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PM Shehbaz, Field Marshal Munir share top spot in influential Muslims list

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir have jointly secured top spots on the 2027 edition of the world's 500 most influential Muslims list, alongside Saudi King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The annual publication 'The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims' has released its 2027 list, ranking the most influential Muslims around the world.

The publication, compiled by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, said this was the first time multiple individuals had jointly secured the top position.



Punjab ensuring economic empowerment for youth: Azma Bukhari

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that empowering young people and ensuring their economic independence are among the top priorities of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, Azma Bokhari said the CMIT Internship Programme reflects the chief minister's vision of equipping youth with practical skills and creating employment opportunities in the information technology sector.

She said thousands of young people have already received IT training through the four-month internship programme, with each intern receiving a monthly stipend of Rs50,000 from the Punjab government.

The provincial information minister added that registration for the third phase of the programme is currently underway, providing more graduates with opportunities to acquire professional IT skills and establish sustainable careers.

The minister added that the Maryam Nawaz-led government believes in delivering practical results rather than making verbal promises.



Ahsan Iqbal stresses administrative reforms to meet new challenges

News Desk

NAROWAL

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the need for comprehensive reforms in the country's administrative structure, saying the existing system must evolve in line with changing public needs and prevailing circumstances.

Addressing a gathering at the District Bar Association in Narowal, his hometown, the minister said retaining an administrative system designed five decades ago was no longer appropriate, as the country's population, resources and global environment had undergone significant changes.

He emphasised that administrative reforms were a continuous process and should not be halted under any circumstances. He also called on political leaders to engage in dialogue and develop consensus on key national issues, saying collective efforts could pave the way for meaningful reforms in the country's administrative framework.



Islamabad: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meeting with the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pakistan, OIC chief pledge continued support for Palestine and Kashmir

- Dar reaffirms Pakistan's support for united and strong OIC

Atif Saeed

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment to strengthening the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as a strong, united and effective voice representing the interests of the Muslim world.He expressed these views during a meeting with OIC Secretary General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed in Islamabad on Sunday. According to the Foreign Office, the meeting was held on the sidelines of the 30th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers.During the meeting, Ishaq Dar warmly welcomed the OIC Secretary General on his first visit to Islamabad since assuming charge of the organisation. He reiterated that Pakistan attached great importance to the OIC and would continue extending its full support to the organisation in achieving its objectives and strengthening cooperation among Muslim countries.The Deputy Prime Minister emphasised that Pakistan remained committed to promoting unity, solidarity and collective efforts among OIC member states to effectively address the challenges confronting the Muslim world. He also underlined the importance of strengthening the organisation's role in promoting peace, stability and cooperation at regional and international levels.The OIC Secretary General appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to promote peace and stability in the region, particularly its role during the Iran-US conflict. He acknowledged Islamabad's diplomatic engagement and efforts aimed at supporting regional stability amid challenging geopolitical circumstances.The Secretary General also praised Pakistan's active and constructive role within the OIC framework, particularly its initiatives to promote cooperation in science and technology among member states through the organisation's Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH).He acknowledged the importance of Pakistan's contribution to strengthening scientific collaboration and enhancing the collective capabilities of OIC member countries in emerging fields of science and technology.Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest and exchanged views

(Continued on Page-5)

ISPR releases special song paying tribute to Pakistan police martyrs, Ghazis



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has released a special song dedicated to Pakistan Police, paying tribute to the everlasting sacrifices of its martyrs and Ghazis (war veterans).

The special song, released by the Pakistan Army's media wing, pays rich tribute to the invaluable sacrifices of Pakistan Police officers and brave personnel.

The song's powerful lyrics, "Hum Shaheed Hain, Hum Ghazi Hain, Allah-o-Akbar" (We are martyrs, we are Ghazis, Allah is the Greatest).

NA sesssion likely to be rescheduled for next week

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has not yet forwarded the summary to the president for convening the National Assembly session, with the sitting now likely to be held next week.According to parliamentary sources, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs had sent a summary to the prime minister seeking to convene the National Assembly session on Monday at 5pm.Sources said a decision to reschedule the session was taken during a meeting between the president and the prime minister.

PA speaker calls for comprehensive reforms in justice system

- He said differing proposals regarding the creation of new provinces, including holding a referendum or following constitutional procedures, were part of the democratic discourse

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has stressed the need for comprehensive reforms to make the country's justice system more effective, noting that the number of pending cases in Pakistani courts has reached hundreds of thousands.

Addressing a dinner hosted by the District Bar Association Kasur, he said several proposals were under discussion, including separating the constitutional court from the Supreme Court, creating new provinces, establishing additional high court benches and strengthening local government systems.



He said differing proposals regarding the creation of new provinces, including holding a referendum or following constitutional procedures, were part of the democratic discourse.

"Democracy is all about dialogue. Everyone has the right to express their opinion, but respecting and listening to opposing views is equally important," he said, adding that disagreements should be expressed through reasoned arguments and mutual respect.

Khawaja Asif hints at major political developments By New Year

- Minister says consensus on provincial issue likely in coming weeks, hints at opportunity for Imran's return

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has said that Punjab accounts for more than half of Pakistan's population and that if the province awakens, it could trigger a revolution across the country.Addressing the "Kul Punjab Ijtema-e-Zimmedaran" in Lahore, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said existing political parties had no solutions to public problems, adding that Jamaat-e-Islami was the only alternative for bringing about systemic change in the country.

He said Jamaat-e-Islami must emerge as a major political party in Punjab and become a leading parliamentary force across Pakistan.

He said whoever established a strong political presence in Punjab ultimately dominated politics across the country. He added that the time had come for Jamaat-e-Islami to emerge as a major political force in the province, expressing confidence that the party would soon become a significant parliamentary force nationwide.

JI chief Hafiz Naeem slams elite capture, education crisis

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said the country's political, social and economic systems were being held hostage by a handful of individuals.

Nearly 70 pc decline in overall crime rate in Punjab encouraging, says Maryam Nawaz

- Maryam Nawaz says Punjab's overall crime rate has declined nearly 70%, crediting digital policing and security initiatives for positive results.

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has described the nearly 70 per cent decline in the overall crime rate across the province as an encouraging development.

In her message on the International Day for the Prevention of and Fight Against All Forms of Transnational Organised Crime, Maryam Nawaz said combating human trafficking, drug trafficking and illegal activities was an urgent necessity. She stressed that law enforcement agencies must play a more effective and active role in establishing a crime-free society.

She said organised crime posed a serious threat to social peace, stability and development, making joint efforts at every level essential to prevent it.

The Punjab chief minister said the overall crime rate had declined by 41 per cent in Lahore, 16 per cent in Dera Ghazi Khan, 52 per cent in Bahawalpur and 32 per cent in Sheikhupura.

According to her, crime rates had also fallen by 47 per cent in Multan, 36 per cent in Rawalpindi, 42 per cent in Sahiwal, 67 per cent in Gujranwala and 58 per cent in Gujrat.

Maryam Nawaz said District Safe City Authorities, mobile police stations and digital smart policing initiatives in Punjab were producing positive results.



She emphasised that cooperation and a joint strategy were essential to completely eliminate criminal networks. Modern technology and intelligence sharing could play an important role in the fight against organised crime.

The chief minister said collective efforts were necessary to uphold the rule of law, protect the public and eliminate crime. Taking indiscriminate action against criminal elements was the state's responsibility, while establishing a crime-free society was impossible without the rule of law.

Maryam Nawaz said protecting women and children from human trafficking and exploitation was a collective responsibility. She added that safeguarding young people from drugs and criminal activities was also among the government's priorities.

130 Couples Tie the Knot Under Punjab's Dhee Rani Programme in Narowal

Ahsan Iqbal, Sohail Shaukat Butt Attend Grand Mass Wedding Ceremony; Newlywed Couples Receive Rs200,000 Cash Gifts and Wedding Outfits Under CM Maryam Nawaz's Welfare Initiative to Support Deserving Families.

ZAHID MAHMOOD

NAROWAL



A grand mass wedding ceremony for 130 couples was held in Narowal under the Punjab government's Dhee Rani Programme, an initiative launched on the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to support deserving and underprivileged families in arranging dignified marriages for their daughters.Under the programme, each couple was presented with a cash gift of Rs200,000 as a wedding blessing, along with special wedding outfits for the bride and groom.Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, Punjab Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Sohail Shaukat Butt, Chairman Punjab Bait-ul-Maal Khawaja Muhammad Waseem Butt, Chairman Punjab Prisons Task Force Rana Mannan Khan, Director General Social Welfare Punjab Shehenshah Faisal, and Deputy Commissioner Narowal Muhammad Tayyab Khan attended the ceremony as chief guests.Highlighting the significance and social impact of the Dhee Rani Programme, speakers described it as a unique and commendable welfare initiative aimed at helping deserving parents overcome the financial difficulties associated with their daughters' marriages. The programme seeks to ease their economic burden and ensure that their daughters begin their married lives with dignity. It also promotes compassion, social responsibility and collective support within society.Addressing the ceremony, Punjab Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Sohail Shaukat Butt said the Dhee Rani Programme had entered its third year. He congratulated all the newlywed couples on behalf of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and said it was a great honour and privilege for him to have been entrusted with the responsibility of serving humanity through such a noble initiative.Expressing his feelings, he said witnessing the happiness and emotions of parents at the ceremony had brought him immense inner satisfaction and spiritual peace.He said it was the fundamental responsibility of the state to introduce effective and comprehensive initiatives for the welfare of its citizens.

PPP leader Faryal Talpur meets Punjab governor

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Women Wing President Faryal Talpur met Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor's House on Sunday,

The meeting centered round political situation of the country, party's restructuring in the province.

Faryal eulogized the governor for turning the governor's house into a public place and said party representatives, workers and jiyalas should not feel themselves neglected or ignored rather they must spread to every nook and corner of the province and convey message of the party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto.

Islamabad Police Arrest Key Member of Motorcycle Theft Gang, Recover Five Stolen Bikes

Bani Gala Police Seize Stolen Motorcycles, Cash and Weapons with Ammunition; SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza Directs Intensified Crackdown Against Criminal Elements Across the Federal Capital.



Crime Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Police Arrest Key Member of Organized Motorcycle Theft Gang in Bani Gala, Five Stolen Motorcycles RecoveredAccording to details, Islamabad Police Bani Gala Police Station team arrested a key member of an organized gang allegedly involved in multiple motorcycle theft incidents. During the operation, police recovered five stolen motorcycles worth millions of rupees, cash, and weapons with ammunition used in criminal activities from the accused. Cases have been registered against the accused, and further investigation is underway.Following the special directions of SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza, Islamabad Police is continuing its crackdown against criminal elements involved in theft, robbery, street crime and other serious offences across the federal capital. Effective operations are being carried out to apprehend accused involved in criminal activities and prevent crime.SSP Operations Islamabad has directed all officers to intensify action against criminal elements depriving citizens of their valuable belongings and ensure their arrest.Islamabad Police appeals to citizens to cooperate with the police in eliminating crime and immediately report any suspicious activity or person to the relevant police station or emergency helpline Pukar-15.

Agri-Tech, Innovation and Research Vital for Strengthening Food Security: PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor

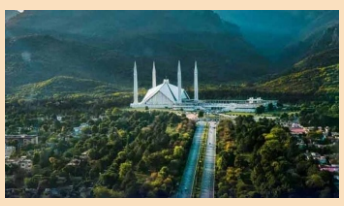
STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Vice Chancellor of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), Professor Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman, has emphasised that modern technology, innovation-driven research and entrepreneurship must become integral components of Pakistan's agricultural sector to address emerging challenges, ensure food security and promote sustainable agricultural development.He expressed these views while addressing a panel discussion on "Agriculture, Food Security and Agri-Tech" at the Hunarmand Punjab Tech Expo 2026, organised by the Punjab Higher Education Commission in Lahore.Professor Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman said that agriculture across the world was undergoing rapid transformation through modern technologies, digital systems and data-driven decision-making. He stressed that Pakistan must accelerate the adoption and practical application of advanced agricultural technologies to enhance productivity, ensure efficient utilisation of natural resources and strengthen the agricultural system against climate change and other emerging challenges.

New administrative model proposed for Islamabad, boundary expansion under consideration

The mayor will serve as the administrative head of Islamabad, while the number of elected members are expected to range between 25 and 30



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The government has started preparations to grant Islamabad a special administrative status while a proposal to expand the capital's geographical boundaries is also under consideration.

According to sources, a new administrative model has been drafted for Islamabad, proposing to grant the capital a special status or transform it into a model administrative unit.

Under the proposed plan, the mayor would serve as the administrative head of Islamabad, while the number of elected members of the proposed administrative unit is expected to range between 25 and 30.

Sources said the plan also envisages expanding the geographical boundaries of the federal capital.In this regard, proposals are being considered to incorporate parts of Haripur district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, certain areas of Rawalpindi, and localities falling within National Assembly constituency NA-51 in Murree district into Islamabad.

However, details of the final decision regarding the proposed administrative model and changes to the capital's geographical boundaries have yet to emerge.

SSP Investigation Islamabad Orders Swift Investigations, Arrest of Proclaimed Offenders

Zain Asim Directs Officers to Ensure Merit-Based Probes, Strong Evidence and Timely Submission of Challans to Courts; Warns Against Negligence in Protecting Citizens' Lives and Property.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



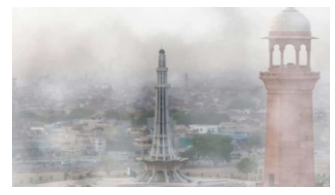
SSP Investigation Islamabad Directs Officers to Expedite Investigations, Strengthen Evidence and Ensure Arrest of Proclaimed OffendersAccording to details, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation Islamabad Zain Asim held a meeting with investigating officers to review the progress of cases involving serious crimes. Investigating officers from across the district attended the meeting.During the meeting, SSP Investigation reviewed cases involving street crime and other serious offences. He directed the investigating officers to complete investigations promptly and strictly on merit, compile challans based on solid evidence and submit them to the competent courts to ensure that the accused are brought to justice and awarded punishment in accordance with the law.He further directed officers to ensure the arrest of absconding members of criminal gangs and intensify efforts to apprehend proclaimed offenders.SSP Investigation Zain Asim emphasized that effective investigation plays a vital role in securing convictions and ensuring the provision of justice to citizens. He directed officers to improve the quality of investigations by combining traditional investigative methods with the effective use of modern technology and available resources.He reiterated that the protection of citizens' lives and property remains the top priority of Islamabad Police and that no negligence or lapse in this regard would be tolerated.

Lahore's air quality remains unhealthy as AQI reaches 269

An anti-smog operation is underway across the province, with authorities intensifying action against local sources of pollution

SPECIAL REPORTER

LAHORE



Air pollution continued to grip Lahore, with the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 269, indicating unhealthy air quality.Wind speed in the city was recorded at 5 kilometres per hour, blowing from the northwest. Winds are expected to pick up to 11 kilometres per hour by the afternoon, potentially bringing some improvement in air quality.

On the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, an anti-smog operation is underway across the province, with authorities intensifying action against local sources of pollution. During the past 24 hours, enforcement teams took action against industrial units, brick kilns, plastic-related businesses and commercial cooking points over violations of environmental regulations, imposing fines worth millions of rupees.

Authorities inspected 272 industrial units across Punjab, sealing 11 and demolishing two for violations. Fines amounting to Rs1.325 million were also imposed.In a crackdown on brick kilns, 513 units were inspected, 24 sealed and six demolished, while eight cases were registered. A total of Rs1.8 million in fines was imposed.

As part of the campaign against substandard plastic, officials inspected 183 locations and seized 294 kilogrammes of plastic, imposing an additional fine of Rs30,000.

To control smoke emissions, 92 barbecue outlets and commercial cooking points were inspected. Suction hoods were installed at 58 locations, while three establishments were sealed.

Authorities said monitoring had been tightened to ensure that suction hoods installed at commercial kitchens and barbecue outlets were functioning effectively.

On the chief minister's directives, drone squads, night squads and Hawk Eye field teams are also actively monitoring the situation, with round-the-clock surveillance and immediate action against violations.

AJK Health Minister Announces Major Funds for Improving Medical Facilities at DHQ Hospital Kotli

Rs40 million allocated for oxygen plant, Rs30 million increase in emergency budget, Rs10 million for operation theatre upgradation; Cath Lab project also reviewed

STAFF REPORTER

Kotli



Azad Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Public Health Dr. Mustafa Bashir Abbasi and Minister of State for Tourism, Mineral Resources, TEVTA, Sports and Youth Affairs Chaudhry Abdul Rehman conducted a detailed visit to District Headquarters Hospital Kotli on Sunday to review healthcare facilities, ongoing and proposed development projects, and the requirements of various departments.During the visit, the ministers inspected the designated site for the proposed Cath Lab, the building upgradation requirements of the laboratory and proposed improvements to various wards in the old hospital building. They issued necessary instructions to Executive Engineer Buildings Rizwan Shabbir Mirza, emphasizing that development works must be completed in accordance with the hospital's operational needs and medical requirements.The ministers also inaugurated a sports park established within the hospital premises and visited the Burn Centre to review the medical facilities being provided there.Later, Medical Superintendent Dr. Nasrullah Sadiq briefed the ministers in the committee room on the hospital's overall performance, available healthcare facilities, departmental requirements and administrative and financial challenges.On the occasion, Health Minister Dr. Mustafa Bashir Abbasi announced an allocation of Rs40 million for the installation of an oxygen plant at the hospital. He also announced an increase in the budget of the pathology department to ensure the provision of quality diagnostic facilities to patients.The health minister further announced that the annual budget for the hospital's emergency services would be increased by Rs30 million, out of which Rs5 million could be spent on the treatment of dialysis patients. He also directed that an immediate advertisement be issued for the appointment of a nephrologist on an ad hoc basis against the vacant post to improve healthcare services for kidney patients.

Awareness Walk Held at DHQ Teaching Hospital Mirpur on World Diabetes Day

Doctors and medical staff participate in the walk, highlighting the importance of early diagnosis, balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle to prevent diabetes



STAFF REPORTER

Mirpur

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, an awareness walk was organized at Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur under the auspices of the Pakistan Society of Physicians, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chapter, to promote awareness about diabetes prevention, early diagnosis and public health education.The walk was attended by Medical Superintendent DHQ Teaching Hospital Mirpur Professor Dr. Ijaz Ahmed Raja, Professor Dr. Amjad Mahmood, Professor Dr. Tariq Masood, Assistant Professor Dr. Zahid and Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr. Maria Zulfiqar, along with doctors, medical staff and other participants.On the occasion, concern was expressed over the increasing prevalence of diabetes. The participants highlighted the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, consuming a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activities and getting blood sugar levels checked in a timely manner.The participants emphasized that greater public awareness, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment could significantly reduce complications associated with diabetes.The awareness walk aimed to educate citizens about the risks of diabetes, preventive measures and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. .

NHMP Expresses Solidarity with Road Crash Victims, Remembers Those Who Lost Their Lives

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

NHMP Expresses Solidarity With Road Crash Victims And Their Families. On the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, the National Highways & Motorway Police (NHMP) remembers those who lost their lives in road crashes and expresses solidarity with injured people and affected families. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly, through Resolution A/RES/60/5, invited Member States and the international community to recognize the third Sunday in November as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. The organizers of the international campaign use the shared slogan “Remember. Support. Act. It calls on communities to remember those who lost their lives, support injured people and affected families, and take practical steps to prevent further crashes.

The NHMP urges all road users to obey all traffic laws and make compliance a daily habit*. Drivers and passengers should wear seat belts, drivers should observe posted speed limits and avoid using mobile phones while driving, and motorcyclists should wear helmets.



Sargodha Police Kill Two Most-Wanted Proclaimed Offenders in Kot Momin Encounter

Inam Wains alias Namo Wains and accomplice Faisal Budhika wanted in 32 heinous cases, including target killings, kidnappings for ransom and attacks on police; rocket launchers, hand grenades and sophisticated weapons recovered

Crime reporter

Lahore / Sargodha

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, DPO Tauqeer Muhammad Naeem and R.O. CTD Muhammad Ashraf, while addressing a joint press conference at the ASP Office Kot Momin, briefed the media that notorious criminal and proclaimed offender Inam Wains alias Namo Wains, considered a symbol of terror across Punjab, and his accomplice Faisal Budhika were killed in a police encounter. They were wanted in 32 heinous cases, including target killings, kidnapping for ransom, kidnapping of a police constable, robberies, attempted assassinations of police personnel, firing incidents and terrorism According to details, Sargodha Police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Sargodha conducted a joint operation in Kot Momin last night following information about the presence of proclaimed



offenders in the area. The criminals were travelling in a Vigo pickup when police attempted to stop them at a checkpoint near Chak No. 12 South. However, they opened direct fire on the police party. During the exchange of fire in the retaliatory action by police, both dangerous proclaimed offenders were killed The press conference was informed that Inam Wains was also wanted by Sargodha, Mandi Bahauddin and Chakwal Police, as well as the Crime Control Department. The other deceased proclaimed offender, Faisal Budhika, was wanted in heinous cases, including attempted assassinations of Inspector Shahid Harl and Inspector Ansar Abbas, murder, terrorism and extortion It is pertinent to mention that the gang had been active since 2023 in various districts of Punjab, including Sargodha, Mandi Bahauddin, Chakwal, Gujrat and Jhelum, while its criminal activities also extended to Azad Kashmir. Over the past few months, a total of 13 members of this dangerous gang, including its three key members, have been killed, while several others have been arrested Rocket launchers, a drone camera, hand grenades, sophisticated weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition were recovered from the deceased criminals. Police teams have been formed to arrest the absconding accomplices, who will be apprehended soon SP Investigation Imran Abbas Chadhar, ASPKot Momin Abdul Ghaffar and ASP Bhalwal Abdul Wahid were also present at the press conference

SSP Operations Islamabad Reviews Church Security Arrangements During Sunday Field Visit

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

SSP Operations Islamabad Remains Active in the Field on Sunday, Reviews Church Security Arrangements According to the details, on the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, Islamabad Police has taken effective measures to ensure foolproof security at churches across the federal capital. In this regard, SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza remained active in the field on Sunday and visited various churches across the district. He met with police officers and officials deployed on duty, reviewed their performance and issued directions to further improve security arrangements. The SSP Operations inspected the overall security plan, including entry and exit points, parking areas and the deployment of police officials in and around the churches. During his meeting with church administrations, he said that Islamabad Police is committed to protecting the lives and property of people of all religions without discrimination. He urged citizens to cooperate with the police and immediately report any suspicious person or activity to the concerned police station or the emergency helpline PUCAR-15.

Punjab Police Register 1,766 Cases, Arrest 1,241 in Anti-Smog Operations

Over 11,360 Violators Fined Rs100 Million; 4,111 Issued Warnings as Crackdown Intensifies Across Province



Crime Reporter

LAHORE

Punjab Police intensified operations across the province to curb smog and air pollution and protect the environment. According to details shared by the Punjab Police spokesperson, a total of 1,766 cases were registered and 1,241 violators arrested during anti-smog operations in Lahore and other districts this year. Furthermore, 11,360 individuals were collectively fined Rs. 100 million, while 4,111 individuals were issued warnings Punjab Police spokesperson further shared that operations resulted in 5,824 violations involving smoke-emitting vehicles, 184 related to industrial activities, 811 cases of crop residue burning, 641 violations by brick kilns, and 153 other violations IG Punjab Abdul Kareem has ordered further intensification of the anti-smog crackdown on highways, in industrial areas, agricultural areas and other locations. He directed that strict legal action be ensured under the zero-tolerance policy against those responsible for violating smog SOPs

Three workers killed in soil collapse during illegal gold mining in Kohat



STAFF REPORTER

KOHAT

Three workers were killed after a mound of earth collapsed during illegal gold mining in Gumbat tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kohat district on Sunday.

According to Gumbat police, the incident occurred in the Dara Bokach area in the morning when the workers were attempting to extract gold and became trapped under the collapsing soil.

Police said rescue teams recovered the bodies from the debris and shifted them to a local hospital.

A similar incident occurred in the same tehsil in January, when eight people lost their lives after a mound collapsed during gold extraction.

Illegal gold mining has been reported along the banks of the Indus River in various parts of Kohat. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said at a press conference on Saturday that around 90 kilograms of gold had been extracted from the area every month.

He also alleged that police came under attack during an operation against illegal gold mining in Kohat on Wednesday, leaving 10 police personnel, including a deputy superintendent of police (DSP), martyred.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, the attack targeted a police party returning after completing an operation against illegal gold mining. Police subsequently launched a retaliatory action, killing 18 alleged attackers.

Overseas Community Leader Chaudhry Adnan Asif Ali Advocate Meets Medical Superintendent DHQ Teaching Hospital Mirpur

Discussion focuses on healthcare facilities, public health matters and efforts to improve the quality of medical services at the hospital



STAFF REPORTER

Mirpur

Chaudhry Adnan Asif Ali Advocate, a prominent leader of the overseas community and young legal professional, met Professor Dr. Ijaz Ahmed Raja, Medical Superintendent of Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur, at his office.Professor Dr. Ijaz Ahmed Raja thanked the distinguished guest for visiting the hospital and appreciating the efforts of its medical staff and administration.During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, medical facilities available at the hospital, public health issues and the provision of quality healthcare services to citizens were discussed.On the occasion, Chaudhry Adnan Asif Ali Advocate appreciated the efforts of the hospital administration to provide better medical facilities to citizens and improve the standards of healthcare and treatment. He described these initiatives as commendable.

COMSATS Introduces Major Reforms in First Year of Rector Raheel Qamar’s Tenure

467 Appointments and 438 Promotions Recommended; Mandatory AI Course Introduced Across All Degree Programmes, Digitalisation Saves Over Seven Million Printed Pages

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



COMSATS University Islamabad has introduced major academic, administrative and institutional reforms during the first year of the tenure of its Rector, Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, including recommendations for 467 appointments and 438 promotions, the introduction of compulsory Artificial Intelligence (AI) courses across all degree programmes, and extensive digitalisation of university operations.To mark the completion of his first year in office, Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, accompanied by Controller of Examinations Dr. Sajjad Madni, met a delegation of journalists and briefed them on the university's performance and key achievements.According to the university's first annual performance report, covering the period from October 27, 2025, to October 26, 2026, the administration undertook a series of reforms across all seven campuses under its Green Transformation initiative, aimed at improving institutional efficiency, transparency, academic standards and resource utilisation.The Rector said that the transition towards digital systems had resulted in estimated savings equivalent to more than seven million printed pages. At the 44th meeting of the Academic Council, an agenda comprising over 12,000 pages was presented digitally. The initiative alone reportedly helped save approximately 700,000 printed pages and 700,000 litres of water, while avoiding carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to 9.1 tonnes.Highlighting administrative reforms, Prof. Qamar said the university's 40th and 41st Selection Boards recommended 467 appointments. In addition, 220 promotions under the Tenure Track System (TTS) and 218 promotions of non-teaching staff were recommended. Promotions of 141 staff-grade employees across various campuses and the principal seat were also recorded.To strengthen the university's administrative structure, six campus directors, five faculty deans and three departmental chairpersons were appointed on a regular basis.In a major academic initiative, the university approved a compulsory three-credit-hour Artificial Intelligence course for students enrolled in all degree programmes, effective from the Fall 2026 semester. The initiative aims to equip students from disciplines beyond computer science with essential knowledge and practical understanding of emerging AI technologies.The university has also introduced a six-skill academic framework to prepare graduates for evolving job-market requirements. The framework focuses on coding, cloud technology, creative thinking, human-AI collaboration, cybersecurity and effective communication.The report further highlights the approval of several new academic programmes, including BS Financial Technology at the Islamabad and Attock campuses, BS Economics with Data Science at Abbottabad, MS Psychology at Islamabad, PhD English Linguistics at Lahore, and Bachelor of Fine Arts.Under its faculty and staff development initiatives.

Israel claims to kill senior Hamas commander in Gaza airstrike

■ **The Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades confirmed Abu Younis's death in a statement, expressing condolences over his killing**



Web DESK

JERUSALEM

The Israeli military has claimed that it targeted a senior commander of Hamas's armed wing in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip. In a statement, the Israeli military said it had targeted the senior Hamas commander but did not immediately disclose his identity.

However, according to the British news agency, Hamas sources said commander Samir Abu Younis was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza.

Medical sources said the strike targeted a street in the al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis, killing Abu Younis and injuring several other people.

Mahmoud Bassal, spokesperson for Gaza's Civil Defence agency, said rescue workers had recovered the body of 53-year-old Samir Abu Younis. Two other people were also injured in the attack.

Later, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades confirmed Abu Younis's death in a statement, expressing condolences over his killing.According to the group, Samir Mahmoud Abu Younis, also known as Abu Mahmoud, was a member of Hamas's General Military Council and commander of its Rafah Brigade.



Jordan's State Security Court sentenced three men to death on Sunday for carrying out an attack on a church in the southern governorate of Karak last month that killed nine people, the state news agency Petra reported.

Philippines, Australia sign defence pact with eye on China

■ **Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese witnessed the signing of the defence pact in Manila, where he is attending a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations**

Web Desk

MANILA

The Philippines and Australia signed a defence cooperation arrangement on Sunday that Manila said would lower bureaucratic hurdles to joint military activities, as the two countries further deepen security ties.

Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said the arrangement would streamline implementation of the bilateral Status of Visiting Forces Agreement, or SOVFA, by simplifying coordination procedures.

"Rather than 100 steps to do a single thing, it will just now take



10," Teodoro told reporters, describing the deal as an "anti-red tape measure" for implementing SOVFA.

He said the arrangement would pave ?the way for closer cooperation involving maritime, air and land forces, as well as humanitarian and disaster response, and would bolster the Philippines' "credible deterrence posture" including in the South China Sea.The Philippines has been broadening its network of security ties while complementing a long-standing alliance with its treaty partner, the United States, in the face of what it describes as China's aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea, where countries have overlapping maritime claims.

Australia has consistently supported Manila's position on the strategic waterway, backing a 2016 ruling by an international arbitral tribunal that China's sweeping claims have no basis under international law, a decision Beijing rejects.

Beijing maintains that its actions in the South China Sea have been lawful and professional. It routinely opposes Manila's joint military activities with its allied partners, saying such drills heighten tensions in the region.

UK's Prince William to be joined by wife Kate for visit to India

■ **Heir-to-the-throne William, 44, and Kate are flying out for a series of events across Mumbai during a three-day visit**

Web Desk

LONDON

Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, will undertake her biggest foreign trip since having treatment for cancer when she joins her husband Prince William in India for his annual Earthshot Prize awards this week. Heir-to-the-throne William, 44, and Kate are flying out for a series of events across Mumbai during a three-day visit that includes Tuesday's awards ceremony.

For Kate, 44, the trip marks her most high-profile overseas visit since she had preventative chemotherapy for an unspecified form of cancer in 2024. While she is now in remission, she says the illness still ?impacts her life.



William, who, like his father King Charles, has made campaigning on the environment one of his biggest causes, founded the Earthshot Prize in 2020 with the aim of finding solutions to climate change. It awards five winners £1 million ($1.3 million) each to scale up their projects.

"For the prince, Earthshot is ultimately about replacing pessimism with possibility," a spokesperson for the couple's office at Kensington Palace said.

US aviation crisis persists as over 6,200 flights cancelled, 7,500 delayed

● **Thousands of passengers remained stranded at major airports, including those in Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta and New York**

Web Desk

WASHINGTON

Air travel disruptions across the United States continued for a second consecutive day, with airlines struggling to restore normal schedules despite the reopening of airspace and the resumption of flight operations.

Thousands of passengers remained stranded at major airports, including those in Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta and New York, awaiting flights to their destinations.

According to FlightAware data, a total of 6,228 flights to and from the United States were cancelled, while another 7,542 were



delayed. The figures exceeded the morning forecast by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) chief Bryan Bedford.

Bedford had estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 of the 41,000 scheduled flights for the day would be cancelled. Globally, 6,843 flights were cancelled and 19,927 delayed, with a significant proportion of the disruptions involving US operations.

Among major airlines, JetBlue was the worst affected, with nearly 45 percent of its flights cancelled. American Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Air Lines also cancelled approximately a quarter of their scheduled flights.Airlines have announced that affected passengers can reschedule their journeys for alternative dates without paying additional fees.

Chicago's O'Hare International Airport was among the hardest-hit facilities, with more than 559 flights cancelled by 2pm. Another 68 cancellations were reported at Chicago Midway Airport. At Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, a major hub for Delta Air Lines, 479 flights had been cancelled by 12:30pm.

In Texas, nearly 300 flights had been cancelled at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport by 9am. Several passengers spent the night at the airport, with those scheduled to take connecting flights from Dallas facing particular difficulties.

At Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport, more than 310 flights had been cancelled by the evening, while disruptions also continued at William P. Hobby Airport. According to the US Department of Transportation, airspace remains open and departures are operating safely. However, passengers have been advised to prepare for further cancellations and delays as airlines face difficulties repositioning.

Saudi-led coalition intercepts missiles towards Riyadh, drones in Eastern Province

Web Desk

JADAH

The Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said on Sunday it had intercepted two Houthi ballistic missiles launched towards the Saudi capital Riyadh and three drones in the kingdom's oil-rich Eastern Province.

The Houthis, who control most of the populous parts of Yemen, have intensified attacks on the Saudi capital in recent days. A Houthi attack last week damaged an administrative building of the state oil company Saudi Aramco in Riyadh's financial hub.

The Eastern Province, the economic powerhouse of Saudi



Arabia, has been subject to multiple attacks by Houthis in the past few weeks.It contains the majority of the kingdom's oil and gas reserves ?and is home to Aramco's headquarters, which suffered extensive damage in an attack in October.

The Houthis have stepped up strikes on Saudi airports, ports and oil facilities, while Saudi Arabia has ramped up airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen in response.

South Korea should not fear China's rise, foreign minister says



Web Desk

SEOUL

South Korea should neither fear China's rise nor underestimate its capabilities, Foreign Minister Cho Hyun urging deeper cooperation ahead of a regional summit in China next week. "During this visit to China, I was reminded that we should neither have an unfounded fear of China's rise nor underestimate its capabilities and potential," Cho wrote on X, saying Seoul should ?build cooperation benefiting both countries by drawing on the autonomy and ?creativity of its people and companies.

Cho's remarks came after talks and dinner with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on Friday, their first meeting in about three months.

The ministers discussed bilateral ties, issues on the Korean Peninsula and ways to deliver tangible benefits to people in both countries

Global powers converge in Manila as ASEAN summit kicks off

■ **US President Donald Trump is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday near the summit's conclusion, a visit expected to include a sideline meeting with fellow Quad countries India, Japan and Australia**

Web Desk

MANILA

A key regional summit opens on Sunday in Manila, with Southeast Asian heads of state facing questions on trade, security and an ongoing energy crisis while playing host to a who's who of global leaders.

US President Donald Trump is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday near the summit's conclusion, a visit expected to include a sideline meeting with fellow Quad countries India, Japan and Australia — the first of his second term.

The meeting of the Quad — a grouping broadly aimed at counterbalancing China's regional influence — would come days before a historic sit-down with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin in Shenzhen.

Brazil's recently re-elected Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, meanwhile, is set to attend a plenary session of the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Sunday, while Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will sign a new defense pact with host country the Philippines.

Nearly 20,000 police officers have been deployed around Metro Manila for the summit, with progressive groups predicting a turnout of thousands for an anti-Trump march on the summit site.

Much of the uproar targets the US Pax Silica program — a supply-chain initiative designed to counter China's dominance in semiconductors and rare earths — whose flagship Philippine project, a 1,620-hectare AI manufacturing hub north of Manila, threatens to displace Indigenous families.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Lipton said last week that a widely rumored November target date for a deal signing timed to Trump's visit was never in the works.



Unfinished business A day of early meetings kicked off on Saturday with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announcing a Philippine trade deal, and ASEAN leaders huddling on key issues including haze from Indonesia and potential fuel-sharing schemes as members struggle with Iran war-driven shortages.

But two issues that have vexed ASEAN leaders for years — a languishing South China Sea "Code of Conduct" and their relationship with war-torn Myanmar — look to be Singapore's problem when the bloc's rotating chair passes to the city-state in 2027.

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From Neighborhood to Convergence; ECO and New Horizons of Iran-Pakistan Cooperation



By: Hamid Ghanbari

Our region is at a critical juncture in its history. International developments, changes in economic and geopolitical equations, and increasing security challenges have created conditions that, more than ever, remind us of the need to strengthen cooperation among the countries of the region. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the future of this region cannot be built on the basis of erosive competition or dependence on external arrangements. What can lead to stability and sustainable development is strengthening cooperation among neighbors, mutual respect, trust-building, and utilizing the capacities that the countries of the region possess. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is one of the important platforms for realizing such an approach, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is also pursuing active participation in this organization with the same view.

The 30th ECO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Islamabad is an appropriate opportunity to once again emphasize the importance of regional convergence. Regional cooperation for member countries does not only mean increasing economic exchanges; it is also directly related to their strategic interests, including strengthening economic independence, ensuring security, and consolidating peace and stability. This meeting is also an opportunity to examine existing obstacles and find new ways to expand cooperation among members.

ECO; Great potential, shared responsibilities

The Economic Cooperation Organization has a history of nearly six decades. The organization was formed in 1964 with the participation of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey under the title of "Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD)" and continued its activities under the name ECO in 1985. The accession of seven more countries in 1992 expanded its scope of activities and turned ECO into a regional organization with ten members, an area of ??about eight million square kilometers, and a population of more than half a billion people.

These figures not only indicate the geographical and demographic extent of ECO; but also indicate a significant economic potential that has not yet been fully utilized. The member countries have vast energy resources, fertile agricultural lands, industrial capabilities, important transit locations and markets that can complement each other. The location of these countries on the East-West and North-South communication routes has also provided a position that, if coordinated and cooperated more, will allow them to play an effective role in regional and international trade, transportation, energy and communications.

The economic dimensions of this capacity are also significant. The total population of the member countries in 2025 was about 545 million people and their GDP exceeded 3 trillion dollars. Although these countries accommodate more than 6.6 percent of the world's population, their share of world trade is close to 2 percent. These figures show that there is a significant gap between the region's demographic and economic capacities and its position in world trade. Bridging this gap is one of the most important reasons that highlights the need to strengthen economic cooperation within the ECO framework.

The reality is that the level of trade between member states is still not commensurate with the existing capacities. Customs and trade barriers, infrastructure deficiencies, banking and financial constraints, and difficulties in facilitating trade continue to prevent the full exploitation of regional opportunities. Therefore, merely agreeing on common goals is not enough. What is important is to transform these agreements into concrete and implementable programs; programs whose effects are visible in the economic and social life of the people of the member states.

In my opinion, several issues should be prioritized for ECO's activities in the coming years: increasing trade between member states, developing transport and transit corridors, expanding cooperation in the energy sector, facilitating banking and financial exchanges, attracting investment, and strengthening scientific, technological, and cultural ties between the nations of the region.

Among these priorities, the issue of transport and transit holds a special place. The geographical location of the member states has enabled ECO to become an important link between the markets of East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and Europe. Of course, this capacity cannot be realized solely by relying on geographical location. Coordination in transit policies, joint investment in infrastructure and facilitating the crossing of goods and passengers across borders are the main prerequisites for achieving such a goal.

The energy sector is also one of the areas that can link the common interests of the member states. The fact that ECO members have diverse capacities in the fields of gas, electricity and renewable energies has provided a good opportunity for the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The establishment and development of energy transmission and exchange networks, in addition to helping to ensure energy security, can strengthen the basis for economic growth and sustainable development in the region.

In this context, the development of ECO's 2035 Vision Document is of particular importance. This document should be able to provide a clear picture of the future direction of the organization and identify priorities that all members should play a role in implementing. We expect that the new vision will not be limited to merely stating general goals and will pave the way for a move from fragmented cooperation to a coherent and sustainable model of regional integration. The Islamic Republic of Iran is also ready to actively participate in this process and cooperate in formulating and implementing programs that will ensure the common interests of the members. Hosting the 18th ECO Summit in the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 2026 will also be a valuable opportunity to review the achievements of the organization and chart its future course. We hope that with the active participation of member countries and the presentation of their views and suggestions, constructive, this summit can become a turning point in the development of economic and political cooperation in the region.

Pakistan; Iran's neighbor, partner and strategic friend

The holding of the ECO Council of Ministers meeting in Islamabad, in addition to its multilateral importance, is also an opportunity to emphasize Pakistan's position in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

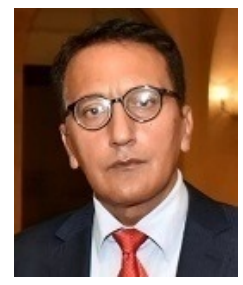
Iran-Pakistan relations cannot be defined solely within the framework of the usual relations between two neighboring countries. The historical, civilizational, cultural and religious ties between the two nations have a long history and have formed extensive contacts between them over the years. These commonalities are a valuable asset for the development of relations between the two countries in the current situation and in the years to come.

Iran has always attached special importance to its relations with Pakistan. From our point of view, the stability and security of each of the two countries is directly related to the national interests of the other country. The common borders, economic and trade capacities, people-to-people contacts and geopolitical position of the two countries have provided numerous grounds for expanding cooperation; Potentials that seem to have not yet been fully utilized.

Developing economic and trade relations should be one of the main axes of relations between Tehran and Islamabad. Increasing bilateral trade, developing border markets, completing transportation infrastructure, facilitating the activities of businessmen, and strengthening ties between the private sectors of Iran and Pakistan can help increase the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries. Cooperation in the field of energy and connecting infrastructure networks are also other areas that have the potential to create long-term and mutual benefits for Tehran and Islamabad.

Economic Cooperation Organization Big Potential, Small Integration

Pakistan Promoting Regionalism for a Resilient ECO



By: Tazeen Akhtar

Economic Cooperation Organization ECO that emerged from Regional Cooperation for Development RCD after the fall of USSR and independence of Central Asian States is the 3rd largest bloc in the world by population, after China-India led blocs. ECO has everything – 580 million people, $3 trillion economy, $9.8 trillion PPP, oil, gas, minerals, agriculture, young labour, and a land bridge from China to Europe.But it trades more with outsiders than with itself. Only 1 dollar out of every 10 earned in trade stays inside ECO.If Pakistan's chairmanship can turn ECOTA from paper to practice, and connect Central Asia to Gwadar / Karachi through real corridors, ECO can become what it was meant to be in 1964 – not just a talking club, but a real economic bloc.RCD was formed by Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye in 1964 while Azerbaijan,Kazakhstan,Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan,Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan were included and the the organization was reshaped as ECO in 1985 with Afghanistan also as member and it was further expanded in 1992 after CARs became independent states.The 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of MinistersIt will be held in Islamabad on 15-16 November 2026. The Meeting will be chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and will be attended by Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegations of ECO Member States, along with representatives of the ECO Secretariat and its subsidiary bodies.The Ministerial Meeting will be preceded by the Meeting of Senior Officials (SOM) of ECO Member States, which will review the activities and programmes of the Organization, assess the work of its subsidiary bodies, and finalize the agenda and draft outcome documents for consideration by the Ministers during COM.Pakistan As Chair of the ECO for 2026-2027Pakistan will seek to advance the Organization's objectives under the theme "Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO". Pakistan's Chairmanship will focus on strengthening regional connectivity and deepening regional integration to strengthen regional partnerships, and promote collective efforts towards greater prosperity, sustainable development, and a more integrated and resilient ECO region.This would also provide an opportunity to reinvigorate the ECO's role as an effective platform for regional cooperation, dialogue, and economic collaboration. Pakistan's Chairmanship of the ECO offers an opportunity to position Pakistan as a regional connectivity hub, facilitator of logistic supply chains and an agenda setter for regional trade.These efforts will contribute towards unlocking the region's considerable economic potential and ensuring that the benefits of regional cooperation are translated into tangible improvements in the lives of the people of ECO Member States.Total GDP of ECOECO is the 8th largest bloc by nominal GDP, 4th largest by PPP GDP. TotalGDP Nominal~ $3.0 – $3.16 Trillion, GDP PPP~ $9.84 Trillion (2026 estimate)GDP Per Capita Nominal~ $5,440 – $5,536, GDP Per Capita PPP~ $16,947Breakdown – Nominal GDP 2025-26 Approx:Türkiye$1,602,860 Million, Pakistan$407,307 Million, Iran$371,123 Million, Kazakhstan$306,239 Million, Uzbekistan$110,000 – $120,000 Million, Azerbaijan$75,938 Million, Turkmenistan$70,000 – $80,000 Million, Tajikistan$14,000 – $15,000 Million, Kyrgyzstan$22,625 Million, Afghanistan$17,817 Million = TOTAL~ $3.05 TrillionTürkiye alone is more than 52% of ECO's nominal GDP. Kazakhstan is 2nd in per capita – $15,191, followed by Türkiye $18,676.Volume of Trade Between Members – The Weak PointThis is ECO's biggest failure – and biggest opportunity. ECO's Total Foreign Trade with the World:~ $1.016 Trillion (2023-24)~ 4-5% of world tradeIntra-ECO Trade – Trade Between Members Themselves: 2024: $94 – $95 Billion – Uzbek President Mirziyoyev at 17th ECO Summit, Khankendi, July 20252023-24 – other estimate: $110 BillionShare: Only 8% to 10% of ECO's total foreign trade, ECO share in global trade: Only ~2% – 4%Comparison:EU intra-trade: 60-70% – ASEAN intra-trade: ~25% – ECO intra-trade: 8-10%Pakistan's trade with ECO: Only 3% of Pakistan's external trade is with ECO countries – despite Pakistan being a founding member.Why so low? High tariffs and non-tariff barriers, ECOTA not fully ratified / implemented, Sanctions on Iran, Security situation in Afghanistan, Weak transport, banking, payment systems, Limited product diversification – all sell similar oil, gas, cotton, agricultureTarget: ECO Vision 2025 had set a target to double intra-regional trade. It was not achieved. Now Vision 2035 and Pakistan's Chairmanship 2026-27 aim to revive it through: Implementing ECOTA, Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Corridor, Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad freight train, ECO Trade and Development Bank, Green corridors, e-commerce, digital trade.ECO Vision ; According to the Treaty of Izmir and ECO Vision 2025 / Vision 2035:Main purpose: Create conditions for sustainable economic development and joint welfare of member states.Specific objectives:1. Remove trade barriers within the ECO region and develop intra-regional trade – 2. Promote ECO region's integration with global markets – 3. Develop transport and connectivity – road, rail, sea, air, energy corridors linking Central Asia to the Arabian Sea and Europe – 4. Develop energy cooperation – oil, gas, electricity, renewables, TAPI, CASA-1000, ITI Corridor – 5. Strengthen cultural and historical ties among member states – 6. Promote agriculture, industry, tourism, science, environment and human developmentIn simple words: Trade more with each other, connect with each other, and grow together – instead of depending only on outside powers.Its flagship agreement is ECOTA – ECO Trade Agreement, signed 2003, in force April 2008, to create an ECO Free Trade Area. It is still not fully implemented – a major reason intra-ECO trade remains low.ECO is one of the oldest regional organizations in Asia. It connects Asia to Europe, Eurasia to the Arab World, and Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. ECO is an intergovernmental regional organization for economic, technical and cultural cooperation among 10 countries in South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East.

THE BIG QUESTION: WHO IS PROTECTING THE TECHNICAL TEAM OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES?



By: Syed Naseer Gillani

The most disturbing aspect of the Tarbela-5 controversy is that accountability appears to have stopped at the sacrifice of individuals, while the Ministry of Water Resources' technical team, whose professional competence and role in major water-sector projects require independent investigation, remains protected and continues to enjoy positions of authority.Serious questions need to be answered:1. Questionable appointments and promotions: How were certain technical officials inducted into the Ministry, allegedly without the requisite qualifications and experience? Were positions subsequently created or upgraded to accommodate and promote them? Were the applicable recruitment, promotion and service rules followed?2. Lack of field experience: What relevant practical experience do these officials possess in the construction, supervision and management of major dams and hydropower projects? Allegations that some have virtually no hands-on field experience, not even a single day of practical dam-site experience, must be independently verified.3. Repeated project failures: Their professional and administrative roles in Tarbela-4, Tarbela-5, Neelum-Jhelum and Kurram Tangi deserve a comprehensive, project-wise performance review. Who made the critical decisions, who approved them, and who is accountable for the resulting technical, financial and contractual consequences?4. Indus Waters Treaty and water diplomacy: Equally serious concerns have been raised about Pakistan's handling of Indus Waters Treaty matters. The Ministry must disclose its litigation record, actual outcomes of international proceedings and the professional basis of its claims of success. Public statements about victories must be supported by documented legal and technical results.5. Institutional protection: Who recommended these appointments? Who approved the creation of positions? Who facilitated their promotions? Who continues to protect this team despite recurring controversies and audit observations?THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION: WHY IS ACCOUNTABILITY SELECTIVE?A retired Lieutenant General serving as Chairman WAPDA was made to leave following the Tarbela-5 controversy. Yet the Ministry of Water Resources' technical and administrative chain of responsibility appears to have escaped comparable scrutiny.Why was the Chairman WAPDA held accountable, while the Ministry's relevant technical decision-makers were not subjected to the same level of investigation?Was the responsibility confined to WAPDA, or did it extend to the Ministry, the project authorities, the consultant and those responsible for procurement, technical evaluation and supervision?PAKISTAN NEEDS ANSWERS, NOT ANOTHER COVER-UP.An independent, high-level inquiry must examine:- The original appointments, qualifications and service records of the concerned technical officials.- The legality of subsequently created posts, promotions and postings.- Their actual field experience and professional track records.- Their individual decision-making roles in Tarbela-4, Tarbela-5, Neelum-Jhelum and Kurram Tangi.- Pakistan's legal and technical performance in Indus Waters Treaty proceedings.- The responsibility of the Ministry, WAPDA, project management and consultants for the decisions and failures under investigation.The inquiry must identify not only those who executed decisions but also those who appointed, promoted, protected and empowered the people responsible.THE QUESTION IS SIMPLE: WHO IS BEHIND THIS TEAM, WHY IS IT STILL IN POWER, AND WHY HAS NO ONE BEEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE?Pakistan's water and energy security cannot be left at the mercy of questionable appointments, inadequate professional capacity and an absence of institutional accountability.PAKISTAN ZINDABADALWAYS

Pakistan, OIC chief pledge continued support for Palestine and Kashmir

on strengthening cooperation within the OIC framework. They agreed to continue working closely to advance the organisation's objectives and promote greater coordination among member states on issues of common concern.The meeting also reaffirmed their strong support for the people of Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir. Both sides reiterated their commitment to the rights of the people of both territories to determine their own future.The discussions reflected Pakistan's continued engagement with the OIC and its commitment to promoting Muslim unity, diplomatic cooperation and collective action on issues affecting the Muslim world.The meeting concluded with an understanding to maintain close coordination and continue joint efforts within the OIC framework to promote peace, solidarity and cooperation among member countries.



Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmad Shaikh, addressing the 89th convocation Of FAST University, Chiniot, on 15 November 2026.

Online registration opens for auction of attractive vehicle number plates in Punjab

■ **Punjab launches online registration for auction of attractive vehicle registration numbers, with November 30 set as the deadline to participate.**

Business Reporter

LAHORE



- Online registration has opened for the auction of attractive vehicle registration numbers, with November 30 set as the last date to participate in the e-auction.

According to Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Chairman Faisal Yousaf, citizens can participate in the online auction from the comfort of their homes. The facility covers registration numbers for motorcycles, cars and commercial vehicles.

Faisal Yousaf said online registration was available through the e-Auction app and web portal. Citizens would not need to visit Excise Department offices to take part in the auction.

FBR integrates 14,078 Tier-I retailers, textile & leather retailers with POS

■ **A total of 12,302 Tier-I retailers were registered with the POS system, with 25,580 of their branches integrated.**

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has integrated 14,078 Tier-I retailers, textile and leather retailers, and restaurants with its Point of Sale (POS) system as of November 1, 2026, The system is used to document transactions of Tier-I retailers, hotels, and restaurants and the number of integrated branches and outlets across these categories reached 38,259 during the same period.

A total of 12,302 Tier-I retailers were registered with the POS system, with



25,580 of their branches integrated.

Around 1,212 restaurants were registered, and 1,908 restaurant branches were linked to the system of the FBR. The FBR also registered 564 textile and leather retailers, with 10,771 of their branches integrated with the system.

Yesterday, FBR made it mandatory for all registered tea manufacturers, blenders and packers to install electronic production monitoring systems by December 10, requiring every retail pack to be digitally recorded before leaving factory premises.

The directive, issued under Sales Tax General Order (STGO) No. 35 of 2026, covers black, green, flavoured and instant tea, tea bags, extracts and premixes containing milk powder or sugar. It also applies to toll and contract packers and covers all retail packaging formats, including sachets, pouches, cartons, jars and tins. Under the new system, manufacturers must install barcode scanners, counting sensors and other equipment on every packing line to record production.

China, US discuss tariffs, farm trade ahead of Xi-Trump meeting

Staff Reporter

BEIJING



China and the United States discussed tariff cuts, agricultural trade and other issues at their first trade council meeting on Friday, China's Commerce Ministry said, days ahead of an expected leaders' meeting in Shenzhen next week.

"The two sides held candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges on implementing the outcomes of previous China-US economic and trade talks, including tariffs, a reciprocal '$30 billion-for-$30 billion' tariff-cut arrangement, agricultural trade and other issues of mutual concern," the ministry said.

It did not say whether any agreements were reached. Both sides will continue using the council to address trade concerns, expand cooperation and reduce outstanding issues, the ministry added. Following a September summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in Washington, the two sides proposed a $60 billion package of reciprocal tariff cuts, including roughly $17 billion worth of US farm goods that China imported in 2024, but the plan has yet to be finalised.

Chinese purchases of US farm goods other than soybeans are on track to hit a seven-year ?low this year, despite an agreement to buy $17 billion annually through 2028, a Reuters analysis of customs data showed earlier this month, underscoring persistent uncertainty over the deal.

Beijing has repeatedly urged Washington to implement the $60 billion tariff-reduction deal, calling it a prerequisite for increasing purchases of US farm goods.

The White House said Trump will meet Xi on Thursday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic



Rs1.895 trillion transferred to provinces under NFC Award

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The federal government transferred a total of Rs1.895 trillion to the four provinces under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award during the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year. During the period, Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded budget surpluses, while Balochistan faced a budget deficit.According to documents from the Ministry of Finance, Punjab received Rs942 billion under the NFC Award during the first quarter. The province's total revenue stood at Rs1.117 trillion, while its expenditures were recorded at Rs784 billion. As a result, Punjab posted a budget surplus of Rs333 billion between July and September.

The documents showed that Sindh received Rs479 billion under the NFC Award. The province recorded total revenue of Rs690 billion and expenditures of Rs509 billion, resulting in a budget surplus of Rs180 billion during the first quarter.

World Bank approves $300m financing for Sindh water and sanitation project

■ **Pakistan borrowed Rs1.514 trillion in the first quarter of FY2026-27, including Rs1.037 trillion in September, and received $5.44 billion in foreign loans and grants; $3bn in bonds**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The World Bank has approved $300 million financing which is designed to expand safe water, sanitation and hygiene services to 1.5 million people and forms the first phase of a broader 10-year programme in Sindh province of Pakistan,

The World Bank financing is part of the overall $540 million STAR WASH-1 project targeting rural water, sanitation, and hygiene in Sindh province. STAR WASH-1 aims to halve water contamination at point of use and connect 80 percent of targeted rural communities to a professional water and sanitation provider.The investment, including $150 million from Asian Development Bank and $90 million from the Government of Sindh, is expected to generate over 14,000 jobs and formalize Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees as a rural WASH utility.As reported by the World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors approved $300 million in financing on November 13 for the Sindh Transformational Accelerated Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services Phase 1 Project, or STAR WASH-1.

The project is set to finance climate-resilient infrastructure, including solar-powered water supply systems and improved sanitation systems, in selected rural areas of Sindh Province. It also includes an integrated social and behaviour change program aimed at improving personal and environmental hygiene and shifting service delivery toward safer and more sustainable rural WASH systems.

World Bank Country Director for Pakistan Bolormaa Amgaabazar said unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene remain a major driver of child stunting in Pakistan, adding the expansion of services in rural Sindh is intended to address one of the root causes.

The project aims to halve water contamination at the point of use and connect 80 percent of targeted rural communities to a professional water and sanitation service provider.

Tesla offers $29,990 cybercab to select customers

■ **According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the country's food exports increased from $1.11 billion in the corresponding quarter last year**

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI



US electric carmaker Tesla has started offering its fully driverless Cybercab for private use to selected customers, marking a major step towards bringing self-driving technology to the public.

Tesla announced the offer on social media platform X by sharing a picture of its golden-coloured, two-seat Cybercab.

The vehicle has an initial price of $29,990, while customers will have to pay an additional $299 per month to use its self-driving features.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk said the offer would become available across the country after receiving the required regulatory approval.

However, Musk described the monthly subscription fee as expensive and indicated that the company could reduce it to around $115.

The proposed lower price would be closer to the current cost of self-driving and connectivity services offered with other Tesla vehicles.

The move is part of Tesla's plan to expand its driverless car technology beyond commercial robotaxi services and bring it to private car buyers.

The development could open a new chapter in the use of self-driving vehicles, making advanced driving technology more accessible to ordinary customers.

Officials from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkiye arrive in Islamabad for 30th ECO ministerial meeting

■ FM Dar chairs two-day ECO ministerial meeting in Islamabad on November 15-16

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Senior officials from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkiye, along with representatives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), arrived in Islamabad on Sunday to attend the 30th Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Council of Ministers Meeting, the Foreign Office (FO) said.

In separate posts on X, the FO said Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Elnur Mammadov, who is also heading his country's delegation, had "arrived in Islamabad to participate in the 30th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting". He was received at Islamabad International Airport by FO officials.

Deputy Secretary General of the SCO Ahmad Saidmurodzoda also arrived to attend the meeting and was received by FO officials, according to another post.

The FO said Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Issagaliyev, who is heading his country's delegation, had also arrived in Islamabad for the meeting. He was received at the airport by ministry officials.

Meanwhile, OIC Secretary General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived in the federal capital to participate in the meeting, while Turkiye's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Musa



Kulaklikaya, who is also leading his country's delegation, arrived to take part in the proceedings. Both were received by FO officials at the airport.The two-day meeting is being held in Islamabad on November 15 and 16 under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. It will bring together foreign ministers and heads of delegations from ECO member states, alongside representatives of the organisation's secretariat and subsidiary bodies.

The ministerial meeting will be preceded by a gathering of senior officials from member states, who will review the organisation's activities and programmes, assess the work of its subsidiary bodies and finalise the agenda and draft outcome documents for consideration by the ministers.

Pakistan, which holds the ECO chairmanship for 2026-27, will seek to advance the organisation's objectives under the theme "Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO". The country's priorities include strengthening regional connectivity and economic integration, deepening partnerships and promoting cooperation for sustainable development and shared prosperity.

The ECO was established in 1985 by Pakistan, Iran and Turkiye and expanded in 1992 to include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The 10-member regional organisation aims to promote economic development through cooperation in areas including trade, transport, energy and investment.

England crush Australia to level ODI series

● Banton's 121 and Atkinson's four-wicket haul seal a commanding win for the tourists

SPORTS DESK

SYDNEY



England opener Tom Banton struck a superb century and fast bowler Gus Atkinson claimed four wickets as they beat Australia by 135 runs in the second One-Day International in Adelaide on Sunday to level the three-match series at 1-1.

Australia won the toss and elected to bowl, but Banton set the tone for England's imposing total by taking the attack to the hosts from the outset.

The right-hander reached the second ODI century of his career from just 86 balls before finishing with 121 off 99 deliveries, including 12 fours and ?four sixes. After England lost Ben Duckett with the score at 19-1, Banton and Joe Root (62) rebuilt the innings with a 137-run second-wicket partnership, the highest stand for that wicket by an England pair in a 50-over match on Australian soil.

Australia briefly worked their way back into the contest with three wickets in the middle overs, but wicketkeeper-batter Jordan Cox counterattacked with 67 off 49 deliveries and all-rounder Will Jacks struck an unbeaten 54 from 40 balls to propel England to 355-6, their highest ODI total on Australian soil.

Xavier Bartlett was the pick of Australia's bowlers with figures of 3-72. Set 356 to win, Australia slumped to 29-4 after Atkinson ?ripped through the top order.

Matt Renshaw (63) and Cameron Green (64) mounted a spirited fightback to keep Australia in contention, but spinner Liam Dawson removed both batters to extinguish the home side's hopes. Australia's lower order offered some late resistance through Jack Edwards (17), Adam Zampa (18), Spencer Johnson (14) and Riley Meredith (17 not out), but they were eventually bowled out for 220.

"We obviously bowled first thinking there might have been a little bit in the ?wicket, which probably sounds weird to say at the Adelaide Oval, and try to maximise those early overs," Australia captain Mitch Marsh said at the presentation.

"I thought they batted really well. We tried a lot through the 50 overs, a few different plans with Meredith bowling bumpers, and all sorts of stuff. "Credit to England. They played well. We know they are a good side. A really rounded side and they showed that tonight."

England's attack maintained the pressure throughout, with Atkinson finishing with outstanding figures of 4-28. Dawson and all-rounder Sam Curran chipped in with two wickets apiece as the tourists wrapped up a comprehensive victory.

"The whole innings, we looked like we were in control," England captain Harry Brook said. "We countered their bad balls, put them under pressure when we needed to and Banton played an exceptional innings... "The depth that we have means we were able to go on and get that 350."

Australia had won the opening ?ODI in Perth by seven wickets, with the series now set for a decider in Hobart on Wednesday.



Mohammad Yousuf, Sana Mir inducted into PCB Hall of Fame 2025

SPORTS DESK

Islamabad

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has inducted former national captain Mohammad Yousuf and former Pakistan women's team captain Sana Mir into its Hall of Fame for 2025.

The prestigious recognition honours both cricketers for their outstanding performances and exceptional contributions to Pakistan cricket.

Yousuf was selected through an independent and transparent voting process, while Mir earned her place in the PCB Hall of Fame following her induction into the ICC Hall of Fame.

During his international career, Yousuf played 381 matches and scored 17,300 runs across formats.

He also set a world record in 2006 by scoring 1,788 runs in Test cricket in a single calendar year, a remarkable achievement that remains a significant milestone in the history of the game.

The inductions recognise the lasting contributions of two prominent figures who played a significant role in the development and success of Pakistan cricket.

Ex-Australia bowler Sayers says everyone knew about 'Sandpapergate'

■ Chadd Sayers says there was discussions in Australia's change rooms of how to get the ball to reverse



SPORTS Desk

Britain

A Cricket Australia probe concluded only then-skipper Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and Cameron Bancroft were in the know, with all sent home and banned.

But Khawaja alleged in his autobiography last week that the whole team was aware, a claim strongly backed by Warner and now Sayers.

"I believe that everyone in that side knew what was going on and what was being used," the retired Sayers, who played in the fourth Test at Johannesburg, told SEN radio.

Khawaja also alleged sandpaper was used in the second Test at Port Elizabeth, with Sayers saying he was the one who took it from the field.

"It (sandpaper) was given to me to take off, so that wasn't planned or anything. I was just the player who took the drinks out at the time," he said.

"It was used in two Test matches and there was discussions in the change rooms of how we were going to get the ball to reverse and what was going to be used."

Cummins, now the Test captain, held a lengthy press conference on Friday to rubbish Khawaja's allegations, calling them "100% wrong".

The bowling group of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon and Cummins all denied publicly in a 2021 statement that they were aware of the plan.

Cricket Australia have ruled out reopening their investigation.

Warner on Saturday accused the governing body of "a cover-up", saying that "as far as he knew" they did not interview Hazlewood, Starc or Lyon at the time.

"If that's correct, then how can CA push the idea that the bowlers didn't know?" he said.

After numerous media reports confirmed the bowlers had indeed been interviewed, Warner on Sunday posted another statement on Instagram.

"Just to clarify 'As far as I am aware' was the POINT," he wrote.

"I was never told the bowlers had been interviewed or provided statements. That information would've been pretty useful when I was forced to make decisions back in 2018.

"Why weren't we given all the evidence by CA?" .

South Africa recall Hamza for Bangladesh Test

● Captain Temba Bavuma said Hamza would bat at number three in place of David Bedingham, who was dropped after the series against Australia last month.

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Zubayr Hamza will play in his first Test match in more than two years when he lines up for South Africa against Bangladesh in the first Test starting at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

Captain Temba Bavuma said Hamza would bat at number three in place of David Bedingham, who was dropped after the series against Australia last month.

In the only other change from the team that clinched the series against Australia with a 176-run win in the third Test in Cape Town, seam bowler Dane Paterson replaces Gerald Coetzee, who is also dropped.

Fast bowler Anrich Nortje, who played in the first two Tests against Australia, is in the squad but has still not fully recovered from a groin injury, Bavuma said.

Off-spinner Simon Harmer, who was man of the match in Cape Town, remains as the sole specialist spinner ahead of long-time incumbent Keshav Maharaj.

Hamza, 31, played for a below-strength South African team in a series in New Zealand in 2023/24 but has not played in a home Test since appearing against England in January 2020.

Hamza served a nine-month ban after testing positive for a banned substance in 2022, which he said was the result of accidentally taking medication prescribed for his father."He has gone back and done what he can in domestic cricket," said Bavuma. "He's scored runs in all formats."



Hamza plays his domestic cricket for the Gauteng Lions, whose home ground is the Wanderers.

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said his team would be finalised on the morning of the match but said it was likely they would pick three seam bowlers and one specialist spinner.

"I think I can say that there will be three pacers," said Shanto. "There must also be a spinner."

Although South Africa will be strong favourites, Shanto said Bangladesh took confidence from recent performances as well as a one-day series win in South Africa in 2021/22.

Bavuma said that it was important for South Africa to maintain the standards of world Test champions as they aim to reach the next final in 2027.

Pakistan decide not to participate in Over-50s Cricket World Cup 2027 in India

■ Pakistan will miss the 2027 Over-50 Cricket World Cup in India after the government denied permission, preventing the defending champions from competing in Hyderabad from January 23 to February 7.

SPORTS DESK

INDIAN WELLS

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva extended her unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, dispatching American Jessica Pegula 6-3 6-4 to reach the final, where she will face a resurgent Elina Svitolina.

Andreeva's heavy groundstrokes, strong serving and tireless defense were too much for the American in their first career meeting, played under sunny skies in the California desert. "It was a tough match," Andreeva said. "You have to work hard to win a point against her. She is going to leave everything out there and make your life complicated, so I wanted to make her life complicated as well today."

The opening set was tight until Andreeva pounced on a looping shot from Pegula and drilled a forehand winner to break serve for a 5-3 lead.



Pegula, backed by a supportive crowd, earned break points as Andreeva served for the set, but shanked an overhead and Andreeva took the set two points later when her opponent's backhand found the net.

Pegula broke to grab a 3-1 advantage in the second set but the lead would prove ?short-lived. Andreeva broke straight back with a deft volley and broke again to lead 4-3. The tournament's third ?seed ultimately sealed the win when a Pegula backhand sailed long on match point.

Andreeva, making her WTA Finals debut, has not dropped a set in four matches at the event.

She will face sixth seed Elina Svitolina in Sunday's final after the Ukrainian needed just over an hour to cruise past Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova 6-2 6-1 in Saturday's other semi-final.

Despite strong sun shining in her eyes, Svitolina delivered a crosscourt backhand winner to claim the first set.

She raced out to a 5-0 lead in the second and raised her arms in triumph and beamed a smile after Noskova's forehand went wide on match point. Andreeva holds a 2-1 lead in their head-to-head matchups, including a one-sided 6-4 6-0 victory in their round-robin match on Monday, but Svitolina has raised her level since.

US thrash Haiti as Pochettino prepares for farewell

■ Pulisic scores twice as the Americans secure a 6-0 victory

SPORTS DESK

LONDON

The United States thrashed Haiti 6-0 to surge towards the CONCACAF Nations League semi-finals on Saturday as Mauricio Pochettino's penultimate game in charge ended in an emphatic victory.

Goals from Christian Pulisic (2), Auston Trusty, Julian Hall, Weston McKennie and Folarin Balogun gave the US a commanding first leg advantage to all but settle the outcome of the quarter-final before Tuesday's second leg in Cincinnati.

The build-up to Saturday's fixture in Miami had been overshadowed by news of Pochettino's departure as US coach after agreeing to take over Manchester United.

But there was little sign that news of Pochettino's exit had disturbed US preparations as they demolished World Cup qualifiers Haiti to deliver the biggest victory of the Argentine coach's two-year reign.

Trusty gave the Americans the lead after just 10 minutes, confidently finishing from close range after Sebastian Berhalter's free-kick from the right flank.



That goal was all that separated the teams at half-time but the floodgates opened after the break.Hall calmly tucked away Antonee Robinson's low cross in the 52nd minute after a sweeping counter-attack to make it 2-0.

Pulisic made it 3-0 from the penalty spot 10 minutes later after being brought down in the box by Haiti defender Carlens Arcus.

The AC Milan forward then grabbed his second goal a minute later, rifling into the bottom corner from the edge of the area to make it 4-0.

McKennie's 68th-minute header put Pochettino's side 5-0 up and the US thought they had added a sixth soon afterwards when Balogun shrugged off Arcus to score from close range.

A VAR review, however, determined that Balogun had fouled Arcus in the build-up and the goal was chalked off.

Balogun did not have long to wait though for his 13th international goal, latching on to a Malik Tillman through ball to score in the 82nd minute.



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Turkish Cyprus at 43: No Settlement Without Sovereign Equality and Equal International Status

By Muzaffar Ahmad Bhatti

ISLAMABAD

Photo by Raja Farid







The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) marked the 43rd Anniversary of the founding of the State with a clear and firm message: statehood is not a matter of political preference, but a question of security, dignity, equality, and the right of the Turkish Cypriot people to determine their own future.The message was delivered by the TRNC Ambassador to Islamabad, Ms. Buket Kop, in her keynote address at a reception hosted by her in Islamabad to mark the anniversary. The event commenced with the National Anthems of both states, followed by the address of the Ambassador. It was attended by the Ambassadors of Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, along with diplomats, academics and friends of the Turkish Cypriot people. Amb Bilal Hayee Additional Secretary MOFA Pakistan was chief guest. Parliamentary Secretary Farah Naz Akbar and Advisor to PM Fahad Haroon were also present.Ambassador Kop underscored that at its core, the Cyprus Issue is fundamentally a question of political equality and international status.She recalled the events of 1963, which led to the collapse of the power-sharing partnership established under the 1960 Constitutional Order, as central to understanding the issue. She observed that after decades of negotiations, a comprehensive and lasting settlement had yet to be achieved.That history, she said, explains why the Turkish Cypriot people cannot return to a partnership in which they are treated as a minority community, rather than as a politically equal people.Unequal Treatment Has Blocked a SettlementThe Ambassador highlighted the issue of unequal international treatment, noting that the Greek Cypriot Administration continues to be treated by the international community as though it represents the entire island, while the Turkish Cypriot people are regarded merely as a "Community" and remain subject to political, economic and diplomatic isolation.She stated that this imbalance has created a political comfort zone for the Greek Cypriot side and discouraged meaningful compromise and genuine efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement.In her words, isolation is not a neutral policy. It rewards intransigence on one side and punishes the victims on the other.Determination, Identity and





Self-DeterminationIn her address, Ambassador Kop highlighted the determination and resilience of the Turkish Cypriot people in preserving their national identity, safeguarding their existence, and pursuing their right to self-determination through the establishment of the TRNC.The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, she said, remains firm in its resolve to secure its statehood, safeguard its independence, and achieve international recognition.For the Turkish Cypriot people, this resolve is not about confrontation. It is about survival with dignity.President Erdogan's Call and Pakistan's SupportAmbassador Kop's address also acknowledged Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's longstanding calls for the recognition of the TRNC and the establishment of diplomatic, political and economic relations with it.Expressing appreciation for Pakistan's longstanding support for the just cause of the Turkish Cypriot people, Ambassador Kop described the enduring bonds of friendship, solidarity and brotherhood between Pakistan and the Turkish Cypriot people as a source of strength and encouragement. She expressed hope for further strengthening political, economic and diplomatic cooperation between Pakistan and the Turkish Cypriot people.Where TRNC Is Present in the World Despite isolation, the TRNC is not cut off from the world. It maintains a wide network of representation abroad. TRNC has Representative Offices in more than 20 countries, including: Asia: Pakistan (Islamabad), Azerbaijan (Baku), Qatar (Doha), United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi), Bahrain (Manama), Kuwait (Kuwait City), Oman (Muscat), Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek - Economy and Tourism Office) en.wikipedia.orgEurope: United Kingdom (London), Germany (Berlin), France (Strasbourg), Italy (Rome), Belgium (Brussels), Austria (Gaming), Switzerland (Geneva), Sweden (Stockholm), Finland (Helsinki), Hungary (Budapest)Americas: United States (Washington D.C. and New York City), with the New York office also serving as the TRNC Office to the United Nations.The TRNC is not a member of the United Nations. But it has steadily gained observer status in important regional and international organizations - in most cases under the name "Turkish Cypriot State", and in one case under its own constitutional name.1. Organization of Turkic States (OTS). TRNC Foreign Minister is participating in ECO Islamabad as observer member. TRNC has observer status at OIC as well.This growing presence, Ambassador Kop argued, proves that the world can no longer deal with the Turkish Cypriots only as a community to be managed. It must deal with them as a people with equal rights.A Call to the World: Equality, Not IsolationAmbassador Kop called upon the international community to recognize the sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriot people and the TRNC. She urged engagement on the basis of equality and mutual respect, stressing that ending the isolation endured by Turkish Cypriots was not merely a political necessity but also a moral responsibility.The reception marked the 43rd Anniversary of the founding of the TRNC and underscored the importance of the longstanding bonds of friendship and solidarity between Pakistan and the Turkish Cypriot people.The message from Islamabad was clear: There can be no just and lasting settlement in Cyprus without sovereign equality, equal international status, and an end to isolation.

PTI founder wants direct talks on 28th Amendment, says Salman Akram Raja

■ PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja says Imran Khan wants decision-makers to approach him directly for talks on constitutional amendments and other issues.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salman Akram Raja has said that party founder Imran Khan conveyed through lawyer Salman Safdar that anyone wishing to discuss the 28th Constitutional Amendment or other matters should speak to him directly.

aja questioned why decision-makers were not approaching Imran Khan directly if a three-hour meeting could be held with someone else. He said discussions were taking place about the provinces, adding that no progress could be made without consulting the PTI founder. He also pointed out that the text of the proposed



constitutional amendment had not yet been made public.Raja said the establishment of new provinces should also be discussed with Imran Khan. He described PTI as the country's largest representative political party and said consultations with its founder were essential before moving forward. He maintained that Imran Khan would not support anything contrary to his principles.

According to Raja, Imran Khan had told Salman Safdar that anyone wishing to discuss an issue should meet him directly.

Federal govt plans to expand KP governor's powers through new ordinance

■ Federal government plans to expand KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's emergency and administrative powers through a proposed ordinance sent to President Asif Ali Zardari.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The federal government has decided to expand the powers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi amid the province's law and order situation, with preparations underway to issue a new ordinance.

According to government sources, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sent a proposed ordinance concerning the governor's powers during an emergency situation to President Asif Ali Zardari.

Governor Kundi, Tariq Fazal discuss peace, development and public welfare in KP

The president is expected to promulgate the ordinance soon on the prime minister's advice.

Under the proposed legal measure, the governor will be granted greater powers during the enforcement of an emergency. His administrative powers will also be expanded in relation to 12 special districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Government sources said the National Assembly session had been rescheduled due to the proposed ordinance, as an

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DAILY THE SPOKESMAN

Nigar Johar calls for private sector role in improving KP healthcare system

■ KP health adviser Nigar Johar calls for private sector involvement, highlighting shortages of doctors, hospital beds, maternal care and healthcare facilities.

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Adviser Lieutenant General (retd) Nigar Johar has said that efforts are underway to improve the province's healthcare system, but the private sector must also play its role in strengthening healthcare services.

Addressing a news conference in Peshawar, Lieutenant General (retd) Nigar Johar said that 42 out of every 1,000 children die during pregnancy or around the time of birth, while several mothers also lose their lives during childbirth. She stressed the need to reduce maternal mortality.

She said the shortage of hospital beds and healthcare workers was a major challenge in the province, with as many as three patients being treated on a single bed in some hospitals.

She added that the growth and development of 40 per cent of children in the province were being affected.

Johar said polio had been eradicated in most parts of the world, but Pakistan and Afghanistan remained the only countries where the disease was still present. She said polio could only be eradicated through sustained and vigorous efforts against the disease.

The health adviser said primary healthcare was the government's top priority and that a digitisation process was underway to ensure transparency in the sector. She warned that the absence of digitisation could create opportunities for shortcomings and irregularities within the system.

Expressing concern over the quality of medicines, she said their standard remained a major question mark and that steps were being taken to improve it. She added that five mobile drug-testing laboratories had been provided to five divisions for collecting and testing medicine samples.

Lieutenant General (retd) Nigar Johar said 250 new doctors had been recruited recently. She pointed out that some locations where doctors were not required had three doctors appointed against a single sanctioned post, while efforts were being made to address shortages in cities where medical professionals were needed.

She also said that the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Mardan project, which was launched in 2012, had yet to be completed. Making the Khyber Institute of Child Health operational was also extremely important, she added.

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