

PTI rejects governor's rule, demands IK release

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) joint parliamentary party, comprising members of the National Assembly and Senate, has strongly rejected the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, demanded the immediate release of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, and vowed to continue its political, parliamentary and legal struggle.

The demands were outlined in a resolution adopted at a joint parliamentary party meeting that continued for more than seven hours and discussed the country's political, constitutional, security and economic situation, as well as the party's future course of action.

According to PTI leaders, the meeting witnessed an extensive exchange of views on key national issues, including governor's rule, emergency measures, the arrest and detention of party leaders, access to the incarcerated PTI founder, parliamentary affairs and the possibility of negotiations with the government.

PTI Chief Whip Malik Aamir Dogar described the meeting as an extraordinary gathering, while the party's parliamentary leader in the Senate, Barrister Ali Zafar, said more than 70 members had attended.

The meeting decided that the parliamentary party would play an active role both inside and outside parliament. A committee, to be led by the opposition leaders, would also be constituted to formulate the party's future strategy.

In its resolution, the joint parliamentary party reaffirmed its unwavering allegiance to PTI founder Imran Khan, his leadership and his vision for Pakistan, pledging to continue its struggle for democracy, constitutional supremacy, justice and public rights.

The party demanded the immediate release of Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in accordance with legal requirements. It also called for unrestricted meetings between Imran Khan and his family, lawyers and authorised party representatives.

The resolution further demanded full implementation of the Supreme Court's directions issued in August 2026, including an independent medical examination of Imran Khan, treatment at Shifa International Hospital and the involvement of his personal physician.

Expressing serious concern over restrictions on meetings and arrangements for his medical care, the parliamentary party called for the protection of his health, dignity and legal rights.

The resolution strongly condemned the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, describing the measures as an attack on provincial autonomy and the federal principles enshrined in the Constitution.

The party demanded the immediate withdrawal of these measures and the restoration of the elected provincial government led by Chief Minister Sohail Afridi.

It also called for the immediate release of Afridi, provincial assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and PTI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Junaid Akbar Khan.

The parliamentary party rejected the establishment of an unelected advisory council and any arrangement that would transfer the powers of the elected provincial government to bodies lacking independent constitutional authority.

■ Continued on Page 7

Bilawal Draws Line: End new provinces discussion

PPP scion says only people of Sindh and no one else can decide province's future

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday called for a 'full stop' to conversations regarding the creation of new provinces.

He made the remarks while speaking to the media at Spencer Eye Hospital in Karachi's Lyari alongside Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Reiterating his party's stance in response to a question over 'pressure' the PPP was facing regarding the creation of new administrative units and the possibility of rolling back the 18th Amendment, Bilawal said the people of Sindh and their elected representatives had presented their decision and "now we should put a full stop to this conversation".

He said the Sindh Assembly had also made its stance in the matter evident for "at least seven to eight times now".

"The people here can determine the fate of this province and the city," Bilawal asserted.

"I think we should close this topic because the people themselves have closed it," he said.

When asked about ongoing conversations regarding a 28th constitutional amendment and whether the government had spoken to him in this regard,



Bilawal simply replied: "No."

The PPP chairman was also questioned about the recent dispute between the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and Pakistan Railways and the federal government's lack of interest in the city.

"The federal government should definitely pay attention to this city. Karachi is the country's economic hub. Everyone else should pay attention to it," he said.

Bilawal's remarks came amid an ongoing debate across the country about the creation of new administrative units, sparked by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's proposal for a dialogue among all political parties to bring about

reforms to the current governance system and call for new provinces and urgent administrative reforms in July.

At the time, the PPP had referred the question to its top decision-making forum, while the Sindh chief minister flatly rejected it; Lahore's lawyers also called it unconstitutional and Sindh nationalist groups have been demanding the minister's resignation.

However, since Naqvi's remarks, various political parties have also spoken in favour of it and called for the creation of more provinces or administrative units for better governance.

The Muttahida Qaumi

Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) - an ally of the PML-N-led ruling coalition - has been demanding that Karachi be designated a province separate from Sindh.

However, the PPP, which rules Sindh and is also an ally of the PML-N government at the Centre along with MQM-P, has strongly opposed the suggested move.

In September, the Sindh Assembly adopted a resolution rejecting all attempts to divide the province or create new administrative units, with the CM Murad declaring that "there will be no compromise on Sindh's geographical unity". **NEWS DESK**

Prince of Kalat, three guards kidnapped in Balochistan

5 militants killed in joint security operation

Prince Muhammad Khan Ahmedzai, son of Khan of Kalat Mir Suleman Dawood Jan Ahmedzai, was reportedly abducted along with his three guards by unidentified suspects while travelling between Soorab and Kalat in Balochistan, sources said on Tuesday.

The incident reportedly took place last night when Prince Ahmedzai was travelling from Khuzdar to Kalat.

The armed men intercepted his vehicle during the journey and took him and his three security personnel away to an undisclosed location.

Official confirmation of the incident is awaited.

in Karachi area of Balochistan's Khuzdar district, according to a provincial government spokesman.

"The killing of five terrorists during an intelligence-based operation is a testament to the professional capabilities of the security forces," Balochistan government spokesman Shahid Rind said in a statement.

"Continued, coordinated measures and effective operations are essential until terrorism is completely eradicated [from the region]."

The development comes amid a spike in attacks in Balochistan, along with kidnappings of civilians and government officials.



Following the incident, police, security agencies and other law enforcement authorities have launched efforts to trace the abducted men and secure their safe recovery.

There was no immediate information about the whereabouts of the abducted individuals or the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Meanwhile, five militants were killed in a joint security operation in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, an official said on Tuesday, amid a surge in militancy in the region.

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest but least developed province that borders Iran and Afghanistan, has been the site of a long-running separatist insurgency that has intensified in recent years.

The latest operation was conducted by police and paramilitary Frontier Corps based on reports about militant presence

Pakistan's military said last week that an army major and four separatist militants were killed in multiple operations in the province.

On Oct. 18, unidentified gunmen attacked a marble mining site in Khuzdar and kidnapped at least 16 local laborers, a senior police official said on Sunday. The attack came two days after the kidnapping of 20 police constables in the province.

No group claimed responsibility for the attacks and kidnappings in the region, where separatist militants have frequently targeted foreign nationals, infrastructure projects, security forces, police and non-native Pakistanis in recent years.

Islamabad has frequently accused India of backing militant groups and Afghanistan of allowing the use of its soil for attacks in Pakistan's western regions that border Afghanistan. New Delhi and Kabul deny this. **NEWS DESK**

Jl, government to moot fuel relief expansion

Jl gives 10-day deadline on petroleum levy

The government and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Tuesday decided to form a joint committee to recommend proposals for expanding the ongoing fuel relief scheme, while JI warned of marching to Islamabad next month if no relief 'package' was announced by then.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and JI chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman at the PM House, according to a press release issued by the PM Office (PMO).

The meeting was offered by PM Shehbaz last month when urging JI to postpone its Islamabad march, which it had accepted. JI has been demanding the abolition of the petroleum levy to reduce the burden of heightened fuel prices on the public.

Tuesday's meeting decided that a committee, comprising three members each from the government and JI, will present final recommendations on the following two measures:

The premier informed the JI delegation in detail about the relief provided so far by the government in the petroleum products quota for the low-income segment, noting that 12.7 million people have registered in the subsidy scheme so far.

The relief scheme for owners of motorcycles, rickshaws and vehicles of up to 800cc was rolled out across the country on Sept. 17. PM Shehbaz had announced the subsidies to ease the public's burden amid rising fuel

prices due to the Middle East situation.

During the meeting, the prime minister conveyed to JI that he "fully understands the burden on the public due to the increase in prices of petroleum products", PMO said.

He highlighted the government's effort to provide relief through the subsidy scheme and asserted that Islamabad was "making all-out diplomatic efforts to resolve the regional crisis so that the situation can return to normal".

"The current crisis is not

related to government policies but to the increase in oil prices in view of regional and international situations. However, according to financial capacity, the government is providing relief to the public and will continue to do so," he was quoted as saying.

The prime minister thanked JI for adopting the path of negotiations regarding the prices of petroleum products. PMO noted that the JI delegation "expressed its stance on the abolition of the petroleum levy and relief for the public".

JI Deputy Emir Liaquat Baloch, Deputy Secretary General Syed Farasat Shah, Islamabad Emir Nasrullah Randhawa and Inayatullah were also part of the party

delegation.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami on Tuesday said it would proceed with its planned march to the capital in mid-November to protest the government's petroleum levy, amid rising fuel prices in the country.

The announcement by JI chief Hafiz Naeem-un-Rehman came after his meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who Rehman said had sought seven to 10 days to announce a relief for the masses.

Pakistan's government levies Rs 114 per liter in taxes and duties on petrol and Rs 100 per liter on diesel. In recent months, the exorbitant levy has sparked protests across the country, amid multiple hikes in fuel prices due to Gulf supply disruptions.

Rehman on Tuesday said that his party had presented alternative proposals to the government regarding providing relief to the public and abolishing the petroleum levy, adding that they aimed to bring the price of petrol down to Rs 225 per liter.

"The government has sought seven days for relief; if the levy is not abolished, there will be a march to Islamabad in mid-November," Rehman was quoted as saying by his party on X.

Pakistan's government relies on the petroleum levy as a major source of non-tax revenue, with collections helping finance budgetary expenditures and meet fiscal targets agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The levy is imposed separately from the base price of petroleum products.

Fuel prices remain a politically sensitive issue in Pakistan, where higher transportation and energy costs quickly feed into inflation and increase the cost of living.

■ Continued on Page 7



FUEL PRICE UPDATE

PETROL
Rs 376.06 / litre
↓ Reduced by Rs 3.19 per litre
DOWN — Rs 3.19

HIGH-SPEED DIESEL (HSD)
Rs 398.07 / litre
↑ Increased by Rs 2.25 per litre
UP — Rs 2.25

World



Charles faces reparations fury on Caribbean trip

Money



New business plan sought to save Pakistan Post

Sports



BALLON BRILLIANCE! Kane makes English History

Glamour



Nicole Kidman is ageless in Vogue

Back Page



Pakistan, China launch information corridor

NATIONAL

DTM

Memon urges UN to act on Kashmir resolution

Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that October 27, 1947, is a black day in the history of Kashmir and South Asia. India entered Kashmir with nefarious intentions and violated the rights of the Kashmiri people. Even today, the Kashmiri people are fighting for their fundamental rights, and their sacrifices demand justice from the global conscience.

In his message on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day on October 27, Senior Minister Memon said that the government and the people of Sindh stand with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. The events being held across Sindh reflect the commitment that the people of Pakistan stand with the Kashmiri people in their struggle.

He said that Pakistan would continue to support the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. The United Nations and the international community should play an effective role in implementing their resolutions and ensuring a just resolution of the Kashmir issue. NEWS DESK

Karachi mayor directs action on water supply issues

On the directives of Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Karamullah Waqasi, Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and Spokesperson for the Mayor of Karachi, chaired a meeting to discuss issues related to the water pumping station in Parsi Colony.

The meeting, held at the parliamentary office, was attended by council members and people from various union councils. Participants exchanged views on water supply challenges, while several proposals were considered to address the problems and explore practical solutions. Parliamentary Leader Karamullah Waqasi emphasized the importance of consultation, coordinated planning and keeping public needs at the centre of decision-making. The meeting aimed to identify issues faced by local residents and consider workable measures to improve water supply arrangements.

Spokesperson for the Mayor of Karachi Karamullah Waqasi said that efforts were underway to monitor development projects, resolve water supply issues and eliminate encroachments. He added that Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab had taken notice of citizens' complaints and directed the relevant departments to take prompt and effective action.

Meanwhile, on the mayor's directives, Spokesperson for the Mayor of Karachi Karamullah Waqasi conducted a late-night inspection of ongoing road carpeting work in the Old City Area. He reviewed development work from Bohra Pir to the City Court, as well as on Chand Bibi Road and in the areas surrounding Lady Dufferin Hospital, Civil Hospital and the Trauma Centre. Relevant administrative officials, UC-13 Vice Chairman Sajid Shah Bukhari, Union Council President Shakir and others were also present during the inspection. The visit was aimed at reviewing the progress of ongoing projects and advancing efforts to provide better travel facilities to citizens. Parliamentary Leader Karamullah Waqasi said that coordination among relevant institutions was essential for accelerating development, improving civic facilities and resolving public concerns. He reaffirmed the Pakistan Peoples Party's commitment to public service and said that efforts would continue, in collaboration with the relevant departments, to improve basic facilities, address citizens' problems and make Karachi a better-organized city. NEWS DESK

32 Information Deptt officials promoted

The Information Department, Government Of Sindh, has promoted 32 officials and employees serving in various directorates and cadres to higher basic pay scales (BPS). The promotions were approved in separate meetings of the departmental promotion committees (DPC-I and DPC-II).

The DPC-I meeting was chaired by Secretary Information Sindh Barrister Kashif Gulzar Shaikh in his office. The meeting was attended by Director General Public Relations Muhammad Yousif Kaboro, Deputy Secretary, Services, General Administration and Coordination Department (SGA&CD), Taj Muhammad Halepoto, Deputy Secretary Information Sahib Khan Bhand, and other members of the committee.

During the meeting, the promotion of five assistants from BPS-16 to the post of Superintendent in BPS-17 was approved. The committee also approved promotions of senior clerks serving in various directorates of the information department to higher posts in accordance with the relevant service rules.

The DPC-II meeting was chaired by Director General Public Relations Muhammad Yousif Kaboro and attended by Director Information (Administration) Muhammad Tariq Imam, Deputy Director Information (Administration) Haji Muhammad Sabir Kaka, and other committee members.

The committee approved the promotion of six junior clerks from BPS-11 to senior clerks in BPS-14, in addition, promotions of three junior photographers, two assistant cameramen, and one film editor to the posts of photographer and cameraman, as applicable under the relevant service rules, were approved. NEWS DESK

Kashmir's freedom remains Pakistan's responsibility: GB CM, Saeed Ghani



Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Amjad Hussain Advocate and Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani have said that the struggle for Kashmir's freedom is the responsibility of every Pakistani, pledging continued support for the Kashmiri people after 78 years of struggle.

They expressed hope that Kashmir would eventually achieve freedom, saying Pakistan would continue to raise its voice at international forums. They also said the recent Pakistan-India conflict had raised hopes of an early resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

The two leaders were addressing a rally organised by the Karachi Commissioner to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people on Kashmir Black Day. Sindh Minister for Tourism and Culture Syed Zulfiqar Shah, Chief Minister's Adviser Syed Najmi Alam, All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Muhammad Shafi Dar, Karachi Commissioner Hassan Naqvi and others also addressed the gathering.

The rally began at People's Chowrangi and concluded at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam, with participants observing a minute's silence to express solidarity with Kashmiris. Members of the Sindh Assembly, government officials, schoolchildren, teachers and people from various walks of life attended.

Addressing the participants, Amjad Hussain Advocate recalled October 27, 1947, when Indian troops landed in Kashmir, marking the beginning of what he described as a prolonged period of oppression and human rights violations.

He described Kashmir as an integral part of Pakistan and said the struggle for freedom could not be suppressed by force.

"We have struggled for Kashmir's freedom for 78 years and will continue to do so," he said, urging the international community, global institutions and human rights organisations to take notice of the situation in the territory.

The GB chief minister also criticised India's August 5, 2019, decision to revoke Kashmir's special status, alleging that it had further curtailed the rights of the Kashmiri people. He called for educating younger generations about the dispute and encouraging them to stand alongside Kashmiris.

Saeed Ghani said Pakistan

had consistently supported the Kashmiri people's struggle. Referring to the recent Pakistan-India conflict, he expressed optimism that the dispute could be resolved in the near future. He also credited the armed forces and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari with advocating Kashmir's cause at national and international forums.

Muhammad Shafi Dar said October 27 was observed as Black Day because Indian troops had entered Kashmir on that date in 1947. He alleged that the dispute remained unresolved despite its being taken to the United Nations and criticised the international community for failing to address Kashmiri grievances effectively.

Dar also raised concerns over the presence of Indian troops, the imprisonment of political activists and restrictions faced by Kashmiris, calling for a resolution in accordance with their aspirations.

Syed Zulfiqar Shah said Kashmir Black Day was being observed in Pakistan and elsewhere to highlight the difficulties faced by Kashmiris. He reiterated Pakistan's support for their cause and praised efforts by the armed forces and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to highlight the issue at international forums. NEWS DESK

Aseefa reaffirms Pakistan's support for Kashmiris

First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to extending moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their pursuit of legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

In her message on Kashmir Black Day, observed on October 27, she expressed solidarity with Kashmiri women and children, highlighting the suffering they continue to endure amid the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Recalling October 27, 1947, when Indian forces landed in Srinagar, the first lady said the day marked the beginning of a prolonged period of suffering for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

She paid particular tribute to Kashmiri women who have endured profound loss and hardship, with many left to raise their children alone following the deaths or disappearances of their husbands and other family members. She stressed that the voices of mothers who have lost their sons, daughters growing up without fathers, and women seeking justice must be heard.

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also drew attention to the impact of prolonged conflict on children, noting that many have grown up amid fear, uncertainty and disruptions to their education and everyday lives.

She emphasised that every child has the right to education, proper healthcare, safe recreational spaces and a future free from fear. She urged the international community, human rights organisations and the United Nations to give serious attention to the emotional and psychological consequences of prolonged conflict on children.

The first lady reaffirmed her solidarity with Kashmiri mothers, daughters and children whose lives have been affected by the conflict, stressing that the rights, safety and future of women and children must remain central to international efforts to address the situation in IIOJK.

She further stated that nearly eight decades after the events of October 27, 1947, the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination, recognised in relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, remains unfulfilled.

Emphasising the need for lasting peace in South Asia, she called for a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and relevant UNSC resolutions.

On Kashmir Black Day, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari remembered the mothers waiting for their loved ones, women shouldering the responsibilities of entire families, and children whose futures remain uncertain. She said their sacrifices must not be forgotten.

Expressing hope for a peaceful future, she said Kashmiri mothers should be able to raise their children in peace, girls should pursue education without fear, and every Kashmiri child should be able to look towards the future with hope and confidence.

She also highlighted the solidarity of the women and children of Pakistan with their Kashmiri counterparts, expressing the shared aspiration for a future in which they can live with freedom, security and the opportunity to shape their own future. NEWS DESK

Kuwait Naval Force Chief calls on Khawaja Asif

Commander of the Kuwait Naval Force, Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan called on Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif here on Tuesday.

Both sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, with particular focus on bilateral defence cooperation, naval collaboration and ways to further strengthen the longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Kuwait, said a press release.

The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to enhance defence ties and expand mutually beneficial cooperation in support of regional peace and stability. NEWS DESK

Hashmi reaffirms support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination

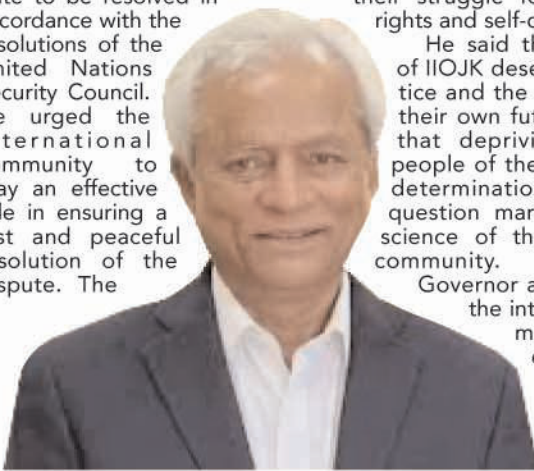
Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi has expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir on Kashmir Black Day, paying tribute to their struggle, sacrifices and commitment to the right to self-determination.

In his message on the occasion, the Governor described October 27, 1947, as a dark and tragic day in the history of IIOJK.

He said that the aspirations of the Kashmiri people for freedom, dignity and the right to self-determination

could not be ignored.

He called for the IIOJK dispute to be resolved in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. He urged the international community to play an effective role in ensuring a just and peaceful resolution of the dispute. The



Governor reiterated that Pakistan stands with the IIOJK people in their struggle for fundamental rights and self-determination.

He said that the people of IIOJK deserve peace, justice and the right to decide their own future. He added that depriving the IIOJK people of their right to self-determination remained a question mark on the conscience of the international community. The Sindh Governor also called upon the international community to take effective measures to protect human rights in IIOJK. NEWS DESK

Sindh CM Murad supports Kashmiris on Black Day

Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) on Kashmir Black Day, reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering support for their struggle for freedom and the right to self-determination.

In his message on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that Indian forces entered Srinagar on October 27, 1947, marking the beginning of India's occupation of IIOJK.

He strongly condemned India's occupation of the territory, stating that depriving the Kashmiri people of their right to self-determination remains a question mark on the conscience of the international community.

Murad Ali Shah said that the Kashmir dispute must be resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

He urged the international community to take effective measures to protect human rights

in IIOJK and called upon the United Nations to play its role in ensuring the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

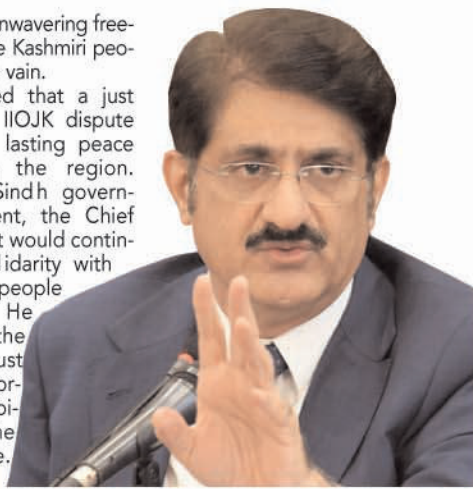
The Chief Minister reiterated that Pakistan stands firmly with the Kashmiri people in their struggle for freedom and self-determination. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) would continue its political, diplomatic and moral support for the people of Kashmir.

He recalled that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had always highlighted the Kashmir issue and advocated for the rights of the Kashmiri people.

Murad Ali Shah said the count-

less sacrifices and unwavering freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people would not go in vain.

He emphasized that a just resolution to the IIOJK dispute was essential for lasting peace and stability in the region. Reaffirming the Sindh government's commitment, the Chief Minister said that it would continue to express solidarity with and support the people of Kashmir. He stressed that the IIOJK dispute must be resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. NEWS DESK



NATIONAL

DTM

Islamabad's AQI reaches unhealthy level

Islamabad's fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentration exceeded the national environmental standard, with the pollutant's Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching 153, classified as unhealthy, according to an air quality data sheet on Tuesday.

According to Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), the 24-hour average PM2.5 concentration was recorded at 61.6 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), against the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) value of 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ — nearly 1.8 times the prescribed limit.

The data showed that PM2.5 concentrations fluctuated throughout the day, standing at 57.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ during the first reporting period, deducing to 47.4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ during the daytime period before rising to 80 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the evening and night period.

The pollutant's AQI of 153 was categorised as unhealthy, while the indices for sulphur dioxide (SO_2), carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) remained in the good category at 26, 29 and 8, respectively. Their respective 24-hour average concentrations were recorded at 18.4, 2,568.3 and 8.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, all below the NEQS values listed in the data sheet.

The AQI is an indicator used to communicate the level of air pollution and its potential health implications, helping people make informed decisions about outdoor activities. **NEWS DESK**

Naqvi reviews Kashmir Chowk underpass project

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project early in the morning to review construction work and assess progress on the project, which was launched 17 days ago.

Expressing satisfaction with the pace of construction, the minister said the project could be completed in less than 30 days if work continued at the same speed. During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi inspected the ongoing construction activities and reviewed the progress made since the project's launch. He examined the pace of work on the underpass's roof slab and walls.

The interior minister expressed satisfaction with the speed of construction and the progress achieved so far. He said he was pleased to see the pace of work on the roof slab and walls of the underpass.

Naqvi said the project could be completed in less than 30 days if construction continued at the current pace. The minister's visit focused on reviewing the ongoing work and assessing whether the project could be completed within the anticipated timeframe.

The Kashmir Chowk Underpass Project was launched 17 days ago. The minister's remarks indicated that, with construction continuing at the same speed, the project could be completed before 30 days have elapsed since its launch. **APP**

Zardari sees Pakistan-Czech Republic ties grow

President Asif Ali Zardari expressed confidence that Pakistan and the Czech Republic would continue strengthening their longstanding, cordial relations and explore new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation across diverse fields.

In his letter to President of the Czech Republic, Petr Pavel, on the occasion of the country's National Day, President Zardari said that relations between the two countries were based on mutual respect, friendship and close cooperation.

The president expressed confidence that Pakistan and the Czech Republic would continue to strengthen their friendly ties and explore new avenues of mutually beneficial cooperation, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. **NEWS DESK**

Govt seeks details of unpaid salaries, layoffs at media houses, NA told

Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiani on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that he had asked PRA to provide channel-wise details of employees who had not received their salaries, the number of affected journalists and other media workers, the duration of the delays and the total outstanding amount.

The Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) staged a walkout from the National Assembly proceedings over the issue of forced layoffs and non-payment of salaries at media houses.

Speaking on the matter after meeting the journalists, the minister of state said he had discussed the concerns raised by the journalists' body with the information minister.

Bilal Azhar Kiani said the reporters had also raised concerns about dismissals at some television channels.

He had requested details of the cases so that the matter could be taken up with the relevant authorities, he added. He said the information minister had informed him that the government regularly raised the issue of salary payments to journalists and media workers with the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA).

The government's payments to media organisations were also relevant to the process, he added.

He assured the House that details submitted by the association

representing parliamentary reporters would also be considered and that any outstanding complaints would be taken up with the relevant authorities for appropriate action.

The minister said another proposal was to establish a committee comprising members of both Houses of Parliament to examine journalists' concerns in detail. He said he would share the proposal with the information minister for consideration.

He added that the reporters had also proposed reviewing television channels' licensing conditions and relevant laws to strengthen protections for journalists and link compliance with such safeguards to licensing



requirements. Bilal Azhar Kiani asked the reporters to provide more specific recommendations on the proposed legal and regulatory changes, saying these would also be conveyed to the information minister.

NA passes seven private members' bills: The National Assembly on Tuesday passed seven private members' bills by majority vote after clause-by-clause consideration.

The bills passed by the House included the Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (Amendment)

Bill, 2025; the Corporate Social Responsibility Bill, 2026; the Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amendment) Bill, 2026; the Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2025; the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Schedule-I); the National Commission on the Rights of Child (Amendment) Bill, 2025; and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Meanwhile, six other bills were referred to the relevant committees for further deliberation and review.

These included the Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to amend the Factories Act, 1934; the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) (Amendment)



Bill, 2024, to amend the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021; the Islamabad Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to amend the Islamabad Rent Restriction Ordinance, 2007; the National Highways Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to amend the National Highways Safety Ordinance, 2000; the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to amend the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; and the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeking amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Section 297A). **NEWS DESK**

Dar supports Kashmiris' self-determination right

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday calling the resolve of 250 million Pakistanis for the Kashmir cause unshakable, pledged that Pakistan would continue its relentless moral, political and diplomatic support on all global forums until the people of Jammu and Kashmir achieve their right to self-determination.

The deputy prime minister, addressing the participants of a solidarity walk held in connection with the Kashmir Black Day, denounced India for launching an unprovoked and illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir on this day in 1947, violating international law and UN Security Council commitments.

The Day is observed annually by Pakistanis and Kashmiris worldwide to mark the day Indian troops first landed in Srinagar in 1947.

"Every year, the world is reminded of the illegal step India took on October 27, 1947. India's actions remain condemned across the globe, and freedom for Kashmir remains the heartbeat of every Pakistani," Dar said. Held at Constitution Avenue here, the rally started from the Foreign Office and culminated at D-Chowk. The event was attended by federal ministers, parliamentarians, leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, civil society activists and students from different educational institutions of the federal capital.

Highlighting Pakistan's proactive diplomatic engagement, the deputy prime minister underscored that the government, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had revived the Kashmir cause on international platforms.

He highlighted the reactivation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, and said that its meetings were now consistently convened alongside major international summits, including the recent 81st session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA).



High-Level Week in New York.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar strongly condemned the unilateral actions taken by the Indian government on August 5, 2019, which revoked the special status of J&K, terming the move a blatant violation of international law, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, and India's own constitutional commitments.

He said that India was attempting to alter the demographic balance of the occupied territory by converting the Muslim majority into a minority and allowing non-locals to acquire property illegally. However, no illegal act can strip the Kashmiri people of their inalienable right to self-determination. He paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, honoring over 90,000 martyrs who had laid down their lives for freedom. He condemned India's severe human rights violations, including the illegal detention of political leadership, restrictions on religious freedoms including Friday prayers, and banning of foreign observers and international media from visiting the occupied territory to conceal human rights abuses.

The deputy prime minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz consistently highlighted the Kashmir issue at every major global forum, including the UN General Assembly, the OIC, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). He added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained in constant contact with the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly, and the leadership of the OIC and SCO, highlighting Indian state-sponsored atrocities and custodial deaths in J&K.

He urged the international community to play its role in addressing the plight of the people of Kashmir and called for a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan joins China-led global AI body: Ishaq Dar

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday informed the Senate that Pakistan had joined the World AI Cooperation Organization (WACO), a China-led initiative aimed at promoting transparency, openness and cooperation in artificial intelligence.

Speaking in the Senate, he said around 50 members had joined the organisation and Pakistan had signed its founding document. He said its headquarters would be in Shanghai and its first council meeting was expected in mid-December.

Meanwhile, replying to a question during Question Hour, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the government was implementing the National AI Policy through the National AI Advancement Initiative and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. Training and capacity-building programmes were under way, while further details about scholarships would be provided to the senator, he added. Responding to another question on AI and social media, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the technology was spreading worldwide and Pakistan could not remain isolated from it.

He acknowledged its potential negative effects and said the government was working to control misuse, including fake news, propaganda, fraud and blackmail.

He said the former FIA cybercrime wing had been replaced by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) to address these growing challenges and take legal action. **NEWS DESK**

No plan to abandon Naya Pakistan projects

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday told the Senate that the government had no plan to abandon Naya Pakistan housing projects. Replying to a question during Question Hour, he said Rs6.48 billion had been spent on a housing project costing Rs7.7 billion, with only a small amount remaining for its completion.

Some projects were in Islamabad while others were being handled by the Punjab government, he said, adding that work on some Islamabad projects had slowed. A major project of the Naya Pakistan Housing and Development Authority had been completed and was close to commissioning, he added. Replying to a supplementary question, Tariq Chaudhry said the Punjab government had taken ownership of some projects through mutual understanding.

He said the Rs7.7 billion project had received Rs6.48 billion and the remaining work would be completed. The project was now with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), which had launched it, allotted units and was receiving installments, he added. Responding to a question, the minister rejected allegations of irregularities or plans to abandon the projects. He said six projects had not been completed during the PTI's four-and-a-half-year tenure, and stressed that the name "Naya Pakistan" was not an issue as the projects were meant to benefit the public.

He said some completed projects had been handed over to the relevant authorities, while others were nearing completion. The government had not wasted funds on the schemes, he added. **NEWS DESK**

Monetary policy aimed at easing impact of global conflicts

Parliamentary Secretary for Finance Saad Waseem Sheikh on Tuesday told the National Assembly that the recent monetary adjustment was aimed at mitigating the economic impact of escalating global conflicts, particularly in the Gulf region, and providing relief to the common man.

Responding to a Calling Attention Notice moved by Naeema Kishwer Khan regarding an increase in the interest rate to 12 per cent, he said the decision had been taken in view of international developments and their potential impact on Pakistan's economy. He said the government was taking measures to absorb external economic shocks and protect the domestic economy from the adverse effects of regional instability.

Responding to supplementary questions, the parliamentary secretary said the government remained committed to implementing its economic policies and strengthening the country's financial system.

He also highlighted the decline in the interest rate, saying it had fallen from 22 per cent to 11 per cent.

He said this improvement should be acknowledged while assessing the impact of monetary policy, adding that a marginal adjustment in the policy rate did not mean the government's efforts were ineffective.

Saad Waseem Sheikh said controlling inflation remained a key objective, warning that without appropriate measures, rising prices could have placed an additional burden on ordinary citizens. He said the government's measures were intended to contain inflation, strengthen the domestic economy and reduce the impact of external economic pressures on the public. **NEWS DESK**

NA unanimously passes resolution on Kashmir

The National Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution reiterating Pakistan's unwavering moral, political and diplomatic support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their just and legitimate struggle for the realisation of their fundamental right to self-determination.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam and Chairman of the Kashmir Committee Rana Qasim Noon tabled the resolution.

According to the resolution, the House recalled that on October 27, 1947, Indian forces landed in Srinagar, marking the beginning of India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and one of the darkest chapters in the history of the Kashmiri people.

Noting that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains one of the oldest unresolved international disputes on the United Nations agenda.

Reaffirming the inalienable right of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

Paying tribute to the extraordinary courage, resilience and sacrifices of generations of Kashmiri men, women and children who have continued their struggle for dignity, freedom and self-determination despite decades of oppression.

Strongly condemning the continuing grave and systematic human rights violations in Indian-illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, detentions, enforced disappearances, custodial torture, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, destruction and confiscation of properties, and suppression of legitimate political expression.

The resolution expressed grave concern over the continued incarceration of Kashmiri political leaders and activists and attempts to silence the legitimate political voice and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Categorically rejecting India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, and subsequent measures aimed at altering the internationally recognised disputed status and demographic character of Indian-illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Expressing serious concern over

measures designed to bring about demographic and political changes in the occupied territory and emphasising that no demographic engineering, unilateral actions or political process conducted under occupation can substitute for the exercise by the Kashmiri people of their inalienable right to self-determination.

India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5 and subsequent measures are aimed at altering the internationally recognised disputed status of the territory.

Reaffirming that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be determined in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the freely expressed will and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The House, therefore, calls upon India to end the grave human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, cease measures aimed at altering its demographic character, end the incarceration of legitimate Kashmiri leadership, and allow unhindered access to international human rights organisations and independent observers.

Calls upon the international community,

particularly the United Nations, to fulfil its responsibilities and commitments towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir, implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, and hold India accountable for grave human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

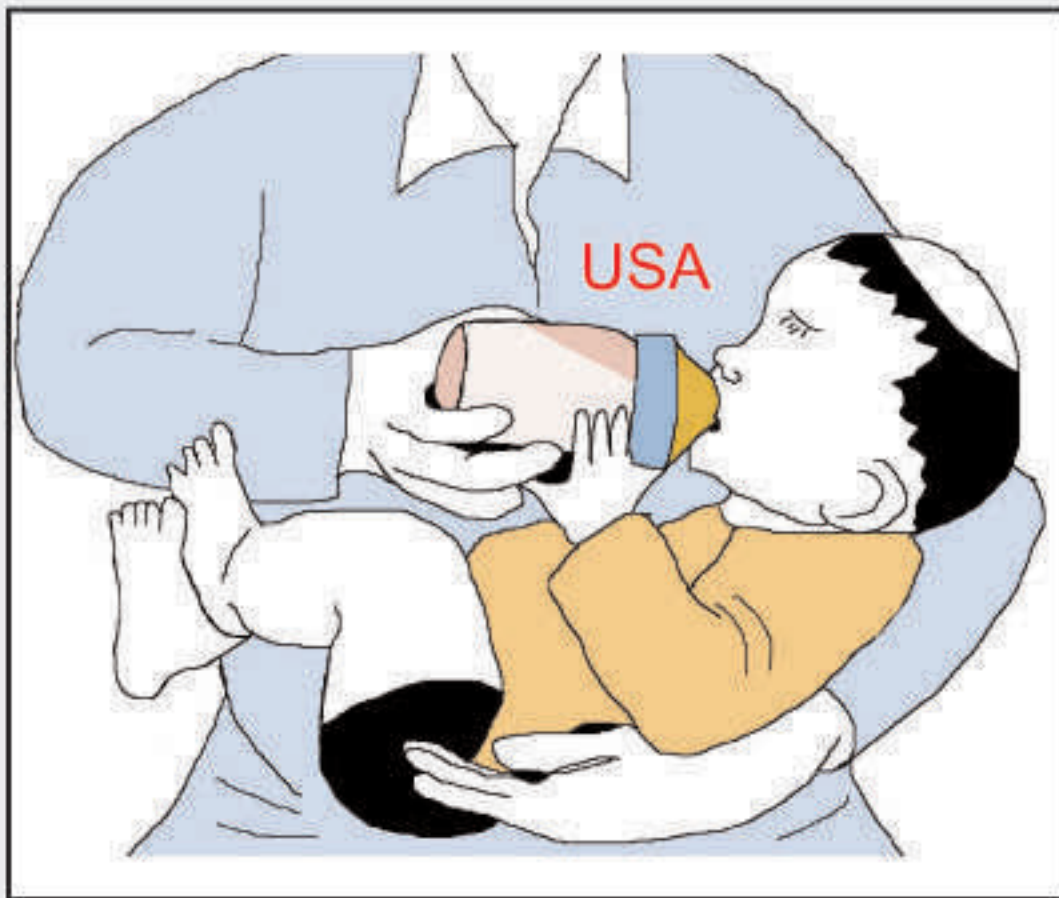
Urges the Government of Pakistan to continue sustained diplomatic efforts at the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and other relevant international forums to highlight the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and advocate the legitimate right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination.

The resolution emphasised that lasting peace, security and stability in South Asia remain contingent upon a just, peaceful and lasting resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Resolves that the National Assembly of Pakistan stands in unwavering solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and shall continue to raise its voice for their fundamental rights, dignity and inalienable right to self-determination. **NEWS DESK**

EDITORIAL

DTM



Hope for regional peace

Pakistan's initiative to bring Iran, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye together for high-level talks in Tehran is a welcome move at a time when the Middle East faces the danger of a wider conflict. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Monday that Tehran had accepted the proposal made by Field Marshal Asim Munir. The meeting, held on October 26, is aimed at discussing regional security, ongoing conflicts and ways to prevent further escalation. Its significance lies not merely in bringing four regional powers to the same table, but also in creating space for dialogue when military confrontation threatens to overshadow diplomacy. The agenda includes Israel's policies, the conflict involving Iran and the continuing crisis in Lebanon. These issues involve competing national interests and deep political differences, making any agreement difficult. Yet the alternative - allowing tensions to rise without sustained diplomatic engagement - could carry far greater costs for the region. Pakistan deserves credit for attempting to keep communication channels open among countries whose cooperation is essential to regional stability. Its geographical position, relationships with the participating countries and exposure to the economic consequences of regional instability give Islamabad compelling reasons to pursue a peaceful settlement.

The Tehran meeting also assumes importance because it brings Iran into direct discussions with countries participating in the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. Defence cooperation and diplomacy need not be contradictory. Indeed, regional security arrangements are more effective when supported by dialogue, mutual understanding and mechanisms to prevent misunderstandings from turning into armed conflict. Baghaei said Pakistan was also facilitating the exchange of messages between Tehran and Washington through intermediaries. Although he criticised American demands and rejected what Iran regards as pressure to surrender, he maintained that diplomacy remained possible. This distinction matters: negotiations need not imply agreement on every issue, but they can help identify areas where compromise is possible. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye should use this opportunity to encourage restraint, protect national sovereignty and pursue practical steps towards de-escalation. They must also ensure that the Palestinian question and the suffering of people caught in regional conflicts remain central to peace efforts.

Waheed Kakar and weight of duty

The death of former army chief General (ret'd) Abdul Waheed Kakar marks the passing of a senior military figure who served Pakistan during a difficult period in its history. General Kakar served as army chief from January 1993 to January 1996, a period marked by political instability and tensions between the civilian government and the presidency. His tenure is particularly remembered for the role he played in the political crisis of 1993, when he intervened to help resolve the confrontation between then president Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Both leaders eventually left office, paving the way for fresh elections. His intervention remains part of Pakistan's complex civil-military history, in which the armed forces have repeatedly found themselves at the centre of political developments. An obituary must acknowledge a public figure's service while also placing his legacy in its proper historical context. General Kakar's career therefore deserves to be remembered with respect, alongside a clear understanding of the challenges that shaped his time in office.

His death also comes at a time when Pakistan continues to face serious security threats. Recent operations in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have claimed the lives of military personnel and police officers. Two soldiers were martyred during an operation in Dera Ismail Khan, while four police personnel were killed in an exchange of fire in Karak. Major Wajahat Waheed also lost his life during a clearance operation in Gwadar. These losses underline the continuing human cost of the fight against militancy. Behind every official announcement is a family facing an absence that no public tribute can fully address. Remembering a former army chief should therefore also encourage reflection on the duties of the state: protecting its citizens, strengthening institutions and ensuring that sacrifices made in the service of the country contribute to lasting peace. General Kakar's place in Pakistan's history will remain linked to both his military leadership and the political circumstances of his tenure.

Migration in Mandi Bahauddin

Migration is a psychological and actual way out of families. In Mandi Bahauddin, sending one of its members to another country is not only perceived as a means of economic growth but also as a means of obtaining social status and security. Those unable to obtain such opportunities find themselves in a vulnerable social situation; some of them use illegal, unsafe pathways, commonly called dunki journeys, which have been reported by investigative news stories and police.

Despite a seemingly peaceful facade, communities like Mandi Bahauddin grapple with deep-seated conflicts and psychological burdens. Migration is viewed as a pathway to better opportunities, yet it highlights social inequalities and unresolved disputes. Sustainable peace requires addressing these issues through conflict resolution, community support, and fostering emotional security.

On the surface, a lot of districts in Punjab appear to be quiet and prosperous. Life is well-organized, and the absence of headlines can be equated to harmony in society. However, there is a lot of structural and psychological pressure beneath this calm. Mandi Bahauddin's success with the diaspora and its description as a "Mini Europe" demonstrates how unsolvable conflicts, immigrant movements, and social pressures influence the lives of a community and an individual.

There are decades of unresolved property, honor, and family feuds in most regions, which have been transmitted over time without any conflict. Such disputes seldom get resolved in any formal way, cases are often not registered, and local institutions do not have the capacity or are under pressure to avoid informal systems. The culture of silence that results is not an indication of peace; it is a survival tactic. Violence, like the recent tragic shooting during a wedding that claimed the lives of many people and injured others, does break this silence sometimes, and official attention is drawn to it, though it hardly becomes a subject of wider consideration in society.

On the surface, a lot of districts in Punjab appear to be quiet and prosperous. Life is well-organized, and the absence of headlines can be equated to harmony in society. However, there is a lot of structural and psychological pressure beneath this calm. Mandi Bahauddin's success with the diaspora and its description as a "Mini Europe" demonstrates how unsolvable conflicts, immigrant movements, and social pressures influence the lives of a community and an individual.

Migration is a psychological and actual way out of families. In Mandi Bahauddin, sending one of its members to another country is not only perceived as a means of economic growth but also as a means of obtaining social status and security. Those unable to obtain such opportunities find themselves in a vulnerable social situation; some of them use illegal, unsafe pathways, commonly called dunki journeys, which have been reported by investigative news stories and police. When educated young people relocate overseas, they tend to break off permanently, abandoning societies where unresolved conflicts and social strains remain unresolved.

These dynamics can be perceived through the prism of peace psychology. It teaches us that it is not just the lack of apparent struggle that would allow us to be at peace with one another, but justice, trust, and emotional safety. With conflicts not resolved, social systems do not mediate in conflict, there are few opportunities for youth, and even apparent peaceful situations are in fact weak negative peace. Disillusionment, silent grief, and mental fatigue appear, which in some cases are expressed in aggression, at other times in solitude and silent desolation. Societies get to understand how to move through an intricate landscape of honor, danger, and survival, and violence patterns get an informal sanction, even though they may

not be on paper.

The effects of social and psychological impacts are not limited to families. However, the young people get the lessons of conflict in their blood, as they learn that hard work and education do not necessarily keep them safe or dignified. Migration is not only required but also a status, and the left-behind population is forced to deal with daily life out of fear, lack of opportunity, and rooted expectations. The difference between economic success in foreign countries and domestic insecurity can breed frustration and lack of social cohesion, which can cause cycles where structural forces feed off their psychological effects.

This fact does not belong only to Mandi Bahauddin; however, the example of the district reflects larger tendencies in the whole of Pakistan: unresolved conflicts, poor institutions, social silence, and economic and psychological factors that motivated migration. Violence is a headline only on rare occasions, and the day-to-day stressors, such as the fear of revenge, absence of justice formalities, and demands to perform well in overseas destinations, all influence the communities to live, and the way the youth perceive their future. It is imperative to be aware of these

dynamics, not to report sensational reports, but to learn what peace really demands.

To help cope with these challenges, first and foremost, interventions of a social, economic, and psychological nature are necessary. Frustration can be decreased by encouraging young people to participate in conflict-resolution programs and educational campaigns that would educate them about the importance of negotiating, managing emotions, and being responsible citizens to avoid relying on migration as the sole way of solving problems. Enhancing the local mediation structures, such as community councils or panchayats, will offer legal channels of resolving disputes, which will help to curb the use of informal and harmful mediation methods. The incorporation of mental support provides counseling and guidance to the affected families to come to terms with the generational conflict and social stress. Policies that view the needs of communities as a whole or put together economic opportunities, institutional trust, and psychological support can help change fragile negative peace to sustainable positive peace.

Peace psychology makes us remember that true peace cannot be measured by the fact that there are no headlines and there is money coming in. It is quantified by how communities live with dignity, trust, and emotional security. Such states are weak in case structural pressures and unresolved conflicts still exist. The example of Mandi Bahauddin provides some insight into these underlying fissures, showing that seemingly peaceful areas might harbor violence behind the curtain and that being aware of and concerned about such trends is crucial in the process of creating long-lasting social peace.



ZAHRA RAHIM

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The Need for Strategic Autonomy in Pakistan's Foreign Policy-Part III

Strategic autonomy, as a policy framework to build upon, for the successful conduct of foreign policy, must be complemented with "cowboy diplomacy" so that objectives of national interest can be secured. The going argument also holds importance in the sense that if a state or its representative cannot be reasoned with, then aligning one's fate with them should be avoided at all costs.

A reasonable cowboy will always make sure that his gun is polished, oiled, loaded, and of the best metal so as not to choke when the time of action arrives. The reasonable cowboy must also make sure that when it comes to a "Mexican Standoff" (Zarif, 2021), he is quick enough to reach for his gun. At the same time, the reasonable cowboy would see to it that the need does not arise for his slinging the gun.

He must be reasonable and shrewd enough to find his way out of a dispute between other ruddy cowboys. Now when there are multiple cowboys and they cannot agree on some contentious dispute and it seems that interjection on part of the reasonable cowboy is needed, then he must make sure that he is cool-headed and try to diffuse the tension between the ruddy cowboys, which are intent on slinging their guns.

The expertise of the reasonable cowboy should not be as much to pull himself out of the dispute without incurring any harm, but if possible, he should be able to make the ruddy cowboys see reason, a variant of which was termed as "psychological approach" by Nehru (Rana, 1969). He should make them look at the dispute objectively to avoid confrontation.

The test of the reasonable cowboy, however, will come when he has to make a choice in favor of one of the two ruddy cowboys. He will then have to take the side of that ruddy cowboy who is reasonable enough,

given that the reasonable cowboy reached his conclusion with the coolest head possible and considering all the possible consequences of his conclusion.

Taking sides, however, precludes any use of force in favor of one, and against the other. All of this is possible if it is established that the reasonable cowboy can be fast enough with his gun to out-manoeuvre his unreasonable opponents. When a reasonable cowboy sides with one party, it should be to establish a customary precedent that no one can act unreasonably and still eat their cake in the wild world of perpetual anarchy.

"Among reasonable men, problems of business could always be solved" (Puzo, 1969). This allegory should inform and enlighten the agencies of Pakistan's foreign policy establishment and its diplomats. The role of a nuclear state like Pakistan should be of a reasonable "cowboy" between two or more "ruddy cowboys".

While protecting its own interests, Pakistan should make sure that it brings the other belligerent cow-

boys [read; states] to be reasonable about a dispute. Pakistan, the reasonable cowboy, should be able to tell the ruddy cowboys what they must do to protect their interests and how the ruddy cowboys can come to resolve their disputes without actually confronting each other.

This use of cowboy diplomacy will give Pakistan enough room to maintain an independent course of action in the future order, to protect its own interests, while balancing the demands of ruddy cowboys. A reasonable cowboy should realize the inherent power and force of his ability to reason and make others see reason while dissociating himself from the struggle of "power politics" of ruddy cowboys.

Strategic autonomy, as a policy framework to build upon, for the successful conduct of foreign policy, must be complemented with "cowboy diplomacy" so that objectives of national interest can be secured. The going argument also holds importance in the sense that if a state or its representative cannot be reasoned with, then aligning one's fate with

them should be avoided at all costs.

Hasty decisions without enough reasoned deliberation are a recipe for disaster. In the case of Pakistan, the post-9/11 history of insurgency in the western border areas is a sobering example.

Writing in 2013, C. Raja Mohan (2013) was quick to suggest that shifting sands of global power from West to the East, will create a situation for India where it will inevitably have to make a choice between its long-term policy of strategic autonomy or to embrace the new reality. One opportunity came in the form of the United States' pivot to Asia (Lieberthal, 2011), announced by the Obama administration.

However, the Indian foreign policy establishment did not simply swoon into the arms of the United States. Historically, after independence, India was quick to realize the benefits of remaining non-aligned in the developing cold war rivalry.

Even before the emergence of the Cold War, as the new normal in the global power politics, India, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, had realized the importance of pursuing an independent course of foreign policy, that would have seen an amicable relation between India and the international society of states, at large.

This independent course of foreign policy was also to ensure that India does not side with any nation against the security of another nation. That sovereignty and security

as fundamental rights granted to every state under international law should preclude the possibility that one state sides with another in a great-power rivalry.

"...India was to refuse to tie her policy to the interests of any great power so that she was free to cultivate friendly and cooperative relations with all powers. At the same time Nehru believed that system of national independent states, without any empires and extended to the rest of the world, was not viable in itself so that peaceful and friendly cooperation under some sort of world association or federation was inescapable..."

"...Nehru saw the coming struggle between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. as a continuation of power politics of the sort that had led to the creation and maintenance of empires. He attributed the possible expansionist aims of both these great constellations of power to fear of each other; he believed that fear for their own security would drive them to attain positions of strength against each other, and that if no resistance was offered both, the old sorry tale of empire-building, empire-consolidation and empire justification, would be repeated, if in a new form. The slow and painful gains made by India over a period of more than sixty years could be wiped away in the headlong clash between two antagonists much too powerful to be physically withstood..."



UZAIR BIN FARID

Uzair Bin Farid completed his undergraduate degree from Quaid-e-Azam University

OPINION



RAWALPINDI: Bani Chowk shopkeeper makes wedding garland from currency notes. ONLINE

Pakistan's 48% Poverty Rate

Some confusion was added by the coverage. There are a number of outlets where \$3 has been exchanged for around Rs840 per day, and which are based on purchasing power. When the increase in poverty was 6.4 percentage points, one agency reported that poverty "jumped by 6.4%," a relative increase of approximately 39%. In my arithmetic. And the "poorest" headline has no basis in the report.

The response was split into two sets when the World Bank's October Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAAP) Economic Update reported that about 48% of the people in the region lived below \$3.00 a day. Some interpret it as a ranking; Pakistan is the poorest in the region. Some took it as a consequence of the Bank changing the map of its region, such as Khuram Schehzad, adviser to the Ministry of Finance. Both reactions misrepresent what it is.

The 48% is Pakistan's poorest population, and it is the region's poorest. Pakistan's own poverty rate at that line is 23.0% in 2024 (World Bank Open Data), and thus it is in the same range as Djibouti, Syria, and Yemen, where the report indicates rates approach or exceed 20%. But why is it that the share is so large? Pakistan has nearly a third of MENAAP's population of 813 million (World Bank Data Blog December 2025), and its rate is approximately 1.6 times MENAAP's rate of 14.3%. If you take a population share of about 31% and multiply by 1.6, you arrive at the figure of about 50%. That's my own back-of-the-envelope calculation, but it comes close to the published 48%.

The 48% is Pakistan's poorest population, and it is the region's poorest. Pakistan's own poverty rate at that line is 23.0% in 2024 (World Bank Open Data), and thus it is in the same range as Djibouti, Syria, and Yemen, where the report indicates rates approach or exceed 20%. But why is it that the share is so large? Pakistan has nearly a third of MENAAP's population of 813 million (World Bank Data Blog December 2025), and its rate is approximately 1.6 times MENAAP's rate of 14.3%. If you take a population share of about 31% and multiply by 1.6, you arrive at the figure of about 50%.



DR. GHULAM MOHEY-UD-DIN

Dr Ghulam Mohey-ud-din is an urban economist from Pakistan, currently based in the Middle East

one's income (Dawn, June 2025). The remaining 47% of the poor population of the region in Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen is based on modelling, while the number for Pakistan is from a household survey. Therefore, the regional total and Pakistan's share of the total is not as accurate as it may appear in a single percentage.

Some confusion was added by the coverage. There are a number of outlets where \$3 has been exchanged for around Rs840 per day, and which are based on purchasing power. When the increase in poverty was 6.4 percentage points, one agency reported that poverty "jumped by 6.4%," a relative increase of approximately 39%, in my arithmetic. And the "poorest" headline has no basis in the report.

What caused the rate to go up then? The Bank attributes this to COVID-19, the floods in 2022, the macro poverty pressure from inflation (29.2% in FY23 and 23.4% in FY24), and a long adjustment period, which led to a reduction in real incomes (Macro Poverty Outlook, April 2026). The same report states that inequality is at a 20-year high. My interpretation is that stabilisation was required, and it was households close to the line who paid the price. The increasing Gini is a consequence of that, but I haven't seen anyone state it like that. The Bank projects growth of 3.8% for FY27, which Dawn and the Express Tribune report as about 2.2% per head. That won't reverse a seven-point increase in the nation's poverty rate in the foreseeable future.

The risk is also from the Gulf. The Update anticipates that the GCC economies will experience a decline in output of 4.3% in 2026, while weaker demand for construction and services jobs will limit income flows to economies that send labour, especially to Pakistan. The numbers are currently in favour of remittances, which hit a record high of \$41.6 billion in fiscal year 26, and \$10.9 billion in the first quarter of fiscal year 27, which is 14% higher (State Bank of Pakistan data, as reported by Gulf News and Arab News). Remittances will follow the Gulf hiring with a lag, so I would not plan on the current remittance flow continuing.

All that follows is quite practical. Pakistan must conduct HIES on a regular basis; otherwise, if deterioration occurs, it will be reflected in the survey results and not in a revision. It should hold the bottom of the distribution as further consolidation takes place, with the losses showing to be concentrated between the \$3.00 and \$4.20 levels. It should monitor remittances by corridor and outward worker registration and Gulf non-oil PMIs monthly, as it is the first indicator for the poorest households. The share is 48% due to reclassification. It does not provide any reason for the increase in the rate.



Letters To The EDITOR

Justice must be served in Ali Raza's murder case

The tragic murder of Mir Ali Raza, a food business owner associated with Wafflix in Karachi's Gulistan-e-Johar area, has raised serious concerns about public safety and the need for justice. His death has left his family and loved ones grieving, while the circumstances surrounding the case demand a thorough and transparent investigation.

According to a report published by Pakistan Today, police sources said Ali Raza had been in contact with his fiancée until around 11:30pm before returning to his home in the PECHS area. At approximately 3am on July 28, his fiancée tried to contact him again. She reportedly made more than 40 calls within about 20 minutes and sent several messages expressing concern for his safety. However, her attempts to reach him went unanswered.

Police sources also reportedly said that, before leaving his PECHS residence, Ali Raza had deleted his social media accounts, disconnected his WhatsApp and transferred some money to his father's account. His body was reportedly found on the morning of July 30 after being left at a location the previous night. These details raise questions that investigators must carefully examine to establish what happened and who was responsible.

Every unexplained death deserves a serious response from law enforcement, particularly when a family is left searching for answers. The loss of a young person under such circumstances is heartbreaking. No family should have to endure the pain of losing a loved one to violence while waiting for clarity and justice.

Karachi residents have a right to live without fear for their lives. Public safety is not a privilege; it is a basic responsibility of the state. When a citizen is murdered, the authorities must investigate the crime professionally, collect reliable evidence, question relevant individuals where necessary and ensure that those responsible are brought before the law.

We appeal to the police and other concerned authorities to support Ali Raza's family, investigate every relevant lead and keep the family informed about the progress of the case. The investigation must be based on evidence, and no one should be declared guilty without due legal process.

Ali Raza's death must not become another case that fades from public attention with the passage of time. His family deserves answers, and society deserves reassurance that violent

crime will not go unpunished.

Justice for Ali Raza would be an important step towards restoring public confidence in law enforcement. The authorities must ensure accountability and take effective measures to protect citizens. Every life matters, and every family deserves the right to seek justice when a loved one is taken away through violence.

NAZAIK MAJID
TURBAT

Cousin marriages and future generations

Cousin marriages have been part of many cultures and communities for generations and remain common in Pakistan. Families often prefer such marriages because the individuals already know each other, family ties are strong, and parents feel more comfortable with a relative joining the family. However, alongside these social considerations, families must also understand the possible health risks associated with marriages between close relatives.

Such marriages can increase the risk of inherited genetic disorders in children. This does not mean that every child born to cousin parents will have a health problem. However, the risk of certain inherited conditions can be higher, particularly when marriages between close relatives occur repeatedly over several generations. Some children may develop serious illnesses, developmental difficulties or other inherited conditions that can affect their quality of life.

Discussing this issue does not mean attacking any family, culture or tradition. Instead, it is about promoting awareness and helping people make informed decisions. Families should consider medical advice and genetic counselling before marriage, especially when there is a history of inherited illness. Appropriate screening and counselling can help couples better understand potential risks and explore available options.

Marriage is a personal and family decision, but the health of future generations also deserves attention. Education, medical awareness and responsible counselling can help families make choices based on knowledge rather than assumptions. Traditions deserve respect, but protecting children's health should remain an important consideration.

MUHAMMAD NASEER

Illusion of Peace Through Memorandums

There is also a simpler problem: governments change, but agreements are signed by governments. Elections happen, leadership shifts, domestic pressures build, ideologies clash, and suddenly a new administration doesn't see the point in honouring what its predecessor signed. Add in regional allies, military establishments, and domestic interest groups all pulling in different directions, and you start to see why so many MOUs fall apart, not necessarily because the diplomacy was flawed, but because politics itself is unstable by nature.

Every time there's a diplomatic breakthrough, the optimism comes rushing in. Photos of world leaders shaking hands, signing some memorandum of understanding as they create this sense that a decades-old dispute is finally about to be resolved. Governments love to hold these documents up as milestones of peace, and the world tends to applaud right along with them, treating it as diplomacy winning out over conflict. But history tells a different story, again and again: most MOUs promise a lot more than they actually deliver.

More often than not, they don't resolve anything, as they just buy a temporary pause in hostilities before things pick back up. The recent US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding, which sought to de-escalate tensions and establish a framework for future negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme and regional security, is a clear example of how political agreements can create the illusion of peace without addressing the deeper causes of conflict.

A Test of Fragile Diplomacy

The US-Iran MoU was intended to reduce tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear programme, regional security, and economic sanctions. Both countries entered the negotiations

by hoping to avoid direct military confrontation and restore diplomatic engagement. Both sides came to the table wanting to avoid a direct military clash and get diplomatic engagement back on track. But underneath that shared goal, what each side actually wanted was pretty different.

Washington was after tighter restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme and more stability across the region. Tehran, on the other hand, wanted sanctions lifted, its sovereignty recognised, and real security guarantees. So, while the understanding did ease tensions for a while, the thorniest issues never really got resolved, which means the whole agreement was fragile from the start.

And honestly, the biggest problem isn't even the specifics of the deal; it is trust, or the total lack of it. Four-plus decades of hostility, sanctions, proxy wars, and diplomatic isolation don't just disappear because two sides sign a piece of paper. That kind of history leaves deep suspicion behind.

In an environment like that, every statement gets read as proof while the other side is negotiating in bad faith. An MoU can put shared intentions on paper, but it can't undo decades of distrust overnight. And without real confidence between the parties, even a carefully

worded agreement is one bad news cycle away from falling apart.

There is also a simpler problem: governments change, but agreements are signed by governments. Elections happen, leadership shifts, domestic pressures build, ideologies clash, and suddenly a new administration doesn't see the point in honouring what its predecessor signed. Add in regional allies, military establishments, and domestic interest groups all pulling in different directions, and you start to see why so many MOUs fall apart, not necessarily because the diplomacy was flawed, but because politics itself is unstable by nature.

A Pattern Repeated Across the World

The instability of the US-Iran MoU is not an isolated programme. Similar patterns have repeatedly emerged across the international scene. The 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea initially promised to freeze Pyongyang's nuclear programme in exchange for economic assistance and energy cooperation. However, these mutual accusations of non-compliance, growing mistrust, and changing political priorities eventually led to its collapse, allowing North Korea to resume its nuclear weapons programme.

Likewise, the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was widely regarded as a landmark diplomatic achievement that would place strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities. Nevertheless, the declining political commitment and the subsequent withdrawal of one of its principal parties had weakened the agreement significantly, as illustrated by how even more comprehensive diplomatic arrangements

remain vulnerable to political change.

The Minsk Agreements of 2014 and 2015 were being negotiated to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Despite the repeated ceasefire commitments, violations continued, and weak enforcement mechanisms had been prevented by meaningful accountability. Ultimately, the agreements failed to prevent the escalation of conflict, demonstrating that the diplomatic understandings require effective implementation.

From Symbolism to Sustainable Peace

MOUs still matter as they open communication and ease immediate tensions through them. But they should never be confused with an actual solution. Lasting peace needs a lot more than a signature, including transparent implementation, legal accountability, and genuine political will to follow through. Governments should deal with what is causing the conflict in the first place by not just papering it over with symbolic agreements. In the end, diplomatic success isn't measured by how many documents get signed, but by whether states actually honour what they agreed to.

If international diplomacy has taught us anything, it's this: "peace doesn't come from signatures alone." Memorandums of Understanding can initiate dialogue and reduce immediate risks, but they cannot substitute for trust, political courage, and long-term cooperation. The US-Iran MoU serves as another reminder that agreements built on fragile foundations rarely withstand geopolitical realities. The MoU will continue to offer hope on paper while leaving conflicts unresolved in practice.



MAHAM ASIF

Maham Asif is a bachelor's student of international relations at Government College University Lahore, passionate about international affairs, diplomacy, and democratic governance.

NATIONAL

DTM

Climate change poses serious threats to country's economy: Nasir Shah

Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah, while addressing the Climate Finance Accelerator Investor Roadshow, said that climate change in Pakistan is not merely an environmental issue; it also poses serious threats to the country's economy, agricultural lands, cities, infrastructure and people.

He said that building a greener and more resilient economy requires new ideas, innovative technologies and investment.

He added that companies operating in Pakistan are contributing to the development of the country's climate economy.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah further stated that the government could not tackle this challenge alone, as public funds were also limited. Attracting private investment requires considerable effort and a strategic approach.

He said that Sindh also faced climate-related risks, but there were opportunities in clean energy, water management, waste management, agriculture and

infrastructure.

He stressed the urgent need to transform climate change challenges into viable projects capable of attracting investment.

British Deputy High Commissioner, Chairman of the Planning and Development Board Najam Ahmed Shah, and representatives of various companies also addressed the event.

Najam Ahmed Shah said in his speech that from the planning and Development board's perspective, we are working to identify and support projects that respond to Sindh's development and climate priorities. Our areas of interest include renewable energy and energy efficiency, climate-smart agriculture, water security and irrigation efficiency, resilient urban infrastructure, waste management and circular economy solutions, as well as technologies that can help communities and businesses adapt to climate risks, he added. He said we welcome partnerships with investors, financial institutions, development partners, research organizations, technology providers and local communities.

NEWS DESK



Ahsan calls for greater use of space technology on climate

The Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET), the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), inaugurated the International Conference on Leveraging Space Technology for EW4AI, Climate Actions and Disaster Risk Assessment at Serena Hotel, Islamabad.

The five-day conference, being held from 27 to 31 October 2026, brings together 250 national and international participants to explore the role of space technology in strengthening early warning systems, climate resilience and disaster risk management. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, was the Chief Guest of the ceremony.

The conference brings together around 250 national and international participants from 20 countries. Alongside the organizers, SUPARCO, UNOOSA, UN-SPIDER, ISNET and APSCO, international participation includes the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and space and research agencies from partner countries, among them the National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN), the Iranian Space Research Center, the Space Research and Technology Center of Iraq, the Turkish Space Agency, TUBITAK Space Technologies Research Institute, Vietnam's National Remote Sensing Department and Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, and Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.

National participation spans government, disaster management and public-sector institutions, including the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NDMA, the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund, the Planning Commission, the State Bank of Pakistan, SECP, the Federal Flood Commission, Pak-EPA, the Punjab Forest Department and the Punjab Information Technology Board.

The conference also sees strong participation from academia. This diverse participation provides a platform for experts, policymakers, researchers and institutional representatives to exchange knowledge, share experiences and strengthen international cooperation in the application of space technology for early warning, climate action and disaster risk assessment.

The conference focuses on the Early Warnings for All (EW4AI) initiative, disaster risk assessment, climate action and the use of satellite-based information and geospatial technologies to support timely decision-making.

Chairman SUPARCO, Muhammad Yousef Khan, welcomed the participants and highlighted the growing importance of space-based applications in climate monitoring, disaster management and early warning systems. He underscored SUPARCO's role in developing and utilizing satellite-based capabilities to support national priorities, particularly in monitoring environmental

observation, meteorology and communication systems, to strengthen early warning systems, disaster risk assessment, climate monitoring and emergency response.

The Federal Minister stressed the need to translate technological advancements into practical outcomes through effective policies, stronger institutional coordination and international cooperation. Referring to the Early Warnings for All (EW4AI) initiative, he highlighted the importance of timely and reliable warnings in reducing disaster-related losses and protecting vulnerable communities.

He also called for improved data-sharing



changes, assessing disaster risks and providing timely information to relevant stakeholders.

Addressing the inaugural session, the Chief Guest, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, emphasized the critical role of science, technology and international cooperation in addressing climate-related challenges and strengthening Pakistan's resilience to natural disasters. He highlighted the close link between climate risks, economic development, fiscal stability and poverty reduction, recalling that the devastating floods of 2022 caused direct losses equivalent to approximately 2.2 percent of GDP.

He underscored the importance of integrating climate resilience into national economic planning and public-sector development projects, emphasizing the potential of space-based technologies, including satellite-based Earth

mechanisms, investment in human and institutional capacity, innovative financing models, and enhanced regional cooperation. Urging the conference to develop actionable recommendations on institutional arrangements, data sharing, financing and capacity building, he reaffirmed that the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives would consider these recommendations in the national planning process.

The inaugural session also featured remarks by representatives of partner organizations, including ISNET Executive Director, Munir Ahmed Asad, UNOOSA Director, Aarti Holla-Mairi and APSCO Secretary-General Dr. Jiang Hui. Their participation underscored the importance of international collaboration and the sharing of expertise to enhance the contribution of space science and technology to global development and disaster resilience. **WFP**

SC criticizes Punjab Police over failure to arrest accused

The Supreme Court has questioned the performance of Punjab Police over its failure to arrest an accused despite the rejection of his bail applications by the trial court and the High Court, asking why he had not been taken into custody.

The court observed that Punjab Police had failed to arrest accused persons even in serious cases, including murder, despite the rejection of their bail applications.

During the hearing of a bail petition in a cheque dishonour case, Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan questioned a Punjab Police official, asking why the accused had not been arrested despite the rejection of his bail pleas by the trial court and the high court.

He observed that the accused had approached the Supreme Court without bail.

Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan remarked sarcastically that, given such performance, the court should recommend the official for appointment as inspector general of police.

Justice Shakeel Ahmad observed that it had become routine for Punjab Police not to arrest accused persons after the rejection of their bail applications, adding that even in murder cases, arrests were not made following the dismissal of bail pleas.

During the hearing, Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan asked the accused's counsel whether he would withdraw the petition himself or whether the court should dismiss it on merit. The counsel subsequently withdrew the bail petition. The court later disposed of the matter after the accused surrendered before the police. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistani student honoured by Türkiye's President Erdogan

Inaya Khan, a Grade 9 student at Pak-Türk Maarif International Schools & Colleges' Asifa Irfan Girls Campus, Lahore, has earned international distinction by securing first place in two global competitions and receiving an award shield from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The award was presented during the Turkish Maarif Foundation's 10th Anniversary celebration held in Ankara, where her achievements were recognized at the international forum.

Inaya achieved both victories while studying at Lahore Dream Gardens Campus. As a Grade 7 student, she secured first place at Teknofest in Lefkosa, Northern Cyprus, earning a trophy, medal and cash prize. She subsequently claimed another first-place victory at the International STEAM Competition in Baku, Azerbaijan, as a Grade 8 student, receiving a laptop in recognition of her achievement.

Both of Inaya's international competition visits were fully funded by

Pak-Türk Maarif International Schools & Colleges, enabling her to participate in these prestigious events and represent her institution on international platforms.

In recog-



nition of her accomplishments, Inaya was invited to attend the Turkish Maarif Foundation's 10th

Anniversary celebration, held at the Presidential Complex in Ankara. Her visit to Türkiye was fully funded by Pak-Türk Maarif International Schools & Colleges.

In the presence of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who attended the landmark celebration, Inaya received an award shield from the President of Türkiye and Chairman of the Turkish Maarif Foundation, Mr. Mahmut Mustafa Özdi.

The occasion marked a significant moment of recognition for the young student, whose achievements have brought distinction to her institution.

Now continuing her studies at Asifa Irfan Girls Campus, Lahore, Inaya's achievements reflect the potential of young learners when talent is supported and opportunities are made accessible.

Her journey also highlights Pak-Türk Maarif's commitment to encouraging students to pursue excellence, participate in international competitions and broaden their horizons beyond the classroom.

Her accomplishments stand as a source of pride for the wider Pak-Türk Maarif community and underscore the institution's continued commitment to nurturing talent and supporting students in achieving success on international platforms. **NEWS DESK**

FCC questions SNGPL's handling of Rs 17m bill

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has questioned the performance of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) over the issuance of a Rs17 million gas bill to a consumer in Peshawar, asking when the department detected the alleged illegal use of gas and what evidence it had to establish the violation.

The court allowed SNGPL's counsel to submit relevant documents in the case.

A bench comprising Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha on Tuesday heard an appeal filed by SNGPL against relief granted by a court to Peshawar consumer Irfan Ali, who had challenged the Rs17 million gas bill.

During the hearing, SNGPL's counsel contended that the consumer had used a domestic gas connection for commercial purposes.

He said an inspection had been conducted and the use of a domestic meter for commercial purposes had been established.

Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi asked whether the consumer was running a CNG station, a tandoor or a hotel. The counsel replied that the domestic gas was being used for a hospital.

The judge questioned what evidence had been collected during the inspection and what material had been seized from the premises. He observed that the gas utility should explain when it became aware of the alleged illegal use.

Justice Rizvi remarked that someone must have wasted gas worth Rs17 million while ordinary consumers were paying high prices for the commodity.

Expressing displeasure over the utility's performance, he termed the situation an institutional failure and criticised employees for sitting in air-conditioned offices. He also remarked that, while the police had a bad reputation, there were serious problems within the gas department as well.

Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha observed that gas theft and misuse were serious issues. He said SNGPL was a major organisation and should deal with such cases seriously.

SNGPL's counsel sought time to submit the relevant documents, which the court allowed.

According to the case background, SNGPL had issued a Rs17 million gas bill to Irfan Ali, who challenged it before the relevant court and obtained relief.

The gas utility subsequently filed an appeal before the Federal Constitutional Court against the decision in the consumer's favour. **NEWS DESK**



Sindh rejects MDCAT claims, says Karachi students outperformed others

The Sindh government has rejected objections and claims regarding the 2026 Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) 2026, maintaining that Karachi candidates performed better than students from other divisions of the province.

According to sources, the Sindh Health Department has submitted its response to the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), refuting claims that Karachi students performed poorly in the examination. In its letter, the department said an analysis of MDCAT results and district-wise data did not support allegations of poor performance by Karachi candidates.

According to the department, 33,336 candidates appeared for the examination across Sindh, while 57.96 per cent of candidates in the province scored 90 or more marks. Karachi recorded the highest performance among the province's divisions,

with an average score of 107.67 marks, the letter stated.

Of the 9,505 candidates who appeared from Karachi, 66.98 per cent scored 90 or more marks, while 57.78 per cent secured 99 or more marks, according to the department's figures.

The letter also cited the performance of other divisions, stating that 55.04 per cent of candidates in Sukkur, 54.50 per cent in Larkana, 53.62 per cent in Shaheed Benazirabad and 52.34 per cent in Hyderabad scored 90 or more marks.

The health department said all districts of Karachi were among the nine best-performing districts in Sindh, based on its analysis of the results. The department said its assessment was based on data compiled by Sukkur IBA Testing Services (STS), which conducted the MDCAT examination during previous years. It added that STS had published candidates' marks and domicile details to

promote transparency.

The Sindh government maintained that seats in public medical colleges are allocated on a district-based basis under the applicable admission rules, with Karachi's seats reserved for candidates holding the relevant Karachi domicile.

The department said higher scores obtained by candidates from other districts would not change the allocation of seats designated for Karachi under the existing admission policy. It also noted that students from different districts may prepare in major cities, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana.

The department argued that candidates should not be viewed with suspicion solely because they obtained higher marks than others on the basis of their domicile. It called for the achievements of MDCAT candidates across Sindh to be recognized and urged that the examina-

tion results not be made controversial for political purposes.

The development follows a letter sent by the PMDC to the Sindh Health Department on October 5 regarding concerns over the MDCAT.

Earlier, the federal government had approached the Sindh government over complaints about the examination and called for an independent and transparent inquiry.

The PMDC wrote to Sindh's health minister, asking the provincial government to investigate allegations linked to the examination. The Sindh government were directed to complete the inquiry and submit a report within two weeks.

The development follows complaints on social media alleging that the MDCAT question paper had been leaked, and lawmakers had also raised concerns over the credibility and transparency of the examination. **WFP**

NATIONAL

DTM

QatarEnergy halts LNG supplies to Pakistan clients

Edison and some Pakistani clients of QatarEnergy will not receive liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Gulf supplier until the end of this year, the Italian utility and a market source said on Tuesday.

In a message on the platform of Italy's energy markets manager GME, Edison said QatarEnergy had extended force majeure on LNG deliveries to end-December from a previous early-December deadline.

A further three LNG cargoes that were intended for the Italian utility - one of Qatar's biggest customers in Europe - will be affected by the suspension, Edison said.

Clients in Pakistan were also informed that force majeure notices had been extended until the end of this year, one person with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. QatarEnergy did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Gulf supplier has cancelled deliveries to Edison since April due to disruptions caused by the Iran war, which began in late February.

Edison holds a long-term contract with QatarEnergy for the supply of 6.4 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year to Italy, around 10% of the country's annual consumption. The contract, which has been in force since 2009, has a total duration of 25 years. The lack of supply from Qatar, a low level of gas storage in Europe and gradually cooler weather have pushed the benchmark Dutch price for gas to above €95 per megawatt hour this week, close to its highest levels since December 2022. **REUTERS**

Jl, government to moot fuel relief expansion

Continued from Page 1

Opposition parties have repeatedly organized demonstrations against fuel price hikes, while the government has defended the levy as necessary to stabilize the economy and sustain fiscal reforms.

Rehman's party has held major demonstrations over petroleum levy since Aug. this year. Last month, the party led a march toward the capital, Islamabad, but Rehman asked his supporters in Multan to disperse following what he called a request by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to temporarily halt the march.

"If the government does not announce a relief package and does not make progress toward abolishing the levy, we will have to sit on the roads," Rehman was quoted as saying on Tuesday.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal stated on Tuesday that a joint committee comprising members of Jl and representatives of the government would be formed to expand the scope of the petrol relief scheme.

In a press conference in Islamabad, Iqbal stated that the government was aware of how an increase in fuel prices impacted ordinary people, adding that the premier remained acutely aware of this and wanted to work to protect the "vulnerable sections" of the population from the fuel hike.

Iqbal stated that both PM Shehbaz and Rehman agreed to form a committee that would consist of three members from Jl and three representatives from the government.

"The government representatives will include Deputy PM Dar, Rana Sanaullah and myself."

Iqbal further informed that the government had told the Jl delegation about its "challenges" and had also heard the party's proposals, noting that both parties agreed that their goals of providing relief to people were similar, with the government insisting on the need to adopt a durable and "sustainable" path for this purpose.

Iqbal also said the committee would examine how the current relief scheme could be expanded so that more "deserving people" could avail it, adding that the committee would also look at how the petroleum levy could be abolished in the next budget through a phased process. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, also speaking at the press conference, noted that 1.27 crore people were availing the Rs100 per litre petrol relief scheme, further noting that this number was expected to reach two crore in the coming days.

The minister added: "The government is attempting to provide relief to the common and poor man as much as possible, and we appreciate Jl's efforts for this purpose, but we need to make this relief targeted so that it reaches the most deserving people". **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan calls for UN Security Council veto reform

Pakistan Monday told the UN General Assembly that reform of the Security Council must tackle the veto power, held by the five permanent members - US, Russia, China, France and UK - to end the 15-member body's institutional paralysis and make it more effective and equitable.

"The misuse of the veto undermines the Security Council's effectiveness and the credibility of the UN, while giving the permanent five unmatched influence throughout the UN system," Pakistani delegate Gul Qaiser Sarwani told the 193-member Assembly where representatives reiterated calls to restructure the Council to make it more responsive to its primary role of maintaining international peace and security, as they debated use of the veto.

The General Assembly convened in line with resolution 76/262, adopted in April 2022, which mandates it to hold a session within 10 working days of a veto being cast in the Security Council.

With the campaign of India, Brazil, Germany and Japan for permanent seats on the Council in mind, Sarwani, a counsellor and political coordinator in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, said more permanent members and more vetoes would deepen existing inequalities, perpetuate historical privileges, create new centres of power and increase the risk of institutional paralysis. "Let us be clear: the problems cannot be the solution," he said, highlighting that Pakistan/Italy-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group remains opposed to addition of any new individual permanent member on an expanded Security Council.

"We believe that the veto should be abolished or at least severely restricted; it must not be expanded," Sarwani said.

Pakistan, he said, supported resolution 76/262, saying any measures to restrict or restrain the use of the veto must be consistent with the UN Charter provisions.

Regarding the negative power of the veto to "block", Sarwani said Pakistan believes that this can be better balanced by placing restrictions on the use of the veto or by enhancing the number and role of the elected members of the Council through



larger representation and thereby changing the threshold for approval of decisions by the Council - to make it more democratic and to serve as an effective check on the use of veto.

Opening the meeting, General Assembly President Khelilur Rahman (Bangladesh) said that, with 21 such meetings convened as part of the veto initiative, the "mechanism has

become an established expression of transparency, accountability and collective responsibility within our organization".

He commended the Security Council for its timely special reports to the General Assembly and its permanent members' participation in those debates, noting that humanity is best served when both organs "operate in balance, each fulfilling its distinct yet complementary responsibilities under the Charter".

Noting that the Council's effectiveness directly impacts people living in conflict, insecurity and humanitarian suffering, he said when it does not act definitively, the cost is borne "first and foremost by those most affected by violence and instability".

"It is my hope that the Council will find the consensus needed to act decisively in the service of peace - and that the veto initiative will be needed less often", he said, urging related debates to not become repetitive exercises, but help keep dialogue alive.

"Let us reaffirm that no veto should bring an end to dialogue and diplomacy and that the principles of the Charter must continue to guide our collective search for peace", Rahman said.

In the ensuing debate, delegates highlighted the present and potential pitfalls of a veto-laden Security Council with its implications in regions and territories far from the location where the decision is taken. **NEWS DESK**

Murad assures GB of Sindh's support in healthcare, housing

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday assured Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Aamjad Hussain Azad of Sindh government's full cooperation in improving healthcare facilities, strengthening the revenue system and rebuilding homes for flood-affected families in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between the two chief ministers at CM House, where they discussed various areas of mutual interest and agreed to strengthen institutional cooperation between Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan. The meeting was attended by Sindh Minister for Home Ziaul Hassan Lariyar, Special Assistant Syed Qasim Navood, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman Karachi Port Trust Rear Admiral (ret'd) Shahid Ahmed, Secretary Health Tahir Sangi, and NICVD Professor Dr Asad Bilel.

During the meeting, the Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister sought the Sindh government's assistance in improving the facilities at a cardiac hospital in his province.

Responding to the request, CM Murad directed the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) to extend technical and institutional support for upgrading the hospital and improving cardiac treatment facilities in Gilgit-Baltistan.

He proposed that the Gilgit-Baltistan government sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NICVD to formalise cooperation and establish a framework for

the hospital's upgradation.

The Sindh chief minister said that NICVD would assist in improving cardiac healthcare services in Gilgit-Baltistan, enabling patients to benefit from better treatment facilities.

The two chief ministers also held detailed discussions on the establish-

ment of a Revenue Board in Gilgit-Baltistan and the development of an effective revenue administration system in the region.

CM Murad directed the chairman of the Sindh Revenue Board to extend full assistance to the Gilgit-Baltistan government in this regard.

He said Sindh was ready to share its institutional experience



and provide the necessary support to help strengthen revenue administration and improve the effectiveness of the system in Gilgit-Baltistan. Both sides agreed to promote institutional collaboration and exchange expertise to improve governance and public service delivery.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the reconstruction of houses for families affected by floods in Gilgit-Baltistan.

CM Murad Shah recalled that Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had directed the reconstruction of 200 homes for flood-affected families in the region. **NEWS DESK**

Cuba praises Pakistan's unwavering support

Cuba's Ambassador to Pakistan, Damian Cordero Torres, has lauded Pakistan's consistent support for Cuba at international forums, particularly at the United Nations, while calling for an end to the decades-old United States embargo that Havana says has severely impacted the country's economy, healthcare system, and energy sector.

Addressing a press briefing in Islamabad ahead of the annual United Nations General Assembly vote on a resolution calling for the lifting of the US embargo on Cuba, Ambassador Damian devoted significant attention to Pakistan-Cuba relations, describing them as historic, friendly, and rooted in mutual respect and solidarity.

The Cuban envoy thanked the Government of Pakistan for its continued support at the United Nations, where Islamabad has consistently voted in favor of resolutions opposing the embargo. The ambassador said Cuba deeply values Pakistan's principled stance, which is based on respect for the UN Charter, international law, state sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries. "Pakistan has always stood by Cuba on international issues and has consistently supported our position at the United Nations. We highly appreciate this friendship and solidarity," the ambassador said.

Recalling Cuba's humanitarian assistance to Pakistan following the devastating 2005 earthquake, Ambassador González Grau said the bond between the two countries remains strong because both nations have demonstrated solidarity in times of need. The ambassador noted that during visits to Mansehra and Balakot, areas heavily affected by the earthquake, local residents still remembered and appreciated the contribution of Cuban medical teams who served in Pakistan during one of the country's most difficult periods.

"I was able to visit Mansehra and Balakot and saw with my own eyes that people have not forgotten Cuba's support. Pakistan never forgets its friends, and Cuba never forgets Pakistan's solidarity," the ambassador remarked.

The briefing primarily focused on the impact of the US embargo on Cuba. Ambassador said economic restrictions and financial sanctions have significantly constrained Cuba's ability to import essential goods, including medicines, fuel, and medical equipment.

The envoy stated that persistent electricity shortages caused by fuel constraints have affected hospitals and healthcare facilities across the island. According to the ambassador, thousands of surgical procedures remain delayed because hospitals are unable to operate at full capacity due to power shortages and limited resources.

The ambassador said Cuba, once known for producing medicines domestically and providing medical assistance to other countries, is now struggling to meet its own pharmaceutical needs. More than 100,000 surgeries are reported by awaiting scheduling, while many cancer patients are facing difficulties obtaining first-line treatments.

Despite these challenges, the ambassador insisted that Cuba remains committed to maintaining its public healthcare and social welfare systems. Criticizing Washington's policy toward Havana, the ambassador argued that the embargo is designed to isolate Cuba economically and financially.

The envoy also rejected allegations that Cuba sponsors terrorism, describing such claims as politically motivated and inconsistent with Cuba's longstanding support for diplomacy and international cooperation. "The Cuban people have suffered the consequences of these policies for more than six decades. Cuba believes in dialogue and mutual respect, but such engagement must be based on equality and recognition of our sovereignty," the ambassador said.

Responding to questions about whether countries such as Pakistan, China, or Russia could help mediate between Cuba and the United States, the ambassador said the issue ultimately depends on decisions taken in Washington and Havana. "This is fundamentally a bilateral matter between Cuba and the United States. We are prepared to engage in dialogue, but discussions must take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and without coercion," the envoy said. **DNA**

PTI rejects governor's rule, demands IK release

Continued from Page 1

It also expressed concern over arrests, raids and restrictions targeting PTI's elected leadership, party organisations and workers in the name of counterterrorism, warning that counterterrorism operations must not be used as a pretext for political victimisation or the removal of an elected provincial government.

The PTI parliamentary party strongly condemned what it described as politically motivated arrests, abductions, raids, harassment and legal proceedings against party leaders, lawmakers, workers and their family members, particularly in connection with the party's long march.

It demanded the immediate release of Imran Khan's sisters, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Ejaz Chaudhry, Umar Cheema and other political prisoners and detained workers held under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) law.

At the same time, it accused the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government of deliberately attempting to create divisions between Imran Khan, PTI and state institutions.

According to the resolution, portraying the party's democratic and constitutional struggle as hostility towards the state undermines national unity, weakens public confidence in state institutions and diverts attention from the country's genuine security challenges.

The party called for effective and coordinated measures to restore peace in accordance with the Constitution, the rule of law, provincial rights and the protection of citizens' lives.

The PTI parliamentary party demanded the restoration of the public mandate expressed in the February 8, 2024 general elections or, alternatively, fresh, free and transparent elections across the country. It also called for impartial investigations into the events of May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan's last antique restorers revive old treasures

Sitting outside his small shop in a warren of alleyways in the ancient Pakistani city of Rawalpindi, Ahsan Shakeel buffed an antique brass pot to a high shine, pressing it against a mechanized wheel.

"We've removed all the dents, but it still needs polishing," the 72-year-old restorer, among the last still practising his craft, told AFP as the spinning buffer sent fine metal dust into the air.

Quitting a job as a hotel cook, Shakeel followed in his father's footsteps to become an antiques restorer, opening his workshop in the Bhabra Bazaar market in densely populated Rawalpindi in 1980. Today, he is one of the last master restorers preserving antique metalware in Pakistan.

Rawalpindi's roots stretch back to prehistoric human settlements and over centuries the garrison city evolved into a major commercial hub where metalcraft from the Mughal and British colonial periods converged. Moving inside his shop, Shakeel navigated wall-to-wall shelves stacked with centuries-old ewer jugs, samovars for boiling, dishes, jars and teapots, most



of which were made of copper or brass.

He took down various items and enthusiastically explained to AFP their materials and origins.

The vintage items are now increasingly rare in the modern era in which they have been replaced by stainless steel and plastic kitchenware. "I used to travel everywhere, Lahore, Gujranwala, Karachi, back and forth (to purchase antiques)," he said.

Shakeel procures the items he restores mostly from scrap yards, ports, or household clearances. "Often, the condition of the items is so bad that no one would buy them," he said. The shop owner and his colleague Shakeel Ahmed restore the battered items by hammering out dents, re-tinning the interiors over coal fires, and polishing the metal. A badly damaged item could take a few days to fix. After restoration, a piece can sell between \$100 and \$1,000. Shakeel's

customers are mostly collectors or antique enthusiasts, including foreigners. Today, he mostly relies on online platforms and messaging applications to buy and sell antiques.

"I don't have the same health anymore, so I travel less," he said.

Prices for antiques are on the increase but the number of customers has fallen over time, Shakeel said.

"The money doesn't turn over quickly in this business. It's a very slow trade," he said.

"Customers who still exist, they are not many. They collect these things because they understand these items. Those who don't understand them would think it's all useless," Shakeel added. Ahmed said he enjoyed restoring worn and damaged objects because they carry stories within them from different communities in the past or historical periods.

"This is a very old thing," the 56-year-old man said at his own dimly lit workshop, as he gently used a small hammer to smooth out little dents on a large brass hookah pipe for smoking tobacco.

"What we do is like putting life back into the dead," Ahmed said. **AFP**

BACKPAGE

Power relief threshold to be raised to 250 units: Minister

Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awwis Ahmad Khan Leghari on Tuesday said that the government was working on a system to provide electricity relief to consumers based on poverty rather than consumption of up to 200 units, while efforts were underway to increase the existing threshold to 250 units.

Speaking during a Senate session, Leghari said that wealthy consumers were installing solar panels to reduce their electricity consumption below 200 units and subsequently benefit from relief intended for lower-income households. He said the government was working on a plan to provide relief specifically to people living below the poverty line.

According to Leghari, the number of electricity consumers using up to 200 units had reached 20 million, with most of them using solar energy. He stressed that electricity tariff slabs needed to be determined appropriately to prevent such problems in the future.

Turning to the power sector's financial situation, Leghari said circular debt had declined to Rs1.67 trillion. The minister said the government had set a target to eliminate circular debt over the next four years, adding that the debt servicing surcharge associated with circular debt

would also be abolished during the same period.

He said the ministry had received Rs1.18 trillion in budgetary support when the government assumed office, but the amount had declined to Rs700 billion during the current year. Leghari maintained that losses incurred by electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) had been reduced every year. However, he acknowledged that the benefits of reduced losses had not yet been passed on to consumers.

During the session, Senator Abid Sher Ali raised concerns about electricity tariffs and their impact on millions of Pakistanis. He said electricity bills had become unaffordable even for protected consumers.

"If a consumer uses just one unit more than 200 units, the electricity bill suddenly doubles," the senator said. He also questioned whether the burden of electricity theft in distribution companies was being passed on to poorer consumers.

Responding to concerns about the tariff structure, Leghari stressed the need to determine electricity tariff slabs in a way that would prevent such problems in the future. Meanwhile, only two members were present on the government benches during the Senate proceedings. **NEWS DESK**

ATC rejects further remand of Hammad Azhar

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday rejected a police request for further physical remand of PTI leader Hammad Azhar in the Jinnah House attack case and sent him to jail on judicial remand.

Sarwar Road police had booked several PTI leaders and workers on charges of attacking and vandalising Jinnah House during the May 9, 2023 protests against the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.

According to his family, Azhar was arrested on Sept 5. However, police said the next day they were unaware of his arrest, and he was produced before an ATC on Sept 7. His initial 21-day physical remand was extended at least twice.

Subsequently, upon the completion of the latest 12-day remand, the PTI leader was presented before ATC Judge Sardar Muhammad Akram Khan on Tuesday.

The investigating officer sought further physical remand of the former finance minister, stating that the police wanted to

conduct a polygraph test, also known as a lie detector test.

However, Azhar's counsel, Barrister Abuzar Salman Niazi, argued that a polygraph test required the suspect's consent.

He argued that according to a Lahore High Court judgment, the procedure was to be conducted during judicial remand.

The lawyer said the suspect was also required to make a statement before a magistrate indicating whether he wished to undergo the test.

Azhar told the court that he did not want to undergo the test if the law allowed him to refuse it. He said a suspect should not be punished for the prosecution's alleged lack of knowledge about the legal requirements.

After hearing arguments from the prosecution and the defence over the proposed polygraph test, Judge Akram dismissed the police request for further physical remand and sent Azhar to jail under judicial custody. **NEWS DESK**

IMAAAN, HADI SECURITY BREACH CASE

Verdict Reserved

The trial of human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in the security breach case concluded at Adiala Jail on Tuesday, with the anti-terrorism court (ATC) reserving its verdict.

Imaan and Hadi are facing a jail trial in a 2024 case pertaining to the alleged disruption of an international cricket team's security route and incitement to public unrest. The couple, accused of removing barriers from the route, was indicted on October 7.

On Tuesday, both accused recorded their statements under Section 342 (power to examine the accused) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, while

arguments by the state counsel also concluded during the proceedings.

Following the completion of the trial and final arguments, the court reserved its verdict and said that it would be pronounced on October 29.

A day prior, the couple approached the Supreme Court to challenge the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Oct 19 order refusing to stay the trial in the case.

The IHC had earlier dismissed petitions challenging the framing of charges and the inclusion of terrorism-related provisions. The high court issued notices and said it would decide how to proceed after receiving responses from the parties.

The couple has been in jail since their arrest on Jan 23 in a case registered against them for protesting outside the IHC and allegedly manhandling the high court Bar Association president.

The arrest prompted criticism by rights bodies, politicians and journalists, who stressed the couple's right to a fair trial. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan, China launch information corridor

Set up 18-outlet news exchange, fact-checking mechanism: Information corridor also covers business partnerships, research, tourism and university youth ambassadors

Pakistan and China have established an 18-outlet news exchange and a dedicated fact-checking mechanism under a newly launched information corridor aimed at expanding media cooperation, Pakistan's information minister said on Tuesday.

The China-Pakistan Information Corridor is intended to complement the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Beijing's flagship multibillion dollar energy, infrastructure and industrial investment program in Pakistan, by strengthening communication and public understanding of bilateral cooperation.

The information corridor brings together four areas of cooperation: media, business and enterprise, think tanks and culture, tourism and youth. Officials say these activities will connect institutions and people in both countries while building support for their partnership.

"A news exchange working group of 18 Pakistani and Chinese media organizations," including state broadcasters and private channels, "now share verified news on our cooperation," information Minister Attaulah Tarar said at the



information corridor's launch in Islamabad.

"Alongside it, a dedicated fact check mechanism tracks misleading narratives and answers them with concrete facts."

Tarar named Chinese news agency Xinhua, China Media Group and People's Daily among the participants in the media component.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning and Ambassador Jiang Zaidong attended the ceremony at the Pakistan-China Friendship Center.

"We're still facing misinformation, fake news, and lies," Mao said. "I believe that's the very reason why the launch of CPIC is necessary, important, and right on time."

The ambassador said the information corridor would help create a more favorable public opinion environment for practical cooperation, particularly the next phase of CPEC.

The proposal dates back at least to March 2024, when Tarar discussed establishing an information corridor with the Chinese ambassador and called for coordination to counter what he described as fake news about CPEC.

Beyond media cooperation, the information corridor's business component has opened its first regional office in Karachi, Tarar said.

It is developing a portal to track trade, investment and foreign direct investment,

alongside a podcast series featuring Chinese entrepreneurs in Pakistan and Pakistani entrepreneurs in China.

The think-tank component, led by the Pakistan-China Institute, will bring Pakistani research institutions together with Chinese counterparts for joint discussions, research and publications.

Under the culture, tourism and youth component, the first cohort of youth ambassadors has been nominated from 13 Pakistani universities.

That component also includes work on a proposed Xinjiang-Gilgit-Baltistan tourism corridor, intended to extend visits by Chinese travelers into northern Pakistan, and a Pakistan-China friendship rally. **NEWS DESK**

ECP reserves verdict on KP polls

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday reserved its verdict on the case concerning local government elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja observing that political governments, rather than the commission, were reluctant to hold local polls.

The verdict will be announced on Wednesday. During the hearing, a bench headed by the chief election commissioner examined the provincial government's request to defer local government elections in 12 districts, citing law and order concerns and the imposition of emergency.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Adviser on Law, Amir Javed, told the bench that an emergency had been imposed in various districts of the province on October 11, while troops had also been deployed in certain areas under Article 245 of the Constitution.

He argued that holding local government elections in the 12 districts was not possible under the prevailing circumstances. He also cited the imposition of governor's rule and the absence of provincial ministers, saying the government needed time to address the situation in accordance with ground realities.

The adviser requested additional time to consult the attorney general and the governor on the matter.

The chief election commissioner questioned whether these were the only grounds for not holding the elections, asking why polls could not be conducted despite



delimitation having been completed in 16 districts.

He observed that the public believed the ECP did not want to hold local government elections, whereas the reality was that political governments were reluctant to conduct them.

"The truth should come before the public," he remarked, adding that the commission would issue an order on the matter.

Raja further observed that holding local government elections despite governor's rule or an emergency would be an achievement for

the provincial administrative setup.

During the proceedings, the ECP secretary said elections could be held even during emergencies and wars, citing international examples in support of his argument.

ECP officials also informed the bench that there was no legal bar on conducting local government elections during an emergency, adding that law and order concerns were a separate matter.

The commission reserved its verdict, which is scheduled to be announced on Wednesday. **NEWS DESK**

Khamenei wants tighter control of Strait of Hormuz

Iranian President, Qatari Emir discuss boosting political, economic ties

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtahab Khamenei on Tuesday met with Security Chief Mohsen Rezaei, reaffirming "the necessity of tightening the management of the Strait of Hormuz," Iranian media reported.

Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since succeeding his slain father Ali Khamenei, called for ensuring that Tehran's conditions were met to end the war as Rezaei briefed him on the country's situation and measures being taken to address ongoing challenges.

The supreme leader reaffirmed "the importance of relations with neighbouring countries based on interests," stressed the importance of pursuing Iran's interests and implementing its conditions with the aim of ending the war, and the "no war, nor peace situation", state media said.

He also stressed the need to safeguard the rights and interests of the Iranian people and what Tehran calls the "resistance front" by

fulfilling the conditions set by Iranian officials for ending the conflict with the US.

Khamenei further described the Supreme National Security Council as a central body for managing state affairs, emphasizing coordination among political, economic, cultural and security institutions.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Emir of Qatar Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed expanding political, economic, and energy cooperation as well as strengthening coordination among gas-exporting countries during a meeting on the sidelines of the GECF Summit in Moscow, according to IRNA on Tuesday.

The eighth Gas Exporting Countries Forum summit has begun today in Moscow, with Pezeshkian in attendance.

Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Major General Mohsen Rezaei said on Tuesday that Washington's inability to provide



security guarantees has become evident, stressing that security in West Asia must be homegrown.

In a post on X on Tuesday, Rezaei said the United States has not brought security to any country in the region and called for preventing foreign intervention.

"Washington's inability to provide security guarantees has become evident," he wrote. "Security in West Asia must originate from within the region itself, and any foreign intervention must be prevented." **NEWS DESK**

GLAMOUR

DTM

Nicole Kidman Is Ageless In Vogue

Nicole Kidman appeared to have turned back the clock as she showed off her incredible abs in a Chanel bikini for a new *Vogue Australia* cover shoot. The actress, 59, looked incredible in the editorial as she recalled once being told she was 'too tall' to be an actress.

Nicole teamed the bikini with a pair of low-slung denim jeans by the high-end fashion house and a statement gold necklace as she sported tousled wet hair.

A second look saw the movie star looking like a skater chick in a Chanel beanie hat and matching monochromatic strapless dress as she gazed into the camera.

The interview saw Nicole questioned by many famous Australians.

Filmmaker, Baz Luhrmann asked her: 'When you're young, there's always a big focus on fitting in. Is there something you viewed as an obstacle in your youth that you've since found to be a strength?'

Nicole replied: 'My height was an obstacle. I was the tallest in the class, taller than all the boys. I couldn't fulfill being a ballet dancer because I was too tall.'

'Even as an actress, I was told, "You're too tall, because you're taller than the leading man."' NEWS DESK

Tom Brady's Fling Exposed

Tom Brady and new flame Candice Swanepool 'have been dating in secret for months' and are 'spending a lot of time together,' a new report on their romance has revealed.

It emerged on Saturday night that the NFL icon has moved on from ex-wife Gisele Bündchen with Swanepool, another stunning Victoria's Secret model.

According to *US Weekly*, Brady, 49, has been dating Swanepool, 38, 'for a while,' though neither has publicly addressed the rumors or responded to request for comment from the *Daily Mail*.

PEOPLE then revealed on Sunday night that the pair are being extremely cautious when they spend time together in a bid to keep their romance under wraps.

NEWS DESK

Antonoff To Keep Singing For Ex

Jack Antonoff opened up about continuing to perform love songs he penned about ex Margaret Qualley, more than three months after they separated.

The musical artist, 42, who split with actress, 32, this past July after almost three years of marriage, spoke with *The Guardian* about the mixed feelings he gets when he performs love songs he wrote in her honor.

Antonoff said he 'obviously was really worried about this specific thing' in terms of performing songs he 'wrote recently,' even debating if he should omit them from his set.

'I sat long and hard with it and thought, "If I change the setlist..." and in my gut there was a unanimous jury that said, "No, this is the deal."'

He said that the 'deal' he's made with his fans is to honestly reveal how he feels via his music: 'I'm going to risk at any moment having to stand behind it for f***ing over.' NEWS DESK

Heidi Klum's Creepy Costume Teaser

Heidi Klum gave fans another cryptic clue about her 2026 Halloween costume, just a week ahead of her legendary annual bash.

The supermodel, 53 - who is known for her incredibly realistic costumes - shared a gruesome Instagram photo on Sunday of what appeared to be human organ props.

'What's my costume? One week to go...' she wrote in the caption, along with a number of Halloween emojis.

One fan guessed that Klum - who previously said the costume would be 'very bloody' - was going

to be dressed up as 'an autopsy.'

Others wondered if she would be transforming into a 'zombie from *The Last of Us*.'

Someone else simply asked, 'Internal organs?'

Over the past few years, Klum has become known for the legendary looks that she wears during her iconic Halloween party in New York City each holiday.

'It goes very well with red wine,' the supermodel told *People* in an interview about her upcoming costume.

NEWS DESK

Hero Lana Helps Abuse Survivor

Lana Del Rey proved she has a heart of gold as she helped a victim of domestic abuse that she met while driving in Los Angeles.

The singer, 41, was filming a video of herself while cruising and listening to Rubberband by Tate McRae when she noticed a woman holding a sign outside her window at a stoplight.

She posted the clip to her Instagram Stories on Sunday, writing, 'When you're listening to Tate's song about Highland when you're sitting at a light on Highland and a woman sticks a sign on your window that says trying to stay out of an abusive relationship.'

The star - who previously hit back at allegations that she 'glamorizes abuse' in her lyrics - was pictured reaching into her wallet and pulling out what appeared to be a \$100 bill before handing it to the fleeing survivor.

'You got me when I was filming,' she told her, as the woman replied, 'Thank you so much.'

The singer then advised the vulnerable stranger, 'Well, try and stay away.' NEWS DESK



MONEY

DTM

Commerce minister in Doha to strengthen trade ties

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a series of high-level meetings with senior officials, international economic leadership and prominent business representatives in Doha on the sidelines of the World Investment Forum 2026, focusing on strengthening Pakistan's international trade relations, attracting foreign investment, enhancing regional connectivity and expanding economic cooperation across key sectors.

During the engagements held, the Federal Minister met with the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, Qatar's Minister of Municipality, the Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industries and representatives of Retaj Group.

The meetings explored opportunities for expanding bilateral and multilateral trade, strengthening private-sector linkages and promoting investment in agriculture, food security, industrial development, hospitality and tourism, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

Pakistan Reaffirms Commitment to D-8 Economic Cooperation and \$500 billion trade target, in a meeting with the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation on October 25, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan discussed measures to strengthen economic integration and accelerate trade among member countries.

The D-8 Secretary-General appreciated Pakistan's continued support for the organisation highlighted the importance of implementing the D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement following its ratification by Egypt.

Both sides emphasised the need to translate existing economic cooperation frameworks into practical commercial opportunities through greater private-sector participation, improved market access and stronger trade linkages among member states.

The discussions also focused on advancing the D-8 organisation's ambitious target of achieving US\$500 billion in intra-member trade by 2030.

Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening cooperation within the D-8 framework and supporting initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, encouraging investment and promoting sustainable economic growth among member economies.

Pakistan and Qatar explore Cooperation in agriculture and food security, in a separate bilateral meeting on

October 26, the Federal Minister met with Qatar's Minister of Municipality to discuss expanding cooperation in agriculture, food security and bilateral trade.

Both sides exchanged views on opportunities to strengthen commercial relations and promote greater institutional and business-level engagement in agricultural development and food supply chains.

The discussions highlighted the potential for closer collaboration between relevant government institutions and private-sector stakeholders to identify practical areas of cooperation and facilitate mutually beneficial commercial partnerships.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment of Pakistan and Qatar to further strengthening their longstanding bilateral relations through enhanced economic engagement and cooperation in sectors of common interest.

Jam Kamal Khan invites Qatari Investors to Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs), in another important

engagement, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan met with the Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industries to explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral trade, investment and private-sector cooperation.

The Federal Minister encouraged the Qatari business community to expand business-to-business interactions with Pakistani counterparts and develop stronger people-to-people connections to translate the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Qatar into tangible economic and commercial opportunities.

Highlighting Pakistan's investment potential, Jam Kamal Khan invited Qatari investors to explore opportunities in the country's Special Economic Zones, particularly in the Karachi industrial area, where export-oriented manufacturing and industrial partnerships could provide access to domestic and international markets.

He also highlighted Pakistan's strategic geographical position and the potential for investors to access wider regional markets, including Africa, through improved trade connectivity and supply-chain networks.

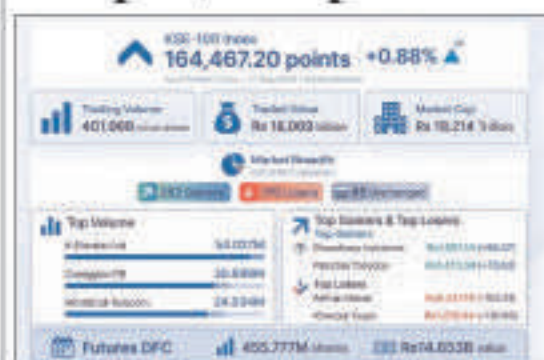
During the discussions, the Chairman of Qatar Chamber highlighted changing global supply-chain dynamics and expressed interest in proposed regional transit routes and connectivity initiatives.

Both sides recognised that improved logistics infrastructure, diversified supply chains and stronger regional transport connections could play a significant role in facilitating trade, reducing commercial barriers and opening new markets for businesses in Pakistan and Qatar.

The meeting underscored the importance of sustained engagement between chambers of commerce, investors and business communities to identify commercially viable projects and strengthen bilateral economic relations.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to promoting investment, expanding private-sector partnerships and advancing shared economic prosperity. **NEWS DESK**

Bullish trend continues at PSX, up 1,428 points



The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish momentum on Tuesday, gaining 1,428.73 points, a positive change of 0.88 percent, to close at 164,467.20 points against 163,038.47 points recorded in the previous trading session. [1]

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 401,069 million shares, compared to 376,019 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs18,069 billion from Rs16,192 billion.

Market capitalisation increased to Rs18,214 trillion from Rs18,061 trillion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 497 companies that traded in the ready market, 282 posted gains, 170 suffered losses, while 45 remained unchanged.

K-Electric Ltd. led the volume chart with 54,027 million shares, followed by Energyco PK with 30,699 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 24,034 million shares. Among the top gainers, Ghandhara Industries Limited surged by Rs96.47 to close at Rs1,061.16, while Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited advanced by Rs73.63 to settle at Rs1,473.58.

On the losing side, Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited declined by Rs162.81 to close at Rs9,337.19, while Kheirpur Sugar Mills Limited fell by Rs139.98 to Rs1,259.84.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 455.777 million shares with a traded value of Rs14,653 billion, compared with 339,047 million shares worth Rs9,357 billion in the previous session. Of 313 companies traded in the DFC market, 247 advanced, 63 declined and 3 remained unchanged. **NEWS DESK**

REITs channel property wealth into capital markets

Regulated Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) could help bring property wealth into the formal economy and channel it into capital markets, provided transparent valuations, sound governance and simpler tax rules are ensured, speakers said at a Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Talk Series session here on Tuesday.

Commissioner Imtiaz Haider, who welcomed the participants, said REITs could mobilise private investment for infrastructure projects, including motorways, bridges, energy parks and logistics hubs. He also proposed exploring REITs to unlock value from existing public assets and finance development projects.

Presentations at the session showed that 29 REIT schemes were registered in Pakistan by March 2026, with an aggregate fund size of Rs173.1 billion as of December 2025. Globally, 1,021 listed REITs had a combined market capitalisation of US\$2.04 trillion at the end of 2024.

Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman of ISE REIT Management Company Limited, highlighted the global REIT market and presented the Rs5.67 billion ISE Towers Rental REIT as a local example. He also outlined potential opportunities in rental, developmental, hybrid and parking REITs in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Muhammad Ejaz, Chief Executive of Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited, presented Dolmen City REIT and Globe Residency REIT as local examples. He said Dolmen City REIT had a market capitalisation of Rs86.88 billion as of September 30, 2026, while occupancy at both properties exceeded 97 per cent. He called for rationalising property transfer duties and taxes and reviewing investment limits to support the growth of the REIT sector.

Speakers emphasised that REIT returns and liquidity were not guaranteed and depended on the underlying assets, scheme structure and market conditions. Independent valuations, trustee oversight, clear disclosures and investor awareness were identified as essential to building investor confidence. **NEWS DESK**

Engro Fertilizers, Mari Energies sign MoU

Mari Energies Limited and Engro Fertilizers Limited have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to help farmers improve crop yields and incomes through better access to quality agricultural inputs and balanced nutrient use, alongside community development initiatives.

The collaboration will combine Mari Energies' experience in community development across its areas of operation with Engro Fertilizers' agricultural expertise. It establishes a framework for the companies to jointly plan, implement and review programmes for farmers and local communities.

Agricultural initiatives will focus on improving access to quality inputs and promoting informed nutrient management practices to support farm productivity and livelihoods.

The partnership will also cover education, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning, vocational training, youth employability, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. Sports, cultural and leadership programmes are also included in its scope. **NEWS DESK**

Panel gives 120 days to finalise shrimp farming roadmap

A sub-committee constituted by the prime minister has set a 120-day deadline to prepare a roadmap for expanding shrimp farming, improving value addition and boosting exports as part of a broader 24-month implementation and review process.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chaired a meeting of the sub-committee on Aquaculture and Shrimp Value Chain, which brought together provincial fisheries officials and relevant federal institutions to develop a coordinated strategy for transforming aquaculture into a competitive, export-oriented industry.

The committee will prepare a comprehensive report based on verified data and stakeholder recommendations. The exercise will establish a baseline for the sector, identify bottlenecks across the value chain and propose measures to improve production, processing and export competitiveness.

The sub-committee approved seven technical working groups and a projection and costing cell to prepare 14 reports and export projections, assigning responsibilities to the relevant institutions. It also adopted a common framework for data collection and validation, prioritizing challenges, developing reform proposals and monitoring progress.

An initial 14-day action plan was approved, with participating institutions directed to complete their assigned tasks within the stipulated deadlines.

Junaid Chaudhry said the exercise would identify constraints and develop practical solutions to expand shrimp farming, strengthen value addition and increase exports. The federal government would work with provincial governments and other stakeholders to pool expertise and develop a coordinated approach to harness the country's potential in shrimp farming.

Punjab Secretary for Aquaculture and Fisheries Rana Muhammad Saleem Afzal said the provincial government was working to expand shrimp farming, but establishing an effective value chain remained a major challenge. Efforts were also underway to establish hatcheries, he added.

Sindh's secretary for livestock and fisheries said a feasibility study was being prepared for a 3,500-acre shrimp farm in the province. **NEWS DESK**

ISLAMABAD SAFE MILK CITY

FPCCI demands immediate rollout

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has called for the immediate launch of the "Islamabad Safe Milk City" pilot project and stronger milk safety regulations in line with international standards to protect public health and formalise Pakistan's dairy sector.

The demand was made at a dairy roundtable conference titled "Reforms in the Dairy Sector," organised by the FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Dairy and Dairy Products at its Capital Office in Islamabad.

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain attended the conference as chief guest.

The conference focused on dairy sector reforms, ensuring a level playing field for businesses, safeguarding the formal dairy industry and addressing challenges to sustainable growth.

Welcoming participants, Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman, in-charge of the FPCCI Capital Office, said a safe,

regulated and competitive dairy sector could increase farmers' incomes, protect public health and create new export opportunities.

Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasised that safe and nutritious milk was essential for national food security and public health, acknowledging the sector's contribution to millions of rural households.

Dr Shahzad Amin, Convener of the FPCCI's dairy committee and Chief Operating Officer of the Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA), said more than eight million rural families depended on livestock, which contributes approximately 35 to 40 per cent of their income.

He said consumers spend around Rs 8.2 trillion annually on milk, but only Rs 372 billion comes through the formal dairy sector, leaving approximately Rs7.9 trillion in the informal market. Formalising part of this market could unlock more than Rs7.5 trillion in economic potential.

Citing a University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) study, Dr

Amin said 92 per cent of tested loose-milk samples failed to meet required quality and safety standards. He stressed that access to safe milk should be a basic necessity for every household. Participants also highlighted malnutrition among children under five, including stunting exceeding 40 per cent, wasting at 17.7 per cent and underweight prevalence of 28.9 per cent. The conference further noted vitamin D deficiencies among women of reproductive age and annual healthcare expenditure of approximately \$14 billion.

The PDA identified three priorities: improving farmers' livelihoods through better animal genetics, quality feed and veterinary services; attracting foreign direct investment; and increasing production and exports through improved farm productivity and formal processing channels.

The association said investors from China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had shown interest in Pakistan's dairy sector. **NEWS DESK**

New business plan sought to save Pakistan Post

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday directed officials to prepare a comprehensive business plan for Pakistan Post to improve its financial stability, accelerate digitalization and safeguard the future of its 22,000 employees.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the institution's financial losses, administrative challenges and reform initiatives, the minister emphasized the need for a viable strategy to modernize Pakistan Post in line with contemporary requirements, restore its financial stability and transform it into a profitable institution, said a press release.

He said that digitalizing the postal system was an urgent necessity. However, the continued delay in this process over the past 10 years was a matter of great concern. He questioned why and where the arrangements with EXIM Bank for digitalization had stalled and what had

caused such a prolonged delay in this important initiative.

Abdul Aleem Khan further stated that 86 major post offices across the country could have been digitized in the first phase. However, the failure to take timely action had deprived the institution of modern facilities, leaving it unable to compete effectively with other logistics providers.

The minister cautioned that the entire institution would bear the consequences of any negligence on the part of its officers.

He stressed that an effective, comprehensive and viable business plan must be developed immediately to safeguard the future of Pakistan Post's 22,000 employees.

He said that, in the current competitive environment, Pakistan Post must move beyond traditional practices and adopt modern technology, improved administrative systems and an effective business strategy to grow.

Aleem Khan said that comprehensive reforms were essential to transform Pakistan Post into a profitable and self-sustaining institution. He warned that failure to take timely and effective measures could further jeopardize the institution's future.

He directed the relevant officials to prepare a concrete business plan, taking into account Pakistan Post's operational capacity,

available resources and market requirements. The plan should focus on reducing financial losses and increasing revenue, he added.

During a briefing on the institution's financial challenges and existing administrative structure, the meeting was informed that the provision of free services in the past, coupled with the lack of an effective business strategy had contributed to Pakistan Post's financial difficulties.

The recruitment of an additional 4,000 employees in 2023 had further increased the institution's financial burden. In this regard, the need for effective measures to restructure the organization, ensure the effective utilization of human resources and reduce expenditure was emphasized.

The Minister directed officials to develop a restructuring plan for Pakistan Post based on clearly defined objectives, practical measures and measurable outcomes.

He said that merely proposing reforms was not enough; their timely implementation must also be ensured to modernize the institution. He instructed senior Pakistan Post officials to prepare a comprehensive and coordinated

programme for submission to the Prime Minister, incorporating digitalization, financial stabilisation, administrative reforms and effective measures to enhance revenue.

During the meeting, the Federal Secretary for Communications and the Director General of Pakistan Post briefed the Minister on the institution's current situation, financial challenges, digitalization initiatives and other key matters.

The meeting emphasized the importance of a coordinated strategy and practical measures to address the challenges facing Pakistan Post and improve its credibility, efficiency and overall performance. **NEWS DESK**



WORLD

DTM

Charles Faces Reparations Fury On Caribbean Trip

King Charles heads to the Caribbean this week on a tour which comes against the backdrop of increasingly vocal demands from the region that Britain pays reparations for its role in the slave trade.

Charles and his wife Queen Camilla will first visit the Bahamas and Guyana, before heading to Antigua and Barbuda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the biennial get-together of the international organisation which he heads.

The tour runs from October 27 to November 4. At a previous meeting in 2022 of the leaders of the Commonwealth — a group of 56 nations which were mainly former British colonies —

Charles expressed deep personal sorrow over slavery, and the issue is certain to be prominent once again. Last month, CARICOM, the Caribbean Community, a group of 23 member and associate member states which includes the Bahamas, Barbados and Jamaica, said it would push for reparations to be on the CHOGM agenda.

"The Caribbean has consistently asserted that reparations is fundamentally about justice," CARICOM's Secretary-General Carla Barnett said in a speech last month. REUTERS

New Zealand ex-PM Ardern to teach leadership in Sydney

Former New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern will teach students about "empathetic leadership" after being hired for a new job at the University of Sydney.

Ardern, 46, won international acclaim for her handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in New Zealand but the restrictions dented her popularity at home before she stood down from politics in January 2023.

She initially joined Harvard University in the United States, and then moved to Sydney's northern beaches earlier this year.

"I'm delighted to be joining the University of Sydney," Ardern said in a statement.

"I've found myself especially focused on the question of leadership since leaving office — and how we can better support and encourage the kind of leadership needed to tackle our many global challenges," she said.

Ardern is taking up a post as Professor of Practice this month, the university said, offering guest lectures, masterclasses and mentoring.

"Her work will focus on empathetic leadership, social cohesion and civic trust; further developing new approaches to global and values-based leadership," it said.

An international hero of progressive politics, Ardern steered New Zealand through natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2019 Christchurch mosque massacre. But plaudits

abroad did not always match her support at home, which dipped towards the end of her second term in office in the face of deteriorating economic conditions and the Covid backlash. AP



Oromiya Attack Leaves 60 Dead: Church

At least 60 people were killed in two separate attacks in Ethiopia's conflict-hit Oromiya region in the past week, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church said.

Church authorities said the dead were all Christians, but did not go into details on how they died or who was behind the attacks.

The Oromiya regional government and a source linked to a rebel alliance fighting government forces in the northern Tigray region traded blame for the attacks. The Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church said 14 believers were killed in Marti Woreda on October 20 and 46 in Sherka Woreda on October 24.

More than 20 homes were also burned and more than 20 people hospitalized with severe injuries,



the church's statement, issued on Monday, added.

The regional government said the rebel alliance launched the attacks to try to spark religious conflict, without providing evidence.

The source linked to the rebel alliance said the Oromiya regional government had carried out the killings, citing conversations with two local residents.

The Oromo Liberation Army rebel group, which the regional government has blamed for previous attacks on Orthodox Christians, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The OLA is one of seven armed groups that announced last month that they had formed an alliance aimed at overthrowing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government. REUTERS

Australia warns of 'unprecedented' AI threat



Artificial intelligence poses an "unprecedented" threat as foreign governments turn it loose to hack computer networks and critical infrastructure, Australia's cyber security agency warned on Tuesday.

The Australian Signals Directorate said rapidly advancing artificial intelligence models could be of huge benefit if harnessed for good, even using some AI tools to compile its own annual "cyber threat" report.

But recent months had also shown how AI was helping criminals and state-sponsored hackers launch attacks at "greater scale than ever before", the directorate said in the report.

"AI has been the defining force in the cyber threat landscape over the past year, allowing malicious actors to find vulnerabilities faster and exploit them at unprecedented scale, speed and sophistication," the report read.

"In recent weeks, new threats have emerged from the unintended actions of AI agents and model testing."

Global worries about the power of advanced AI tools are mounting after a string of hacking incidents involving models from leading developers such as OpenAI and Anthropic.

The report documented a stark increase in cyber security incidents.

The Australian Signals Directorate issued more than 4,400 warnings about potentially malicious activity over the past year — an 80 percent increase compared to the prior 12 months.

"State-sponsored cyber actors continued to target Australian organisations primarily to gain access to sensitive or non-public information."

"This activity extends beyond government networks, and includes critical infrastructure entities, private businesses and individuals."

The report said hackers linked to China, Russia and North Korea had targeted Australia or its allies in recent times.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said the nation could not ignore the AI revolution.

"AI is here and it's real. People need to engage," he told reporters.

"There's no turning the clock back in relation to that. Malicious actors are using AI to find vulnerabilities in systems."

Marles urged Australians to update their computers and "harden their systems".

Governments and firms have in recent days been rushing to fix critical flaws in a programming language that runs a large share of the world's websites.

The vulnerability was found using a powerful model from OpenAI. AP

India Rushes Troops As Two Charged Over Alleged Dam Protests Erupt Air Base Plot In UK

India has deployed hundreds of additional security personnel in its remote north-east, authorities said on Tuesday, after youth protesters clashed with police last week over a plan to build a mega-dam to counter a Chinese hydropower project upstream.

Protests in Arunachal Pradesh's Siang Valley, which borders Tibet, turned violent last week, triggering clashes with police, who made at least 21 arrests.

Police fired tear gas shells, while youth protesters pelted stones and set fire to a police station and an office of the state-owned National Hydroelectric Power Corporation, authorities said.

"Forces are being increased in the places where it is required. We do not want any law and order problem," SD Singh Jamwal, police chief of Arunachal Pradesh, told Reuters.

Sporadic protests have taken place in the Siang Valley in the last two years, the location of the proposed 11,200-megawatt Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, which will be developed by state-run National Hydroelectric Power Corporation.

Villagers who oppose the project fear that the dam would submerge ancestral villages belonging to the Adi tribe. "We will keep opposing this dam till they cancel it. If it is constructed, 27 of our ancestral villages will be completely submerged. At least 40 or 50 more will be affected," Gegong Jijong of the Siang Indigenous Farmers' Forum told Reuters. The Siang river flows into Arunachal Pradesh from Tibet, where it is known as the Yarlung Zangbo. China announced plans in December 2024 to build the world's largest hydropower dam upstream, triggering fears in New Delhi that its longtime strategic rival could weaponise its control of the river. REUTERS

Two men were charged Tuesday with national security offenses over a suspected plot against RAF Fairford, a US-run military air base in England, police and prosecutors said.

British nationals Mohamed Ahmad Abdulkarim and Nouman Essghir, both aged 24 and from London, were charged under the National Security Act, the Crown Prosecution Service said. They are due to appear in court later Tuesday.

Abdulkarim is charged with assisting Iran's intelligence service and Essghir with entering a prohibited place for a purpose prejudicial to the UK.

RAF Fairford, in western England, has been used by American bombers to strike Iran during this year's war.

Essghir was arrested outside the base on Sept. 27, when armed police officers and army bomb-disposal experts swarmed the rural area. Scores of residents were evacuated from their homes as police and army bomb-disposal experts searched for explosives.

Police later said they had found a quantity of an accelerant — gasoline — in vans at the scene, but no explosives.

Essghir was initially released on bail before being re-arrested last week. Abdulkarim was arrested in the past week. Six other men have been arrested and released on bail as investigations continue.

British authorities have linked Tehran to the incident, which led the US to pull its bombers from RAF Fairford. Prime Minister Andy Burnham said that the apparent plot was "almost certainly" directed by Iran's Revolutionary Guard. AP



SPORTS



BALLON BRILLIANCE! Kane Makes English History

Harry Kane became the first Englishman in 25 years to win the Ballon d'Or on Monday thanks to his prolific scoring last season.

Kane scored 73 goals for club and country last campaign - he was Europe's top scorer - and smashed scoring records in Germany for Bayern Munich and at the World Cup, where he captained England to a third-place finish.

The 33-year-old Kane says winning the prestigious individual award was built on so much more.

"Anything is possible with hard work, when no one else is watching, to go through the ups and downs, to learn through resilience, determination and self-belief," an emotional Kane said in a message to young players, after reflecting on his early career struggles.

"My journey wasn't straightforward. I wasn't the kid who went straight to the top. I had to experience the downs," he added. "I had to fight my way to be the very best right now. I hope that can give you inspiration as well."

Kane was followed in the voting by Kylian Mbappé, Lamine Yamal - voted best young talent for a third straight year - 2024 winner Rodri and record eight-time winner Lionel Messi.

Kane thanked his teammates, coaches, parents, children - "It's past your bedtime" - and wife Kate, "my best friend. We've been through ups and downs for sure. You're my biggest supporter. You always want the best for me."

Kane led Bayern to the Bundesliga and German Cup double, scoring a hat trick against Stuttgart in the cup final. Bayern also reached the Champions League semifinals. **AP**



Mbappe Faces Chinese Brand Boycott

Kylian Mbappe was dropped Tuesday by two major brands in China after a video circulated online in which the French football superstar apparently joked about former leader Mao Zedong. In China jokes about Mao, the country's founding leader who died in 1976, are considered disrespectful and remain a social taboo.

"Our company firmly opposes and has a zero-tolerance policy towards any behaviour that offends national sentiments," drinks giant Dongpeng said in a statement, adding that "with immediate effect we are terminating all cooperation with Kylian Mbappe".

Adverts showing AI-generated images of the 27-year-old France captain drinking a Dongpeng sports drink were regularly shown in China during this year's World Cup.

Mengniu, China's largest dairy producer, also cut ties with the Real Madrid forward, who until this incident was hugely popular among Chinese fans with millions of followers on social media.

Mbappe is fondly nicknamed "Guigui", the Chinese translation of "Turtle", due to his popularity as a character in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles meme.

"With immediate effect our company is terminating all cooperation with Kylian Mbappe," Mengniu said in a statement. **AP**



Venus Williams' Nightmare Year Gets Worse

Tennis great Venus Williams fell to 0-13 in singles matches this year at age 46 after losing 6-2, 6-2 to teenager Lili Tagger in the Guangzhou Open first round on Tuesday.

Their 28-year age gap was reportedly a record difference between opponents in a WTA Tour match.

The 18-year-old Austrian Tagger was born in 2008, the year Williams won the last of her seven Grand Slam singles titles at Wimbledon.

Now ranked No. 599, Williams was playing her first singles match for two months since the U.S. Open, where she lost in the first round to Sofia Kenin.

Williams now has lost 16 straight singles matches on tour going back to July last year.

She matched the 53rd-ranked Tagger with each landing 63% of their first serves, though Williams won just 60% of those points and her opponent won all of hers.

Williams created no break-point chances and Tagger took four of the 16 she had. Kenin also lost her round of 32 match, beaten 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-4 by Kaitlin Quevedo. **AP**



Sengun's 29-Point Blitz Keeps Rockets Hot



Alperen Sengun had 29 points, nine assists and nine rebounds and the Houston Rockets remained unbeaten with a 120-110 win over the Atlanta Hawks Monday night.

The Rockets are 4-0 this season and Monday was their second consecutive win over the Hawks after they got a 121-114 win in Atlanta on Saturday night. A 7-0 run by the Hawks, capped by a 3 from Nickail Alexander-Walker cut the lead to 95-93 early in the fourth.

Houston got hot after that, using a 14-0 spurt, with 3s from Reed Sheppard and Tari Eason, to make it 109-93 with less than seven minutes to go.

Jalen Johnson gave the Hawks their first points in 3 1/2 minutes on a dunk after that, but the Rockets went on an 8-0 run to push their advantage to 117-95 with under five minutes left.

Johnson led the Hawks with 21 points and CJ McCollum had 20. Kevin Durant added 22 points for the Rockets and Jabari Smith Jr. scored 16 points, had five assists and led the team with 12 rebounds.

Atlanta took a 1-point lead after a basket by Aaron Wiggins midway through the third quarter. **AP**

Baz And Flem! McCullum Hypes Dream Team

Brendon McCullum is convinced his close bond with "older brother" Stephen Fleming means they can succeed as dual England coaches where others have failed.

Fleming was appointed to the Test job and will begin his brief in South Africa in December after McCullum's four-year reign ended in July - although he remains in charge of England's white-ball sides.

In the previous instances where England have split the coaching roles, the needs of the Test side have taken priority, with McCullum the beneficiary from 2022 to 2024 as Matthew Mott was marginalised.

While England have had a setback after being ignominiously eliminated from the Pakistan tri-series with a match to spare, McCullum is upbeat the dynamic he has with Fleming as a former New Zealand team-mate and business partner will see them prosper in the long run.

McCullum told the Press Association: "I know that Flem and I both have very strong ambitions to try and achieve ultimate success across all formats for English cricket. We'll work very well together."

PAMEDIA



Sri Lanka thumps Pakistan to reach tri-series final

A rejuvenated Sri Lanka routed Pakistan by eight wickets on Tuesday to end England's hopes of reaching the ODI tri-series cricket final.

Fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka grabbed a career-best 5-34 as Pakistan was skittled for 110 after captain Kusal Mendis had won the toss and elected to field. It was Pakistan's second-lowest ODI total at home, after its 75 all out against Sri Lanka in Lahore in 2009.

Sri Lanka, which chased down the second-highest target in ODI history of 430 against England in Rawalpindi, then made 114-2 in 18.1 overs before the floodlight towers were fully switched on at the Gaddafi Stadium for the day-night game.

Pakistan had already quali-



fied for the final after beating England twice, including an epic one-wicket win on Sunday, and handing Sri Lanka a 37-run defeat in the opening game of the tournament.

Pakistan rounded off the league stage with six points from three wins while Sri Lanka, which has four points, will tune up for Saturday's final by playing England on Thursday.

England needed Pakistan to win on Tuesday to have a chance of making the final. Pakistan's struggle in the top-order continued with four of the leading five batters falling for single digits. Left-handed opener Maaz Sadaqat was drafted in for Saïm Ayub, who had made a run of poor scores.

Fakhar Zaman continued his lean patch when he offered a tame catch at point off Madushanka's short-pitched delivery.

Sadaqat fell lbw to Asitha Fernando's yorker and wicketkeeper-batter Saad Baig chipped an easy catch to short cover off Madushanka as Pakistan slipped to 46-3.

Babar Azam (29) again failed to capitalize on a good start, burning a review when he was plumb lbw to Eshan Malinga's perfect inswinger. Pakistan's Sunday hero Shadab Khan, whose unbeaten 113 earned the astonishing victory over England, lasted five balls as he tried to sweep Sahan Arachchige and gloved an easy catch to Mendis behind the wicket.

Then, the re-introduction of Madushanka saw the left-arm paceman take three more wickets as Pakistan was bowled out in 25.3 overs. "Unfortunately, for the last three or four games we are collapsing at the top order," captain Shaheen Shah Afridi said. "We have three days now and we can practice. We will come back in the final and bat stronger. We need to forget this game quickly and take the positives from the previous games." **NEWS DESK**