Daily
Simultaneously Published From
Rawalpindi, Lahore , Multan
The Spokesman
A LEADING NATIONAL DAILY -
Chief Editor
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ABC Certified
Editor
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Saturday, November 28,2026 | Jamadius Sani 15,1448AH | Vol: 20 | Issue: 219 | Price Rs,30.00 | Pages-8

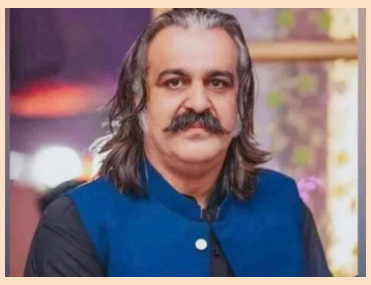


President Zardari reaches Lahore, set to meet Chaudhry Shujaat

WEB DESK

LAHORE

President Asif Ali Zardari arrived in Lahore on Friday for a two-day visit, with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan receiving him at the airport. During his stay, President Zardari is scheduled to visit the residence of former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain for a meeting.



Court cancels non-bailable arrest warrants for Ali Amin Gandapur

News Reporter

ISLAMABAD

A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Friday cancelled non-bailable arrest warrants issued for former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur in an audio leak case.
Additional District and Sessions Judge Hakim Khan Bakar heard the case, with Gandapur appearing before the court alongside his lawyer, Raja Zahoorul Hassan.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding SME Financing at Islamabad on 27 November 2026.

PM Shehbaz highlights PCSIR's key role in boosting export-led growth

■ The prime minister said the PCSIR could also contribute significantly to the ecosystem for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the expansion of exports.

Atif Saeed

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) could play an important role in promoting export-led growth and increasing the country's exports.
He was chairing a meeting on matters related to the PCSIR, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.
The prime minister said the PCSIR could also contribute significantly to the ecosystem for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the expansion of exports.
He directed all PCSIR laboratories obtain accreditation in line with international standards so that internationally recognized certification and validation of Pakistani export products can be facilitated.The prime minister also directed the PCSIR to make its research role more effective in order to enable domestic products to compete in global markets.
He further directed that cooperation with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) be enhanced for the industrial and technical training of youth.
The prime minister called for the report of the third-party validation conducted on the PCSIR.
He also constituted a committee to review the mandate of the PCSIR, its performance to date and its potential future role.
The committee will examine the objectives behind the establishment of the PCSIR, its legal responsibilities, the measures taken so far and the possibilities for making full use of the institution's capacity in the future.
It will also determine how the PCSIR can be made more effective in contributing to the national economy, industrial development and the growth of exports.
Earlier, the meeting was briefed on the responsibilities and performance of the PCSIR. The briefing was informed that the PCSIR has 10 research laboratories and units across the country, along with
(Continued on Page-4)



PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Contacts Maulana Fazlur Rehman

News Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan held a telephone conversation with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and discussed the current situation.During the conversation, Barrister Gohar condemned the treatment meted out to Maulana Fazlur Rehman and expressed solidarity and sympathy with him.He also urged the government to take practical measures to prevent further escalation of tensions.



JI postpones Nov 29 public rally in Lahore

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) announced the postponement of its public rally, which was scheduled for November 29, 2026, at Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore, Sources said that Jamaat-e-Islami will now hold its public rally on December 6, 2026, at Minar-e-Pakistan.Sources further revealed that the decision to postpone the public rally was taken keeping in view the Sikh Yatree's Besakhi Festival. Jamaat-e-Islami will hold the public rally against the imposition of a levy on petroleum products.

Maryam Nawaz Distributes Scholarships, Laptops Among Students in Chakwal

■ CM says scholarships and laptops are rewards for merit, not government favours; vows to promote education, empower women and accelerate development of Chakwal

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHAKWAL

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended a ceremony at the University of Chakwal on Friday, where scholarships and laptops were distributed among talented students under the Honhaar Scholarship and Laptop Programme. Addressing the ceremony, she said the scholarships and laptops were rewards for students' hard work and merit, not a favour from the government, Maryam Nawaz said Punjab was the only province rewarding children for their hard work and providing them with opportunities to pursue higher education. She said education was the fundamental right of



every child and no talented student should be deprived of educational opportunities due to poverty or a lack of financial resources.
The chief minister said poverty and limited resources remained major obstacles to progress, adding that talent had no provincial boundaries and skills had no borders. She encouraged students to dream big and assured them that she would make every possible effort to help turn their dreams into reality.
Referring to Chakwal's contribution to the armed forces, Maryam Nawaz said a large number of people from the district joined the Pakistan Army. She said she would work even harder for the development of Chakwal and ensure that the district received greater attention.
Speaking about public transport facilities, the chief minister said the same Green Buses operating in Rawalpindi were also being provided in Chakwal. She added that CCTV cameras had been installed in the buses to ensure the safety of female passengers and prevent anyone from misbehaving with women and girls.
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Trump says 'victory at hand' in Iran, urges Tehran to reach deal



WEB DESK

WASHNGATION

US President Donald Trump has said that victory over Iran was "at hand" while emphasizing that his administration was giving Tehran every opportunity to reach an agreement and avert further loss of life.
"We have victory at hand (in Iran). It's going to be whenever, sort of, whatever I want it to be. To be honest, and we're trying to be nice, we're giving them every chance to make a deal and save a lot of lives.

Bilawal backs South Punjab province, rejects division of Punjab into four parts

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said he supports the creation of a separate South Punjab province but does not want Punjab to be divided into four parts, Addressing party workers in Rahim Yar Khan today, Bilawal said he supported the South Punjab province because local people wanted it and the Punjab Assembly had also backed the demand.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman Must Choose Between Pakistan and Taliban, Tarar

■ Federal Information Minister says JUI-F chief is behaving like a militant organisation; asks Bilawal to present legal arguments if he considers PTI founder a political prisoner.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman's protest is not a major issue, as minor traffic jams occur frequently. However, he alleged that members of Maulana Fazlur Rehman's own party were also trying to persuade him, but he wanted confrontation.Speaking to a private television channel, Tarar said Maulana Fazlur Rehman would have to decide whether he wanted to stand with Pakistan or with Afghanistan and the Taliban. He said the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief was



behaving like the head of a militant organisation and should take a step back to find a way forward.The federal minister said matters could improve if roads were not blocked. He added that it was inappropriate for Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who had supported General Pervez Musharraf's Legal Framework Order (LFO), to now describe a referendum held by a democratic government as illegitimate.Commenting on Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Tarar said the Pakistan Peoples Party chairman had been displaying greater anger lately and should not be afraid of a referendum. He questioned why Bilawal was so fearful of public opinion.Tarar said that if Bilawal Bhutto Zardari considered the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) a political prisoner, he should present a legal argument in court. He alleged that Bilawal was using political arguments in place of legal ones and legal arguments in place of political ones.The federal information minister said the government had differences with the Pakistan Peoples Party, but that did not mean relations between the two parties had ended.

FO Says Reports of Pakistani Migrant Boat Capsizing Off Libya Yet to Be Verified

■ Pakistan Embassy in Tripoli Contacts Libyan Authorities, IOM to Establish Facts and Confirm Whether Pakistani Nationals Were Aboard

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Foreign Office (FO) said on Friday that reports of a boat carrying Pakistani migrants capsizing off the coast of Libya had yet to be "independently verified," adding that the Pakistan Embassy in Tripoli was "actively pursuing the matter to ascertain the facts." The statement comes amid reports of a migrant boat capsizing near Libya, with families and local sources expressing concern over the fate of 35 young Pakistanis reportedly aboard the vessel, trying to illegally reach Europe in hopes of a better future. Responding to a query regarding the reported incident, FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan



said the ministry was aware of media reports suggesting that a boat had capsized off the Libyan coast.
"There has been no independent verification of such reports so far. We hope and pray it is not true," the spokesperson said in a statement. Khan said the Pakistan Embassy in Tripoli was working to establish the facts, including whether any Pakistani nationals were aboard the boat.
He added that the embassy had contacted the relevant Libyan government authorities, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and other relevant stakeholders in this regard.
"Further information will be shared as soon as verified details become available," the spokesperson added.
A day earlier in Bajaur, families of dozens of young men, reportedly killed or went missing while attempting to reach Europe through illegal migration routes, performed the funeral prayers. Families said they received confirmation of deaths from travel agents, although authorities did not verify the incident or recover any bodies. The FIA, local police and district administration also launched investigations into suspected human trafficking networks and efforts to trace missing passengers.

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Saturday, November 28,2026

IGP Islamabad Directs Timely, Merit-Based Resolution of Police Personnel's Grievances

Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry says welfare and legitimate concerns of serving and retired personnel remain a priority

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry has directed senior police officers to ensure the timely, transparent and merit-based resolution of grievances raised by police officers and officials.He issued these directions while chairing an Orderly Room at the Central Police Office (CPO), where police personnel presented their departmental and personal concerns.The IGP listened to their grievances and instructed the concerned officers to take prompt action in accordance with departmental rules and regulations, ensuring that no application or case was unnecessarily delayed.Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry said that addressing the legitimate concerns of police personnel was an important responsibility of the department. He stressed that all matters must be dealt with transparently and strictly on merit.He acknowledged that police officers and officials perform duties round the clock to protect the lives and property of citizens, adding that their welfare and legitimate concerns would remain a priority.The IGP also directed senior officers to maintain effective communication with their subordinates, listen to their problems and facilitate their timely resolution.He further stated that serving and retired police personnel could meet him directly to discuss their personal grievances and departmental matters. He reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring an accessible, transparent and merit-based mechanism for addressing the concerns of Islamabad Police personnel.

ECP rules out role in allocation of tickets to women

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

:Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has clarified that political parties have the exclusive authority to allocate tickets to women candidates on general seats under existing electoral laws, and the commission cannot intervene in their internal decisions or direct them to award tickets for constituencies where women have better chances of winning.In a clarification issued on Friday, the ECP spokesperson responded to a news report published in an English-language newspaper regarding directions allegedly issued by a parliamentary committee, asking the commission to ensure that political parties allocate the mandatory five per cent quota for women under Section 206 of the Elections Act to general constituencies where their victory is more likely.

The reported directions also called on the ECP to make arrangements for filling 563 vacant seats in various local governments.

National Assembly Launches Parliamentary Expert Network to Empower Women

Initiative Aims to Strengthen Women's Legislative Capacity Through Research, Technical Expertise and Evidence-Based Policymaking



CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Assembly's Women's Parliamentary Caucus has established a Parliamentary Expert Network (PEN) to strengthen the capacity of women parliamentarians and provide them access to research and technical expertise. The caucus also presented its Annual Report for 2025-26.The initiative was launched by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq during a special ceremony titled "From Home to Assembly: Women's Leadership" at the Speaker's Banquet Hall. The event was part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign against gender-based violence, under the theme "Gender Caravan: Journey Towards Equality, From Every Home."Addressing the ceremony, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the network would connect women parliamentarians with research, knowledge and specialised expertise, helping promote evidence-based legislation and policymaking.Women's Parliamentary Caucus Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani emphasised the importance of strengthening women's representation and ensuring their voices and priorities are reflected in parliamentary decisions.Representatives of UN Women, UNDP and other stakeholders also highlighted the need to promote women's political participation, eliminate harassment and violence, and ensure their meaningful role in decision-making.The event also featured a dialogue between young women leaders and parliamentarians on translating community-level challenges into parliamentary priorities. The ceremony was dedicated to digital media professional Hina Javed, who was killed at her residence in Rawalpindi on August 20, 2026.On the occasion, the Parliament House was illuminated in orange to express solidarity with the global campaign against violence against women and girls.

HSA, PNCA introduce expressive arts into public health education

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The Health Services Academy (HSA), in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), has launched arts-based activities for its students to explore the integration of expressive arts into public health education, communication and community engagement.

As part of the initiative, HSA has welcomed Farrukh Seir as its first Professor of Expressive Arts in Public Health, marking a new step towards incorporating creative approaches into public health training.

The initiative aims to develop practical models for integrating various forms of expressive arts into public health activities, enabling students to use visual arts, performance and other creative mediums to strengthen health communication and community awareness.

Through creative engagement, students will explore innovative ways of conveying health messages, encouraging community participation and addressing public health challenges.

The collaboration reflects HSA's efforts to promote innovative approaches in public health education by combining artistic expression with health communication and community engagement.



DIG Islamabad Holds Open Court, Orders Immediate Resolution of Citizens' Complaints

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem held an open court at his office on Friday, where he listened to complaints and concerns raised by a large number of citizens and directed the concerned officers to ensure their prompt resolution.During the open court, the DIG heard citizens' grievances in detail and issued on-the-spot instructions to the relevant officers for necessary action and timely redressal of their complaints.DIG Ali Waseem emphasised that resolving citizens' issues promptly, fairly and strictly on merit is a top priority of Islamabad Police. He said citizens could directly approach the open court and present their complaints without requiring any recommendation or reference.He further stated that an open court is held daily at the DIG Office to provide direct access to police officials, facilitate the public and ensure the timely resolution of their grievances.

NCCIA Arrests Three Suspects in Online Harassment and Blackmail Case

Suspects allegedly stole private data from woman's husband's phone and threatened to circulate her photographs online



News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Gujranwala has arrested three suspects allegedly involved in online harassment and blackmailing of a woman in a major operation conducted in Lahore.According to an NCCIA press release, the operation was carried out under the supervision of Additional Director NCCIA Gujranwala Atif Amir, following a complaint lodged by the affected woman.The suspects allegedly gained illegal access to the mobile phone of the woman's husband, stole private data and subsequently harassed and blackmailed the woman and her family by threatening to circulate her personal photographs online.Acting on the complaint, the NCCIA team used technical means to trace the suspects and arrested all three during raids in Lahore.During the operation, four mobile phones and related private data were recovered from the possession of the suspects. The seized devices and data have been taken into custody for further technical analysis.A case has been registered against the arrested suspects, while further investigation and legal proceedings are underway.The NCCIA said the operation aimed to bring those involved in online harassment and blackmailing to justice and ensure protection for the affected woman and her family against cybercrime, misuse of private data and online intimidation.

Plea filed in LHC seeking CNIC-based medical records in Punjab hospitals

A petition filed in the Lahore High Court seeks directions for Punjab to maintain patients' medical records in government hospitals through their CNIC numbers.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

A petition has been filed in the Lahore High Court challenging the failure to maintain patients' medical records through their Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) numbers in government hospitals across Punjab.The petition was filed by citizen Abdullah Usman through his counsel, Rana Sikandar Advocate, naming the Punjab government and the provincial health secretary as respondents.

In the petition, the lawyer argued that most patients visiting government hospitals belong to low- and middle-income groups and often struggle to preserve their medical reports, test results and other health records.



He informed the court that the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) already maintains patients' data through their CNIC numbers, describing it as a successful example of such a system.

The petition further stated that several other countries also maintain patients' medical records through their identity numbers. It argued that

IAEA, Pakistan renew focus on international nuclear security cooperation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The 15th Annual Meeting of the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network), hosted by Pakistan in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), concluded here after four days of technical discussions, expert exchanges and engagements aimed at strengthening international cooperation in nuclear security.Held from November 23 to 26, the meeting brought together international delegates and nuclear security experts to discuss emerging challenges, institutional sustainability, human resource development and the future of international cooperation in nuclear security training, a press release issued here on Friday said.

AWP Demands Halt to Evictions, Environment-Damaging Projects in Islamabad

Islamabad Bachao Conference calls for immediate local government elections and an empowered municipal administration

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Awami Workers Party (AWP) has called for an immediate halt to the demolition of informal settlements and development projects damaging the environment, while demanding urgent local government elections to establish an empowered municipal administration in Islamabad.Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club under the banner of the Islamabad Bachao Conference, political leaders, civil society representatives, trade unionists and residents of informal settlements expressed concern over the forced displacement of citizens and environmental degradation in the capital.Speakers, including Bakhshal Thalho, Asim Sajjad Akhtar, Ayub Malik, Ayesha Shahid, Izzat Kamal Pasha, Alia Amir Ali and Mehtab Qureshi, claimed that more than 50,000 people had been displaced during the past year due to CDA operations.They criticised the repeated postponement of local government elections, saying Islamabad had remained without an elected local government since 2015. They also raised concerns over tree cutting, unplanned construction and development projects affecting the city's environment and historic villages.The speakers demanded protection of the housing rights of low-income communities, an end to forced evictions, environmental safeguards and effective public oversight of the Capital Development Authority (CDA).They urged the government to hold local government elections without further delay and ensure public consultation before introducing any

Misbah Khar Receives 8th Global Ambassador Award 2026

■ Senate Chairman's Adviser honoured for contributions to parliamentary diplomacy, peacebuilding and international cooperation; dedicates award to Pakistan, Senate and women of the country

STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad



Ms. Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman Senate of Pakistan, has been conferred with the prestigious 8th Global Ambassador Award 2026 in recognition of her contributions to parliamentary diplomacy, peacebuilding, inclusive development, interfaith harmony and international cooperation.The award acknowledges her efforts to promote Pakistan's parliamentary outreach and strengthen engagement with the international community.Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Khar expressed gratitude to the Global Ambassador Awards, The Diplomatic Insight and members of the diplomatic corps for recognising her contributions. She also thanked Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani for his continued support, encouragement and guidance.She said that under his leadership, parliamentary diplomacy was playing an important role in promoting mutual understanding, respect and constructive engagement between Pakistan and the international community.Ms. Khar dedicated the award to Pakistan, the Senate of Pakistan and the women of the country, whose voices and aspirations she continues to represent on national and international platforms.The award ceremony was attended by senior parliamentarians, diplomats, government officials and representatives of civil society, who acknowledged her role in strengthening parliamentary relations and people-to-people diplomacy.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Receives Warm Welcome in Toronto

■ Pakistani community hosts receptions in his honour; Deputy Chairman Senate urges overseas Pakistanis to invest in Pakistan and contribute to economic development

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar received a warm welcome from prominent members of the Pakistani community upon his arrival in Toronto, Canada.Several receptions and dinners were hosted in his honour by senior journalist Tauseef Shah and social leader Chaudhry Joya, attended by Pakistani political, social, business and media personalities, journalists from the US and Canada, and local parliamentary representatives.Speaking on the occasion, Syedaal Khan Nasar said Pakistan's leadership was committed to national development, prosperity and stability, while the country's diplomatic efforts for promoting international peace were being appreciated worldwide.He highlighted the important role of overseas Pakistanis in promoting Pakistan's positive image and strengthening bilateral relations, urging the Pakistani business community in Canada to explore investment opportunities and contribute to the country's economic development.He thanked the Pakistani community for its warm welcome and hospitality, expressing confidence that relations between Pakistan and Canada would continue to grow.

German Delegation Visits Barani University, Shows Interest in Academic Collaboration

■ Scientists and researchers explore cooperation in research, scholarships and sustainable agriculture

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



A German delegation comprising prominent scientists and researchers from various German universities visited Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi and expressed interest in strengthening academic and research collaboration.The visit was organised as part of Students Week 2026, during which the university's Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and Technology hosted an international symposium on the role of modern technologies in promoting sustainable agriculture.The delegation included DAAD officials Muhammad Khashi'ah, Head of Section, Scholarship Programmes, Middle East and North Africa, and Yasmin Paracha, Director DAAD Islamabad. Dean Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and Technology Prof Dr Jahanzeb Masud Cheema welcomed the guests and briefed them on the university's academic, research and agricultural extension activities.Addressing the symposium, Muhammad Khashi'ah highlighted the importance of international academic partnerships, research collaboration and scholarship opportunities. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman appreciated DAAD's contribution to higher education and expressed hope for stronger collaboration between German universities and Barani University.The delegation also visited various research centres and laboratories, showing interest in exploring institutional cooperation in areas of mutual interest.Meanwhile, various academic and co-curricular activities, including technical seminars, poster presentations and the inauguration of the Poultry and Dairy Research Forum, were also held under Students Week 2026.

NCCIA DG Holds Late-Night Meeting with Citizens to Address Complaints

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Director General of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, held a late-night meeting with citizens to hear their complaints and review the issues faced by them.During the meeting, the Director General personally listened to each complainant and reviewed their cases in detail. He directed Additional Director Islamabad Shoaib Khan and other concerned officers to take immediate action and ensure the early resolution of complaints.Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi instructed the officers to prioritise public complaints and keep complainants regularly informed about progress on their cases.He emphasised that addressing citizens' grievances promptly and providing them with effective facilitation remained a top priority of the NCCIA.The meeting was aimed at ensuring direct public engagement, timely relief and effective resolution of complaints.

Senate Panel Inspects Malakand Factories Over Alleged Rs400bn Tax Evasion



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A three-member sub-committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior, headed by Senator Saifullah Abro, on Friday inspected industrial units in Sakakot and Dargai, Malakand, to investigate alleged tax evasion worth Rs400 billion and irregularities involving imported raw material valued at Rs1,120 billion.Senators Talha Mahmood and Umar Farooq, accompanied by FIA and FBR officials, inspected ghee mills, steel mills and tea factories operating under the tax exemption scheme for former FATA and PATA.Speaking to the media, Senator Abro alleged that records for imported raw material worth only Rs389 billion were available against the total amount of Rs1,120 billion, while no record existed for the remaining Rs731 billion. He also alleged that tax exemptions had been obtained through fictitious companies and without mandatory verification by the FBR.He accused senior FBR officials of negligence and alleged collusion, demanding action against all those involved. The committee also directed the FIA to take steps to place the names of suspected officials on the Exit Control List (ECL).Senator Abro said the committee would write to the Prime Minister seeking withdrawal of Sitara-e-Imtiaz nominations for four FBR officials allegedly linked to the scandal. He also expressed concern over the substandard quality of ghee being manufactured at the inspected factories.The sub-committee has summoned the FBR Chairman to a meeting scheduled for Monday at Parliament House to explain the alleged irregularities. Senator Abro vowed that those responsible would be held accountable and the allegedly evaded taxes recovered

Kp's Natural Resources Hold Key to Pakistan's Economic Growth: Governor

■ Calls for transparent mining, local mineral processing, digital skills and greater investment to boost exports and employment.

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has the potential to accelerate Pakistan's ambition of becoming a $1 trillion economy by 2035 through its energy resources, mineral wealth, strategic location and young workforce, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said.Addressing ACCA Pakistan's Corporate Conference 2026 in Peshawar, themed "Redefining Value in a Changed World", he said KP's estimated 30,000-megawatt hydropower potential, mineral resources and growing technology sector could play a vital role in national economic growth.He stressed the need for local processing of minerals, transparent mining practices, digital skills and investment to generate employment and boost exports. He said the province's future lay in transforming "from terrorism to tourism, trade and technology", adding that peace was essential for sustainable development.ACCA Pakistan Head Assad Hameed Khan said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's human capital, natural resources and entrepreneurial potential could make a significant contribution to the country's economy.Former Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Governor's Adviser on Science and Technology and IT Osman Saifullah Khan, Special Secretary Finance Tanveer ur Rehman and KPITB Managing Director Dr Akif Khan also addressed the conference.Two panel discussions focused on investment, climate risks, institutional capacity and the impact of artificial intelligence on businesses and the workforce.

Indus Hospital Hosts Media Meetup in Islamabad, Over 40 Senior Journalists Attend



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Indus Hospital & Health Network (IHHN) organised a media meetup at Islamabad Club, attended by more than 40 senior journalists from the federal capital. The event featured briefings on the performance of Pak-China Friendship Hospital Islamabad, community health programmes and free healthcare services being provided across the country.Head of Campus Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Dr Khizar Pervaiz, informed participants that the hospital had provided free medical facilities to 17,053 patients within one month, up to November 26, 2026. These included 13,217 OPD patients, 3,545 emergency cases and 291 admitted patients. The hospital also performed 34 major and minor surgeries during this period.Manager Media and Public Relations Syed Shabbir Hussain Shah said IHHN was operating 13 multi-speciality hospitals and more than 100 primary healthcare centres across Pakistan, providing quality healthcare services free of cost to millions of deserving patients.

CDA Unveils Comprehensive Plan to Control Smog and Air Pollution

■ Measures include electric vehicles, industrial monitoring, modern landfills, Euro-5 fuel standards and water sprinkling.

STAFF REPORTER

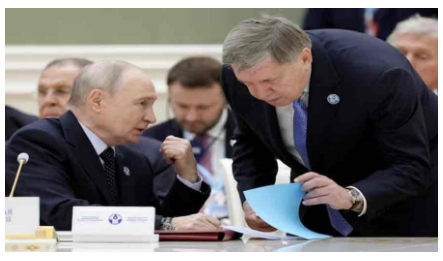
ISLAMABAD



: A meeting to control smog and environmental pollution in the Federal Capital Islamabad was held on Friday at CDA Headquarters under the chairmanship of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf. The meeting was attended by Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Dr. Anam Fatima, other CDA officers as well as senior faculty member Prof. Dr. Muhammad Fahim Khokhar and a research expert from NUST University.The meeting agreed upon a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CDA and NUST University to mitigate smog and control environmental pollution in the Federal Capital Islamabad. The primary objective of the MoU is to control pollution, promote Research and Development work for environmental protection and adopt an effective strategy against smog.The meeting decided that a special fund will also be created for smog mitigation, environmental improvement and research and development projects. In this regard, it was also decided to constitute a special committee comprising members from NUST University and the Environment Wing. This committee will also submit progress reports every fortnight regarding measures to mitigate smog and environmental pollution.Important decisions were taken regarding the improvement of road infrastructure to curb the causes of pollution. Similarly the design of newly constructed roads and kerbstones will be revised. Under this, water flow will be improved in the design of all newly constructed roads so that dust on roads can be controlled. Under this, kerbstones should be installed in such a manner that soil or debris does not accumulate on the roads.Chairman CDA & Chief Commissioner Islamabad said that all possible measures will be taken to promote electric vehicles in the Federal Capital Islamabad so that air pollution can be controlled.Immediate measures discussed in the meeting included identifying waste burning sites and taking legal action against them. Similarly, smog alerts will also be issued through mobile apps and water sprinkling and precautionary measures will be adopted to prevent dust during construction work. While camera monitoring of industrial units in Sectors I-9, I-10 and other areas will be ensured.The meeting decided that measures including Euro-5 fuel standards for vehicles.

Russia and Ukraine exchange another 272 bodies of soldiers killed in war

Russia and Ukraine exchange bodies of 272 fallen soldiers while President Vladimir Putin approves a new Arctic development security strategy.



Web DESK

MOSCOW

Another exchange of the bodies of soldiers killed in the war between Russia and Ukraine has taken place this weak.

Under this exchange, Russia handed over the bodies of 250 Ukrainian soldiers to Ukraine, while Ukraine returned the bodies of 22 Russian soldiers to Russia.

Russian war correspondent Alexander Kots reported that the exchange process for the bodies of fallen soldiers between the two countries has been completed.

In a statement released on the Russian messaging platform MAX, Alexander Kots stated that Russia has handed over the bodies of 250 Ukrainian military personnel to Ukraine, while the bodies of 22 Russian soldiers have been brought back home.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved a new strategy for the development of Russia's Arctic region and the protection of national security in the area.According to a presidential order, the new strategy aims to safeguard Russia's national interests in the Arctic, promote comprehensive socio-economic development, and enhance coordination and cooperation among government authorities, civil society institutions, and various organizations.



Beijing, Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal met Zhou Haibing, Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), to discuss duty-free access for Pakistani products to the Chinese market, expansion of bilateral trade and enhanced cooperation under CPEC Phase II.

German Embassy Hosts Annual Alumni Gathering in Islamabad

Around 13,000 Pakistani students currently pursuing studies in Germany; Ambassador Ina Lepel highlights affordable, tuition-free higher education opportunities

By Muzaffar Ahmed Bhatti

ISLAMABAD

The German Embassy in Islamabad hosted its annual Alumni Gathering, bringing together Pakistani scholars, researchers and professionals who have pursued higher education and research in Germany.The gathering provided an opportunity for alumni of prestigious German academic and cultural exchange programmes, including the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) and the CrossCulture Programme (CCP), to reconnect, share experiences and explore avenues for future cooperation.Counsellor Jan Gerald Krausser, Head of



Communications, Cultural Affairs and Protocol at the German Embassy, welcomed the participants and disclosed that approximately 13,000 Pakistani students are currently pursuing their studies in Germany.German Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Ina Lepel, in her address, appreciated the significant contributions of Pakistani alumni in their respective fields and highlighted Germany's commitment to providing quality higher education at affordable costs. She noted that public universities in Germany, including many renowned institutions, offer tuition-free education, making higher education accessible to international students, including those without scholarships. Sharing their experiences, Professor Dr Jamshed Iqbal, Dean of the Faculty of Sciences at COMSATS University Islamabad and DAAD alumnus; Dr Faisal Abbas, Dean and Principal of NUST and Alexander von Humboldt alumnus; and renowned filmmaker Muhammad Jawad Sharif, a CrossCulture Programme alumnus, highlighted the positive impact of their respective programmes on their academic, professional and personal development.

Trump's newest order curtailing birthright citizenship is blocked by second judge

US District Judge Christopher Cooper blocks President Donald Trump's latest executive order restricting birthright citizenship, citing 14th Amendment precedent.

Web Desk

TEHRAN

A second US judge on Wednesday blocked enforcement of President Donald Trump's executive order limiting the number of people eligible for birthright citizenship, which Trump signed after the US Supreme Court rejected his initial effort to impose restrictions.

US District Judge Christopher Cooper in Washington, DC, issued an injunction, opens new tab in a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of children who would be denied citizenship under the August executive order.

The ruling will stymie Trump's efforts to implement a flagship piece of his administration's hardline immigration crackdown. Another federal judge in Maryland in September also blocked Trump's



order, and the administration will now need to overturn both decisions in order to ever enforce it.

"The merits in this case are clear-cut," Cooper said. "The Supreme Court has twice confirmed that all children born in this country are US citizens, save only for the small handful who are not subject to US law." Cody Wofsy, a lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union who represented the plaintiffs, in a statement said Trump "needs to accept that birthright citizenship is the law of the land."

IIUI to Expand Scholarships and Research Collaboration with Saudi Arabia

Academic initiatives aimed at equipping young people with modern knowledge, professional skills and strong moral values.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

International Islamic University Islamabad refreshes its commitment to exploring options for cooperation in the field of education with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said Prof. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, the acting rector and the president of the university. He expressed these views as Islamabad hosts the third meeting of the Strategic Political and Defence Committee of the Makkah Accord on Friday. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement reflects the wise leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, said Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed.In a statement, Prof. Alahmed said the agreement carries profound significance for the Muslim world.Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan signed the agreement on August 7, 2026, at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah Al-Mukarramah. The signing took place during the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit for Joint Defence, hosted by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.Prof. Alahmed said the



agreement's principle of treating an armed attack on one member as an attack on all was an expression of solidarity. Welcoming the pact, he congratulated the leadership and people of the three brotherly nations.He said it was a matter of pride that Islamabad was hosting the third meeting of the agreement's Strategic Political and Defence Committee on November 26 and 27, calling it an important step towards turning shared commitments into practical cooperation. "The meeting reflects the confidence placed in Pakistan and its constructive role in regional peace," he said, wishing the visiting delegations success.The committee brings together the foreign and defence ministers and military chiefs of the three countries. At its inaugural meeting in Istanbul in August, the three countries agreed to set up a permanent secretariat in Riyadh.

Zelenskiy says Russia preparing new mass strike in coming days

Web Desk

KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Ukraine had information Russia was planning a new mass strike on the country in the coming days. "Unfortunately, we have information about a new mass strike being prepared by the Russians," Zelenskiy said in his ?nightly video address.

"In the coming days, please pay attention to the alarms of missile threats. And in Russia, they should know that we will rebuild what is ours and retaliate against every Russian strike."

The warning was the second issued by the president this week.

Russian forces have been subjecting Kyiv and other



Ukrainian cities to virtually continuous, round-the-clock attacks since September.

Russia struck Kyiv with ballistic missiles overnight, wounding seven people and hitting a shopping centre and two other buildings, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said, while Moscow said it had struck drone-related sites in the city.

Ukrainian military intelligence said Ukrainian drones had struck an oil refinery in Russia's southern Krasnodar region.

Palestinian journalist killed by Israel in Gaza wins prestigious Rory Peck prize



NEWS DESK

GAZA

Palestinian war correspondent Mariam Dagga, who was killed in Gaza in an Israeli strike last year, has posthumously won the prestigious Rory Peck prize for freelance video journalists,

She shares the award with two of her colleagues from the Associated Press (AP), Abdel Kareem Hana and Jehad Alshrafi, "for their powerful coverage of the human cost of the war" in the Palestinian territory, the Rory Peck Trust said.

Dagga was 33 years old when she was killed in August 2025 in an Israeli air strike on a southern Gaza hospital, which claimed the lives of four other journalists. The independent photographer and reporter had been working with AP since the beginning of the war, sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

Erdogan completes Turkiye's ratification of Makkah defence pact

Turkiye's parliament ratified the agreement on November 5, paving the way for Ankara to support Riyadh amid attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia against the kingdom

STAFF REPORTER

Turkiye

President Tayyip Erdogan has formally approved the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the country's Official Gazette said on Friday, completing Turkiye's ratification after parliament ratified it earlier this month.

Turkiye's parliament ratified the agreement on November 5, paving the way for Ankara to support Riyadh amid attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia against the kingdom. Under the agreement, an attack on one party constitutes an attack on all.

The approval comes as Pakistan hosts a two-day meeting of the tripartite alliance's top decision-making body from Friday, with discussions also expected to feature the conflict



between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi fighters.

The third session of the Strategic Political and Defence Committee (SPDC) is being held in Islamabad, where authorities have announced a public holiday and imposed special movement restrictions for the high-level gathering. A local holiday has also been announced in Rawalpindi.

The meeting is expected to focus on finalising standard operating procedures (SOPs), establishing an implementation mechanism and defining coordination between the three countries' political, defence and military institutions, a Pakistani official said. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday that the foreign and defence ministers of Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan would participate in the meeting, adding that the "continuous turmoil south of Saudi Arabia will obviously be one agenda point in the meeting".

A ruling party lawmaker told Reuters last month that Turkiye would also submit a mandate to parliament seeking approval for the deployment of military personnel to Saudi Arabia under the agreement. Ankara's ratification clears another step towards the implementation of the pact, which could allow Turkiye to provide military support to Riyadh amid attacks by Houthis against the kingdom.The three countries signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement on Aug 7.

Daily The Spokesman

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Expansion of PM Youth Loan Scheme Welcomed

New financing of up to Rs25 million, revised interest rates and a renewed focus on women entrepreneurs offer promising opportunities for economic growth, but transparent implementation is essential to ensure that the benefits reach deserving youth.The expansion of the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme is an important initiative aimed at providing financial assistance to young entrepreneurs and promoting business and agricultural activities in the country. The decision to increase the maximum financing limit to Rs25 million, introduce a new financing tier, revise the rate structure for existing loans and strengthen women's participation in entrepreneurship is a welcome development. Such measures are particularly significant at a time when young people need financial resources to establish new businesses and expand existing ventures.According to a circular issued by the State Bank of Pakistan, a new Tier 4 has been introduced under the scheme, allowing financing exceeding Rs7.5 million and going up to Rs25 million. The end-user interest rate has been fixed at 8 percent, while long-term financing will have a maximum repayment period of eight years and a grace period of up to one year. This facility could prove particularly beneficial for young entrepreneurs seeking to expand their businesses and requiring substantial investment.The bank rate for the new tier has been set at six-month Karachi Interbank Offered Rate (KIBOR) plus 2.4 percent. The six-month KIBOR offer rate will also be used to calculate the mark-up subsidy. In addition, the government has introduced a first-loss coverage mechanism of up to 10 percent on a portfolio basis for loans under the new tier. The measure is intended to reduce lending risks for participating financial institutions and encourage banks to extend financing to young entrepreneurs.The government has also revised the bank rate for the existing Tier 3, setting it at six-month KIBOR plus 2.4 percent. Furthermore, the existing categories of the scheme have been reorganised. The previous Tier 4, which covered the Laptop for All and Prospective Overseas Workers programmes, has now been redesignated as Tier 5. These changes reflect an effort to reorganise the scheme's financing categories and broaden its scope.Another significant aspect of the revised framework is the government's renewed emphasis on women's participation in entrepreneurship. Participating banks have been directed to make all-out efforts to increase the women's quota to at least 30 percent under the scheme. Encouraging women to establish and expand businesses is essential not only for their economic empowerment but also for strengthening the country's overall economic development. However, achieving this objective will require practical measures to address the difficulties women face in accessing financing and ensuring that they receive complete information about the available facilities.It must also be recognised that increasing the financing limit alone cannot guarantee economic progress. The real significance of the scheme lies in ensuring that financial assistance reaches eligible and deserving applicants, loan applications are processed without unnecessary delays, and banking procedures are made simple and transparent. Young entrepreneurs should also receive guidance in business planning, financial management and relevant business sectors so that they can utilise the loans effectively.The government should establish an effective monitoring mechanism to oversee the distribution of loans and the participation of women under the scheme. Young applicants must be protected from unnecessary paperwork and administrative delays, while participating banks should adopt clear and uniform procedures. Regular assessments of the scheme's performance are also necessary to determine how many new businesses have been established and how many existing enterprises have expanded through the financing facility.The expansion of the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme is undoubtedly a positive step. However, its actual success will depend on effective implementation, transparency and accessibility for deserving applicants. If the government and financial institutions implement the scheme in its true spirit, it can play an important role in creating business opportunities for young people, increasing women's economic participation and promoting entrepreneurial activities across the country.The need of the hour is to ensure that the announced facilities reach young entrepreneurs and women in practical terms, enabling them to transform their business ambitions into reality. The success of this initiative should ultimately be measured not merely by the amount of financing announced, but by the businesses established, employment opportunities created and sustainable economic activity generated throughit.

Can New Provinces Build a Stronger Pakistan?

By: Malik Muslim Raza Awan



For a farmer in South Punjab, the debate over new provinces comes down to whether a milk collection centre will open closer to his village. For a young worker in Faisalabad, it is whether an apprenticeship will lead to a skilled job. A small manufacturer in Karachi wants to know whether goods can reach the port on time. These are the tests by which Pakistan should judge any proposal to redraw its provincial boundaries.

government closer to its districts can better align schools, training and infrastructure with local needs. Pakistan should also encourage provinces to compete for investment, better jobs and better

public services. When one province finds a policy that works, it should help others put it into practice. Both reforms can begin under the existing map.Bring government closer to the people Smaller provinces could make it easier to supervise public services and respond to local problems. But bringing the capital closer is only the beginning. Districts need staffed clinics, functioning schools and police stations with the resources to respond promptly. Smaller administrative units could also ease pressure on the courts if judicial resources follow demand. That means filling vacancies, adding capacity where caseloads are heavy and improving case management so families spend less time travelling and waiting for hearings.

If the same political families and local power brokers capture the new offices, Pakistan could create 200 provinces instead of 12 and still leave citizens facing the same problems. Elected governments should set priorities and answer to voters, while qualified professionals chosen on merit should manage health, education, public finance and other public services. Open recruitment, published budgets and regular performance reviews would give citizens a way to hold both their representatives and administrators to account.

After China began its reforms in 1978, provincial and municipal governments had room to experiment within a national reform programme. In Guangdong, Shenzhen became a special economic zone where China tested a wider opening to foreign investment and export manufacturing. Industrial clusters brought manufacturers, suppliers and skilled workers together. Other regions could adapt successful policies to their own circumstances.

Regional experimentation and competition helped China grow rapidly alongside agricultural reform, infrastructure investment and access to global markets. The Chinese experience also warns against duplicated industrial estates and debts incurred by local governments pursuing investment. Pakistan's elected provinces should have room to try different policies, with incentives tied to businesses operating, exports shipped and jobs sustained. India's use of state-level development and export indices offers a closer example of how a federal democracy can measure progress and share what works.

Central Punjab should become an export manufacturing hub built around Lahore, Gujranwala and Sialkot. Gujranwala's engineering and metalworking businesses and Sialkot's surgical instruments, sports goods and leather products provide a starting point. Shared testing laboratories, reliable utilities and technical training can help smaller manufacturers qualify for overseas orders. A motorcycle glove maker in Sialkot, for example, could use a shared laboratory to test its products against a foreign buyer's specifications.South Punjab should earn more from agriculture and livestock. Multan and surrounding districts can develop mango grading, modern packhouses and fruit processing. Dairy districts can link small farmers to milk chilling centres and processors. Meat exports require veterinary services, inspected slaughterhouses, dependable refrigeration and compliance with importing countries' standards. Transparent milk testing and quality-based payments would help farmers share in the value created.

A Faisalabad-centred province has an economic case worth examining because of the city's textile cluster. Faisalabad can begin now by investing in higher-value home textiles, workwear, finished garments and technical fabrics. Shared finishing and testing facilities, mill-based apprenticeships and wastewater treatment can help the industry compete. South Punjab's growers and Faisalabad's mills can work together to improve cotton quality and traceability.

Karachi, within Sindh, can anchor Pakistan's export logistics and high-value services. Karachi Port and Port Qasim link producers across Pakistan to overseas markets. Better freight access, more predictable cargo clearance and reliable utilities would help Karachi's own factories and exporters inland. Sindh and the federal government can work together on those bottlenecks while Karachi develops skills in logistics, finance and software.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar could develop warehousing, food processing and wholesale logistics. Mardan could add value to local farm produce through grading, packaging and processing. Abbottabad and Mingora could train young people in hospitality and tourism services, with reliable waste management and careful planning in mountain destinations. Each city's training programmes should be designed with employers who can offer apprenticeships and jobs.In Balochistan, Quetta could become a centre for grading, cold storage and marketing of fruit from surrounding districts.

Pakistani Confucius Institute Teacher: The Pakistani Student Who Practiced Chinese Calligraphy Has Now ReachedSpace

By Zainab Noor



On November 25, the Shenzhou-24 manned spacecraft was successfully launched, carrying Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zishan Ali to the Chinese space station "Tiangong," becoming the first foreign astronaut to enter the Chinese space station. In an interview, he specifically mentioned that the most challenging part of all his training was learning Chinese. In fact, he and another astronaut candidate selected for the Chinese space station mission both studied Chinese at the Confucius Institute at Beijing Language and Culture University in Islamabad. How did they "learn" this "essential course for spaceflight"? The Sichuan International Communication Center invited Rashida Mustafa, a lecturer in the Department of Sinology at the National University of Modern Languages ??in Pakistan, to recount the two astronauts' experiences learning Chinese and share her observations on the growing "Chinese fever" among young people in Pakistan.

As a Chinese language teacher and coordinator at the Confucius Institute at the Islamabad campus of the National University of Modern Languages ??(NUML) in Pakistan, I had the opportunity to speak with candidates Muhammad Zishan Ali and Hulam Daoud. I recall that both of them had a strong interest in Chinese culture, including the Chinese language, and frequently participated in Chinese calligraphy activities organized by the Confucius Institute.

During the activity, the two students didn't simply finish writing and leave; instead, they earnestly asked me, "Teacher, why is this stroke like this? What does this character mean?" Even if they made a mistake, they would proactively ask for another sheet of paper to practice again. Their serious and engaged attitude left a deep impression on me. This showed me that beyond language learning, they were also willing to actively explore the cultural connotations behind the Chinese language. This thirst for knowledge is truly invaluable.

I was thrilled to learn that Pakistani astronaut Muhammad Zishan Ali had become the first foreign astronaut to visit the Chinese space station, and I am genuinely proud of Pakistani youth. This is not only a significant moment in the development of Pakistan's space program, but it also means that young Pakistanis have the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge international scientific and technological cooperation through their own efforts and professional skills.

In my view, the significance of this event goes beyond simply "entering space." It allows more young people to see how vast the opportunities science, education, and international exchange can open up for personal growth and development. For the people of Pakistan, seeing their youth have the opportunity to step onto such an international stage gives them greater confidence in the future of the next generation.Having participated in China-Pakistan educational cooperation for many years at the Confucius Institute at the National University of Modern Languages ??(NUML) in Pakistan, I have witnessed firsthand the evolution of the cooperation model between the two countries. The past model was more like "you watch, I do." A decade or so ago, when we participated in international exchange activities, developing countries often could only play the role of bystanders: others conducted experiments, and we watched; others explained, and we took notes.

PM Shehbaz highlights PCSIR's key role in boosting export-led growth

seven technical training institutes, while 12 new laboratories are in the final stages of completion.

The meeting was told that the PCSIR provides the industrial sector with modern technology, research and low-cost technical solutions to improve the productivity and quality of domestic industry.

It was further informed that the institution has so far provided technical training to more than 12,000 youth.

The briefing also noted that the PCSIR conducts research and development activities in food, agriculture, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, textiles, leather, minerals, engineering, energy and other sectors.

The meeting was told that the institution's laboratories offer domestic industries and exporters facilities for product testing, quality verification and calibration of technical instruments.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik and Khalid Magsi, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Adviser to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, and senior officials of the relevant departments. .



Ahsan Iqbal seeks zero-tariff access to Chinese market to boost Pakistan's exports to $25bn

■ Ahsan Iqbal seeks China's zero-tariff market access for Pakistani goods to raise annual exports to $25bn and support a proposed Knowledge

WEB DESK

BEIJING

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal has sought China's support for preferential, zero-tariff access for Pakistani goods to its market, aiming to increase Pakistan's annual exports to China from around US$ three billion to US$ 20-25 billion.

The proposal was discussed during a meeting between Ahsan Iqbal and Liu Haixing, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee (IDCPC), a news release said on Friday.

The minister followed up on a proposal discussed on November 3 and previously raised by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He cited China's tariff concessions to African countries as a possible model for enhancing the competitiveness of Pakistani exports in the Chinese market, which imports nearly $3 trillion worth of goods annually. Ahsan Iqbal also sought support for the proposed Pakistan-China Knowledge Corridor, envisaging doctoral studies and specialised research opportunities for around 10,000 Pakistani scholars over ten years.

The initiative would involve scholarships, partnerships with leading Chinese universities and co-financing, with priority areas including artificial intelligence, engineering, advanced manufacturing, modern agriculture, biotechnology and mineral sciences.

Discussing the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he identified industrial and agricultural cooperation, business partnerships, technology transfer, minerals and green development as key priorities.

He said the first phase of CPEC had attracted around US$ 25 billion in investment, added more than 8,000 megawatts of power generation capacity and delivered 888 kilometres of highways and motorways, while creating an estimated 236,000 direct and indirect jobs.



PSX sees marginal decline in early trading session

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a marginal decline during early trading on Friday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index shedding 37.42 points.

The index stood at 178,023.26 points, down 0.02 percent from its previous close of 178,060.68 points.

During the session, the benchmark index touched an intraday high of 178,073.03 points and a low of 177,807.72 points.

Trading activity remained underway, with total market volume recorded at 44,528,985 shares.

In the previous session on Thursday, the stock market had also closed in negative territory. The KSE-100 Index declined by 60.56 points, representing a decrease of 0.03 per cent, to settle at 178,060.69 points against the earlier closing level of 178,121.25 points.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 618.812 million shares, compared to 643.869 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs18.204 billion, down from Rs18.507 billion a day earlier.

Dollar lingers near 22-month peak as AI worries simmer

■ US dollar hovers below a 22-month peak amid AI-stock volatility and Fed rate hike bets; analysts see a stronger-for-longer path with limited upside.

Staff Reporter

TOKYO

The US dollar hovered below a 22-month peak in holiday-thinned trading on Friday, with traders looking to equity markets for clues on direction as doubts about the AI trade triggers heightened volatility.

The dollar index , which measures the currency against a basket of six peers, was steady at 103.81, at the end of a week that saw it pop to the highest level since March of last year at 104.53 on Monday only to erase those gains a day later. For the week, the index is currently flat.

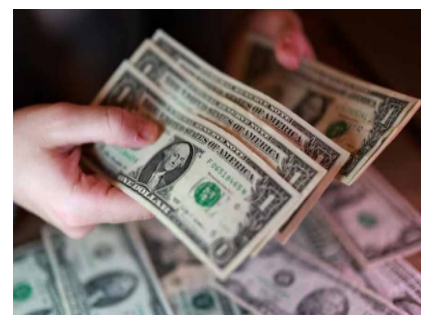
The US currency edged up 0.1% to 159.355 yen early in Friday's Asian session, and also strengthened slightly to 0.83455 Swiss franc .

The euro was little changed at $1.0964 and sterling eased slightly to $1.3099.

The risk-sensitive Aussie dollar weakened a touch to $0.6631, after dipping to a one-year low of $0.6559 on Wednesday.

"All eyes are on whether the downtrend in AI-related stocks will turn around," Mizuho analysts wrote in a client note.

A recovery could see currencies such as the Aussie and high-yielding Mexican peso bounce back, while renewed selling would likely see those currencies under additional pressure, they said.



The US currency has been supported by expectations for Federal Reserve policy tightening with traders seeing a quarter-point interest rate hike on December 9 as a near certainty, according to ?CME Group's FedWatch tool.

Hotter-than-expected US core personal consumption expenditures inflation in October, a sharp upward revision to third-quarter gross domestic product and a Federal Reserve survey showing continued economic growth and sticky inflation also have traders confident of an additional hike by around April.

The dollar index has risen about 5.7% so far in 2026, with only a month left in the year. "The USD looks to be on a stronger-for-longer path than previously expected," NAB strategists wrote in a research report.

However, "given its rapid rise, we see limited scope for further gains," they added.

TCP to purchase 200,000 MT of sugar from local mills

Business Reporter

KARACHI



The Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TC) on Friday decided to purchase 200,000 metric tons of sugar from local sugar mills, According to details, the Trading Corporation of Pakistan has invited tenders from interested parties till December 4, 2026.

The TCP informed the interested parties that they have to deliver fine-quality sugar in 50kg bags to the Trading Corporation of Pakistan godown in Pipri, Karachi.

The minimum amount of sugar to be purchased is 5,000 metric tons. The tenders will be opened on December 4 at 11:00 am.

US pushed Venezuela, Iraq to consider leaving OPEC, sources say

■ Reuters reports the US urged Venezuela and Iraq to leave OPEC, blocking Venezuela's membership dues payment, in moves aimed at boosting oil production and challenging the oil group.

Staff Reporter

LONDON/BAGHDAD/HOUSTON



The Trump administration encouraged Venezuela and Iraq to consider leaving OPEC earlier this year and prevented Venezuela from paying its annual membership dues to the group, according to ten people familiar with the matter.The previously unreported moves targeted two of OPEC's five founding members, marking an unusually direct challenge to an organization President Donald Trump has long accused of keeping oil prices artificially high.US officials were pushing for greater oil production and investment in both countries at the time, and some worried OPEC production limits could eventually constrain those ambitions, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The US pressure on Venezuela went far enough that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman intervened this summer, persuading the Trump administration not to press the issue further, two people familiar with the matter said.

In Iraq, Prime Minister Ali Faleh al-Zaidi raised the possibility of leaving OPEC at a government meeting this summer after discussions with US officials who encouraged the idea, two people familiar with the matter said.

Iraq's oil ministry pushed back, persuading al-Zaidi to keep Iraq in the group and consider seeking a higher production quota instead, the people said.

Islamabad Excise suspends physical inspection of vehicles bought in Punjab

■ The facility was introduced around two years ago to make the transfer of Islamabad-registered vehicles easier for buyers residing in Punjab.

Commerce Reporter

ISLAMABAD



Residents of Punjab who have bought Islamabad-registered cars or other vehicles are reportedly facing a hurdle regarding the online transfer of ownership facility, as the Islamabad Excise Department has suspended the facility for physical inspection of such vehicles in Punjab,The online inspection facility, which allowed vehicle owners to complete the physical verification process at designated excise offices in Punjab, has been discontinued.

The facility was introduced around two years ago to make the transfer of Islamabad-registered vehicles easier for buyers residing in Punjab.

Under the arrangement, vehicle owners could present their cars at relevant Excise Department offices in Punjab for physical inspection. Officials would then upload photographs and other vehicle details to an online portal.

Islamabad Excise authorities would subsequently verify the uploaded information and complete the biometric verification process before proceeding with the ownership transfer. Reports said the Islamabad Excise Department has suspended the vehicle transfer facility through its online inspection portal without prior notice. Following the decision, Punjab residents purchasing Islamabad-registered vehicles will now have to travel to the Islamabad Excise Office to complete the physical inspection and transfer formalities.

Finance Minister, UNDP discuss climate finance cooperation under Türkiye's COP31 Bridge Initiative

■ Senior Ministry of Finance officials also attended the meeting, according to a press release issued by finance ministry.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb met a delegation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), led by Resident Representative Samuel Rizk, to discuss Pakistan's development priorities, climate finance opportunities and enhanced cooperation with development partners.

Senior Ministry of Finance officials also attended the meeting, according to a press release issued by finance ministry.

The UNDP delegation highlighted Pakistan's progress in developing a pipeline of potential investments aligned with national development and climate priorities. The portfolio brings together projects from the SDG Investment Pipeline, Climate Prosperity Plans and other climate adaptation initiatives.

It comprises a range of projects covering clean energy and infrastructure, climate resilience, water and food security, ecosystems, and circular economy initiatives.

The UNDP noted that the portfolio could serve as a starting point for identifying investment opportunities and mobilising resources. The discussion focused on prioritising technically sound, investment-ready projects capable of delivering tangible results within a shorter timeframe.

On the occasion, the Finance Minister underscored the importance of aligning the initiative with national priorities and concrete development outcomes. He emphasised that the next phase should focus on a carefully selected portfolio of projects with clear implementation pathways and the potential to demonstrate timely progress.



The Minister highlighted the importance of close coordination and stakeholder consultation to ensure that the initiative remains aligned with national priorities, drawing on relevant institutional expertise and mandates.

He observed that climate finance requires a coordinated approach to project development, financing and implementation. He emphasised the need to build on existing project pipelines, engage relevant stakeholders and identify opportunities to accelerate projects already under consideration by multilateral development partners.

The Minister also stressed the importance of making effective use of available financing opportunities, including concessional resources, climate funds and private-sector investment, while recognising the time required to mobilise international finance. He called for a focused and manageable set of priority projects.

The UNDP outlined its proposed support in refining the portfolio, undertaking a diagnostic assessment, facilitating project preparation and engaging with global climate financing mechanisms. The discussion also covered blended finance and public-private partnerships, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, waste management.

Pakistani woman makes waves, breaks jet ski barriers

● Conservative social customs in country discourage women from sitting behind male riders on small, jet-propelled water scooter

SPORTS REPORTER

Kallar Kahar



Gliding across the waters of Kallar Kahar Lake in Punjab's Chakwal district, instructor Farhat Jabeen grips the handlebars of her jet ski, executing sharp turns and sending spray flying into the air.

Jabeen has emerged as a jet ski pioneer in Pakistan, where water sports are typically dominated by men.

Social customs in some parts of the country also discourage women from sitting behind male riders on the small, jet-propelled water scooter.

Clinging on and nestled in front of her, a woman passenger looked thrilled as Jabeen deftly manoeuvred the jet ski.

"A woman should be brave," Jabeen, 35, told AFP on the shores of the scenic lake, 125 kilometres south of Islamabad.

The mother-of-four has spent the past two years taking women on jet ski tours, as well as riding with other instructors.

Jabeen's arrival has been transformative for women travellers and thrill-seekers like Qamar-un-Nisa, who only gave her first name.

"Appointing a female instructor is a very admirable step," said the 50-year-old school principal, who was visiting the lake with her students.

"Her skill was excellent. I really enjoyed it a lot," she added after a ride with Jabeen.

Jabeen said that she was "a little afraid" when she started the job.

It was very difficult when I first came here for this job. Many objections were raised about me," she said.

"Some said, 'You're a woman, how will you work among men?'" she added.

Under the guidance of a senior instructor, Jabeen spent a month mastering the jet ski's controls and safety procedures.

She works up to 11 hours a day now, inspecting boat engines, cleaning equipment, and stitching damaged life jackets before embarking on dozens of rides.

Despite the busy schedule, Jabeen said she is enjoying the work.

"When I go home and meet my children in the evening, when I see them, all my tiredness goes away," she added.

Jabeen's appointment by regional tourism authorities as a jet ski guide has unlocked recreational access for women visitors, said instructor Tariq Mahmood.

Ever since Jabeen joined, "it has become completely easy for us to send women to ride" with her, he said.

Her arrival has removed barriers for women visitors, said Muhammad Abbas Ashraf, manager of Kallar Kahar's Tourism Development Corporation.

"When we first introduced the jet skis, women who visited here faced difficulties, because we could not have them sit with us and ride," he told AFP.

Jabeen encouraged women to be "brave" and not be afraid of seeking out employment.

"Women should step out of the house and do some kind of work," she said.



Messi, Ronaldo could play together for first time at Carlos Tevez's farewell match

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Football icons Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo could feature together on the same team for the first time in history during former Argentine forward Carlos Tevez's upcoming farewell match.

According to international media reports, Messi has confirmed his participation in the exhibition game—titled "Apache's Last Dance"—while Ronaldo has also received an invitation to play. The match is scheduled to take place on December 20 at Buenos Aires' iconic La Bombonera stadium.

Tevez, 42, retired from professional football in 2022 after ending his playing career at his boyhood club, Boca Juniors. Over the course of his career, he shared the pitch with Messi for the Argentine national team and played alongside Ronaldo at Manchester United.

If the Portuguese star accepts the invitation, it will mark the first time the two longtime rivals line up as teammates. While Messi's appearance is official.

New Zealand battle to 246-5 after day one of second India Test

■ Fast bowler Akash Deep was the best of India's bowlers taking 2-52 from 21 overs on a day their seam attack struggled to bowl threatening line or length.



SPORTS DESK

New Zealand

New Zealand fought to 246-5 on Friday at stumps on the first day of the second Test against India, surviving a tricky day on a green seaming pitch.

Tom Blundell made a scrappy unbeaten 117-ball 53 in his 50th Test and Glenn Phillips was 36 from 64 balls at the end of the day in Christchurch.

Fast bowler Akash Deep was the best of India's bowlers taking 2-52 from 21 overs on a day their seam attack struggled to bowl threatening line or length.

Jasprit Bumrah was the only Indian bowler without a wicket. There was plenty of help in a green pitch captain Shubman Gill chose to bowl on after winning the toss -- India's 10th toss win in 12 matches on their tour to New Zealand.

But his bowlers were guilty of not threatening the stumps enough throughout the day.

The Hagley Oval pitch had long and dense grass coverage, leading both captains to expect pace and bounce throughout the Test. Blundell battled early, leaving well on length while holding his defensive shape so as not to edge several balls that went past his outside edge.

He picked his moments to counterpunch, cutting through the offside when offered width.

Blundell initially combined for a 74-run partnership with Daryl Mitchell, the two coming together with New Zealand in bother at 110-4 midway through the middle session.

Mitchell was out for 31, innocuously steering a Washington Sundar offspinner to Dhruv Jurel at leg slip.

Phillips then joined Blundell for a 62-run partnership in the last 20 overs.Blundell was dropped on 49, edging to Yashasvi Jaiswal at gully but he couldn't hold on to a difficult chance diving to his left.

New Zealand captain Tom Latham made 59 earlier in the day, coming off two two-ball ducks in the drawn first Test in Wellington.

He made the most of a reprieve on 29 to make his 32nd Test 50.

He was removed caught behind from the bowling of Deep in the second session, a prodding defensive stroke only finding the edge as the ball nipped off the seam.

Henry Nicholls fell the next over, poorly pulling Anshul Kamboj to Deep on the fine leg boundary for 16. Rachin Ravindra was also caught behind from Deep for 0, his third dismissal in three innings edging into the cordon.

Devon Conway was out for 31 with the last ball before lunch, lbw to debutant Gurnoor Brar.

Pakistan eyes September window to Stage 14th South Asian Games

● POA in talks with SAOC as September 15-30 emerges as the only viable window

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is expected to announce fresh dates for the 14th South Asian Games within the next few hours, with September 15-30 emerging as the only viable window to stage the regional event in 2027.

The biennial Games, which were postponed the other day, had been scheduled to take place from April 3-11 across Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar.



"Due to various international events next year, we have only one window, and that is from September 15-30, during which we can organise the Games," a highly credible source told The Express Tribune.

This correspondent has learnt that the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) is in consultation with the South Asian Olympic Council (SAOC), with an announcement on the revised dates expected soon. Rejecting speculation surrounding the postponement, the source said a clash with the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Riyadh, scheduled for March 28 to April 8, was the sole reason behind the decision.

"This is the only reason that we had to delay the Games," the source said.Pakistan and other South Asian nations are also set to participate in the Riyadh event, which was itself postponed on security grounds after initially being scheduled for December 11-21, 2026. The source stressed that missing the available window in 2027 would make it extremely difficult to stage the South Asian Games in 2028, which will be an Olympic year.

"Everything is ready, and both state institutions and sports governing bodies are working closely to handle the arrangements," the source added.

PCB awards central contracts to eight women cricketers

■ Fatima Sana, Sadia Iqbal given Category A central contracts for 2026-27

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced awarding of the central contracts to eight women cricketers for the 2026-27 season, with Fatima Sana and Sadia Iqbal featuring in Category A,

According to a PCB press release issued in Lahore on Friday morning, Muneeba Ali Siddiqui, Nashra Sundhu and Sidra Amin have been placed in Category B, while Ayesha Zafar, Gull Feroza and Sadaf Shamas have been included in Category C.

24-year-old Fatima has been rewarded for her consistent performances with both bat and ball. She recently became the first Pakistan woman cricketer to feature in The Hundred in England and Women's Big Bash in Australia.

Sadia Iqbal, meanwhile, has retained her place among Pakistan's leading performers. The left-arm spinner has previously topped the ICC Women's T20I Bowling Rankings.

Muneeba Ali Siddiqui, Nashra Sundhu and Sidra Amin have been placed in Category B in recognition of their consistent performances and contributions across formats.

The opening duo of Gull Feroza and Sadaf Shamas have been included in Category C alongside experienced campaigner Ayesha Zafar. Their inclusion reflects their strong recent domestic and international performances, as well as the team's future requirements.

Cricket Australia widens 'Sandpapergate' forum to 2017-2018 Ashes

■ The governing body has ruled out reopening its investigation into the explosive 2018 ball-tampering scandal in South Africa that blew up again this month.

SPORTS DESK

AUSTRALIA



Cricket Australia widened its independent "Sandpapergate" forum on Friday to include the preceding Ashes series against England, while pledging to make the findings and its response public. The governing body has ruled out reopening its investigation into the explosive 2018 ball-tampering scandal in South Africa that blew up again this month. Instead, it proposed a forum for players, coaches and staff on the tour to share their versions of events.

In a surprise development, the terms of reference released Friday broadened to include "ball-management practices" during the 2017-2018 season, including the home Ashes series which Australia won 4-0. The hosts' consistent ability to get reverse swing in that series had England's bowlers scratching their heads.

In the wake of the South Africa fallout, England great Alastair Cook, who was part of the Ashes side, was asked whether the team suspected Australia of ball-tampering. "Yes a little bit, certainly in Perth when the outfield was wet with rain they got the ball-reversing," he said.

The issue went no further.

Experienced senior counsel Fiona McLeod will lead the forum, which will be open for six weeks and is voluntary.

Players' accounts, which can be written or verbal, will be confidential.

She will investigate the Ashes, all four Tests of the South Africa tour, the events of March 24, 2018, when Cameron Bancroft was caught with sandpaper, and the conduct of the 2018 Cricket Australia probe. McLeod will provide a report detailing the principal themes and her recommendations.

But what players say will not be published, no new sanctions will come out of it and she is not charged with determining any individual responsibility.

Daily The Spokesman

Saturday
November 28,2026

Romania's National Day Celebrated with Grand Reception in Islamabad

Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain Attends as Chief Guest; Pakistan and Romania Vow to Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Education, Culture and Defence







By Muzaffar Ahmed Bhatti

ISLAMABAD

The Embassy of Romania in Pakistan celebrated the National Day of Romania with a grand reception in Islamabad, hosted by Ambassador H.E. Dr. Dan Stoenescu.The event was attended by the Honourable Chief Guest Chaudhry Salik Hussain Federal Minister Overseas , diplomats, , members of the Romanian community, Pakistani officials, business leaders, academics and friends of Romania.Governer Punjab Sardar Saleem Haidar, Minister State for Law and Human Rights Barrister Aqeel Malik, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting and Convener of the Pakistan-Romania Parliamentary Friendship Group, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, attended the event as the Guests of Honour.The National Anthems of Romania, Pakistan and the European Union were played in choral format, as composed by Romanian artists under the direction of the Embassy.A special documentary was also screened, apprising the guests of the history of Romanian independence and its journey towards developing a strong state in Eastern Europe, a state that is facing threats from the ongoing war in the Black Sea region.Federal Minister Salik Hussain wished the best for the well being and prosperity of the people of Romania. He spoke highly about Pakistan Romania relations and cooperation and looked forward to further deepening and strengthening them in all spheres including trade, economy, education, culture and defense.He said, both countries carry a shared approach of multilaterism, peace, dialogue to resolve the conflicts and cooperation for development and stability in the world. " Pakistan is ready to work together with Romania to promote dialogue and peace in the world, Minister mentioned. Salik said global challenges and security issues requires joint efforts to face them for keeping the conflicts from damaging the development made in the years. He was sure that the visits of business delegations to Romania will play central role in enhancing the trade and economic cooperation. In his welcome address, Ambassador Stoenescu thanked all guests for their presence, calling it a meaningful expression of friendship and solidarity. The Ambassador reminded the guests of the historic significance of 1st December 1918 - The Great Union."On December 1st 1918, the Great Union fulfilled the aspirations of generations of Romanians for national unity, laying the foundations of modern Romania."He said the National Day is an occasion to celebrate history and identity, but also to reaffirm the values that define Romania. Freedom, Democracy, Solidarity and the Rule of Law."Our National Day is an occasion to celebrate our history and identity, but also to reaffirm the values that define us: freedom, democracy, solidarity and the rule of law." .

President Zardari approves two-year extension for Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar

■ President Asif Ali Zardari has approved a two-year contract extension for Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmed, allowing him to continue serving in the position.



WEB DESK

NEW YORK

President Asif Ali Zardari has approved a two-year contract extension for Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmed, allowing him to continue serving in the position for another two years.

According to sources, President Zardari has approved a fresh two-year contract for Asim Iftikhar Ahmed, enabling him to continue performing his responsibilities as foreign secretary during the extended period.

Asim Iftikhar Ahmed is among Pakistan's experienced diplomats and currently holds the country's top diplomatic position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has decades of experience in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

Before assuming charge as foreign secretary, he served as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, where he played a role in advancing the country's diplomatic position and priorities at the international level.

He has also served as spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representing Pakistan's foreign policy and official position before the international community and media during important regional and global developments.

His diplomatic career includes key assignments both within the country and abroad. He has extensive experience in international affairs, regional developments and diplomatic relations.

Asim Iftikhar Ahmed was expected to retire in December. However, following approval of the two-year contract, he will continue performing his duties as foreign secretary.

The extension is being viewed as an important step towards maintaining continuity in Pakistan's foreign policy and retaining experienced leadership on key diplomatic matters. .

Sindh govt rejects MQM-P plea for Nov 29 rally



Our Correspondent

KARACHI

The Sindh government has turned down MQM-P's request to hold its November 29 rally on Shahra-e-Faisal and a gathering at Bagh-e-Jinnah over security concerns,

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon stated the government will not grant permission to MQM-P and the Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party (STP) for holding rallies on the same day due to security reasons.The MQM-P had submitted a formal application to the Karachi commissioner seeking approval and security support for a November 29 rally along Shahrah-e-Faisal followed by a public meeting at Bagh-e-Jinnah in support of new administrative units.

The Sindh Home Department claimed that Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party put forward application last month while MQM-P's request was submitted three days ago. .

AJK government unveils 100-day plan with Rs15 billion for health, education, tourism

Ministers announce mobile hospital units, Danish schools, laptops and electric buses at Muzaffarabad news conference

STAFF REPORTER

MUZAFFARABAD



The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has released details of a 100-day plan with Rs15 billion allocated for health, education, tourism, employment and other sectors, according to ministers who briefed reporters.

Health Minister Dr. Mustafa Bashir, along with ministers Waqar Noor, Umair Naeem and others, outlined the plan at a news conference.

Bashir said 70 mobile hospital units would be provided under the Sehat Karwan program. He said 20 model basic health units and 10 rural health centers would be set up, and a modern Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Cardiac Hospital would be built in Bagh.

He said cath labs and stroke centers would be established in three cities each. Rescue 1122 units would be set up in Neelum and Bagh, and an urban drainage and flood protection project would begin in Muzaffarabad.

Education

The ministers said a Dars-e-Gah program would be launched for out-of-school children. Five Danish schools would be built in AJK, and a Danish University would be established in Muzaffarabad.

Five thousand laptops would be distributed among students on merit, and the Kamyab and Quaid-e-Azam scholarship programs would also begin, they said.

Transport, loans and social programs

Under the plan, 75 green electric buses would run in seven cities. Interest-free loans would be provided to young people, and homeless people would receive interest-free loans under the Apna Ghar program.

Under the Dhee Rani program, mass weddings would be arranged for deserving girls, the ministers said.

Sanitation, tourism and governance

The ministers said the Suthra Kashmir program would start in 10 AJK districts, along with Suthra Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Rawalakot projects.

Tourism would be promoted under the Discover AJK program, with 26 guest houses and 32 tuck shops to be renovated. The plan also includes digitizing government services through the AJK One portal and tree-planting under the Sarsabz Shahrah program.

The ministers did not say in the information available when the 100 days begin, how the Rs15 billion is divided among sectors, or how the projects would be funded. .

Pakistan, Qatar still relaying proposals to US as Hormuz dispute persists: Iran

■ FM Araghchi says Tehran reviewing proposals maintains its conditions for reopening Strait of Hormuz



NEWS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Qatar are still carrying proposals between Iran and the United States, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi , adding that Tehran was reviewing ideas but stood by its conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz . The United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, setting off a war that spread across the Middle East. Disruption around the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial route for global energy shipments, and the US blockade of Iranian ports have made the waterway a central issue in negotiations. Tehran and Washington also remain divided over sanctions and Iran's nuclear program.

Pakistan and Qatar helped broker a June accord that briefly halted fighting and set out a path toward talks on Iran's nuclear program and the reopening of the Strait. The truce later broke down and both sides have accused the other of violating it."It's ongoing, the Qatari and Pakistani mediators are still active, putting forward and conveying ideas and proposals. This is a routine process," Araghchi said in an interview with Iranian state television.

Asked whether the exchanges had produced any results, Araghchi said ideas were under review and that he believed a way forward could be found. "We have a set of demands, these demands must be met, so the Strait of Hormuz can be opened, and the path of negotiation can be pursued up to an agreement."

Tehran has told Washington it wants the US naval blockade of Iranian ports lifted and an end to the war on all fronts before it restores normal shipping through Hormuz.

Iran has also sought sanctions relief and the release of frozen assets. Washington has demanded assurances that ships can pass without attack and has said Iran's nuclear program must be part of any initial negotiations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Celebrates Statehood Day and Armed Forces Day in Islamabad

Ambassador Emin Cohodarevic Highlights Historic Ties with Pakistan Calls for Stronger Bilateral Cooperation

By Muzaffar Ahmed Bhatti

ISLAMABAD



The Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated the Statehood Day and Armed Forces Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina at a special ceremony in Islamabad, bringing together distinguished guests, government representatives and members of the diplomatic community.Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina H.E. Emin Cohodarevic expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their participation and continued friendship. He highlighted the historical significance of November 25, 1943, when the first session of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH) was held in Mrkonjic Grad, reaffirming the country's statehood and laying the foundations of its modern political identity.The Ambassador said the historic resolution adopted on that occasion established the principles of equality, sovereignty, unity and multi-ethnic harmony, declaring Bosnia and Herzegovina a state based on equal rights for all its people. He emphasised that these principles continued to guide the country despite historical challenges, political changes and evolving global circumstances.Referring to Armed Forces Day, he described the unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina's defence forces in 2005 as a significant achievement and an act of political courage that strengthened the country's sovereignty, stability and peace. He said the country's armed forces were now contributing to international peacekeeping operations, supporting United Nations and European Union-led initiatives and maintaining interoperability with Euro-Atlantic defence frameworks. Their declared units are also part of the NATO force pool.Highlighting the longstanding friendship between Bosnia and Pakistan, Ambassador Cohodarevic said, "For the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan holds a unique and irreplaceable place in our hearts." He noted that relations between the two countries were rooted in genuine brotherhood and mutual support, particularly during some of the most difficult chapters of Bosnia and Herzegovina's modern history.He said both countries currently enjoyed strong cooperation at international organisations and forums, alongside growing bilateral exchanges and active collaboration in defence, education, science and culture.The Ambassador also emphasised the considerable untapped potential for expanding bilateral trade and economic relations, calling for greater efforts to strengthen commercial partnerships and explore new areas of cooperation.Concluding his address, Ambassador Cohodarevic expressed sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their hospitality and friendship, reaffirming his commitment to promoting peace and further strengthening the longstanding relations between Sarajevo and Islamabad.

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