

Senate to facilitate business community's input in economic policymaking: Gillani



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Shaza Fatima receives 'Easy Service Medal' at UN Governance Innovation Summit in Baku

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DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

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PM orders cancellation of petrol pumps licences not extending relief to public

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the technology-based fuel subsidy scheme will prove to be a game-changer as part of the government's public welfare policy for the deserving people, ordering the cancellation of licences for those petrol pumps not extending the relief to the public.

Chairing a meeting on Prime Minister's Relief Scheme in Islamabad on Thursday, the PM reviewed the progress and steps taken so far, expressing satisfaction over its implementation and transparency in subsidy payments. "Alhamdulilah, more people are able to register after the government facilitated the process to register for fuel subsidy." According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, a total of 15,519,282 citizens have registered under the programme so far. These include approximately 15.06 million motorcycle owners and 449,000 owners of vehicles with engine capacities of up to 800cc. The meeting was informed that 63,153,685 fuel subsidy tokens had been issued, of which 59,445,347 had been redeemed by beneficiaries. The government has disbursed Rs28.6 billion in subsidy payments under the programme as of November 4, 2026, the briefing added. The prime minister also appreciated Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal IT Secretary Zarar Hashim Khan and their team for developing an effective monitoring mechanism and dashboard to oversee the programme.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the progress of PM Fuel Relief Program.

New wave of bomb threats hits passenger flights across Europe



PEAK POINT

LONDON: Airlines across Europe received a series of bomb threats on Thursday morning for the second time this week, forcing many to make unplanned or escorted landings, although none of the threats immediately proved to be genuine. While no country has attributed blame for the threats, they come at a time when European officials have been blaming both Russia and Iran for what they describe as "hybrid attacks". Moscow and Tehran both deny any such campaign. Aer Lingus flight EI402 from Dublin to Rome landed safely on Thursday at Evreux airport, 100 km (62 miles) west of Paris, after being diverted as a security precaution, the Irish airline said in a statement. Bulgarian officials reported three aircraft making emergency landings in the Balkan country because of bomb threats. Airplanes flying from Copenhagen and Madrid landed safely in Sofia, the interior minister said, according to broadcaster bTV. A third aircraft, from London, was diverted and landed in Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second-largest city, local media said. The government did not respond to requests for comment.

Field Marshal Asim Munir visits SSG headquarters, reviews operational readiness



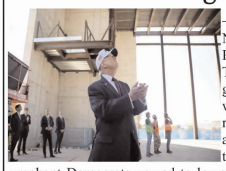
PEAK POINT

TARBELA: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS and CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir visited the Special Services Group (SSG) headquarters in Tarbela on Thursday and reviewed its training and operational preparedness, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. On arrival, the field marshal was received by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) SSG. He laid a floral wreath at the Shuhada Monument and offered Fateha, paying tribute to SSG personnel who sacrificed their lives in defence of the country. The field marshal was briefed on the SSG's specialised training, operational preparedness and mission-oriented readiness. He also witnessed a display of advanced specialised equipment and a demonstration of the SSG's combat capabilities, agility and precision in conducting special operations.

Interacting with officers and troops, Munir praised their professionalism, high morale and dedication to duty.

He said sustained training, development of indigenous capabilities and maintaining operational readiness were essential to counter evolving security threats and emerging challenges.

Trump faces new political reality as Democrats vow investigations



PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump was left to grapple on Thursday with the stinging rebuke from voters after a midterm election rout, while triumphant Democrats vowed to lower prices and combat the "cartel" within the White House in the new Congress. Trump faces a radically transformed and hostile political landscape after Democrats seized both the House of Representatives and the Senate in Tuesday's midterms. The result was a personal humiliation for the 80-year-old Trump, leaving him as a lame duck president for the remaining two years of his term and signaling an end to his stranglehold on the Republican Party. Vice President JD Vance publicly split with Trump over the Iran war a day after the vote, saying the conflict was the "reason we lost" as he distanced himself from the unpopular war ahead of a possible 2028 White House run. "The reason we lost is the war," Vance wrote in a long social media post. "The president himself said so last night. If you'd like to argue it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next six years was worth it, then do so.

Pakistan reports ninth polio case as virus linked to Afghanistan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported its ninth polio case of 2026 after a seven-month-old child tested positive in Khyber district, with genetic evidence linking the virus to strains circulating in neighbouring Afghanistan, health officials confirmed on Thursday. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication, the infected child belongs to Union Council Mastak in Bara tehsil of Khyber district. This is the third polio case reported from the district and the seventh from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year.

Iran's supreme leader threatens wider war if US resumes strikes

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader warned on Wednesday that the Middle East war would widen if the US resumes its attacks, dismissing hopes of a policy shift in Washington after midterm elections dealt a blow to President Donald Trump. Trump has recently threatened to renew the war against Iran amid similar rhetoric from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but on Tuesday he suffered a resounding defeat in polls that will strip his Republicans of control over Congress.

The results could constrain Trump's ability to enact his agenda, though the president retains the power to order new strikes.

"Those who still harbour even the slightest hope that the behaviour of the hegemonic system might change through partisan or factional shifts, or who imagine that making concessions to the United States can dissuade it from hostility towards the Iranian nation, are seriously mistaken," Iranian supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei said in a written statement Wednesday. He also warned that if the United States did choose further military action, the scope of the war would widen, without elaborating. Khamenei has yet to appear in public since he took power in March following the killing of his father and predecessor in US-Israeli strikes, and has communicated through written messages.



Earlier, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's chief negotiator in talks with the US, said Americans had voted against war in the midterms. "Conscience or the cost of living, Americans said NO TO WAR, and we endorse this message," he posted on X.

"If the US government betrays their public will to serve international paymasters and blackmailers, it will learn our NO comes with a Nightmare," Ghalibaf said.

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei also hailed the election results, saying Trump had been "defeated both militarily and politically".

The war has proved unpopular among the US public, who have seen the cost of living rise after a spike in energy prices caused by the war.

Trump on Tuesday acknowledged the conflict may have played a part in the defeat of his Republican Party. "I think a part of it was Iran, but at the same time, people understood the importance of what I've done," Trump told Fox News.

FCC rejects JUI-F appeal against election of its own lawmaker



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Thursday dismissed an appeal filed by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) in a dispute over a reserved seat, upholding the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision. A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case. During the hearing, counsel for JUI-F informed the court that the party had submitted four names for reserved seats. The counsel argued that the ECP could not make changes to the list submitted by a political party for reserved seats. "This is a unique case in Pakistan's history," the JUI-F lawyer said. The counsel maintained that JUI-F had stated that Sadaf Ihsan was not its candidate, but the party was being told otherwise.



DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

SPORTS



Pakistan go down to India despite late onslaught in SAFF Championship opener



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan scored twice in stoppage time, including a spectacular overhead kick by Alamgir Ghazi, but their late rally proved insufficient as Nolberto Solano's side suffered a 3-2 defeat against India in their SAFF Championship opener at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Thursday.

Trailing 3-0 at half-time, Pakistan mounted a spirited fightback, with Najeebullah and Alamgir finding the net in injury time to give the Shaheens hope of an unlikely comeback.

Najeebullah reduced the deficit in the second minute of stoppage time, powering home a bullet header from a Junaid Shah cross to score his first international goal.

Two minutes later, Alamgir produced a moment of individual brilliance to make it 3-2. Collecting a pass from McKeal Abdullah with his back to goal, the midfielder lifted the ball before swivelling and connecting with a stunning overhead kick that found the far corner.

Pakistan pushed forward in search of a dramatic equaliser, but India held on to secure all three points in the Group 'B' encounter.

The defeat left Pakistan to rue a disappointing first-half performance in which they struggled to impose themselves against their arch-rivals. The Shaheens were also without several key players who had featured in last month's FIFA ASEAN Cup.

India took the lead in the 14th minute through Suhail Ahmad Bhat, who finished first-time after a swift attacking move.

The forward doubled his tally six minutes later with another clinical finish, before Manglenthang Kipgen extended the advantage to 3-0 two minutes past the half-hour mark.

Pakistan had an opportunity to reduce the deficit shortly afterwards when Hayyaan Khattak won a penalty following a foul inside the box. However, Shayek Dost blazed his effort over the crossbar, allowing India to take their three-goal lead into the interval.

Solano made an early change, bringing on striker McKeal Abdullah for defender Waqar Ehtisham Baloch. At half-time, Umar Nawaz and Muhammad Junaid replaced Syed Ali Raza and Ali Uzair Mahmood.= Pakistan's efforts in the second half were further disrupted by injuries to left-back Abdul Rehman.

Cristiano Ronaldo announces Int'l retirement



PEAK POINT

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo said on Thursday he was retiring from the Portugal team, bringing the curtain down on one of the most illustrious international careers in the history of football.

The 41-year-old announced that he would 'hand back the number 7 shirt' after the November international break.

Ronaldo captained Portugal to their first major trophy at Euro 2016 and helped them win the 2019 and 2025 Nations Leagues.

"It was not an easy decision, because there are decisions that are not made only with the head. They are also made with the heart," said Ronaldo.

"If I ever made you happy, if one of my goals ever made you hug someone, forget a worry or feel proud of our country, then it was all worth it." Ronaldo thanked his family, the Portuguese people and the teammates, coaches and staff he worked with over his 23-year career with national team.

"Portugal will always be a part of me," he captioned the announcement video.

Ronaldo has made 234 appearances for Portugal and scored 146 goals. He holds the all-time record for international appearances and for international goals.

113 female shuttlers feature in National Ranking Badminton Tournament



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The growing participation of women in badminton has emerged as a significant feature of the All Pakistan National Ranking Badminton Tournament 2026, with 113 female shuttlers among approximately 300 players competing in the championship.

Talking to APP, Chairman Islamabad Badminton Association Pervez Butt said the national ranking tournament provided an excellent opportunity for players to improve their national rankings by competing against leading shuttlers from across the country.

Highlighting the growing interest of women in badminton, Pervez Butt said the participation of 113 female players out of around 300 participants reflected the increasing popularity of the sport among women.

He termed the development encouraging for the future of badminton in Pakistan and emphasised the need to provide female players with better coaching facilities, training opportunities and regular competitions.

He said sustained efforts were required to identify emerging talent and provide players with opportunities to progress to national and international levels.

He said such tournaments played an important role in providing players with competitive exposure, helping them assess their performance, gain match experience and improve their standards. 113 female shuttlers feature in National Ranking Badminton Tournament



FAISALABAD: A view of final cricket match playing between Champions and Warriors Women Cricket teams during PCB Women's Super-3 T20 Tournament 2026-27 at Iqbal Stadium.

Pakistan professional boxing board launched, first show on Feb 10

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Professional Boxing Board has been officially launched to promote professional boxing in Pakistan, introduce Pakistani players at the global level, and establish a transparent, safe and organized boxing system in line with international standards.

Under the new Board, boxers, referees and judges will be formally registered, licensed and trained, with links to international boxing bodies. The first professional boxing show is expected on February 10 next year. The announcement was made by Chairman Amir Khan at a press conference at the National Press Club, Islamabad, along with President Shajad Khan, General Secretary Tahir Khan, Director Legal Affairs Sultan Qamar Afzal, and Official & Refereeing Director Syed Kamal Khan.

Amir Khan said Pakistan faces a shortage of boxing academies and modern gymnasiums. Immense talent exists in Lyari, Karachi, and other parts of the country, but youngsters lack proper facilities to polish their skills.

He requested to authority concerned to cooperate in setting up boxing academies on vacant sports complexes and available state land.

He said he has repeatedly requested land for academies and is ready to build more academies on a self-help basis if facilities are provided. Through the new Board, opportunities will be created for foreign bouts, world-class training and sponsorship, while boxers will be paid win or lose saying that the Board aims to change this and provide merit-based opportunities. He clarified the Board is a private-sector initiative adding that it will include legal experts, experienced referees, judges and technical experts to ensure all bouts follow international rules. The Board will seek affiliation with WBC, WBA, IBF, WBO and Commonwealth Boxing to open doors for Pakistani boxers to fight for international titles.





Table tennis players of different schools in action on table tennis match during 6th Students Olympic Games at Hyderabad Club.

TWIN CITIES
Daily Peak Point, November 06, 2026
DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD



Copper wiring, Scrap and Machinery Stolen from Pakistan Steel Mills, NA Panel demands security plan

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Theft of valuable state property, including copper wiring, scrap and important industrial equipment, at Pakistan Steel Mills has triggered serious concern in the National Assembly, with a parliamentary committee demanding an urgent security plan and a transparent investigation to identify those responsible for the losses. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Industries and Production directed the Ministry of Industries and Production to prepare and present a comprehensive security plan to stop further theft from Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM). The committee also called for strict monitoring and a transparent investigation into possible failures within the mill's security system.The committee expressed concern that valuable public assets were being stolen, causing losses to state property. It stressed that those found involved in illegal activities must be identified and dealt with under the law.The demand raises serious questions about how copper wiring, scrap and essential industrial equipment could be stolen from a major state owned industrial facility and whether existing security arrangements were strong enough to protect public property.The committee has called for an examination of internal security failures, but the information provided does not give the value of the stolen items, the number of theft incidents, the names of any suspects or details of arrests. It also does not establish whether any official was involved in the alleged theft.The issue was discussed during a meeting of the committee chaired by Syed Hafeezuddin, MNA. Members stressed that the protection of state assets must be treated as an urgent matter and that the ministry should not allow further losses.Alongside the security crisis, the committee was briefed on the government's plans for the future of Pakistan's steel industry.The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister informed the meeting that the government was considering establishing a new steel mill in Pakistan alongside ongoing efforts to revive Pakistan Steel Mills. The proposed new facility is aimed at increasing local steel production and reducing the country's dependence on imported steel.According to the briefing, Pakistan imports around $5 billion worth of steel. The government believes that increasing domestic production could help reduce these imports and strengthen the local industrial sector.However, the briefing did not provide the proposed location, construction cost, funding plan, production capacity or expected completion date of the new steel mill. These details will be important in judging whether the proposal can become a practical project.The committee was also informed about progress on the upcoming National Auto Policy. The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister said work on the policy framework had reached its final stages.A total of 49 initial observations raised by the Prime Minister's Office on the draft policy had been addressed, according to the briefing. The revised draft was due to be presented to the Prime Minister for review on the day of the meeting.The Prime Minister was expected to hold a press conference the following day to announce the new policy framework, subject to approval. The final announcement would clarify the government's plans for the automobile industry.The committee's immediate demand is for the ministry to explain how it will protect Pakistan Steel Mills from further theft and investigate the security failures. At the same time, the proposed new steel mill and the revival of the existing facility will be important decisions for an industry that Pakistan relies on but continues to support through large steel imports.

40 Armed en Allegedly Visit Two Quetta Homes, Aliya Kamran and Senator seek Parliamentary Probe

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Around 40 armed men allegedly visited two homes in Quetta, kicked doors, photographed the properties and harassed women and children, prompting Senator Kamran Murtaza and MNA Aliya Kamran to raise the matter through privilege motions in Parliament.The two motions have called for an investigation into the incident reported on November 4, 2026, in the Samungli Housing Scheme of Quetta. The central question raised by the parliamentarians is who sent the visitors, whether they were government or law enforcement personnel, and what legal authority they had to approach or enter the family homes.In her privilege motion submitted to the National Assembly, Aliya Kamran, MNA from NA 326, said the incident directly affected her fundamental rights and her privileges as an elected member of Parliament. She alleged that the incident was linked to political differences with the government and described it as an attempt to intimidate and harass her.According to the account in the motions, around 40 people went to House D70, described as a private residence in the Samungli Housing Scheme. They allegedly kicked the main gate, climbed the boundary walls and took photographs of the property. Photographs were also reportedly taken of the electricity meter outside the house.The noise brought neighbours out of their homes. Some students in the area allegedly tried to record the visitors on their mobile phones, but were stopped from making videos.The group later reportedly went to another family home, House D22, in the same housing scheme. The motions allege that people accompanying police personnel kicked the doors and caused fear among family members, including women and children.Senator Kamran Murtaza's motion also describes the alleged visit to the two houses and says that when family members asked the personnel to identify themselves, they refused to give their names or show identification. They reportedly said they had come on the instructions of law enforcement agencies.Aliya Kamran's motion states that the visitors could not establish their identities or present any legal reason or permission for entering the residential premises. She said the incident caused fear, distress and insecurity. The account also says that Aliya Kamran's younger brother, Adnan, was present at the family home along with women and children. He allegedly asked the visitors to identify themselves, but they did not provide the requested details. The group reportedly left after a large number of people gathered.In her motion, Aliya Kamran referred to Articles 9, 14 and 15 of the Constitution, which deal with security, human dignity and freedom of movement. She argued that any attempt to intimidate an elected representative because of her political views would also affect Parliament's independence and the ability of its members to perform their duties freely.

Opinion & Editorial

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Blue Tsunami

It is blue all over the United States. The Reds have taken a backseat in the House of Representatives and the Senate, pushing the final two years of Donald Trump's presidency into a lame-duck phase. The midterms, indeed, were a Waterloo for Trumpism, as well as a rebuke of the White House incumbent's stewardship. The people voted on issues, squarely reflecting their anger over an escalating cost of living, unprecedented tariffs, and, of course, an undesired war against Iran. In other words, the vote was to curb the President's powers and his impulsive hire-and-fire culture, handing the GOP its worst setback in decades. The backlash was evident from the fact that the Republicans were routed in their strongholds among Black men and Hispanics, and returned the nation's first Muslim senator in Michigan.

In an immediate rejoinder from Iran, Speaker Baqer Qalibaf said, "Conscience or the cost of living, Americans said 'No to War', and we endorse this message." With Democrats now controlling the bicameral Congress, Trump will have to wait and watch for reprisals. The landslide grants the Democrats the power to block any legislation and, moreover, initiate investigations into Trump's alleged corruption.

Decreasing faith

F.S. Aijazuddin

CHRISTIANITY is treading a slow, painful path to its own Calvary. Two thousand years after its emergence as an alternative to Judaism, it is succumbing to a 21st-century malaise — the disparity between the ultra-rich and the irredeemable poor.

It has been reported that a community of Benedictine nuns in Poland needs $1 million urgently to preserve their 800-year-old abbey, which is almost half as old as Christianity itself. Until now, the abbey has been supported by the European Union and sustained by the sale of its own tomatoes and preserves, supplemented by income derived from visitors. (A contemplative order in Karachi — the Monastery of the Angels in Malir — similarly relies upon income from its bakery and confectionery).

One would have imagined that Catholic-rich countries like Brazil and Mexico, or the Vatican (worth $5 billion) and the Vatican Bank ($5.4bn) would help subvent the Polish monastery. Apparently, Peter and his pence are not so easily parted.

The predicament within the Catholic church is not unique. Almost 500 years ago, the English King Henry VIII disbanded "over 800 Catholic monasteries, abbeys, priories, and nunneries" across his kingdom. They owned roughly "a quarter of all cultivated land in England and held vast amounts of gold, silver, and jewels". King Henry diverted their wealth to his private coffers and demanded their loyalty to himself as the head of his new Church of England.

The Catholic church's predicament is not unique.

Today, that Church of England is as indigent as its progenitor King Henry once was. More than 8,000 churches across the UK have closed "due to declining congregations or structural issues". They have been converted into "private homes, shops, or community spaces" — into anything but a mosque. Out of roughly 16,000 Church of England buildings, only one (St Mark's in Peckham, SE London) eventually became a mosque, but only after it had already been used as a scrap yard and a factory.

Deconsecrated churches and parish properties in the UK are listed on 'LoopNet UK Churches for Sale' or The Church of Scotland Properties for Sale. That decline has spread across the channel to France where 'deconsecrated chapels, abbeys, and former convents' are put on the market. Even in Italy, 'Immobiliare Italiano Church Properties/ Monasteries' offer online deconsecrated churches, chapels, monasteries, and abbeys. Prices range from a minimum of €30,000–€85,000 to many millions for larger buildings.

Interestingly, for the first time in its history, the Church of England today has a female Archbishop of Canterbury. By tradition, since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, British monarchs (including queens) have been Supreme Governors of the Church of England. The United Kingdom will not readily admit it, but it is technically at par with other theocracies: Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the Vatican.

Another 'first' occurred when last year, out of the 91 nationalities represented in the Roman Catholic College of Cardinals, 116 of the cardinal electors voted in an American — Robert F. Prevost, originally from Chicago's South side — to the papacy.

He chose the title Pope Leo XIV deliberately. The name echoes the proactive history of earlier Leos — Leo I, who persuaded Attila the Hun to spare Rome; Leo X, who excommunicated Martin Luther, causing the Protestant Reformation; and the modernist Leo XIII, whose encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891) addressed issues such as "industrial labour, workers' rights, and Catholic social teaching".

Reports of Pope Leo XIV's health are a cause of concern. But he will survive his secular counterparts — his fellow American President Donald Trump and the neo-American Benjamin Netanyahu, both of whom are struggling to remain electorally relevant.

Courtesy Dawn

Living in digital darkness

Mujeeb Ali

We are living in the 21st century - an era of unprecedented technological advancement and digital transformation, where AI, social media and smartphones have revolutionised the way we communicate, learn, work and access information.

From the Industrial Revolution to today's digital revolution, technology has dramatically improved living standards. It has transformed industries, simplified everyday tasks, increased productivity and connected billions of people across the globe. Today, digital tools are indispensable in education, healthcare, business, governance and scientific research. From daily wage labourers using mobile banking to professionals working remotely, technology has become an integral part of modern life.

The world has digitally connected, but has created a wide disconnect in human relationships. People are connected on social media just for the sake of appearances, and they are unaware of their neighbours. Ironically, they have hundreds of friends on social media platforms but hardly know about them. They consume hours scrolling through reels and videos, wasting valuable time and energy. When it is time to spend with family members or friends, they often make excuses, saying that they are too busy. Not long ago, families and friends regularly gathered to share meals, visit one another, and spend quality time together. Nowadays, it is increasingly common to see people sitting in the same room absorbed in their smartphones. Conversations are interrupted by endless scrolling through social media platforms. Although we are constantly "connected", genuine human interaction is steadily declining. An estimated 35 million children in Pakistan are now online, many of them without adequate supervision. Pakistani children spend almost 43% of their screen time on YouTube, followed by 16% on WhatsApp and nearly 9% on Instagram.

Courtesy Tribune

DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD

Pakistan aims to develop one million AI professionals by 2030: Ahsan Iqbal



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said Pakistan aimed to develop one million artificial intelligence (AI) professionals by 2030, as part of its broader strategy to strengthen the country's digital economy and expand technological cooperation with Russia.

Addressing the Pakistan-Russia IT Collaboration: Industry Engagement Framework, the minister called for stronger bilateral cooperation in information technology, emphasizing joint ventures, technology partnerships, market access and pilot projects to translate business interactions into tangible commercial opportunities. He said recent business-to-business meetings organized by the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in collaboration with P@SHA had demonstrated the potential for closer commercial engagement, as five Russian companies held 16 meetings with 11 Pakistani firms.

He said the latest initiative should build on those interactions by providing companies with a clearer pathway from business discussions to commercial contracts.

Highlighting the importance of technology in Pakistan's economic transformation, Ahsan Iqbal said e-Pakistan was one of the five core pillars of the National Economic Transformation Plan, with the government aiming to transform the country into a trillion-dollar economy by 2035. He said cooperation with Russia could focus on automation and enterprise software for industry, digital supply chains for agriculture, secure digital systems for trade, artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing and cybersecurity. The minister stressed that Pakistan needed to move beyond exporting information technology services towards developing products and digital platforms for international markets. Underscoring Pakistan's human resource potential, he said the country produced more than 75,000 graduates annually, while its National AI Policy aimed to develop one million AI professionals by 2030.

Pakistan recycles less than 10pc of plastic waste, minister calls for stronger EPR framework

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Dr Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal on Thursday called for a comprehensive and harmonised Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework, improved waste segregation and greater investment in recycling infrastructure to address plastic pollution in the country.

Addressing a panel discussion titled "From Policy to Practice: Strengthening Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Better Systems in Pakistan" at the 29th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC), organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), she said Pakistan needed to strengthen its waste management systems and move towards a circular economy. The minister said plastic, despite its affordability and usefulness in preserving food and protecting medicines, had become a major environmental challenge because of its durability and inadequate disposal and recycling systems.

She said fragmented waste collection, lack of segregation at household level and limited recycling capacity were contributing to plastic accumulation along roads, riverbanks and drainage systems, besides polluting air and water.

Senate to facilitate business community's input in economic policymaking: Gillani

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said on Thursday that the Senate would continue playing its role in promoting a legislative and policy environment conducive to business, protecting legitimate business interests and advancing national economic priorities. He said the business community would be provided an opportunity to present its views and recommendations before relevant Senate standing committees dealing with Finance, Economics, Commerce and Industry, emphasising that effective economic policymaking required meaningful consultation with all stakeholders. He was addressing members of the business community at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), where LCCI President Ali Hussam Asghar, Senior Vice President Sardar Usman Ghani, Vice President Chaudhry Khadim Hussain, Member National Assembly Syed Ali Qasim Gillani, former LCCI president Mian Misbahur-Rehman and Mian Aziz-ur-Rehman Chan also spoke. The Senate Chairman said taxation, regulatory challenges, policy discontinuity and the rising cost of doing business were genuine concerns of the business community that needed to be addressed. He acknowledged Lahore's historic role as a centre of commerce, industry and entrepreneurship and appreciated the contribution of its business community to employment generation, industrial development and national prosperity. Highlighting the role of Parliament, particularly the Senate as the House of the Federation, he said its legislative and oversight functions provided an institutional platform for examining economic challenges and facilitating constructive engagement between stakeholders and policymakers. He assured the business community that the Senate would work towards a policy framework that encouraged entrepreneurship, protected legitimate business interests and supported the country's economic priorities.

Yousaf Raza Gillani encouraged the Lahore Chamber to maintain active and constructive engagement with parliamentary institutions, observing that its practical experience, informed recommendations and sector-specific insights could make a meaningful contribution to legislative deliberations and parliamentary oversight.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, at a meeting with Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lahore.

Message of Speaker NA Ayaz Sadiq on Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Jammu

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has paid tribute to the martyrs of Jammu on the occasion of Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Jammu, stating that the tragedy of November 6, 1947, remains one of the most tragic chapters in the history of the subcontinent.He said that on this day, Dogra forces, extremist elements of the RSS and armed groups carried out a large-scale massacre of Muslims in Jammu, resulting in the martyrdom of thousands of people and forcing hundreds of thousands of Muslims to migrate from their ancestral homes. He said the sacrifices of the martyrs of Jammu would always be remembered as an integral part of the history of the Kashmiri people's struggle for freedom.The Speaker said that the Jammu tragedy was not merely a historical event but also a painful reminder of the atrocities committed against the Kashmiri people and of attempts to alter their identity and demographic composition. He stated that the Kashmiri people had rendered countless sacrifices in their struggle for fundamental rights, freedom and the right to self-determination, and that these sacrifices could never be forgotten.

Shaza Fatima receives 'Easy Service Medal' at UN Governance Innovation Summit in Baku

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja received the "Easy Service Medal" at the UN Governance Innovation Summit in Baku on Thursday in recognition of the success of the Asaan Khidmat Centre.

The centre has served more than 171,000 citizens, earning international recognition for Pakistan's efforts to improve public service delivery through technology. The award recognizes Pakistan's efforts to promote digital transformation and make public services more accessible through technology-driven initiatives. The summit formally opened in Baku, bringing together ministers from more than 100 countries. Shaza Fatima is representing Pakistan at the international gathering.

During her visit, the federal minister also met United Nations Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua and the chairman of Azerbaijan's State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations (top). The meetings focused on the Digital Pakistan initiative, governance reforms and the use of technology to improve public service delivery.

Bilal Bin Saqib meets Mastercard president to discuss digital finance

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), Bilal Bin Saqib, met Mastercard's Division President for East Arabia, Mark Elliott, on Thursday to discuss ways to improve cross-border payments, remittances, and digital financial infrastructure. The meeting focused on promoting modern financial technologies, including blockchain and the tokenisation of digital assets, with a view to exploring new opportunities for Pakistan's digital economy. During the discussion, Bilal Bin Saqib highlighted that Pakistan receives more than $40 billion in annual remittances, emphasising the need to improve cross-border payment mechanisms and make financial transactions more efficient. The two sides also discussed potential opportunities for freelancers and businesses through the development of modern digital payment solutions. Bilal Bin Saqib stressed that cybersecurity and consumer protection must remain central to the development of digital financial services.

National Assembly passes record 24 Bills as Ayaz Sadiq builds consensus between Government and Opposition

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly passed a record 24 bills during its 30th session as Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq successfully brought government and opposition parties closer to reach agreement on important legislation. The bills included 17 government bills and seven private members' bills, reflecting efforts to make parliamentary business more effective through consultation and consensus.According to the National Assembly Spokesperson, the session continued from October 13 to October 30. During this period, the Speaker took several steps to resolve differences among parliamentary parties and ensure the smooth passage of legislation.On the special directions of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, several meetings of the Select Committee were held to examine proposed laws and address objections raised by government coalition partners and opposition parties. Representatives of parliamentary parties, officials from relevant ministries and officers of the National Assembly Secretariat took part in these discussions.The consultations helped resolve disagreements on several proposed laws and build agreement on most issues, allowing important bills to move forward.Of the 17 government bills passed by the National Assembly, seven were sent to the Senate for further consideration, while 10 were forwarded to the President of Pakistan for approval.Similarly, five of the seven private members' bills were sent to the Senate, while the remaining two were forwarded to the President for assent.Apart from the bills passed, another 16 bills were introduced in the National Assembly during the session. These included nine government bills and seven private members' bills.The House also unanimously approved a motion to establish a Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms, providing a platform for lawmakers to discuss possible improvements in the country's electoral system.The National Assembly Spokesperson said Speaker Ayaz Sadiq gave priority to legislation related to public interest and encouraged political parties to work together despite their differences. He played an important role in coordinating consultations and negotiations to ensure that disagreements did not block the legislative process.The Speaker also took steps to improve the performance of the House during Question Hour and discussions on Calling Attention Notices. He directed that relevant federal ministers and parliamentary secretaries should be present to respond to questions raised by lawmakers. Senior officials from concerned ministries were also required to remain present in the visitors' galleries during these proceedings so that members could receive timely and accurate answers about public issues.To maintain a democratic and constructive atmosphere, Ayaz Sadiq provided parliamentary parties with opportunities to express their positions and raise public concerns. Members were also allowed to bring important matters before the House through points of order.The National Assembly Secretariat said these measures helped promote meaningful debate, improve coordination among political parties and strengthen the role of Parliament in lawmaking and public accountability.