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Kundi: Islamabad, Not Kabul, Calls Shots On KP Policy

Provincial Apex Committee urges joint action against terrorism; Naqvi says federal and provincial governments are finally aligned, seeks more funds for affected areas; Peshawar schools to reopen today as Section 144 stays in place

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said on Monday that gone were the days when there would be no coordination between the Centre and the province, adding that "our policies will now come from Islamabad, not Kabul".

"Gone are the days when there was no coordination between the Centre and the province. Gone are the days when we used to fight needlessly with another province ... We will have coordination with the Centre; our policies will come from Islamabad .... not Kabul, Jalalabad or Kahandar. It is clear," Kundi said at a press conference in Peshawar a day after taking the helm in KP.

Kundi assumed executive control of the province after the Centre imposed governor's rule in KP and emergency in 12 of its districts, citing security situation and alleged non-cooperation of the now non-functional provincial government.

He said the new setup in the province would "not compromise on police", pledging enhanced support and a pay raise for its law enforcers.

The governor further stated that he called a meeting on security the previous day and that of the provincial apex committee earlier today. He said the Centre had "shown confidence in us" and to meet its expectations, "our first priority is the fight against terrorism".

Kundi issued a message to the army, police, Frontier Constabulary (FC) and security institutions, saying: "Our committee, this government, is standing side by side with you and will support you fully."

He said that all members of the newly-formed advisory council had today taken charge of departments assigned to them, and would share future plans.

"I want to say on behalf of this government that we are by your side," he said addressing law enforcers, adding, "Whatever weapons you want, whatever you need, we will get them to you."

Kundi stressed, "We will not compromise on our police officers and personnel. We will equip them well."

He added that yesterday, he spoke to the inspector general of police (IGP) and chief secretary, ordering that from now on, the KP police would no longer have the lowest salaries in the country.

"If they are not the highest, they will at least be equal (to those of the personnel in other areas)."

The governor also said that disbursements under the martyrs' package would be increased, and the children of martyrs would be given free education.

The governor also said that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had provided the provincial police 10 armoured personnel carriers (APCs) on behalf of the Centre. He noted that in his earlier meeting with the minister, Naqvi had assured him and the apex committee that police and security forces would be granted as much in funds as they required.

"Our priority, our focus, is peace plus development," the governor stressed. "We will work 24/7, we will deliver hope to people, to our young people, to the business community ... that this is not your fight now, it is ours." Earlier in the day, Kundi and Naqvi co-chaired a meeting of the provincial apex committee, a day after the imposition of governor's rule and an emergency in the province.

Addressing the meeting, Kundi – who is now in charge of running the province – asserted that under the new set-up, tackling terrorism would be the priority.

"We can sacrifice our development, but never security," Kundi vowed as he noted a "lack of synergy" in counterterrorism efforts in the province.

"Now it will show that there is (synergy)," he said, adding that the administration will "fulfil the demands of the Counter-Terrorism Department and police". He stressed that the administration will "work 24/7" as the federal government and the "people had put their faith in us".

Co-chairing the meeting alongside Kundi, Naqvi remarked: "Today is the first time I can proudly say that the federal and the provincial governments are on the same page. "In the past 2.5 years, we have seen many ups and downs," Naqvi said. The minister stated that the most difficult work was that the war against terrorism was being fought with "no backend support".

According to an official handout, the forum directed relevant institutions to ensure "coordinated, effective and decisive" steps for eradicating terrorism and establishing sustainable peace.

"The forum made it clear that intelligence-based operations against terrorist activities would continue and all available resources would be utilised to improve the law and order situation," it said, adding that the need to improve the operational capability of police and the CTD was also stressed.

The body decided to provide these departments with modern equipment, necessary vehicles, effective weapons, required personnel and all other necessary resources.

Earlier in the day, Kundi chaired a high-level security meeting with the new chief secretary, Dr Muhammad Fakhr Alam Irfan, newly appointed Home Affairs Adviser Kifayetullah Khan, and Inspector General Zulfiqar Hameed.

In a post on X, Kundi said the meeting reviewed the security situation and counterterrorism efforts in KP.

All educational institutions in Peshawar will remain open on Tuesday, a statement by the city's deputy commissioner (DC) has announced.

Meanwhile, TransPeshawar, which manages the city's BRT transport system, has announced that services would be restored from October 13 (Tuesday). "Service will be provided as usual on all routes," it said in a notice.

The district administration has also imposed a ban on gatherings in Peshawar for seven days under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

The order by the DC has also banned the display of weapons, and barred carrying spikes, ball bearings, laden batons, petrol bombs, or any instrument that could potentially be used for violence.

All public and private educational institutions in the district of Dera Ismail Khan, including schools, colleges and universities, will remain closed on Tuesday (Oct 13) under orders issued by the deputy commissioner. NEWS DESK

Sohail Afridi, KP assembly speaker in preventative custody: police

Non-functional Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, Sohail Afridi, and some of his cabinet members are in preventative custody, officials confirmed on Monday.

The PTI had reported their detention on Sunday, shortly after the Centre imposed emergency and governor's rule in the province under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution.

On Monday, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry told Reuters, "Yes, I can confirm that the chief minister (Sohail Afridi) and some of his cabinet members have been taken into preventive custody."

If any of them have any cases to be tried against them, they will be charged and tried but the others will be released, he said, adding that the detentions happened on Sunday.

A senior police official privy to the developments also confirmed to a media house that eight people – including Afridi, MNA Junaid Akbar and assembly speaker Babar Saleem Swati – had been taken into "preventative custody".

As of Sunday, even Afridi's party members said they did not know about his whereabouts. Sources had said that the chief minister and Akbar were under house arrest under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

Meanwhile, PTI spokesperson Shaikh Waqas Akram has said Afridi's "arrest" could not be viewed in isolation from the federal government's decision to impose emergency and governor's rule.

He contended that the arrests had "exposed the political nature of the federal government's actions".

"These measures are not directed at addressing security challenges; they are intended to weaken [the] PTI, undermine the elected government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and disregard the democratic will of its people," Akram added. AGENCIES

Pakistani killed in Houthi attack, Riyadh airport closure extended

Saudi authorities said on Monday they were extending the suspension of operations at the international airport in the capital, Riyadh, after deadly weekend attacks by Yemen's Houthis.

Operations at King Khalid International Airport, Saudi Arabia's second-busiest airport after Jeddah, were suspended to "allow for the completion of procedures to ensure the safety and operational readiness of the airport's facilities", the Saudi civil aviation authority said in a statement.

The airport has been shut since an attack on Saturday that killed 13 people and wounded more than 300, the deadliest in the kingdom in more than a decade. On Sunday, another attack killed one Pakistani and injured nearly a dozen others.

The attacks marked one of the most significant disruptions to Saudi aviation in years, adding to pressures on an industry already grappling with conflict across the Middle East.

The airport cancelled 99.7 per cent of all scheduled flights on Sunday, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium. An air traffic tracker from Flightradar24 showed no planes over the city.

The disruption has forced airlines across Europe and Asia to suspend services, while the Federal Aviation Administration advised US carriers on Sunday to exercise caution when flying to or over Saudi Arabia.

The escalation with the Houthis has raised concerns over the broader economic impact. Saudi Arabia's real gross domestic product is projected to contract by 3.6pc this year, reflecting a combination of factors including lower oil activity.

The attacks have put events scheduled in Riyadh this month under pressure, including the kingdom's flagship investment conference and the WPC Energy Congress, where several top oil executives were dropped from the programme.

Meanwhile, a senior Houthi official has warned the United States that it will receive a "swift and painful response" if it enters the war in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia has reportedly requested its help in dealing with the group.

"If the US becomes involved in the aggression against Yemen, we will not deliberate over the decision to respond; rather, there will be a swift and painful response targeting the US and all its interests in the region," Houthi political bureau member Mohammed Al Bukhaiti tells AFP in an interview. NEWS DESK

Double SME lending to Rs 2.2 trillion: PM's big push

PM orders industries to install tax monitoring systems by Dec 31

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed to increase the total financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Rs1.1 trillion to Rs2.2 trillion by 2028, underscoring their potential to drive economic growth and create business opportunities across the country.

Chairing a meeting on the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), the prime minister said the business community was the backbone of any country's economy, while Pakistan's SME sector had immense potential to accelerate economic development, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

He said providing people in less-developed areas with opportunities to establish businesses in different sectors would promote local economic activity, development and prosperity.

The prime minister directed SMEDA to formulate a comprehensive plan to educate a greater number of people about procedures for obtaining business loans. He also instructed the authority to commission feasibility studies for establishing SMEs in various sectors through relevant industry experts and make them available in local languages.

Separately, PM directed the completion of a production monitoring system for sales tax purposes across all manufacturing sectors by the end of this year. Chairing a review meeting on FBR reforms in Islamabad, the prime minister observed that production monitoring through cameras under the faceless taxation system was being made more effective and directed the removal of obstacles in the installation of automated monitoring systems.

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Petrol price cut by Rs 2.93, diesel hiked by Rs 0.61

The federal government on Monday reduced the price of petrol by Rs2.93 per litre while raising the rate of high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs0.61 per litre in line with fluctuations in global oil markets. Following the adjustment, petrol will cost Rs395.37 per litre, whereas high-speed diesel will be sold at Rs396.35 per litre. NEWS DESK

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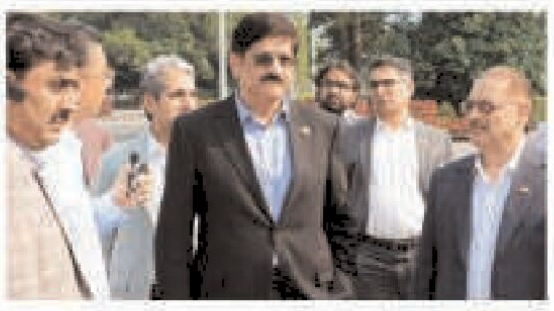

CM Murad studies Chinese water management for Sindh

World

Pakistan, Qatar mediate as Iran studies US Hormuz response

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Growth Surge: Pakistan over 4%, $1 billion sell-off plan

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Golden Girl Russo Wins England Top Honour

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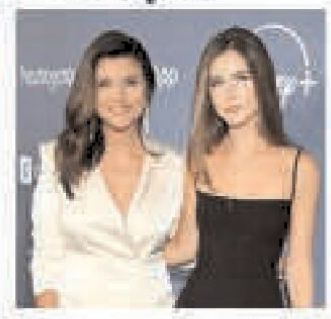

Tiffani Thiessen Gushes Over Growing Daughter

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Pakistan, Brazil military chiefs eye stronger defence ties

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CM Murad studies Chinese water management for Sindh

Sindh seeks lessons in reservoir management, flood regulation and climate resilience

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited the world-renowned Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River on Monday, where he was briefed on China's experience in hydroelectric power generation, flood control, water storage and river management.

Leading a high-level Sindh delegation, comprising provincial ministers – Sharjeel Inam Memon, Jam Khan Shoro, Muhammad Bux Khan Maher, Special Assistant to CM Syed Qasim Nawaod, and senior officers, the chief minister toured various sections of the dam and received a detailed presentation from Chinese officials on the planning, construction and operation of the world's largest hydroelectric power station.

Officials informed the delegation that the Three Gorges Dam, completed in 2012 after nearly two decades of construction, has an installed power generation capacity of 22,500 megawatts and produces more than 100 terawatt-hours of electricity annually. Besides generating clean energy, the project plays a critical role in flood control and inland navigation along the Yangtze River.

During the briefing, the chief minister showed particular interest in the dam's integrated approach to water storage, flood regulation and real-time hydrological monitoring systems.

Murad Ali Shah said Sindh faced increasing challenges arising from climate change, including devastating floods during monsoon seasons and water shortages during dry periods, making effective water management a strategic priority for the province.

"The experience of the Three Gorges Dam demonstrates how modern engineering, technology and long-term planning can transform water resources into engines of economic development, energy security and climate resilience," he said.

The chief minister noted that Sindh receives substantial seasonal flows through the Indus River system but possesses limited capacity to conserve surplus water for future agricultural, municipal and industrial use.

"We must explore innovative solutions for water storage, flood mitigation and irrigation management to ensure sustainable development and water security for future generations," he added.

He directed officials accompanying the delegation to study Chinese best practices in hydrological monitoring, smart reservoir operations and integrated river basin management for possible adaptation in Sindh.

The visit formed part of the chief minister's week-long official tour of China aimed at strengthening cooperation in infrastructure, investment, technology, education and sustainable development.

Chinese officials expressed their willingness to share technical expertise and experiences in water resource management and climate adaptation, while both sides discussed opportunities for future institutional cooperation in these areas.

Murad Ali Shah said the Sindh government would examine opportunities for applying relevant aspects of China's water management model, particularly in areas such as reservoir operation, flood forecasting, sediment management and freshwater storage.

The chief minister also discussed the importance of protecting the Indus Delta and preventing seawater intrusion in coastal areas of Sindh, stressing that future water infrastructure projects must balance development needs with environmental sustainability.

"Any strategy for water conservation must safeguard the ecological requirements of the Indus Delta while enhancing agricultural productivity and protecting vulnerable communities from floods and droughts," he said.

Following the briefing, the delegation visited observation points overlooking the dam and its navigation system before returning to Wuhan for the next phase of the official programme.

The Chief Minister visited the Three Gorges Dam Museum, where he was shown a documentary depicting the construction of the dam, the arrival and departure of cargo ships, and other maritime traffic.

Being an engineer by profession, Murad Ali Shah described the dam as an engineering marvel. NEWS DESK

Private schools urged to ensure mother-tongue education

Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah has urged private educational institutions to adopt a serious and responsible approach towards providing education to children in their mother tongue, stating that learning in one's mother tongue is a fundamental right of every child.

Appreciating the contribution of private educational institutions in educating approximately 4.2 million children across Sindh, he said the private sector was playing an important role in supporting the state's responsibility to provide education, and those associated with it deserved respect and recognition. He expressed these views while addressing an event held at the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, as the chief guest in connection with International Teachers' Day. The event was organized by the All Sindh Private Schools and Colleges Association in collaboration with the Directorate of Inspection and Private Institutions Sindh.

The event was attended by Director General Inspection and Private Institutions Sindh Muhammad Afzal Ansari, Additional Director Rafia Mallah, Executive Director Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority Rasul Bakhsh Shah, Chairman All Sindh Private Schools and Colleges Association Syed Haider Ali, General Secretary Danish Baloch, Vice Chairman Muhammad Saleem, teachers from private schools and colleges across Sindh, students, and other education-sector representatives.

Paying tribute to teachers for their professional services and dedication, the provincial minister said their role was fundamental to the promotion of education. He noted that private educational institutions were providing education to millions of children in Sindh, helping prevent a large number of children from remaining out of school. He said the government was aware of the challenges and issues faced by private schools and would take steps to address their legitimate concerns.

Accepting the demand of private schools for an extension in the validity of their registration, Syed Sardar Ali Shah announced that the registration period for private educational institutions would be extended from three years to five years. Emphasizing the importance of mother-tongue education, the Sindh Education Minister said private schools must fulfil their responsibility in this regard with due seriousness. Providing education to children in their mother tongue was not merely an important educational requirement but also a fundamental right, he said. He added that psychologists agreed that incorporating the mother tongue into education helped better develop children's creativity and learning abilities. NEWS DESK

Sindh governor meets federal religious affairs minister

Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi met Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf at Governor House, here on Monday.

During the meeting, both leaders discussed matters of mutual interest including religious affairs, Hajj arrangements, and the provision of facilities to pilgrims.

The Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi appreciated the measures taken to ensure effective Hajj arrangements and provide the best possible facilities to pilgrims. He said that ensuring quality facilities for Hajj pilgrims was commendable.

They also discussed the establishment of a Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) Library at Governor House.

The initiative aims to promote awareness of the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and foster Islamic education. The Sindh Governor emphasized the need for joint efforts to promote religious teachings and strengthen interfaith harmony. They also exchanged views on promoting religious affairs and spreading the universal message of Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH). NEWS DESK

Section 144 in Karachi

Section 144 has been imposed in Karachi until October 20, banning gatherings of more than five people, rallies, processions, protests and sit-ins, according to a notification.

Karachi Commissioner has issued an order for the enforcement of Section 144 across the city. The notification stated that the restrictions have been imposed in view of road blockages and concerns over the law and order situation.

Under the order, gatherings of more than five people, public rallies, processions, protests and sit-ins are prohibited until October 20. Meanwhile, the federal government has issued a notification for the deployment of Pakistan Army troops in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to assist the civil administration.

The deployment has been approved under Article 245 of the Constitution for the duration of the emergency declared on October 11. According to the notification, the deployment aims to protect the lives and property of citizens and government installations in the province.

The Pakistan Army will assist the civil administration in maintaining law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the notification stated. It said the KP governor, in consultation with General Headquarters (GHQ), would determine the number of troops and resources required for the deployment. The formal notification for the army's deployment will be published in the Gazette of Pakistan, Part II. INP

Mayor Wahab inspects Natha Khan Link Road, says to be opened to public soon

Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab visited the under-construction Natha Khan Link Road and reviewed the ongoing development work, announcing that the road would be opened to the public soon.

He said that the completion of Natha Khan Link Road would connect Shahrah-e-Faisal with Gulistan-e-Johar, improve traffic flow across the city, and help reduce congestion on major roads. He said that Karachi needed more such link roads, and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) was working on their construction.

He added that providing better commuting facilities to citizens and reducing traffic problems were among the city's key priorities. The objective of these development projects was to facilitate daily travel and address the city's fundamental civic issues. The Mayor Karachi said that the development initiatives being undertaken by KMC reflected the genuine priorities of the people. Unlike the past, when greater emphasis was placed solely on the construction of flyovers, the current approach also focused on improving traffic flow through roads and link roads. He said that KMC was undertaking projects in line with the city's needs that would directly benefit citizens and improve Karachi's traffic system.

Mayor Wahab further stated that KMC was taking practical measures to reconstruct roads and improve commuting facilities in different parts of the city. He also visited the under-construction Chakor Nala Expressway and reviewed the progress of the project. He said that the project would greatly benefit commuters travelling towards Gulistan-e-Johar, Johar More, Rashid Minhas Road, and Airport Road, providing them with improved transportation facilities.

He said that, alongside improving the city's roads, KMC was also focusing on resolving fundamental civic issues. Reconstruction work on Chand Bibi Road near Civil Hospital had commenced after addressing the sewerage and drainage problems in the area. He explained that resolving these issues before reconstructing the road would help ensure the project's durability and prevent residents from facing the same problems again.

The Mayor said that there was also good news for the residents of Pehalwan Goth and commuters travelling through the area, as KMC was undertaking development work to improve road conditions and facilitate transportation. Similarly, reconstruction of the internal streets of Block 6, PECHS, in Chanesar Town was underway to provide residents with better roads and improved access.

Karachi Mayor Wahab said that the KMC team was also working to improve the area around Guru Mandir and Meeruth Kabab House. He stated that road construction, rehabilitation, and improvements in basic civic facilities across different parts of Karachi were aimed at providing relief to citizens. He added that the development of Karachi and the resolution of public problems remained among KMC's foremost priorities, and under the leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), efforts to serve the people would continue. NEWS DESK

Bilawal grieved over demise of Pir Arif Zaman

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of party leader, former former member of the Punjab Assembly, Makhdoom Pir Arif Zaman Qureshi.

In a condolence message, Bilawal Bhutto extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the deceased's son, senior PPP leader Haider Zaman Qureshi, and other members of the bereaved family.

He said that Makhdoom Pir Arif Zaman Qureshi had rendered valuable services to the party and that his political contributions would always be remembered. Bilawal Bhutto prayed to Almighty Allah to grant the departed soul forgiveness and a high place in Jannat-ul-Firdous. He also prayed for patience, strength and courage for the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss. NEWS DESK

Karachi Police arrest over 905 in a week

Karachi Police arrested more than 905 suspects, including 60 alleged robbers, during anti-crime operations across the city last week, a police spokesperson said on Monday. District police engaged suspected robbers in 47 encounters, during which 48 suspects were injured and arrested. Police recovered 59 illegal weapons of different types, two cars and 22 motorcycles from the arrested suspects.

In anti-narcotics operations and encounters, police recovered 93.813 kilogrammes of hashish and 4.705 kilogrammes of ice/crystal and heroin from different areas. Police also seized more than 140 illegal weapons allegedly used in street robberies and other criminal activities. In separate operations, Karachi Police recovered 29 snatched or stolen motorcycles and seven vehicles from various areas. The operations were carried out on the directives of Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Azad Khan. NEWS DESK

President for initiatives to cut disaster risks

President Asif Ali Zardari has called for regional cooperation and global initiatives to strengthen disaster risk reduction, stressing the need to shift from disaster response to preparedness.

In his message on International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, observed on October 13, the president said Pakistan had experienced floods, earthquakes, heatwaves and droughts, underscoring the heavy human and economic costs of disasters. He said the country had learned that preparedness is essential and that the traditional approach of responding after a disaster strikes is no longer sufficient.

The president said Pakistan was transforming its disaster management system by using artificial intelligence, satellite technology and real-time data to identify emerging threats, issue early warnings and help communities move to safety before disasters struck.

Emphasising the role of local governments and communities, he said local administrations and community volunteers were often the first to respond during emergencies because of their familiarity with local terrain and populations.

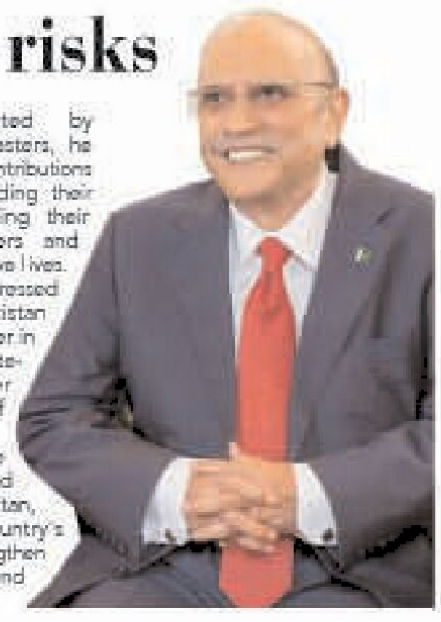
He called upon national and international organisations to make disaster preparedness a core component of their work, adding that Pakistan's experience could offer valuable lessons to the international community.

President Zardari also urged nations to regionalise disaster risk reduction by strengthening cooperation among areas facing shared risks. He stressed that early warning systems must facilitate the rapid exchange of information across national borders.

The president called for a global water resilience programme, a global cryosphere protection initiative and a global food security and climate adaptation fund. He also underscored the need for stronger environmental protection laws and greater international cooperation on shared rivers and common disaster risks.

Recalling the resilience and courage demonstrated by Pakistanis during disasters, he acknowledged the contributions of communities rebuilding their lives, volunteers risking their safety to help others and scientists working to save lives. President Zardari expressed confidence that Pakistan could emerge as a leader in addressing climate-related disasters rather than remain a victim of their impacts.

He urged collective and timely action to build a disaster-resilient Pakistan, reaffirming the country's determination to strengthen its preparedness and resilience. NEWS DESK



NATIONAL

DTM

CM Maryam rolls out mobile health lifeline for workers

Punjab Chief Minister(CM),Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday inaugurated the Social Security Mobile Health Program to provide healthcare facilities to registered industrial workers and their families at their workplaces and doorsteps through 65 mobile healthcare units,including hospitals,clinics,motorcycles and scooters.

Under the programme, more than 4.6 million industrial workers and their family members in Lahore,Kasur and Sheikhupura will benefit from healthcare services. The programme was aimed at ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment, expanding access to medical facilities and reducing the burden on hospitals.

The CM said the initiative marked a significant step towards providing quality healthcare to registered workers and their families.

She said mobile health units would reach factories,commercial establishments and industrial units wherever workers were employed,while their families would also receive medical facilities at their doorsteps.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI) was providing treatment and medicines to more than 10 million industrial workers and their family members through 24 social security hospitals. She added that medical facilities would also be extended through 250 medical outlets under the institution.

The CM said the mobile health programme would facilitate early diagnosis and treatment while helping reduce pressure on social security hospitals.

According to the briefing,the mobile healthcare fleet comprises 10 mobile hospitals,five mobile clinics, specialised dental and cardiac mobile units,40 motorcycles and 10 scooters.

The units will provide medical consultations,outpatient services,diagnostic facilities,medicines,first aid, telemedicine and health awareness services.

The mobile hospitals will have doctors,female doctors,radiologists,nurses,laboratory and X-ray technicians, outpatient departments,radiology facilities and pathology laboratories. Mobile dental services will include dental surgeons,technicians,dental X-ray facilities,intraoral camera systems and telemedicine. The mobile motorcycles and scooters will carry medical kits,first-aid supplies and essential medicines to provide basic healthcare services to workers and their families along designated routes.

The programme also includes a Mobile Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) Screening Unit to facilitate the early detection of heart diseases.

The unit will visit 29,845 factories,industrial establishments and other institutions in Lahore,Sheikhupura and Kasur, according to the briefing.

The mobile healthcare units will also be used to screen 54,000 children studying in workers' welfare schools across Punjab for heart diseases.

The cardiac mobile hospital will provide preliminary diagnosis and medical consultations to industrial workers and their family members,while mobile dental hospitals will offer dental treatment to them. All mobile units will be connected to a digital hub established at the PESSI head office to ensure real-time monitoring of their movements, field operations and service delivery through a central dashboard.

The provincial government aims to extend the program to Gujranwala,Sialkot,Gujrat,Faisalabad,Sargodha, Sahiwal,Multan,Muzaffargarh,Dera Ghazi Khan,Bahawalpur,Rahim Yar Khan and Rawalpindi by March 2027.

During the inauguration,the CM inspected the mobile hospital, mobile dental hospital, motorcycles and scooters and received a briefing on the medicines, medical equipment and diagnostic devices available on the units. NEWS DESK

1.3m rush for Punjab E-bikes

The Punjab government's e-bike scheme attracted significant interest from young people, with more than 1.3 million registering for the initiative and over 607,000 applications submitted, according to an official announcement.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the relevant authorities to complete the process as soon as possible, saying that providing affordable transport to young people and facilitating access to education, particularly for female students, are among the government's priorities.

Under the CM E-Bikes Scheme, 100,000 young people will be selected through a balloting process to receive e-bikes. Successful candidates will pay monthly installments of Rs3,000, while the Punjab government will cover the interest on the bikes, according to the announcement.

On the chief minister's instructions, free driving lessons will also be arranged for successful applicants to help them travel safely and conveniently for educational purposes. NEWS DESK

2 army pilots martyred In training crash

Two Pakistan Army Aviation pilots embraced martyrdom when a Mushshak training aircraft crashed near Nawan Killi, Quetta, due to a technical fault.

According to an ISPR press release, "On mid-day, 12 October 2026, a Mushshak training aircraft of Pakistan Army Aviation crashed near Nawan Killi, Quetta due to a technical fault. Both pilots, Major Husnain Shehzad Humayun (Instructor Pilot) and Captain Abdul Samad (Student Pilot) embraced Shahadat in the unfortunate crash." NEWS DESK

Over 51k secure Hajj 2027 with 2nd payment

The collection of the second installment of Hajj dues under the Government Hajj Scheme 2027 is underway, with 51,500 pilgrims having deposited their dues so far. A total of Rs 32.6 billion has been received under the second installment. According to the spokesperson for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, 26,000 pilgrims made payments through One Link, while 2,126 paid through bank cards.

Meanwhile, 23,200 pilgrims deposited cash through manual bank challans. The proportion of pilgrims making online payments from home through the Hajj portal remains at 55 percent. The spokesperson said the last date for depositing the second installment of dues under the Government Hajj Scheme 2027 is October 20. Pilgrims have been instructed to upload their medical fitness certificates to the Hajj portal before paying the second installment, as the certificate is mandatory for the payment process. The spokesperson directed pilgrims to complete their payments by the deadline, clarifying that applications of those who fail to deposit the second installment by October 20 will be cancelled, and their deposited amounts will be returned. NEWS DESK

NUML lights up with Korean spirit on 580th Hangul Day

The Islamabad King Sejong Institute (IKSI), Department of Korean Language and Culture at NUML celebrated the 580th Hangeul Day with great enthusiasm, highlighting the significance of the Korean language in fostering cultural understanding and strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea.

The ceremony was graced by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, H.E. Han Sungho, as the Chief Guest. Rector NUML, Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI(M) (Retd), Director General NUML, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, along with Deans, Directors, faculty members and students, also attended the celebrations.

The event featured an essay writing competition, a calligraphy competition and vibrant cultural performances showcasing the richness of Korean language and culture. The activities provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic abilities, creativity and appreciation of Korean traditions.

Rector NUML, Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI(M) (Retd), commended the Korean people for their profound love for their language and their enthusiasm for celebrating Hangeul Day.

He reaffirmed NUML's commitment to promoting languages as a means of fostering mutual understanding and strengthening people-to-people connections between Pakistan and friendly countries.

The Rector emphasized that learning a foreign language opens doors to diverse educational, professional and cultural opportunities.

He also congratulated the winners of the essay writing and calligraphy competitions and appreciated the students for their impressive cultural performances. He underscored that sustained engagement through language and cultural exchange can contribute significantly to stronger bilateral relations, emphasizing that people-to-people contact remains one of the most effective ways to bring the two nations closer.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Han Sungho expressed his gratitude to the Rector NUML for his enthusiasm and commitment to the celebration and promotion of the Korean language in Pakistan. He congratulated the winners of the various competitions and appreciated the efforts made by NUML to promote Korean language and culture among Pakistani students. The Ambassador emphasized that language is not merely a means of communication but also a bridge that connects people, cultures and nations.

He observed that individuals learning Korean contribute to bringing Pakistan and Korea closer by developing a deeper understanding of each other's cultures, traditions and values.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of prizes among the competition winners, recognizing their talent and dedication. Souvenirs were also presented to the Korean Ambassador as a gesture of respect and goodwill. AGENCIES

Positive winds in KP, terror to be crushed: Tarar

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday welcomed a positive change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying the province's people were determined to fight terrorism and wanted the menace eradicated permanently.

Addressing an international conference on Pakistan's Evolving Counter-Terrorism Landscape and Regional Peace and Security, he said the fight against terrorism would continue with full force to eliminate the menace from Pakistan and the region.

He said Pakistan had remained at the forefront of the war against terrorism for decades, losing more than 90,000 lives and suffering economic losses exceeding $100 billion. He said Pakistan stood as an ambassador of peace, a proponent of regional security and a symbol of resistance against violent extremism. Every Pakistani life sacrificed in the fight against terrorism contributed to the country's security and global peace, he added. Referring to Pakistan's recent mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, Atta Tarar said the country had demonstrated its commitment to resolving international conflicts.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir had contributed to the process, which was being acknowledged by the international community.

The minister said Pakistan had consistently pursued regional stability, particularly in Afghanistan, as a peaceful and stable country would benefit the region through increased trade with Central Asia, foreign investment, cooperation and connectivity.

He said Pakistan had participated in negotiations in different parts of the world involving the deputy prime minister, defence minister and national security adviser, seeking to convey to the interim Afghan government its commitment to peace and prosperity, particularly for the Afghan people.

However, these efforts had not yielded the desired results, he said, adding that Pakistan had hosted more than four million Afghan refugees for over four decades and borne a heavy cost, but its hospitality and generosity had not been reciprocated.

Atta Tarar said Pakistan continued to face terrorism emanating from safe havens across its international border with Afghanistan. Citing United Nations and independent assessments, he said more than 6,000 Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists were estimated to be present in Afghanistan, while the total estimated terrorist presence exceeded 20,000.

Since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021, the TTP had continued to exploit Afghan territory for recruitment, training, facilitation, planning and attacks against Pakistan, he said.

Pakistan had responded to these attacks because it could not allow terrorists to use Afghan territory to target the country, he said, adding that its desire for peace must not be misconstrued as weakness.

Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to peaceful coexistence, Atta Tarar highlighted the plight of the Afghan people, particularly women, who, he said, had been denied education and economic empowerment and excluded from the productive workforce.

He said the Afghan regime's ideology promoted violent extremism and had nothing to do with Islam. A regime that denied women and minorities their basic rights while promoting violent extremism posed a challenge to regional peace, he added.

Atta Tarar said Pakistan had made every effort to bring the interim Afghan government to common ground, but recent negotiations had been unsuccessful. Referring to the public response to terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said he had recently visited Kohat, where terrorist attacks had taken place, and interacted with injured people at the Combined Military Hospital. AGENCIES

Public warned against fake polio job ads

The Pakistan Polio Programme has warned the public against fake job advertisements and unverified websites circulating online in its name, urging people not to share personal information or documents without verifying their authenticity. In an advisory, the programme clarified that a job advertisement recently circulating on social media and other online platforms was fake and had neither been issued nor approved by the Pakistan Polio Programme.

It urged the public to exercise caution and avoid relying on unverified advertisements, particularly those seeking personal information or documents. AGENCIES

DRAP makes 2D barcodes mandatory on medicines

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has made two-dimensional (2D) barcodes and serialization mandatory for pharmaceutical products manufactured locally or imported into Pakistan on or after October 9, 2026, to curb counterfeit medicines and strengthen supply chain transparency.

In a notification issued under the amended Drugs (Labelling and Packaging) Rules, 1978, through S.R.O. 963(I)/2026, DRAP said the requirement would apply to all registered drug products manufactured locally or imported from the effective date under the first phase of the Pharmaceutical Track and Trace System.

However, medicine batches manufactured locally or imported before October 9, 2026, have been exempted from the new requirement and will remain permitted for import, distribution and sale. AGENCIES

PTI can contest emergency, governor rule in KP

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Monday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) can challenge the imposition of an emergency and Governor's Rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in court if it has reservations over the decision.

Speaking to the media, Chaudhry said the constitutional validity of the emergency would be examined by parliament, adding that the measure had been taken due to PTI's alleged stubbornness and failure to cooperate with the federal government on counterterrorism efforts.

He said the government had sought PTI's cooperation in combating terrorism, but the provincial government had allegedly continued to create obstacles in the federal government's efforts.

"The opposition should challenge the imposition of an emergency and Governor's Rule in court," he said, adding that the opposition should also invite the government to its all-parties conference (APC) so that all relevant data could be presented before the participants. Chaudhry said the federal government had made repeated offers of dialogue to the opposition leader and maintained that the government had never closed the door to negotiations on political issues.

He clarified that the government had not asked PTI to postpone its long march but had sought cooperation on counterterrorism efforts.

The minister said special security arrangements had been made in 12 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that the emergency measures were aimed at restoring lasting peace in the province.

He said the emergency would remain in force until the objectives of peace and stability had been achieved.

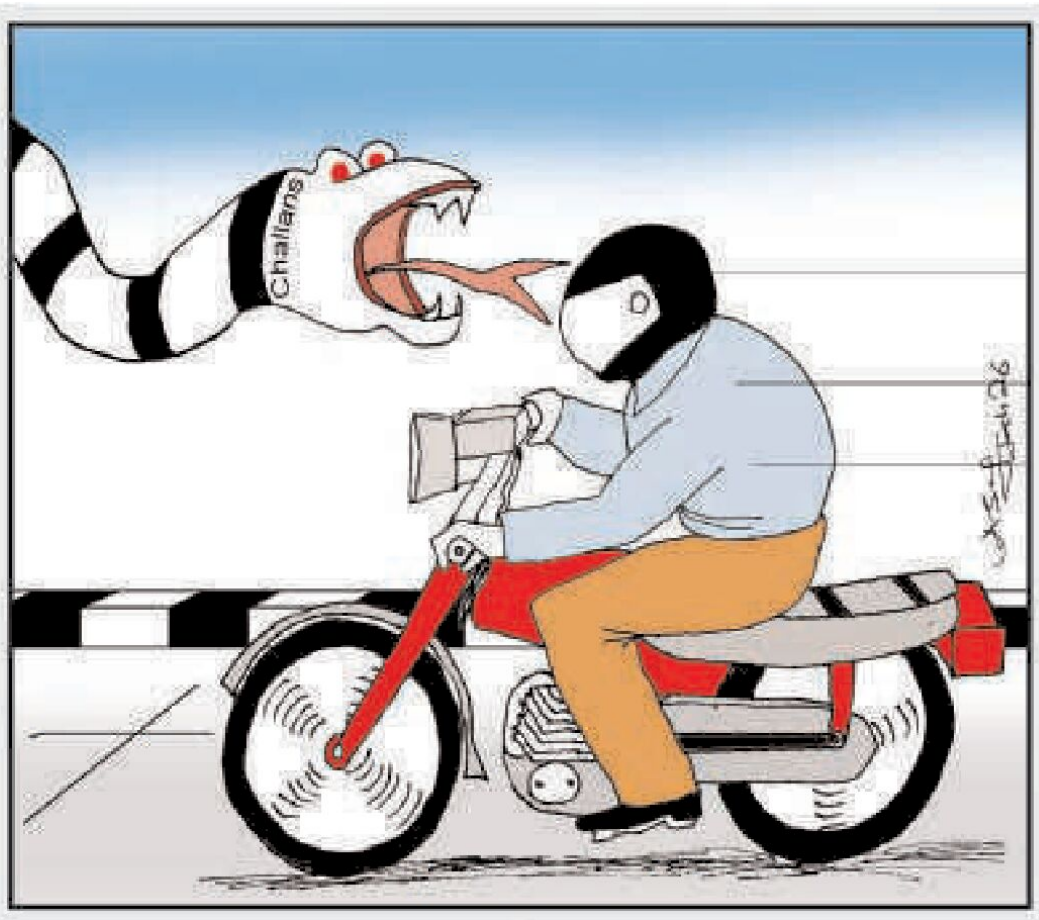
Chaudhry further said the imposition of the emergency had not been an abrupt decision. He added that affected areas would be cleared before being handed over to the civil administration.

Claiming that the people of KP had welcomed the decision, the minister said no protests had taken place anywhere in the province against the imposition of emergency or Governor's Rule. He also attributed public dissatisfaction with PTI to what he described as a lack of development in the province over the past 13 years.

The remarks came amid heightened political tensions following the imposition of Governor's Rule and an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. President Asif Ali Zardari approved the measures on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution. AGENCIES

EDITORIAL

DTM



KP emergency rule should be above politics

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's account of the federal government's repeated attempts to secure Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's cooperation against terrorism raises an important question: why should political differences prevent elected governments from working together to protect citizens? He also claimed that backchannel contacts and efforts by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to arrange talks had failed to produce the desired outcome. According to Naqvi, the prime minister had proposed a meeting with the opposition leader in the National Assembly in September, along with a committee to address political differences and consider postponing PTI's planned march towards Islamabad. These efforts, if accurately described, suggest that the federal government sought political engagement before moving towards extraordinary measures in KP. The provincial leadership should have treated the offer of cooperation as an opportunity to strengthen the fight against militancy rather than allowing its confrontation with the Centre to overshadow an urgent security challenge.

PTI and the KP government must recognise that provincial autonomy does not mean avoiding coordination with the federal government on national security. Equally, political opposition cannot become an excuse for refusing to engage with institutions responsible for the country's wider security policy. When militant violence threatens citizens, political leaders have a duty to explain their differences, negotiate practical solutions and demonstrate that public safety comes before party interests. The planned march towards Islamabad, at a time when the two governments were struggling to agree on counterterrorism policy, risked deepening an already dangerous confrontation. PTI was entitled to raise political and constitutional concerns, but it also had a responsibility to consider whether its protest would help or hinder efforts to address the security crisis. The Centre, meanwhile, must establish transparently why emergency measures were necessary and demonstrate that they will produce better security outcomes rather than merely change the provincial power structure. The failure of negotiations cannot, by itself, prove that Governor's Rule or emergency intervention was the only option available. Both sides must be judged by their willingness to find workable solutions and by results on the ground.

Killing of senior ECP official shows terror threat

The killing of Election Commission of Pakistan Director Shamshad Khan Mehsud by unidentified gunmen in Tank district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is another grim reminder of the growing security challenges facing the province. The attack, confirmed by police on Saturday, must be condemned in the strongest terms. Mehsud, who had previously served as the provincial election commissioner of KP, was reportedly visiting Girra Baloch village to offer condolences to his family following the death of his elder brother. Whatever the eventual findings, the killing of a public official in such circumstances exposes the vulnerability of citizens and state representatives in areas struggling with recurring violence. It is particularly disturbing that a family visit to share grief should end in another family's tragedy. The authorities must conduct a thorough investigation, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Condemnation alone will not suffice; the state must demonstrate that those who resort to violence cannot escape accountability.

The incident has occurred amid a troubling series of violent attacks in Tank and surrounding areas, including reported killings of police personnel and a peace committee member, as well as a suspected suicide attack. This pattern demands a serious reassessment of the security response in southern KP. The loss of experienced public officials and law enforcement personnel weakens public confidence and makes the ordinary business of administration increasingly difficult. Terrorism cannot be defeated through occasional search operations or heightened security immediately after an attack. It requires sustained intelligence-led action, effective policing, coordination among security agencies and the dismantling of networks that plan and facilitate violence. Equally important is ensuring that local communities can cooperate with the authorities without fear of retaliation. The federal and provincial governments must move beyond political differences and make public safety a shared priority. The killing of Mehsud also raises wider concerns about the protection of officials who serve essential democratic institutions. The Election Commission plays a vital role in safeguarding the electoral process, and attacks on its personnel must not be treated as isolated crimes without examining their broader implications. While investigators must establish the motive before drawing conclusions, the state cannot afford complacency as violence continues to claim lives in KP.

Where the Mind is Without Fear

In it, one witnesses wave upon wave of unarmed Indian protesters move toward the salt works. The police force which is guarding the factory brutally strikes them with lathis but the protestors just take the blows. The sense of standing on the side of justice arouses such a sense of fearlessness. And that is what the Delhi youth protestors are exhibiting, time after time. They are a wave that cannot be stopped. Or barricaded. They are lathi-charged, bundled like sacks into vans, mistreated.

Nothing else encapsulates the scenes that played out on October 10 in Delhi. The Indian state went into overdrive, summoning thousands of security personnel (30000? 40000?), from Delhi and other parts of India. They employed totalitarian tactics of shutdowns of transport and communications, pre-emptive arrests, threats to probable participants etc.

The days and months leading up to October 10 have been a study in the contrasting emotions of fear and fearlessness. Fear on part of the supposedly all-powerful state. Fearlessness on the part of the people, mostly the youth.

Nothing else encapsulates the scenes that played out on October 10 in Delhi. The Indian state went into overdrive, summoning thousands of security personnel (30000? 40000?), from Delhi and other parts of India. They employed totalitarian tactics of shutdowns of transport and communications, pre-emptive arrests, threats to probable participants etc. In short, the big hammer approach of - "Stop the protestors at all costs."

Such a disproportionate use of force to crush the freedom of expression of the common, unarmed people has been seen, mostly in militaristic settings of Kashmir. Some of this nature of a response has been utilized in the name of countering left-wing extremism, say, in Chattisgarh.

But this display of raw force and oppressive tactics, in the capital city of India, against the citizens of India who expressed no hostile intent, was shocking and jarring to almost everyone - the newbie protestor and the more seasoned agitator.

Imagine the conversation in security establishments around "threat perception" - from unarmed students and youth mostly - to plan with such an overwhelming response!

One is reminded of the heavily armed ICE agents terrorizing ordinary citizens in US towns recently.

This confrontation in Delhi was symptomatic of the state's nervousness about its own wrongdoings and the desperate need to hide them. Truly an epic David and Goliath encounter. In which David won once again.

Because thousands of Davids attended the protest despite all attempts to hobble them - trains canceled in to Delhi, nearly 50 metro stations closed, cab companies placed under restrictions. They came - from across the northern swathe of this country, from the northeast to the west, from Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, UP, Punjab, Haryana, MP - even from Gujarat and Maharashtra. If not from the southern states as well!

By planes, trains and automobiles, as far as they could, and then walked if necessary.

They slept the day before on pavements, outside metro stations; some sought shelter in sacred refuges like the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara. The state tried to deny them access to the protest site, to suffocate their progress. But, their will was unbendable. Sure, many of them might have some associations with political parties, with left-leaning outfits. But many did not. They still came. With their frustrations, with their despair - but with visions of a fairer country and a desire to resist injustices.

A state that does not meet them half-way but just tries to erect an imposing wall in their path is an arrogant state. But that arrogance rests on a sense of impunity. Of invincibility. Of a blemishless Teflon-like moral strength. But that feeling of false superiority has corroded when it has been used to mask egregious misdeeds. So, now that same arrogant state can only lash out and pretend, like an ostrich, that they still have the higher moral ground.

UMANG KUMAR

Umang Kumar is an Indian entrepreneur, angel investor

But the endless stream of determined youth who might come armed with just their placards have been busting that myth time and again, in front of cameras and eyewitnesses.

What one will discern in most of the face-offs of the youth with the fearsome security personnel is a breathtaking boldness, a devil-may-care attitude and a steely resolve for justice. You might have seen something of that spirit in the Dharasana Salt Works scene from the motion picture, Gandhi.

In it, one witnesses wave upon wave of unarmed Indian protesters move toward the salt works. The police force which is guarding the factory brutally strikes them with lathis but the protestors just take the blows. The sense of standing on the side of justice arouses such a sense of fearlessness. And that is what the Delhi youth protestors are exhibiting, time after time. They are a wave that cannot be stopped. Or barricaded. They are lathi-charged, bundled like sacks into vans, mis-treated. But they continue rising up again. And again. Their mind is without fear. Much as Rabindranath Tagore had envisioned in his poem.

Fear is responding with snarling violence. Fearlessness marches on, with chants, slogans, signs - and resolve.

Why Did It Take 13 Years for 'Shahid' to Find an OTT Home?

Perhaps the most powerful thing about Shahid arriving on OTT in 2026 is that the film has outlived the circumstances that once made it difficult to access. Thirteen years may have passed, but its questions remain stubbornly relevant: What happens when an accusation becomes a conviction in the public mind? Who defends the rights of those whom society has already condemned? And what does justice mean when fear becomes more powerful than due process?

Hansal Mehta's Shahid, the National Award-winning film based on the life of lawyer and human rights activist Shahid Azmi, has finally arrived on Prime Video after nearly 13 years. Its arrival isn't just about an old movie landing on a new streaming service. It reopens a much bigger conversation about what happens to movies that dare to tackle topics like dissent, state power, terrorism, and the rights of the accused.

When Shahid hit theaters in 2013, it was a modest film carrying a massive story. It followed Shahid Azmi, a Mumbai lawyer who chose to defend people accused in terrorism cases, fighting for due process in a climate where accusation often meant instant guilt. Azmi was murdered in February 2010 after receiving repeated threats for his legal work. Over a decade later, the film's arrival on a mainstream streaming platform has everyone asking the same question: why was such an acclaimed movie so hard to find online for so long?

Recognized by the State, Lost to the Web

What makes the 13-year wait so strange is that Shahid was never an obscure, forgotten project. It was recognized at the highest level, winning two National Film Awards. Hansal Mehta took home Best Director, and Rajkummar Rao won Best Actor for a career-defining performance.

The official award citation explicitly praised the film for telling the true story of a slain activist against the backdrop of communal violence in Mumbai. Yet, despite receiving the highest honor from the Indian government, the film seemed to disappear into thin air when the streaming age arrived. Critical praise, it turns out, didn't guarantee easy digital access.

Apurva Asrani Asks: Why Now?

When the film finally went live on Prime Video, its co-writer and editor, Apurva Asrani, took to social media to celebrate, but she also raised the elephant in the room. She pointed out how the political and cultural landscape shifted after the film's 2013 release, suggesting that an increasingly tense environment surrounding activists, journalists, and defence lawyers might have squeezed out space for stories like Shahid.

ZIYAULLAH KHAN

The writer is social entrepreneur, activist and writer

Asrani openly wondered if the film's 2026 digital release signals a shift in the cultural mood. It's a compelling point, though it's worth noting that there is no public proof that any platform, government body, or regulator intentionally suppressed the film. But the fact that nobody really knows for sure is exactly why Asrani's question resonates so strongly.

The Streaming Boom Makes the Delay Stranger

Back in 2013, streaming in India barely existed. Fast forward to today, and India boasts one of the largest OTT markets in the world, with over 200 million paid subscriptions and a digital media space worth trillions of rupees.

With thousands of titles available at the click of a button, the delay becomes even harder to wrap your head around. Why did a decorated piece of Indian cinema struggle to find a permanent streaming home while virtually everything else found a spot?

Is It Just Politics, or Complicated Business?

There is another, more grounded side to the story. A missing film doesn't always equal active censorship; often, it's just messy business. Corporate ownership changes, tangled contract rights, missing high-definition technical masters, and licensing disputes routinely trap older films in legal limbo.

In fact, Hansal Mehta himself previously called the film's digital disappearance a "personal tragedy," admitting he wasn't even sure who held the rights. Furthermore, the film wasn't completely invisible a rental version had briefly surfaced on Prime Video in 2024. The real milestone here is that Shahid has finally landed on a mainstream subscription tier, making it accessible to millions without extra fees.

Uncomfortable Questions That Last

Part of what makes Shahid stand out is that it doesn't offer easy comfort. It forces the audience to confront tough questions:

What actually happens when someone is tagged with a terror charge?

Does an accusation automatically equal guilt in the eyes of society?

Can a lawyer defend an unpopular accused person without being branded a traitor?

These aren't easy topics, but they are essential for any democracy. By grounding these big ideals in a deeply personal human story, the movie created a narrative that hasn't aged a day.

The True Cost of Digital Absence

A movie can win every award on the planet, but if people can't watch it, it eventually fades from the public consciousness. Cinema is a vital part of our shared cultural memory. Movies like Shahid keep real history alive stories that might otherwise stay buried in dusty court archives or old newspaper clippings.

The promise of the OTT revolution was that no good film would ever be lost again. Shahid proves that digital abundance doesn't automatically mean easy access.

Thirteen Years Is a Lifetime in Cinema

Thirteen years is a long time. Teenagers who were too young to catch Shahid in theaters in 2013 are full-grown adults today. Actors have become superstars, streaming platforms have risen and fallen, and public debates have completely transformed.

Shahid has finally crossed the digital divide. Its arrival on Prime Video is more than just another weekend binge option it's a chance to revisit a vital story. Ultimately, the biggest question isn't just why it took 13 years to stream, but why powerful stories about justice often have to fight so hard just to be seen.

Final Thought - The Film's Questions Never Went Away

Perhaps the most powerful thing about Shahid arriving on OTT in 2026 is that the film has outlived the circumstances that once made it difficult to access. Thirteen years may have passed, but its questions remain stubbornly relevant: What happens when an accusation becomes a conviction in the public mind? Who defends the rights of those whom society has already condemned? And what does justice mean when fear becomes more powerful than due process?

There may be perfectly ordinary commercial and rights-related explanations for the film's long OTT journey, and no public evidence establishes that it was deliberately suppressed. But its absence for so long still deserves scrutiny.

As films are not merely entertainment, they are part of a society's memory. Shahid is finally available. The greater tragedy would be if, after waiting 13 years to reach a wider audience, we watched it without asking the uncomfortable questions it was made to ask. Some films entertain us. Some films disturb us. And a rare few remind us why the freedom to tell difficult stories matters in the first place.

OPINION DTM

KARACHI: Fisherman dragging nets ashore after fishing at the provincial capital's beach. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Lahore cannot afford to ignore its air pollution crisis

Lahore's worsening air quality has once again raised concerns about the health of its residents. Although the Punjab Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) questioned an air quality reading that placed Lahore among the world's most polluted cities, the disagreement over monitoring methods should not distract from the serious pollution problem facing the provincial capital.

The EPA reportedly questioned the certification and legal status of air quality monitoring devices installed at the US embassy in Lahore. It also pointed out that the Air Quality Index (AQI) can vary according to location and time. Such differences highlight the need for reliable, transparent and consistent air quality monitoring.

However, a debate over individual readings does not remove the need to address Lahore's pollution. The city has faced recurring smog and poor air quality for years, particularly as winter approaches. Vehicle emissions, industrial pollution, crop residue burning and the burning of garbage all contribute to the problem.

With a population of more than 13 million, Lahore faces a major public health challenge. Its reputation as the City of Gardens cannot protect residents from polluted air. Tree plantation drives are useful, but they cannot replace effective action against the sources of emissions.

Delhi and other cities in the region also struggle with severe air pollution, showing that the problem requires sustained efforts and cooperation across administrative boundaries. At the same time, Pakistan needs dependable local monitoring systems to help the public understand the severity of the situation and make informed decisions.

The provincial government should strengthen inspections of industrial units, enforce vehicle emission standards and take strict action against the burning of crop residues and waste. It should also improve public transport and encourage cleaner industrial and energy practices.

Air pollution is not merely an environmental issue; it is a threat to public health. Exposure to polluted air can worsen asthma and other respiratory illnesses and increase the risk of heart and lung problems. Children, older people and those with existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable.

The government must make clean air a priority through effective enforcement, public awareness and long-term planning. Lahore's residents deserve reliable information about the air they breathe and practical measures to protect their health. The city's pollution crisis demands action, not arguments over rankings alone.

KASHAF MUNIR
Lahore

Pakistan must tap its religious tourism potential

The proverb "The early bird catches the worm" is relevant to today's changing world. Countries that make the right decisions at the right time can benefit from emerging opportunities. Religious tourism is one such opportunity that Pakistan cannot afford to ignore.

Religious tourism is among the oldest forms of travel. Today, tourism plays an important role in the economies of many countries, attracting visitors interested in ancient civilisations, religious sites, cultural heritage and historical landmarks.

Pakistan is blessed with a rich cultural and religious heritage. From Karachi to Kashmir, the country has many places worth visiting. It is home to important religious sites associated with Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam. According to figures cited by the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), the country has hundreds of locations with tourism potential, including many linked to religious heritage.

Hindu religious sites include Katas Raj Temples in Chakwal and the Jagannath Temple in Sialkot. Sikh heritage sites include Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, and Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hasan Abdal. For Buddhists, the ancient ruins of Takht-i-Bahi and the nearby remains of Sahri-Bahlol in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are important parts of the Gandhara civilisation.

These sites demonstrate Pakistan's potential to attract pilgrims, researchers and tourists from around the world. Properly managed religious tourism could generate revenue, create jobs and improve the country's international image.

Pakistan has already taken an important step through the Kartarpur Corridor, which has made it easier for Sikh pilgrims to visit one of their most sacred sites. However, the country should not limit its efforts to one religion. All religious heritage sites deserve attention, protection and promotion.

The government should improve security, preserve historical buildings and provide basic facilities for visitors. Hotels, restaurants, transport services, information centres and trained guides could make visits more convenient while creating opportunities for local communities.

Pakistan has a valuable opportunity to turn its religious heritage into an economic asset. What is needed is a clear policy, effective management and consistent investment. If these steps are taken in time, religious tourism could become an important source of income and international goodwill.

WAJID ALI
Lahore

Earth Flunks 2026 Physical Exam

ROBERT HUNZIKER

Robert Hunziker intensely researches ecosystems

The planet has flunked its annual physical exam. Seven-of-Nine planetary boundaries have been breached. This means: "Human activities have pushed Earth beyond its Safe Operating Space. The planet's natural resilience is weakening: Global warming is accelerating, ecosystems are showing clear signs of degradation, and early warning signs of tipping points are emerging in key systems." (Johan Rockström, joint director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany Planetary Health Check 2026.)

The Planetary Health Check 2026 (PHC '26) comprehensive (beautifully done) report is exhausting to contemplate, 124 pages of scientific analysis while not knowing for sure what to do on an individual basis to help what appears to be a train wreck in slow-motion. Screaming!!! comes to mind, but then again, who's listening and do they really care? After all, the planet is so big and so overwhelming, what can one person do? But it's what people do not do that makes a difference, for example, stop using fossil fuels in favor of solar energy. Indeed, it's disturbing that seven of nine planetary boundaries have transgressed; it's not a good look and demands attention, assuming something, if anything at all, can be done to help; here are the seven infamous transgressions:

Climate Change influenced by greenhouse gas emissions and global temperatures.

Loss of Biodiversity

Extensive Deforestation and Habitat Conversion

Freshwater Change via alteration of river flows, soil moisture, and water usage

Biogeochemical Flows via disruption of natural nitrogen and phosphorus cycles because of synthetic fertilizers.

Accumulation of man-made pollutants, synthetic chemicals, and plastics.

Ocean Acidification via excessive levels of CO2.

Two-of-Nine boundaries remain safe: (8) Stratospheric Ozone Depletion thanks to global bans on ozone-depleting substances (9) Atmospheric Aerosol within safe limits.

"With seven out of nine boundaries transgressed, we have pushed Earth outside of its Safe Operating Space - meaning that we are turning Earth from a safe home into one full of hazards that threaten people across the world... The only way to bring Earth below 1.5°C of global warming is to phase out fossil fuels and, simultaneously, to reverse the transgression of the other Planetary Boundaries - especially by safeguarding the integrity of the biosphere," Ibid.

Living Beyond Earth's Limits

It's only too obvious that "reversing the transgressions of planetary boundaries" is easy to suggest as a solution, but, come on, based upon 200 years of human experience, not happening any time soon, if at all, better to brace for the inevitable.

More to the point, there's a bigger overwhelming problem at hand: A recent study found today's population overshoot of 8.3 billion to be far above what can be sustained by a wheezing, coughing planet hobbling on one crutch: "Humanity may already be living far beyond what Earth can sustainably support, according to a sweeping new study analyzing more than 200 years of population and environmental data. Researchers found that while population growth once fueled innovation and expansion, the trend shifted decades ago as the planet's resources became increasingly strained." (Humanity Has Already Exceeded Earth's Limits, Study Warns, ScienceDaily, May 27, 2026)

According to the study, population growth accelerated before the 1950s. More people led to greater innovation, increased energy use, and technological advances that supported more growth, but the pattern changed during the 1960s as population continued to increase. "This shift marked the beginning of what we call 'a negative demographic phase,' according to Corey Bradshaw, Matthew Flinders Professor of Global Ecology at Flinders University," Ibid.

Population growth was only possible because societies relied heavily on fossil fuels and consumed natural resources faster than Earth can replenish them.

"The truly sustainable population is much lower and closer to what the world supported in the mid-twentieth century. Our calculations show a sustainable global population closer to about 2.5 billion people if everyone were to live within ecological limits and comfortably, economically secure living standards," Ibid.

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As a result of today's real world of 8.38 people making demands on the planet, straining/exceeding seven key boundaries, according to Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson d/d Sept. 28, 2026: "The United Nations Environment Programme has acknowledged that the world has lost the opportunity to prevent certain severe consequences of climate change, marking a shift in the global response strategy. According to a major report released in early September 2026, exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold set by the Paris Agreement is now unavoidable in the coming years due to accumulated greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. This overshoot means some of the most damaging effects, including (1) accelerated sea level rise (2) irreversible glacier and ice sheet melt (3) intensified extreme weather events (4) ecosystem disruptions, and (5) threats to food and water security, can no longer be fully averted."

Is the Planet a Socialist?

With 8.3 billion people straining resources, the only conceivable way to tackle seven out-of-bounds planetary boundaries requires global cooperation and equitable 'Per Capita GDP' contributions, which is foreign to capitalistic principles of rugged individualistic ownership and profit-oriented competitive free markets, "let the markets decide" cannot ignore a profit motive. Yet, socialism depends upon equitable distribution of resources. How else is it possible to tackle the Great Overshoot?

"Mainstream environmentalists seek to solve ecological problems almost exclusively through three mechanical strategies: (1) technological bullets, (2) extending the market to all aspects of nature, and (3) creating what are intended as mere islands of preservation in a world of almost universal exploitation and destruction of natural habitats. In contrast, a minority of critical human ecologists have come to understand the need to change our fundamental social relations. Some of the best, most concerned ecologists, searching for concrete models of change, have thus come to focus on those states (or regions) that are both ecological and socialistic (in the sense of relying to a considerable extent on social planning rather than market forces) in orientation." (Ecology and the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism, Monthly Review, November 2008)

Altering How the Earth System Works in Only 70 Years

"Human beings have been changing their environments for thousands of years. What we have not had before the past seventy years is change that actually alters the way the Earth System works, an actual break with the conditions that have been dominant on Earth for some twelve thousand years." (An Ecological Civilization Will Have to Be Socialist, Monthly Review, January 2025)

Bangladeshi Fashion Workers and a German law (part-II)

Yet there are NGO reports on violence in the workplace. In other words, stable buildings alone do not create a safe workplace. Reports from various human rights organizations state that working conditions are hardly any better; some even report that they have worsened due to inflation and the pandemic. For example, sexual violence and harassment are widespread in factories in the clothing industry. According to a study by the non-governmental organization ActionAid, around 80% of Bangladeshi workers have either experienced or observed assaults at work.

The air is heavy, hot, polluted, dirty, and dusty. Workers run home quickly during their lunch break. The meeting with Hemalika takes place in her brother's apartment. The room in which she waits is not even 10 square meters; one bed takes up almost the entire space. She sits on a chair next to it.

Hemalika speaks quietly and keeps looking at the floor, or at her brother in search of support. The 27-year-old has been working in the finishing department of Fiat Fashion for two years. "Most of the products I work on are intended for [Germany's] Lidl client," she says. A pink scarf - an ama - covers her head. She picks up the fabric and strokes it smooth with her fingers as she begins to describe what happened.

To verify her story, German journalists spoke with other workers at the factory, as well as with the local trade union and human rights organizations. On August 16, 2025, Hemalika was almost finished with her work. "Around 18:00, I prepared a cardboard box for Lidl with a sweater. The box was torn open," she says.

As a result, the head of the department came to her workboard. "My boss saw this and rejected the box, so I replaced it." That could have been the end of it. But the department head asked, "How did this happen? Why is the box torn open?"

He then began to scold her loudly. According to Hemalika's account, the department head insulted her, calling her a whore, and beat her with the board several times. "I started crying. Everyone in the room saw that," she says. In complaints filed with the industry organization BGMEA (Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association) and the Bangladesh Ministry of Labor, it is stated that the department head beat and insulted her.

THOMAS KLIKAUER

Thomas Klikauer is a Senior lecturer teaching Human resource management and Industrial Relations at the Sydney Graduate School of Management

This behavior is a serious violation of labor law and of workplace standards. Hemalika says she went to a supervisor. When she told him what had happened, he said: "He's like your brother, that's why he beat you. Forgive him."

When another supervisor didn't help her either, she went back to the first supervisor and insisted on a clarification. Then the head of the department took her hand and asked for forgiveness. "I was scared and I just said that he should never do something like that again, please," she says.

When Hemalika went home that evening, she constantly rewound what had happened in her head. Since then, she keeps retelling herself what her department head did to her and what the supervisor said afterwards: forgive him. How your department head asked you for forgiveness. But she cannot forgive him.

These workplaces create dependencies. More than 84% of Bangladesh's export earnings come from the textile and clothing industry. Bangladesh is dependent on it - on the textile industry. The country is dependent on Germany - the largest European sales market.

In the 2023/24 financial year, Bangladesh exported goods worth over 54 bn ($6.6 bn) - the majority of them textiles. Around 4.5 million people work in the textile industry; most of them are women like Hemalika. Her workplace was never considered truly safe.

The place where German journalists first meet Hemalika is not far from the Memorial of the Rana Plaza collapse. The memorial commemorates the "disaster" - evil heretics would say profit maximization leading to the death of workers - in April 2013. On that day, the Rana Plaza factory building "collapsed" - all by itself! In reality, the company saved money on safety measures. What followed was almost predictable. It killed more than 1,130 workers and injured more than 2,500.

Not by chance, workers in that factory building produced for German companies. Not to worry. Only ten years later were the responsibilities of German companies legally stipulated by the LkSG (2023). Since 2023, corporations have had to check the environmental impact, corporate governance, and compliance with human rights of their suppliers. Just checking, as it is said.

If a company learns of a violation of human rights, it must immediately conduct a risk analysis, solve the problem, and introduce preventive measures. Who is going to tell? If it does not, Germany's Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA) can be contacted.

In fact, not a lot has changed since Rana Plaza. Still - and only after years of protests - the minimum wage was increased from 8,000 to 12,500 taka per month in 2023, the equivalent of a meager 90 or $149. Still, today, factory buildings are considered safer.

Yet there are NGO reports on violence in the workplace. In other words, stable buildings alone do not create a safe workplace. Reports from various human rights organizations state that working conditions are hardly any better; some even report that they have worsened due to inflation and the pandemic. For example, sexual violence and harassment are widespread in factories in the clothing industry. According to a study by the non-governmental organization ActionAid, around 80% of Bangladeshi workers have either experienced or observed assaults at work.

The problem is that most workers hardly know their rights. So it was for Hemalika. Hemalika is "lucky" - yet, unions do not appear suddenly out of luck. Workers fought and organized a union. Her factory has its own union, the Fiat Fashion Workers Union. It works under the umbrella of the largest union for textile workers in the country: the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF).

The next day, Hemalika talked to members of the union, told them everything, and demanded justice. She was not aware of how much she would trigger with this. Three days later, a message from Fiat Fashion (2025) was read at the factory building stating that processes at the factory had been significantly disrupted.

In the notice, management declared an indefinite factory closure. Shortly afterwards, there was a new notice. In it, management targeted 57 workers who, according to factory management, were involved in a previous protest to support Hemalika. Six of them were elected union representatives. Even when the factory reopened under pressure from the trade union, these six were forbidden to enter the building.

German journalists met twelve of the affected workers and spoke with them. They had gone to the supervisor together and demanded consequences for the head of the department. There was no solution, but also no further dispute. The meeting took place in February 2026 in Dhaka, at the headquarters of the NGWF.

Many workers were threatened by management's thugs and even had to leave their homes for security reasons. They report threats from local brutes as well as anonymous calls telling them to stop protesting against Fiat Fashion. In addition, the landlords of three employees - including union members - demanded that they leave their apartments for no apparent reason.

NATIONAL DTM

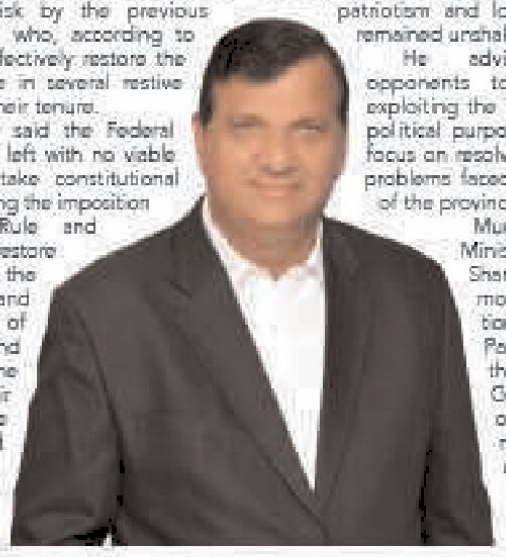
'Youm-e-Nijat' observed in KP after governor's rule: Amir Muqam

Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam on Monday said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had observed Youm-e-Nijat after PTI provincial government was made non-functional following the imposition of Governor Rule and Emergency under the constitutional provisions.

Addressing a press conference at the Peshawar Press Club, the federal minister said that people in various parts of the province distributed sweets and reports of fireworks were also received after the imposition of Governor Rule under the constitution. He said no untoward incident had been reported from any district and that routine life and activities were continuing normally, which, he added, negated the claims being made by the PTI leadership.

"People of KP want peace, employment and development rather than terrorism," Engr Amir Muqam said, adding that the people were also demanding accountability of all those responsible for misusing or looting provincial resources during the last two-and-a-half years.

He said peace and stability in KP had been put at risk by the previous provincial rulers, who, according to him, failed to effectively restore the writ of the state in several restive districts during their tenure.



The minister said the Federal Government was left with no viable option but to take constitutional measures, including the imposition of Governor Rule and Emergency, to restore the writ of the government and ensure protection of the lives and properties of the people. Engr Amir Muqam said the people of KP had rejected the politics of negativity, aimless long marches and hollow claims of PTI, and welcomed steps of Federal Government aimed at restoring peace, stability and good governance in the province. He said the Federal and provincial governments were on the same page in the fight against terrorism and all available resources would be utilized to defeat the menace with full might.

"The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have rendered matchless sacrifices in the war against terrorism and it was held in high esteem," he said, regretting that the PTI rulers had failed to give due attention to the deteriorating security situation and repeated terrorist attacks.

He said the police and other law-enforcement agencies would be further strengthened by providing them with modern equipment, better training and other necessary resources to effectively combat terrorism.

Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said peace was the government's foremost priority and every segment of society, from government institutions to the general public, would have to play a constructive role in achieving this objective.

He said an KP Apex Committee's meeting attended by Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi was held on Monday at Governor House Peshawar to deliberate upon the overall security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, during which important decisions were taken to improve security and strengthen coordination among relevant institutions.

The federal minister said the people of KP had voted in the referendum in favour of Pakistan and demonstrated that their patriotism and love for Pakistan remained unshakable.

He advised political opponents to refrain from exploiting the Pashtun card for political purposes and instead focus on resolving the genuine problems faced by the people of the province.

Muqam said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was personally monitoring the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federal Government would continue taking all necessary measures for the security and welfare of its people. NEWS DESK

Pakistan calls for implementation of resolutions on Kashmir

Pakistan has called on the international community to implement the long-standing UN Security Council resolutions guaranteeing the right to self-determination for the Kashmiri people, saying those resolutions have no expiry date.

Addressing the UN General Assembly's Fourth Committee deliberations on decolonization and special political affairs, Pakistan's Acting Permanent Representative, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, underscored the systemic denial of these core freedoms, framing the resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute as an essential obligation for global peace and stability.

The Pakistani envoy, who was speaking on 'Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization', said while settler colonialism was an enduring reality in certain occupied territories, the promise of self-determination also remains unfulfilled for the peoples of Occupied Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Since independence, he said Pakistan had stood firmly with peoples struggling to determine their own future, pledging to continue its political, diplomatic and moral support for their legitimate struggle.

Ambassador Jadoon said Security Council resolutions provide for a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices, and were accepted by both India and Pakistan.

"Time does not extinguish these commitments," he pointed out.

The Pakistani envoy also spotlighted ongoing concerns regarding intensifying restrictions on fundamental freedoms in occupied Kashmir, alongside deliberate legislative and administrative attempts to alter the demographic and political character of the region. India's illegal measures of 5 August 2019 and subsequent unilateral actions, he warned cannot alter Jammu and Kashmir's internationally recognized disputed status.

"Domestic legislation and sham electoral exercises cannot substitute for self-determination."

Ambassador Jadoon demanded India halt these violations, release detained political leaders and human rights defenders, reverse its unlawful measures imposed in the occupied territory since 5 August 2019, allow independent international human rights scrutiny, and implement UNSC resolutions to ensure that Kashmiri people realize their right to self-determination.

Pakistan, he said, seeks peaceful relations with all its neighbours, emphasizing that durable peace in South Asia requires a just settlement of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. "The international community must actively advance this objective."

On the Palestinian tragedy, the Pakistani envoy said despite the ceasefire, continuing violence, displacement and restrictions on assistance perpetuate the humanitarian catastrophe. Since October last year, he said, more than 1,400 have been killed.

"The ceasefire must be fully implemented; humanitarian assistance must flow safely, unimpeded and at scale, with UNRWA enabled to fulfil its mandate."

Pakistan supports the US-proposed Gaza Peace Plan and implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2803.

Recovery of war-shattered Gaza must uphold Palestinian ownership and the enclave's unity with the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Ambassador Jadoon said.

"Forced displacement and demographic alteration must be rejected," he said, stressing that illegal settlements, organized settler violence and land seizures threaten the two-State solution of the Israel-Palestine dispute. The E1 project would undermine Palestinian territorial contiguity and must stop, he said.

"Lasting peace requires an end to occupation and an independent, sovereign, viable and contiguous State of Palestine on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital." Ambassador Jadoon's sharp words in favour of Kashmiri people's self-determination, drew a response from an Indian delegate, who accused Pakistan of abusing the forum.

Exercising her right of reply, Mahima Kumari Mewar, a member of Indian Parliament, claimed that Jammu and Kashmir is and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India, and commented on Pakistan's internal matters.

Reacting to India's "false" statement, Pakistani delegate Anser Shah said, "Jammu and Kashmir is neither an 'integral part' of India nor its internal matter."

"Repetition cannot rewrite history. Occupation cannot create sovereignty. And denial cannot erase an internationally-recognized dispute," asserted Shah, a first secretary in the Pakistan Mission to the UN.

Highlighting that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally-recognized dispute before the United Nations., he said numerous Security Council resolutions reaffirm the principle that the territory's future will be decided by its people through exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination.

The Pakistani delegate rejected as "absurd" India's repeated attempts to strike a comparison between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, he insisted, Kashmiris live freely and express themselves, adding, "They protest. They participate in political life. They raise their voices."

"In Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, political voices are silenced, dissent is criminalized, thousands have faced detention, demographic changes are imposed and the fundamental right to self-determination remains denied," Shah said.

"Rights exercised cannot be equated with rights denied."

The real question is: Will India honour Security Council resolutions, will it honor article 25 of the UN charter and allow the promised free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices, he asked. NEWS DESK

Zardari felicitates Prince Rahim Aga Khan on birthday

President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday extended his warm felicitations to Prince Rahim Aga Khan on the occasion of his birthday.

The president, in his message, appreciated the valuable contributions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the Aga Khan Foundation in Pakistan and around the world, particularly in the sectors of health, education, women's empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods. President Zardari wished Prince Rahim Aga Khan good health and continued success in his endeavours to improve lives. NEWS DESK

Sindh officers visit Rescue 1122 HQ

A delegation of probationary officers from the Sindh government's first Common Training Programme (CTP) visited the Emergency Services Headquarters and Academy here on Monday to study Rescue 1122's operational management, training activities and simulation facilities.

According to a Rescue Punjab spokesperson, Emergency Services Department Secretary Dr Rizwan Naseer briefed the delegation on the development of Rescue 1122 since its establishment. The participants held a detailed discussion with Dr Rizwan on the establishment and evolution of emergency rescue services in Pakistan. They also discussed Rescue 1122's United Nations INSARAG certification. The delegation observed the training activities and practical skills of rescue cadets, while rescuers demonstrated life-saving techniques using various training simulators. The visiting officers appreciated Rescue 1122's professional capabilities and operational performance, the spokesperson added. NEWS DESK

CDA seals 58 buildings over laws violations

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has sealed 58 buildings along Islamabad Expressway for violations of building control regulations and land-use rules, recovering Rs250.59 million in charges during an ongoing enforcement operation.

The action was reviewed by CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf during a visit to the Islamabad Expressway Service Road East project on Monday, where he directed officials to ensure timely completion of development work while maintaining construction standards.

According to the CDA, 377 structures, including 281 commercial buildings, have been identified for enforcement action. Of the 58 buildings sealed so far, 34 are in Sohan Iqbal Town and 24 in the areas of Korang Bridge, Korang Police Station and Gulberg Greens. Another 124 structures between Sohan and Khanna Pul have been identified for demolition, with work under way.

The violations include unauthorised construction, commercial activities in areas not designated for such use, construction without approval and failure to meet mandatory fire-safety requirements.

The CDA said notices had been served on the owners and occupants concerned before action was taken against those who failed to rectify the violations within the prescribed period.

The authority recovered Rs250.59 million through land-use conversion charges, charges for construction without approval and de-sealing fees. The recoveries relate to various properties, including commercial buildings, plazas, hospitals and marriage halls.

Around Rs3 billion remains recoverable in connection with land-use conversion, unauthorised construction and violations involving setbacks, floor area ratio and covered area, the CDA said.

During his visit to the service road project, Sohail Ashraf was briefed on the progress of construction and the next phase of work.

He directed the project team to follow approved designs and technical specifications and ensure regular monitoring, quality control and traffic management to minimise inconvenience to commuters.

The CDA said the project was aimed at improving road connectivity, easing congestion and strengthening the capital's road network.

The enforcement operation is being conducted by the CDA's Building Control Section and Enforcement Directorate in coordination with the Islamabad district administration and police.

The chairman directed officials to ensure uniform enforcement of building regulations, land-use rules and fire-safety requirements, saying illegal construction and activities in violation of approved land use would not be allowed to compromise public safety and planned development. NEWS DESK

Poetry gala marks 75 years of Pak-China ties

The 2026 Mid-Autumn Poetry Gala, held here at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), unveiling two long-term cultural initiatives to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

The Shouyang Book House Islamabad Public Reading Station was officially launched, creating a regular venue for reading, learning and exchange between Chinese and Pakistani people, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. In addition, a call for entries for artworks, photographs and video works under the theme "75 Years of Friendship, Forging Peace and Amity Together" was formally opened, inviting submissions from all sectors of society to capture friendship through images and convey peace through art. The gala brought together more than 400 guests from the political, academic, cultural and educational communities of both countries. NEWS DESK

Islamabad police promote 29 officers

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have promoted 29 officers, including 27 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) and two administrative officers, to their next ranks under the leadership of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Captain (Retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry, bringing the total number of recent promotions to 69.

A police official told APP on Monday that a formal notification had been issued for the latest promotions, while 40 officers had already been promoted in an earlier phase.

The official said the promotions were made on the basis of merit, professional performance and service records to ensure that deserving officers received their due promotions.

IGP Sohail said promotion committee meetings would be held every month to review and decide pending promotion cases on merit. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that eligible personnel did not face unnecessary delays in receiving their promotions.

The IGP Sohail said timely promotions would boost the morale of police personnel and encourage them to perform their duties with greater dedication and responsibility.

He said every officer should work in a manner that enhanced the reputation of Islamabad Police and strengthened public confidence in the department.

Congratulating the promoted officers, Sohail said promotions also brought greater responsibilities and urged them to continue serving the public with hard work, honesty and professional commitment.

He added that the department would continue taking steps to recognise the services of deserving officers and improve the overall performance of Islamabad Police.ICT Police promote 29 officers, taking total promotions to 69

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NATIONAL

DTM

CM Bugti reviews uplift projects in Sui

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired a detailed review meeting in Sui to assess progress on development projects and evaluate the performance of various government departments, with a focus on education, healthcare, public service delivery and district administration.

The meeting reviewed ongoing development schemes, the provision of education and health facilities, public welfare initiatives and the overall performance of the district administration.

The chief minister directed all relevant departments to accelerate work on ongoing development projects and ensure their completion within stipulated time-lines without compromising on quality.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti specifically instructed authorities to ensure the completion of the Gopet Water Supply Scheme by April 1, 2027, to address the drinking water needs of local residents. He also directed officials to take the necessary steps for the establishment of a new girls' high school in Sui and implement effective measures for plantation and the promotion of forestry along the Sui Ring Road.

Emphasising the importance of healthcare services, the chief minister ordered the provision of an ambulance for the Indus Hospital in Sui and called for additional medical facilities to be made available. He stressed that the Health Department must effectively fulfil its responsibilities to provide quality healthcare services to the public.

Sarfraz Bugti further directed that labour rooms established in remote areas should remain fully functional and that maternal and child healthcare services should be strengthened to ensure women have access to essential medical facilities within their own communities.

The chief minister also reviewed anti-polio efforts and instructed authorities to maintain effective monitoring and preventive measures aimed at eradicating the virus. He said all concerned institutions must diligently perform their responsibilities to protect children from the disease.

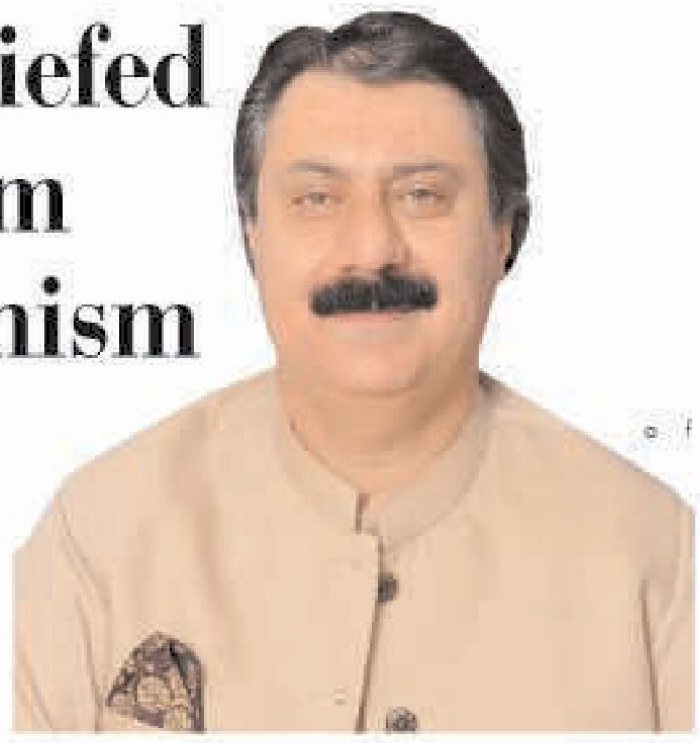
Highlighting the importance of education, he called for ensuring the continued functioning of educational institutions, improving teacher attendance in schools and guaranteeing the regular presence of healthcare staff at medical facilities. He said improved performance and accountability within relevant departments were essential for the effective delivery of education and health services.

Sarfraz Bugti directed all departments to regularly monitor development projects and ensure that both the pace of implementation and quality standards are maintained.

He also praised the performance of the district administration, particularly its efforts to keep labour rooms operational in remote areas, provide routine maternity services, ensure schools remain open and improve attendance among teachers and health staff.

The chief minister instructed officials to sustain recent improvements in public service delivery while further accelerating the development process so that the people of Sui and adjoining areas could fully benefit from ongoing government initiatives. NEWS DESK

Senate body briefed on petroleum pricing mechanism



The Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum was briefed on Monday about the prevailing petroleum pricing mechanism, including daily price calculations and the roles and responsibilities of the Petroleum Division, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) and oil marketing companies (OMCs).

The meeting was chaired by Senator Manzoor Ahmed.

OGRA's Member Finance briefed the committee on the publication and updating of petroleum prices on the authority's website.

He said petroleum prices had previously been revised monthly, but the process shifted to daily assessments during the Iran-Israel war. He also updated the committee on the availability of petroleum stocks in the country and explained the mechanism for determining prices.

The committee chairman expressed concern over the extent of petroleum price reductions, questioning why prices were being reduced by only a few paisas despite the arrival of petroleum consignments and the availability of sufficient stocks.

The committee was informed that the government had introduced a fuel subsidy scheme under which 10 million people had been registered, while approximately nine million had benefited so far.

Around 9,700 fuel stations were facilitating consumers under the scheme, it was told.

The committee was also briefed on complaints submitted jointly by employees of Inter Gas System (Private) Limited (IGSS) regarding the termination of their regular employment.

The affected employees presented their grievances and said the company's operational projects had not been discontinued despite the termination of their services.

The company's human resources representative said the cost of maintaining its workforce had been rising gradually. Following four meetings of the board of directors, 15 employees, including two members of the executive staff, had been terminated. One of the affected employees told the committee that they had been informed that the company's operations would be closed within two to three months. The employees said they had received two months' salary as compensation and that their services were terminated when they arrived at their offices in the morning.

The chairman observed that the termination of permanent employees must follow the procedure prescribed by law, including proper notification to the employees concerned.

He expressed concern over the termination of regular employees at around 50 years of age, questioning their future employment prospects amid widespread unemployment.

The company's human resources wing briefed the committee on the procedure followed for terminating employees. The chairman directed the company to submit its criteria for recruitment and termination, along with a complete list of affected employees, at the next meeting.

The committee condemned the termination of employees, particularly those at an advanced stage of their careers, without adequate consideration of their future employment prospects in the prevailing employment situation. It decided to take up the matter for a further briefing at its next meeting.

The committee deferred consideration of agenda items concerning the proposed relocation of Pakistan Petroleum Limited's (PPL) headquarters from Karachi to Islamabad and a review of the ownership structure of Jamshoro Joint Venture Limited (JJVL). It was also updated on the implementation of recommendations made during its meetings held on September 1 and 17, 2026.

The committee chairman informed members that residents of Qila Mubarik Town, Quetta, were facing difficulties in obtaining gas connections despite the availability of Rs5 million for the project. He said the contractor awarded the project had now demanded Rs11.5 million for the same work.

The committee was informed that the government's ban on new gas connections had delayed the project by approximately three years. During this period, the project's cost had increased due to rising commodity prices.

The committee observed that the delay was attributable to the concerned department, which had already issued a demand note to the residents. It further observed that issuing a fresh demand note under the circumstances was unlawful and held the department responsible for the difficulties faced by the residents.

During the discussion, it was proposed that the department lay the gas pipeline infrastructure without supplying gas while the ban remained in force. Gas could be supplied through the installed pipelines once restrictions on network extensions were lifted.

The committee deliberated on the matter and stressed the need for the concerned department to address the issue and resolve the difficulties faced by residents of Qila Mubarik Town, Quetta. NEWS DESK

Rear Admiral Shifaat Khan promoted vice admiral

Rear Admiral Shifaat Ali Khan of the Pakistan Navy has been promoted to the rank of Vice Admiral. According to a news release issued by the Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy), Vice Admiral Shifaat Ali Khan was commissioned in the Operations Branch of the Pakistan Navy in 1993. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, Naval Staff College, USA and National Defence University, Islamabad.

The Admiral has an illustrious career with vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His major Command appointments include CO PNS MUNSIF, CO Ex PNS SHAHJAHAN, Commander 10th Patrol Craft Squadron, Commander Central Punjab/ Commandant PN War College and Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST).

His key staff appointments include Fleet Operations Officer to Commander Pakistan Fleet, Naval Attaché of Pakistan in China and DCNS(W&H) at Naval Headquarters. Currently, the Admiral is serving as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) and Director General C4I at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral was awarded Hilal-Imtiaz (Military). NEWS DESK

Omani FM due in Pakistan today for JMC session

Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi will undertake an official two-day visit to Pakistan on Tuesday, the Foreign Office (FO) said on Monday.

According to a statement issued by the FO, Albusaidi's visit, taking place at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, will last from Oct 13-14.

The statement added that during the visit, the Eighth Session of the Pakistan-Oman Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) would be held in Islamabad, co-chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

"The meeting would serve as an important platform to review the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Oman bilateral relations and to further strengthen cooperation in diverse fields," the FO said.

Additionally, Albusaidi is expected to make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his visit.

According to the FO, the visit "reflects the longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Oman and is expected to further deepen mutually beneficial cooperation across multiple sectors". NEWS DESK

Double SME lending to Rs 2.2 trillion: PM's big push

Continued from Page 1

He warned that those businesses that had been collecting taxes from consumers but pocketing the same amount instead of depositing it with the government exchequer did not deserve any concession.

The prime minister appreciated those in the manufacturing sector that were voluntarily installing production monitoring systems and said the government would take all necessary measures to achieve the country's full tax potential.

He commended the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Transformation Team for preparing a comprehensive assessment of the country's tax potential in the production sector.

He also appreciated the audit report on the production monitoring system in the cement sector and directed the Ministry of Information Technology to audit the system in other sectors to assess its effectiveness.

The meeting was also presented with a review report on the gap between tax collection and the country's tax potential, including an assessment of the revenue that could be generated through improved tax compliance and enforcement.

It was informed that government measures had resulted in the collection of an additional Rs1.3 trillion in taxes over the past three years, representing a 40% increase in tax collection. The meeting was told that the additional revenue had been generated through enforcement measures.

He particularly appreciated the officials who prepared the report and presented them with shields at the conclusion of the meeting. NEWS DESK

PN announces civilian apprentice Batch A-2027

Pakistan Navy has announced induction for Civilian Apprentice (Lower Formation) Batch A-2027 for youth across the country. A total of 57 vacancies will be filled under the PNCA Industrial / Technical Staff category.

According to handout issued here on Monday, male candidates holding Pakistani nationality, aged between 15 to 19 years as on January 1, 2027, are eligible to apply. The required educational qualification is Matric with Science securing at least 55% marks. For candidates belonging to Balochistan, the minimum required marks are 45%. Selected candidates will have to undergo 3 years of apprenticeship training followed by an 8-year bond period. The recruitment will be made in the category of Civilian Apprentice (BPS-07).

Interested candidates have been advised to apply online till October 20, 2026, through the official website of Pakistan Navy: www.joinpaknavy.gov.pk. All candidates must appear for the entry test on the date and time mentioned on their registration slip. For further information, candidates can contact Pakistan Navy Recruitment and Selection Center Sukkur or other selection centers across the country. NEWS DESK

Zardari receives envoys from Norway, Azerbaijan, Switzerland

Ambassadors-designate of the Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Azerbaijan and Switzerland, on Monday, presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president felicitated the ambassadors on their appointments and wished them successful tenures in Pakistan.

He discussed opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations, with particular emphasis on economic cooperation, trade and investment, alongside areas of shared interest, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

In his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Norway Sigvald Hauge, the president reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its long-standing friendly relations with Norway.

He expressed appreciation for Norway's support during Pakistan's devastating floods in 2022 and welcomed the bilateral MoU on climate cooperation signed in April 2026.

He highlighted opportunities for cooperation in renewable energy, maritime affairs, technology, trade and investment, and acknowledged the Pakistani diaspora's contribution to relations between the two countries.

Talking to Ambassador-designate of Azerbaijan Irfan Shakiroglu Davudov, the president reaffirmed the close and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and stressed the need to translate strong political relations into greater trade and investment.

He highlighted the potential for cooperation in energy, regional connectivity and defence, welcomed progress in defence-industrial cooperation and noted the contribution of direct air links to tourism and people-to-people contacts.

During his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Switzerland Stephane Laurent Roy, the president appreciated Switzerland's role in mediation and peace efforts, including its facilitation of technical talks between the United States and Iran at Burgenstock. He emphasised the importance of continued cooperation for regional peace and highlighted opportunities in trade, investment, pharmaceuticals, IT and cybersecurity, renewable energy, water management and tourism. NEWS DESK

BACK PAGE DTM

Pakistan, Brazil military chiefs eye stronger defence ties

Pakistan and Brazil have agreed to strengthen military-to-military cooperation during a meeting between their senior military officials at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday.

Admiral Renato Rodrigues De Aguiar Freire, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Brazil's Armed Forces, led a high-level Brazilian delegation that called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces.

According to the military's media wing, the two sides discussed matters of mutual interest, the regional security environment and avenues for enhancing bilateral defence and security cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the longstanding cordial relations between Pakistan and Brazil and agreed to further strengthen military ties.

Field Marshal Munir reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening defence relations with Brazil, while the visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism and operational preparedness of Pakistan's armed forces and acknowledged their contributions to regional peace and stability.

The visit reflects the two countries' shared resolve to deepen defence cooperation and strengthen bilateral military relations, the ISPR added. NEWS DESK

Act against terrorists or face consequences, Pakistan warns Kabul

Centre forced to impose emergency in KP: Dar

Deputy Prime Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has said the federal government was left with no option but to impose an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, describing it a "tough decision". Ishaq Dar said protests and sit-in caused significant damage to the national economy. Ishaq Dar warned that the Afghan Taliban regime will eventually face consequences if it fails to take action against terrorists operating from its territory.

"If the Afghan government does not take action against terrorists, one day it will have to face the consequences itself," Ishaq Dar said while addressing the ISSI International Conference on "Pakistan's evolving terrorism landscape" in Islamabad.

Addressing the conference, Ishaq Dar said that terrorism remained the biggest challenge for the region and the world, adding that Pakistan had made immense sacrifices in its fight against militancy. "Pakistan has sacrificed more than 90,000 lives in the war against terrorism," he said, calling on the international community to acknowledge the country's losses.

He also referred to the Jaffar Express incident and the abduction and killings of workers in Balochistan, citing them among the challenges facing the country.

According to Ishaq Dar, operations against terrorists were being conducted daily on the instructions of the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan had repeatedly urged the Afghan authorities not to allow their territory to be used for terrorism against neighbouring countries. "Pakistan has only one demand from Afghanistan: that it should not allow its territory to be used for terrorism," he added.

Pakistan had held talks with Afghan officials on the issue and had undertaken visits to Afghanistan to discuss counterterrorism efforts, he said, referring to a trilateral meeting involving Pakistan, China and Afghanistan held in Kabul in August last year. However, he said that the Afghan Taliban regime had failed to fulfil its commitments on the issue of terrorism.

He warned that the presence of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups in Afghanistan posed a threat to regional peace.

He urged the Afghan Taliban authorities to immediately stop providing terrorists with weapons and other forms of assistance.

Ishaq Dar said that India was involved in supporting terrorism in Pakistan, referring to Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, whom Islamabad says was a serving Indian naval officer involved in espionage, sabotage and terrorist activities.

He said that security forces and law enforcement agencies had confronted terrorism with determination, but the threat had damaged the country's image and international reputation.

The deputy prime minister also called for international cooperation to strengthen the capacity of Pakistan's law enforcement agencies, saying that recognition of the country's sacrifices alone was not sufficient.

He said that militants crossed into Pakistan through mountainous areas to carry out attacks before returning to safe havens, adding that a serious increase in terrorist attacks in Pakistan had led to the closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Ishaq Dar added that Pakistan had subsequently allowed 1,000 containers to pass into Afghanistan following contact from the United Nations.

Describing the banned TTP as a serious threat to Pakistan's security, he said that the terrorist groups received external support. He warned that safe havens used by groups to launch attacks against Pakistan could eventually pose a threat to other countries as well.

He noted Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism through implementation of the National Action Plan, Azm-e-Istehkam and improved intelligence coordination. He also outlined Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to advance bilateral and multilateral counterterrorism cooperation.

He lauded Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's leadership in this fight and paid tribute to the armed forces under Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and law enforcement agencies for their courage and sacrifices. BABAR

Pakistan security forces eliminate terrorist in Bannu IBO

Pakistan security forces eliminated one Khawarij during an intelligence-based operation in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The operation was part of ongoing counterterrorism efforts under the Azm-e-Istehkam vision. The operation was conducted on the basis of credible intelligence, resulting in the killing of the terrorist associated with Fitna al-Khawarij, the sources said.

Security forces are maintaining strict surveillance over the movement and presence of Fitna al-Khawarij operatives in the area to prevent terrorist activities.

According to security sources, ongoing operations are proving effective in dismantling terrorist networks and restricting the movement of militants.

Security forces remain committed to eliminating terrorism from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with operations set to continue until the last terrorist is eliminated, the sources added.

On Saturday, at least 10 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan were killed during an intelligence-based operation conducted by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in Barkhan district of Balochistan, a CTD spokesperson said. The operation was carried out under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3 in the Rarasham Valley after the department received credible intelligence about the presence of militants in the area, the spokesperson said.

According to the CTD, a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from the terrorists killed during the operation. Two CTD personnel were also injured during the operation, the spokesperson added.

The department said security forces, including police and CTD personnel, remained committed to eliminating terrorism from Balochistan and would continue operations to counter terrorism in the province. INP

PM directs development of Daanish IT Park into world-class tech hub

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the authorities concerned to develop the Daanish IT Park Islamabad into a world-class hub of technology and transform it into a centre of a modern IT ecosystem through effective collaboration between academia and industry.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss matters related to the Daanish IT Park Islamabad, said that the government would continue its efforts to equip Pakistani youth with modern skills in IT, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and FinTech, besides creating new opportunities for IT entrepreneurs.

He instructed the Ministry of Information Technology to conduct a comprehensive case study of the project. The prime minister directed to operationalise Daanish IT Park in partnership with global technology companies, and carry out a third-party audit of the project. During the meeting, a briefing was given on the creation of a comprehensive ecosystem aimed at boosting IT exports and promoting investment in the sector.

It was informed that 50 private buildings have been upgraded into Software Technology Parks under the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB). Additionally, eight incubation centres have been established across the country to support startups, while 105 co-working spaces are operational to facilitate IT professionals.

The participants of the meeting were told that global technology companies were being approached to operationalise the Daanish IT Park Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by Federal ministers Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Musadik Masood Malik, Ahad Khan Cheema, and Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kiyani, and senior government officials. APP

Senate, NA sessions 'called'

The sessions of both Houses of Parliament Senate and National Assembly have been called on Tuesday afternoon.

According to sources, a meeting of the ruling PML-N's Parliament Party will also be held in Islamabad at 4:00 pm tomorrow afternoon in which important decision are expected to be taken.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar will chair the parliamentary party meeting. The Senate and National Assembly session will begin at 5:00 pm, the sources said. INP

Russian interior minister arrives on four-day visit

Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev has arrived in Pakistan on a four-day visit at the invitation of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, marking the first visit to Pakistan by a Russian interior minister.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry received Kolokoltsev upon his arrival in Islamabad and accorded him a warm welcome.

During the visit, the Russian interior minister is scheduled to hold important meetings with Pakistani leadership to discuss bilateral relations and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

The visit is expected to provide an opportunity for both sides to strengthen bilateral engagement and advance cooperation in areas of mutual interest. NEWS DESK

PTI chief Gohar to move PHC against KP emergency

Achakzai slams Centre over KP governor's rule, draws Balochistan parallel

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday said he would personally challenge the emergency and governor's rule in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) in the Peshawar High Court tomorrow, as the party vowed to continue its long march. Speaking at a press conference outside Parliament alongside Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Opposition Leader in the Senate Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Gohar said the party would decide at its parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday how to oppose the measures in the provincial assembly.

"We will raise our voices on every forum. Our long march is ongoing, and our protests are continuing. We will not accept this," he said, adding that the demonstrations would continue. Gohar called October 11 a "black day" in Pakistan's democratic history, saying the people of K-P had rejected emergency measures and governor's rule, and that the provincial chief minister had been kept in custody and claimed that supporters of the party were in jail. "We demand that the measures taken on October 11 be withdrawn," he said, adding that the party would challenge the decision through all channels. He said he would personally challenge the decisions taken on October 11 in the Peshawar High Court, adding that the party was also pursuing a legal challenge.

"The federation will be strong only when the provinces are strong," he said.

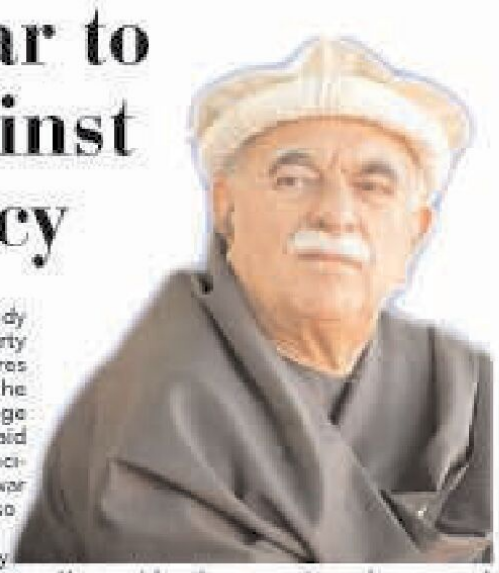
Achakzai criticised the decision to impose governor's rule and emergency measures in K-P, calling it a major attack. He said he had been raising concerns about the Constitution when the measures were imposed and argued that the situation in Balochistan was worse than the circumstances cited to justify governor's rule in KP.

"Balochistan's chief minister is your blue-eyed boy, but you take no action against what is being looted there," he said, adding that half of Balochistan had become a no-go area for security forces.

Achakzai called for permission to meet Imran, saying he was willing to provide a written assurance that he would not disclose anything discussed during the meeting. "This government wants Imran to leave the country, but he is not leaving," he said.

He also rejected the suggestion that he did not want to meet the prime minister, saying he was willing to meet but would not go to the Prime Minister's House or the Speaker's Office. He said the opposition would continue its struggle against the existing system while pursuing negotiations.

On the occasion, Raja Nasir Abbas also rejected the imposition of governor's rule and emergency measures, saying the country was dealing with "deceivers and liars".



He said the unanimously agreed Constitution was being made controversial and accused the government of equating political workers with terrorists. "We have to contend with those who violate the Constitution," Abbas said, calling for unity in the fight against terrorism. "Let us join hands with the people of the province to fight terrorists," he added.

Questioning the justification for imposing emergency measures in K-P, Abbas said the law and order situation in Balochistan was worse and argued that emergency should be imposed there instead.

Petition Filed: Earlier, a petition challenging the imposition of emergency measures and governor's rule in K-P was also filed in the PHC.

The petition was filed by Advocate Salman; the petition named President Zardari, PM Shehbaz and K-P Governor Faisal Karim Kundi as respondents.

Lawyers Strike: Separately, the KP Bar Council expressed its concern over the imposition of emergency and governor's rule, and announced a strike of court proceedings today (Tuesday).

In a statement issued on Monday, the bar claimed the move was aimed at removing the provincial government over "political differences". NEWS DESK

Head Office address: Office Number 18, Pirzada Street, Pir Mohallah, New Pind Sukkur. Publisher Ali Raza. Editor Yousaf Rafiq.

GLAMOUR DTM

Tiffani Thiessen Gushes Over Growing Daughter

Tiffani Thiessen is opening up about what she thinks about the resurgence of '90s-era fashion — as well as what styles she thinks would be better left in the past.

Thiessen, 52, caught up with PEOPLE for an episode of The Sitdown to talk about her new Freeform and Disney+ show Coven Academy. During the conversation, the actress shared that it's "really, really fun" to see '90s fashion getting a "newfound sort of love."

Thiessen — who shares daughter, Harper, 16, son, Holt, 11, with her husband, actor Brady Smith — said the throwback trends are especially enjoyable now that she has a teen in the house.

"I have a teenage daughter, so of course, I see, like, the '90s — and now the Y2K [style] that's so popular right now in fashion and makeup and hair and all that. It's neat to see the full circle, like, I literally go around, and seeing it happen over again," she explains.

The star went on to share which past trends she most enjoys seeing come back around — starting with the "zig-zag" hair part.

"I'm kind of into it," Thiessen tells PEOPLE. "I think the middle part was having such a big moment, and the side part's coming back, so maybe this is a way to bring it back … I kind of dig it."

"The unitard is totally having comeback," she adds.

"I don't know if I'd wear it in orange," she continues, referring to a past look she wore on the show Saved by the Bell. "I'd probably stick to the darker colors for myself. Or maybe I shouldn't at 52 and let the younger generation take that one."

Thiessen also says she's even a fan of feathered bangs — with some caveats.

"I think the feathered bangs that are out now are totally fine and amazing. I think those [past] feather bangs — with lots of volume and a lot of hair spray — those can be left behind," she explains.

The actress says she's also a fan of "tiny sunglasses," blazers worn with crop tops, and even suspenders paired with baggy pants and white sleeveless tees. NEWS DESK

McRae Bottles Her Pop Power

The result was a woody fragrance, with notes of bergamot, sage, amber, and sandalwood. And while some artists have opted for playful novelty bottles, McRae housed her scent in something sleek and elevated-a shape that was mirrored in the silver pendant necklace she wore to the late-night celebration.

From Jennifer Lopez and Britney Spears to Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, and Ariana Grande, creating a signature scent has become somewhat of a rite of passage for a pop star. And for Tate McRae, it was a milestone she was particularly excited to reach. (And one that called for a new little party dress.)

On Thursday night, the "Sports Car" singer celebrated the launch of her debut fragrance, Tate 01, with a New York City event and a slinky silver minidress. Courtesy of Saint Laurent, the slip featured thin spaghetti straps and a cowl neckline, with a dramatic open back. She mixed her metals, wearing gold laced stiletto sandals and carrying a black clutch with gold hardware (both also Saint Laurent).

Her blonde hair was parted at the side and pinned out of her face, and for makeup, she went with bold smokey eyes and a soft glossy lip. "I've been working on [Tate 01] for like a year now. I've always wanted to do a perfume, I feel like it's such a pop star thing. You have to do it at some point," she told Jimmy Fallon earlier this week. "I was cooking up in the lab, doing all the scents." The result was a woody fragrance, with notes of bergamot, sage, amber, and sandalwood. And while some artists have opted for playful novelty bottles, McRae housed her scent in something sleek and elevated—a shape that was mirrored in the silver pendant necklace she wore to the late-night celebration. "I'm so obsessed with the bottle, I'm so obsessed with the scent," she said. "I can't believe it's out now." NEWS DESK

Meghan and Malala's Meet-Up Steals Show

Earlier this week, Duchess Meghan made a rare public appearance in London, grabbing a bite to eat with activist and Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai at Claridge's. Photos showed the pair outside of the Mayfair hotel, where we now know they were having a business meeting over a classic afternoon tea.

The subject of their conversation, according to a new Instagram post shared by both the royal and the Pakistani human rights advocate, was International Day of the Girl. Celebrated every October 11, the day was founded to advocate for gender equality, human rights, and girls' access to education, healthcare, and nutrition. Doing her part, Meghan announced that today, in partnership with Archewell Philanthropies, 100% of net proceeds from As Ever jams and teas will go to the Malala Fund and "its vital work to ensure that every girl has access to free, safe, quality education." This content is imported from instagram. You may be able to find the same content in another format, or you may be able to find more information, at their web site. "When we support the girls of today, we empower the women of tomorrow. Access to education is the key to unlocking this," the two wrote on social media, alongside their own personal photos from the day. "Tea for two has never felt so good." NEWS DESK

'Other Mommy' Tops the Box Office With $27.5M

The Jessica Chastain horror "Other Mommy" topped the North American box office this weekend with a bigger audience than expected, while "The Social Reckoning" got off to a lackluster start.

"Other Mommy," released by Universal Pictures, earned $27.5 million in its first few days in 3,365 theaters, according to studio estimates on Sunday. The movie, about a sinister supernatural creature that terrorizes a young girl who thinks it's her mother, got dismal reviews from both critics and audiences. It also joins the ranks of "Megalopolis" and "Hereditary" with a D+ CinemaScore.

But with a production budget of around $19 million, it's also another win for the horror genre and producer Blumhouse Atomic Monster, which was behind "Backrooms" and "Obsession."

"Other Mommy" opened in 50 international markets as well, boosting its global debut to $45.2 million.

Jim Orr, Universal's head of domestic distribution, noted that the audience gender divide was evenly split and about 2/3 were between 18 and 34 years old.

"No matter how you look at it, everybody turned out for it. It wasn't just one particular demographic," Orr said. "That usually is a very good sign."

"The Social Reckoning," the weekend's other big release, was not as lucky, earning an estimated $5.5 million from 2,606 North American theaters. Aaron Sorkin wrote and directed the film about a Facebook whistleblower who leaked incriminating documents to a Wall Street Journal reporter.

Sixteen years ago, "The Social Network," which Sorkin wrote and David Fincher directed, opened to over $22 million and went on to gross over $224 million worldwide, receiving eight Oscar nominations and winning three. A similar fate might be a stretch for "The Social Reckoning," which stars Mikey Madison, Jeremy Allen White and Jeremy Strong and received mixed-to-negative reviews from critics. Audiences gave it a B- CinemaScore. According to reports, the Sony Pictures release cost around $30 million to produce, not accounting for marketing and promotion.

Paul Dergarabedian, Rentrak's head of marketplace trends, said October is a time when studios take chances and it doesn't always work out. "These movies that are topical in nature, sometimes they resonate with the culture, sometimes they don't," said Dergarabedian. "You don't always know what's going to connect with audiences."

He compared "The Social Reckoning" to "Digger," which fell 60% in its second weekend.

"The Social Reckoning" opened behind several holdovers as well. The Anne Hathaway psychological thriller "Verity" took second place with $11.5 million, down 64% from its opening weekend. In third place, "Resident Evil" added $8.4 million, bringing its domestic total to $138.5 million. The Brad Pitt survival thriller "Heart of the Beast" took fourth with $7.1 million. AP

Game, Set, Style: Rodrigo's Brooch Moment

Olivia Rodrigo is embracing her High School Musical roots. The singer, who famously got her start on Disney Channel as the lead in High School Musical: The Musical: The Series, got her "head in the game" at Barclays Center last night, sitting courtside for the WNBA playoff semi-finals.

For the night out, Rodrigo put together a handful of vintage pieces, starting with a black halter top, designed with a retro sweetheart neckline, a cropped hem, and an all-over floral print. The pattern's pink, red, and white details added some color to the otherwise monochrome combo, which was made complete with a flowy, flouncy low-rise midi skirt. She grabbed her quilted Miu Miu bag and slipped into little black ballerina heels.

And, when she wasn't trying on her custom mint-green New York Liberty jersey, she swapped her sporty style for a jacket that embraced the season's favorite styling trick. The floral brooch—which can thank Matthieu Blazy and his Chanel Spring 2026 chrysanthemum pins for its blooming resurgence—has become a statement over the past several seasons, with Tory Burch, Alberta Ferretti, Carolina Herrera, and more labels putting their own spins on the age-old accessory. NEWS DESK

DTM MONEY

Growth Surge: Pakistan over 4%, $1 billion sell-off plan

Privatisation of 5 or 6 entities could raise more than $1 billion, says Aurangzeb
Talks ongoing with United States on proposed $10 billion exchange stabilisation facility

Pakistan's economy is expected to grow by more than 4% this fiscal year despite elevated oil prices, as the government looks to push for the privatisation of five to six entities that could raise upwards of $1 billion, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told Reuters on Monday.

Pakistan's economy is considered to be highly vulnerable to a prolonged Middle East conflict given its dependence on Gulf energy imports, remittances and financing support from the region, even as it remains reliant on external financing to bolster foreign exchange reserves and meet debt repayments.

The South Asian country of 255 million people has been able to procure adequate quantities of fuel, successfully avoiding any shortages, and critical sectors such as agriculture were holding up, Aurangzeb said.

"So I'm still quite clear that we should clock north of 4%," he said in an interview on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Bangkok.

"And on the inflation side, obviously, we are keeping a very close eye because it does have a knock-on impact in terms of the commodity prices."

Following a period of severe economic turmoil exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cash-strapped economy has recovered some of its footing, supported by a $7 billion, 37-month IMF loan program known as the Extended Fund Facility signed in 2024 that includes some tough measures such as raising tax revenue on farm income.

Exchange stabilisation facility

The US-Israel-led war with Iran, now in its eighth month, and the inflation and hardship it has caused, will dominate the agenda and sideline conversations during the meetings that are being held outside Washington for the first time in three years.

Pakistan, which reached a staff-level agreement with the IMF last week, potentially unlocking about $1.21 billion in financing under the Extended Fund Facility and a climate program, is continuing discussions with the United States for a proposed $10 billion exchange stabilisation facility, Aurangzeb said.

But he declined to provide a time frame for the conclusion of negotiations.

"If it comes through, this will be a great help for us," he said, referring to the facility, which is in addition to ongoing talks with the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

"If it doesn't come through, this does not, you know, create any problem for us in terms of access to market."

Privatisation push

Following the privatisation of flag carrier Pakistan International Airlines last year, Aurangzeb said the government has around another dozen entities in the pipeline, including state-owned power distribution companies and the outsourcing of airport operations.

"I expect about five or six of these to go through during this fiscal year," he said, adding that they could raise more than $1 billion.

Privatisation has been seen as a key test of Pakistan's reform credibility with the IMF, with officials previously underlining that failure to offload loss-making state firms risked renewed pressure on public finances.

"We are quite clear that we want the private sector to lead the country," said Aurangzeb. "So our role is to help support, assist in any way we can in terms of the ecosystem."

External Debt

Pakistan plans to refinance some of its short-term external debt into longer maturities over the next two to three years to reduce rollover risks, while keeping its overall external debt, estimated at close to $100 billion, broadly unchanged, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said to Bloomberg News on Monday.

"The way I was explaining to you earlier as well, this year, it is not a question that we absolutely need to cover the external financing gap, but for the next two to three years, what we do want to do is to see if some of our short-term external debt can be refinanced into longer tenors, longer maturities, so [the] country does not have to go into this rollover risk of short-term debt.

"We want to keep the overall quantum of our external debt, which is close to $100 billion, but think about it mostly as replacement rates, as diversification and elongating maturities," said Aurangzeb, while talking at Bloomberg: The China Show.

Talking about raising capital from the international markets, the finance minister said that the country is "not in a rush" to issue bonds this fiscal year.

"We have given a mandate for Islamic Sukuks and, for the first time, dollar-settled but rupee-denominated bonds. A lot of reverse inquiries are coming through on that as well.

"Going forward, we are going to issue RFPs for the remaining Panda bonds. For the first time, you are also going to see if we can go for tokenisation of our existing Eurobonds," said Aurangzeb. NEWS DESK

Pakistan diversifies oil, seeks Libyan crude

Turkish seismic vessel is expected to arrive next month to begin data acquisition in the Indus Basin, says Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz

Pakistan has encouraged domestic refineries to explore imports of Libyan crude oil to diversify supply sources, while a Turkish seismic vessel is expected to arrive next month to begin data acquisition in the Indus Basin, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Monday.

The development came on the sidelines of the 17th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial Meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, read a statement on Monday.

Ali Pervaiz held a bilateral meeting with Khalifa Rajab Abdulsadek, Minister of Oil and Gas of Libya, to discuss avenues for strengthening cooperation in the oil and gas sector. The federal minister informed his Libyan counterpart that Pakistan had encouraged its refineries to explore imports of Libyan crude oil.

He emphasised that Pakistan aimed to diversify its crude oil supply sources to strengthen energy security and maintain alternative supply options in the event of disruptions to key maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

Khalifa Rajab described Pakistan as an important country for Libya and said he would encourage Libya's national oil company to allocate greater volumes of crude oil to Pakistani companies.

He also noted that Libya was planning to upgrade its refineries and expressed interest in learning from Pakistan's experience in refinery upgradation.

Turkish Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar also called on Ali Pervaiz and stated he was looking forward to visiting Pakistan next month to receive a TPAO seismic vessel to start data acquisition in Indus Basin.

The petroleum minister also had a detailed breakfast meeting with the Energy Minister of the State of Qatar, Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, to explore possibilities of cooperation in the LNG sector.

Ali Pervaiz was attending the IEF at the invitation of Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Minister of Energy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Addressing the plenary session titled "Investment and Trade in Sustainable Energy Solutions: Making Energy Clean, Accessible and Affordable," the federal minister highlighted that the global energy sector was entering a new investment cycle in which energy security, affordability and sustainability must advance together.

He emphasised that investment was needed not only in renewable energy but also in hydrocarbons, critical minerals and essential infrastructure, including grids and pipelines.

Referring to the unprecedented global energy supply shock of 2026, the minister noted that the crisis extended beyond oil and gas to shipping and insurance.

Despite its heavy dependence on imported energy, Pakistan had navigated the crisis without resorting to rationing of major energy sources, supported by the government's response and cooperation from brotherly countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, he said.

The minister said Pakistan was working to strengthen its long-term energy security architecture through the development of strategic reserves, a world-class bonded reserves scheme, greater indigenous energy production, critical infrastructure including refineries and tank farms, competitive electricity and gas markets, and targeted relief mechanisms.

He stressed that international investment and trade frameworks must balance innovation and sustainability with affordability, equity and access. Pakistan, he added, looked forward to working with all IEF member countries to advance shared energy security objectives for future generations. NEWS DESK

Market Meltdown: PSX sheds 1964+ points

The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained bearish on Monday, losing 1,964.87 points, a negative change of 1.18 percent, to close at 165,124.41 points against 167,089.28 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 362.954 million shares, compared to 309.412 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value decreased to Rs14.507 billion from Rs15.437 billion.

Market capitalisation declined to Rs18.359 trillion from Rs18.569 trillion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 500 companies that traded in the ready market, 135 posted gains, 322 suffered losses, while 43 remained unchanged, reflecting a highly bearish trend in the market.

Treet Corporation led the volume chart with 27.311 million shares, followed by LSE Financial (R) with 20.828 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 20.349 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited surged by Rs207.49 to close at Rs25,262.50, while Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited advanced by Rs74.55 to settle at Rs820.02.

On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited B declined by Rs294.00 to close at Rs14,200.00, while Khyber Textile Mills Limited fell by Rs95.81 to Rs1,686.92.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 97.870 million shares with a traded value of Rs7.623 billion, compared with 78.244 million shares worth Rs5.276 billion in the previous session. Of the 326 companies traded in the DFC market, 46 advanced, 280 declined and none remained unchanged. NEWS DESK

Rupee edges up 3 paisa vs dollar

Rupee on Monday appreciated by 3 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.97, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.00.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.60 and Rs 278.20, respectively.

The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.94, closing at Rs 310.01 against the previous day's rate of Rs 310.95, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 1 paisa and closed at Rs 1.74, and the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.21 and closed at Rs 366.64 compared to the previous day's Rs 366.85.

The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 and 04 paisa to close at Rs 75.40 and Rs 73.74, respectively. NEWS DESK

$10m In Play: Chinese investors eye Pakistan

China's Shengtang Group on Monday expressed interest in exploring investment opportunities worth US$10 million in Pakistan, particularly in industrial development, electric vehicles (EVs), infrastructure, energy, railways, tourism and urban development, reflecting growing Chinese interest in Pakistan's industrial and economic potential.

A delegation of the Chinese group called on Adviser to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan and discussed potential investment and cooperation in key sectors of the economy, including the proposed signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth US$10 million.

During the meeting, Haroon Akhtar said that the prime minister's vision of enhanced cooperation with China was being translated into practical outcomes with clear directions to facilitate Chinese investors, improve the business environment and ensure ease of doing business in Pakistan. He said business-friendly regulatory reforms were being introduced in line with the prime minister's directives to attract foreign investment and promote industrial development.

The adviser also highlighted the land-lease model available to investors as an important facilitation mechanism for encouraging investment and supporting industrial growth.

"The time is right for investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan. The country has demonstrated its reliability and resilience at the international level," Haroon Akhtar Khan said, inviting Chinese investors to benefit from emerging opportunities in Pakistan's industrial and economic landscape.

Highlighting the longstanding relationship between Pakistan and China, Haroon said the two countries enjoyed ties that were "thicker than blood." NEWS DESK

Pakistan, Netherlands plot big trade push

Pakistan and the Netherlands on Monday explored new avenue of expanding bilateral trade, investment and business partnerships in textiles, information technology, agriculture, food processing, engineering and skilled workforce development.

The discussions took place at a business dinner hosted by Federal Secretary for Commerce Jawad Paul in honour of a visiting Dutch business delegation led by Merlin Melles, comprised prominent Dutch entrepreneurs, investors and business executives from various sectors of the Netherlands' economy, said a news release.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan Robert-Jan Siegert, Special Secretary Commerce Syed Hamid Ali, senior officials of the Ministry of Commerce and representatives of the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) also attended the event.

Welcoming the delegation, Jawad Paul underscored the importance of direct business-to-business engagement and identifying commercially viable opportunities to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries.

The discussions focused on Pakistan's manufacturing capabilities, expanding technology sector, skilled human resources and opportunities for Dutch businesses to establish commercial partnerships and explore investment in export-oriented industries.

A Ministry of Commerce presentation highlighted Pakistan's trade relations with the European Union, the benefits of the EU's GSP Plus arrangement and opportunities to diversify exports beyond traditional products. It also showcased the country's textile industry, agricultural potential, sports goods manufacturing and investment opportunities in food processing, value addition and export-oriented manufacturing.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Robert-Jan Siegert described the Netherlands as Pakistan's second-largest export market within the European Union, with bilateral trade reaching approximately US$1.9 billion.

He noted that bilateral trade was largely driven by Pakistani exports to the Netherlands, while stressing the need to expand Dutch exports, investments and commercial activities in Pakistan.

The Ambassador welcomed growing interest among Dutch businesses in Pakistan, citing emerging joint ventures, research partnerships and innovative agricultural projects. NEWS DESK

Gold slides Rs 2,100 per tola

Gold prices witnessed a decline in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs2,100 to settle at Rs439,936, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs1,800 to Rs377,174, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs1,650 to Rs345,755.

In the international market, the price of gold fell by $21 to $4,174 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs23 to Rs6,532, while the price of 10 grams of silver declined by Rs19 to Rs5,600.

The price of silver in the international market also decreased by $0.23 to $60.54 per ounce, the association added. NEWS DESK

WORLD

Pakistan, Qatar Mediate As Iran Studies US Hormuz Response

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said on Monday that Tehran was still reviewing a US response to its proposal regarding the reopening of ?the Strait of Hormuz and will reply to Washington when the review is over, Iranian state media reported, with Baghaei saying that Pakistan and Qatar were still acting as mediators in the conflict.

After a June interim ceasefire crumbled and on-off strikes resumed, Iran presented its proposal in mid-September and later confirmed receipt of a US response. But the process has since stalled, with Iran's security chief saying on Sunday ?that Washington's response did ?not sufficiently address Tehran's seven conditions ?for reopening the ?Strait of Hormuz and returning to negotiations. A central ?point of disagreement has been Washington's insistence on addressing Iran's nuclear program from the outset. Tehran says negotiations should initially focus on reopening the Strait of ?Hormuz, which before the war carried about a fifth of the global trade in oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), and restoring security in the waterway.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing, Baghaei said the proposal, discussed on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, covers Iran's legitimate demands, including lifting the naval blockade, ending the war on all fronts, and releasing Iranian assets, which were also part of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding agreed in June, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported.

"Our President articulated our positions, once again outlining Iran's seven-point plan and explaining the considerations and points relevant to the overall issue," Baghaei said, adding that Iran would convey its position to mediators once the review is complete.

"We have always welcomed the good offices of friendly nations; however, as you know, technically and in the strict sense of the word, Pakistan and Qatar continue to play the role of mediator between Iran and the US." Tehran has maintained its stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz since the US launched its war on Iran in late Feb., while Washington continues a counter-blockade of Iranian ports. Washington is also seeking to choke Iran's economy, rolling out sanctions on entities with financial links to the Islamic republic in a bid to force it into submission.

Pakistan, which hosted US and Iranian officials in April for their first direct talks since 2015, has repeatedly urged the parties to return to dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict.

"What we have been witnessing in this waterway since February 28 is the direct result of actions by the US," Baqaei said at Monday's briefing.

"The United States' aggressive actions have caused trouble for itself, the region, and the world." NEWS DESK

US Duo Wins Nobel Economics Prize For Crisis-Proof Models

Americans Robert Hall and Michael Woodford were awarded the Nobel economics prize Monday for their work on how monetary and fiscal policy can better stabilise disruptive economic fluctuations.

The two were honoured for developing new models for managing recessions and other crises that fail to respond to traditional tools.

"On the basis of these models, well-timed fiscal and monetary policy measures can reduce the economy's peaks and troughs," the jury said.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences explained in a statement that ever since John Maynard Keynes formulated his economic theories almost a century ago, "stabilisation" policies had long let officials boost economic growth when needed.

But during the oil shocks in the 1970s, the Keynesian models that governed when and how action should be taken no longer worked.

Hall, 83, a professor at Stanford University, and Woodford, a professor at Columbia University born in 1955, separately began to explore new models.

"Rather than basing the models on statistical links between macroeconomic variables, such as inflation, production and consumption, they chose to build them on a microeconomic foundation," the jury said.

Hall and Woodford's models include an "understanding for how the total mass of individual households and businesses affect the economy through their actions", it said.

A fundamental aspect of this is the understanding that households are forward-looking when making decisions about spending or saving.

This means the way governments and central banks communicate their policies can influence people's views of the future when making such decisions.

"The laureates' work has provided us with a stable theoretical foundation for the models that are now used by central banks and governments around the world," John Hassler, chair of the Committee for the Prize in Economic Sciences, said in a statement.

"It's a surprise, but I'm feeling very good about it," Woodford told reporters via phone during the announcement of the prize, saying he felt "elated" for receiving "a tremendous honour".

While his theories have had a large impact on policymakers, he said they had not been "motivated by a specific political agenda". AFP

Kim Fires Again! Missiles Splash Into Sea Of Japan

North Korea on Monday fired multiple ballistic missiles off its east coast, Seoul's military said, after weeks of mounting friction over a landmine explosion along their heavily fortified border.

Since the blast that injured three South Korean soldiers in the Seoul-controlled area of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), both countries have touted the test-firing of upgraded missile technology.

"Our military detected around 09:20 (0020 GMT) several ballistic missiles launched from the Pyongyang area towards the East Sea," the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

"Our military has stepped up surveillance and vigilance against possible additional launches," it added in its statement.

Japan's defence ministry separately confirmed the launch of at least one suspected ballistic missile.

Some of the North Korean missiles detected flew more than 900 kilometres (560 miles), the JCS said, while Seoul and longtime ally the United States were now conducting an analysis of their exact specifications. AFP

NZ bank in free speech row over 'explicit' sheep memes

A bank in New Zealand has found itself at the centre of an unlikely free speech row after an attempt to remove "explicit" memes about its sheep mascot from social media.

Kiwibank unveiled the mascot "Buck" this year in an ad campaign urging consumers to "bank Kiwi".

But the cute sheep with green wool quickly drew some unwanted attention online, with viral posts on X alluding to Buck's good looks -- and uncharitable references to stereotypes about New Zealanders. The state-owned bank responded by sending takedown requests, removing the image of Buck in the offending posts and leaving only the phrase: "this media has been disabled in response to a report by the copyright owner".Users responded by barraging the platform with dozens more in its place, and the original post has now garnered over four million views. "what if we ALL say the kiwibank sheep is sexy. They can't get us all," one social media user said. Commentators described it as a classic example of the so-called "Streisand effect" -- in which an attempt to hide something draws even greater attention to it. Kiwibank spokesman Ben Mabon said the company had been responding to "explicit and harmful content being shared using Buck's image". AFP

Trump Ordered To Axe Taxpayer TV Blitz

US President Donald Trump must cancel any remaining taxpayer-funded television advertisements promoting himself, a federal judge ordered Sunday, following backlash from both sides of the political divide just weeks ahead of crucial midterm elections. According to US media reports, the Trump administration has used $20 million from Department of Homeland Security funds to pay for pro-Trump ads.

US District Judge Jennifer Rochon issued a temporary restraining order, preventing the administration from creating or airing such ads for 14 days. "Defendants shall not enter into, renew, or expand any agreement authorizing the development, creation, dissemination, placement, or airing of the challenged advertisements," Rochon said in the court order.

The plaintiffs alleged the ads "exceed the purposes authorized by Congress and violate restrictions on publicity and propaganda," according to the court order.

"We are pleased the court acted swiftly to prevent more taxpayer dollars from being used for such blatantly unlawful political propaganda," the plaintiffs said in a statement issued by Democracy Forward, the nonprofit legal organization that represents them.

"There is no legal justification -- and no precedent -- for the president to use the machinery of the government and funds set aside by Congress for other uses to influence electoral outcomes that further his own agenda." AFP

Delhi uprising to oust poll chief

Thousands of protesters marched in New Delhi on Monday demanding the resignation of India's election chief over alleged misconduct during a voter roll revision, the latest showdown with authorities in the heavily fortified capital.

Opposition parties and supporters of the youth-led Cockroach Janta Party protest movement have taken to the streets in recent days, defying a strict security clampdown to demand a halt to the revision exercise and the resignation of the chief election commissioner.

"You can see how big the crowd is already," demonstrator Abhey Aryan, 28, told AFP as the crowd marched towards the Supreme Court, chanting slogans and waving placards.

"The government has to listen to the voice of the people."

Critics say the large-scale revision of electoral lists could benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

The Election Commission of India, which oversees the voting process in the world's most populous nation, has denied wrongdoing.

A protester who gave his name as Mehvash said he could no longer "tolerate the injustices" meted out by Modi's government. AFP

SPORTS

DTM

VVD Relishes Fierce Liverpool-City Rivalry

Although they matched their rivals for an hour at Anfield, the sending-off of Ryan Gravenberch turned the game and City showed their ruthlessness with a flurry of goals in 13 minutes to win 3-0.

Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk insists he still looks back on their close-run Premier League title races with Manchester City with fondness but makes a distinct separation between that and what the club had done off the field. The Netherlands skipper has twice been pipped to the title by a single point by their north-west rivals in in 2018-19 and 2021-22 but in the wake of being found guilty of significant financial breaches between 2009 and 2018, City's achievements are being called into question.

Although they matched their rivals for an hour at Anfield, the sending-off of Ryan Gravenberch turned the game and City showed their ruthlessness with a flurry of goals in 13 minutes to win 3-0.

The game was played out against a backdrop of chants which were all 'cheat' themed but Van Dijk would not be drawn on the intricacies of the case against City, who have appealed against the verdict.

"I think everyone could hear it," said Van Dijk.

"Everyone can share their feelings and I don't think Anfield will be the only place where it will be the case because fans will have their feelings. "I really enjoyed our rivalry and it was a great rivalry on the pitch. What happened off the pitch, that is for others to find a conclusion to and then let's see.

"It's still a little bit ongoing so I don't think it's smart for me to comment on it right now but when the verdict comes out I will definitely have my opinion and I will probably share it as well." PA MEDIA

Golden Girl Russo Wins England Top Honour

Forward Alessia Russo has been voted by fans as England women's player of the year for the 2025-26 season, winning the award for the second time in her career, the national team announced on Sunday.

Arsenal player Russo, who also won the award in 2023-24, was the most prolific English scorer in the Women's Super League last season with 13 goals and six assists. Her double in a 3-0 win over Aston Villa in May helped Arsenal secure Champions League qualification. The 27-year-old also played a leading role in England's World Cup qualification campaign, starting in all six group matches and scoring ?three times. "To receive the award is really special, particularly as it comes directly from the fans," said Russo, who beat Lucy Bronze and Hannah Hampton in the poll.

"I absolutely love playing for England every moment I get... hopefully we will go on to have a really big season."

Russo was on the scoresheet when England beat Greece 3-1 in their World Cup round one playoff tie on Friday, with the reverse fixture set for Tuesday in Leicester. REUTERS

Queen Of Beijing: Zheng Blasts Past Mirra For Title

Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen became the first Chinese player to win the China Open, beating French Open winner Mirra Andreeva 7-5 6-4 on Sunday.

Wildcard Zheng, who has been on a recovery path after missing much of last year and early 2026 due to an elbow injury on her dominant right arm, looked like her old self as she used powerful forehands to control the rallies, and landed swift winners angling away from Andreeva. "The feeling was incredible to win here in Beijing... it's one of my dreams," said 24-year-old Zheng, whose China Open campaign ended in a heartbreak last year as she was forced to retire after aggravating her injury.

After the two exchanged early breaks, world number five Andreeva held firm to go 5-4 up, and almost got a decisive break when world number 54 Zheng sent a cross-court shot too long before netting a forehand. However, Zheng, saved three break points to make it 5-5, and pounced on an error-prone Andreeva in the next game, outwitting the Russian with a swift backhand to get the break that secured the first set. Andreeva saved three break points as the second set was poised at 4-4, but a persistent Zheng got the break, and landed a perfect ace in the next game to clinch her first WTA 1000 title, and her first trophy of the year. REUTERS

Codes, Sprints & Trolls: Singapore GP Drama

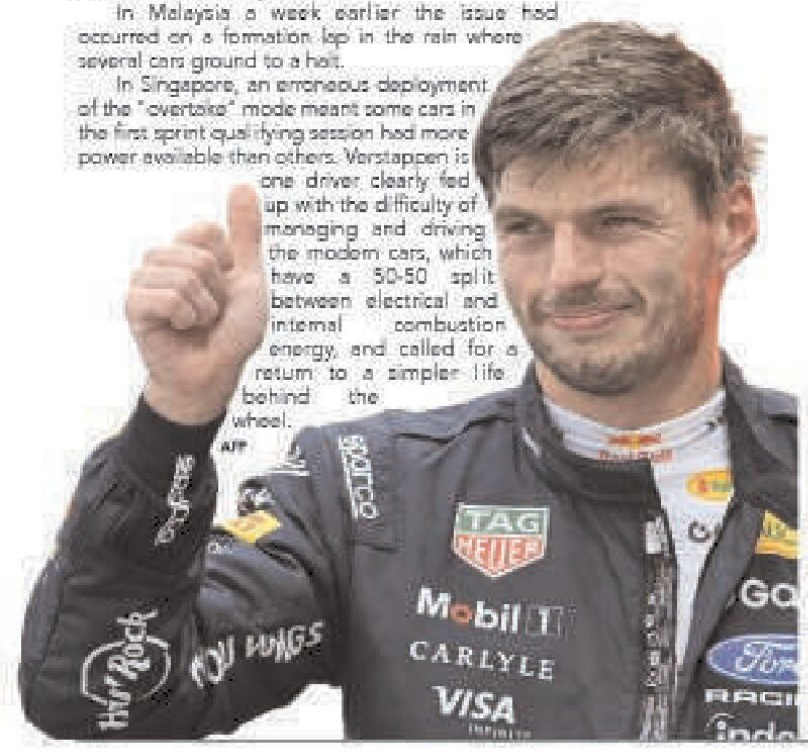
A dominant Max Verstappen won the Singapore Grand Prix for the first time on Sunday, 24 hours after taking the chequered flag in the sprint race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit. Here are three talking points to emerge from a hot and humid weekend in Singapore:

'Brake, throttle, that's it'

For the second weekend in a row, software glitches on the 2026 generation of cars caused problems.

In Malaysia a week earlier the issue had occurred on a formation lap in the rain where several cars ground to a halt.

In Singapore, an erroneous deployment of the "overtake" mode meant some cars in the first sprint qualifying session had more power available then others. Verstappen is one driver clearly fed up with the difficulty of managing and driving the modern cars, which have a 50-50 split between electrical and internal combustion energy, and called for a return to a simpler life behind the wheel. AFP



Boos And 'Cheat' Jeers Greet City At Anfield

Premier League leaders Manchester City came to Liverpool's Anfield stadium on Sunday to find the fallout from their financial rules verdict waiting at the gates. It was their first game since being found guilty of 114 breaches of the league's financial rules, and Liverpool supporters had prepared a blunt welcome. Fans drowned out the announcement of City's team with earspl itting boos and chants of "Going down, going down!" in reference to a possible relegation sanction. City deny the charges and are appealing. In a raucous atmosphere among some 60,000 supporters at Anfield, one banner read: "A Generation Of Supporters Cheated" while some fans held three balloons making the number 114. Another two banners referenced Oasis songs, since the band's Liam and Noel Gallagher are devoted City fans. "All of your stars are fading away," read one, changing a line from the song "Stop Crying Your Heart Out," while another said "& after all, you really robbed us all," a perody of the song "Wonderwall." Liverpool fans are particularly angry as they were narrowly pipped to the Premier League title three times by Manchester City during the period in which they were deemed to have broken financial rules. REUTERS

Oz Build Big Lead Over SA On Day 4

Australia's Matt Renshaw continued his red-hot batting form in before his side declared on 314-6 at tea on the fourth day of the first Test on Monday, setting hosts South Africa a victory target of 421.

Australia had a 106-run lead after Renshaw scored 190 in the first innings, and the 30-year-old Queenslander continued to dominate the home bowlers at Kingsmead, scoring before a controversial caught and bowled from Keshav Maharaj ended his contribution.

It was the top score for Australia, who looked to accelerate their run accumulation in a bid to give themselves time to put South Africa into bat and chase down the 10 wickets required for victory with one day left.

Renshaw, who had not made a significant score in his previous 15 Test innings, looked disgusted with the manner of his dismissal as Maharaj juggled a caught and bowl which looked to drop to the ground before he claimed a catch. It was given out after a television review. REUTERS

Lazio March On, Big Guns Held In Serie A

Lazio maintained their impressive start to the season with a 3-1 win over Monza on Sunday to move level on points with Serie A leaders Inter Milan, while Juventus rescued a 1-1 draw at high-flying Cagliari.

Ten-man AS Roma held on to draw 0-0 at Como and AC Milan were pegged back in a 1-1 draw at Sassuolo.

Inter moved to 16 points with Saturday's 3-0 win over Parma and Lazio joined them despite almost allowing 10-man Monza back in the game. Roma are two points behind in third, with Cagliari fourth on 13 points and Milan a further point back in fifth spot. Juventus and Como are on 11 points.

Gennaro Gattuso's Lazio took a third-minute lead at the Stadio Olimpico when Nuno Tavares rifled an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net.

Midway through the first half, Lazio doubled their advantage with Gustav Isaksen finding the far bottom corner with a first-time shot from wide in the box. Monza's comeback chances then took a hammering when they had Lorenzo Lucchesi sent off 10 minutes before the break.

Instead, Lazio appeared to switch off, and Monza pulled one back in the opening minute of the second half. Daryl Mota flicked on a corner for Saba Goglichidze to head home, and for long periods the visitors had Lazio under the cosh.

Mota was twice denied by Lazio keeper Christos Mandas before Lazio regrouped and finished off Monza's challenge two minutes from time through Andrea Pinamonti's strike from the edge of the six-yard box. "We can't afford to play like we did in the second half," Gattuso told DAZN. "We shouldn't be trying to manage the game. We need to keep doing things the right way."

Roma and Milan lose ground

Roma were without injured keeper Mile Svilar, allowing Pierluigi Gollini to make his first league appearance since joining the club in January 2025. REUTERS