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FAZL UNDER FIRE

Naqvi: Party head wanted KP governorship

CM Maryam accuses Fazlur Rehman of backing terrorism supporters

Without taking any names, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday claimed that the 'head of a party' was 'extremely upset' about not being appointed the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The head of a party is extremely upset over being denied a role in the new setup in KP and not getting the governorship," Naqvi alleged while speaking to journalists in Lahore.

He was seemingly referring to Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who has been critical of the federal government over the imposition of governor's rule in KP.

This politician, Naqvi said, had remained "dependent on the establishment for decades to advance his political career".

"These are the same politicians who remained in politics for decades with the support of the establishment, and this politician even relied on the establishment to arrange air tickets for the members of his party," he further alleged.

He said such politicians had little justification for criticising others now, particularly after having benefitted from the same system they currently denounced.

"Political differences are part of politics. But instead of using inappropriate language and making allegations, political leaders should speak on the basis of arguments and facts," the minister said.

Separately, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz flayed Fazlur Rehman for what she described as his support for those backing terrorism, saying she had not expected such a stance from a senior politician who had himself been a victim of terrorism.

In a statement on X, the chief minister said one would not expect a senior politician like Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who has himself been a victim of terrorism, to support those who back terrorism. Instead of holding accountable those responsible for the ruin of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through incompetence, ineptitude, and corruption, speaking in their favor is deeply regrettable, she added.

She said, those in whose support statements are being issued should be asked: In thirteen years, did they even attend the funeral of a single martyr? On the contrary, they provided shelter to terrorists, nurtured them, and supplied them with resources, safe havens, and land from their own province to launch attacks on Pakistan.

The CM said, these are the same people who piled up heaps of incompetence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, destroyed the lives of its people, and offered them up to terrorism. The province's precious resources were squandered on sit-ins and protests, and thirteen valuable years were sacrificed to corruption and ineptitude.

She said, the officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army are even today taking bullets to the chest to eradicate the cancer of terrorism. Every day, some mother's piece of liver, some sister's brother, and some woman's husband returns home wrapped in the green crescent flag. "Rather than saluting the blood of these martyrs and standing with your army, siding with those who obstruct the path to eliminating terrorism is unworthy of you," she added.

"Your party has itself endured the wounds of terrorism; your companions have attained martyrdom. And those in whose support you stand today are the same ones who, until yesterday, used the most indecent language against you and launched personal attacks. For the victims of terrorism to stand with those who back terrorism is, at the very least, beyond my comprehension," CM Maryam said.

She said, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, no one but PTI itself is responsible for the end of its own government.

The criticism comes after Fazl slammed the imposition of an emergency in the areas of FATA and agreements with the United States, saying the measures aim to seize mineral reserves and open the country's resources to American investment.

Addressing a conference, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said imposing an emergency in the areas of FATA was tantamount to seizing its mineral reserves.

He said the matter was not limited to mineral resources, adding that agreements with the United States were being used in an attempt to establish American control over Pakistani resources and pave the way for investment.

He said that if they received a few coins in return for these measures, the rulers were preparing to pay the price. Maulana Fazlur Rehman warned that they would no longer accept such politics, adding that China and Russia also had reservations about these measures. He also criticized bringing foreign elements into the region and said no compromise would be accepted on the country's resources and national interests. NEWS DESK

PM Shehbaz vows full support for Saudi Arabia

Strongly condemning the Houthi attacks, Premier Shehbaz thanked the Saudi leadership for its continued economic and financial support to Pakistan; Saudi-led coal ition says it intercepted missiles and drones over Riyad h and other areas

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its 'sovereignty, security and territorial integrity' amid a recent escalation in Houthi attacks.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the premier made the remarks during a meeting with newly appointed Saudi Ambassador Dr Rajeh Tami Albugamy. He welcomed the envoy to Pakistan and congratulated him on assuming his new responsibilities.

Ambassador Albugamy, assumed his diplomatic responsibilities in Islamabad on Thursday, reaffirming the commitment to strengthening the strategic and fraternal ties between the two countries.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz said Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations had made significant progress in recent years and reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

He "strongly condemned" the recent escalation in Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, which had resulted in deaths and injuries, including among Pakistani nationals, the statement said.

The prime minister also said the two countries had always stood by each other, adding that the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement and the Makkah Joint Defence Alliance marked "historic milestones" in their longstanding fraternal relations and reflected their shared commitment to regional peace and security.

PM Shehbaz also thanked the Saudi leadership for its longstanding economic and financial support to Pakistan and assured the ambassador of Pakistan's full support and cooperation in further strengthening bilateral ties.

Ambassador Albugamy also met Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, where the latter underscored longstanding fraternal and strategic ties between Islamabad and Riyadh, according to the Foreign Office (FO).

He also reaffirmed Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's "shared commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation for mutual progress and prosperity".

The FO added that the new Saudi envoy conveyed greetings from the kingdom's leadership to Pakistan, with Dar reciprocating and conveying his best wishes to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other Saudi leaders.

The meeting comes amid heightened tensions in the Middle East. On Wednesday, Yemen's Houthi rebels said they had targeted facilities belonging to Saudi Aramco, after Saudi officials reported a strike on a building in Riyadh housing the energy giant's operations centre.

Meanwhile, the Saudi-led coalition said on Friday that it intercepted missiles and drones over Riyadh and other areas.

"We intercepted and destroyed three drones in the southern area and Riyadh ... and two cruise missiles over the Red Sea," coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki wrote on X.

He added that "in the past hours, we intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile over Yanbu", a city home to the terminus of a major oil pipeline on the Red Sea coast.

Moreover, a Houthi commander was killed in clashes with Yemeni government forces near Mount Han in the southwestern city of Taiz, a Yemeni official said on Friday.

Fayyad al-Noman, a Yemeni media spokesman, said on US social media platform X that Abdulrahman Mohammed Sufyan Wajih al-Din, also known as Abu al-Karrar, was killed by government troops near Mount Han.

Al-Noman identified the slain Houthi commander as a brigadier general and director of Dhi al-Sufal in the Ibb province.

He did not specify when the incident occurred or provide further details on the circumstances of the killing.

There was no immediate comment from the Houthis.

Taiz has remained a major front line in Yemen's conflict, with government forces and the Houthis engaged in repeated clashes around the city. NEWS DESK

CM Sindh seeks Shanghai expertise for smart Karachi

Sindh partners with Huawei to build Pakistan's first AI-powered digital province

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday discussed stronger city-to-city cooperation with Shanghai Mayor Zhu Zhongming, proposing a sister-city relationship between Karachi and Shanghai and seeking Chinese expertise in smart-city planning, urban development and digital governance.

During his meeting with the Shanghai mayor, the Chief Minister said Karachi and Shanghai, as major commercial and port cities, could benefit from greater cooperation in urban planning, transport, technology, infrastructure development and investment.

He proposed establishing a formal sister-city partnership between Karachi and Shanghai to provide a framework for regular exchanges between the two cities and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Mr Shah highlighted major urban development initiatives being pursued in Karachi, including the Karachi Circular Railway and the development of technology and IT-related infrastructure.

He invited Shanghai to share its experience in integrated urban planning, public transport, digital services and smart-city management with Karachi.

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Don't mess with us: Pakistan's blunt warning to India

Pakistan on Friday strongly rejected Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's provocative remarks, describing them as a reflection of New Delhi's "hegemonic mindset" that posed risks to regional peace and stability.

Addressing a weekly press briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty, warning that any aggression would be met with a forceful response.

He said that the Indian defence minister's remarks entailed a threat of Indian aggression against Pakistan and urged New Delhi to abandon dangerous rhetoric.

"Such reckless statements reflect India's hegemonistic mindset and the risk it poses to regional peace and stability in South Asia," the spokesperson said.

The FO spokesperson's remarks came after Rajnath Singh said any "future terrorist attack originating from Pakistan" would draw a stronger response from India.

Pakistan and India went to war in May last year after India launched an unprovoked attack on Pakistan following the attack on tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

New Delhi claimed that the terrorists who killed 26 tourists in IIOJK's Pahalgam were Pakistanis - a charge that Islamabad has denied and has also asked India to partake in a neutral investigation. India followed the baseless accusations with unlawful missile strikes inside Pakistan, which resulted in the martyrdom of several civilians and security personnel. Pakistan responded by downing eight Indian fighter jets, including three Rafales.

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Pakistan demands end to Israeli occupation

Expressing deep concern over the deteriorating situation in Gaza, Pakistan has called for a definitive end to the Israeli occupation, stressing that global efforts must converge on an irreversible timeline to establish an independent, viable Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"So long as the occupation continues and the Palestinian people's legitimate yearning for self-determination goes unfulfilled, lasting peace in the Middle East will remain out of reach," the Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, told the UN Security Council which met to discuss the situation in the Middle East, "We stand firmly and unwaveringly with the Palestinian people, he declared.

Noting that during General Assembly High-Level Week, considerable attention was devoted to the Palestinian question, the Pakistani envoy said that across the various meetings and statements, a clear convergence emerged: the two-State solution remains the internationally agreed framework and the indispensable foundation for just and lasting peace.

"This international commitment to the two-State solution must be accompanied by concrete measures to preserve the territorial integrity and viability of the State of Palestine."

Resolution 2803, the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and the New York Declaration provide mutually reinforcing frameworks for advancing this objective, he said.

"Yet," Ambassador Jadoon said, "this consensus is being undermined by Israel's deliberate attempts to create irreversible facts on the ground," pointing out that In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, settlement expansion, particularly the E1 project, threatens to sever Palestinian territorial contiguity.

"Settler violence, demolitions, land seizures and forced displacement are entrenching annexation and dismantling the foundations of peace.

All settlement activities must cease in accordance with resolution 2334; settler violence must be halted; and accountability ensured. We strongly condemn the provocative and illegal incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and demand respect for the historical and legal status quo of the holy sites," Ambassador Jadoon added.

In Gaza, he said, continued violations of the ceasefire, wanton killing of the Palestinian population and restrictions on humanitarian access continue, with the approaching winter threatens to deepen the crisis.

The ceasefire, he added, must be fully upheld, humanitarian assistance delivered unhindered and at scale, and recovery and reconstruction advanced without delay.

UNRWA's indispensable work must be supported. We reject forced displacement and any attempt to fragment Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which constitute a single territorial unit, the Pakistani envoy said. "Withheld Palestinian revenues must be released to enable the Palestinian Authority to fulfill its responsibilities."

Pakistan, he said, strongly condemns the continued Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, including its civilian and economic infrastructure.

"These attacks must cease immediately.We reiterate our unwavering support for the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the brotherly Kingdom, and reaffirm its right to self-defense under international law against any external attacks."

Pakistan, the ambassador said, supports the UN Special Envoy's efforts towards the resumption of dialogue for a comprehensive and lasting peace in Yemen. NEWS DESK

Memon announces plan to expand jobs, internships

The Sindh government has decided to increase internship and employment opportunities for students, fresh graduates, and individuals at the early stages of their careers.

Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that the Sindh Government is contacting more than 100 companies with the aim of increasing internship and employment opportunities.

In a statement, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that through iWork4Sindh, alignment is being established between the skills of young people and market requirements. So far, more than 5.19 million people have visited this digital platform, 136,547 candidates are registered, while 721 companies are present on the platform. He said that so far, 31,270 job opportunities have been posted through the digital platform, 24,766 jobs are active, and 473,339 applications have been submitted by candidates. The platform is creating new opportunities for interaction between young people and employers.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that alongside employment, the Sindh Government is also focusing on enhancing the professional capabilities of young people. Access to more than 1,800 internationally recognised short training courses has been provided on iWork4Sindh. He said that so far, 4,620 candidates have completed their courses, while 5,789 candidates are undergoing training in various courses. A system is also being developed to automatically incorporate jobs from the public and private sectors into the platform.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that a period of the next one and a half to two months has been planned for the initial preparation and implementation of the project, and plans are also being made to introduce a facility for daily alerts about new jobs. news desk

Shazia criticises KP government

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central spokesperson Shazia Marri, expressed serious concern over the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), accusing the Pakistan Tehreek-eInsaf (PTI)-led provincial government of failing to effectively address terrorism and fulfil its basic responsibilities towards the people.

Addressing a press conference along with Senator Quratulain Marri, MNA Sardar Fatehullah Khan Miankhel and PPP leader Akhunzada Chattan at Parliament House on Friday, she said that innocent people were being targeted in terrorist attacks across the province during their government there.

She said that Pakistan had been fighting terrorism for decades and had achieved significant successes and rendered several sacrifices. However, she regretted that the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had continued to deteriorate due to lack of governance and other lapses by provincial government.

Shazia Marri questioned what concrete measures the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led provincial government had taken during its years in power to eliminate terrorism and ensure the safety of citizens. She said the people of the province had suffered immensely, with children, women and entire families bearing the consequences of violence, particularly in the tribal districts. Criticizing the provincial leadership's political activities and visits to other provinces, she said the chief minister's foremost responsibility was to protect the lives and property of people in his own province. Shazia Marri said that education, healthcare and development were fundamental responsibilities of a provincial government. NEWS DESK

Aseefa stresses community-led development

First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has emphasised that community engagement, public trust and inclusive leadership are essential for sustainable development, stressing that lasting solutions must be shaped by the needs and experiences of local communities.

In an article published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, she highlighted the growing challenges posed by climate change, conflicts, economic pressures, inequality and displacement, calling for collective action and stronger partnerships to address them.

Reflecting on the legacy of her mother, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari said public service was a responsibility rooted in listening to people, understanding their concerns and standing with those whose voices often go unheard.

Drawing on her experiences across Pakistan, she said development should be measured not merely through policies and programmes but by improvements in people's lives, including greater security for families, better opportunities for children and stronger communities.

She underscored the role of frontline health workers in Pakistan's polio eradication efforts, noting that their engagement with families and continued efforts to build trust are as important as vaccine delivery.

The first lady also highlighted the contribution of the Benazir Income Support Programme in providing social protection and helping vulnerable families cope with economic hardship.

Addressing climate-related challenges, she said Pakistan's recurring floods and heatwaves had demonstrated the importance of community resilience. She cited the devastating floods of 2022 as a reminder that recovery requires listening to affected populations and addressing their long-term needs.

Aseefa Bibi acknowledged Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's efforts to engage with affected families and raise Pakistan's case at the international level, highlighting the need for long-term recovery beyond emergency relief.

She praised the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF) initiative as an example of climate-resilient reconstruction, helping flood-affected families rebuild safer homes and livelihoods.

The first lady also stressed the need to invest in young people through education and expanded opportunities, while emphasising women's role as community leaders, entrepreneurs and agents of change.

Highlighting the importance of international cooperation, she said governments, international organisations, civil society and local communities must work together to tackle challenges such as poverty, public health emergencies and climate change. NEWS DESK

Court acquits Anmol Pinky due to lack of evidence

A Karachi court on Friday approved the acquittal plea of Anmol, alias Pinky, in a narcotics case.

The court acquitted her due to a lack of evidence and ordered her immediate release, provided she is not wanted in any other case.

This case was originally registered at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station in 2018. Prior to this decision, she had already been acquitted in four other cases.

In August, an Additional District and Sessions Court (South) in Karachi acquitted the alleged drug dealer in three separate drug-related cases registered at the Gizri Police Station after approving her acquittal pleas.

According to defence counsel, those cases were registered against Anmol in 2020, 2021, and 2022, and she had previously been declared a absconder in all three. The lawyer informed the court that two co-accused, Ali and Fahmida, were already acquitted in 2024.

The defence argued that Anmol was implicated solely on the basis of statements allegedly made by the co-accused. Since those co-accused were cleared, the prosecution could no longer secure a conviction against Anmol. The court observed that the prosecution failed to present sufficient evidence against the accused before granting her acquittal. INP

Flour millers refuse to lift 'rotten' wheat from Landhi warehouses

Millions of maunds of wheat stored in government warehouses in Karachi's Landhi area have reportedly deteriorated and become unfit for human consumption, prompting flour millers to refuse to lift the grain released by the Sindh government.

A substantial quantity of wheat purchased with public funds has reportedly rotted and turned black during storage at warehouses operated by the Sindh Food Department in Landhi. The reported damage to the government's wheat stocks has raised concerns about substantial financial losses to the national exchequer, as wheat purchased at a cost of billions of rupees has allegedly been allowed to go to waste instead of being sold and distributed.

The stockpile reportedly includes wheat that has been stored for four years, with a significant portion said to be damaged and unusable. Association chairman Malik Iqbal said a large portion of the government-held wheat was damaged. He called for the spoiled grain to be separated from the usable stock, adding that flour millers would consider lifting the wheat that remained fit for consumption.

The association has warned that the wheat shortage could intensify in the coming months, raising concerns about the availability and cost of flour. Sindh requires approximately one million metric tonnes of wheat, and millers have expressed concern that supplies could fall short despite the existence of government stocks.

The Flour Mills Association has written to the prime minister, the president and the chief minister of Sindh, urging the authorities to allow wheat imports amid concerns over reduced domestic production and the condition of government reserves. Malik Iqbal described the government's official wheat price of Rs12,500 per maund as encouraging. However, he stressed that damaged stocks must be separated from usable grain before millers could consider purchasing the remaining supplies. The association also expressed support for a new wheat policy, saying it could help curb corruption and reduce the burden of government subsidies. INP

Hashmi pays tribute to Liaquat Ali Khan on 75th death anniversary

Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi visited the mausoleum of Shaheed-e-Millat Khan Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, on his death anniversary.

He laid a floral wreath, offered Fateha and paid tribute to the services and sacrifices of the founding leader. Governor Sindh also offered prayers for the elevation of his ranks on behalf of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and himself. He also recorded his remarks in the visitors' book.

Speaking to the media after the visit, Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi stated that the national services and sacrifices of Shaheed-e-Millat Liaquat Ali Khan would never be forgotten. He emphasized that Pakistan was established through the extraordinary struggle, sacrifices and unwavering determination of the nation's forefathers. The country, he remarked, was not achieved without immense hardship; the leaders of the Pakistan Movement made tremendous sacrifices for its creation.

Governor Sindh added that hostile elements had never wanted Pakistan to prosper, but the sacrifices and dedication of the country's leadership helped lay the foundations of the nation. He noted that the final words attributed to Shaheed-e-Millat Liaquat Ali Khan, "May Allah protect Pakistan," continued to convey a powerful message to the nation. He maintained that the people would always remember his services and sacrifices with deep respect.

Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi stressed that the nation's responsibility was now to fulfil the vision of its founding leaders and take Pakistan forward on the path of development, prosperity and stability. He expressed confidence that the country's journey towards progress would continue, noting that the Pakistan Muslim League was in government, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was leading the country, and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was the party's leader.

Responding to questions about the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the broader national circumstances, Governor Sindh emphasized the need to protect cities from destruction and disorder. He questioned whether the sacrifices of Pakistan's soldiers and civilians should continue without an end and stressed that eliminating terrorism was essential. He called upon all Pakistanis to unite and play their part in promoting peace, stability and national development.

Commenting on the political situation, Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi observed that alliances may form and change in a parliamentary democracy, but national interests, peace and stability must always remain the foremost priorities. He underscored the importance of resolving matters in accordance with the Constitution and the law, adding that political harmony and national unity were essential for the country's progress and public prosperity.

In response to a question about Karachi's economic situation, Governor Sindh highlighted the city's pivotal role in Pakistan's economy. He emphasized that all relevant stakeholders must work together to strengthen economic growth, maintain law and order and secure a better future for the people of Karachi. He called for collective efforts and cooperation to move the city further along the path of economic development. On the occasion, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab Rashid Nasrullah also spoke to the media about Karachi's law-and-order situation and measures taken in the past. He referred to the initiatives undertaken during former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's tenure to restore peace in Karachi and acknowledged his role in those efforts. NEWS DESK

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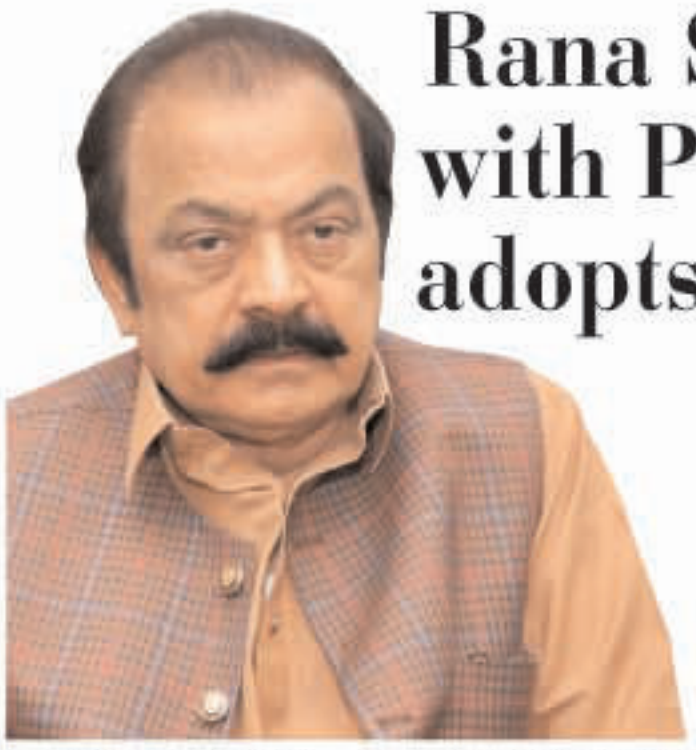
Rana Sana says talks with PTI possible if it adopts legal approach



Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has said the government may consider negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) if the party agrees to play a constructive role within constitutional and legal parameters.

Speaking on a private television programme, Rana Sanaullah said the opposition's approach was causing harm to the party itself. He said that during Imran Khan's tenure as prime minister, he had not even contacted the opposition leader by telephone, whereas Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif shook hands and spoke with the opposition leader when he arrived in the National Assembly.

Rana Sanaullah expressed regret over the detention of Imran Khan's sisters, saying the government was also saddened by the situation. However, he said everyone knew what they had been saying regarding the long march.

He alleged that Imran Khan's sisters had made statements about storming the Governor House, adding that their detention had become necessary to maintain control of the situation.

The prime minister's adviser said the nature of statements made by PTI's social media network was also well known. He maintained that if the party had agreed to play its role through constitutional and legal means, there would have been no need for an interim arrangement. However, he said the possibility of reconsidering the matter remained open.

Warning about the security situation, Rana Sanaullah said the country's existence could be threatened if terrorism was not eliminated promptly and the nation failed to unite against it. He stressed that federal and provincial governments needed to adopt a uniform policy to tackle terrorism effectively.

Rana Sanaullah claimed that India was no longer in a position to fight Pakistan through conventional warfare and alleged that it had established bases in Afghanistan. He further alleged that India was financing terrorist activities in Pakistan, adding that the wider region viewed Pakistan as a security provider. INP

Punjab announces winter timings for schools: Government schools across Punjab will follow new winter operating hours starting October 16, 2026, under a notification issued by the Punjab School Education Department.

The revised schedule will remain in effect until March 31, 2027. Chief Executive Officers of all districts have been directed to ensure that schools implement the new timings.

Under the revised schedule, government schools will operate from 8:45am to 1:30pm, Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, schools will close earlier, at 12:30pm, under the winter timetable.

The department has also announced separate timings for government schools operating in double shifts. The morning shift will run from 8:45am to 1:15pm, Monday through Thursday. The second shift will operate from 1:30pm to 4:30pm on the same days.

On Fridays, the second shift will run from 2pm to 4:30pm. The Punjab School Education Department has issued an official notification outlining the revised winter school timings.

Chief executive officers of all districts have been instructed to ensure implementation of the new schedule across government schools. The revised timings will remain applicable until March 31, 2027. INP

Pakistan, Russia seek stronger academic, cultural ties

Russian Education Attaché Gleb Shubin highlighted vast scope for Pak-Russia academic and cultural cooperation, saying partnerships will boost mutual understanding and friendly ties.

Speaking at a certificate distribution ceremony at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Russian Cultural and Education Attaché Gleb Shubin said educational cooperation offers people of both countries valuable opportunities to learn each other's languages, cultures, academic traditions and social values.

He noted that such exchanges not only enhance academic learning but also promote cultural harmony and people-to-people contacts.

Congratulating the successful participants of the Russian language course, Shubin expressed hope that these language initiatives would continue to play a vital role in strengthening mutual understanding, academic linkages and long-standing friendly relations between Pakistan and Russia.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director of International Collaboration and Exchange at AIOU said the university was providing Pakistani students with opportunities to learn foreign languages and gain a deeper understanding of the cultures, educational traditions and social values of different countries.

Dr. Zahid Majeed said that this was the eleventh batch of the Russian language course, adding that training for the next batch would begin in November and that the programme would continue in the future.

He said the university hosted Türkiye's Yunus Emre Institute and the Japan-Pakistan Advancement Centre, providing students with opportunities to learn Turkish and Japanese and explore the respective countries' cultures.

Dr. Zahid Majeed further revealed that the university planned to establish centres for Chinese and German languages to broaden the scope of language education and strengthen its international academic links.

Professor Dr. Anton Dolgov and Dr. Roman Porozov of Russia's Ural State Pedagogical University also shared their experiences of teaching Russian in Pakistan.

They said learning foreign languages promoted direct communication, cultural awareness and mutual trust among people from different countries.

Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood Allama Iqbal Open University has been undertaking various initiatives to promote international academic collaboration, expand foreign language education and enable students to benefit from educational opportunities at the global level.

The university aims to provide quality education while familiarizing students with different languages and cultures and opening new avenues for international cooperation. NEWS DESK

Dar reviews arrangements for next SCO summit

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday chaired a follow-up meeting to review preparations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council of Heads of State Summit to be hosted by Pakistan here in 2027.

The meeting took stock of progress on the arrangements for the Summit and followed up on decisions taken at the previous meeting. The deputy prime minister highlighted the upcoming Summit as an important opportunity to deepen engagement with SCO member states and advance shared regional priorities. He directed that preparations be undertaken in a coordinated and timely manner to ensure the smooth conduct of the Summit.

The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Defence, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority and senior officials from relevant ministries. NEWS DESK

Fine for minor offence cannot disqualify for police job: FCCP

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has ruled that a Rs500 fine for a minor offence cannot permanently disqualify a candidate from police recruitment, particularly when the candidate has not concealed his criminal record.

A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi dismissed an appeal filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief, upholding the Peshawar High Court's decision in favour of Hanifullah. In its written judgment authored by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, the court observed that a minor offence should not affect a person's entire life. The nature of the offence, punishment and likelihood of future criminal conduct must be considered.

Hanifullah was fined Rs500 in 2018 after admitting an offence under Sections 285 and 286 of the Pakistan Penal Code in a case registered at Talash Police Station, Lower Dir, relating to negligence involving fire or explosive substances.

The court observed that the offence did not fall within the category of serious crimes or offences involving moral turpitude. It also noted that the record did not establish Hanifullah as a habitual offender.

The judgment emphasised that punishment must be proportionate to the offence and that Article 10-A of the Constitution guarantees the right to a fair trial and due process. It further observed that a person should not be deprived of employment for life without being informed of the legal consequences of admitting guilt.

The Peshawar High Court's Mingora Bench had directed the authorities on March 15, 2023, to consider Hanifullah for appointment as a constable. The FCC dismissed the police chief's appeal in its judgment dated May 5, 2026. NEWS DESK

1.87m Pakistanis went abroad for jobs in three years, NA told

Around 1.871 million Pakistanis travelled abroad for employment over the past three years, the National Assembly was informed on Friday, as the government outlined plans to expand technical training and overseas job opportunities.

Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Awn Saqlain told the House during question hour that overseas workers included accountants, nurses, data engineers, advisers and television technicians. While demand for nurses remained strong in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the number of engineers going abroad was relatively low, partly because of visa restrictions in some destinations. He said overseas employment depended on the requirements of destination countries, which were communicated through Community Welfare Attachés.

More than 10 million Pakistanis living abroad contributed approximately $40 billion annually in remittances, he said, expressing hope that improved skills training and employment opportunities would help raise annual remittances to $80 billion within two years. The government was strengthening technical and vocational education through TEVTA, NAVTTC and information technology institutions to prepare workers for international markets.

Addressing illegal immigration, Saqlain said authorities had taken action against human traffickers and agents, particularly in central Punjab. The Federal Investigation Agency and Interior Ministry had conducted operations and arrested suspects. He also referred to migration-related cooperation agreements with countries including Italy.

The minister said a welfare mechanism had been established to provide financial assistance to Pakistanis injured in accidents abroad.

E-Passport: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary told the National Assembly that the government aimed to complete Pakistan's transition to electronic passports to bring immigration services in line with international standards.

He said all passports currently being issued in Pakistan were e-passports containing embedded chips to strengthen security and prevent forgery. Modern machinery had been installed at passport offices and the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports headquarters in Islamabad. However, the transition could take time because of the country's large population and the need to equip offices across different locations.

The minister said the government was expanding passport services to districts and tehsil-level areas. Applications submitted by overseas Pakistanis through embassies and consulates were generally forwarded to headquarters for issuance.

He added that modern machinery had increased processing capacity, while NADRA's expertise in technology-based services had attracted interest from other countries.

Workers Welfare Fund: Minister of State Awn Saqlain informed the National Assembly that the Workers Welfare Fund had 251 regular employees, 12 employees on deputation and 90 vacant posts.

He said all deputation appointments complied with prescribed rules and had been scrutinised by a committee. The fund's administrative expenditure over the past five years stood at Rs753 million, while operational expenditure totalled Rs300 million.

The minister said 22 vehicles were being used by Grade-20 officers, with a 50 per cent reduction imposed under the prime minister's austerity policy. He added that expenditure had been further reduced during the current financial year.

Saqlain offered to arrange a briefing for lawmakers at the WWF office to clarify questions concerning staffing, salaries and expenditure.

PTV business plan: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry told the National Assembly that Pakistan Television's business plan had been submitted to its board after completion of the required formalities.

He expressed hope that the plan would be approved within the next few months. The Finance Division had released allocated funds of Rs11.73 billion and Rs13 billion for the respective financial years, he said.

Chaudhry said the government wanted to ensure sustainable programming and more effective communication of the state's message.

He added that efforts were underway to broadcast public awareness advertisements during prime time or other slots offering maximum viewership, while making full use of allocated airtime. The minister also said concerns about certain television drama content and practices had been discussed by the relevant parliamentary standing committee. NEWS DESK

FCCP orders closure of NAB inquiry against former DG

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan has allowed an appeal filed by former National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Director General Shehzad Saleem and ordered the closure of an inquiry against him regarding alleged illegal recruitment.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi announced the short order. During the hearing, counsel for Shehzad Saleem argued that NAB had initiated the inquiry into his appointment after a delay of nine years, while the Supreme Court had already decided the matter in an earlier judgment. Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi questioned why NAB had remained inactive for so long, observing that the inquiry into the former NAB director general's appointment should have been conducted earlier. The NAB prosecutor acknowledged that the delay in initiating the inquiry was attributable to the bureau. However, he maintained that documentary evidence was available indicating irregularities in the recruitment process. Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi observed that the matter should have been examined when the Supreme Court issued its order.

The NAB prosecutor informed the court that, in compliance with the Supreme Court's directions, the bureau had examined Shehzad Saleem's promotions. The judge remarked that if NAB had been tasked with scrutinising his promotions, it should also have examined the process of his initial appointment. Subsequently, the court allowed Shehzad Saleem's appeal and ordered the closure of the inquiry against him. NEWS DESK

Nawaz vehicles vandalised in London

Masked men vandalised vehicles belonging to former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president Nawaz Sharif in London, police said.

According to police, the incident took place on Saturday evening, and CCTV footage has been obtained. The footage showed two men breaking the vehicles' side-view mirrors. The suspects were wearing masks, making it difficult to identify them. Their identities and whereabouts remained unknown at the time of reporting. The damaged vehicles have since been repaired, and Nawaz Sharif travelled in the same vehicle on Sunday.

Upon arriving at Avenfield House, Nawaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the school roof collapse in Peshawar. He said Maryam Nawaz was already working on issues concerning the poor condition of private schools. Asked about his health, Nawaz Sharif replied that he was doing well, thanking Allah. His physician, Dr Adnan, was also accompanying him. INP

Rawalpindi ATC defers verdict against Aleema

A special Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Rawalpindi has deferred its verdict for the fourth time in a case registered against Aleema Khan and 10 other accused in connection with the November 26 protests.

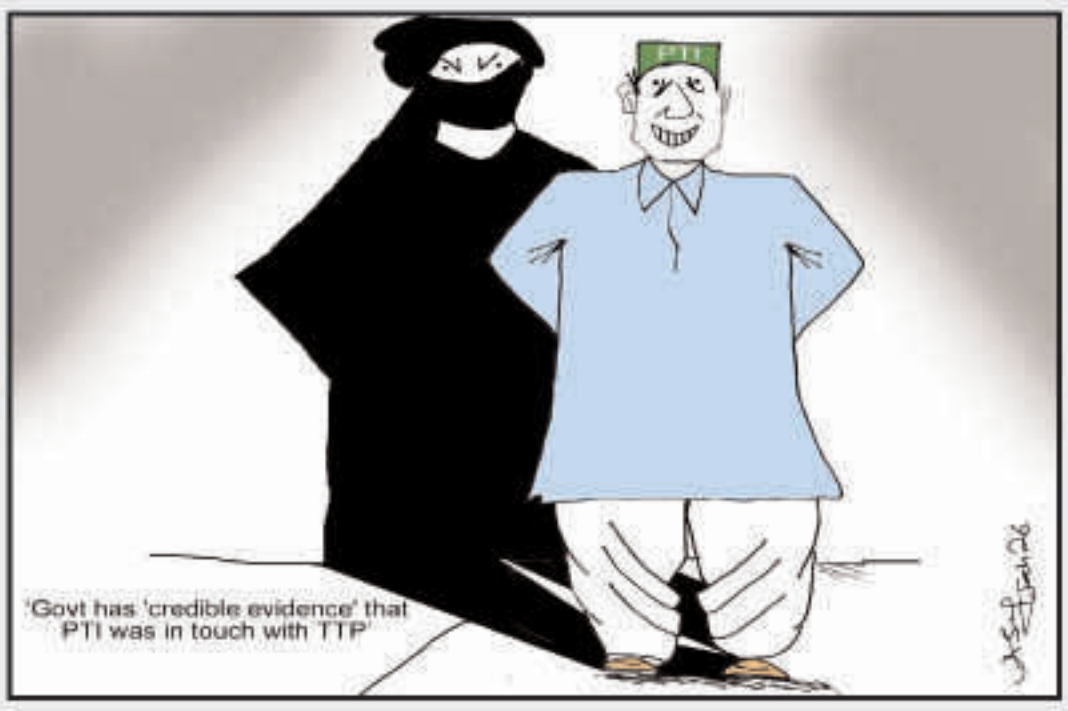
ATC Rawalpindi Judge Amjad Ali Shah conducted the hearing today, while Aleema Khan's counsel, Faisal Malik, appeared before the court alongside his legal team. The defense counsel urged the court to allow further arguments in the case. However, the court adjourned the hearing without pronouncing its reserved verdict.

The verdict, which was scheduled to be announced today, will now be pronounced on October 26. According to the prosecution, Aleema Khan is accused of planning the November 26 protest and allegedly conspiring with Imran Khan during a meeting at Adiala Jail on November 22, 2024. Earlier, Aleema Khan was detained in Lahore after the city's deputy commissioner ordered her 30-day detention under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance. Police later confirmed that she was moved to Kot Lakhpat Jail.

The detention came ahead of PTI's planned September 27 countrywide protest and march toward Islamabad, which the party stated was aimed at demanding Imran Khan's release. The November 26 protest case, involving allegations of violence and an alleged conspiracy, was lodged at the Sadiqabad Police Station in Rawalpindi. During previous proceedings, the prosecution team completed its arguments, after which the court reserved its verdict. Aleema Khan's lawyer, Muhammad Faisal Malik, objected to the proceedings, describing the hearing as one-sided.

To date, the cross-examination of 19 prosecution witnesses has been completed, and the court has heard various miscellaneous applications filed on behalf of Aleema Khan. The case stems from the November 26, 2024 protest organized by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), during which thousands of party supporters marched toward Islamabad despite restrictions on public gatherings. Ensuing clashes between protesters and security forces led to violence in several parts of the capital, including the Red Zone, before PTI eventually called off its planned sit-in. INP

EDITORIAL



Punjab cannot keep delaying local elections

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rightly rejected the Punjab government's proposal to postpone local government elections until April 2027. The decision is important for a province where elected local bodies are essential for addressing public problems and improving service delivery. The provincial government has cited winter, fog, smog and the expected start of Ramazan as reasons for seeking a delay. These concerns deserve consideration, but they should not become grounds for repeatedly pushing elections into the future. The ECP had already discussed a possible election timeframe with the provincial government, and its proposed December schedule showed that preparations were moving forward. The government's request for elections in three phases in April raises a basic question: why should citizens have to wait several more months to elect their local representatives? Weather conditions can create genuine difficulties, but election authorities routinely have to plan around administrative and logistical challenges. The answer should be better preparation, not an indefinite search for the most convenient time.

Local governments are not a secondary part of democracy. They provide a direct link between citizens and the state, allowing communities to raise issues involving sanitation, water supply, roads, street lighting and other essential services. Without elected local representatives, these matters risk remaining dependent on provincial officials and political priorities set far from the communities concerned. Delaying elections also weakens accountability, as citizens lose an important opportunity to judge local leadership through the ballot box. The ECP's direction to prepare the election schedule without delay is therefore a necessary step towards restoring democratic representation at the grassroots level. The Punjab government should cooperate fully, submit the required lists of election officers and help the commission complete preparations within the agreed legal framework. If particular areas face serious weather-related risks, the authorities should develop suitable contingency plans rather than postpone elections across the province. The commission, for its part, must communicate the schedule clearly and ensure that all candidates receive a fair opportunity to participate.

Pakistan and Malaysia must deepen defence ties

Pakistan and Malaysia have reaffirmed their commitment to closer defence and security cooperation following the conclusion of Exercise Harimau Markhor-IV at the National Counter Terrorism Centre in Pabbi, Nowshera. The two-week exercise brought together the armed forces of both countries to exchange counter-terrorism expertise, improve tactical skills and learn from each other's operational experience. The exercise is a welcome step, but its value should not be measured only by the successful completion of military drills. In a region facing changing security threats, cooperation between friendly countries can help improve preparedness, strengthen professional ties and build trust. Pakistan has considerable experience in counter-terrorism operations, while cooperation with Malaysia offers opportunities to exchange knowledge and improve responses to shared security challenges. The exercise also reflects a wider relationship that has developed over decades. The two countries have maintained diplomatic relations since 1957, and their partnership now extends beyond defence to trade, investment and other fields. However, lasting security cooperation requires regular engagement, clear objectives and practical follow-up. Joint exercises should therefore form part of a continuing process of training, information-sharing and institutional coordination. Both countries must also ensure that their cooperation remains focused on peace, stability and the protection of their citizens.

The meeting provides another opportunity to turn this partnership into meaningful progress. The two sides reviewed developments since their previous meeting in 2025 and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral defence relations. Such regular consultations are important because military cooperation cannot depend on occasional exercises or high-level visits alone. It needs sustained planning and a clear understanding of each country's needs and capabilities. At the same time, Pakistan and Malaysia should avoid allowing their relationship to remain limited to official statements and formal meetings. Defence ties can be strengthened through continued training, professional exchanges and cooperation in areas where both countries can benefit. Economic relations deserve similar attention. The Malaysia-Pakistan Closer Economic Partnership Agreement, signed in 2007, provides a framework for trade and investment, while earlier commitments have created opportunities for further cooperation. Stronger economic links can give the broader relationship greater depth and resilience.

The theater of punishment-Part 1

Ben-Gvir's rhetoric reveals the depth of this political culture. He speaks of Palestinians not as a people with rights but as a demographic threat to be controlled and contained. In this worldview, solidarity itself becomes criminal. Humanitarianism is recast as terrorism. International law becomes an inconvenience. The flotilla activists were therefore dangerous not because they carried weapons but because they carried testimony.

Gaza Global Sumud Flotilla activists arrived in Turkey in horrific condition after severe beatings in Israeli custody. Photo: State of Palestine

The treatment of the flotilla activists by Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir was shocking only to those who continue to clothe colonial violence in the soft language of security. There is now a mountain of evidence before humanity: Gaza has become not merely a place under siege but a geography of calculated despair, where starvation and bombardment have been converted into instruments of political management. The activists aboard the flotilla were not armed combatants, nor were they soldiers threatening invasion. They were international volunteers, human rights advocates, doctors, parliamentarians, and organizers attempting to break the siege imposed on Gaza. Their journey was political, moral, and humanitarian. Yet the Israeli state met them with humiliation, detention, and theatrical violence.

VIJAY PRASHAD
Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian and journalist.

Ben-Gvir understood precisely the symbolic function of his actions. The politics of the Israeli far right is not merely about security; it is about pedagogy. The violence must be seen and the humiliation must circulate publicly. Domination must constantly reproduce itself through spectacle. The public degradation of Palestinians and their allies is central to the ideological machinery of the Israeli far right. Every arrest becomes a lesson in obedience, every beating becomes a message, every detention becomes a declaration that resistance, even symbolic resistance, will be met with overwhelming force.

Long before the flotilla activists were detained and brutalized, Ben-Gvir directed his fury toward one of the most important Palestinian political prisoners of the modern era: Marwan Barghouti (born 1959).

The flotilla activists entered a geography already transformed by blockade and devastation. Gaza today is not merely occupied territory; it is a laboratory of punishment. For years, Israel has controlled the movement of food, medicine, fuel, electricity, and people into the strip. The blockade has produced not security but social suffocation. International organizations have repeatedly warned about catastrophic humanitarian conditions. Yet the siege continues because it serves a political purpose: to fragment Palestinian life and break collective morale.

When activists attempted to challenge this order through the flotilla, Ben-Gvir and his allies responded as colonial powers often do when confronted by moral witness. The activists were presented not as human beings motivated by conscience but as enemies of the state. Their detention was accompanied by taunts and intimidation. The aim was not merely to stop the flotilla but to discourage future acts of solidarity. This pattern is older than the present crisis. Colonial systems survive not only through military superiority but through rituals of domination. The British Empire practiced it in India and Kenya, French colonial authorities employed it in Algeria, and South African apartheid institutionalized it with bureaucratic precision. Humiliation becomes part of governance.

Ben-Gvir's rhetoric reveals the depth of this political culture. He speaks of Palestinians not as a people with rights but as a demographic threat to be controlled and contained. In this worldview, solidarity itself becomes criminal. Humanitarianism is recast as terrorism. International law becomes an inconvenience. The flotilla activists were therefore dangerous not because they carried weapons but because they carried testimony. They threatened to expose the architecture of siege before a global audience. Their mere presence undermined the carefully manufactured narrative that Gaza's suffering is unavoidable collateral damage rather than a political choice. What Ben-Gvir fears most is not armed resistance alone. He fears political imagination and the possibility that ordinary people across the world may see Palestinians not through the language of security briefings but through the language of shared humanity. And so, the brutality directed at the flotilla activists was not an aberration. It was entirely consistent with the ideological world that Ben-Gvir inhabits: a world in which domination must constantly reproduce itself through force, humiliation, and fear.

The politics of erasure

Long before the flotilla activists were detained and brutalized, Ben-Gvir directed his fury toward one of the most important Palestinian political prisoners of the modern era: Marwan Barghouti (born 1959). Marwan Barghouti occupies a singular place in Palestinian political life, not because he is untouched by political contradiction but because he embodies the continuity of a national struggle that many powerful actors wish to erase. To many Palestinians, he represents a figure capable of unifying fragmented political tendencies. Emerging from the ranks of Fatah during the First Intifada, Barghouti became associated with grassroots political mobilization and the demand for national liberation. Even among those who disagree with aspects of his political strategy, there is widespread recognition of his symbolic importance. Israel understands this symbolism well. That is why Barghouti's imprisonment since 2002 has never been merely judicial. It is deeply political.

Ben-Gvir's hostility toward Barghouti reflects a broader Israeli strategy: the systematic destruction of Palestinian political leadership. Colonial systems frequently attempt to criminalize leadership because organized political consciousness poses a threat greater than spontaneous unrest. A people without leadership can be fragmented. A people without political memory can be managed.

Barghouti's imprisonment became a site through which the Israeli far right could perform its politics of vengeance. Ben-Gvir repeatedly advocated harsher prison conditions for Palestinian detainees.

Under his political influence, there were intensified crackdowns on prisoners' rights, restrictions on family visits, and punitive measures designed not simply to incarcerate but to degrade. Reports from Palestinian prisoners and human rights organizations have described conditions marked by isolation, overcrowding, physical abuse, and psychological pressure. Prison raids became spectacles of domination. Books were confiscated. Collective punishment intensified. The prison, in this system, is not only a place of detention; it is an instrument of colonial management.

Barghouti's case reveals something essential about Ben-Gvir's worldview. He does not merely oppose Palestinian armed groups, but he opposes Palestinian political existence itself. This is why figures like Barghouti are so threatening. Barghouti speaks the language of national liberation. He invokes anti-colonial traditions familiar across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. His political symbolism connects Palestine to a wider history of struggle against occupation and racial domination. For Ben-Gvir, such figures must be broken psychologically. Their dignity must be shattered publicly. Their image must be transformed from political leader into criminal inmate.

The arc of the physical universe bends towards heat-Part-IV

Representing the energy companies, lawyer Kannon Shanmugam described Boulder's claims as an "unprecedented effort to use state law to regulate global conduct." The Constitution, he said, bars the application of state law to "certain inherently federal areas," and the Supreme Court has long held that federal law governs interstate-pollution claims. Moreover, he added, a state cannot regulate out-of-state conduct "based solely on attenuated effects" that it might have within the state.

Chief Justice John Roberts appeared skeptical, however. He suggested to both Shanmugam and Sarah Harris, the principal deputy U.S. solicitor general who argued on behalf of the Trump administration in support of the energy companies, that it was not uncommon for lawsuits to be based on conduct that occurs outside a state but has broad "effects," including within the state. He asked Harris "what makes this situation different from those" other cases in which the court allowed lawsuits to proceed in state court.

Harris answered that, unlike those lawsuits, Colorado would ban the production of fossil fuels anywhere in the country.

Roberts did not appear persuaded. "That's a question of relief" for Colorado, "and what might be available," he said. It did not, in his view, necessarily seem to go to the question of whether Colorado could bring the lawsuit at all.

Justice Elena Kagan also seemed dubious of the energy companies' arguments. She told Shanmugam that Boulder's "suit appears to be based on the old 1990s tobacco suits," as well as more recent lawsuits against opioid manufacturers. Were those lawsuits also trumped by federal law, she asked?

The case won't be decided until April or May-at which point it could coincide with the other emerging waves I described above. Since Samuel Alito owns so much oil stock that he had to recuse himself, just one of the conservatives needs to defect, and given precedent-you're allowed to sue for damages, essentially-that's not impossible. If it happens, it preserves important pressure on Big Oil, and weakens their political position, even as their protector, Mr. Trump, starts to fade. But even if Big Oil wins in the corrupt American judiciary, Jeff Goodell argues that science's newfound ability to attribute climate damage to carbon emissions (and those carbon emissions to particular companies) means judgment is coming:

BILL MCKIBBEN
Bill McKibben is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College

More broadly, climate accountability extends far beyond the reach of Congress or the Supreme Court. Recent opinions in Germany and the International Court of Justice have endorsed the basic legal principle that entities that contribute to climate change owe something to the people who suffer from its impacts. As attribution science becomes more sophisticated, it will articulate that debt with ever more precision.

The simple truth is, the climate accountability genie is out of the bottle, and the Supreme Court is unlikely to jam it back in. Even if the court sides with Suncor, attribution science will continue to move forward, filling in the gaps between cause and effect in our understanding of how climate works.

"New science drives social and political change," Abigail Dillen, the president of Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law organization, told me. Learning about the risks of the ozone hole brought a quick crackdown on ozone-destroying chemicals. The iconic 1968 photo of the earth from space helped trigger the modern environmental movement.

Anyway, that's more or less my arc for the moment, as much of a hopeful trajectory as I can fairly posit. It's of course informed by my personal experiences, especially watching with great joy as younger colleagues come to the fore of important efforts at change. I wrote last week about Phil Aroneanu, one of the then-college-students with whom I co-founded 350.org, who is now leading a campaign to check AI; one of the others, Jon Warnow, has an organization of his own, Humans in Control, which is planning a nationwide teach-in for November 14.

Meanwhile, a third of those pioneering climate champs, Jamie Henn, is the guest this week on the podcast I've been helping the wonderful Dr. Ayana Johnson with (check it out here), not to mention leading the efforts for next summer's Sun Day. And May Boeve, who more than anyone held 350.org together as its executive director, has a superb podcast of her own, this week featuring an interview with Leah Greenberg, one half of the inspiring team behind Indivisible, previewing the next No Kings Day which comes up on October 17.

I take no credit for the power of these leaders, but I do take great satisfaction in having known them when.

As Boeve said at the end of her interview with Greenberg, "this is not the moment to take a break, not before the midterms." She's right. Here's a picture of me with Seed the Vote's great organizer Ernie Flores, out in Bakersfield, CA doorknocking for Randy Villegas. If you're wondering about the umbrella, it was 103 degrees, a record for the day, and a good reminder of why we're doing this. I'm on to upstate New York today, Maine by Sunday, Michigan and Texas and on and on in the 24 days we have left. If you can figure out a way to help, do. (And if you can't, Third Act has lots of canvasses and phone banks; we don't check IDs, so even if you haven't reached our magic age of 60, feel free to hop aboard).

And if you want one more reason to feel like it might be worth the fight, I give you a study published this week in the journal Ecology and Evolution with the excellent title Inferring the Abundance of an Island Megaherbivore From Semi-Structured Distance Sampling.

OPINION

DTM

RAWALPINDI: A shopkeeper showcases winter wear for customers at Commercial Market. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Pakistan needs a practical plan to address begging

Dear Sir,

I am writing to highlight the problem of begging in Pakistan and the need for a practical, long-term solution. Begging is often linked to poverty, unemployment, lack of education and limited opportunities to earn a living. Many people struggle to meet their basic needs, while some vulnerable individuals, including children, may also be exploited by organised groups that profit from their helplessness.

It would be wrong to treat every beggar in the same way. Some people genuinely need financial assistance because of poverty, disability, illness or the absence of family support. Others may be pushed into begging by people who exploit their vulnerability. The government must distinguish between those who need social protection and those who organise or profit from the exploitation of others.

Law enforcement alone cannot eliminate begging. If people have no access to education, employment or social support, removing them from streets will not solve the underlying problem. The government should introduce effective rehabilitation programmes that provide shelter, food, healthcare, vocational training and opportunities to earn a living. These measures can help vulnerable people become more independent.

Authorities must also investigate organised begging networks, particularly those that exploit children. Those responsible for forcing people to beg should face legal action. At the same time, government departments should work with welfare organisations to identify people in need and connect them with suitable support services.

Public awareness is equally important. Citizens should be encouraged to support credible welfare organisations and programmes that help people meet their basic needs. Assistance should focus on improving people's lives rather than allowing exploitation to continue.

Pakistan needs a balanced approach that combines poverty reduction, education, employment opportunities, rehabilitation and law enforcement. Begging cannot be addressed through temporary campaigns alone. The government must develop a consistent policy that protects vulnerable people, holds exploiters accountable and gives those in need a genuine chance to earn a respectable living.

RABIA TANVEER
SZABIST

The need for stock market awareness

I want to express my views on the importance of stock market awareness in Pakistan. Many people are afraid of investing in the stock market because they lack basic knowledge of how it works. They often associate stock trading with heavy financial losses and believe that investing in shares is only suitable for wealthy people or experienced business professionals. However, with proper guidance and awareness, the stock market can become an important source of investment and economic growth.

The stock market is a place where people buy and sell shares in publicly listed companies. It allows businesses to raise money by offering shares to investors. Companies can use this money to expand their operations, introduce new products, improve their services and create employment opportunities. In this way, the stock market can support economic development and help businesses grow.

I believe that the government should launch awareness programmes to educate people about stock market investment. These programmes should explain the basic rules of share trading, the possible benefits of investment and the risks involved. Schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions can also play an important role in promoting financial literacy among young people.

Pakistan Stock Exchange can help people understand how the market operates and how companies can become publicly listed. Small and medium-sized businesses should also be encouraged to explore the opportunities available through the stock market. This could help them find new sources of funding instead of depending entirely on bank loans.

However, people must understand that investing in shares does not guarantee profits. Share prices can rise or fall, and investors may lose money. Therefore, awareness programmes should teach people to make informed decisions rather than encourage them to invest without understanding the risks.

I believe that greater stock market awareness can help develop a stronger investment culture in Pakistan. If people understand the opportunities and risks involved, they may become more confident about investing. This can help businesses raise capital, create jobs and contribute to the country's economic progress.

HAMZA AHEER
JHANG

Yemen spiralling into another civil war

Tehran's Houthi allies, who control one-third of Yemen (including the capital Sanaa), entered the fray to support Iran earlier this year. They have tightened their control of the vital Bab al-Mandab Strait that connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. And they have made territorial gains in Yemen since July, with the aim of taking over the whole country, while also attacking Saudi oil facilities, tankers and its main airport in Riyadh.

Without direct US involvement, Riyadh has looked for support from its new security partners, Pakistan and Turkey. Before committing to deploy military forces to Saudi Arabia this week, the two had appeared cautious about getting involved - caught between the need to support Saudi Arabia and not to offend Iran and its strategic partners, Russia and China.

The Middle East has seen many explosions of violence in recent years. But while the US-Iran war has grabbed the headlines this year, the rapidly escalating conflict between the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognised government and Saudi Arabia risks becoming just as consequential for the region.

The complexity of Yemen's internal conflict cannot be underestimated. The violence is linked to two major regional powers - Iran and Saudi Arabia - as well as the ongoing US-Israel confrontation with Iran over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran backs the Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah or Partisans of God), while Saudi Arabia supports the Yemeni government (known as the Presidential Leadership Council or PLC). The United States is also standing beside its de facto ally, the Saudis, while Russia and China are aligned with Iran.

AMIN SAIKAL
Emeritus Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Australian National University

And Riyadh's other regional allies, Turkey and Pakistan, have just agreed to activate their newly signed mutual defence pact and deploy troops to help defend Saudi Arabia if it's attacked again.

Given how many actors are involved, the conflict could quickly spiral out of control and engulf the entire region, further destabilising global fuel supplies.

This image from a video released October 5 by the Yemeni government-allied Southern Giants Brigades media office shows what the group says are its fighters clashing with the Iran-backed Houthi group in Dhobab district, Taiz, Yemen. Southern Giants Brigades Media Office via AP

Houthis gaining ground

The US-Iran war has reached a stalemate in recent months. Tehran remains adamant that it controls the Strait of Hormuz, a conduit for 20% of the world's daily supply of oil and liquefied natural gas before the war. And US President Donald Trump has been running hot and cold about how to end the conflict. Neither America's military might, nor its maximum economic pressure, has worked so far.

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And they have made territorial gains in Yemen since July, with the aim of taking over the whole country, while also attacking Saudi oil facilities, tankers and its main airport in Riyadh. An attack in recent days again halted the pumping of oil through the East-West Pipeline, which Riyadh has been using to export oil via Bab al Mandab since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Yemeni and Saudi forces have launched a counteroffensive in recent days in an attempt to retake all the territory held by the Houthis, raising the spectre of a return to a major civil war and a potentially dire humanitarian crisis for Yemenis.

Displaced Yemenis at a makeshift camp in Sanaa, Yemen, on September 10 2026. Yahya Arhab/EPA

Riyadh has asked Washington to carry out airstrikes on the Houthis, but Trump has declined the request to get actively involved, instead offering support from US intelligence and military analysts in the country.

Trump has been disinclined to expand the US-Iran war and get the US embroiled in another conflict while the potential for a restart of the war with Iran remains very real.

In addition, despite his denials that he is concerned, Trump will no doubt be aware of the impact of the Iran war on American consumers, with higher petroleum prices and cost of living pressures. His Republican Party is urgently trying to shore up its voter base with the midterm elections now just a month away.

Without direct US involvement, Riyadh has looked for support from its new security partners, Pakistan and Turkey. Before committing to deploy military forces to Saudi Arabia this week, the two had appeared cautious about getting involved - caught between the need to support Saudi Arabia and not to offend Iran and its strategic partners, Russia and China.

The renewed conflict has already taken a very heavy toll on the Yemeni people, with more than 800 killed, 3,000 injured and 158,000 displaced. This comes on the top of the hundreds of thousands of people who have died since the civil war and Saudi-led intervention began in 2014-15. These deaths were due to fighting, as well as indirect impacts such as hunger, disease, and lack of health services and infrastructure.

Where is this going?

The worse the fighting becomes in Yemen, the greater the impact on the world economy.

While the Strait of Hormuz remains partially inoperable due to the fear of ships being attacked, some tankers have managed to sail through after making deals with Iran's new Persian Gulf Strait Authority, or with US escort protection.

The US energy secretary, Chris Wright, recently claimed 13 million barrels of crude oil were getting through the strait daily. This has been disputed by Iran.

On October 4, Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the strait will not reopen fully until the US meets Iranian demands. These include a ceasefire on all fronts, the lifting of the US blockade of Iranian ports and the unfreezing of Iran's assets.

And after the Houthis announced a blockade of Saudi ports and started attacking Saudi-linked ships in the Red Sea in July, disruptions in the global oil supply are expected to worsen.

At the root of this expanding and multi-dimensional crisis is the US war of choice against Iran. If Trump does escalate that conflict with more lethal force, Tehran is prepared to retaliate. It has warned the US' Arab allies in the Gulf they could be targeted more severely than before.

France's Student Revolt vs NATO's Spending Push

NATO officials insist that this massive military buildup is necessary to protect Europe from Russia and other threats. But the notion that Russia is poised to invade France is absurd, and the push for ever-greater military spending raises a fundamental question: What kind of security is the French government actually providing if their schools, hospitals and other public services are left to deteriorate?

For the third week in a row, high school students across France are taking to the streets demanding more investment in their education. They want more teachers, smaller classes, decent school buildings and a public education system that works for poor and working-class students.

But their struggle comes at a moment when France faces mounting pressure to cut public spending while dramatically increasing its military budget. The question at the heart of this uprising goes far beyond education: Will France invest in its young people-or in missiles, weapons and war? Books or bombs?

MEDEA BENJAMIN
Medea Benjamin is co-founder of Global Exchange and CODEPINK: Women for Peace

What began in the Paris suburbs has spread to more than a thousand schools. On October 6, more than 250,000 people reportedly took to the streets in demonstrations supporting the students.

The government's response has only deepened the anger. Instead of addressing students' demands, authorities have unleashed riot police, tear gas, grenades and mass arrests. More than 6,500 people have reportedly been arrested since the protests began, most of them minors. Some young protesters have suffered horrific injuries, including a 15-year-old who lost his hand after a police grenade exploded. Amnesty International has condemned what it calls the "disproportionate" use of force against young people peacefully demanding their right to education.

The contrast is striking: Students are asking for teachers and decent schools, while the government deploys riot police against them-and finds billions more for its military.

The student movement is unfolding just as NATO is pressuring European governments to massively increase military spending. Under intense pressure from Washington, NATO leaders agreed in 2025 to a staggering new target: 5 percent of each member country's GDP by 2035. At least 3.5 percent is supposed to go directly to military expenditures, with another 1.5 percent devoted to military-related infrastructure, cybersecurity and "resilience."

This represents an enormous shift from NATO's previous 2 percent target, which many members already struggled to meet. For countries facing growing deficits, heavy debt and deteriorating public services, such an increase comes at a steep price.

France provides a glaring example. The country has nearly $4 trillion in public debt-roughly 119 percent of GDP, one of the highest levels in Europe. To tackle its deficit, the government has proposed approximately $48 billion in spending cuts and tax increases, putting already strained public services under even greater pressure.

Yet even as the government demands belt-tightening, its proposed 2027 budget increases military spending by approximately $7.2 billion in a single year, compared with just $1.2 billion more for education. The education budget would also eliminate 1,588 permanent teaching positions.

Imagine being a 16-year-old sitting in an overcrowded classroom, with a leaking ceiling and no regular teacher, hearing that your government cannot afford better schools-but can somehow find billions more for weapons.

France's own fiscal watchdog has pointed out that increases in central government spending are being driven largely by rising interest payments, contributions to the European Union and increased military expenditures.

NATO officials insist that this massive military buildup is necessary to protect Europe from Russia and other threats. But the notion that Russia is poised to invade France is absurd, and the push for ever-greater military spending raises a fundamental question: What kind of security is the French government actually providing if their schools, hospitals and other public services are left to deteriorate?

France is not alone. Students and teachers in Belgium, Spain and Portugal have also taken to the streets over education funding and working conditions, reflecting growing frustration across Europe with governments that claim there is not enough money for basic public services.

An entire generation is being asked to accept austerity while Europe embarks on one of its largest military buildups since the Cold War. Political leaders may insist that education and military spending are separate issues. But they compete for the same limited public resources.

And some French students are already making that connection themselves. Protest signs have declared "money for schools, not war" and "fund high schools, not genocide," linking their immediate demands to the broader question of what-and whom-the government chooses to fund.

These young people are challenging the very definition of security. NATO measures security in tanks, missiles, drones and ammunition. The students are demanding another kind of security: decent schools, equal opportunity, and a society that invests in their future instead of sacrificing it to an endless arms buildup.

Their demands should resonate throughout the NATO alliance, including in the United States, where public services are under attack while Trump seeks a staggering 54 percent increase in the military budget.

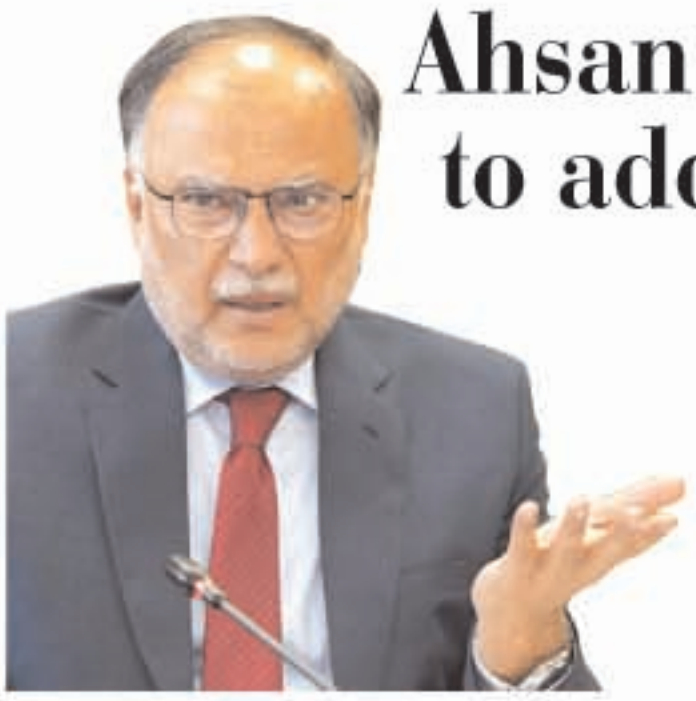
That's why CODEPINK and allied groups are organizing a Taxpayer Uprising in Washington, D.C., November 10-12, bringing people into the halls of Congress to demand a fundamental reorientation of our national priorities. Instead of funneling ever more tax dollars into war and weapons manufacturers, our government should invest in healthcare, education, affordable housing, green energy and a sustainable future.

From the classrooms of France to the halls of Congress, the question is the same: Will our governments invest in life-or in war? Books or bombs.?

NATIONAL

DTM

Ahsan calls on youth to address national challenges



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday urged young people to move beyond criticism and develop practical, sustainable solutions to Pakistan's social and economic challenges through the National Youth Solution Sprint 2026, Round Two, under the Banu Shaheen initiative.

"Pakistan's greatest strength is its youth. Our objective is to transform young people from critics of problems into solution providers who can play a meaningful role in national development," the minister said while addressing the event.

He stressed that understanding the root causes of problems was essential to developing effective and sustainable solutions, adding that success depended not merely on proposing ideas but also on translating them into practical action.

During the second round of the National Youth Solution Sprint 2026, student teams explored critical social challenges, including drug abuse, population growth, access to clean drinking water and sanitation, out-of-school children, and malnutrition.

Team leads outlined the challenges associated with each issue and proposed community-level activities and actionable interventions to generate positive and sustainable impact.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that young people must develop solutions in line with Pakistan's ground realities, available resources and local needs to ensure their ideas delivered tangible results beyond presentations.

He also highlighted the importance of communication, leadership and other life skills alongside technical knowledge, noting that these capabilities were essential for turning ideas into meaningful outcomes.

The minister said young people should be engaged in addressing national challenges from their student years and connected with the country's development agenda through constructive participation rather than being used for political agendas.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to nurturing a generation of young leaders capable of contributing positively across all sectors.

The National Youth Solution Sprint aims to place young people at the centre of problem-solving by equipping them with the tools, methodologies and platforms needed to contribute to national development.

The initiative would also provide a continuous platform for innovation and policy engagement through monthly innovation sprints, TED-style talks, policy labs and "Dragons' Den"-style pitches, enabling participants to refine their ideas, test solutions, engage with experts and present innovative proposals. NEWS DESK

No justification of emergency: Mengal

BNP Mengal chief Akhtar Mengal said those in power defend their actions, but if current actions are declared justified, past martial laws and unconstitutional measures would also have to be accepted as legitimate. Speaking to the media, Akhtar Mengal said people in power try to justify everything.

If they consider today's actions justified, they would also have to justify the October 12, 1999 action and the hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He said that, by the same logic, former President General Zia-ul-Haq's martial law, which was contrary to democratic principles, would also have to be justified. Akhtar Mengal said no action that violates the Constitution and democracy can be supported.

He said it was highly shameful for people who support unconstitutional and undemocratic measures to call themselves democrats. He stressed that respect for democracy and the Constitution requires all actions to be judged by the same standard, rather than declaring decisions by those in power correct while rejecting similar actions from the past. INP

Imaan, Hadi boycott ATC proceedings at Adiala Jail

Rights activist and lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, on Friday objected to the manner of their presentation during the hearing of the security breach case, with the couple and their lawyers eventually walking out of the proceedings at Adiala jail.

The defence counsel also filed an application seeking an end to the jail trial. The case pertains to the alleged disruption of a security route of an international cricket team and incitement to public unrest. Imaan and her husband have been accused of removing barriers from the route. The couple was indicted in the case on Oct 7.

A day earlier, at the police's recommendation, citing limitations in transporting the accused to court, the court directed counsels and witnesses to appear at the Adiala jail for the next hearing.

On Friday, Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra conducted the hearing inside Adiala jail, where proceedings commenced at 10:55am, according to the defence counsel present inside the makeshift courtroom.

The accused were presented inside a dock located in a corner of the courtroom, prompting them to raise objections over the manner in which they were produced before the court.

"This is not the proper way to present someone in court," Imaan said, adding that they were not being allowed to meet their lawyers. Hadi complained that the two were being treated worse than terrorists.

Judge Sipra, taking note of the police standing next to the accused, directed the personnel to move away and remarked: "They have been brought into the courtroom; what is the need for the police to stand right next to them?"

The defence counsel had also filed an application seeking an end to the jail trial and adjournment of the hearing on Friday.

After hearing arguments from the lawyers, the court announced a 20-minute recess. On the application filed by the defence, he said, "I have received your applications; I will issue an order regarding this."

After the proceedings resumed, prosecution witness Ibrahim recorded his statement, while defence lawyer Aimal Khan Mandokhail urged the court to decide the application seeking adjournment before proceeding further.

"We have filed an application to adjourn the hearing; please rule on it," he told the court. He also complained that other members of the defence legal team were not being allowed to enter the courtroom.

"If the proceedings continue in this manner, we cannot remain a part of them," Mandokhail said. He further urged the court to not defer the matter until the following day, referring to the pending bail proceedings.

Subsequently, Imaan, Hadi and their lawyers walked out of the courtroom. AGENCIES

Balochistan inks shrimp farming agreement

The Balochistan government and the House of Kasib Consortium on Friday signed an agreement for the establishment of the province's first commercial shrimp farming project in Damb, marking a significant step towards attracting private investment, strengthening the coastal economy and creating new employment opportunities for local communities.

The agreement, facilitated by the Balochistan Board of Investment and Trade (BBoIT), was signed by House of Kasib Consortium Chief Executive Officer Saad Zahid and Secretary Fisheries Tariq Qamar in the presence of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan and BBoIT Vice Chairman Bilal Khan Kakar also attended the signing ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the provincial government was pursuing development projects through public-private partnerships to promote investment, effectively utilise natural resources and expand economic activity across the province. He termed the establishment of the first commercial shrimp farming venture in Damb an important milestone that would help harness coastal resources and open new avenues for economic growth. He noted that Balochistan's extensive coastline held vast potential for economic development, aquaculture and export growth, stressing the need to transform these resources into productive economic assets through modern techniques, private investment and effective planning.

The chief minister said the shrimp farming initiative would introduce a new commercial sector in the province while creating opportunities for future expansion of the aquaculture industry. He emphasised that economic development could only be meaningful if its benefits reached local communities, adding that the commitment to provide 100 percent of project-related jobs to local residents would generate employment and increase economic participation in coastal areas.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti reaffirmed the government's support for initiatives that utilise local resources to boost employment, attract investment and enhance productive capacity.

According to officials, the private sector will invest Rs1.11 billion in the project. In the initial phase, a commercial shrimp farm will be established on 50 acres of land, with the capacity for future expension to 100 acres or more. The project aims to promote the production of export-quality shrimp and contribute to the development of Balochistan's aquaculture sector.

Under the agreement, the Balochistan government will provide land worth Rs75 million and electricity infrastructure valued at Rs400 million, bringing the total value of government support to Rs475 million. The provincial government will hold a 20 percent equity stake in the project, comprising 10 percent free equity secured through a competitive bidding process and 10 percent paid equity against the provision of land and electricity facilities.

Officials said that during the project's 20-year operational period, the Government of Balochistan is expected to receive profits amounting to Rs866 million. The project has been granted a total concession period of 21 years and six months, including six months for financial closure, one year for construction and 20 years for operations and maintenance.

Upon completion of the concession period, the project and all associated assets will be transferred to the Government of Balochistan.

BBoIT Vice Chairman Bilal Khan Kakar expressed confidence that the shrimp farming project would make a meaningful contribution to the provincial economy by attracting further investment, generating employment opportunities for local residents and enabling greater economic benefits from the region's coastal

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE SHAHDADPUR, DISTRICT SANGHAR

No.MC/EB/SHD/295/2026
Shahdadpur Dated: 15-10-2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Municipal Committee Shahdadpur is invited e-Bid through newly methods of " EPADS" website of SPPRA in accordance of Rule-17 (1) & Rule 46 (1) of SPPRA Rules-2010 (amended upto date) for the following works from all eligible contractors firm/ parties having adequate experience in the relevant field.

S. #	Name of Schemes	Estimated Cost (Million)	Earnest Money	Earnest Money
1	Const: of Paver/CC block flooring & Ree Sewer line 12", 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rec Slabs at Ward No. 03 to 04 Shahdadpur.	10.0	2%	3000/-
2	Const: of Paver/CC block flooring & Ree Sewer line 12", 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rec Slabs at Ward No. 05 to 06 Shahdadpur.	10.0	2%	3000/-
3	Const: of Paver/CC block flooring & Ree Sewer line 12", 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rec Slabs at Ward No. 07 to 08 Shahdadpur.	10.0	2%	3000/-
4	Const: of Paver/CC block flooring & Ree Sewer line 12", 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rec Slabs at Ward No. 09 to 10 Shahdadpur.	10.0	2%	3000/-
5	Const: of Paver/CC block flooring & Ree Sewer line 12", 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rec Slabs at Ward No. 11 to 12 Shahdadpur.	10.0	2%	3000/-
6	Const: & Repair of Paver/CC block flooring & Rcc Sewer line 12" 18" dia i/c rising of drains, Rcc Manholes at Main Road Flyover to Teen Talwar Shahdadpur	10.0	2%	3000/-
7	Constriction / Supply & Plantation of Outdoor Landscaping & Parks M.C Shahdadpur.	20.0	2%	3000/-
8	Supplying of Uniform 2 Nos (Fabrics, Sari, & Jens) for General Staff & Sanitation Staff BPS- 01 to 04 Employees of MC SHD.	Open Rate	2%	3000/-

TENDER PROCEEDING SCHEDULE

S. #	Schedule	Date & Time	Venue
1.	Availability of bidding / tender documents	21-10-2026 To 04-11-2026	The bidding/tenders documents shall be downloaded website of "EPADS" (http://portalsindh.eprocurement.govt.pk) SPPRA Sindh
	Submission of Bid/Tender & Deadline	05-11-2026 At 03:00 PM	The bids / tenders shall be uploaded on the website of "EPADS" (http://portalsindh.eprocurement.govt.pk) SPPRA Sindh
	Announcement of Bid/ Tender & Venue	05-11-2026 At 04:00 PM	Tender opening committee in the office of Chief Municipal Officer MC Shahdadpur.

IF NOT RESPONDED 2nd ATTEMPT IS AS UNDER

S. #	Schedule	Date & Time	Venue
2.	Availability of bidding / tender documents	06-11-2026 To 20-11-2026	The bidding/tenders documents shall be downloaded website of "EPADS" (http://portalsindh.eprocurement.govt.pk) SPPRA Sindh
	Submission of Bid/Tender & Deadline	23-11-2026 At 03:00 PM	The bids / tenders shall be uploaded on the website of "EPADS" (http://portalsindh.eprocurement.govt.pk) SPPRA Sindh
	Announcement of Bid/ Tender & Venue	23-11-2026 At 04:00 PM	Tender opening committee in the office of Chief Municipal Officer MC Shahdadpur.

3. The bidder shall submit non-refundable cost of tender fees physically mentioned against the work through pay order from any schedule Bank in favor of Municipal Committee Shahdadpur before the opening of the bid / tender.
4. The bidding documents shall be downloaded from the website of of "EPADS" (http://portalsindh.eprocurement.govt.pk) SPPRA Sindh.
5. The bid security equal to 5% specified amount against the work in shape of pay order / banks drafts in favor of Municipal Committee Shahdadpur, shall be uploaded with the tender. The hard copy of original bid security shall be submitted physically in sealed envelope showing name of Firm along with name of work in the office of tender opening committee before opening of bid/tender otherwise the tender/ bid will be rejected.
6. The contractors must mentioned their complete & correct present / postal address in the tender documents and quote the rates both in words and figures. Incomplete /conditional tender / bid will not be accepted.
7. If any fake documents are found then the tender / bid is liable to be rejected-cancelled without any compensation but penalty will be imposed as per rule.
8. The downloaded bid / tender will be opened by the Procurement Committee in the office of Chief Municipal Officer Municipal Committee Shahdadpur, on the above mentioned date, time & venue in presence of such contractors/parties / firms/bidders who wished to be present.
9. In case the date of opening is declared as a public holiday by the government or non-working day due to any reason, the next official working day shall be deemed to the date for submission and opening of tender of the same time as mentioned.
10. The procuring agency may reject bid/tender at any time prior to the acceptance of the bid or proposal, subject to the relevant provision, of SPPRA Rules 2010.
11. Tender/ Bid will not be received after the schedule time.
    The bid security shall be release to the unsuccessful bidders once the contractor has been signed with the successful bidders.
12. In case any query required regarding e-bidding please contract: "EPADS" helpline UAN# 051-111-137-237.
13. The authority of Municipal Committee Shahdadpur may accept or reject tender / bid subject to the provision of SPPRA Rule-2010 (Amended up to date).
14. Eligibility Criteria / Qualification Criteria:-
    - NTN Certification.
    - Valid P.E.C Category (Where application) relevant field of specialization.
    - Registration with Sindh Revenue Board.
    - Relevant Experience of 05 years (work order and completion certificate of similar nature of work)
    - Turn-over of at least 5 years (02 to 04 Millions).
    - Valid License issued from inspector of electrical license sindh of the similar region with respect to Electrical & Mechanical works (if Applicable).
    - Undertaking on stamp paper the firm is not involved in any litigation, Department rift, abandoned or un-necessary delay in completion of any work in the Government department.
    - Affidavit to effect that all documents/particulars / information furnished are true and correct.
    - Documentary of work equivalent cost or above executed in last 3 years & certificate of Satisfactory Completion showing data of start & completion from employer.
    - List of machinery & equipment available with documentary proof of its ownership.
    - The firm is not black listed/debarred by any procuring agency otherwise the Municipal Committee SHD Will disqualified the firm subject to rule-30 of SPPRA rule-2010 (amended up to date) Affidavit that the firm is not black listed is required.
    - Any other factor deemed to relevant by the Municipal Committee Shahdadpur subject to provision of SPPRA Rule-44.

INF-KRY 4563/2026
iWORK FOR SINDH
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JOB PORTAL BY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Chief Municipal Officer,
Municipal Committee
Shahdadpur

NATIONAL DTM

Gilani calls for deeper Pakistan-Germany partnership

Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, has called for stronger Pakistan-Germany relations through increased economic cooperation, investment, education and parliamentary exchanges, saying 75 years of diplomatic ties provide a strong foundation for a mutually beneficial partnership.

Addressing a gathering to mark German Unity Day, attended by German Ambassador Ina Lepel, diplomats and other dignitaries, Gilani congratulated the German leadership and people on behalf of Pakistan's Parliament, government and people.

He described the occasion as a symbol of unity, resilience and shared prosperity. He also highlighted the longstanding friendship between the two countries, strengthened by the contributions of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Dr Ruth Pfau.

The Senate chairman appreciated Germany's continued support for Pakistan in development cooperation, climate action, women's empowerment and human development.

He stressed the need for continued German support for Pakistan's participation in the GSP Plus arrangement. He also identified Special Economic Zones, renewable energy, information technology, industrial development and value-added manufacturing as key areas for greater German investment and business cooperation.

Highlighting people-to-people ties, Gilani appreciated the contributions of Pakistani students studying at German universities. He expressed hope that delays in student and family-reunion visas would receive due attention.

He also welcomed cooperation in skilled labour mobility and called for greater collaboration in technology, research and industrial development, including defence-related ventures in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Emphasising parliamentary diplomacy, Gilani called for regular exchanges between the parliaments of Pakistan and Germany and closer consultations on regional and international issues to promote peace, stability and prosperity.

He invited the German leadership to visit Pakistan and expressed confidence that continued engagement would further strengthen the longstanding partnership between the two countries.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik has called for stronger Pakistan-Germany cooperation in green startups, sustainable innovation and research, saying the two countries could take their longstanding relationship to new heights through climate-friendly initiatives.

Addressing a celebration of the Day of German Unity here Friday, the minister said that Pakistan wanted to work with Germany's innovation ecosystem to promote green entrepreneurship and develop sustainable solutions with the potential to expand globally.

"We want to do a startup revolution, all things green, all things sustainable," he said, explaining that the government wanted researchers and young innovators to develop businesses based on their ideas rather than relying solely on grants.

The minister said that Pakistan's challenging environmental conditions, including floods, made it important to develop innovative solutions that could also prove viable internationally.

He expressed the hope that cooperation with Germany's innovation system would help establish a green startup ecosystem and strengthen long-term bilateral ties through research, new ideas and sustainable development.

Highlighting the importance of economic cooperation, Musadik Malik described Germany as one of Pakistan's closest partners and friends and its largest trading partner. He said that the government was committed to meeting the standards required to maintain Pakistan's GSP Plus status, emphasising that the country sought to demonstrate its commitment rather than ask for concessions.

He said that Pakistan wanted to strengthen its economic and trade relations with Germany and build on the existing partnership. NEWS DESK

LHC disposes of plea against Basant festival

The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday disposed of a petition challenging the Punjab government's plan to hold a 10-day Basant festival in 2027 after the petitioner's counsel withdrew the plea following objections from the court over its maintainability. Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry heard the petition filed by citizen Shahid Islam, who appeared in court along with his counsel.

Additional Advocate General Khawaja Mohsin Abbas represented the Punjab government. During the proceedings, the court questioned how the proposed Basant celebrations could be challenged in the absence of a formal government notification. The judge expressed displeasure over the filing of the petition without an official document and asked why the court office had not raised an objection at the initial stage.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that information about the proposed festival had been obtained from the government's website and newspapers.

The court questioned the legal basis for filing a petition on the strength of such information, observing that the documents attached to the plea were not authenticated. The judge directed the petitioner to first obtain the official notification and challenge it through proper legal channels, after which the government could be asked to respond.

The court further observed that the petitioner could obtain a certified copy of the relevant notification under the Right to Information law. The judge also indicated that tOhe petition could be dismissed with a cost and summoned the additional registrar (judicial) to explain why an objection had not been raised against the plea.

During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel referred to restrictions on Basant celebrations and fatalities reported during previous festivities. The court, however, directed him to advance arguments in accordance with the relevant legal requirements.

The judge also expressed concern over the petitioner repeatedly interrupting the proceedings and speaking despite being represented by counsel, observing that such conduct was inappropriate.

Following the court's objections, the petitioner's counsel withdrew the petition, and the court disposed of the matter.

Shahid Islam had challenged the Punjab government's announcement to celebrate Basant from January 29 to February 7, 2027. The Punjab government, chief secretary, home secretary, deputy commissioner, Punjab inspector general of police, Lahore capital city police officer and other officials had been named as respondents in the petition. NEWS DESK

Kohat attack mastermind killed

The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said on Friday that key terrorist commander Zahid Gul, described as the mastermind of the suicide attack on the Kohat Police Lines, was killed during a joint intelligence-based operation conducted by the CTD and security forces in FR area of Lakki Marwat.

According to the CTD spokesman, the slain terrorist was affiliated with the Khwarij Gul Bahadur group and was wanted by security agencies in connection with several serious terrorist incidents.

A CTD spokesperson said Zahid Gul had personally guided a suicide vehicle loaded with explosives during the attack on the Kohat Police Lines. He was also involved in transporting several suicide attackers to Kohat.

According to the CTD, the slain terrorist was also present at the Bli Tang bank robbery, during which Rs60 million was looted. The stolen money was distributed among terrorist formations in Bannu, including those operating in the Bakakhel and Jani Khel areas.

Officials said that around two months ago, Zahid Gul had also brought a suicide attacker for an attack on the new Kohat Police Lines; however, the attack was foiled.

The CTD said Zahid Gul's planned future targets included police training school in Kohat. NEWS DESK

Petrol price cut again, diesel remains unchanged

The federal government announced a reduction in petrol prices for second successive day on Friday, while kept the rate of high-speed diesel unchanged under the latest petroleum price revision.

Petrol would be Rs3.93 cheaper per litre, bringing the price down to Rs386.30.

The revised rates will apply from October 17 to 19, 2026, according to a notification issued by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). NEWS DESK

Major terror bid foiled in Peshawar, bomb defuseed

Police foiled a major terror bid in Peshawar's densely populated Yakatoot area by defusing an 11-kilogramme pressure-cooker bomb in a timely operation, averting a potential tragedy.

The Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) swung into action after receiving information about the presence of a suspected explosive device in the locality and successfully neutralised the bomb.

SP City Shahid Adnan and Yakatoot Station House Officer Riaz Afridi supervised the operation, in which the specialised squad safely defused the device.

The timely intervention prevented the suspected bomb from posing a further threat to residents of the densely populated area. NEWS DESK

Don't mess with us: Pakistan's blunt warning to India

Continued from Page 1

The war between the two nuclear-armed nations ended on May 10 with a ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States.

Briefing the media, the FO spokesperson reminded India of the consequences of its military aggression in May last year, saying Pakistan had demonstrated its capability and resolve to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"Let there be no ambiguity, Pakistan remains fully prepared to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any ill-advised aggression," he said.

The FO spokesperson said Pakistan's restraint and commitment to peace should not be mistaken for weakness, warning that any aggression would be met with a forceful response.

He urged India to draw appropriate lessons from last year's experience and act responsibly to ensure lasting peace in the region.

He further said that the Foreign Office is digitising and automating its apostille services to improve efficiency, transparency and accessibility.

He said e-attestation had been launched through the ministry's portal, while the transition to e-apostille services was underway. Eligible applicants could also be exempted from physical appearances, subject to prescribed safeguards, particularly facilitating overseas Pakistanis.

Khan described the initiative as a "massive leap forward", adding that Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar had personally steered the process.

He said an inquiry into alleged irregularities in attestation services was underway, with findings to be announced upon completion. AGENCIES

CM Sindh seeks Shanghai expertise for smart Karachi

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister said Sindh was keen to learn from Shanghai's experience in using technology to improve urban services and make cities more efficient, connected and responsive to citizens' needs.

The two sides also discussed opportunities for strengthening economic and investment links between Sindh and Shanghai, particularly through business-to-business contacts and institutional cooperation.

Mayor Zhu Zhongming welcomed the proposed cooperation and discussed the potential for closer engagement between Shanghai and Karachi. Zhu was appointed Shanghai's vice-mayor and acting mayor in September 2026. (?Shanghai Municipal Government)

In a major leap toward technological transformation, the Government of Sindh has signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with global tech giant Huawei to establish Pakistan's first AI-native digital province.

The agreement- finalised during Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's high-level visit to Huawei's Lianqiu Lake R&D Center in Shanghai- shifts the provincial government's strategy from mere technology procurement to a deep, collaborative partnership. The comprehensive pact encompasses full e-governance digitization, provincial cloud and data center infrastructure, smart city solutions, and large-scale ICT skills training for Sindh's youth.

Addressing the signing ceremony, CM Murad Ali Shah emphasised the transformative nature of the alliance. "This marks an important shift, from purchasing technology to building it together through joint projects, local capacity, and skills for our youth," he stated, committing his government's highest-level support to ensure the partnership delivers tangible results for citizens.

The MoU was signed by Special Assistant to the CM Syed Qasim Naveed, in the presence of Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Chairman of Huawei Pakistan. The framework covers extensive collaboration in Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Smart Cities, Digital Government, and AI-Native Smart Parks.

Addressing the signing ceremony, CM Murad Shah emphasised the transformative nature of the alliance: "This marks an important shift-from purchasing technology to building it together through joint projects, local capacity, and skills for our youth."

Partnership Rooted in Research and Innovation: Paying tribute to Huawei's formidable research credentials, the Chief Minister noted that a firm consistently investing over a fifth of its revenue into R&D "has earned its place among the world's foremost technology leaders."

Huawei, founded in Shenzhen in 1987 as a private company wholly owned by its employees, reported 2025 revenues of CNY 880.9 billion and a net profit of CNY 68 billion. Demonstrating an aggressive commitment to future tech, the company invested CNY 192.3 billion in R&D in 2025 alone - amounting to 21.8 percent of its revenue - and has channeled more than CNY 1.38 trillion into research over the past decade.

In Pakistan, Huawei is led by CEO Ethan Sun and plays a pivotal role in national ICT capacity-building. This includes a major initiative with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to train 300,000 young Pakistanis, alongside the September 2026 launch of Pakistan's first national-level telecom equipment repair center in Islamabad.

CM Murad Shah also thanked Huawei for arranging a prior delegation visit to its Global Model Site in Wuhan, noting that it had "left a deep impression" on the provincial leadership.

Inside Huawei's Lianqiu Lake: The signing took place at the Lianqiu Lake R&D Center, which officially opened in 2024 in Jinze Town, Qingpu District, western Shanghai. Spanning roughly 2,400 mu (about 160 hectares) with 2.06 million square meters of floor space, the campus represents an investment of over CNY 10 billion (approx. US$1.4 billion).

Designed to house 30,000 to 35,000 researchers and engineers across eight zones connected by an internal light-rail system known as the "Red Train," the facility focuses on breakthroughs in semiconductor design, wireless 5G/6G technologies, intelligent automotive solutions, and digital energy.

From Wuhan to Karachi: Drawing parallels with Wuhan-where advanced technology enables city managers to identify urban issues in real time and mitigate crises before they escalate- the Chief Minister stressed that Karachi, a metropolis of over 20 million people, desperately needs similar capabilities.

"The Sindh government is determined to make Sindh Pakistan's leading digital province, with smart, data-driven governance in Karachi and across our cities, and a young workforce fully prepared for the digital economy," he asserted.

Four first-year priorities: To translate the vision into practical action, CM Murad Shah proposed four concrete priorities for the first year of the partnership:

A pilot city-operations and flood early-warning platform in Karachi, adapting lessons from Wuhan's smart city model.

A roadmap for a Sindh government cloud and data center, incorporating robust disaster recovery, cybersecurity, and AI computing infrastructure.

An innovation and training center at Karachi Education City, featuring an R&D presence and an AI-native smart park.

ICT skills training and certification for Sindh's students, delivered in close partnership with provincial universities.

Furthermore, he proposed establishing a joint working group with designated focal persons from both sides to ensure timely progress, operating under a mutually agreed first-year work plan.

Objectives for Sindh: The overarching agenda of the agreement focuses on transitioning from technology procurement to an active technology partnership involving joint pilots, capacity building, and knowledge transfer. Securing Huawei's backing for an innovation hub and AI-native smart park at Karachi Education City. Executing technical cooperation for government cloud architecture, data centers, and cybersecurity and Equipping local youth with certified, industry-standard ICT skills.

Reiterating his personal and governmental commitment to the partnership, the Chief Minister concluded the ceremony with a clear metric for success:

"Let us measure its success not by the signatures on this document, but by the services delivered to our citizens and the opportunities created for our young people."

Expressing gratitude for Huawei's hospitality and confidence in Sindh, CM Murad Shah extended an official invitation to the Huawei team to visit Karachi and cement a lasting alliance. NEWS DESK

BACK DTM PAGE

PHC fixes Oct 20 for KP emergency pleas

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) will hear petitions challenging the imposition of an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on October 20.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and Advocate Salman Khan have filed seperate petitions seeking to overturn the measures. The petitions name the Federation of Pakistan, the president, the prime minister, the KP governor and other relevant authorities as respondents.

In its petition filed through lawyer Ali Zaman, the PTI has asked the PHC to declare the imposition of emergency and governor's rule unconstitutional and set aside the decisions.

The party argued that using terrorism as a justification to curtail the authority of an elected provincial government amounted to discriminatory treatment. It maintained that political differences could not serve as grounds for stripping the provincial administration of its powers.

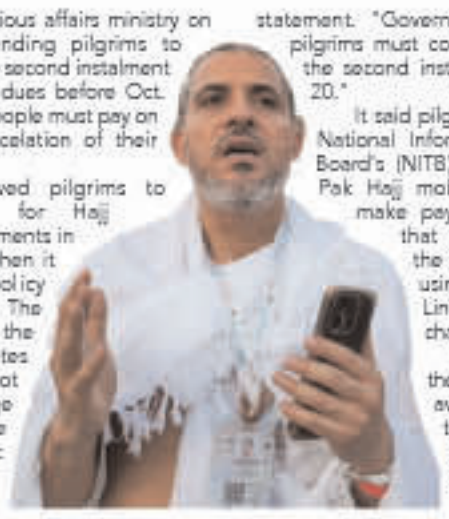
The petition also questioned why governor's rule had not been imposed in Balochistan despite terrorist attacks and loss of life, or in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the period from 2007 to 2015. The PTI argued that the decision targeting the current provincial government was discriminatory.

While expressing support for counterterrorism operations and efforts to restore peace, the party alleged that claims of inadequate action against militancy were being used to exert political pressure on its government. The petition further stated that the PTI had secured a two-thirds majority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 2024 general elections.

It argued that the imposition of governor's rule must comply with the constitutional requirements and procedures set out in Article 234. It also called for the emergency proclamation to be scrutinised under Article 232 and the applicable parliamentary requirements. The PTI additionally maintained that no unlawful action had been planned as part of its proposed long march.

President Asif Ali Zardari approved the imposition of emergency in the province on October 11 on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution. The federal government cited the province's worsening security situation and concerns over its counterterrorism efforts as grounds for the move. The PTI, which governs KP, has challenged the decision. **INP**

October 20 deadline for 2nd Hajj 2027 payment



Pakistan's religious affairs ministry on Friday urged intending pilgrims to ensure they pay the second instalment of their Hajj 2027 dues before Oct. 20, stressing that people must pay on time to avoid cancelation of their Hajj applications.

Pakistan allowed pilgrims to make payments for Hajj pilgrimage in instalments in November 2024, when it unveiled its Hajj policy for the year 2025. The government says the move facilitates people who cannot not make large payments for the annual Islamic pilgrimage at once.

Pakistan allocated 107,526 slots, including 30,000 for a shorter package, to the government scheme this year, while another 71,696 slots have been allocated to the private scheme for next year's Hajj. The government has announced that pilgrims would pay Rs1.2 million ($4,334) for a 40-day Hajj package and Rs1.3 million ($4,695) for a shorter, 20- to 25-day package under the government scheme.

"Four days remain for the payment of the second instalment of Hajj dues," the religious affairs ministry said in a statement. "Government scheme Hajj pilgrims must complete payment of the second instalment before Oct. 20."

It said pilgrims should use the National Information Technology Board's (NITB) Hajj portal or the Pak Hajj mobile application to make payments. It clarified that payments through the portal can be made using a bank card, One Link or a manual bank challan.

"Pilgrims must pay their dues on time to avoid cancelation of their Hajj applications," the statement said.

It said that pilgrims are required to download the medical fitness certificate available on the Hajj portal and have it verified by a doctor. It added that uploading a verified medical fitness certificate on the portal is also mandatory.

Every year, thousands of Pakistani pilgrims travel to Saudi Arabia's holy sites to perform Hajj pilgrimage. The exercise involves hectic arrangements by the government and private tour operators in terms of booking flights, ensuring food and accommodation for Pakistani pilgrims during their stay in Saudi Arabia. **NEWS DESK**

Pickaxe Mountain strike possible: Trump on Iran

President Donald Trump said the US may have to target Pickaxe Mountain, a site linked to Iran's nuclear program, as he aims to ensure Tehran does not get a nuclear weapon.

In an interview with Newsmax on Thursday night, Trump also said he would not use a nuclear weapon in the war on Iran, which began in February with US-Israeli strikes.

Trump said the US wanted to make sure Iran will never have a nuclear weapon "because if they had it, they would use it."

"Their nuclear is buried under millions of tons of mountain. Now we're looking at Pickaxe Mountain. We may have to go there. We'll take a shot at that one. We'll knock it out fast," Trump told the news outlet.

Pickaxe Mountain is a fortified facility buried deep underground near one of Tehran's main nuclear sites.

The US president said there was no need to use a nuclear bomb in Iran. "I wouldn't use nuclear. We don't have to."

Trump did not say if he had authorized the use of GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bomb, also known as the "mother of all bombs," against Iranian energy infrastructure and nuclear sites. He did say the MOAB bomb was not a nuclear bomb. **REUTERS**

Peshawar School Tragedy: Govt announces compensation

Thirty-four students, one teacher were killed Thursday morning when roof of school collapsed

Families of the deceased will get Rs 1 million each, and the injured Rs 300,000 each

School inspections ordered as relatives say they warned of risks before deadly collapse

The governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday announced financial compensation for families of the people who were killed and injured this week when the roof of a school collapsed in Peshawar city.

Tragedy struck the Dir Colony neighborhood of the city on Thursday morning when the roof of the Al-Khair private school collapsed. Rescue officials and the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) spokesperson said 35 people were killed, including 34 students and one female teacher.

Police said it had taken the owner of the school into custody, as authorities launched an investigation into the reasons of the collapse. Peshawar police chief said the building was structurally weak. However, the school's owner said this week's rains had weakened one of the roofs, according to police.

"No one can replace a child, and financial assistance cannot ease the grief of parents," KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said, according to a statement issued by his office.

"The families of children who lost their lives in the tragedy will receive financial assistance of Rs 1 million ($3,610) each, while the injured will be given Rs 300,000 ($1,083) each."

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi visited the affected school and assured the media that anyone found responsible for negligence would face punishment. The governor said that, owing to the negligence of the previous administration, school audits had not been conducted. He stressed that the investigation would examine the responsibilities of all parties involved, from the school owner to the relevant government departments.

FIR names owners, contractor

The FIR alleges that substandard materials were used to construct the school building and that complaints about the deteriorating condition of its walls and roofs had previously been raised but ignored by the school owners. According to the FIR registered at Agha Mir Jani Police Station, the roofs of the nursery classroom on the second floor and the ground floor collapsed in the incident.

The case states that the school premises cover 16 marlas of land owned by Waheed and Javed. The building was constructed after the land was acquired on lease in 2024. The FIR names the contractor responsible for the construction, along with the school owners and shareholders, as part of the case concerning the tragedy.

An initial report issued by the deputy commissioner also pointed to the use of substandard construction materials in the school building.

Double Compensation

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Friday announced doubling the compensation for families of children killed in the Dir Colony school building collapse and pledged to build a government school in the area.

During a visit to the accident site, the minister expressed condolences to the bereaved families on his own behalf and on behalf of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif. He also offered Fateha for the victims.

Talking to the media, Amir Muqam called for a thorough investigation to establish the circumstances that led to the collapse and identify those responsible for allowing the construction of the building.

He said the prime minister had ordered an inquiry and stressed that investigators should complete the process promptly and take action against those found responsible.

The minister said the compensation announced by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor would be doubled to provide greater financial support to the affected families.

Dilapidated School Buildings

Member Advisory Council Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Samar Haroon Bilour, has appealed to the people to help identify dilapidated school buildings in their areas, saying the safety of children is a top priority.

In a video message released here, she urged citizens to post pictures of such school buildings on social media so that the inspection teams could visit them in a timely manner and take necessary action.

She said the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is personally monitoring the steps being taken for safeguarding children in schools across the province.

Samar Haroon Bilour said public cooperation was essential to make the inspection drive successful, as the administration alone could not cover all areas. She asked the people to come forward and play their role in protecting the lives of schoolchildren.

School Inspections

Pakistani authorities ordered inspections of all private schools in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after a school roof collapsed and killed 34 children and a teacher, as some victims' relatives said the structure previously was reported to be weak.

The provincial government announced an investigation into the cause of Thursday's collapse at Al-Khair school as victims' families demanded justice. At least one family member said he had warned the school owner about leaks.

Police on Thursday arrested the school's owner, Mohammad Khan. Peshawar Police Chief Saeed Ahmed said the building was structurally weak and Khan told officers that recent rains had weakened one of the roofs.

The government order, which was seen by The Associated Press, directs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's education department to establish district committees to inspect private school buildings throughout the province and submit findings and recommendations within three days.

The inspections must cover premises that are owned as well as those that are rented. Specific areas to checks in the buildings include roofs, ceilings, walls, columns, beams, foundations and staircases. Districts must require urgent technical assessment and classify school buildings as safe, in need of repairs or improvements, or potentially unsafe, the order says.

On Friday, government spokesperson Samar Haroon Bilour expressed grief over the deaths and injuries of children. In a video message, she appealed to parents to provide information about schools housed in structurally weak buildings, saying the government also was conducting inspections to help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Emergency crews arrived within five minutes of being alerted and everyone trapped beneath the rubble was recovered by the time the operation ended Thursday. Rescuers pulled at least 40 children alive from the debris, said Bilal Faizi, a spokesperson for emergency services in Peshawar.

The collapsed roof was a traditional structure made of mud and bricks and some of the children trapped beneath died of suffocation, Faizi said.

Speaking from a hospital bed, injured teacher Mahwish Zaman said the collapse happened so suddenly that no one had time to escape.

Zaman described being in her classroom when she heard a loud crash from the floor above. Before she could warn her students to run to safety, the ceiling fell in. She was unconscious when she was taken to the hospital and later learned many of her students had died. **NEWS DESK**

19 Muslim nations slam Colombia's Jerusalem Embassy

Foreign ministers urge Bogotá to reverse decision, warning it undermines prospects for a two-state solution

Colombia's new president has restored ties with Israel after his predecessor severed relations over Gaza war

Pakistan and 18 other Muslim countries have strongly condemned Colombia's inauguration of its embassy in Jerusalem, saying the move contravenes relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and undermines international efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace based on a two-state solution.

Colombia opened its embassy in Jerusalem on Wednesday, becoming the 10th country to do so, as new President Abelardo de la Espriella reversed his predecessor's break with Israel by also restoring a free trade agreement between the two countries.

Pakistan, Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, and Turkiye have condemned the move to open the embassy.

In a joint statement issued on Friday, the foreign ministers of the 19 countries rejected any measure intended to alter the legal or historical status of occupied Jerusalem or recognise it as Israel's capital.

The statement said such measures were "null and void" and had no legal effect, citing relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, particularly Resolutions 476 and 478, adopted in 1980.

The ministers said Jerusalem was part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967 and noted that the resolutions rejected attempts to change the city's character or status and called on states to withdraw their diplomatic missions from it.

They urged the Colombian government to reconsider and reverse its decision, uphold its obligations under international law and refrain from measures that prejudice the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The ministers also reaffirmed support for the Palestinian people's right to an independent and sovereign state, with East Jerusalem as its capital. **NEWS DESK**

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GLAMOUR DTM

Celine Dion's Diamond Goodbye To Paris

First worn at the 1997 Oscars, Celine Dion debuted a reimagined version of the shimmering Chanel gown at her performance in Paris this week.

Adorned with thousands of jewels and beads, the new creation is a celebration of fashion history, craftsmanship and the singer's enduring style legacy.

The breathtaking couture gown has been reinterpreted by Chanel's creative director Matthieu Blazy, bringing an iconic style moment back to life.

Celine revisited her Academy Awards moment for her final shows of the year, which also included the stunning 18-karat white gold Chanel Comète necklace.

The piece of jewellery is set with 1,080 diamonds weighing more than 67 carats in total, with a sweeping, asymmetrical design evoking a shooting star.

The original dress was designed by the late Karl Lagerfeld and the plunging silhouette and starry necklace made for a memorable red-carpet moment.

Celine performed twice during that ceremony, singing Because You Loved Me and I Finally Found Someone.

The following year, Celine won an Oscar at the 70th Academy Awards for performing My Heart Will Go On from the film Titanic.

It comes as Celine has been immortalised in Barbie form and honoured with her very own signature doll from toy manufacturer Mattel – amid her comeback residency.

The Canadian singer's figurine pays tribute to the navy, long-sleeved dress she wore when she performed Titanic theme song My Heart Will Go On at the 1998 awards.

NEWS DESK

Blondie Return With High Noon!

One way or another, we're getting a new Blondie album.

The pioneers of new wave are set to release "High Noon" early next year, a decade after their last outing, and on Thursday dropped the driving first single "Spectral Eyes," written by Johnny Marr, former guitarist of The Smiths, who also plays on the track.

"This album is classic Blondie - an amalgamation of all our different influences and eras into something new," lead singer and songwriter Debbie Harry said in a statement. "This music feels grounded in the present, shaped by who we are and how we're living now." AP

Madoona's Biblical Bond With Lourdes At 30

Madonna has shared a sweet tribute to her eldest daughter Lourdes to celebrate her 30th birthday.

The singer, 68, gushed about her 'biblical connection' with Lourdes as she recalled her dramatic, 18-hour birth.

Born on October 14, 1996, Lourdes' dad is Carlos Leon, who Madonna was in a relationship with during the 1990s before they separated less than a year after their daughter was born.

Recalling the birth of her eldest child, the superstar shared a sweet caption alongside childhood photos of Lourdes in her Wednesday tribute.

'Happy Birthday My Lolita! You came to me in a Dream. A fever dream. A Dream called Life. If I tried to write it all down, I would cry a river of tears," Madonna wrote. 'Your chin was tilted up in my birth canal, you were looking for the stars you were stuck. After 18 hours of labor and your heartbeat slowing down, an emergency C-section was the only option.'

'Did I mention the helicopters and news crews swirling above our heads on the top floor of the hospital in East LA?'

'You're birth was dramatic. Like our lives. Our connection - it is Biblical. When I ask God to explain it to me He tells me- Look in the mirror!'

She continued: 'We are Two sides of the same coin. If what we risk reveals what we value then I would risk it all on you.'

NEWS DESK

Thriller Again! Jacko Is Top Of 2026!

Michael Jackson has landed the best-selling album of 2026 so far, with the honour coming 17 years after his death.

The late King of Pop died in June 2009 aged 50 of acute propofol intoxication, with his personal physician Dr Conrad Murray being found responsible for his passing.

But his legacy continues as The Essential Michael Jackson is currently leading the race at the close of the third quarter, edging ahead of records by modern artists including Olivia Dean and Harry Styles amid the closely-fought contest.

The surge in sales has been significantly boosted thanks to the release of the late singer's biopic Michael, which was released in April and stars his real-life nephew, Jafaar Jackson, 30.

The UK's Official Charts Company confirmed that the 38-track greatest hits album – originally released in 2005 – has sold over 508,000 units with sales across downloads and streams as well as physical sales.

Michael's compilation album overtakes Olivia's The Art of Loving which is in second place and Harry's Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally in third.

With the recent Michael Jackson film no doubt introducing a new generation of people to his music, it's little wonder that his other works have also seen a resurgence.

Michael's iconic 1982 Thriller album has climbed to number 16 in the charts, while his seventh studio album, 1987's Bad, is at number 20.

NEWS DESK

Katy Turns Heads At Selena's Event

Katy Perry turned heads in a plunging little black dress as she attended the Rare Impact Fund Benefit held at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles on Wednesday.

The singer, 41, looked gorgeous as she stepped out to support host and founder Selena Gomez, 34, at the fourth annual event.

Katy dared to bare as she went braless beneath her cut-out black number which had cream bow detailing down the front.

Allowing her racy dress to do the talking, she kept her accessories to a minimum, adding simple diamond studs while her raven tresses were styled with a centre-parting.

The Firework hitmaker was on fine form as she graced the pink carpet, posing this way and that as she showcased her slender frame.

She then took her seat inside the event where she mingled with the likes of actress America Ferrera and Selena's husband Benny Blanco.

Selena launched Rare Beauty, her first-ever makeup and beauty line, back in 2020 just months after introducing the Rare Impact Fund, which is aiming to raise $100million over a decade in support of mental health advocacy and services.

Over the last six years, the Rare Impact Fund has raised a reported total of $30million.

Selena has publicly battled her own mental health issues, having been diagnosed with bipolar disorder – a condition that causes extreme mood shifts – in 2018

NEWS DESK

Gomez Glows In Prada For Rare Gala

Selena Gomez stepped out in a shiny red Prada gown at the fourth annual Rare Impact Fund Benefit in Los Angeles on Wednesday, Oct. 14

Gomez opens up to PEOPLE about the fund's impact, her husband Benny Blanco's support and the message she wants people struggling with their mental health to hear

For Selena Gomez, one of the most meaningful measures of success has little to do with fame or beauty. It's knowing that a young person who feels alone can find a place to turn for support.

That mission was at the heart of the fourth annual Rare Impact Fund Benefit on Wednesday, Oct. 14, where Gomez, 34, stepped out in a striking red Prada gown for the event at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles on Wednesday, Oct. 14. The embellished dress featured a sculptural waist reminiscent of rose petals, which she paired with matching red satin pumps, silver jewelry and sleek hair.

While the look made a statement on the pink carpet, Gomez was there to celebrate something she has spent years building beyond the beauty industry: a commitment to expanding access to mental health resources for young people. In an exclusive interview with PEOPLE at the benefit, Gomez reflects on the progress of the Rare Impact Fund, which she launched alongside Rare Beauty in 2020. Created with a $100 million fundraising pledge over 10 years, the fund has raised more than $30 million to support youth mental health organizations and initiatives. NEWS DESK

Kate Moss Pouts With Vapes On Lunch Date

Kate Moss showed off her supermodel pout as she carried two vapes while enjoying an al fresco lunch date on her own.

The model, 52, cut a chic figure as she sat outside north London's Lemonia restaurant, glancing at a Louis Vuitton Magazine.

For the occasion, she looked stylish in a black Dior Cannage Jacket, styled with Levi's Orange Tab Jeans.

Kate shielded her eyes with a pair of sunglasses and toted her belongings in a Bottega Veneta handbag.

The model, who was pictured taking a phone call, finished off her outfit with a black belt and boots.

Her outing comes after her sister Lottie Moss laid bare their fractured relationship, claiming her sibling 'doesn't want anything to do with me' and 'just didn't really ever bond'.

The influencer, 28, revealed the pair have 'next to no relationship' and admitted she felt 'bitter and embarrassed' that her sibling would ignore her text messages and phone calls when she was growing up.

Lottie explained she and Kate, who have a 24-year age gap and share the same father, 'grew up in different times' and they now 'don't have to all pretend to get along'.

Kate and Lottie's father Peter had the supermodel and her younger brother Nick during his first marriage to Linda Shepherd, before the couple divorced in 1987 when Kate was 13.

He then went on to marry Inger Solnordal, and welcomed Lottie in 1998 when Kate was 24.

Speaking on Olivia Attwood's podcast Olivia's House, Lottie said: 'God me and my sister is quite a tricky one and I would never normally talk about it. I never say anything she is, you know, Kate Moss and I don't want to upset her. NEWS DESK

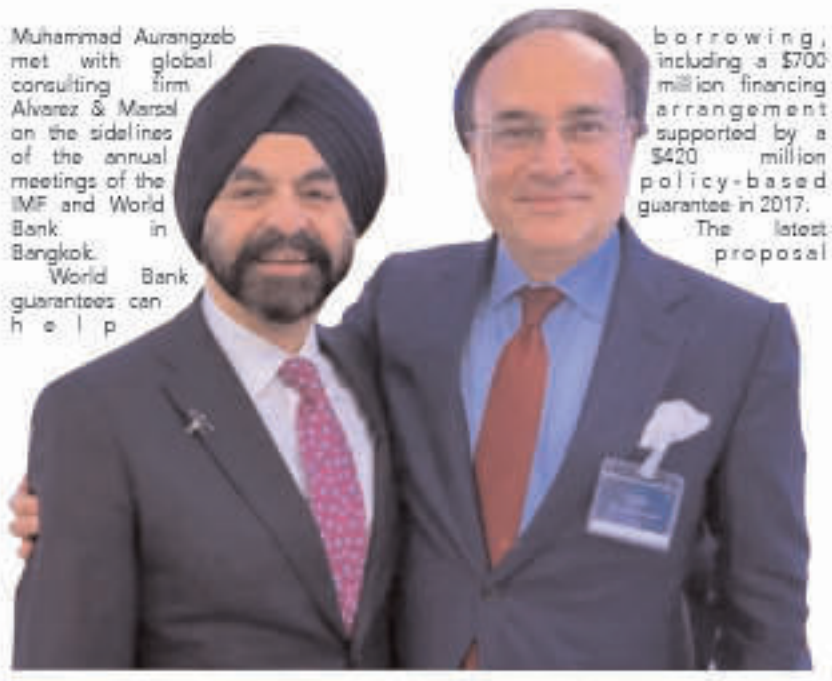
DTM MONEY

Pakistan eyes $1.5 billion WB-backed financing

Alvarez & Marsal proposes combining World Bank and MIGA guarantees to help Pakistan secure competitive financing

In separate meeting, Deutsche Bank expresses interest in advising on power distribution and airport privatizations

Pakistan is exploring a proposal to raise approximately $1.5 billion in financing backed by World Bank Group guarantees, the finance ministry said on Friday, as Islamabad seeks cheaper, longer-term borrowing to manage its external debt.



Muhammad Aurangzeb met with global consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Bangkok.

The proposal comes as the South Asian nation works to diversify its financing sources and reduce reliance on expensive, short-term borrowing after repeated balance-of-payments crises forced it to seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund.

Pakistan, currently implementing a $7 billion IMF bailout program, has returned to international debt markets through private placements, Panda bonds and Eurobonds. The government says it wants to use improved market access to refinance costly debt and extend repayment periods without increasing its overall external debt burden.

"The Finance Minister welcomed the proposal of combining a World Bank policy-based guarantee with Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) coverage to attract financing at competitive rates, with a potential financing target of approximately $1.5 billion, subject to the guarantee envelope and transaction structure," the ministry said in a statement after Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb met with global consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Bangkok.

World Bank guarantees can help countries obtain commercial financing on more favorable terms by reducing risks for lenders. MIGA, a member of the World Bank Group, provides guarantees against certain investment and financing risks, helping mobilize private capital in developing economies.

Combining the two instruments could potentially allow Pakistan to attract financing at lower costs or with longer maturities than it could otherwise secure in international markets.

The ministry said the discussions included leveraging existing World Bank resources, combining budget support with guarantees and broadening participation by international investors.

Aurangzeb emphasized using an existing World Bank Development Policy Operation, rather than negotiating a new framework, to avoid delays in arranging the proposed financing.

He also supported further examination of the proposal by the Finance Division, Economic Affairs Division and World Bank Group, according to the statement.

The ministry did not identify potential lenders, disclose proposed borrowing terms or provide a timeline for the transaction. It also did not say how much of the proposed $1.5 billion would be covered by World Bank Group guarantees.

Pakistan has previously used World Bank guarantees to mobilize commercial borrowing, including a $700 million financing arrangement supported by a $420 million policy-based guarantee in 2017.

The latest proposal comes as Islamabad seeks to sustain its economic recovery despite higher global energy costs and disruptions associated with the continuing Middle East conflict, which have added pressure to the import-dependent economy.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb also met World Bank President Ajay Banga during a dinner hosted by Thailand's prime minister on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF annual meetings in Bangkok.

"The occasion provided an opportunity for informal interaction alongside the ongoing high-level engagements at the annual meetings," the finance ministry said on Friday.

PRIVATIZATION PUSH

In a separate meeting in Bangkok, Aurangzeb met a delegation from Deutsche Bank, which expressed interest in providing strategic advisory support for Pakistan's privatization program, including electricity distribution companies and major airports.

The government is seeking to accelerate the sale or restructuring of loss-making state enterprises under its IMF-backed reform agenda, following the privatization of national carrier Pakistan International Airlines last year.

Aurangzeb told Reuters this week Islamabad expected to complete five or six privatization transactions during the current fiscal year, potentially raising more than $1 billion.

The first phase of the electricity-sector program covers distribution companies serving Islamabad, Faisalabad and Gujranwala, while the government is pursuing private-sector management of major airports in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore.

"The Finance Minister welcomed Deutsche Bank's interest in strategic advisory support for privatization, including power distribution companies and major airports," the finance ministry said in a separate statement.

The ministry did not specify whether Deutsche Bank had submitted a formal proposal or identify the transactions in which it might participate.

Pakistan's Privatization Commission said earlier this month that nine interested parties had been prequalified for the sale of Gujranwala Electric Power Company, including three Turkish energy companies. Preparations are also underway for the privatization of Islamabad Electric Supply Company and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company.

The airport initiative, meanwhile, involves bringing private operators into the management of major international airports rather than selling the underlying assets.

Lazard Delegation

Moreover, the finance minister also met with a Lazard delegation to discuss mining investment, financing diversification and Pakistan's sovereign credit outlook.

Aurangzeb welcomed proposals for blended finance, sustainability-linked loans, guaranteed Sukuk and debt swaps to broaden funding sources and improve financing terms. He highlighted Pakistan's restored international capital market access and plans for further issuances, including Panda bonds.

He emphasized cost discipline, alignment with the medium-term financing strategy, and preparation to benefit from favourable market conditions. Both sides discussed sovereign rating advisory support, policy predictability and stronger economic resilience to support progress towards the BB rating category.

It was agreed that follow-up would be coordinated through the Debt Management Office and the State Bank of Pakistan, with Lazard proposing a short note outlining its recommendations. NEWS DESK

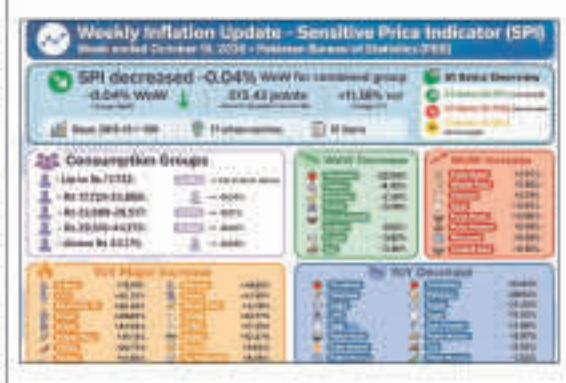
Textile export increases 5.26%

Textile exports witnessed an increase of 5.26 per cent during the first quarter of the fiscal year (2026-27) as compared to the same period of last year.

The textile exports from the country were recorded at US $5.026 billion during July-September (2026-27) against the exports of US $4.775 billion during July-September (2025-26), according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included cotton yarn, the export of which increased by 24.47 percent to $227.101 million from $182.447 million, while knitwear export surged by 4.14 percent to $1,482 million from $1,423 million. NEWS DESK

Weekly inflation decreases 0.04%



he Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI)-based weekly inflation decreased by 0.04 percent during the week ended on October 15, 2026, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported here on Friday.

According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review decreased to 372.43 points from 372.58 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 11.38 percent. The weekly SPI, with base year 2015-16=100, covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up to Rs 17,732) decreased by 0.06 percent to 356.35 points from 356.56. NEWS DESK

IT exports surge to $435mn in September

Pakistan's IT and tech exports rose to $435 million in September 2026, the second-highest monthly figure on record, Adviser to the Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said on Friday.

In a post on X, Schehzad said the September total was $2 million below the all-time high of $437 million set in December 2025. Exports grew 18 percent year-on-year and 10 percent month-on-month.

IT exports for the first quarter of FY27 (July-September) totalled $1.25 billion, up about 18 percent from the same period last year, he said.

Schehzad credited the growth to targeted incentives in the FY27 budget for exporters, and for the IT sector in particular, as well as to a strengthening digital economy. He said these were supporting exports, non-debt foreign exchange earnings, high-value jobs and Pakistan's integration with global markets. NEWS DESK

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,800 per tola

The prices of gold witnessed an increase in the local market on Friday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs2,800 to settle at Rs440,636, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. NEWS DESK

$100bn export goal by 2035: Ihsaan

Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industries Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan has reaffirmed the government's commitment to achieving $100 billion in annual exports by 2035 through comprehensive trade reforms, improved market access, industrial competitiveness and sustained policy implementation.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the 39th Annual General Meeting and International Conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), organised at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) here, he said Pakistan was moving towards an export-oriented economy to overcome recurring economic challenges and ensure sustainable growth, said a news release.

The two-day conference, themed "Mission $100 Billion: The National Race for Sustainable Export-led Prosperity," brought together policymakers, economists, researchers and business representatives to discuss strategies for enhancing Pakistan's exports.

Rana Ihsaan said the government's export targets of $60 billion in the medium term and $100 billion by 2035 required structural reforms, export diversification and stronger industrial productivity.

Highlighting key initiatives, he said the National Tariff Policy 2025-30 aimed to rationalise duties across approximately 7,500 tariff lines, gradually eliminate regulatory and additional customs duties, and reduce the maximum customs duty to 15 percent to improve industrial competitiveness.

He said the government was reviewing approximately 500 regulatory requirements and removing unnecessary certification and inspection procedures under the Export Policy Order to facilitate businesses.

Rana Ihsaan said the Prime Minister had approved a Trade Facilitation Board to improve coordination among government agencies, streamline export logistics and reduce port-related costs. NEWS DESK

Pakistan's CAD widens nearly 5-fold in Sept 2026

Pakistan's current account posted a deficit of $356 million in September 2026, data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed on Friday.

The latest figure follows a deficit of $73 million recorded in August 2026 and a surplus of $133 million in September 2025. The August 2026 deficit was revised down from $98 million to $73 million.

The deficit came from a significantly higher import bill and a marginal increase in exports during the month.

In September 2026, the country's total exports of goods and services amounted to $3.95 billion, up over 15% as compared to $3.42 billion in the same month of the previous year.

Meanwhile, total imports clocked in at $7.38 billion during September 2026, an increase of over 23% on a yearly basis, as compared to $5.99 billion in the same month last year, according to SBP data. NEWS DESK

Pakistan to chair WB, IMF Boards in 2027

Pakistan returns to the chairmanship for the first time since 1953

In a key development, Pakistan has been nominated to chair the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) in 2027, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said on Friday, marking the country's first such appointment since 1953.

"Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Governor WBG for Pakistan, Ahad Khan Cheema, has been formally announced as the incoming chair of the Boards of Governors of the WBG and the IMF for 2027," read a statement.

The announcement was made during the plenary session of the 2026 WBG-IMF Annual Meetings in Bangkok, the statement read.

"The forthcoming chairmanship provides Pakistan an important opportunity to contribute to global economic and development deliberations and facilitate constructive dialogue among member countries at a critical juncture for the multilateral system," the ministry said.

The Boards of Governors of the WBG and the IMF are the highest decision-making bodies of these two major international financial institutions. They represent the member countries and determine the broad direction of the organisations.

Following the plenary, Ahad Cheema received a briefing from the WBG Corporate Secretariat on the responsibilities of the chairmanship.

He also met WBG Vice President and Corporate Secretary Aradhana Kumar-Capoor to discuss institutional support and coordination during Pakistan's term.

The minister also met Governor of the Central Bank of Paraguay Carlos Carvallo Spalding.

He congratulated Spalding, the outgoing chair, on the successful completion of his tenure and commended his stewardship of the chairmanship. The two exchanged views on the responsibilities of the office and priorities for the year ahead, providing an opportunity to benefit from the outgoing chair's experience and insights.

During the meetings, the minister highlighted Pakistan's commitment to strengthening the voice of developing countries, promoting effective and predictable development financing, enhancing coordination among multilateral development institutions, and mobilising private capital to support sustainable and inclusive growth.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to work closely with the WBG, IMF and member countries to foster constructive dialogue and contribute to a more responsive multilateral development and financial system. NEWS DESK

KSE gains 233 points

The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued its positive momentum on Friday, gaining 233.55 points, a positive change of 0.14 percent, to close at 166,419.72 points against 166,186.17 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 396.904 million shares, compared to 517.601 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value stood at Rs 18.679 billion against Rs 23.571 billion.

Market capitalisation advanced to Rs 18.479 trillion from Rs 18.475 trillion recorded a day earlier. NEWS DESK

WORLD DTM

UN Warning: 100 Million Climate Refugees?

Climate change is threatening livelihoods and forcing people from their homes across South Asia, but technology and government action could help limit the damage, the UN migration chief told AFP on Friday.

Rising seas, flooding and drought threaten homes and farmland, Amy Pope, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said during a visit to New Delhi.

In the Himalayas, she pointed to Nepal's August 26 disaster, when a mountain and glacier collapse triggered deadly flooding, where IOM sent humanitarian aid to help.

In a worst-case scenario, up to 40.5 million people in South Asia may be forced to move by 2050, according to IOM.

"When they can't produce food, when they can't feed their livestock, it increases the likelihood of displacement," said Pope. "The first adaptation is often for people to move."

Pope said climate change was also accelerating urbanisation in India.

"As people seek shelter from heat, they're going into urban centres," she said. The risks are particularly acute in South Asia, where vast populations and limited resources leave many communities vulnerable. "There's a lack of urgency globally about the risks that vulnerable communities are facing," Pope said, warning that funding to help residents prepare for climate change remained inadequate. AFP

Flushed With Success: China Fires Back With Toilet Taunt

Beijing told the White House Press Secretary Katie Zacharia on Friday to visit China "more often", after she said the country lacked "proper toilets" less than a week into her new post.

After years of intense rivalry between the United States and China over globally challenging issues from trade and technology to Taiwan and human rights, the US president's new spokesperson took the two sides' relationship to uncharted territory.

Zacharia -- who previously lived in China and is due to visit next month -- recalled in an interview the perception in 2016 that China would soon overtake the United States.

"I remember this very distinctly, having just come from China, thinking, 'How is China the next country on the horizon? They don't even have proper toilets," she told right-wing influencer Jack Posobiec. In response, China's foreign ministry on Friday suggested she may want to make another trip to the country. "We welcome her to visit China more often when she has the opportunity," spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters, fighting back a smile. Trump has often spoken about his "great relationship" with China's President Xi Jinping, who he has met twice this year, though ties remain strained. Zacharia's remarks come just days after what many considered a somewhat questionable debut in front of the White House press corp in which she appeared to be unable to answer basic questions and at one point referred to her husband as the president. AFP

Maduro Hits Back At Torture Claims: 'False'

Former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro insisted in court on Thursday that newly unsealed torture allegations against him and his wife were "false accusations."

Maduro and Cilia Flores, both shackled at the ankles, were brought to court to face a rewritten indictment that expands from an initial set of drug trafficking charges to accuse them of leading a state-sponsored repression campaign that tortured scores of victims, including three Americans.

Maduro twice defied a judge's request that he enter a plea to the charges, instead condemning them through a courtroom interpreter as "false accusations and false testimony." Irked, Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein took matters into his own hands, interjecting that "a plea of not guilty will be entered on behalf of Mr. Maduro."

Flores was less combative. After saying that she'd read through a version of the new indictment written in Spanish, she told the judge through the Spanish interpreter: "I am completely innocent. I am not guilty."

They were seized from their Caracas home by the U.S. military in a nighttime raid in January. Their trial will begin June 14, 2027, two weeks later than previously set, according to a schedule approved by the judge Thursday.

As they have in the past, Maduro and Flores listened to the proceedings through headphones carrying the voice of a courtroom translator. At times, the bespectacled Maduro looked through papers in front of him.

When they entered the courtroom, Maduro waved to people in the gallery and shook hands with one of his lawyers, Barry Pollack, while Flores gave a peck on the cheek to Mark Donnelly, one of her attorneys.

Pollack said when the charges were announced last week that Maduro, 63, denies them and "looks forward to his day in court." AP

Elon Musk unveils Tesla's 'flying' car

Tesla CEO Elon Musk unveiled what he described as a "flying" car, equipped with thrusters, during a livestreamed event at his SpaceX rocket company's facility on Thursday. Technical and regulatory challenges have so far prevented the much-hyped flying car sector from getting off the ground.

Musk revealed his new Roadster sports car during a launch event at a SpaceX test facility in Texas. During the demo, which was livestreamed on Tesla's X account, the car launched from a steep ramp and landed on its wheels. "Flying cars are real," Musk said during the event.

He added that the vehicle's "success is not guaranteed" but that "it will probably work". Musk said the car was equipped with "ultra high-pressure air tanks" to propel itself into the air. The tech billionaire described the development as "what happens when you have a collaboration with the world's best car company and the world's best rocket company," referring to Tesla and SpaceX.

The vehicle would go into production in 2028, he said. American aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss debuted the first flying car prototype in 1917. But successful designs have become more seriously contemplated only in recent years as electric motors and high-performance batteries have advanced. DNA

Zelensky Finds Friends in Europe as US Drifts

European leaders on Friday rallied around Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky as Kyiv's ties with US President Donald Trump have nosedived and worries grow that US leader is increasingly siding with Russia.

Relations between Kyiv and Washington have soured since last week, when Trump eased sanctions on Russia in exchange for Moscow releasing large amounts of diesel onto global markets.

Zelensky infuriated Trump further by ordering Ukraine's forces to restart strikes on Russian oil refineries in defiance of Washington's demands.

Meanwhile anger in Ukraine has been heightened by disruptions to a critical US-provided satellite system that has hampered its military's ability to counter Russia's intense bombardments ahead of the harsh winter months.

"This is no time to withdraw the support to Ukraine. This is no time to relieve Russia's sanctions," European Council chief Antonio Costa said, standing alongside Zelensky at an EU summit in Brussels. "Now it is time to increase our support, to increase our pressure." The Ukrainian president welcomed the backing of "real leaders" in Europe and said there were no signals that Moscow is ready "to end this war". AFP

Carney Says US Fueling Canada Split

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney warned Thursday that the United States is trying to break Canada so it can "own us" as he urged oil-rich Alberta not to begin a process toward separation in Monday's referendum.

The vote is not a direct referendum on independence. Alberta, which has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves, will decide whether to remain a province or instruct the government to begin the legal process toward a future referendum on separation. "This referendum comes at the worst possible time," Carney told a large pro-Canada rally in Calgary. "The world has become more dangerous and divided. Some outside our borders are working to break us so they can own us." He did not directly mention the U.S. or its President Donald Trump in that passage, but has done so in similar past speeches. Carney's warning came as U.S. President Donald Trump wages a trade war with Canada and after his repeated threats to make Canada the 51st U.S. state. AP

Poll: Voters Frustrated, Want Change in DC

A strong majority of voters believe that President Donald Trump is falling short at home and abroad, and they want major change in the upcoming midterm elections, according to a new AP-NORC poll that raises serious warning signs for the Republican Party at a critical moment.

The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, conducted less than four weeks before Election Day, finds that registered voters who identify as Democrats are more enthusiastic than Republican voters about casting a ballot. More voters want Democrats to win control of Congress and have a more negative view of Republicans.

The Democratic advantage is small in some cases, but, taken together, the findings paint a challenging picture for Republicans, who are clinging to control of Congress under the weight of an unpopular war with Iran and surging prices at home.

About 8 in 10 voters overall say the economy or the cost of living is among their top issues for the upcoming election, while about two-thirds say this about health care and the war in Iran. Other issues that are stronger for Trump — like immigration or crime — are lower priorities.

"The world is going backwards. We can barely afford anything," said Diana Walker, a 65-year-old Democrat from Decatur, Georgia. "Everybody's down. I don't care if you're a Democrat or Republican, we're all catching hell."

Democrats are more enthusiastic about voting than Republicans

Less than a month before the final midterm votes are cast, the poll finds that Democratic voters are more motivated to vote.

Overall, about two-thirds of registered voters say it's "extremely" important to vote in the upcoming election, while about 2 in 10 say it's "very" important.

But about three-quarters of Democratic voters say that voting in this November's midterm elections is "extremely" important, compared with roughly 6 in 10 Republicans.

Ryan Longbrake, a 52-year-old Democrat from Columbus, Ohio who works in technology marketing, said he's especially excited about casting his ballot, and he's already taken steps to ensure that his wife and two college-age daughters will vote as well.

"I believe that there is change on the horizon and there is an excitement within our party," he said, pointing to Democrats' momentum in Ohio's elections for governor and US Senate. The party is also investing resources in Republican-leaning states, like Iowa and Kansas, where the political environment has put Democratic candidates on friendlier footing.

Republicans have controlled Congress for the past two years, but about half of registered voters now say they'd prefer to see the Democratic Party control the House or the Senate. AP

SPORTS

DTM

England in Pakistan for ODI Tri-Series

TRI-NATION SERIES SCHEDULE - PAKISTAN 2026

- OCT 18 – Pakistan vs Sri Lanka — Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium
- OCT 20 – Pakistan vs England — Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium
- OCT 22 – Sri Lanka vs England — Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium
- OCT 25 – Pakistan vs England — Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
- OCT 27 – Pakistan vs Sri Lanka — Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
- OCT 29 – Sri Lanka vs England — Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
- OCT 31 FINAL — Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

All matches - Pakistan Standard Time (PST) - Schedule subject to change

The England cricket team has arrived in Pakistan to participate in the ODI tri-series featuring Pakistan, England and Sri Lanka, scheduled to take place from October 18 to 31.

Officials of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) welcomed the visiting team upon its arrival at Islamabad International Airport. The England squad subsequently departed for a local hotel. The team is scheduled to hold a practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium later in the day.

The tri-series will begin on October 18, with Pakistan taking on Sri Lanka in the opening match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Pakistan and England will face each other at the same venue on October 20.

The final of the tri-series is scheduled to be played at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on October 31.

England squad: Harry Brook (c), Gus Atkinson, Sonny Baker, Tom Banton, James Coles, Jordan Cox, Mason Crane, Henry Crocombe, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Joe Root and Josh Tongue. INP

British Rising Star Kartal Sinks Svitolina

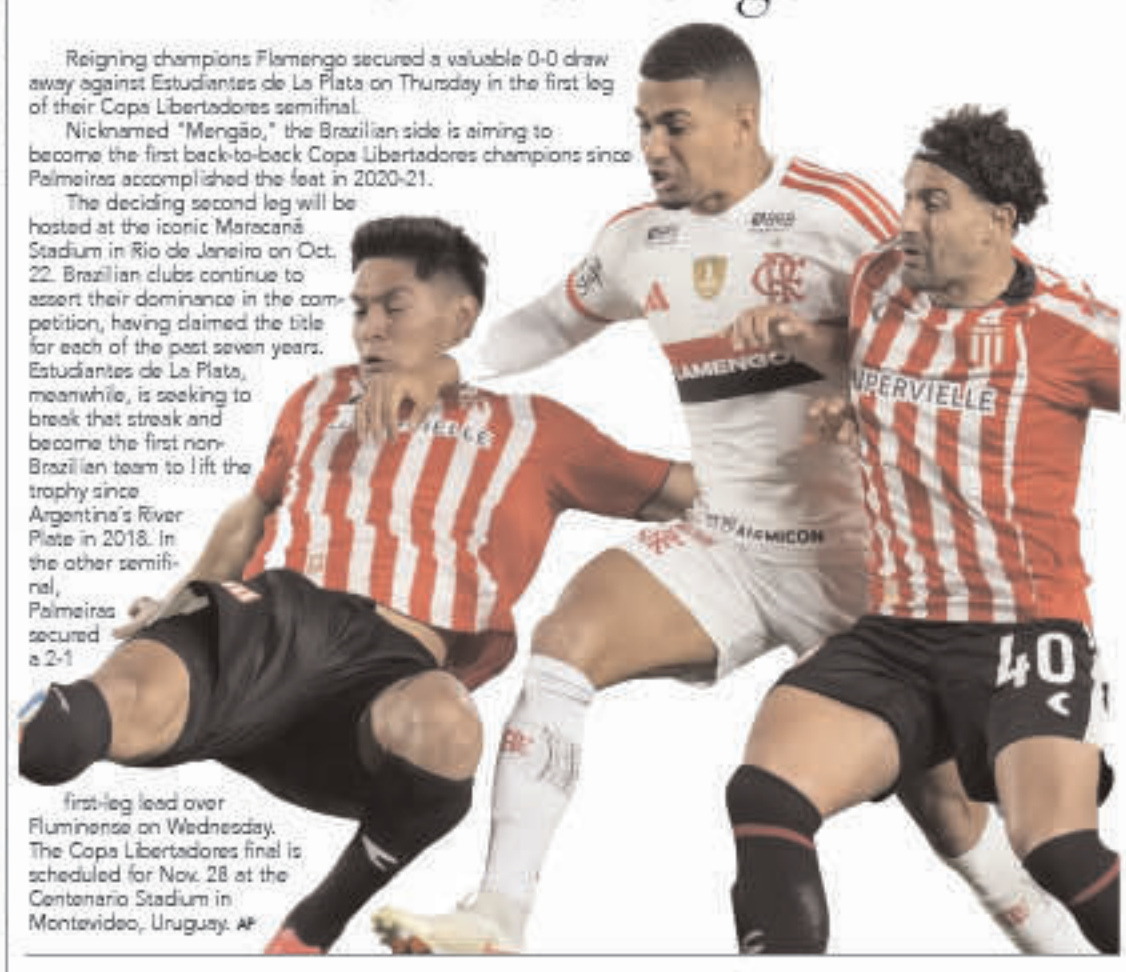
Fifth-seeded Elina Svitolina is out of the Wuhan Open after losing 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 to resurgent British player Sonay Kartal in the quarterfinals Friday.

The No. 170-ranked old Kartal, who missed more than six months with a stress fracture in her back, has won six of her eight matches since returning to the elite tour. She beat two-time Grand Slam finalist Jasmine Paolini to reach the quarterfinals in Wuhan after defeating ninth-seeded Belinda Bencic, the Tokyo Olympics gold medalist, in the second round.

Kartal, who broke Svitolina's serve in the last game to clinch the match, reached a career-high No. 44 ranking in July of last year. Svitolina lost in the quarterfinals at the China Open last week to eventual champion Zheng Qinwen.

Kartal advanced to a semifinal against 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko, who beat 11th-seeded Diana Shnaider 7-6 (6), 6-1. Seventh-seeded Iga Swiatek was scheduled to play a quarterfinal later Friday against American Ann Li, who upset top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka in the second round. The winner of that match will face either Maria Sakkari or Maja Chwalinska in the semifinals. AP

No Goals, Big Gains For Flamengo



Reigning champions Flamengo secured a valuable 0-0 draw away against Estudiantes de La Plata on Thursday in the first leg of their Copa Libertadores semifinal.

Nicknamed "Mengão," the Brazilian side is aiming to become the first back-to-back Copa Libertadores champions since Palmeiras accomplished the feat in 2020-21.

The deciding second leg will be hosted at the iconic Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on Oct. 22. Brazilian clubs continue to assert their dominance in the competition, having claimed the title for each of the past seven years. Estudiantes de La Plata, meanwhile, is seeking to break that streak and become the first non-Brazilian team to lift the trophy since Argentina's River Plate in 2018. In the other semifinal, Palmeiras secured a 2-1 first-leg lead over Fluminense on Wednesday. The Copa Libertadores final is scheduled for Nov. 28 at the Centenario Stadium in Montevideo, Uruguay. AP

From Zen To Scrum: Wemby Goes All In

Last year, Victor Wembanyama spent part of his offseason in the peaceful company of Chinese monks with hopes of growing both mentally and spiritually.

This year, he got roughed up by a rugby team.

His rationale seems obvious. Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs got near the top of the NBA mountain last season, then fell in five games to the New York Knicks - wasting big leads in all four of their losses. Wembanyama decided he needed to get tougher, so a rugby club in the south of France was enlisted to help with that mission this summer.

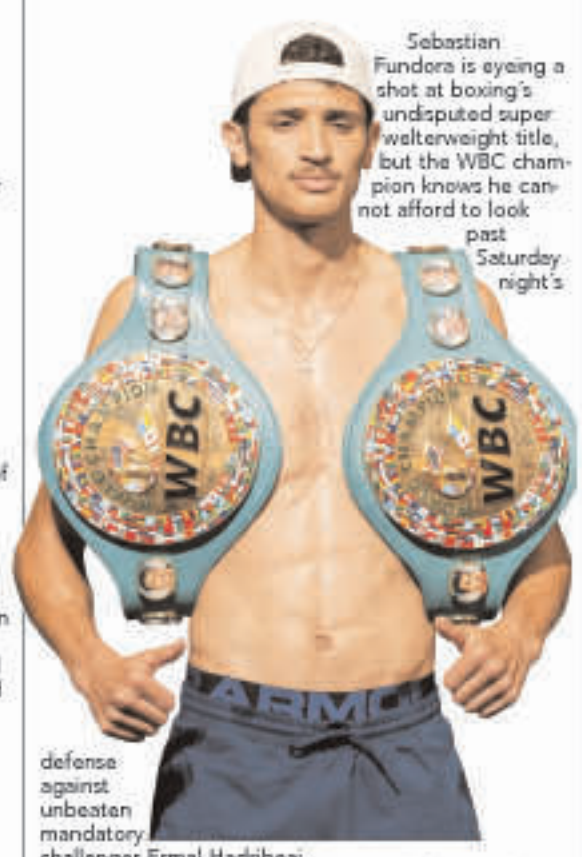
He got pushed. He got shoved. He got tossed around. He loved it all. And now, as Wembanyama gets ready for the scrums awaiting in his fourth NBA season, the French superstar listed at 7-foot-4 looks bigger and stronger. That's great for the Spurs. That might not be great for the other 29 teams.

"It feels like going through something of great magnitude and feels like destiny (for) anybody," Wembanyama said. "We're fighting for the top spot of the mountain and we're going to have to move people in our way. That's just the way it is."

The goal for the Spurs this season is clear - a championship, and rightly so. Aiming at anything else would make no sense, especially after winning the Western Conference last season by taking a Game 7 in Oklahoma City to oust the 2025 NBA champions.

It's not an unrealistic expectation. The annual poll of NBA general managers was released Thursday, and not only did they give the Spurs the nod as favorites to win the 2027 title, they made Wembanyama the overwhelming pick to win defensive player of the year for the second consecutive season and what would be his first Most Valuable Player award. AP

Fundora On Brink Of Undisputed



Sebastian Fundora is eyeing a shot at boxing's undisputed super welterweight title, but the WBC champion knows he cannot afford to look past Saturday night's defense against unbeaten mandatory challenger Ermal Hadribeaj.

Fundora (24-1-1, 16 KOs) enters the bout at The Chelsea inside The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas riding a four-fight winning streak since his knockout loss to Brian Mendoza in 2023.

With a potential showdown against the winner of a proposed January matchup between Jaron Ennis and Josh Kelly looming, Fundora could be one win away from positioning himself to unify all four major titles in the 154-pound division.

"Of course, it's just you guys questioning it, so it's gonna remain in my mind, but of course we have Ermal in front of us," Fundora said Thursday during the final pre-fight news conference. "I'm not overlooking him. Of course, he's the number one mandatory for WBC. You cannot overlook anybody."

The 28-year-old southpaw, nicknamed "The Towering Inferno," has established himself as one of the division's toughest opponents because of his 6-foot-5 frame, reach, and aggressive punching style. AP

Jodar beats Ruud to make Shanghai Masters history

Rafael Jodar became the youngest semifinalist in Shanghai Masters history after advancing with victory against Casper Ruud on Friday. The 20-year-old Spaniard was a set down and rallied to a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 win. It was the fourth straight match at the ATP Masters 1000 event that Jodar had mounted a comeback from losing the first set.

"Casper, I think, played the important points in the first set better than me," Jodar said. "I couldn't win the break points because of his serve, so I knew I wanted to come back again. It was very tough, so I had to give my best level today to win this match."

Jodar powered to victory in 2 hours 20 minutes by breaking Ruud's serve five times in the second and third sets.

He will face Daniil Medvedev or Tommy Paul in the semifinals. AP

Asian Cup 2027 Stays On Course, Say Saudis

The Asian Cup in January is "on schedule", Saudi Arabian organisers said, after growing fears for the tournament following Houthi attacks on the country.

The continent's top football official said this week that the competition could be postponed to 2028, while stressing there was "no hurry" to make a decision.

The 2027 Asian Cup is supposed to kick off on January 7 in the Saudi cities of Jeddah, Riyadh and Al Khobar.

In a statement late Thursday, the local organising committee said: "Preparations remain on schedule for the tournament.

"This work continues in close coordination with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and other relevant stakeholders."

Saudi Arabia has in recent days come under sustained attack in a dramatic escalation in the war with the Iran-backed Houthi group. AFP