



‘Enough is enough’: Centre raps KP on terrorism

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif assailed the PTI-led KP government for continuing its “complete detachment from terrorism in the province and criminal indifference.”

“Enough is enough!!!” he wrote in a post on X.

“The PTI provincial government is roaming the streets for a so-called failed political long march, while its facilitators have unleashed a fresh wave of terrorism against the people of KP during this very time,” he said.

The minister recalled Tuesday’s attacks in Dera Ismail Khan, where customs officials were among five people killed.

He remarked that the entire provincial cabinet, including the chief minister, was “numb to this serious matter and fully engrossed in their politically failed long march.”

“As always, these insensitive and shameless people did not even condemn the innocent murder of these five individuals in DI Khan, offered no condolences to the grieving families, did not attend their funerals or, at the very least, visit their homes to express regret,” Asif regretted.

“This is inexcusable by any standard.”

Instead, the defence minister noted, the KP CM had scheduled a meeting at his party’s behest to reprimand the IG and chief secretary for attending the

governor’s security meeting.

“The chief minister and his cabinet of a province under the scourge of terrorism have completely abandoned the province’s people to the mercy of the terrorists. That is why the people of KP are protesting against the provincial government on the streets in various areas.”

“This can no longer be tolerated,” Asif declared.

The defence minister accused the KP government of being in “complete collusion” with terrorists, saying there was evidence available of “its facilitator ecosystem, which every Pakistani has witnessed with their own eyes over the past three years.”

The defence minister said that the “time has come to make crucial decisions.”

“KP cannot be left any longer to the mercy of incompetent, insensitive rulers and Taliban allies,” he avowed.

Asif further stressed that the unity of the country cannot be put at risk. “An entire province cannot be held hostage. Enough is enough.”

Meanwhile, Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday again offered talks to PTI, saying the government’s doors remained open for negotiations.

Addressing a press conference, the PM’s aide said: “No demands can be met by holding the state hostage.”

“Political differences can be resolved through negotiations,” Sanaullah added.

He urged PTI to “set aside personal interests” and come forward to resolve issues.

The PM’s aide alleged that PTI’s sole agenda was to create instability in the country, saying political instability had continued since 2014.

He said attempts to surround Islamabad had remained a key point of PTI’s politics since its 2014 march on the capital, adding that the party was now

trying to march on Islamabad again.

Sanaullah said that PTI was using the KP government’s resources for the march, saying provincial resources had been “thrown into” the effort over the past two years.

Moving on to the security situation in KP, the PM’s aide said intelligence-based operations would continue in the province. He said no new operation was being launched and “no IDPs will be made”, adding that the federal government and the field marshal had already made this clear.

He said the provincial apex committee was headed by the chief minister, but Sohail Afridi had held only one meeting during his 11 months in office.

“It is necessary that the policy against terrorism is implemented,” the PML-N leader said.

Separately, KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Wednesday condemned a security meeting chaired by Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, calling it “an attack on the Constitution and democracy” and warning that his government would not allow “any conspiracy to break up Pakistan” to succeed.

He also accused the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) of trying to create “another East Pakistan”, alleging that the party had previously prioritised personal interests over national interests. “We are with Pakistan and will not allow anyone to break up Pakistan under any circumstances. Whatever their intentions, God willing, they will fail,” he added.

While addressing a meeting of the provincial cabinet, Afridi said the provincial government had been elected with a two-thirds majority and that the provincial assembly, cabinet and government remained intact. “The drama staged by the governor yesterday was extremely regrettable and condemnable,” he said, adding, “The governor presiding over such a meeting is an attack on the

Constitution and democracy.”

Afridi questioned the governor’s authority to summon the chief secretary and IGP while an elected provincial government was in place.

“There is a constitutional procedure for removing a chief minister. The vote of no-confidence is the mechanism to do so,” he said, adding that he would consult the advocate general on the constitutional status of the meeting and, if necessary, legislation would be introduced through the provincial assembly.

He further stated that the advocate general of K-P would be consulted on the constitutional status of the meeting held on Tuesday.

He added that there was a constitutional procedure for removing a chief minister and that a vote of no-confidence was the mechanism provided for this purpose.

Afridi defended his government’s record on policing and counter-terrorism, saying it had worked continuously to strengthen the police, CTD and Special Branch since he took oath on October 15, 2025.

“The weapons now with our police are not with any other police force in Pakistan,” he said, adding that his government had invested in CTD infrastructure and provided funds to strengthen the Special Branch, which he described as the “eyes” of the provincial government because effective intelligence was key to preventing attacks.

He also praised the police and administration for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, saying they had helped take the province from a period marked by ammunition and suicide attacks towards peace.

Afridi also accused the federal government of treating K-P as a “stepchild”. **NEWS DESK**

Stamp out terrorism in KP at all costs: PM

Ahsan tasked with contacting JI to avert protest

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the surge of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa must be stamped out at all costs, reiterating his government’s desire to bring the province’s development on par with the rest of the country.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam, who called on him here, paid tribute to the immense sacrifices rendered by the people of KP in the fight against terrorism.

During the meeting, they discussed the matters pertaining to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Muqam briefed the prime minister on matters related to AJK and GB.

Prime Minister Shehbaz directed for maintaining continuous momentum to ensure the welfare, development, and provision of basic amenities to the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He said that the development of AJK and GB, as well as the prosperity of their people, was among the government’s priorities.

Separately, a government delegation led by National Assembly Speaker Ayesz Sadiq called on JUI-F chief Maulana Fazal ur Rehman at his residence in Islamabad.

According to sources, the government delegation briefed Fazl on the ongoing political situation and said the government was not responsible for the dead lock in talks with the PTI.

The delegation said the KP chief minister’s refusal to cooperate on the issue of terrorism had become a reason for the failure of efforts to resolve the matter, according to sources.

He said negotiations were necessary to resolve the issues. He urged all sides to adopt the path of dialogue in the national interest.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal to contact Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Deputy Emir Liaquat Baloch as the government seeks to advance dialogue with the party.

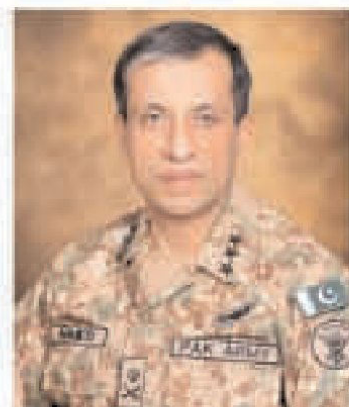
According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister’s Office, Ahsan Iqbal contacted Liaquat Baloch on the prime minister’s special instructions and conveyed Shehbaz Sharif’s message to the JI leadership.

Earlier a telephone conversation was held between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the JI Emir, during which the premier requested him to withdraw the party’s call for a protest. Following the prime minister’s intervention, the JI leadership postponed the protest call.

Ahsan Iqbal said the meeting agreed upon during the prime minister’s conversation with the JI Emir would be held soon at a mutually agreed time. “Providing relief to the people is among the government’s priorities,” he said, adding that the government and JI would sit together to discuss the matter further. **APP**

Saudi deployment predates Makkah Pact: ISPR

Pakistani troops are already present in Saudi Arabia across multiple capabilities and domains, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General (DG) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Wednesday.



Asked by CNN whether Pakistani troops or personnel were already on the ground in Saudi Arabia as part of the Makkah alliance, the DG ISPR said the forces had been there for decades.

“Pakistani troops have been there for decades [...] in Saudi Arabia,” Lt Gen Chaudhry said.

He said the Makkah alliance had not emerged “in a vacuum”, pointing

to the longstanding diplomatic, political, military and people-to-people ties between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

“So I can share with you that Pakistani troops, in multiple capabilities and domains, are already there,” the DG ISPR said.

The remarks come after Pakistan,

Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments and ensure the “rapid deployment” of agreed military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Riyadh on Monday, according to a joint statement shared by Pakistan’s Foreign Office.

The three countries said the deployment would take place under approved arrangements and in accordance with their respective national laws, with the measures aimed at enhancing readiness, military integration and collective capacity.

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in August. Under the agreement, an armed attack against one member is considered an attack against all. **NEWS DESK**

Forces kill 18 India-backed terrorists

Killing of two Afghan nationals in Kurram operation uncovers fresh evidence of cross-border terror network

district and adjoining areas, killing 13 militants, they added.

Separately, security forces conducted an operation against Fitna al-Hindustan in Mastung, killing five militants, according to the sources.

Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the militants during the operation, the security sources said.

Following the raid, security forces conducted a clearance operation in the area to eliminate remaining militants, the sources added.

Separately, fresh evidence of Afghan nationals’ involvement in cross-border terrorism within Pakistan has come to light following a security operation in the Kurram district.

Two foreign terrorists neutralised during an intelligence-based operation against Fitna-al-Khawarij on October 5 were identified as Afghan nationals, security sources

Security forces have killed 18 India-backed terrorists in multiple operations conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, security sources said on Wednesday.

The operations were carried out against Fitna al-Khawarij in KP under the Azme-e-Isohkam vision and Fitna al-Hindustan in Balochistan, said the security sources.

Security forces targeted militant hideouts in KP’s North Waziristan

said on Wednesday.

The deceased terrorists were identified as Sifat Ullah, alias Saifullah Jamshid, son of Tajalli, a resident of Janikhel in Afghanistan’s Pakia province, and Omar Fida.

Their identification brings the documented count of Afghan citizens involved in terror activities inside Pakistan to over 257.

Moreover, Police on Wednesday repulsed a terrorist attack on the Shadi Fur police checkpoint in Kohat, forcing the attackers to flee following an intense exchange of fire, police officials said.

According to police, heavily armed terrorists launched an attack on the checkpoint with sustained gunfire. The personnel deployed there responded promptly and engaged the attackers, forcing them to retreat. Four policemen sustained injuries during the exchange of fire. **NEWS DESK**

CM Afridi rules out military operations

The PTI convoy led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi reached the Khyber district on Wednesday with the provincial chief executive vowing that he would not allow another military operation in KP.

The route plan for the march, being carried out to demand the release of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, has been changing since it began.

The PTI earlier planned that the chief minister would lead his convoy to Khairabad - which borders Punjab’s Attack - on Oct 8 and announce the next plan of action.

However, according to a statement released by CM Afridi’s office, he told the protesters in Khyber today that the long march would now go all the way to Swabi, where he would announce the next plan of action.

But a member of the PTI’s social media team, Omar Farooq, told Dawn that the final destination remained tentative for now. He also confirmed that the march will reach Peshawar on Thursday and spend the night tomorrow in Charsadda. The plan was also shared by the focal person to the chief minister on social media, Yar Muhammad Khan Niazi.

The march was announced as part of the PTI’s nationwide protest, initially scheduled for Sept 27 but was later postponed to Oct 4. On Oct 4, the march began from Lakki Marwat and Karak, from where the protesters trekked to Kohat on the second day and arrived in Mattani, located on the outskirts of Peshawar, on Tuesday night.

While the plan for the trek after Oct 8 is yet to be announced, the PTI previously announced Islamabad as its final destination.

The Centre has warned the party against any protest or gatherings in Islamabad. However, the PTI decided to embark on the march after weekend talks with the federal government to bridge the differences failed for multiple reasons, particularly over the counterterrorism policy.

“I will not allow another military operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I will resist anti-people policies till I am the chief minister,” Afridi said while addressing PTI supporters in Khyber. Khyber is also home to Tirah, whose residents had agreed to vacate their homes to facilitate a military operation against terrorists in December 2025.

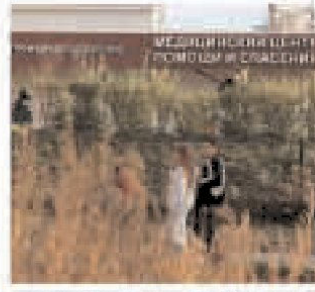
In recent months, the displaced families have expressed reservations over the government’s fulfilment of commitments following their displacement, including the provision of financial assistance. **AGENCIES**

National



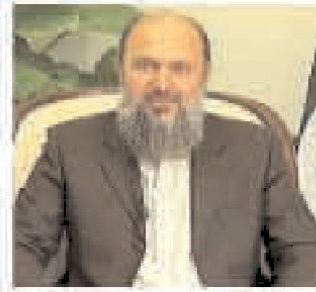
PPP nominates Bilawal for JCP membership after Naek quits

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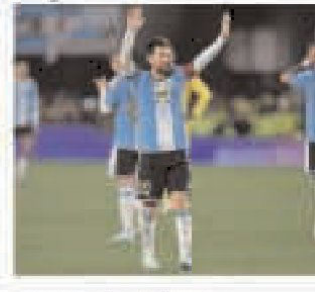
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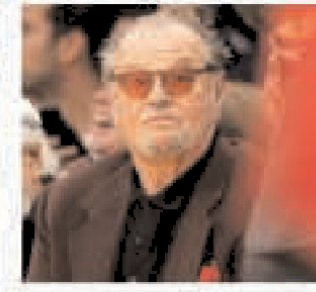
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Messi’s last dance ends an era for Argentina

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SC clears way for divorce over discord

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Sharjeel tells Afridi to act like a CM, not as Imran's spokesperson

Orders accelerated work on Yellow Line BRT project for timely completion

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Pakistan Peoples Party has no need for a patriotism certificate from a novice politician like Sohail Afridi. The Pakistan Peoples Party is the chain of the federation; those who engage in the politics of hatred and division should first look at their own political role, and after that point a finger at the Pakistan Peoples Party.

Separately, an important meeting regarding the Yellow Line BRT project was held under the chairmanship of Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, in which Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Project Director Yellow Line Kamal Dayo, Managing Director Sindh Mass Transit Authority Behzad Memon and other concerned officials participated. In the meeting, a detailed review was made of various construction works of the Yellow Line BRT, the ongoing progress on the project and important sections, while the concerned officials briefed Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon regarding the ongoing work on the project and various construction packages.

On this occasion, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon directed that all relevant works of the Yellow Line BRT project be taken forward under mutual coordination and a coordinated strategy. He said that the Yellow

Line BRT is an important project in Karachi's public transport system; therefore, construction work should continue day and night so that this project for the provision of modern travel facilities can be completed as soon as possible.

Sharjeel Inam Memon, while also directing that the ongoing construction work on the second part of Taj Haider Bridge be completed as soon as possible, said that rapid progress in the construction work of Taj Haider Bridge should be ensured. He also directed that the construction work of the project's important components, the depots, be taken forward on a priority basis and that every part of the project be regularly monitored. He made it clear that along with the speed of construction work, quality should also be ensured in every case.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh Government is working on various projects for the provision of a modern and integrated mass transit system in Karachi. The Yellow Line BRT is part of the Sindh Government's comprehensive transport vision, while in view of Karachi's increasing population and travel needs, a modern public transport system is inevitable. He said that the Sindh Government is taking all necessary measures to provide better, modern and quality travel facilities to the public. NEWS DESK

Sindh presents \$562m worth of 7 development projects

Sindh's Minister for Planning and Development, Jam Khan Shoro, stated that the Government of Sindh has presented seven investment projects worth approximately USD 562 million at the National SDGs Investment Fair.

The aim of these projects is to create investment opportunities in public infrastructure, transport, and basic facilities. He emphasized that private sector and development partners' investment is crucial for addressing water supply challenges, improving water resource management, and supporting development projects in Sindh.

The event was attended by Chairman Planning and Development Najam Shah, Irrigation Secretary Zarif Khoro, officials from Balochistan, and other senior representatives.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the National SDGs Investment Fair and later addressing the media, Jam Khan Shoro said that the two-day fair provided an important platform to link development needs with investment opportunities and financial solutions, enabling direct interaction and negotiations between project developers, investors, financial institutions, and development partners.

He highlighted Sindh's strong experience in public-private partnerships in infrastructure and service projects. The Malir Expressway, Riverine Forestry, Delta Blue Carbon, Shahrah-e-Bhutto, and Thar Coal Project are notable examples. These projects demonstrate that with proper planning and effective partnerships, public needs can be transformed into investment-ready projects. Discussing water supply issues, the Minister explained that

Karachi receives water from Keenjhar Lake, located about 100 to 150 kilometers away, while Sindh's major cities are situated along the Indus River, making the province heavily dependent on it. A shortage of water in the river further aggravates supply challenges.

He noted that Sindh has fewer than 100,000 tube wells, compared to Punjab's approximately 1.4 million. He also expressed concern over polluted water entering the Indus River and the rising levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) at Kotri Barrage, stressing the need for effective measures to address water quality and supply issues.

Jam Khan Shoro added that investment in rainwater harvesting projects is another major challenge. Advancing these projects effectively requires financial resources, proper planning, and innovative investment mechanisms.

He stressed that achieving sustainable development goals cannot rely solely on government budgets; private investment, development financing, climate finance, and public-private partnerships must be utilized effectively. According to him, adopting suitable financial models for each project is essential to ensure completion and improved public services.

The Minister said that the Sindh government is focusing on project preparation, transparent procedures, and strengthening institutional frameworks to facilitate investment. He clarified that the true success of the investment fair will be when the proposed projects translate into practical partnerships, investments, job opportunities, and improved public services.

Inviting investors, financial institutions, and development partners to take advantage of opportunities in Sindh, Jam Khan Shoro assured that the provincial government will continue to collaborate with relevant institutions to bring these projects to fruition. NEWS DESK

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that Sohail Afridi should first prove himself as a Chief Minister and should not become a spokesperson for Imran Khan's political agenda, and should pay attention to the affairs of his own province.

Reacting to the statement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, he said in a statement that from the day of his oath-taking until today, Sohail Afridi has remained engaged in the mission of Imran Khan, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is in the grip of terrorism, and the Chief Minister of KP is concerned with fighting Imran Khan's case instead of running the province.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that instead of putting the burden of his failure on others, Sohail Afridi should answer for the deteriorating situation of his province. He said that using the Fall of Dhoka for political point-scoring is an insult to history, the martyrs, and the nation. Distorting history and holding the Pakistan Peoples Party or the Bhutto family responsible for the Fall of East Pakistan is unacceptable. Senior Minister

SEPA penalises 34 smoky vehicles

The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has released a detailed report on vehicle inspections carried out in Karachi last month as part of its Vehicular Emission Control campaign aimed at curbing air pollution.

Sindh Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Coastal Development Faisal Ahmed Uqaili, while briefing on the campaign, said 34 vehicles found emitting smoke beyond permissible environmental standards were declared failed, issued red stickers and challans. He said 259 vehicles were inspected during September, of which 225 were declared compliant and issued green stickers. The vehicles declared failed have been given a further 10-day period to rectify their emission-related violations, failing which they would be impounded.

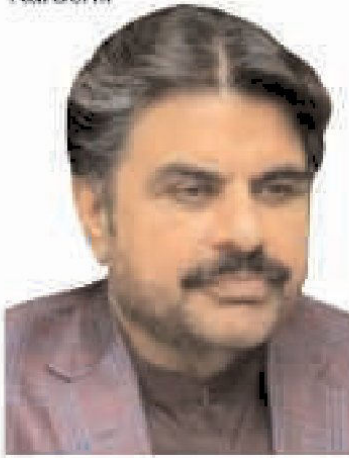
Uqaili said SEPA's vehicular emission monitoring and public awareness activities continued at different locations across Karachi from Sept 1 to Sept 30, 2026. The agency also coordinated with the relevant traffic police zones and the e-challan office during the inspections.

He said the purpose of the monitoring exercise was to protect citizens from the harmful effects of air pollution, prevent excessive vehicular emissions and help ensure a clean and healthy environment. Action against vehicles contributing to air pollution was being intensified, he added, while inspections would continue at different locations across the city.

The secretary said no negligence would be tolerated in efforts to curb environmentally harmful activities. He described the Vehicular Emission Control campaign as not merely a temporary exercise but a sustained practical measure to control air pollution in Karachi and improve environmental standards, calling it an important step towards environmental improvement and what he termed an environmental transformation in Sindh. NEWS DESK

Sindh offers full support to Chinese investors

Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah chaired an important meeting with a delegation of Chinese investors, during which detailed discussions were held on investment opportunities in various sectors in Karachi and Sindh, particularly modern firefighting systems and machinery, water-related projects and the establishment of a desalination plant in Karachi.



Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Investment Qasim Naveed Qamar, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Local Government Secretary Wasim Shamshad, CEO Water Corporation and other relevant officers attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Chinese investors expressed keen interest in investing in various sectors and discussed opportunities for cooperation in modern technology, machinery and urban infrastructure development projects.

Detailed discussions were also held on the provision of modern firefighting equipment and machinery and the development of an advanced system to deal with emergency situations. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Nasir Hussain Shah said that modern and effective firefighting systems were essential for protecting the lives and property of citizens. He said the Sindh government wanted to equip Rescue 1122 and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation with modern firefighting systems, equipment and machinery to ensure an immediate and effective response during emergencies. He said modern firefighting facilities would help reduce casualties as well as protect valuable property and urban infrastructure during fire incidents.

The CEO of the Water Corporation briefed the meeting about the requirements of the corporation, the existing water supply system and

various projects aimed at improving water availability in Karachi. Nasir Hussain Shah said special attention was being given to new and sustainable water projects keeping in view the growing population and increasing water requirements of Karachi. He said modern technology and cooperation with the private sector were being encouraged to find long-term solutions to urban challenges. The minister further said that Chinese investors had also expressed interest in investing in a desalination plant in Karachi, which could prove to be an important development in meeting the city's growing water requirements.

He said desalination projects could help address water shortages in Karachi by converting seawater into usable water and could strengthen the city's water supply system in the future. The meeting also discussed creating a conducive environment for foreign investors, technology transfer, development of urban infrastructure and opportunities for cooperation in various projects. Nasir Hussain Shah said the Sindh government was committed to providing all possible facilities and cooperation to foreign investors and would encourage foreign investment in projects aimed at improving public services, while steps would continue to modernize Karachi's urban infrastructure by benefiting from advanced technology and international experience. NEWS DESK

Hashmi stresses on effective steps to resolve public issues



Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nihal Hashmi met Member of the National Assembly Agha Rafiullah at Governor House. Parliamentary Leader in Karachi Metropolitan Corporation Muhammad Feroz Khan and social activist Chaudhry Altamash were also present.

The meeting discussed matters of mutual interest, the prevailing national and provincial situation, and various measures to address the issues faced by the people of Sindh.

Muhammad Feroz Khan briefed Governor Sindh on the problems faced by the citizens of Karachi and shared various proposals regarding urban development and improvement of basic civic facilities.

Governor Sindh stressed the need for effective and practical measures to resolve public issues and improve the provision of essential services. Agha Rafiullah highlighted that work on public welfare initiatives and development projects was progressing at a fast pace.

The meeting also included consultations on improving public facilities in Sindh, particularly in the Malir area of Karachi, as well as various ongoing and proposed development projects. NEWS DESK

Pakistan Navy seizes drugs worth \$96m in two operations

President Zardari and Interior Minister Naqvi hail successful operation

The Pakistan Navy seized narcotics worth approximately \$96 million during two successful counter-narcotics operations while deployed in the Arabian Sea, the military's media wing said on Wednesday.

In a press release, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Pakistan Navy Ship Yamook conducted the operations "at extended ranges from [the] Pakistani coast, resulting in [the] successful seizure of a large cache of narcotics".

"During the operations, two dhows were intercepted, and approximately 850 kilograms of ice and 2,000kg of hashish/cannabis were recovered from concealed compartments inside the vessels," it said.

The seized narcotics, valued at approximately \$96m, were taken into custody

and will subsequently be handed over to the authorities concerned for further disposal and legal proceedings, according to ISPR.

"The successful operations reflect the Pakistan Navy's sustained presence, vigilance and commitment to regional maritime security and the fight against illicit trafficking at sea," the statement concluded.

President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to the Pakistan Navy for its successful counter-narcotics operations in the Arabian Sea.

In a statement, he said that the "navy's role in preventing illegal activities within the country's maritime boundaries and safeguarding regional maritime security was commendable".

He commended the navy's continuous vigilance, readiness and resolve against illicit drug smuggling at sea.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also paid tribute to Pakistan Navy for its "successful and timely" operations.

In a statement, he said the navy's role in regional maritime security and in preventing illegal activities at sea was commendable.

Last month, the Pakistan Navy seized



narcotics worth approximately \$750m during a joint counter-narcotics operation in the Arabian Sea. The operation was conducted by Pakistan Navy ships Hunsin and Yamook under the ambit of maritime security operations.

In June, the navy seized around two

tonnes of drugs - 1,500kg of hashish and 500kg of ice - near the coastline of Gwader. The value of seized drugs was estimated at around \$215m in the international market.

In October last year, the navy seized narcotics worth more than \$972m from sailboats in the Arabian Sea. NEWS DESK

NATIONAL

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Government plans to raise mortgage finance to 5% of GDP by 2035

Presentation highlighted that construction supports 72 allied industries

The government has proposed raising mortgage finance to 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2035 from below 0.5% currently, alongside plans to build 300,000-400,000 housing units annually under a new housing reform framework, the Planning Ministry said on Wednesday.

The proposals on housing, construction and real estate reform framework were presented by Member Planning Commission Waqas Anwar during a meeting of the eighth National Economic Mission under the "Urban Pakistan" framework, held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal.

The presentation also envisaged digitising land records, permits, valuations and transfers by FY2029, alongside one-window construction approvals, incentives linked to verified construction milestones and secure escrow payments for property transactions. Addressing the meeting, focused on the promotion of the housing, construction and real estate market, Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan must activate every sector of the economy to achieve the vision of a \$1 trillion economy.

He said the real estate and construction sectors were the backbone of any economy, as they were linked with multiple industries and generated significant employment opportunities. The presentation highlighted that construction supports 72 allied industries and accounts for approximately 9.5% of national employment.

He noted that Pakistan faced a serious housing challenge, with population growth increasing demand while a large segment of the population remained without adequate housing facilities.

During the meeting, it was learnt that

Pakistan's urban population increased from approximately 76 million in 2017 to 94 million in 2023. Annual housing demand was estimated at 700,000 units against a supply of 250,000 units, leaving an annual shortfall of approximately 450,000 homes.

The minister emphasised the need to promote vertical development and better utilise limited land resources, while protecting agricultural land from unchecked horizontal expansion.

Figures presented at the meeting showed that built-up areas increased by 104% in Islamabad, 59% in Lahore, 43% in Karachi, 44% in Peshawar and 72% in Quetta between 2005 and 2022.

Ahsan said Pakistan needed to modernise construction practices by introducing new technologies, innovation and more efficient building methods.

He highlighted Pakistan's strong pool of skilled and technical human resources, noting that Pakistani workers had demonstrated their capabilities in the construction sector across the Middle East. However, he said Pakistani construction companies must also build a strong international presence and compete in global markets.

The minister stressed that the public and private sectors must work together to build a stronger economy. He emphasised that the construction sector should not remain limited to meeting domestic requirements but must also be developed as a source of exports, investment and foreign exchange earnings. **NEWS DESK**

Doctors require licence to sell medicines in ICT

The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has directed registered medical practitioners (RMPs) operating in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to obtain a valid Drug Sale Licence (DSL) for running pharmacies or medical stores.

According to an advisory issued by the Pharmacy Services and Drug Control (PS&DC), unlicensed pharmacies and medical stores have been directed to immediately apply for the requisite licence to avoid legal action.

The advisory was issued in the light of a recent Federal Constitution Court (FCC) decision.

The advisory clarified that medicines kept in doctors' clinics for their own patients would remain exempt from the licensing requirement, provided the facility did not fall within the category of a commercial pharmacy or medical store.

Drug distributors have also been directed not to supply medicines to any unlicensed pharmacy or medical store.

The Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA) welcomed the decision, describing it as a long-awaited measure to ensure that medicines are sold only through legally licensed outlets. The association said the decision would help strengthen patient safety, improve regulatory compliance and promote responsible medicine distribution.

It is pertinent to mention that the advisory follows the recent Federal Constitutional Court ruling that while a registered doctor may prescribe and dispense medicines to their own patients, operating a medical store or retail drug outlet requires a valid licence under the Drugs Act, 1976.

The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has ruled that registered doctors may prescribe and dispense medicines to their own patients but cannot operate a

medical store or retail drug outlet without a valid licence under the Drugs Act, 1976.

The ruling came in an appeal filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department against an order of the Peshawar High Court, Dera Ismail Khan Bench, which had halted proceedings against doctors accused of storing and selling medicines without the required licence.

A two-member bench set aside the High Court order and allowed the legal proceedings against the doctors to continue in accordance with law.

The court observed that registration as a medical practitioner and registration under the Pharmacy Act serve different legal purposes, and a doctor's registration does not exempt them from the licensing requirements of the Drugs Act.

The judgment clarified that the Pharmacy Act, 1967 permits a registered medical practitioner to dispense medicines to their own patients or fulfil their own prescriptions, but does not authorize the establishment of a medical store or commercial sale of medicines.

The court further held that Section 23(1)(c) of the Drugs Act prohibits the sale of medicines without a valid licence and provides no special exemption for registered doctors operating commercial drug outlets. The ruling also upheld the authority of drug inspectors to inspect premises, collect samples, conduct searches and seize medicines in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law.

The FCC observed that intervention by the High Court at the showcase stage was premature and directed that the matter proceed in accordance with law.

The decision is expected to strengthen regulatory oversight of medicine sales and reinforce patient safety by ensuring that commercial drug outlets operate under the prescribed licensing framework. **APP**

Fulbright Scholar Program 2027 opens for academics

AIOU extends enrollment deadline till Oct 19

PMDC reschedules NRE Step-I exam

FBISE extends deadline for submission of HSSC registration returns

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, in collaboration with the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), has invited applications for the Fulbright Scholar Program 2027.

According to the official announcement shared by the HEC on Wednesday, the prestigious program is open to Pakistani scholars and professionals who wish to pursue lecturing and post-doctoral research opportunities in the United States. The Fulbright Scholar Program is one of the most competitive and fully-funded exchange programs in the world. Under the program, selected scholars will get up to 10 months of grant support.

As per the official notification, the program is open to all disciplines except clinical medicine.

The eligibility criteria require applicants to have a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field, excellent English communication skills, and must be a Pakistani citizen residing and working in Pakistan at the time of application.

The HEC has advised interested candidates to apply online through the official USEFP website. The last date to submit applications is October 28, 2026.

AIOU: In a major relief for continuing students, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the enrollment deadline for its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs for the Autumn 2026 semester. On the special directions of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, the last date for enrollment of continuing students has been extended till October 19, 2026.

The decision was taken to facilitate thousands of old students who were unable to complete their enrollment formalities within the earlier deadline. According to the notification, the extension applies to all ODL programs offered in Autumn 2026. The university clarified that continuing students can now complete their course registration process through the CMS Portal.

PMDC: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has rescheduled the National Registration Examination (NRE) Step-I from October 11 to November 8, 2026.

According to a notification issued by the PMDC Examination Department, the examination was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances.

The NRE is conducted for Pakistani medical and dental graduates who have qualified abroad as part of the registration process in Pakistan.

FBISE: The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Islamabad has extended the deadline for submitting Registration Returns at the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) level for all affiliated institutions to October 30, 2026.

The extension was granted in response to requests from affiliated institutions and under the direction and special intervention of the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khelid Maqbool Siddiqui.

The decision has been taken particularly in view of the difficulties being faced by affiliated institutions in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), as well as other affiliated institutions, in completing the registration process within the previously notified timeframe. **NEWS DESK**

SC: Review petition can't reopen case decided by three courts

SC dismisses appeal in blasphemy death penalty case

The Supreme Court has held that where the judgments of three courts have gone against a party, the entire case cannot be reopened in review proceedings.

The court dismissed a review petition filed by advocate Ghulam Mustafa Kundwal but withdrew an order imposing a fine of Rs 25,000 on him during the hearing.

During the proceedings, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan observed that judgments of three courts had gone against the petitioner and that the Supreme Court had also not allowed reopening the matter in review. "You cannot reopen the entire case now," he remarked.

Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan further observed that review petitions

were filed against every judgment of the Supreme Court.

During the hearing, a heated exchange also took place between advocate Ghulam Mustafa Kundwal and the judges. The counsel said that he was a senior lawyer and that the court was not listening to him, adding that he still had further arguments to make.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail responded that the court had already heard his arguments.

When Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked that the fine could be increased if the counsel continued with further arguments, Ghulam Mustafa Kundwal said, "You may impose a fine equal to my entire fee, but please hear me. This is what we still expect from the Supreme Court."

Justice Jamal Mandokhail expressed regret over the counsel's conduct, saying he was saddened by his attitude.

The court had imposed a fine of

Rs 25,000 on the counsel during the proceedings. However, while dismissing the review petition, it withdrew the order imposing the fine.

Blasphemy case: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed an appeal filed by convict Qaiser Ayub against his death sentence in a case involving the uploading of blasphemous content on social media.

A bench headed by Justice Hashim Khan Kakar heard the case.

The complainant, Muhammad Saeed, had registered a case against the two accused in Talagang, alleging that they had uploaded blasphemous content on social media.

The co-accused, Aamoon, was acquitted for lack of evidence, while Qaiser Ayub was sentenced to death.

Qaiser Ayub had approached the Supreme Court challenging the death sentence.

After hearing the case, the Supreme Court dismissed his appeal against the death sentence. **APP**

Over 29.3 mn children vaccinated in polio campaign

The Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) has successfully concluded its weeklong Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign, vaccinating more than 29.3 million children under five across 113 high-risk districts. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), the campaign, conducted from September 21 to 27, deployed more than 273,000 frontline polio workers to administer two drops of oral polio vaccine (OPV) to eligible children through door-to-door visits.

Preliminary data showed that more than 9.07 million children were vaccinated in 11 districts of Punjab, over 10.14 million in 30 districts of Sindh, and more than 7.21 million in 37 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Balochistan, more than 2.32 million children were vaccinated across 32 districts, while over 443,000 children received the vaccine in Islamabad and more than 140,000 in two districts of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The campaign achieved 100 percent of the target across the covered districts. Of the children initially missed during household visits, targeted revisits and follow-up efforts resulted in 86 percent being vaccinated. The NEOC said 627,776 children, representing 2.1 percent of the campaign target, remained missed and would require continued follow-up.

The campaign focused particularly on reaching missed, zero-dose and previously missed children, as well as those from mobile, migrant and other high-risk populations. The campaign was conducted simultaneously with Afghanistan to strengthen coordinated vaccination efforts and reduce the risk of cross-border transmission of polio virus.

The NEOC said Pakistan had reduced paralytic polio cases by 99.8 percent, from an estimated 20,000 cases in the early 1990s to 31 in 2025 and six so far in 2026. Four of the six polio cases reported this year were from southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where security-related access constraints have affected vaccination activities. The campaign was deferred in Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur due to deployment of security personnel for other essential duties. The NEOC, in coordination with relevant authorities, will conduct the campaign in the two districts at a later stage. **APP**

Goodbye Donkey Route: Pakistan, Poland push legal way to Europe

Pakistan and Poland agreed on Wednesday to expand legal migration and employment opportunities for Pakistanis in Europe as part of efforts to curb illegal migration, a longstanding challenge that has exposed thousands of Pakistanis to dangerous smuggling routes.

The agreement came during talks in Islamabad between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and visiting Polish minister Tomasz Siemoniak, with the two sides also agreeing to deepen cooperation on intelligence sharing, counterterrorism and organized crime.

Irregular migration has become a major concern for Pakistan following a series of deadly boat disasters involving its citizens attempting to reach Europe through smuggling networks. Islamabad has responded with crackdowns on human smugglers, tighter scrutiny of travel documents and greater cooperation with European governments.

"The government's measures have resulted in a 64 percent decline in illegal migration from Pakistan to Europe," Naqvi said, according to a statement from his ministry. He said Pakistan had adopted a

"zero-tolerance" policy toward illegal migration, drugs and organized crime and argued that closer bilateral coordination could further reduce such offenses.

Siemoniak said Pakistani citizens arriving in Poland through legal channels would be welcomed, according to the statement.

During Wednesday's meeting, Pakistan and Poland also agreed to finalize several agreements, including one on mutual legal assistance, and increase cooperation between their law enforcement agencies.

A Pakistani Interior Ministry delegation led by Chaudhry will visit Poland to advance the agreements, while the two sides also discussed the possibility of visa-free travel for holders of official passports.

Siemoniak's visit is part of a broader push to expand bilateral ties. He met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday and President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday, with discussions covering political and economic relations as well as security, migration and counterterrorism cooperation.

Pakistan and Poland also agreed to expand trade, business and people-to-people ties, while Naqvi thanked Warsaw for supporting Pakistan's access to the European Union's GSP Plus trade scheme. **NEWS DESK**



LHC bans arrests of suspects on court premises

The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday imposed a complete ban on the arrest of suspects from the court premises.

In this connection, the registrar of the LHC wrote a letter to the Punjab IGP in which he told him to order police not to arrest any individual from the court premises, even if his or her bail had been cancelled.

"The directives issued in 2014, 2016 and 2021 should be implemented in letter and spirit," wrote the registrar. The registrar asked the IGP to convey the court orders to all police officers and personnel and to make sure that the court orders were followed.

The registrar also asked the IGP to submit a preliminary report on the implementation of the court orders. **APP**

EDITORIAL



Housing policy must reach ordinary Pakistanis

The new National Housing Policy 2025 comes after nearly 25 years, but its real test will not be the quality of the document. It will be whether it can change the housing conditions of ordinary citizens. Pakistan faces a serious housing shortage, rapid urbanisation, rising land prices and a large number of informal settlements. For millions of low- and middle-income families, owning a home has become increasingly difficult because of expensive land, limited housing finance and weak protection of land rights. At the same time, many people live in settlements without proper water, sanitation, roads and other basic services. A housing policy that remains confined to government offices, conferences and official statements will do little to solve these problems. The announcement of affordable housing, rental housing, better land tenure and improved finance is welcome, but Pakistan has seen policies before that failed because of weak implementation, poor coordination and limited institutional capacity.

The government must now turn the policy into a practical programme with clear targets, timelines and public accountability. Housing finance should become genuinely accessible to low- and middle-income families, while banks and public institutions must develop affordable long-term financing options. State land can be used for planned housing schemes, but such projects must not become another source of speculation or benefit only the wealthy. Informal settlements should be upgraded where possible instead of simply being demolished, and basic services must be provided to their residents. Rental housing also deserves greater attention because not every family can or wants to buy a house. Most importantly, federal, provincial and local institutions must work together on land use, transport, water, sanitation and urban planning. The success of the National Housing Policy should ultimately be measured not by how well it is launched, but by how many families gain secure, affordable and decent homes.

Cheap power cannot hide the real cost

The government's request to review the discounted electricity package for industrial and agricultural consumers raises a difficult but important question: who should pay for cheap power? The Rs22.98 per unit rate was introduced to encourage additional electricity use, but the cost of supplying that extra power has now risen far above the fixed tariff. The government says the average marginal cost has reached around Rs32 per unit, while the loss-adjusted cost has been even higher. This means the difference is ultimately being carried by the wider power system and, potentially, by other consumers. A subsidy for industry and agriculture can be justified when it supports production, jobs, exports and investment. But it becomes unfair when its cost is quietly shifted to households and businesses already struggling with high electricity bills. The sharp rise in marginal costs and the strong growth in consumption under the scheme show that the present arrangement cannot continue without a proper review.

NEPRA should therefore revise the scheme, but it must do so carefully and transparently. The answer is not to suddenly remove the incentive and push industrial and agricultural users towards higher costs. Instead, the tariff should be linked to the actual cost of additional electricity through a clear and predictable formula. Any subsidy should be targeted at activities that increase production, farm output, exports or employment rather than simply rewarding higher consumption. The government should also publish the full cost of the scheme and clearly explain who is paying for the subsidy. Most importantly, domestic and commercial consumers should not be forced to carry an unfair cross-subsidy. If the scheme is helping productive sectors, its benefits should be measured against its cost to the wider economy. NEPRA should also review the programme regularly instead of allowing a temporary incentive to become a permanent burden. Cheap electricity can support economic growth, but it cannot remain cheap for one group by making power more expensive for everyone else. The government needs a tariff system that encourages productive electricity use while making its real cost visible and fairly shared.

Keeping humans central in the age of AI

AI can improve speed, access to information and technical performance. Humanities can help ensure that these technological advances are guided by empathy, judgement, creativity and responsibility. For healthcare in particular, this balance is essential. The ultimate purpose of technology should be to improve human lives.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of everyday life, including classrooms, universities and healthcare. As technology takes on more tasks that were once performed by people, higher education faces an important challenge: how to benefit from AI without losing the human qualities that make education and healthcare meaningful.

One emerging approach is *humanics*, a concept focused on understanding and developing important human qualities. Its growing use in higher education offers a way to connect technology with human abilities and encourage greater cooperation between different academic fields. In healthcare education, this approach can help prepare students and professionals to use advanced technologies while keeping patients and human relationships at the centre of their work.

Humanics is based on the idea that technological progress should strengthen human capabilities rather than replace them. This is particularly important in healthcare, where artificial intelligence is increasingly being used for diagnosis, research, treatment planning, medical records and other areas. Although these tools can improve efficiency and support better decisions, healthcare still depends heavily on communication, compassion, judgement and trust.

Fairleigh Dickinson University has begun incorporating humanics into its educational approach as part of an effort to prepare students for a rapidly changing world. The university is working to ensure that healthcare students develop both technical knowledge and the ability to understand the people they will eventually serve.

The approach focuses on five main pillars: empathy, agility, cultural competence, creativity and critical thinking. These qualities are increasingly important in an environment where technology is developing at a remarkable speed.

Empathy allows healthcare professionals to understand the feelings, concerns and experiences of patients. A machine may identify a medical condition, but it cannot fully understand the fear or uncertainty experienced by a patient receiving difficult news. Human interaction therefore remains an essential part of healthcare.

Agility is equally important because healthcare professionals must learn to adapt to new technologies, changing medical practices and different patient needs. Students who can adjust to change will be better prepared for workplaces where AI and other technologies are likely to evolve continuously.

Cultural competence is another important element. Healthcare professionals work with people from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Understanding these differ-

ences can improve communication and help professionals provide more respectful and effective care.

Creativity also has a major role to play. AI can process huge amounts of information and identify patterns, but human creativity remains essential when dealing with unusual problems or developing new approaches. Healthcare education should therefore encourage students to think beyond standard solutions.

Critical thinking may be the most important quality in an AI-driven environment. Students need to understand that information produced by technology is not automatically correct. They must be able to question information, examine evidence, identify errors and make responsible decisions.

However, introducing humanics into universities is not without challenges. Academic leaders may encounter two extreme views about AI. Some people see technology as the solution to almost every problem, while others regard it with suspicion and fear that it could undermine education and professional work.

Neither position is likely to provide a useful long-term solution. Universities need to move towards a balanced approach in which AI is treated as a powerful tool rather than either a complete answer or an enemy.

This requires cooperation across academic disciplines. For example, leaders of liberal arts pro-

grammes and healthcare schools can work together to explore how human skills can be incorporated into professional education. Such discussions can encourage faculty members, department heads and students to develop new ideas and practical projects.

Universities can also create dedicated spaces where teachers, students, employers and technology experts work together. These hubs can become laboratories for testing new educational approaches, developing partnerships and solving real-world problems.

The central lesson is that the future of education should not be a competition between humans and machines. It should be about finding ways for both to work together.

AI can improve speed, access to information and technical performance. Humanities can help ensure that these technological advances are guided by empathy, judgement, creativity and responsibility.

For healthcare in particular, this balance is essential. The ultimate purpose of technology should be to improve human lives. Universities therefore have a responsibility to prepare graduates who can use powerful digital tools while still seeing, hearing and understanding the person behind every case.

The future of higher education may depend on achieving exactly that balance: using technology to strengthen human performance, not replace it.



MICHAEL AVALTRONI

Michael Avaltroni is the president of Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

Creativity also has a major role to play. AI can process huge amounts of information and identify patterns, but human creativity remains essential when dealing with unusual problems or developing new approaches. Healthcare education should therefore encourage students to think beyond standard solutions.

Social care must include disabled people

For families caring for disabled people, the current system can be frightening. Parents often have to make difficult decisions about employment, housing, education and daily support. They also face a lack of reliable information about what services will be available when their children become adults.

This problem becomes especially serious when disabled young people leave education. Families often describe this period as a "cliff edge".

A powerful speech by Andy Burnham on the future of social care has created hope, but it has also raised important questions about how his proposed national care service will actually work.

Burnham has promised major changes to England's social care system, including personal and home-based care that would be available free when people need it. This is an important goal, but the government must make sure that working-age disabled people are given equal attention.

Much of the political discussion about social care focuses on older people. This is understandable because the issue is easier for the public to understand. However, a large part of England's social care budget is spent on working-age adults with disabilities. Their needs are also serious, and many families live with constant uncertainty about what will happen to their loved ones in the future.

For families caring for disabled people, the current system can be frightening. Parents often have to make difficult decisions about employment, housing, education and daily support. They also face a lack of reliable information about what services will be available when their children become adults.

This problem becomes especially

serious when disabled young people leave education. Families often describe this period as a "cliff edge".

A young person may have received support through school or college, but that support can change dramatically when they enter adult social care.

Parents then have to ask basic questions. Will their son or daughter be able to find work? If they remain at home, what support will the local council provide? Will they receive enough activities and opportunities to develop their skills?

If they move into supported accommodation, will they have a good quality of life?

These concerns are particularly important for people with autism and learning disabilities. Their needs cannot always be placed into simple categories. A person may appear able to manage some parts of daily life but still need considerable support in other areas.

Recent proposals to change disability-related benefits have added to these worries. Any reduction in financial support for disabled young people could put additional pressure on families already struggling with the cost of care. The government must therefore consider social care, employment and benefits together instead of treating them as separate issues.

The government has established an independent commission led by Baroness Louise Casey to examine the future of adult social care. The commission is expected to consider the needs of both older people and working-age disabled adults. This is welcome, but the government must make sure that the needs of disabled people remain central to the final plan.

The current system has many serious weaknesses. One major problem is the financial contribution that some disabled people have to make towards their care. Even people who depend heavily on benefits may be required to give part of their income to local authorities.

This can leave disabled people with very little money for their everyday lives. For someone who needs care throughout the week, paying for that care from already limited benefits can create another form of poverty.

Another major problem is the long wait for care assessments. Many disabled people and their families remain on waiting lists before councils even assess what support they need. Delays can make already difficult situations much worse.

There are also concerns about accountability. Families can challenge decisions through some education and health systems while children are still young, but once a person enters adult social care, the options for challenging poor services can become much more limited.

A national care service should therefore be about more than providing food, housing and basic safety. Social care should help people live meaningful lives.

A disabled person should be able



JOHN HARRIS

John Harris is a British journalist, writer and critic.



to have friends, enjoy hobbies, receive education, develop relationships and make choices about where and with whom they live. These are not luxuries. They are basic parts of a decent life.

The quality of care also depends on the people providing it. Care workers often receive much lower pay than workers performing similar roles in the National Health Service. This makes it difficult to attract and retain experienced staff.

Low wages also affect the quality and stability of care. When workers leave because of poor pay and difficult conditions, people receiving care may repeatedly have to adjust to new staff.

The government must therefore invest in the workforce as part of any national care service. Better pay,

training and working conditions should be treated as essential parts of reform rather than additional costs.

Burnham is right to argue that care is about how society looks after its people. But that principle must apply to everyone. Older people deserve dignity and security, but so do working-age disabled adults.

The success of a national care service should not be measured simply by how many people receive care. It should be measured by whether people are able to live with dignity, independence, choice and purpose.

If the government is serious about transforming social care, disabled adults must not become an afterthought. They should be at the centre of the reform from the beginning.

OPINION

DTM



KARACHI: Women with children crossing railway tracks from under parked coach may cause untoward incident. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Poor roads in Pidrak

The poor condition of roads in Pidrak, a village in Kech district of Balochistan, has become a major concern for local residents and visitors. Broken and uneven roads are making travel difficult and increasing the risk of accidents, particularly after dark.

Drivers have to move slowly and remain alert because of potholes and damaged sections. The situation becomes worse during the rainy season, when water collects on the roads and makes potholes difficult to see while causing further damage.

The authorities should inspect the roads in Pidrak and arrange repairs without further delay. Proper drainage should also be provided to protect the roads from rainwater. Streetlights and clear road signs would further improve safety and help reduce accidents, especially at night.

TAYYABA BALOCH KHAN
JUSAK

Constitutional courage and institutions

Justice (ret'd) Syed Mansoor Ali Shah's recent article, "A Small Republic in Every Classroom", presents a thoughtful argument for promoting democracy, critical thinking and the courage to question authority in educational institutions. His point that students who learn to question authority can grow into citizens capable of holding those in power accountable is important.

However, the argument also raises an uncomfortable question. It is easy to encourage young people to show democratic courage in classrooms, but the older generation, including senior constitutional figures, must also demonstrate the same courage during moments of institutional crisis.

Teaching young people to challenge authority is valuable, but democratic institutions cannot be protected through lessons alone. They require those entrusted with constitutional responsibilities to speak and act when institutions are under pressure.

When constitutional principles are weakened, institutional traditions are undermined and judicial independence comes under strain, those holding important positions must respond at the appropriate time. Resistance after serious damage has already occurred may be principled, but timely

action can sometimes prevent that damage.

Justice Shah resigned after the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, describing it as a serious attack on the Constitution. His decision deserves attention, but it also raises a wider question about whether stronger resistance at an earlier stage could have helped protect the institutions involved.

True institutional integrity is tested during difficult moments. History remembers those who defend principles when the cost is high, rather than those who explain what went wrong after the crisis has passed.

HAROON RASHID SIDDIQI
CANADA

Lahore's worsening smog crisis

October has only begun, and winter has not yet fully arrived, but Lahore is already facing another serious wave of toxic smog. Air monitoring stations have recorded hazardous AQI levels above 250 and 300, again placing the city among the world's most polluted urban areas.

The most worrying aspect is that this has become an annual problem. Air quality deteriorates every year, respiratory illnesses increase, and people are advised to wear masks or remain indoors. Such advice, however, is not a practical long-term solution for daily wage workers, students and families who must continue with their normal lives.

Temporary steps such as closing schools for short periods or carrying out occasional action against crop burning cannot solve the problem. The government must address the major causes of air pollution, including vehicle emissions, industrial pollution, the loss of green spaces and poor waste management.

The provincial government should invest in modern public transport and introduce stronger environmental policies to reduce pollution. Regular monitoring and strict action against major polluters are also needed.

Clear air is a basic right and should not be treated as a seasonal concern. The provincial government and environmental authorities must take urgent and lasting measures before another winter puts the health of millions at further risk.

RUTAB NASEER
LAHORE

Can Badenoch bring Tories back again?

Farage is facing questions over an alleged failure to declare a large financial gift. If he is suspended from Parliament, it could create serious political problems for him and Reform. However, relying on Reform's problems is not a strong political strategy. The Conservatives need to rebuild their own support instead of simply waiting for their main rival to fail. The Conservative Party has faced major crises before. It suffered serious defeats in 1846, 1906, 1945 and 1997, but it eventually recovered. There is, however, an important difference today.

The party is also changing the way it chooses candidates for the next election. Candidates are increasingly expected to support the leadership's new political direction. But the Conservatives still have a major problem: voters continue to blame them for many of Britain's current difficulties. Immigration remains one of the areas where the party faces strong criticism.

Kemi Badenoch told the Conservative Party conference that her party would win the next British general election. Her confident statement received strong applause from party members in Birmingham. Many Conservatives had been worried about the future of their party only a year ago.

However, the situation facing the Conservative Party remains difficult. The party currently has only 118 seats in the House of Commons. This is even fewer than the number it won in the 2024 election because some MPs have left the party and joined Reform UK.

The Conservatives are also struggling in opinion polls. Their support is around 20 per cent, which is lower than their already poor result in the 2024 election. That election was the party's worst national performance since the 19th century.

The party's position may therefore make Badenoch's confidence appear surprising. Yet Conservative activists in Birmingham seemed much more hopeful than they were a year ago. The main reason is their leader.

When Badenoch became Conservative leader, many MPs doubted whether she could survive. Some believed Robert Jenrick, whom she defeated in the leadership contest, could eventually replace her. However, that possibility disappeared when Jenrick decided to leave the Conservatives for Reform UK.

Badenoch moved quickly and forced the issue before he could make the move himself. The decision helped strengthen her position within the Conservative Party. Some MPs who had previously supported Jenrick now strongly dislike him because of his decision to join Reform.

The same hostility exists towards former Conservative politician Suella Braverman, who has also moved towards Reform. Conservative chairman Kevin Hollinrake has made it clear that the party does not want former MPs who joined Reform to return. He has also rejected the idea of an electoral agreement between the two parties.

This bitter relationship is important because Reform UK is now the biggest challenge facing the Conservatives on the political right. However, Reform is also experiencing difficulties.

The gap between the Conservatives and Reform has become much smaller. A year ago, the Conservatives were around 12 points behind Reform. Now the difference is only about two points in some polls.

One recent poll put Labour at 25 per cent, Reform at 22 per cent, the Conservatives at 20 per cent and the Liberal Democrats at 10 per cent. These figures give the Conservatives some hope that they can overtake Reform and once again become the main party on the right.

Conservative leaders believe Reform leader Nigel Farage may have reached the highest point of his popularity. They also believe controversy surrounding his financial links and a parliamentary standards investigation could damage Reform further.

Farage is facing questions over an alleged failure to declare a large financial gift. If he is suspended from Parliament, it could create serious political problems for him and Reform. However, relying on Reform's problems is not a strong political strategy. The Conservatives need to rebuild their own support instead of simply waiting for their main rival to fail. The Conservative Party has faced major crises before. It suffered serious defeats in 1846, 1906, 1945 and 1997, but it eventually recovered. There is, however, an important difference today.

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In previous periods, there was no strong political party to the right of the Conservatives. Disappointed Conservative voters had few alternatives and often returned to the party. Today, Reform UK provides a clear alternative for voters who want a stronger right-wing position.

This makes the Conservative recovery much harder.

The Conservatives' main target should therefore be to overtake Reform and become the leading party on the right. But the party has another problem: Badenoch herself appears to be more popular than the Conservative Party.

She has attracted some voters who had previously rejected the Conservatives. Her political message is based on clear principles, and she has attempted to create a new direction for the party.

Her supporters have compared her approach with Margaret Thatcher's leadership in the 1970s. Thatcher changed many of the policies associated with the Conservative leadership before her and prepared the party for a future election victory.

The comparison should not be taken too far. The political conditions of the 1970s were very different from those of today. Still, there is one useful similarity. Thatcher understood that a political party must change when voters lose confidence in it.

Badenoch is also moving away from several policies that the Conservatives supported during the 2024 election. This is effectively an admission that the party made serious political mistakes.

The party is also changing the way it chooses candidates for the next election. Candidates are increasingly expected to support the leadership's new political direction.

But the Conservatives still have a major problem: voters continue to blame them for many of Britain's current difficulties. Immigration remains one of the areas where the party faces strong criticism.

The Conservatives still have an advantage over other parties on economic competence. This could become an important strength if the party can convince voters that it has learned from its previous mistakes.

There is also a danger that the Conservatives are focusing too heavily on Reform. To win a general election, they need to recover support across the country, including many seats in southern England that have moved towards the Liberal Democrats.

Recent opinion polling has provided some encouragement for Badenoch. Her personal popularity appears to be improving. But the Conservative Party itself remains unpopular with many voters.

This creates an enormous responsibility for Badenoch. She has to rebuild trust in a party that suffered a historic defeat, deal with the challenge from Reform, regain seats from the Liberal Democrats and convince voters that the Conservatives have changed.

Her confidence may energise party members, but confidence alone will not win an election. The Conservatives need a credible programme, popular candidates and a clear message about how they would govern Britain differently.

Badenoch has managed to survive when many expected her to fail. The next challenge is much bigger: turning personal popularity into support for the Conservative Party.

Whether she can achieve that will determine whether her claim about winning the next election is realistic or simply an expression of hope.



PHILIP JOHNSTON

Philip Johnston is UK-based journalist

AI changing modern life everywhere

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing many areas of modern life. It is now being used in education, business, healthcare and government. The justice system is also becoming an important area where AI can be used. In Pakistan, AI has the potential to make legal and judicial work faster, more accurate and more efficient.

AI can help at different stages of the justice system, from police investigations to court proceedings. It can be used for case management, data analysis, surveillance, legal research, risk assessment, sentencing and language translation.

One important use of AI is managing court cases. AI systems can organise cases, classify them according to their nature and give priority to urgent matters. They can also help assign cases according to the workload and experience of judges. This could help courts deal with the large number of pending cases in Pakistan.

AI can also help lawyers and judges study large amounts of legal information. Courts deal with thousands of judgments, laws and case files. Reading all this material manually can take a great deal of time. AI tools can search large databases quickly and identify important information, previous judgments and legal arguments.

Another possible use is predicting case outcomes. AI can study previous court decisions and identify patterns. This information may help lawyers and judges understand how similar cases have been handled in the past. However, such predictions should only support human decision-making and should never replace judges.

AI can also be used in criminal justice. Intelligent surveillance systems can help identify suspicious activities and assist police

investigations. AI may also be used to assess the risk of reoffending and provide information that can help courts consider appropriate sentences.

Language is another area where AI can make a difference. Pakistan has many languages, and communication can sometimes create difficulties in legal proceedings. AI-powered translation tools could help people communicate with lawyers, police officers and courts. This could improve access to justice for people who do not speak English or Urdu well.

Several countries are already exploring these possibilities. The United States uses AI-based systems to help assess the risk of reoffending. China has introduced advanced AI systems for legal research and judicial work. The United Kingdom is exploring the use of technology in online dispute resolution. Canada uses AI to find relevant information, while Australia uses technology to analyse court decisions. Singapore is also using AI for legal research and preparing documents. The United Arab Emirates has adopted advanced technology to improve court procedures.

Research has also suggested that AI could help reduce the time needed to deal with cases. Studies in countries such as India and Kenya have examined the use of AI to identify relevant laws and previous judgments. Research has also considered how AI can help distribute cases according to their

complexity and workload.

However, Pakistan must be careful while introducing AI into the justice system. Technology can create new problems if it is not properly controlled.

One major concern is bias. AI systems learn from data. If the data contains discrimination or mistakes, the AI system may produce unfair results. This could seriously affect people involved in criminal or civil cases.

Privacy is another major concern. Courts and police departments handle sensitive personal information. If this information is not properly protected, it could be stolen, misused or accessed by unauthorised people.

Transparency is also important. People have a right to understand how important decisions affecting their lives are made. If an AI system produces a recommendation, judges and lawyers should be able to understand the reasons behind it.

There is also a risk of depending too heavily on technology. AI should assist judges, lawyers and police officers, but it should not replace human judgement. Justice involves human circumstances, emotions and individual situations that cannot always be understood through data alone.

Pakistan also faces a digital divide. Large cities and major institutions may have better access to technology, while smaller courts and rural areas may lack proper internet facilities, computers and trained staff. Without

investment in these areas, AI could increase inequality rather than reduce it.

Training is therefore essential. Judges, lawyers, police officers and other legal professionals should be taught how AI systems work and how to use them responsibly. Training can also reduce fears that technology will simply replace human jobs.

Pakistan needs clear rules for the use of AI in the justice system. The government should develop ethical standards to make sure AI is transparent, explainable, secure and fair. Algorithms should be regularly tested to identify possible discrimination or errors.

There should also be cooperation between judges, lawyers, policymakers, technology experts and researchers. Different experts can help design AI systems according to the actual needs of Pakistan's justice system.

Investment in research is equally important. AI technology is developing quickly, and Pakistan needs to study both its benefits and risks. New systems should be tested carefully before being used in important legal decisions.

AI cannot solve all the problems of Pakistan's justice system. Courts will still need judges, lawyers, police officers and other professionals. But if used responsibly, AI can reduce paperwork, improve legal research, speed up case management and increase access to information.

The real goal should not be to replace people with machines. It should be to use technology to help people deliver justice more efficiently and fairly. With proper safeguards, training and accountability, AI could become a useful tool for improving Pakistan's justice system.

Pakistan also faces a digital divide. Large cities and major institutions may have better access to technology, while smaller courts and rural areas may lack proper internet facilities, computers and trained staff. Without investment in these areas, AI could increase inequality rather than reduce it.



DR SHAHID HUSSAIN KAMBOYO

NATIONAL

DTM

PM Shehbaz links ML-1 funding to commercialisation of Railway land

Says the future development of Pakistan Railways hinges on the ML-1 upgrade

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to expedite work on the upgradation of Main Line-1 (ML-1) and implement corporate-style reforms in Pakistan Railways to make it strong and economically self-sufficient.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on reforms in Pakistan Railways here, said that ML-1 should be constructed on a

He said that introducing corporate-style reforms in the railways was among the government's priorities to make it strong and economically self-sufficient.

Appreciating Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi for striving to make railways profitable and improve its operations, the prime minister approved utilising bank funding through various commercial projects on railway land for the construction of ML-1.

Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed that a comprehensive strategy regarding the commercial utilization of retrieved railway land and obtaining bank funding for the construction of ML-1 be submitted within two weeks. The meeting was informed that the upgradation of the 1,726-kilometre-long

Dar condemns India's weaponization of water

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday condemned India's weaponization of water and underlined that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) remains fully in force and that India's unilateral action to place it in abeyance has no legal basis.

Addressing the "International Water Symposium" at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna through a video message, he said shared rivers must serve peace and cooperation, not coercion.

The symposium was convened by the Embassy of Pakistan in Austria in collaboration with the Diplomatic Academy. It brought together diplomats, academics and international experts to discuss water security and international cooperation, with a separate session on transboundary river governance, water rights and obligations under international law, a DPM's Office news release said.

The deputy prime minister said India unilaterally placed the Treaty in abeyance in April 2025, although it contains no provision allowing either party to suspend, terminate or hold it in abeyance.

He highlighted the unanimous Award on the Status of the Treaty, rendered by the Court of Arbitration on August 31, 2026. After examining the grounds advanced by India, including material breach, fundamental change of circumstances, armed conflict and countermeasures, the Court concluded that none justified suspension or termination of the Treaty.

"The Court unequivocally

confirmed that the Treaty remains fully in force and that India continues to be bound by its obligations," he said, including those governing the design and operation of hydroelectric projects on the Western Rivers. He described this as a reaffirmation of the principle of pacta sunt servanda, that agreements must be kept.

Senator Dar also noted that on the same day the Court issued an Order on Interim Measures concerning India's Ratle Hydro-Electric Plant. It restricted the completion of specified components of the project above prescribed levels until ninety days after the Neutral Expert's final decision, and directed India to provide information on the project's construction schedule.

He said that despite these pronouncements, which endorse Pakistan's position and reject India's actions, India "continues its intransigent behaviour and illegal actions" with regard to the Treaty.

Underlining the importance of the Indus system, the deputy prime minister said it sustains the lives and livelihoods of more than 250 million Pakistanis, supporting agriculture, food security, energy production and economic development. "For Pakistan, water security is inseparable from food security, economic security, and ultimately national security," he said.

He warned that using water as an instrument of pressure against such a population would have profound humanitarian, economic and security implications. India's action, he added, would also set a dangerous precedent for other



transboundary river basins, where millions depend on the faithful implementation of international agreements.

He said Pakistan has consistently sought to resolve differences through dialogue, diplomacy and the Treaty's dispute resolution mechanisms. Pakistan is also participating in the Neutral Expert proceedings, administered by the Vienna Office of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hofburg Palace, and has engaged constructively in both processes.

The deputy prime minister outlined three principles: The Treaty must be respected and implemented in letter and spirit, and its obligations cannot be made contingent on political relations or unilateral considerations. All questions, differences and disputes must be addressed through the Treaty's mechanisms, and decisions rendered through them must be respected and implemented. Both countries must strengthen technical engagement, transparency and data-sharing in accordance with the Treaty.

He underscored the crucial role of the international community in upholding international law and treaty-based cooperation. "Amidst challenges to the international law-based world order, the international community should be strengthening treaty-based cooperation, not permitting its erosion," he said.

Reiterating Pakistan's position, he said, "Our preference remains clear: cooperation over coercion, dialogue over confrontation, and the rule of law over unilateralism."

At the same time, he said, there should be no misunderstanding about Pakistan's resolve to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests under the Treaty and international law. "Any attempt to deprive Pakistan of the waters rightfully allocated to it would have serious implications for regional peace and security," he warned. The deputy prime minister wished the symposium fruitful deliberations and expressed hope that it would contribute to strengthening international cooperation on water governance. **APP**



commercial basis by utilising the encroached railway land worth billions of rupees.

He appreciated the efforts of the joint teams of the National Accountability Bureau and the Ministry of Railways, under the chairmanship of the NAB Chairman, regarding the identification and retrieval of encroached land belonging to Pakistan Railways. He said that the upgradation of ML-1 was vital to uplift Pakistan Railways, provide better travel facilities to passengers, and increase freight transport, stressing the need to harness the actual commercial potential existing in railway properties.

The prime minister said that valuable railway land should be used effectively for commercial purposes to support the development of the national economy and railways.

ML-1 has been divided into four major sections, comprising Karachi-Rohri, Rohri-Multan, Multan-Lahore, and Lahore-Peshawar sections. The international financing is being utilised for the upgradation of the Karachi-Rohri section, while local resources are planned to be used to fund other sections. The participants of the meeting were briefed regarding the various phases of the ML-1 project, progress on the Karachi-Rohri section, and the status of railway-owned land.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Khan Choema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Hanif Abbasi, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, State Bank Governor Jamil Ahmed, Chairman NAB Lt. General (Retd) Nazir Ahmed Butt, and other relevant senior officials attended the meeting. **APP**

UN Secretary General calls on CDF Syed Asim Munir



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, here at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Wednesday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, the prevailing regional security environment and the United Nations' role in promoting international peace and security were discussed, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The two sides exchanged views on regional stability, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, India's abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan.

The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international peace and highlighted its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions.

He also lauded the United Nations' role under the leadership of Secretary General Antonio Guterres, in advancing peace, stability and humanitarian cooperation. The UN Secretary-General paid tribute to the sacrifices and contributions of Pakistan and its Armed Forces in War against Terror and in UN peacekeeping missions.

He also acknowledged Pakistan's continued commitment to international peace and security. He specifically appreciated Pakistan's efforts towards the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. **APP**

Gilani proposes steps to strengthen Pakistan-Tanzania ties

Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, during his meeting with Muzee Azzan Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the sidelines of the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Arusha on Wednesday, proposed concrete measures to strengthen Pakistan-Tanzania relations, with a focus on diplomatic presence, trade, technology and parliamentary cooperation.

The Chairman of the Senate called for the establishment of a resident Tanzanian diplomatic mission in Islamabad, noting that a permanent diplomatic presence would strengthen bilateral engagement while facilitating visas, business travel, tourism and greater people-to-people interaction.

He also stressed the need to substantially enhance bilateral trade and investment, including stronger linkages between the ports, business communities and chambers of commerce of the two countries.

He highlighted the potential for cooperation in information technology, digital innovation, agriculture, education and skills development, and encouraged greater private-sector engagement to translate the goodwill between Pakistan and Tanzania into tangible

economic cooperation.

As another concrete step, the Chairman Senate called for the activation and strengthening of Parliamentary Friendship Groups in both countries, with regular parliamentary exchanges and closer institutional cooperation between the Senate of Pakistan and the National

Zungu, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, on the successful hosting of the 153rd IPU Assembly in Arusha, and appreciated Tanzania's role in bringing parliamentarians from across the world together to advance dialogue, parliamentary diplomacy and international cooperation.



Assembly of Tanzania.

The Chairman of the Senate also welcomed greater cooperation in education, including scholarships and academic exchanges for Tanzanian students, and emphasised the importance of building stronger links between the youth and educational institutions of the two countries.

He congratulated Muzee Azzan

The Chairman of the Senate said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Tanzania and the wider African continent, and stressed that the next phase of Pakistan-Tanzania relations should be driven by trade, technology, parliamentary diplomacy and stronger people-to-people connectivity. **APP**

UN-AU must prevent, not just react to African crises: Pakistan

Amid deepening conflict and insecurity across Africa, Pakistan Tuesday urged the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) to focus on preventing conflicts rather than just reacting to crises in an effort to promote peace in the continent.

"The UN-AU partnership must cover the full peace continuum: prevention, mediation, peace operations, peacebuilding and counter-terrorism," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council which reviewed cooperation between the two organizations.

Today's meeting was convened by Greece, the 15-member Council's president for the month of October.

The Horn of Africa remains highly fragile and faces devastating conflicts, toxic weaponization of identities and external shocks. In the Great Lakes region, efforts by the African Union, East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, United States and Qatar face weak implementation, continued fighting and regional tensions.

Meanwhile, insecurity in the Sahel persists amid interconnected political, security and humanitarian crises driven by violent extremism, weak governance, delayed political transition, displacement, food insecurity and climate pressures.

In his remarks, Ambassador Jadoon said the challenge now was to translate the deep AU-UN cooperation into greater political coherence and concrete results on the ground, as Africa's peace and security landscape is becoming more complex.

Conflicts were more protracted, terrorism expanding, external interference intensifying, and multiple mediation tracks not always producing sustainable outcomes, the Pakistani envoy noted. **APP**

Disaster resilience vital amid rising climate risks, says Zardari

President Asif Ali Zardari Wednesday said that Pakistan today faced an increasingly complex risk environment, intensified by climate change, urbanization and environmental degradation, stressing that disaster resilience, therefore, must be treated as an essential part of national development and their responsibility towards future generations.

The president further emphasized that they must move from reacting to emergencies towards anticipating risks, with scientific knowledge, reliable data and emerging technologies playing a greater role in this effort.

He opined that Next Generation Technology (NGT) at NDMA represents an important step in this direction. Advanced analytics, satellite technologies, predictive modelling and artificial intelligence can strengthen early warning systems, improve risk assessment and support better-informed decisions, adding these capabilities can help them prepare earlier and respond more effectively when disasters strike.

In a message on the occasion of National Resilience Day, being observed on October 8, the president said "National Resilience Day is a solemn occasion to remember the thousands of precious lives lost in the devastating earthquake of 8 October 2005 and to pay tribute to the survivors who rebuilt their lives with

courage and determination. We honour the bereaved families and all those who stood beside affected communities in their hour of need."

The tragedy remained etched in the national memory, but so did the extraordinary compassion and collective strength shown by the people and institutions of Pakistan, with support from international partners, he added.

The president observed their experience demonstrated that in times of adversity, their ability to protect one another and recover together was one of their greatest strengths, adding the most meaningful tribute to those lost was to turn the lessons of the past into measures that better protect lives and communities in the future.

"I express my sincere gratitude to the international community, including countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United States, China, Turkey, Iran, Japan and Cuba, for their solidarity and assistance during the earthquake. I also pay tribute to Pakistan's national media, charitable organizations and countless volunteers who worked alongside public institutions to support affected communities. Their contribution remains an important part of our national experience of responding to disaster and helping people in times of need," the President Secretariat Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

He said resilience also depends on partnerships, trust

and our collective ability to mobilize resources.

The president said Global Resilience Hub is another important step towards strengthening Pakistan's national resilience by bringing together key national and humanitarian stakeholders for greater coordination at the regional and global levels. NGT and the Global Resilience Hub could therefore serve as complementary elements of their evolving national resilience framework, he added.

He said a resilient Pakistan must also integrate risk reduction into development planning. Homes, schools, roads and essential services must be planned and strengthened with an understanding of future risks.

For ordinary citizens, the president said this means safer places to live, learn and work and greater confidence that essential services can continue when communities face a disaster. He also underlined the need that regional and global cooperation in early warning, scientific research, technological innovation and humanitarian assistance must also be strengthened.

"On National Resilience Day, I call upon all institutions, communities and citizens to recognize resilience as a shared national responsibility. By combining the strength of our people with science, technology and sound planning, we can build a Pakistan better prepared for the uncertainties of tomorrow," the president added. **APP**

NATIONAL

DTM

Pakistan should take pride in UN honour for Punjab housing project: Azma Bokhari

Those running the government in KP for 13 years should first build homes for their own people, quips minister

Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that Maryam Nawaz did not receive an award for "cattle and calves"; Pakistan should take pride in receiving a global honour. The United Nations has also recognised Punjab's housing initiative, and no one had received this award before. She said another May 9 would not be tolerated under any circumstances. Those who have been staging sit-ins for 14 years would no longer receive any "Faiz." The 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' is the flagship initiative of the Chief Minister of Punjab, with a target of constructing one million homes in five years. As many as 230,000 people have received the benefit of a roof over their heads, while interest-free loans are being provided to empower ordinary citizens. She said those political stuntmen who have been in government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 13 years should first build homes for the

deserving families not only with financial assistance but also an opportunity to own a home and live with dignity. According to the latest officially available figures, loans amounting to around Rs260 billion had been provided for the construction of more than 200,000 homes, while more than 100,000 families had already moved into their homes.

The Information Minister said those criticising Punjab's public welfare initiatives should also undertake practical work for the people in their own provinces. She said those who had been in government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 13 years should build homes for the people there and provide them with practical relief.

Azma Bokhari said that when a target of five hundred thousand homes had been announced in the past, it was dismissed as a political slogan, while claims of building one crore homes and other major promises also



people of their own province.

She said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif had worked day and night on public welfare initiatives and the 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' programme was a practical manifestation of that commitment. The Chief Minister had set a target of constructing one million homes in five years and, God willing, the initiative would continue to move forward at the same pace.

She expressed these views while addressing an important press conference along with Provincial Minister for Housing Bilal Yasin at the DGPR.

Azma Bokhari said the 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' was Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's flagship initiative under which interest-free loans were being provided to deserving families for construction of their own homes. The programme was launched in August 2024 and millions of families had benefited from it within a short period. She said the success of Punjab's initiative to provide homes to the people had been recognised globally. The 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' programme was selected for the United Nations-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award, which Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif received in Muscat, Oman, on October 5.

Azma Bokhari said the Punjab government's provision of interest-free loans to ordinary citizens for construction of homes was a unique programme of its kind in Pakistan. She said the initiative was providing

failed to materialise. She said that today, hundreds of thousands of homes were being constructed in Punjab and people were being provided interest-free loans.

She said the Chief Minister of Punjab had also briefed the Omani Minister for Housing during her meeting with him about the features of the 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' programme and the mechanism for interest-free loans. Deserving families have to repay these loans over a period of nine years.

Azma Bokhari said the responsibility of a journalist was to present the complete news to the public. Turning someone into a target of ridicule or ignoring facts could not be considered journalism. She said she was accountable for every action and statement of hers and that conducting a personal campaign against anyone was not her way.

She said PTI leaders had remained silent about the programme for two and a half years and were now talking about meetings and demands. If their intentions were sincere, practical measures for public reforms and public service should be presented. The Information Minister said Pakistan and Punjab should be proud of the global honour received by them, rising above political differences. She said the Chief Minister of Punjab had been specially invited to represent Pakistan and Punjab before the world, and had received significant appreciation at the award ceremony. NEWS DES

PM Shehbaz orders removal of loan curbs for housing, agri sectors

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to remove obstacles hindering the provision of financial resources to the housing, agriculture, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sectors, saying that the lending system should be made more effective.

Chairing a review meeting regarding access to finance, the prime minister also directed to make the SME Portal operational by the end of November to facilitate the provision of loans to small and medium-sized enterprises. "The SME Portal will enable real-time monitoring of the latest status of loans being provided by banks, as well as business facilities including Letters of Credit (LCs)."

The prime minister instructed the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to

take effective measures to enhance the capacity of SMEs, promote modern technology, increase productivity, and integrate them into global value chains.

The meeting reviewed the performance of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and First Women Bank with regard to lending.

The prime minister said that a 76 percent loan approval rate in housing finance by the National Bank of Pakistan was commendable, instructing the newly appointed President of NBP to engage the services of the best professionals to improve the bank's performance and to take departmental action, without fear or favour, against employees who fail to deliver the required results.

He directed other provinces to accelerate the digitization of land records on the pattern of Punjab to facilitate housing finance for banks.

He said that digitization of land records would make it easier and more transparent for banks to provide housing loans.

The meeting was briefed on the statistics regarding the provision of loans to the housing, agriculture, and small and medium-sized enterprise sectors.

Under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme, loans worth Rs 426 billion have so far been approved for 71,690 applicants, out

of which Rs. 76 billion in loans have so far been disbursed to 13,214 individuals while a target has been set for the provision of Rs 700 billion in loans for 125,000 residential units during the current year.

Similarly, the total volume of agricultural loans stands at Rs 1,352 billion, benefiting 3.455 million people while a target has been set to increase the volume of agricultural loans to Rs 1,500 billion and the number of beneficiaries to 4.5 million by June 2027, the meeting was briefed.

The meeting was informed that improved access to financial resources for the agriculture sector would enhance farmers' productivity and promote economic activity. Loans amounting to Rs 1,137 billion have so far been provided to 350,000 SME entrepreneurs against the target of Rs 1,500 billion to 565,000 entrepreneurs, by June 2027.

It was informed in the meeting that measures were being taken to provide SMEs with easier access to financial resources, facilitate investment in modern technology, and enable them to compete in international markets.

While steps are also being taken to further simplify and



improve the revised regulations for SMEs and the procedures for housing finance.

The meeting was further briefed on ongoing measures including joint risk-sharing in lending, promotion of supply-chain financing, verified data sharing, and other initiatives.

The meeting was informed that digital systems are being promoted to spare customers seeking small loans from the need to make repeated visits to bank branches.

Federal Ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Attaulah Tarar, Prime Minister's Adviser Haroon Akhtar, State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad, and other senior government officials attended the meeting. APP

Bahrain's FM arrives in Islamabad

Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday evening for a two-day visit, where he is expected to co-chair the third session of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), the Foreign Office (FO) said.

According to the FO, Al Zayani was received at the airport by Economic Affairs Division Secretary Muhammad Humair Karim and Additional Secretary (Middle East) Zahid Hussain. "The visit reflects the close, cordial and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Bahrain and underscores the shared commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation," it added. In an earlier statement, the FO said that Bahrain's top diplomat will be visiting the country at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

"The two sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and discuss ways to further strengthen cooperation across diverse areas of mutual interest, including trade, investment, economic cooperation, defence and security, labour and manpower, and cultural exchanges," it said. The two sides would also exchange views on regional and international developments of mutual interest and cooperation at multilateral forums, the FO added.



"Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy close, brotherly relations founded on shared faith, common values, mutual respect, and long-standing people-to-people links," it noted.

The FO further stated that the two countries maintain regular high-level exchanges and close cooperation across a wide range of areas. "The visit reflects the strong momentum in Pakistan-Bahrain relations and the shared commitment of both countries to further deepen bilateral cooperation and advance mutually beneficial ties," it said. Earlier this month, Dar chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review preparations for the Pakistan-Bahrain JMC, which he will co-chair with his Bahraini counterpart. The deputy premier had directed the ministries concerned to finalise preparations in close coordination and pursue concrete outcomes from the Bahrain FM's visit. NEWS DESK

PPP nominates Bilawal for JCP membership after Naek quits

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has nominated Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as its new member of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan, sources said.

According to sources, the notification of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's nomination will be issued soon.

Bilawal Bhutto had previously withdrawn his nomination from the Judicial Commission in November 2024 in protest over what he described as the government's failure to honour its commitment. According to sources, Bilawal had said the government did not fulfil its promise of equal representation in the Judicial Commission.

Sources said the PPP's Central Executive Committee would decide the party's future course of action regarding the government. Bilawal is expected to convene a meeting of the Central Executive Committee upon his return to Pakistan, where important decisions will be taken.

Earlier, PPP stalwart Farooq H. Naek has resigned from the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) - a constitutional body which appoints judges in the superior judiciary. "Yes, I have resigned from the body [due to] personal commitments," the senator, who has also served as chairman of the upper house of Parliament.

In a one-page letter addressed to Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who is the leader of the house in the Senate, Naek expressed gratitude at being appointed a member of the JCP from the treasury benches.

He said that it was a "great honour and privilege" for him to serve as a member of the JCP. Naek had participated in a number of JCP proceedings to appoint judges for different high courts as well as the Supreme Court. As a lawyer, he represented PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari before the SC in the presidential reference moved by the latter's father, President Asif Ali Zardari, in the murder case of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He also appeared in several constitutional petitions before the SC, including cases concerning reserved seats, amendments to the accountability laws, presidential immunities and provincial assembly disputes.

Although he remained associated with the PPP for three decades, he shot to prominence when he defended late former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and Zardari in a number of corruption and criminal cases during former military dictator Pervez Musharraf's rule. NEWS DESK

Imaan Mazari, Hadi Chattha indicted in terror case

An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday indicted lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha in a case pertaining to removal of a barrier, and summoned prosecution witnesses at the next hearing.

ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Supra conducted the hearing. Dr Shireen Mazari appeared before the court along with counsel Eimal Khan Mandokhail, Zainab Janjua and others, while Raja Naveed appeared as prosecutor on behalf of the federation. During the proceedings, Advocate Zainab Janjua complained that despite the court's orders, she had not been allowed to meet the accused and that copies of the case documents had also not been provided to them.

The judge said that reports from the jail authorities were already before the court.

Later, Hadi Ali Chattha was produced before the court through video link, followed by Imaan Mazari.

Advocate Zainab Janjua informed the court that she had filed two applications, including one seeking deferment of the indictment and another regarding provision of case documents to the accused. The judge read out the charges, which also referred to removal of the barrier and use of an iron punch. Hadi objected that he had not even received copies of the case documents and argued that charges could not be framed until all legal requirements were fulfilled.

The defence counsel maintained that neither accused had received the copies nor had they been allowed to meet their lawyers, arguing that the court could not frame charges without completing the legal requirements. The court summoned the prosecution witnesses for the next hearing and directed that both accused be produced before the court in person. The court adjourned the hearing until October 9. APP

PTI pursuing external agenda to destabilize Pakistan: Abbasi

Federal Minister for Railways, Hanif Abbasi on Wednesday said the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI)' stance was contributing to igniting political instability in the country backed by external conspiracy.

Addressing a press conference, Abbasi said those pursuing the agenda knew Pakistan, being a nuclear power, could not be defeated through conventional means and therefore sought to create internal instability and law-and-order problems.

The minister warned political workers against becoming "fuel" for political leaders, saying workers had repeatedly suffered during political confrontations.

Referring to incidents including October 10, 2014, May 9, October 4-5, 2024, and November 26, he questioned whether PTI leaders had remembered the workers who lost their lives or faced imprisonment during such incidents. "Did they ever go and apologise to their families? Did

they make any arrangements for their children or elderly parents?" he asked. Abbasi said political workers who were jailed after violating the law and Constitution had been left to face their cases on their own.

He urged workers of all political parties to consider whether they were sacrificing their lives for leaders who did not even remember their names.

The minister said political parties had the right to organise campaigns and hold protests, but they must remain within the law and Constitution.

He said some political activities had targeted state institutions responsible for protecting the country and its people. Abbasi said India and Israel, along with elements based in Afghanistan, were involved in a nexus aimed at promoting terrorism in Pakistan.

He said militants operating from Afghanistan were receiving financial and intelligence support from outside the country and were being used

to carry out attacks in Pakistan.

He said terrorism was the main source of livelihood for certain elements in Afghanistan and that militants were being supported to export terrorism into Pakistan. The minister also questioned the performance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, asking why the province had not adequately addressed education, healthcare and security issues despite receiving substantial funds.

He urged the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not to allow political interests to divide the country along ethnic or provincial lines.

Abbasi said Rs 8,500 billion had been provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa between 2010 and 2025 and questioned how the money had been utilised.

He said the provincial government should explain what it had done with the funds and what responsibilities it had fulfilled. The minister also criticised the provincial government over the deteriorating security situation. APP



Govt hikes petrol price by Rs1.82, cuts diesel by Re0.91 per litre

The government has increased the price of petrol by Rs1.82 per litre to Rs396.65, while reducing the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) by 91 paise to Rs394.94 per litre, effective October 8, 2026.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) revised the ex-depot prices of petroleum products under the government's petroleum pricing mechanism, according to the Petroleum Division.

It added that petroleum product prices were revised in line with changes in international market prices, Platts rates, premiums and other related costs.

The revised prices will remain effective from October 8, 2026, under the government's petroleum pricing mechanism. NEWS DESK

BACKPAGE

PM pushes for UN reforms, Kashmir resolution



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday called for a more effective, inclusive and representative United Nations and reiterated Pakistan's position that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be resolved peacefully in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The prime minister made the remarks while welcoming United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, during a meeting here, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative and emphasized that reform of the United Nations should remain responsive to the priorities of developing countries, while strengthening conflict prevention, peaceful settlement of disputes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's longstanding commitment to UN peacekeeping and its contribution to international peace and security.

The prime minister also highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to promote dialogue and de-escalation, including its mediation role between the United States and Iran, stressing that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path to resolving disputes and preventing escalation.

On regional issues, Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated the need for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN

Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

He also emphasized that the Indus Waters Treaty was a binding international agreement and maintained that India's unilateral decision to place it in abeyance had no legal basis.

On Afghanistan, the prime minister said a peaceful and stable Afghanistan remained in Pakistan's interest. He expressed serious concern over terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and the presence of terrorist groups on Afghan soil, emphasizing the need for concrete and verifiable action against such groups.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and statehood and its support for implementation of the Gaza Peace Plan and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803.

He underscored the need for greater access to affordable and concessional financing for developing countries to advance development and strengthen climate resilience.

The prime minister lauded Secretary-General Guterres for his commitment to the UN Charter, multilateralism, international law, dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes, and acknowledged his contribution to international peace and security during his tenure.

Secretary-General Guterres appreciated Pakistan's longstanding contribution to the United Nations and international peace and security, including its significant role in UN peacekeeping and constructive engagement in the Security Council.

He particularly appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to promote dialogue, mediation and de-escalation and welcomed its continued commitment to multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hosted a dinner in honour of the UN Secretary-General and his delegation. **NEWS DESK**

Oman housing minister hails Punjab's 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' scheme

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday met Oman's Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Dr Khalfan bin Said bin Mubarak Al Shueili in Muscat, who described Punjab's interest-free housing scheme, Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar, as a better model than Oman's existing housing loan programme.

The Omani minister warmly welcomed the chief minister and her delegation and congratulated her on Punjab receiving the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour award. He expressed keen interest in the province's low-cost housing initiative.

The meeting discussed urban planning and development, with the chief minister briefing the Omani delegation on the scheme and responding to their queries. She also outlined details of other initiatives, including Apna Khet, Apna Roogar, Apni Zameen, Apna Ghar and Apni Chhat, Mehfooz Chhat.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz said more than 200,000 people had been provided loans to build homes under Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar within just 18 months, calling it an "extraordinary achievement".

She said Rs260 billion in



interest-free loans had been disbursed under the programme and recovery of instalments had also begun. More than 125,000 families, she added, had already moved into their homes.

"Merit and transparency are the hallmarks of Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar. No recommendation is required to obtain an interest-free loan," she said.

The chief minister said she wanted to build one million houses under the programme but economic constraints remained a challenge. "We will, however, achieve the target of building 500,000 houses for low-income people in five years," she said.

She said the programme's recovery rate had exceeded 99 per cent, largely because of the affordable monthly instalment of Rs14,000. The Punjab Socio-Economic Registry had enabled the government to compile comprehensive data across the province and determine housing needs on the basis of that data,

she added.

"Every house built under Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar has a heart-touching story," CM Punjab said.

Dr Khalfan bin Said bin Mubarak Al Shueili said a large Pakistani community in Oman was making valuable contributions to the country.

He said Oman was like a second home for Pakistanis as well as for Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He said Oman had two models for housing finance, including housing grants for people earning less than \$1,000 and loans through the Oman Housing Bank.

However, he said, Punjab's Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar was a better initiative because its loans were interest-free.

The minister said Oman had separate departments dealing with housing and urban development. He said integrated planning and sustainable strategies were being pursued for the growing real estate

industry in Muscat.

He said urban development was being undertaken through economic and environmental planning while keeping in view the needs of different communities and sectors.

Omani Minister said Oman was focusing on smart housing to meet future requirements, adding that Pakistani companies were making valuable contributions to Muscat's real estate sector.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed her appreciation for the security forces for killing 13 terrorists in North Waziristan.

The chief minister commended the security forces for eliminating 13 Khawarij of Fitna al-Hindustan and lauded the successful intelligence-based operation. "Pakistan's armed forces stand as an impenetrable wall against the enemy on every front," Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said. **NEWS DESK**

NO CRUELTY PROOF NEEDED

SC clears way for divorce over discord

The Supreme Court has held that where a marital relationship has been marked by severe and persistent discord, all meaningful efforts at reconciliation have failed, and the fundamental objectives of marriage can no longer be fulfilled, shiqq (serious marital discord) may constitute a valid ground for dissolution of marriage under Muslim law, even if cruelty or mistreatment by the husband is not proved.

A five-member bench headed by Justice Shahid Waheed and comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice Shiqq Ibrahim and Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb issued a detailed judgment while deciding two separate cases filed by Zainab Bibi and Iram Naz Begum.

The court held that khula and dissolution of Muslim marriages under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, are two distinct legal avenues. Where a wife seeks dissolution of marriage on the ground of cruelty or other statutory grounds and does not opt for khula, the court cannot, on its own, convert her claim into khula without her clear and voluntary choice, particularly where such conversion affects her legal right to dower.

The Supreme Court observed that even where cruelty is not established, a wife has the right to pursue her legal claim for dissolution or voluntarily opt for

khula. She cannot be forced into khula and thereby deprived of her entitlement to dower.

The court noted that in both cases, the Family Courts had dissolved the marriages on the basis of khula after finding that cruelty had not been proved and reconciliation efforts had failed, although the wives had neither sought nor opted for khula. Such orders could not legally be sustained.

The court further held that the position regarding dower was different in the two legal avenues. Dissolution through khula may have financial consequences concerning repayment or relinquishment of dower, whereas dissolution under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, preserves the wife's right to dower.

Explaining shiqq, the Supreme Court said it refers to a serious, deep-seated and continuing breakdown in the marital relationship in which the fundamental purposes of marriage can no longer be fulfilled and genuine efforts at reconciliation have failed.

The court cautioned that every quarrel, disagreement, temporary separation or incompatibility would not amount to shiqq. A Family Court must be satisfied that the marital relationship has suffered a genuine, serious and continuing breakdown and that meaningful

attempts at reconciliation have failed.

The judgment distinguished shiqq from cruelty. Cruelty involves a specific legal wrong committed by one spouse, whereas shiqq concerns the overall and continuing condition of the marital relationship. Thus, even where cruelty is not established on a particular legal ground, the relationship may nevertheless reach a stage of shiqq warranting dissolution.

The Supreme Court clarified that recognizing shiqq as a ground for dissolution did not amount to judicially creating a general doctrine of "irretrievable breakdown" of marriage. Family Courts cannot dissolve marriages by labelling every unhappy marital relationship as shiqq.

The court also explained the limits of the High Court's constitutional jurisdiction under Article 199, observing that it is supervisory rather than appellate. A High Court cannot reassess evidence merely to substitute its own view for that of a lower court, although interference is permissible where there is a violation of law, excess of jurisdiction, a finding unsupported by evidence or failure to consider material evidence.

The judgment emphasized that Article 4 of the Constitution guarantees treatment in accordance with law. Article 14 protects human dignity and Article

25 guarantees equality before law. The rights and dignity of both spouses must therefore be protected throughout matrimonial litigation.

The Supreme Court held that a wife cannot be deprived of her dower by being compelled to seek khula against her will, just as a husband cannot be held responsible for cruelty or marital misconduct without sufficient evidence.

The court observed that the purpose of law is to determine the rights of the parties, not to aggravate a human dispute. Where allegations of a specific matrimonial wrong fail to meet the required legal standard, courts should not treat them as proved. However, if the marital relationship has genuinely reached a state of severe and continuing shiqq, the parties need not be kept in the marriage indefinitely merely because a particular matrimonial wrong has not been established.

Distinguishing khula from shiqq, the Supreme Court held that khula is a form of marital release obtained through the wife's voluntary choice, whereas shiqq is an objectively established condition of serious and continuing breakdown of the marital relationship. In such a case, relinquishment of dower or any other financial benefit by the wife is not a necessary condition for dissolution. **APP**

Three more rescued off Somalia return home



The three remaining Pakistani crew members of MT Honour 25, an oil tanker that was hijacked off the coast of Somalia in April, landed in Karachi on Wednesday.

According to Shaheen Burney, the vice chairperson of the Anzar Burney Trust, the three crew members arrived in the city at 4:40pm via an Ethiopian Airways flight from Addis Ababa.

Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi welcomed the crew members at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport upon their return, according to a press release. Karachi Mayor Murtoza Wahab and other dignitaries were also present.

The governor met the returning Pakistanis, inquired about their well-being and presented them with bouquets. He expressed solidarity with them, saying that the incident was extremely painful and highlighting that the "sufferings and hardships of the affected Pakistanis were being shared as a collective national concern", the statement said.

Speaking to the media, the governor said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

had taken special notice of the matter, issued necessary directives and remained continuously informed about the situation of the affected Pakistanis.

He said that, although no amount of money could compensate for the loss of a human life, the state would take "all possible measures" to support the affected families, particularly with regards to the education, healthcare and future of their children.

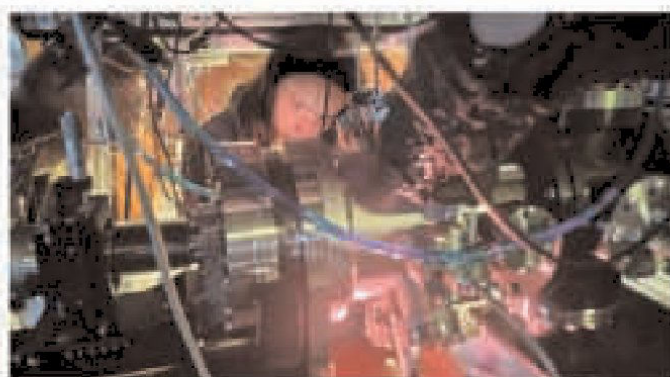
PM Shehbaz had issued clear directions regarding residential plots and arrangements for the education, upbringing and healthcare of the children of the affected families, he added, according to the press release.

Hashmi noted that the state would extend support to the affected families as far as possible, while any financial assistance received in this regard would also be given to the affected persons. The provincial government had also extended its full cooperation, he said.

"We are not here as representatives of any political party; we are here as Pakistanis. We have come to express solidarity with our brothers and assure them that they are not alone - the entire nation stands with them," the statement quoted the governor as saying. **NEWS DESK**

Scientific teams working separately in Vienna and Beijing have developed the world's first two operating nuclear clocks in what they are calling an important advance in timekeeping that promises wide-ranging practical applications and offers a new tool to investigate fundamental physics.

The two devices represent the next generation of atomic clocks, the ultra-accurate timekeeping machines first created in 1949. The two research teams,



describing their achievements on Wednesday, in scientific papers published in the journal Nature, said nuclear clocks have the potential to outperform the best conventional atomic clocks, but do not do so yet.

They are called nuclear clocks not because they are powered by nuclear fusion or fission, as a layman might surmise, but because time is calculated by

monitoring how light - a high-powered laser - interacts with the nucleus of an atom. The nuclear clocks both are based on a form, or isotope, of the element thorium, called thorium-229, trapped in solid-state calcium fluoride crystals.

The two teams worked independently and reached operating thorium-229 nuclear clocks at the same time, using

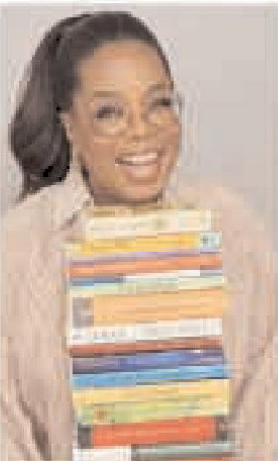
different experimental approaches. I think this is very encouraging because it shows that the concept is robust and not dependent on one particular technical implementation," said physicist Shiqian Ding of Tsinghua University in China, who helped lead the team behind the Beijing clock.

"The creation of a nuclear clock was something that physicists dreamt of for almost 50 years. In my team, we have been working towards this goal since 2008," said physicist Thorsten Schumm of TU Wien in Austria, who helped lead the team behind the Vienna clock.

Schumm said he envisions uses for nuclear clocks in areas such as satellite-based navigation, synchronization of data transfer, surveying and metrology, which is the study of measurement and its practical applications. **REUTERS**

GLAMOURDTM

Oprah taps riveting debut for Book Club



A debut novel about a 12-year-old girl's struggles to find herself amid poverty and family strife is Oprah Winfrey's new book club pick.

On Tuesday, Winfrey announced that she had chosen Amanda Rizkalla's "Hungered," which came out in May. Winfrey said in a statement that the 28-year-old Rizkalla had written a "riveting novel" about "families who live outside the margins, living unhealed" and "their hopes, dreams, and the perseverance it takes to face another day."

Rizkalla, a Los Angeles native who now lives in the Bay Area, was an undergraduate student at Stanford University and received a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Like so many authors since Winfrey launched her club 30 years ago, she learned she had been selected after receiving a surprise call from Winfrey herself.

"I was so stunned I could hardly believe it was real, and there are still moments where it all feels like one big daydream," Rizkalla said in a statement.

The Oprah Podcast conversation with Rizkalla can be seen on Winfrey's YouTube channel and through other outlets. **AP**

Waters duo to tour Pink Floyd music

Roger Waters and his son Harry have teamed up for a tour celebrating the music of Pink Floyd.

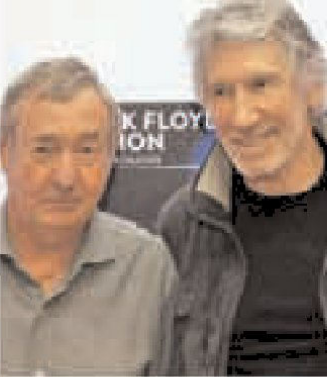
Legacy - A Pink Floyd Show will see Harry and his band honour material from the group's "golden era" from 1971 to 1979.

Roger, 83, will direct the show while Harry, 49, as musical director, will lead the 10-piece band on B3 organ, piano and vocals.

The band will perform selections from Pink Floyd albums The Dark Side of the Moon (1973), Wish You Were Here (1975), Animals (1977) and The Wall (1979).

The tour will begin in Manchester on June 16, 2027, with further stops scheduled for Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Sheffield, Southend, Brighton, Wolverhampton and London.

Roger said: "These songs have meant so much to so many people for so many years and I'm excited for audiences to come together and experience them live again." **PA MEDIA**



Nicole Kidman and Dua Lipa watch Chanel's creative revival at Paris Fashion Week



Chanel's artistic director Matthieu Blazy sent the fashion house's suits stretching towards sportswear and evening dresses drifting through clouds, with Nicole Kidman, Dua Lipa and Pedro Pascal in the audience as he unveiled his spring-summer 2027 collection.

The Monday night show underscored that a year into his creative revival, Blazy has made the house feel newly unpredictable.

The former Bottega Veneta designer succeeded Virginie Viard, who took over after Karl Lagerfeld's death in 2019. Viard's tenure brought record sales but Blazy's contribution has been to restore a sense that Chanel's familiar ingredients can produce something unexpected.

That renewal is visible in his treatment of the house's symbols: tweed can stretch; formal jackets sit against bare skin; quilted bags turn slouchy.

The appeal lies in giving established clients something recognizable, and newer ones something to reinterpret.

Beneath illuminated birds at the Grand Palais, Blazy's collection traced Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's passage from Edwardian constraint towards the freedom she sought in dress.

"It's about the women within a woman," Blazy wrote in his notes.

Across 83 looks, that meant expanding the possibilities of a Chanel wardrobe: knits that skimmed the body, masculine tailoring, airy eveningwear and sharply abbreviated skirts.

Raw-edged waistcoats and narrow skirt suits reworked men's formal clothes.

A pearl-embroidered corset top paired with black trousers brought the tension between restriction and ease into focus.

Older fashions lingered in ruf-

fled collars, peplums and traces of corset boning.

The strongest development was Chanel's new "smocked tweed," designed to stretch and move with something of athleisure's ease. It was a useful proposition for an expensive, familiar garment: preserve its character while improving its possibilities.

Competing patterns and frothy tutus sometimes tipped towards costume. Dresses made from layered, printed silk

were more persuasive, turning cloud formations and changing light into shifting color.

Model Dyanira Hurbuscher opened and closed the collection - carrying Gabrielle Chanel's own 2.55 handbag, borrowed from the famed archives.

That element neatly framed the collection's ambition: continuity with room for change - a balance Blazy's revitalization of Chanel rests on.

He has made Chanel's heritage feel available for play, backed by serious work in the ateliers. Lipa wore a sleeveless skirt suit with pink heels. Kidman attended with her daughter Faith Margaret. **AP**



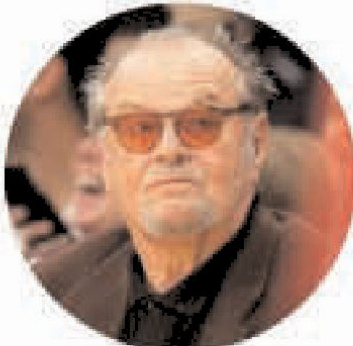
'I'm Bill Gates' daughter': Nazish mocks headlines

Pakistani actress Nazish Johangir has criticised the way comments from interviews are sometimes taken out of context and turned into sensational headlines, saying that a simple statement can be presented in a completely different way to attract public attention.

The actress shared a sarcastic Instagram Story in response to what she described as exaggerated reporting. Without naming any particular publication, Nazish expressed frustration over the way her remarks had been presented and reshaped for attention.

Taking a humorous approach, she wrote, "I am Bill Gates' daughter," adding that she had never actually said such a thing. Her sarcastic remark appeared to highlight how far statements can be distorted when they are removed from their original context.

Nazish said this was one of the reasons she did not enjoy giving interviews in Pakistan. She complained that people can take a straightforward comment, remove it from its context and present it in a way that changes its intended meaning. The actress urged those reporting on celebrity interviews to understand the complete conversation before creating their own version of the story. She also argued that not every statement needs to be turned into sensational content simply to create an attention-grabbing headline. Nazish's reaction came after excerpts from one of her recent interviews began circulating widely across social media and entertainment platforms. During the interview, she spoke about relationships, marriage and the qualities she would prefer in a future partner. **NEWS DESK**



Axe used by Jack Nicholson in The Shining to go on sale

The axe used by Jack Nicholson as he delivered the famous line "Here's Johnny!" in the 1980 horror film The Shining is to go on sale.

Items from director Stanley Kubrick's personal archive are to go to auction for the first time next year.

Kubrick, considered one of the greatest film-makers of all time, is known for works including 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), A Clockwork Orange (1971) and Eyes Wide Shut (1999).

The axe used by The Shining's Jack Torrance (Nicholson) is estimated to sell for £30,000 to £50,000.

In the film, Jack slammed the axe through a bathroom door as he attempted to murder his wife Wendy (Shelley Long) after losing his mind while staying at the Overlook Hotel. Other items for sale include the Star Child prop from 2001: A Space Odyssey, which is expected to fetch between £600,000 and £800,000.

The Star Child appears as a glowing foetus in the final scene of the 1968 science fiction epic. Among the other memorabilia are the blue dresses worn by the Grady sisters from The Shining, which are expected to fetch between £40,000 and £60,000. Kubrick's annotated copy of the film story treatment of Journey Beyond The Stars, the original working title of 2001: A Space Odyssey, is estimated to sell for between £30,000 and £50,000. The director's annotated script for Lolita (1962) is expected to fetch between £40,000 and £60,000, while the annotated script for Spartacus (1960) is expected to sell for £20,000 to £40,000. **PA MEDIA**

Zain Ahmed, Aima Baig fuel reconciliation buzz

Pakistani singer Aima Baig and fashion designer and entrepreneur Zain Ahmed have once again drawn public attention after their latest social media interaction appeared to challenge ongoing speculation about trouble in their marriage.

The speculation gained renewed attention after Zain Ahmed was announced as part of the BoF 500 Class of 2026, an annual list by The Business of Fashion recognising influential figures who have contributed to the global fashion industry.

Aima Baig publicly celebrated her husband's achievement and expressed pride in his inclusion on the prestigious list. Zain Ahmed, who is the founder and creative director of Lahore-based fashion

house Restah, attended the BoF gala in Paris and later shared pictures from the event on Instagram.

Sharing moments from the gala, Zain described it as a memorable evening and thanked those working to contribute to

the fashion industry. Aima responded to his post with a supportive comment, writing, "Proud and proud." Zain replied to her comment by thanking her for always

supporting him. Their public exchange quickly attracted attention because it came amid months of speculation about the status of their relationship. Zain Ahmed is the second Pakistani designer to be included in the BoF 500. Designer

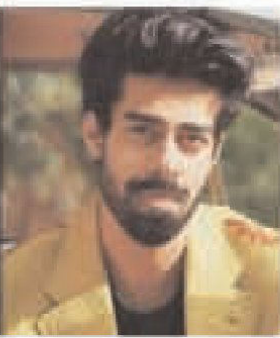
Faraz Manan became the first Pakistani to make the list in 2024.

The BoF 500 is an annual recognition programme that highlights individuals

who are considered influential in shaping the global fashion industry through design, business and culture. New members are selected following months of nominations and editorial evaluation, with the 2026 class announced during a gala held alongside Paris Fashion Week.

Meanwhile, rumours about difficulties between Aima and Zain have circulated for several months. The couple got married in a private Nikah ceremony in Canada on August 6, 2025.

Reports of differences between them first emerged in October 2025 after Zain reportedly unfollowed Aima on Instagram and removed their wedding photographs from his social media account. He later explained that the posts had been archived because of a technical issue. **NEWS DESK**



Restaurant Kid to Hollywood: Ming-Na Wen in 70 recipes

Just like her mother, Ming-Na Wen will show you she cares through the love language of food.

"Whenever anyone comes to the house, it's always, 'Have you eaten yet?'" Wen told The Associated Press. "So that was how I came up with the title, because I wanted that as a greeting for my fans."

Wen, who found fame in the 1993 film adaptation of Amy Tan's novel "The Joy Luck Club" and went on to star in "Mulan," is wading into the cookbook market. "Have You Eaten Yet? Family Recipes From a Restaurant Daughter," out Tuesday, is sprinkled with Chinese and Western recipes and first-person anecdotes.

The recipes parallel Wen's evolution from immigrant kid helping out at her parents' restaurant to working actor cooking for her own children.

For generations of Asian Americans, Wen became an icon for

validating the bicultural experience as June in "The Joy Luck Club." The first big studio feature with an all-Asian cast was praised for depicting Chinese characters and Chinese food in a non-demeaning way.

Despite being more prevalent now than ever, Chinese cuisine is still at times stereotyped or devalued. Wen might be an ideal ambassador to share experiences of growing up eating Chinese and American food.

"I didn't want it to just be about Chinese food," said Wen, 62. "I wanted it to be about the Asian American experience."

The idea for a cookbook began with Wen's Instagram cooking videos, posted from her Los Angeles home. Fans urged "The Mandalorian" star to write a cookbook, but she didn't feel qualified until she learned there are "many celebrities who would write a book who didn't cook, which to me was such a no-no."

"It took a couple of years before

my literary agent came up with this wonderful idea that we write the cookbook as my journey through food," Wen said.

She ended up whittling a list of a hundred recipes down to 70. Among those that made the cut are Popo's (Cantonese for grandmother) Wontons, and Chestnut Chicken, both reminiscent of her childhood in Hong Kong.

She also wanted to honor her stepfather, or "Chef Baba" (Cantonese for father), who taught her to cook Western dishes he had learned cooking in the army. He could pivot from making clam chowder to winter melon soup.

At age 7, Wen rode in an airplane for the first time when her stepfather sponsored her, her mother and brother to come to the U.S. They lived in New York City for three years



before moving to Pittsburgh. There, her parents opened the Chinatown Inn restaurant. A good "restaurant daughter," Wen helped set tables, wash dishes and other tasks. "Being a restaurant kid was something that I sort of was either embarrassed about or rejected or didn't like because it took time away from hanging out with my friends," Wen said. "Looking back ... it makes me so much more aware of how much that restaurant's given and provided for my family and for shaping who I am."

It wasn't until the Carnegie Mellon University alum moved to New York to pursue acting that she found she had a knack for cooking. She was on a shoestring budget, and the necessity of cooking awoke all those kitchen-prep skills she had seen as a child. **AP**

MONEY

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Despite Mideast tensions, Pakistan eyes 4%+ growth: Finance Chief

Strong remittances to keep CAD at 0-1% of GDP

Pakistan expects economic growth of more than 4% this fiscal year despite a hit from the continuing hostilities in the Middle East, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Wednesday, describing the conflict's impact on growth and inflation so far as 'manageable.'

Aurangzeb said he and State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad had reviewed first-quarter economic data on Tuesday and remained confident about the full-year outlook, including keeping the current account deficit between zero and 1% of gross domestic product on the back of strong remittance flows.

"Hope is not a strategy," Aurangzeb said while virtually addressing the 10th Annual Microfinance Conference organized by the Pakistan Microfinance

Network in Karachi, referring to devalued the Middle East conflict.

He said Pakistan had managed the "first-order impact" of the crisis well, including through procurement measures, while the government and central bank continued to closely monitor its economic fallout.

"There has been an impact on inflation and growth, but from our perspective, it is still manageable," he said.

Pakistan, which relies heavily on imported energy, has faced pressure from disruptions to oil and liquefied natural gas supplies caused by the Iran conflict and restrictions on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Asian LNG prices surged to nearly \$30 per million British thermal units last month as the crisis disrupted Middle Eastern supplies, while Pakistan has introduced fuel subsidies to cushion consumers from soaring petrol and diesel prices.

Aurangzeb had warned last month that a prolonged conflict could threaten Pakistan's 4% annual growth target. On Wednesday, however, he maintained the government's expectation of growth above that level.

"If you look at three years ago, our economy actually contracted," he said. "We were negative 0.3%. Last fiscal year, we were at 3.7%. This year, we are expecting north of 4%."

The finance minister said,

however, that Pakistan would pursue what he called "responsible growth," warning against stimulating consumption through an injection of liquidity that could again create external financing pressures.

"Can we do it? Yes, we can do it," he said. "But then we get into a balance of payment problem and we go running back to the lender of the last resort. And we don't want to do that."

Pakistan has repeatedly turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during balance-of-payments crises and is currently operating under a \$7 billion IMF bailout program.

Aurangzeb said the government would continue structural reforms in taxation, energy, state-owned enterprises, privatization and public finance as it sought to make recent macroeconomic stability permanent.

He said Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves had recently reached \$21.4 billion, equivalent to roughly three months of import cover, while citing three sovereign rating upgrades since April 2025 and Pakistan's return to international capital markets after a nearly four-year absence as evidence of improving investor confidence.

Pakistan raised \$3 billion through a Eurobond sale that attracted demand roughly twice the size of the issuance, Aurangzeb said, with investors participating from Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the United States. **NEWS DESK**

Berlin calls on Islamabad to fast-track GSP Plus reforms

Jam Kamal invites German firms to invest in Pakistan



Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan here on Wednesday invited German companies to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan and participate in the upcoming FoodAg exhibition in Karachi next month.

The minister was talking to German Ambassador to Pakistan Ina Lepel, who called on the Federal Minister, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industries, Rana Isaan Afzal; Secretary Commerce, Jawad Paul and senior officials of the Ministry of Commerce were also present.

The discussed ways to deepen bilateral trade, investment and business-to-business cooperation between the two countries, said a press release issued by commerce ministry.

The minister emphasized that collaboration with German companies could help Pakistan improve agricultural productivity, strengthen quality and export standards, and generate greater exportable surpluses. He said FoodAg would

provide a valuable platform for German businesses to directly engage with Pakistani companies, identify investment opportunities and develop partnerships across the agriculture and food value chains.

He appreciated Germany's longstanding economic cooperation with Pakistan and its constructive role in relation to the European Union's GSP Plus scheme. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations and strengthening coordination among federal ministries and provincial governments.

On the occasion, the Ambassador Lepel acknowledged Pakistan's legislative progress and positive developments in areas relevant to GSP Plus, noting that these efforts reflected Pakistan's commitment to reforms and stronger institutional mechanisms. She emphasized the importance of translating legislative measures into effective implementation, measurable results and tangible improvements for citizens.

She welcomed Pakistan's structured approach towards the next GSP Plus application and encouraged continued coordination among relevant federal ministries, provincial governments and other stakeholders. She said sustained engagement, transparent reporting and timely follow-up would help maintain momentum and reinforce confidence among Pakistan's international partners.

Ambassador Lepel also highlighted potential opportunities in agriculture, food processing, technology, manufacturing, renewable energy and other areas, and encouraged stronger interaction between the private sectors of Pakistan and Germany.

Lepel underscored the importance of protecting the interests of producers, farmers and exporters through appropriate legal and institutional mechanisms. She noted that effective protection of geographical indications could strengthen product recognition in international markets, support rural livelihoods and enhance the value of agricultural exports.

She said, German participation in FoodAg could help translate bilateral engagement into practical business and institutional cooperation. She highlighted opportunities in modern agricultural technology, quality assurance, vocational training, research and development, and sustainable production practices.

The German side also shared preparations for a delegation of Pakistani businesspeople to attend a major animal husbandry trade fair in Germany. Ambassador Lepel said such exchanges could facilitate knowledge transfer, strengthen commercial linkages and help identify new opportunities in livestock and related sectors. **APP**

Govt to tighten grip on dominant telcos with roaming rules

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) has proposed a tougher competition regime for the telecom sector, empowering the regulator to impose national roaming obligations on operators with Significant Market Power (SMP).

Proceedings will be initiated against violators and adjudicate disputes while placing greater emphasis on consumer welfare and competitive impact.

The proposals form part of the draft Telecommunication Competition Rules, 2026, which are aimed at establishing a sector-specific framework for competition in telecom markets.

According to the draft, the Authority may require a licensee possessing SMP to provide national roaming access where

considered necessary to promote effective competition, facilitate network expansion, protect consumer welfare or ensure efficient utilisation of telecom infrastructure.

The draft further proposes that national roaming obligations would have to be imposed on fair, reasonable, transparent and non-discriminatory terms, with the Authority empowered to determine the technical feasibility, operational scope and duration of such arrangements.

The proposed framework could significantly increase regulatory pressure on dominant telecom operators, particularly as the sector undergoes consolidation and prepares for wider 5G deployment.

The draft also provides the Authority with enforcement powers where a licensee is found to have contravened the rules. It may issue directions, require corrective measures, impose proportionate regulatory obligations and/or initiate proceedings under the relevant Act.

Importantly, the proposed rules state that disputes arising

under the framework may be adjudicated by the Authority in accordance with the law.

While resolving disputes, the Authority may consider a broader set of factors, including market efficiency, consumer welfare, proportionality, technical feasibility and competitive impact.

The draft also envisages the rules as a sector-specific regulatory framework for telecommunications markets, while expressly stating that they would operate without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) under the Competition Act, 2010.

The move is particularly significant against the backdrop of a long-running jurisdictional dispute between the MoITT, PTA and CCP over competition regulation in the telecom sector. The Islamabad High Court had previously held that the CCP has overarching jurisdiction over competition matters.

The draft rules also seek to bring greater regulatory discipline to applications submitted to the Authority. Such applications would be required to carry fees

prescribed under Schedule-I, replacing the earlier wording referring to "reasonable fees".

The Authority would additionally be empowered to issue guidelines, determinations, frameworks or directions for carrying out the purposes of the rules.

The proposed national roaming provisions are consistent with the broader policy objective of encouraging rapid nationwide telecom coverage. The 2015 Telecom Policy had already envisaged national roaming for SMP operators on fair and non-discriminatory terms.

The proposed framework comes at a sensitive time for Pakistan's telecom industry, where consolidation, spectrum concentration, infrastructure access and competitive conditions are becoming increasingly important. Recent PTA proposals have also suggested a 25-percent market-share threshold as an initial trigger for SMP assessment, alongside wider tests covering market concentration, spectrum holdings, essential infrastructure, financial strength, network effects and barriers to entry. **NEWS DESK**

SECP introduces passive equity sub-fund under voluntary pension scheme

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has introduced a Passive Equity Sub-Fund under the Voluntary Pension Scheme (VPS) framework, which will be offered by pension fund managers from January 1, 2027.

According to a statement, the new sub-fund will be mandatorily offered alongside existing equity, debt and money market sub-funds, giving savers the choice between actively managed equity funds and passive equity funds that track a specified market index.

Pension fund managers may manage the Passive Equity Sub-Fund either by directly tracking a market index or by investing in Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). Under the ETF-based option, managers may invest in equity ETFs listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), providing diversified exposure to the equity market, SECP said.

The management fee for an ETF-based Passive Equity Sub-Fund will be capped at 0.75% per annum. Where a pension fund manager invests in ETFs managed by its own asset management company, no additional management fee will be charged, avoiding two layers of management fees on the same investment.

"The introduction of Passive Equity Sub-Funds will give pension savers greater choice in managing their retirement savings and provide a cost-efficient route to participate in the stock market," said Chairman SECP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Siddhu.

"This reform will support wider participation in the voluntary pension system and strengthen long-term retirement savings."

The measure is aimed at expanding accessible and cost-efficient investment options for long-term retirement savings and strengthening Pakistan's voluntary pension system. **NEWS DESK**

KSE-100 gains 120 points

KSE-100
+120.30 pts (0.07%)
168,580.41
vs 168,460.11 previous

Volume
586,861 mln shares
Value Rs 22,365 bn
vs 20,139 bn previous

Market Cap
Rs 18.747 trn
vs 18.712 trn
272 gainers • 184 losers • 45 unchanged

Top Volume
• K-Electric 82,659 mln
• Energycor PK 68,756 mln
• Pak Refinery 44,141 mln

The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its positive momentum on Wednesday, gaining 120.30 points, a positive change of 0.07 percent, to close at 168,580.41 points against 168,460.11 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 586,861 million shares, compared to 432,015 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs 22,365 billion from Rs 20,139 billion.

Market capitalization increased to Rs 18.747 trillion from Rs 18.712 trillion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 501 companies that traded in the ready market, 272 posted gains, 184 suffered losses, while 45 remained unchanged.

K-Electric Ltd. led the volume chart

with 82,659 million shares, followed by Energycor PK with 68,756 million shares and Pak Refinery with 44,141 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs 440.02 to close at Rs 25,680.00, while Hoechst Pakistan Limited advanced by Rs 55.75 to settle at Rs 3,979.04.

On the losing side, Nestle Pakistan Limited declined by Rs 30.66 to close at Rs 6,995.19, while S.S. Oil Mills Limited fell by Rs 28.92 to Rs 401.66.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 174,910 million shares with a traded value of Rs 8.472 billion, compared with 125.12 million shares worth Rs 7.168 billion in the previous session.

Of the 296 companies traded in the DFC market, 176 advanced, 115 declined and 5 remained unchanged. **APP**

Gold retreats by Rs 3,100 Rupee inches higher against Dollar

The prices of gold witnessed a sharp decline in the local market on Wednesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs3,100 to close at Rs434,436, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs2,658 to settle at Rs372,458, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold also dipped by Rs2,436, closing at Rs341,432.

Rupee vs Dollar

Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 3 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.02, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.05.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.45 and Rs 278.05, respectively.

The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.33, closing at Rs 310.09 against the previous day's rate of Rs 311.42, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at Rs 1.75, and the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of 0.01 paise and closed at Rs 366.76 compared to the previous day's Rs 366.77.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 and 02 paise to close at Rs 75.42 and Rs 73.79, respectively. **APP**

Lucky Group in contention for GEPCO takeover

A consortium comprising Lucky Cement Limited, Hub Power Holdings Limited, Kohat Cement Company Limited and Metro Ventures (Private) Limited has been pre-qualified to conduct due diligence on Gujranwala Electric Power Company Limited (GEPCO).

Lucky Cement, one of the largest cement makers in the country, informed in a filing to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday.

The consortium "submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) and Statement of Qualification for the proposed acquisition of a 51% to 100% equity stake, along with management control, in GEPCO, being offered for divestment by the Government of Pakistan through a privatisation process," read the filing.

Lucky Cement said the consortium, along with other interested parties, had been shortlisted to undertake financial, technical and legal due diligence on the power distribution company.

The company, however, said neither it nor the consortium had entered into any binding commitment to acquire an equity

stake in GEPCO.

"Any such commitment would only be made following satisfactory completion of due diligence, receipt of all applicable corporate and regulatory approvals, and a determination that the transaction is commercially viable."

"At this stage, the company, through the consortium, intends only to undertake a comprehensive due diligence exercise and evaluate the viability of the potential acquisition opportunity," said Lucky.

On Monday, the Privatisation Commission (PC) Board approved the prequalification of nine interested parties for the privatisation of GEPCO, paving the way for the next stage of the transaction.

The board was informed that 11 EQIs had been received for the acquisition of a 51% to 100% shareholding in GEPCO, along with management control.

The prequalified parties will now move to the next stage, including access to the Virtual Data Room for detailed buy-side due diligence. **NEWS DESK**

WORLD

DTM

Satellite photos show how Israeli forces have erased Gaza towns

It's perhaps the most dramatic wound inflicted on the Gaza Strip by Israel's military campaign over the past three years: The city of Rafah, once home to a quarter million people, has been erased.

Satellite imagery shows the Israeli military has systematically razed the southern city and other towns and districts to the ground and in some places plowed away the rubble. Demolition, using bulldozers and explosives, has continued unabated since the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal reached a year ago, as the military solidifies its hold on just over 60% of the territory that it still controls.

Gaza's mangled landscape is just one of the wounds on top of wounds that the enclave's 2 million Palestinians have endured since Israel launched its campaign to destroy Hamas after the militants' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel.

More than one out of every 10 people from Gaza's prewar population has been killed or wounded by Israeli fire. While nearly every family mourns dead or cares for wounded, most also had to move multiple times to escape fighting and Israeli evacuation orders. With almost the entire population homeless, the coastal territory is now effectively one of the



world's most populated tent cities. Ramsheike canvas and nylon shelters blanket beaches and former agricultural lands and fill empty lots.

Little is likely to change for the foreseeable future. While the ceasefire deal stopped the offensives and heaviest bombardment, Israel hits tents, cars and buildings almost daily in strikes that it says target Hamas members - but that regularly kill women, children and other

family members.

People no longer have to flee from place to place, but few can rebuild homes because Israel bans most construction material from entering Gaza. The ceasefire agreement's plan for the large-scale reconstruction of Gaza has never gotten off the ground because Israel and Hamas have failed to reach a deal on disarming the militant group.

Najwa Abu Eita lost her 7-year-old daughter when Israeli forces struck her home in the central refugee camp of Nuseirat in September 2024, and her three other children were injured in the attack. Abu Eita lost an eye, her face remains heavily damaged and scorched, and she has trouble breathing.

A hairdresser before the war, she now has no work, living in a tent by the ruins of her home. Worst of all, she says, her children are frightened by her face and avoid looking at her.

"My 4-year-old son tells me, 'Mamma, I'll give you one of my eyes.' And inside, I'm weeping," she said.

Gaza's population is squeezed into about 40% of the tiny territory, and Israel's military controls the rest. Satellite imagery by Planet Labs PBC shows that the vast majority of buildings in the Israel-held part have been bulldozed or exploded down to piles of rubble, much of it after major fighting ended a year ago. The Israeli military says it demolishes buildings to prevent their use by Hamas militants or to destroy the group's tunnel networks. AP

Sri Lanka arrests ex-first lady in charity graft probe



Sri Lanka's anti-graft authority arrested former first lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa on Wednesday over allegations that her charity misused donations collected for a children's hospital.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's government has revived long-dormant graft investigations involving members of the once-powerful Rajapaksa family, which dominated Sri Lankan politics for nearly two decades.

The 73-year-old wife of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa was arrested in Colombo, and will be taken before a magistrate, the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) said.

"The arrest is in connection with her Siniya Saviya Foundation," a CIABOC official told reporters at the Rajapaksa home in the capital.

She travelled to Singapore on September 16 for medical treatment, and was served with a summons at Colombo airport to provide a statement to police about her charity.

She flew back on Monday after filing a court petition seeking to prevent her arrest, but the hearing for anticipatory bail was fixed for October 12.

Police said the authorities wanted to question Shiranthi over the 10 million rupees (\$30,300) of donations collected by her Siniya Saviya charity for a PET scanner intended for a local cancer hospital.

Investigators told a court that the scanner had already been donated by the Chinese government, but the charity allegedly continued to solicit donations and misused the funds. AP

Israeli settlers beat AFP photographer covering West Bank



Armed Israeli settlers on Tuesday beat an AFP photographer, leaving him requiring hospital treatment, as he covered ongoing violence by settlers against West Bank olive farmers.

Jasfar Ashtiyeh, 58, a veteran photographer for the international news agency in the Palestinian territory, had tried to rush into a car for safety but two men tackled him down and clobbered him with their rifle butts, according to witnesses, his family and fellow journalists.

Ashtiyeh and another AFP photographer, John Wessels, were standing on a hill near the northern village of Aqraba watching the olive harvest from around 500 metres away when they saw an Israeli soldier detain a Palestinian.

As Ashtiyeh took pictures, a man suddenly opened fire as he raced in a quad bike up a hill towards the journalists.

One Palestinian dropped to the ground. He was also hospitalized, with a gunshot to the foot, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

At least six other people then ran towards the AFP journalists firing guns, with two of them beating Ashtiyeh as he tried to enter the car, which was clearly marked "Press". AP

French-Japanese duo wins chemistry Nobel for solving molecular 'mystery'

France's Henri Kagan and Japan's Kenso Soai on Wednesday won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for solving the mystery of why only one form of certain molecules appears in nature, a discovery decisive for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals.

announcing the laureates.

The academy said in a separate statement that the "molecules of life make things difficult for chemists".

It likened the problem to a locksmith creating keys to order but whenever they produce them they get two mirrored variants.

"Only one of them fits the lock - and the lock can be damaged if your customers try to unlock it with the other key."

One example of the potential danger of using the wrong key, or version, was the thalidomide scandal in the early 1960s, when thousands of

children were affected by birth defects.

"When researchers analysed what had happened, they realised that it was the active substance's mirror image that caused the harm," the academy said.

Through the work Kagan and Soai did in the 1980s and 1990s, chemists were able to understand how chemical reactions could be controlled to produce one side of the mirror image.

"Thanks to Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai, we now know how homochirality can emerge," the jury said.

"Their discoveries have been



decisive for chemists who design reactions for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals."

Kagan had previously missed out on the Nobel prize.

In 2001, the chemistry prize was awarded to William Knowles, Ryoji Noyori and Barry Sharpless for their pioneering work in asymmetric catalysis.

That sparked controversy, with many French chemists outraged by the absence of the man regarded internationally as the "father" of the technique.

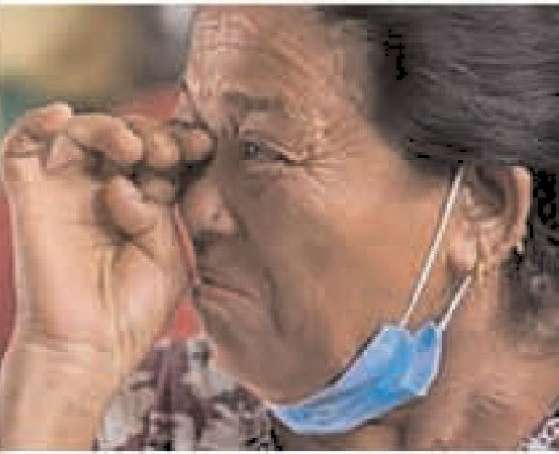
Last year, the chemistry prize went to Japan's Susumu Kitagawa, UK-born Richard Robson and American-Jordanian Omar Yaghi for developing a method of designing molecular structures.

The chemistry prize follows the physics prize, which on Tuesday honoured Belgian physicist Francis Halzen for groundbreaking work using Antarctic ice to capture particles originating in the distant cosmos.

On Monday, the medicine prize was awarded to US psychiatrist and neurologist Karl Deisseroth and German scientists Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel. The literature laureate will be revealed on Thursday, and perhaps the most keenly anticipated award - the peace prize - is due on Friday.

US President Donald Trump lobbied intensively last year to get the prize - Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado ended up giving him her Nobel medal - and the committee is aware he will be watching closely again. AP

Thousands still missing as Nepal ends flood search



Nepal announced its intention to cease search and rescue operations for victims of the Aug. 26 flood that killed at least 1,455 people with thousands more still missing.

Family members of 5,285 people who remain unaccounted for, including hundreds of foreign nationals, expressed mixed reactions, with some relieved and others unhappy with the decision by Nepal's government announced late Monday.

The office of Prime Minister Balendra Shah said the government will concentrate on rehabilitation and reconstruction including restoring roads and bridges cut off by floods, particularly in remote areas where damaged infrastructure has made aid deliveries difficult.

The government estimates reconstruction and recovery will cost \$4.77 billion. Nearly 33,000 people have been affected and about 7,500 homes were damaged or destroyed.

Hopes for finding survivors were revived after two Nepalese workers were rescued from an underground tunnel at the Trishuli hydropower project on Sept. 4, and again two days later when rescuers found a Chinese man at the same location.

The families of other flood victims have held protests and vigils in Nepal to call for the search efforts to be improved.

Usha Khatri opposed the government's decision to end rescue operations. She has spent days searching for her husband in many of the towns where the river flows and bodies have been recovered.

"I am so angry at the government for giving up on search and rescue with thousands of people still missing. I just don't understand how they can do that when we still have hope left that our loved one can still be found," Khatri said Wednesday.

During her ongoing search she has checked photos of bodies that were recovered but buried for preservation until identification is made. AP

US seeks answers from Russia on alleged plague outbreak reports

The United States made a formal request pressing Russia for information on the reported plague death of a laboratory technician, a source close to the matter said Tuesday, as calls grew for transparency from Moscow.

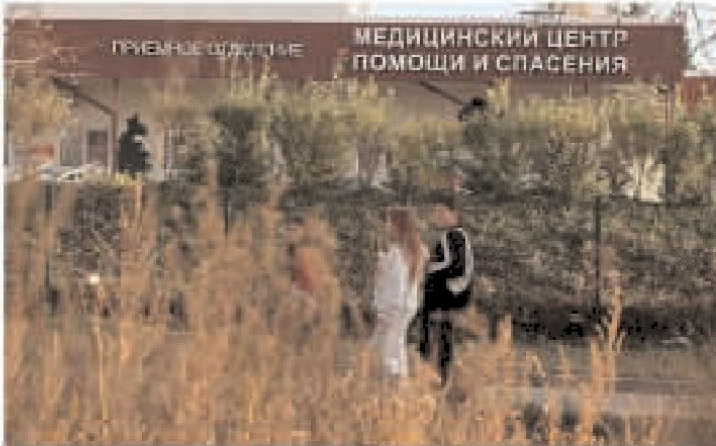
Russian authorities have denied that they are imposing anti-plague measures and played down the reports of an incident at a plague research institute in Siberia's Irkutsk region last week.

But US President Donald Trump said he would speak soon with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, while US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the World Health Organization's head called on Moscow to be open about the situation.

"We have officially requested information from the Russian government," a State Department spokesperson said

diplomatic communication, known as a demarche, according to a source close to the matter.

During a trip to Iceland,



be speaking to Putin about what happened.

"I have a call scheduled, yes," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked if he had spoken to Putin, adding that it would happen "very soon."

Asked what US intelligence agencies were saying about the situation, Trump said: "We're in very deep discussions. We'll be able to report on it probably tomorrow."

Cause of death 'undetermined'

Russian news outlet People of Baikal reported Friday that the dead woman - named as 28-year-old Darya Shipilova - may have contracted pneumonic plague from a broken test tube.

Other media reported a possible link between her death and a lab accident at the facility. The People of Baikal outlet also said up to 200 people with whom she may have had contact were under quarantine. AP

SPORTS

DTM



Russell penalty hands Antonelli lead chance

George Russell will be hit with a power unit penalty at this weekend's Singapore Grand Prix that could result in Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli extending his lead in the Formula 1 drivers' standings.

"George has the added challenge of a power unit penalty, which will mean starting from the back of the grid on Sunday, following the engine failure in Malaysia," Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff announced Wednesday.

"That is particularly frustrating given the way he drove last weekend and the result he deserved to be fighting for. Unfortunately, these things are part of the sport and our focus now is on giving him the best possible car and opportunities to fight back through the field."

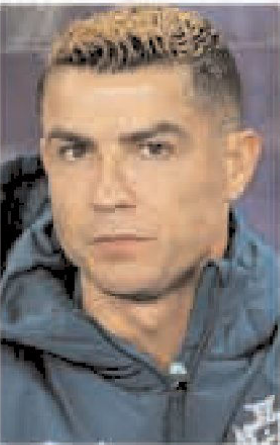
Russell's retirement in Malaysia already helped Antonelli stretch his lead over Russell from 66 to 84 points, with seven races remaining this season.

"Malaysia was obviously a very difficult weekend for us," Wolff said. "We have spent the days since then working hard to understand why our performance was not where it should have been."

The 20-year-old Antonelli, who finished second in Malaysia, is closing in on his first F1 title.

"The characteristics of the [Singapore] circuit are very different," Wolff said, "and that will help us build a clearer picture of where we are." **AP**

Ronaldo wants back in with Portugal after squad exit



Cristiano Ronaldo is not following Lionel Messi into international retirement just yet.

The Portugal superstar said he will remain available to play for his national team, despite having walked out on the squad during the current international window.

In a long statement posted Tuesday, just hours before Messi's much-anticipated farewell game with Argentina, Ronaldo said recently hired coach Jorge Jesus hadn't been true to his word about when he would play the striker in the latest round of Nations League matches.

Still, the 41-year-old Ronaldo said he owed fans and his teammates an apology and expects to receive a punishment.

"I can promise all my fans, and naturally especially all Portuguese people, that we will have one or more farewell matches. There will be time for that," Ronaldo said. He added: "Therefore, if I am physically fit, playing for my club, hopefully scoring goals, then after serving whatever suspension is imposed on me, I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team."

Ronaldo was an unused substitute for Portugal's 2-1 win over Norway in Oslo. He then left camp after Jesus said the star forward wouldn't start the game against Denmark last Thursday. Portugal beat the Danes 4-2 in Copenhagen. Ronaldo could possibly face a harsh punishment for leaving the training camp. The federation's disciplinary regulations say that any player who "abandons or fails to appear" without justification at a training session, match or activity of the national teams, "shall be sanctioned with a suspension of one to six months," in addition to a fine. **AP**

Gauff hit by racist abuse, then defeat in Beijing

Coco Gauff lost to a player she had beaten in all five of their previous matchups after receiving what she described as an "insane" amount of racist comments on social media following a controversial point in the preceding round.

The 19th-ranked Elise Mertens beat the fourth-ranked Gauff 6-3, 6-3 to reach the China Open quarterfinals on Wednesday.

In Monday's match against home player Sun Xinran, Gauff stepped a rally after electronic advertising boards lining the court flickered during a point late in the first set.

Sun appeared about to win the point when Gauff stopped playing. The chair umpire then ordered the point to be replayed.

"Hey everyone, you can dislike me or disagree about what happened without being racist," Gauff, who is Black, said in a reply on X. "The amount of racist comments/dms I've received in the last few hours is insane. Lastly, I'm not a cheater or a thief."

export, whose triumphs reminded the country of its capacity for greatness through years of political and economic instability.

"Argentines often say, 'Thank God I was born at a time when I could experience the miracle of watching Messi play,'" said Andrés Rabinovich, a University of Chicago scholar who has researched soccer's role in Argentine culture. "It's hard living in Argentina. Soccer is often one of the few things that offers you some respite, some joy."

For years, Argentines had debated when and how Messi should leave the world stage. His Aug. 31 announcement that he'd be retiring from the national team, weeks after Argentina's loss to Spain in the World Cup final, prompted an outpouring of gratitude and grief.

Argentina is confronting a once-unimaginable reality: a national team without soccer great Lionel Messi.

On Tuesday, 39-year-old Messi bid farewell to international soccer after 21 years, 126 goals, two Copa América titles and a World Cup championship, scoring a penalty and setting up Argentina's other two goals for a 3-0 victory over Benin. What was otherwise an unremarkable friendly against the West African nation became a moment that this soccer-crazed country had long dreaded.

"It feels like an era is ending, knowing he won't play for the national team anymore," said Valentino Russo, 17, who was heading to a friend's house in Buenos Aires to watch the game. "I'm sad. I think everyone is upset today. He will be missed."

Argentines had an intense, often unforgiving relationship with the shy boy who left his hometown of Rosario at 13 for the youth academy of Spanish club Barcelona. As he grew into a global icon of near-mythical stature, his compatriots adored and abused him, sometimes questioning his commitment to his home country and accusing him of indifference to it.

But by the time he ended his dazzling international career, his devotion to Argentina was no longer in question. Nor was Argentina's devotion to its most famous

Messi caps Argentina farewell with a penalty and 2 assists in a 3-0 win over Benin

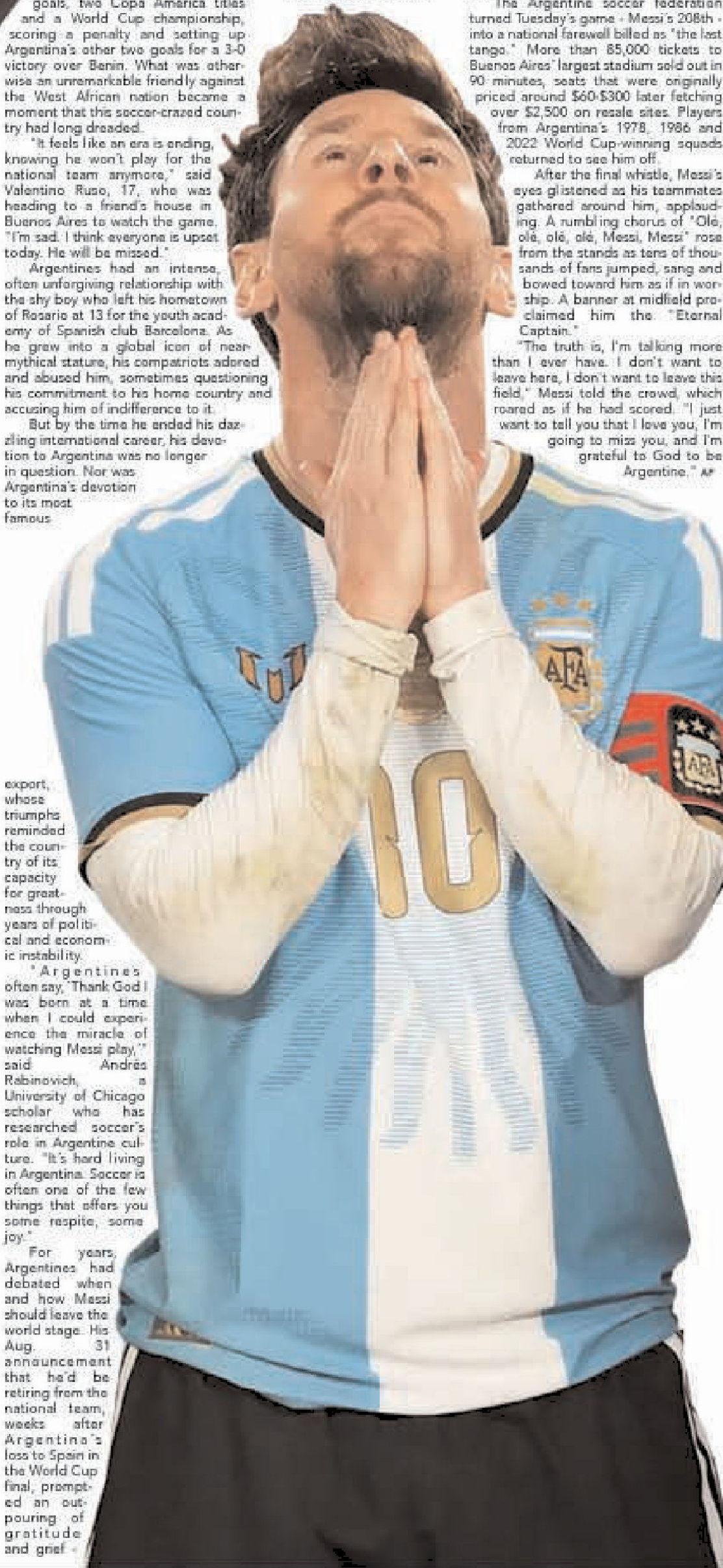
even as Messi will continue to light up Major League Soccer with Inter Miami.

"I don't know if there has ever been a love story between a player and a nation as great as the one you built," his teammate Rodrigo De Paul wrote on Instagram.

The Argentine soccer federation turned Tuesday's game - Messi's 208th - into a national farewell billed as "the last tango." More than 85,000 tickets to Buenos Aires' largest stadium sold out in 90 minutes, seats that were originally priced around \$60-\$300 later fetching over \$2,500 on resale sites. Players from Argentina's 1978, 1986 and 2022 World Cup-winning squads returned to see him off.

After the final whistle, Messi's eyes glistened as his teammates gathered around him, applauding. A rumbling chorus of "Olé, olé, olé, olé, Messi, Messi" rose from the stands as tens of thousands of fans jumped, sang and bowed toward him as if in worship. A banner at midfield proclaimed him the "Eternal Captain."

"The truth is, I'm talking more than I ever have. I don't want to leave here, I don't want to leave this field," Messi told the crowd, which roared as if he had scored. "I just want to tell you that I love you, I'm going to miss you, and I'm grateful to God to be Argentine." **AP**



Spain stun Croatia as Kane leads England



World champions Spain recovered to beat Croatia 2-1 on Tuesday, with Mikel Merino scoring twice to extend their unbeaten run to 42 matches and seal a place in the Nations League quarter-finals on the final night of the fourth round of group-stage action.

England eased to a 3-0 victory over the Czech Republic in the other League A3 match, with captain Harry Kane scoring twice and setting up the third on the night he equalled Peter Shilton's national appearance record with his 125th cap.

Spain top the group with 12 points, while England, who all but clinched a quarter-final spot, have nine, and Croatia are on three. The Czechs are still without a point.

Three days after Croatia were trounced 7-0 by visitors England, they threatened a major upset against Spain in Split when Ivan Perisic sent a well-placed header into the bottom-left corner in the 17th minute to give them the lead.

But substitute Merino equalized in the 61st to help preserve his nation's undefeated streak stretching back to March 2024 when he found space in the middle of the box before firing a left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

Croatia were reduced to 10 men when Perisic was sent off for a second yellow card in the 79th minute and Merino completed Spain's comeback 10 minutes later with another left-footed finish into the corner of the net.

At Wembley, Thomas Tuchel was full of praise for his team after reaching 20 wins in the fewest games of any England manager in the nation's history, with 26.

"I think we played a very good match, very fluid and, to put it into context, it's the fourth match in 11 or 12 days and I think we dominated through the whole match," Tuchel told ITV.

"Very focused, created some good opportunities, got some beautiful goals and, yeah, subs were strong. So a very good performance again and a deserved win."

The World Cup bronze medallists went ahead after 27 minutes through a Vladimir Coufal own goal, with Kane providing the cross.

Kane then marked his historic night with a pair of goals, striking just before the break when Elliot Anderson launched a long ball to Morgan Rogers, whose first-time cross from the right found the 33-year-old in the box for a clinical finish.

Kane completed his double in the 57th when he rose to head Lewis Hall's corner home from the back post to bag his 91st goal for England.

"It was the perfect night for me personally and also the team," Kane said. "It's been a tough camp, a long camp, and it's been nice to finish it off at Wembley, a really proud evening for sure."

"You saw some fantastic football from England out there today." **REUTERS**

Abrar loses No. 1 spot in T20I rankings

Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed has lost the top spot in the latest ICC T20I bowling rankings, with Afghanistan's Rashid Khan reclaiming the No. 1 position.

Rashid moved back to the top, while Australia's Adam Zampa retained third place and England's Adil Rashid remained fourth. India's Ishan Kishan retained the No. 1 position among T20I batters in the latest rankings.

His compatriot Abhishek Sharma held on to second place, while Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan remained third. The latest rankings reflect the performances of players in recent T20I matches.

Abrar's drop from the top spot comes as Rashid returns to the summit of the T20I bowling rankings. Sahibzada Farhan, meanwhile, continues to feature among the leading T20I batters, holding third position behind Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma. **AP**



Against Mertens, Gauff dropped her serve four times.

Mertens reached her first quarterfinal at a WTA 1000 event - the level just below the Grand Slams - in five years.

"She's an incredible player, of course. I knew it was going to be a very tough match," Mertens said. "But I had motivation. My coach/boyfriend, it's his birthday tomorrow. So this win is dedicated to him and all the work we do."

Mertens improved to 3-3 against top-10 opponents this year. She also beat defending champion Jasmine Paolini at the Italian Open and current No. 1 Elena Rybakina in the third round of Wimbledon, where she reached the quarterfinal.

Earlier, Iga Swiatek broke Iva Jovic's serve twice in the last four games to beat the 18-year-old American 6-1, 6-3.

Swiatek, a six-time Grand Slam champion who has struggled at times this year, will next play Mertens. **AP**