which oversees American forces in the Middle East. CENTCOM did not respond to requests for comment.

Earlier on Monday, Iranian state media outlet IRNA reported that there were several explosions on Qeshm Island. The Journal reported that the attack was the latest in a series of strikes carried out by Washington in recent weeks. Fox News, citing officials, said the strikes were defensive and carried out in response to Iran firing at a US aircraft.

Iran's state news agency IRNA reported five explosions on Qeshm Island, located in the Strait of Hormuz. Separately, the semi-official Fars news agency said explosions were heard coming from the direction of the sea in Bandar Lengeh in Hormozgan province.

Last week, top officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan met Iranian officials in Tehran, the first high-level contact between Iran and the three nations since August. The US-Israeli war on Iran started in late February, and since then, fighting has spread to Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

CamScanner

ECP issues show-cause notice to MQM-P over failure to hold intra-party elections

- ECP issues MQM-P a show-cause notice for failing to hold intra-party elections by October 15, giving the party 14 days to respond or face further legal action.

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a show-cause notice to Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) for failing to hold intra-party elections within the prescribed deadline.

According to the ECP, MQM-P failed to fulfil the legal requirements for conducting intra-party elections despite being granted an extension until October 15, 2026. However, the party did not hold the elections within the extended period.

In its notice, the ECP stated that



conducting intra-party elections is mandatory under the Elections Act, 2017. Political parties are also required to submit an election certificate to the commission within seven days of completing their intra-party polls.

The commission has given MQM-P 14 days to respond to the show-cause notice, warning that further action would be taken in accordance with the law if the party fails to submit its reply.

The notice further states that failure to conduct intra-party elections could render MQM-P ineligible to obtain an election symbol.

It is worth mentioning that the ECP issued the show-cause notice to MQM-P on October 26, 2026.



Parliamentary Secretary Mrs. Farah Naz Akbar, along with 500 Girl Guides on Tuesday, paid tribute to Pakistan's martyrs at Yadgar-e-Fatah, honouring their supreme sacrifices for the motherland.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

- The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and German Development Cooperation have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Pakistan's social protection system

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and German Development Cooperation have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Pakistan's social protection system, with a particular focus on developing adaptive mechanisms to respond to climate-related risks, disasters and emerging vulnerabilities.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection, strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

A high-level German delegation, comprising representatives of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), German Embassy, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and KfW Development Bank, visited BISP's One Window Centre in Islamabad to learn about the programme's progress and the



impact of Pakistan-Germany cooperation in expanding access to social protection.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection, strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid warmly welcomed the German delegation. Dr. Asim Ijaz, Director General (NSER), and Muhammad Idrees Mian, Director General (CT), were also present on the occasion.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection, strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

The visit highlighted the growing importance of adaptive social protection, not only in addressing poverty but also in enabling vulnerable communities to prepare for and recover from economic and climate-related shocks.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection, strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

As Pakistan faces increasing exposure to floods, extreme weather events and other climate risks, strengthening the capacity of social protection institutions to respond to crises has emerged as an important development priority.

BISP highlights progress in adaptive social protection, strengthens Pakistan-Germany cooperation

Through Pakistan-Germany cooperation, BISP's 647 Dynamic Registry Centres and 32 Mobile Registration Vehicles have supported the registration and updating of information for 38.7 million people, significantly strengthening access to social protection across the country.

Four polio workers abducted in Tank, KP governor expresses concern

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has expressed concern over the abduction of four polio workers in Tank district, calling for immediate and effective measures to ensure their safe recovery.

In a statement, the governor termed the abduction an extremely regrettable and condemnable incident, saying polio workers were performing a national duty to secure children's future and promote a healthy Pakistan.

He said providing security to polio vaccination teams was the government's responsibility and stressed that targeting polio workers was against humanity and the national interest.

Kundi urged the relevant authorities to take immediate steps to ensure the safe recovery of the abducted workers.

Govt plans local production of e-passport chips



SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The Directorate General of Immigration and Passports has decided to take steps towards the local production of passport chips to improve security and reduce dependence on foreign technology,

The decision was discussed during a virtual meeting chaired by the Director General of Immigration and Passports with officials of the Pakistan Security Printing Corporation (PSPC).

The meeting reviewed the entire passport production system, including printing, supply chain management and the timely availability of passport booklets.

Officials also discussed ways to strengthen the security features of e-passports and bring their existing security standards in line with international requirements.

The meeting also focused on improving the production of polycarbonate data cards to ensure better quality and compliance with international standards.

The DG directed PSPC officials to work with the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) team to take effective steps towards developing passport chips locally and ensuring their security.

Officials stressed that the plan was in line with the government's vision of digital transformation and greater reliance on local technological capabilities.

Tanveer hails farmers for achieving record 70-maund wheat yield per acre

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

:Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, has commended Pakistani farmers for achieving an impressive wheat yield of 70 maunds per acre, describing it as a remarkable achievement for the country's agricultural sector.

He said that improved crop yields reflected the positive impact of quality seeds, balanced fertilizer application and the adoption of modern agricultural practices. Increased per-acre productivity would not only strengthen national food security but also create opportunities for wheat exports and valuable foreign exchange earnings, said a press release.

The Federal Minister was addressing the "Sarsabz Ki Jeet" event, organized by Fatima Fertilizer to recognize and celebrate the achievements of high-performing wheat farmers. He congratulated the successful farmers and appreciated their commitment, hard work and adoption of modern agricultural practices.



He also acknowledged the efforts of Punjab Chief Minister, Provincial Minister for Agriculture and the Punjab Agriculture Department in promoting agricultural development and supporting the farming community.

Hussain appreciated Fatima Fertilizer's contribution towards farmer training, dissemination of modern agricultural knowledge and promotion of balanced fertilizer use. He emphasized that the true success of private-sector investment in agriculture should be reflected in improved farm productivity and higher farmer incomes.

He noted that almost all the winning farmers recognized through the initiative had secured provincial and district-level positions through the use of Sarsabz Nitrophos and CAN fertilizers. Sharing his positive personal experience with Sarsabz fertilizers, he highlighted the importance of quality agricultural inputs and effective technical guidance in improving crop yields.

The Federal Minister said that the government's agricultural priorities include increasing per-acre productivity, reducing production costs, improving farmers' incomes and strengthening national food security.



Islamabad: 3 November, 2026 - Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meeting a delegation of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), led by Mr. Liaquat Baloch, to discuss petroleum prices in the country.

Lahore's Air Quality Index surpasses 400 as smog worsens across Punjab

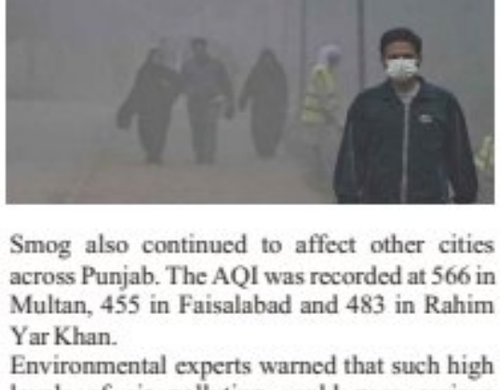
- Air pollution worsens across Punjab as Lahore's AQI exceeds 400, Paragon records 728, and Multan, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan also report hazardous pollution levels.

SPECIAL REPORTER
LAHORE

Air pollution has reached alarming levels in Lahore and several other cities across Punjab, with hazardous smog posing serious health risks to residents.

According to an international environmental monitoring website, Multan ranked as Pakistan's most polluted city on Tuesday, while Lahore remained among the world's most polluted major cities.

Lahore's overall Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeded 400, with the Paragon area recording the highest pollution level at 728. The AQI in Allama Iqbal Town reached 615, while Model Town recorded 435.



Smog also continued to affect other cities across Punjab. The AQI was recorded at 566 in Multan, 455 in Faisalabad and 483 in Rahim Yar Khan.

Environmental experts warned that such high levels of air pollution could pose serious threats to public health and advised citizens to take precautionary measures.

CamScanner

SBP bought $24b to build reserves

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad disclosed on Wednesday that the central bank purchased $24 billion from the local market over the past three years to build foreign exchange reserves and that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been informed about the monthly rollover of $2 billion debt by the United Arab Emirates.

The disclosures underscore the vulnerabilities of Pakistan's external sector, which is surviving on market purchases while keeping the rupee under pressure and on the goodwill of the UAE that has now moved to monthly rollovers from the six-year-old practice of annual rollovers. During the past three years, the central bank has purchased $24 billion from the market, the SBP governor said while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Finance. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chaired the committee meeting. The standing committee also deferred the approval of a private member's bill of the PPP that sought disclosure of money spent by companies on social welfare. The massive market purchases have also weakened the rupee, which otherwise would have been stronger due to the availability of the $24 billion in the market. The heavy reliance on market purchases also shows the failure of the IMF programme that has not helped attract sufficient non-debt creating inflows to build foreign exchange reserves. The governor further said that foreign exchange reserves would reach $18 billion by June this year and exceed $20 billion by December, admitting that the reserves would be increased through market purchases.

The central bank has $16 billion in reserves, including $12.5 billion in cash deposits by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China. The UAE until recently was rolling over its $3.5 billion debt on an annual basis, a practice that ended in January this year when $2 billion matured.

"The UAE is rolling over debt on a monthly basis instead of annually," Ahmad finally conceded after the central bank remained quiet for almost two months. He further said that the IMF has been informed that the UAE was rolling over debt on a monthly basis. Responding to a question about the IMF's reaction, the governor said the IMF's requirement was that the three countries should retain their cash deposits until the expiry of the programme in September 2027, irrespective of whether the rollover was monthly or annual.

The governor also spoke about the impact of increasing crude oil prices on the external sector. He said the current account deficit could remain up to 1% of GDP in this fiscal year but if prices hit $100 per barrel, it could put pressure on the external account. According to the government's assessment, a $100 per barrel price could increase Pakistan's monthly oil import bill by $280 million to $300 million. This would have an additional impact of $1.2 billion for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Ahmad said foreign remittances for the current financial year are estimated at $42 billion. The volume remained at approximately $3.3 billion in February. Legislative agenda



The standing committee also took up the PPP's private member bill, the Corporate Social Responsibility Bill, 2026, which was initially moved by MNA Nafisa Shah in the National Assembly. The National Assembly had already passed the bill, which required disclosure of funds spent by companies on social welfare.

Shah's bill was then introduced in the Senate by Senator Sherry Rehman. However, Senator Mandviwalla said that since Senator Rehman was not present, the committee should defer the bill's approval. Shah had proposed a 1% additional levy on companies to raise funds for social welfare. However, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Kayani had objected in the National Assembly and subsequently Shah agreed to withdraw the proposal of a mandatory 1% tax.

There appeared to be confusion within the PPP ranks. After Shah's bill, MNA Shazia Marri also introduced another bill seeking to impose a 2% levy on companies for corporate social responsibility activities. Kayani on Wednesday reminded the committee that the government had opposed these bills from the beginning as they would have resulted in imposing more taxes on companies. He said it was the PPP's decision to proceed with these bills.

However, the minister of state said that Shah had agreed to dilute the bill after reaching an understanding with the government, converting the mandatory fee into only disclosure of the money spent on social welfare. Kayani said that a separate bill has now been introduced that seeks to impose a mandatory 2% tax on companies by Marri. PPP sources said the movers of the private bill backed out after President Asif Ali Zardari expressed displeasure over introducing legislation that could have increased.

costs for companies. Following

Dollar Under Siege and the Global Financial Shift



By : Muhammad Tayyab Khan

The dominance of the U.S. dollar in the global financial system has remained an unquestioned reality for decades. From the Bretton Woods system established after World War II to the subsequent dollar hegemony in oil trade, the world's economies have revolved, in one way or another, around the American currency. The dollar has served as a central pillar in global trade, foreign exchange reserves, debt management, and the pricing of commodities. Yet now, this pillar appears increasingly vulnerable, facing pressures that are not merely economic but also deeply geopolitical, political, and strategic.

In recent years, shifts in the behavior of global powers have signaled a growing awareness that full dependence on a single currency controlled by one nation can be risky. Countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East are now seriously questioning whether allowing the global financial system to remain under the sway of a single state is prudent. This concern forms the foundation of a growing global movement to diversify away from the dollar. China, Russia, and India have emerged as the primary leaders of this shift. These nations are significant not only because of the size and influence of their economies but also because they are now openly advocating financial sovereignty. India, for instance, has sold over $50 billion in U.S. Treasury bonds over the past year. This is not merely a technical adjustment but a clear signal that emerging economies are seeking to diversify their foreign exchange reserves rather than keeping them one-dimensional. The reduction in India's holdings recorded at the largest scale in four years underscores the seriousness of this trend. China, traditionally the largest buyer of U.S. debt, has taken even bolder steps. Between October 2024 and October 2025, China sold $71 billion worth of U.S. Treasury bonds. This action coincided with China's efforts to globally strengthen and internationalize its currency, the yuan. Today, China conducts direct trade in yuan with over forty countries, demonstrating that international transactions are feasible even without relying on the dollar, provided there is sufficient political will and economic clout.

The collective strategy of the BRICS nations also reflects this trend. In just one month, these countries reduced their U.S. Treasury holdings by $29 billion a seemingly quiet yet highly coordinated move. This reduction is not the result of an immediate crisis but part of a long-term strategy to insulate themselves from potential future financial shocks. Proposals for a BRICS-based digital currency network and experiments under "Project mBridge" for cross-border central bank digital currency (CBDC) payments are extensions of the same strategic thinking.

The vulnerabilities of the U.S. dollar are no longer abstract debates but evident in concrete figures. The U.S. national debt has surpassed $38 trillion, signaling not only domestic economic pressure but also posing serious concerns for global investors. Volatility in interest rates, declining bond prices, and rising borrowing costs have raised serious questions about the stability of the American financial system. Consequently, countries holding significant portions of their reserves in U.S. bonds are naturally exploring alternative avenues.

Geopolitical developments have further deepened this mistrust. The freezing of Russia's dollar reserves under Western sanctions was a wake-up call, demonstrating that dollar assets can be weaponized for political leverage. This single incident compelled numerous nations to consider the risks of having their reserves jeopardized due to political conflicts, becoming a major impetus for moving away from the dollar.

In this context, gold has regained extraordinary significance. Long considered secondary in modern financial systems, it is once again viewed as a secure store of value. Gold's primary advantage is that it is free from governmental control and immune to sanctions or bankruptcy. In an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment, this attribute makes it particularly attractive to central banks. Many nations have substantially increased their gold reserves, a clear indicator of this evolving mindset.

Significant changes are also occurring in trade and payment systems. Trade between Russia and Iran in rubles, China's transactions in yuan, and India's establishment of special rupee accounts with twenty countries all indicate that the global economy is gradually moving toward a multi-currency system. Saudi Arabia's willingness to accept non-dollar payments further reinforces this trend, as the dollar has long dominated oil trade, a symbol of U.S. influence.

Digitalization, crypto and rethinking Pakistan's identity architecture



By: Faisal Aziz Gill

Pakistan's telecom sector has been a cornerstone of digital expansion. Mobile connectivity widened access, reduced transaction costs, and enabled the rise of branchless banking and mobile wallets. As digital services deepen and financial activity migrates to mobile platforms, however, a structural weakness has become increasingly visible: Pakistan continues to treat telecom connectivity as a substitute for digital identity. This conflation was never intentional, but it has become a growing constraint on trust, scale, and long-term digital growth. Across banking, payments, and mobile wallets, SIM cards have gradually assumed an unintended role as identity proxies, used for authentication, account recovery, and access control. SIMs were designed to connect devices to networks, not individuals to systems of value. Expecting them to perform both roles is no longer viable in a mature digital economy. The challenge Pakistan faces is not unique, but most advanced digital economies have already resolved it through deliberate structural separation.

In the European Union, financial access is anchored in state-grade digital identity frameworks under the electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services Regulation (eIDAS), reinforced through device-based authentication, while SMS-based verification has been explicitly downgraded due to its vulnerability. Singapore relies on its national digital identity system, SingPass, as the primary trust anchor for financial and government services, using telecom data only as a contextual risk signal. The United Kingdom and Australia have followed similar paths, moving away from SIM-centric security models and treating SIM-swap events as indicators of potential fraud rather than legitimate authentication. Across these systems, a consistent principle applies: SIMs enable access, while digital identity secures value. Pakistan has yet to formalize this separation, and the regulatory and economic cost of delay continues to rise.

SIM cards are transferable, replaceable, and commercially issued, with lifecycles optimized for speed and availability rather than assurance. These characteristics make them effective tools for connectivity but unsuitable foundations for identity. When possession of a SIM is treated as proof of identity, digital platforms inherit structural fragility by design. The resulting failures—account takeovers, recovery abuse, and agent-level manipulation—are often framed as enforcement gaps, when they in fact reflect a deeper design flaw: reliance on the wrong trust anchor. No degree of supervision can compensate for an identity model that was never designed to secure financial value. Pakistan's push toward digitalization and mobile wallets has been a success story. Millions now rely on mobile platforms for payments, savings, and everyday transactions. Yet this success has also exposed the limits of SIM-based trust. As transaction volumes rise and wallets begin to store real value, identity assurance becomes the cases, and growing international credibility concerns. In contrast, countries that anchored wallet ecosystems to national digital identity systems were able to scale safely, introduce new services, and attract long-term investment.binding constraint. Without a financial-grade digital identity, mobile wallets face higher fraud losses, increased customer churn, regulatory hesitation to expand use cases, and growing international credibility concerns. In contrast, countries that anchored wallet ecosystems to national digital identity systems were able to scale safely, introduce new services, and attract long-term investment.In modern digital states, identity is treated as public infrastructure rather than a feature embedded in private platforms. A mature framework separates three functions with precision: digital identity anchored in a state-grade system, connectivity delivered by telecom networks, and risk signaling, where telecom events inform safeguards without conferring authority. For Pakistan, this requires a coordinated national approach. NADRA becomes the root provider of digital identity—biometric, verifiable.

and reusable across public and private services—while telecom operators, under PTA oversight, remain providers of access and identity-related risk signals rather than guarantors of identity itself. Banks, mobile wallets, and digital platforms then bind accounts to digital identity and secure devices instead of phone numbers, with regulators and enforcement agencies overseeing compliance through clear legal frameworks without expanding surveillance. Any such transition must be phased and inclusive, recognizing differences in digital literacy, device access, and regional connectivity so that citizens are migrated gradually rather than excluded abruptly. This is substitution, not disruption: replacing a fragile trust model with a durable one while preserving institutional boundaries and commercial roles.For the telecom sector, separating identity from connectivity is not a threat but a strategic release. Over time, mobile networks have been pulled into identity and financial risk domains they were never designed to manage.



Islamabad: November 3, 2026: Minister of State for Finance and Railways, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, chairing a consultative meeting of the Prime Minister's Committee to Review the Export Facilitation Scheme, discussing measures to streamline the scheme, facilitate exporters and promote SME-led export growth.

CamScanner

Pakistan surpasses vietnam in rice exports during September 2026



Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan recorded a significant increase in rice exports in September 2026, overtaking Vietnam despite tensions in the Gulf region and disruptions to international shipping routes.

According to available data, Pakistan exported 420,000 tonnes of rice to global markets during September, compared with Vietnam's exports of 337,000 tonnes. Vietnam is the world's third-largest rice exporter.The report stated that demand for Pakistani rice, particularly basmati, remained strong in international markets despite tensions between the United States and Iran and disruptions to maritime transportation in the Gulf region. This helped boost Pakistan's rice exports.

Figures showed that Pakistan's total rice export volume increased by 51 percent during the first quarter of fiscal year 2026-27, covering July to September, compared with the corresponding period last year.

Foreign exchange earnings from rice exports also rose by 37 percent during the same period, reflecting growing international demand for Pakistani rice.



Gold price jumps by Rs2,400 per tola in Pakistan

■ Gold price in Pakistan rises by Rs2,400 per tola to Rs412,136, as international rates climb $24 to $3,896 per ounce, says the association

Staff Reporter

KARACHI

The price of gold in Pakistan has risen by Rs2,400 per tola today.

According to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association, after the Rs2,400 increase, the price of gold in the country has reached Rs412,136 per tola.

The price of 10 grams of gold has gone up by Rs2,058 to Rs353,340.

The association said that in the international market, the price of gold per ounce has risen by $24 to $3,896.

It may be recalled that on Saturday, the price of gold per tola in Pakistan had fallen by Rs10,800.

Oil price falls below $110 per barrel on Iran diplomacy

■ CBS News reported that Mr Trump said he believed the US would soon end the war with Iran, "one way or the other".

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI

Crude oil prices slipped more than three percent on Monday after Iranian and Qatari officials held a third straight day of talks aimed at pushing for a deal to end the US-Israeli war against Tehran. Brent crude futures fell $3.68, or 3.2%, to $109.75 a barrel by 0407 GMT while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at $100.69 a barrel, down $3.43, or 3.3%.

The development came amid amid hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough between the US and Iran, easing concerns about further supply disruption. US President Donald Trump reportedly said he wants to give diplomacy with Iran more time before considering renewed military strikes after Tuesday's US midterm elections.

Mr Trump reportedly told Israeli Prime



Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a phone call that he wanted to give diplomacy with Tehran more time before considering further strikes, Axios reported, quoting sources.

CBS News reported that Mr Trump said he believed the US would soon end the war with Iran, "one way or the other".

The US President was speaking to Right Side Broadcasting Network before a campaign rally in Iowa on Sunday, according to the report.

"We've had such a victory, and we'll put



Islamabad: November 3, 2026: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, in a group photo alongside the Governor State Bank of Pakistan, and Dr. Ishrat Husain at SDPI's Lifetime Achievement Award Plenary at the 29th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) 2026.

Saudi Aramco profits surge 34.6% in third quarter

■ Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis have targeted Saudi tankers, pipelines, storage facilities and refineries regularly since hostilities resumed in July, intensifying their strikes in recent weeks.

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

Saudi oil giant Aramco on Tuesday announced a 34.6 percent surge in third-quarter net profit, as the Middle East war keeps crude prices soaring while the kingdom's energy infrastructure comes under regular attack.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis have targeted Saudi tankers, pipelines, storage facilities and refineries regularly since hostilities resumed in July, intensifying their strikes in recent weeks.

The kingdom has also had to contend with the Houthis and Iran hampering traffic in the straits of Bab al-Mandeb and



Hormuz, complicating exports.

Yet Aramco -- the cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's economy and one of the world's most valuable companies -- saw its profits soar during the third quarter thanks in large part to stubbornly high oil prices.

The firm said net profit hit 135.9 billion riyals ($36.2 billion) in the third quarter, compared with around 101 billion riyals in the same period a year earlier.

The results come as energy majors around the world have seen earnings surge because of disruptions to oil and gas supplies in the Middle East, pushing up refining margins and prices.

But Aramco's boss warned that the conflict continued to weigh heavily on energy security.

"Geopolitical uncertainty and attacks on key energy facilities continued to amplify the global energy supply crisis in the third quarter of 2026, with serious implications for global energy security," president and CEO Amin H. Nasser said in a statement.

Stripping out exceptional items, adjusted net income came in at 116.9 billion riyals.



FBR places non-resident Pakistanis as non-filers due to administrative lapses

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Due to an administrative lapse, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) placed all non-resident Pakistanis in the category of non-filers as their IRIS passwords were not restored, Sources said that the Federal Board of Revenue even failed to issue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the non-resident Pakistanis in this regard.Despite many reminders from the Lahore Tax Bar Association (LTBA), the Federal Board of Revenue failed to take any measures to address the issue.

LTBA urged the FBR to restore the status of non-resident Pakistanis to Active Taxpayers status and give them another chance to submit their tax returns without any penalty.It is necessary to mention here that the deadline for filing income tax returns for the current tax year expired on Oct 31, with late filers facing penalties.

According to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sources, taxpayers who had submitted applications seeking an extension before the original deadline may be exempt from the late-filing penalties.

Pakistan's Crypto Market Needs Formal Industry Body to Protect Investors

■ AWAJ President Hinza Asif calls for an organised platform to represent digital asset investors, strengthen cybersecurity safeguards and improve engagement with global cryptocurrency exchanges.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's expanding cryptocurrency market needs a formal industry body to represent investors and strengthen engagement with global exchanges,

Asia Web3 Alliance Japan (AWAJ) President Hinza Asif made the remarks after a multibillion-dollar cybersecurity breach involving Binance, highlighting concerns over how Pakistani investors would be represented if a major international platform faced a security or financial crisis.

In a statement she said the country's digital asset sector remains constrained by a lack of reliable investor data and the absence of an organized platform through which industry participants can coordinate or raise concerns during major incidents.

Pakistan ranked third in Chainalysis' 2025 Global Crypto Adoption Index, underscoring the scale of its cryptocurrency activity. Estimates put the number of crypto-linked accounts at around 40 million, with digital asset exposure ranging between $10 billion and $20 billion. However, these figures have not been officially verified as representing individual investors.

Asif said cybersecurity breaches at



major exchanges could lead to financial losses, unauthorised transactions and withdrawal disruptions, potentially undermining investor confidence.

She added that the potential impact of the Binance incident on Pakistani investors remained unclear and required independent verification.

"The question is who will represent and protect Pakistani investors if an international exchange faces a major cybersecurity or financial crisis," she said, noting that Pakistan lacks an established mechanism to coordinate investor complaints and engage with international exchanges in such circumstances.

Welcoming the government's regulatory initiatives through the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), Asif said the regulator and an independent industry association would have complementary roles.

While PVARA would oversee regulatory

Dollar under pressure as oil prices slump, Australia rate decision awaited

■ The dollar weakened amid US-Iran peace hopes and falling oil prices, while investors awaited Australia's rate decision and key central bank policy announcements.

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The dollar wavered alongside oil prices on Tuesday on hopes for a diplomatic breakthrough between the US and Iran, while the Aussie ?was steady ahead of the Reserve Bank of Australia's rate decision.

Brent crude futures plunged more than 7% on Monday in their sharpest single-day drop in months, after Tehran said its contacts with the US aimed at ending their eight-month war were continuing.

Falling energy prices helped ease inflation concerns and dragged longer-dated US Treasury yields lower.

The ?yield on the benchmark US 10-year Treasury note was steady at 4.9145%, while ?that on the 30-year bond was also flat at 5.2868%. Both had dipped to their lowest ?levels in nearly two months in the previous session.

The dollar index , which measures the currency against a basket ?of currencies including the yen and the euro, last traded a shade weaker at 101.76 after dropping to a one-month low on Monday.

Meanwhile, an AI-driven stock market slump showed little sign of slowing down, hurting risk sentiment and lending some ?support to the dollar. Tensions



around US midterm elections also loom large, helping to prop up the dollar as a safe-haven play.

"Oil relief is growing, but conviction elsewhere remains thin," Sim Moh Siong, FX strategist at OCBC, said ?in a note.

"Cheaper energy is reshaping FX dynamics, while AI concerns and US election risks reinforce our view that the USD remains supported."

The euro was a touch higher at $1.1185 on the back of dollar weakness.

The Japanese yen was flat at 157.915 per dollar during a local holiday.

Multiple central banks are scheduled to issue policy ?statements this week, including those in Britain, Australia, Norway and Sweden.

The Reserve Bank of Australia is expected to raise the official cash rate (AUCBIR=ECI) by 25 basis points ?to 4.85% on Tuesday, which would be the highest level since December ? 2008. The move would bring total tightening this year across five increases to 125 basis points.

The Australian dollar was little changed at $0.7002 . The kiwi was flat at $0.5617.

Sterling strengthened 0.05% to $1.3414 after PMI data showed British manufacturers started the final quarter of 2026 with the strongest output growth in more than two years.

Economists polled by Reuters expect the Bank of England to raise its Bank Rate to 4.0% from 3.75%, the first hike since August 2023, ?when inflation was still more than triple its 2% target.

CamScanner

Ready to reopen Hormuz if US agrees to conditions, says Iran

■ Foreign Ministry spokesman says exchanges with US ongoing via mediators



Web DESK

TEHRAN

Iran on Monday said it was ready to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within two days if the US agrees to its conditions, having previously proposed a one-week timeline.

"The possibility of implementing this plan in two days is another indication of Iran's good-faith approach," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei."We have stated that, if Iran's demands are met, it would be possible to restore security to the Strait of Hormuz and resume the negotiating process within a short period."

He said an exchange of messages was ongoing with the United States via mediators and that "everything depends" on the US side accepting the Iranian demands. "Only then can we discuss the subsequent stages."

Since the Middle East war broke out in late February, Iran has claimed control over Hormuz, a vital energy conduit for shipping.



Ambassador Khan appreciated the contributions of the Coordinator of the Prime Minister's Taskforce on Gandhara – Cradle of Buddhism Strategy Imran Shaukat, and the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan, who also attended the meeting.

Tensions rise as midterm campaign ends with control of Congress at stake

■ US midterm elections approach amid high political tensions, with Trump urging Republican support, while key Senate races and legal disputes over ballot counting draw attention.

Web Desk

DETROIT/WASHINGTON

Congressional candidates and President Donald Trump made their final arguments to US voters , the eve of the midterm elections, with tensions running high in Michigan, where Abdul El-Sayed aims to become the first Muslim elected to the Senate.

California was also in the spotlight after the Supreme Court swiftly quashed an attempt by Trump's Justice Department to intervene and block vote counting from alleged non-US citizens.

With control ?of the US Congress at stake for his final two years in office, Trump devoted his last major speech before voting day to touting renovations of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, one of the Washington public works projects he has made a priority since returning to the White



House.

He later spoke by telephone on Fox News' "Hannity" show, urging Republicans to pretend he is on the ballot in an effort to increase voter participation.

"We have to vote. If our people vote, we win in a landslide," Trump said.

All 435 seats in the US House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 US ?Senate seats will be contested on Tuesday. Democrats are widely favored to retake the House but face a greater challenge in the Senate.

Loss of control in either chamber would constrain Trump and empower Democrats to investigate his administration, while ?a Senate majority would also allow them to block his appointees to federal courts including the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected the Trump administration's attempt to temporarily block California from counting mail-in ballots from more than 20,000 registered voters who federal officials alleged were likely non-US citizens.

It was quick action from the high court. California had argued the federal lawsuit would disenfranchise 20,000 voters based on vague accusations and that the ?process for identifying noncitizens was error-prone.

A US judge on Monday also ordered the Trump administration to stop demanding that California segregate ballots cast by people on lists of suspected noncitizens.

Trump, 80, has campaigned hard for Republicans, holding events in 20 states over the past 32 ?days, the White House said. His final in-person event was a speech at the belated reopening of the Washington reflecting pool, where the former real-estate developer spent more than 20 minutes discussing pipes, joints, caulking, granite resurfacing, algae and leaks.

Japan launches new national agency to deal with disasters

■ More than 350 workers at the National Disaster Management Agency will oversee preparedness, emergency response and reconstruction efforts.

Web Desk

TOKYO



Japan on Monday launched a new national agency focused on disaster management with the goal of making the country better prepared if there's a megaquake along the Pacific coast or in Tokyo, or an eruption of Mount Fuji.

More than 350 workers at the National Disaster Management Agency will oversee preparedness, emergency response and reconstruction efforts.

The agency is not being created in anticipation of any specific calamity, but rather is meant to fill a gap amid worries about whether the nation is prepared for a crisis along the lines of the 2011 quake and tsunami in northern Japan, which killed nearly 20,000 people, and the subsequent Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Japan, which is part of the "Pacific ring of fire," is one of the most disaster-prone places on earth, but it has never had an agency dedicated to dealing with disasters.

"As the command center of disaster response, we will do everything to strengthen our preparedness to protect people's lives and properties ... and aim to become the world's most prepared," Reconstruction Minister Goshi Hosono said.

Foreign policy should be part of the national grand strategy, says Ambassador Javid Hussain

NEWS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Ambassador Javid Hussain has said that ideally the foreign policy should be part of the national grand strategy which brings into a coherent whole the country's political, economic, security and diplomatic policies.

This he said while delivering a lecture titled "National Strategy, International Relations and Credible Partnerships" at the Conference on "Leadership & Governance Development Programme" at Nathia Gali, organized by Al-Kawthar University.

Following is the text of his



lecture:

Dear Professor Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, Al-Kawthar University

Distinguished Speakers and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to have this opportunity provided by the organisers of this Conference, particularly Dr Athar Mahboob, to share my views on the challenging global and regional environment confronting Pakistan and how Pakistan can navigate successfully through the choppy waters ahead for safeguarding and promoting its national interests. I will try to be as brief as possible in dealing with this vast subject so as to remain within the limits of the time allocated to me and to leave some time for question-answer session to make the discussion on the subject interactive and hopefully interesting.

Foreign policy deals with the conduct of a country's external relations for safeguarding and promoting its national interests relating to national security, an economic well-being and progress, and cultural identity. Policy makers must have an accurate assessment of the global and regional environment and its likely evolution in the future to be able to formulate a successful and effective foreign policy. It should also be obvious that the foreign policy must be conducted in close coordination with a country's security, economic and political policies. A foreign policy which is out of sync with a country's political, security and economic realities and policies is a recipe for disaster because in that undesirable situation, different institutions of the state are likely to work at cross purposes with disastrous results instead of working with mutual cohesion for maximum effect.

3 killed, at least 29 injured in shootings near US college communities

Web Desk

WASHINGTON



Three people were killed and at least 29 others injured in a series of shootings near US college communities across five states over the weekend,

In Bloomington, Indiana, seven people were hospitalised after gunfire erupted near Indiana University's homecoming celebrations at around 1.30 am (01030PKT).

Police detained a man carrying a firearm and recovered a gun and shell casings. No fatalities were reported, and investigators have yet to determine whether the man fired any shots.

In Newark, Delaware, at least six people were hospitalised following a shooting Saturday night on Main Street near the University of Delaware.

Local police launched an investigation, while university President Laura Carlson urged the community to support the victims and witnesses.

US midterms put Trump presidency at risk as democrats seek control of congress



Web Desk

WASHINGTON

Millions of Americans are heading to the polls on Tuesday in midterm elections that could significantly alter President Donald Trump's political position in Washington, as Democrats seek to take control of the House of Representatives and make gains in the Senate.

A Republican loss in the House would allow Democrats to obstruct Trump's legislative plans and launch extensive investigations into his administration. Losing the Senate could also complicate his efforts to appoint Supreme Court justices and other senior officials.

The vote is being viewed as a nationwide assessment of Trump's second presidency, with growing public frustration over the cost of living and the war against Iran creating challenges for Republicans.

French school protests resume on smaller scale as students return from break

■ Police present, though not in full anti-riot gear as youth try to blockade high schools in Paris, Marseille, Rennes

Web Desk

France

The Middle East and Gulf region should not become a battleground for great-power rivalry, and China is willing to work with Arab nations to achieve lasting peace, Chinese President Xi Jinping told Oman's sultan on Monday.

China has traditionally played a low-key diplomatic role in the Middle East, but has stepped up efforts to try to help end tensions amid the US-Israeli war on Iran, which has snarled the Strait of Hormuz and driven up global energy and shipping costs.

Xi told Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said that the world is undergoing "profound changes unseen in a century."

"The Middle East Gulf region should not become an arena for great-power rivalry and geopolitical conflict. Peace and stability in the region require joint nurturing and protection by all



parties," Xi said, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

China has consistently been committed to stopping the war, and hopes to contribute "wisdom and solutions to resolving the region's security dilemmas," he added.

China is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with Arab countries, including the Gulf Cooperation Council states, to work together toward restoring peace and achieving lasting stability and security, Xi said.

Last week, China's Foreign Ministry said the country will soon be dispatching its special envoys to the Middle East to promote engagement and de-escalation.

First China trip

Haitham arrived in Beijing on Sunday for a two-day visit, the first by an Omani head of state since the countries established ties in 1978.

Haitham told Xi his government had deep appreciation for China's positions on key issues concerning the region, Omani state media reported.

"We believe that development and stability are inextricably linked," he said."The prosperity of nations requires an environment defined by security, peace, respect for state sovereignty, and adherence to international law — an environment where disputes are resolved through peaceful means."

CamScanner

Yashma Gill shares how her father reacted to her decision to pursue acting

■ The romantic ballad, titled Na Tumse Zyaada, is a soft, melodic track centered on devotion and emotional surrender in love.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani actress Yashma Gill recently opened up about the initial resistance she faced from her father when she chose to pursue acting, revealing that he did not speak to her for an entire year.

In a recent talk show appearance, Yashma shared that while her mother supported her dreams, her father struggled to accept her entry into the entertainment industry due to traditional concerns. The tension lasted months, with silence creating a painful distance between them. She recalled a small but meaningful moment during Ramadan when she greeted him with "Salam," gently reminding him that responding is obligatory in Islam. His reply, "Walaikum Assalam," became the first crack in the emotional wall between them. The real turning point, however, came during her first Umrah trip. Yashma invited her father to accompany her, and what he witnessed there shifted his perspective.



From fans recognizing her at the hotel to people sending Sehri and Iftari meals, she received overwhelming respect.

A particularly emotional moment came when a fan gifted her a piece of the Ghilaf-e-Kaaba.

Seeing this admiration in a sacred place deeply moved her father, who later told her that if she was receiving such respect in the House of Allah, she must be on the right path.

Yashma's story echoes a sentiment many celebrities have expressed that family skepticism often softens only after visible success.

Stars like Mahira Khan and Sajal Aly have similarly spoken about initial family concerns regarding showbiz careers. For many parents, acceptance grows once stability, recognition and dignity in the profession become evident.



Yashma Gill began her career with supporting roles before earning acclaim in dramas such as Qurban, Azmaish and Phaans.

Known for her expressive

Sydney Sweeney reveals Ronaldo as her favourite footballer

■ Cristiano Ronaldo has millions of fans around the world, and the way he has inspired people through his dedication, discipline and relentless drive is something truly special.



WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Sydney Sweeney has reveled that she is a Cristiano Ronaldo fan.

Cristiano Ronaldo has millions of fans around the world, and the way he has inspired people through his dedication, discipline and relentless drive is something truly special.

Sweeney, one of the most talked about stars in Hollywood today, has quietly shown that football is one of her interests. The American actress and producer rose to global fame through her Emmy nominated performances as Cassie Howard in Euphoria and Olivia Mossbacher in The White Lotus.

Her versatility and screen presence have made her a major name in the entertainment industry, but there are still a few lesser known details about her life. One of them is her love for football.

The actress has shown support for Inter Milan on several occasions. When it comes to Major League Soccer in the United States, however, she has not publicly backed any specific club and has rarely been seen attending MLS matches. In American football she is much clearer about her loyalties, proudly supporting the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFL.

Her football interests also extend to Europe. During a recent visit to Portugal, Sweeney went to Lisbon's Jose Alvalade Stadium to watch Sporting CP play against Estoril. Sporting won the match 3-1 and the visit quickly caught attention online.



Nora Fatehi hits back at critics over peace message

■ The LHC has an approved strength of 60 judges, however, this number has never been fully achieved in the past.

Staff Reporter

MUMBAI

Nora Fatehi has issued a firm response to critics who targeted her online after she shared a message calling for global peace amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

The 34-year-old Canadian-born actress and dancer had recently taken to Instagram to condemn the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran, expressing solidarity with victims of violence and urging unity across nations. However, her remarks drew backlash from some social media users, who accused her of taking sides and criticised her perceived support for Muslims.

In a new video posted on Instagram, Fatehi addressed the controversy directly, saying many people had "lost the ability to listen and understand". She stressed that critical thinking was a skill learned in school and urged viewers to reflect before reacting with anger.

"My message of peace and unity is for every single human being, regardless of their country or religion," she said in the video. "If a call for peace triggers you, then perhaps you need to look within yourself."

The actress added that speaking out against chaos and violence should not make anyone an enemy. "Every country and every individual is part of this world.

Yumna Zaidi's regal red look leaves fans in awe

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani actress Yumna Zaidi shared a stunning new shoot on her social media, captivating fans with her latest elegant ensemble. Sharing a video on Instagram, she captioned the post: "@urgepret serving timeless red elegance just in time for Eid."

The outfit is a Ready-to-Wear (RTW) kurta set, a popular choice in contemporary Pakistani ethnic wear.

The top features a short-length maroon shirt with a round neckline and intricate white embroidery, extending down the front and along the full, wide sleeves. The matching maroon trousers, styled as wide-leg culottes or farshi shalwar, are adorned with elaborate embroidered motifs on the lower panels, completing the coordinated festive look.



Yumna accessorized her ensemble with a long jasmine gajra draped over one shoulder, ri traditional Kashmiri bangles with dangling gold-toned ghungroos, subtle gold-toned jhumkas and a delicate gold ring, combining both traditional and modern festive styling.

Fans were quick to respond, ant flooding the comments with love, admiration, and emojis, praising her radiant smile and confident presence.

These glimpses also tie into Yumna's recent and ongoing projects. She was recently lauded for her role as Nashwa in the drama Qarz-e-Jaan and is currently starring in the Ramzan 2026 special Dekh Zara Pyaar Se. She portrays Romaila, a self-reliant young woman shaped by her parents' separation, who navigates her emotional past while encountering Zoraiz, played by Hamza Sohail, a disciplined professional dealing with early loss.

BTS set for comeback with free Seoul concert

■ BTS unveil 14-song Arirang album, announce free Gwanghwamun Square comeback concert and global Netflix livestream ahead of world tour.

Web Desk

KARACHI

Global superstars BTS have unveiled major details about their highly anticipated comeback, confirming a 14-song album titled Arirang and a landmark concert in Seoul. The announcement marks their first full-group release in over three years following mandatory military service.

For millions of ARMY worldwide, including devoted South Asian fans, the news signals a powerful new chapter.

The group revealed the Arirang tracklist on March 3, 2026, through official social media accounts, including @bts.bighitofficial.

Striking graphics showcased song titles and member credits, instantly igniting conversation across global platforms.



Arirang will be released on March 20, 2026, at 1 p.m. KST in multiple physical versions, including vinyl editions themed around each member.

The album is produced with extensive member involvement, reinforcing BTS's creative autonomy. RM is credited across all 14 tracks, while SUGA and j-hope also contributed significantly to songwriting and production.

International producers including Pdogg, Diplo, Mike Will Made-It and Ryan Tedder are also attached to the project.

The title draws inspiration from Korea's iconic folk song, underscoring the group's deep cultural roots.

Arirang is described as BTS's sixth Korean-language studio ped album and their fifth full studio release overall. Developed from July 2025 as a reunion project, it celebrates their heritage while embracing global pop influences.

The 14-track record runs approximately 41 minutes, with SWIM confirmed as the lead single.An interlude titled No. 29 adds a reflective moment within the album's structure.

Notably, there are no external collaborations, making it a pure OT7 effort that highlights the synergy of all seven members.

Pre-orders opened on January 16, 2026, with teaser content steadily building anticipation among fans worldwide.

Alongside the album, BTS announced a special free comeback concert titled BTS THE COMEBACK LIVE | ARIRANG. The show will take place on March 21, 2026, at 8 p.m.



Sahiba picks Mahira Khan to portray her in potential biopic

Australia's Glenn Maxwell calls time on international career

- Maxwell, who scored 3,990 runs in ODIs and 2,897 in T20s, last played for Australia against Oman at T20 World Cup



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Explosive batsman Glenn Maxwell announced his international retirement Tuesday after being overlooked for Australia's upcoming Twenty20 series against England.

The mercurial 38-year-old, who had not played a Test since 2017, called time on his one-day career last year but kept the door open for T20s.

He has not been picked since the World Cup in Sri Lanka in February, with selectors bypassing him for a series against Bangladesh in June.

Maxwell was again overlooked for the squad named Monday to play England in November, with a host of younger players instead preferred.

"A little bit sad and a little bit inevitable too, but I'm announcing my retirement from international cricket," Maxwell said on the Final Word podcast.

"We probably had numerous discussions before and after the T20 World Cup," he added of talks with selectors. "And it was pretty open-ended.

"There wasn't any pressure from (Australia team management), and we decided to sort of leave the door open.

"There was a couple of series that were coming up (in which) they were going to look to the future, and we saw that in Bangladesh with guys getting their opportunity and performing really well.

"There was a small hope or discussion that I might have been able to potentially get a send-off game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (against England).

"But I can completely understand the direction they're going with this squad."

Maxwell played 130 T20 internationals, blasting 2,897 runs with a strike rate of 154.42, leaving as Australia's third-highest run-scorer after David Warner and Aaron Finch.

While he only played seven Tests, he featured in 149 ODIs, crunching 3,990 runs.

Maxwell also called time on his first-class career with Victoria, but will continue with the Melbourne Renegades in the Big Bash League.

"I'm grateful for the time I was able to play for my country," he said.

"If you had offered me that career when I first walked into the Victoria change rooms in 2009-ish, I would have bitten your hand off."

Misbah raises safety concerns as Pakistani players leave Nepal Premier League



WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

The controversy surrounding the Nepal Premier League has intensified, with seven of the eight Pakistani cricketers taking part in the tournament leaving Nepal and returning home,

Pakistani cricketer Hussain Talat is the only player who remains in Nepal.

Former Pakistan captain and coach Misbah-ul-Haq has strongly criticised the poor condition of the ground's outfield and faulty floodlight towers, saying players' safety cannot be compromised under any circumstances.

The dispute also grew after the decision to hold matches over five overs, prompting Sudeurpaschim Royals to protest.

The match was eventually played after negotiations, with Biratnagar Kings defeating their opponents by 35 runs.



Kalat Khair Defeat Bolan Panthers by 5 Wickets in Grand Balochistan T20 Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

QUETTA

Grand Balochistan T20 Cricket League Quetta A great series of league matches continues ??Grand Balochistan T20 Cricket League Quetta All Balochistan, which is being held in collaboration with FC Balochistan (North), is ongoing. The twentieth league match of which was played on November 3, 2026 at Chagai Stadium, Quetta Cantt between Kalat Khair and Bolan Panthers.After a great competition, the Kalat Khair team won by 5 wickets. More eyes on the Champion Trophy.

Pakistan Shaheens squad unveiled for 50-over ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026

- Abdul Samad will lead defending champions Pakistan Shaheens in the tournament where they are placed in Group B alongside India A, Nepal and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday announced the 15-member Pakistan Shaheens squad for the upcoming 50-over edition of the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2026 set to be played in Qatar from 19 to 29 November,

Abdul Samad will lead defending champions Pakistan Shaheens in the tournament where they are placed in Group B alongside India A, Nepal and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Shaheens will begin their campaign against UAE on 20 November and will face India A on 22 and Nepal on 24 November.

The semi-finals of the tournament will be played on 26 and 27 November, while the final will take place on Sunday, 29 November. All of Shaheens' matches are day-night and will be played at the Eden Park International Stadium except the first one which is a day fixture and is scheduled to be played at the University of Doha Ground.

Apart from skipper Samad, Hasan Nawaz, Maaz Sadaqat, Haider Ali, Shahzaib Khan, Farhan Yousuf, Shamyl Hussain form a strong batting core for the Shaheens with Rohail Nazir listed as the designated wicket-keeper.

Left-arm spin bowling all-rounder Danish Aziz, leg-spinner Saad Masood and Sufyan Moqim are the trio of spinners in the squad. The pace contingent will be led by Mohammad Hasnain and it comprises of Ahmed Daniyal -



Shaheens' super-over hero from the previous edition of the tournament – left-arm pacer Akif Javed and Muhammad Imran Randhawa.

Shaheens won the last 50-over edition of the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars in 2023 in Sri Lanka when they beat India A by 128 runs. Meanwhile, in the previous edition, which was played in T20 format, the Shaheens clinched title by edging Bangladesh A in a thrilling final decided by super-over.

Pakistan were runners-up in the opening two editions of this tournament in 2013 and 2017, while they emerged victorious in 2019. In the 2026 edition, the Group A consists of Afghanistan A, Bangladesh A, Hong Kong China and Sri Lanka A.

Pakistan Shaheens 15-member squad

Abdul Samad (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Akif Javed, Danish Aziz, Farhan Yousuf, Haider Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Imran Randhawa, Rohail Nazir (wk), Saad Masood, Shahzaib Khan, Shamyl Hussain, Sufyan Moqim

Turku says won't host junior ice hockey world championship if Russia plays



SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

The Finnish city of Turku said it would withdraw from hosting the ice hockey junior world championships in 2027-2028 if neighbouring Russia participates following a CAS ruling last week.

Russia has been banned from International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) competitions since President Vladimir Putin launched the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ruled on October 30 that Russia can return to the world championships following an appeal from the Russian Ice Hockey Federation.

The first tournament for which Russia will be eligible for is the junior world championships in Canada that run from December 26 this year to January 5, 2027.

The following tournament, in 2027-2028, is to be held in Turku.

"Turku will give up hosting the IIHF World Junior Ice Hockey Championship at the turn of the year 2027–2028 if the Russian national team participates in the tournament," the city of Turku said in a statement.

"As long as Russia is waging a war of aggression in Ukraine, we cannot accept the Russian national team playing in Turku," mayor Piia Elo said in the statement.

FIFA to grant access to documents from scrapped World Cup sell-off plan

- FIFA will let council members review documents on its scrapped $20 billion World Cup plan as UEFA seeks answers over Infantino's presidency and demands reforms.

SPORTS DESK

PARIS

Soccer's world governing body will grant its council members access to key documents concerning the defunct FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) proposal, a person with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters

FIFA scrapped the $20 billion ?World Cup sell-off plan earlier this summer only days after making it public, amid a backlash that imperiled President Gianni Infantino's leadership.

FIFA Secretary General Mattias Grafstrom sent a letter to FIFA council ?members on Monday inviting them to register their interest in reviewing the documents under specific conditions at the group's Zurich headquarters, the person said.

The move came on the day of a deadline European soccer's governing body UEFA had ?set for FIFA to answer questions about Infantino's presidency, as European federations press for ?reforms and oppose his



reelection.

Multiple federations demanded sweeping reforms of FIFA in the aftermath of the failed proposal, with Swiss-Italian Infantino having previously proposed an independent review of the organisation's decision-making processes.

Last month, UEFA ?sent a letter to FIFA seeking answers about Infantino's presidency, including questions over ?FFE and the FIFA Peace Prize, setting a November 2 deadline for a response.

"FIFA viewed UEFA's two-week deadline to respond to more than 100 questions as unfeasible, given their recent focus on organising a new youth World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan," the person said.

"The organisation is also preparing for an extraordinary congress on 23 November to determine the hosts for ?the 2031 and 2035 FIFA Women's World Cups. The ongoing legal action in the United States has also created legal boundaries.

"FIFA has maintained it would respond to Council members in ?due course, and the invitation to view key documents is ?only to Council members."

Infantino's reelection prospects strengthened significantly a little over a week ago when the head of Asian football endorsed him for a fourth term. The move left Europe increasingly isolated in its opposition to the FIFA chief.

CamScanner



Islamabad: November 3, 2026: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, meets Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy, to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in agriculture, livestock, trade and investment.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to boost cooperation in media, culture and tourism

● Tarar said relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were reaching new heights, adding that there were vast opportunities for cooperation in media and culture

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to further strengthen cooperation in information, broadcasting, media and cultural sectors, with a focus on promoting tourism and people-to-people contacts.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki's successor, Raje bin Tami Al-Buqami, in Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Tarar welcomed the Saudi envoy and congratulated him on his appointment to Pakistan.

The information minister said relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were reaching new heights, adding that there were vast opportunities for cooperation in media, culture, drama, music, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.



He said the relationship between the two countries was rooted in generations of historical, religious and public ties and extended beyond diplomatic and political cooperation.

Tarar also highlighted the importance of the defence cooperation agreement between the two countries, describing it as a reflection of their strong strategic partnership.

Appreciating Saudi Arabia's transformation under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, he cited tourism development in AlUla and the modern presentation of Diriyah's historical and cultural heritage as examples of the kingdom's vision.

The minister stressed the need to introduce Pakistani dramas to Saudi audiences, saying they reflected family values, eastern traditions and Islamic culture.

He also proposed exchanges of delegations comprising writers, poets, artists, musicians, media representatives and digital content creators to strengthen cultural ties.

Referring to Pakistani national Farman Ali Khan, who sacrificed his life while rescuing people during the 2009 floods in Jeddah, Tarar said he had set a remarkable example of love and brotherhood between the two nations.

Imaan Mazari, Hadi Ali Chattha granted bail in road blockade case

■ An Islamabad ATC has granted bail to Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha against Rs5,000 surety bonds each in a case involving road blockades and a scuffle with police.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, have secured bail in a separate case linked to an alleged confrontation with police in Islamabad.

The relief was granted by Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Abul Hasanat Zulqarnain, who accepted their bail applications against surety bonds of Rs5,000 each.

Police presented the case record during Tuesday's proceedings. The case was registered at Kohsar Police Station, accusing the couple of obstructing officials in the performance of their duties.

The latest development comes amid several ongoing legal proceedings against the couple. Just a week earlier, they had received prison sentences in a separate case concerning an alleged security breach during the visit of an international cricket team to Pakistan in October 2024.



Registered at Aabpara Police Station, that case involved allegations that the lawyers had interfered in state affairs and created a security risk during the team's visit. They were sentenced under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997, with fines of Rs100,000 also imposed.

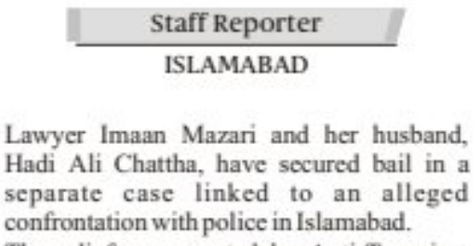
The court's order specified a two-year prison term and a Rs50,000 fine under Section 353, while Section 186 provided for another year in prison and an additional Rs50,000 fine. The court also extended the benefit of Section 382 to the defendants.

Mazari and Chattha were formally indicted in the case on October 7, which had been registered on October 25, 2024.

Previous arrests and convictions

Bilawal Bhutto to launch Sindh Youth Card this month

▪ Sindh plans to issue 100,000 youth cards in the first phase, offering access to scholarships, internships, transport discounts and other services.



NEW DESK

KARACHI

The Sindh government has completed preparations for the launch of the Sindh Youth Card, which Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is scheduled to inaugurate this month.

A meeting chaired by Sindh Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar reviewed arrangements for the launch and the programme. Participants included Sindh Chief Minister's Special Assistant for IT Ali Rashid, Sports Secretary Munawar Ali Mahesar, Education Secretary Zahid Abbasi, Youth Director Syed Habibullah and senior officials from relevant departments.

The meeting was briefed on plans to register young people and provide services through the cooperation of public and private institutions.

Mahar said 100,000 young people aged 16 to 29 from Sindh's 30 districts would receive cards in the first phase. Services from 13 government departments and other institutions would be made available through a shared digital platform.

The card would provide access to scholarships for higher education and internships. The meeting also considered discounted travel on public transport, including the Green Line, Orange Line and People's Bus Service.

Proposals included a 25 per cent discount on all Pakistan Railways routes and special discounts on domestic air travel in coordination with the Civil Aviation Authority. Agreements would be made with Pakistan Railways, the Civil Aviation Authority and relevant transport organisations to provide travel benefits under the programme.

Sindh rules out MQM rally on Shahrah-e-Faisal, says Sharjeel Memon

■ Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon said rallies require official permission and that no party would be allowed to hold one on Shahrah-e-Faisal.

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) will not be allowed to hold a rally on Shahrah-e-Faisal.

Speaking to reporters after a Sindh cabinet meeting, Memon said political parties must obtain permission from the relevant authorities and hold rallies peacefully and in accordance with the law. He said no political party would be permitted to stage a rally on Shahrah-e-Faisal.

Memon said the government would not allow a repeat of incidents such as May 12. He added that all political parties were free to carry out political activities within the Constitution and the law, but no party could impose its decisions on the government. He said the government would not allow confrontation or unrest.

The senior minister said the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Sindh government had made their position clear on provincial autonomy and the rights of provinces. He said no law or decision could supersede the Sindh Assembly, which had already made its decision on the matter, and stressed that the Constitution and law must prevail.

Memon said the cabinet had approved reducing the release price of government wheat from Rs5,000 to Rs4,500 per 40 kilograms. He said the new price had begun lowering flour prices by Rs17 per kilogram.

The cabinet also approved the registration of Lady Dufferin Hospital Trust under the Sindh Trust Act 2020.

It approved additional funding of Rs502.409 million for five development schemes in Jamshoro district, as well as a Rs2.993 billion scheme to improve water supply and drainage in Nawabshah town, Shaheed Benazirabad district.

Memon said a cabinet committee had been formed to address issues concerning katchi abadis and prepare laws and proposals for a one-window operation.



Over 128,000 houses completed under Punjab's 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' scheme

■ Punjab has disbursed over 225,000 loans under its Apni Chhat Apna Ghar scheme, completing 128,718 houses, while new applications have been approved for the project.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

More than 225,000 loans have been disbursed under the Punjab government's Apni Chhat Apna Ghar scheme, while 128,718 houses have been completed, a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was informed.

The chief minister presided over a special meeting to review progress on the housing project and directed officials to achieve the targets set under the scheme.

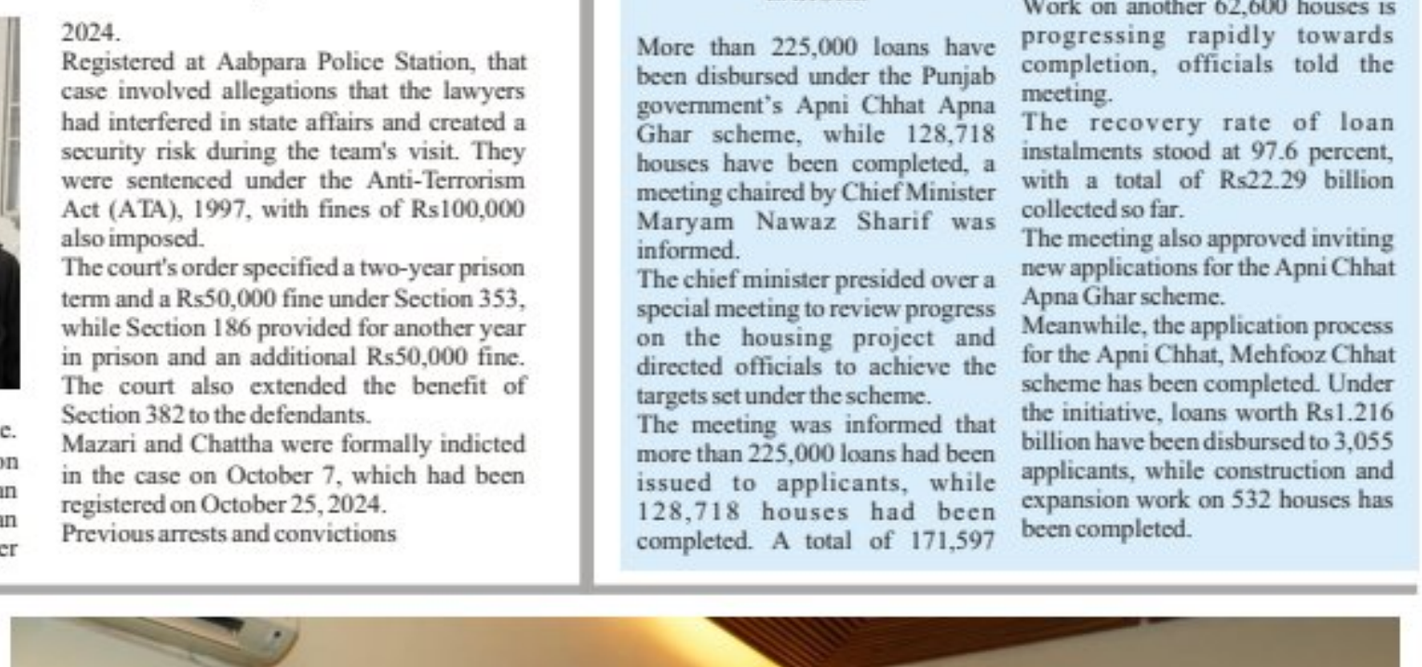
The meeting was informed that more than 225,000 loans had been issued to applicants, while 128,718 houses had been completed. A total of 171,597 beneficiaries had also received the second instalment of their loans.

Work on another 62,600 houses is progressing rapidly towards completion, officials told the meeting.

The recovery rate of loan instalments stood at 97.6 percent, with a total of Rs22.29 billion collected so far.

The meeting also approved inviting new applications for the Apni Chhat Apna Ghar scheme.

Meanwhile, the application process for the Apni Chhat, Mehfooz Chhat scheme has been completed. Under the initiative, loans worth Rs1.216 billion have been disbursed to 3,055 applicants, while construction and expansion work on 532 houses has been completed.



A 16-member high-level Sri Lankan Buddhist delegation, led by Mr. Deeptha Wickramaratna, called on Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, at PNCA, Islamabad on Tuesday.

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