



Two soldiers martyred, six militants killed in DI Khan operation: ISPR

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Security forces killed six militants during an intelligence-based operation in the Zarkani area of Dera Ismail Khan on October 24, while two Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred in an intense exchange of fire, the military's media wing said on Sunday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was launched following intelligence reports about the presence of militants belonging to what it described as the Indian-sponsored Fitna al-Khawarij.



Zardari, Shehbaz and Naqvi praise security forces after six terrorists killed in DI Khan

News Reporter

ISLAMABAD

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi have praised security forces for killing six Indian-backed terrorists in an operation in Dera Ismail Khan, while paying tribute to two soldiers who embraced martyrdom during the action. In separate statements on Sunday, the three leaders paid rich tribute to Naik Ghulam Murtaza and Sepoy Taseer Ahmed, who lost their lives while bravely fighting the terrorists in the Zarkani area.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif hands over Chromebooks and MiFi devices to brilliant students from madrassas and schools in Islamabad on 25 October 2026.

PM Shehbaz launches Chromebook scheme for 500,000 students across Pakistan

PM Shehbaz said the programme would enable students to access online educational resources and electronic libraries from home

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formally launched a nationwide initiative to provide 500,000 Chromebooks and internet facilities to talented students enrolled in schools and religious seminars across Pakistan over the next two years. Addressing the launch ceremony, the prime minister said the programme aimed to empower talented students by equipping them with modern technology and digital skills, enabling them to compete at the international level. He stressed that intelligence and talent should not be limited by financial circumstances, adding that providing young people with access to modern technology was a shared responsibility. Under the initiative, Chromebooks will be distributed strictly on merit, with each selected student also receiving a school bag and an internet device to facilitate digital learning. PM Shehbaz said the programme would enable students to access online educational resources and electronic libraries from home, expanding their learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Recalling previous educational initiatives, the prime minister said 600,000 laptops had been distributed among students on merit over the past decade under a programme launched during former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's tenure. He appreciated the Tokyo Technology Care Foundation for its contribution to the Chromebook initiative and acknowledged overseas Pakistanis for donating towards the education and digital development of young people. The prime minister described overseas Pakistani youth as an important national asset and future builders of the country. Highlighting the government's efforts to improve access to quality education, Shehbaz said Danish Schools provided free education, accommodation and meals, alongside facilities such as smart boards and electronic libraries. He added that 27 Danish Schools were currently under construction across the country. (Continued on Page-5)



Iran says resumption of war would not change its stances

News Reporter

TEHRAN

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that a potential resumption of war with Israel and the United States would not change his country's positions. The remarks come amid mounting US and Israeli threats of renewed attacks on Iran, as President Donald Trump said on Friday that Washington "may do another little Epic Fury," referring to the US-Israeli campaign on Iran that began on February 28.



Dar directs authorities to curb rising wheat prices

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar directed federal and provincial authorities to take immediate measures to control rising wheat prices, including increasing market supplies and preventing hoarding and speculation. Chairing a cabinet committee meeting to review the stocks, prices and availability of essential commodities, Dar said ensuring food security and providing essential items at affordable prices remained key government priorities.

Punjab CM sets deadline for installing 5,734 water filtration plants

Maryam Nawaz also approves Last Mile Water Supply Project

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has said that the provision of clean water is a public right and every citizen will get clean water, setting a deadline of June 2027 for relevant department to achieve target of installing 5,734 water filtration plants in the province. Chairing a special meeting of the Saaf Pani Authority in Lahore on Sunday, CM Maryam Nawaz assigned the deputy commissioners the responsibility of monitoring the water filtration plants. A public committee will be formed at the local level under the leadership of the assistant commissioner for looking after the water filtration plant in the street area. It has been decided in the meeting to establish a mobile maintenance unit in every tehsil for the repair and maintenance of water filtration plants. Plumbers and other technical staff will be appointed in the water filtration plant mobile workshop. CM Maryam also approved the Last Mile Water Supply Project. Under the Last Mile Water Supply Project, water will be provided to the most affected areas of Chakwal, Rajanpur and Rawalpindi. Water supply projects up to 256 kilometers in Chakwal and 1,780 kilometers in Rajanpur will be built on priority. Maryam Nawaz was given a detailed briefing on the water bottling plants underway in four districts of Punjab. As many as 10,000 19-litre water bottles are being produced daily in Khushab, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur. Maryam Nawaz said that 4.8 million people will benefit from the water bottling project in a short period of time. More than 75,000 one-litre bottles of water were delivered to homes from the CM Water Bottling Project. "Clean water is the right of the people and every person will definitely get clean water," she added.



Top terrorist with Rs2.5m head money eliminated in Killa Saifullah operation

News Reporter

Killa Saifullah

A most-wanted terrorist commander with Rs2.5 reward on his head was killed in an intelligence-based operation carried out by the security forces personnel Balochistan city of Killa Saifullah. According to the security sources, Fitna al-Khawarij terrorist commander Adil Shah alias Darvesh was targeted in the operation conducted under Operation Ruddul Fitna 3. Adil Shah was linked to Fitna al-Khawarij since December 2020 and had been supervising terrorist group's financial affairs since 2024.

Saudi Arabia says two injured by falling debris from intercepted Houthi missiles

WEB DESK

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia said on Sunday that two people were injured and three residential buildings and seven vehicles were damaged by falling debris from two intercepted ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi group toward the kingdom's south. Civil Defence teams responded to missile debris in Khamis Mushait and Ahad Rafidah governorates after the projectiles were intercepted and destroyed, a Civil Defence spokesperson said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Pakistan sees 66pc drop in terrorist attacks over five weeks: Report

The report said the number of attacks fell from 61 recorded between September 18 and 24 to 21 between October 16 and 22

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A significant decline has been recorded in terrorist attacks as a result of successful operations conducted by security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. According to a new report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), terrorist attacks dropped by approximately sixty-six percent over a five-week period. The report said the number of attacks fell from 61 recorded between September 18 and 24 to 21 between October 16 and 22. It also noted a 38 per cent week-on-week decline in militant attacks during October 16-22. The number of people injured in such attacks dropped from 20 in the preceding week to 11 during the same period, representing a 45 per cent decrease. According to PICSS, security forces conducted 10 operations during which 33 militants were killed. The report also examined the impact of a leadership dispute within Fitna al-Hindustan and changes in the propaganda strategy of Fitna al-Khawarij on the militant landscape. The findings highlight a decline in militant activity during the period under review, although security challenges remain in parts of the country.



Pakistan's first theme park will be built in Islamabad: Mohsin Naqvi

Interior minister vows to provide all facilities to Saudi investors: Says not a single tree will be cut in F-9 Park

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi said on Sunday that Pakistan's first theme park of its kind would be built in Islamabad. Speaking at the ceremony held to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the park at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, Naqvi said that the federal capital's infrastructure was being built on modern lines. "The park will prove to be a gamechanger," he added. He expressed the resolve to provide all facilities to Saudi investors. "Soon a road show will be held in Saudi Arabia in connection with real estate sector in the country," he informed.



Saudi-Pakistan Business Council Chairman Prince Mansour bin Mohammed Al-Saud and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Sohail Ashraf signed the MoU. "We extend a warm welcome from the depths of our hearts to the esteemed guests who have come from Saudi Arabia regarding the theme park project," Naqvi said and added Islamabad's infrastructure is being established in the style of the most modern cities.

IGP Islamabad Reviews Police Performance, Security Arrangements and Facilities

- Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry Inspects Police Lines Headquarters and Official Vehicles, Awards Appreciation Certificates to Outstanding Officers and Directs Timely Maintenance, Improved Discipline and Efficient Public Service Delivery.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



collectively to provide better services to citizens. Later, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry visited Police Lines Headquarters, where he reviewed ongoing renovation work, security arrangements at entry and exit points, and the facilities available to police officers and personnel. He inspected the condition of buildings, security measures, residential

facilities, and other arrangements, emphasizing the need for continued improvements. The IGP Islamabad also inspected the official vehicles of Islamabad Police at the Central Police Office and reviewed their fitness, technical condition, and maintenance arrangements. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely maintenance of all official vehicles and

keep them in suitable operational condition to support police operations and the effective performance of official duties. On the occasion, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry encouraged police officers who had demonstrated outstanding professional performance by presenting them with appreciation certificates. He emphasized that officers who perform their duties with dedication, hard work, integrity, and professionalism would continue to receive recognition and encouragement. The IGP Islamabad highlighted that improving the professional capacity of the police force, making effective use of available resources, maintaining discipline, and providing better facilities to officers and personnel are essential to enhancing the overall performance of the department. He directed all officers to discharge their responsibilities with diligence, commitment, and mutual cooperation, while ensuring the timely, efficient, and improved delivery of police services to citizens. .

NHMP Assists Over 167,000 Commuters Nationwide During September 2026

- Motorway Police Returns Lost Valuables Worth Millions, Reunites 33 Missing Children With Families, Foils 18 Criminal Incidents and Recovers 303 Kilograms of Narcotics in Nationwide Operations.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The National Highways and Motorway Police demonstrated significant performance in public service, road safety, and law enforcement during September 2026, providing timely assistance to more than 167,000 commuters across the country, according to a performance report released by the NHMP spokesperson Saqib

Waheed. According to the report, the Motorway Police returned lost gold jewellery worth Rs 1.693 million and mobile phones valued at Rs 2.953 million to their rightful owners, reflecting its commitment to public service and the protection of citizens' belongings. The report further revealed that 252 road safety awareness programmes were organised nationwide during the month. More than 2.729 million citizens received road safety awareness messages at toll plazas to promote responsible driving

and safer travel on national highways and motorways. The NHMP also reunited 33 missing children with their parents safely, providing relief to their families. In its law enforcement operations, the Motorway Police foiled 18 criminal incidents on national highways and arrested 20 suspects, who were subsequently handed over to the relevant authorities. Seven stolen vehicles were also recovered during various operations. As part of its ongoing efforts to combat drug trafficking, the NHMP recovered 148

kilograms of charas and 155 kilograms of opium during anti-narcotics operations. Suspects involved in the cases were arrested and handed over to the relevant authorities. The spokesperson stated that ensuring safe journeys, providing timely assistance to road users, and enforcing the law remain the top priorities of the National Highways and Motorway Police. The NHMP reaffirmed its commitment to public service, crime prevention, and the promotion of road safety across the country.

NCCIA Busts International Child Sexual Abuse Network, Arrests Suspect in Harassment Case



Crime reporter

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has exposed an alleged international network involved in the production and sale of child sexual abuse material and arrested a key suspect in a separate case involving the alleged harassment and blackmail of a minor girl. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Additional Director of the NCCIA Islamabad Circle Muhammad Shoaib Khan briefed the media on the two major investigations, highlighting the agency's efforts to combat cybercrime and protect children and other vulnerable individuals. According to the NCCIA spokesperson, the agency uncovered an alleged international network in which a father was found involved in the production and sale of sexually abusive videos featuring his own young children, aged between four and five years. The material was reportedly traded through secret Telegram groups, with cryptocurrency being used for financial transactions. The investigation also revealed disturbing footage involving animal abuse. The alleged ringleader, who belongs to Skardu, was arrested with the assistance of international agencies, the spokesperson said. Investigators also traced important links and collected evidence from Islamabad, Multan and parts of southern Punjab. Raids were conducted to arrest other suspected facilitators and dismantle the wider network. Muhammad Shoaib Khan said the agency would ensure that those involved in such heinous crimes were brought to justice in accordance with the law. In the second case, a minor girl from Karachi allegedly attempted suicide after facing persistent harassment and blackmail. The girl is currently receiving treatment at a hospital, the spokesperson said. Acting on information provided with the assistance of the victim's family, an NCCIA team traced and arrested the prime suspect from Islamabad within just 13 hours. According to the agency, the suspect had allegedly been harassing and blackmailing the girl for the past two to three years.

Fines increased for traffic rules violations on Lahore's Ring Road

NEWS REPORTER

LAHORE

Fines have been increased for violations of different traffic rules on Lahore's Ring Road, Drivers driving without licenses will now be fined Rs5,000, and not Rs500. Similarly, drivers found overtaking from the wrong side will be fined Rs5,000, while those driving cars exceeding 2,000 cc will be fined Rs10,000. Likewise, drivers driving vehicles in the wrong lane will be fined Rs2,000, while a fine of Rs5,000 will be imposed for one-way entry. Smoke-emitting vehicles will be fined Rs4,000 while commercial vehicles will be fined Rs5,000. Fine for overloading has been increased from Rs2,000 to Rs7,000, while that for wrong parking from Rs1,000 to Rs2,000. A fine of Rs10,000 will be slapped on underage drivers, while people driving cars with tinted glasses or without number plates will be fined Rs5,000. A fine of Rs5,000 will be imposed on a



motorcyclist in case he rides it on the Ring Road. Now those crossing the Ring Road on foot will be fined Rs1,000, and not Rs200, and in case a man brings his cattle onto the road, a fine of Rs5,000 will be slapped on him. Drivers of cars of up to 2,000 cc, found involved in rash driving, will be fined Rs5,000, while those driving vehicles of more than 2,000 cc will be fined Rs10,000. Similarly, fine has been increased from Rs5,00 to Rs3,000 on those using cellphone while driving or not wearing a seatbelt.

Islamabad Police Arrest 267 Suspects in Weeklong Crackdown, Recover Drugs and Illegal Weapons

- 180 Court Absconders, Proclaimed Offenders and Record-Holders Among Those Arrested; 47 Pistols, Narcotics and Ammunition Seized as Search Operations Continue Across the Capital.

Crime reporter

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Police Arrests 267 Suspects in Weeklong Crackdown; Drugs and Illegal Weapons Recovered According to the details, following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhary, Islamabad Police is continuing its effective crackdown to prevent crime and take action against criminal elements. In this regard, Islamabad Police teams arrested 267 suspects involved in various serious offences during operations conducted over the past week. Narcotics, illegal weapons, and ammunition were also recovered from their possession. Of the arrested accused, 180 were court absconders, proclaimed offenders, and previously recorded



criminals, while 87 were arrested on charges of drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. The items recovered from the suspects included 7,072 grams of ice (methamphetamine), 4,533 grams of hashish, 3,670 grams of heroin, 33 bottles of liquor, five daggers, and 47 pistols of various bores, along with ammunition. Cases have been registered against the arrested

NCCIA Arrests Two Suspects for Impersonating Pakistan Army Officers to Defraud Citizens

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Karachi Zone, has arrested two suspects during a major operation in Korangi Industrial Area for allegedly impersonating Pakistan Army officers and defrauding citizens, an NCCIA spokesperson said. The arrested suspects have been identified as Muzammil, son of Badruddin Qureshi, and Hamza, son of Muhammad Aslam, the spokesperson added. According to the NCCIA, the suspects allegedly posed as senior military and government officials and extorted money from citizens on the pretext of facilitating transfers, postings and other official matters. The suspects allegedly misused the name of the Pakistan Army to deceive citizens into believing they could arrange government-related work in exchange for money. A case has been registered against the suspects under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), the spokesperson said. NCCIA Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi stated that operations against individuals involved in cybercrime, fraud and the exploitation of citizens would continue.



Motorway Police Recover Abducted Man, Arrest Three Suspects Near Wazirabad

Crime Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Motorway Police Recover Abducted Man, Arrest Three Suspects Near Wazirabad The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) recovered an abducted man and arrested three suspects near Wazirabad during routine patrolling, a spokesperson said on Sunday. According to the spokesperson, the patrolling officers intercepted a suspicious Suzuki Alto car near Wazirabad, in the Gujranwala region, and safely recovered the abducted man. The victim had reportedly been abducted while withdrawing cash from an ATM in the area. During the operation, police recovered a 9mm pistol, five bullets, one laptop and eight mobile phones from the possession of the suspects.



Additional amount was paid for construction of swimming pool at GCU

News Desk

LAHORE

It has been revealed that additional payments were made to the contractor for the construction of a swimming pool at Lahore's Government College University (GCU). Pointing out over payment, the audit report has said that an additional amount of over Rs18.4 million was paid. It has further said that despite the fact that the market cost of drilling holes is Rs60 per inch, the contractor was paid Rs350 per inch for the purpose. The report has also raised objection to the costs of MS Bar fixing for the construction of the pool. On the other hand, the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Punjab has said that payments were made according to approved estimates, technical approval and rate analysis.

suspects, and further investigations are underway. Furthermore, to curb criminal activities and protect the lives and property of citizens, extensive search and combing operations were conducted in various areas under the supervision of Zonal SPs. During these operations, 2,482 individuals, 919 houses, 324 shops, 122 hotels, 1,355 motorcycles, and 547 vehicles were checked. For further verification, 95 suspicious individuals and 128 motorcycles and vehicles were taken to various police stations. DIG Islamabad Ali Wasim stated that Islamabad Police is working around the clock to protect citizens' lives and property and eliminate crime. He added that search, combing, and intelligence-based operations would continue to strengthen action against criminal elements.

Obama says Trump launched 'unnecessary' war with Iran

■ Says Iran war has left Tehran in a stronger position. Challenges administration's claims of victory, saying the conflict had exposed US allies, bases to attacks



Web DESK
WASHINGTON

Former US President Barack Obama accused President Donald Trump of launching an unnecessary war with Iran that had left Tehran in a stronger strategic position, killed American troops and pushed up prices.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Michigan , Obama challenged the administration’s claims of victory, saying the conflict had exposed US allies and bases to attacks while giving Iran greater control over shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. “The current president chose to make a series of bad decisions,” Obama said. “The most important of which was he decided to start an unnecessary war nobody asked for and nobody voted for.” He contrasted Trump’s decision to go to war with his own administration’s nuclear diplomacy, saying Iran did not possess nuclear weapons and that the 2015 agreement reached during his presidency had curbed its nuclear program.



Chicago: Ambassador of Pakistan to the US, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, addresses the Pakistan-US Tech Connect 2026 event, held in Chicago.



FM Dar, Chinese envoy discuss CPEC, trade and regional stability

■ Dar underscores importance of high-level engagements to advance Pakistan-China Community

News Desk
ISLAMABAD



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong in Islamabad on Sunday, discussing bilateral cooperation, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), trade and investment, and regional developments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said. According to the statement released by MoFA on X, FM Dar “appreciated the continued progress” in the Pakistan-China “all-weather strategic cooperative partnership”, which encompasses cooperation under CPEC,

connectivity, trade and investment, agricultural modernisation and people-to-people exchanges. FM Dar “underscored the importance of sustained high-level exchanges” to further advance the “Pakistan-China Community of Shared Future in

the New Era”, according to the statement. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the two sides to “exchange views on regional developments”, the ministry said, adding that they had reaffirmed “the importance of dialogue and diplomacy for

sustainable peace and stability in the region”.Pakistan and China marked the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations this year, with both sides seeking to expand cooperation beyond traditional infrastructure projects. The next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, known as CPEC 2.0, is expected to focus on industrialisation, agriculture, mining, information technology and artificial intelligence. At the seventh round of the Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue in Beijing in January, the two countries agreed to align their development priorities and deepen cooperation in trade, investment, science and technology, cybersecurity and people-to-people exchanges.

Indian Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann expresses desire to visit Pakistan for Lahore conference

● The chief minister stressed the importance of interaction between people across the border, citing their shared cultural heritage

Web Desk
INDIA



Indian Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has expressed his desire to visit Pakistan to attend the 4th International Punjabi Conference in Lahore, questioning whether the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government would allow him to travel to the neighbouring country. Speaking during a session of the Indian Punjab Assembly, Mann said he had received an invitation from Pakistani Punjabi poet Baba Najmi to attend the conference,

scheduled to take place in Lahore from November 27 to 29. “They do not even let me go to France or Japan. How will they let me go to Pakistan?” Mann

said, taking a swipe at the BJP-led government. He added that he wanted to visit Pakistan because people on both sides shared common roots and faced similar problems.

The chief minister stressed the importance of interaction between people across the border, citing their shared cultural heritage. Supporting Mann’s wish, Indian Punjab Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan urged him to take fellow lawmakers to Pakistan if permission for the visit was granted.Mann also called for the reopening of the Kartarpur Corridor, which connects Dera Baba Nanak in India’s Punjab to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan. The corridor was suspended indefinitely by Indian authorities on May 7, 2025, following the Pahalgam attack and subsequent tensions between the two countries.

Violence flares in Paris after largely peaceful protests across France

■ The Interior Ministry said 410,000 people took part in protests nationwide, though unions said the true figure was twice as high

Web Desk
PARIS



Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched in France , with largely peaceful rallies giving way to clashes in Paris and Marseille as night fell despite a huge security operation aimed at preventing a repeat of last week's unrest.The Interior Ministry said 410,000 people took part in protests nationwide, though unions said the true figure was twice as high. The main demonstration took place on the southeastern fringes of Paris, where at least 110,000 people turned out to denounce rising living costs and growing inequality. The atmosphere deteriorated sharply after the rally ended. Riot police fired tear gas and water cannon at a group of around 500 hooded youths before they eventually dispersed on a cold,

rainy evening. In France's second city, Marseille, youths set fire to rubbish bins to block roads, and hurled rocks and bottles at security forces. Police said several stores, including two jewellery shops, were ransacked. Clashes also flared in Lyon, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Clermont-Ferrand, Lille, Rennes, Nantes and Toulouse."In almost every march we saw the formation of these high-risk groups. They broke away from the main body and sought to commit acts of ?violence," said Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, accusing far-left activists and criminal gangs of seeking to foment trouble.

Thousands rally in Tel Aviv against Netanyahu ahead of vote

Web Desk
Tel Aviv



Thousands gathered in Tel Aviv for a large anti-government demonstration, three days ahead of a general election widely viewed as a referendum on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.The protest was organised by the October Council, a group founded by the families of victims and hostages taken by Palestinian militants on October 7, 2023, to demand accountability for the failure to prevent the Hamas attack that sparked the Gaza war.According to Israeli media, the gathering saw the

participation of the leaders of the four main opposition parties, including Gadi Eisenkot, the former military chief of staff who is neck and neck with Netanyahu and who received a warm reception from the crowd."Three days before the election, we will hold the culminating event marking three years of struggle to uncover the truth, demand accountability.

Oil tanker freight rate surges to \$280,000 per day



Web Desk
UAE

The Gulf war has caused a dramatic surge in global oil tanker fares, with freight rate for Aframax tankers sailing from the Middle East to the Far East snowballed to a record high of \$280,000 per day, From 2022 to 2025, the daily fare of an oil tanker was between \$20,000 to \$50,000. An Aframax is a medium-sized oil tanker with a deadweight tonnage (DWT) between 80,000 and 120,000 metric tonnes.Experts said global oil supplies have become more expensive due to the soaring freight charges.According to news reports, the global average crude freight rate surged above \$20 per barrel, from \$3 per barrel a year ago. That’s what analysts at Goldman Sachs, including Daan Struyven, said in a report sent to Rigzone by the Goldman Sachs team.

Saudi-led coalition intercepts, destroys drone in Riyadh region

■ Riyadh airport announces new terminal arrangements for domestic, international flights

Web Desk
Riyadh

The Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's internationally recognised government intercepted and destroyed a drone in the Riyadh capital region, coalition spokesperson Saudi Maj. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki said in a post on X early Sunday. Al-Maliki provided no details about the incident. Meanwhile, King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital Riyadh announced on Saturday that domestic flights and international services operated by national airlines would use designated terminals starting Sunday. In a notice to passengers, the airport said Terminal 1 would handle domestic flights, while Terminal 2 would serve international flights operated by national carriers, effective October 25. Passengers with confirmed bookings were advised to contact their airlines to verify their flight and reservation status before traveling to the airport. King Khalid International Airport is among several Saudi airports targeted



in recent attacks claimed by Yemen's Houthi group, some of which have caused civilian casualties and disrupted air travel. Yemen's Houthis renewed their warning to airlines, airport staff and travellers against using Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport, with the group's spokesman saying early on Sunday it was unsafe and remained a "military target." Houthis claim to have struck Saudi airports, oil facilities with missiles,

drones Yemen's Houthi group claimed on Saturday that it carried out seven military operations using ballistic missiles and drones against airports, oil facilities and an air base across Saudi Arabia in retaliation for Saudi airstrikes on Yemen. In a statement, the group said it targeted King Khalid International Airport in the capital Riyadh. It also claimed attacks on Saudi oil giant Aramco's facilities in Yanbu and the Rabigh oil refinery, both on the kingdom's western Red Sea coast.

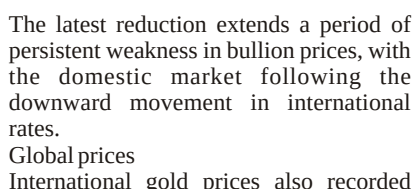
Another operation targeted crude oil pumping stations and the East-West oil pipeline, which transports oil from eastern Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea coast, according to the statement. Other operations targeted Najran airport in southern Saudi Arabia, near the Yemeni border, and the Khamis Mushait air base in the southwest, with the group claiming direct hits. The Houthis said the attacks were in response to Saudi airstrikes on Yemen, alleging that 100 strikes over the last 24 hours had hit civilian sites in the capital Sanaa and other areas under their control, killing and injuring dozens. The group claimed Saudi Arabia had carried out a total of 3,123 airstrikes and missile attacks since the latest escalation began. Meanwhile, Saudi Civil Defence said two Houthi ballistic missiles launched toward the Mecca and Medina regions were intercepted, with debris falling in four locations. Parts of the missiles fell in Wadi al-Mughammas in Mecca, while interception debris fell in Jeddah's al-Nuzha district, Wadi Jalil in Taif and Masturah in Rabigh, the agency said in a statement.



- Ten-gram rate falls to Rs361,686

ISLAMABAD

Gold prices in Pakistan continued to decline, marking a fifth consecutive day of losses as international bullion prices slipped below the key \$4,000-per-ounce level. The sustained fall pushed gold in both domestic and international markets to a five-month low, according to the All Sarafa Association. In local markets, the price of 24-carat gold fell by Rs2,500 per tola to Rs422,036. The price of 10 grams also declined, dropping by Rs2,144 to Rs361,686.



another decline, falling by \$25 per ounce to \$3,995. The move took bullion below the psychologically significant \$4,000 threshold, adding to the pressure on local prices.

Gold has now registered five consecutive days of losses in global and domestic markets. The latest figures underline the extent of the recent retreat, with prices falling to their lowest levels in five months, according to the association.

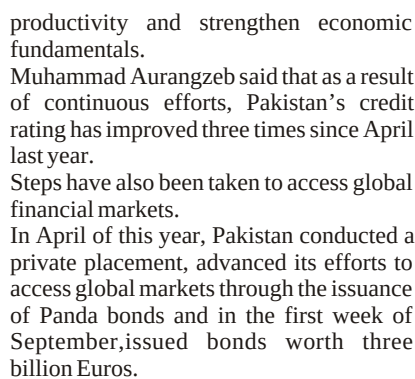
International bullion movements are closely watched in Pakistan's jewellery markets, where changes in global prices influence local rates alongside currency movements and other market factors.

ISLAMABAD

:Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Saturday that government's focus was on export-led sustainable economic growth, improvement of tax system, reduction in energy costs and encouragement of the private sector for which implementation of structural reforms for economic stability in Pakistan was underway.

Addressing a ceremony here at a private university, he disclosed that IT exports are expected to reach USD 5.5 billion and remittances to USD 44 billion in the current fiscal year while the country's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient for more than three months of imports.

The Finance Minister said Pakistan must move away from the boom-and-bust economic cycle of the past and adopt a path of growth that creates employment opportunities and brings the fruit of economic growth to the people. He said that due to over-reliance on imports, Pakistan had faced balance of payments crises in the past, after which it took four to five years to stabilize the economy. To avoid this situation, there is a need to increase exports, improve



ISLAMABAD

The prices of jet fuel, light diesel oil (LDO) and kerosene oil have been increased, with the revised rates taking effect from Sunday.

The price of jet fuel has been raised by Rs4.96 per litre to Rs357.37, up from the previous rate of Rs352.41 per litre.

Light diesel oil has become more expensive by Rs7.78 per litre, taking its new price to Rs275.24 per litre.

Meanwhile, the price of kerosene oil has been increased by Rs4.21 per litre to Rs330.96.

Separately, petrol remained unchanged at Rs377.71 per litre for the period from October 24 to October 26.

The price of high-speed diesel, however, rose by Rs1.91 per litre to Rs393.66.

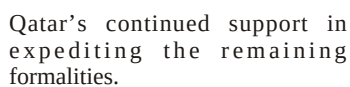
■ Pakistan informed the meeting that it had already completed its domestic approval process and forwarded the approved agreement text to the GCC Secretariat on December 31, 2025.

ISLAMBAD

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Dr. Ahmad bin Mohammed Al-Sayed co-chaired the second meeting of the Pakistan-Qatar Joint Task Force (JTF) on Trade and Investment in Doha, and reviewed progress on bilateral economic cooperation and explore new opportunities for trade, investment and industrial partnerships. Representatives of relevant Pakistani ministries participated

virtually, while the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), serving as the Secretariat of the Joint Task Force, coordinated the proceedings from Pakistan, said a news release issued here on Sunday.

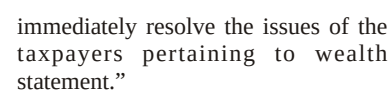
Both sides reviewed progress since the inaugural meeting in April 2026 and discussed measures to strengthen bilateral trade, facilitate investment and advance cooperation across priority economic sectors. During the meeting, Pakistan emphasized the importance of the early signing of the Pakistan-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement and sought



Pakistan informed the meeting that it had already completed its domestic approval process and

KARACHI

The Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) has demanded the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to make the procedure of wealth statement easier. In a letter to the FBR, the KTBA has demanded that the wealth statement for the tax year, 2026, be made easier. The Association has suggested the provision of relief to the taxpayers from previous years' wealth reconciliation statement. "The Board is requested to



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said on Saturday that the government was working to improve road infrastructure across Pakistan through self-generated resources with the National Highway Authority (NHA) revenue target increased from Rs.66 billion to Rs.160 billion for the current year and its expenditure capped at Rs.50 billion. He said, additional revenue generated through toll taxes and other sources would be utilized for constructing new

roads and improving infrastructure across the country.

While addressing a meeting here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), the Federal Minister discussed major road projects, the financial sustainability of the NHA, industrial financing, regional trade connectivity and the need to address concerns raised by the business community.

LCCI President Ali Hussam Asghar, Senior Vice President (VP) Sardar Usman Ghani, members of the Executive Committee and senior members also spoke at the meeting.

- Audi confirmed the investment in a release, saying the plant would create about 4,500 jobs.

KARACHI

US President Donald Trump announced that German automaker Audi planned to invest \$4.2 billion to build its first factory in the United States that will produce 200,000 vehicles a year. Audi confirmed the investment in a release, saying the plant would create about 4,500 jobs.

I'm thrilled to announce a massive auto manufacturing investment in the great state of Georgia by a fantastic company," Trump said at a campaign rally 10 days ahead of the November 3 midterm elections that will determine control of the US Congress.

"Audi has just committed to invest \$4.2 billion dollars in nearby Macon, Georgia, to begin the construction next month on a massive plant that will produce 200,000 cars a year," Trump continued. Audi, which is a unit of Volkswagen, said in its release that construction was scheduled to begin



es for



Group chairman / chief editor : Almass Ayoub Sabir	Vice chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad	Editor : Atif Saeed
---	--	--------------------------------------

Head office :
 AES Complex , plot no 94 , Street no 4 , Sector H-8/1 , Islamabad

spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone no. +92 51 27 22 123

Govt rejects \$490m loan over cost

Pakistan has turned down a \$490 million commercial loan proposal by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group due to higher interest rates, amid elevated gross financing needs (GFN) that the finance ministry has estimated at around 20% of the size of the nation's economy. The facility was refused a couple of months after Pakistan took a \$300 million loan from United Bank Limited, which originated the

finance ministry's annual borrowing plan for fiscal year 2026-27, "total gross financing needs are projected at Rs28.647 trillion, approximately 20% of GDP".

This is inclusive of the total federal fiscal deficit of Rs7 trillion and, after adding domestic and external maturities, of over Rs21 trillion, according to the finance ministry's own report based on original budget estimates.

The same report noted that net external financing is projected at



amount from Bahrain and Dubai in August this year, according to the sources. The government obtained these loans by waiving income tax on the profits the bank would earn by extending them.

The decision to turn down the offer from the IsDB's arm, the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), was taken last week, according to government officials. The facility had been offered for a period of one year.

The finance ministry spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment about the government's decision.

The officials said the Debt Management Office (DMO) of the finance ministry took the decision to turn down the loan due to higher cost. The debt office has been working without a permanent director general since January this year.

The finance ministry has now asked the Economic Affairs Division to look for a new loan facility, either from the ITFC or any other source at competitive rates, the sources added.

Pakistan's GFN, including external requirements, remain high as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has now projected a current account deficit that is higher than the official estimates. The IMF's latest report projected the current account deficit at 1% of gross domestic product (GDP), or nearly \$4.5 billion. This is at least \$1.5 billion higher than the \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion figure pitched by the Pakistani authorities during recently concluded talks. In the same report released this week, the IMF showed Pakistan's GFN around 22% of GDP for the last fiscal year, which finance ministry officials found on the higher side.

However, according to the

Rs813 billion, equivalent to \$2.8 billion. The net amount is after repaying maturing debts, which suggests the actual borrowings will be higher than this amount. The finance ministry is betting on inflows from multilateral lenders that are expected to be the primary external funding source for \$1.6 billion net lending to meet these requirements.

Regarding the ITFC's \$490 million facility, the debt office was of the view that the interest rate offered by the lender was considerably high, as it had hoped for an interest cost of around 6%. The sources said the ITFC's offered all-in cost of about 8% was higher than the December 2027 maturing bond, which was trading at 6.1%. In September this year, the government raised \$3 billion through Eurobonds at interest rates higher than those Pakistan paid in 2021 against five- and 10-year Eurobonds, showing a comparison of both transactions. The key reason behind relatively low interest rates on the debt raised in 2021 was that US Treasury rates were very low, ranging from 1% on five-year bonds to 1.64% on 10-year bonds.

Current US Treasury rates were over 5% due to prevailing global geopolitical and consequent economic uncertainties. The finance ministry stated that it raised \$1.75 billion through a five-and-a-half-year Eurobond at a coupon rate of 7.5%.

The face value interest rate on the five-year Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Eurobond was also 3% higher than the comparative US Treasury bond. During the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) time, it was 5% higher than the comparative US rates. The actual interest rate on the PML-N five-year transaction was 7.75%.

The finance ministry also raised \$1.25 billion through a 10-year Eurobond at a 7.9% face value interest rate.

Egypt's Potential Military Involvement Could Jeopardise Suez Canal Recovery and Threaten Vital Revenues

By: Asmaa Selim

The gradual recovery of maritime traffic through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal is facing renewed uncertainty as fighting in Yemen intensifies and Egypt considers the possibility of providing military support to Saudi Arabia. Any further escalation could undermine efforts to restore international shipping through one of the world's most important maritime corridors, threatening a vital source of foreign currency for the Egyptian economy.

The developments come as major international shipping companies have begun cautiously resuming services through the Suez Canal, the shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe, following nearly three years of disruption that forced numerous vessels to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope.

Shipping data covering September and mid-October 2026 point to a fragile recovery. Although traffic through the Suez Canal and the Bab al-Mandab Strait has improved, shipping volumes remain below pre-crisis levels. At the same time, renewed security concerns and rising freight rates are threatening to reverse some of the progress achieved in recent months.

Experts at the Egyptian Chamber of Shipping have warned that the recovery remains vulnerable to regional instability. The risk of a wider confrontation, potentially extending beyond Yemen and involving other regional powers, has heightened concerns across the global shipping industry.

Against this backdrop, the United States has also threatened to resume military hostilities with Iran, with tensions centred on the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway through which approximately 20 million barrels of oil per day passed before the war.

Shipping industry experts who spoke to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed on condition of anonymity outlined two possible outcomes of Egyptian military involvement. Such participation could potentially contribute to securing maritime routes and supporting the recovery of the Suez Canal. However, it could also expose shipping companies to additional risks, prompting them to delay their return or divert vessels away from the Red Sea once



again.

The consequences for Egypt could be substantial, particularly if renewed disruptions reduce canal revenues, increase energy and import costs, and place further pressure on foreign currency reserves. A prolonged escalation could also deepen existing economic difficulties and threaten employment across sectors dependent on trade and maritime activity.

Escalating Security Risks Could Push Shipping Costs Higher

Wael Qaddoura, a former member of the Suez Canal Authority's board of directors and a maritime transport expert, said freight rates had risen significantly over the preceding week, particularly for shipments passing through the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

He warned that transportation costs could continue to increase as long as regional instability and military confrontations persist. Qaddoura argued that the crisis in Yemen requires a political solution rather than further military escalation. He also maintained that Egypt could support Saudi Arabia's defence without launching military strikes inside Yemen.

According to Qaddoura, disruptions at strategic maritime chokepoints have consequences extending far beyond the countries directly involved. Protecting these waterways therefore requires international cooperation, coordinated security arrangements and agreements capable of safeguarding freedom of navigation.

He also highlighted shortcomings in the international legal framework governing

maritime security, calling for clearer rules to protect strategic straits and mechanisms to ensure their effective enforcement.

Without a more comprehensive international framework, he warned, the region would remain exposed to recurring confrontations, instability and further disruptions to global shipping.

Addressing the challenge of ensuring Houthi compliance with international law, Qaddoura said effective enforcement would require an international mechanism capable of compelling compliance. He suggested that legally grounded international restrictions could be considered by countries seeking to protect freedom of navigation through strategic waterways.

Qaddoura also argued that Egypt's direct entry into the conflict would neither guarantee the safe passage of vessels through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal nor necessarily reduce shipping costs. Continued hostilities, he cautioned, could instead complicate the security situation and prolong the disruption. He expects freight rates and maritime disturbances to continue rising gradually until the legal and coordination challenges surrounding the protection of strategic chokepoints are addressed.

Egypt Faces Mounting Economic and Political Pressures

Hamdy Barghout, a professor of logistics and maritime transport expert, similarly warned against the economic consequences of Egypt becoming involved in another military confrontation.

AI's second chance for the Global South

By: Afreen Qureshi

For developing countries, technological revolutions often arrive twice: first as a promise and later as a reminder of how far behind they remain. The industrial age was built around capital-intensive factories; the information age around computing power, networks and intellectual property. By the time many countries in the Global South acquired the infrastructure and skills needed to participate, the frontier had moved again.

Artificial intelligence may not follow the same script. That is the argument recently made by Justin Yifu Lin, former World Bank chief economist and a leading Chinese development economist. Lin believes open-weight AI — models whose trained parameters can be downloaded, adapted and run locally — could give developing economies an opportunity they did not have during earlier industrial transformations.

The claim deserves attention, but not celebration. Open-weight AI changes the economics of access. Whether it changes the economics



of development is a harder question.

A lower barrier, not a level field

Countries do not necessarily have to build the most advanced AI model themselves to benefit from it. They can take an existing model, adapt it for a local language or industry, and deploy it for tasks ranging from agricultural advice and medical support to education, logistics and public administration.

This matters because the AI frontier is prohibitively expensive. Training the largest models requires enormous computing resources, advanced chips, specialist talent, and capital that most developing economies lack. Open-weight models reduce part of that

barrier.

Chinese firms have become important to this shift. Models such as DeepSeek and Alibaba's Qwen have attracted attention not only for their capabilities but because they can be downloaded and adapted under their respective licences. This widens the options available to developers who cannot afford to build frontier systems from scratch. Lin's point is practical: if advanced tools become cheaper and more adaptable, latecomers gain room to experiment.

The World Bank has noted that open technologies can help developing countries adapt AI to local contexts without reinventing foundational technology. Yet its research also shows how unequal the landscape remains. Data-

centre capacity, venture funding, advanced computing and model development are still heavily concentrated in richer economies.

So the door may be more open, but the road beyond it is hardly level.

It is also worth being precise about terminology. "Open-weight" is not always the same as fully open-source. A model may make its parameters available while withholding parts of the training data or development process. That does not negate its usefulness, but governments should resist treating openness as a binary category. The real question is what users are legally and technically able to inspect, modify, and deploy.

The development question comes after access. The temptation in policy circles is to assume that once a technology becomes affordable, development will follow. History offers little support for that assumption.

Electricity did not industrialise countries that lacked functioning institutions. Internet access did not automatically produce productive digital economies. Smartphones expanded connectivity, but did not by themselves create high-value industries. AI will be no different.

PM Shehbaz launches Chromebook scheme for 500,000 students across Pakistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formally launched a nationwide initiative to provide 500,000 Chromebooks and internet facilities to talented students enrolled in schools and religious seminaries across Pakistan over the next two years.

Addressing the launch ceremony, the prime minister said the programme aimed to empower talented students by equipping them with modern technology and digital skills, enabling them to compete at the international level.

He stressed that intelligence and talent should not be limited by financial circumstances, adding that providing young people with access to modern technology was a shared responsibility.

Under the initiative, Chromebooks will be distributed strictly on merit, with each selected student also receiving a school bag and an internet device to facilitate digital learning.

PM Shehbaz said the programme would enable students to access online educational resources and electronic libraries from home,

expanding their learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Recalling previous educational initiatives, the prime minister said 600,000 laptops had been distributed among students on merit over the past decade under a programme launched during former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's tenure. He appreciated the Tokyo Technology Care Foundation for its contribution to the Chromebook initiative and acknowledged overseas Pakistanis for donating towards the education and digital development of young people.

The prime minister described overseas Pakistani youth as an important national asset and future builders of the country.

Highlighting the government's efforts to improve access to quality education, Shehbaz said Danish Schools provided free education, accommodation and meals, alongside facilities such as smart boards and electronic libraries. He added that 27 Danish Schools were currently under construction across the country.

(Continued on Page-5)

CM removes Jhang Deputy Commissioner over use of PERA vehicle for MPA's protocol

- The Chief Minister stated that using regulatory institutional resources for frivolous purposes outside official jurisdiction violates administrative discipline.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered the transfer of Jhang Deputy Commissioner Babar Sahib Din over the reported use of a Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) vehicle for the protocol of PML-N MPASaqib Chadhar, The Services and General Administration Department issued an official notification on October 25, ordering Babar Sahib Din, a Grade-18 Pakistan Administrative Service officer, to report to the



department immediately. He has been declared an OSD until further orders. The development comes after a video showed a PERA vehicle taking part in an unauthorized car rally protocol.

A viral video showed a PERA

vehicle accompanying a car rally and providing official protocol reportedly linked to MPA Saqib Chadhar. The Chief Minister stated that using regulatory institutional resources for frivolous purposes

outside official jurisdiction violates administrative discipline. The development comes months after actress Momina Iqbal accused MPA Saqib Chadhar of harassment and threats on May 20, 2026. She submitted a complaint to police on May 22, while the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) registered a case

on June 5. Chadhar's lawyer, Ali Ashfaq, had rejected the allegations as baseless, saying that all evidence would be presented before the court.

Six die after jeep falls into ravine in Muzaffarabad

NEWS DESK

Muzaffarabad

As many as six people were killed, while four were injured after a jeep fell into a ravine in Shakarpatian, a suburban town of Muzaffarabad on Sunday. Sources in the police told the 24News TV channel that the bodies as well as the injured had been shifted to a hospital. Four school-going children lost their lives, and their father and two others were seriously injured when their jeep plunged

into a ravine after developing a technical fault in Neelum Valley on Saturday morning. The jeep was going from Nagdar to Athmuqam. All the deceased children were members of the same family. According to rescue sources, the jeep fell into a deep ravine due to a technical fault at Ghureda Nikah. Soon after receiving the report, local police, rescue teams and residents rushed to the spot and shifted the dead and injured persons to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ).



Punjab Police Maintain High Alert, Ensure Tight Security at Churches Across Province

IG Punjab Abdul Kareem Directs Enhanced Security, Deployment of Snipers and Elite Force, and Continued Search Operations

Crime reporter

Lahore

Punjab Police officers and personnel remained on high alert and performed security duties very diligently during Christian prayer services at churches across the province, including Lahore. Earlier, Inspector General of Police Punjab Abdul Kareem issued directives to RPOs, DPOs, and senior police officers to further enhance security at churches. He said that supervisory officers should personally inspect the security arrangements at churches as well as other important and sensitive locations. Additional police personnel and

snipers should be deployed at sensitive churches, while teams of the Dolphin Squad, Police Response Unit (PRU), and Elite Force should ensure effective patrolling around churches. IG Punjab directed that all deployed police officers and personnel should remain highly vigilant and keep a close watch on miscreant elements. He further instructed that search and sweep operations should continue around churches, Christian localities, and other sensitive locations. Abdul Kareem said that religious scholars, the Christian community, and members of Peace Committees should promote interfaith harmony.

Rana Sikandar criticises Fazlur Rehman over remarks about martyrs

- Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat criticised JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman over his remarks about martyrs, while Salma Butt called for stronger counterterrorism measures.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat has criticised Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman over his remarks about martyrs, saying political differences over power-sharing should not be used to undermine the sacrifices made in the fight against terrorism. Speaking at a news conference alongside Punjab Provincial Minister Salma Butt on Sunday, Hayat condemned the reported remarks and said disrespect towards martyrs would not be tolerated. He questioned Fazlur Rehman's contributions to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and asked what measures had been taken to protect residents of the province.

Hayat said Fazlur Rehman should not make



statements against martyrs over his alleged dissatisfaction with not receiving a share in power. He added that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wanted answers about the steps taken to ensure their safety and well-being. The press conference also addressed the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the political debate surrounding the province's governance.

Salma Butt criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying its 13-year record in the province was open to public scrutiny. She alleged that terrorism had resurged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during PTI's tenure.

Butt said the sacrifices made by Pakistan's armed forces in the fight against terrorism could not be denied. She stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy to eliminate terrorism and called for the formulation and effective implementation of the National Action Plan.

Addressing the issue of governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Butt said its imposition had not been anyone's preference and was not considered a political solution. Rather, she described it as a measure taken out of necessity under the prevailing circumstances.

The remarks reflect continuing political differences over security, governance and responsibility for the resurgence of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sindh revises SPSC recruitment rules, lowers passing marks to 33%



NEWS REPORTER

KARACHI

The Sindh government has amended the recruitment rules of the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) following approval from the provincial cabinet, issuing an official notification outlining key changes to the examination. Under the revised rules, candidates will face a negative marking of 0.25 marks for each incorrect answer in SPSC examinations. The minimum passing marks have been reduced from 40% to 33%.

Candidates appearing in a 200-mark examination will now need to secure 66 marks to pass instead of previous 80 marks. The number of attempts allowed for SPSC examinations has also been increased from three to five. Candidates will be able to use these five attempts within a period of

three years.

The amended rules also provide for an increase in the age limit from 30 to 33 years under the relevant provision. According to the notification, this amendment will remain effective for three years. Meanwhile, the examination fee has been reduced from Rs300 to Rs250. The revised rules also incorporate the commission's e-services, mobile application and artificial intelligence (AI) into its regulatory framework.

Traffic advisory issued for Pakistan-England ODI in Lahore



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Lahore traffic police have issued a traffic management plan ahead of the Pakistan-England one-day international (ODI), aiming to facilitate spectators and ensure smooth traffic flow.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Syed Abdul Rahim Shirazi said two senior superintendents of police (SSPs), seven deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) and 90 inspectors would perform duties during the match. More than 1,000 traffic wardens will be deployed around Gaddafi

Stadium, along team routes and on alternative roads. To prevent illegal parking, 10 forklifts and five breakdown vehicles will also be on duty.

Four parking areas have been designated to facilitate cricket fans and ensure convenient access to the stadium.

According to the CTO, Mall Road, Canal Road, Jail Road and Main Boulevard Gulberg will remain open to traffic. No road will be permanently closed during the match. However, roads may be temporarily blocked for a few moments during team movements, with diversions reopened as soon as the teams pass.

Spectators travelling from Mall Road, Jail Road, Canal Road and Ferozepur Road can park at Government College for Boys via Ferozepur Road. Those arriving from Thokar, Johar Town and Kahna can access the same parking facility via Kalma Chowk and Centre Point.

NCCIA Launches Official WhatsApp Channel to Raise Cybercrime Awareness

- Citizens to Receive Verified Updates on Online Fraud, Harassment, Blackmail and Cybersecurity; DG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi Urges Victims to Report Crimes Through Helpline 1799, Available 24/7, Assuring Confidentiality.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has launched its official WhatsApp channel to facilitate public access to authentic information, timely updates and awareness messages regarding cybercrime prevention. According to an NCCIA press release, citizens can follow the NCCIA Official WhatsApp channel to receive verified information about the agency's operations, cybersecurity measures and important public advisories. On the directions of Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the channel will provide timely awareness messages regarding online fraud, harassment, blackmail, fake calls,



fraudulent websites and the safe use of social media. The initiative aims to help citizens protect themselves against cybercrime and potential financial losses. The agency has urged the public to remain cautious of misleading information circulated through fake social media accounts and unofficial channels, advising citizens to rely only on information issued through NCCIA's official platforms. Citizens can follow the official WhatsApp channel through the following

link: <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbE9ZsU4SpkDwT4umA1Q> Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi urged victims of cybercrime, online harassment, blackmail or financial fraud not to remain silent. He assured them that their identities would be kept strictly confidential. For immediate assistance, citizens can contact the NCCIA helpline 1799, which operates 24 hours a day, or lodge a complaint at their nearest NCCIA circle.



A group photo taken on the occasion of the birthday of Mirza Mahmood Baig, Chairman of the Etemad Welfare Group. Those present include: Malik Atif Bali (candidate for Chairman, UC-20), Rana Qadeer (candidate for Chairman, UC-17), Rana Aamir Iqbal, senior PML-N leader Moon Sindhu, senior PML-N leader Adeel Khan, and candidates for General Councilor (UC-21) — Rao Zahid Asif Mughal, Mirza Asif Baig, Syed Naveed Farhan, Raees Sadiq Hussain, Azeem Baig, and Asghar Hussain.

'Unbelievable' Shadab Khan leaves fans in awe after England heroics

● All-rounder smashes unbeaten 113 as Pakistan pull off remarkable one-wicket victory



SPORTS REPORTER
LAHORE

Shadab Khan produced a sensational unbeaten century against England on

Sunday, pulling Pakistan back from the brink of defeat and triggering an outpouring of praise from cricket fans on social media. The all-rounder struck an unbeaten 113

off just 96 deliveries, smashing 13 fours and five sixes as Pakistan chased down a 242-run target by one wicket in a dramatic ODI tri-series encounter at Lahore’s Gaddafi Stadium.

Shadab walked into a difficult situation after Pakistan’s top order had faltered and continued to fight even as wickets fell around him. The hosts eventually slipped to 154-9, leaving Shadab and Haris Rauf with the daunting task of scoring the remaining 88 runs for victory. Shadab kept his composure under immense pressure, bringing up his maiden ODI century before Rauf scored the winning runs as Pakistan completed the chase in the 48th over and booked their place in the tri-series final. His extraordinary rescue act quickly became the talk of social media, with fans showering the all-rounder with praise. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) led the celebrations, declaring: “SHADAB SUPERSTAR KHAN! WHAT A KNOCK!” One fan described the contest as “DRAMA IN LAHORE!” and said “Shadab Khan apology forms should be out now” after Pakistan pulled off the unlikely victory. Another called Shadab's innings “unbelievable”, marvelling at Pakistan's recovery from 154-9 to successfully chase 242. Another fan summed up the mood by writing: “What an absolute thriller,” praising the “unbelievable effort and outstanding performance”



Shaheen Afridi becomes fastest national fast bowler to take 150 ODI wickets

SPORTS REPORTER
Islamabad

Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi has become the fastest Pakistani fast bowler to claim 150 wickets in One-Day International (ODI) cricket, Shaheen reached the milestone in his 80th ODI, beating the record of former Pakistan fast bowlers Waqar Younis and Shoaib Akhtar, who each took 91 matches to claim 150 wickets. He marked the achievement with an impressive performance against England on Sunday, taking four wickets to lead Pakistan’s bowling attack. Former off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq remains the fastest Pakistani bowler overall to reach 150 ODI wickets, having achieved the feat in just 78 matches. Shaheen has also enjoyed an impressive record at Lahore’s Gaddafi Stadium, where he has taken 16 wickets in six matches. Under his captaincy, Pakistan have won nine of their 13 ODI matches, highlighting his successful start as national team leader.

Mansoor backs Noor to reach top ten

■ Former World No11 says patience, fitness and experience key to squash star’s rise



SPORTS REPORTER
KARACHI

Pakistan’s former international squash player Mansoor Zaman has said that the rising star Noor Zaman has the talent to become one of the world’s leading players but must improve his patience, fitness and match management to fulfill his potential. Mansoor praised Noor’s technical ability and physical attributes but said his tendency to rush points and finish games too quickly often resulted in lapses of concentration and costly mistakes. “Noor is doing well. He is very talented and has good quality, but he lacks patience. He is in a hurry and tries to end the game with speed,” Mansoor said. “It is the wrong thing in him because, in this way, he loses his focus and concentration and then makes mistakes,” said Mansoor, a former World No11. Mansoor said Noor had the potential to compete with the world’s best once he learned to control the pace of his game and maintain his composure under pressure. “He has good quality, he has shots with him and his reach and run are superb, but he lacks a little bit in stamina,” he said. “If he works on his fitness, then I think he will soon find a place in the top ten.” Noor reached the quarter-finals of

the Silicon Valley Open in Redwood City, California, before losing 3-1 to Egypt’s Mohamed ElShorbagy in the Professional Squash Association Gold tournament. The Pakistani opened his campaign with a 3-1 victory over Malaysia’s Beng Hee Ming before producing an impressive performance against Egypt’s Karim Gawad, a former world number two, who was ranked world number four while entering into the tournament. Noor won the opening two games against Gawad 11-9 and 11-7, lost the third 11-9, but recovered to take the fourth 11-6 and secure his place in the last eight. His run ended against fifth seed ElShorbagy, who recovered after dropping the opening game to win 8-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-8. Mansoor described the victory over Gawad as an important milestone, saying it could help Noor improve his ranking and secure more favourable draws in future competitions. “It was a big win in the US, as it will help improve his ranking and onwards he will get easy draws,” he said. “His second game in the US was against world number four and he upset Karim Gawad. It is a good sign for him,” Mansoor said. Mansoor was one of the finest squash players of his era. He is also a two-time Asian champion. Mansoor said experience remained a key difference between Noor and the established players at the top of the rankings, who had competed more frequently against elite opposition.

Egyptian Players Dominate Karachi International Squash Championship

● Karim El Hammamy Defeats England’s Curtis Malik Despite Injury, While Rowan Al-Arabi Beats Amina El Rihany to Claim Women’s Title and \$41,000 Prize

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

Egyptian players Karim El Hammamy and Rowan Al-Arabi won the men’s and women’s titles at an international squash championship in Karachi. Second seed Karim El Hammamy defeated top seed and England’s world number 25 Curtis Malik 3-0 to lift the men’s trophy at the Creek Club. Despite an injury, world number 49 El Hammamy put up an impressive performance, winning the match in 48 minutes.



He took the first game 11-6, the second 12-10 and the third 11-3. In the women’s final, fourth seed Rowan Al-Arabi defeated second seed and compatriot Amina El Rihany 3-0 to claim the title and the \$41,000 prize. Al-Arabi, ranked world number 47, won the first game 11-6, the second 11-8 and the third 11-5 against world number 44 El Rihany. The championship carried a total prize fund of \$82,000. Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani was the chief guest at the final and closing ceremony, while DHA Karachi Administrator Brigadier Ameer Nawaz Khan attended as guest of honour.

Rybakina crushes Fernandez to win fourth title of season

■ World number one cruises to a 6-2, 6-2 win in 73 minutes

SPORTS DESK
ISLAMABAD

World number one Elena Rybakina won her fourth title of an outstanding season with a ruthless straight-sets victory over Leylah Fernandez in the Ningbo Open final on Sunday. The top seed and defending champion cruised to a 6-2, 6-2 win in 73 minutes over the world number 30 from Canada. Rybakina, the Australian and US Open champion, collected her 15th WTA crown in all and went a long way towards securing the year-end number-one ranking. “Thank you all you guys for an amazing atmosphere,” the Moscow-born Kazakh said in her victory speech to the crowd. “Every day it’s amazing to play in front of you. It gives a lot of motivation and energy to keep on going. “A second win here, it’s such a special place for me.”

Rybakina broke and then held her own serve with a delicious two-handed crosscourt backhand for a 4-2 lead in the opening set. She immediately put Fernandez under pressure again on the Canadian’s serve and it was soon 5-2 to the reigning champion when her opponent fired into the net. The 27-year-old Rybakina, who missed this month’s Wuhan Open with a foot injury, began to turn the screw and sealed the set to love in under 40 minutes. Fernandez, who was looking to win her second title in as many months, was broken once more as a clinical Rybakina grabbed a 2-1 second-set lead. Rybakina saw off two break points in the fourth game to hold, and with that,



Fernandez’s resistance was broken. Rybakina was within sight of retaining her trophy after breaking once more for 5-2, then sealed the deal on her first championship point with a searing forehand.

England great Anderson's future unclear after Lancashire exit



SPORTS DESK
England

England's record Test wicket-taker James Anderson will leave Lancashire after the club announced on Sunday that it would not renew his contract, casting doubt over the 44-year-old's playing future. Anderson retired from Test cricket in 2024 with 704 wickets, the most by a fast bowler in the five-

day format, but continued his playing career with Lancashire at county level. Only spin bowling stars Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708) took more Test wickets than Anderson. "I've supported Lancashire since I was a kid, and so to get to play for them for 25 years was a dream come true," Anderson said on social media. "I have always found it special walking out to play at Old Trafford and have some incredible memories of doing so, including the honour of being captain." However, Anderson indicated that the decision to part ways with the club had been taken out of his hands. “If it was up to me, it wouldn't have ended like this, but I wish the players and fans all the best for the future.” Anderson has reportedly attracted interest from several counties and had hoped to play on for another season before being informed he would not be offered a new deal.



Japan's Yuri Yoshida captured her first LPGA Tour title on Sunday with a neryv one-shot victory at the Ladies Championship in South Korea.



Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan addressing a press conference after chairing a joint meeting with members of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) at Federation House

Pakistan, Qatar vow to strengthen trade and investment ties

- The two sides discussed a proposed government-to-government agreement for rice supplies from Pakistan to Qatar

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Qatar have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation during the second meeting of the Pakistan-Qatar Joint Task Force in Doha. The meeting was co-chaired by Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs, Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Said.



Participants reviewed progress in economic cooperation since the task force's first meeting in April 2026. Pakistan stressed the need for an early signing of the Pakistan-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement. Pakistani officials said the domestic approval process had been

completed and sought Qatar's cooperation in finalising the remaining formalities. Pakistan also called on Qatar to lift its ban on imports of bone-in meat. Pakistani authorities said comprehensive technical documentation concerning animal health and food safety had already been provided to Qatar. The two sides discussed a proposed government-to-government agreement for rice supplies from Pakistan to Qatar.

Amir Muqam says Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ready for political change

- Federal Minister Amir Muqam claims Khyber Pakhtunkhwa residents have rejected PTI's protest politics, pledging public welfare measures and accountability for alleged corruption.

SPECIAL REPORTER

BISHAM



large turnout demonstrated public enthusiasm. He challenged critics who, he alleged, had been spreading propaganda on YouTube to assess the response at the rally. The federal minister also claimed that people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had rejected PTI's protest movement and criticised the former provincial government over its performance. Muqam said he had observed a significant presence of young people at the gathering,

estimating that they accounted for around 80% of the participants. He further alleged that negotiations with PTI had continued for 12 hours but failed to produce a meaningful agenda for public welfare. He accused

the former chief minister of making misleading statements during the discussions. According to Muqam, residents had become increasingly aware of what he described as the opposition party's political agenda. He also claimed that celebrations had taken place in some areas following the end of the previous provincial administration. The minister asserted that PTI's political influence in the province had been weakened, adding that his government would seek accountability for every rupee allegedly misappropriated during the

previous administration. However, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) did not believe in political victimisation or a politics of revenge. Muqam said the government's priority was to address public grievances, overcome longstanding deprivations and improve living conditions across the province. He added that the government would continue its public service agenda under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and expressed confidence that residents would see changes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the coming period. The minister's remarks come amid continuing political differences between the PML-N-led federal government and PTI over governance, political protests and accountability.

Ashrafi declares Haramain Sharifain's security red line for Muslims, says it cannot be compromised

- He stressed that the entire Muslim Ummah must unite against any attempt to target Baitullah al-Ateeq and Masjid-e-Nabawi (Peace Be Upon Him) after Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



:Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, has expressed grave concern and strongly condemned reports of Houthi ballistic missile attacks towards Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madinah al-Munawwarah, saying that the Haramain Sharifain are a red line for two billion Muslims and no attempt to attack their sanctity and security is acceptable. He said the designs of Houthi terrorists and their backers were extremely dangerous. He stressed that the entire Muslim Ummah

must unite against any attempt to target Baitullah al-Ateeq and Masjid-e-Nabawi (Peace Be Upon Him) after Al-Aqsa Mosque. Ashrafi called upon Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to take steps to convene an immediate

emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. He also urged the United Nations Security Council to hold an immediate meeting and take decisive measures against these terrorist threats. He said two billion Muslims could not remain silent on the sanctity and protection of the Haramain Sharifain. The leadership of the Islamic world must now make a clear, unequivocal and collective decision. The Muslim Ummah is waiting for this decision. The entire Muslim Ummah stands shoulder to shoulder with the Saudi leadership and people in defending the Haramain Sharifain and safeguarding the security and stability of Saudi Arabia.

Distributors end strike as 3rd LPG ship in two days docks at Karachi

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI



The distributors have called off their strike after third ship in two days carrying LPGA docked at Karachi Port on Sunday. The back-to-back LPG ships arrival has strengthened hopes that the rate will come down which have shot up to over Rs600 per kg in some cities. A ship carrying 4,000 metric tonnes LPG from Bahrain berthed at Port Qasim on Sunday. Over the two days, more than 11,000 metric tons LPG has arrived at Port Qasim. Meanwhile, LPG Distributors Association has called out their strike and agree to reopen their shops in Lahore. Association's general secretary Rana Abdul Jabbar claimed that the district administration has shown willingness to accept their demands.

Iran says border with Pakistan open, LPG exports face no restrictions

- Envoy says Pakistan's E-Form changes have effectively stalled cargo dispatches

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Iran has said its border with Pakistan remains open and there are currently no restrictions on the export of Iranian goods, including liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), to the country. Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amir Moghadam issued the clarification amid reports concerning the closure of the Iranian border, saying Tehran had imposed no restrictions on exports to Pakistan. "Iran's borders with all its neighbouring countries remain open," the envoy said in a statement on X. "Under the prevailing circumstances, it would be neither logical nor in the interests of either side for Iran to close its borders to its immediate neighbours, particularly brotherly Pakistan," he added. Moghadam, however, pointed towards changes in Pakistan's E-Form procedure for imports from Iran, saying they had created a situation in which traders were "effectively and literally unable to dispatch cargo from Iran to Pakistan". He said consultations with the Pakistani side were currently underway to



address the issue. Hundreds of LPG trucks await clearance. The Iranian envoy also said that, according to reports, several hundred trucks carrying LPG had crossed the Rimdan border into Gbad on the Pakistani side. However, the trucks had remained there for several weeks without being unloaded or cleared, he said. Moghadam said the situation was further complicating the movement of goods and the smooth flow of bilateral trade. The ambassador stressed that cross-border trade between Pakistan and Iran was an integral part of bilateral agreements reached at the highest levels and served the interests of both countries and their people.

Pakistan Railways declares three-month emergency amid rising accidents

- Hanif Abbasi said the emergency, effective from October 24, would remain in place until deficiencies in passenger coaches were addressed

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan Railways has declared an emergency until December 31 following a series of train accidents and derailments, ordering officers to cancel holidays and urgently address operational shortcomings to improve passenger safety and ensure the secure transportation of goods across the country. The decision comes after several recent railway accidents, including the derailment of the Rehman Baba Express near Multan on October 13, which resulted in multiple casualties. Announcing the measures on Saturday, Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi said the emergency, effective from October 24, would remain in place until deficiencies in passenger coaches, freight wagons, locomotives, signalling systems and other railway infrastructure were addressed.

He warned that officers in the operations department, including himself, would not be allowed to take Saturdays, Sundays or other public holidays off until the shortcomings were resolved. All types of leave, except medical leave, have been suspended for officers and officials under the emergency arrangements. Railway personnel have also been directed to monitor train operations in the field, while chief engineers of the civil and mechanical departments must submit daily progress reports to the ministry. The head of the safety department has likewise been instructed to provide daily updates.



Pakistan secures second place at International Military Drone Competition in Türkiye

- Pakistan also achieved individual success, with Captain Talha finishing second among more than 100 international pilots to win a silver medal

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD

akistan secured second place among 33 countries at an International Military Drone Team Competition held in Ankara, Türkiye, demonstrating the skills of its military drone pilots. According to reports, Pakistan also achieved individual success, with Captain Talha finishing second among more than 100 international pilots to win a silver medal. Host nation Türkiye claimed first place, followed by Pakistan in second and Italy in third, while France finished fourth.

The competition assessed pilots' technical skills, speed and ability to navigate drones through obstacle courses. Pakistan's military drone team demonstrated its proficiency, precision and competitive capabilities during the international event. Pakistan's performance was described as a reflection of the professional expertise of its armed forces and their capabilities in modern defence technology. The team's overall achievement, along with Captain Talha's individual silver medal, marked a notable result for Pakistan at the international competition.

Senate to take up 84-point agenda featuring constitutional changes, key bills

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Proposed changes to the Constitution, amendments to criminal law and regulations on tinted vehicle windows are among the key topics on the Senate's 84-point agenda for its session scheduled for tomorrow, reported The Senate Secretariat has issued the agenda for the session, which will begin at 4pm

at Parliament House. A motion to introduce a bill seeking amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure is included in the agenda, alongside a proposal to amend Article 140-A of the Constitution and add the Sixth Schedule. The agenda also features a bill by Senator Sherry Rehman seeking amendments to the law banning plastic book covers, as well as proposed legislation to regulate tinted windows in motor vehicles.