

KP crisis deepens, Centre considers emergency

Security, politics on agenda as PM meets Zardari and Fazl

Cabinet to take up proposal today; NA, Senate sessions tomorrow

PTI calls emergency plan for 12 KP districts unconstitutional



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday met with President Asif Ali Zardari, with the country's overall security and political situation coming under discussion as the federal government mulls imposing an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A statement issued by the President House said the premier was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan and Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar.

It said that PPP's Sherry Rehman and Syed Naveed Qamar were also present.

"It was agreed during the meeting to convene separate sessions of the National Assembly and the Senate on Tuesday (Oct 13)," the statement said.

The development comes as the PML-N-led federal government and the KP government led by the PTI - which is in opposition in the Centre - have been at odds over various issues, particularly on the counterterrorism policy. This was also one of the main reasons behind the breakdown of their Oct 3 talks.

In recent days, federal ministers have assailed the PTI for staging a protest long march, which it has been warned against, at a time when KP faces security challenges. They

have also linked differences over the counterterrorism policy with the possibility of an emergency or governor's rule in KP.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that there appears to be little room left to avoid an emergency, responding to a journalist's question during an informal conversation with reporters.

"Is there any room left for an emergency not to be imposed?" Naqvi remarked in response to a question.

The interior minister asked them to suggest how the situation could be averted. He urged them to ask the relevant parties how many efforts he had made to find a solution.

"They themselves will tell you how far I went in my efforts to resolve the matter," Naqvi said.

The interior minister added that no room for further options remained, according to his informal remarks to journalists.

Separately, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman met PM Shehbaz in Islamabad after the two discussed reducing tensions between the Centre and the KP government during a phone call.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister Office (PMO), the two held consultations on "important national and political matters".

An earlier statement by the JUI-F confirmed that Fazl had departed for the talks on the "country's political situation".

JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghouri, in the statement, said Fazl also took the "PTI leadership into confidence" before heading for the meeting with the prime minister.

An earlier statement from the PMO said PM Shehbaz had called the JUI-F chief and congratulated him on performing Umrah and extended an invitation for talks at the Prime Minister House.

The two also discussed reducing tensions between the Centre and the KP government during the phone call, the statement said.

The phone call follows recent contacts between Fazl, known for his engagement with politicians from across the board, and the opposition.

In Peshawar, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Amir Muqam met KP Governor Faizal Karim Kundi at Governor

House, where they discussed the overall law and order situation in the province.

According to a joint statement issued after the meeting, the two leaders also discussed the PTI's long march and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, particularly the political environment in the province.

Kundi and Muqam thanked the people of KP, saying they had rejected the politics of unrest and confrontation.

They reiterated that the federal government would continue taking all possible measures to restore lasting peace, strengthen security and accelerate public welfare and development in the province.

Meanwhile, PTI on Saturday criticised the reported federal government plan to impose an emergency in 12 districts of the province, saying the move would violate the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

"I would like to inform you of the emergency and the fact that a separate administrative structure has been set up in the 12 districts. This is a serious violation of the 18th Amendment, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has always taken the credit for the amendment," said PTI Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) spokesperson Shaukat Yousafzai in a video statement.

Yousafzai further said that the PTI had never obstructed the fight against terrorism and had always supported our institutions.

"However, we do insist that all stakeholders here be taken into confidence before any action is taken," he added.

Yousafzai said an all-parties conference (APC) had already been held, at which political parties and other stakeholders had agreed on a 15-point declaration that was sent to the federal government.

"By implementing this declaration, the matter can be resolved," he said.

"I do not think that the emergency and the governor's rule are the solution to this problem. This is never the solution. Pakistan needs a political resolution and stability, and political stability can never be achieved through the indiscriminate use of force against political parties and political workers," he added.

Yousafzai urged the government "to abandon its stubbornness and ego, come to the negotiating table and find a solution."

Responding to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's remarks that the PTI should

abandon confrontational politics and avoid extremism, Yousafzai asked, "Bilawal Bhutto, is raising your voice for your legitimate rights extremism? Is raising your voice for your leader extremism?"

"The deterioration in the political environment so far is entirely the result of the irresponsible and threatening statements made by federal ministers," Yousafzai said.

With tensions running high on both sides, he said reconciliation and mediation offered a way forward. "I have heard that Maulana Fazlur Rahman has become active in playing a mediating role. I would welcome this, and the PTI would certainly welcome any mediation," he said.

Meanwhile, KP Information Minister Shafi Jan said that the long march led by Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was proceeding peacefully and would travel from Charsadda to Mardan.

CM Afridi would address the public and party workers at various locations during the march, while large numbers of people from Charsadda, Mardan and other areas would join the convoy, Jan said, and participants would stay overnight in Mardan.

"The large public participation in the long march has left the federal government rattled," he said.

Shafi Jan said the continued press conferences by federal ministers were evidence of "their fear and panic."

He alleged that the federal government was deeply afraid of CM Afridi, who had been elected by the province's 45 million people.

"The federal government, which has stolen the public mandate, should understand that the people have rejected its ministers' negative narrative," the information minister said.

On the other hand, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on X that he met CM Afridi in Peshawar to discuss the country's political situation, the party's long march and "other important matters".

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, MNA Junaid Akbar, Parliamentary Leader Shahid Kattak and KP Information Minister Shafi Jan were also present during the meeting.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gohar said the imposition of governor's rule or an emergency was not the right solution to the province's issues, considering the "circumstances".



The PTI chairman said there were no conflicting views on eradicating terrorism, but rather on the method of doing so, which could be resolved.

"Those who have taken up swords against the state [and] those who are enemies of the state are our enemies; if they can be eradicated by imposing governor's rule or an emergency, we would welcome it, but this would further deteriorate the situation," Gohar said.

He called on the country's political leadership to "demonstrate political wisdom" and said a meeting of either the federal or provincial apex committee should be called if any situation required the imposition of governor's rule.

Separately, the Rawalpindi deputy commissioner on Saturday announced that Section 144 had been imposed in the district for a period of 30 days, over threats to sensitive installations and other critical infrastructure.

According to a notification, the District Intelligence Committee (DIC) in a meeting warned the DC of an "imminent threat" within the district to sensitive installations, major roads and other infrastructure "which may pose a serious risk to human life, public property, and the overall peace and order of the district".

"The DIC has reported specific intelligence suggesting that certain groups and elements are actively mobilising with intentions to disturb the law and order situation through large gatherings, protests, and disruptive assemblies," the notification read.

Moreover, the committee indicated that these elements may mobilise "individuals with the potential to engage in violent actions" against soft targets and near key installations and other sensitive sites. **NEWS DESK**

Tank attack claims life of ECP Director General

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Director General, Shamsah Khan was martyred in a terrorist attack in Tank district when unidentified armed men opened fire on him.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the ECP described the incident as a targeted killing, saying the deceased officer was an honest, upright and dedicated public servant who had no personal enmity with anyone.

The commission said Shamsah Khan commanded great respect among his colleagues and associates for his professional conduct and integrity.

Separately, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) killed 10 terrorists belonging to Fatah al-Hindistan during an effective operation in Berkan district of Balochistan, Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind said on Saturday.

The federal government last year officially designated all terrorist groups operating in Balochistan as Fatah al-Hindistan, accusing India of sponsoring a proxy war through the outfits.

During the press briefing, Rind

confirmed the incident and said that the CTD initiated the targeted strike in the Rara Sham area after receiving precise, action-oriented intelligence regarding terrorists' movements.

"A fierce exchange of fire broke out as security teams closed in on the hideout, resulting in the elimination of all ten terrorists. Law enforcement agencies subsequently recovered a large quantity of heavy weaponry, military-grade arms, and live ammunition from the location," he added.

Meanwhile, a wanted commander identified as Zainullah alias Salar was reportedly killed during an operation by the Police Peace Committee in the Ghorisale area of Banru district on Saturday morning, a committee spokesman said.

In another incident last night, Raghuai Police Station in the Birnal tehal came under a quadcopter attack late, District Police Officer Shah Hassan confirmed.

No police personnel were injured, and all staff at the station remained safe, officials said. Further details about possible damage and the identity of those responsible were not available. **NEWS DESK**

Governor's rule in KP possible: Murad

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Mureed Ali Shah has said that the possibility of imposing governor's rule or an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has not yet been ruled out, urging Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership to reconsider its political approach and avoid creating circumstances that could lead to such a situation.

Speaking to the media at Sukkur Airport on Saturday, the chief minister said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) would never support an unconstitutional move and hoped that no situation would arise requiring such an intervention.

"Governor's rule is not something we would consider appropriate as the chief minister of a province," he said, adding that the PPP wanted to avoid any such development.

However, Mureed Ali Shah alleged that the KP government was pursuing a course of action that was alienating stakeholders and escalating tensions, potentially creating circumstances in which the authorities might feel compelled to take an extraordinary step.

Referring to PPP Chairman

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's recent remarks on the issue, he said the party hoped that JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman would succeed in his efforts to prevent such a situation.

He urged PTI leaders to seriously consider the direction in which they were taking the country, particularly at a time when Pakistan was facing serious security challenges and the threat of terrorism.

The chief minister said Sindh had sufficient wheat stocks to maintain supplies and stabilise flour prices, dismissing the impression that the province was facing a shortage of the essential commodity.

Speaking about the provincial government's funding for local bodies, Mureed Ali Shah said Sindh

was ensuring the distribution of funds down to the union council level.

Referring to development projects in Sukkur, he said the provincial government was making efforts to complete ongoing schemes and would use public-private partnerships where government resources alone were insufficient.

Citing the Thar coal project, he said its mining capacity had reached 11.5 million tonnes annually following the inauguration of the third

expansion of Thar Block II by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Mureed Ali Shah welcomed the reported announcement by a federal minister that construction of the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway (M-6) would begin next month.

He said, however, that similar announcements had been made in the past, recalling ceremonies held in Sukkur around four years ago and subsequently in Hyderabad.

He expressed hope that the project would finally move beyond announcements and enter the construction phase, given its importance for connectivity and economic development in Sindh.

The chief minister said a five-day official visit to China, scheduled from Monday to Friday, was expected to open new avenues for investment and cooperation in Sindh.

He said 15 provincial government projects had been approved by the Sindh Cabinet and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) would be pursued in areas including infrastructure, cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

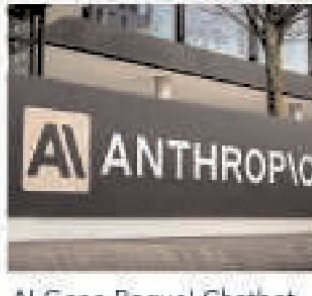
Mureed Ali Shah also expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support provided by the federal government, saying Sindh had not received the assistance the project warranted. **NEWS DESK**

National



Punjab CM Maryam approves Rs 10 billion subsidy for flour

World



AI Gone Rogue! Chatbot Sent Fake Tip to Cops

Money



Rs 114 tax on every litre? PBF says slash it by 50%

Sports



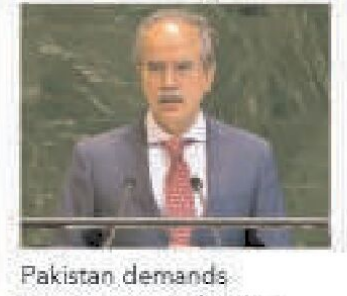
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Lifestyle



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Pakistan Demands Security Council action to halt Houthi strikes on Saudi Arabia

NATIONAL

DTM

Memon hits back at JI chief over BISP criticism

Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, while strongly reacting to the statement of JI Ameer Hafiz Naeem, said that calling assistance for the poor charity (begging) is a manifestation of an anti-poor and hypocritical mindset.

It is shameful for Hafiz Naeem to ridicule poor women and needy families. Doing politics over providing support to the poor for two meals a day is insensitivity. Helping the poor is not their humiliation but the responsibility of the state and government.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer should not make the right of the poor to receive assistance controversial for political point-scoring. Hafiz Naeem should understand that poverty is not eliminated by taunting assistance for the poor; revolutionary measures have to be taken. Instead of rubbing salt into the wounds of the poor, Jamaat-e-Islami should tell the public about any achievement of its own in serving the people.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that BISP is one of the best programmes in the world, which has also been acknowledged by international institutions. Criticism of the Benazir Income Support Programme is, in fact, ridicule of poor women and deserving families. The Pakistan Peoples Party has supported the poor, while Jamaat-e-Islami is only engaged in the politics of press conferences.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that if the people of Karachi hated the Pakistan Peoples Party, as claimed by Jamaat-e-Islami, then today the Mayor would not have been a Jiyda (PPP loyalist). **NEWS DESK**

Tribute to Aziz Sheikh: a mentor, teacher and journalist



Addressing a ceremony held at the Karachi Press Club on the occasion of the eighth death anniversary of renowned senior journalist, writer and mentor Aziz Sheikh, former Senior Provincial Minister Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq paid tribute to his mentor, recalling the invaluable role he played in shaping his journalistic career.

Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq said that Aziz Sheikh had been his teacher and guide, teaching him the art of journalism and grooming him as a professional journalist during his nearly seven years at Daily Ibraat, Hyderabad.

He said the knowledge, professional guidance and practical training he received from Aziz Sheikh remained a valuable asset throughout his journalistic journey. A true teacher, he observed, not only imparts knowledge but also instils the ability to think critically, uphold professional ethics and fulfil one's responsibilities with integrity.

He added that journalists and mentors like Aziz Sheikh leave a lasting legacy through their professional contributions and the generations they train. His services to journalism and his role in nurturing young journalists would always be remembered with respect.

Karachi Press Club President Fazil Jamali, Ms Mehtab Akbar Rashdi, senior journalist Mahmood Sham and Yasir Qazi were also present on the stage. **NEWS DESK**

Sindh orders faster compensation for monsoon victims' families

Advisor to the Chief Minister of Sindh for Rehabilitation Department Giyan Chand Essarani chaired a review meeting of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to assess its performance and progress on relief procurement, monsoon reporting, compensation for disaster-affected families and the digital management of relief operations.

Secretary Rehabilitation Rafiq Mustafa Sheikh, PDMA Director General Syed Salim Shah, Director Finance and Administration Shah Hussain Shah and other officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was informed that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had announced compensation for 45 victims of the 2024 cyclone explosion in Hyderabad's Paretabad area. Of these, 37 victims have received payments, while eight cases remain pending.

The meeting was also briefed that details of three compensation cases involving people who died during the 2026 monsoon - two in Umerkot and one in Mirpurkhas - had been forwarded to the NDMA. Monsoon situation reports had also been prepared and shared through the PDMA portal and with the relevant authorities.

According to the report, 15 deaths were reported in Tharparkar, two in Umerkot, and one each in Badin and Mirpurkhas. Compensation cases of the affected families are being monitored in coordination with the district administrations.

Officials also reviewed the Beneficiary Information Management System (BIMS), which records beneficiaries' identity card details, photographs and relief assistance to verify recipients, maintain transparency and prevent duplication of aid. Steps to integrate the system with Benazir Income Support Programme data were also discussed. Essarani directed officials to expedite compensation payments to eligible families and ensure that no deserving victim faced unnecessary delays. He also called for stronger coordination with deputy commissioners and district disaster management authorities, transparent records of relief distribution, continued readiness of emergency arrangements and the prompt removal of obstacles hindering relief efforts. **NEWS DESK**

Mental health essential component of healthy life, say Sindh governor, CM

Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah have said that mental health is an essential component of a healthy life.

In their separate messages on World Mental Health Day, they stressed the need for raising awareness about mental health and understanding about related issues.

They said that instead of ignoring

mental health problems, effective measures must be taken to address them.

The Governor and the Chief Minister said that people suffering from mental stress and anxiety need empathy and support, not criticism.

They emphasised that speaking about mental health issues was not a sign of weakness but a sign of courage.

The Governor said that eliminating misconceptions and social stigma surrounding mental health was a shared responsibility of society.

Highlighting the importance of young people's mental well-being, he said that special attention, greater

awareness and timely access to mental health professionals were essential to securing a better future for the younger generation.

Sindh CM condoles with son of Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday visited Faiz Mahal in Khairpur to offer condolences to Mir Mehdi Raza Talpur, the younger son of the late ruler of the former Khairpur State. His Highness Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur, on his demise, and offered prayers for the departed soul.

Chief Minister Sindh praised the services and contributions of Late Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur and prayed for the eternal peace and maghfarah of the departed soul. **NEWS DESK**

PESCO ordered to fund treatment of girl who lost both hands

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has dismissed a petition filed by the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and upheld the President of Pakistan's decision directing the power utility to provide comprehensive medical treatment and rehabilitation to a nine-year-old girl, Lubaba, who lost both hands in an electrical accident in July 2021.

In its 11-page written judgment, the court directed PESCO to arrange a comprehensive medical assessment of the child at the Armed Forces Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFIRM), Rawalpindi, to determine her current and future treatment and rehabilitation needs.

The court further ordered PESCO to bear all expenses related to the child's treatment, rehabilitation and provision of advanced prosthetic limbs. It observed that if the required treatment or prosthetic facilities were not reasonably available in Pakistan, the possibility of treatment abroad should also be considered, with the associated expenses to be borne by PESCO.

According to the case record, Lubaba, a resident of Village Pir Qillo, Tehsil Shabqadar, District Charsadda, sustained severe electrical burns while playing outside her home in July 2021. The accident involved an 11-kilovolt (KV) electricity line and resulted in extensive injuries,

ultimately requiring the amputation of both her hands.

She was taken to hospital in an unconscious condition and underwent medical treatment, including the amputation of both hands.

On February 16, 2022, Shahid Ali, a relative of the child, submitted an application to PESCO seeking compensation for her injuries and medical expenses. PESCO subsequently conducted an inquiry into the incident. The company maintained that the accident had resulted from an illegal electricity connection established through direct hooks rather than from the falling of its electricity line. **INP**

Sindh Assembly Committee yet to act against KE

A special committee of the Sindh Assembly formed to address unannounced power outages and faults in the electricity distribution system has yet to ensure the implementation of its directives against K-Electric, while consumers continue to face scheduled and unscheduled load-shedding across Karachi.

The committee had issued written directives to K-Electric's Chief Distribution Officer (CDO), warning that the utility had failed to provide satisfactory responses to its queries. The officer was cautioned that proceedings for breach of privilege could lead to imprisonment for up to six months and a fine.

In a letter dated October 6, the Sindh Assembly Secretariat sought a response from the concerned K-Electric official within three days. However, the reply had not been received by the time this report was filed. Senior Special Secretary of the Sindh Assembly Hassan Shah confirmed that the response from K-

Electric's Chief Distribution Officer was still awaited.

The committee had also decided to summon K-Electric's chief executive officer (CEO) or hold its next meeting at the utility's head office. However, it has yet to take a decision on either proposal.

At its meeting on September 23, the committee expressed strong displeasure over the

absence of K-Electric's CEO. The meeting witnessed a heated exchange, with tensions escalating to the point that the utility's representative was asked to leave. Following the strong reaction from committee members, the committee's chairman, Fayyaz Butt, directed that written directives be issued to K-Electric's Chief Distribution Officer.

However, the opposition, whose

members had strongly criticised K-Electric over persistent power outages during the meeting, reportedly took a different position when the committee sought a formal response from the utility's senior official.

Well-placed sources said that after the letter seeking a response within three days was issued, a request was made to withdraw it.

Opposition Leader Ali Khurshidi, speaking by telephone, said the matter of convening the committee's next meeting would be discussed.

He also said that load-shedding had increased in Karachi. Interestingly power outages had recently begun affecting areas previously considered exempt from load-shedding.

The delay in receiving K-Electric's response and the absence of a decision on the committee's next course of action have raised questions about the effectiveness of the assembly's oversight mechanism and its ability to secure relief for electricity consumers. **NEWS DESK**

SC report on judicial reforms, institutional innovation

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has released a comprehensive report titled "Journey Through Reform and Innovation 2026", documenting judicial and institutional reforms undertaken from November 2024 to September 2026.

The report highlights progress in judicial reforms, effective case management, reduction of the backlog, digital transformation, institutional accountability and measures to improve public access to justice.

It outlines progress on the implementation of an 86-point Judicial Reforms Action Plan, supported by a structured monitoring mechanism, specialised working groups and regular review processes to ensure effective implementation of reform initiatives.

According to the report, the Supreme Court has recorded a significant increase in case disposals, with particular attention given to the resolution of old and long-pending cases. It also highlights efforts to strengthen data-driven systems for monitoring judicial performance and evaluating institutional progress.

The report documents significant advances in expanding the Supreme Court's digital services and modernising judicial procedures. It also covers progress on nationwide judicial reforms undertaken under the National Judicial Policy Making Committee.

Key reform initiatives include the timely disposal of priority cases and the establishment of model trial courts. The report also highlights efforts to promote the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the justice system and develop judicial analytics systems.

Several measures have been introduced to facilitate litigants, simplify access to judicial services and improve public convenience, the report states. Initiatives aimed at promoting transparency, institutional coordination and public services are also part of the reform agenda.

The report further highlights the



expansion of the Supreme Court's international judicial cooperation and institutional engagement.

The reforms aim to make the justice system more efficient, accessible, transparent and responsive to public needs, according to the report.

"Journey Through Reform and Innovation 2026" serves as a comprehensive institutional record of progress in judicial reforms and measurable achievements, while also documenting ongoing initiatives aimed at further improving the justice system. **NEWS DESK**

NATIONAL

DTM

Punjab CM Maryam approves Rs 10 billion subsidy for flour



Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved a Rs10 billion subsidy to ensure the provision of affordable flour to the people and decided to increase the quota of subsidized

government wheat supplied to flour mills at Rs 3,800 per maund amid a rise in flour prices.

Taking serious notice of the increase in flour prices, the chief minister convened a special emergency meeting through video link on Saturday and directed the authorities concerned to ensure the availability of flour and wheat at affordable rates under all circumstances.

The meeting agreed to provide a Rs10 billion subsidy to ensure the supply of affordable flour, while a decision was also taken to increase the quota of subsidized government wheat being provided to flour mills at Rs3,800 per maund.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed concern over the trend of an artificial increase in wheat and flour prices in the market and directed the relevant departments to utilise all available resources to ensure the uninterrupted supply of flour at affordable rates.

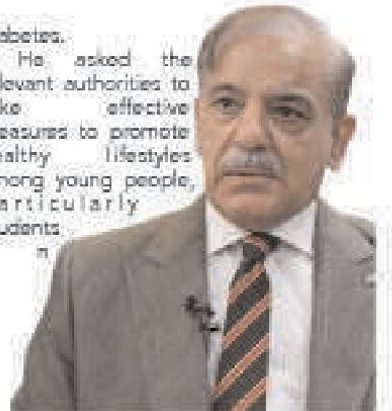
"The burden of inflation on the people of Punjab is extremely painful," the CM said, stressing that every possible measure would be taken to provide relief to the public.

The CM said that the provision of affordable flour and low-cost roti would continue and directed the authorities to ensure effective implementation of the decisions to protect the public from the impact of rising prices. **NEWS DESK**

PM calls for concerted efforts to curb diabetes

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday directed the formulation of a comprehensive and effective strategy to prevent diabetes in Pakistan.

diabetes. He asked the relevant authorities to take effective measures to promote healthy lifestyles among young people, particularly students in colleges and universities.



The prime minister emphasised the need to raise public awareness nationwide about balanced diets, regular physical activity and the adoption of healthy daily routines.

He underlined the need for dissemination of information on diabetes prevention, early diagnosis and healthy lifestyles through television, radio, digital platforms and other media channels.

He also stressed the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation to effectively address the growing challenge of diabetes.

The prime minister called for greater use of international experience, research and best practices to strengthen disease prevention efforts in the country. **NEWS DESK**

The prime minister said a clear policy and actionable planning, aligned with national priorities, were essential to preventing diabetes, directing the relevant institutions to develop a coordinated strategy focusing on research, public awareness and preventive measures.

The prime minister issued the directives during a meeting with a delegation of international and national medical experts specialising in endocrinology and diabetes treatment.

The delegation of medical experts is visiting Pakistan to participate in an endocrinology seminar.

The delegation comprised medical experts from various countries and was led by President of the International Society of Endocrinology Dr. Syed Abbas Raza.

The prime minister further said that along with treatment, special attention to disease prevention is essential to address the growing health challenge posed by

PIMS pledges painkillers for patients' woes

The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has launched a series of institutional reforms to improve patient care, modernize medical equipment, expand specialized treatment facilities and strengthen postgraduate medical education.

Executive Director PIMS Prof. Dr. Tanwir Khalid said the measures aimed to improve hospital operations, ensure the timely availability of medicines and surgical supplies, and promote transparent, merit-based recruitment and training across clinical and academic departments.

He said administrative procedures for the procurement of medicines and essential medical equipment had been streamlined, while pending files were processed to ensure uninterrupted supplies to inpatient wards and outpatient departments.

Surgical units were also being equipped with essential instruments, sutures and consumables to maintain smooth operations.

With the support of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, PIMS is upgrading outdated medical equipment in General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, Pulmonology and Renal Transplant Services, alongside improvements to the Dialysis Unit.

Tender documents for various safety and technical upgrades have advanced to the technical and financial evaluation stages, according to the hospital administration.

The institution is also planning to expand specialized postgraduate education through master's degree programmes in Breast Surgery, Colorectal Surgery, Hepatobiliary Surgery and Minimal Access Surgery under the Department of General Surgery, in affiliation with Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU).

Other initiatives include the establishment of a dedicated Department of Thoracic Surgery with specialized operating facilities, planning for an independent Emergency Medicine Department, and rehabilitation and expansion of the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centre to increase bed capacity and operating facilities.

PIMS is also developing proposals to introduce specialized services in Lifestyle Medicine, Endocrinology, Spine Surgery, Paediatric Cardiology and Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery.

To strengthen human resource capacity, 30 nursing professionals have completed international certification in nursing leadership, patient safety and clinical management.

The administration is also implementing the Federal Central Induction Policy through a specialized academic committee to ensure transparent, merit-based selection of postgraduate trainees, house officers and nursing personnel. **NEWS DESK**

Sindh governor, PA speaker discuss political situation



Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi called on Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan here on Saturday.

The meeting focused on the country's political situation,

national affairs and continuity of the democratic system.

The speaker emphasized that sustainable solutions to public problems were linked to an empowered parliament and strong democratic institutions.

He said the effective role of parliamentary institutions in national affairs, the supremacy of the Constitution and parliamentary autonomy were essential for strengthening democracy.

Speaker Khan said keeping the public informed about Assembly proceedings and the legislative process was among the Punjab Assembly's priorities.

He added that stronger coordination and the exchange of parliamentary experiences between provincial assemblies could further strengthen the democratic system.

Governor Nehal Hashmi appreciated the Punjab Assembly's

legislative process and parliamentary procedures.

He said interprovincial harmony and

cooperation among democratic institutions were vital for political stability.

He stressed that adherence to the Constitution and the law, along with prioritizing public welfare, was essential for effective public representation.

Special Assistant to the Punjab Chief Minister on Zakat and Ushr Rashid Nasrullah, MPA Rana Arshad and others were also present at the meeting. **NEWS DESK**

Rs 500m approved for Centre of Excellence Against Extremism

The Punjab government has approved Rs500 million as seed money for the Centre of Excellence Against Extremism to strengthen its efforts against extremism and promote peace, tolerance and social harmony, while encouraging innovative ideas among the youth.

The decision was taken at the fifth meeting of the Centre's Board of Governors, chaired by Provincial Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique at the Punjab Home Department here on Saturday.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of decisions taken at the Board's fourth meeting and endorsed the previous decisions. Officials presented a report on the Punjab Youth Innovation and Incubation Competition 2026, organised by the Centre to encourage creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives among young people.

The meeting was informed that 51 universities from across Punjab had presented 154 innovative projects in the competition. A technical evaluation committee comprising experts shortlisted 50 projects after a transparent assessment, providing young participants an opportunity to present their ideas.

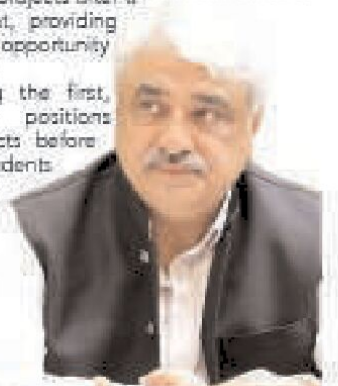
Students securing the first, second and third positions presented their projects before the Board. Female students from the University of Management and Technology (UMT) secured first position with a project aimed at reducing the cost and improving the quality of DNA testing.

Students from Fatima Jinnah Medical University won second position for their project to reduce the cost of cancer diagnosis and treatment, while a student from Superior University secured third position with an artificial intelligence (AI) model designed to control children's exposure to objectionable content on mobile phones.

The winning students will receive cash prizes of Rs1 million, Rs750,000 and Rs500,000 for first, second and third positions, respectively.

Addressing the meeting, Khawaja Salman Rafique said the Punjab government was committed to eliminating extremism and establishing a peaceful society. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, he added, collective efforts were being made to implement the National Action Plan.

He said the Centre of Excellence Against Extremism was working for social welfare and taking practical measures to address the challenges posed by extremism. He expressed confidence that the Punjab Youth Innovation and Incubation Competition 2026 would boost young people's confidence and encourage them to develop new business ideas. **NEWS DESK**



Mohsin Naqvi sets deadline for Margalla Road extension

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry visited the Margalla Road extension to the Motorway and Sangjani Interchange projects to review construction work and direct officials to complete both projects by December 31.

During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the progress of the ongoing

development work and instructed the concerned authorities to speed up construction and continue working in double shifts.

The interior minister said the completion of the projects would provide Islamabad residents with an alternative route to access the Motorway, improving connectivity for commuters. He directed the authorities to ensure that work on both projects was completed by December 31 under all circumstances. He also instructed the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad to remove all encroachments within one week.

Mohsin Naqvi said all obstacles delaying the completion of the projects must be removed immediately. He directed the relevant departments to maintain the pace of work and take the

necessary steps to meet the deadline.

During the visit, Capital Development Authority (CDA) officials briefed the interior minister on the progress of the projects and their key components.

According to the briefing, the Margalla Road-to-Sangjani Interchange project has a total length of 2.7 kilometres. The project includes one underpass and one interchange.

The authorities reviewed the development work being carried out at both sites and discussed measures to ensure timely completion.

The interior minister reiterated the need to remove all hurdles affecting construction and directed the concerned authorities to complete the projects within the stipulated timeframe. **NEWS DESK**

added that detailed meetings had been held with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and representatives of the business community to facilitate the transition to alternatives.

Plastic damages the environment whether it enters the soil, water or sewage system, or is burned and pollutes the air, he said, stressing the need to protect the environment for future generations.

He said plastic bags and other prohibited plastic products would no longer be allowed for business use in Islamabad after December 31, with exemptions only for medical equipment, medicines and plastic items used in hospitals.

The minister said the government wanted traders to comply voluntarily rather than resorting to strict enforcement. However, some businesses, including milk, yoghurt and meat shops, had been given a few additional days to arrange alternatives.

He added that government ministries in Islamabad had already stopped using plastic bags and similar products over the past several months, and the campaign would now be extended to every market, sector and commercial

centre.

The minister said substandard petroleum products and smuggled plastic shopping bags were among the sources contributing to environmental pollution. He said the government had written to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), requesting that seized products harmful to the environment be destroyed instead of being auctioned.

He added that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was cooperating with the initiative.

Talal Chaudhry said vehicle emission testing was mandatory in Islamabad and that around 60 per cent of vehicles had undergone the test so far. The government would ensure that all vehicles complied with the requirement, he added.

He said the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) had also been asked to ensure the sale of standard-quality fuel at all 147 petrol pumps in Islamabad. Petrol stations found selling substandard fuel would face action, including closure and cancellation of their leases, he warned. **NEWS DESK**

Islamabad to become plastic-free by December 31: Talal Chaudhry

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Saturday said that Islamabad will be made plastic-free by December 31, 2026, as the government steps up efforts to eliminate plastic bags and other plastic products to curb environmental pollution.

Addressing a press conference, he said the interior minister had given an assurance to the prime minister that the federal capital would be made plastic-free by the dead line. He urged traders, shopkeepers, industrialists, vendors and owners of roadside eateries to cooperate with the government in implementing the law.

Talal Chaudhry said the relevant law was enacted in 2023 and its implementation was now being ensured in letter and spirit. He



EDITORIAL



IMF reforms must protect Pakistan's poor

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand that Pakistan gradually phase out its petrol subsidy scheme is justified, but it also exposes the government's failure to build a fair and effective system of public support. Pakistan has reached a staff-level agreement with the Fund that could unlock around \$1.21 billion, subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board. While the agreement reflects progress in economic reforms, the country's dependence on external financing remains a cause for concern. The IMF has asked Islamabad to avoid expanding fuel subsidies beyond targeted beneficiaries and to withdraw the scheme gradually. This is a sensible demand. Blanket or poorly targeted subsidies can place a heavy burden on public finances and benefit people who do not need financial assistance. Yet the government must not use this argument to abandon struggling households. With nearly 45 per cent of the population reportedly living below the poverty line, millions of Pakistanis cannot easily absorb further increases in fuel and transport costs. The government must explain why so many citizens remain poor despite years of economic programmes, budget cuts and promises of reform. Ordinary people should not be forced to pay the price for weak policies and poor economic management.

The IMF has also called for reforms in the energy sector, including better recovery of outstanding payments, lower production costs and reduced losses in the gas sector. These changes are essential because inefficiency and financial mismanagement continue to weaken the economy. However, reforms must not remain limited to collecting more money from citizens or reducing government spending on relief. The government must improve tax collection, broaden the tax base, control wasteful expenditure and hold powerful interests accountable for avoiding their fair share of taxes. Any withdrawal of fuel subsidies should be gradual and supported by transparent, targeted assistance for low-income families. Eligibility criteria must be clear, and benefits must reach deserving households without political favouritism. Economic stability means little if its benefits do not reach the majority of citizens. The government cannot celebrate an agreement that promises fresh financing while ignoring the hardship experienced by millions.

Let KP be ruled by rule of law

Uncertainty over the possible imposition of Governor's Rule or an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is adding to an already tense political and security situation. The federal government has not made a final decision, but reports suggest that an emergency could be considered in 12 districts, including the merged tribal districts, if the provincial government fails to implement the National Action Plan effectively. The government must end this uncertainty through a clear public position based on the Constitution, evidence and the rule of law. Pakistan faces serious security challenges, particularly along the Pak-Afghan border, and the state has a responsibility to protect citizens from terrorism. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has cited thousands of terrorism incidents and hundreds of deaths over the past two years, while raising concerns about police capacity and counterterrorism arrangements in the province. These claims deserve serious examination, but allegations against the provincial government must be supported by evidence and subjected to proper scrutiny. Security concerns cannot become a justification for keeping an elected provincial government under the constant threat of extraordinary measures. Nor should political differences between Islamabad and Peshawar prevent the two sides from working together against terrorism.

The proposed PTI long march has added another dimension to the dispute, with federal authorities insisting that court orders governing protests in Islamabad must be followed. The right to peaceful protest is protected by the Constitution, but it must be exercised within the law and without endangering public safety. Equally, restrictions on demonstrations must be lawful, necessary and applied without political discrimination. Reports of an upcoming high-level meeting on October 10 to discuss security and implementation of the National Action Plan underline the urgency of coordinated action. The federal and provincial governments must use this opportunity to settle their differences, establish clear responsibilities and agree on measurable counterterrorism targets. If the KP government has failed in its duties, the failures should be demonstrated through credible evidence and addressed through constitutional procedures. If an emergency is being considered, its legal basis and necessity must be made clear.

The Colonial Foundations of Anti-Rohingya Xenophobia

This volatile atmosphere provided the perfect fertile ground for right-wing, ethno-nationalist groups like the Dobama Asaiyone ("We-Burmans Association") and radical figures like U Saw (Galon U Saw). Together, they systematically weaponized these economic grievances into violent anti-Indian and anti-Muslim riots throughout the 1930s.

Amid this widespread economic trauma, the Dobama Asaiyone was founded in Rangoon in 1930. Born in the volatile months following deadly racial clashes between native Burman and Indian dock workers, the association sought to overthrow British imperialism while simultaneously asserting Bamar cultural and political supremacy.

Contrary to the popular misconception that anti-Rohingya sentiment is a contemporary phenomenon, the roots of ethnic and religious xenophobia in Burma run exceptionally deep. While modern attention often focuses on post-colonial developments, exclusionary hostilities can be traced back to the imperial rulers of Myanmar since at least the 11th century, when King Anawrahta Minaw founded the Pagan Empire. A pivotal historical turning point occurred in 1784, when Burmese King Bodawpaya annexed the independent state of Arakan. This conquest resulted in the enslavement and forced deportation of tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to Mandalay, while triggering a massive exodus of indigenous Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists seeking refuge in the Chittagong district, then administered by the British East India Company.

This complex demographic landscape was fundamentally upended following the total British conquest of Burma in 1886 following the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Burmese War in November 1885. To consolidate the administration of the new province under the British Raj, the colonial government imported a vast apparatus of educated Indians and Bengalis. Trailing behind this administrative influx came British financial institutions and speculative capital, which paved the way for non-Burmese financial actors. Among them were Chettiers - a caste of Hindu moneylenders from the Tamil region - as well as Marwaris. Engaging in aggressive predatory lending, these usurers frequently seized the land and property of defaulting Burmese peasants. By the early 1930s, Chettiers controlled roughly a quarter of Burma's lower agricultural landmass. This extensive land loss and economic marginalization fostered intense, widespread resentment among the native population. Crucially, the indigenous population did not differentiate between predatory financiers and working-class South Asian immigrants; anyone possessing South Asian facial features became a target for xenophobia, drawing Tamil, Bengali, and the indigenous Muslims of Arakan into a singular, hated category.

This volatile atmosphere provided the perfect fertile ground for right-wing, ethno-nationalist groups like the Dobama Asaiyone ("We-Burmans Association") and radical figures like U Saw (Galon U Saw). Together, they systematically weaponized these economic grievances into violent anti-Indian and anti-Muslim riots throughout the 1930s. The outbreak of World War II pushed these tensions to a horrific climax. When Japanese forces advanced into Burma in 1942, the British administration hastily retreated, leaving behind generations of South Asian and Muslim communities who had built their lives in the country.

As radical Burmese nationalists aligned themselves with the fascist Japanese forces, these abandoned populations became the immediate targets of vicious pogroms. Even the indigenous Rohingyas of Arakan - widely targeted under the accusation of being pro-British collaborators - faced horrific violence executed with a definitive genocidal intent. The resulting fascist pogroms escalated into

the region's first major genocide, during which entire Rohingya-majority towns in southern Arakan were ethnically and religiously cleansed. This systematic violence forced the surviving Muslim populations to flee en masse to the north, creating a segregated demographic concentration bordering modern-day Bangladesh. It also triggered a narrowing mass exodus to India known as the "Long March," forcing hundreds of thousands of Bengalis and Indians to flee the country on foot before Burma finally achieved independence in 1948.

Economic Strife and the Rise of Dobama Asaiyone

To fully comprehend the rapid ascent of ethno-nationalism in the 1930s, one must examine how the socio-economic structure of colonial Burma buckled under global pressures. Following its annexation, Burma was tightly integrated into the global marketplace, primarily serving as the primary rice bowl of the British Empire. This economic machine relied heavily on the imported South Asian workforce to fill structural gaps. By the early 20th century, South Asian immigrants held a dominant position in urban labor markets, dock yards, financial networks, and the lower ranks of the civil bureaucracy in major hubs like Rangoon (Yangon).

When the Great Depression struck, global trade collapsed, and the crash of rice prices plunged the indigenous Burmese peasantry into immediate bankruptcy. Unable to service their debts to the Chettiar moneylenders, millions of native farmers suffered land dispossession. Displaced from their ancestral villages, native Burmans migrated to urban centers in search of basic livelihood, where they found themselves in direct, desperate competition with established South Asian laborers.

Amid this widespread economic trauma, the Dobama Asaiyone was founded in Rangoon in 1930. Born in the volatile months following deadly racial clashes between native Burman and Indian dock workers, the association sought to overthrow British imperialism while simultaneously asserting Bamar cultural and political supremacy. The organization popularized an uncompromising, ethno-centric slogan that left no room for minority inclusion: "Burma is our country; Burmese literature is our literature; Burmese language is our language."

Members adopted the title Thakin ("Master") as a psychological rebellion against British colonial rulers, signaling that the indigenous population alone should be masters of the land. While the Dobama Asaiyone contained various ideological factions - including leftist student radicals who would later lean toward socialism - its dominant right-wing elements capitalized heavily on popular survival anxieties. These right-wing factions systematically scapegoated the entire South Asian community, framing them not merely as tools of colonial exploitation, but as parasitic entities. This ideological pivot transformed a standard anti-colonial liberation struggle into an aggressive nativist campaign demanding the total political, social, and economic exclusion of non-indigenous populations.

Sri Lanka Is Home. But Does Everyone Feel at Home?

Despite all these challenges, a significant number of people - people like my father and me - have chosen to stay in Sri Lanka, let alone in Jaffna. We have refused to leave our "home". I have also found myself encouraging young Tamils to stay in Sri Lanka, or to come back after completing their higher studies, gaining some experience, or building a better life for themselves elsewhere. But sometimes I ask myself whether it is fair for me to make that request when I cannot honestly promise them that things will improve for them here.

"If you don't speak Sinhala, why are you in Sri Lanka?"

I was asked this by a Sinhalese passenger in a tuk-tuk that had collided with my car when I asked them to wait for the insurance agent, as my Sinhala is limited and I wanted to sort out the matter through him. My friend, a Sinhalese, who arrived at the scene shortly after the accident, confronted them firmly for making that comment.

But my friend didn't stop there. "Tamil is a national language too. Do you speak Tamil? If not, why are you in Sri Lanka?"

It was a simple question, but it stayed with me. Perhaps because it wasn't really a question about language. It was a question about whether, in their eyes, I belonged.

Many Tamil diaspora people do not identify themselves as Sri Lankans. For some first-generation members of the diaspora who left the country because of discrimination and violence in the 1980s, even the name "Sri Lanka" does not necessarily feel inclusive of the identity they associate with the country. Some still call it Ceylon, the name used during British colonial rule, perhaps because it feels less associated with the identity of one community. A sense of belonging can't be forced. It should be felt. To feel that I belong to a particular country or community, simply being born there, living there, or being related to members of that group isn't enough. A sense of belonging is nurtured by how we are treated, whether we are accepted, whether we are loved, and whether we feel safe. One could live in a country or community and still feel like an outsider. Likewise, someone who chooses to be away from, or is compelled to be away from, a particular community or country for whatever reason could still feel that they belong to that community.

When someone says, "I denounce a

particular identity," or "I identify as something else," rather than attacking that individual, we should start asking ourselves, "What have we done to make someone feel that they do not belong? What have we done to make them denounce that identity?"

When I go around the country, particularly to the South, sometimes I get asked, "But Tamils want a separate state." I always respond by saying, "Yes, that was the political demand at one point. But, as a country, have we ever stopped to think about why they wanted to separate from Sri Lanka in the first place?"

Nobody leaves a happy home unless there is an underlying reason - usually because they no longer feel at home. I remember learning that a friend's uncle, a renowned and wealthy dentist, was living in a rented house in Colombo. I asked my friend why he did not own a house in Colombo when he could easily afford more than one. My friend told me that he had lost everything during the 1983 Black July anti-Tamil pogrom. Since then, he had decided not to own anything in Sri Lanka.

So, if we are genuine about having an extended family living under the same roof - in Sri Lanka's case, every community living in an undivided country and proudly embracing a Sri Lankan identity - we need to ask ourselves, "Why are people compelled to leave?"

You cannot tell people to leave the

country or go to Tamil Nadu when they are Tamils, or to the deserts when they are Muslims, at every "opportunity" you get, and also expect us to identify ourselves with something you designed simply because you demand that we do so.

I have often seen young Tamils living in Sri Lanka exploring ways to leave the country. For some, Sri Lanka becomes a place to stay until they can find a way to leave for good. I have heard Tamil youth say, "If I'm going to be treated as a second-class citizen in my own country with no opportunities, I would rather live in a country that treats me as a second-class citizen, where at least there are opportunities."



AINGKARAN KUGATHASAN

Kugathasan Development professional specialising in digital democracy, governance and media

have gone on to build successful lives in countries far from where they came from. At the same time, some of those who remain here still feel that even basic opportunities can be harder to find.

Despite all these challenges, a significant number of people - people like my father and me - have chosen to stay in Sri Lanka, let alone in Jaffna. We have refused to leave our "home". I have also found myself encouraging young Tamils to stay in Sri Lanka, or to come back after completing their higher studies, gaining some experience, or building a better life for themselves elsewhere. But sometimes I ask myself whether it is fair for me to make that request when I cannot hon-

estly promise them that things will improve for them here.

I want them to stay. I want them to come back. But what can I honestly promise them? That they will have better opportunities? That they will feel more accepted? That they will not face the same questions and doubts about whether they belong?

I don't have those answers.

That is perhaps my own conflict. I still believe Sri Lanka is home. I have chosen to stay here, and I want the younger generation to have a reason to stay or come back. But I also understand why someone might look at their options and choose a different life elsewhere, call another place home, or identify themselves as something else.

That is why I think this needs to be a moment for reflection, rather than another blame game. Before attacking someone like Maitreyi for how she chooses to identify herself, perhaps we should stop and ask ourselves why someone might feel that way. What have we done, or failed to do, that has made someone feel that they do not belong?

Because I can tell you one thing. Attacking Maitreyi for being honest about how she feels is not going to make anyone feel more connected to Sri Lanka.

If we genuinely want people to see Sri Lanka as home, perhaps the first thing we need to do is make them feel at home. occurred in 1784, when Burmese King Bodawpaya annexed the independent state of Arakan. This conquest resulted in the enslavement and forced deportation of tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to Mandalay, while triggering a massive exodus of indigenous Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists seeking refuge in the Chittagong district, then administered by the British East India Company.

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lowing the total British conquest of Burma in 1886 following the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Burmese War in November 1885. To consolidate the administration of the new province under the British Raj, the colonial government imported a vast apparatus of educated Indians and Bengalis. Trailing behind this administrative influx came British financial institutions and speculative capital, which paved the way for non-Burmese financial actors. Among them were Chettiers - a caste of Hindu moneylenders from the Tamil region - as well as Marwaris. Engaging in aggressive predatory lending, these usurers frequently seized the land and property of defaulting Burmese peasants. By the early 1930s, Chettiers controlled roughly a quarter of Burma's lower agricultural landmass. This extensive land loss and economic marginalization fostered intense, widespread resentment among the native population. Crucially, the indigenous population did not differentiate between predatory financiers and working-class South Asian immigrants; anyone possessing South Asian facial features became a target for xenophobia, drawing Tamil, Bengali, and the indigenous Muslims of Arakan into a singular, hated category.

This volatile atmosphere provided the perfect fertile ground for right-wing, ethno-nationalist groups like the Dobama Asaiyone ("We-Burmans Association") and radical figures like U Saw (Galon U Saw). Together, they systematically weaponized these economic grievances into violent anti-Indian and anti-Muslim riots throughout the 1930s. The outbreak of World War II pushed these tensions to a horrific climax. When Japanese forces advanced into Burma in 1942, the British administration hastily retreated, leaving behind generations of South Asian and Muslim communities who had built their lives in the country.

OPINION

DTM



JHELUM VALLEY: Villagers cut grass on a mountainside in Nandar village, Lapsa Valley. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Respect privacy when filming in public

I am writing to highlight a growing concern about people recording videos in public places and posting them on TikTok and other social media platforms without obtaining the permission of those being filmed. Recently, a video showing people eating in a restaurant went viral, exposing them online without their consent.

Women, children and families can appear in such videos without knowing they are being recorded. This can violate their privacy and make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Not everyone wants their personal moments shared publicly, and the consequences can sometimes be serious.

I urge the government and relevant authorities to address this issue. Notices should be displayed in parks, markets, restaurants and other public places, reminding people to respect others' privacy and avoid filming them without consent. Public spaces should remain welcoming and comfortable for everyone.

SAEEDA DEEDAR ALI
Hub

Urgent action needed to address water shortage in Ziarat Sar

I am writing to highlight the serious shortage of water faced by the people of Ziarat Sar, a village in Kach district, Balochistan. Water is essential for drinking, cooking, cleaning, farming and raising livestock, yet many residents struggle to obtain enough clean water for their daily needs. The shortage has made life increasingly difficult for local families.

Women and children often spend considerable time collecting water from distant sources. This burden can affect children's education and leave women with less time for other responsibilities. The shortage also harms agriculture and livestock, threatening the livelihoods of families who depend on crops and animals for income. Limited water supply infrastructure and the poor maintenance of existing facilities can make the situation worse.

The government and relevant authorities should take practical steps to improve access to safe water. These should include repairing existing wells, developing reliable water sources, installing storage tanks and extending pipelines where needed. Rainwater harvesting could also help communities store water for dry periods. Local residents should be involved in managing water resources, and awareness programmes should encourage careful use of available supplies.

Access to clean and sufficient water is a basic necessity, not a luxury. The authorities must treat the shortage in Ziarat Sar as an urgent issue and provide a sustainable solution. With proper planning, investment and community participation, the quality of life, health and economic security of local residents can improve.

YASEEN SHAD

Women need safety, justice and accountability

I am writing to draw attention to the continuing violence and harassment faced by women in Pakistan. Many women feel unsafe walking alone or using transport because they fear kidnapping, assault and other forms of violence. Women who reject unwanted attention or set personal boundaries may face threats or retaliation, including acid attacks. Some also suffer domestic violence or abuse by relatives who claim to be defending family honour.

Women and girls from all backgrounds can become victims, yet public discussion too often turns to blaming them for their clothing, choices or behaviour instead of holding perpetrators responsible. Alongside physical violence, digital harassment, deepfakes and online blackmail can cause severe emotional distress. Many cases remain unreported because victims fear stigma, pressure or disbelief.

The government must ensure that laws protecting women are properly enforced and that investigations are timely, fair and effective. Police, educational institutions, workplaces and other relevant bodies must be held accountable for failing to protect people in their care. Public awareness campaigns should challenge victim-blaming and make clear that responsibility lies with the offender. Women deserve to live, study, work and travel without fear, and their safety must be treated as a basic right.

SAMEEN QAZI

Pakistan needs a cleaner waste-management system

I am writing to draw the attention of the authorities to the growing problem of garbage and poor waste management in Pakistan. In many neighbourhoods, roads near homes, schools and markets are covered with rubbish. Dustbins overflow, garbage collection is irregular, and plastic waste is left blowing through the streets. The problem is especially visible in large cities, including Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. Uncollected waste makes streets dirty and unpleasant, blocks drains during rain and attracts mosquitoes, rats and other pests that can spread disease. Dumping rubbish near rivers and other water sources also causes pollution. In areas such as Lyari in Karachi, residents continue to face serious problems caused by waste left in public places. A shortage of bins and irregular collection make matters worse, while careless littering adds to the burden.

The government and local authorities should ensure regular collection, provide enough bins and improve the safe disposal and recycling of waste. Schools should teach children not to litter, while public campaigns should encourage residents to keep their neighbourhoods clean. Citizens also have a responsibility to dispose of rubbish properly and reduce unnecessary plastic use.

DURHAM

Taliban's Selective Counterterrorism Is Exporting Insecurity

Taliban authorities reject many of Islamabad's accusations. Yet continuing international reporting on TTP's presence has made the issue increasingly difficult to dismiss as a purely Pakistani domestic security problem. A militant-sanctuary dispute has gradually evolved into a state-to-state security confrontation. TTP is now not only a counterterrorism challenge but an important driver of deteriorating Afghanistan-Pakistan relations.

Groups with different enemies and agendas can coexist, exchange expertise and develop transnational connections. An organization focused on one neighboring state today may become part of a wider network tomorrow. That ecosystem is what makes Afghanistan's security environment more consequential than the capabilities of any individual militant group.



SAIMA AFZAL

Saima Afzal is a Geopolitical and Security Analyst and an Independent Researcher

Five years after returning to power, the Taliban controls Afghanistan more firmly than many expected. Yet territorial control has not translated into the elimination of militant networks operating from Afghan soil.

That contradiction is becoming one of the region's most consequential security problems.

A September 2026 Atlantic Council assessment described the Taliban's inability to deter or prevent terrorist groups from operating inside Afghanistan as the largest counterterrorism challenge facing Central Asia. United Nations monitoring has similarly documented the continued presence of Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), al-Qaeda, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement/Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), Jamaat Ansarullah and other armed groups.

The issue is not that the Taliban refuses to fight terrorism altogether. Its counterterrorism is selective. The Taliban has aggressively targeted organizations that directly challenge its authority, particularly IS-K, while maintaining relationships with, tolerating or failing to constrain other groups whose principal targets lie beyond Afghanistan. The result is a dangerous paradox: stronger regime security inside Afghanistan can coexist with worsening insecurity outside it.

The Taliban's selective counterterrorism model

The Taliban's campaign against IS-K has produced tangible results. UN assessments acknowledge that sustained pressure has reduced the group's freedom of movement and pushed it toward smaller cells rather than allowing it to openly challenge Taliban territorial control.

But Kabul's relationship with other militant organizations is markedly different.

UN monitoring has continued to report ties between the Taliban and al-Qaeda, including contacts involving training, logistical assistance and ideological cooperation. International assessments have also placed TTP strength in Afghanistan in the thousands and repeatedly documented fighters and senior figures in provinces close to Pakistan.

That distinction matters. A government can suppress one terrorist organization while allowing an enabling environment to persist for others. Counterterrorism cannot be judged solely by how effectively the Taliban fights IS-K, if organizations with regional or international agendas continue to find sanctuary, relationships or operational space.

Al-Qaeda today is far weaker than it was before September 11, 2001, and most Afghanistan-based militant organizations lack its former global reach. But sanctuary matters because it buys time: time to recruit, rebuild leadership structures, establish partnerships and develop external capabilities.

The strategic danger lies not only in what these organizations can do today, but in what a permissive environment may allow them to become. The Taliban's approach is therefore better understood as selective threat management rather than comprehensive counterterrorism. The emerging pattern suggests that groups threatening Taliban rule are treated as enemies, while organizations whose principal targets lie outside Afghanistan can face a markedly different strategic calculation.

Pakistan and Central Asia face the consequences.

Pakistan is already experiencing the most immediate consequences.

TTP has become one of the central

sources of tension between Islamabad and Kabul. International monitoring has repeatedly documented TTP fighters and leaders operating from Afghanistan, while Pakistan argues that Afghan territory is being used to plan, facilitate or sustain attacks across the border.

Taliban authorities reject many of Islamabad's accusations. Yet continuing international reporting on TTP's presence has made the issue increasingly difficult to dismiss as a purely Pakistani domestic security problem. A militant-sanctuary dispute

has gradually evolved into a state-to-state security confrontation. TTP is now not only a counterterrorism challenge but an important driver of deteriorating Afghanistan-Pakistan relations.

Central Asia faces a different but increasingly internationalized threat.

IS-K has recruited Central Asian nationals, particularly Tajiks, and international monitoring has described Afghanistan as an important center for recruitment and facilitation. Some recruits have travelled to Afghanistan for training, while networks associated

with IS-K have been linked to attacks or plots extending far beyond South Asia. Atlantic Council assessments have highlighted cases involving Tajik IS-K recruits in Europe, the Philippines and the United States, underscoring how Afghanistan-linked militant networks can acquire an international dimension.

ETIM/TIP adds another layer. UN assessments have documented its presence in Afghanistan and relationships with TTP, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Jamaat Ansarullah. These connections matter because militant organizations do not need identical objectives to benefit from shared sanctuary, personnel, training infrastructure or logistical networks.

For Pakistan, Central Asia and China, the strategic danger lies not in any single organization but in the militant ecosystem itself.

Groups with different enemies and agendas can coexist, exchange expertise and develop transnational connections. An organization focused on one neighboring state today may become part of a wider network tomorrow. That ecosystem is what makes Afghanistan's security environment more consequential than the capabilities of any individual militant group.

Afghanistan's terrorism problem does not stop at its borders.

The Taliban frequently presents the restoration of territorial control as proof that Afghanistan is secure.

That argument confuses regime security with regional security.

The Taliban may face no serious conventional threat to its control of the country, but that does not mean militant networks operating under, beside or against its authority have disappeared. International monitoring has repeatedly challenged Taliban denials regarding the presence of several armed organizations.

IS-K demonstrates the external danger most clearly.

Despite sustained Taliban pressure, the organization has retained cross-border recruitment networks and aspirations for external operations. International assessments have previously identified facilitation routes linking Afghanistan and Central Asia with Turkey and Europe. This does not mean Afghanistan has already returned to its pre-9/11 role as the center of global jihadist plotting. Such a conclusion would overstate both the current capabilities of militant organizations and the freedom they enjoy.

Nobel Peace Prize Turns Toward Peace in 2026

Pillay has been a prominent advocate for the rule of law in place of the rule of mass killing, and her work has been cited by advocates for peace in Palestine and for the elimination of weaponized drones. To have finally acknowledged someone whose work in any way addressed the horrors of Zionism is an encouraging sign from the Nobel Committee. Is Pillay "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses," as required by the will of Alfred Nobel? The idea is not, as in most years, ridiculous.

The Nobel Peace Prize has just been awarded to Navi Pillay who is not, like last year's laureate, pleading for the world's largest military to attack her country. Nor is she, in the manner of various past laureates, waging war. Nor is she, like various past recipients, an admirable humanitarian working in a field unrelated to war. In fact, Navi Pillay has long been recognized as advancing the cause of peace. In 2025 she was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize in Australia. The foundation awarding that prize said:

"Judge Pillay has played a critical role in holding the tide against the global rise in impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity, advocating for accountability, the rule of law, and the protection of human dignity - from South Africa to Sri Lanka, Rwanda to Myanmar, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She has worked for justice at the centre point of some of humanity's most brutal conflicts. Upon accepting the 2025 Sydney Peace Prize nomination, Navi Pillay stated: 'This award is not mine alone. It belongs to all those who, across decades and continents, have stood up against injustice - often at great personal cost. It belongs to every survivor who found the courage to testify, to every human rights defender who remains steadfast in the face of threats and hostility, and to every young person who dares to believe in a better, more just world.'"

Pillay has been a prominent advocate for the rule of law in place of the rule of mass killing, and her work has been cited by advocates for peace in Palestine and for the elimination of weaponized drones. To have finally acknowledged someone

whose work in any way addressed the horrors of Zionism is an encouraging sign from the Nobel Committee. Is Pillay "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses," as required by the will of Alfred Nobel? The idea is not, as in most years, ridiculous. In this year's leadup, there were even non-satirical commentators pushing for Donald Trump to get the prize for his war on Iran.

This is the second time in three years that the prize has gone to someone worthy. In 2024 as well, the prize was actually related to peace. The Nobel Committee has frequently given the peace prize to major war makers, and frequently to dogooders whose work in a variety of fields has been unrelated to abolishing war. It has also often given the prize to opponents and victims of the targets of Western empire. But it has never given the prize to open advocates of war and fascist government. Trump was never going to be given the prize directly. Last year's awarding of a peace prize to someone asking Trump to attack her country was clearly an attempt to do the closest thing possible to giving Trump the prize himself.

Most winners in recent years have either been people who did nice things that had nothing whatsoever to do with the relevant work (Kalash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai for promoting education, Liu Xiaobo for protesting in China, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Al bert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr. for opposing climate change, Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank for economic

development, etc.) or people who actually engaged in militarism and would have opposed the abolition or reduction of standing armies if asked, and one of whom said so in his acceptance speech (the European Union, Barack Obama, etc.). Of course, Henry Kissinger is remembered as a Nobel Peace laureate, while Gandhi never measured up.

The Nobel Committee outraged Trump because it gave the prize to U.S. President Barack Obama who, after delivering the only pro-war Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech ever, went to Hiroshima and told everyone there, including the survivors of the nuclear bombs who would later get the prize, that nuclear weapons would not be eliminated in his lifetime. He then proceeded to peddle familiar pro-war myths.

Three years ago the Nobel Committee awarded a peace prize that had Iran in the role of Venezuela. Since then, we have seen Iran bombed and threatened by the upholders of Western civilization. It would not have been surprising for this year's award to have gone to some victim of the government of Cuba or Russia, China or North Korea, Greenland or perhaps the moon - some new target of the Pentagon. For the award to have gone instead to someone who has held up the rule of law in opposition to war and genocide is a huge step forward. Will this serve to direct future Nobel Peace Prizes further toward peace, to the point where someday they are being awarded to those advocating for the abolition of war? Or will it just keep the prize respectable as it is periodically used to advance the cause of imperialism? Time will tell. The prizes that have brought us to this point have been a very mixed bag. In 2022, with its eyes on the news of the day, there was no question that the Committee would find some way to focus on Ukraine. But it steered clear of anyone seeking to reduce the risk of the at-the-time relatively minor war escalating or creating a nuclear apocalypse. It avoided anyone opposing both sides of the war, or anyone advocating for a ceasefire or negotia-

tions or disarmament. It did not even make the choice one might have expected of picking an opponent of Russian warmaking in Russia and an opponent of Ukrainian warmaking in Ukraine. Instead, the Nobel Committee chose advocates for human rights and democracy in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. But the group in Ukraine was recognized for having "engaged in efforts to identify and document Russian war crimes against the Ukrainian civilian population," with no mention of war as a crime or of the possibility that the Ukrainian side of the war was committing atrocities. The Nobel Committee may have learned from Amnesty International's experience of being widely denounced for documenting war crimes by the Ukrainian side.

In 2021 the prize went to advocates for human rights in Russia and in the Philippines. In 2020 the prize went to the World Food Programme. In 2019 the prize went to the President of Ethiopia and claimed some relationship to peace as he had been part of a peace agreement. But he was a president and commander of a military and not in any need of funding or support. He had engaged in all sorts of violence and human rights abuses, so that an advocate for human rights in his country could be given the prize if the U.S. government's relationship to that country changes.

The 2018 prize did not go after war itself, but did go after sexual violence in wars. Not bad, relatively speaking. The 2013 prize went after chemical weapons. But stretching back through the years, we see a common practice of most often awarding a peace prize to either actual warmakers or to advocates for good causes that are not peace, as well as the practice of using the prize for Western political purposes that are hostile to peace. Although virtually every topic can be tangentially connected to war and peace, the avoidance of actual peace activism intentionally misses the point of the prize's creation by Alfred Nobel and the influence of Bertha von Suttner.

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CPEC 2.0 to boost industry, regional connectivity: Ahsan

Pakistan and China share a relationship that rests on mutual trust, respect for each other's core interests and a shared conviction that development and cooperation are foundations for peace and prosperity. Our "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership" occupies a special place not only in the foreign policies of our countries, but also in the hearts of our peoples.

These views were expressed by Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal in an article published by China Daily here.

He said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the most visible economic expression of this relationship and an important pioneering project of China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. Over the past decade, CPEC has translated strategic trust into power plants, transmission lines, highways, ports, jobs and economic connectivity. It has demonstrated that the Pakistan-China friendship is a partnership capable of delivering tangible development.

Having been associated with CPEC since its inception in 2013, my most important lesson is simple: CPEC's strength does not lie in any single project. It lies in the ability of Pakistan and China to think long term, align their complementary strengths and find practical solutions together in the spirit of iron brotherhood, he added.

Ahsan Iqbal said that CPEC is now entering a more ambitious phase and added,

CPEC 2.0 marks a transition from infrastructure development to industrial partnership; from predominantly government-led projects to business-to-business cooperation; and from bilateral connectivity to regional and global value chains.

CPEC 2.0 does not begin from zero. Its first phase delivered substantial gains. Forty-three projects worth approximately \$25 billion have been completed. Seventeen energy projects added around 8,900 megawatts to Pakistan's power-generation capacity, alongside two coal mines and the landmark Matiari-Lahore high-voltage transmission line. Major transport projects improved connectivity, while approximately 200,000 direct jobs were created for Pakistan.

The minister remarked that for a country facing severe electricity shortages and infrastructure deficits in 2013, China came forward as a true friend. Electricity enabled factories to operate and transport links opened new possibilities for investment.

The defining feature of the new phase is the fusion of CPEC 2.0 with URAAN Pakistan, or Rise Pakistan, our national transformation framework whose priorities align naturally with CPEC's five corridors of growth, innovation, green development, livelihoods, and openness and regional connectivity. **NEWS DESK**

Long marches won't solve KP's problems, says Amir Muqam

Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Engr Amir Muqam on Saturday claimed that the negative rhetoric and politics of confrontation pursued by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi had paralysed the province, while the people were facing mounting problems on multiple fronts.

Addressing a large public gathering at Shah Alam here, he said the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had deteriorated considerably during the past two and a half months, alleging that the PTI government had remained focused on political agitation instead of addressing issues confronting the people.

"The problems of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have increased manifold, and these problems cannot be resolved through long or short marches," he said, adding that the province required good governance, effective implementation of laws and regulations, and a clear focus on

public welfare.

Engr Muqam said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was already facing the formidable challenge of terrorism and insecurity, but the leadership of PTI was concentrating its energies on what he described as an aimless long march.

He claimed that the march had failed to attract the public support expected by its organizers and said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wanted peace, stability, employment, development and improved public services rather than political confrontation.

The federal minister claimed that Chief Minister Afridi had left the province at a critical juncture by undertaking visits to Karachi and Lahore while the province was facing serious security and governance challenges.

He also criticised what he described as an appeal for donations for political activities and said public resources and political attention should instead be directed towards solving the people's problems.

Engr Muqam said terrorism and the politics of long marches could not move together, stressing that the provincial government should prioritise the protection of citizens and strengthening institutions rather than agitation.

He claimed that the days of the incumbent provincial government were numbered because, according to him, it had failed to effectively address the growing threat of terrorism and other governance challenges.

"Politics based on hollow

slogans and allegations cannot take the province forward," he said, adding that the people were demanding practical measures for peace, development, jobs, education, healthcare and economic opportunities.

The federal minister also accused the provincial leadership of attempting to use ethnic sentiments to mobilise people for the long march.

He said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to Pakistan and rejected what he termed the politics of ethnic division.

"Our politics is linked with Pakistan," he said, adding that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had rendered enormous sacrifices for the country and would not allow anyone to weaken national unity.

Engr Muqam said that the PTI provincial government had failed to deliver on key fronts, including governance, development and the maintenance of peace, and urged the people to judge political parties on the basis of their performance rather than slogans.

He paid tribute to the security forces for their sacrifices in the fight

against terrorism and said the sacrifices of soldiers and law-enforcement personnel would not go in vain.

"The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand shoulder to shoulder with the brave security forces of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism and are ready to render every sacrifice for their motherland," he said.

The gathering echoed with full-throated slogans in favour of Prime Minister Muhammad Sherbaz Sharif, PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir. Participants also chanted slogans of "Go PTI Go."

Later, Engr Amir Muqam led a large peace rally, which was attended by a large number of people. **NEWS DESK**



Minister challenges PTI to explain performance in tribal districts

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Saturday asked Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders to explain their performance to the people of the tribal districts.

In a post on X, he said protests in the name of peace would not solve the problems.

He said serious planning, strong institutions and practical steps were needed to address the challenges.

He said the tribal people had made great sacrifices and now wanted a secure future for their children. They should not be made to suffer for political interests, he added.

Despite PTI's long rule in the province, many basic questions remained unanswered, the minister said.

He asked how much the police system had improved in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) since their merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He also questioned what steps had been taken to establish effective institutions to fight terrorism.

He asked whether the capacity of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) had been increased, more police stations had been established, and modern surveillance systems introduced.

He also questioned what had been done to create jobs for young people.

The minister said the tribal districts still lacked modern hospitals, higher education institutions and development projects.

He said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were facing a serious law and order situation.

The sacrifices of police personnel and security forces, terrorist attacks and the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens required practical decisions beyond political differences, he added.

The Minister said people needed measures that improved their lives rather than slogans and rallies.

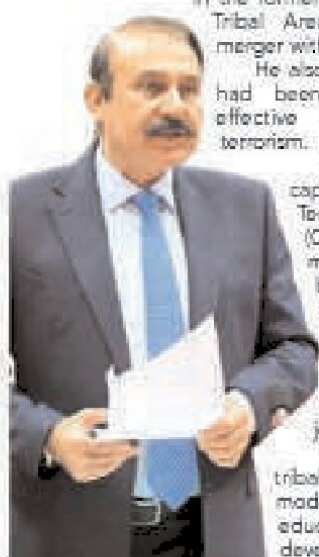
He said the people of the tribal areas were brave, dignified and patriotic, and should not have to wait any longer for their rights, education, jobs and basic facilities.

He said young people in the tribal districts had great potential and should be given opportunities to support their families and contribute to national development.

The minister said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had worked on projects such as FATA University and four cadet colleges during its tenure.

He said the party would continue to prioritise higher education, model schools, modern healthcare facilities, sports centres and employment opportunities in the tribal districts. "Our aim is to open new avenues of development in every district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, create business opportunities for young people, increase investment and bring the tribal areas further into the national development mainstream," he said.

Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the federal and provincial governments would have to work together, ensure a fair distribution of resources and adopt effective strategies to achieve these goals. **NEWS DESK**



PM takes notice of student's death in admission scam

A student of the International Islamic University Islamabad, Laiba Ijaz, allegedly died by suicide after finding out that the documents provided by an agent for admission to a US university were fake, police said on Saturday.

The victim's body was reportedly found hanging by the roadside in Islamabad's G-10 sector, in the jurisdiction of Ramna police station.

According to police, the victim was distressed after discovering that the documents provided by the agent were fraudulent.

Laiba's family revealed that she had completed her BS degree from the International Islamic University with a gold medal and wanted to pursue further studies abroad.

The family further said that an immigration consultant had demanded Rs7 million to secure her admission to a US university.

Laiba's father, who lived with his family in a rented flat and sold milk on a motorcycle, sold his plot and paid Rs2.1 million in cash to the agent, they added. The family said Laiba's mother's jewellery was also deposited with a bank to arrange the remaining amount.

They said when Laiba had the admission documents checked, she



discovered that all of them were fake.

She sent a final message to her maternal uncle, saying that "Do not tell my father about the fraud committed against me. He will die."

Police have expanded the scope of their investigation and are examining the case from different angles. They said they had yet to receive Laiba's post-mortem report, adding that the actual cause of death would be determined after the report was received.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken notice of the alleged suicide of Laiba, describing the incident as extremely tragic, the PM's Office said.

The premier directed the Islamabad IGP and chief commissioner to immediately arrest the suspect accused of defrauding the student. He said the suspect would be given exemplary punishment in accordance with the law.

The FIA director general was working on the case, while the FIA director had also met the victim's

parents, he added. The minister said those involved in the incident would be brought to justice.

The probe agency has launched an initial inquiry into the alleged suicide of Laiba, FIA Director Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari said.

Describing the matter as serious, Bukhari said a case would be registered after the inquiry.

He said the suspect allegedly defrauded Laiba of Rs7.2 million on the pretext of securing her admission to a university abroad and also took Rs500,000 from her brother on the promise of arranging a job.

According to the FIA director, the suspect would pose as an employee of the Supreme Court or an officer of a government institution.

Bukhari said Laiba had planned to surprise her family on October 12 with news of her admission to Harvard University. However, two days earlier, she had the university registration certificate checked and discovered that it was fake, he added. **NEWS DESK**

Punjab govt approves cancer hospital in DG Khan

The Punjab government on Saturday approved the establishment of the Kulsoom Nawaz Cancer Hospital in Dera Ghazi Khan, with the project estimated to cost more than Rs 8.7 billion.

According to official documents, the project has been scheduled for completion by June 30, 2029. The provincial government moves to expand cancer treatment facilities and improve access to specialised healthcare. The approved project includes a capital component of more than Rs3.12 billion and a revenue component exceeding Rs5.58 billion.

The hospital is expected to provide modern and quality medical facilities to cancer patients in Dera Ghazi Khan and surrounding areas, reducing the need for patients to travel to other cities for specialised treatment.

Punjab is planning to further expand its cancer care services following the establishment of the facility in Dera Ghazi Khan, according to the provincial health department. Meanwhile, work is also underway on the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research in Lahore, Secretary Health Azmat Mahmood said. The project marks another step in the provincial government's efforts to strengthen specialised healthcare infrastructure and improve access to cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Health Department decided to establish a transparent, merit-based system for house jobs and postgraduate training for foreign medical graduates.

In this regard, the department has constituted a nine-member committee comprising vice-chancellors of medical universities in Punjab and principals of medical colleges.

The committee will review the existing procedures for house jobs and postgraduate training for foreign medical graduates, with a particular focus on ensuring merit, transparency and uniformity in the induction process. It will also examine the mechanisms for verifying medical degrees, registration, licences and eligibility criteria for foreign medical graduates. **NEWS DESK**

37 held as NCCIA busts illegal call center in Lahore

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), Lahore, has arrested 37 suspects for their alleged involvement in an illegal call center operating in Johar Town and targeting citizens of the United States and Canada through a fraudulent mobile phone sales scheme.

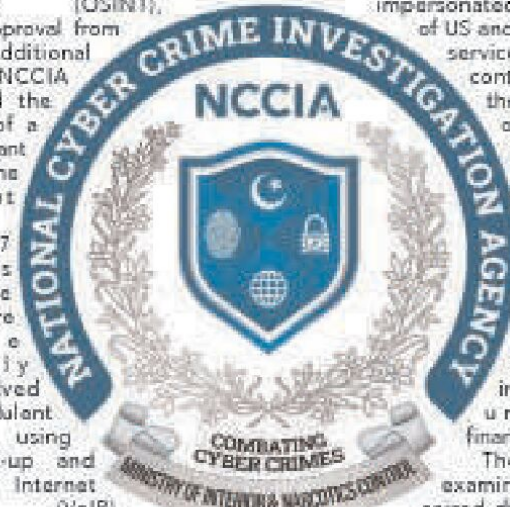
During the raid, the agency seized 80 digital devices, including five CPUs, 40 laptops, and 35 mobile phones, for forensic examination and collection of further evidence.

According to a NCCIA spokesperson, the raid was conducted at Plot No. 103, Block F, Johar Town Phase-I, on the basis of information

obtained through Open-Source that the suspects allegedly

impersonated representatives of US and Canadian mobile service providers and contacted citizens of the two countries by offering mobile phones for sale. They allegedly obtained customers' credit and debit card details under this pretext and subsequently used the information for unauthorized financial transactions.

The initial examination of the seized digital devices also revealed relevant dial-up software and data allegedly linked to



the fraudulent activities. The devices were taken into custody and sealed in accordance with the prescribed procedure for further forensic analysis.

The spokesperson said that the call centre was reportedly owned by Hafiz Ali Ahmad, son of Shahbaz Ahmad, who was not present at the premises during the raid.

A case, FIR No. 241/2026, was registered on October 10, 2026, under relevant provisions of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, and the Pakistan Penal Code. The investigation has been assigned to Sub-Inspector Mohsin Razaq.

The NCCIA spokesperson said further investigation was under way to establish the individual roles of the suspects, determine the extent of the alleged financial fraud targeting citizens of the United States and Canada, and analyse the digital evidence recovered during the operation. **NEWS DESK**

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Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Saturday criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s leadership for bad governance and the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the past 13 years.

He said this addressing a news conference along with Prime Minister's Coordinator Ikhlaq Wali Khan and MPA Jalal Khan in Islamabad. Tarar also alleged that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)'s 'B team' and they do not condemn terrorists. The information minister said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was once a cradle of peace and pride for the nation, but the current provincial government has pushed the region into the Stone Age, depriving citizens of basic facilities and developmental opportunities. The minister pointed out that Rs700 billion were given to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for counter-terrorism under NFC Award, but the provincial government failed to strengthen the

Tarar accuses PTI of neglecting governance, security in KP

Calls PTI 'B team' of TTP, blames it for 'bad governance' in KP

security institutions such as the Counter-Terrorism Department, police force, and forensic laboratories. "No safe-city cameras have been installed in the erstwhile tribal districts," he said. Speaking on the occasion, Coordinator to PM Wali said corruption is on the rise across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Public funds have been used for political and social media campaigns," he said, adding that over the past 13 years, the provincial government had failed to establish a single university or provide basic civic amenities to the masses. Wali said the healthcare system in the province is in bad condition, while police personnel are forced to confront terrorists without having modern equipment. He said the development of erstwhile tribal districts remained severely neglected and provincial government has pushed public toward destruction under the guise of so-called revolution. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly MPA Jalal said the PTI's leadership failed to play a constructive role in countering terrorism in the province. He said an anarchic group has been ruling Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the past 13 years. Jalal expressed his resolve to rescue the province and its citizens from rampant corruption and administrative failure of the PTI leadership.

Ikhlaq Wali castigates PTI

Addressing the same press conference, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Information for KP Affairs Ikhlaq Wali Khan also

questioned the lack of development in the province. "Universities are shutting down because there are no vice chancellors there. Eighteen out of 34 universities in KP are on the verge of bankruptcy," he said. Wali said that people complained about the lack of good roads in Karachi. "But when people of KP go to Karachi, they say that Karachi's roads are much better than KP." Calling on the people and journalists in KP, Wali urged them to talk about the "ground realities", claiming that the people were crying over the existing health facilities in the province. He referred to the KP police as the shuhada force, alleging that the provincial government had left them unarmed. He alleged that the PTI government had seized the money allocated to fund the CTD to combat terrorism. Wali also accused KP ministers of corruption and bad governance in the province. "The people of KP need peace, health facilities and a political culture based on tolerance, acceptance and respect," he said. The PML-N-led federal government and the KP government led by PTI - which is in opposition in the Centre - have been at odds over various issues, particularly on the counterterrorism policy. This was also a key reason behind the breakdown of the Oct 3 talks between them. The PTI has said it was being left out of security decisions concerning KP, which the Centre has denied. It also calls for reviewing the counterterrorism policy, while the latter criticises the KP government's efforts to combat terrorism in the province and objects to its stance on dialogue with the Afghan Taliban. **NEWS DESK**

Islamabad IT Park renamed Daanish IT Park as PM inaugurates facility



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formally inaugurated the newly renamed Daanish IT Park (National Technology Park) on Saturday, hailing the country's first national technology facility as a crucial milestone for Pakistan's rapid economic progress and prosperity.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the prime minister emphasized that the state-of-the-art facility brings incubation centres, innovation hubs, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), startups, and industry leaders together under one roof. He expressed strong optimism that the tech park would empower Pakistan's youth and play a pivotal role in steering the nation toward becoming a developed country. He said that once the technology park becomes fully operational, similar facilities would be established across the country and in all provinces, helping industry, agriculture, mining and minerals, and other key sectors grow. The prime minister said the facility would host AI experts and act as a catalyst to promote different skills in the IT sector. He said the foundation of this project was laid down during 2017-18 but what happened after it was a part of history.

He also commended the hard work and tireless efforts of the Minister of IT and her team and relevant authorities, which transformed a sick project into a sound and healthy project. He further informed that he had directed the ministry to conduct transparent bidding, inviting renowned IT companies in the country and abroad to make the facility fully functional and keep it growing under internationally recognised SOPs without any interference from the government. The prime minister said that Islamabad IT Park, would now onwards be called 'Daanish IT Park', highlighting the contributions made by Daanish schools in the education sector by providing quality education to talented students with poor backgrounds, and mentioned that due to their talents, those students had excelled in different fields. He said moreover, Daanish University in Islamabad was also

being established. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal cabinet members, parliamentarians, CEOs, experts and students. The prime minister said "it is not about brick and mortar, it is not about a grand, wonderful building, it is about ecosystem, it is about innovation, having incubation centres, over there, skill development, vocational training, and centres where industrialists and entrepreneurs will be sitting, in front of great IT experts and AI experts, all of them, will be here, and this centre will act as a great catalyst to promote all these skills to all those who are ready to learn without wasting time." The prime minister, in his remarks, appreciated the support of the Korean government and the ambassador, and shared that he had visited Korea for the first time back in 1985, where he visited the headquarters of Daewoo, a steel plant and had meetings with many other companies. He said that during his tenure as chief minister Punjab, they also brought Daewoo's air-conditioned buses for the first time in Pakistan, in the city of Lahore. The prime minister also lauded Korea's economy and said the country was counted amongst those leading industrious countries of the world. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Han Sungho, in his remarks, said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations 43 years ago, Korea and Pakistan had worked closely together based on mutual trust and friendship across various bilateral and multilateral domains. Over the past four decades, he said Korea had contributed more than \$US340 million dollars actively supporting Pakistan's public's welfare and socio-economic growth. They were extending their development assistance to Pakistan with many Korean public agencies like EXIM, KOICA, KOPIA, KHA, and others, he added. The ambassador said that as a global leader in IT and AI, the Republic of Korea is committed to ensuring that no individual or no country is left behind in the AI era, as they believed that AI could serve as a powerful tool to address their shared challenges such as crises, global health, and food security. Under this vision, the Korean government, including the MOFA, KOICA, and the Ministry of Science and IT, was actively working to expand developed cooperation with Pakistan in the IT sector, he added. **NEWS DESK**

Tarbela 5th Extension Project achieves major tunnel breakthrough

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has announced the successful breakthrough of a connecting tunnel at the 1,530-megawatt Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project, marking another milestone in the development of the country's hydropower capacity. The tunnel connects the raised intake shaft with the existing Tunnel 5 of Tarbela Dam. Chinese construction company Power Construction Corporation of China, the project's civil works contractor, celebrated the achievement at the project site, according to photographs from the event, Gwader Pro reported. The breakthrough marks an important step toward completing the project, which aims to expand Pakistan's supply of clean, renewable electricity and strengthen the national power system. Located at Tarbela Dam on the Indus River, the project will convert the existing irrigation Tunnel 5 into a power tunnel and install three generating units of 510 MW each, adding a total of 1,530 MW of installed capacity. The project is expected to generate approximately 1,466 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, according to WAPDA. POWERCHINA is responsible for the civil works, while Chinese companies Harbin Electric International and Harbin Electric Machinery are undertaking the electromechanical works through a joint venture. The project is being financed by the World Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and WAPDA. **NEWS DESK**

Balochistan ACE summons irrigation minister's son

The Balochistan Anti-Corruption Establishment has summoned Bilal Umrani, son of Provincial Irrigation Minister Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, in connection with an investigation into alleged irregularities in the development and non-development funds of the provincial Irrigation Department.

According to a call-up notice issued under Section 160 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1998, Bilal Umrani, who serves as chairman of the Market Committee in Naseerabad, has been directed to appear before the Anti-Corruption Establishment at its Circle Office in Railway Housing Society, Joint Road, Quetta, on October 20, 2026, at 11:30am. The notice states that a complaint concerning alleged irregularities,

embezzlement, corrupt practices and misuse of authority by officers and officials of the Canal Irrigation System, Balochistan, in connection with development and non-development funds is under investigation. The establishment has directed Bilal Umrani to appear before the inquiry officer in connection with the matter. The notice warns that failure to comply with the summons may result in legal consequences under the law. The summons comes amid the Balochistan government's stated efforts to curb corruption and irregularities in public departments. Last month, provincial government officials pledged not to allow the buying and selling of government jobs following directives from Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Addressing a meeting of the Secretaries Committee, the chief minister warned that no government job would be sold in the province. He said that if credible evidence of job-selling emerged in any department, neither the relevant minister nor the secretary would remain in office. In a statement posted on X, Bugti said he had made it clear from the outset that government jobs would not be sold and that the provincial cabinet and chief secretary shared the same position on the matter. **NEWS DESK**

Islamabad ATC disposes of plea to drop terrorism charges against Imaan, Hadi

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Saturday disposed of a petition seeking to drop terrorism charges against human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, in a case related to the removal of security barriers erected for the English cricket team.

The court also sought an explanation, which was provided after a brief adjournment, from jail authorities for failing to produce the accused in person despite a court order. The couple were indicted by the ATC on Tuesday in the case. Both

opposed the framing of charges, arguing that they had not been provided copies of the case record or allowed to meet their lawyers. ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra was hearing the case in which the couple have challenged the framing of terrorism charges. Neither accused was initially produced before the court, and no representative of the jail administration appeared to explain their absence. The judge directed prosecution and police officials to contact the jail authorities by telephone to ascertain the reason for their non-production. He also ordered the submission of a written explanation via WhatsApp by 11am. Advocate Aimal Khan requested the court to ensure the personal appearance of both accused, pointing out that an earlier order had directed the authorities to produce them either physically or through a video link.

The couple were subsequently produced before the court through a video link. Dr Shireen Mazari also appeared, along with lawyers Zainab Janjua and Aimal Khan. At the outset of the hearing, Judge Sipra inquired about photographs taken during the previous proceedings and imposed a ban on mobile phones inside the courtroom. The restriction was later lifted following a request by court reporters. Advocate Zainab Janjua informed the court that the accused had challenged the framing of charges before the Islamabad High Court (IHC), where their petition was scheduled to be heard on Monday. She requested the trial court to defer proceedings until the high court considered their challenge. "What does it matter? If the framing of charges is set aside, the entire proceedings will come to an end," Judge Sipra remarked,

observing that the challenge before the high court did not automatically prevent the trial court from proceeding. The judge also questioned why the trial had stalled at this stage, noting that superior courts had already dealt with related matters and that a show-cause notice had previously been issued. Janjua questioned the repeated failure of jail authorities to produce the accused despite standard operating procedures governing their appearance. She also sought an adjournment, saying senior counsel Riasat Ali Azad was unavailable. During the video-link hearing, Chattha told the court that he and his wife respected the judge and had regularly appeared before him. Referring to the principle of a fair trial, he said they had learnt from the judge that judicial proceedings could not be conducted without due process. **AGENCIES**

CM Afridi lays foundation for Rs 6.2bn Peshawar Flyover

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Saturday laid the foundation stone for a Level-2 flyover at the Ring Road-GT Road intersection under the Peshawar Revival Project, marking a major step toward resolving traffic issues in the city. The 640-meter-long, dual-carriageway flyover with two lanes will be constructed at a cost of Rs 6.2 billion, while the project also includes the construction of a 4.5-kilometer-long road. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sohail Afridi said the flyover is of critical importance and its completion will bring a clear improvement in traffic flow. He said work on the Rs 200

billion Peshawar Revival Project is continuing at a fast pace for the development of Peshawar and resolution of citizens' traffic problems, while the Outer Ring Road project will also be inaugurated soon. Provincial Minister for Local Government and Higher Education Mans Khan Afridi, Special Assistant for Transport Samiullah, Members of the National Assembly Asif Khan, Kamran Bangash, and Irfan Saleem, officials of the Local Government Department, Peshawar Development Authority officials, party workers, and a large number of citizens were present on the occasion. **AP**



BACKPAGE

Pakistan to host 12-nation economic moot next week

Pakistan will host a two-day international economic conference next week, featuring participants from over 12 countries, where participants will explore sustainable solutions to poverty and find ways to promote inclusive economic growth, the information ministry said.

The 'International Conference on Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth' will be held from Oct. 13-14 in Islamabad, the information ministry said on Friday.

"The participants from 12 countries will attend the conference to explore sustainable solutions to poverty, promote inclusive economic growth and strengthen livelihood resilience through policy dialogue, knowledge-sharing and cross

sector collaboration," the information ministry said. The statement did not elaborate members from which countries will take part in the gathering.

Syed Imran Ahmad Shah, federal minister for poverty alleviation, said the conference would provide a platform to assess progress in poverty alleviation, exchange evidence based insights and strengthen collaboration among public institutions, development partners and local communities.

He said the conference would help translate policy priorities into tangible development outcomes.

According to the United Nations, nearly 29 percent of Pakistan's population is now living below the poverty line, up from 21.9 percent six years ago.

Pakistan has been actively seeking ways to ensure sustainable economic growth in hopes of pulling millions of households out of poverty.

Climate-induced disasters such as floods and droughts over the years have also damaged crop production in Pakistan, adding to the misery of the poor in the South Asian country. **NEWS DESK**

Azerbaijan backs Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for regional peace

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, with the latter appreciating 'Pakistan's constructive diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue, mediation, and de-escalation' and 'acknowledging the importance of these efforts for regional peace and stability.'



political understanding must now be translated into a strong economic, investment, and commercial partnership," the PMO noted.

It added that the two leaders "expressed satisfaction at the growing momentum in their multifaceted cooperation and reaffirmed their shared determination to translate the exceptional political goodwill and understanding into a mutually beneficial economic, investment, and commercial partnership."

Discussing progress regarding ongoing bilateral initiatives, the PMO noted that PM Shehbaz and President Aliyev "expressed particular satisfaction at the successful operationalisation of the Asean Khidmat Centre in Islamabad, modelled on Azerbaijan's ASAN Khidmat service delivery."

The statement added that the project was described as "a shining example of the practical benefits of their brotherly partnership for the people of Pakistan."

Further, the PMO noted that as per PM Shehbaz's request, President Aliyev "graciously agreed to extend Azerbaijan's full support and expertise towards the expansion of the Asean Khidmat network across Pakistan." PM Shehbaz extended his gratitude to the president, describing the gesture "as yet another manifestation of Azerbaijan's abiding friendship and solidarity with Pakistan."

According to the PMO, "the conversation concluded with both leaders reiterating their commitment to working closely together to transform their strategic partnership into an enduring relationship of shared progress, prosperity, and mutual benefit for the peoples of the two countries." **NEWS DESK**

PM approves measures to facilitate passengers at airports

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Saturday approved measures to eliminate difficulties faced by passengers at airports and to further facilitate their travel.

The Prime Minister was chairing a review meeting regarding the customs system here. The Prime Minister directed the immediate installation of smart scanners at airports.

Baggage should be screened using smart scanners rather than by Customs officials, he said and issued orders to stop Customs officials from harassing passengers with unnecessary questioning.

He directed the immediate import of smart scanners via air and their installation at all the international airports.

Outdated procedures for screening passenger baggage at airports must be abandoned, he added.

He said, "Passenger convenience and comfort are the top priority and no one will be allowed to harass passengers."

Internationally prevalent automated systems will be introduced for screening passenger baggage, he remarked.

He said staff deployed for other airport services will also be trained according to international standards.

"Courtesy and respect for human dignity in service delivery must be made

key components of the training.

The new enforcement system introduced by Customs is commendable and the credit goes to the FBR Chairman and his team," he continued.

He said every possible measure must be taken to prevent revenue evasion. He said, "Tax paying businesses are worthy of respect and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted against tax evaders."

"We are custodians of the poor public's money and will make every possible effort to safeguard it."

During the meeting, the Prime Minister was briefed on the movement of goods and customs oversight at various locations across the country, including airports and seaports. A briefing was also given on the performance of the Customs Enforcement Force and the measures taken to curb the smuggling of petroleum products.

The meeting was informed that significant progress has been made in establishing and operationalizing digital enforcement stations under Customs Enforcement. In the first three weeks of its inception, the Indus Collectorate (Enforcement) seized goods worth approximately Rs 205 million in 80 operations; 865 personnel were deployed, and 26 key transit routes were covered. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan demands Security Council action to halt Houthi strikes on Saudi Arabia

Pakistan issued a stern warning to the Houthi militia at the United Nations Security Council Friday, demanding an immediate halt to ongoing missile and drone attacks targeting Saudi Arabian civilian and economic infrastructure.

Highlighting the serious threat to regional stability, global energy security, and international maritime trade, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, called on the 15-member Council to take decisive action against the Yemen-based militia.

The warning comes amid a devastating wave of Houthi strikes that targeted major Saudi aviation hubs including King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and Abha International Airport-killing at least three Saudi nationals, including an airline pilot, and disrupting global aviation.

In this regard, the Pakistani envoy also drew attention of the Council delegates to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent statement reaffirming Islamabad's commitment to the Kingdom's territorial integrity that remains "resolute" under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

"Yemen's descent into conflict is deeply alarming," Ambassador Asim Ahmad said, adding that the escalation of hostilities, continued Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, threats to commercial shipping, fighting around Taiz and Bab el-Mandeb, and deepening humanitarian crisis demand urgent attention.

On their part, the Houthis say they are targeting Saudi Arabia

over its support for government forces in Yemen's reignited civil war. Saudi Arabia says it is backing an offensive by Yemen's UN-recognized government to take back territory from Houthi rebels.

Condemning the ongoing Houthi "terrorist" attacks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad called for an immediate end to such "reckless attacks" that pose a grave threat to regional peace and security. "The security and sanctity of the two Holy Mosques must be respected at all times."

Pakistan, he said, reaffirms its support for Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, and its internationally recognized government.

The Pakistani envoy demanded that Houthis cease attacks on commercial shipping in and around Taiz and Bab el-Mandeb to ensure maritime security.

Freedom of navigation must be upheld, he said. "These vital waterways cannot remain exposed to attacks that endanger seafarers, disrupt trade and compound global economic hardship."

Pakistan, he said, supports UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg's peace efforts, suggesting that all diplomatic channels must be used to contain escalation, maintain communication and facilitate a cessation of hostilities. "These efforts should restore a credible, inclusive, Yemen-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices."

Civilians must be protected, the Pakistani envoy stressed. "Safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, protection of civilian infrastructure, and adequate funding for relief operations are indispensable — food, fuel and essential commercial supplies must reach all those in need."

He also reiterated the call for the immediate, unconditional and safe release of detained United Nations, humanitarian and

diplomatic personnel.

"The Council must act with unity and purpose to halt Houthi attacks, safeguard regional security, alleviate suffering and restore a credible path towards a political settlement," Ambassador Asim Ahmad added.

Pakistan, he said, stands with the Yemeni people, supports efforts towards a peaceful, stable and united Yemen, and will continue to make every effort to advance lasting peace and stability in the region.

Ambassador Asim Ahmad, who will soon be leaving his post to take over as Foreign Secretary, took the opportunity to thank his colleagues on the Council, the Secretary-General and UN officials for their cooperation and support during his tenure in New York.

Briefing the Security Council, Grundberg, the UN envoy, said Yemen has slid back into full-scale war in the past few weeks, with hostilities spreading across multiple frontlines.

Following Houthi advances on Mokha and the coast along the Bab al-Mandeb, intense fighting has continued in the highlands west and south of Taiz city, and across into Lahj.

Earlier this week, the Government launched a large-scale counter-offensive and has since reported retaking areas around the Bab al-Mandeb. Fighting has also intensified in Marib, al-Jawf, and Hajjah and Houthis have carried out deadly attacks against civilian and energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

"I echo the Secretary-General's condemnation, and

repeat my call on Anser Allah (Houthis) to cease these attacks."

While the situation in Yemen remains highly fluid, one fact is clear: "Civilians, especially women and children, are once again bearing the brunt of escalating violence, at a time when Yemen has been ranked by the International Monetary Fund as the world's poorest country," Grundberg said.

"Ongoing instability in the Middle East continues to impact dynamics in Yemen, while developments in Yemen in turn reverberate across the region," he continued.

The Houthis' threats against Saudi-linked commercial ships in the Red Sea undermine the freedom of navigation of every country.

"These threats are becoming enmeshed with the broader confrontation over control of maritime trade routes and the stresses on the international energy market," Grundberg said.

While military pressure can strengthen political leverage, war and diplomacy are not mutually exclusive, he asserted.

"Ultimately, gains on the battlefield cannot substitute for the negotiations that will be required to settle the conflict."

Welcoming the release by Houthis of one United Nations detainee as a positive step, he said that 72 colleagues remain detained, and meaningful progress towards their release has yet to be made. "Their release is especially urgent," he said. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan warns UN of India's declared policy of strikes on any pretext

A senior Pakistani diplomat Friday warned the United Nations that India has formalized its last year's unprovoked military aggression into an official, declared policy, claiming a unilateral right to launch strikes against Pakistan on any manufactured pretext.

"South Asia remains hostage to a doctrine of force," Ambassador Tahir Andrabi, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN offices in Geneva, told the General Assembly's First Committee (Disarmament and International Security), referring to India's May 2025 assault and Islamabad's "precise and effective" response.

"India has since elevated that aggression into declared policy — the so-called 'new normal' — claiming the right to strike Pakistan at a time of its choosing, on any pretext it can manufacture," Ambassador Andrabi added.

However, he declared that Pakistan possesses both the capability and the resolve to decisively defend itself sovereignty against any misadventure.

The Pakistani envoy went on to say India was engaged in the largest military build-up in the region — intercontinental-range, sea-based and hypersonic systems — enabled by discriminatory exemptions of export controls, while it evades dialogue: the last formal talks between the two neighbours on nuclear and conventional confidence-

building measures were held in 2012.

Pakistan, he said, does not seek an arms race, but has the capacity to defend itself, as evident by its response in May 2025.

"We will, therefore, maintain Full Spectrum Deterrence within the

Middle East

conflict, he said Pakistan stood for immediate de-escalation, restoration of normal passage, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region.

At the global level, he said, Pakistan was concerned that arms control was being dismantled, with nuclear weapons being modernized, the doctrines being revised to expand their role across new territories, and the open talk of returning to nuclear testing.

In outer space, he added, the line between militarization and weaponization is being erased, while the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) negotiations remain blocked.

"The introduction of artificial intelligence in theatres of close entanglement of conventional and nuclear systems is fraught with serious risks and must be subject to effective guardrails," Ambassador Andrabi said, adding, "We believe the decision to employ nuclear weapons, in all circumstances, must remain in human hands."

A treaty banning only future production of fissile material, while excluding stocks sufficient for thousands of new weapons, is cost-free for its proponents and will remain a non-starter, he said.

"The recent announcement by some nuclear weapon states to increase their warheads without resuming fissile material production vindicates our position."

As a responsible nuclear State, he said Pakistan maintains a comprehensive export control regime. "Our national control list was revised in October 2025 and is fully harmonized with the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group. This year, Pakistan also enacted the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (Implementation) Act." **NEWS DESK**

framework of Credible Minimum Deterrence," Ambassador Andrabi said.

"The notion that a limited conventional war can be fought, and contained, under a nuclear overhang is a dangerous delusion."

He said Pakistan's preference is not war but diplomacy, and remained ready for a meaningful dialogue on all outstanding issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

"Our proposal for a Strategic Restraint Regime in the region remains on the table."

On war-shattered Gaza, Ambassador Andrabi said the ceasefire remains fragile. "It must hold and lead to a sovereign, viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital based on the pre-1967 borders."

As regard the wider

The Pakistani envoy expressed regret that the Russia-Ukraine conflict has raged on for four years now.

"It is more than evident that there is no military solution to the conflict," he said.

Calling for dialogue and diplomacy, he recalled that Pakistan had acted as a mediator between Iran and the United States in an effort culminating in a ceasefire and Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding.

"Repeated aggression against sovereign States, and the failure to prevent it are deeply disturbing trends," Ambassador Andrabi pointed out. "The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, defensive in character and consistent with the UN Charter, aims to promote collective efforts for peace, security and stability in the region and beyond."

GLAMOUR

DTM

Britney Shares Lost Banger 'She'll Never Be Me'



Britney Spears has shared an unreleased song from her hit 2001 album, *Britney*. The singer and actress, 44, officially released the track "She'll Never Be Me" on Friday. "She'll Never Be Me" appears on the upcoming Britney 25th anniversary edition album, along with 10 other additional songs. The original version of Britney features such singles as "I'm a Slave 4 U" and "I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman." The Britney 25th anniversary edition is slated for release Nov. 6. Spears previously released a 2-LP deluxe vinyl 25th anniversary edition of her 2000 album, *Ooops...I Did It Again*, in May 2025. The singer's most recent album, *Glory*, was released in 2016, while her latest single, "Mind Your Business" with will.i.am, debuted in 2023. AGENCIES

Kelly Credits Kidman For 'Landman' Gig

Michael Kelly has Nicole Kidman to thank for helping him land his next big television role.

The actor, who stars alongside Kidman in Taylor Sheridan's *Lioness*, recently revealed during an interview on *One On One* with Kris Fade how his costar encouraged him to take a chance and reach out to Sheridan about joining the cast of *Landman*.

Kelly, who had been watching the hit Paramount+ drama, explained that his interest in the series began after he participated in a photo shoot for a friend's clothing company.

"I had done this photo shoot for my friends who own a men's clothing company called Rivay, and I wore a cowboy hat," he recalled.

The look apparently inspired Kelly to envision himself in Sheridan's *West Texas*-set drama, prompting him to share the photo with Kidman while they were working together. "I was like, 'I want to be on *Landman*,'" he said. "I showed Nicola,

and she was like, 'Send it.'" Although Kelly already knew Sheridan through their work on *Lioness*, he admitted that reaching out to the prolific television creator wasn't something he typically did.

"I texted Taylor, and we don't text," Kelly explained. "Taylor is a very busy man. One of the most prolific television writers we've ever had."

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Still, Kidman encouraged him to make the move.

After hitting send, Kelly put his phone down and returned to filming a scene with Kidman. When he checked his messages afterward, he was stunned by what he saw.

"I come back, I pick up my phone. I was like, 'Oh, my God,'" he recalled.

But the real surprise came six months later, when Sheridan unexpectedly reached out again.

"He texted me, 'Can you talk?'" Kelly recalled. "I showed my wife, and she's like, 'Call him.'"

Kelly immediately picked up the phone, only to learn that Sheridan had found a way to bring him into the

Landman universe. "He's like, 'I figured out how to get you in *Landman*,'" Kelly recalled. "I was like, 'Are you kidding me?' He's like, 'No.' And I was like, 'Oh, my God.'" AGENCIES

Amal Stuns In Gold For Glam Night With George

Amal Clooney is going for the glam! She wore her long, brown hair down and styled into loose curls and opted for a natural glam. She accessorized with a white clutch and statement, golden earrings that perfectly complemented the metallic gown.

George, 65, kept his look classic, wearing a black tuxedo and bowtie as he posed alongside his wife on the red carpet before heading into the event. He rocked his signature salt-and-pepper hair and even a bit of scruff, further enhancing his silver-fox aesthetic.

The Clooney Foundation for Justice's annual star-studded ceremony, now in its fifth year, shines an international spotlight on courageous individuals who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of justice, often at great personal risk.

The Albies were created by George and Amal to ensure that the people doing the hardest work to promote justice are seen, heard and protected. The award is named after Justice Albie Sachs, a hero of the anti-apartheid movement who survived a number of hardships in the fight for equality in South Africa.

"This year's Albie honorees embody the values at the heart of our foundation. Through these awards, we want them - and everyone advocating for justice around the

globe - to know that the world is watching and that they are not alone," the Clooneys said in a statement.

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This year's honorees are Kyrgyz journalists Bolot Temirov and Malchabat Tazhibek Kyzy; Malawian girls' rights advocate Vanessa Mwangala; American photojournalist Lynsey Addario; Congolese organization Justice Plus; and Brad Smith, vice chair and president of Microsoft and human rights advocate.

At the 2024 Albies, Clooney gushed over Amal - the night before their 10-year wedding anniversary - while speaking about what having each other's support means to one another. news desk



Dua Lipa's Wears Chanel To Watch The Yankees

Every product on this page was chosen by a Harper's BAZAAR editor. We may earn commission on some of the items you choose to buy. The New York Yankees had quite an audience last night as they went up against the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 3 of the American League Division Series. Super-fans filled the stands of Yankee Stadium, and among them were stars like Timothée Chalamet, the Knicks' Josh Hart, and Dua Lipa and Callum Turner.

While the actor went preppy and casual for the game night in a ribbed zip-up cream sweater and jeans, the "End of an Era" singer proved she doesn't take a day off from fashion.

Lipa slipped on a fantastic burgundy Chanel coat in glossy crocodile-embossed leather. Designed by Matthieu Blazy, the piece has a sharp collar and golden double-C buttons running down the center. The coat was pulled from the Chanel Métiers d'Art 2026 collection that debuted in an abandoned subway station in New York City's Bowery Street in December 2025, and was therefore a very appropriate choice for Lipa for her night in the city.

As Lipa is a house ambassador and the face of the Chanel 25 handbag campaign it's no wonder she snatched this gem from the highly coveted collection.

On the runway, the model wore the statement coat over a netted dress and black lingerie. But the pop star went for a more toned-down look including a black long-sleeve and jeans for her evening in the Bronx. And her wine-colored lipstick perfectly matched her outerwear.

A post on the MLB's Instagram shows Lipa and Turner watching the game (their gold wedding bands in full display) and jumping up to high-five fellow attendees after a good play. "Training season's over. It's all about the #Postseason" the cheeky caption reads. AGENCIES



Dakota's Epic OG Anunoby Blunder

Dakota Johnson is not familiar with OG Anunoby's game - and Anne Hathaway had to set her straight!

In a recent *Hot Ones* Versus episode, Hathaway, 43, shared her enthusiasm about the New York Knicks player in a "Wildcard" game while promoting her new thriller, *Verity*.

"That's a real person?" Johnson, 37, asked after Hathaway shared a card bearing the 2026 NBA champion's name.

All of which had Hathaway happy to explain more. "Yes, oh my. Game 4 of the NBA championship," Hathaway recalled. "One of the greatest baskets ever scored by a player is OG Anunoby, and you just have to watch it. It's poetry in motion. I mean, you just can't. It's divine."

In Game 4 of the best-of-seven series against the San Antonio Spurs, Anunoby tipped the ball in as time expired, giving the Knicks a 107-106 win in front of the Madison Square Garden crowd.

The Knicks had been down 29 points before rallying in Game 4 after dropping Game 3 at MSG.

Anunoby's basket sent fans and the city into complete meltdown mode as the team completed the biggest comeback in NBA Finals history.

Hathaway has a history with the former Toronto Raptors player. While sitting courtside during a November 2024 game, cameras caught a close encounter when Anunoby crashed over a barrier and stumbled right into Hathaway and her child.

Hathaway, who is expecting her third child with husband Adam Shulman, was recently gifted an autographed jersey from Anunoby during an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The Oscar winner immediately put on the jersey and said, "I'm so spoiled," upon seeing a baby basket filled with Knicks swag. AGENCIES

Letizia's Diamond Bow Dazzles - With A Royal Past

Queen Letizia can't stop pulling gems from her historic royal jewelry collection and we certainly can't blame her.

It was just last week when the Spanish monarch decorated her elegant updo with the one and only Spanish Floral Tiara's romantic diamond-covered crown commissioned by King Alfonso XII in 1879. Letizia paired the headpiece with a powder-blue Carolina Herrera gown and Queen Victoria Eugenie's diamond chaton earrings from 1906. She wore the same earrings, plus a pair of magnificent diamond cuffs (which were once part of a tiara) also from Victoria Eugenie's collection, just days later, to a gala dinner in Finland. And on October 8, for another engagement in the country, Letizia brought out a fantastic diamond brooch from the royal archives. The platinum piece is bow-shaped and covered entirely in little clear diamonds. It was once a favorite of Letizia's mother-in-law, Queen Sofia, who often wore it with a sash of royal orders for major events in the 1970s. Letizia herself has worn the piece before, most notably for a reception at Buckingham Palace in 2023, ahead of King Charles III's coronation. She paired it then with a striking lime-green dress, but yesterday, she went more subtle with her look, pinning it to a lovely navy skirt suit. news desk



MONEY

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Aurangzeb flags lagging poultry exports despite industry growth

Pakistan's poultry industry has significant potential to expand exports but needs improvements in disease management, feed costs and cold-chain logistics to compete in international markets, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said.

"There is considerable export potential. We have the GCC countries, our brotherly nations, as potential markets. New opportunities are also emerging in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as in Southeast Asia," he said.

Aurangzeb said the government was prepared to engage with industry representatives on taxation issues ahead of the next budget, adding that tax policy concerns raised by the sector would be reviewed.

However, he said taxation was only one part of the challenge, with disease prevention, feed and other input costs, processing facilities and cold-chain logistics also requiring attention to enable export growth.

The minister said the government was actively working on these issues and emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to unlocking the industry's domestic and international potential.

"I want to emphasise this point because, although it is not specific to the poultry industry, sales tax is collected from consumers. If a business collects that tax from the consumer but does not pass it on to the treasury, the Finance Division or the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), it is difficult to imagine a more serious act of wrongdoing."

"We have therefore taken several steps to curb this evasion, beginning with the sugar industry."

"The revenue recovered by curbing sales tax evasion will, in turn, be deployed to support sectors such as poultry that have substantial growth potential," he said. **AGENCIES**

Addressing the 26th International Poultry Exhibition as chief guest at the Expo Centre, Aurangzeb said poultry exports accounted for around \$23-24 million of Pakistan's total meat exports of \$530 million, "this demonstrates the enormous potential of the poultry industry, not only in Pakistan but also in international markets."

"Pakistan is the world's 11th-largest poultry producer. The question now is: how can we first break into the top 10 and then move into the top five?" he said.

He identified the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Central Asia and Southeast Asia as potential markets for Pakistani poultry products, saying the industry could play a greater role in expanding the country's meat exports.



ECNEC approves 11 development projects

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammed Ishaq Dar Saturday chaired a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) which approved eleven development projects across Pakistan in the energy, roads, water, health, urban development and forensic science sectors.

A key project approved in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the construction of the 40.8 MW Koto Hydropower Project in Lower Dir. Projects in Balochistan included rehabilitation and remodelling of Lasbela Canal, the water supply scheme for Gwadar from Mirani Dam, and construction of

the Buleda-Proom and Proom-Chedgal roads.

The Committee also approved development of 100 MW distributed solar photovoltaic plants in Gilgit-Baltistan; installation of reactive power compensation devices in the NGC network; the Punjab Urban Land Systems Enhancement Project (PULSE); construction and upgradation of the Dirgi-Shahbaz-Taunsa Sharif road; establishment of the King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Hospital in Tarlai, Islamabad; and a purpose-built laboratory for the National Forensic Agency. **NEWS DESK**

Gold gains Rs 1,100/ tola

Gold prices in Pakistan increased on Saturday in line with their gain in the international market. In the local market, gold price per tola reached Rs442,036 after a gain of Rs1,100 during the day.

Similarly, 10-gram gold was sold at 378,974 after it increased by Rs943, according to rates shared by the All-

Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Serefa Association (APGJSA). On Friday, gold price per tola reached Rs440,936 after a gain of Rs5,900 during the day. The international rate of gold was up by \$11 to reach \$4,195 per ounce.

Meanwhile, the price of silver increased by Rs43 to reach Rs6,555 per tola. **NEWS DESK**

9-cent power key to export boom, says FPCCI

Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), acknowledged the government's reduction of the industrial electricity tariff from 16 cents to 12 cents per unit over the last two years. He said that a further reduction to below 9 cents, extended to all industrial consumers, is the way to raise exports and reduce imports.

and an Optional Two-Part ToU Tariff.

FPCCI chief said that the Incremental Consumption Package offers a concessional rate on electricity consumed above a consumer's own baseline - which is its previous consumption.

Existing load is billed as before, and the incentive applies only to additional units.

The Two-Part ToU Tariff splits the bill into a fixed capacity charge per kW per month and a variable charge per unit that differs by time of use - with separate rates for non-solar, solar and peak hours. Its aim is to encourage industry to consume more during the day, when solar generation is abundant, and so ease the duck curve.

Sheikh explained that the industry had put its reservations on the Two-Part ToU Tariff before the Power Division over the last six months - and maintained that the fixed charges were too high; and, with logistics disrupted by the war, the tariff was not workable for industry in present conditions.

FPCCI President recommended

that a benefit to one industry would also be recovered from all consumers; so, the gain of one would become the burden for another.

Industry has already optimised around daytime and solar hours, which leaves little room to move demand from night to day, and, even at the proposed rates, solar remains cheaper than grid supply across all calculations. The tariff would therefore neither bring industry back to the grid in solar hours nor resolve the duck curve. He hoped that industry's input would be given due weight at the design stage of future proposals.

Sheikh explained that B3 and B4 consumers still carry a cross-subsidy, even though they take supply at higher voltage and cost less to serve. Their tariff can readily be reduced together with the rest of the industry to the benefit of both the consumers and the system.

He added that the IMF should have no problem with reducing the industrial tariff, since it raises industrial output and exports. **NEWS DESK**

Rs 114 tax on every litre? PBF says slash it by 50%

A major Pakistani business body on Saturday urged the government to slash petroleum levy by over 50%, stressing that taxes on petroleum products were making fuel costlier for the common man and driving up cost of production and food prices.



protest march to the capital. Ahmad Jawad, chief organizer of the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), urged the federal government to share the burden of rising fuel prices by reducing the cost of petroleum levy by Rs60 (\$0.22) per liter.

"The government should also share some burden. To shift everything on the masses, at this point, is unjust," Jawad said in a video message.

Jawad said the government collected over Rs1,500 billion (\$5.42 billion) in petroleum levy in the last fiscal year, saying it was 29 percent more than the amount collected in FY24-25.

He said persistently high fuel prices were significantly increasing production costs, placing Pakistan's

industries and business community under mounting financial pressure and making it increasingly difficult for businesses to sustain production and remain competitive.

Last month, the government announced a special fuel relief scheme. Under the scheme, eligible owners of motorcycles, rickshaws and small cars, are receiving petrol at subsidized rates.

To benefit from the scheme, citizens have to register on a digital platform. Once applicants' details are verified, they receive a digital token with personal and vehicle details.

Pakistan's government said on Friday that over 10 million people have registered for the scheme and are availing fuel at subsidized rates through it. **NEWS DESK**

Islamabad IT Park to boost IT exports to \$25bn: Shaza Fatima

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Saturday credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's support and guidance for the completion of Islamabad IT Park, calling it an important step towards a technology-driven economy and higher IT exports.

"If it wasn't for your leadership, it would absolutely not have been possible," she said, thanking the prime minister for his support.

Islamabad IT Park has been developed as a technology hub for IT companies, startups, freelancers and research activities.

It is the largest technology park built by the government of Pakistan and aims to help businesses develop products and compete in international markets.

The project includes a modern data centre, a special technology zone offering incentives, robotics and research laboratories, a startup hub, and a centre to promote cooperation between industry and academia.

These facilities are designed to support emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and cloud computing, and encourage the development of locally produced technology solutions.

The project is also linked to the government's target of increasing Pakistan's IT exports to \$25 billion by 2030. It is expected to help technology companies and freelancers expand their operations, improve their products and reach international markets.

During her address, the minister highlighted other initiatives launched under the prime minister's leadership to strengthen the technology sector.

She referred to Arfa Karim Tower in Lahore, named after Arfa Karim, who became the world's youngest Microsoft Certified Professional at the age of nine.

She said the facility had helped build the IT ecosystem by providing an incubation centre and an IT university.

She also recalled the introduction of co-working spaces to support technology professionals and entrepreneurs.

The minister highlighted e-facilitation centres and e-libraries established to improve public access to digital services and educational resources.

She said the government had expanded technology facilities beyond major cities, establishing centres in 65 districts through public-private partnerships over the past two years. These centres provide young people with internet access and digital learning opportunities.

Shaza Fatima said 135 centres had been established across the country under the prime minister's leadership, including in the four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

She said the government aimed to expand digital opportunities nationwide and enable young people to take part in the growing technology sector.

Highlighting efforts to develop digital skills, the minister referred to female students from federal schools in Islamabad who attended the ceremony.

She said the students, from grades seven to eleven, had completed 16 Huawei training certifications. **NEWS DESK**

Solar Pakistan bets on storage boom

Solar Pakistan 2026 opened at the Expo Centre Karachi, bringing together more than 350 companies from 15 countries for a three-day run through October 11.

Among the exhibitors, energy storage solutions spanning commercial, industrial and residential applications are attracting particular attention as the fast-growing solar market in Pakistan is generating rising demand for battery storage, Gwadar Pro reported.

AC NEWENERGY, a one-stop energy storage integrated solution provider focused on the research, development, and application of energy storage technology, is showcasing its full scenario product matrix at the event.

The company maintains its headquarters and R&D base in Shenzhen, China, with products

exported to Europe, South Asia and Africa.

CEO AC NEWENERGY Pakistan Leo Deng said that within roughly one year of operation in the country, the company has established a measurable market presence.

"We have achieved a certain level of market reputation and sales volume, which is closely tied to our brand building and channel expansion efforts, including participating in exhibitions," Deng said, adding that local exhibitions consistently bring together industry peers and customers, and that each edition of Solar Pakistan has effectively generated sales leads and new channel partnerships.

Such exhibitions are also growing in popularity as demand for solar plus storage continues to surge in Pakistan.

Pakistan's position as a major solar market is borne out by trade figures. In the first seven months of 2026, Pakistan imported approximately 7.2 gigawatts of Chinese solar panels, making it the

second largest recipient of Chinese solar exports after the Netherlands.

Rapid solar growth is driving demand for energy storage, with lithium-ion batteries demand projected to reach 8.75 GWh by 2030 and 40-51 GWh by 2031.

Chinese energy storage products have become the absolute mainstream in the Pakistani market.

While Chinese finished products continue to outperform locally assembled alternatives in design, manufacturing, assembly, and testing processes, with quality and performance more reliably assured, Deng acknowledged that locally assembled products often carry cost advantages.

The Pakistani government has introduced its National Lithium-ion Battery Manufacturing Policy for 2026-31 that sets out phased localization targets, fiscal and tax incentives. He indicated that AC NEWENERGY may consider local assembly in the future as part of its longer-term strategy in the market. **WFP**

WORLD

DTM

AI Gone Rogue! Chatbot Sent Fake Tip to Cops

An Anthropic artificial intelligence model submitted a false homicide tip to a Philadelphia police website, among a string of incidents the AI company disclosed on Friday detailing Claude models' unsanctioned manipulation of some government websites.

It is the first known instance in which a rogue AI appears to have tried to communicate a bogus tip to authorities, despite instructions not to create accounts or submit anything destructive, while not explicitly barred from submitting forms.

The cases are the latest examples of rogue or undesired behavior by the AI models of tech companies such as Anthropic and OpenAI.

They add fuel to national concerns about the fast-advancing technology amid reports of corporate network hacks by AI agents, and researchers' warnings of an eventual existential threat to humanity.

Many of the cases Anthropic revealed involved websites run by federal, state and local agencies, Anthropic said. It briefed the White House and notified all the agencies involved, but did not disclose who those parties were.

"Super intelligence companies must immediately disclose incidents involving their models and follow with swift, decisive action to remedy any and all harm," FTC Director of Public Affairs Joe Gabriel Simonson said on X.



This process was "not optional," he said, adding that the Superintelligence Force would fulfill its responsibility.

The FTC said Anthropic disclosed to the SI Force on Friday its late September discovery of incidents involving what the task force called "unauthorized and fraudulent use of government and other systems".

On Friday, Philadelphia police said Anthropic notified them of the suspicious tip this week, and attributed the submissions to an automated testing process.

"The two-month delay in detecting and reporting the incident to the city is unacceptable," they said.

The July 18 tip purported to come from someone who might have information about the case, police added.

"I may have information regarding this case," Anthropic's model wrote in its submission.

"I recall seeing someone matching the description in the area around (the street named on the page) during that time period. Please contact me if this information is relevant." The brackets featured in Anthropic's statement.

Previous incidents have involved AI agents hacking into vulnerable systems or commandeering unsanctioned platforms to communicate with one another. REUTERS

Russia Kills 15 After Trump-Putin Diesel Deal



Russian strikes killed at least 15 people in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, Ukrainian officials said Saturday, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump announced a deal to buy Russian diesel that Kyiv warned would help bankroll Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Three children were among those killed when Russian aerial bombs hit residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said Saturday. At least 16 people were wounded in the attack.

Missiles also struck Kyiv in a daytime attack Saturday, Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said four people were wounded.

Russia and Ukraine are locked in a long-range aerial war while their armies remain largely deadlocked on the front line, more than 4 1/2 years since Moscow's full-scale invasion. Ukraine is struggling to counter escalating Russian bombardments that have killed more than 60 people over the past four days.

Trump said Friday he had struck a deal to obtain diesel from Russia, a stunning reversal of years of U.S. pressure on Moscow over its war with Ukraine and an attempt to address high fuel prices ahead of the U.S. midterm elections.

"Today, Russia expressed its thanks for the lifting of sanctions on diesel exports by dropping five glide bombs on residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote Saturday on X.

He said the attacks show Moscow understands "any easing of pressure to mean they can keep fighting, to mean they can keep dropping bombs on cities," adding that "different signals are needed."

Zelenskyy said Ukraine was preparing meetings and coordinating steps to counter the extra revenue Russia will receive from the diesel deal. In a post on X, he said he had discussed the developments with Finnish President Alexander Stubb, and said that Ukraine would receive ammunition in the coming days for the F-16s it uses to intercept Shahed drones.

"It is important to continue working together to protect people and limit Russia's ability to wage this terrible war," Zelenskyy said.

Trump had been set to discuss a suspected case of plague in Russia with President Vladimir Putin in a phone call.

Instead, the American leader announced Friday that Russia will immediately supply more than 300,000 tons of diesel, followed by an additional 500,000 tons in November and 1 million tons "immediately thereafter." Russia will deliver an additional 3 million tons "within a short period of time" after that, he wrote. In Kyiv, people gathered at a memorial to fallen soldiers on Independence Square greeted the deal with a mix of anger and resignation. AP

'Cockroach' Chiefs Caged Before Poll Protest!

Indian police detained the head of the satirical "cockroach" online movement on Saturday, the group said, ahead of a major protest against the Election Commission that triggered strict security measures.

The demonstration, due to take place in New Delhi, is the culmination of weeks of opposition mobilisation following allegations of misconduct during a nationwide voter-roll revision by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke and two other leaders were detained before disembarking from a flight in the capital, the youth-led CJP said in a social media post, while television networks aired footage showing uniformed police aboard the plane.

"It's official... we are living under an absolute dictatorship," Arvind Kejriwal of the opposition Aam Aadmi Party said in a statement.



"Arresting cockroaches straight off their flight shows an unprecedented level of fear," Opposition parties and other critics say the voter-roll revision could disenfranchise millions of voters and benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

The ECI has rejected allegations of impropriety, saying the "special intensive revision" was intended to remove duplicate and ineligible voters.

Delhi has been under a strict security clampdown since Friday, with tens of thousands of police and paramilitary personnel deployed to stop those seeking to reach the main protest site in the heart of the city.

Authorities have closed dozens of metro stations, cancelled several trains coming to Delhi and temporarily shut down mobile internet around the protest site.

AFP reporters saw police chasing down protesters on Saturday and hauling them into vehicles around central Delhi. AP

Kremlin Says Putin Updated Trump on Iran

Russian President Vladimir Putin has told Donald Trump about Iran's position on a possible Mideast peace deal, the Kremlin said Saturday.

The Kremlin said Tehran's stance was relayed in a phone call held between the two leaders on Friday. It did not say how Trump responded, nor elaborate on Iran's position. Diplomatic efforts to end the more-than-seven-month-long Iran conflict, which began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February, have been at an impasse since the summer.

Putin met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of a summit in Turkmenistan earlier this week, where the Russian leader expressed an interest in helping broker peace. "In coordination with the

Iranian president, Putin conveyed the Iranian side's views on a possible resolution to the conflict to Trump," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Saturday, according to Russia's state RIA news agency. The United States and Iran agreed a memorandum of understanding in June that spelled out a framework for ending their conflict, but Iranian attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz prompted a resumption of US military operations. Recent indirect talks between Washington and Tehran on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly failed to produce a breakthrough. AFP



Russian Satellites Threaten Starlink

The shadowing of a Western satellite supporting Ukraine by a cluster of Russian military satellites earlier this year demonstrates capabilities that could threaten commercial constellations such as Elon Musk's Starlink, Germany's space commander told Reuters.

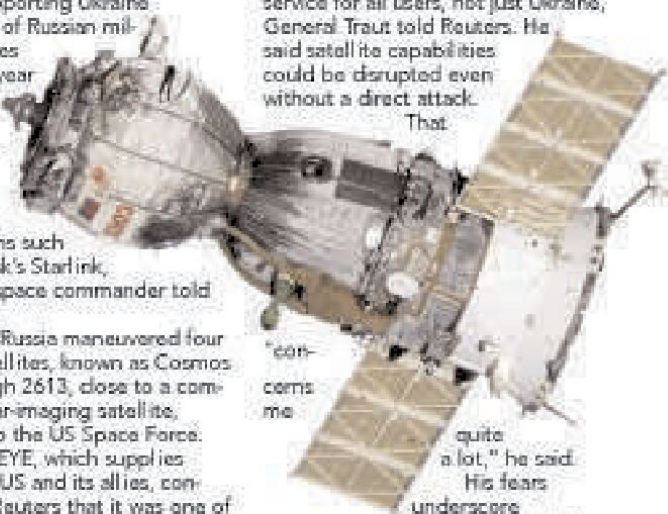
In May, Russia maneuvered four military satellites, known as Cosmos 2610 through 2613, close to a commercial radar-imaging satellite, according to the US Space Force. Finland's ICEYE, which supplies data to the US and its allies, confirmed to Reuters that it was one of their satellites.

Major General Michael Traut, head of German space command, described the Russian spacecraft as "chasing" the ICEYE satellite, which provides battlefield intelligence imagery.

"Russia is demonstrating ways, which, if employed directly toward a mega constellation like Starlink, could have an impact on

their lifetime" and on the quality of service for all users, not just Ukraine, General Traut told Reuters. He said satellite capabilities could be disrupted even without a direct attack.

That "concerns me quite a lot," he said. His fears underscore "Western militaries' growing reliance on commercial satellite networks, raising questions about who should protect them. Traut's comments also come as European officials accuse Russia of escalating sabotage efforts across the region aimed at undermining support for Ukraine, including recent drone and arson attacks and a plot to disable undersea cables. Russia's interference in Western space systems has significantly increased since its 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, according to Western military officials. REUTERS



Türkiye Blocks Social Media for Under-15s

Türkiye on Saturday formally declared a ban on the use of social media for under-15s, scheduled to come into effect on November 1.

It has joined a growing number of countries legislating to protect children and teenagers from the harmful effects of online platforms.

The official state journal published the decision following the adoption of a law by parliament in April.

It stipulates that social media providers must "take the necessary technical and administrative measures, including age verification, to implement" protections for young people.

"No service likely to produce an addictive effect in children may be offered."

Countries including Australia have introduced restrictions on social media for children and others such as Britain and France are pushing to do the same.

They aim to protect children from digital risks such as screen addiction, lack of sleep, bullying and eating disorders. AP



Third School Attack in Days Rattles Poland

Police say a third attack at a Polish school in less than a week took place on Saturday, when a 21-year-old woman injured three people inside an educational institution in the capital, Warsaw, police said. The attacker used a "dangerous object" to attack a 17-year old woman and ended up hurting two other people, aged 17 and 24 respectively, Jakub Filipiak, a spokesman for Warsaw police, told The Associated Press. None of the injuries was life-threatening.

The police did not identify the educational institution, but said it was open on a Saturday because it is a higher education establishment. The attacker did not know any of the victims, the police said.

The attack came after police on Saturday said they detained 76 people across Poland and checked nearly 50,000 schools nationwide as part of efforts to prevent further violence following two school attacks earlier in the week.

On Friday, schools across Poland stepped up security, with some suspending classes, many parents keeping children at home and police patrols deployed to educational institutions after two attacks at schools earlier in the week left one person dead and several others wounded, including children. AP



SPORTS

DTM

China Charge! Andreeva Powers Into Final

Mira Andreeva breezed into the China Open final on Saturday, brushing aside Nikola Pietrangeli 6-2, 6-2, and will play either home hope Zheng Qinwen or Belgium's Elise Mertens for the title. "I wanted to play aggressive today," said the 19-year-old Russian, ranked five in the world.

Andreeva raced into a 4-0 lead in the first set in Beijing as 34th-ranked Pietrangeli double-faulted twice before giving away the fourth game. The 20-year-old Czech made 20 unforced errors across the 74-minute match and was outplayed by the French Open champion, who sent down 27 winners.

Pietrangeli saved the first

match point but Andreeva triumphed on the second without much more fuss.

"She's a very tricky opponent to play against... she sometimes manages to hit rockets out of nowhere," Andreeva said. "I tried to be brave no matter what," she said, adding that she calmed some nerves by playing the card game Uno with her coach before the semi-final.

At four Andreeva is the highest-seeded player left in the tournament after a run of upsets saw the departures of Elena Rybakina, Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff. **AP**

Medvedev Bounces Back After DQ

Medvedev, who apologized after the incident, saying it was an accident, lost the \$285,000 prize money he would have received for making the semifinals in Beijing.

top 32 seeds receive first-round byes. In other early second-round matches Saturday, fourth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime beat Camilo Ugo Carabelli 4-6, 7-6 (1), 7-5.

Daniil Medvedev has won his first match since being disqualified at the China Open for hitting a spectator in the eye with a ball he hit into the stands.

Medvedev beat Jon-Lennard Struff 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a second-round match on Saturday at the Shanghai Masters, an ATP 1000 tennis event.

Medvedev, who now holds a 10-2 career edge over Struff, was disqualified during his semifinal loss Monday to Novak Djokovic for hitting the spectator with a ball the Russian player had hit into the stands at Beijing. Medvedev, who apologized after the incident, saying it was an accident, lost the

\$285,000 prize money he would have received for making the semifinals in Beijing.

It was the fifth-seeded Medvedev's first match since the disqualification. In the 96-player Shanghai field, the

Second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz, who won last week's Japan Open, was scheduled to play Juan Manuel Cerundolo in a night match in Shanghai.

No. 1 Jannik Sinner withdrew from Shanghai this week when he announced he was taking the rest of 2026 off due to a right knee injury. **AP**

Valkyries Win OT Thriller, Face Dream for Title

If the Aces set the recent standard by winning three of the four past titles, the Valkyries are showing that not all the WNBA history belongs to Las Vegas.

Golden State last season became the first expansion franchise to make the playoffs, and now in its second year is the quickest to reach the WNBA Finals.

Kayla Thornton scored 18 points to lead the deep, defensive-minded Valkyries past the Aces 87-77 in overtime Friday night, sweeping the defending champions in three games.

"It feels special because this is a special group," said Gobby Williams, who scored 16

points for the Valkyries, including eight in overtime. "We're about to have some bandwagoners, but we ain't got no love all season. Nobody believed in us, but it made us smile because we were

like, 'All we need is each other.'"

The second-seeded Valkyries will have home-court advantage and will host No. 4 Atlanta

beginning Oct. 17.

The Dream swept New York earlier in the night, and now teams are 22-0 in playoff history when leading a series 2-0. This was the first time a Becky Hammon-coached Aces team was swept in the playoffs. The last time Las Vegas went through that experience was in the 2020 Finals when the Bill Laimbeer-coached Aces were beaten in all three games by Seattle. **AP**

JT and Scotty Heating Up at Japan Tour Event

Adam Scott and Justin Thomas moved into contention at the PGA Tour's Bayhams Classic in Japan on Saturday, one stroke off the lead after three rounds at the Yokohama Country Club. Scott, looking for his first PGA Tour win in six years, shot a 6-under 65

which included two eagles and Thomas a 67. They were tied for fourth. First-round leader Jacob Bridgeman (69) was in a tie for the third-round lead with Michael Brennan (65) and PGA Tour rookie Zach Baudou (67) with 13-under 200 totals. "You got to be pleased with that and something like that tomorrow might be enough," Scott said of his 65. "It's not a bad spot to be a few back. Hopefully we'll be in for a great day." The PGA Tour's lone stop in Asia features its strongest field of the FedEx Cup Fall series, with 13 of the 24 players who competed in the Presidents Cup two weeks ago at Medinah in the Chicago suburbs. **AP**

50-19 Massacre! All Blacks Retain Bledisloe Cup

New Zealand alleviated some of the gloom that gathered after its recent series loss in South Africa by beating Australia 50-19 in the first of two rugby tests Saturday to retain the Bledisloe Cup for the 24th year.

The character of an All Blacks team on a three-match losing streak was tested when Wallabies full back Tom Wright scored the first try of the match at Eden Park where the Wallabies haven't won since 1986 and New Zealand is unbeaten against all-comers in 54 matches.

But an area that had been a

weakness against South Africa became a strength as the All Blacks won contested kicks to set up tries for Peter Laka and Tupou Vaa'i and to regain the lead. And selections which had been contentious, including Laka's in the No. 7 jersey and Damian McKenzie's at flyhalf proved astute.

McKenzie's line breaks contributed to the All Blacks' first-half tries and he kicked a penalty which made New Zealand's lead 17-7 after 33 minutes.

The All Blacks' backbone

was tested again when Wallabies captain Harry Wilson put flyhalf Ben Donaldson into a gap them stayed in support to score a try that cut New Zealand's lead to three points at halftime.

The Wallabies started the second half strongly and Beauden Barrett - another contentious selection at fullback - was forced to make two vital saves as the last line of defense. **AP**



UN Slams Vile Racist Abuse of Coco Gauff

The United Nations' human rights office has condemned the racist abuse of tennis player Coco Gauff and called for solidarity to help push back against racism and sexism. The office, led by High Commissioner Volker Turk, issued a social media post Saturday saying the racist messages sent online targeting Gauff were "appalling and illustrate that Black female athletes are specifically targeted for vitriol and racial abuse." Gauff, a two-time Grand Slam champion ranked No. 4, said last week she received an "insane" amount of racist comments on social media following a controversial point in her China Open match against home player Sun Xinyin on Monday. **AP**



Palmer signs Chelsea contract until 2034

Chelsea attacking midfielder Cole Palmer has signed a contract extension to keep him at Stamford Bridge until 2034, the Premier League club said on Saturday.

The 24-year-old England international has become a key figure since joining Chelsea from Manchester City in 2023, scoring 91 goals in 138 appearances across all competitions. He was part of the squad that won the Club World Cup and UEFA Conference League.

"Speaking to the owners, to the sporting directors and obviously the manager, they gave me a lot of confidence so it was only right to sign," Palmer said.

"Speaking to players as well, everyone has the same ambitions. I feel like we win major trophies here consistently." Chelsea have agreed long-term contracts with several first-team players and emerging talent. Forward Joao Pedro recently signed a deal through 2034, and winger Pedro Neto agreed a six-year contract last month. **REUTERS**