

Pakistan-Bahrain trade group, GCC FTA agreed

PM express satisfaction over positive trajectory of Pakistan-Bahrain bilateral relations

Pakistan and Bahrain on Thursday agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in multiple areas, including trade, investment, industries, agriculture and food security, higher education, information technology, logistics and maritime affairs, besides committing to finalise the Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed as Pakistan and Bahrain held the 3rd Joint Ministerial Commission, co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and

visiting Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani.

Following the ministerial commission's meeting, both leaders told the media at a joint press stakeout that two sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation across a broad spectrum of sectors, including energy, sports, tourism, and business-to-business dealings, besides achieving the target of doubling trade in three years.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar said the two countries signed the protocol of the third session of the 3rd Joint Ministerial Commission and committed to holding the 4th ministerial commission's meeting within a year.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in labour mobility, vocational training and human resource development, with a view to creating new opportunities for skilled Pakistani professionals

and workers.

The deputy prime minister told the media that the two sides also exchanged views on the evolving situation in the Gulf and emphasised the importance of restraint, de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy, besides discussing the need to ensure the safety and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-ul-Mandeb.

Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to playing a constructive role in supporting diplomatic efforts for peace and stability in the region, he also reaffirmed the principled support for the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights.

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Pakistan rubbishes NYT report on PAF jets in Yemen

Pakistan has rejected a New York Times report claiming that Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jets took part in an operation launched by Saudi forces against the Houthis.

In a fact-check posted on its official account on Thursday, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting described the report as "fake and fabricated" and urged international media organisations to refrain from speculative reporting on the use of Pakistan's armed forces under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

"Details of any employment, if necessary, will be given by the concerned authorities," the ministry said.

The clarification comes days after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye agreed to immediately implement their collective defence commitments under the agreement and ensure the "rapid deployment" of agreed military forces and capabilities in the Kingdom. **NEWS DESK**

Power bills up: Nepra notifies Rs 1.11 fuel cost hike

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Thursday notified electricity consumers of an additional burden of Rs16 billion by allowing Rs1.11 per unit in higher fuel costs in October billing.

In a notification, Nepra said it had decided that the "positive fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for August 2026, i.e. Rs1.1086/kWh ... shall be applicable to all the consumer categories of K-Electric and ex-Wapda distribution companies (KWDISCOs), except lifeline consumers, electric vehicle charging stations and prepaid electricity consumers of all categories who opted for the prepaid tariff".

The regulator said the higher FCA would also be applicable to consumers under the incremental consumption package.

DISCOs and KE are required to reflect the fuel cost adjustment for August 2026 in the October 2026 billing month.

The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) had reported that the actual average fuel charges component for August 2026 amounted to Rs8.8265/kWh, against the reference fuel charges component of Rs7.0998/kWh approved in the applicable notified consumer-and tariff.

Accordingly, it had demanded an additional FCA of Rs1.73 per unit for electricity consumed in August 2026.

After certain adjustments, Nepra worked out the actual fuel component of the tariff at Rs8.2084, instead of Rs8.8265 as claimed by CPPA, thus allowing an additional FCA of Rs1.11 in October billing, instead of the Rs1.73 per unit demanded by CPPA. **NEWS DESK**

IMF nods to \$1.2bn deal with Pakistan as reviews conclude

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff and Pakistan have reached a staff-level agreement on the fourth review of the \$7-billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review of the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), while completing the 2026 Article IV consultation.

IMF team, led by Iva Petrova, held discussions under the 2026 Article IV consultation and on the fourth review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) in Karachi and Islamabad from September 23 to October 7, 2026. At the conclusion of the discussions, Petrova issued the following statement on Thursday.

"The IMF team has reached a staff-level agreement with the Pakistani authorities on the fourth review of the 37-month Extended Arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the third review of the 28-month arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). The staff-level agreement is subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board. Upon approval, Pakistan will have access to about \$1.0 billion (SDR 760 million)



under the EFF and about US\$210 million (SDR 154 million) under the RSF, bringing total disbursements under the two arrangements to about \$5.7 billion.

"Supported by the EFF, the authorities have successfully navigated the impact of the Middle East conflict, and strong policies have helped preserve macroeconomic stability. Real GDP growth reached 4 percent in the first three quarters of FY26, and although higher energy prices and supply disruptions weakened somewhat the momentum, FY26 growth is estimated at 3.6 percent. Headline inflation, after peaking in May, moderated to about 10.3 percent in September, while core inflation remained contained. The current account was broadly balanced in FY26, supported by strong remittances, and gross reserves rose to about \$21½ billion by end-September. Sovereign rating

upgrades and renewed international market access also point to stronger policy credibility. Nevertheless, risks remain high, particularly from geopolitical tensions, volatile energy prices, tighter global financial conditions, and trade disruptions.

Foreign reserves rise to \$26.8 bn
The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan rose to US\$ 26,797.4 million as of October 02, while State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reserves further increased to US\$ 21,453.7 million.

"During the week ended on 2-Oct-2026, SBP's FX reserves increased by US\$ 15 million to US\$ 21,453.7 million", the central bank Thursday reported in its weekly statement on the position of liquid foreign reserves.

Meanwhile, the foreign reserves held by commercial banks increased by \$ 12 million to \$ 5,343.7 million during the period under review, the breakup of forex reserves showed. **NEWS DESK**

Fazl emerges as go-between for govt, opposition

The government committee has submitted a report to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on its meeting with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rahman, government sources said on Thursday.

According to the committee's report, Fazlur Rahman is ready to play his role in ending the deadlock in talks and resolving disputes.

Sources said the committee also briefed the prime minister on the conditions put forward by Fazlur Rahman for playing a conciliatory role. A special message from Fazlur Rahman was also conveyed to the prime minister, according to government sources.

According to the sources, both the government and opposition have agreed on Fazlur Rahman's name as a potential mediator and have approached him to play a role in resolving the impasse.

The sources said Maulana has informed both sides of his basic conditions for taking on the mediatory role.

The JUI-F chief has told the parties that he would first assess how serious and committed they are to finding a solution to the issues before deciding whether to mediate.

He has asked both sides to respond to his conditions, after which he will decide whether to formally assume the role. According to the sources, Fazlur Rahman will proceed with mediation if the government and opposition reach agreement on the basic issues.

He has conveyed to both sides that a way out of the deadlock remains possible if they make a serious and sincere effort and recognize each other's positions.

Fazlur Rahman has also warned that if the deadlock persists and force is used to stop the opposition's long march, it would further complicate efforts to resolve the situation, according to the sources.

Moreover, the JUI-F chief has conveyed the government's offer to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), prompting the party to call an emergency meeting, sources said.

The emergency meeting is being held via video link, with all PTI leaders participating, according to sources.

Meanwhile, PTI Chairman Barister Gohar Khan called for renewed political dialogue, saying the party remained willing to pursue a "middle way" to prevent further instability and safeguard the democratic system.

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Another hike: Petrol +Rs 2.31, diesel +Rs 0.78

Government further increased the price of petrol by Rs2.31 per litre to Rs398.96 and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs0.78 to Rs395.72 per litre, effective for Friday, October 9, 2026.

According to a Petroleum

Division notification, the price of petrol was raised from Rs396.65 to Rs398.96 per litre, while the price of diesel was increased from Rs394.94 to Rs395.72 per litre.

The revised prices will remain effective for October 9, 2026, under

the federal government's petroleum pricing mechanism.

The Petroleum Division said the price revision was necessitated by global developments, including changes in Pletts rates, premiums and incidentals. **NEWS DESK**

National



Bilawal reviews development, climate resilience plan of Sukkur

World



Canadian poet and essayist Anne Carson wins Nobel Prize in literature

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Pakistan, Sri Lanka set for T20I series opener in Rawalpindi

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Memon blasts KP CM over talks failure

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DTM

Bilawal reviews development, climate resilience plan of Sukkur



PPP chairman appreciates development initiatives in Sukkur, stressing that benefits of development must reach citizens directly

Discusses legislative matters during separate meeting with Sindh Assembly speaker

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held a detailed meeting with Mayor Sukkur and Sindh Government Spokesperson Barrister Arsalan Islam Sheikh to review Sukkur's urban development roadmap, civic services and climate resilience initiatives.

During the meeting on Thursday, Barrister Sheikh briefed the PPP Chairman on the performance of Sukkur Municipal Corporation, ongoing projects, municipal reforms and measures being taken to improve quality of life for citizens.

The Mayor said Sukkur Municipal Corporation is undergoing a major digital transformation to create a modern, efficient and paperless municipal system. The initiative, he said, will improve service delivery, transparency and citizens' access to municipal services.

Briefing on water and sanitation, Barrister Sheikh said a major clean drinking water project for Sukkur has been prepared under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The plan and operational model are ready and awaiting approval from the PPP Policy Board. Once approved, the project will provide clean drinking water to over 650,000 citizens and more than 100,000 households in the city.

On sewerage, he informed that over 50 percent of Sukkur's wastewater is now being treated before discharge into the River Indus, with a target to achieve 100 percent treatment in the next phase. He added that steps are being taken to protect the ecology and biodiversity of the Indus River, including conservation of the Indus River Blind Dolphin and freshwater turtles.

Barrister Sheikh also briefed the Chairman on the climate adaptation and urban development plan presented at the Climate Adaptation Investment Planning Forum (CAIP) at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Headquarters in Manila.

He said the Sindh Secondary Cities Improvement and Investment Programme, being implemented jointly by the Government of Sindh

and ADB, is one of the major urban initiatives for the province.

Under the programme, an investment plan of around US\$1 billion is envisaged for Sindh's five divisional headquarters — Sukkur, Hyderabad, Larkana, Mirpurkhas and Shehzad Benazirabad.

The programme focuses on clean drinking water, modern sewerage and wastewater management, solid waste management, scientifically designed landfill sites and resource recovery facilities. It also includes climate-resilient infrastructure, urban forestry, tree plantation and comprehensive master and sectoral development plans.

He said the programme aims to go beyond infrastructure and strengthen cities' economic potential, enhance productive capacity and create employment and economic opportunities for youth, women and vulnerable communities.

Documentation for project readiness financing is nearing completion, which will also include PPP projects to improve urban services and create sustainable revenue streams for municipal institutions.

In another major development, Barrister Sheikh informed that a US\$2 million grant has been approved for Sukkur under the Urban Resilience Trust Fund for Climate and Heat Adaptation Investment Planning.

He clarified that it is a grant, not a loan, and carries no repayment obligation, debt servicing or service charges.

The grant will help develop investment-ready projects, mobilise additional financial resources and strengthen long-term planning to protect the city from extreme heat, with special focus on low-income families, informal settlements and vulnerable communities.

international consultants are expected to start work in Sukkur in November 2026.

Briefing on major city projects, the Mayor said the internationally-standard "Ladies World" project will provide women a safe and healthy recreational and social space, with facilities including a walking track, swimming pool, gymnasium and library.

He said the Gadani Phatak Overhead Bridge will significantly improve connectivity between two key tahsils of Sukkur, directly benefiting around 350,000 citizens.

He stressed that Sukkur's development vision is not limited to roads and bridges but aims to build a modern, sustainable and economically vibrant urban system linking improved civic services with economic opportunities for youth, women and entrepreneurs.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari appreciated the development initiatives in Sukkur and stressed that sustainable urban development must be further strengthened and its benefits must reach citizens directly. Provision of quality public services and improvement in living standards must remain the top priority, he said.

Barrister Arsalan Islam Sheikh thanked Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his special interest in Sukkur's development and said that under PPP's leadership, all available resources and modern planning approaches are being utilized to transform Sukkur into a modern, clean, green and climate-resilient city.

Separately, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Speaker Provincial Assembly of Sindh Syed Awaiz Qadir Shah at Bilawal House. During the meeting, matters related to the Sindh Assembly and legislation was discussed. The Speaker briefed the PPP Chairman on Assembly affairs and legislative matters. **NEWS DESK**

Mayor Wahab directs prompt resolution of complaints

Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab held the second E-Kachehri as part of efforts to provide citizens with direct access for the resolution of municipal issues.

Citizens from different parts of the city contacted the Mayor Karachi directly and apprised him of their problems, complaints and suggestions. The E-Kachehri continued from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm, during which citizens contacted the Water Corporation helpline 1334 and raised complaints regarding sanitation, road repairs, water supply, sewerage and other municipal matters.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab directly reviewed the complaints received from citizens and issued immediate directives to the relevant departments and officers for necessary action. He directed that issues which could be resolved on the spot should be addressed immediately, while every possible effort should be made to resolve other urgent matters within 24 hours. He said that no delay in providing relief to citizens would be tolerated and directed the concerned officers to ensure that complaints were addressed on a priority basis.

Mayor Karachi said that the primary objective of the E-Kachehri was to listen directly to citizens and take effective and timely measures for resolving their

municipal problems. He said that citizens had been provided with a direct platform to bring their complaints to the attention of the city's senior municipal leadership, enabling the relevant departments to take immediate action. He also directed the concerned officers to keep citizens informed about the progress made in resolving their complaints so that the grievance-redressal process could be made more effective and transparent.

The second E-Kachehri organized by Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab received positive feedback from citizens. In view of public demand and the encouraging response, the duration of the E-Kachehri has also been extended, with further expansion

being considered in the future. Mayor Karachi said that the process of listening to citizens' problems and providing them with timely relief would continue. **NEWS DESK**



Lanjar reviews progress on Sindh Forensic Laboratory

Sindh Minister for Home and Law Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar visited the under-construction Sindh Forensic Science Laboratory in Deh Joreji, Bin Qasim town District Malir. The facility is being developed on 30 acres of land.

The Home Minister was briefed on the project's progress, design and planned facilities. Officials informed him that approximately 85 per cent of the construction work had been completed, with the building's completion and handover targeted in 2026-27.

The project includes a main laboratory building, an evidence collection block and a reception block, along with allied infrastructure. The planned facilities have a total covered area of approximately 393,145 square feet. The laboratory will have 14 forensic disciplines, including digital forensics and forensic photography, pathology, trace chemistry, firearms and tool marks, toxicology, computer forensics, questioned documents, DNA and serology,

latent fingerprints, audiovisual analysis, narcotics, polygraph, crime and death scene investigation, and explosives analysis.

The briefing also covered the laboratory's environmental controls, specialised electrical and data systems, backup power, biosafety arrangements, security systems and dedicated ventilation for chemical laboratories. An operationalisation plan, including procurement of laboratory equipment and furniture, training and operationalisation, has also been approved.

The Home Minister directed that the facility be equipped to meet modern requirements, with all necessary digital facilities. He stressed the need to complete construction promptly, adding that modern forensic services would support scientific investigation and strengthen the criminal justice and prosecution systems. The Additional Chief Secretary for Home

Additional Chief Secretary Home Home Muhammad Iqbal Memon, Advocate General Sindh Jawad Dero, Inspector General of Police Sindh Javed Alam Odha, Additional IG Karachi, Additional IG CTD, DIG Crime Branch, DIG East and Ssp Malir were also present during the visit. **NEWS DESK**

Nasir Shah accuses PTI of promoting violent politics

Sindh Minister for Local Government, Housing and Town Planning Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that PTI's long march amounts to terrorism against the minds of the people, while the politics of confrontation, violence and unrest has become their practice. He said every PTI rally turns violent, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party had always opposed and condemned violent politics. He expressed these views while speaking to the media at the inauguration ceremony of a 900-metre road in Scheme-33, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, the Director General of the KDA and local leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party were also present on the occasion.

Nasir Hussain Shah said PTI leaders kept praising themselves and put their workers at risk before retreating themselves. He said Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was

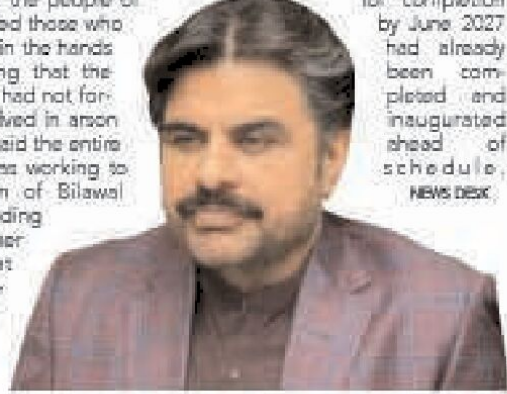
the first to oppose Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the Chairman had stressed resolving issues through dialogue. However, he said the talks failed because of their rigid attitude, while their violent and disruptive approach also contributed to the failure of negotiations.

The PPP leadership was still making efforts to resolve issues, he said, adding that the country could not afford any political unrest amid the prevailing economic and terrorism-related situation. Nasir Hussain Shah said motorways around the world were generally developed from seaports, but the most important route had not been given due attention. Motorways were being constructed in other provinces, while the Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway was being developed under a public-private partnership.

He said Sindh contributed 67 per cent to the federation economically, but the federal government provided only two per cent for development works in the province. He added that not even one per cent had been provided to Sindh from 2013 to 2018. Nasir Hussain Shah said the people of Karachi had rejected those who had put weapons in the hands of children, adding that the people of Karachi had not forgotten those involved in arson and violence. He said the entire PPP leadership was working to realize the vision of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, adding that a large number of development projects were nearing completion in Karachi and inaugurations and

groundbreaking ceremonies were being held on a daily basis, which, he said, were becoming a source of concern for opponents.

He said provision of public facilities was the government's top priority, adding that several projects scheduled for completion by June 2027 had already been completed and inaugurated ahead of schedule. **NEWS DESK**



Bilawal's Sindh vision: Water, energy, investment and jobs

By Mustafa Abdullah Baloch

Development is ultimately measured by its impact on people's lives. In Sindh, two major developments witnessed in recent days — one in Karachi and the other in Tharparkar — reflect an increasingly clear development direction under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto: investing in essential infrastructure, developing indigenous resources, attracting investment and creating economic opportunities for the people.

The inauguration of the first phase of the wastewater treatment project at Heroanabad in Karachi and the expansion of the Thar Block-II coal project may appear to belong to two different sectors. In reality, both address fundamental requirements of economic development: water and energy.

For Karachi, water remains one of the city's most pressing challenges. The inauguration of Treatment Plant-I under the Greater Karachi Sewerage Plan (GKSP) represents an important step towards addressing that challenge. The first phase will provide 35 million gallons of treated wastewater per day for industrial use, while a further 65 MGD is planned, ultimately taking the project's capacity to 100 MGD.

The significance of this initiative extends beyond wastewater treatment. Karachi's industries require reliable water supplies, but freshwater is an increasingly precious resource. By providing treated wastewater for industrial purposes, the project can help release valuable freshwater for domestic consumption,

Mustafa Abdullah Baloch, Spokesperson, Government of Sindh, said these initiatives connect development with the everyday needs of the people. He said Karachi's water needs and Sindh's energy potential require long-term planning and investment.

He said the Karachi project demonstrates how infrastructure can simultaneously address an immediate public need and support the city's economic growth. For a city of Karachi's scale, sustainable water management is essential for both its residents and its industrial economy.

Bilawal Bhutto's emphasis on Karachi's development is particularly important because the city's economic performance has a direct bearing on the prosperity of Sindh and Pakistan. Karachi is home to major industries, businesses, ports and millions of workers. Investment in its basic infrastructure is therefore investment in the wider economy.

According to Mustafa Abdullah Baloch, the public-private partnership model being applied to major infrastructure projects can play an important role in accelerating development. Government can provide policy direction, infrastructure and oversight, while private investment, technology and expertise can help deliver projects on the scale required by a city of Karachi's size.

The same develop-

ment philosophy is visible in Thar.

During his recent visit to Tharparkar, Bilawal inaugurated Phase III of the Thar Block-II coal mine, increasing annual mining capacity from 7.6 million tonnes to 11.2 million tonnes, along with Pakistan's first coal-drying unit.

The expansion is intended to provide additional fuel for Lucky Electric's 660MW power plant, while total electricity generation supported by Thar Block-II is projected to reach 1,980MW.

For Pakistan, the development of indigenous energy resources has strategic economic significance. The country has for years faced the challenge of expensive imported fuels and pressure on its foreign exchange reserves. Increasing domestic energy production can help reduce exposure to international fuel-price fluctuations while retaining greater economic value within the country.

Mustafa Abdullah Baloch said the development of Thar's energy resources is significant not only for Sindh but for Pakistan's broader energy and economic needs. He noted that indigenous energy can support electricity generation, reduce dependence on imported fuel and create new economic opportunities.

Officials have estimated that the

latest Thar expansion could save approximately Rs15 billion annually in power generation costs and around \$220 million in foreign exchange.

But the significance of Thar goes beyond coal and electricity.

The development of Thar has also been linked with local employment and social development. The objective is not simply to extract a natural resource, but to create an economic ecosystem around it — generating jobs, developing skills and improving infrastructure for communities in Tharparkar.

This local dimension matters greatly. The success of any resource-development project should ultimately be reflected in the lives of the people living in the resource-rich region.

Mustafa Abdullah Baloch said the Thar experience demonstrates how the province's natural resources can be connected with employment, investment and opportunities for local communities. He said development must ultimately translate into better economic prospects for the people of Sindh.

Bilawal has also highlighted the potential of extending the public-private partnership model developed through Thar to other parts of Sindh, including Karachi and the province's coastal areas.

Karachi possesses enormous economic potential. Its industrial base, coastline, ports, workforce and commercial importance make it capable of attracting investment across multiple sectors. But that potential can only be realized when the city's infrastructure

keeps pace with its growth.

This is why the recent developments in Karachi and Thar deserve to be viewed together.

Karachi represents the economic heart of Sindh, while Thar represents one of its most important indigenous resource bases. One requires sustainable water and infrastructure; the other offers enormous energy potential.

According to Mustafa Abdullah Baloch, these developments reflect an approach that seeks to connect Sindh's different economic strengths rather than viewing individual projects in isolation. Karachi's infrastructure, Thar's energy resources, the province's coastline and its industrial base can collectively contribute to a stronger economic foundation.

Sindh has extraordinary economic assets: Karachi's industrial and commercial strength, Thar's energy resources, a long coastline and a large young population. The task is to convert these assets into sustainable opportunities for its people.

The developments in Karachi and Thar provide a glimpse of that possibility.

From treating wastewater for Karachi's industries to expanding indigenous energy production in Thar, the focus is increasingly on practical solutions to the challenges that directly affect economic growth and people's lives.

This is the essence of Bilawal Bhutto's development drive: turning Sindh's resources and potential into infrastructure, energy, investment and opportunities for its people.



NATIONAL



No EOBI pension without meeting legal requirements: FCCP

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has ruled that a person who does not fulfil the mandatory legal requirements for pension cannot be directed to receive pension, while a dispute over a legal entitlement cannot be brought within the jurisdiction of the Federal Ombudsman merely by labeling it as maladministration.

The court allowed an appeal filed by the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) and set aside the Islamabad High Court judgment as well as the orders passed by the Federal Ombudsman and the President of Pakistan.

Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan authored the 12-page written order of a three-member bench. Umar Ejaz Gilani appeared on behalf of the petitioner.

The court held that the Federal Ombudsman could not bypass the specific statutory procedure for determining eligibility for pension. Rejection of a pension claim, by itself, did not constitute maladministration. Maladministration required elements such as arbitrariness, discrimination, negligence or unjustified delay.

The written order said that causing loss to an applicant as a result of compliance with mandatory legal requirements did not amount to maladministration. A mandatory condition for legal eligibility could not be waived on the basis of compassion or general notions of justice.

The court observed that, under the EOBI law, pension generally requires at least 15 years of contributions, while the special five-year concession does not apply to insured employees covered on or after July 1, 2008.

According to the order, Javed Iqbal Bhatti had less than six years of insured employment and was therefore not entitled to pension. The Old-Age Grant of Rs48,000 already paid to him also did not create a right to pension.

The court said eligibility for benefits, their amount and duration would be determined under Section 33 of the EOBI law, which also provides a mechanism for review and appeal against decisions.

The written order further held that an order issued without jurisdiction could not acquire legal validity merely through its endorsement by the President or a court. Recording reasons for a decision was not a mere formality but was necessary to establish its legal basis.

The FCCP ruled that a dispute concerning a legal entitlement could not be brought within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction by simply describing it as maladministration. APP

Interior Minister, UN Chief discuss global security, regional situation

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited the Ministry of Interior and met Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry.

The meeting focused on the global and regional situation as well as matters related to United Nations peace missions.

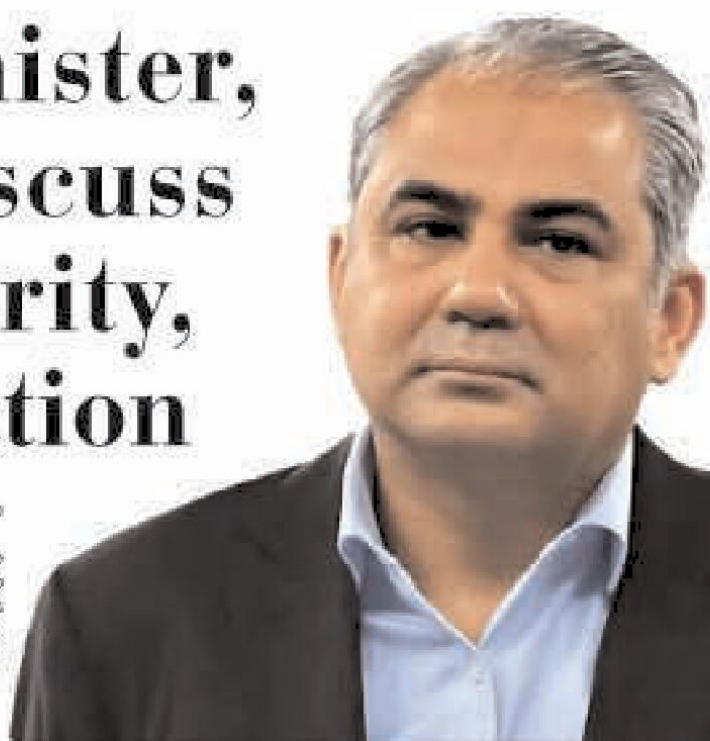
During the meeting, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan is fighting the global war against terrorism and continues to face security challenges. He stated that 25 terrorist organizations are currently operating in Afghanistan

and pose a serious threat to peace around the world.

Mohsin Naqvi said the international community needs to work together to address this threat. He emphasized that cooperation among countries is necessary to counter terrorism and maintain peace and stability.

The Interior Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to United Nations peacekeeping missions and said the country will continue to play its role in these operations. He noted that Pakistani police officers and personnel are also serving in the United Nations Police and contributing to international peace efforts.

Mohsin Naqvi said Pakistan has sacrificed 181 lives while participating in UN peace missions, reflecting the country's contribution to maintaining peace



in different parts of the world.

Speaking on the occasion, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres acknowledged Pakistan's role in UN peacekeeping operations. He said Pakistan's participation in peace missions has always been significant and recognized the country's contribution to international peace and security.

Guterres also appreciated Pakistan's efforts for global peace and said the country has played an important role in supporting peace initiatives under the United Nations framework. During the meeting, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi thanked the UN Secretary-General for the support and assistance provided by the United Nations to Pakistan during natural disasters.

Special Secretary Interior, Additional Secretary Interior and other senior officials were also present during the meeting. APP

President calls for further strengthening of Pak-German ties

President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called for further strengthening Pakistan-Germany relations, particularly in trade and investment, development cooperation, defence, skilled labour mobility and business-to-business engagement.

The president expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Germany, Salman Sharif, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said. He said Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding relations with Germany and looks forward to making the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026 a meaningful opportunity to deepen bilateral cooperation. The president stressed the need to increase bilateral trade and business engagement, noting that Germany is Pakistan's largest export destination in the EU.

The president also called for continued defence cooperation, a early favourable consideration of Pakistan's pending requests and greater cooperation on skilled labour mobility. The president recalled Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's invitation to German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to visit Pakistan and expressed the hope that the visit would take place at a mutually convenient date. The president congratulated Salman Sharif on his new assignment and expressed confidence that he would work towards further strengthening Pak-Germany relations. app



Receives report from Justice Irfan: President Zardari received a report from Justice Irfan Qadir, Consultant (Legal Affairs) on the disposal of more than 6,000 representations between 2024 and 2026, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

According to the report, more than 6,000 representations were decided, a record in the history of the representation mechanism. The president was informed that the process also saw increased emphasis on transparency and decisions in most cases were pronounced in the presence of the concerned parties, a Presidency's news release said.

Wafaqi Mohtasib: President Zardari met with Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Naveed Kamran Baloch at Aiwan-e-Sadr, where he was presented with the Annual Report for 2025.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib briefed the President on the institution's performance and measures to improve public access to administrative justice, including the redressal of a record 261,101 complaints in 2025, compared with 223,198 in 2024, with an implementation rate of 96.8%. He also highlighted the expansion of its presence to 28 cities, One Window Facilitation Desks for Overseas Pakistanis at international airports, noting that nearly 88% of complaints were disposed of within the statutory 60-day time period, a Presidency's news release said. The president commended the performance of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, saying that the institution is rendering a useful service to the people. He underscored the need to project its activities, particularly its efforts for speedy redressal of public complaints, so that a greater number of people could benefit from its services.

Greets Ugandan president: President Asif Ali Zardari has felicitated President of the Republic of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and the people of Uganda on the occasion of Uganda's Independence Day.

In his letter, the president said that Pakistan and Uganda enjoy close and cordial relations founded on mutual respect, shared values and cooperation at international fora. APP

Pak-Iran ties key to regional peace: Envoy

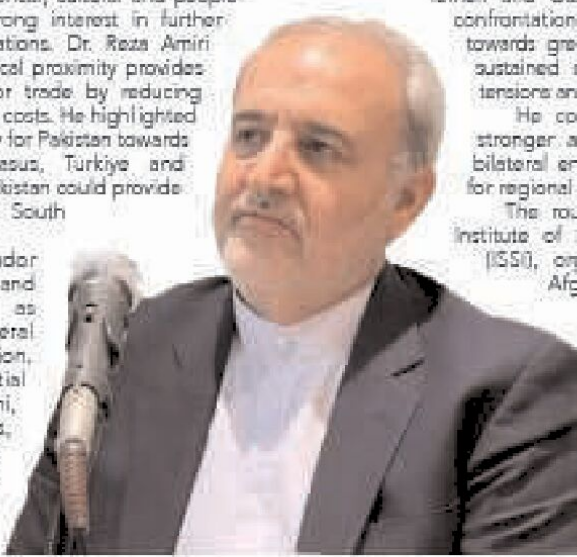
Appreciates the solidarity expressed by Govt & people of Pakistan during the hostilities between the US and Iran

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam says Pakistan and Iran, as neighbouring countries with deep historical, cultural and people-to-people ties, have a shared interest in strengthening cooperation across all areas. Our geographical proximity provides significant opportunities to expand trade, connectivity and regional economic cooperation, he said.

This was stated by Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam while speaking at a Roundtable Discussion at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Thursday.

The Ambassador stated that Pakistan and Iran, as neighbouring countries sharing a long border, maritime connectivity and deep historical, cultural and people-to-people ties, have a strong interest in further strengthening bilateral relations. Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam said geographical proximity provides significant opportunities for trade by reducing transportation and logistical costs. He highlighted Iran's potential as a gateway for Pakistan towards Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey and European markets, while Pakistan could provide Iran access to markets in South Asia and beyond.

The Ambassador identified road, maritime and railway connectivity as important pillars of bilateral economic cooperation. Referring to potential cooperation among Karachi, Qwader and Bandar Abbas, he stressed the need to expand border crossings and improve border infrastructure. He also highlighted the



potential for increased Pakistani food exports to Iran and greater transit activity through Pakistan. On railway connectivity, he said Iran had developed infrastructure towards Zahedan and the Pakistani border, while further development on the Pakistani side would be required to establish an effective rail connection linking Pakistan with Central Asia and European markets.

Turning to regional security, the Ambassador appreciated the solidarity expressed by the Government and people of Pakistan during the hostilities between the US and Iran. He acknowledged the diplomatic efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Asim Munir and Pakistan's senior leadership in seeking de-escalation and facilitating dialogue. He said Iran remained committed to negotiations and a peaceful and sustainable solution while maintaining its readiness to respond to security challenges if needed. Referring to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), he emphasised that credible commitments and their implementation were essential for future diplomatic processes. The Ambassador expressed concern over continuing tensions in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Gaza, warning that prolonged confrontation was pushing the region towards greater instability. He called for sustained diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and promote peaceful solutions.

He concluded by reiterating that stronger and sustained Pakistan-Iran bilateral engagement was instrumental for regional peace and stability.

The roundtable was hosted at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), organized by its Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA), and moderated by Ambassador Mo'in Ul Haque, Director General, ISSI. Pakistan's former senior diplomats, politicians and military officials, leading academics, and security analysts attended the discussion. SABAH

Chairman Senate holds meeting with IPU President

Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday held a luncheon and a one-on-one meeting with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) President Dr Tullia Ackson on the sidelines of the 153rd IPU Assembly in Arusha, Tanzania.

Gilani congratulated Dr Ackson on the successful completion of her tenure as IPU president from 2023 to 2026.

He praised her leadership and efforts to make the IPU more inclusive, representative and effective as the global organisation of parliaments.

"Under your able and inspiring leadership, the IPU has become a stronger platform for peace, dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy," he said.

Gilani said Dr Ackson, as the first African woman to serve as IPU president, had become an inspiration for women parliamentarians, particularly in the Global South.

He said he had worked closely with Dr Ackson during her presidency and would continue to work with her to promote parliamentary cooperation and strengthen the role of the IPU.

The Senate chairman also thanked Dr Ackson, the Tanzanian government and its people for the arrangements and hospitality extended to the delegates in Arusha.

He invited Dr Ackson to visit Pakistan as a guest of the Senate at a mutually convenient time. She accepted the invitation and thanked Gilani for the gesture.

Gilani is leading a cross-party delegation of the Senate and National Assembly to the 153rd IPU Assembly, being held at the Arusha International Conference Centre from Oct 5 to 9.

The meeting was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. APP

Rubina highlights skills, jobs and climate resilience at ADB Forum

The Asia-Pacific Social Protection (APSP) Week 2026, organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) from October 6 to 8 in Manila, Philippines, brought together government leaders, policymakers, practitioners, development partners and social protection experts to advance inclusive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems.

Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid participated in the High-Level Roundtable on Skills, Employment and Social Protection: "Building Resilience Pathways for Learning, Work and Security." She highlighted BISP's evolving role beyond cash transfers, particularly its efforts to connect social protection with market-relevant skills, digital opportunities and employment for young people and women.

Senator Rubina Khalid said Pakistan's large youth population requires skills aligned with changing market demands and said that BISP is working with the ADB to scale up skills development within the social

protection framework.

Highlighting the Benazir Humairat Programme (BHP), she said the programme was launched by the President and approved by the BISP Board as a regular programme to respond to evolving skills and employment challenges. She explained that training is based on market-driven trades identified through national assessments, while success is measured by employability and income generation rather than certification alone.

The roundtable included Carmela Torres, Undersecretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines; Pakafanus Paungs, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tonga; Krishna Bahadur Rout, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security, Nepal; and Farzana Shamim, State Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh. The closing remarks were delivered by Ms. Ayako Inagaki, Deputy Director General, ADB.

Later, Senator Rubina Khalid participated in a Panel Discussion at the ADB Adaptive Social Protection Forum, held under the broader APSP Week theme, "Boosting Resilience to Face Polyrisks and Megatrends." She highlighted Pakistan's experience in developing an adaptive and shock-responsive social protection system to protect vulnerable families from climate and economic shocks.

Speaking during the discussion, Senator Rubina Khalid stated,

"Pakistan contributes very little to global carbon emissions, yet its vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate change. The international community must step up support for Pakistan's most vulnerable families by strengthening climate resilience, expanding adaptive social protection and providing practical assistance to help communities withstand future climate shocks."

She highlighted BISP's experience in responding to climate-related emergencies, stating that during the 2022 floods, 2.7 million families received PKR 70 billion in emergency cash assistance. She also said that BISP's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) covers more than 40 million households and has been

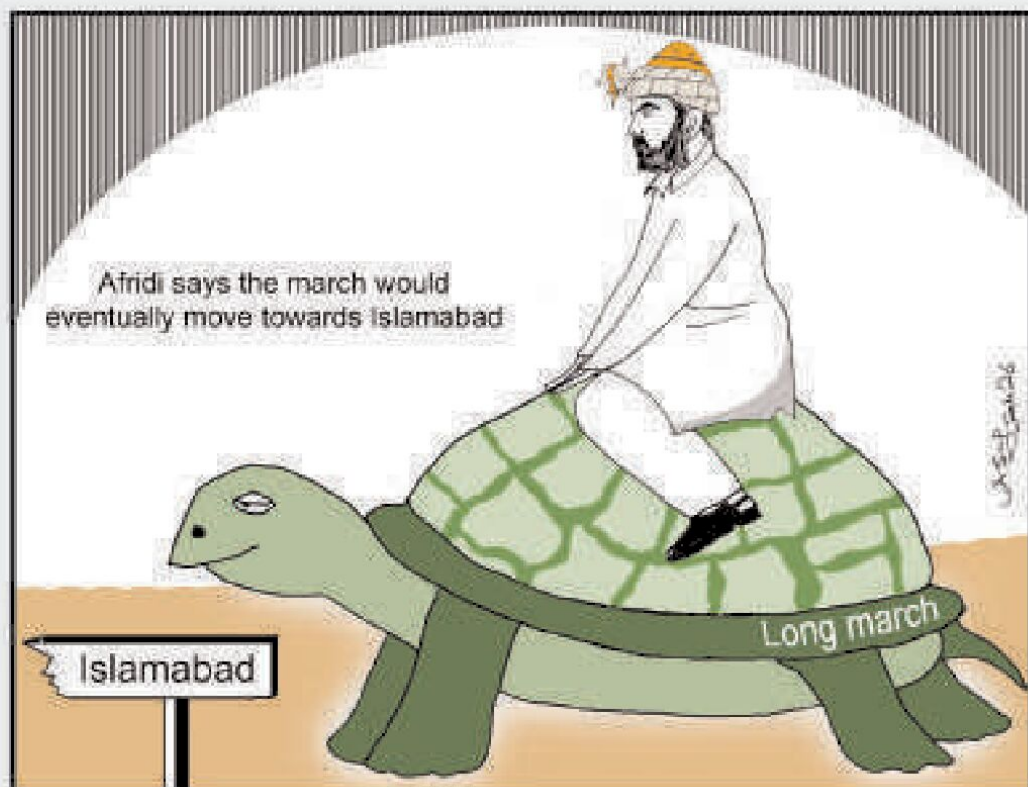
made dynamic, with climate-related questions incorporated into the survey to better identify households exposed to climate risks.

The panel featured Brenda Alik-Helms, Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; Datuk Norma Mansor, Professor Emeritus and Director, Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Malaya, Malaysia; and Samir Vannmali, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, World Food Programme (WFP), Thailand.

Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid also met with Rex Gaschalian, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Philippines, during her visit to Manila. SABAH



EDITORIAL



UN must do something on Kashmir

The meeting between UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi comes at an important time for regional and global security. Their discussion on Kashmir, the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, terrorism from Afghanistan and wider regional tensions shows how closely these issues are linked to international peace. Pakistan has also continued to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions and has paid a heavy price in the fight against terrorism. Guterres' recognition of Pakistan's sacrifices is welcome. But appreciation alone is not enough. The United Nations must play a more active and credible role when long-running disputes threaten peace and stability. The Kashmir dispute, in particular, cannot remain a subject of repeated statements without meaningful international attention. The UN has a responsibility to support peaceful dialogue, encourage respect for international commitments and help prevent disputes from turning into larger conflicts. Its role is especially important when relations between neighbouring countries remain tense and when issues such as water can affect the lives and security of millions of people.

The wider challenge for the UN is to restore confidence in multilateral action. From Kashmir to conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and other troubled regions, people continue to suffer while diplomatic efforts often move slowly. The UN cannot solve every conflict, but it can provide a forum where disagreements are addressed through dialogue rather than force. It should use its diplomatic influence more consistently, encourage parties to respect agreements and international law, and give greater attention to disputes that carry the risk of wider instability. Pakistan's contribution to UN peacekeeping gives it a legitimate voice in calling for stronger international action. The organisation should also recognise that peace is not simply the absence of war. It requires political dialogue, respect for agreements, humanitarian protection and fair mechanisms for resolving disputes. Guterres' visit provides an opportunity to reinforce this message. The UN must move beyond acknowledging conflicts and do more to prevent them.

Pakistan needs more than used cars

The sharp rise in used vehicle imports should make the government ask a more important question: why has Pakistan's automobile industry still failed to meet its development and localisation targets? The import of used cars increased from just 48 vehicles in May 2026 to 2,276 in September after the government relaxed some rules. Local manufacturers are naturally worried that a growing flow of used vehicles will reduce demand for locally produced cars. But the answer cannot simply be to close the door on imported vehicles. Pakistani consumers have for years faced expensive cars, limited choices, long waiting periods and questions about quality and technology. If the domestic industry wants protection, it must also show that it is using that protection to become more competitive. Protection without better prices, stronger localisation, improved quality and new technology only creates a protected market, not a strong automobile industry. Used-car imports are not a development strategy, but neither is permanent protection for an industry that has not delivered enough for consumers.

The government's review should therefore look beyond the immediate rise in imports and examine why local manufacturers have struggled to meet their promised targets. The country needs a clear and time-bound plan to develop its domestic automobile industry. The government should not allow used cars to become the main answer to consumer demand, because that would do little to build local production, skills, jobs and technology. At the same time, local manufacturers cannot expect consumers to keep paying high prices simply because imports are restricted. The better approach is to link protection with performance. Companies should be given clear targets for localisation, production, exports, quality and technology transfer, with regular public reviews of their progress. The government should also encourage new investment and competition rather than protecting a few established players. A stronger local parts industry can reduce costs and create wider economic benefits. Pakistan should aim to produce better and more affordable vehicles, not merely prevent consumers from buying alternatives. The prime minister's meeting is therefore an opportunity to rethink automobile policy. The real goal should be a competitive Pakistani automobile industry that can stand on its own feet.

AI poses a challenge to humanity

Human beings often enjoy activities because they are difficult. Learning an instrument, writing a story, solving a mathematical problem, drawing a picture or building something requires time and effort. The satisfaction comes partly from overcoming those limitations. If a machine does everything for us, the final product may remain, but the human experience behind it may disappear.

AI systems need large data centres to operate. These centres use huge amounts of electricity and can also affect air and water. At a time when the world needs more clean energy, the growing demand from AI creates another challenge. AI may also threaten many jobs because machines can increasingly perform tasks that were once done by people. There are also concerns among some experts that highly advanced AI could create very serious risks for humanity.

Artificial intelligence is growing very quickly and is changing the way people work, communicate and create. Many people see AI as a powerful technology that can make life easier and help solve difficult problems. But there are also serious reasons to worry about its rapid growth. The debate is not only about jobs, electricity, pollution or even the possible dangers of advanced technology. It is also about something harder to explain: what it means to be human.

AI systems need large data centres to operate. These centres use huge amounts of electricity and can also affect air and water. At a time when the world needs more clean energy, the growing demand from AI creates another challenge. AI may also threaten many jobs because machines can increasingly perform tasks that were once done by people. There are also concerns among some experts that highly advanced AI could create very serious risks for humanity. These concerns alone are enough to demand careful discussion about how far and how fast this technology should develop.

But there is another issue that deserves equal attention. Human beings have always been defined partly by their limitations. People have to learn, practise, struggle and spend time to create something. These limitations can be difficult, but they can also give meaning to human achievement. If technology removes too many of these challenges, we may gain speed and convenience but lose something important in the process.

A simple example is the use of AI to produce cartoons. AI systems can now create cartoons that look like the work of real artists. They can even imitate the style of particular cartoonists. This raises concerns about plagiarism and the future of artists who depend on their creativity for their living. But the issue goes beyond jobs. Human cartoons can bring humour, personality and pleasure into everyday life. The process of creating them is also part of their value.

The same concern applies to many other forms of creative and intellectual work. Writing, journalism, sports reporting, book writing, press releases and even obituaries can now be produced with AI. It is possible to create more material much faster with machines. But producing more is not necessarily the same as producing something meaningful. The important question is not only whether a machine can produce an article or a cartoon. It is whether we lose something valuable when humans stop doing the work themselves.

This concern is also being raised in mathematics and science. A group of leading mathematicians has warned about the use of AI to solve problems that students and researchers traditionally solve through years of study and practice. Their concern is that the process of learning may become separated from the final answer. A student does not study mathematics only to obtain a correct answer. The process develops understanding, creativity and the ability to ask new questions.

This is an important point for the whole of society. Education is not simply about collecting answers. It is also about developing the human mind. Training, practice and failure can all play a role in building knowledge. If AI pro-

vides the answer immediately, people may save time, but they may also lose part of the experience that helps them understand how and why the answer was reached.

Supporters of AI often argue that it will simply help people do things faster. Faster medical research, faster scientific discoveries and faster solutions to difficult problems can clearly have benefits. But speed should not always be the main measure of progress. Human beings have already achieved major improvements in science, medicine and technology through their own intelligence and hard work.

The development of renewable energy is one example. Human intelligence has produced solar panels, wind turbines and batteries that can help address the climate crisis. This shows that people are capable of developing powerful technologies without handing every intellectual task to machines. The barriers to progress are not always technological. They can also be political, economic and social.

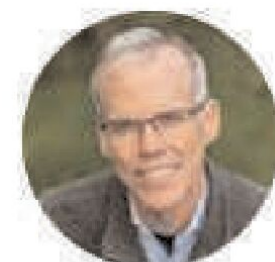
Human beings have also made progress in responding to disease and addressing social inequalities. Cultural change has taken place through human thinking, debate and action. These achievements show that human intelligence is not a problem that technology needs to replace. Human beings are capable of learning, creating and improving their societies.

This raises a difficult question about the future. If machines eventually perform most forms of intellectual and creative work, what will people do? Some technology leaders imagine that new industries and leisure activities will develop. But a future in which humans become largely consumers while machines perform the meaningful work may not be as attractive as it first appears.

There is a difference between making life easier and removing the reasons that make life meaningful. A runner who completes a race only because technology has made the task effortless may achieve a faster time, but the achievement may no longer have the same meaning. In the same way, producing millions of cartoons with a simple command may create more cartoons, but it does not necessarily create more satisfaction.

Human beings often enjoy activities because they are difficult. Learning an instrument, writing a story, solving a mathematical problem, drawing a picture or building something requires time and effort. The satisfaction comes partly from overcoming those limitations. If a machine does everything for us, the final product may remain, but the human experience behind it may disappear.

This does not mean that all technology is bad. Technology can make people more capable and can help solve serious problems. Technologies such as solar power, wind energy and batteries can help reduce pollution and give communities greater control over their energy systems. The important question is what technology is designed to achieve and who controls it. AI should therefore remain a tool for humanity rather than becoming a replacement for humanity. Its development needs rules that protect not only physical safety and jobs but also human creativity, education, dignity and meaning.



WILLIAM ERNEST MCKIBBEN

William Ernest McKibben is an American environmentalist, author, and journalist.

Climate change turns glaciers into deadly threats

Climate change is no longer only about rising temperatures, melting ice or changing weather patterns. It is increasingly creating direct dangers for people living near mountains and glaciers.

Another major concern is the existence of what scientists call "surging glaciers". A global study identified about 3,100 such glaciers. These glaciers do not behave like ordinary glaciers that slowly lose ice over time. They can move suddenly and rapidly and may trigger floods and avalanches. Extreme heat and heavy rainfall can make these dangers more complicated.

Scientists and disaster response teams are warning about unstable glaciers that can suddenly collapse, causing floods, landslides and huge avalanches of rocks, ice and mud. Some experts have described these unstable glaciers as "nature's missiles" because they can release enormous amounts of water, ice and rock with little warning. There are more than 200,000 glaciers around the world. Many of them have existed for thousands of years, but rising temperatures are now changing mountain environments. Frozen ground and glacial ice have helped hold mountains together for centuries. As temperatures rise, this frozen material can melt and weaken the structure of mountains. The result can be sudden and destructive events far below the glaciers.

The danger was clearly shown by the devastating floods and debris avalanches described in Nepal in August 2026. A massive flow of water, mud and debris moved rapidly down the mountains and affected villages and the Gyirong Port area. The disaster caused a large number of deaths and left many people missing. A month later, rescue teams were still searching through thick layers of mud in

areas such as Devisghat. The destruction showed how quickly a mountain disaster can turn into a human tragedy.

The basic problem is that a warming climate can make glaciers and mountain slopes less stable. For thousands of years, frozen ground and ice helped keep rocks together. But as the planet becomes warmer, that natural support is weakening. When glaciers collapse, they can release millions of tons of rock and ice. If this material reaches rivers or glacial lakes, it can create enormous floods and waves of mud and debris. The danger is not limited to Nepal. Similar risks are being identified in different mountain regions around the world. In the Mont Blanc massif in the Alps, scientists have reported a sharp increase in rockfalls. Researchers have described the number of rockfalls as unusually high compared with previous decades. This is a serious warning because large rocks and pieces of ice falling from high mountains can threaten people, roads, buildings and communities below.

The Himalayas also face serious risks. A scientific assessment of the Aikonda Basin and Garhiwal Himalayas in India identified hundreds of unstable hanging glaciers. These glaciers lack strong structural support and can become dangerous if conditions change. In Sikkim, researchers have identified potential glacial lake outburst floods, known as GLOFs. Such floods can occur when an avalanche or large amount of ice enters a glacial lake and suddenly pushes huge quantities of water downstream. Similar concerns exist in South America. Mountain areas in Peru and Bolivia contain unstable glaciers and glacial lakes that could create serious flooding risks. Satellite mapping has identified lakes located close to retreating glaciers, with some areas considered especially vulnerable to cascading floods.

Another major concern is the existence of what scientists call "surging glaciers". A global study identified about 3,100 such glaciers. These glaciers do not behave like ordinary glaciers that slowly lose ice over time. They can move suddenly and rapidly and may trigger floods and avalanches. Extreme heat and heavy rainfall can make these dangers more complicated.

This means that climate change is not simply a slow environmental problem. It can increase the possibility of sudden disasters. A heatwave, heavy rainfall event or rapid melting of ice can combine with unstable mountain conditions and produce a disaster in a short period of time. The answer must therefore include both adaptation and action against the main cause of global warming. Communities living below glaciers need better warning systems, disaster planning and monitoring of dangerous mountains and lakes. Governments must identify vulnerable communities and prepare evacuation plans before disaster strikes. Scientific monitoring can also help authorities understand when a glacier or glacial lake is becoming more dangerous.

But these measures alone cannot solve the larger problem. The world must also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Coal, oil and gas remain major sources of carbon dioxide emissions, which con-

tribute to global warming. Cutting these emissions is necessary if the world wants to slow the changes taking place in mountain environments.

This requires stronger international cooperation. The countries with the largest economies and highest emissions have a particular responsibility to act. Climate change cannot be treated as a secondary issue during international meetings while communities around the world face floods, heatwaves, fires, droughts and melting glaciers.



The concern is also about the future. If mountain glaciers become increasingly unstable, millions of people living downstream could face greater risks. Roads, bridges, farms, homes and other infrastructure can be damaged by sudden floods and landslides. Water supplies could also be affected as glaciers change. The world therefore needs to take

these warnings seriously. Climate change is not an abstract idea for people living beneath unstable mountains. It can mean the loss of homes, livelihoods and lives.

The growing danger from unstable glaciers should encourage governments to act before disasters occur. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving early-warning systems and protecting vulnerable communities must be treated as connected priorities.

The message from the mountains is becoming harder to ignore. Glaciers

that once appeared stable are changing. The world cannot stop every natural disaster, but it can reduce the human causes that are making some disasters more likely and more dangerous. The choice is now between preparing seriously for a changing climate or waiting for more "nature's missiles" to remind us of the cost of inaction.

OPINION



QUETTA: A vendor displays warm clothes for children along the roadside to attract customers. INP

Letters To The EDITOR

Growing Burden on the People of Balochistan

I am writing to express my concern over the repeated closure of border crossings in Balochistan. Many families depend on cross-border trade for their daily income. When borders remain closed, small traders lose their livelihoods, workers become unemployed, and poor families struggle to meet their basic needs. The closure also affects the prices of essential goods and creates difficulties for people whose lives depend on border-related activities. For many residents, the border is not just a line between two countries; it is a source of food, income, and hope.

The authorities should take immediate steps to ensure the regular opening of border crossings, improve trade facilities, and provide relief to affected families. Security is important, but the economic needs of ordinary people must also be considered.

I hope the authorities will address this issue seriously and find a lasting solution to protect the livelihoods of people in Balochistan.

HANI RASHEED
Turbat

Karachi needs bus stops before shelters

Before discussing shade or shelter, Karachi needs to address a more basic problem: in most parts of the city, proper bus stops simply do not exist. Commuters often gather at familiar stretches of road without any designated waiting area, signs, seating or protection from the weather. During the intense summer heat, working men and women, as well as students, are forced to stand under the open sun while waiting for buses. There are no benches,

no shade and often no indication that the spot is even an official bus stop. This is a more fundamental issue than simply adding shelters to existing stops. In many localities, there is no basic infrastructure for public transport passengers at all. Commuters are left to wait on roadsides and manage the heat, rain and other weather conditions on their own. Karachi's transport authorities should therefore begin by establishing proper bus stops across the city, with clear markers, seating and basic facilities. Once this essential infrastructure is in place, providing shade and improving passenger comfort can follow. A reliable public transport system should begin with a safe and dignified place for people to wait.

BATOOL FATIMA
KARACHI

Turbat-Hirronk commuter safety concerns

The road of Turbat-Hirronk is very dangerous for the people of Hirronk. Many students, traders, government cars, officers and employees use this road. The road is very dangerous because there are no traffic instructions, rules or signs for careful driving. Students, traders and government employees drive cars at high speed and the road is not safe. It means the road is a deadly road. Unfortunately their brakes fail and cars meet accidents or fall down among stones on the ground. It causes death or serious problems for those who are in the car (they can be students, traders or government employees). That is why the road between Hirronk and Turbat is a deadly road.

I kindly request the government to repair the road and install a board that shows instructions, rules and danger signs to make people aware of the dangerous area.

GUHRAM
Balochistan

In rural Sindh, training in agricultural value chains, livestock management, food processing and locally viable enterprises may be relevant where market assessments support such investment. In Karachi and other urban centres, digital services, technical trades, healthcare support and employer-linked apprenticeships may provide different pathways.

A central dimension of the NEET dilemma is the weak transition between education and employment. Academic qualifications remain important, but qualifications alone do not guarantee access to suitable work.

Pakistan's NEET Youth Dilemma

Pakistan's youth challenge is not only about unemployment. It is about building reliable pathways from education and skills to decent work and productive participation.

Pakistan's youthful population offers considerable potential for economic growth, innovation and social development. However, this potential cannot be realised simply by increasing school enrolment, university admissions or vocational training opportunities. Young people must also be able to transition into productive employment, further education or relevant skills development.

The challenge is captured by the term NEET: young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training. Unlike the conventional unemployment rate, the NEET indicator includes young people who are outside the labour market and may not be actively seeking work, as well as those unable to secure employment despite searching for it. It therefore provides a broader perspective on youth exclusion. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recognises NEET as an important indicator of young people's difficulties in accessing education and the labour market. [1]

For Pakistan, the NEET dilemma is not merely an employment issue. It reflects a structural disconnect between education, skills development, labour-market demand and the institutional arrangements intended to support young people. Addressing this challenge requires a shift from measuring programme participation to measuring whether young people actually progress towards sustainable livelihoods.

Pakistan's Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024-25, published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), reports a NEET rate of 28.4 per cent among young people aged 15-24. The corresponding rate is 13.0 per cent for males and 45.4 per cent for females. These figures demonstrate a substantial gender disparity in young people's participation in education, employment and training. [2]

Sindh's NEET rate of 32 per cent exceeds the national figure by 3.6 percentage points. More importantly, the female NEET rate in Sindh stands at 51.6 per cent, compared with 14.7 per cent among males. The provincial figures indicate that youth exclusion cannot be understood solely through the availability of jobs; barriers to education, mobility, training and economic participation must also be considered.

These figures should be interpreted carefully. A NEET rate does not mean that every young person concerned is unemployed or without skills. Some may undertake unpaid household and care work, face barriers to participation, or have temporarily left education. The indicator identifies disconnection from recognised education, employment and training pathways, rather than explaining every individual circumstance.

Earlier research by Gallup Pakistan and the Policy Research and Innovation in Development and Education (PRIDE) initiative estimated that 21.8 million young people aged 15-29 were NEET in 2020-21, equivalent to approximately 37.2 per cent of that age group. The same analysis estimated rates of 42 per cent for females and 12.2 per cent for males. [3] These figures are useful historical context, but they should not be directly compared with the 2024-25 figures above because the age groups and measurement approaches differ.

Pakistan: 28.4% overall; 13.0% male; 45.4% female.
Sindh: 32.0% overall; 14.7% male; 51.6% female.
Punjab: 24.8% overall; 12.6% male; 37.6% female.
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 32.7% overall; 10.5% male; 57.6% female.
Balochistan: 34.0% overall; 17.9% male; 60.5% female.

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey 2024-25, SDG indicator 8.6.1. Figures represent percentages of the relevant provincial or national youth population aged 15-24.

A central dimension of the NEET dilemma is the weak transition between education and employment. Academic qualifications remain important, but qualifications alone do not guarantee access to suitable work.

Employers may require practical experience, digital competencies, communication skills and occupational knowledge that graduates have had limited opportunities to acquire. Meanwhile, some vocational programmes are designed around available training capacity rather than verified labour-market demand.

This creates a challenge for policymakers: expanding training enrolment does not necessarily translate into higher employment. A programme may report successful completion while graduates remain unemployed, accept work unrelated to their training or enter low-paid and insecure occupations.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must therefore be evaluated through measurable outcomes. These include employment placement, job retention, earnings progression, employer satisfaction and the survival of youth-led enterprises.

The objective should not be to produce more certificates alone. It should be to establish credible pathways through which qualifications and skills translate into economic opportunity.

The gender gap requires particular attention. In Sindh, more than half of young women aged 15-24 fall within the NEET category according to the 2024-25 survey. This figure calls for investigation into the different barriers faced by young women across rural and urban communities.

These may include unpaid domestic responsibilities, limited transport, safety concerns, restrictive social expectations, inadequate childcare and a shortage of accessible employment opportunities. Earlier research by Gallup Pakistan and PRIDE also identified mobility constraints, care responsibilities and mismatches between skills and labour-market needs among the factors associated with high female NEET rates. [3]

Consequently, gender-responsive policy cannot stop at enrolling women in training courses. It must also examine whether women can attend training regularly, travel safely, access digital infrastructure, obtain placements and remain economically active after completing their programmes.

Flexible training schedules, childcare sup-

port, safe transport arrangements, workplace protections and connections to employers can help address these barriers. Digital work and home-based enterprises may offer additional routes to participation, provided that genuine market demand, fair earnings and reliable connectivity are available.

Sindh requires a differentiated response because the economic and social conditions of Karachi are not identical to those of rural districts or smaller urban centres.

Karachi offers opportunities in information technology, logistics, healthcare, retail, manufacturing and business services. Other districts may have stronger links to agriculture, livestock, food processing, fisheries, construction, tourism and small-scale enterprise. These are potential areas for investigation, not a substitute for district-level evidence of actual employer demand.

A provincial NEET response should begin with district and divisional labour-market assessments. These should identify the number and characteristics of out-of-education youth, local occupational demand, existing training capacity, transport constraints and barriers to employment.

In rural Sindh, training in agricultural value chains, livestock management, food processing and locally viable enterprises may be relevant where market assessments support such investment. In Karachi and other urban centres, digital services, technical trades, healthcare support and employer-linked apprenticeships may provide different pathways.

The provincial government could establish an integrated youth opportunity framework linking education, technical training, employment services, universities, employers and relevant social-protection programmes. Rather than requiring young people to navigate disconnected institutions independently, a coordinated system could direct them towards appropriate services through district-level referral mechanisms.

Five Policy Priorities for Action

1. Establish a reliable NEET data and referral system. This Government of Sindh should use PBS statistics as the foundation for a provincial youth inclusion dashboard, supplemented by appropriately designed district assessments. Data should be disaggregated by age, sex, disability, education, rural-urban location and relevant socioeconomic characteristics. Confidentiality and appropriate safeguards must be maintained. The purpose should be to identify barriers and connect young people with suitable opportunities, not simply to compile lists.

2. Link skills programmes to verified labour-market demand. Training authorities should consult employers, chambers of commerce, industry associations and local businesses before approving or expanding courses. Employer participation in curriculum design, apprenticeships and workplace-based learning can help reduce skills mismatches. Funding decisions should increasingly reflect independently verified employment and enterprise outcomes, rather than enrolment and completion figures alone.

3. Introduce a comprehensive youth transition model. Young people require more than technical instruction. Career counselling, digital literacy, communication skills, financial literacy, entrepreneurship support and workplace readiness should form part of an integrated pathway. Those who leave school early should have access to second-cycle education, foundational learning and flexible vocational qualifications.

4. Design interventions around gender-specific barriers. Programmes should incorporate safe transport, flexible learning arrangements, childcare referrals and accessible training facilities where needed. Female participation should be tracked beyond graduation, including job placement, retention, earnings and enterprise performance. Partnerships with employers should promote safe workplaces and transparent recruitment practices.

5. Make programme performance transparent. Every publicly funded youth development programme should establish a graduate-tracking mechanism, with follow-up at six and twelve months after training. Results should distinguish between paid employment, self-employment, further education, continued job search and inactivity. Independent verification can improve accountability, reveal ineffective interventions and support the reallocation of resources towards programmes that demonstrate results.

Conclusion: From Demographic Potential to Productive Participation

Pakistan's NEET challenge demonstrates that demographic potential does not automatically translate into economic progress. The national rate of 28.4 per cent among 15-24-year-olds, alongside Sindh's rate of 32 per cent and the pronounced gender disparity, provides a clear basis for policy attention. [2]

However, the response must go beyond short-term training schemes and employment announcements. It requires a coordinated system connecting education, skills, labour-market information, employers, entrepreneurship and social inclusion.

For Sindh, the immediate priority should be to translate provincial statistics into district-level action, align training with verified economic demand, address the barriers confronting young women and track outcomes beyond programme completion.

The ultimate measure of success is not how many young people enter a classroom or receive a certificate. It is how many acquire the opportunity and support to progress into education, decent work, sustainable self-employment or further skills development.

Reducing NEET rates should therefore be treated as a measurable human-development objective—one that demands sustained institutional coordination, reliable evidence and accountability for results.

Pakistan's youth dividend will depend not merely on the size of its young population, but on the opportunities its institutions make accessible to them.

How thriving villages are born and sustained

Thriving communities do not necessarily depend entirely on government policies or official programmes. Government can certainly help, but ordinary people can also solve problems themselves. They can organise activities, support neighbors, share resources and work together despite their differences. This tolerance is important because no community consists of people who agree on everything. One example is South Whidbey Island, where a Transition Town group was created to encourage people to prepare for uncertain times.

A village is not always just a small place on a map. It can be a neighborhood, a town, a group, an extended family, a church or even a business. What makes it a village is that most people know one another, at least by sight or through a few connections. A thriving village is built through relationships, culture, traditions, shared activities and volunteer work. In simple words, people create a village by living together. Perhaps "to village" should even be used as a verb because communities are created by what people do every day.

A thriving community is different from simply living in a place where people are healthy or successful. Some places in the world are known as Blue Zones, where people appear to live longer and enjoy better lives. Visitors may travel to these places hoping to experience the same benefits. But the real strength of such communities is not necessarily in their land, air or water. It is in their culture and relationships. A tourist can spend a weekend in a beautiful town, stay in a comfortable house, eat in local restaurants and visit shops, but that does not automatically make the person part of the community. Belonging comes through relationships and participation. So, what is the ticket to becoming part of a thriving community? The answer is participation.

People can participate in many different ways. Someone can take a local class, help with a theatre production, become a gardener, join a community cleanup or help repair an old building. A person may become a regular customer at the same local café, volunteer at a soup kitchen, help children, teach a class at the library or join a church choir. Others may sell or buy products at a farmers market, join a service organisation, start a discussion group or support a local bookstore and theatre. There is almost always something for everyone.

New residents may find this difficult at first. Established communities often have informal relationships and traditions that take years to understand. People who have lived somewhere for decades may have a stronger sense of belonging. Newcomers cannot become part of such a community simply by buying a house. They need to spend time there, meet people, participate and slowly build trust. Belonging takes time. Participation also means both giving and receiving. A healthy community should not make people feel ashamed when they need help. Someone may need a ride to a doctor, food after a difficult period, help with gardening or support after an illness. Accepting help does not make a person less valuable. In the same way, people who volunteer or serve on community boards are not more important than those who receive services. A strong community works because people can help

one another in different ways.

Another important factor may be pressure. This idea is less certain, but difficult circumstances can sometimes bring people closer. An island, for example, has a natural boundary. People living there may understand that they depend on one another. Economic problems and other crises can also encourage people to cooperate. During difficult times, communities may create local systems of support because they cannot depend completely on larger institutions. When the pressure disappears, people may become more independent and less connected.

This idea is close to the meaning of "membership" described by writer Wendell Berry. Membership is built slowly through shared experiences, difficult times, celebrations and simply showing up for one another. Community does not appear overnight. It grows through repeated participation.

The idea of the "first follower" is also important. A person who starts something may look unusual or even foolish at first. But when another person joins, the action begins to look different. More people may follow. In this way, community action can grow from one person into a shared effort.

Thriving communities do not necessarily depend entirely on government policies or official programmes. Government can certainly help, but ordinary people can also solve problems themselves. They can organise activities, support neighbors, share resources and work together despite their differences. This tolerance is important because no community consists of people who agree on everything. One example is South Whidbey Island, where a Transition Town group was

created to encourage people to prepare for uncertain times. The group followed the Transition Towns UK model and worked successfully for about three years. Eventually, however, the volunteers did not have enough energy to continue developing the project, and the group declined. Even so, the work was not wasted. Relationships were created, ideas spread and new projects developed from the experience.

This shows that a community does not have to exist forever in one organised form to have an impact. People may carry its ideas into other activities and relationships. Even when one project ends, the connections created through it can continue.

The larger lesson is that thriving communities are made by ordinary people doing useful things together. They are not created simply by good buildings, attractive locations or government plans. They grow when people choose to belong, participate, give, receive help and remain connected during both good and difficult times.



VICKI ROBIN

Vicki Robin is an American writer and speaker.

NATIONAL

DTM

Muqam urges KP govt to focus on public issues

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam on Thursday urged the KP government to focus on resolving public issues instead of pursuing a long march.

Addressing a press conference, he said terrorism incidents continued in the province while the provincial leadership was busy with political activities.

He said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were facing serious hardships and questioned what practical change had been brought about despite the PTI government being in power in the province for the third consecutive term.

Amir Muqam said that the PTI had also governed at the federal level for three and a half years, adding that the people had witnessed its performance. He questioned what measures had been taken during that period to address the province's issues and provide

funds. He said that the provincial government had the responsibility to address public problems and maintain law and order, adding that its focus should not be limited to political slogans and social media activities.

Referring to the proposed long march, the minister said its date kept changing while people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued to face difficulties due to blocked routes.

He said that the government would not allow anyone to paralyze Islamabad, adding that the authorities would take the necessary decision if the march reached the federal capital.

Regarding negotiations, Amir Muqam said that detailed discussions had been held between the two sides and views were exchanged on various issues. He said the terms of a joint agreement had been finalized, but the Chief Minister later backed out.

The minister said that terrorism could be defeated through collective efforts by the federal and provincial governments, political parties, the people and the Pakistan Armed Forces. PML-N Central Additional Secretary Information Senator Zahid Khan, MNA Ghazala Anjum, MPA Ali Hadi and former MNA Shahzade Mohi-ud-Din were also present. **APP**

India-backed proxies warned of 'same fate' as downed jets

A senior Pakistani diplomat told a UN panel Wednesday that India has intensified its use of terrorist proxies — including the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) — against Pakistan following its May 2025 defeat, warning that these groups will face the same fate as downed Indian fighter jets.

"We continue to face terrorist attacks from externally-sponsored groups such as the TTP and BLA and its Mejeed Brigade which operate with impunity from Afghan soil with the active support of India," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said during a debate in the General Assembly's Legal (sixth) Committee on "Measures to eliminate International Terrorism".

At the end of Pakistani envoy's sharp remarks, a verbal duel ensued between delegates of India and Pakistan who traded cross-border terrorism charges.

In his address, Ambassador

Jadoon reaffirmed Pakistan's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, highlighting the menace emanating from Afghanistan, in particular, has emerged as a grave threat, besides its incidence in West Africa and the Sahel, and the Middle East.

Pakistan, he said, has been compelled to respond with precise, well-planned and calibrated counterterrorism operations against terrorist infrastructure and safe havens along the country's western border, based on credible intelligence.

"These strikes are strictly targeted at TTP and BLA terrorists and are carried out with high precision and accuracy to avoid civilian casualties," the Pakistani envoy said, adding, "We categorically reject any allegations or insinuation to the contrary."

Exercising his right of reply, an Indian delegate Raghu Furi denied Ambassador Jadoon's charges, asserting it is Pakistan which was involved in cross-border terrorism.

"For years", he added, "Pakistan has presented itself as a frontline state in combating terrorism and as a victim, while masking the fact that the Frankenstein's the Pakistani state has created and lost control over have moved from wreaking havoc in neighbouring countries to doing the same in Pakistan," said Furi, a first secretary in the Indian Mission to the UN.

Pakistani delegate Muhammad Jawed Ajmal hit back, calling India a serial violator of human rights.

Noting that India's "new found love for the Taliban regime" was no



accident, he pointed out that they have been actively supporting them with material and logistical support for carrying out terrorist attacks against Pakistan — causing deaths and destruction of infrastructure.

The capture of a serving Indian naval commander Kulbhushan Jadhav on Pakistani territory, Ajmal, a counsellor in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said was a glaring example of Indian state terrorism.

"The Indian footprint of extraterritorial assassinations and killings abroad, which have now become a global feature of their illegal actions, include attempts made by Nikhil Gupta who pleaded guilty for plotting to murder a Sikh leader on U.S. territory and the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, all at the behest of the Indian government are public knowledge and need no elaboration."

Pakistan, he said, will defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity, its people and its security.

Furi, the Indian delegate, came back again. "If this much effort had actually been made in countering terrorism rather than narrative building, misinformation, and disinformation,

the world would have been a better place," he said.

Reacting to India's second night of reply, Ajmal, the Pakistani delegate said New Delhi seems obsessed with the internal affairs of Pakistan. Instead of criticizing and resorting to insults, it should spend its energy on putting its house in order.

The ruling RSS-BJP dispensation in India has institutionalized Hindutva ideology in state policy and practice, and unleashed a reign of terror to persecute minorities, as Muslims are being demonized, Christians targeted, Dalits dehumanized and Sikhs disenfranchised, he said.

Since 2019, India intensified its attempts to change the distinct Kashmiri identity through brutal tactics and alter the demographic composition of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir with the aim of turning Kashmiris into a minority in their own homeland that can materially affect the plebiscite arrangements to be held under the UN auspices in line with international law.

The international community must reject such settler colonialist policies that have no place in the 21st century, Ajmal added. **APP**

PHC seeks CM's response on use of state resources

The Peshawar High Court on Thursday sought a response from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi over an application alleging the use of government resources for political activities and an ongoing protest long march.

A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice SM Attiq Shah heard the petition filed by PML-N MPA Qari Zahir.

The petitioner contended that the PHC had barred the use of government resources for political activities in a judgment issued in November 2025.

He alleged that CM Sohail Afridi had travelled to Lakki Marwat in a government helicopter on Oct 4 to join the launch of the protest long march.

The petitioner asked the court to take notice of the alleged use of official resources during the march and seek explanations from those responsible.

The court issued a notice to the CM and sought his response on the matter. Further proceedings would be determined after submission of the response.

The petition also referred to an incident in October 2024, alleging that more than 10 government vehicles and 47 officials were taken into custody by Punjab Police during a protest march towards Islamabad during the tenure of former CM Ali Amin Gandapur. **APP**

Two killed in Darra Adam Khel coal mine accident

Two coal miners from Shangla were killed in a mining accident in the Akhonor area of Darra Adam Khel, Kohat, with local residents calling for an investigation into the incident and improved safety measures for mine workers.

The deceased were identified as Zareen Toj, son of Fazal Karim, a resident of Banda Daulet, Alpur, and Muhammad Qayyum, son of Muhammad Zaman, from Chachlo village, Union Council Raniel, Alpur.

The two men were working inside the coal mine when the accident occurred. Rescue teams, fellow miners and relevant personnel launched an operation after receiving information about the incident and recovered the bodies from deep inside the mine.

The bodies were subsequently sent to their native areas in Shangla after completion of necessary legal formalities and documentation.

The incident has once again highlighted the risks faced by workers from Shangla, where limited local employment opportunities have pushed many young people to seek work in coal mines and other labour-intensive sectors outside the district.

Local elders and community members urged the federal and provincial governments to create more employment opportunities in Shangla, promote local industries and tourism, and ensure that communities benefit from the district's mineral resources. **APP**

Governor Faisal Kundi calls for promoting KP's heritage, tourism through floral festivals

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday stressed the need to promote the province's rich heritage, culture and tourism through floral festivals and other cultural activities, saying such initiatives would help project province's soft image at the international level.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Floral Society led by Fareeda Tariq Nishtar at Governor House.

The delegation discussed proposals for organizing flower festivals in Peshawar and exchanged ideas on promoting the province's heritage and culture through floral exhibitions and meetings with relevant organizations.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said Pakistan

was a beautiful country with immense tourism potential and its positive image should be highlighted globally.

He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was blessed with scenic beauty and tourism opportunities, adding that lasting peace was essential for the growth of the tourism sector.

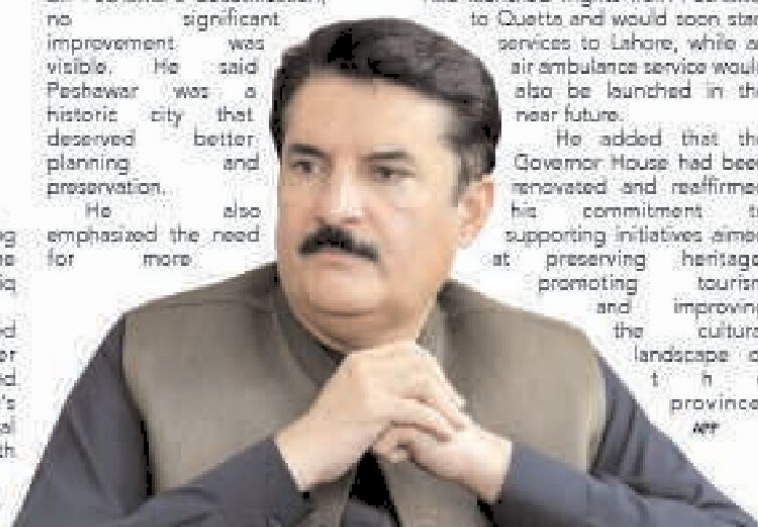
The Governor regretted that despite spending billions of rupees on Peshawar's beautification, no significant improvement was visible. He said Peshawar was a historic city that deserved better planning and preservation.

He also emphasized the need for more recreational facilities for families and modern public libraries to promote reading culture.

He said illegal timber cutting had damaged the province's greenery and called for effective measures to protect the environment.

Referring to recent developments, Governor Kundi said the long-standing Namak Mandi gas issue had been resolved. South Air had launched flights from Peshawar to Quetta and would soon start services to Lahore, while an air ambulance service would also be launched in the near future.

He added that the Governor House had been renovated and reaffirmed his commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at preserving heritage, promoting tourism and improving the cultural landscape of the province. **APP**



KP Cabinet approves key decisions

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet, in an important meeting, approved a number of significant decisions relating to counter-terrorism, sanitation, health, social welfare, and other sectors in the province.

The Cabinet approved an additional amount of Rs 5.33 billion for the project of the Counter-Terrorism Department's (CTD) district setup and the Peshawar Regional CTD Headquarters.

The meeting also approved

the expansion of the sanitation programme in rural areas (Village Councils) at a cost of Rs 7,660,590 million.

The Cabinet approved sending Joint Resolution No. 283, passed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, to the federal government. The resolution condemns the incident that occurred with Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in Punjab.

The meeting approved the policy for the distribution of reserved seats in medical and dental colleges across the country for candidates from the merged districts for the academic year 2026-27.

The Cabinet also approved financial assistance for the treatment of 81 deserving patients suffering from long-term and chronic diseases or complicated medical conditions.

Approval was granted to transfer 4 kanals and 17 marlas of land from the Awaq Department to the Social Welfare Department for the construction of a rehabilitation, treatment, and drug de-addiction centre for drug addicts in Swabi.

Similarly, approval was granted to transfer 25 kanals of land from the Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives Department to the Social Welfare Department for the establishment of a proposed Child Protection Unit and Social Welfare Complex in Dera Ismail Khan.

While deciding on the export of sugar, the Cabinet directed that it be made subject to the crushing season and the new sugar production.

The meeting also approved the acquisition of \$250 million in funding for the World Bank (IDA) KP READ project. **APP**

Mustafa Kamal discusses AI-based cancer care

Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on Thursday met Munir Ahmed, representative of BIOS, an AI-native cancer surveillance and precision oncology company, to discuss the provision of advanced oncology equipment to Pakistan under Chinese Grant-in-Aid.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the use of artificial intelligence-based technologies to strengthen cancer surveillance, enable timely and accurate diagnosis, improve treatment and enhance access to quality healthcare services for cancer patients.

A detailed briefing was also given on the provision of modern medical equipment for oncology services in Pakistan under the Chinese Grant-in-Aid.

The minister stressed the importance of promoting modern technology, artificial intelligence and advanced medical equipment in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

He welcomed potential cooperation in the field and emphasized the need to explore innovative approaches to improve cancer care and patient outcomes in Pakistan. **APP**

Funeral prayer for martyred SHO, gunman offered

Funeral prayer for Station House Officer (SHO) Banda Daud Shah police station Daud Khan and his gunman Farhad, who were martyred in a terrorist attack in New Karappa area, was offered with full police honours at New Police Lines here on Thursday.

Regional Police Officer Kohat Irfan Tariq, Commissioner Kohat Moatassim Billah, DPO Karak Imran Khan, Deputy Commissioner Asad Sarwar and senior police and civil administration officials attended the funeral.

A smartly turned-out police contingent presented a guard of honour to the martyred officials, while senior police and civil officers laid floral wreaths on their coffins and prayed for the departed souls.

The officials expressed condolences to the bereaved families and assured them of full support in their hour of grief.

After the funeral the bodies were transported to their native areas for burial.

RPO Kohat Irfan Tariq and DPO Karak Imran Khan paid tribute to the sacrifices of the two martyrs and vowed that those responsible for the attack would be brought to justice. **APP**

NATIONAL



ILO chief hails Punjab's labour reforms

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director General Gilbert F. Houngbo, leading a delegation, called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif today and appreciated the provincial government's measures for the welfare of industrial workers, including the allocation of apartments and provision of ration cards.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed workers' welfare, labour laws, ration cards, labour colonies and measures for improving working conditions in Punjab. Director General Gilbert F. Houngbo also congratulated the chief minister on receiving the UN-

post three years, while 752 FIRs had been registered over violations. As many as 42,858 inspections and 22,547 advisories had also been issued to ensure compliance with occupational safety and health laws. According to the chief minister, 1.2 million industrial workers in Punjab had so far received Rs3.7 billion through the Maryam Nawaz Ration Card programme.

She said the Labour Information Management System (LIMS) was being used to monitor enforcement of minimum wages, curb child labour and improve occupational safety and health standards. The system had also been linked with



Habitat Scroll of Honour award.

The chief minister said the Punjab Labour Code 2026 had been enforced following approval by the provincial cabinet. She said the government was ensuring an increase in minimum wages, registration of workers and strict implementation of labour laws.

The chief minister said more than 70,000 children had been identified and removed from forced labour, while 3,644 children had been enrolled in schools. Rehabilitation centres and dedicated helpline were also being established for the elimination of child labour.

She said minimum wages had been ensured for 4.9 million workers over the

past three years, while 752 FIRs had been registered over violations. As many as 42,858 inspections and 22,547 advisories had also been issued to ensure compliance with occupational safety and health laws. According to the chief minister, 1.2 million industrial workers in Punjab had so far received Rs3.7 billion through the Maryam Nawaz Ration Card programme.

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PM directs swift digitisation of govt data

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed all federal ministries to complete, within the stipulated time frame, necessary measures for digitizing relevant data in coordination with provincial governments and concerned institutions and ensuring its provision to the central data centre.

ministries, along with the provision of relevant data to the central data centre, would help bring the government system in line with modern requirements.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said the Digital Nation Pakistan Programme was essentially aimed at ensuring efficient and convenient services for citizens at the national level.

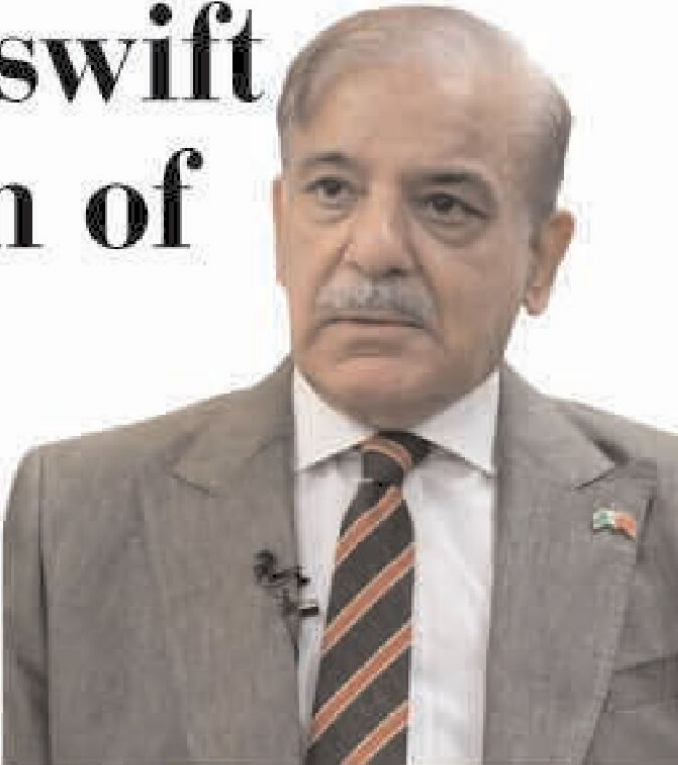
He observed that making useful data from all sectors and government institutions available at one place could contribute significantly to the country's economic development.

Referring to the fuel subsidy scheme for deserving segments of society, the prime minister said data sharing among institutions had played a key role in its successful implementation.

He said digitization of the performance of ministries and relevant data was important for preventing corruption and institutional mismanagement.

The prime minister appreciated the Ministry of Health for taking commendable steps, in collaboration with provincial governments, towards establishing universal medical records at the national level.

He also appreciated the implementation of QR codes



to ensure the availability and verification of quality medicines across the country.

The Ministry of Information Technology briefed the meeting that, with the active cooperation of all relevant ministries, comprehensive measures were being taken for sector-specific digitization.

The meeting was informed that, keeping in view public convenience, the digitization process in basic service sectors, particularly health, agriculture and other ministries, was being completed on a priority basis.

The Ministry of Information Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Law, was also taking special and effective measures to make relevant national laws available at one place, which would provide

better guidance for future legislation.

The meeting was further informed that, in accordance with the Prime Minister's directives, work was underway on the digitization of priority sectors, with special measures being taken to achieve the objectives of digital government services, a digital economy and digital public facilitation.

Different federal ministries briefed the meeting on their public services, performance and progress in providing relevant data to the central data centre.

A special briefing was also given on the provision of data related to the Ministry of National Health Services to the central data centre and the use of digitization for verification of the quality of medicines. **APP**

SC acquits mother accused of killing son for lack of evidence

The Supreme Court on Thursday acquitted Aneeka, who had been accused of murdering her five-year-old son, for lack of sufficient evidence.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan heard the case. During the hearing, the accused's counsel, Prince Rehman, argued that his client had been accused of killing the child by burning him, but there was no solid evidence against her.

He said neither petrol nor any other material alleged to be used in the incident had been recovered from the accused, while there was also no direct eyewitness to the alleged murder. The state counsel contended that the accused's own video statement was available and that she had also confessed to killing the child during a television programme.

Justice Shakeel Ahmad observed that a television programme alone could not constitute admissible evidence and that such a programme had to be corroborated by other evidence.

Justice Shakeel Ahmad further observed that the investigating officer had failed to discharge his responsibility properly, while Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed noted contradictions between the testimonies of witnesses and the medical report.

A case had been registered against Aneeka at Sihala Police Station, Islamabad, accusing her of killing her five-year-old son. The Supreme Court acquitted her after finding the evidence against her insufficient. **APP**

FCC fixes KP CM disqualification case for hearing

The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has fixed for hearing a petition challenging the appointment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sahal Afridi.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan will hear the case on October 15.

Advocate Sher Afzal Marwat has challenged the appointment of the KP chief minister, arguing that a convicted individual does not have the authority to nominate any public official.

The Peshawar High Court on Thursday sought a response from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sahal Afridi over an application alleging the use of government resources for political activities and an ongoing protest long march. A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice SM Attiq Shah heard the petition filed by PML-N MPA Qari Zahid. The petitioner contended that the PHC had barred the use of government resources for political activities in a judgment issued in November 2025.

He alleged that CM Sahal Afridi had travelled to Laki Marwat in a government helicopter on Oct 4 to join the launch of the protest long march.

The petitioner asked the court to take notice of the alleged use of official resources during the march and seek explanations from those responsible.

The court issued a notice to the CM and sought his response on the matter. Further proceedings would be determined after submission of the response.

The petition also referred to an incident in October 2024, alleging that more than 10 government vehicles and 47 officials were taken into custody by Punjab Police during a protest march towards Islamabad during the tenure of former CM Ali Amin Gandapur. **APP**

Pakistan-Bahrain trade group, GCC FTA agreed

Continued from Page 1

Two sides also stressed the urgent need for unhindered humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and reiterated their support for a just and lasting solution in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

Discussing the Indus Waters Treaty, Deputy Prime Minister highlighted that India's unilateral decision to place the treaty in abeyance constituted a breach of international law and represented a dangerous attempt to weaponise shared water resources and jeopardise the water, food and energy security of Pakistan's 250 million people.

On Afghanistan, Dar underscored the need to ensure that foreign territory is not used against Pakistan.

In his remarks, the Bahraini foreign minister said next week, on 14th of October, both countries would mark 55 years of diplomatic relations, bonds of brotherhood, trust, and solidarity, that have gained fresh momentum with the official visits to Bahrain by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in November 2025 and President Asif Ali Zardari in January 2026.

He appreciated Pakistan's principled positions during ongoing crises, including its support for Security Council resolutions and for its efforts alongside other partners to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation, including by hosting talks between the United States and Iran.

He reaffirmed Bahrain's strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks on Abha International and King Khaled International Airports, and of the Houthis terrorist militia's attacks on civilians and civilian facilities in Saudi Arabia, particularly the assault on Makkah al-Mukarrama and al-Madinah al-Munawwarah.

Foreign Minister Al Zayani said that his visit reaffirmed the strategic nature of bilateral relations, as both sides were determined to work on the outcomes of JMC for the peace, stability, and prosperity of the two countries, the region, and beyond.

Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his meeting with Bahrain's FM, on Thursday expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and underscored Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Bahrain in diverse fields, including trade, investment, energy, and human resource development.

The two sides exchanged views on regional and international developments and emphasized the importance of continued consultations and coordination on issues of mutual interest. Foreign Minister Al Zayani appreciated Pakistan's constructive role and mediation efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in the region.

The prime minister expressed confidence that the 3rd Session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission would provide further impetus to bilateral cooperation and contribute to deepening the multifaceted relationship between the two countries. **NEWS DESK**

Fazl emerges as go-between for govt, opposition

Continued from Page 1

"We sat down for negotiations with complete honesty, sincerity and good faith, without any conditions. We did not want to sit in negotiations in such a situation, where we had not met our leader, but we made the effort to sit down. Something is better than nothing. Not your way, not my way, but a middle way. Should move forward somehow, whatever happened, for the sake of the country, the nation and democracy," said Gohar during a press conference in Charsadda.

He regretted that the talks had ended abruptly after two days and said there was still time for both the government and opposition to reconsider their positions.

"We remained seated for two days, but abruptly everything ended. It should not have ended. There is still time. Reality is that both the government and opposition vehicles are stuck in the mud. How do we get this vehicle out of the mud and bring it onto the motorway? We are also calling out; they are also calling out; Let us come onto the motorway," he added. Gohar said the only way to prevent the system from being derailed was to set aside egos and allow "common sense" to prevail.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja has said that

big decisions in the national interest could be made if the party leadership is allowed to meet incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan.

He said that the PTI founder must be included in the political dialogue.

Earlier, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that Imran Khan would not receive relief if PTI sought to pressure the government through its long march.

Speaking to media at Parliament House in Islamabad, Asif said the government would not yield to pressure, and accused PTI of acting in concert with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"PTI has declared war against Pakistan together with the TTP," the defence minister said, adding that it was the party's "wishful thinking" that it could blackmail the government by holding a long march.

"The government cannot be blackmailed by them under any circumstances," he said, adding that it had become a practice for PTI to "attack Islamabad" every two or three months.

Asif also questioned PTI's position on the TTP and its Afghan patrons. He alleged that terrorists were being financed and said they were operating openly in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. **NEWS DESK**

17 women, 9 others held for running Honey-trap call centre

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has achieved major success in a nationwide crackdown against cyber fraud and honey-trap networks, detaining several suspects.

According to NCCIA officials, the agency raided a call centre allegedly involved in luring citizens through honey traps and arrested 17 women along with nine other people allegedly involved in cyber fraud.

Thirty-five mobile phones and two laptops were also recovered from the women. Initial investigations revealed that the women allegedly trapped

innocent citizens and men through social media and online platforms, blackmailed them through video calls and obtained illicit financial benefits. Meanwhile, the NCCIA also conducted another raid in Lahore's Allama Iqbal Town, where another call centre was allegedly being operated illegally to target foreign nationals through online fraud.

Agency officials said indiscriminate action would continue under a zero-tolerance policy against elements involved in cybercrime, blackmail and honey traps to prevent digital platforms from being used for

criminal activities. On the other hand, the NCCIA's Rawalpindi Circle exposed an international cyber-fraud network and arrested several suspects.

A raid was conducted at the Abbasi call centre in a private housing society on Chakri Road, Rawalpindi, where the alleged international fraud operation was being conducted. Initial investigations revealed that the suspects targeted Australian citizens through fake Telegram profiles and defrauded them of lakhs of rupees by luring them into completing fake YouTube tasks and investing in USDT cryptocurrency. **APP**

Holy See secretary arrives on first visit

Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Holy See Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, arrived here on Thursday on his first-ever visit to Pakistan by a Holy See Secretary, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan-Holy See relations.

He was received by Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe) Ambassador Ayesha Ali, according to a press statement issued by the Foreign Office.

Archbishop Gallagher is visiting Pakistan from October 8 to 10. His visit also coincides with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Holy See. During his visit, the Archbishop will meet Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar to discuss matters of mutual interest, including interfaith harmony, dialogue and peace, as well as regional and international developments.

He is also expected to call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Archbishop Gallagher will also interact with members of the Catholic community in Pakistan during his stay. The visit marks an important milestone in the longstanding relations between Pakistan and the Holy See and reflects the shared commitment of the two sides to strengthening mutual understanding, cooperation and trust, while promoting interfaith harmony, dialogue and peace. **APP**

One killed, two hurt in building collapse

At least one person was killed and two others sustained injuries when a portion of a building collapsed in the Ranchor Line area of Karachi, according to Rescue sources. According to initial reports, the victims were inside the building when a portion of the structure suddenly collapsed.

Rescue teams promptly reached the site after receiving information about the incident. Rescuers retrieved the body and shifted the injured persons to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause of the building collapse. **APP**

BACKPAGE

Bahraini FM praises professionalism of Pakistan Armed forces

HE Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral defence and security were discussed.

The COAS & CDF underscored the

longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Bahrain, rooted in shared values and mutual respect. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly in the defence and security domains. The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism and operational preparedness of Pakistan Armed Forces, reiterated resolve to further enhance bilateral cooperation and acknowledged Pakistan's contributions towards regional peace and stability. **NEWS DESK**

President for stronger Pak-Bahrain trade and security ties

President calls for further strengthening of Pakistan-Germany relations

President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Bahrain and expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade, investment, economic engagement and security.

The president said this during his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani, who called on him at Awwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said.

The two leaders first held a restricted meeting, which was followed by a delegation-level meeting.

Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani is on a visit to Pakistan to attend the 3rd Session of the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC).

Talking to him, President Zardari said Pakistan is keen to translate strong bilateral political relations into deeper trade and investment ties.

He highlighted opportunities for cooperation in food security, IT and digital services, construction, mining, port handling, research and development, tourism and healthcare. He also encouraged greater business-to-business engagement between the two countries.

The president appreciated



Bahrain's warm welcome of the Islamabad MoU and the Mekhsh Joint Defence Agreement and its recognition of Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, security and stability.

The president said Pakistan and Bahrain share a long-standing and trusted defence partnership, reflected in joint exercises, high-level exchanges and institutional cooperation. He expressed Pakistan's readiness to further strengthen cooperation in manpower, logistics, training and defence hardware.

The president also appreciated Bahrain's support and

opportunities for more than 134,000 Pakistanis residing in the Kingdom and welcomed continued cooperation on matters concerning the Pakistani diaspora.

Talking about the regional situation, the president said Pakistan remains committed to constructive engagement with all parties to build trust, bridge gaps and promote lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani conveyed the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime

Minister of Bahrain, to the President.

He said the Pakistan-Bahrain JMC meetings had remained highly productive, covering several important areas of cooperation, and noted that the President's visit to Bahrain has left a significant and positive impact on bilateral relations.

Discussing the regional situation, he commended Pakistan's courageous efforts to mediate and bring the warring parties to the table, saying that Pakistan's actions had helped save many lives. **NEWS DESK**

Security Forces kill 9 terrorists, including four key commanders

SHO, gunman martyred in armed attack on police in KP's Karak

Security forces killed nine terrorists, including four key commanders belonging to Fitna al-Khwarezmi, during intelligence-based operations in North Waziristan.

Security sources said security forces conducted intelligence-based operations in the areas of Palangzai, Nadeem Kot and Kot Khazri in North Waziristan against terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khwarezmi.

The four key commanders killed during the operations were identified as Khalid Raza, Kamran, Musa and Maftoon, the sources said.

A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorists during the successful operations, they added.

The sources said several hideouts of the terrorists were also destroyed during the ongoing operations being conducted under the Azm-e-Istehkam vision.

Security forces continue to conduct intelligence-based operations to eliminate terrorist elements and dismantle their networks in the region, the sources said.

A station house officer (SHO) and his gunman were martyred when unidentified armed assailants opened fire on a police party in the New Karpa area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (K-P) Karak. District Police Officer (DPO) Imran Khan said on Thursday.

According to DPO Khan, the police party from Banda Daud Shah Police Station was on routine patrol near the Karak-Kohat boundary when armed men opened fire.

SHO Daud Khan and his gunman, Farhad, were martyred in the attack, while a passerby was also injured.

Following the incident, DPO Khan reached the scene along with additional police personnel. The area was cordoned off and a search operation was launched to trace and arrest the assailants.

Further investigation into the attack is under way. **APP**

Memon blasts KP CM over talks failure

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon on Thursday accused Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi of 'sabotaging' negotiations between the government and opposition in Islamabad due to his 'stubbornness and ego', saying the talks had been moving towards a solution before they broke down.

His remarks came a day after Afridi accused the PPP of attempting to create "another East Pakistan" during a meeting of the K-P cabinet, alleging that the party had previously placed personal interests ahead of national interests. The chief minister also criticised Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, who belongs to PPP, for chairing a security meeting, calling it "an attack on the Constitution and democracy" and warning that his government would not allow any attempt to undermine Pakistan's unity.

"The talks that happened in Islamabad were result-oriented. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) were part of it, and we were going towards a solution," Memon said at a press conference in Karachi.

He said the K-P chief minister had "sabotaged" the talks due to his "stubbornness and ego". "I understand that the reason was that, to look good in Imran Khan's eyes, he was doing all of this," he added.

"Talks were going well. The drafts of the agreement had almost been prepared. Some channels even reported that the agreement had been signed and that everything had been settled," Memon said, while responding to a question.

He claimed that Afridi had acted in a manner aimed at protecting his position before the PTI leadership. "Afridi acted to save his own position before the PTI leadership. The consequences of this are being suffered by PTI and the innocent people of K-P," he said.

Memon further said PPP had wanted political engagement with PTI and was willing to debate the issue of terrorism on any forum. "I am telling them to come to their senses. Even today there are

serious people in PTI: Gohar, their chairman, and Asad Qaiser," he added, urging them to come forward and give a "shut-up call" to those promoting a confrontational approach.

He further said political parties should remain within the political process rather than resort to confrontation or violence, urging senior PTI leaders to rein in such voices. "We want political parties to keep doing their work and have space and continue with a political mindset. Not to pick up weapons and do such hoodlums," he added.

Memon stated that PPP had not responded to Afridi's earlier statements but would defend its leadership after the K-P chief minister targeted the party. "PPP will not engage with PTI. But if PTI wants to end and launches a baseless smear campaign, then PPP will defend its leaders and show PTI the mirror," he said.

Asked whether the PPP was prepared for the possibility of governor's rule or an emergency being imposed in K-P, particularly amid the threat of terrorism and the possibility of PTI protests, Memon said the matter should not be viewed as an

issue concerning his party alone. "This is not merely a matter for the People's Party. It is an issue for every Pakistani, especially my Pashtun brothers and sisters," he said.

Memon compared the situation in K-P with Karachi's past experience of terrorism and prolonged strikes, saying around 70% of the province was currently facing a similar situation on a daily basis.

He questioned whether restoring peace should not be the provincial government's foremost priority. "Political disputes, protests and long marches can continue later but the immediate focus should be on protecting the lives of citizens," he said.

He said K-P was facing a serious security crisis, with members of the armed forces, police and Frontier Corps, as well as civilians and political workers, being targeted and killed. "Your priority should be to sit down and provide peace to the people and secure their lives. Should the priority be sit-ins and long marches?" he asked.

Turning to the security

situation in K-P, Memon said five of the province's seven divisions were "completely in the grip of terrorism". "Talibanisation's biggest headquarters has almost been established in K-P, and its targets are innocent, poor Pashtun brothers and sisters," he said.

He pointed to the threats facing police personnel and the deterioration of the security situation after dark, attributing it to what he described as "the provincial government's failure".

Memon also criticised PTI founder Imran Khan's past position on negotiations with the Taliban, saying Khan

had targeted rallies held by PPP and other political parties but not PTI rallies. "Why was this?" he asked. He linked it to what he described as the party's support for the Taliban.

"If your narrative is such that those people who are doing terrorism, you support them, become their spokesperson, they will say that they are our spokespersons, so they will not touch you," he said.

Memon also cited the Bannu jailbreak during the PTI government and the Army Public School attack, accusing PTI of failing to take a strong position against the Taliban. "In the PTI government, the Bannu jailbreak happened. In double-cabin vehicles, terrorists came under the

disguise of a rally and procession, carried out a jailbreak and took away terrorists, and PTI remained silent," he said.

"Where they have their government, where they want to extend, have they ever said a word for the end of terrorism? Did they ever raise their voice for that? Did they ever hold a press conference against the Taliban?" he asked. He added that PPP had itself suffered heavily from terrorism and maintained that political parties should focus on restoring peace.

Memon also warned that the political conduct being displayed by the K-P government was setting a bad precedent and urged PTI to "come to its senses" and adopt a more sensible approach.

"There are serious people within PTI. I have mentioned their chairman, Gohar and Asad Qaiser. These are serious people. They should make the decisions rather than handing decision-making authority to a young man who could lead things towards some unfortunate incident," Memon said. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan Bar Council declares Ahsan Bhoon's law degree genuine

The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) on Thursday declared that the degrees of its elected members, including prominent lawyer Ahsan Bhoon, were genuine.

The announcement by the PBC - the supreme regulatory body of lawyers - follows a debate over lawyers' degrees, with the qualification of Bhoon, a member of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), particularly being questioned.

In an official statement on Thursday, the PBC noted that the returning officers (ROs) for the council's 2020 and 2025 elections had gotten the elected members' degrees verified from their respective universities before notifying them as PBC members.

"It is, therefore, clarified that the verification of the degrees of the returned candidates, including that of Bhoon, was undertaken through the relevant universities in accordance with the prescribed procedure," the council said.

It explained that the RO for PBC Election-2020, the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP), had the degrees verified by the universities soon after the elections, following which the successful candidates were notified as PBC members.

Similarly, the RO for PBC Election-2025, also the AGP, again

initiated the process of verification of the elected members' degrees.

"Some members whose degrees were already verified in the last elections, their degrees too were sent again for verification to the relevant universities as well as the Higher Education Commission (HEC)," the council maintained.

The statement comes over a week after former MNA and retired Capt Muhammad Safdar called for verification of the degrees of prominent lawyers, including Bhoon, a close associate of Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The debate also comes ahead of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) elections scheduled for Oct 29.

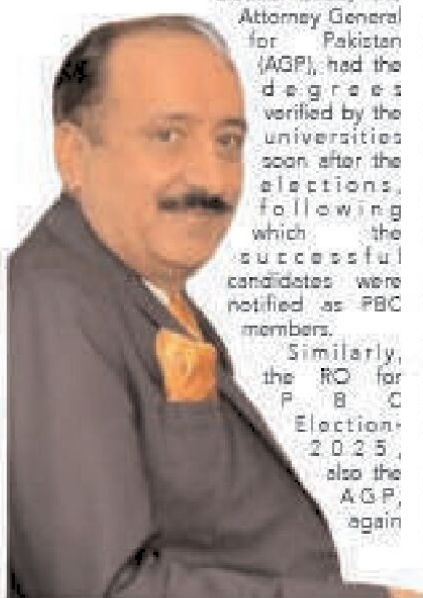
Bhoon, a former SCBA president, heads the Independent Group, also known as the Azma Jahangir Group. Safdar has announced the formation of his own group, the Qasidi-Azma Muhammad Ali Jinnah Group.

Days later, Safdar moved a complaint with the JCP to seek verification of Bhoon's educational qualifications, enrolment and professional credentials.

The complaint had also sought verification of his original degrees, transcripts, result cards and registration records; independent confirmation from the degree-awarding institution; verification from the HEC; his complete enrolment record with the relevant provincial bar council and the PBC; and the dates and basis of his enrolment as an advocate.

On the other hand, Bhoon has served a Rs5 billion defamation notice on Capt Safdar, demanding an unconditional public apology and retraction of the allegation that his LLB degree was fake.

According to the notice, Safdar made the allegations while speaking publicly outside the Supreme Court on or about Sept 23, with remarks repeated in later media appearances and video messages. **AGENCIES**



GLAMOURDTMUR

Emma Slays Paris in Blue!



Emma Stone brought star power to the final show of Paris Fashion Week alongside Zendaya and Ana de Armas at the Louis Vuitton presentation on Tuesday.

The Louis Vuitton show is the last major presentation of Paris Fashion Week, as the run of catwalks comes

to an end on Tuesday night. It also finalises the wider Fashion Week schedule, which has been hosted in New York, London and Milan before arriving in Paris. Actress Emma, 37, looked incredible as she ditched her lars in a cobalt blue skirt suit and paired the daring co-ord with black heels. Emma toted her belongings in a stylish black bag from the designer and further accessorised the outfit with a long silver chain necklace. Meanwhile, Zendaya opted for a more casual look by opting for classic blue jeans with an elevated white ruffled jacket with a crop

top. The Euphoria actress, 30, who's appearance marked her first sighting at Fashion Week, finished off her look with white pointed heels and gold hoop earrings. The A-list arrivals continued as Ana de Armas turned up the heat in a leather blazer dress that showed off her toned pins. The beauty, 38, added inches to her slender frame with black knee-high boots and a burgundy bag. Chloë Grace Moretz displayed her toned abs in a ruffled white and blue collar crop top with intricate layered textures from Nicolas

Ghesquière's 2027 collection. The 29-year-old teamed the edgy look with black trousers and heeled boots. Saoirse Ronan looked stylish in a red striped jumper and suede leather skirt, while Rhea Seehorn cut a chic figure in a white skin and leather trousers. Sophie Turner wowed in a tan and white leather jacket with blue trousers. The show is being hosted at the Louvre's Cour Carrée, which is the large, perfectly symmetrical square courtyard at the eastern end of the Louvre Palace in the city. NEWS DESK

Scooter's Girl Goes Kosher?

Sydney Sweeney is reportedly considering making a religious conversion as her relationship with Scooter Braun gets more serious.



Sweeney, 29, has lately been exploring a conversion to Braun's religion, Judaism, a source told Page Six, after Deauxma first reported that she was allegedly considering changing her faith. According to the source, the Euphoria star—who recently made a subtle nod to her boyfriend in a series of racy selfies—began considering converting after she and the 45-year-old former talent manager talked about the possibility of having children together. The couple is discussing having their own family and Scooter feels strongly on the subject, they claimed. The Daily Mail has reached out to Sweeney and Braun's representatives for comment but has not yet received a response.

Braun already shares three children with his ex-wife, Yael Cohen, whom he was married to from 2014 to 2022. The publication previously reported that Sweeney had been spotted attending Rosh Hashanah services with Braun at Temple Shalom in Greenwich, Connecticut. NEWS DESK

Pugh Powers Up Jaguar's New Ride!

Florence Pugh turned heads as she led the stars at the launch of Jaguar's new £120,000 Type 01 electric car in New York on Tuesday night.

The actress, 30, looked incredibly glamorous in a plunging black waistcoat dress with a satin skirt as she posed for photos by the new motor. Florence styled her hair in a messy updo and accessorised with a diamond necklace and huge platform heels. Models David Gandy, Elizabeth Lake, Jordan Rand and Simona Andrejic were also in attendance and were treated to an exclusive performance from English singer-songwriter Sienna Spiro. Florence was announced as Jaguar's brand ambassador for its new era. Jaguar's controversial rebirth as an all-electric carmaker shifted into gear on Tuesday as it finally revealed what it claims to be 'one of the most eagerly awaited cars in recent history'. In a shock rebrand for the 91-year-old British manufacturer, it stopped selling all petrol and diesel cars in December last year. The overhaul sparked a fierce backlash from critics including Donald Trump for its unconventional and 'woke' campaign, which featured androgynous models in avant-garde, brightly coloured clothing without showing a single car. The launch comes almost two years after Jaguar announced its dramatic rebrand in November 2024 with an advertising campaign featuring distinctive fashion models and bold slogans such as 'Copy Nothing', 'Delete Ordinary', 'Break Moulds' and 'Live Vivid', but no cars. It also confirmed it would retire its iconic 'growler' badge of a Jaguar baring its teeth in favour of a more contemporary visual identity. NEWS DESK



Hareem Farooq's university outfit draws mixed reactions

Pakistani actress Hareem Farooq has drawn mixed reactions on social media after appearing at Punjab University in Lahore with actor Faisal Qureshi as part of the promotional campaign for their upcoming Punjabi film Mango Jatt.

The actors visited the university to interact with students and promote their film. However, attention soon shifted from the promotional event to Hareem's outfit, with social media users debating whether her casual look was suitable for a university setting. Hareem wore a loose yellow shirt with denim pants for the appearance. While some users described the outfit as comfortable and appropriate for a promotional visit, others criticised her styling and argued that celebrities should dress according to the nature of the venue. The discussion quickly spread online, with users expressing different views about fashion and public appearances. Some believed a more formal or modest outfit would have been better suited to an educational



institution, while others said there was nothing unusual about Hareem's choice of clothing. The controversy also highlighted the intense scrutiny celebrities often face over their appearance. Public figures can attract criticism over even minor details of their clothing, particularly when they attend events at universities or other public institutions. Some online comments also shifted from criticism of the outfit to remarks about Hareem's physical appearance. Such comments have sparked concern over body shaming, as criticism of a celebrity's fashion choices can easily turn into personal attacks. Hareem has remained a prominent figure in Pakistan's entertainment industry, with her public appearances frequently attracting attention from fans and social media users. Her latest university visit has once again demonstrated how quickly celebrity fashion can become a topic of online debate. Meanwhile, Hareem Farooq and Faisal Qureshi are continuing to promote Mango Jatt. The Punjabi-language film has attracted interest because of its cast and promotional activities, with the actors visiting different platforms to connect with audiences ahead of its release. Despite the criticism, the debate has also generated further attention for the film. NEWS DESK

Taylor Who? Madonna Steals Grammy Spotlight



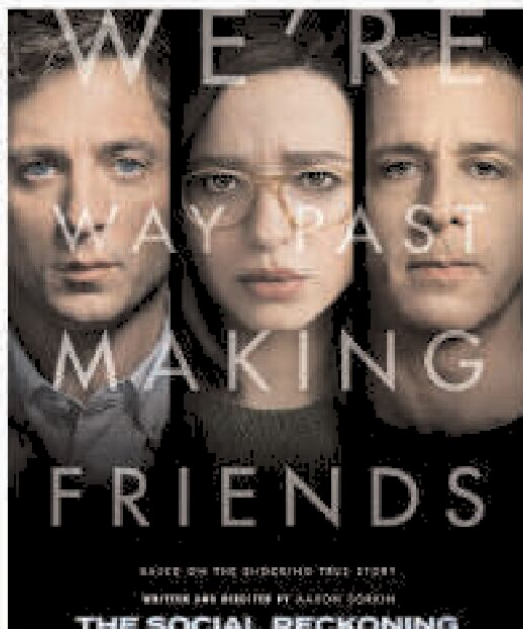
Madonna could be headed for another major career win following the release of her fifteenth studio album, Confessions II. After the album topped the Billboard 200 chart and received rave reviews from critics, it is now being tipped for a potential Album of the Year nomination at next year's Grammys. While the record wasn't originally eyeing a nomination, Madonna's odds have significantly increased following her big night at the MTV VMAs last month. The 68-year-old dominated the VMAs, taking home seven of the thirteen trophies she was nominated for. Her biggest wins included Artist of the Year, Best Dance, and Best Album. According to awards tracker website Gold Derby, Madonna is now gaining 'momentum' for next year's Grammys as a result of her VMAs victory. 'The VMAs gave Madonna a valuable platform to strengthen her case for a potential Album of the Year nomination at the Grammys,' the publication wrote. 'Her showcase wins and ceremony-opening number with assists from Sabrina Carpenter and Cherli XCX—easily the performance highlight of the evening—guaranteed Confessions II will remain on Recording Academy voters' radar, while the reception she received from fellow artists in the room suggests strong industry support.' They added, 'the night reinforced her standing as one of the season's most visible, viable contenders.' Following the VMAs, Madonna has now moved ahead of Taylor Swift's The Life of a Showgirl in the Album of the Year category. NEWS DESK

Jeremy Allen White unpacks Facebook's 'Frightening' ambition

Jeremy Allen White finds the power of social media frightening -- an anxiety he's now confronting in his latest film.

The actor is starring alongside the Oscar-winning Mikey Madison in 'The Social Reckoning,' the drama directed and written by Aaron Sorkin that delves into the inner workings of Facebook. The film focuses on the investigation that led to 'The Facebook Files,' a trove of statements and data leaked in 2021. The preceding probe into the social network's practices was spearheaded by the then-Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Hynowitz (White) with assistance from whistleblower Frances Haugen (Madison). 'I've got a lot of fears about, like, what these companies want ultimately,' White said in an interview with AFP. 'They want all of our time. They want all of our engagement. They want the way we communicate to be with their tools,' he continued. The American TV and film star said it's 'a frightening concept that we don't know where the ceiling is here. You know, they have billions and trillions of dollars. What else?'

'The Social Reckoning' serves as a sequel of sorts to 2010's 'The Social Network,' Sorkin's acclaimed film that chronicled Facebook's origins. That movie starring Jesse Eisenberg centered on Mark Zuckerberg, a student who struggled socially and eventually created his own online ecosystem for making friends -- what would become Facebook.



For White, who opened an account on the platform during high school, 'it seemed innocent enough, I guess, at the time.'

But the 35-year-old actor recalls witnessing the stress and insecurities experienced by friends over who had the most followers, or who followed who on social media. 'Now it's kind of like how we value everything in this world,' he said. Madison, 27, opted out of social media, a stance she still maintains today. The actor, who scored an Academy Award for her starring role in the hit film 'Anora,' said she shares 'a lot of the same sensibilities' and concerns voiced by White. 'The Social Reckoning' portrays Zuckerberg as an adult, a role played by Jeremy Strong. Still socially awkward, the rendition of Zuckerberg is now one of a powerful, globally known figure, whose platform generates billions of dollars and is used by millions of people. The film shows how, according to the investigations, company practices contributed to the radicalization of some users. In the wake of the public revelations, the parent firm rebranded as Meta. The probe's revelations sparked lawsuits that in some cases sought compensation running into the millions. But White emphasized that for companies 'handling billions in revenue, the sums are kind of irrelevant.' He said he hopes the film will 'get people to speak about the damages that can be caused by companies like Facebook. AFP

MONEY

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Govt pushes back on World Bank poverty numbers

The move to place Pakistan in MENAAP is a statistical reclassification: Schehzad

Advisor to the Finance Minister Khuram Schehzad on Thursday said the World Bank's decision to include Pakistan in its Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAAP) reporting region is merely an administrative and statistical reclassification and does not affect the country's geographical identity or income classification.

This distinction was important as regional statistics changed whenever the composition of a statistical group changed, he said in his official X handle.

Once Pakistan's large population

is added to MENAAP, indicators relating to poverty, population and per-capita income will naturally look different from those of the traditional Middle East and North Africa region. Regional averages are usually population-weighted. A large country therefore pulls the regional figure strongly toward its own values. Pakistan's population is large relative to most MENA economies, so its inclusion will noticeably shift any regional average it joins.

Giving an illustration, he said if a region of 100 million people has a 10% poverty rate (10 million poor). Add a country of 100 million with a 30% rate (30 million poor). The regional rate becomes 20%. Nobody in either country became poorer. The regional rate doubled purely because the group changed.

Therefore, the statements suggesting that a large proportion of "MENA poor" now live in Pakistan creates a misleading impression, he said. Pakistan has been added to the statistical region itself; consequently, its population and poverty figures are now included in the regional totals.

He said the same caution applies when comparing the new MENAAP

figures with historical MENA data. An apparent increase in regional poverty may partly reflect the addition of Pakistan and Afghanistan rather than deterioration in the economic conditions of countries traditionally considered part of MENA.

Similarly, Pakistan's removal from the World Bank's South Asia reporting group will change South Asian averages.

This does not mean that poverty has suddenly declined in South Asia because conditions improved; part of the statistical change may simply arise because Pakistan is no longer included in that particular regional aggregate.

The correct interpretation is therefore that Pakistan has been reclassified to the World Bank's MENAAP reporting region.

He said that the comparisons of poverty between Pakistan, India and other countries should consequently rely on country-level data, the same poverty threshold and the same reference year, rather than statistics taken from changing regional groupings. The central point is simple: a change in the statistical basket can change the regional picture without changing the economic reality on the ground, he concluded. **APP**

PIA taps UK for fleet makeover

PIA's direct international routes offered an important commercial advantage



Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) on Thursday discussed ways to further enhance trade and cooperation in priority sectors and deliver concrete outcomes through the next bilateral Trade Dialogue.

During a meeting between Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott here at the Ministry of Commerce, the two sides focused on expanding trade and investment cooperation in healthcare and life sciences, information technology, agriculture and livestock, financial services, aviation and minerals-related services, said a news release.

The British side outlined the possibility of a long-term, non-legally binding investment partnership, supported at ministerial level, to provide a framework for cooperation in mutually agreed sectors. Potential areas included regulatory reforms, trade facilitation, education and workforce skills, and investment financing.

Jam Kamal Khan highlighted livestock as an important area for cooperation, noting the Prime Minister's keen interest in strengthening the sector, improving animal productivity and increasing value addition and meat exports.

He underscored the opportunities for British expertise, technology and investment to support modern livestock practices and stronger commercial linkages.

The High Commissioner highlighted the importance of incorporating food safety and regulatory requirements into sector development, enabling Pakistani producers to access UK and other international markets.

The meeting also reviewed ongoing engagement through the healthcare and life sciences working group.

The minister emphasised the need to strengthen the international branding of Pakistani products and help domestic businesses develop a stronger presence in overseas markets. Discussions covered opportunities to promote Pakistani pink salt, olive oil, food products, textiles and surgical instruments through quality assurance, value addition and effective marketing.

Both sides recognised the potential for Pakistani businesses to develop their own brands and capture greater value from products already supplied to international markets. They also discussed opportunities for Pakistani food businesses and restaurant brands to expand their presence in the UK.

Cooperation in aviation was another major area of discussion. The British side briefed the minister on engagement involving Airbus and Rolls-Royce, including potential aircraft and engine arrangements for PIA and possible export credit support.

Aircraft leasing was discussed as a means of addressing immediate fleet requirements while longer-term procurement options are considered.

Jam Kamal noted that PIA's direct international routes offered an important commercial advantage and stressed the need for improved service standards, reliability and fleet

modernization to rebuild passenger confidence.

The High Commissioner acknowledged Pakistan's ongoing economic reform efforts, including work on regulatory and tax reforms. The minister highlighted tariff rationalization as an important step towards improving competitiveness, widening access to inputs and encouraging investment.

The meeting also explored cooperation in Islamic finance, including opportunities to strengthen financial links with the Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom.

On minerals, the minister highlighted the need for experienced technical partners, professional exploration services and joint ventures to build Pakistan's domestic capabilities. The British side identified potential contributions in legal, financial, insurance and other services supporting the minerals sector, and expressed interest in facilitating UK business participation in the planned minerals conference.

Looking ahead to Pakistan's 80th anniversary in 2027, both sides discussed using the milestone to showcase Pakistan's products, economic opportunities and areas of bilateral cooperation through a series of business, education and cultural engagements.

The meeting concluded with an emphasis on continued coordination to develop practical proposals and advance preparations for the next trade dialogue. **APP**

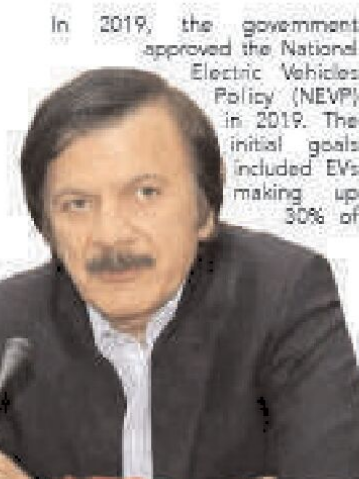
Pump price pinch pushes EV timeline forward

Petrol and diesel prices have risen 54% and 43% since the Middle East war started in February

Amid the growing popularity of electric vehicles (EVs), Pakistan expects to reach its EV adoption target ahead of schedule as consumers increasingly switch from petrol- or diesel-powered cars.

"I feel that the target we had set in our electric-vehicle policy last year, we will achieve it much earlier as the rise in oil prices has brought cost recovery of EVs to one to one-and-a-half year," Haroon Akhtar, adviser to the prime minister on industries and production, told Bloomberg.

Pakistan has developed policies to promote the adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs) to reduce its fuel import bill, improve environmental conditions, and foster a sustainable transport system.



In 2019, the government approved the National Electric Vehicles Policy (NEVP) in 2019. The initial goals included EVs making up 30% of

all passenger vehicle and heavy-duty truck sales by 2030, and 90% by 2040. Since the Middle East war started in February, petrol and diesel prices have jumped 54% and 43%, respectively, according to Pakistan State Oil Company Ltd. This has shortened the time it takes for buyers to recoup the higher upfront cost of

an EV, Akhtar told Bloomberg.

Oil prices climbed on Thursday on persistent worries about supply from the key Middle East producing region amid an increase in attacks on shipping in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, while the US cut output as a hurricane menaced offshore production.

Brent crude futures rose \$2.28, or 2.28%, to \$102.28 a barrel by 0427 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures gained \$1.66, or 1.88%, to \$89.94.

Meanwhile, the official told Bloomberg that the government is also preparing a new auto policy that could be presented to the cabinet within the next two weeks. The government is considering tax incentives for EVs to narrow their price gap with conventional vehicles, Akhtar said.

Last year, the National Electric Vehicle (NEV) Policy 2025-30 was officially launched in June 2025, after being finalised in November 2024 and approved by the Economic Coordination Committee in October 2025. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan restores direct shipping service to seven European ports to boost exports



Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Thursday said that direct shipping connectivity between Karachi and major European ports had been restored, providing relief to exporters facing longer transit times and increased freight costs due to disruptions on international shipping routes, read a statement.

The minister said Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) had reinstated its PREMIUM IPAK service in response to exporters' demand for a dedicated, direct Europe service.

Under the restored service, MSC will make a weekly call at Karachi Gateway Terminal International (KGTI), connecting Karachi with key European destinations through Colombo, Felixstowe, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Bremerhaven, Antwerp, Le Havre and London Gateway.

"The restoration of a dedicated Europe service is an important development for our export-oriented

industries, particularly the textile sector, which has been facing increased transit times and logistics costs because of disruptions to international shipping routes," Chaudhry said.

He said textile exporters had recently apprised him of the difficulties caused by changes in shipping routes, particularly those linked to the situation in the Red Sea.

"Exporters told me in a recent that longer vessel journeys were increasing transportation costs and delivery times for shipments to European and US markets. These additional costs and delays have affected the competitiveness of Pakistani exporters," he said.

The minister said the government was taking up the concerns of the export sector with shipping lines and other relevant stakeholders to improve maritime connectivity and facilitate international trade.

"Reliable and predictable shipping connectivity is essential for Pakistan's exporters. Our focus is to ensure that the maritime sector supports trade, reduces logistical bottlenecks and strengthens Pakistan's access to international markets," he said.

He welcomed MSC's decision to reinstate the PREMIUM IPAK service, saying the weekly Karachi call would give exporters a more direct link to key European markets.

"The restored service will improve connectivity with major European ports and provide

exporters with greater options for planning and moving their shipments," he said.

The minister, however, noted that the reinstatement of the service should not be viewed as a resolution of the wider challenges affecting international shipping routes.

"Disruptions to established shipping routes continue to have implications for global trade. We will continue working with the shipping industry and exporters to address connectivity and logistics issues and to strengthen Pakistan's position in international trade," he said.

Chaudhry said the government remained committed to improving port and shipping services and creating a more efficient maritime logistics system to support exporters and enhance the country's trade competitiveness.

The federal minister also lauded the efforts of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Chairman Rear Admiral (retd) Shehid Ahmed and the management of Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited (KGTI) for restoring the shipping link between Karachi and major European markets.

KPT Chairman Rear Admiral (retd) Shehid Ahmed said measures were under way to further improve the efficiency of the maritime logistics system.

He said the restored shipping connection would improve access from Karachi to key European markets and facilitate the country's exporters. **NEWS DESK**

KSE-100 sheds 1,138 points

The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Thursday, shedding 1,138.50 points, a negative change of 0.68 percent, to close at 167,441.91 points against 168,580.41 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 365,869 million shares, compared to 586,861 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value decreased to Rs 17,722 billion from Rs 22,365 billion.

Market capitalization decreased to Rs 18,597 billion from Rs 18,747 billion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 496 companies that traded in the ready market, 130 posted gains, 324 suffered losses, while 42 remained unchanged.

K-Electric Ltd. led the volume chart with 29,662 million shares, followed by Energyica PK with 21,323 million shares and Waves Home App with 16,919 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Baba Farid Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs 35.26 to close at Rs 465.22, while Fatah Industries Limited advanced by Rs 26.22 to settle at Rs 288.38.

On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited declined by Rs 280.00 to close at Rs 25,400.00, while Saezgar Engineering Works Limited fell by Rs 35.33 to Rs 1,591.47. **APP**

KSE-100
1,138.50 pts (-0.68%)
167,441.91
vs 168,580.41 previous

Volume
365,869 mln shares
Value Rs 17,722 bn
vs 22,365 bn previous

Market Cap
Rs 18,597 trn
vs 18,747 trn

350 gainers • 324 losers • 42 unchanged

Rupee up

Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 1 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.01, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.02. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.50 and Rs 278.10, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.20, closing at Rs 309.89 against the previous day's rate of Rs 310.09, 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 Rs 1.20 and closed at Rs 365.56 compared to the previous day's Rs 366.76. **APP**

Gold rises

The prices of gold witnessed an upward trend in the local market on Thursday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola increasing by Rs600 to close at Rs435,036, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs515 to settle at Rs372,973, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold also rose by Rs472, closing at Rs341,904. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola in the domestic market dropped by Rs120 to stand at Rs6,368, while the price of 10 grams of silver went down by Rs103 to close at Rs5,459. **APP**

WORLD

DTM

Strike on Ukrainian public bus leaves 30 dead

Thirty people were killed and at least 18 were injured by Russian strikes in eastern Ukraine that included an attack on a public bus, authorities said Thursday, as an intensive pre-winter wave of attacks continued and power outages worsened in the capital Kyiv.

Vadym Filashkin, head of the regional military administration, said public transport in Kramatorsk and the neighboring city of Sloviansk, in Ukraine's Donetsk region, was halted because of the sharp deterioration in security. He accused Russia of deliberately targeting civilians, adding: "In such circumstances, we have no right to risk the lives of passengers and drivers. The safety of residents of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk is above all."

The attacks follow deadly missile strikes a day earlier in the northern Ukrainian town of Pryluky, where the death toll rose to 22, including five children. Rescuers hit through the rubble of a residential building hit by a Russian missile and at least 54 people were injured.

Heavy debris was removed from the cratered section of the building, while rescue dogs continued a search nearby for residents who have not yet been accounted for.

Several survivors of the attack were forced to sleep in heavily damaged apartments after they couldn't find anywhere else to sleep.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Russia will likely escalate daily missile and drone attacks as winter approaches. He appealed for additional defense support from NATO countries.



"It is important that support in words takes concrete form in new packages for Ukraine's defense," he wrote in an online post. "Supplies of anti-ballistic capabilities, ammunition for our combat aircraft, and investments in interceptors - all of this is directly helping save lives every day."

Ukraine's energy company DTEK said the national grid operator Ukrenergo had ordered emergency power outages in Kyiv. It explained that this is separate from regular, rolling outages scheduled across the country and would not be applied during those shutdowns.

A public awareness campaign, restarted this month, urged families to prepare emergency kits, store drinking water and maintain off-grid power sources ahead of expected prolonged winter blackouts, as Moscow keeps up the intensity of its attacks.

Kyiv police said bomb disposal specialists had defused two more unexploded ballistic missile warheads, each weighing about half a ton, after they landed near residential buildings. Late Wednesday, Russian drones struck Kyiv's Obolonskyi and Desnianskyi districts, killing four people and injuring 12, including four children, police said.

Russia and Ukraine are locked in a long-range aerial war while their armies remain largely deadlocked on the front line, more than 4-1/2 years since Moscow's full-scale invasion.

Russia's technology giant Yandex said one of its data centers in the western Ryazan region was damaged in a Ukrainian drone attack, taking the site offline and leading to potential online service disruption.

Separately, Ukraine said its forces struck a large oil refinery complex in the city of Salavat, some 1,200 kilometers (about 750 miles) east of Moscow. Ukraine's General Staff described the complex as one of Russia's largest oil refining and petrochemical facilities. The claim could not be independently verified. **AP**

Canadian poet and essayist Anne Carson wins Nobel Prize in literature



Canadian poet and essayist Anne Carson won the Nobel Prize in literature Thursday "for her bold and inventive oeuvre that, in playful dialogue with the classical tradition, has created new forms for contemporary literature."

Ingrid Carlberg, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, said the author was in Iceland "listening to the wind" when the academy reached her to notify her of the win.

"She was very taken by surprise," Carlberg said.

Toronto-born Carson, 76, draws on themes and stories from ancient Greek and Roman literature for works that often blend elements of poetry, essay and fiction.

Her books include "Eros the Bittersweet," a look at the pleasure and pain of desire in ancient Greek literature, verse novel "Autobiography of Red," "Men in the Off Hours," a collection of poetry and prose that won Canada's Griffin Prize for poetry in 2001 and "Nome Jeane Baker of Troy," which compares Marilyn Monroe and Helen of Troy.

Carson also has translated works of classical Greek literature that, the Swedish Academy said, "may be regarded as independent works in their own right." They include "If Not, Winter," based on poem fragments by Sappho, Sophocles' tragic plays "Electra" and "Antigone" and Euripides' "Bakkhai." **AP**

Award-Winning Kashmiri filmmaker detained in US



An award-winning filmmaker whose work has explored conflict in his native Kashmir has been detained by US immigration officials after legally coming to the United States to study and later claiming asylum, his family and friends said on Wednesday. The Department of Homeland Security separately confirmed on Wednesday that Arif Sheikh was arrested on September 24. The department said that Sheikh "legally entered the US on a temporary basis and illegally overstayed his lawful admittance."

A pending application does not confer legal status in the US, DHS said, adding he will receive due process. Sheikh was detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, part of DHS, coming off a plane from California at Washington Dulles International Airport, according to a statement from relatives and friends campaigning for his release from detention.

Sheikh, who lived in Alexandria, Virginia, entered the US in 2019 on a student visa to pursue graduate studies in film at Georgia State University and filed for asylum in 2020, according to the statement. It did not describe the grounds for his asylum claim. The statement said he had a pending immigration application and was authorized to work and live in the US.

President Donald Trump's administration said in August it was working "to identify and revoke the non-immigrant visas of foreigners who have come to the US claiming to be short-term visitors, but then file for asylum to stay here permanently." Trump has pursued an immigration crackdown and deportation drive that he says aims to improve domestic security. **AP**

Israel drastically reduces British diplomatic presence in Jerusalem

Israel said the British consulate in Jerusalem ended its functions on Thursday but that seven diplomats would be allowed to remain in a limited capacity, with the UK saying it would continue to offer 'vital services'.

The move comes after Israel ordered the closure of the consulate in September as retaliation after London led Western sanctions over violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.



Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said Thursday's move to downsize the UK presence had followed a dialogue with the British government in order to avoid an escalation of tensions between the two countries.

"As I announced, the British consulate in Jerusalem ended its role today," Sa'ar said in a statement, adding that 20 diplomats including the consul general were ending their missions and leaving the country.

Sa'ar said the building is the property of the British government and that a "task force of only seven diplomats" would be allowed to operate from the premises, "which ceased to function as a consulate today". "Their scope of activity will be very limited," Sa'ar said.

Britain and Israel have "agreed on the continuation of dialogue between the governments, within which both sides will be able to raise issues important to them", he

said.

The UK government pledged to continue delivering "vital services" in Jerusalem, saying the consulate general building would remain open and would "be known as the UK Mission, Jerusalem".

"The UK Mission, Jerusalem, is independent, operational and will continue to deliver vital services and our work with the Palestinian people," Foreign Minister Ed Miliband said in a statement. An AFP photographer on Thursday saw that the diplomatic emblem and a plaque that adorned the consulate's facade had been removed. It was not immediately clear whether new plaques would be put up.

On September 8, Sa'ar ordered the British

consulate to close. At the time, he said Israel would also expel British representatives at a centre monitoring the US-brokered ceasefire plan in Gaza, bar British training for Palestinian Authority forces and ban 12 Britons, mostly members of parliament, from visiting. Sa'ar on Thursday said the measures had been implemented.

The retaliation came after 12 countries including Britain, Canada and France announced they would sanction trade with Israel's settlements in the West Bank, following a surge in settler attacks against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

The British consulate in Jerusalem was founded nearly 200 years ago.

It lies in east Jerusalem, part of the historically Palestinian area that Israel captured in 1967. Israel later annexed east Jerusalem and considers the holy city its undivided capital. **AP**

'Cockroach' protests swarm Bengaluru over election chief



Thousands of supporters of India's youth "Cockroach" movement and several student groups demonstrated in the southern city of Bengaluru on Thursday, stepping up a nationwide campaign that is demanding the election chief's resignation over a revision of voter lists that has removed over 130 million people from the rolls.

The demonstration in Bengaluru came a day after opposition leader Rahul Gandhi was briefly detained by police at a protest in New Delhi. Dramatic images of police dragging Gandhi into a vehicle spread widely on social media, adding momentum to the protests calling for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

Gandhi's Congress party has called for more protests in New Delhi later Thursday.

The nationwide voter list review, known as the Special Intensive Revision, has been carried out in most of India's states and federally administered territories. More than 130 million names have been removed so far, a number larger than the populations of countries like Japan and Mexico. Millions of people have appealed the deletions.

The opposition says the removals have disproportionately affected voters who support them, while voters more likely to back Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party have been preserved or added to the lists. The Election Commission and the government reject the allegations, saying the revision is aimed at removing duplicate and ineligible entries.

Those whose names have been struck off the list can appeal, but getting back on the rolls can be difficult. Critics say the requirements are confusing and some people may not have required documents such as older government records.

The anger intensified last month following an investigation by the Indian Express newspaper that found two election commissioners had raised concerns about the process.

The campaign has been led in part by the "Cockroach" movement, which began as an online youth campaign in May and has since organized street protests across the country. Its earlier nationwide demonstrations, sit-ins and hunger strikes over exam paper leaks led to the resignation of Modi's education minister in July.

Protesters are demanding Kumar's resignation and an end to the removals, warning that they could disenfranchise millions more voters.

The rallies pose a political challenge to Modi midway through his third term, as opposition parties seek to turn growing anger into a broader national campaign. Opposition leader Gandhi is also emerging as a prominent face of the protest.

The "Cockroach" movement has called for more protests in New Delhi starting Saturday, with thousands expected to march to Jantar Mantar, the capital's designated protest site. Police barricaded the area ahead of the demonstrations. **AP**

The growing protests against India's poll body — and PM Modi

India's election commission is facing mounting pressure after a newspaper investigation alleged misconduct during a nationwide voter-roll revision.

The Indian Express alleged last month that key decisions linked to the large-scale revision exercise -- which has seen millions of names removed from draft voter rolls -- were likely taken without the approval of two of the three election commissioners.

The Election Commission of India (ECI), a constitutional body, has rejected the allegations. It says all its decisions were unanimous and legally valid.

Opposition parties say legitimate voters are being struck off to benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

Protests demanding that

commission chief Gyanesh Kumar step down have grown since the report, with a demonstration in the capital New Delhi on Saturday expected to draw large crowds.

The allegations are a fresh challenge for 76-year-old Modi, in his third term in office, following student protests in July that



forced the education minister to resign.

Here is a rundown of the major issues at stake in the latest

protest:

What's the controversy

The Indian Express reported that the poll body has been riven by internal disagreements since the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter lists began in 2025. It said two of the ECI's three

Decisions by the three-member poll body should be taken by consensus or a majority. Why has it sparked anger

The poll body says the exercise identifies fraudulently registered voters and aims to prevent "foreign, illegal immigrants" from casting ballots.

Critics say the drive has disproportionately affected marginalized and minority communities.

Members of Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have long alleged that large numbers of undocumented Muslim migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh have fraudulently entered India's electoral rolls.

How many are excluded

According to election commission data cited by Indian media, more than 133 million names have been excluded from draft rolls.

That's roughly the population of Mexico and, in the world's most populous nation, adds up to about 15 percent of the electorate. **AP**

SPORTS



Anfield cauldron awaits Man City after verdict

Erling Haaland and Manchester City's other star players have watched from a distance as the club dealt with the fallout from being found guilty of large-scale financial wrongdoing in the biggest scandal in Premier League history.

Now they have to face the music.

City's first game back after an international window dominated by the explosive verdict in its long-running case with the Premier League comes on Sunday.

And it just had to be at Anfield.

A trip to Liverpool has long been considered the toughest, most fearsome away game of the season by City. It just got even tougher, with Haaland, Rayan Cherki and the rest likely entering a cauldron of hate and anger this weekend.

Liverpool might consider itself the team which suffered most from the slew of financial misdemeanors carried out by City, according to the findings of an independent investigatory panel, between 2009-18 - the period when City's Abu Dhabi ownership was assembling a squad that would later dominate English soccer. Those findings are the subject of an appeal by City, which continues to assert its innocence.

Under former coach Jürgen Klopp, Liverpool won the Premier League in 2020 but the team also finished second to Pep Guardiola's City by one point in the 2018-19 and 2021-22 seasons following memorable title races that raised the bar in terms of points earned and the standard of football played.

What helped City to reach that level was nearly a decade of rule-breaking, the independent panel has found. So, expect Liverpool fans to be seething inside and outside of Anfield. They'll believe they are owed some titles.

Aside from Phil Foden, who is suspended for the match, no current member of City's squad even played for the club from 2009-18. Enzo Maresca took over as City manager only in June.

Still, they will be the ones bearing the brunt of the widespread discontent from fan bases up and down the country in the coming months.

What will be intriguing is who from City's ownership or board attends the Liverpool game. How much will the matter weigh on the players under the most intense pressure? And what will be the reaction of City's match-going supporters, with the future of their club so uncertain - the potential sanctions include a huge points deduction, even expulsion from the Premier League - and the violations of its ownership clear for all to see in the commission's verdict?

City leads the league on a maximum 15 points from five games - all of which were played when the club was being accused of those financial breaches.

Now the guilty verdict has arrived, it's time to see the impact on the team - and the reaction of its rivals.

The first game back after an extended three-week break for internationals is Arsenal, the defending champion, at home to Leeds on Saturday lunchtime.

Manchester United hosts Tottenham - in last place on two points - in one of five other games on Saturday. The international window was marked by a raft of injuries to high-profile Premier League players. Now to see how serious they are.

Alexander Isak and Cody Gakpo returned to Liverpool for assessment of injuries picked up playing for Sweden and the Netherlands, respectively, and are currently doubts for the Liverpool-City game. So might be Haaland, who asked to be substituted midway through the second half of Norway's final Nations League game, but that might have been because of fatigue. Kai Havertz, who has been the starting striker for Arsenal this season, was injured in the first of four games played by Germany - though that was two weeks ago now. Certain to be missing is Bournemouth midfielder Alex Scott, who is out for up to eight weeks with a thigh injury sustained on England duty. Scott is a key player in a Bournemouth team without a win so far and heading into its first ever European campaign next week. Sunderland striker Brian Brobbey also is facing a spell on the sidelines after sustaining a hamstring injury playing for the Netherlands. AP

Portugal jumps into top 5 of FIFA world rankings



Portugal was the only team that moved up in the top 10 of the updated FIFA/Coca-Cola World Rankings on Wednesday, climbing two spots to No. 5.

Brazil and Morocco each fell one spot in the only other changes within the top 10, after each drew a friendly during the just-concluded international window.

Portugal won all four UEFA Nations League matches during this window, beating Norway twice and Wales and Denmark once each.

Spain, fresh off winning its second World Cup this summer, built on its margin as the top-ranked team after sweeping the first four Nations League matches, beating England 3-2, Croatia twice and the Czech Republic. Argentina remains No. 2 after beating Benin 3-0 Tuesday night in Lionel Messi's final match for his country, while France and England round out the top four. Belgium, the Netherlands and Mexico complete the top 10. REUTERS

PSL 12 Set for March 18 - May 2

Pakistan's biggest cricket event is coming back as HBL PSL on Thursday confirmed that the 12th edition of the tournament will be held from 18 March to 2 May 2027, with all eight franchises returning to compete for the coveted title, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

The window was determined following extensive consultation with all key stakeholders after the PSL Governing Council meeting held in London on 1 September 2026, attended by owners and representatives of all eight HBL PSL franchises. HBL

PSL 12 will build on a landmark 2026 season that broke new ground - eight teams competed for the first time, a first-ever player auction replaced the draft system and the final at Gaddafi Stadium drew a record crowd of 32,461. Peshawar Zalmi were crowned champions after beating debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen by five wickets on 3 May 2026, ending a nine-year wait for the title.

With the window now confirmed, a series of marquee milestones will follow including Direct Signings, Retention announcements, the Trade window and the Player Auction, each one a moment for fans to look forward to as the competition takes shape.

"HBL PSL 11 showed the world what this league is capable of - thrilling moments that had the whole nation transfixed, record crowds, record broadcasts. HBL PSL 12 will raise the bar further. "We are committed to delivering another outstanding season and look forward to seeing all eight franchises compete once again for the title."

"Last season changed what people expect from this league and we intend to meet every one of those expectations in 2027. Today's announcement is only the first step, Direct signings, retentions, the trade window and the auction will each bring their



own excitement in the months ahead. "Eight teams, eight squads hungry to go one better and millions of fans across Pakistan and the world already counting down the days. Naye Daur ka Aghaz ho chuka hai. #NewEra". AP

Pakistan, Sri Lanka set for T20I series opener in Rawalpindi

Staff Report

Pakistan and Sri Lanka will begin their three-match T20I series in Rawalpindi on Friday, with both sides unveiling the series trophy ahead of the opening match and their captains addressing the media at a pre-series press conference.

Pakistan T20I captain Saibzada Farhan, who is taking charge of the national side for the first time in a bilateral series, acknowledged that captaincy comes with pressure but said the responsibility should not be allowed to become a burden.

"As captain, you have to lead from the front and perform," Farhan said, adding that he was focused on fulfilling his responsibilities while not allowing the captaincy to affect his natural game.

He said Pakistan have a combination of young and experienced players, while the return of Fakhr Zaman would further strengthen the team.

When our correspondent asked Farhan about Pakistan's bowling struggles in the opening and death overs, he said the team was aware of the issue and was working to rectify it.

"We are looking at these areas



and trying to improve them," Farhan said.

He also stressed that pressure was part of international cricket regardless of the opposition, saying even matches against comparatively smaller teams such as Zimbabwe could present challenges.

Sri Lankan captain Kusal Mendis, meanwhile, said Pakistan's current side features several new players but remains a strong team. He added that a number of Sri Lankan players had experience of playing in Pakistan and were familiar with the

conditions.

Mendis said there was a lot of cricket being played at present and noted that conditions in Pakistan and Sri Lanka were not significantly different. "We believe in our players and hope they will perform well," he said.

When our correspondent asked Mendis about the absence of star all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga and who would be expected to fill his place, the Sri Lankan captain said the team had several young players capable of stepping up.

"We have youngsters who can perform well," Mendis said.

Asked about Sri Lanka's likely combination for the opening match, Mendis said the pitch would play an important role in the final decision. He indicated that the conditions

suggested a combination of three seamers and two spinners could be considered, although the final team would be decided after assessing the pitch.

Mendis also praised head coach Gary Kirsten, describing him as an excellent coach and saying that he was keeping an eye on the team's preparations for major tournaments in the future. The three-match series will give both teams an opportunity to test their combinations and assess their players ahead of their upcoming international commitments.

Tennis titans sign up for 1 Point Slam madness

The Australian Open's 1 Point Slam will again have some star power in January with Carlos Alcaraz, Coco Gauff, Naomi Osaka and Jannik Sinner among the players set to compete against pros and amateur qualifiers for a 1 million Australian dollar prize.

At the Australian Open launch on Thursday, organizers said qualifying events for the 1 Point Slam are underway at clubs and tennis communities across the country, and a further two days of qualifying will be held during opening week ahead of the first Grand Slam tournament of the year from Jan. 17-31. The 1 Point Slam final will see the pros competing against amateurs and wild cards for the million dollar Australian prize (about \$700,000) at Rod Laver Arena on Jan. 13. Jordan Smith, a little-known local amateur player beat Sinner and went on to make himself a millionaire after winning the 1 Point Slam last January. Smith won on the third stroke of the final when Joanna Garland, the women's No. 117 from Taiwan, sent a two-handed backhand wide.

All the matches tested just one single point in a knockout bracket that included men and women, professionals

and amateurs, plus celebrities such as Taiwanese pop star Jay Chou, who was knocked out without hitting a ball after an ace from Peter Jovic. "At the heart of the creation of the 1 Point Slam is our desire to even more deeply connect the Australian Open to every tennis community in the country," Andrew Abdo, Tennis Australia's new chief executive, said Thursday.

More than 1.3 million fans attended the 2026 Australian Open, and organizers are planning to increase viewing capacity, seating and offer more shade across the Melbourne Park precinct next year. AP

