Daily The Spokesman

Simultaneously Published From
Rawalpindi, Lahore , Multan

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ABC Certified

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A LEADING NATIONAL DAILY -

www.dailyspokesman.net @daily_spokesman Daily Spokesman

Wednesday, November 18,2026 | Jamadius Sani 7,1448AH | Vol: 20 | Issue: 209 | Price Rs,30.00 | Pages-8



Pakistan, Turkiye discuss strengthening defence cooperation, regional security

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Turkish Air Force Commander General Rafet Dalkiran met Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (Continued on Page-5)



CM Punjab announces Khushhal Dehat Programme for rural development

News Reporter

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided to launch the "Khushhal Dehat Programme" to promote rural development across the province, with local residents empowered to make decisions about development projects in their villages.
Under the initiative, villages will be equipped with paved streets, drainage systems, wastewater disposal ponds and (Continued on Page-5)



Islamabad: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with a delegation of Endeavour Group.

PM Shehbaz calls for stronger support to Pakistani startups, global market access

■ **Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called on the Endeavor Group to enhance its support for Pakistani entrepreneurs by strengthening their capacity, providing international mentorship and facilitating links with global investors.**

Atif Saeed

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called on the Endeavor Group to enhance its support for Pakistani entrepreneurs by strengthening their capacity, providing international mentorship and facilitating links with global investors.
During a meeting with a delegation of the Endeavor Group here, the prime minister said Pakistan's talented youth possessed immense entrepreneurial potential, adding that the government was committed to providing them with a conducive environment to establish and expand their businesses, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.
He said modern technology, innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset were key drivers of Pakistan's economic growth, and the government was promoting investment and public-private sector collaboration in these areas.The prime minister informed the delegation that an Information Technology (IT) Park had recently been inaugurated in Islamabad, where all possible facilities had been made available to startups.
He said the IT Park would be developed into a modern technology ecosystem through effective collaboration between academia and industry.
Appreciating Endeavor Group's global experience and its contribution towards promoting entrepreneurship in Pakistan, the prime minister said international best practices and the experience of successful businesses could help Pakistani startups and enterprises gain greater access to international markets.He urged the (Continued on Page-5)

Rangers official martyred in firing near Rawalakot bus terminal



News Reporter

RAWALAKOT

Law enforcement personnel remain deployed in Rawalakot and surrounding areas to maintain public order and protect residents, while armed individuals are reportedly attempting to disrupt security measures through violence and intimidation.
According to the report, armed men opened indiscriminate fire on law enforcement personnel deployed near the Matyalmera Bus Terminal at around 10:30am on Tuesday. Pakistan Rangers Deputy Superintendent Barkat was shot in the head and seriously injured. The injured officer was immediately shifted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalakot, where he succumbed to his injuries. Law enforcement agencies responded to the attack and killed four armed men, according to the report. An operation was under way to restore control of the situation in the area.Officials said legal action would continue against those involved in disrupting daily life, intimidating residents and attacking law enforcement personnel in Rawalakot. They added that those involved in the Matyalmera firing would be brought to justice and that no leniency would be shown towards armed groups involved in violence.



31 Countries to Participate in International Qirat Competition in Islamabad

Government finalises arrangements for November 24-26 event; renowned Quran reciters to showcase their skills.



News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is set to host the Second International Qirat Competition in Islamabad from November 24 to 26, bringing together renowned Quran reciters from 31 countries, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf announced on Tuesday.Addressing a news conference regarding the upcoming event, the minister said the competition would serve as an important international platform to promote the teachings of the Holy Quran, highlight the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of Quranic recitation, and spread its universal message across the world.Secretary Religious Affairs Abrar Ahmed Mirza, Joint Secretary Shahbaz Mustafa, Deputy Secretary Dr Shahid-ur-Rehman Marth and Chief Judge and recipient of the Presidential Award, renowned Qari Syed Sadaqat Ali, were also present.Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said invitations had been extended to 69 countries, out of which participants from 31 countries were expected to attend. Visa arrangements for foreign guests had been completed, and their arrival in Pakistan was scheduled for November 23. He added that all administrative arrangements for the competition had been finalised.The minister said transparency, merit and professional standards would be ensured throughout the competition. Judges from Iran and Egypt had been selected, while the process of selecting Pakistan's representative Qari was also underway.He emphasised that the event was not merely a competition but a global expression of love, devotion and commitment to the Holy Quran, providing distinguished Qaris with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and benefit from one another's experiences.The minister further announced that the programme would be extended beyond Islamabad to other major cities. The Qaris securing first, second and third positions would visit Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi, where one-day Quran recitation gatherings would be organised to provide people with an opportunity to listen to internationally acclaimed reciters.He said the initiative aimed to encourage younger generations to develop an interest in Quranic recitation, memorisation and correct pronunciation. The government wanted the event to produce lasting and positive impacts rather than remain limited to a three-day programme.Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said such international events would also strengthen religious, cultural and fraternal relations between Pakistan and participating countries while promoting unity, harmony and mutual respect within the Muslim Ummah.

FUUAST, University of Chitral Sign MoU to Strengthen Academic Cooperation

Agreement to promote joint research, faculty exchange and academic collaboration between the two universities



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), and the University of Chitral have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote academic cooperation, joint research and faculty exchange between the two institutions, on Tuesday 17 November. The MoU was signed by FUUAST through its Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), in collaboration with the relevant research office of the University of Chitral. Under the agreement, faculty members from both universities will have opportunities to visit each other's institutions for a limited period to participate in teaching activities, share academic experiences and work together on research projects.The MoU was signed by the Vice Chancellors of both universities Prof Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari and Prof. Dr. Hazir Ullah on Tuesday 17 November at FUUAST campus Islamabad. Incharge Campus Dr.Tariq Mehmood, Deputy Director ORIC Dr. Faisal Javaid and the heads of various departments and administrative officials of FUUAST were present on the occasion.Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of FUUAST Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari said that FUUAST is focusing on strengthening both national and international academic connections. He also mentioned its growing cooperation with China and also efforts to promote the learning of Russian and Turkish languages at the campus. He added that FUUAST is working to provide students with quality education and better opportunities in research and higher studies. Dr. Shinwari further said that FUUAST believes in putting MoUs into practice through meaningful academic activities and cooperation, rather than keeping them limited to formal agreements.The Vice Chancellor of the University of Chitral, Dr. Hazir Ullah appreciated the academic environment and research efforts of FUUAST and praised the leadership and performance of its Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari.

Punjab plans new legal framework for issuing police clearance certificates



Staff Reporter

LAHORE

The Punjab government has decided to introduce a formal legal framework for issuing police clearance certificates to citizens who have been acquitted, discharged or had criminal cases dismissed.

In this regard, the Police Order (Amendment) Act 2026 bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Law for consideration.

The proposed amendment to the Punjab Police Order 2002 was presented in the Punjab Assembly a day earlier. According to the bill, citizens acquitted in criminal cases will be issued police clearance certificates without details of the relevant cases, helping them avoid difficulties in securing employment, visas and immigration approvals.

The bill states that even after acquittal, discharge or dismissal of a case, the inclusion of criminal case records in police certificates can create obstacles for citizens seeking employment or travelling abroad. It therefore proposes legislation to address the issue.

Under the proposed law, applicants will be required to submit their applications to the head of police in their respective districts. If no criminal record is found, the certificate must be issued within three days. Citizens seeking certificates after acquittal will have to attach certified copies of the relevant court orders to their applications. Once the court documents have been verified, the police clearance certificate may be issued within 15 days.

The bill further stipulates that police certificates issued following an acquittal or dismissal of a case will not disclose details of the relevant criminal proceedings. However, the status of individuals declared habitual offenders will be mentioned in the certificate.

NCCIA advises job seekers to verify call centres before applying

NCCIA urges young job seekers to verify call centres' legal status and registrations before accepting employment to avoid involvement in illegal activities.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has issued an advisory for young men and women, urging them to verify the legal status of call centres before applying for jobs to avoid becoming involved in activities that could lead to police records.

According to the advisory, applicants should verify a call centre's registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) before starting employment.

The agency said the company must be registered with the SECP and possess a National Tax Number (NTN) and tax registration with the FBR.



It also advised young job seekers to confirm through the PTA whether the company had obtained IP whitelisting and was using legally authorised telecommunications services.

Applicants were further urged to ensure that the company was not involved in fraud, identity forgery or illegal financial schemes.

IIUI Makes Major Leap in Global Rankings, Enters Top 500 Worldwide and Top 10 in Pakistan

IIUI improves its THE interdisciplinary education and research ranking by 200 positions, while securing a place among Pakistan's top 10 universities in QS Sustainability Rankings 2027.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) has achieved a significant milestone in global and national university rankings, further strengthening its position in Pakistan's higher education sector.According to the Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings, the university has secured a place among the world's top 500 institutions in the field of interdisciplinary education and research. The achievement marks a remarkable improvement of 200 positions compared to its previous ranking.Similarly, the university has secured a place among Pakistan's top 10 universities in the QS Sustainability Rankings 2027, improving its position by three



places."This is a matter of pride not only for Pakistan but for the entire Muslim Ummah, as the International Islamic University is an asset of the Ummah," IIUI President Professor Dr Ahmed Saad Al-Ahmad said while commenting on the achievement."Few could have imagined that we would reach this position, but we have made it possible," he remarked.The university president particularly appreciated the tireless efforts and contributions of Vice President for Research and Enterprise Professor Dr Ahmed Shuja Syed. He also acknowledged the role of the ranking committee, Director of the Quality Assurance Directorate (QAD) Professor Dr Rehmat Elahi, faculty members, administrative staff and, above all, students in achieving this success."Students are our future and our ambassadors, and all our efforts are centred on them," he said.It is worth mentioning that since assuming the office of president, Professor Dr Ahmed Saad Al-Ahmad has consistently encouraged cross-cutting, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research at the university.Drawing on his extensive international experience and leadership capabilities.

CDA plans multi-facility public park with sports courts, library in Islamabad

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Capital Development Authority (CDA) is developing Babur Park as a multi-facility public recreational space in Islamabad, featuring sports courts, jogging tracks, a modern library and dedicated facilities for children.

CDA plans multi-facility public park with sports courts, library in Islamabad

The project aims to provide residents with recreational, sporting and leisure facilities, with development work currently underway, according to the CDA. CDA Chairman and Islamabad Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf, accompanied by Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi and other senior officials, visited the park on Tuesday to review progress on the project.



BISP approves inclusion of unmarried women aged 45 and above

News Desk

KARACHI

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has decided to extend financial assistance to deserving unmarried women aged 45 and above.

BISP Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid said the programme's board had approved the inclusion of eligible unmarried women aged 45 or older in the social protection initiative.

She clarified that the decision applies to women who have never been married. Such women will now be eligible to receive financial assistance from BISP, provided they meet the programme's prescribed eligibility criteria.



Drought alert issued for several districts in Sindh, Balochistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a high alert for several districts of Sindh over the risk of severe drought following an assessment of drought conditions across the country.According to the NEOC, parts of Umerkot, Tharparkar, Mirpurkhas and Sujawal districts are at serious risk of drought, prompting authorities to closely monitor the situation.

In addition to Sindh, parts of Chagai and Washuk districts in Balochistan are also experiencing drought conditions.The NEOC identified below-average rainfall, prolonged dry spells, rising temperatures and changes in monsoon rainfall patterns as major factors contributing to the worsening situation.

OIC-COMSTECH Offers 25 Fully Funded Fellowships to Bosnian Students and Researchers

■ **Programme covers AI, ICT, biomedical sciences and nanotechnology; COMSTECH proposes academic partnerships with five leading Bosnian universities to promote joint research, faculty exchanges and scientific cooperation.**

STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad



OIC-COMSTECH has offered 25 fully funded fellowships to students and researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in emerging scientific fields, while also proposing to invite rectors of five leading Bosnian universities for academic and institutional engagement with COMSTECH and its partner institutions.The offer was made during a meeting between the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Emin Cohodarevic and Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary at the COMSTECH Secretariat on Tuesday.Bosnia and Herzegovina holds observer status in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.Prof. Choudhary said the fellowships would be offered through the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) and would provide Bosnian researchers and students opportunities to work at leading member universities and research institutions.The fellowships, for a duration of up to one year, will cover areas including artificial intelligence, information and communication technologies, biomedical sciences and nanotechnology. COMSTECH will cover major expenses, including international travel and placement at participating CCoE institutions.Prof. Choudhary said the initiative was intended to promote two-way scientific and academic mobility, noting that Bosnia and Herzegovina itself had strong universities and research institutions that could provide opportunities for scientists and students from other OIC countries.He also proposed hosting a "Bosnia Evening" at COMSTECH, combining scientific and academic interaction with presentations on Bosnian culture, heritage and educational institutions.



IGP Islamabad Reviews Police Training, Administrative Performance and Public Grievances

■ **Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry directs improvements in professional training, administrative transparency and timely resolution of police personnel's and citizens' complaints.**

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

IGP Islamabad Reviews Police Training, Administrative Performance and Public Grievances, Issues Key DirectivesAccording to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry chaired an important meeting at the Central Police Office, attended by the DIG Headquarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq, DIG Law and Order & Training Muhammad Atiq Tahir, AIG Logistics and SP Capital Police College.The meeting focused on aligning the professional training standards of Islamabad Police officers and officials with modern requirements, ensuring effective arrangements for the basic training of newly recruited personnel, and upgrading training facilities at the Capital Police College.IGP Islamabad directed the concerned officers to further improve the training system and ensure that newly recruited personnel receive comprehensive training in modern policing, professional skills, legal procedures and public service. He emphasized that a well-trained police force is essential for effective policing and the efficient performance of professional duties.He further directed that available training facilities be improved and the overall standard of professional training be enhanced to meet contemporary policing requirements.Separately, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry held a meeting with Assistant Directors of various branches at the Central Police Office, during which he reviewed their overall performance, administrative affairs and ongoing initiatives.He issued necessary directions to ensure transparency in official matters, improve professional capacity, strengthen coordination among branches and make administrative processes more organized and efficient. He stressed that all official tasks should be completed responsibly and within the stipulated time, without unnecessary delays.IGP Islamabad also personally heard the personal and departmental issues of police officers and officials visiting the Central Police Office and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for their timely resolution.He also met citizens who visited his office, listened to their complaints and concerns, and directed the relevant officers to take immediate steps for their resolution.

PM Youth Programme to Extend Benefits to Deserving Youth Supported by Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal

■ **Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan agrees to include eligible students, Women Empowerment Centre trainees and Pakistan Sweet Homes residents in laptop, skills development and business loan schemes.**

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, has agreed to extend the benefits of the Prime Minister's flagship youth initiatives to deserving young people supported by Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), opening new avenues for their educational advancement, skills development, entrepreneurship and economic self-reliance.The understanding was reached during his visit to Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Head Office, where he was received by Managing Director PBM, Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt. The meeting focused on strengthening institutional cooperation between the two federal government organizations and creating sustainable opportunities for underprivileged youth.The delegation was also briefed on PBM's digital transformation, particularly its e-Beneficiary Management System (e-BMS), Management Information System (MIS) and hybrid cloud infrastructure, which facilitate beneficiary verification, transparent operations and efficient service delivery.Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan agreed to facilitate the inclusion of eligible PBM-supported university students, Women Empowerment Centre trainees and youth residing in Pakistan Sweet Homes in the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, Youth Skills Development Programme and Youth Business & Loan Scheme, subject to the respective programme criteria. PBM will identify and nominate deserving candidates through its verified digital records and facilitate outreach through its nationwide network of 165 Women Empowerment Centres and 46 Pakistan Sweet Homes.Both sides agreed to nominate dedicated focal persons to ensure continuous coordination, facilitate beneficiary nominations and oversee the implementation of agreed initiatives.

Punjab Govt Appoints Muhammad Sohaib Ashraf as New CPO Rawalpindi

■ **Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera Transferred as DIG Operations, CTD Punjab**



CRIME REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

The Punjab government has transferred City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera and appointed Muhammad Sohaib Ashraf as the new CPO Rawalpindi with immediate effect.According to a notification issued by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD), Punjab, on Tuesday, Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera (PSP/BS-20) has been transferred and posted as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Punjab, Lahore, against an existing vacancy.Meanwhile, Muhammad Sohaib Ashraf (PSP/BS-19), who was awaiting posting in the Central Police Office (CPO), Punjab, has been appointed City Police Officer Rawalpindi in place of Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera.The notification stated that Ashraf's appointment has been made under Section 9 of the Punjab Civil Servants Act, 1974, with immediate effect.The transfer and posting orders were issued by the Punjab government under the authority of Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman.

ITP Makes Vehicle Fitness Certificates Mandatory, Sets November 30 Deadline for Smoke-Free Vehicles

■ **Transporters warned of strict legal action after deadline as Islamabad steps up efforts to combat smog and air pollution.**



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has made vehicle fitness certificates mandatory for all vehicles in the federal capital and directed transporters to make their vehicles smoke-free by November 30, warning of strict legal action against violators after the deadline.

ITP sets Nov 30 deadline for smoke-emitting vehicles, makes fitness certificates mandatory An ITP official told APP onTuesday that the decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Kainat Azhar Khan with representatives of the Islamabad-Rawalpindi Goods Transport Union and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce.

He said the meeting discussed vehicle fitness, prevention of smog and measures to reduce air pollution caused by smoke-emitting vehicles.

The CTO Kainat directed transporters to ensure their vehicles met the required fitness and emission standards by November 30, warning that a crackdown would be launched against smoke-emitting vehicles after the deadline.

She said vehicles carrying sand, gravel and cement must be properly covered with tarpaulins to prevent dust pollution, adding that violations would also invite legal action.

Kainat said smoke-emitting vehicles posed a serious threat to human health and stressed the need for collective efforts to make Islamabad smog-free.

Unity of Muslim Ummah Essential for Protection of Haramain Sharifain: Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad

■ **Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad presides over conference; speakers highlight the protection of Haramain Sharifain, national unity, the role of religious seminaries and Pakistan's contribution to global peace.**

STAFF REPORTER

Dera Ghazi Khan



A Paigham-e-Pakistan Peace Conference was held in Dera Ghazi Khan under the theme of Protection of Haramain Sharifain, Religious Harmony, Respect for Humanity, the Role of Minbar-o-Mihrab and Religious Seminaries, and Promotion of the Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative.The conference aimed to highlight Pakistan's role in establishing global peace, the success of Marka-e-Haq, the mutual defence agreement between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye for the protection of Haramain Sharifain, and the promotion of the Paigham-e-Pakistan message.The participants stressed the importance of national unity, religious harmony, countering extremist elements, and taking Pakistan's national narrative of Paigham-e-Pakistan to every household. The role of religious scholars, religious seminaries, Minbar-o-Mihrab and youth in promoting peace and harmony in society was also discussed.The conference also paid tribute to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir for their services and efforts towards promoting peace at the international level.The conference was presided over by Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee of Pakistan and Khateeb and Imam of Badshahi Mosque Lahore, Ambassador of Peace Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad.Commissioner Dera Ghazi Khan Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed Chaudhry, RPO Dera Ghazi Khan Muhammad Azhar Akram, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffargarh Hafiz Usman Tahir Jappa, DPO Muzaffargarh Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah, DPO Kot Addu Mansoor Qamar, Deputy Commissioner Kot Addu Syed Jawad Haider and Deputy Commissioner Rajanpur Imran Ranjha, along with other deputy commissioners and district police officers, attended the conference.Prominent religious scholars, spiritual leaders, social figures and representatives of different schools of thought participated and addressed the gathering.

Punjab Finalises Security Arrangements for Baba Guru Nanak's 557th Birth Anniversary

■ **Over 5,000 personnel, 420 CCTV cameras to ensure foolproof security in Nankana Sahib; celebrations from November 22 to December 1**

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



The Cabinet Committee on Law and Order visited Nankana Sahib to review arrangements for the 557th birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Provincial Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee Khawaja Salman Rafique, Provincial Minister and Co-Chairman Bilal Yasin, Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora and Secretary Home Punjab Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi attended the visit. The committee chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements and also conducted a detailed visit to Gurdwara Janam Asthan. Commissioner Lahore Division Jahanzeb Khan and RPO Sheikhupura Athar Ismail accompanied the committee. Deputy Commissioner Nankana Sahib Ranaa Hameed and DPO Arslan Zahid gave a detailed briefing on the arrangements. Administrative officers, members of the Peace Committee and Sikh community leaders also attended the meeting and visit. The briefing was informed that the birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji will continue from November 22 to December 1, and all arrangements for the celebrations have been completed. Pilgrims will visit Nankana Sahib, Farooqabad in Sheikhupura, Hasan Abdal, Kartarpur in Narowal and Lahore. More than 5,000 officers and personnel will be deployed in Nankana Sahib to ensure security during the celebrations. A total of 420 CCTV cameras have been installed for surveillance, while control rooms are fully operational. Comprehensive arrangements have been made across the city for security, cleanliness, accommodation and food. Facilitation desks, including medical facilities, have also been established at the Gurdwaras. The briefing further stated that foolproof accommodation and security arrangements for Sikh pilgrims visiting Nankana Sahib have been finalised. Nankana Sahib city will remain free from gas and electricity load-shedding, while leave of officers and staff has been cancelled. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee Khawaja Salman Rafique said that arrangements for the birth anniversary celebrations were being reviewed on the directions of the Chief Minister Punjab.

Taliban supreme leader makes rare visit to Afghan capital



Web DESK

Kandahar

The Taliban's reclusive Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada made a rare visit to the Afghan capital Kabul on Tuesday, heralding the "extraordinary turn of events" that brought him to power.

Based in Kandahar, the southern heartland of the Taliban movement, Akhundzada has ruled Afghanistan by decree for more than five years."Now that Islam has triumphed, an Islamic system has been established, and the Islamic Emirate holds authority -- it is essential to help people understand the true nature of the Islamic Emirate" of Afghanistan, Akhundzada said at Kabul University, according to a government live audio feed.

Akhundzada inherited the Taliban leadership a decade ago and has made only a handful of visits to Kabul in recent years.

A massive security operation was launched ahead of his attendance at the Kabul conference, about the impact of his decrees, with heavily-manned checkpoints installed around the venue.

AFP journalists saw snipers atop buildings surrounding Kabul University, dozens of Humvees guarding the gates and intelligence agents stationed in the area.

Kabul University has been shut since Sunday, staff and students told AFP, while residents in the area said their homes were searched.The thousands of attendees included senior officials and scholars, the Ministry of Higher Education said Monday.



Islamabad: November 17, 2026: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Turkmenistan's Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, Dortguly Suleymanov, pose for a group photograph with senior officials following their bilateral meeting on trade and economic cooperation.

Trump administration moves to block China from indirect access to American AI technology

The rule came on the same day President Donald Trump departed for a trip to Asia, where he expects to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping for the third time this year amid a fragile truce on trade.

Web Desk

WASHINGTON



The Trump administration issued new rules to restrict remote access to advanced U.S. computing chips and servers, marking the latest step to limit China's abilities to use U.S. chips to train their best artificial intelligence models.

Last week, Nvidia co-founder Jensen Huang resigned as CEO following scrutiny of his ties to a Chinese executive who used to lead Singapore-based Megaspeed International, which is suspected of diverting advanced Nvidia chips to China in violation of U.S. export controls. The company provides computing power to Chinese companies using chips housed in Southeast Asian data centers, including facilities in Malaysia.

"The rule is designed to ensure that existing restrictions on access to sensitive American technology cannot be circumvented through remote computing arrangements involving data centers in third countries," the Bureau of Industry and Security under the Commerce Department said in issuing the rule that took effect immediately.

The rule came on the same day President Donald Trump departed for a trip to Asia, where he expects to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping for the third time this year amid a fragile truce on trade.

Under the new rule, overseas data centers that serve companies in countries including China, Russia, Iran and Cuba are required to identify their end users. There also will be additional licensing requirements for sales of chips for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand or Brazil — countries that "present a higher-than-normal risk of diversion" to unauthorized destinations, the rule says.

In Beijing, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun accused Washington of arbitrarily interfering with China's trade and technological cooperation with other countries and suppressing the development of China's high-tech industries.

"This is a typical example of economic coercion and long-arm jurisdiction, runs counter to the common understanding between the two sides," he told reporter, adding that it infringes upon the rights of Chinese companies and disrupts the stability of global supply chains.

He said China would take necessary measures to safeguard its interests.

The U.S. bans sales of the country's most advanced AI chips to China, seeking to maintain an edge in its rivalry with China for predominance in artificial

US military readiness and security shortcomings exposed

A US Army survivor has exposed serious security failures at a Kuwait base, where inadequate defences preceded a deadly Iranian drone attack.

Web Desk

Washington



Serious shortcomings in the US military's defence preparedness and security arrangements have come to light following revelations by a US Army officer who survived an Iranian drone attack in Kuwait.

Major Stephen Reamsbottom, who survived the attack, said the military base lacked adequate security measures despite prior warnings of a possible Iranian retaliatory strike.

Speaking on CBS's 60 Minutes, the major revealed that six US service members were killed in an Iranian drone attack on Camp Arifjan? No—the attack took place at Port Shuaiba military base in Kuwait on March 1.

He said the base lacked sufficiently reinforced shelters to protect personnel from aerial attacks, effective counter-drone defence systems and adequate medical facilities.

According to the major, US intelligence had already identified the base as a potential Iranian target. However, despite assurances that counter-drone defence systems would be provided, the promised equipment was never deployed.

US intelligence warns of Iranian dirty bomb or chemical attack plot targeting Trump officials: CNN

Plans prompt heightened security concerns and contingency planning within US government, report says

Web Desk

WASHINGTON



US intelligence agencies have detected Iranian planning for potential attacks against senior Trump administration officials in Washington, DC, involving a radioactive dirty bomb or chemical weapons, CNN reported on Monday, citing seven US officials familiar with the intelligence.

The reported plans have prompted heightened security concerns and contingency planning within the US government, although officials remain divided over whether Iran has the capability or intention to carry out an attack.

According to CNN, sources familiar with the intelligence characterised the Iranian activity as an effort to develop potential attack options rather than evidence of an imminent operation. However, two sources said the planning identified specific locations and potential targets in the US capital.

White House spokesperson Lauren Bis said the administration was monitoring potential threats but emphasised that there was no confirmed immediate danger.

The US is "monitoring any and all potential threats, but at this time, there are no credible threats to the homeland," Bis said, according to the report.

The intelligence has reportedly triggered several meetings among US officials over the past week to discuss possible responses and preventive measures.One source familiar with the intelligence described the contingency planning as "prudent," while another said officials were still debating whether Iran had personnel capable of executing such an operation.

The security concerns have also affected protection arrangements for senior administration officials. According to CNN, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent was moved into military housing last week following threats linked to Iran. Iran's diplomatic mission to the UN in New York rejected allegations that Tehran was considering using chemical weapons.

In a statement, the Iranian mission said the country "considers the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances to be wholly illegitimate and categorically rejects and unequivocally refutes the false and fabricated allegations circulated in this regard."

The Pentagon referred questions to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which declined to comment, CNN reported.

Two mass shootings claim 17 lives in South Africa

Web Desk

JOHANNESBURG



Seventeen people have been killed in two separate mass shootings in South Africa, police said the crime-weary country battles persistently high murder rates.

In one incident, nine bodies were found on Monday in an informal settlement outside the capital Pretoria, police said.

"All nine were found in a shack with gunshot wounds this morning," a spokeswoman said. The dead were six men and three women.

Provincial police commissioner Tommy Mthombeni said the attack may be linked to a shooting last year at a nearby informal settlement in which 12 people were killed and 13 wounded.

The second killing occurred in a semi-rural area outside the eastern city of Pietermaritzburg where police found a bullet-riddled vehicle after responding to reports of a shooting on Sunday.

"Inside the vehicle police found eight men who had multiple gunshot wounds and were certified dead at the scene," police said on Monday. They were believed to be between 20 and 30 years old.

US naval presence in Middle East exceeds peak of Iran war: Israeli institute



NEWS DESK

NORTH ARABIAN

The current US naval presence in the Middle East region exceeds the level recorded during the peak of the US-Israeli war on Iran in February and March, an Israeli security institute said on Tuesday.

The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) said in a statement that it compiled open-source data on the current number of US forces and naval vessels deployed in the Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean."The current US naval presence exceeds the size of the forces deployed during Operation Epic Fury, providing greater offensive capabilities and broader missile-interception capacity," the institute said.

Israel drops explosives packaged in boxes in Gaza

Residents report Israeli drones dropping boxes of explosives onto buildings before remote detonations

STAFF REPORTER

ABU DHABI



Israeli forces are using quadcopter drones to drop boxes packed with explosives onto or beside Palestinian houses in Gaza, residents and witnesses say.

The explosives are detonated remotely, destroying buildings and damaging properties. Residents have observed the method for about a week in areas close to Israeli military positions.

The explosions have spread fear among families nearby, prompting some to flee. Witnesses have reported boxes containing several kilograms of explosives being dropped onto houses and other buildings.

Video footage showed Israeli drones dropping boxes of explosives onto rooftops. The operations have been reported east of Gaza City's Zeitoun and Tuffah neighbourhoods, as well as in eastern Deir al-Balah and Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza.

Local sources said dozens of Palestinians fled the Zeitoun neighbourhood on Friday, fearing their homes would be targeted next.

The demolitions continued into Monday, when sources reported drones dropping explosive boxes near the Wadi Gaza bridge on Salah al-Din Street and north of the Bureij and Nuseirat refugee camps. They reported at least seven such operations, causing powerful explosions and extensive destruction.

On Nov. 10, Israeli forces used the same method to demolish two houses that had already been evacuated east of Maghazi refugee camp, local sources told Anadolu.

Four similar demolitions were reported around Dar al-Salam Hospital in northeastern Khan Younis, in southern Gaza.

The tactic adds to the methods Israeli forces have used to destroy Palestinian buildings since the war began, including heavy aerial bombardment, artillery fire, explosives planted inside or around buildings, and military bulldozers.

Israeli forces have also used old military vehicles packed with explosives, sending them between buildings near army-held areas. The resulting blasts have destroyed entire residential blocks.

Demolitions have continued in Israeli-controlled areas along the "Yellow Line" despite the ceasefire that took effect on Oct. 10, 2025.

Israeli violations of the agreement have killed 1,650 Palestinians and wounded 5,975 others as of Monday, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Daily The Spokesman

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ECO backs Pakistan's peace push

The Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) on Monday threw its collective weight behind Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to end the Iran-US conflict, welcoming Tehran's latest peace initiative and calling for a complete and permanent termination of the war, in a significant regional endorsement of Islamabad's mediation efforts.

The Islamabad Communique, adopted at the 30th meeting of reaffirming the importance of resolving disputes through diplomacy, respect for international law and mutual trust.Speaking at a news conference after chairing the ECO ministerial meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar reiterated that Pakistan had not abandoned hopes of bringing Washington and Tehran back to the negotiating table.

Dar said Islamabad was still awaiting Washington's response to Iran's latest proposals and would



the ECO Council of Ministers, specifically appreciated Pakistan's role in facilitating the Islamabad peace talks and the resulting Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as well as its participation in subsequent negotiations in Burgenstock, Switzerland.

The 10-member regional organisation also expressed support for the mediation efforts undertaken by Pakistan and Qatar and welcomed Iran's recent initiative aimed at achieving a "dignified resolution" of the conflict and ensuring the "complete and permanent termination" of the ongoing war.

The communique, while expressing concern over the challenging geopolitical environment, called for restraint, dialogue and diplomatic engagement, continue pursuing diplomatic efforts. "We have discussed the latest situation. The response from the US is pending. We have not given up on our efforts. We are still trying. Let's hope for the best," he said.

Dar's remarks followed his meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who visited Islamabad to attend the ECO meeting. The two foreign ministers discussed the latest regional developments, particularly the Iran-US conflict and ongoing efforts to revive the diplomatic process.

Dar said the earlier proposal envisaged a seven-day period for the diplomatic process, but the timeline had now been fast-tracked to two days. He did not disclose further details about the proposed arrangement or the response Islamabad was expecting from Washington.

Separately, the Islamabad

Forgotten Kinship with Habasha



Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood

Growing up in Pakistan, few of us escaped the story of Hazrat Bilal ibn Rabah (RA). It reached us through a grandmother's bedtime telling, a Friday sermon, or a schoolbook chapter. Almost every one of us learnt of the man whose tongue uttered Ahad, Ahad while lying on the scorching sands of Makkah with a rock on his chest and the Quraish's cruelty on his back. We learnt of the man whom the Holy Prophet (SAW) chose to be the first muezzin of Islam, whose voice first carried the call to prayer over Madinah.

What we seldom paused to consider is where that story leads geographically. Hazrat Bilal (RA) was born in Makkah to a mother from Habasha, as Ethiopia was then known, and was counted among the earliest Muslims to publicly proclaim faith in the oneness of Allah. He is remembered as the first prominent African Muslim, and in him Islam's message of equality found its most enduring illustration. In a society ordered by lineage and colour, the Prophet (SAW) raised a freed slave of Abyssinian descent to one of the most honoured positions in the young community.

Habasha is also the land to which the persecuted Muslims of Makkah made their first Hijra, years before Madinah. The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said that there was a king there in whose realm no one was wronged. The Negus, King Ashama ibn Abjar, did not disappoint. He heard the Muslim delegation out, refused to surrender them to the Quraish envoys, and offered protection. Islam, therefore, reached Africa not by conquest but by justice, fairness and equality. The Al-Nejashi Mosque in Negash, in the Tigray region, is traditionally regarded as among the oldest mosques on the continent, a living reminder of that moment. Few countries in the Muslim world can claim such a founding relationship with the faith, and fewer still are as casually overlooked in our popular imagination.

With this history in mind, I recently visited the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, which opened its doors only in 2022. I was hosted by H.E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Pakistan, over a cup of coffee prepared in the traditional manner. Anyone who has attended an Ethiopian coffee ceremony knows it is not a beverage but a ritual. The green beans are roasted before your eyes, and the aroma of coffee and burning incense fills the room. The brew emerges from a clay pot called Jebena and is served in small cups across three rounds. One does not rush it. It is the exact opposite of the desk-side paper cup that has come to define our working lives, and it was an apt setting for a conversation about patience, partnership and long memories. Ethiopia, after all, is the birthplace of coffee itself. There is a certain poetry in the fact that a nation that gave the world its favourite morning habit is now quietly asking Pakistan for something simpler. It wants us to widen our footprint in Africa through Ethiopia, a gateway to a continent of 1.6 billion people, vast untapped resources and culturally enriched horizons.

Over that cup, ideas were exchanged and fresh commitments made to bring the two countries closer, at a level that, frankly, should have been reached long ago. It struck me during the conversation how much we share. Both nations are young, populous and ambitious, with large youth populations that represent either a dividend or a burden depending on how wisely they are educated and employed. Both are agrarian economies seeking industrial depth. Both are navigating a rapidly changing global order in which Global South partnerships matter more than they did a generation ago.

The room for practical cooperation is considerable. As an academic, I find education and research the most promising and the most neglected avenue, since universities in both countries can build faculty exchanges, joint research programmes and scholarships. Agriculture offers complementary lessons, with Ethiopia's experience in highland farming, coffee and livestock set beside Pakistan's in irrigation and cereals. Trade has a natural logic too. Pakistani pharmaceuticals, textiles, surgical goods and rice have a ready market in East Africa, while Ethiopian coffee, sesame, leather and spices deserve a place on our shelves. And better connectivity, with Ethiopian Airlines and its vast African network as a natural partner, along with cultural weeks and student exchanges, can make a distant country feel familiar.

It is tempting to leave the matter at sentiment. Shared faith and shared history are a wonderful beginning, but they are not a policy. Pakistan's engagement with Africa has too often been episodic, with a visit here and a communiqué there, and little follow-through. The opening of the Ethiopian mission in Islamabad is an invitation, and an invitation unanswered is a courtesy wasted.

In my humble opinion, Ethiopia should be treated as a strategic entry point to Africa rather than a line in a regional brief, with regular political consultations and a standing joint commission that actually meets. The Higher Education Commission and our leading universities should open scholarship windows and sign faculty exchange agreements with Ethiopian institutions this academic year, not at some convenient point in the future. Chambers of commerce and export bodies owe our businessmen a serious look at the Ethiopian market, including trade delegations, sector-specific fairs and clear guidance on logistics and payments, so that interest turns into shipments. Our media and our teachers carry a duty as well, since a nation cannot befriend a country it has never been introduced to. Let a few pages of our textbooks and a few minutes of our airtime go to Ethiopia's history, its languages, its music and, yes, its coffee. And each of us, as individuals, can start small by visiting the embassy's cultural events, meeting Ethiopian students in our cities, and carrying the story of Bilal (RA) beyond the sermon and into curiosity about the land his mother came from.If the story of Hazrat Bilal (RA) teaches us anything beyond devotion, it is that dignity belongs to the steadfast, and that connections forged in sincerity outlast the circumstances that created them. A friendship that began on the shores of the Red Sea over fourteen centuries ago deserves better than nostalgia. The next time we hear the azan, we might remember that its first voice carried a bridge between Arabia and Africa. The least we can do is walk across it.

Kashmir at 78: Broken Promises, Endless Repression and the World's Failure

By: Muhammad Ibrahim Bhatti



Seventy-eight years after the Kashmir dispute reached the United Nations, the promise of self-determination remains unfulfilled, while repression continues to define everyday life in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Instead of honouring its international commitments, India has intensified military operations, arbitrary arrests, home demolitions and restrictions on political dissent. The developments of November 2026 expose a painful contradiction: a state that claims democratic legitimacy continues to deny millions of Kashmiris the right to decide their political future. The question is no longer how long Kashmiris must wait for justice, but how long the international community will continue to look away.

November carries a particular weight in this betrayal. In November 1947, the Kashmir dispute was brought before the United Nations, placing the future of the territory on the international agenda. The Security Council subsequently adopted resolutions calling for a free and impartial plebiscite so that Kashmiris could decide their political future. Jawaharlal Nehru also made public commitments to allow the people of Kashmir to exercise this choice. Yet, seventy-eight years later, the promise remains unfulfilled. India has refused to implement these commitments while maintaining a massive military presence in the territory. The question is unavoidable: if India's claim enjoys the consent of the Kashmiri people, why has it never allowed them to express that consent through a plebiscite?This denial of political choice has also shaped India's security response in the region. Whenever an attack occurs in IIOJK, India immediately points the finger at Pakistan. However, this narrative raises serious questions that deserve independent scrutiny. How do such attacks take place in a territory under extensive military surveillance and security control? More importantly, why do their aftermaths so often bring intensified cordon-and-search operations, mass arrests and reports of civilian killings? Security concerns cannot justify collective punishment or the indiscriminate targeting of a population. Nor should every demand for political rights be reduced to a security threat. The central issue remains unchanged: Kashmiris continue to seek the right to decide their future, while the political and human costs of denying that right continue to mount.Pakistan's position has never wavered and never will. The Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made it permanent when he declared Kashmir the jugular vein of Pakistan — not rhetoric, but an existential truth that every generation of Pakistan's leadership has reaffirmed. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told the AJK Assembly: Kashmir will become part of Pakistan. At the UN General Assembly he demanded implementation of Security Council resolutions. Field Marshal Asim Munir has stated that the people of IIOJK will see a new dawn of freedom, and that Pakistan's bond with Kashmir is one of faith, history and blood that no occupation can sever. Pakistan raised this cause before the world in 1947. It is raising it today. It will raise it tomorrow. As long as a single Kashmiri remains under occupation, Pakistan will not be silent.The world has watched for 78 years. It has passed resolutions, held debates and done nothing that costs India anything. Every year of silence is a year India reads as permission to raid more homes, kill more youth and bury more plebiscite demands under military boots. November 2026 is another anniversary of a promise made and broken. The numbers, the documented evidence and a living man who survived his own death announcement have settled whether India is committing atrocities in IIOJK. The only question left is whether the world has the conscience to act on what it already knows. Because if 78 years of repression, one million troops and a blocked plebiscite are not enough, Modi's India has spent 78 years perfecting the art of fooling the world — with staged encounters, manufactured victories and borrowed democratic language wrapped around a military occupation.

CM Punjab announces Khushhal Dehat Programme for rural development

solar-powered streetlights. Development projects will be implemented through a cooperative society model, allowing residents to play a direct role in planning and executing local initiatives. In the first phase, cooperative societies will be established in 485 villages, while another 1,500 villages will be covered in the second phase. Maryam Nawaz has set a 44-day deadline for launching the programme. To facilitate the initiative, an agreement has also been reached to partially lift a ban on cooperative societies in Punjab after 29 years.

A five-member tehsil monitoring committee, headed by the assistant commissioner and including the assistant director of local government, will oversee the functioning of the cooperative societies. Each cooperative society will also have a five-member management committee comprising a president, vice president, general secretary, treasurer and executive ember. The chief minister said the government wanted to place the development of every village in the hands of its own residents.She added that villagers would be able to make decisions about development projects through cooperative societies, making the process more sustainable and effective.

Pakistan, Turkiye discuss strengthening defence cooperation, regional security

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Tuesday to discuss regional security and ways to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics and opportunities to enhance defence collaboration between Pakistan and Turkiye.

Field Marshal Asim Munir highlighted the deep-rooted historical, cultural and strategic ties between the two countries and appreciated the strong defence partnership between their armed forces. General Dalkiran reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening bilateral defence ties and appreciated the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces.

PM Shehbaz calls for stronger support to Pakistani startups, global market access

organisation to play a more effective role in building the capacity of Pakistani entrepreneurs, providing them with global mentorship and facilitating their engagement with international investors.

The delegation briefed the prime minister on Endeavor Group and its operations in Pakistan, describing it as a non-profit organisation that provides policy guidance and consultancy to high-impact entrepreneurs across the world.

The delegation informed him that Endeavor had been operating in Pakistan since 2022 and had selected eight Pakistani startups over the past four years through a comprehensive process, providing them with mentorship and support.

The meeting was also attended by Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and senior relevant government officials.



Islamabad: November 17, 2026: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, attended the China's Governance and Worldwide Development Global Dialogue as Chief Guest, jointly organized by China Media Group (CMG), the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan and the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI).

Online customs valuation hearings to begin at Lahore: FBR Chairman

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial said on Tuesday that a dedicated online hearing room for customs valuation cases will become operational at Lahore, enabling Lahore-based importers to pursue their cases locally without travelling to Karachi.

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial said on Tuesday that a dedicated online hearing room for customs valuation cases will become operational at Lahore, enabling Lahore-based importers to pursue their cases locally without travelling to Karachi.

He also announced that a new online system to address exporters' pending tax refund claims would become operational by December, providing facilities for online submission and processing of documents and resolution of refund claims



within defined timelines. He further stated that 30 percent more refunds were being issued this year compared to the previous year.

He was addressing the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). LCCI President Ali Hussam Asghar presented the welcome address and highlighted the key challenges confronting the business community, along with practical proposals for their resolution. Senior Vice President Sardar Usman Ghani, Vice President Chaudhry Khadim Hussain, members of the Executive Committee, senior business leaders and a large number of traders and industrialists were also present.

The FBR Chairman said the proposal to further empower the Director of Customs Valuation Lahore and provide the office would also be considered. The objective was to facilitate importers and make the customs valuation process more accessible and efficient for the business community.



Pakistan cotton arrivals rise 7pc to nearly 5 million bales

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Cotton arrivals at ginning factories across Pakistan rose 7 percent to 47,43,000 bales as of October 31, compared with 4,437,256 bales in the corresponding period last year, According to the Pakistan Cotton Ginners' Association (PCGA), the total arrivals of 4,432,836 bales had been pressed, while 309,794 bales remained unginned, compared with 312,126 bales last year.

A total of 4,094,596 bales had been sold, including 3,996,596 bales to textile mills and 98,000 bales to exporters and traders. No bales were purchased under the TCP category during the period.

Unsold stock with ginners stood at 338,240 bales. Combined with unginned stock, total unsold stock stood at 648,034 bales, compared with 693,818 bales a year earlier.Punjab's arrivals stood at 1,998,944 bales. Of this, 1,873,774 bales were pressed, and 1,726,641 bales were sold, comprising 1,723,041 bales to textile mills and 3,600 bales to exporters and traders.

Punjab to develop 250acre industrial park in Gujranwala Shafay Hussain

He said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had introduced a new industrial policy allowing investors to acquire plots in industrial estates on a lease basis to establish industrial units.

Staff Reporter

Gujranwala



Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain has announced the development of a 250-acre industrial park in Gujranwala, where existing industries will be relocated and new industrial units established.

Addressing industrialists and later talking to reporters during his visit to the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the minister said the Punjab government would provide all possible support for establishing a dry port in the city.

He said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had introduced a new industrial policy allowing investors to acquire plots in industrial estates on a lease basis to establish industrial units.

Shafay Hussain said the policy would pave the way for an industrial revolution in Punjab, while interest-free and easy loan schemes were helping promote industrial and commercial activities.

He encouraged Gujranwala's industrialists to benefit from the financing schemes, saying Punjab had attracted billions of rupees in domestic and foreign investment over the past two and a half years.

The minister said establishing new factories in industrial hubs had created employment opportunities, while promoting the electric vehicle sector remained a government priority.

He said the chief minister had approved funds to improve infrastructure at the Small Industries Estate in Gujranwala.

Shafay Hussain inaugurated a five-megawatt grid station at Small Industrial Estate 4 and reviewed electricity supply arrangements for industrial units.

He said a 10-bed Social Security Hospital would soon become operational, while instructions had been issued to improve security at the industrial estate.

Addressing environmental concerns, the minister said the Punjab government was taking measures to control air pollution and directed industries to ensure full compliance with environmental protection standard operating procedures.

Gold rates stabilise after six straight sessions of decline

In the international market, gold was recorded at $3,864 per ounce

Business Reporter

KARACHI



Gold prices across Pakistan stabilised on Tuesday after declining for six consecutive days in local and international markets.

According to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association, the price of 24-karat gold remained unchanged at Rs408,936 per tola.

Similarly, the price of 10-gram gold held steady at Rs350,596.

Meanwhile, silver prices also remained unchanged, with one tola priced at Rs5,228. In the international market, gold was recorded at $3,864 per ounce.

PSX opens higher, crosses 179,000 mark amid bullish trend

Pakistan Stock Exchange extends its bullish run as KSE-100 gains 957 points to 179,140, following Monday's gains and stronger trading activity.



Staff Reporter

KARACHI

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) extended its bullish momentum on Tuesday, as strong buying activity lifted share prices and reflected growing investor confidence.

During early trading session, the benchmark KSE-100 Index gained 957.37 points to reach 179,140.32 points, reflecting an increase of 0.54 percent compared with the previous closing level of 178,182.95 points.

Trading remained positive as the index recorded an intraday high of 179,450.96 points, while its lowest level stood at 179,091.36 points.

A day earlier, PSX also witnessed a bullish trend on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 309.07 points, a positive change of 0.17 percent, to close at 178,182.95 points against 177,873.88 points recorded in the previous trading session.

ADB okays $500m for reforming Pakistan's federal pension system

The reforms will help contain rising pension-related fiscal pressures, strengthen pension system sustainability

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $500 million results-based loan to help Pakistan reform its federal civil pension system,

The reforms will help contain rising pension-related fiscal pressures, strengthen pension system sustainability, and expand fiscal space for development and social spending, said ADB press release received in Islamabad on Tuesday.

It said, the country's federal pension spending has grown nearly fivefold since fiscal year 2016 and now exceeds PRs1 trillion a year. Its longstanding unfunded and noncontributory legacy defined benefit scheme is financed entirely through annual budget allocations, creating growing fiscal pressure as pension obligations increase over time.

"Pakistan has taken important steps to strengthen its federal pension system, and this program will help sustain and institutionalize those reforms," said ADB Country Director for Pakistan Emma Fan.Fan said, ADB's support would help achieve lasting results by strengthening institutions, improving transparency, and supporting a more sustainable pension system.The financing will support the first phase of the Government of Pakistan's Pension Reform Implementation Plan, and the transition to the defined contribution pension scheme, in which federal civil employees appointed from July 2024 are required to participate.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan discuss regional trade corridors, expansion of bilateral commerce

Pakistan and Turkmenistan discuss boosting bilateral trade, air and road connectivity, market access and business cooperation as both countries seek to reverse declining trade volumes.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a bilateral meeting with Turkmenistan's Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, Dortguly Suleymanov, in Islamabad, discussing measures to expand bilateral trade, strengthen regional connectivity, improve market access and promote greater business cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting took place ahead of the sixth session of the Pakistan–Turkmenistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission, scheduled for November 17 in Islamabad.

Welcoming the Turkmen Minister, Jam Kamal Khan emphasized the importance of translating strong bilateral relations into practical commercial partnerships, particularly in textiles, agriculture, food processing, manufacturing and logistics.

He appreciated the exchange of business delegations between the two countries and stressed the need for continuous engagement to identify new investment opportunities and develop commercially viable trade arrangements.



Highlighting changing global economic dynamics, the Federal Minister said rising international freight costs and disruptions to traditional trade routes had increased the importance of regional economic integration. He observed that Pakistan and Turkmenistan were well positioned to benefit from emerging trade opportunities linking South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Jam Kamal Khan proposed exploring direct flights between Islamabad and Ashgabat, along with chartered cargo services for perishable agricultural and food products. He noted that the relatively short flying distance between the two capitals could provide a significant advantage for time-sensitive exports.

The Turkmen minister acknowledged the importance of improved air connectivity and indicated that the proposal could be discussed further with relevant aviation authorities during the upcoming Intergovernmental Commission meeting.

Discussing overland connectivity, Jam Kamal Khan highlighted the expanding operations of Pakistan's National Logistics Corporation (NLC) across Central Asian markets, including its growing fleet of vehicles suitable for regional transport requirements.

He emphasized the need to facilitate cross-border movement, explore alternative trade corridors and address logistical challenges affecting bilateral commerce.

Pakistan run riot as Sri Lanka crumble for 98 in second Test

● Three-wicket hauls from Abbas, Razaullah and Jamal leave visitors in tatters as Azan powers hosts to 121-3 in Pindi

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan on Tuesday put themselves in commanding position when they reached 121-3 in 37.2 overs at stumps in their first innings after skittling Sri Lanka out for a paltry total of 98 on the first day of their second Test at the Pindi Stadium in Rawalpindi.

The hosts lead by 23 runs with seven wickets in hand.

The second day on Wedesday will be very crucial for Pakistan as they would need to build a solid total which would allow them to put an immense pressure on the visitors who had a poor first day both with the bat and ball.

Azan Awais was batting on 47 and with him at the other end was nightwatchman Saqib Khan on two when bails were drawn.

Azan struck six fours from 96 balls. Azan added much-needed 80 runs for the first wicket stand with Tayyab Arif after a cheap fall of Sri Lanka.

Tayyab was the first casualty when he was removed by Asitha Fernando for 46. The youngster, who had hit fifty in his debut innings in the first Test at the same venue, faced 82 balls and had six cracking fours.

Mohammad Taha then joined Azan but he fell to left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya for eight after facing 29 deliveries.

Babar Azam once again failed to play a solid knock when he was bowled by Lahiru Kumara for eight. He hit two forus in his brief stay. Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara and Prabath Jayasuriya got one wicket each.

Earlier, Razaullah, Mohammad Abbas and Aamer Jamal exploited lively pitch and got three wickets each to bundle Sri Lanka out for 98 in 35.3 overs.

Skipper Kusal Mendis (32) and Sonal Dinusha (21) were the only batsmen who entered double figures.

Saqib Khan, who had ripped through Sri Lanka's batting in the first Test, provided an early breakthrough when he had Pasindu Sooriyabandara for just two. He edged a delivery pitched outside the off-stumps to keeper Ghazi Ghori who took an easy catch.

Soon afterwards seasoned pacer Mohammad Abbas got rid of Dinesh Chandimal (7) to leave the visitors struggling at 16-2. Dinesh hit one four from 13 balls.

Abbas struck again when he sent Kamindu Mendis for seven to leave Sri Lanka reeling at 25-3. Mendis hit one four. And in the next over Razaullah, who had a bad first Test, added to the miseries of Sri Lanka when he dislodged Lahiru Udara for four.



Pakistan storm into Polo World Cup after defeating Nigeria

SPORTS DESK

Islamabad

Pakistan have qualified for the Polo World Cup, scheduled to be held in Uruguay in February 2027, after winning all three matches in the Zone E Play-off Qualifiers in Nigeria, Pakistan booked their place in the tournament by defeating hosts Nigeria 9-5 in their third and final match of the four-team qualifying event.The victory completed Pakistan's clean sweep in the qualifiers, as they won all three matches to finish at the top of the group.

Before beating Nigeria, Pakistan had also defeated Iran and India to maintain their winning run in the competition. With three wins in three matches, Pakistan have secured their place among the teams competing in next year's Polo World Cup in Uruguay.

Dhoni takes up Chennai's mentor role

▪ Former captain leads IPL franchise to five titles



SPORTS DESK

CHENNAI

Former India cricket captain MS Dhoni has retired as a player in the Indian Premier League and will take up a mentoring role with Chennai Super Kings, the franchise said on Tuesday.

The 45-year-old wicketkeeper-batter, who last played for India in 2019, led Chennai to five IPL titles, establishing the franchise as one of the tournament's most successful teams.

"A player like MS Dhoni comes along once in a lifetime," Chennai owner Rupa Gurunath said in a statement.

"We are fortunate, and deeply grateful, that he has been with CSK since its inception and has laid the foundation for everything this team is."

Dhoni's "experience and expertise" would be particularly valuable as Chennai looks to develop its younger players during a "phase of transition", she added.

Chennai, which last lifted the IPL trophy in 2023, endured a disappointing campaign this year, finishing eighth in the 10-team standings.

Dhoni scored 5,314 runs for Chennai, making him the franchise's second-highest run-scorer. He is also the most-capped player for the franchise with 272 appearances.

Known as "Captain Cool" for his composure under pressure, Dhoni was renowned for his finishing skills and ability to guide his team through tense run chases.

His international career included leading India to the 2007 T20 World Cup and the 2011 ODI World Cup titles. He retired from international cricket in 2020 but continued playing in the IPL.

In recent seasons, however, persistent knee problems and a dip in batting form had limited his impact on the field.

"When we look back, the trophies will be remembered but so will be the way we won them. That is his real legacy," Chennai managing director Kasi Viswanathan said.

"While we will miss seeing him in yellow on the field, we are glad that he will keep guiding our players."

Australia's Shane Deitz appointed Pakistan women team's head coach

◉ The 51-year-old Australian has previously held coaching roles with the Bangladesh and Netherlands women's national teams.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed former Australian cricketer Shane Deitz as head coach of the Pakistan women's cricket team,

According to a PCB statement released in Lahore on Tuesday, Shane Deitz will assume his duties from the forthcoming bilateral series against West Indies Women and will join the Pakistan squad in the Caribbean.

Deitz, a former first-class cricketer brings extensive international coaching experience, having recently served as head coach of the West Indies women's team. Under his tenure, West Indies reached the semi-finals of consecutive ICC Women's T20 World Cups in 2024 and 2026.

The 51-year-old Australian has previously held coaching roles with the Bangladesh and Netherlands women's national teams. He also served as a high-performance coach with Cricket Wellington in New Zealand from 2008 to 2013.



Speaking about his appointment, Shane Deitz said: "I am very honoured to become the Head Coach of the Pakistan Women's team. Pakistan cricket has a tremendous history and I remember fondly cheering them on as a youngster in Australia at the 1992 World Cup final against England which was a great achievement for Pakistan cricket.

"In 2028 we will host the T20 World Cup and our aim is to give the supporters something to cheer about on home soil. To be competitive at the World Cup we have a lot of work to do and we all must develop as players and staff to produce world class performances.

New Zealand all-rounder Santner ruled out of India Tests

■ New Zealand all-rounder and limited-overs captain Mitchell Santner was on Tuesday ruled out of the two-Test series against India after breaking a bone in his hand.

SPORTS DESK

New Zealand

New Zealand all-rounder and limited-overs captain Mitchell Santner was on Tuesday ruled out of the two-Test series against India after breaking a bone in his hand.

Santner was struck while batting during Sunday's fifth one-day international against India and a scan showed a fracture in his non-bowling right hand.

New Zealand host India in Wellington on Thursday to begin a two-Test series which concludes in Christchurch from November 27. It leaves the left-arm spinner doubtful for the subsequent four-Test series in Australia, which begins on December 9 in Perth, eight days after the India series concludes.

"Scans have revealed that Santner has fractured his right hand," said New Zealand Cricket.



"His return-to-play timeline is being worked through and his involvement in the Test series in Australia will be updated in due course."

Spin-bowling all-rounder Dean Foxcroft, who made his Test debut against Ireland in May, has replaced Santner in New Zealand's 14-man Test squad.

Spin does not usually play a big role on New Zealand's seamer-friendly wickets and captain Tom Latham may rely on part-time spinners Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra to back up a four-pronged pace attack.

The series will see the two nations meet in red-ball cricket for the first time since New Zealand's historic 3-0 Test series win in India in 2024.

French cricket 'dying' as federation crisis and chaos deepens

■ The last, and only time that cricket was played at the Olympics was in Paris in 1900, where England beat France by 158 runs to win the gold medal.

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI

Cricket in France is at risk of disappearing altogether, less than two years before the sport makes its long-awaited Olympic return. The last, and only time that cricket was played at the Olympics was in Paris in 1900, where England beat France by 158 runs to win the gold medal.

France will not be at the Twenty20 tournament at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, and cricket in the country is on the verge of "dying" due to a crisis within the country's federation, Miriam Romero, a player and administrator, told AFP.



Clubs suspended the national league this year as they try to force president Prebagarane 'Prebou' Balane to resign following a series of scandals.

The organisation lost its recognition by France's sports ministry early this year, while the International Cricket Council (ICC) in June suspended development funding and placed France Cricket on notice for "non-compliance with membership criteria". This came after scandals such as 'ghost' women's matches and development funding that was unaccounted for.

"We must not let cricket die in France, it's a shame," Romero, who is president of the Paris regional cricket committee, told AFP."If we don't do anything (it will die)."

Romero, who at 65 still plays, was previously on France Cricket's finance committee and is also a director at Paris Universitaire Club (PUC), one of the main cricket clubs in France.She says PUC and other clubs have left France Cricket and are trying to set up a new national association to replace the existing structure.Others, though, simply want Balane to resign so they can resolve the governance issues that saw them lose recognition from the ICC and the sports ministry.

According to the minutes of a board meeting in June, seen by the France 24 television station before it was deleted from the France Cricket website, Balane said he would resign on July 17.But board member Jubaid Ahamed said Balane had not fulfilled his promise.Despite repeated attempts by AFP to contact Balane and France Cricket, neither replied.

The chaos led the main clubs in France Cricket's domestic championship to suspend the competition in mid-August, meaning the season was never completed.They have had enough and their demands are simple: "Firstly, to change the president. Then, to restructure France Cricket by implementing more flexible rules to develop youth and women's cricket," Djega Sankaran.

Daily The Spokesman

Wednesday
November 18,2026

Punjab local government elections approved in two phases

The Election Commission has approved Punjab's local government elections in two phases, placing Lahore in the first phase and Faisalabad and Multan in the second.



Our Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has approved holding local government elections in Punjab in two phases, with Lahore among the districts included in the first phase.

According to an official letter issued to the Punjab chief secretary on November 17, the commission agreed to the provincial government's proposal, submitted on November 16, to conduct the local government elections in two stages.

In the first phase, elections will be held in 18 district groups, including Lahore, Kasur, Nankana Sahib, Pakpattan, Sialkot and Okara.

The first phase will also cover Chakwal and Talagang, Rawalpindi and Murree, Dera Ghazi Khan and Taunsa, Rajanpur, Narowal, Chiniot, Khanewal, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Sargodha, Hafizabad and Bhakkar.The second phase will cover another 18 district groups, including Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, Gujranwala and Wazirabad, Bahawalnagar, Attock, Khushab, Mandi Bahauddin, Vehari, Jhelum and Sheikhupura.

The remaining areas in the second phase include Muzaffargarh and Kot Addu, Toba Tek Singh, Mianwali, Layyah, Jhang, Gujrat and Rahim Yar Khan.The ECP has directed the relevant authorities to complete all necessary preliminary arrangements in a timely manner and accelerate preparations for holding the local government elections.



A high-level defence delegation led by General Rafet Dalkıran, Commander Turkish Air Force, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. (17-11-2026)

LHC rejects traffic official's bail plea in biker's death case



STAFF REPORTER
LAHORE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) has dismissed the interim bail petition of traffic police official Sultanul Haq, who is accused in a case involving the death of a young motorcyclist in Lahore's Shadman area.

Justice Sardar Akbar Ali heard the petition seeking confirmation of the traffic official's interim pre-arrest bail. During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel argued that motorcyclist Muhammad Zain was riding at high speed without wearing a helmet. He claimed that when the official attempted to stop him, the motorcyclist negligently struck the traffic official, leaving both injured.

Field Marshal Asim Munir, Iranian FM discuss regional security

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics and evolving geopolitical developments were discussed.

STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi on Monday as part of his bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the ECO Council of Foreign Ministers summit held in the Pakistani capital,

According to an ISPR statement released in Rawalpindi on Tuesday, a high-level Iranian delegation led by Abbas Araghchi, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), on 16 November at Rawalpindi. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics and evolving geopolitical developments were discussed. Both sides exchanged views on exploring avenues for addressing common security challenges.

The COAS & CDF underscored the importance of sustained engagement, mutual trust and close coordination between the two brotherly countries for promoting regional peace and stability.The Iranian foreign minister appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and expressed his country's desire to further strengthen bilateral relations.According to the Iranian news agency IRNA, during the meeting at the General Headquarters yesterday evening, Field Marshal Asim Munir and Abbas Araghchi reviewed the latest developments in bilateral relations between Islamabad and Tehran and discussed regional developments.



Islamabad Expressway Service Road to be completed in 60 days: Naqvi

The interior minister said the service road would benefit a large population, while plans to extend it beyond Koral were also under consideration.

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said the Islamabad Expressway Service Road project will be completed within 60 days, with 40 per cent of construction work already finished.

Talking to reporters during a visit to the project site, Naqvi said obstacles that had delayed construction, including a gas pipeline, had been removed.

He said the government was developing the Islamabad Expressway along motorway standards to improve traffic flow and reduce travel time between Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The interior minister said the service road would benefit a large population, while plans to extend it beyond Koral were also under consideration.

During the visit, Naqvi reviewed the progress of construction work and received a briefing on the project's implementation.

Officials said 40 per cent of the work had been completed and the remaining construction would be finished within the stipulated timeframe.

Speaking about environmental initiatives, Naqvi said a report by the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) showed that the number of trees in Islamabad had increased by 28 per cent over the past 18 months.

He said the government was continuing tree plantation in areas with insufficient greenery to further expand Islamabad's green cover.

At 6th JIC session, Pakistan, Turkmenistan lay focus on trade, energy, food security

Both sides emphasise stronger B2B engagement, people-to-people exchanges: Ishaq Dar, Turkmen FM underscore JIC role in translating friendship into practical projects: Ministers sign protocol for 6th JIC, MoU on tourism cooperation

Muzaffar Ahmad Bhatti
ISLAMABAD

The 6th Session of the Pakistan-Turkmenistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission was held in Islamabad on Tuesday, during which the two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation and discussed the opportunities for power cooperation, transit trade and regional connectivity,

During the meeting, co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov, the two sides underscored the importance of stronger business-to-business engagement, institutional partnerships, and people-to-people exchanges.



?The two sides discussed ways to deepen collaboration across trade and investment, energy, agriculture and food security, transport and communications, industry, IT and telecommunications, education, health, banking and finance, tourism, sports and culture.

?Deputy Prime Minister Dar stressed the need to implement the agreed outcomes through Joint Working Groups, close institutional co-ordination, and regular follow-up to translate the longstanding friendship into tangible benefits.

The session was attended by the federal ministers for power, commerce, and petroleum, the minister of state for federal education and professional training, and the minister of state for national heritage and culture, along with senior officials from the relevant ministries and departments.In his opening remarks, Ishaq Dar said that the participation of ministers and institutions from both sides reflected the importance attached to advancing the bilateral economic partnership.

He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its long-standing friendly relations with Turkmenistan, founded on mutual respect, shared historic ties, and a common interest in regional prosperity.Deputy Prime Minister Dar said that the JIC provides an important institutional framework to translate this friendship into stronger trade, investment, energy, transport, and people-to-people cooperation.

Hafiz Naeem backs smaller administrative units, calls for constitutional framework

The JI chief said that his party's protests had contributed to a reduction of Rs80 per litre in petrol prices and Rs32 per litre in diesel prices

STAFF REPORTER
LAHORE

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has voiced support for the creation of smaller administrative units, saying any new provinces must be established within the constitutional framework.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Tuesday, Hafiz Naeem said a referendum could be held if permitted by the Constitution. He also urged the government to immediately conduct local government elections. Commenting on political developments, he said that while the removal of a government through a no-confidence motion had been described as a constitutional process, horse-trading was not permitted under the Constitution.



The JI chief said that his party's protests had contributed to a reduction of Rs80 per litre in petrol prices and Rs32 per litre in diesel prices. He said government ministers had previously warned that petrol could reach Rs1,000 per litre.

Hafiz Naeem said his party's negotiating team had kept the government under pressure and that protests would continue despite the suspension of sit-ins.

He announced that JI would hold a public gathering in Balochistan on November 22 to highlight rising petrol and electricity prices, inflation and the law and order situation. Another major rally is scheduled for November 29 at Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore.

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DAILY THE SPOKESMAN

Published by Almass Ayoub Sabir, Printed at Zero Point Printer, House No. 31, New Gulzar-e-Quaid, Rawalpindi. Editor: Atif Saeed.