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

WEB DESK

TEHRAN

The US carried out strikes on Iran's Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz, a US official said. The strikes, earlier reported by the Wall Street Journal, appeared to be limited and were not a resumption of major combat operations, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. Another official said the strikes were defensive measures against Iranians using surface-to-air missiles against US assets.The Pentagon referred a request for comment to the US Central Command.



PM Shehbaz calls meeting to review KP situation

News Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned a special meeting to review the current situation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Islamabad
Several federal ministers and high-level civil and military officials will participate in the meeting.
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi will also attend the meeting.The participants of the meeting will review the overall situation of the province.



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

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

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani security forces have killed 17 Indian-sponsored terrorists during two intelligence-based operations in Balochistan, while an army soldier was martyred in an exchange of fire, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.
The operations were conducted in Kachhi and Kharan districts on November 1 against militants belonging to Fitna Al Hindustan and Fitna Al Khawarij, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).
The military said the operations were launched after intelligence reports indicated the presence of terrorists in the two districts.
In Kachhi district's Sanni area, security forces carried out an intelligence-based operation and thwarted an attempt by terrorists to establish a roadblock.
The military said 10 Indian-sponsored



terrorists were killed during the operation. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the area following the engagement.
The attempted road blockade was prevented before the militants could carry out their intended activity, according to the ISPR.
In a separate operation in Kharan district, security forces targeted a terrorist hideout and killed seven militants belonging to Fitna Al Khawarij following an intense exchange of fire.The military's statement said the hideout was destroyed during the operation.
During the exchange of fire in Kharan, Sepoy Hikmat Ullah, 25, from Karak district, fought bravely and embraced martyrdom, the ISPR said.Security forces recovered weapons and ammunition during the operations, while sanitisation efforts were under way in the affected areas to eliminate any remaining terrorists. The military said clearance operations would continue to ensure that other militants in the areas were tracked down and neutralised.
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised security forces for killing 17 Indian-sponsored terrorists during the operations in Kachhi and Kharan. He also paid tribute to Sepoy Hikmat Ullah, who was martyred while confronting terrorists in Kharan, and prayed for the elevation of his ranks.
The prime minister expressed condolences and sympathy to the soldier's family over their loss.
Shehbaz Sharif said security forces were achieving significant successes against terrorism under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam and remained committed to eliminating all forms of terrorism from the country.(Continued on Page-5)

Govt, JI negotiation teams meet in Islamabad over petroleum levy

News Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The government and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) are set to resume negotiations today (Tuesday) over the petroleum levy, with the JI calling for substantial relief for the public and a gradual withdrawal of the levy.
According to sources, a JI delegation, led by Liaquat Baloch, arrived at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold talks with the government.
The negotiations are taking place at the office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.
The JI negotiating team comprises Liaquat Baloch, Syed Farasat Shah and Engineer Nasrullah Randhawa.



Govt reduces petrol price by over Rs5 per litre, diesel by more than Rs3

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

he federal government has cut the price of petrol by Rs5.45 per litre and the rate of high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs3.68 per litre, according to a notification issued on Tuesday.
Following the reduction, petrol will be sold at Rs369.06 per litre, while the price of high-speed diesel has been decreased to Rs391.52 per litre.According to a notification issued by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), the revised rates will remain effective until November 4. Ogra has also begun publishing daily petroleum prices on its website to improve transparency and allow changes in international oil prices to be passed on to consumers more quickly.

Maryam Nawaz inaugurates 127 development projects worth billions in Attock

■ Maryam Nawaz inaugurates 127 development projects in Attock, including 59 road schemes worth Rs23 billion, and responds to corruption allegations.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ATTOCK

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif visited Attock, where she inaugurated 127 development projects, including 59 road schemes worth Rs23 billion, amid a warm welcome from residents, party workers and children.
Large crowds gathered along various roads and intersections to welcome the chief minister, showering flower petals on her convoy. Hatian Road, Kamra Road and University Road were decorated with rose petals ahead of her arrival.
Maryam Nawaz removed security barriers to interact with the public and invited children to join her in inaugurating development projects across the district.
The inaugurated projects included an Agri



Mall, a land record centre, a model children's home and the Fateh Jang Special Education Centre, in addition to 59 road schemes.
The road projects included Fateh Jang-Pindi Gheb Road, Dhok Laham-Jhamat Road and Mithial Chowk-Dhok Pathan Road. Maryam Nawaz highlights public engagement
Addressing the gathering, Maryam Nawaz recalled that a young girl had once crossed a crowd during the inauguration of Galla Mandi to approach her for an autograph.
She said people had expected the public to question her after she had completed one year as chief minister.
Referring to past practices, she said people had previously been pushed away from the stage, but she believed in staying among the public and maintaining direct contact with them.
The chief minister urged people not to fear difficulties or lose courage, saying challenges had to be faced with determination and perseverance.
She said the satisfaction gained from serving the public could not be found elsewhere.
Maryam Nawaz said talented children would inaugurate development projects in Attock.

US approves Qatar-presented draft deal with Iran: sources

WEB DESK

TEHRAN



The United States approved a draft memorandum of understanding that Qatari mediators presented to Iran a day ago, sources familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.
"The mediation team briefed Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the memorandum, which they also approved," the sources told Qatari newspaper Al-Araby Al-Jadeed.
The newspaper said Washington and Tehran have made concessions regarding Iran's nuclear programme and frozen assets.

Govt plans local production of e-passport chips

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Directorate General of Immigration and Passports has decided to take steps towards the local production of passport chips to improve security and reduce dependence on foreign technology,
The decision was discussed during a virtual meeting chaired by the Director General of Immigration and Passports with officials of the Pakistan Security Printing Corporation (PSPC).

Gohar calls for easing political tensions, says dialogue is needed

■ PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar urged political leaders to reduce tensions, saying denied prisoner meetings had worsened the situation and threatened democracy.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has called for reducing political tensions, saying the country, nation and democracy require efforts to ease the current strain.
Speaking to the media, Gohar said Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had his own party and political position. He said he had told Rehman in the National Assembly that some words in his speech should not have been used. Gohar added that the government's response had also been inappropriate. He said



Salman Safdar had met PTI founder Imran Khan for the first time since April 8, after a gap of 380 days, calling the meeting a positive development. Gohar said restrictions on meetings had contributed to the high level of tension.He said denying a prisoner access to family for 15 days amounted to a human rights violation. Regular meetings, he added, could have improved the situation and prevented such tensions, as well as the possibility of an emergency or governor's rule.
Gohar denied that his name had been finalised for a meeting with Imran Khan. He said he had consistently tried to arrange meetings between political leaders, including himself and Allama Nasir Abbas, and had then sought a meeting through Salman Safdar.
The PTI chairman said the matter concerning the recovery of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and provincial assembly speaker was heard by the Peshawar High Court and referred to a larger bench. He expressed hope that it would be heard soon, saying their disappearance was difficult to understand.

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

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

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has successfully conducted the flight test of its first indigenously developed Fa'az air-to-air missile, marking a significant advancement in the country's aerospace and defence capabilities, the military's media wing said on Tuesday.
According to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the missile is equipped with a state-of-the-art terminal guidance system and is capable of engaging enemy aerial targets at longer ranges.
The Fa'az missile is expected to enhance the operational flexibility of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and further strengthen the country's overall defence posture, the



statement said.
It added that the successful flight test demonstrated the technical maturity, innovation and self-reliance achieved by Pakistan's defence industry.
Senior officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces witnessed the launch alongside scientists and engineers involved in the development of the advanced weapon system.
President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as well as the services chiefs, congratulated the scientists and engineers on the successful test.
The development follows the Pakistan Army's successful test launch of the extended-range version of the Fatah-2 hypersonic ballistic missile on October 13, 2026.
According to the military's media wing, the Fatah-2 Extended Range (ER) weapon system is equipped with advanced navigation and state-of-the-art avionics.
The missile can engage targets with high precision and penetrate enemy missile defence systems owing to its "unique trajectory and manoeuvrability features", the ISPR said.



SHO Aabpara, Zulfiqar Ali, receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Inspector General of Police Islamabad, Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, in recognition of his outstanding professional performance.

NA body directs NHA to prioritise ongoing projects, strengthen workforce in Balochistan

■ The National Assembly Standing Committee on Communications on Tuesday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to prioritise ongoing development schemes, ensure timely completion of delayed projects and take measures to strengthen its workforce in Balochistan.

CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has called for strict enforcement of existing laws to protect breastfeeding and prevent the commercial promotion of formula milk.

The committee directed the Ministry of National Health Services and PEMRA to ensure implementation of relevant parliamentary legislation.

The committee, chaired by Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti at Parliament House, reviewed the implementation of its previous recommendations regarding the regulation and advertisement of formula milk for infants aged one to 36 months.

The chairman expressed concern that a stay order obtained by Nestle from the Islamabad High Court had affected the



implementation of directions requiring the disclaimer, "Mother's Milk is the Best for a Child," in formula milk advertisements.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) informed the committee that the disclaimer had been broadcast on 29 television channels, while efforts were underway to ensure its transmission on the remaining channels. It had also issued three letters to the Pakistan Broadcasters Association in this regard. The chairman observed that several countries, including Bangladesh, had adopted restrictions on formula milk advertisements. Referring to international practices, he said such advertisements had been prohibited in 89 countries.

He stressed that resources spent on promoting formula milk could instead be directed towards improving maternal nutrition, benefiting both mothers and children.

Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal informed the committee that instructions had been issued to prepare an advertisement highlighting the importance of breastfeeding.

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) clarified that formula milk fell within its regulatory ambit under the category of alternative medicines.

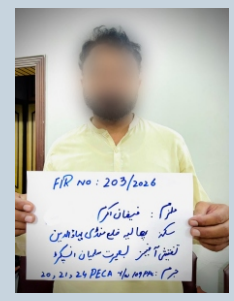
Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri stressed the need to review existing nutritional regulations and cautioned against misleading claims regarding formula milk and child growth.

She said the committee would not compromise on false claims and urged relevant authorities to examine the applicable rules.

NCCIA Rawalpindi Arrests Suspect for Blackmailing Women Using Objectionable Photos and Videos

News Desk

RAWALPINDI



The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Rawalpindi, has arrested a suspect allegedly involved in blackmailing women through their objectionable photographs and videos, the agency's spokesperson said on Tuesday.According to details, the Cyber Crime Reporting Centre (CCRC), Rawalpindi, acting under the supervision of Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, arrested the accused, identified as Faizan Akram, son of Muhammad Akram, on October 29, 2026.The accused, a resident of Chenini Manga, PO Basool Nagar, Tehsil Alipur Chatha, District Wazirabad, was found in possession of two mobile phones, which were taken into custody through proper seizure memos.During the technical examination of the recovered devices, investigators found objectionable photographs and videos of the complainant, along with similar material involving several other women, stored in the mobile phone galleries.The seized devices have been forwarded for further forensic analysis to collect additional evidence.

Seniority-Based Promotions Bring New Enthusiasm to Islamabad Police

Naeem Minhas, Crime Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Seniority-Based Promotions Continue in Police Department Hardworking and Honest Officer Irshad Ali Abro Named Among Top Senior Experienced Officers Promoted in Police Force IG Islamabad Sohail Chaudhry's favors towards his force have doubled the morale of the police. Employees and officers promoted on the basis of seniority expressed their heartiest gratitude to IG Islamabad and conveyed their best wishes. Hailing from Larkana, Sindh, the experienced and highly talented Irshad Ali Abro is a well-known personality in the police department. He has dedicated a significant portion of his life to the Islamabad Police, proving his mettle through passion and sheer dedication. Covering the journey from ASI to SP, senior officer Irshad Ali Abro served as SHO at various police stations in the federal capital.



500 Girl Guides Pay Tribute to Martyrs at Yadgar-e-Fatah Under Leadership of Farah Naz Akbar



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture and MNA Mrs. Farah Naz Akbar, President of the ICT Chapter of the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA), led a group of 500 Girl Guides on a visit to the newly inaugurated Yadgar-e-Fatah in Islamabad to pay tribute to the martyrs who rendered supreme sacrifices for the defence of the motherland.Organised by the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA), ICT Chapter, the visit was held to honour the sacrifices of Pakistan's martyrs and commemorate the victory of Marka-e-Haq. The large gathering of young Girl Guides reflected a strong spirit of patriotism, national unity and solidarity, while providing an opportunity for the younger generation to connect with the country's national history and sacrifices.Addressing the initiative, Mrs. Farah Naz Akbar highlighted the importance of instilling patriotic values, national pride and a sense of responsibility among young girls. She emphasised that the sacrifices of the martyrs would continue to inspire generations to serve the country with dedication, courage and commitment.The initiative also reflected Mrs. Farah Naz Akbar's commitment to the empowerment, leadership development and active participation of young girls in national and community activities. Under her leadership, the PGGA ICT Chapter continues to provide meaningful platforms for girls to build confidence, develop leadership skills and contribute positively to society.

FBISE Organises Naat Recitation Competition to Promote Students' Creative Talent

News Desk

ISLAMABAD



The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), Islamabad, organized a Naat recitation competition on the second day of its ongoing weekly co-curricular activities, aimed at promoting students' creative abilities and boosting their confidence.Addressing the participants, Director Test Development Mirza Ali welcomed the students and teachers and said that co-curricular activities not only enhance students' intellectual capabilities but also help bring out their hidden talents and improve their self-confidence. He said the Federal Board had launched weekly co-curricular activities with this objective, with directorates of educational institutions affiliated with the board participating in the programme.At the matriculation level, Simaab Mohsin of FG Public School for Boys, RA Bazaar, Rawalpindi, secured first position. Muhammad Daniyal of Askaria College, A-30, Lalarukh, Wah Cantt, stood second, while Muhammad Ahmed Attari of FG Public School No. 1 for Boys, Chaklala, Rawalpindi Cantt, clinched third position.At the intermediate level, Muhammad Roshan Ali of FG Science Degree College for Boys, Wah Cantt, won first position. Syeda Momina Zahid of FG Degree College for Women, Abid Majeed Road, Rawalpindi, secured second position, while Muhammad Owais of KRL Model College for Boys, Kohat Road, Rawalpindi.

Islamabad Police Arrest 26 Accused in 24-Hour Crackdown; Drugs and Illegal Weapons Recovered

CRIME REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad Police Arrest 26 Accused in 24-Hour Crackdown; Drugs and Illegal Weapons RecoveredAccording to details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, Islamabad Police continued its indiscriminate crackdown against criminal elements over the past 24 hours to protect the lives and property of citizens and prevent crime in the federal capital.During various operations across the city, police teams arrested a total of 26 accused, including 16 proclaimed offenders and court absconders.

Punjab Highway Patrol Arrests 1,082 Wanted Criminals in October

■ 3.5 Million Individuals and 1.9 Million Vehicles Checked; 712 Stolen Vehicles and Motorcycles Recovered

Crime reporter

Lahore





Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) is actively working to ensure the safety and convenience of citizens and the enforcement of traffic laws on highways across the province. Punjab Highway Patrol has released its performance report for October 2026, according to which PHP undertook various measures to prevent crime, facilitate citizens and ensure safe travel on highways through modern technology and effective strategies.Giving details, Punjab Police spokesperson said that Punjab Highway Patrol checked 3.5 million individuals on highways through the E-Police Post App, while 1,082 proclaimed offenders and court absconders were arrested during checking. A total of 1.9 million vehicles were checked on highways across the province, resulting in the recovery of 712 stolen vehicles and motorcycles.During October, legal action was taken against 9,894 vehicles for axle-load violations, while 1,999 drivers were proceeded against for the illegal use of gas cylinders. To facilitate citizens, 4,829 driving licences were issued, while 60 missing children were traced and reunited with their parents. Similarly, 79 temporary and permanent encroachments were removed from highways to improve traffic flow, while 40,119 commuters were provided with various forms of assistance and guidance on highways.Furthermore, 1,947 citizens were

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Relations Enter a New Era, Says Sardar Muhammad Yousaf

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs meets Saudi Ambassador; discusses Hajj and Umrah arrangements, religious cooperation and enhanced facilities for Pakistani pilgrims

STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad



Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf held a meeting with Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Rajeh bin Tami Al-Buqami at the Ministry of Religious Affairs on Tuesday. The meeting focused on Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations, cooperation in religious affairs, and arrangements for facilitating Pakistani Hajj pilgrims and Umrah visitors.Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs Abrar Ahmed Mirza and Joint Secretary Hajj Syed Abdul Waheed Shah were also present.Welcoming the Saudi ambassador on his appointment to Pakistan, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had entered a new era. He said the two brotherly countries enjoyed deep-rooted religious, historical and fraternal ties, adding that Saudi Arabia had always stood by Pakistan like an elder brother during difficult times.The minister said the Makkah Charter represented the voice of the people and that Pakistan's spiritual and emotional bond with the Haramain Sharifain would remain intact forever. He added that the people of both countries were connected through lasting bonds of love, devotion and brotherhood.Sardar Muhammad Yousaf appreciated the exemplary measures taken by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to provide maximum facilities to Hajj pilgrims. He also praised the Saudi government's efforts to improve Hajj arrangements and introduce modern facilities for pilgrims.Describing the Route to Makkah initiative as an excellent facility, the minister said it had significantly eased the journey for Pakistani pilgrims and made their Hajj experience more convenient.

Two Pakistani Universities Ranked Among World's Top 500, QS Ranking Sees Country's Representation Rise to 18

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani universities have made significant progress in international rankings, strengthening the country's presence in the global higher education landscape. Two Pakistani universities have secured places among the world's top 500 institutions in the QS World University Rankings 2027, while 12 universities have been ranked among the top 1,000 worldwide.The development was shared by Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar while briefing the 27th meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training.He informed the committee that Pakistan's representation in the QS World University Rankings had increased from seven universities in 2020 to 18 in 2027. Similarly, the number of Pakistani universities featured in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings had risen from 14 to 56.



IGP Islamabad Reviews Security Arrangements, Safe City Surveillance And Modern Policing Initiatives

Awards Cash Prizes and Certificates of Appreciation; Holds Open Court to Address Citizens' Complaints and Ensure Prompt Relief

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



IG Islamabad Reviews Security Arrangements, Safe City Surveillance and Modern Policing Initiatives; Directs Upgradation of Police Training and Welfare FacilitiesAccording to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry chaired an important meeting at Safe City Islamabad, where the overall security situation in the federal capital, surveillance through Safe City cameras, crime prevention, traffic management and the use of modern technology were reviewed in detail.During the meeting, discussions focused on further improving the Safe City monitoring system, ensuring timely identification of suspicious activities and enhancing police response. The IGP directed the concerned officers to make effective use of modern technology and available resources to strengthen surveillance, improve security arrangements and ensure a prompt response to any untoward incident.Meanwhile, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry met police officers and officials selected through the Hajj and Umrah balloting at the Central Police Office. He congratulated the successful candidates and extended his best wishes to them. On the occasion, he said that the welfare of police officers and officials remains among the key priorities of Islamabad Police and that further measures would continue to be taken in this regard.Furthermore, as part of ongoing efforts to enhance the professional training and operational capacity of Islamabad Police, the IGP visited the firing range and reviewed the target installation, training facilities and other arrangements in detail. He directed the concerned staff to improve the firing range, raise training standards and ensure the timely completion of all necessary arrangements.In addition, work on the renovation and upgradation of residential barracks for police officers and officials is progressing rapidly on the special attention and directions of IGP Islamabad. Accompanied by senior officers, he also visited the barracks and inspected the ongoing construction and renovation work. He directed the concerned officers to maintain high standards of construction quality and ensure the timely completion of the project.IGP Islamabad Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry said that the effective use of modern technology, enhancement of professional capabilities and welfare of police officers and officials are among the key priorities of Islamabad Police. He emphasized that all available resources are being utilized to improve policing standards, strengthen public security and provide better facilities to the police force.

FCCU Hosts Third International 'Connecting Voices 2026' Conference

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Department of English at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore, is organising the third international Connecting Voices Conference 2026, a two-day academic event aimed at promoting critical thinking, equality, inclusivity, and meaningful representation through literary, linguistic, and cultural discourseThe conference seeks to highlight the significance of social justice and linguistic rights in a global context, while exploring the value of multilingual societies and diverse cultural identities. Particular emphasis will be placed on amplifying the voices of marginalised, underrepresented, and disadvantaged communities, especially in the context of the Global South, and ensuring their meaningful inclusion in academic and intellectual discourse Serving as an international platform for scholarly engagement, the conference brings together researchers, academics, and intellectuals to explore new possibilities for dialogue, critical inquiry, and creative expression beyond conventional academic boundaries.

Annual Sports Gala 2026: Cricket Tournament Promotes Healthy Activities Among

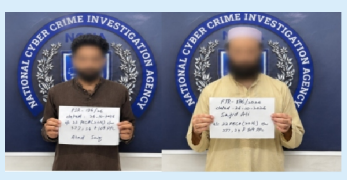


STAFF REPORTER

Islamabad

A cricket tournament was successfully organised under the Annual Sports Gala 2026 through the efforts of Prime Minister's Youth Programme Coordinator Azeem Khan, in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Pakistan Chamber of Education and Private Educational Society.Teams from various educational institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad participated in the tournament. Gracious Model School and College, Jhangi Syedan, secured first position, while AIMS School and College, Bhara Kahu, finished as runners-up.Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister's Youth Programme Coordinator Azeem Khan said that participation in sports and healthy activities enables students to improve their physical and mental development. He emphasised the need to promote sports among young people to encourage positive and constructive activities.Chairman Private Educational Society Raja Khalid said that sports play a vital role in developing discipline, teamwork and leadership skills among students.President Pakistan Chamber of Education and Member Board of Governors, Federal Board, Hafiz Muhammad Basharat, said that promoting sports and establishing more playgrounds could help keep young people away from negative activities. He added that sports played an important role in character-building and creating a healthy society.Chairman Sports Board Qari Muhammad Asif, along with coordinators Hafiz Muhammad Banaras and Kamran Mehboob, was also present on the occasion.

NCCIA Arrests Two Suspects Involved in Child Sexual Abuse Material



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested two suspects allegedly involved in creating, possessing, distributing and selling Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), the agency's spokesperson said on Monday.According to an NCCIA press release, the suspects, identified as Sajid Ali and Asad Saif, were found involved in transmitting objectionable material through WhatsApp and Telegram.The agency said that suspect Asad Saif was allegedly involved in creating and circulating objectionable material involving his own child, while Sajid Ali was also found involved in the heinous offence.Both suspects have been arrested and are currently in physical remand. Two mobile phones allegedly used in the commission of the crime were recovered from Sajid Ali's possession and sent for forensic examination.Cases have been registered against the accused under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), and further investigation is underway.The operation was conducted under the supervision of NCCIA Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi.The Director General said the agency was pursuing a zero-tolerance policy against child exploitation and child pornography, adding that strict legal action would continue against those involved in such crimes.He urged citizens to report any incident of cyber harassment or cybercrime by calling the NCCIA helpline 1799 or visiting their nearest NCCIA circle.

DIG Islamabad Holds Police Darbar to Address Officers' Issues and Promote Welfare

Ali Waseem Directs Timely Resolution of Personnel's Complaints; Reiterates Zero-Tolerance Policy Towards Corruption and Misconduct

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



DIG Islamabad Holds Police Darbar to Address Officers and Officials Issues and Promote Their WelfareFollowing the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Captain (Retd.) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem held a Police Darbar to listen to the issues and concerns of police officers and officials and take steps for their prompt resolution and welfare.During the Darbar, officers and officials presented their problems, difficulties and suggestions directly to the senior leadership. DIG Islamabad listened to them and issued directions to the concerned officers for the timely resolution of their legitimate issues.DIG Islamabad Ali Waseem said that resolving the legitimate issues of officers and officials on priority is a key departmental responsibility. He emphasized that the welfare of the force, professional needs and provision of better facilities remain important priorities, and that the dignity and well-being of police officers and officials will not be compromised.He further said that maintaining the morale of the force and providing a conducive working environment are among the department's responsibilities. Police officers and officials are a valuable asset, and their welfare is essential for effective policing. The Police Darbar provides an important opportunity to identify their concerns and address them.The DIG Islamabad directed officers to perform their duties with dedication and ensure courteous behavior towards citizens. He made it clear that inappropriate or unethical conduct with the public would not be tolerated and that strict departmental action would be taken against anyone found damaging the reputation of the police. He also reiterated the department's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and misuse of authority.DIG Islamabad assured the participants that all legitimate issues would be addressed in a timely manner and that every available resource would be utilized to improve the welfare and facilities of the force.

NCCIA COMMENCES PHYSICAL TESTS FOR RECRUITMENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Tests Being Conducted in 11 Cities; DG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi Directs Strict Monitoring to Ensure 100 Per Cent Transparency and Merit





STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has commenced physical tests for candidates applying for various positions as part of its ongoing recruitment process, the agency's spokesperson said on Tuesday.According to the spokesperson, physical tests are being conducted across the country, including Gujranwala, Karachi, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Lahore, Sahiwal, Peshawar, Quetta, Gilgit, Faisalabad and Multan.The spokesperson said that all physical tests are being conducted in a transparent manner and strictly on merit to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates.The entire recruitment process will be completed with 100 per cent transparency and merit, with no compromise on fairness or the prescribed selection criteria, the spokesperson added.On the directives of NCCIA Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the recruitment process is being carried out under strict monitoring to maintain transparency at every stage.The initiative provides young people across the country with a valuable opportunity to become part of the national effort against cybercrime and contribute to strengthening Pakistan's cyber security framework.Director General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reiterated that merit and transparency would remain the fundamental principles of the recruitment process and that no compromise would be tolerated in this regard.

Iran-US deal still out of reach despite diplomatic push, Iranian official says

■ **Qatar has stepped up mediation efforts amid fears the conflict launched by the United States and Israel in February could reignite after Tuesday's elections.**



Web DESK

TEHRAN

Iran and the United States remain far from a deal to end the war, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on Tuesday, despite intensified diplomatic efforts, opens new tab to avert a return to major conflict after the US midterm elections.

Overnight, the US carried out "defensive" strikes on Iran's ?Qeshm island, with a US official saying the strikes targeted surface-to-air missiles used against US assets. Another official said the strikes appeared to be limited and did not signal a resumption of major combat operations.

Qatar has stepped up mediation efforts amid fears the conflict launched by the United States and Israel in February could reignite after Tuesday's elections.

“Mediators are working hard to narrow gaps between Tehran and Washington," the senior Iranian official said, after Qatari mediators travelled to Tehran on Monday night for talks on a version of a draft US-Iran deal that has been under negotiation for the past eight days.



The UK government’s Chevening programme and Allied Bank Limited (ABL) have announced a partnership to provide fully funded master’s scholarships to Pakistani students at leading British universities.

Saudi-led coalition says it intercepted drone over Makkah region

■ **The Saudi-led coalition said it destroyed a drone over the Makkah region, while Yemen’s Houthi spokesman denied carrying out an operation against Saudi territory.**

Web Desk

RIYADH

The Saudi-led coalition said on Tuesday that it had intercepted and destroyed a drone over the Makkah region in western Saudi Arabia, amid escalating tensions with Yemen’s Houthi group.

Coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki announced the interception on X but provided no details about possible injuries or damage.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had not conducted any operation targeting Saudi territory that day.

Last week, the coalition said it had intercepted and destroyed a Houthi ballistic missile targeting southern Saudi Arabia and a drone



in the Riyadh region. It also reported intercepting a drone over the Makkah region, a claim Saree dismissed as false. He said the group’s operations were targeting Saudi oil facilities and military bases.

The coalition said on October 24 that it had destroyed two Houthi ballistic missiles fired towards Taif and Yanbu. Saudi Civil Defence briefly issued alerts warning of potential danger in Makkah and Jeddah.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia were ongoing, as Tehran sought new regional security arrangements without foreign military involvement.

Senior officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan met Iranian officials in Tehran last week in the first high-level contact between Iran and the three countries since August. Riyadh said the visit was intended to open channels for negotiations and prevent renewed military escalation.

The Houthis have intensified attacks on Saudi oil facilities and airports, disrupting flights and oil exports and prompting Saudi air strikes in Yemen. Yemen has been embroiled in civil war since the Houthis took control of the capital, Sanaa, in 2014.

The report also said the United States carried out what it described as defensive strikes on Iran’s Qeshm Island overnight, targeting surface-to-air missiles used against US assets. Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said they had downed a US MQ-9 drone near the Strait of Hormuz.

A senior Iranian official said mediators were working to narrow differences between Tehran and Washington. The official said Iran’s conditions must be met before the Strait of Hormuz could reopen, and that nuclear talks could begin only afterward.

Indian national killed after 2 helicopters collide in Nepal's Mount Everest region

■ **The accident comes during the peak trekking season in Nepal, when helicopters ferry hikers**

Web Desk

TEHRN

An Indian national was killed and a New Zealander injured after two helicopters collided as they prepared to land in Nepal’s Mount Everest region on Tuesday, authorities said.

The New Zealander has been rescued, the chief district officer of Solukhumbu district, Kaman Singh Thapa Magar, told Reuters. The incident took place in the base camp area of Mount Everest, Magar said.

The helicopters were operated by two private firms, Fishtail Air and Dynasty Air. Fishtail Air said in a statement that its helicopter was carrying passengers who had been rescued from the Everest region when it crashed while landing.

The Indian and the New Zealander on board were tourists, a Fishtail



official said, while a Dynasty Air official said its helicopter was carrying only cargo.

The accident comes during the peak trekking season in Nepal, when helicopters ferry hikers and climbers in the region.

Last week, six people were killed in a helicopter crash in the Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The helicopter was flying from Badrinath, a prominent pilgrimage destination for Hindus located in the mountains, to Dehradun city, the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) said in a statement.

Trump faces midterm verdict with control of Congress at stake

● **President's party has lost ground in nearly every midterm**

Web Desk

WASHINGTON

American voters will deliver a verdict on the first two years of President Donald Trump's second term in Tuesday's midterm elections, with polls and nonpartisan analysts favouring Democrats to wrest the House from Republicans while control of the Senate remains uncertain.

The battle for the Senate is unfolding across nearly 10 closely contested statewide races, most in Republican strongholds.History is against Trump's Republicans: the sitting president's party has lost ground in Congress in all but two midterm elections since World War Two. Trump's approval rating is hovering near his all-time lows, dragged down by deep voter frustration over the war with Iran and the resulting rise in fuel prices.

There is little doubt this year's election is all about Trump, the central US political figure for most of the last decade. Trump himself has told his supporters repeatedly to "pretend I'm on the ballot," a message Democratic leaders have happily echoed.



The president has sought to energize his base with more than two dozen campaign rallies since the start of October, the vast majority in states he easily won in 2024, underscoring the extent to which Republicans are playing defense.

Led by Trump, Republicans have portrayed Democratic candidates as radical, un-American and even communist."The Democrat Party has nominated the most extreme and dangerous slate of candidates in American history," Trump said on Monday during a speech in Washington.But opinion polls show voters are most concerned about affordability and disapprove of Trump's handling of the issue, after his sweeping tariff policy and his decision to attack Iran in February increased domestic costs. Republican candidates, meanwhile, have struggled to distance themselves from a president who demands fealty and rarely acknowledges mistakes.

North Korea rejects US allegations over Binance crypto theft, warns of response

Web Desk

North Korea

North Korea rejected US allegations linking it to a multibillion-dollar cryptocurrency theft involving Binance, accusing Washington of using cybercrime allegations to undermine its international reputation.

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and a senior Workers' Party official, called the allegations a "grave political provocation," state news agency KCNA reported on Tuesday.

She said the FBI was attempting to portray North Korea as a "cyber criminal state" by alleging that a



hacking group supported by Pyongyang was involved in the theft.

"The US assertion is an absurd rhetoric and nothing new," Kim said in a statement. She accused Washington of routinely blaming North Korea for major international cyberattacks without providing credible evidence.

Vance says US has no strict deadline for Iran to reach deal



Web Desk

Washngation

The United States has no strict deadline for Iran to reach an agreement to avoid a possible resumption of military strikes, Vice President JD Vance said Monday, expressing cautious optimism about ongoing diplomatic efforts between the two countries.Speaking to reporters after returning to Washington from campaign stops in New York and Ohio, Vance said the Trump administration’s primary concern is ensuring that Iran does not rebuild or attempt to rebuild its nuclear program.

“We want to make sure they don’t rebuild it or try to rebuild it. That’s what matters most to the United States,” Vance said. He stressed that any potential agreement must include a firm and verifiable commitment from Tehran to prevent the reconstruction of its nuclear capabilities.

Russian strikes kill 26 in Ukraine after longest ceasefire ends

■ **Russia targeted a village in Zaporizhzhia, adjacent to Kherson, with repeated strikes**

Web Desk

MASCOW

Ukraine said that Russian strikes on a school distributing humanitarian aid killed at least 26 people, dashing fragile hopes of "progress toward peace" after a local ceasefire in the south expired without violations.

Russia resumed its strikes on the southern region of Kherson after the end of a ceasefire in the area, the longest truce in the war raging between the neighbours since Russia's 2022 invasion, Kyiv said. A rare pause in the fighting, brokered by US First Lady Melania Trump to enable a mission to the Russian-occupied city of Oleshky, ended Sunday after starting on Tuesday, with neither side reporting breaches.

But hours after the truce, Russia targeted a village in Zaporizhzhia, adjacent to Kherson, with repeated strikes that killed at least 26 people, the acting regional governor said.



Some of the dead had come to collect aid at a local school.

Footage posted by the Ukrainian emergency services showed the building reduced to piles of smouldering rubble and rescuers working at the site.

"Every Monday, humanitarian aid was distributed to people there," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his daily address.

"The Russians carried out the first strike just as people arrived -- several aerial bombs. Then, there was a repeat strike -- more aerial bombs, this time targeting the shelter."Among those killed were "two rescue workers and four police officers", acting regional governor Mykhailo Semikin said on Telegram.

The service named the rescuers as two 44-year-olds: Denys Konovalenko and Oleksy Sushchevsky.

“Every day, they went out to help people, working in dangerous conditions and risking their own lives to save others," it said in a statement.

Zelensky said that after the Oleshky truce, "there was a moment when the next steps could have shown that progress toward peace was possible".

"With these killings, Russia is sending an entirely opposite signal: Russia is counting on more killings. There must be a response to this."

- Russia fortifies positions -

The ceasefire last week enabled an evacuation of the Russian-occupied city of Oleshky. It was the longest pause in fighting between the neighbours in the war, which is grinding through its fifth year after killing hundreds of thousands of people and displacing millions.

A senior Ukrainian figure told AFP on Sunday that Russia refused a Ukrainian offer to extend the truce.

Daily The Spokesman

Group Chairman/ Chief Editor: Almass Ayoub Sabir

Vice Chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad

Editor : Atif Saeed

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

spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com

Phone no. +92 51 27 22 123

Core inflation falls to 7.5% in Oct

The non-energy and non-food inflation eased for the second consecutive month to 7.5% in October, putting a question mark over the central bank's assumption that increasing energy and food prices may "seep into core inflation", which was used to raise its policy rate.

With the slowing pace, the difference between core inflation and the policy rate has substantially widened to 4.5% for the benefit of commercial banks, but at the expense of borrowers, mainly the finance ministry.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Monday that the urban core inflation rate, calculated after excluding volatile energy and food prices, slowed down to 7.8% and rural inflation further fell to 7.1% in October. It was the second straight month when core inflation eased after peaking at 8.8% in August.

Core inflation gauges the underlying inflationary pressures without taking into account the highly volatile energy and food prices. The indicator was used as a base by the State Bank to increase the policy rate to 12% last week.

"There is a risk that elevated food and energy inflation may further increase inflation expectations, which may seep into core inflation going forward," said the monetary policy statement issued by the central bank after the policy rate decision.

The central bank noted that re-escalation in the Middle East conflict and domestic wheat supply frictions were the two major factors keeping inflation at elevated levels and their expected continuation over the next few months had worsened the inflation outlook.

It added that elevated prices of energy and wheat and its allied products contributed significantly to the headline inflation in September, which turned out to be higher than the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) expectation.

However, according to the PBS, the headline inflation slowed down to 9.6% last month, which was largely in line with the finance ministry's forecast for the month.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised Pakistan's inflation forecast to 9.9% for the current fiscal year, which is above the official target of 8.2% and is said to be a reason for the recent rate hike. The Planning Commission of Pakistan has projected a 7.5% inflation rate, even lower than the target.

According to the PBS, inflation went down both in urban and rural areas, reaching 9.5% in urban areas and 9.8% in rural areas. Food inflation slowed down from 8.1% to 7.8% in urban areas while it dropped to 7.1% in rural areas. The energy group saw a southbound movement in both urban and rural areas. The pace decelerated to 10.6% in urban areas and 12.1% in rural areas.



During review talks last month, the IMF asked Pakistan to adjust both exchange rate and interest rate policies to tame inflation and keep the current account deficit under check.

However, the cost of housing, water, electricity, gas and fuel remained the main concern in addition to transportation charges, according to the official bulletin.

PBS reported that petrol price was 42% higher in October compared to a year ago. Within one month, there was a 3% increase in prices of petrol, which was a steep rise given the overall high rates. The per-litre petrol cost was Rs379 on Friday last week and the price was Rs402 for high-speed diesel, which was keeping transport charges elevated.

The cost of transport services went up 27% last month compared to a year ago, according to the PBS. The national data collecting agency stated that electricity tariffs rose 23% in October. The high cost of electricity is already driving consumers away from the national power grid. Motor vehicle taxes jumped 39% over a year ago, contributing to the increase in expenses.

PBS said that onion prices were 82% higher year-on-year in October followed by a 39% increase in wheat prices. Owing to serious wheat management issues, the government is already in the process of importing 765,000 tonnes of wheat. Meanwhile, wheat flour prices surged 35% compared to a year ago, according to the PBS.

But prices of tomatoes, potatoes, sugar, eggs and pulses were lower in the range of 55% to 10% last month. The closure of border with Afghanistan and the subsequent suspension of trade have helped keep prices low for these commodities, which are either exported or smuggled, but contributed to an increase in prices of fruits that were imported from the western neighbour.

Crimes against Kashmiri Journalist in Indian Occupied Jammu And Kashmir



By Syed Faiz Naqshbandi



Press freedom is a fundamental pillar of democracy, accountability and the rule of law. However, in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), a UN-recognised disputed territory, journalists continue to face growing threats, arrests, intimidation, surveillance and restrictions on their professional activities. The situation is particularly alarming in a territory where more than 900,000 Indian armed forces personnel are reportedly deployed, representing one of the highest concentrations of military forces in the world. This extensive military presence has serious implications for peace and security, civilian life, freedom of expression and independent journalism.

According to credible reports Kashmiri journalists have massively faced harassment, police interrogations, detention and intimidation for reporting on political developments, human rights concerns and the hardships experienced by ordinary people by Indian Government and its forces. The journalists are threatened, arrests, tortured and summoned for questioning frequently and pressured to disclose confidential sources. Such practices create an atmosphere of fear and self censorship, seriously undermining independent journalism.

Since the unilateral measures of 5 August 2019, which altered the constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, restrictions on media freedom have intensified. Journalists face difficulties accessing information, conducting independent investigations and reporting freely. The application of stringent legislation, including the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Public Safety Act (PSA), has further raised concerns about the criminalisation of journalistic activities.

These restrictions cannot be separated from the broader human rights situation in the territory. The torture, enforced disappearances, custodial killings, extrajudicial executions in staged encounters, arbitrary arrests and prolonged detentions in occupied Kashmir have continued to generate serious concerns. Demographic changes and measures affecting the disputed territory's distinctive identity and political character have also raised questions under international law. Journalists attempting to investigate and report these developments face additional risks and professional pressures.

The consequences extend beyond individual journalists. When the media is intimidated into silence, victims of human rights violations lose an important channel through which their suffering can reach the international community. Independent reporting is essential to expose abuses, document violations and ensure accountability.

Freedom of expression is protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. India must respect its international human rights obligations and ensure that journalists can perform their professional duties without fear of harassment, arbitrary detention or retaliation.

The United Nations, OHCHR, UNESCO, international human rights organisations and global press freedom institutions must take serious notice of the deteriorating media environment in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Independent monitoring and investigations into reported violations are urgently required.

Ultimately, the Kashmir dispute cannot be resolved through military force, censorship or demographic changes. Its lasting and peaceful solution lies in the implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, which recognise the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their political future through a free and impartial plebiscite.

Silencing Kashmiri journalists there cannot silence the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Protecting press freedom is inseparable from protecting human rights, justice and the fundamental right to self-determination.

The author is senior leader of All Parties HurriyetConference (APHC) and legal expert of international law.

Food Insecurity and Rising Poverty in Pakistan



By: M Rashid Tabassum



Pakistan is an agricultural country blessed with fertile land, hardworking farmers and considerable agricultural resources. Yet millions of families struggle to afford adequate and nutritious food. Rising poverty, inflation, agricultural difficulties and unequal access to food have turned this into a serious national concern. The problem highlights a basic reality: producing enough food does not guarantee food security if people cannot afford to buy itAccording to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report issued in February 2026, around 7.5 million people, or 21 per cent of the population in the rural areas assessed in Pakistan, faced acute food insecurity between December 2025 and March 2026. Floods, climate change, declining agricultural incomes and economic pressures have worsened the situation, threatening both livelihoods and household food supplies.

Poverty and inflation have made access to food increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens. According to the World Bank figures cited for October 2026, Pakistan accounts for 48 per cent of the extremely poor population in the relevant regional grouping. The national poverty rate, measured against the national poverty line, stood at 22.2 per cent in fiscal year 2025. Meanwhile, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data show that annual food inflation reached 8.20 per cent in September 2026, while year-on-year inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator stood at 11.97 per cent for the week ending October 10.

When food prices rise, low-income households are often forced to cut back on nutritious items such as meat, milk, eggs and fruit. This can have serious consequences for children's health and development. The National Nutrition Survey 2018 found that 40.2 per cent of children under five were stunted, while 17.7 per cent were wasted. Although these figures do not reflect current conditions, they reveal the longstanding scale of malnutrition in Pakistan.

Agricultural problems further complicate the country's food security challenge. Rising prices of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, diesel and electricity increase farmers' production costs. At the same time, inadequate returns for their crops reduce their earnings and discourage investment in future production. The result is an unfair arrangement in which farmers may receive low prices for their produce while consumers pay more in retail markets.

Weak supply chains, hoarding and a lack of transparency in agricultural markets also contribute to price instability. Poor storage facilities and inadequate transportation lead to significant post-harvest losses. Investment in modern warehouses, cold-chain facilities and efficient distribution systems could help preserve crops, reduce waste and improve the availability of affordable food. Transparent market practices are equally important to ensure that farmers receive fair returns and consumers are not burdened by unjustified price increases.

Addressing food insecurity requires more than short-term relief. Government social protection programmes, including the Benazir Income Support Programme, provide an important safety net for vulnerable families. However, these efforts must be supported by long-term agricultural reforms. Farmers need affordable, quality inputs, better access to credit, modern irrigation methods and crop varieties suited to changing climatic conditions.

Technology can also contribute to a more resilient agricultural system. Artificial intelligence and digital tools can help farmers monitor crops, anticipate weather conditions and use water more efficiently. However, such facilities must be accessible to small farmers rather than remaining limited to large agricultural enterprises. Nutrition programmes targeting children, pregnant women and low-income households must also be strengthened to address the health consequences of food insecurity.

Ultimately, Pakistan must treat food security as a national priority that links agriculture with economic policy, healthcare and social welfare. Better planning, transparent markets, improved farm incomes and greater purchasing power for poor households are essential to reducing hunger and malnutrition.

Pakistan has the agricultural potential to feed its people, but that potential must translate into affordable, nutritious food for every household. The real measure of success is not simply how much the country produces, but whether its people can put healthy food on their tables.

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

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also praised security forces for their successful operations against Indian-sponsored terrorists in Balochistan. He commended their professional capabilities for thwarting the militants' designs and killing 17 terrorists in the two operations.

Naqvi paid tribute to Sepoy Hikmat Ullah, saying the soldier had set a remarkable example by sacrificing his life for the country. He described the country's security personnel as a source of pride and said security forces remained determined to eliminate Indian-sponsored terrorism.

The interior minister added that the nation stood alongside security forces in the fight against terrorism.



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

Kayai urges SMEs to fully leverage export facilitation scheme

■ Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani here on Tuesday affirmed the government's commitment to boosting the export sector and improving the ease of doing business, urging Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to take full advantage of the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS).

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD

: Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani here on Tuesday affirmed the government's commitment to boosting the export sector and improving the ease of doing business, urging Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to take full advantage of the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS).

He made these remarks while chairing a consultative meeting of the Prime Minister's Committee to Review the Export Facilitation Scheme at the Finance Division.

The meeting was attended by Secretary



Commerce, Special Secretaries from Finance and Commerce, senior officials from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), alongside representatives of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA), and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and prominant exporters via video link.

During the session, various proposals were reviewed in detail to streamline the scheme, enhance its efficiency, and align it with evolving trade dynamics.

Kayani underscored that the prescribed qualification criteria for inclusion in any EFS category would be applied across the board, reiterating that no exemptions would be granted regarding standard operating procedures.The minister directed the relevant authorities to clarify and simplify regulations governing the import of capital goods and manufacturing machinery for exporters. The meeting also conducted an in-depth review of the amendments at cutting export overheads, encouraging local value addition, and stimulating domestic manufacturing.



Gold prices remain unchanged in local and international markets

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Gold prices remained unchanged in both local and international markets on Tuesday, with domestic bullion rates holding steady amid a pause in price movements.

According to market data, the price of 24-karat gold remained unchanged at Rs412,136 per tola in Pakistan.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of gold stood at Rs354,340, showing no change from the previous trading session.

In the international market, gold prices also remained stable, with the precious metal trading at $3,896 per ounce.

The unchanged rates reflected a steady trend in bullion markets, with no immediate movement recorded in either domestic or international gold prices.

Customs, PCDMA agree to resolve issues of commercial importers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD



The Customs Department and the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) have agreed to resolve issues faced by commercial importers through mutual consultation and improved coordination. Progress was reported on costly ICIS scan pricing, the DPL waiver, self-clearance facilities and customs valuation rulings.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between a PCDMA delegation, led by Chairman Muhammad Saleem Muakti, and Chief Collector of Customs Appraisement (South) Wajid Ali here at Customs House. The meeting discussed various challenges confronting commercial importers at the import stage and explored practical measures to streamline customs procedures and facilitate trade.

The PCDMA delegation was comprised of Mustafa Asad and Irfan Asgher, Members of the Managing Committee, former Chairman Arif Lakhani and former Managing Committee members Umair Anwar and Yahya Arshad.

On ICIS scan pricing, the delegation noted that the service costs approximately $15,000 to $20,000 annually, rendering it unaffordable for a large number of importers. The Chief Collector agreed that where Customs requires verification of prices of imported raw materials, PCDMA may issue price verification certificates based on its available resources and market information. These certificates could be accepted as an alternative to ICIS scan pricing. He observed that the Customs Department itself maintains scan subscriptions for only a limited range of products, making PCDMA's assistance a practical option.

Regarding the DPL waiver, the delegation pointed out that the relevant regulator, NEPSA, had granted a three-month waiver and requested that the entire concessionary period be counted without exception so that consignments face no unnecessary complications. The Chief Collector assured the delegation that the three-month waiver would be fully implemented and that Customs would create no hurdles in this regard.

The delegation requested restoration of the NTN-based self-clearance facility for at least six months. Agreeing to the proposal, the Chief Collector said PCDMA could issue recommendation letters for its members, enabling Customs to verify the importers and grant NTN-based self-clearance approval for at least six months on a priority basis.

FBR approves 196,000 tax returns applications

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD



A delegation of businessmen held a meeting with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman, Rashid Mehmood Langrial in Islamabad and discussed with him the issue of tax returns filed after October 31, 2026,

Talking with businessmen, Federal Board of Revenue Chairman Rashid Mehmood Langrial said that FBR approved 196,000 tax applications. He further stated that number of tax filers is likely to reach 82,00,000.

Tea importers raised concerns over the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) recent decision to set a minimum retail price (MRP) of Rs1,200 per kg and additional taxes, fearing a price hike and an increase in smuggled tea entering the market.



KSE-100 surges 1,454 points to reclaim 168,000 mark

■ Strong buying activity lifts Pakistan Stock Exchange benchmark index above 168,000 during second trading session of the week

Staff Reporter

KARACHI

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed strong bullish momentum on Tuesday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index recovering the 168,000-point level following a substantial rally.

The index surged by more than 1,900 points during early trading, reaching an intraday high of 168,469 points as buying activity strengthened across the market.

The positive momentum continued throughout the session, allowing the benchmark index to close at 168,018 points, gaining 1,454 points from the previous close.

On Monday, the KSE-100 Index had settled at 166,564 points after adding 154 points during a volatile trading session. The latest rally marks a significant improvement in market performance, bringing the benchmark index back above the 168,000-point psychological threshold.

Pakistan surpasses vietnam in rice exports during September 2026

■ Pakistan exported 420,000 tonnes of rice in September 2026, surpassing Vietnam, while first-quarter export volume rose 51% and foreign exchange earnings

Commerce Reporter

KARACHI



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

According to available data, Pakistan exported 420,000 tonnes of rice to global markets during September, compared with Vietnam's exports of 337,000 tonnes. Vietnam is the world's third-largest rice exporter.

The report stated that demand for Pakistani rice, particularly basmati, remained strong in international markets despite tensions between the United States and Iran and disruptions to maritime transportation in the Gulf region. This helped boost Pakistan's rice exports.

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

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

Experts said the increase in rice exports could become an important source of foreign exchange earnings for Pakistan.

IMF raises alarm over Pakistan's tax shortfall, calls for emergency revenue measures

■ The IMF has raised concerns over Pakistan's tax revenue shortfall, urging emergency measures, broader taxation and improved collections to meet the Rs15.264 trillion annual target.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has expressed concern over Pakistan's widening tax revenue shortfall and proposed emergency taxation measures to help the government meet its annual revenue collection target of Rs15.264 trillion, according to sources.The global lender has reportedly raised concerns over a revenue gap of Rs129 billion in October and a cumulative shortfall of Rs96 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal year.

According to sources familiar with the discussions, the IMF has stressed the need to accelerate tax collection, describing the existing revenue performance as insufficient to achieve the agreed annual target.

The lender has also called for an improvement in Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio, emphasising the need to bring more economic activities and previously untaxed sectors into the formal tax system.

Sources within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said the government could consider additional taxation measures or reductions in public expenditure if the revenue shortfall continues to



widen.

They added that upcoming reviews under the IMF programme could involve stricter revenue-related conditions, with emergency taxation options likely to feature in discussions if collection targets remain unmet.GST collection and broader tax baseThe IMF has reportedly identified higher General Sales Tax (GST) collection at both federal and provincial levels as an important area for improving overall revenue performance.

The lender has also proposed strengthening tax collection from the retail, wholesale and agricultural sectors before the presentation of the next federal budget. According to sources, the IMF wants authorities to demonstrate measurable progress in bringing these sectors into the tax net rather than relying primarily on existing taxpayers for additional revenue.

The global lender has further stressed the importance of expanding the tax base to cover professionals and other segments of the economy that remain outside the formal taxation system.

Improving compliance and broadening the number of registered taxpayers are also considered essential to strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation.Pressure under $7 billion IMF programme Pakistan is currently implementing a $7 billion loan programme with the IMF, under which the government has committed to meeting several fiscal and structural benchmarks.

Australia's Glenn Maxwell calls time on international career

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



SPORTS DESK

Australia

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

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

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

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

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

"We probably had numerous discussions before and after the T20 World Cup," he added of talks with selectors. "And it was pretty open-ended. "There wasn't any pressure from (Australia team management), and we decided to sort of leave the door open.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



India vs Pakistan 2027 World Cup tie has 8.4 million applications for tickets

SPORTS DESK

Islamabad

The Pakistan-India group-stage clash at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 has attracted unprecedented interest, with around 8.4 million ticket applications received for the highly anticipated encounter.

According to tournament organisers, Pakistan and India are scheduled to face each other on October 10, 2027, at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa. The venue has a seating capacity of approximately 34,000 spectators.The World Cup final has also generated massive interest, with around eight million ticket applications received for the title clash, scheduled to take place at the same stadium on November 21, 2027.The tournament, which will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, has attracted around three million applicants from 193 countries. More than 120 million ticket applications have reportedly been received overall.

The ticket application window will remain open until November 21.

Tenerife striker De Miguel dies after collision

■ Jesus de Miguel succumbs to injuries suffered in a horrific on-field clash with Andorra goalkeeper



SPORTS Desk

MADRID

Tenerife striker Jesus de Miguel died on Tuesday as a result of injuries he suffered in a sickening collision with FC Andorra's goalkeeper in a Spanish second division match.

"Broken with pain, with a lump in our throat and unable to believe this is real, CD Tenerife announces the tragic death, at 8:00 am (7am GMT), of Jesus de Miguel Alameda," his club Tenerife said in a statement.

"No words can ease the pain, nothing can lessen this great feeling of sadness. Our thoughts are with the family, his close friends and Tenerife fans, who today are grieving over this terrible news."

De Miguel, 30, was fouled in the middle of the pitch by Equatorial Guinea international goalkeeper Jesus Owono, who had raced out of his goal to try and clear the ball.

The incident happened towards the end of the match at the Heliodoro Rodriguez Lopez stadium, with the teams level at 2-2. Owono was sent off and the match was subsequently abandoned.

Spanish media said that De Miguel suffered a cardiac arrest and was resuscitated. The player was taken to hospital and placed in intensive care, with Tenerife later saying that De Miguel's condition had "worsened neurologically", before his death.

"I am so deeply sorry. Rest in peace, Jesus," former Barcelona defender Gerard Pique, Andorra's majority shareholder, wrote on social media.

Andorra also sent their "most sincere condolences" to De Miguel's family, team-mates and Tenerife.

Real Madrid, Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and other clubs in Spain also sent messages of condolence, as well as the Spanish football federation (RFEF).

"Shattered by this sad news, the Royal Spanish Football Federation wishes to express our deepest sorrow at his passing today," wrote the federation in a statement.

The RFEF postponed Tuesday's matches in the Copa del Rey and Copa de la Reina, "as a gesture of respect and solidarity".

Real Madrid held a minute of silence before their training session on Tuesday.

"Immense sadness, there are no words," Madrid's French forward Kylian Mbappe wrote on Instagram.

AFC postpones Asian Cup 2027 in Saudi Arabia from January to December

● Saudi cities of Jeddah, Riyadh and Al Khobar set to stage the month-long competition

SPORTS DESK

KUALA LUMPUR

The 2027 Asian Cup football tournament in Saudi Arabia will be postponed from January to December due to "exceptional circumstances" in the region, the continent's governing body said on Tuesday.

A number of big sports events in Saudi Arabia have been cancelled or postponed in recent weeks following Houthi attacks on the country.

"The organising committee for AFC Asian Cup approved to reschedule the flagship national team tournament in light of the current exceptional circumstances arising from developments in the region," the Asian Football Confederation said in a statement.

The AFC also cited "substantial logistical complexities and travel disruptions".

"The new dates of the tournament will be presented to Fifa for approval," it said.

The continental showpiece was originally scheduled to take place from January 7 to February 5 next year.



The new dates are December 23, 2027, to January 21, 2028.

Local organisers insisted last month that the Asian Cup was "on schedule", despite growing fears for the fate of the tournament.

The Saudi cities of Jeddah, Riyadh and Al Khobar are set to stage the month-long competition.

The decision to move the tournament back almost a year came after "extensive discussions and close consultation" between Saudi officials and the AFC, the governing body said.

"Exceptional circumstances have been created for the organisation and delivery of the competition as originally scheduled, making the postponement necessary in the interest of all participating teams, officials, spectators and other stakeholders," it said.

Asian Football Cup in Saudi Arabia postponed over safety

■ A number of sports events in Saudi Arabia have been cancelled or postponed in recent weeks following Houthi attacks on the country.

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

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The AFC also cited "substantial logistical complexities and travel disruptions".

"The new dates of the tournament will be presented to FIFA for approval," it added.

Local organisers insisted last month that the Asian Cup was "on schedule", despite growing fears for the fate of the tournament because of the security situation in Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East.

The Saudi cities of Jeddah, Riyadh and Al Khobar are set to stage the month-long competition.

The decision to move the tournament back almost a year came after "extensive discussions and close consultation" between Saudi officials and the AFC, the Kuala Lumpur-based governing body said.

"Exceptional circumstances have been created for the organisation and delivery of the competition as originally scheduled, making the postponement necessary in the interest of all participating teams, officials, spectators and other stakeholders," it said.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis have targeted Saudi infrastructure, including airports, since hostilities resumed.

The Houthis are fighting a Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's internationally recognised government, a civil war that reignited in July following a years-long truce.

Defending champions Pakistan set for ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup in Oman

SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Defending champions Pakistan are all set to feature in the eight-team ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup, scheduled to take place in Oman from 5 to 14 November. Pakistan are placed in Group A alongside Nepal, the United Arab Emirates and India.

Pakistan defeated India by 191 runs in the final of the previous edition of the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates in December 2025. The side arrived in Oman ahead of the tournament to acclimatise to the conditions and prepare for the event.

Before travelling to Oman, Pakistan U19 enjoyed a successful tour of England, winning the four-match one-day series 3-1. They narrowly lost the only four-day match by 10 runs.

Farhan Yousaf will lead Pakistan in the tournament. The right-handed batter scored 223 runs in four one-day matches during the England tour, including a century and a half-century.

In the upcoming edition, Pakistan will begin their title defence against UAE on 6 November before taking on India on 8 November and Nepal on 10 November. The Group B includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

The semi-finals of the tournament will take place on 12 November, while the final is scheduled on 14 November.

Pakistan U19 head coach Shahid Anwar while talking to PCB Digital said: "First of all, I would like to thank the Pakistan Cricket Board for sending us to Oman four to five days ahead of the tournament, allowing the players to acclimatise to the conditions.

"The players have trained hard over the past few days and are 100 per cent fit,



committed and motivated to defend the title and bring the trophy back to Pakistan. Our mindset is to play fearless cricket. Every player is eager to perform and contribute to the team's success. Being the defending champions is not a pressure but a privilege. Having won the title in the past gives us confidence that we can do it again.

"We are satisfied with the way the players and coaching staff have prepared for the tournament. We will try to win the hearts of our fans, defend our title and bring the trophy back to Pakistan."

15-member squad

Farhan Yousuf (captain), Abdul Qadir (wk), Abdul Subhan, Ahmed Hussain, Ali Raza, Hamza Zahoor (wk), Hasnain Abbas Dar, Hayam Khan, Huzaifa Ahsan, Jahangir Bilal, Mohammad Huzaifa, Mohammad Seyam, Niqab Shafiq, Rizwanullah, Usman Khan

Player support personnel

Shahid Anwar (head coach & team manager), Rao Iftikhar Anjum (fast bowling coach), Zohaib Khan (spin bowling coach), Humayun Farhat (fielding coach), Ubaid Ullah (Physiotherapist), Ibrar Ahmed (trainer) and Ali Hamza (performance analyst)

Daily The Spokesman

Wednesday
November 4,2026

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

Legal notice seeks retraction, apology over federal minister's remarks within seven days



Our Correspondent

LAHORE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maryam had challenged Salik to present evidence

The legal notice follows a public exchange between Maryam and Salik over his remarks about corruption in the provincial administration.

Addressing a ceremony in Attock earlier, the chief minister challenged the federal minister to produce evidence supporting his assertions and warned that she would take him to court if he failed to do so.

"You are a federal minister. Don't make allegations, present evidence," Maryam had said.

She also linked Salik's criticism to the appointment of the deputy commissioner in Gujrat, saying he was unhappy because an officer of his choice had not been posted to the district.

Salik subsequently stood by his remarks, maintaining that corruption was taking place in Punjab.

"I stand by my statement. Corruption is taking place in Punjab," he said.

The federal minister also rejected Maryam's assertion about the Gujrat deputy commissioner's appointment, saying he had not sought the posting of any particular officer and that a DC was already serving in the district. .

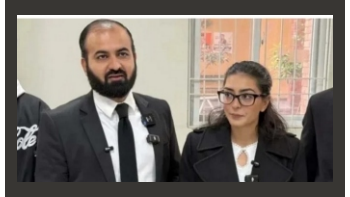


"President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Khan, is meeting a delegation led by Maulana Qazi Mahmood Ashraf, President of the Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Deeniya Azad Kashmir, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) leaders from Jammu and Kashmir."

Imaan Mazari, Hadi Ali Chattha granted bail in police altercation case

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD



An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Tuesday granted bail to lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in a case involving an alleged altercation with police.

Judge Abul Hasanat Zulqarnain approved their bail against surety bonds of Rs5,000 each.

During the hearing, police submitted the case record before the court.The case against Mazari and Ali was registered at Kohsar police station on charges of interfering in official duties.

The development came a week after the lawyer couple was sentenced to 10 years in prison each in a separate case of security breach case, under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997 and fines of Rs100,000.This case, registered at Aabpara Police Station, stems from allegations that the lawyer couple posed a security risk by interfering in state affairs during the visit.

AJK Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani Visits Rawalakot, Addresses Police Darbar, Calls for Maintaining Peace

Poonch's historic sacrifices in the Kashmir freedom movement are unforgettable; blocking roads and preventing children from attending schools and patients from reaching hospitals are not our traditions, says PM

Staff Reporter

RAWALAKOT



Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani visited Rawalakot on Tuesday, where he was presented with a guard of honour by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police.During his visit, the Prime Minister also visited CMH Rawalakot and met various public delegations. A delegation of lawyers also called on him and discussed matters of mutual interest.The Prime Minister addressed a Police Darbar in Rawalakot and received a detailed briefing from the district administration and police officials at the Commissioner Office Poonch. Chief Secretary Khushal Khan and Inspector General of Police Captain (Retd) Liaquat Ali Malik also accompanied the Prime Minister.Speaking to the media in Rawalakot, Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani said that Poonch is a historic region, and the people of the area have made unforgettable sacrifices in the Kashmir freedom movement.He said the courageous people of Poonch had raised the banner of revolt against Dogra rule, adding that public welfare initiatives were part of the region's historic traditions.The Prime Minister said that children were unable to reach schools and patients were facing difficulties in accessing hospitals. Blocking roads, he added, was not part of the region's traditions.He urged the people of Poonch to reflect on who was responsible for the deteriorating situation in the region. He maintained that no governance-related issue in Azad Kashmir was so serious that it warranted disturbing law and order.

Gilani said that the actions of a few individuals were putting the future of the younger generation at stake. Closing schools and preventing patients from reaching hospitals, he stressed, could not be considered a peaceful movement.

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

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



Staff Reporter

KARACHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senate Committee Reviews Development Projects and Departmental Performance in AJK

AJK departments brief Senate delegation on ongoing projects, available resources and administrative challenges.

STAFF REPORTER

MUZAFFARABAD



The Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON was briefed on the performance of various departments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, ongoing development projects, available resources and challenges faced by the departments.Additional Chief Secretary Development Atif-ur-Rehman briefed the visiting delegation of the Senate Standing Committee on the overall performance of various departments, ongoing development initiatives, available resources and administrative and financial challenges.The delegation was led by Committee Chairman Senator Asad Qasim and included Senator Nasir Mahmood, Senator Dost Ali Jaiser and Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto.During the briefing, the Secretary Higher Education, Secretary Public Health, Secretary Forests and Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education apprised the committee of their respective departments' overall performance, ongoing development projects, available resources, administrative and financial issues, and future requirements.Detailed discussions were also held on ongoing projects in different sectors and the resources required to ensure the provision of improved public services.Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Standing Committee Senator Asad Qasim said that the primary objective of the committee's visit to Azad Kashmir was to gain firsthand knowledge of the region's problems and departmental requirements and to play an effective role in addressing them.He assured that every possible effort would be made to resolve the outstanding issues of Azad Kashmir.

COMSTECH and HEC Sign Agreement to Strengthen Academic Cooperation with OIC Member States

Initiative to Promote Joint Research, Academic Exchanges and International Linkages; Pakistani Universities to Benefit from Expertise of Leading Muslim Scholars and Scientists

Education REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan have signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) to promote joint academic and scholarly activities, strengthen international academic linkages, and facilitate the participation of scholars and experts from Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states in academic activities at Pakistani universities.The agreement was signed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, OIC-COMSTECH, and Engr. Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, Chairman, Higher Education Commission Pakistan at OIC-COMSTECH Secretariat Islamabad.The agreement aims to promote academic, scientific and scholarly collaboration through organizing lectures, seminars, workshops, expert talks, academic dialogues, institutional visits, and other mutually agreed capacity-building activities involving distinguished scholars, researchers and experts from OIC member states.The agreement was initiated following the recent visit of the Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH to the HEC Regional Centre Lahore and discussions with the Chairman HEC regarding enhancing cooperation between the two institutions.Welcoming the high-level HEC delegation, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary reaffirmed OIC-COMSTECH's commitment to promoting scientific cooperation, academic mobility and knowledge exchange across the Muslim world. He offered COMSTECH's support in arranging academic visits of leading experts, distinguished academics and scholars from OIC member states to Pakistani universities to facilitate knowledge sharing, joint research and institutional collaboration.Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar appreciated the significant contribution of OIC-COMSTECH to the advancement of science and technology across OIC member states.

LHC CJ says 'entire system is faulty' during vehicle superdari case hearing

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Lahore High Court Chief Justice Aalia Neelum has criticised the performance of the system, remarking that "the entire system is faulty and no one does any work", during a hearing of a vehicle superdari case involving a nine-year delay in the submission of a challan.

The court dismissed the superdari application after hearing a petition filed by TahirAli Phool, who argued that no decision had been made on his request for the release of the vehicle despite the passage of nine years.

Chief Justice Aalia Neelum heard the petition and asked about the applicant's status, saying there was no need to discuss the FIR after such a long period.

Police informed the court that the vehicle had been recovered from the applicant.

The court was told that the case was registered in 2015 and that the applicant had been driving the vehicle on rent. The owner had alleged misappropriation, while the vehicle was later found to have a tampered registration number.

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