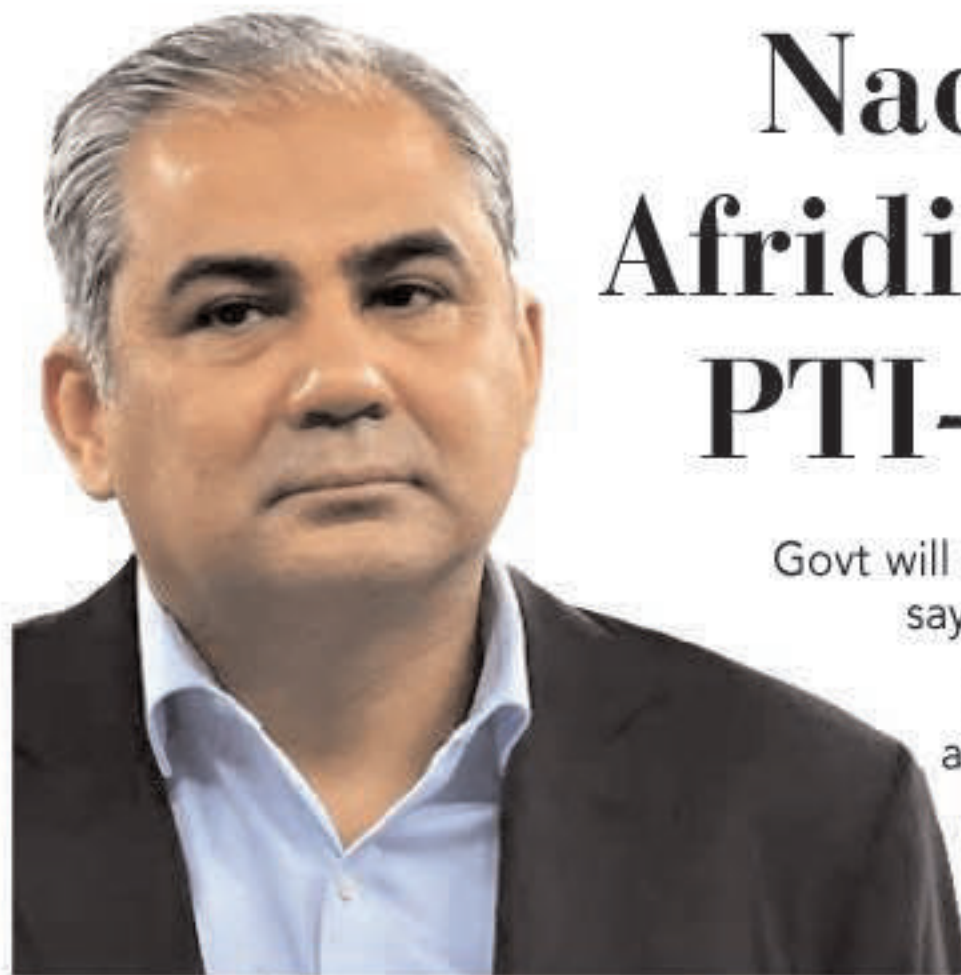




Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Sunday that the talks between the federal government and the opposition had collapsed as the PTI had initiated its long march, accusing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi of "sabotaging" the negotiations.

Naqvi was addressing a press conference

Naqvi blames Afridi for derailing PTI-govt talks

Govt will not tolerate a repeat of May 9, says Interior Minister Naqvi

Cautions that Afridi will be accountable for any fatalities during the protest

in Islamabad hours after an hour-long second round of talks between the two sides ended without yielding any results.

"Their team was reasonable. I am repeating that I will not blame anyone else for all of this collapsing. There is only one person responsible for the entire collapse, and that is the KP chief minister," the interior minister declared.

He further said that Afridi was to be responsible "if there is any loss of life". He said those supporting the PTI leader should "realise that they will be committing contempt of court, and we will take legal action against them to every possible extent".

He warned that no one would be allowed

to violate the Islamabad High Court's order regarding protest. The IHC order, issued on Sept 14, ruled that no political party or its leadership has the "lawful right to occupy public roads, highways, interchanges, toll plazas and buildings in Islamabad".

Notably, Naqvi stressed that there "had been no request from our side for the long march to be postponed".

"When we had the first meeting, we told them that the long march was not an issue for us. However, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto had already given an indication and had also given a date. A day earlier, he had said that the PPP wanted the long march to be postponed and for the temperature to be brought down," he added.

Naqvi explained that the PTI was given the option to hold a protest but would not allow an attempt to "create a disturbance".



"We gave them this option. Now, if they violate the orders, whether they are workers or politicians, whether they are protesting within KP or outside KP, we will pursue them one by one. This time, we want to ensure that this repeated episode of creating a disturbance in Islamabad comes to an end," he asserted.

According to the interior minister, there were two agreements to be reached - one was a "main agreement" that would cover whatever was being decided with the opposition parties, and the other was regarding counterterrorism.

"If we had known that no one in this committee was authorised to give a commitment on behalf of the KP

government, or that the KP government would veto all these things, we would not have held the negotiations in this form in the first place," he remarked.

The minister said the two sides had agreed "100 per cent on political things" so that the KP government could come on board with the Centre on the counterterrorism issues.

"It is not appropriate that there is a war going on in one province and the ministers there are giving statements against the army, are not coming to funerals, and at the local level, somewhere or the other, terrorists are also being given support," he added.

Continued on Page 7

KP government backing terrorism: Defence Minister

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday said the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has been facilitating terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which has resulted in the rising challenges of security in the province.

In his statement on a social media platform, he said the nation would hold the KP government accountable for the martyrdom of several civilians and military personnel in the wake of terrorist activities in the province.

The defence minister said the PTI founder supported the settlement of those elements in KP who backed terrorism. His speeches in the National Assembly and the media's record bear witness to this fact, he added.

He pointed out that every PTI chief minister, after losing power in the Centre attacked the federation.

He termed Islamabad as the symbol of federation's unity and the identity of 250 million Pakistanis.

Continued on Page 7

PTI's begins long march

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Sunday launched the PTI's long march towards Islamabad from Gandhi Chowk in Lakki Marwat, saying the party would "not accept" any policy that was against the interests of the people of the province and Pashtuns.

Afridi reached Lakki Marwat by helicopter to lead the PTI's long march, which is being held to demand the release of jailed party founder and former prime minister Imran Khan. The march was launched from Gandhi Chowk on the Peshawar-Karachi Indus Highway.

Addressing thousands of participants, Afridi urged the public to step out of their homes for the sake

of Pakistan, saying their leader Imran Khan, along with his wife and sisters, was in prison and they should show the world that they were the "true owners" of the country.

He said the "PTI's negotiating committee had gone to Islamabad to lower the political temperature, but those making decisions behind closed doors had sabotaged the talks".

"They wanted their will to prevail in KP, but I declared that only Imran Khan's vision and policies would be implemented here. We do not accept any policy that is not in the interest of the people of KP and the Pashtuns," he maintained.

The chief minister asserted: "We are not 'yes-men'; we are soldiers of Imran Khan, and we will carry forward his policies."

He questioned the policy being followed to tackle terrorism, saying: "What kind of policy is this, where terrorism has persisted for 22 years?"

KP CM said there had been peace during Imran Khan's government because his policies were sound, but

following the "regime change operation", terrorists were resettled, leading to "infinite terrorism".

"We will eradicate terrorism, and if our policy is implemented, we will restore peace within 100 days," he claimed.

He said the long march was being launched from Gandhi Chowk and would conclude at another chowk. At this, the crowd shouted: "D-Chowk."

"We are a political force and a party, and those who dream of the demise of the PTI can never succeed," he added.

Afridi said the participants would leave from Gandhi Chowk and their next stop would be Karak.

Earlier, PTI workers and supporters, led by former KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur, set out from Dera Ismail Khan to join the party's long march at Lakki Marwat.

However, according to Gandapur, they were forced to return from Yarik on their way because of road blockades and the prevailing law and order situation. AGENCIES

Pakistan dodges mini-budget threat following IMF negotiations

The risks of a mini-budget have eased following talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources.

Pakistan and IMF are holding negotiations over the release of the \$1.2 billion fifth tranche under the ongoing loan programme. According to sources, the IMF is satisfied with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's economic policies and their implementation. There is no longer any expectation of additional taxes being imposed during the current fiscal year, the sources added.

The IMF is also reportedly satisfied with the economic performance of Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, sources said. Sources said the IMF appreciated the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) performance during the July-September period. The FBR achieved its tax collection target for July through September, which reportedly satisfied the IMF, according to sources.

Continued on Page 7

Türkiye says Makkah pact committee to meet in Riyadh today

A committee of the Makkah defence pact between Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan will hold talks in Riyadh on Monday, with Turkish ministers among those attending, the Turkish foreign ministry said on Sunday.

The leader of Yemen's Saudi-backed government announced on Sunday the beginning of a major military operation against the Houthis earlier on Sunday, aimed at seizing the territory under their control.

Pakistan's foreign minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar said on Friday that Iran had suggested engaging Yemen's Houthis politically after attacks by the group.

"The meeting will address recent developments in the region and the stage reached in the Alliance's institutionalization efforts," the Turkish statement said.

It said Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Defence Minister Yasar Guler and chief of the general staff General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu would attend the meeting of the pact's strategic political and defence committee, along with officials from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. REUTERS

Faisal Kundi, Mohsin Naqvi discuss KP security and possible governor's rule

The two officials also warned that terrorists could exploit the long march to pass through security checkpoints undetected

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday discussed the province's law and order situation, political developments and issues related to the ongoing long march during a meeting at the



Governor's House.

The two leaders exchanged views on the deteriorating security situation in the province, the prevailing political environment and various aspects of the situation arising from the long march.

The meeting expressed concern over the possibility that terrorists could receive facilitation to cross security checkpoints during the long march. It was also observed that the provincial government's attitude and role regarding counter-terrorism operations during the negotiation process were

against the interests of the people and the province.

The participants said that despite consensus on resolving issues, the provincial government demonstrated rigidity, irresponsibility and repeated its policy reversal.

The meeting also termed the alleged use of helicopters and other government resources by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and provincial ministers during the long march as a violation of the Islamabad High Court's decisions.

The two sides also discussed other matters of mutual interest and held consultations on various issues.

It was agreed that if the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister considered it necessary to impose Governor's Rule or an Emergency to protect the province from terrorism and destruction, the Governor House would perform its constitutional role accordingly. AFP

National



Special units formed to curb fake news, anti-state propaganda

World



Brazil vote pits Trump ally against Lula in bid for 4th term

Business



Haroon Akhtar vows push for industrial growth, exports

Sports



10 medals: Pakistan's best Asian Games in 24 years

Lifestyle



Music links past, present for Pedro Pascal's cell in 'Behemoth!'

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Iran says Strait of Hormuz will not reopen until conditions are met under Islamabad MoU

NATIONAL

DTM

Punjab CM inaugurates five road projects under PPP Authority

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday digitally inaugurated five road projects being transferred to the Punjab Public Private Partnership (PPP) Authority, marking a new phase of public-private partnership in the province.

According to a spokesperson, the five road projects, with a combined length of 318 kilometres, include the 80-kilometre Muridke-Narowal Road, 33-kilometre Shakargarh-Narowal Road, 97-kilometre Faisalabad Ring Road, 52-kilometre Faisalabad-Sahianwala Road and 56-kilometre Faisalabad-Samundri-Rajana Road.

Under the PPP arrangement, private contractors will operate the toll collection system on these roads for seven years and will also be responsible for their maintenance, repair and rehabilitation. Modern electronic toll plazas will be established on the roads. The projects are expected to generate Rs 22 billion in revenue for the Punjab government.

Punjab PPP Authority Vice Chairperson and Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb briefed the chief minister about the projects and the authority's future plans. She said the processing time for PPP projects had been reduced

from two years to six months to expedite their implementation.

She informed that four more roads would also be transferred to the PPP mode, including the 42-kilometre Bahawalpur-Yazman Road, 43-kilometre Yazman-Ahmadpur East Road, 28-kilometre Raiwind-Changa Manga Road and 26-kilometre Gajumata-Kasur Road.

The PPP Authority is also processing projects in various sectors, including hostels, hospitals, parks, sports grounds, waste-to-energy plants, effluent treatment plants, parking plazas, tourism, water supply and recycling. PPP-based water and sanitation service projects are planned in Chakwal and Kasur, while the Tourism Department will establish a Time Travel Park in Lahore under the PPP model.

Other planned projects include an FMD vaccine protection plant to help control foot-and-mouth disease in livestock, a parking plaza and multimodal commercial facility at Badami Bagh Lorry Adda, and a bridge over the River Sutlej at Sahuqa Pattan. A Block Soldier Fly larvae facility will also be established at Punjab's vegetable and fruit markets for solid waste management.

The authority will further

undertake the management of 100 sports grounds and related facilities and develop a modern truck terminal in Faisalabad.

Under the PPP mode, girls' and boys' hostels will be constructed at Punjab University and 28 other public sector universities. Hostels will also be built at three medical colleges, while 14 hostels for working women will be established across the province. A nursing hostel will be constructed at Sahiwal Teaching Hospital, while the operation and development of Faridia Park, Sahiwal, will also be undertaken under the PPP arrangement.

The CM was informed that a Divisional PPP Working Party, headed by the commissioner concerned, could approve and implement projects costing up to Rs 500 million.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated Secretary Finance Mujahid Sher Dil, Secretary Communication and Works (C&W) Raja Jahangir Anwar, CEO PPP Authority Dr Zeeshan Hanif and their teams for advancing the PPP programme.

Provincial Minister for C&W Sohail Ahmed Bhatti, Secretary Finance Mujahid Sher Dil and Secretary C&W Raja Jahangir Anwar also addressed the ceremony. **NEWS DESK**



M-6 construction to begin next month: minister

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan announced that construction on the Sukkur-Hyderabad M-6 Motorway will formally begin next month.

Preparatory work on the long-awaited project is progressing rapidly, with the formal groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for November this year.

In a statement posted on X, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that construction of the motorway, which has remained pending for the past 30 years, is finally set to begin now. He expressed gratitude to Allah Almighty for providing an opportunity to turn the historic M-6 Motorway project into a reality.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that the M-6 Motorway would give a new impetus to trade and commercial activities in Sindh as well as across Pakistan.

The project would also play a significant role in promoting the country's economic growth and strengthening regional connectivity.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would be specially invited to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of the Sukkur-Hyderabad M-6 Motorway.

He added that the Chief Minister of Sindh and distinguished members of the Provincial Cabinet would also be extended special invitations to participate in the occasion.

In his message on X, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan described the M-6 Motorway project as a major milestone in the development and prosperity of Sindh and Pakistan. **APF**



Bilawal pays tribute to teachers on World Teachers' Day

Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has congratulated teachers across the country on World Teachers' Day and paid tribute to their services.

The PPP Chairman said in his message that the hard work and sacrifices of teachers form the foundation of Pakistan's bright future.

A teacher does not merely teach a curriculum, they instill awareness, the courage to ask questions, and the ability to build a better society in their students.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stressed that it is the state's responsibility to provide teachers with respect, adequate facilities, professional freedom, and a conducive working environment. He said that investing in quality education and the welfare of teachers was, in effect, an investment in the country's future.

He also called for a fair increase in salaries for teachers, particularly those at private institutions, along with job security and an effective mechanism to ensure their basic rights. The PPP Chairman said education has always been a core priority for the PPP. "The 1973 Constitution, framed under Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, declared education a fundamental right, while Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's vision was to provide equal, quality education to every child without discrimination. Establishing and expanding educational institutions has remained a priority throughout every PPP government," he pointed out.

He said his party holds the services and struggles of teachers in high regard, and that the PPP will continue to lead the way in securing teachers' rights, resolving their issues, and restoring their professional dignity. **APF**

Inter-provincial drug supplier arrested

Larkana Police's targeted operation against dacoits, criminal elements, and gangs involved in murder cases is ongoing, while acting against drugs, police arrested two accused from an inter-provincial drug supply gang along with 15,500 grams 15.5 kg of hashish.

According to a police spokesperson, under the instructions of SSP Larkana Azhar Khan, search and combing operations are continuing in various katcha and pakka areas under the supervision of all SDPOs. To further stabilize the law and order situation and tighten the noose around criminal elements and accused involved in murder cases, Larkana Police is carrying out operations under comprehensive planning.

During the targeted operation, a heavy contingent of Larkana Police, armored vehicles, and a large number of police mobiles have been deployed in various areas, while human intelligence as well as modern technical systems are being used to assist the operations. On the other hand, acting on secret information, Larkana Police conducted an operation on the Larkana-Rato Dero Road within the jurisdiction of Rato Dero Police Station and foiled an attempt to supply drugs. During the operation, police recovered 15 kg 500 grams of hashish and arrested two accused.

According to SSP Larkana, the arrested accused have been identified as Saleem Brohi, a resident of the Jhat Pat area of Balochistan, and female accused Zarina Sheikh, while a two-year-old child was also present with them. Police have started further interrogation of the accused, and information is being obtained regarding local dealers, buyers, and the drug network. SSP Larkana Azhar Khan (PSP) has said that operations against anti-social elements who disturb law and order and their facilitators will continue without discrimination, and the operation will continue until criminal elements are completely eliminated. **APF**



QUETTA: Heavy oil tanker navigates crowded Sunday Bazaar on Joint Road, raising safety concerns. **APF**

Sindh Governor meets Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal MD

Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi has said that supporting deserving, orphaned, widowed and needy people and enabling them to lead dignified lives is a collective responsibility. He appreciated the role of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal in providing welfare, medical, educational and financial assistance to deserving people and emphasized the need to further strengthen and expand these services.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Senator Captain (Retd.) Shaheen Khalid Butt at Governor House. The meeting discussed the welfare and support of deserving and underprivileged people, as well as other matters of mutual interest.

Governor Sindh stressed that maximum deserving people should benefit from educational, healthcare and financial assistance programmes. He also called for effective measures aimed at their rehabilitation and empowerment so that they can become self-reliant and lead dignified lives.

On the occasion, Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Senator Captain (Retd.) Shaheen Khalid Butt briefed

Governor Sindh on the institution's various welfare initiatives.

He stated that under the Individual Financial Assistance Programme, financial assistance is being provided to deserving people for education, medical treatment and other essential needs.

He further informed the Governor Sindh that the Sweet Homes Programme is providing care and support to orphaned children and taking steps for their better future. He added that 165 Women Empowerment Centres established across the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, are providing deserving women with vocational training and opportunities for employment.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Senator Captain (Retd.) Shaheen Khalid Butt presented a commemorative shield to Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi on behalf of the institution. In return, Governor Sindh presented him with a traditional Sindh Ajrak and Sindhi Topi as a gesture of goodwill. **NEWS DESK**



SHC CJ visits Mirpurkhas, inaugurates various facilities

Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court, Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput, accompanied by Justice Riazat Ali Sahar, Justice Jan Ali Junejo, Justice Khalid Hussain Shahani and Justice Muhammad Humayun Khan, visited the Sindh High Court Circuit Court and District and Sessions Court Mirpurkhas, where various facilities were inaugurated and plantation activities were carried out.

Upon arrival at the SHC Circuit Court Mirpurkhas, the chief justice and other judges planted saplings.

Later, Chief Justice Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput inaugurated the Affidavit and Identification Branch and the Video Link Facility Room at the Circuit Court Mirpurkhas.

The CJ and other judges subsequently visited the District and Sessions Court Mirpurkhas, where a Missing Facility for Women Litigants was inaugurated.

District and Sessions Judge Sumkan Hussain Mughal and other judicial officers were present on the occasion. President of the Sindh High Court Bar Association Mirpurkhas Advocate Shaukat Ali Rahmoon, General Secretary Advocate Kanji Mal Meghwar, President of the District Bar Association Mirpurkhas Advocate Qalandar Bakhsh Laghari and General Secretary Advocate Abdul Hassan Nondani were also present during the visit. **APF**

Five killed in car-trailer collision

At least five people died in a fatal collision between a trailer and a car on the National Highway bypass in Naushahro Feroze area of Sindh on Sunday, according to police sources. Initial reports said that the car was on its way when it collided with a trailer, resulting in the deaths of five people, including a child and a woman. The bodies of the victims were shifted to a nearby hospital, while police launched an investigation into the accident. **APF**

FAO flags gaps in Pakistan's nutritious food supply

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has emphasised the urgent need to transform Pakistan's agrifood system to improve access to healthy diets, a critical step towards addressing all forms of malnutrition and their related costs to society.

The UN agency, in its latest assessment on "Food Supply for Healthy Diets in Pakistan", observed that a major challenge in the country's current food supply is the persistent mismatch between the quantities of food available and those required for the population to consume a healthy diet aligned with the national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs).

"Enabling access to healthy diets for all is essential to achieving Pakistan's national development priorities. Yet over 60 per cent of Pakistanis cannot afford a healthy diet, contributing to the high rates of malnutrition across the country. At the same time, diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCD) are rising, while

various forms of undernutrition persist. Unhealthy diets are a common cause of all forms of malnutrition and contribute directly to morbidity and mortality from NCD," the assessment shows.

The FAO listed priority policy actions to strengthen demand for healthy diets through consumer-focused policies; updating Pakistan's FBDGs to reflect nutrition, health, and environmental priorities and use it for nutrition education and behavior change; introducing evidence-based fiscal measures, including taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages and other foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats; introducing front-of-pack nutrition labelling to help consumers make informed food choices; protecting vulnerable populations; restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods, particularly those targeting children, expanding nutritious school meal programmes; and strengthening social protection programmes to improve access to nutritious foods. **AGENCIES**



NATIONAL

DTM

Special units formed to curb fake news, anti-state propaganda

Islamabad has tightened oversight of online content in recent years, saying it is necessary to combat misinformation. Cyber agency chief directs more citizen-friendly complaint and verification systems to provide swift justice to people.

Pakistan's National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has established dedicated units to counter what it described as "fake news" and "anti-state propaganda," an NCCIA spokesperson said on Sunday.

Pakistan has tightened its oversight of online content in recent years, with authorities saying the measures are necessary to combat misinformation, cybercrime and threats to national security.

Rights groups, journalists and digital freedom advocates,



however, have repeatedly raised concerns that such actions risk curbing free expression and could be used to suppress dissent. The government denies it.

In a statement, the NCCIA spokesperson said these special units have been activated across all regions to monitor the country's cyberspace, adding that all resources would be utilized to provide swift justice to

citizens.

"There is a zero-tolerance policy against fake news and anti-state propaganda," NCCIA Director General Ali Nasir Rizvi said, directing more citizen-friendly complaint and verification systems.

The development follows incidents in recent years in which misinformation circulated online relating to Pakistani officials, militant attacks, counter-terrorism

measures, government actions and private citizens.

Pakistan has in recent years introduced a series of measures to regulate such content, including amendments to cybercrime laws and the creation of the NCCIA.

Authorities say the steps are aimed at tackling misinformation, online fraud, hate speech and content that threatens national security. NEWS DESK

AIOU Autumn 2026 admissions in full swing; last date Oct 5

Admissions for Autumn 2026 semester at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) are in full swing, with last date being October 5, offering a golden opportunity for thousands of students across Pakistan and abroad to continue their education from Matric to PhD level.

According to the Directorate of Admissions, the university is offering a wide range of programs in both Open Distance Learning and Face-to-Face modes, while the last date for submission of admission forms with late fee is October 5, 2026.

According to the admission advertisement issued by the Directorate of Admissions, admissions are open in a wide range of programs from Matric to PhD level.

As per the admission schedule, the last date for submission of fresh admission forms for Matric, FA, AD, BS, http://B.Ed, PGD and Certificate Courses is 05-10-2026 with late fee. The same deadline is also applicable for continuing students for enrollment. The university is offering programs in two modes to facilitate students from different backgrounds.

Under the Open Distance Learning mode, students can apply for Matric in General, Science, Dars-e-Nizami and Open Courses, Intermediate programs including FA General, FA Dars-e-Nizami, ICom, FA Open Courses and FSc Pre-Medical and Pre-Engineering. Associate Degree programs of two years are available in BA General, BCom, BA Open Courses and also in specialized subjects like Arabic, Business Administration, Commerce, Education, English, Gender and Women Studies, International Relations, Library and Information Sciences, Mass Communication, Pakistan Studies, Political Science, Sociology and Psychology.

For those who have completed their

intermediate and graduation, BS programs based on HSSC of four years duration are offered in Arabic, Islamic Studies with specializations, Accounting and Finance, BBA, English, Gender and Women Studies, History, International Relations, Pakistan Studies, Urdu, Economics, Computer Sciences with specialization in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, and many other fields.

Similarly, BA and BSc based BS programs of 2.5 years and AD based BS programs of two years are also included in the same subjects. The Teacher Training programs include B.Ed of 1.5 years, 2 years, 2.5 years and 4 years, along with Postgraduate Diplomas and a large number of short-term certificate, diploma and professional courses for skill development.

Alongside distance learning, the university has also announced Face to Face programs for science students.

These include BS programs based on BSc of 2.5 years and ADS based of 2 years in Chemistry, Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Physics, Mathematics, Statistics, Biochemistry, Botany, Environmental Sciences, Microbiology and others.

Associate Degree and BS programs based on FA and FSc of four years are offered in Computer Sciences with specialization in Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Data Science, Information Technology, Biochemistry, Botany, Chemistry, Environmental Sciences, Mathematics, Microbiology, Physics, Health and Physical Education and BSc Hons Agriculture.

These face to face classes will be conducted at the main campus and at regional campuses located in Islamabad, Lahore, Bahawalpur, Multan, Karachi, Quetta, Muzaffarabad, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Rahim Yar Khan and DG Khan. AFP

Punjab seals 7 polluting units, fines Rs 850,000 in smog drive

Under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the smog control operation is proceeding in full swing, with simultaneous efforts underway to monitor, prevent and enforce regulations on the ground regarding local sources of pollution.

According to a spokesperson here on Sunday, air quality conditions were expected to improve as wind speeds increase after 10:00 AM.

As part of proactive measures taken across Punjab ahead of the smog season, drone squads, night squads and "Hawk-Eye" field squads are conducting round-the-clock surveillance, while action is being taken against violators of environmental laws.

Over the past 24 hours, 220 industrial units were inspected, seven units were sealed, and fines amounting to Rs 850,000 were imposed. Operations against brick kilns involved the inspection of 379 kilns, three were demolished, four were sealed, and four cases were registered, while 10 kilns received notices and fines totaling Rs 1.2 million were levied. During a crackdown on substandard plastic, 230 locations were inspected; four premises were sealed, 3,515 kilograms of plastic were confiscated, 45 notices were issued, and fines totaling Rs 66,000 were imposed.

To curb smoke emissions from barbecue and commercial cooking sites, 206 locations were inspected; suction hoods were installed at 86 sites, 16 premises were sealed, and fines amounting to Rs 35,000 were levied.

Water sprinkling operations to suppress dust have been intensified across Punjab, including Lahore. Over the past 24 hours, water was sprayed on 1,006 kilometers of roads, and 35 road shoulders were repaired or reconstructed.

Action against construction-related pollution is also underway, with 46 measures taken to ensure that exposed and unsecured construction materials are properly covered.

A zero-tolerance policy regarding the burning of crop residues continues to be enforced. By October 3, the harvesting of the rice crop had been completed across 815,558 acres in Punjab. To dispose of crop residues using mechanical methods, 187 balers and 1,259 Kubota machines are active in the field, having facilitated harvesting operations across 426,759 acres.

According to the Punjab government, the distribution of over 10,000 'Super Seeders' is also underway to enable the incorporation of crop residues into the soil rather than burning them. Notices have been issued to 448,712 farmers so far to prevent them from burning crop residues.

Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb stated that the battle against smog was not limited to just one season, as the government had incorporated monitoring, enforcement, mechanized farming, water sprinkling and public awareness into a comprehensive action plan.

She noted that the Punjab government had ensured there was no lapse in monitoring or field operations, with all relevant agencies active in the field and immediate action against violations being ensured. She urged citizens to refrain from burning trash and plastic, and advised farmers to adopt modern mechanized methods instead of burning crop residues. AFP



LAHORE: An anti-smog gun tanker sprays water to curb smog on Mall Road. ONLINE

3,000 citizens join 3rd Lahore Heritage Run at Lahore Fort

The 3rd Lahore Heritage Run was held at Lahore Fort on Sunday with around 3,000 participants from civil society taking part in the event organized by the Lahore Runners Club in collaboration with the Punjab Walled Cities and Heritage Areas Authority (PWCA).

The run commenced from Hazuri Bagh at Lahore Fort and passed through Lahore Fort and Circular Road, covering Kashmiri Gate, Sheranwala Gate and Zakki Gate before returning through Mochi Gate and entering the Walled City through Delhi Gate. The participants then passed through Sabeeh Wali Gali, Shehi Hammam, Hukka Wali Gali, Gali Surjan Singh, Wazir Khan Mosque, Kashmiri Bazaar, Sunehri Mosque, Rang Mahal, Pani Wala Talab, Langa Mandi and Taxali Bazaar before concluding the run at Hazuri Bagh, Lahore Fort. Deputy Commissioner Lahore participated in the run as the chief guest and distributed awards among the winners. Rescue 1122, PERA Force, Traffic Police and Lahore Police provided emergency, traffic management and security support throughout the event.

Speaking on the occasion, DG PWCA Najmussaqib said connecting Lahore's historic sites with public activities was an effective way to engage citizens with the city's rich cultural heritage. He said PWCA would continue collaborating with different organizations and civil society to promote public engagement with Lahore's heritage and make historic sites more accessible to the community. The coordinated efforts of the concerned departments contributed to the successful conduct of the event, while the collaboration between PWCA and Lahore Runners Club provided citizens an opportunity to experience and engage with the city's historic landmarks. AFP

Russian delegation visits UAF to explore opportunities

A delegation of Russian Research and Development (R&D) company, a manufacturer of pesticides and agrochemicals Schelkovo Agrokhim, visited the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) on Sunday to explore opportunities for collaboration in high quality seeds, crop protection, micro fertilizer and pesticide meant for addressing the agricultural challenges.

The delegation, comprising Trade Representative of the Russian Federation Denis Nevzorov and company Export Director Sergei Kalishin, held a meeting with UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali and senior university officials and faculty members. Discussions focused on areas of mutual interest, particularly plant protection, seed, crop productivity, and the technologies for sustainable agriculture.

Sergei Kalishin said that Schelkovo Agrokhim JSC is a Research & Development (R&D) company, a manufacturer of pesticides and agrochemicals, and a leader in the Russian market for crop protection products and seeds.

He said that activities are aimed at developing and expanding the scientific and production potential of agrochemical and agricultural sectors through top-tier developments in farming, and the implementation of innovative technologies.

The Russian representative presented

details regarding specialized crop protection products and micro-fertilizers, pointing out that data are accessible via their official web platform.



He noted that foreign agricultural conditions often require tailored solutions, adding that the UAF could examine the available documentation to select suitable products for trial runs in Pakistan.

According to the delegate, identifying specific regional diseases and crop requirements will allow both sides to determine the most effective products before initiating

to coordination, alongside a joint evaluation comprising experts from the Plant Protection, Soil Science, and Seed Science. The committee will review the Russian catalog, assess local field requirements, and prepare a preliminary list of targeted products for localized trial testing. And a Letter of Intent will be inked in this regard.

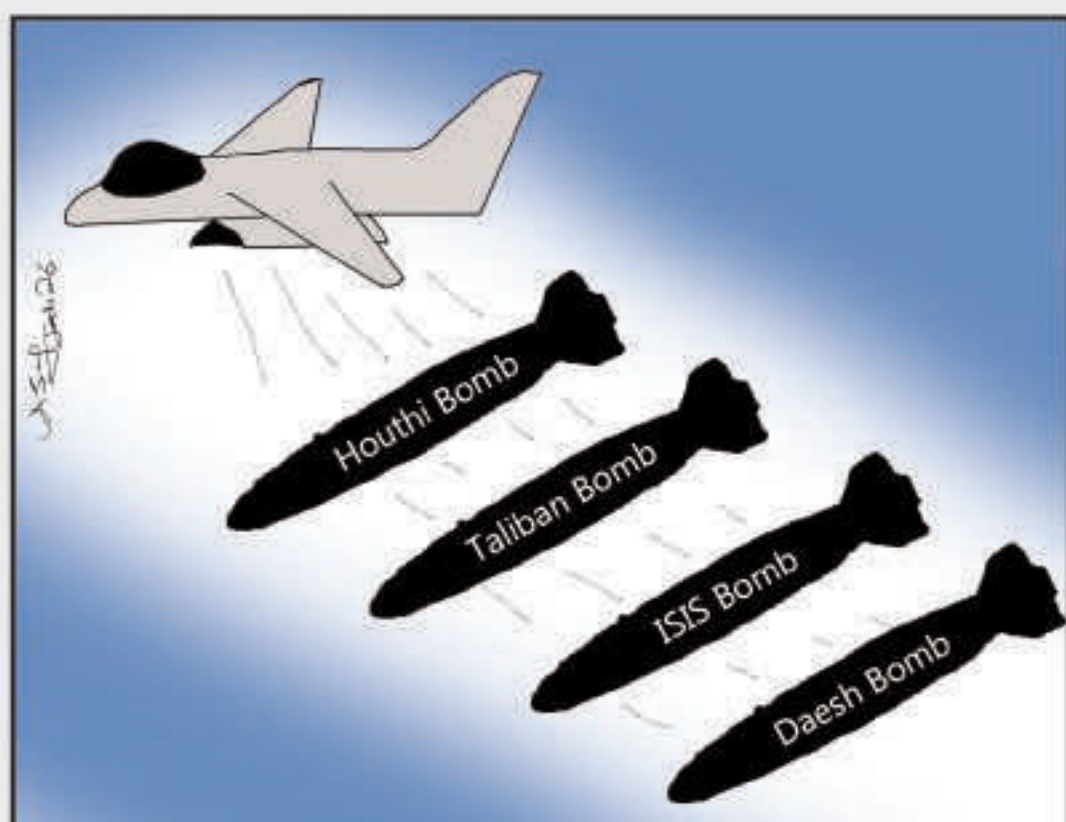
Highlighting Pakistan's diverse agro-climatic zones, Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali also proposed reciprocal arrangements, particularly regarding seed trial.

Both sides expressed confidence that joint field trials and shared academic research would establish a durable framework for future agricultural cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

The Russian representatives appreciated UAF's academic and research capabilities and expressed their willingness to strengthen cooperation with the university through joint research, technology transfer, academic linkages and field-oriented agricultural initiatives.

UAF Vice Chancellor welcomed the interest of the Russian company in collaboration and observed that stronger linkages between academia and the international agricultural industry could contribute to developing innovative solutions for crop protection, productivity and sustainability. AFP

EDITORIAL



Power dues put govts under pressure

The federal government has informed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that it plans to recover more than Rs110 billion in electricity dues from the provinces. The money would be adjusted from provincial shares under the National Finance Commission (NFC) award. The government says more than Rs110 billion in provincial power dues have been reconciled and nearly Rs50 billion could be recovered soon. But the provinces have opposed such deductions in the past, arguing that their consent is needed before money can be taken from their accounts. The State Bank of Pakistan cannot make the deductions without the required authorisation. The IMF has also raised concerns about the impact on provincial finances. The provinces are already expected to generate a combined cash surplus of Rs1.7 trillion and provide Rs1.036 trillion in cash grants to the federal government. To meet these demands, some provinces have already reduced or adjusted development spending.

The IMF talks have also brought other electricity-sector problems into focus. The government has not yet clearly explained whether the uniform electricity tariff will continue after the planned privatisation of several distribution companies. Under the present system, consumers in different areas pay according to a common tariff structure, even when the efficiency of distribution companies differs. The experience of K-Electric has already raised questions about tariffs, subsidies and payments between the company and the federal government. The government is reportedly prepared to settle more than Rs100 billion in K-Electric claims if related tariff issues are resolved. Meanwhile, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority and its tribunal rejected K-Electric's request for a Rs40-per-unit tariff and approved Rs32.37 per unit. The company is expected to challenge the decision in court. Another issue is the delayed review of the industrial incremental support package, which offered eligible industries electricity at Rs22.96 per unit from December 2025. The government had promised a review after six months, but it has not yet taken place. A hearing is scheduled for October 5. Industrial electricity costs have already risen by about 10% after tariff rebasing. Any further increase could add to the burden on industries, which are already facing high energy costs.

Pakistan cricket needs more than efforts

Pakistan may have lost the Asian Games cricket final to India, but the defeat should not hide the effort shown by the team. India made 211 for six and Pakistan finished at 192 for six, losing by 19 runs. Haider Nawaz's 96 off 51 balls was a brave attempt to keep Pakistan in the contest, but the target remained beyond reach. A final against India always carries extra pressure, and the players deserve appreciation for fighting until the last over. Sport is also about accepting defeat with dignity and learning from it. Pakistan should not make this loss a reason to attack individual players. The young cricketers need support, proper training and the confidence to perform on big occasions. At the same time, the result should make the Pakistan Cricket Board and the people running the game ask a bigger question: why does Pakistan continue to struggle to turn talent into consistent success? A single defeat is not the real problem. The real issue is the system that produces the team.

Pakistan cricket needs a serious overhaul, from grassroots cricket and domestic competitions to coaching, selection and player development. Talent is available, but talent alone cannot build a strong national side. The country needs better academies, stronger domestic cricket, modern training methods and clear long-term plans. Selection should be based on performance and potential, while players should know what is expected from them before they reach the international level. The management also needs stability so that every new defeat does not lead to another change in coaches, selectors or plans. Pakistan has a proud cricket history and millions of young people who want to play the game. That passion should be turned into a proper system. The Asian Games final should therefore be seen not simply as another loss to India, but as an opportunity to look honestly at the state of Pakistan cricket. The players gave their effort and fighting spirit. Now the administrators must show the same seriousness in rebuilding the system.

German Unity Day

This year has already demonstrated the depth of German-Saudi relations. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Katherina Reiche, Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul and Minister for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Carsten Schneider have all visited the Kingdom this year.

In September, Wadephul and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan met in Berlin to sign a memorandum of understanding establishing a strategic dialogue at the foreign minister level.

In September, Wadephul and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan met in Berlin to sign a memorandum of understanding establishing a strategic dialogue at the foreign minister level.

Our cooperation today extends far beyond trade. It encompasses energy, industry, investment, science, education, healthcare, culture and technology. As Saudi Arabia advances Vision 2030, German expertise in areas such as engineering, advanced manufacturing, vocational training and sustainable technologies offers many opportunities for cooperation. GESALO, the German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs, plays an important role in connecting businesses and strengthening economic exchange.

Energy and the transformation toward more sustainable economies are other important areas of shared interest, from renewable energy and hydrogen to energy efficiency and industrial transformation.

As we celebrate German Unity Day, I look forward to continuing our work with our Saudi partners. Germany and Saudi Arabia have much to contribute to one another. Together, we can build on our strong foundations and create new opportunities for our people and for a stable, connected and prosperous future.

Happy German Unity Day.

Energy and the transformation toward more sustainable economies are other important areas of shared interest, from renewable energy and hydrogen to energy efficiency and industrial transformation.

A strong partnership, however, is about more than politics and economics. It is about people.

Institutions such as the Goethe-Institut, the German Schools in Riyadh and Jeddah, and our many academic partners create opportunities for education, language learning and cultural exchange. Saudis who have studied in Germany are important bridges between our societies, just as Germans living and working in Saudi Arabia gain a deeper understanding of the Kingdom and its transformation.

The specialist medical training program associated with Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin is another excellent example. Professional exchanges and specialist training strengthen healthcare expertise while creating lasting institutional and personal connections.

Our partnership is also part of a broader relationship between Europe and the Gulf.

Germany supports closer cooperation between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council, including through high-level dialogue on regional stability and economic prosperity.

As we celebrate German Unity Day, I look forward to continuing our work with our Saudi partners. Germany and Saudi Arabia have much to contribute to one another. Together, we can build on our strong foundations and create new opportunities for our people and for a stable, connected and prosperous future.

Happy German Unity Day.



MICHAEL KINDSGAR

Energy and the transformation toward more sustainable economies are other important areas of shared interest, from renewable energy and hydrogen to energy efficiency and industrial transformation.



Israel allies' shift at United Nations

A new language on Palestine was the most noticeable change at this year's UN General Assembly high-level meetings and in statements by Israel's closest allies.

Last Thursday, Saudi Arabia co-chaired a meeting, along with Canada, France and the UK, on the implementation of the two-state solution. It was held on the first anniversary of the adoption of the UN resolution endorsing the New York Declaration. That landmark resolution was adopted overwhelmingly, with only 10 countries in opposition, including Israel, the US and a handful of Pacific islands. That resolution capped the efforts of many countries around the world, led by Saudi Arabia, France and Norway.

At this year's UNGA, the language became sharply critical of Israel, including by some of its closest allies. In part, this shift is due to the diplomatic activity of the past three years to promote the two-state solution, but mostly it appears to be in reaction to Israel's recent actions. There is clear revulsion at the continuing genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank, which appear to be designed, approved and carried out as official policy.

There is clear disappointment that President Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan, which was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2803, is going nowhere because of Israel's obstruction of its implementation. Israeli ministers reject the plan and instead speak openly about expelling Palestinians from the Strip. To achieve that goal, Israel blocks aid, bars UNRWA from providing basic services and prevents Gazans from returning to

There was fear among many at the UN that time is running out before these Israeli actions in Gaza and the West Bank trigger another crisis of catastrophic proportions. King Abdullah of Jordan spoke to this in a moving speech delivered on Sept. 22. He said that what was happening in the West Bank was not simply an escalation but a fundamental shift in the course of the Israeli occupation.

"What was once a creeping process has exploded into something far more aggressive. Settler violence is rampant. Palestinians are being beaten, shot and terrorized. Homes torched. Property destroyed. Families driven from their land. And Israel is tightening its grip on more of the West Bank, seizing land, expanding settlements and pushing Palestinians out," he said.

King Abdullah explained: "What is unfolding across the West Bank is not a series of isolated acts. It is elements of a single policy to compel an entire population to leave their land." He added: "And there is a name for that: forced displacement. And that is a war crime."

Israel intends to make Jordan the destination for those forced out of their land in the West Bank. It is home to millions of Palestinians who were driven out of their homes in previous waves since 1948, including 2.4 million who are registered with the UN as refugees.

The Trump administration again banned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas from attending the session in person, perhaps hoping that his absence would dampen the support movement at the UN. But the opposite happened. The contrast in delegates' reception could not be greater between their warm applause for Abbas, who spoke via

video, and the mass protest of 70-plus nations whose delegations left the General Assembly Hall when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood at the podium, leaving him speaking to a nearly empty room.

In a speech clearly directed at his constituents in Israel, Netanyahu said that Israel did not commit genocide in Gaza but prevented one from happening. He so desperately needs to win the upcoming election that he took a risk in flying to New York, dodging the arrest warrants outstanding against him.

Delegates spoke of a lack of balance in barring Abbas from attending, in clear violation of the US-UN headquarters agreement, while allowing Netanyahu to attend even as he was sought by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity. They cited Israeli policies that were in clear violation of UN principles and conventions, including genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank.

The meeting on the two-state solution held on Sept. 24 was attended by heads of state and government and other senior officials from more than 100 countries and organizations. The statement by its co-chairs stressed three points. First, the two-state solution is the only path to achieving Palestinian political rights, including the right

to establish an independent state in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, along the 1967 lines.

Second, the rejection of Israel's actions meant to block this solution, including settler violence and settlement expansion in the West Bank, violations of the legal and historical status quo in Jerusalem, and blocking the return of Gazans to their homes.

Third, the statement called for unhindered delivery of aid and expressed support for UNRWA to carry out its duties in helping Palestinian refugees.

The shift in the positions of some close allies of Israel has been remarkable. The UK's reversal, in particular, has been extraordinary.

Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said in a speech this week that, while the UK fought antisemitism at home and supported Israel's right to exist and defend itself, it equally opposed its policies toward the Palestinians. "We call out ethnic cleansing by the settler terrorists in the West Bank. We call out the evidence of war crimes in Gaza. We call out Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine," he said.

The reference to ethnic cleansing, war crimes and "illegal occupation of Palestine" is unusual in recent UK statements. But Miliband was clearly meaning to apologize for previous fence-setting on these issues, as he added: "I want to say to the millions of people in this

country and indeed elsewhere, who have been moved and outraged by the plight of the Palestinian people. We hear you. You were right."

Miliband had previously announced a number of trade sanctions against settlement exports to the UK.

A week earlier, a ban by the Netherlands, another close ally of Israel, on imports and the sale of products from settlements in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights entered into force. In April, at the initiative of the Netherlands, the EU reached an agreement regarding a third package of sanctions against a number of extremist settlers and organizations that support them. Work is underway on a fourth package of sanctions.

Officials in Germany, Israel's staunchest ally in Europe, have also criticized some Israeli excesses, including rebukes voiced by its Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

These developments have led The Times of Israel newspaper to conclude: "The Netherlands is just a symptom of a widening global boycott against Israel." It said that in the year since Trump's Gaza peace plan was adopted, "Israel's international standing continues to plummet. The latest European restrictions threaten to exact a heavy economic toll."

More needs to be done to translate the growing support for Palestine and criticism of Israel into action to reverse Tel Aviv's destruction of Gaza and its creeping annexation of the West Bank. The statements made by Israel's closest friends and the sanctions imposed on some of its officials and on settlement exports are steps in the right direction.



DR. ABDEL AZIZ ALUWAISEH

There is clear disappointment that President Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan, which was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2803, is going nowhere because of Israel's obstruction of its implementation. Israeli ministers reject the plan and instead speak openly about expelling Palestinians from the Strip. To achieve that goal, Israel blocks aid, bars UNRWA from providing basic services and prevents Gazans from returning to

OPINION

DTM



LAHORE: Young women take part in the 'Pink October All Girls Ride 2026' cycle rally at Liberty Chowk in connection with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Serious water shortage

Through your esteemed newspaper, I want to draw attention to the serious water shortage in Gwadar. Many people face immense difficulties in getting enough clean water for drinking and daily use. Water is a fundamental need for every person.

This shortage creates major problems for families, schools, hospitals, businesses, and government offices in the region. Without reliable access to water, people cannot live comfortably or carry out their daily work smoothly. It affects almost every area in Gwadar.

Furthermore, the government must take this issue seriously by improving the overall water supply system to ensure clean water reaches every neighborhood. Local fishermen are also severely impacted, even though fishing is vital to our community's livelihood and local economy.

I request the concerned authorities to take immediate and effective steps to resolve the water shortage in Gwadar. Please improve the water supply infrastructure and provide clean drinking water to all affected areas.

MAUKNAZ KHALID
Turbat

Road safety

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I wish to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to the difficulties faced by residents due to narrow, poorly maintained roads in parts of Khuzdar.

Many villages and communities depend on single roads used daily by cars, buses, motorcycles, trucks, and pedestrians. When these roads are narrow, damaged, or poorly maintained, traffic becomes difficult, and the risk of accidents increases.

The problem becomes even more serious at night when adequate street lighting, road signs, safety barriers, and other traffic-control measures are

unavailable in dangerous areas. Commuters, particularly students, women, elderly people, and drivers, face considerable difficulties while travelling.

I request the concerned authorities to repair and widen roads where necessary and install appropriate road signs, speed breakers, streetlights, and safety barriers at accident-prone locations. Regular maintenance is also essential to ensure safer and smoother transportation.

Improving these roads would not only reduce travelling difficulties but also contribute to the safety and development of local communities.

I hope the relevant authorities will give this issue due attention and take practical steps to improve road safety in Khuzdar.

SHAZIA SALEEM
Khuzdar

Clean environment

A clean environment is crucial for maintaining a healthy life. Access to clean air, pure water, and pollution-free surroundings allows individuals to remain both mentally and physically fit. When our environment is properly maintained, the risk of disease drops significantly, enabling people to live longer, healthier lives.

Conversely, a polluted environment leads to severe health issues, including respiratory problems, infections, and allergies. Unmanaged garbage, contaminated water, and industrial emissions pose immediate threats to both human health and local ecosystems. Protecting our surroundings helps preserve nature while keeping our cities and villages safe and peaceful.

Environmental care is a shared civic responsibility. We must refrain from littering on public roads, actively plant trees, and utilize natural resources responsibly. By prioritizing cleanliness today, we can secure a healthy, sustainable future for ourselves and upcoming generations.

SASSI QASIM
Turbat

Why is oil close to \$100 if Trump is winning the battle in Hormuz?

I don't know who will win the U.S.-Iran war. But if you ask me who's prevailing in the battle over the Strait of Hormuz, it's clear U.S. President Donald Trump has the advantage. As much as Tehran says the opposite, the strait is effectively wide open. Crude oil exports from regional U.S. allies via the waterway, plus bypass routes, have risen to about 80% of pre-war levels. Iran, meanwhile, has seen its own oil exports plunge to zero.

A couple of months ago, the surge in oil shipments would have been seen as a major American victory. Yet Brent crude, the oil price benchmark, is hovering around \$100 a barrel. Inside the White House, some must be asking themselves: If this is winning, what would losing look like?

To understand what's happening, a good place to start is market psychology and the fascination with using a triple-digit price level as a benchmark for success or failure: Thumbs up for Trump if Brent stays below \$100 a barrel; thumbs down if it rises above that.

In a world where social media shapes narratives, the difference between \$99.99 and \$100.01 oil can be vast - and absurd. The perception is crucial, though, because it shapes what investors do. With benchmark oil prices perched near the triple-digit threshold and bond yields rising, investors may buy more oil futures as a hedge against the risk of inflation, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. We saw this trend at work in early September after the 10-year U.S. Treasury bond yield climbed above 5%.

Then there's a second psychological factor, tied to a bet on military strategy. Many in the oil market think Trump has been so successful at opening Hormuz that a cornered Tehran would have no other option but to escalate militarily. If attacks on tankers - which still happen daily - aren't enough to close Hormuz, then Iran would have to go after the source of the shipments: ports, pipelines and, ultimately, the oilfields themselves.

By that perverse logic, Trump is inviting a major escalation by winning a key battle. In the eyes of many oil traders, the attack earlier last month against the East-West pipeline, a Saudi oil conduit which has allowed the kingdom to bypass Hormuz, is a rehearsal of what's about to come. Maybe.

Iran now faces two choices: Either it softens its negotiating position or it escalates in a way that renders Hormuz irrelevant. The oil market is convinced Iran will choose the latter. The clock is ticking for Tehran to decide because every day its economy deteriorates further under the American economic blockade. What's clearer is that the oil market would be more vulnerable to renewed conflict now than back in March because the U.S. and its allies have already used significant chunks of their strategic reserves and commercial stockpiles of crude and refined products have fallen.

Oil bulls remained incredulous about the flows and suggested the U.S. government was inflating the numbers. But over the last few weeks, most have accepted that Hormuz is witnessing a huge tanker flow. Last week, crude shipments rose to a six-month high of 14 million barrels a day, according to Vortexa, an energy markets analytics firm



JAVIER BLAS

economic punishment than many, myself included, had expected. Presumably he's willing to absorb still more pain to force the hand of the Islamic Republic.

What's at stake? A lot. Excluding Iranian exports, the countries on the shores of the Persian Gulf were exporting just over 17 million barrels of crude a day before the war broke out on Feb. 28. Initially the conflict closed Hormuz almost completely, forcing everyone to use limited bypass routes and, ultimately, reduce shipments. At the worst point, in mid-March, crude exports plunged to a quarter of normal levels - less than 4.5 million barrels a day. They stayed low for months, only recovering in June and bouncing back further in July after Iran and the U.S. signed a memorandum of understanding that put a provisional end to the war.

That deal collapsed soon after, of course, but flows remained strong as the U.S. military increasingly gained control of the waterway using an array of warships, drones, fighter jets and helicopters. In secrecy, the U.S. Navy cleared Hormuz of sea mines, creating a two-way corridor hugging the coast of Oman. At first, convoys crossed only at night, but recently they have started to move in daylight - an indication of the Pentagon's growing confidence in its ability to control the strait.

Oil bulls remained incredulous about the flows and suggested the U.S. government was inflating the numbers. But over the last few weeks, most have accepted that Hormuz is witnessing a huge tanker flow. Last week, crude shipments rose to a six-month high of 14 million barrels a day, according to Vortexa, an energy markets analytics firm. Other tanker trackers, oil traders and government officials have arrived at similar figures.

The convoys have a huge cost. Putting aside the military expenses, chartering the supertankers costs an average \$30 million per crossing, equal to roughly \$15 per barrel. To make the convoys work on pure economics, Persian Gulf nations must discount their crude, at times by \$20 to \$30 below market levels, just to get traders into the game. Is that sustainable? Not likely.

Meanwhile, the oil flows via Hormuz won't resolve the other problem plaguing the energy market: the scarcity of refined products - above all, diesel. Shipments of gasoline, diesel and jet fuel remain at 50% of normal. The reason? Moving refining products is more expensive than moving crude. On top of that, some of the refineries inside the Persian Gulf that were attacked in the early days of the war have yet to resume operations fully.

Put it all together and the oil market is in wait-and-see mode: Either Iran comes to the negotiation table and prices decline a lot; or Tehran escalates attacks on physical energy infrastructure, sending prices a lot higher. Whatever happens, the status quo isn't sustainable. That's the price of winning in Hormuz.

Unequal development behind Jhimpir's green energy

As power blackouts darken Pakistan's big cities, Jhimpir's villages endure a deeper socioeconomic blackout. Women bear the heaviest burden in this: beyond endless household chores, they trudge long distances for water, gather firewood and tend to livestock. The absence of healthcare and livelihood opportunities compounds their vulnerability, widening the already entrenched inequalities.

Pakistan's power sector is full of contradictions and dilemmas. Nowhere is this more visible than in Jhimpir. Some 120 kilometres northeast of Karachi lies this windswept corridor, capable on paper of generating 43,000 megawatts of electricity across nearly 10,000 square kilometres.

The site boasts average wind speeds over 7 metres per second, making it suitable for wind energy generation. The extensive wind power farms of Jhimpir, stand as towering symbols of Pakistan's push toward a clean, renewable energy future. Vast fields of sleek turbines harness relentless winds to generate significant electricity for the national grid, fuelling the country's green energy ambitions. Yet, many local communities living in the shadow of these wind clusters lack schools and hospitals. Access to safe drinking water is limited.

A significant number of households here lack access to electricity supply and remain shrouded in darkness after sunset. Some of these households were provided solar panels but the systems did not sustain long-term use due to fragile and expensive batteries. Unable to afford replacement batteries or maintenance, many families have been forced back into living without electricity.

Why does such abundant renewable energy potential sit alongside such visible want? The wind farms provide scant employment for locals. The vast majority look on from the sidelines. For them, the giant turbines are less symbols of opportunity than whirling monuments to a modernity that has passed them by.

I met a rare girl in the village to had studied up to the fifth grade. Her journey came at a steep personal cost; she had to live away from her family, staying with relatives for five years just to access schooling. In a village where most girls receive no formal education, she stood out, carrying a quiet confidence born of her rare opportunity. Yet her story also highlights the sacrifices many girls and their families must make to pursue education in underserved areas.

As power blackouts darken Pakistan's big cities, Jhimpir's villages endure a deeper socio-

economic blackout. Women bear the heaviest burden in this: beyond endless household chores, they trudge long distances for water, gather firewood and tend to livestock. The absence of healthcare and livelihood opportunities compounds their vulnerability, widening the already entrenched inequalities. For children, meagre health services and failing schools blunt their development, ensuring that deprivation is passed faithfully from one generation to the next.

This stark contrast between advanced energy production and persistent social deprivation reveals a critical paradox in Pakistan's energy transition. It highlights a broader challenge: expanding renewable energy capacity alone is not enough without inclusive development strategies that improve the lives of local communities. The Jhimpir example shows how infrastructure investments, though vital for climate and energy goals, can bypass the people whose well-being must be central to sustainable progress.

What credibility does 'sustainable progress' carry when those living in the shadow of turbines see none of its dividends? Sustainability is as much about governance as it is about technology. Without policies that bridge social and economic divides, Jhimpir's wind corridor risks becoming a showcase of exclusion. Unless local communities are woven into the fabric of planning-through jobs, services and fair access-the promise of wind power will remain little more than rhetoric, a green success story measured in megawatts rather than in improved lives.

Current measures of renewable energy success focus mainly on installed capacity and emission reductions, highlighting technical and environmental gains. However, they overlook the lived reality of communities like Jhimpir, where

social uplift is missing despite towering clean energy infrastructure. Without including human development indicators, such as education, healthcare, clean water access and job creation, evaluations risk a narrow view of sustainability that leaves vulnerable populations behind. True progress must extend beyond megawatts and climate targets to embrace social inclusion, empowering people and ensuring renewable energy drives equitable, sustainable development for all.

Sustainable governance means adopting inclusive policymaking that aligns energy production goals with broad socioeconomic development, gender equity and community well-being. It requires going beyond technical achievements to ensure that renewable energy projects actively benefit the people who live near them, especially marginalised groups.

Effective governance requires empowering communities through participatory decision-making that ensures that their voices are heard. Energy projects must be coupled with targeted investments in health, education and infrastructure to improve living conditions. Gender-responsive policies help address women's specific burdens and ensure equitable resource access. Transparency and social accountability mechanisms are essential to guarantee that renewable energy delivers both environmental and meaningful social benefits.

Successful examples from the region illustrate these principles in action. In Nepal, the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre has implemented small wind-solar hybrid systems that provide affordable, reliable energy to local households, including marginalised Dalit communities and schools in rural districts. By combining energy access with social uplift and incorporating wind data acquisition to identify appropriate sites, the project strengthens local resilience and inclusion.

Pakistan can adopt these successful examples by implementing inclusive, community-focused energy policies that prioritise local participation, gender equity and targeted investments in social infrastructure alongside renewable energy expansion.

Renewable energy, when harnessed through inclusive development frameworks, can serve as a powerful catalyst for broader social justice goals by promoting equitable economic opportunities, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Projects that prioritise community involvement, especially in underserved areas, can help redistribute economic benefits and foster improved social outcomes such as women's empowerment, education and local skill development.

Trichy in Tamil Nadu, India, has developed into a vital wind turbine manufacturing hub, producing over 50 percent of the country's wind turbine towers and blades. This industrial growth has generated more than 3,500 jobs and is bolstered by targeted training programmes from institutions like BHEL and IIT Madras, helping to build local technical capacity and economic resilience in the region.

On the social front, access to clean energy has been linked to tangible empowerment, particularly for women. In rural West Bengal, micro solar domes have enabled women to engage in income-generating activities by reducing the time and labor involved in traditional energy collection methods, facilitating greater economic participation and enhanced social status. In northern Pakistan, the deployment of micro-hydropower plants has provided women with reliable electricity for both household and communal uses, contributing to improved socio-economic participation and empowerment.

Research has shown that renewable adoption in South Asia not only drives economic expansion but also helps reduce income inequality by facilitating fairer income distribution through improved energy. Improved energy access, particularly from renewable sources, is strongly linked to women's empowerment, enabling increased participation in economic activities and decision-making processes.



SADIA ISHRAT SATTI

NATIONAL

DTM

Priceless antiques stolen from Bahawalpur Nawab's family residence



The stolen items included a silver throne chair, silver ladders, bowls, gold plates, statues, Bahawalpur-crested gold items

A domestic worker stole antiques worth around Rs20 million (\$72,438) from the residence of a member of the former Nawab of Bahawalpur's family in Islamabad, police said on Sunday, amid a spike in burglaries in the Pakistani capital.

The development comes amid a wave of robberies and burglaries in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, with criminals getting away with cash, precious valuables and historical treasures worth more than Rs34 million (\$123,145) in eight incidents, Pakistani media reported this week, citing police. Several antiques and heirlooms belonging to the family of former Nawab of Bahawalpur had been stolen from the residence of Prince Bahawal Abbas Khan Abbasi, son of Nawab Salahuddin Abbasi, in Islamabad's upscale F-8/3 sector.

The stolen items reportedly included a silver throne chair, silver ladders, bowls, gold plates, statues, Bahawalpur-crested gold items, a historic silver frame bearing the Bahawalpur state crest, old muskets and swords.

"This was a case of theft involving a domestic worker, who has been arrested and interrogated," Muhammad Imran, in-charge of the Margalla police station, told Arab News on Sunday.

"The suspect had stolen heirlooms and antiques belonging to the family of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, worth approximately Rs20 million."

The official did not say whether any recoveries had been made in the case.

The development follows several search operations by law enforcement agencies in multiple localities along with vehicle searches to boost security across the federal capital.

Earlier this year, authorities in the capital made it mandatory for all vehicles to have electronic-tags, or m-tags, installed, in a bid to enhance surveillance, improve record-keeping and regulate traffic in a city that hosts the country's main government institutions, foreign missions and diplomatic enclaves.

The move followed a suicide bombing at a judicial complex in the city that killed 12 people and wounded over 20 others, amid a broader surge in militancy in Pakistan. Yet in Feb. this year, at least 32 people were killed and over 150 others sustained injuries in a suicide attack that targeted a Shia mosque in the Tarai Kallan area on Islamabad's outskirts, officials said. A regional affiliate of Daesh claimed the assault. **NEWS DESK**

Hazara province demand should not be delayed, says Yousaf

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Chairman Hazara Province Movement Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Sunday called for the creation of Hazara province without further delay, saying the region's case had already been taken up by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and the National Assembly.

Addressing a large Hazara Province Convention hosted by Senator Talha Mahmood at Haripur, Sardar Yousaf said the demand for a separate province was based on administrative grounds and that the movement was now focused on parliamentary and constitutional forums.

"The Hazara province movement is strong and its case is ready," he said, adding that resolutions in favour of the province had been passed three times by the provincial assembly.

Sardar Yousaf said the demand had received support from political leadership and claimed that the military leadership had also expressed support for the creation of new provinces.

He said bills seeking the creation of Hazara province had

been introduced in the National Assembly in 2019 by both opposition and government members.

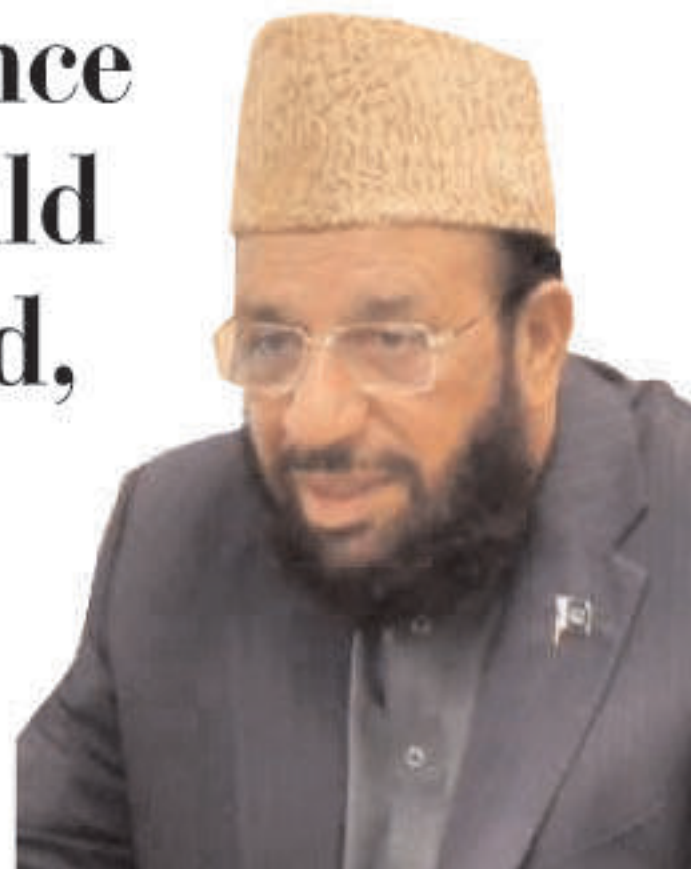
"The matter is now inside the assemblies," he said, urging lawmakers to take steps for the creation of the province.

Sardar Yousaf said bringing administrative services closer to the people was essential for improving access to government and public facilities. Delays in matters concerning public welfare, he added, could create frustration and disappointment among citizens.

Senator Talha Mahmood said Haripur would be the economic backbone of a future Hazara province and rejected concerns about the availability of resources.

He claimed that the region had sufficient resources to meet its requirements and contribute to the national economy. He also linked unemployment and lack of opportunities with frustration among young people and called for reforms in the existing system.

Former federal minister Murtaza Javed Abbasi said the people of Hazara would not



accept the creation of new provinces without Hazara being included.

He said representatives of the region had already raised the issue in parliament.

Former chief minister Pir Sabir Shah said the people of Hazara were united in support of the demand, while Jamaat-i-Islami Hazara leader Abdul Razzaq Abbasi said his party fully supported the creation of a separate province.

Brigadier retired Shahzad Awan said Hazara had significant natural and tourism resources, including dams and other reserves, but claimed that the region was not receiving adequate benefit from them.

Movement coordinator Prof Sajjad Qamar claimed that Hazara was entitled to a

significant share of the National Finance Commission award. He said greater control over its resources would enable the region to finance its development and contribute to the federation.

Prince Fazal Haq and former lawmaker Nawabzada Wali Mohammad also expressed support for the demand, saying representatives from Kohistan and Battagram would continue to support the movement.

The convention was attended and addressed by several lawmakers, former ministers, political leaders and representatives of religious and community organisations, who reiterated their demand for the creation of Hazara province. **APP**

Balochistan launches Global PhD Scholarships to empower youth

The Balochistan government has invited applications for its PhD Scholarships Program under the Education Endowment Fund, offering talented youth opportunities to pursue higher education and research at more than 100 prestigious universities worldwide.

According to the official announcement, ten scholars from Balochistan will be awarded scholarships annually to study abroad. Last year, six candidates secured placements in leading institutions, including the University of Leeds (UK), University of Copenhagen (Denmark), University of Alberta (Canada), University of Queensland (Australia), University of Bristol (UK), and University of Malaysia (Malaysia), in diverse fields ranging from molecular biology and food safety to politics, gender studies, and structural engineering.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, expressed satisfaction over the program's expansion, describing it as a beacon of hope for the province's future. He emphasized that the initiative is not merely about scholarships but about opening doors of knowledge, research, and progress for generations to come. Sarfraz Bugti said: "Balochistan's future lies not with those who take up arms and hide in the mountains, but with those who hold books and prove their talent in the world's leading universities."

He reiterated that investing in education and skill development is the most effective way to counter extremism, empower youth, and integrate Balochistan into the global academic and economic landscape. The government's vision, he added, is to prepare young scholars to compete internationally and to place Balochistan firmly on the map of global research and innovation. **APP**

Scientific study launched to protect forests

The senior officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department visited Dir Kohistan, where a scientific reassessment of forests was underway for better management.

On the directives of Junaid Khan, Secretary, Climate Change, Forestry, Environment & Wildlife Department, the Director Research & Development (R&D) visited Patrak Forest Sub-Division, Dir Kohistan, accompanied by scientists and pathologists from the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Assistant Director R&D Malakand, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO) Patrak and field staff.

The visit focused on a comprehensive scientific reassessment of fungal diseases and pest infestation affecting oak forests in Patrak, Bier and Banikot.

The multidisciplinary team conducted detailed field observations, examined affected forest areas and collected samples for further scientific analysis and diagnosis. **APP**



RAWALPINDI: Medical university students teach underprivileged children at an open-air school in Liaquat Bagh ahead of World Teachers' Day. **ONLINE**

President, PM hail teachers as builders of nation's future

President Asif Ali Zardari extended his greetings and appreciation to teachers across Pakistan and around the world for their contribution to education, human development and nation-building.

In a message on World Teachers' Day (5 October 2026), he said, "Teachers are central to every education system. They impart knowledge, nurture curiosity, shape character and help young people develop the skills and values they need to become responsible and productive members of society. Their influence extends beyond the classroom and is reflected in the lives of families and communities."

"This year's observance is particularly significant as it marks the 60th anniversary of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. The theme, 'Standing with teachers: 60 years of protecting the profession, advancing its status and shaping our futures,' draws attention to the need to recognize the importance of teachers and provide them with the professional support and opportunities they need," he added.

He said, "For Pakistan, strengthening the teaching profession is essential to improving the quality of education and expanding opportunities for our children and young people. We must continue to invest in teacher education, professional development and supportive learning environments so that teachers are equipped to meet the changing needs of their students."

"The rapid development of technology, including the growing use of artificial intelligence, is also changing the way education is delivered. Technology can support

teaching and learning, but it cannot replace the human qualities that teachers bring to the classroom, including empathy, mentorship, ethical guidance and the ability to understand and inspire their students. Our teachers should therefore be supported in using new technologies while keeping the human relationship between teacher and student at the centre of education," he remarked.

The President particularly acknowledged the dedication of teachers serving in remote, underserved and challenging communities. "For many children, the quality of their education depends directly on the commitment of the teacher in their school. Ensuring that such teachers have the training, resources and working conditions they need is essential to giving every child a fair opportunity to learn and progress," he said and called upon governments, educational institutions, parents, communities, civil society and the private sector to work together to strengthen and respect the teaching profession. Supporting teachers is an investment in the education and future of Pakistan.

"May Allah Almighty bless our teachers and guide us in our efforts to provide every child with quality education," he concluded.

Meanwhile, in a message on World Teachers' Day, 5 October 2026, Prime Minister said, "On the occasion of World Teachers' Day, I extend my heartfelt appreciation and profound respect to teachers in Pakistan and around the world who are entrusted with the sacred responsibility of educating and nurturing our youth: the architects of our future."

"Teachers play an indispensable role in nurturing the individuality of

young people, polishing their abilities and expanding their knowledge. Through fostering intellectual development, shaping minds and guiding generations, teachers also help define the shared social foundations and values of our societies."

The dedication, knowledge and commitment of teachers are undoubtedly instrumental in shaping the future of nations. They are the cornerstone of every successful education system, fostering a spirit of inquiry among students and equipping them with the confidence and skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world," he remarked.

"Only an inclusive, future-oriented education system, responsive to the demands of artificial intelligence, climate change, technological advancement and a knowledge-based employment landscape, can ensure a brighter future. The emerging challenges of our time require us to equip our students not only with knowledge, but also with critical thinking, creativity, ethical values, adaptability and the capacity for lifelong learning," he added.

He said, "Making our education system merit-based, high-quality and aligned with global standards remains a foremost priority of the Government. The establishment of Danish Schools across the country is an endeavour to make quality education accessible to capable and talented students."

"The government's commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunities is also reflected in the expansion of the Danish Schools network. Providing quality education to talented and deserving children, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, remains a priority," he concluded. **APP**

GB Chief Secretary visits Astore, reviews development matters

The Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan visited District Astore, where an important meeting was held at Rama under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Astore Neelum Ali. The meeting reviewed in detail the overall administrative situation, public issues, ongoing development activities and other important matters in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP Astore, Assistant Commissioner Astore Muhammad Shoaib, Assistant Commissioner Shouther Tauseeq Ahmed, Executive Engineer Works Department Astore, officers of the Forest Department and other concerned district officials.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Astore Neelum Ali gave a detailed briefing to the Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan on key administrative matters, law and order situation, ongoing development projects, issues faced by the public and various initiatives being undertaken at the district level.

The meeting also discussed in detail public needs, provision of basic facilities, improvement of infrastructure, roads and other development projects, as well as various administrative matters in different areas of the district.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the measures being taken by the district administration to resolve public issues and improve administrative affairs and directed the concerned officers to ensure effective progress on ongoing projects and initiatives in the public interest.

The meeting stressed the need for all concerned departments to work through close coordination and a coordinated strategy to ensure provision of basic facilities to the people of Astore, timely completion of development projects and further improvement in administrative affairs so that maximum relief could be provided to the public. **APP**

Over Rs 1.52 bln spent on police welfare in Punjab

Initiatives for the welfare of the Punjab Police force and their families are ongoing, with over Rs 1.5295 billion spent on the welfare of the police force this year.

According to a spokesperson here on Sunday, over Rs 432.7 million was released as educational scholarships for the children of police employees, while more than Rs 428.5 million was provided as wedding gifts for the employees' daughters.

Funds exceeding Rs 247.2 million were released to assist with medical treatment facilities, and over Rs 233 million was issued for retirement grants.

More than Rs 129.8 million was provided to police employees' families as subsistence allowance, while over Rs 47.3 million was given to families to cover funeral expenses.

According to the spokesperson, more than Rs 10.7 million was also provided to the police force as immediate financial assistance.

IG Punjab stated that efforts to alleviate the difficulties faced by employees will continue through the income generated by the Police Welfare Fund. **APP**

NATIONAL

DTM

Dry weather expected today across most parts of country: PMD



The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast dry weather in most parts of the country on Monday, with hot conditions expected in plain areas during daytime.

However, partly cloudy weather is likely in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan during the evening and night, with rain accompanied by wind and thunderstorms at isolated places during night hours. In Islamabad and its surroundings, dry and hot weather is expected during daytime, while partly cloudy conditions are likely during evening and night. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, dry weather is expected in most districts, with hot conditions in plain areas during daytime. However, upper districts are likely to experience partly cloudy weather, with rain accompanied by wind and thunderstorms at isolated places in Chitral, Dir, Bajaur, Malakand, Peshawar, Swat and Kohistan during evening and night. Most districts of Punjab are expected to experience dry and hot weather during daytime. However, partly cloudy conditions with rain, wind and thunderstorms may occur in Murree,

Galiyat and adjoining areas during evening and night. In Sindh, dry and hot weather is expected in most districts, while Karachi and its adjoining areas may experience partly cloudy weather with drizzle at isolated places. Most districts of Balochistan are likely to experience dry weather, with hot conditions during daytime. In Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, dry weather is expected during daytime, while partly cloudy conditions are likely during evening and night. However, isolated places in Gilgit-Baltistan may receive rain accompanied by wind and thunderstorms during night hours. According to the PMD, dry weather prevailed in most parts of the country during the past 24 hours, while plain areas remained hot. Sibi and Shaheed Benazirabad recorded the highest maximum temperature at 42 degrees Celsius. The minimum and maximum temperatures recorded in major cities included Islamabad 20/33, Lahore 23/36, Karachi 27/33, Peshawar 23/36, Quetta 12/34, Gilgit 09/36, Muzaffarabad 16/36, Skardu 06/27, Murree 12/23, Faisalabad 24/37 and Multan 25/36 degrees Celsius. In Srinagar, Jammu, Leh, Pulwama, Anantnag, Shopian and Baramulla, temperatures remained at 12/31, 22/33, 04/21, 12/30, 11/29, 12/30 and 11/29 degrees Celsius, respectively. **APP**

Naqvi blames Afridi for derailing PTI-government talks

Continued from Page A1

"If there is a military operation, would you tell the army which gun to use or which drone to use? This happens nowhere in the world," he said. Naqvi detailed Saturday's developments: "I requested CM Afridi to onboard the KP government because, definitely, the problems we are facing are coming from the KP government. He said, 'Okay, I am going now,' so we postponed the meeting until tomorrow. All members agreed to the postponement. "They (opposition team) held negotiations with CM Afridi for four hours. The KP CM gave them his feedback and gave them the mandate that whatever they finalise with him, they should proceed with it." The interior minister accused Afridi of changing the draft of the agreement despite what had been agreed to earlier. "When I forwarded the draft to the KP chief minister, around 9pm he became active. Once the draft is finalised, he asks for changes once and then asks again, and by 12am or 12:30am at night, he brings an entirely new draft. And in that, he changed the things that we had

locked after discussing them," Naqvi asserted. In an apparent jibe at the KP CM, Naqvi noted that placing "immature and inexperienced people in positions of authority had consequences for the country". "You have seen in the past how chief ministers came to this province and the country continued to suffer the consequences. Similarly, if an immature boy sits in a position of authority, has no experience and has not seen politics, then definitely he will call himself a representative of the people, but he will make decisions in the same way as my team and I witnessed yesterday." Commending the government's delegation, the minister said: "They worked non-stop for 12 hours and, even before that, made sincere efforts to resolve the issue. I will give them credit for the fact that at no point did they say no. They remained focused on resolving the matter. From the smallest issue to the major ones, all the members made a sincere effort to resolve them in a good manner." Also on Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Naqvi's residence to offer condolences over the death of his maternal

uncle, Akmal Hussain Naqvi. According to the PM Office, the interior minister also briefed PM Shehbaz in detail on the "key negotiations held last night and the progress made" so far. Earlier in the day, Naqvi also claimed on X that the KP government had agreed to sign a written agreement and submit an implementation plan within 72 hours, mainly covering counterterrorism initiatives, during the talks held over the weekend, but then backtracked. According to Naqvi, the PTI had agreed to: Reconsider the Police Act 2026 in light of the security situation and the need to protect security matters from political interference; Prevent terrorists from operating freely or finding safe havens in the province; Unequivocal condemnation of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and all other terrorist groups; Support the national policy on Afghan refugees, including repatriation and dismantling Afghan camps in KP; No contact with the interim Afghan government; Substantial funding for counterterrorism operations and the police. Full provincial ownership of counterterrorism measures and stronger cooperation with the armed forces. Decisions on counterterrorism in the former Fata and merged districts. Implementation of the National Action Plan. "Last night, during the final phase of negotiations, the KP government backed out of these commitments. Security must not be politicised while the province is at war," he said. While expressing disappointment over the stalemate, PTI leadership stated that the party remains open to future political dialogue if the government addresses their core demands. In a press release posted on social media, the PTI expressed regret that the negotiations concluded without substantive progress, despite "serious efforts" to address concerns including political instability, access to the PTI founder as well as his medical treatment, and the worsening security situation in the country, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan opens second Hajj payment window at midnight tonight

Pakistan will begin collecting the second installment of dues from government Hajj scheme pilgrims at midnight tonight, with applicants required to upload a certified medical fitness certificate before they can make the payment, the religious affairs ministry said. The payment window for Hajj 2027 will remain open until Oct. 20

through the Pak Hajj mobile application and the government's digital Hajj portal, part of an increasingly digitized system being used by Pakistan to manage applications and payments for one of the world's largest national pilgrim contingents. "Uploading a certified medical fitness certificate has been made mandatory before submitting the

second installment," a spokesperson for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony said in a statement. Applicants will become eligible to make the payment only after uploading the certificate through the Pak Hajj App or Digital Hajj Portal, the ministry said. The ministry warned that

pilgrims who failed to deposit the second installment by Oct. 20 would have their Hajj applications automatically canceled, with funds already deposited refunded to their accounts. It said the option for successful applicants to change their Hajj packages would also close ahead of the second payment phase. **NEWS DESK**

Sherry Rehman blames KP government for failed talks

Pakistan Peoples Party Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman on Sunday said that the negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) failed because the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government refused to sign the agreed draft concerning cooperation with the federal government on counter-terrorism efforts.

The senator, in a statement, said that all sides had agreed on four drafts during the negotiations, but the talks continued until late at night due to changes proposed by the PTI. She said that the government had repeatedly stressed the need for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government

and the PTI's senior federal leadership to participate directly in the negotiations. She pointed out that neither the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa nor any representative of the provincial cabinet attended the talks. If the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had a workable alternative draft, she said, it should have come to the negotiations itself and presented it. The negotiating side was repeatedly informed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and PTI's senior federal leadership would join the process. Senator Sherry Rehman said that by 8:30 p.m., almost all matters had been settled. However, after 8:30 p.m., the Peshawar government began introducing new conditions. "In my 25 years of parliamentary life, I have never seen such an opportunity being allowed to slip away," she said. She described the negotiations as an important opportunity to build political trust, bring stability to the country and end political polarization. After years of bitter

political division, she said, an opportunity to promote stability in the country had been lost. Senator Sherry Rehman emphasized that time and trust are crucial for confidence-building in negotiations around the world. She said that establishing a better working relationship between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and federal authorities could have provided an important beginning. She added that significant progress could also have been achieved if guidance had been sought from the senior PTI leadership present in Islamabad. "This was not a one-sided matter," Senator Sherry Rehman said, while appreciating the patience shown throughout the process. She thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for providing sufficient opportunity for the talks and for remaining patient throughout the process. **APP**

MG's global product portfolio earns accolades

MG Motor is reinforcing its commitment to bringing globally acclaimed automotive products and technology to Pakistan, as multiple models from its latest portfolio earn recognition from leading automotive media across international markets. The MG4 EV Urban, The All-New MG HS Super Hybrid and MG ZS Hybrid+ have collectively received multiple accolades across the UK,

Australia and Spain, reinforcing MG's product strength across electric, plug-in hybrid and hybrid technologies. These recognitions directly support MG's fourth promise to Pakistan: Offering the Latest Global Specification. The MG4 EV Urban was named Best Small Electric Car of the Year by British automotive media What Car? The All-New MG HS Super

Hybrid won Best Plug-in Hybrid of the Year and Best Hybrid Car of the Year awards from British automotive media Auto Express and What Car? Meanwhile, the MG ZS Hybrid+ was honored as Best Small SUV of the Year by Australian automotive media WhichCar?, and Best Hybrid Car of the Year by Spanish automotive media Carwow. **W**

Pakistan dodges mini-budget threat following IMF negotiations

Continued from Page 1

Sources said the growth in tax revenues means that additional tax measures will not be required. The FBR has assured the IMF that it will achieve the tax collection target

for the current fiscal year. Despite the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, the IMF is reportedly satisfied with Pakistan's economic growth and efforts to control the fiscal deficit, sources said. Pakistan has also assured the IMF

that it will finalize a new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award after December. According to sources, the IMF has also asked Pakistan to meet its targets for containing circular debt in the energy sector. **NEWS DESK**

Dengue outbreak reaches 40, as 2 fresh cases reported during 24 hrs

Seven new confirmed dengue cases were registered in Rawalpindi district over the first four days of October, with 2 in the last 24 hours. Total confirmed cases reach 40, while 10 confirmed dengue patients remain admitted in isolation wards across local hospitals.

District Health Authority's updated disease surveillance report shows that hospital screenings climbed from 4,893 to 5,094 over the four days, registering 179 new suspected cases to reach 4,699 total suspected cases during 2026. While overall hospital admissions saw a minor reduction from 15 to 13 patients, the count of hospitalized confirmed dengue cases remained stable at 10. Health officials confirmed that zero dengue-related fatalities have occurred across the district to date.

The seven recent admissions were reported from union councils including CTC-8, Fauji Colony, Adyala, Wah, Pindora, Qayumabad and Dhama Syedan. High-risk zones operating above a Breteau Index of 10 expanded from 25 to 33 union councils, with peak larval concentrations recorded in Ratta Amral, Dhoke Naju, Fauji Colony, Dhoke Babu Irfan, Takht Pari and Hazara Colony. Enforcement teams lodged 81 new FIRs, sealed eight additional premises, issued 92 new challans and levied Rs. 324,000.0 in fresh penalties, bringing t h e cumulative total to over Rs. 3.15 million in fines collected. **APP**



Talal flags PTI-JAAC protest timing

Continued from Page A8

Talal Chaudhry said that after these details were presented publicly, further investigations led to the arrest of three more individuals. Before discussing their arrests, he played audio recordings in which Sarder Aman expressed concern about Zia's arrest and discussed efforts to portray him as mentally unstable. The minister said the recordings showed attempts to obtain backdated medical certificates declaring Zia mentally ill. He further claimed that when these efforts did not succeed, pressure was allegedly placed on family members, relatives and friends to release video statements on media and social media describing Zia as mentally unfit so that his statements would not be considered credible. He said investigations also

revealed that after Zia's arrest, efforts were made to find alternative channels for the supply of weapons. Providing further background, Talal Chaudhry referred to repeated allegations that security forces had opened fire on protesters. He argued that protests and sit-ins had continued for more than 100 to 125 days and that security forces had not used force despite having opportunities to remove protesters. He said force was not initiated by security personnel and claimed that evidence, including footage of sniper rifles and automatic weapons, had already been shared with the media. He questioned why violent protests emerged on election days after attempts to stop elections failed. Referring to the Mirpur election phase, he said large numbers of people participated in

voting and that violent incidents later occurred, followed by allegations against security forces. Talal Chaudhry announced the arrest of three additional individuals: Waqar Hameed, Muhammad Ali and Ammar Sohail. He said all three had direct links with two key JAAC figures. A recorded statement by Waqar Hameed was played in which he claimed to have been associated with the Action Committee for three years and to have remained in contact with senior leaders. In the statement, he alleged that he and armed associates participated in sit-ins and activities on the instructions of committee leaders and that armed teams received directions regarding operations during protest activities. The minister also accused JAAC leaders of creating political narratives by describing arrests as

abductions. He played a speech by Sarder Aman in which the arrests of Waqar, Sohail and Ali were described as disappearances. Talal Chaudhry said Sarder Aman was aware that the three individuals had been formally arrested and that their families had been informed. He added that family members were satisfied with the legal process and acknowledged their involvement in the activities under investigation. Talal Chaudhry said attempts were being made to portray Azad Kashmir and Indian-occupied Kashmir as identical situations, but such efforts had repeatedly failed. He said elections had been held in Kashmir, an elected government was functioning, and public representatives, including ministers, advisers and the President of Kashmir, had been chosen through votes. **NEWS DESK**

KP govt backing terrorism: Defence Minister

Continued from Page A1

Khawaja Asif said the martyrs sacrificed

their lives while safeguarding their homeland, and recalled the military operation last year that shattered the enemy's arrogance.

The Pakistani nation and the valiant armed forces dare to confront any internal or external enemies. **APP**

BACKPAGE

DTM

Four rescued seamen return home with remains of three colleagues



The four Pakistanis who were injured during a security operation to recover a hijacked oil tanker off the coast of Somalia, along with the remains of three others who lost their lives in the episode, have departed Addis Ababa and are expected to reach Karachi Sunday evening.

"Pakistan's ambassadors to Djibouti and Ethiopia saw off the four injured Pakistani crew members of MT Honour 25, Uman Ghani, Aqeel Khan, Ameen bin Shams and Yasir Khan, along with the mortal remains of Rafi Ullah Khan, Syed Kashif Umar and Mahmood Ahmad Ansari, from Addis Ababa.

"They are arriving in Karachi aboard Ethiopian Airlines flight ET 694," a post on the Foreign Office's (FO) said. The seven were among 10 Pakistanis aboard MT Honour 25, which was hijacked by Somali pirates in April. Apart from Pakistanis, the vessel's crew also included seven Indonesians, an Indian and a Sri Lankan. For around five months, there had been no progress either in negotiations or in the payment

of the ransom, said to be around \$3 million, for the recovery of the hostages, despite concerns abounding about their declining health.

Since the hijacking, the crew made several emotional videos and audio appeals, reporting that they ran out of clean water, food and medicine.

For its part, FO maintained that it remained "actively engaged" to secure the release of the sailors.

On Sept 29, Somali maritime police recovered the Palau-flagged oil tanker amid reports of casualties among the crew. During the operation, it said, 21 suspected pirates were apprehended, while operations to locate the remaining members continue.

"Before the operation [had] begun, the pirates on board the ship killed five of the crew. Among those killed were three from Pakistan, one from Myanmar and one from India," it said.

Advocate Qureshulain of the Ansar Burney Trust, however, gave a separate account of the events, saying the pirates had brought the hostages onto the deck when they realised Puntland forces were approaching.

"They tied their hands and warned to kill them if the police force came anywhere near them without paying them the ransom," she said, adding that the ransom demand had by then been reduced from an initial \$3 million to \$1m. **NEWS DESK**

Iran says Strait of Hormuz will not reopen until conditions are met under Islamabad MoU

FM Araghchi says that Iran's proposal could enable the strait to reopen within seven days if accepted by the US

Araghchi specified that Iran's conditions for reopening the strait are tied to commitments from the United States



The Strait of Hormuz will not reopen until seven Iranian conditions set out in a June interim agreement with the US are met, Reuters reported on Sunday citing Iran's Nournews, a few days after Tehran received Washington's reply to its diplomatic proposal.

The interim deal, also known

as the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, was signed by the US and Iran in June following mediation by Pakistan after months of conflict.

It included a 60-day ceasefire, the reopening of the blockaded Strait of Hormuz, a timetable for a final deal on the war and Iran's nuclear program, immediately allowing Tehran to sell its oil freely in a major concession from Washington. "The Americans, who say something different in the media, have recently put forward proposals through a mediator. But they must understand that the period of dragging out the process and dictating one-sided demands is over," Iran's parliament speaker

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was quoted as saying.

"The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is completely clear and firm, and the Strait of Hormuz will not be opened until our seven conditions, based on the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, are met."

Tehran has maintained its stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz since the US launched its war on Iran in late Feb., while Washington continues a counter-blockade of Iranian ports. Washington is also seeking to choke Iran's economy, rolling out sanctions on entities with financial links to the Islamic republic in a bid to force it into submission.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said separately on Sunday that a plan put forward by Tehran to resolve its dispute with Washington could lead to the Strait of Hormuz reopening within seven days if accepted.

Speaking to foreign ambassadors and diplomats in Tehran, Araghchi said Iran had clearly explained its conditions for reopening the strait and that they were linked to commitments the United States would have to accept. He added that Tehran hoped Washington would choose diplomacy but warned that Iran was prepared to respond if the United States again chose military action. **NEWS DESK**

Security forces kill eight militants in restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Security forces have killed eight Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants in the country's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, the country's interior ministry said on Sunday.

The northwestern Pakistani province, which borders Afghanistan, has seen multiple attacks by TTP and other militant groups that have killed dozens, including security personnel and law enforcers, in recent weeks.

Security forces conducted an



operation in the province's Dera Ismail Khan district, where they gunned down eight TTP militants, according to the Pakistani interior ministry.

"Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is on the

frontline against terrorism," Interior Minister Mohan Naqvi was quoted as saying by his ministry. "Security forces' action reflect the resolve to safeguard national security."

The development comes

more than a week after militants rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a joint police and customs checkpoint in DI Khan, killing at least 11 officials and wounding 18 others, according to police. The TTP claimed responsibility for the assault.

The attack followed heightened tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with Islamabad carrying out strikes across the border this week after accusing Kabul of failing to act against militants it says operate from the Afghan soil and launch attacks inside Pakistan.

The Afghan Taliban deny the presence of armed groups on Afghan soil, saying militancy is Pakistan's internal problem. **NEWS DESK**

Talal flags PTI-JAAC protest timing

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Sunday revealed the arrest of three more individuals linked to JAAC and presented audio recordings, statements and investigation findings related to the case.

He said the Interior Minister would soon present facts, background information and details explaining why, according to the government, the KP administration benefits politically from the law and order situation in the province instead of fulfilling its constitutional and legal responsibilities.

Speaking at a press conference, Talal Chaudhry said that the call for a JAAC protest and the PTI long march had been announced for the same day, October 4. He said JAAC had called for protests and strikes, but the people of Kashmir rejected the call. During all three phases of elections, large numbers of voters participated and rejected efforts aimed at preventing Kashmiris from making their own decisions, he added.

Talal Chaudhry said the government had maintained from the beginning that the movement was not purely political. He stated that after suffering defeat in a direct attack against Pakistan two years ago, hostile elements increased support for their proxies. He alleged that hideouts and training camps operating across the western border were used to destabilize Pakistan through proxy groups.

He said if links existed between such proxies and political figures or groups, an important question arose as to whether politicians were using these elements or whether these elements were using politicians for their own purposes.

Referring to earlier investigations, Talal Chaudhry said a man named Zia had been arrested and was found to have been involved in illegal arms trading for the past eight years. He said investigators established links between Zia, Sardar Aman, Majid and another individual named Zarghoon in Afghanistan. According to the investigation, weapons were procured from Afghanistan, transported through Pakistan's tribal areas and later moved to Kashmir through an official employee named Akbar, who allegedly used his official position to avoid suspicion.

Continued on Page 7

Tarar tears into PTI over KP governance

Federal Information Minister Attaulah Tarar has strongly criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), accusing the party of adopting a contradictory approach towards terrorism and failing to effectively implement counterterrorism measures in the province.

In a statement, Tarar rejected PTI's demand for broader political consultations on security matters, arguing that the federal government had repeatedly sought cooperation from all political stakeholders over the past three years. He claimed that PTI had largely ignored these proposals and was only now responding due to mounting political pressure in KP.

The minister alleged that PTI's public narrative on terrorism was inconsistent with its claims of taking action against militancy. He accused the KP government of pursuing policies that, according to him, have contributed to the spread of terrorism in the province.

Raising a series of questions about the provincial government's security policies, Tarar asked why the KP administration does not regularly attend federal Apex Committee meetings or hold its own provincial security review sessions. He also questioned the government's stance on cross-border attacks and militant activities linked to Afghanistan, alleging that the provincial leadership has failed to clearly condemn such incidents.

Tarar further criticised the KP government for what he described as inadequate support for security forces and police personnel engaged in counterterrorism operations. He questioned whether the provincial leadership had sufficiently recognized the sacrifices made by law enforcement agencies and the armed forces in the fight against militancy.

The federal minister also accused the KP government of failing to fully implement the National Action Plan (NAP), particularly measures relating to illegal spectrum usage, undocumented Afghan immigrants, and capacity building of police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel.

He additionally questioned the provincial leadership's engagement with families of fallen security personnel and its presence in former tribal districts, suggesting that the government had not paid adequate attention to governance and development issues in those areas. **DNA**

Yemen leader announces major military operation against Houthis

The leader of Yemen's Saudi-backed government announced the beginning of a major military operation against the Houthis on Sunday, aimed at seizing the territory under their control.

Regional and western officials had previously told Reuters that Saudi Arabia and its Yemeni allies were planning to launch an assault on the Houthis, with the Saudis leading aerial combat and Yemeni forces fighting on the ground.

"Today, I announce the start of military operations to retake the remaining territory of the republic and extend the authority of the state and its institutions across the entire national territory," Yemeni President Rashad al-Alimi said in a televised address.

Saudi Arabia entered neighbouring Yemen's civil war in 2015 at the head of an Arab coalition in support of the internationally recognised government, which the Houthis had driven out of the capital Sanaa.

A truce agreed between the warring parties in 2022 largely held until this year, when the Houthis launched missile and drone attacks on Saudi shipping and oil infrastructure in a spillover from the Iran war.

Yemen forces say struck Houthi targets in several areas.

Yemen's government forces said on Sunday they had struck Houthi targets around the country, deepening the conflict ravaging one of the world's poorest nations and the wider region.

The armed forces launched strikes against the Houthis in the capital Sanaa, the northwestern governorate of Saada - one of the group's strongholds - and Taiz in the southwest, military spokesman Colonel Majid al-Nuzail said.

Yemen was plunged back into civil war in July after years of calm, pitting the Houthis,



who control most of northwest Yemen including Sanaa, against Yemen's internationally recognised Saudi-backed government.

The government, based in the city of Aden, controls much of the country's south and east - a region that is larger but much less populated.

The strikes came hours after the Houthis claimed an attack on an oil facility near the Saudi capital, where an AFP journalist saw flames and smoke, and accused the Gulf kingdom of striking Sanaa dozens of times.

The foes have traded strikes since the Houthis seized all of Yemen's Red Sea coast and took control of the Bab al-Mandab strait in a lightning offensive last month.

Houthi-affiliated channel Al-Masirah TV reported that "Saudi enemy aircraft" hit Sanaa with 26 strikes, after earlier reporting "Saudi aggression" against the Yemeni capital, without providing details on the targets or casualties. Two correspondents in Sanaa reported hearing loud explosions and seeing warplanes firing missiles at the city.

In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, flames and smoke were seen rising on Saturday afternoon

from an Aramco facility south of Riyadh, an AFP journalist said.

While the Saudi authorities are yet to comment, late on Saturday, the Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had targeted an oil facility in Riyadh with ballistic missiles and drones, adding that they sparked fires at the targeted sites.

The AFP journalist reported seeing firefighters scrambling to extinguish a blaze at Aramco's Riyadh refinery, located south of the capital, while ambulances and police vehicles were stationed near the facility.

The Houthis' Al-Masirah channel also reported missile strikes earlier on Saturday on the telecommunications network in Saada.

The Houthis said Saudi Arabia bombed the Yemeni capital on Thursday night for the first time since renewed fighting broke out between the two sides in July.

Hostilities between the Houthis and Yemen's government had reignited after four years of a fragile truce when Iran sent a plane to Sanaa carrying a Houthi delegation.

The fight did not seek authorisation from Saudi Arabia, contravening a practice in place for a decade. **AGENCIES**

GLAMOUR

DTM

Music links past, present for Pedro Pascal's cellist in 'Behemoth!'



"Behemoth!" tells the story of a cellist who moves to Los Angeles to care for his dying mother and escape an overbearing ex. Pedro Pascal learned to play the cello for his starring role in upcoming film "Behemoth!" from Oscar-winning writer-director Tony Gilroy.

"I was so taken by what the story was and the... intimacy of all of it, in the way that I guess how intimate it can feel to listen to music and to be guided by music," the 51-year-old actor told AFP on Friday.

moves to Los Angeles to care for his dying mother and escape an overbearing ex played by Olivia Wilde.

While there he joins an orchestra that performs film scores, and the music they play serves as a link for both Alex and the audience, connecting fragments from his past that appear to have overwhelmed him.

Chilean-American Pascal said his character "just seemed like a person who is as much of a kind of passenger to his life as you are a passenger to his experience...as a viewer."

As he goes from city to city, lover to lover, the score for "Behemoth!" - written by nine composers and which serves as the score performed by the orchestra in the film - triggers the main character's memories.

The film marks a departure for Gilroy, who cut his teeth writing action movies like the "Bourne" films and legal thrillers like "Michael Clayton."

"I never wrote a character quite like this before that wasn't escaping or rushing towards" crises, the 70-year-old filmmaker said, adding that he was inspired by the legendary Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni, who "manages to be... a passenger in the movie, but never passive."

"And that's the trick to this: is to put him on the train and not have him run over by it. And that became possible when (Pedro Pascal) came on." US actress Eva Victor, who plays one of Alex's partners in the movie, questions whether the main character is as passive as he appears to be. "I feel like it's very active to be running from things and to be not engaging with things in your life... I think that's very actively self-sabotaging," she said. AFP

At 70, Bushra Ansari reveals her secret

Veteran Pakistani actress Bushra Ansari has openly revealed that she is 70 years old, saying she has never felt embarrassed about sharing her age with others.

Speaking at a recent event about her decision not to hide her age, the senior actress said she proudly acknowledges that she has reached the age of 70. She stressed that growing older is a natural part of life and there is no reason to feel ashamed of it.

Bushra explained that she has never tried to conceal her real age. Recalling an incident from the past, she said someone once asked her why she openly told people how old she was.

In response, the actress humorously questioned why she would need to hide her age, saying there was no reason for her to do so simply to maintain a particular image in the entertainment industry.

She further said that she considers looking younger than her actual age a positive thing rather than something that needs to be hidden.



den. Bushra remarked that if someone is 70 but looks 50, it should be considered a compliment.

The actress also spoke about her physical appearance and revealed that she has maintained a slim physique throughout her life. She said people would often describe her as thin and weak because of her background in Punjab.

According to Bushra, however, the body type that was once a subject of comments has now worked in her favour. She believes her naturally slim appearance has helped her look younger as she has grown older.

Bushra Ansari has remained a prominent figure in Pakistan's entertainment industry for decades and continues to appear in television projects and public events. Her candid comments about ageing have also drawn attention for challenging the pressure on celebrities to conceal their real ages. NEWS DESK

Miley's 'Bass Persuades' tops US album chart

Pop star Miley's Bass Persuades is the No. 1 album in the United States this week.

Coming in at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 chart dated Saturday is Ella Langley's Dandelion at No. 2, followed by Riley Green's That's Just Me at No. 3, Morgan Wallen's I'm the Problem at No. 4 and Olivia Rodrigo's You Seem Pretty Sad for a Girl So in Love at No. 5.

Rounding out the top tier is Noah Kahan's The Great Divide at No. 6, beabadoobee's Pylon at No. 7, Jhene Aiko's Westside Whimsy at No. 8, Drake's If You're Reading This It's Because at No. 9 and Kahan's Stick Season at No. 10. um



Netflix renews 'Watcher' for Season 2

Netflix has announced it renewed The Watcher for a second season. Naomi Watts, Bobby Cannavale, Isabel Gravit and Margo Martindale are returning to the ensemble and production is expected to begin this fall.

No anticipated premiere date has been announced yet. The show was created by Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan, with Brennan serving as show-runner. Season 1 followed the Brannock family who moved into what was supposed to be their suburban dream home, and quickly became a living hell," a synopsis said. UPI



Hermes shows airy knits and slit skirts in spring/summer 2027 collection

Models wore loose-knit brown and black tops and dresses revealing bandeau tops underneath, or mesh dresses embroidered with panels of fine leather strips



Hermès creative director Nadège Vanhée presented an airy spring/summer collection using gauzy fabrics at Paris Fashion Week on Saturday.

Models wore loose-knit brown and black tops and dresses revealing bandeau tops underneath, or mesh dresses embroidered with panels of fine leather strips.

Open latticework was also used on cream leather bucket handbags, and models mostly wore flat, minimalist leather sandals, with the occasional knee-high leather boot. Mid-length leather dresses and skirts were sliced into thigh-high strips, and trousers too had side zips open for ventilation.

In a bright white show space inside the Garde Republicaine, the sprawling barracks of Paris' mounted gendarmes, guests including actors Sofia Vergara and Emmy Rossum fanned themselves on an unusually warm and sunny October day.

The collection had splashes of colour, too, with a billowing parka in bright orange worn over a knit mini dress, and a zipped skirt in what Vanhée called sunflower yellow, paired with a matching high-collared jacket.

Vanhée has been womenswear creative director since 2014 for Hermes, which caters to the ultra-wealthy and tightly controls access to its products, with years-long waiting lists for its most exclusive handbags. She will present the first haute couture collection for the brand in January.

Hermes is one of many major luxury brands showing at Paris Fashion Week, which started on Monday and runs through October 6, with Chanel and Louis Vuitton runway shows still to come.

The group is grappling with a slowdown in demand for luxury handbags and clothes and its shares are down 39% since the start of this year. REUTERS

Exiled Russian filmmaker Zvyagintsev takes aim at Putin's war in Oscar bid

The film, which won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival this year and is an entry for the 2027 Oscar for best international film

Exiled Russian filmmaker Andrey Zvyagintsev takes on Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine in "Minotaur", a drama about conscription and moral compromise released nearly five years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion.

The film, which won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival this year and is an entry for the 2027 Oscar for best international film, is released as debate persists over Russia's ability to sustain troop numbers in a conflict that has left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded.

One scene shows Russian conscripts boarding a bus for the front, with a father saying good bye to his teenage son, while the mother of another screams in anguish. Later, the image of an older recruit appears on a roadside billboard: he is dead and celebrated as a war hero.

The story centres on Gleb, the owner of a logistics company who is coming to grips with his wife having an affair, while being pressured by the local mayor to identify 14 employees for military service.

Unwilling to send his existing workers to the front, he recruits new drivers with promises of high salaries, only to dispatch them straight to the war.

"For a director who has lived there, was born there, and speaks only Russian ... how could he not talk about what has become the main, if not the most important, event of recent years?" Zvyagintsev said of himself in an interview with Reuters.

The 62-year-old director, best known internationally for "Leviathan" and "Loveless", both Oscar nominated, now lives in France, having left Russia in 2021, months before Moscow launched what it calls its special military operation in Ukraine. "Minotaur", produced in France, is in Russian but its topic means it will never be officially released in Russia. Zvyagintsev is sceptical anyway that it can shift opinion about the war. Support in Russia for the military campaign in Ukraine remained above 70% in 2026 polling by the Levada Center, although 67% of respondents also favoured peace negotiations.

"Propaganda is like a heavy hammer, like pliers, like an anvil. It's a very crude instrument," he said.

"Art, on the other hand, deals with subtleties. This soft power works over the long term." REUTERS



Saba Qamar shares sweet Dubai moment with Rakhi

Pakistani actress Saba Qamar received a warm surprise from Indian television personality Rakhi Sawant during their meeting in Dubai.

Rakhi welcomed Saba with a

large bouquet of flowers and added a playful touch to the meeting by dancing to a song

by Pakistani singer Hania Aamir. Saba joined Rakhi, as the two celebrities shared a cheerful moment together.

The surprise did not end with the flowers. Rakhi also gifted Saba a ring, which the actress later showed on her Instagram Story along with the bouquet.

Saba thanked Rakhi for the thoughtful gesture and expressed her appreciation for both gifts. She also tagged Rakhi while sharing the moments with her followers. The friendly meeting quickly caught fans' attention online, with social media users enjoying the lighthearted interaction between the two stars in Dubai. NEWS DESK



MONEY

Haroon Akhtar vows push for industrial growth, exports

Advisor to Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan has said that Pakistan's textile industry is an important pillar of the country's economic identity.

The government is paying special attention to the promotion of production, investment, productivity, industrial competitiveness and exports under the National Industrial Policy. He added, Pakistan will have to move beyond the export of raw materials and make rapid progress towards the export of finished and value-added products so that the value of Pakistani products in the global market and the country's export share can be increased.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony of All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills Association (APTMA) here. A large number of association officials, businessmen associated with the textile industry, industrialists and representatives of other related sectors were present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister's Advisor said that Made in Pakistan has made its place in the world, now there is a need to further expand this place and give Pakistani products a stronger identity in the global markets. Pakistan needs to produce more, produce better quality and sell more products to the world, so the country's economic direction should be towards production, exports and sustainable growth led by the private sector. Haroon Akhtar Khan said that the basis of the national industrial policy is being laid on production, investment, productivity and exports. The government is taking steps to create a conducive environment for the industrial sector that will enable increased investment, establishment of new industries, expansion of existing industrial units, new employment opportunities and increase in domestic production. He said that the job of the government is not to do business but to provide an environment in which entrepreneurs can establish and expand successful businesses by utilizing their skills, capital and experience. He said that the

government is taking steps to remove regulatory barriers, simplify business activities and eliminate unnecessary procedures so that industrialists get an opportunity to focus on investment, production, innovation, exports and employment generation instead of wasting time on permits, complex rules and regulations and unnecessary administrative steps.

Steps are also being taken to rationalize tariffs and eliminate unnecessary regulations, while unnecessary laws and regulations for the business sector are being removed through regulatory glutty.

The Prime Minister's Advisor said that industrialists need a policy and business environment where decisions are timely and there are no unnecessary obstacles in the investment process. Instead of permits and complicated procedures, business people should focus on investment, innovation, development of new products, increasing productivity and accessing global markets. He said that the government is in constant touch with the industry and business community to solve their problems so that the obstacles to industrial development can be removed.

Haroon Akhtar Khan said that Pakistan's textile industry will have to make quality, modern technology, design, sustainability, innovation and timely delivery part of its competitive strategy instead of competing in the global market only on the basis of low cost. The preferences of buyers around the world are changing and now price alone is no longer the deciding factor, but quality, sustainability, product traceability, innovative design, environmental requirements and speed of delivery have also become important factors in global trade. He said that Pakistan has a complete and integrated textile ecosystem that includes various sectors from cotton production to yarn, fabric, processing, ready-made garments and other products, however, the real challenge is to create more value from this existing system and adapt it to modern requirements. The productivity and global competitiveness of the textile industry can be significantly

increased

by investing in modern machinery, technology, skilled manpower, research and development and industrial training. He said that the Pakistani textile industry will have to focus more on exports of finished and value-added products instead of exporting raw materials. It is important for Pakistan to produce products that involve more labor, technology, design and brand value, along with exporting cotton, yarn and other basic products, so that Pakistani products can fetch higher prices in the global market and earn more foreign exchange for the country. Haroon Akhtar Khan said that instead of becoming just suppliers of global brands, we have to create our own Pakistani brands. When Pakistani cotton goes abroad, Pakistani technology, design, manufacturing and brand value should also be included. He said that Pakistan's textile industry has the potential to produce world-class brands and this potential needs to be further strengthened through research, innovation, marketing and quality. The Prime Minister's Advisor said that competitive energy prices, taxes, refunds, financing and trade facilities are important issues for the industry, which the government is taking steps to resolve. Competitive energy prices are very important for the industrial sector because the cost of production has a direct impact on the competitiveness of Pakistani products in the global market. Similarly, timely refunds, easy financing and trade facilitation play an important role in increasing the production and export capacity of the industry.

He said that capital goes where there is trust and investment

New data governance framework launched for power sector

The Ministry of Energy's Power Division has established a Power Sector Data Governance Council and introduced a sector-wide Data Governance Framework to ensure the quality, verification, exchange and effective use of data for more than 40 million electricity consumers.

The initiative aims to establish common standards and coordinated procedures for managing data across the power sector, supporting more reliable and integrated information for policymaking, planning, regulation, monitoring and investment decisions.

Energy sector reforms expert and technology entrepreneur Talha Khalid said the initiative would help ensure the availability of reliable, timely and integrated information, decision-making in the power sector more effective.

He said harmonising data standards and definitions across institutions would improve information sharing, monitoring and institutional coordination. The framework would establish clear standards and responsibilities for the collection, verification, protection, exchange and use of information.

Khalid said the importance of reliable and integrated data was increasing with the ongoing reforms and modernisation of the power sector. Quality information plays an important role in policymaking related to power generation, transmission and distribution, consumer services and sectoral planning.

He said digital technologies, including smart meters, artificial intelligence and automated reporting, could make data collection and analysis more effective. Common standards and responsible information sharing could further enhance the benefits of these technologies.

He added that reliable data had become increasingly important as renewable energy, distributed power generation, battery storage, electric vehicles, demand management and



competitive electricity markets continued to develop. Uniform standards and stronger coordination among institutions were necessary for the effective development of these areas.

Khalid said the framework treats power-sector data as a common sectoral resource. Continuous improvement in data quality, common definitions, responsible information sharing, protection of sensitive information and development of digital skills would be important for the effective implementation of the system.

He said improved data governance could also support energy and economic planning in areas including tariff reforms, market development, industrial competitiveness, climate targets and investment decisions.

He said a broader data governance framework under the Pakistan Digital Authority could help promote the use of standardised and integrated data across federal and provincial institutions.

He added that the power sector's data governance initiatives were moving towards practical implementation, while continued development of common data standards and evidence-based decision-making would play an important role in strengthening the process. **APP**

Solar power surge transforms Pakistan's energy landscape



The increasing use of solar power across Pakistan is enabling households and small businesses to generate their own electricity, reducing reliance on conventional power sources and promoting a cleaner environment.

The growing adoption of solar energy reflects increasing public interest in affordable and reliable electricity, as more citizens recognize sunlight as a clean and renewable source of power.

Solar panels are now becoming a common sight on rooftops of homes, shops, schools and small factories across the country, with families and business owners increasingly turning to solar systems to meet their daily electricity needs.

One of the key advantages of solar power is that it enables consumers to generate electricity directly from sunlight, providing a renewable source of energy while offering an opportunity to manage household and business electricity needs more efficiently.

Citizens say solar power is increasingly being viewed not only as an alternative source of electricity but also as a smart investment that can provide long-term benefits to households and businesses.

The growing presence of solar panels across residential and commercial areas also reflects a broader public shift towards cleaner energy solutions and greater energy self-reliance.

For many consumers, the transition to solar is therefore not merely about reducing electricity expenses but also about becoming part of a cleaner, greener and more sustainable energy future for Pakistan.

Families using solar systems say the ability to produce their own electricity has given them a greater sense of self-reliance and helped them plan their household expenses over the long term.

Shafiq Ahmad, a resident of federal capital who recently installed a 3kW solar system said, "We are very happy with our decision. We are producing our own electricity during the day and our home stays bright and comfortable. It is good for our budget and good for the

environment."

He said the net-metering facility was also encouraging, as it allowed consumers to use solar-generated electricity during the day and feed surplus electricity into the system.

"It feels good to be part of a cleaner and greener Pakistan," he added.

The resident said that before installing solar panels, his family had to remain cautious about using certain household appliances during the day.

"Earlier, we were very careful about using home appliances during the day. Now, with solar, we can run the washing machine and refrigerator with peace of mind because we are producing our own clean electricity," he said.

Small business owners are also embracing solar energy, viewing it as a practical investment that can help them meet their daily electricity requirements.

Alamgir Saeed, a small business owner running a tailoring shop said solar power had been particularly helpful for his work.

"Solar has been very helpful for my work as I can run my sewing machines and lights without any worry. Customers also appreciate that my shop is always open and well-lit," he said.

He said he had been looking for a long-term solution for his business and considered solar energy a worthwhile investment.

"Solar is a one-time investment that provides daily benefits. It is a good investment for any small business," he added.

A school teacher, Imrana Yaseen said the growing use of solar energy was also creating greater awareness among children about renewable energy.

"We taught our children about renewable energy in books, and now they can see it on our own roof," she said.

She described it as a proud feeling for her family to use clean energy at home and said the experience was helping children understand the importance of renewable energy in practical terms. **APP**

Pakistan rupee holds firm as Middle East hostilities raise depreciation concerns

Stronger reserves, remittances help absorb pressure from Pakistan's growing import bill

Pakistani exporters favor currency stability, warn against sharp exchange rate swings

Pakistan's rupee has remained resilient against the US dollar despite a sharp rise in oil prices and a growing import bill, economists and currency dealers said on Saturday, though a prolonged Middle East conflict could begin to erode the factors supporting the currency.

The rupee stood at Rs277.1 per dollar on Sept. 29, up 1.5 percent from Rs281.4 a year earlier, according to the finance ministry's Monthly Economic Update & Outlook released on Sept. 30, even as higher energy prices put increased pressure on Pakistan's external account.

Economist Muhammad Waqas Ghani said dollar inflows had so far been sufficient to absorb the



pressure from a higher import bill and keep the currency broadly stable.

"A prolonged conflict in the Gulf and sustained oil prices above \$100 per barrel could materially widen the import bill, pressure the current account and increase demand for dollars," Ghani, head of research at JS Global Capital Pakistan Ltd., told Arab News.

"In such a scenario, I expect gradual depreciation."

Brent crude ended the week at \$102.25 a barrel, while West Texas Intermediate settled at \$91.11 a barrel, Reuters reported on Friday.

Pakistan, which relies heavily on imported energy, is already seeing the impact of higher prices on its import bill.

Petroleum imports rose more than eight percent to \$2.75 billion in the first two months of the current fiscal year, which began in July, compared with the same period last year. Crude oil imports increased nearly 40 percent in value over the same period, according to official data.

Overall imports have also risen sharply, adding to pressure on the country's external payments.

The finance ministry in its latest monthly economic update identified oil as the country's main

external vulnerability.

"The oil market remains the principal source of external risk," the ministry said.

It added that the situation had remained under control due to stronger reserves, remittance inflows and targeted fuel relief.

Finance advisor Khuram Schehzad did not respond to Arab News questions about the factors underpinning the rupee's resilience despite the rising import bill and pressures from the regional conflict.

Malik Muhammad Bostan, chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan, also pointed to rising reserves and remittances as key factors supporting the currency.

"Your foreign exchange reserves have gone up to \$26 billion," Bostan told Arab News, referring to reserves held by the central bank and commercial banks. "Worker remittances are increasing day by day."

Workers' remittances rose 15 percent to \$7.3 billion in July and August from a year earlier, according to the State Bank of Pakistan, while the current account deficit narrowed to \$543 million from \$853 million over the same period.

Bostan said increasing numbers of Pakistanis working overseas were helping sustain remittance flows, particularly from the Middle East.

"The number of Pakistanis going overseas is increasing," he said. "There is a lot of demand in the Middle East."

But Bostan said higher energy costs could begin to offset those gains if they persisted.

"Earlier, our monthly energy import bill was around \$1 billion," he said. "Now it has increased to around \$1.5 billion."

"The rate of the dollar will increase if this war spreads more."

Exporters, meanwhile, said currency stability itself was not a problem, but sharp exchange-rate movements could hurt trade if Pakistan's balance of payments deteriorated.

"If oil prices continue to rise, then our balance of payments will become worse, and eventually the Pakistani rupee will have to depreciate," said Muhammad Raza, chairman of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan. "Unless remittances and exports rise at a better rate than the increase in the import bill."

Raza said currency stability itself was not hurting exporters, and that a weaker rupee was not necessarily preferable for export competitiveness.

"A stable rupee is not detrimental," he said. "Markets adjust. Big shifts are detrimental to exports when they go either way."

What exporters wanted, he said, was for any exchange rate adjustment to be gradual and reflect broader economic conditions.

"As an exporter we don't want any major shifts of revaluation or devaluation," Raza said. "If there is any change it should always be gradual and based on macroeconomic factors." **NEWS DESK**

WORLD

DTM

Malaysia repatriates 1,500 Myanmar nationals despite UN concerns



Nearly 1,500 Myanmar nationals who were sent back from Malaysia arrived in the country's largest city on Sunday, despite warnings from the United Nations refugee agency and rights groups that conditions for return remain unsafe.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, 2021, triggering widespread opposition and plunging large parts of the country into conflict.

The returnees, including 86 women, have been convicted of staying illegally and other immigration violations in Malaysia, according to reports from Myanmar state media. They were transported from Malaysia aboard two navy warships and a hospital ship last Tuesday. They arrived in southern Yangon early Sunday, Nay Lin Tun, a regional government minister, said.

The returnees are among 5,000 Myanmar nationals who will be repatriated in stages from Malaysia, where 10,388 others were being held at immigration detention centers, according to Malaysia's Home Ministry.

The U.N. high commissioner for refugees and rights groups have criticized the repatriation, saying the security and humanitarian situation in parts of Myanmar remains volatile and returnees could face persecution and forced military conscription in an active war zone.

Germany's Merz visits Kyiv as Russia steps up attacks on Ukrainian cities

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arrived in Kyiv Sunday in a show of support as Russia escalated its attacks on Ukrainian cities.

The aerial war has intensified, with Moscow menacing cities across Ukraine with hard-to-intercept ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones, while Kyiv has been striking Russia's oil industry and businesses.

Merz said he traveled to the Ukrainian capital on his second trip as chancellor to demonstrate his country's solidarity with Ukraine. Germany is Ukraine's largest donor, sending Kyiv more than EUR43.3 billion (\$48.8 billion) since the war began, along with equipment and weapons.

"If Russia is not stopped, its war machine will sooner or later turn against us," he said in a statement Sunday, adding that he told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy: "You can continue to count on our help."

Merz said the partnership between the two countries was "not a one-way street," pointing to German and Ukrainian companies jointly developing technologies that benefit both sides. "This makes us safer and stronger," he said.

In a post on X, Zelenskyy thanked Germany and said the two countries would make "important agreements" during the visit to strengthen Ukraine's defenses and those of the rest of Europe. "Russia must be stopped together," he wrote.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said the agenda would focus on "strengthening Ukraine, our defense and resilience, and our shared European security."

Merz and Zelenskyy visited a building of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in central Kyiv that was damaged in a Russian attack on Monday, as air raid sirens sounded across the capital.

"These barbaric attacks on the civilian population of Ukraine must stop. These are daily war crimes," Merz said at the site, a few hundred meters from the German Embassy. Addressing Russian President Vladimir Putin, he called on him

to end "this senseless war," adding: "We're ready to talk."

Speaking in English, Zelenskyy called the attack on the academy "absolutely terrible" and noted that Russia was carrying out strikes even while the chancellor was in Kyiv. He thanked Merz for the visit, saying Ukraine was buoyed by its "strong partners."

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Saturday it would continue to carry out "mass retaliatory strikes" on Kyiv and other

Ties between Russia and Germany have soured even more in recent weeks, following an attempted drone attack in early September at Leipzig airport. Germany has blamed Russia for the incident and announced the closure of the German consulate in St. Petersburg, the latest in a cycle of tit-for-tat moves.

Meanwhile, Merz's power inside Germany has taken a blow after a string of state election defeats last month, including

Dnipro River earlier this week, suspending traffic and causing tailbacks in Moscow's latest effort to disrupt life in the Ukrainian capital. Previously, Russia has hit apartment blocks, supermarket warehouses, gas stations and data centers, among other targets.

One person was killed and 16 wounded Sunday in a Russian aerial bomb attack on the Ukrainian city of Sumy, local officials said.

Russia's Ministry of Defense



Brazil vote pits Trump ally against Lula in bid for 4th term



Brazilians vote Sunday in a high-stakes presidential election pitting incumbent Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva against Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, ideological opposites who are each seen as having a shot at an outright victory.

If no candidate gets more than 50% of the vote, the top two vote-getters will head to a runoff on Oct. 25 in Latin America's economic powerhouse. Ten other candidates are expected to garner much smaller numbers of votes on Sunday.

Bolsonaro, 45, is the son of farright former President Jair Bolsonaro and an ally of US President Donald Trump. Lula, who at 80 is one of the world's oldest heads of state, is running in his seventh presidential election and has strengthened Brazil's ties with Beijing.

Trump allies have found support in recent years in some Latin American countries, including Argentina, Colombia and Peru.

Almost 159 million Brazilians are eligible to vote in this tense political showdown.

Where Bolsonaro has leaned into his ideological alliance with Trump, Lula has criticized Washington. He has often spoken about risks of US intervention in the Brazilian elections after the Trump administration imposed high tariffs against Brazilian exports, revoked the visa of the country's ambassador in D.C. and sanctioned a Supreme Court justice who chaired the probe that ended up resulting in the sentencing of Jair Bolsonaro, Lula's predecessor.

Flávio Bolsonaro has touted his proximity to the White House and insisted Brazil needs to strike better deals with the Trump administration, including the rare minerals economy. Brazil estimates its deposits to hold up to 21 million tons, second only to China. Bolsonaro also has campaigned on releasing his father from his 27-year prison sentence for attempting a coup and bringing him back to politics.

Bolsonaro denies he's being helped by the US government. "That narrative won't stick, sorry," he said at a September campaign event.

Brazilians will also elect 27 state governors, members of state legislatures, all 513 federal congressmen and 54 of the country's 81 senators in Sunday's vote.

Thomas Traumann, a political consultant based in Rio de Janeiro, says last-minute mistakes by either candidate or by their allies could make all the difference for undecided voters.

"Polarization in Brazil created a trap. There's no third candidate. You only have two options, and they fight each other in an atmosphere that becomes worse and worse," Traumann said. "It is much more a competition of accusations than a competition of proposals." AP

Ukrainian cities, urging foreign nationals and diplomats to leave the country. It previously issued a similar warning in May.

The German and Russian foreign ministers met on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly's annual gathering of world leaders last month in what was believed to be the first such face-to-face meeting since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Russia's Sergey Lavrov rejected German calls to ease off its "dangerous path of escalation" toward the country, and instead accused Germany of being Ukraine's main sponsor and seeking to be a leading military power in Europe.

ing losses to the anti-migration and Russia-friendly Alternative for Germany party. However, he said he intends to remain chancellor.

On Sunday morning, Russian attacks continued with a drone hitting Kyiv's Northern Bridge over the Dnipro River again, Zelenskyy said. Video circulating on social media showed the drone flying into the bridge and the explosion as vehicles crossed. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said two people were wounded in the attack.

The latest strike came after Russian assaults forced the full or partial closure of three of Kyiv's six road bridges over the

said Sunday it would intensify its strikes "against military and military-industrial facilities, as well as related infrastructure, in Kyiv and other regions of Ukraine" in response to Zelenskyy's comments, in an interview with Reuters published Saturday, that Ukraine would escalate its attacks on Russian oil refineries.

Russia invaded its neighbor more than 4½ years ago, and there are no concrete signs that a peace settlement might be possible. Fighting along the roughly 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line snaking through northern, eastern and southern Ukraine has been virtually deadlocked in recent months. AP

Ethiopia controls Tigray capital as regional rivals meet in Egypt

Ethiopian federal forces were in full control of the Tigray rebels' regional capital, a local journalist said Sunday, while Ethiopia's regional rivals gathered in Egypt to discuss the risk of a wider war.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) launched attacks against federal forces on September 23, sparking fears of a return to the devastating civil war of 2020-2022.

The presidents of Egypt, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea -- all of whom have difficult relations with Ethiopia -- were set to meet in the Egyptian city of Alamein on Sunday to discuss the conflict.

Ethiopia has accused Eritrea of directly backing the Tigray rebels, with the added support of Sudan and Egypt, which all three countries deny.

A counter-offensive has seen the Ethiopian forces push deep into rebel-held territory, entering the regional capital, Mekelle, on Saturday without a fight, as TPLF leaders and troops abandoned the city.

Federal troops were patrolling Mekelle and manning key institutions on Sunday, a local journalist told AFP, as communications were restored for the first time in more than a week.

"We have taken control of Mekelle and we are marching forward," a commander with a pro-government militia told AFP.

Businesses and shops remained closed, with owners moving stock to safer locations

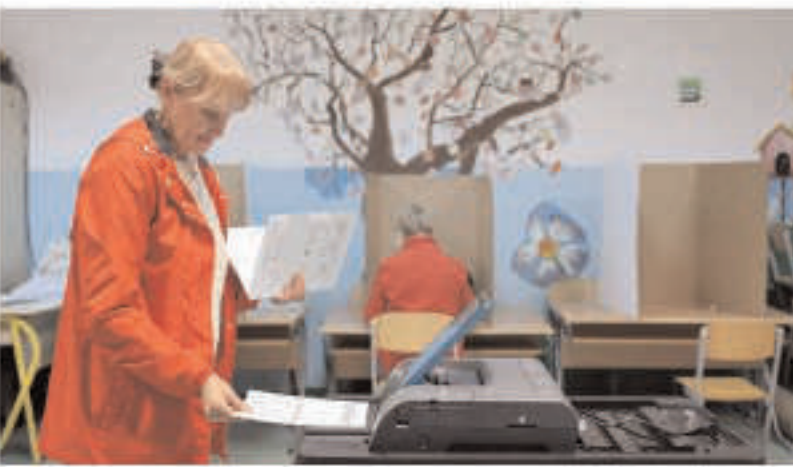


ahead of time, fearing looting and vandalism.

"There are no police. Last night, we had to organize ourselves and take care of security," one resident told AFP, like others speaking on condition of anonymity because of uncertainty of the situation.

The mini-summit in Alamein was set to bring together Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki and Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, as well as the head of the

Bosnia election held under shadow of ethnic division



Polls opened Sunday morning in Bosnia for a general election in which most citizens of the multi-ethnic Balkan nation are focused on everyday problems, while some mainstream politicians are whipping up war-era tensions that have kept the country divided since its brutal 1992-95 conflict.

Around 3.4 million voters in Bosnia are choosing the three members of the country's multi-ethnic presidency, lawmakers for the national Parliament, and heads of institutions for the country's two entities: the Muslim-majority Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska, which is dominated by ethnic Serbs.

Bosnia has a complex web of gov-

erning institutions that were created by a U.S.-brokered peace agreement in 1995 in an effort to manage the ethnic divisions between Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats that gave rise to the war.

On Sunday morning, Associated Press journalists reported seeing multiple polling places where voting could not begin on time due to difficulties with new digital voting technology, a measure introduced to address earlier concerns over vote tampering.

Taking center stage in the contest is a staunchly pro-Russian politician who, despite not appearing on the ballot, has dominated the campaign and inflamed divisions that have sparked fears of renewed instability.

Milorad Dodik, the separatist and nationalist former president of the Serb-majority Republika Srpska, has been banned from holding public office after being convicted of defying decisions by the international envoy overseeing the 1995 peace agreement.

Just back from a trip to Moscow where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Dodik's party, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, is likely to win the election in Republika Srpska. AP

SPORTS

10 medals: Pakistan's best Asian Games in 24 years

Green Shirts failed to win gold in any sporting event

Pakistan ended their Asian Games 2026 campaign with 10 medals - two silver and eight bronze - recording their best medal tally at the continental event since 2002.

Pakistan's two silver medals came in men's cricket and men's squash, while the country secured eight bronze medals in women's cricket, men's hockey, men's volleyball, men's squash singles, MMA, shooting and e-sports (PUBG).

The 10-medal haul marks a significant improvement over Pakistan's recent Asian Games performances. The country won three medals in 2023, four in 2018, five in 2014, eight in 2010 and four in 2006.

Pakistan's last Asian Games campaign with more than nine medals came in 2002, when the country won 13 medals - one gold, six silver and six bronze.

The 2026 campaign also brought an



end to several long medal droughts.

Pakistan won their first Asian Games volleyball medal since 1962, while the men's hockey team secured its first medal at the event since 2014.

Cricket also returned to the Asian Games podium for the first time since 2014, with the men's team winning silver and the women's side taking bronze.

Pakistan's medal tally in recent Asian Games is as follows:

2026: 2 SILVER, 8 BRONZE - 10 MEDALS
2023: 1 SILVER, 2 BRONZE - 3 MEDALS
2018: 4 BRONZE - 4 MEDALS
2014: 1 GOLD, 1 SILVER, 3 BRONZE - 5 MEDALS
2010: 3 GOLD, 2 SILVER, 3 BRONZE - 8 MEDALS
2006: 1 SILVER, 3 BRONZE - 4 MEDALS
2002: 1 GOLD, 6 SILVER, 6 BRONZE - 13 MEDALS

Pakistan also missed out on medals in kabaddi and javelin throw, two events where the country had hoped to challenge for podium finishes.

Despite falling short of gold, the 10-medal haul represents a marked improvement over Pakistan's recent Asian Games record and provides several positives ahead of the country's next major international sporting assignments. **NEWS DESK**

Pacer Kainat Imtiaz announces retirement from int'l cricket



Fast bowler Kainat Imtiaz on Sunday announced her retirement from international cricket after representing the Pakistan women's team in 19 One-Day Internationals and 21 T20 Internationals across a 13-year career.

According to a spokesperson, Kainat, who recently stepped into officiating as a match referee during the PCB National Women's U19 T20 Tournament in August and September, made her international debuts as Pakistan T20I cap No. 22 against South Africa in Potchefstroom in October 2010, and ODI cap No. 64 against Ireland in Fatullah, Bangladesh.

The right-arm pacer featured in four matches during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2017 and was a key member of the national squads that clinched Gold Medals at the Asian Games in 2010 (China) and 2014 (South Korea). She was also part of Pakistan's squad at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

She played her final ODI against Australia at the Gabba in January 2023, while her last T20I appearance was against Thailand at Sylhet in October 2022.

Kainat began her cricketing journey in February 2007 representing the Karachi Schools U17 team before making her domestic List A and T20 debuts in 2008.

Her mother, Saleema Imtiaz, holds the distinction of becoming Pakistan's first woman umpire on the ICC International Development Panel in 2024, having officiated nine WODIs and 69 WT20Is to date. **APP**

Verstappen beats Antonelli to win F1's Bahrain GP in Malaysia



Max Verstappen's long wait for another Formula 1 race win is finally over. The title race might be over, too.

Verstappen took his first victory of an often-frustrating year for the four-time champion at Formula 1's Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia on Sunday. A retirement for George Russell handed a huge title boost to Kimi Antonelli.

Verstappen was leading from Antonelli and Russell behind the safety car with five laps to go when Russell suddenly pulled over in his Mercedes.

Antonelli further stretches his lead over teammate Russell from 66 points to 84, with seven races remaining on the schedule, including those in Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

Mercedes told Antonelli over the radio it appeared Russell had suffered a power unit problem. Antonelli finished second and Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton passed Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar for third. Four-time champion Verstappen hadn't won since the final race of last season, but upgrades to his Red Bull car made him competitive again in Malaysia this week.

"Good job guys, wow," he told the team over the radio, thanking them for a "fantastic weekend".

The first wet-weather race for F1 in 2026 started more than 90 minutes later than planned. The start was first delayed 40 minutes for heavy rain, then suspended again when cars had apparent software problems on the formation lap. **AP**

Sabalenka crashes out of China Open to Bartunkova

Second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka was bundled out in the third round of the China Open in straight sets by the Czech Republic's Nikola Bartunkova on Sunday.

The No. 34-ranked Bartunkova defeated the four-time Grand Slam champion 6-4, 6-3 in just over an hour and a half leaving the tournament without its two top seeds in the first week.

Newly-crowned world No. 1 Elena Rybakina was ousted from the tournament on Saturday and will now be joined by Sabalenka in exiting WTA-1000 event in Beijing early.

Sabalenka, who was denied a three-

peat at the US Open last month by Rybakina, squandered five break points in the first set as her historic struggles in Beijing continued. The 28-year-old Belorussian has never progressed past the quarterfinals at the event.

"First of all, I focused on myself, to be calm," Bartunkova said. "And Aryna, she's great, she's a legend, she's a Grand Slam champion. So, yeah, I'm really happy that I won the match ... I'm not a girl who celebrates too much."

Bartunkova will next play 24-year-old Sinja Kraus of Austria, who earlier defeated Deyana Yastremska 6-1, 6-4.

Fifth-ranked Mirra Andrejeva eased into

the fourth round with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Polina Kudermetova. This year's French Open winner fired six aces and took five of her seven break point opportunities to overwhelm her Uzbek opponent in just in 68 minutes.

In the men's tournament, Hubert Hurkacz beat Karen

Khachanov 7-6 (2) 6-2 to make the final four.

Later Sunday, top seed and US Open champion Alexander Zverev plays his quarterfinal match against Novak Djokovic. **AP**

Silva outpoints Cong to win UFC women's flyweight title



Natalia Silva unanimously outpointed Wang Cong to claim the vacant UFC women's flyweight championship Saturday night at UFC 332.

Silva (21-5-1) extended her winning streak to 15 bouts after largely dominating Wang (10-2) over five rounds.

"This is incredible for me," Silva said. "I have worked hard for this moment and now I am the new champion and I am so so so happy."

Silva went from challenger to favorite in the title bout after Valentina Shevchenko vacated the

title nearly a month ago because of back and shoulder injuries. She proved far more aggressive than Wang early, using her speed, fluid movement, and strong legs to create an advantage.

Silva knocked Wang to the canvas midway through the second round with a sharp head kick. She kept Wang on her heels with her quick striking ability through the next two rounds and connected on other round-house kicks.

Wang fought back in the final round, but Silva landed enough blows to stay in control and had winning scores of 48-47, 48-47, 49-46 from the judges.

"I think if she had stepped on the gas a little earlier, it would have been a completely different fight," UFC President Dana White said.

Payton Talbott earned a victory via TKO over Delveon Figueiredo with 2:51 left in the first round of the bantamweight bout billed as the co-main event. Talbott (12-1) dominated Figueiredo (25-8-1) from the start of the fight. He put him on the canvas early with a right-handed strike and then delivered an elbow along the fence that sent Figueiredo reeling.

Talbott pressed his advantage, raining down blows and forcing his opponent to cover up until he forced a TKO. **AP**



Asian Games close in Japan after records, rancor and rain

The Asian Games in Japan closed on Sunday after a fortnight lit up by record-smashing young stars but marred by mishaps, mediocre crowds and accusations of mismanagement.

More than 17,000 athletes and officials, a bigger number than the Olympics, descended on Nagoya and Aichi prefecture for the continent's premier sporting spectacular.

Chinese swimming sensation Yu Zidi, just 13, stole the show with three gold medals, all in Games-record times.

She looks set to be a major medal threat at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

The schoolgirl was named a Games MVP to cap an extraordinary showing that saw her scorch to gold in the 200m butterfly and do the 200m-400m individual medley double.

For all that, the shy teenager said: "I don't think I am what people describe as a prodigy."

Also in the pool, Japanese swimmer Shin Obashi, only 17, smashed the men's 200m breaststroke world record to delight the home crowd.

In athletics, where rain tumbled down over several days, the 20-year-old Thai sprinter Puripol Boonserm did the 100m-200m double and was named men's MVP.

On a dry evening, a celebratory closing ceremony full of colour and song saw Japan hand over

hosting duties to Doha 2030.

"Tonight we close a Games that will shape the next generation of Asian sport," said Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) president Sheikh Jassan Bin Hamad Al-Thani.

'Failure grade'

Top officials were on the defensive up until the

last minute.

OCA director general Hussain Al-Musallam said "numbers are facts", pointing to 50 world records at the Games after they opened on September 19.

"The athletes cannot perform if they don't sleep good, the athletes cannot perform if they don't have good transportation," he said.

This 20th edition of the Games, which were first

contested in 1951, did not have a traditional athletes' village in a bid to save money.

Instead, participants were housed in wooden temporary units, on cruise ship the Costa Serena and in hotels.

Organisers said this was a template for future multi-sports events. But it came with issues, with some teams complaining the units were too cramped and the beds too short.

The ballooning number of athletes and officials meant there was not enough beds for everyone.

A Thai Olympic official told AFP it was "like musical chairs" trying to get somewhere to sleep.

The sport, including a blockbuster cricket final won by India against arch-rivals Pakistan, did sometimes shine through.

North Korean weightlifter Ri Song Gum, a 140cm (4ft 7in) pocket powerhouse, set three new world marks in one day for gold.

But problems kept coming, including organisers playing North Korea's national anthem for the South Korean hockey team.

There were athletes' buses that did not turn up when they should, or did not arrive at all.

Two teams were sent to the wrong venue, delaying a volleyball match.

"If I were to give them a grade, it would be an F," Ryu Seung-min, president of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee, said. **APP**

