



Support anti-terror drive, end KP emergency: Bilawal

Says Fazl can help end terror, KP governor rule; Bilawal hits out at Afridi over KP security

He made these remarks while speaking to the media in Karachi, where he was visiting the Karsaz Monument on the 19th anniversary of the Karsaz bombing.

"If they really want to fight terrorists, and if they want the emergency and governor rule in KP to end, then they should engage with the federal government and politicians and talk about a policy regarding a united fight against terrorism," Bilawal said on Sunday, referring to the PTI-led opposition.

He added, "if we can create such an environment, we will be in a better position to fight terrorists."

Bilawal emphasized that if the opposition was also ready to fight terrorism and agree on a plan for it, then the emergency in KP could also be concluded.

"If the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister (Sohail Afridi) was a coward, if he was not ready to defend his homeland, if he

was not ready to fight those terrorists, then the PPP is ready to fight them," Bilawal said. "That is why we supported the government's decision to impose governor's rule in KP."

He stressed that the party would "join forces with everyone to fight these terrorists".

In his media talk, the Bhutto scion said the country had reached a point where "terrorist attacks are taking place from Khyber to Khuzdar".

He regretted that when the government changed in Kabul in 2021, the Pakistani government at that time "also decided to invite the terrorists who were in Afghanistan to come back and live in our Swat, our Malakand, our former tribal areas". He was referring to then-prime minister Imran's plans to resettle members of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan in the country.

Bilawal went on to say that terrorists who were in jail in Pakistan were also freed. "Today, Pakistan is suffering the losses from these wrong decisions," he lamented.

He added that the country had now once again reached the point where "some forces want to take down Pakistan's flag in Swat" and there was a fight against terrorism

ongoing across the entire country, while security forces, law enforcers and the public were being targeted.

However, he claimed, in the province where the highest number of terrorist incidents were taking place - KP - its chief minister had pledged that he would not face the terrorists.

He said that the PPP had "readied all of society" to fight terrorism by creating an environment for counter-terrorism operations in 2008, when the party was in government.

He emphasised that success was achieved when "every citizen" of Pakistan joined together to fight terrorism, saying, "Today as well, we will make efforts to create an environment where we are all united, and will fight the terrorists together."

He also said that the PPP made an effort to improve the democratic system by pushing for electoral reforms. To this end, the federal government had decided to establish an electoral reforms committee, Bilawal recalled, adding that he had invited the opposition to join it.

"If they say that democracy is weak in this country, then they should help us to strengthen it," the PPP chairman said.

"We are not yet at the point where I can say that we have achieved the Pakistan that Benazir Bhutto fought for," he said, recalling his mother's efforts. "But we are trying to make that Pakistan."

Answering a question regarding the creation of new provinces, Bilawal stated that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi knew "clearly" what the PPP and President Asif Ali Zardari's policy was regarding new provinces or administrative units, and that this was not the work of the president's desk.

Asked whether new provinces should be created, he stressed that the PPP's opinion was clear: that they could be made according to the Constitution and law if the provincial assembly agreed.

He requested politicians, whether on the treasury or opposition benches, not to politicize the issue of terrorism or create controversy out of steps taken to combat it, but rather play their role in fighting it.

He also expressed his faith that JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman, a figure who held respect from both sides, could contribute to creating a consensus that could ultimately end the emergency and governor's rule in KP. **NEWS DESK**

Dar stresses dialogue in call with Iran's FM

Pakistan, Egypt condemn attacks on Saudi Arabia; No US Navy operations from Pakistan: MoI

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday held a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, to discuss the evolving regional situation and an ongoing meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers in Baghdad, the FO said.

In a post on X, the FO said the two leaders had discussed "the evolving regional situation" and "the ongoing OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Baghdad".

FM Dar "underscored the importance of continued dialogue and diplomacy in addressing regional

challenges", the statement said. The two foreign ministers also "agreed to maintain close contact."

Pakistan and Iran were expected to hold further consultations on regional peace efforts on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Baghdad on October 17-18.

Iranian state news agency IRNA reported that the meeting would provide an opportunity for consultations between key regional players, including Islamabad and Tehran.

Pakistan has continued to advocate a negotiated settlement to the conflict involving Iran and the United States. On October 9, the military's media wing

chief, Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, said Pakistan remained committed to a "negotiated and peaceful outcome" and warned against the conflict spreading further across the region.

He said Pakistan had condemned attacks on Iran by the United States and Israel, as well as Iranian attacks on Arab and Gulf countries.

Earlier in the day, FM Dar also held a telephone conversation with his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelatty, and strongly condemned the Houthis' attacks against Saudi Arabia, reaffirming their full solidarity with the Kingdom and support for its

sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. In a post on X, the FO said the two leaders also discussed the next meeting of the R-4 grouping, comprising Pakistan, Egypt, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia, during a telephone conversation.

"The two leaders exchanged views on recent regional developments," the ministry added. Both looked forward to holding the next R-4 meeting soon to "further strengthen mutual ties and to coordinate on the regional issues."

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PM Shehbaz calls for equal education for all

Premier Shehbaz says Pakistan cannot reach its true destination without ensuring accessible, high-quality opportunities for all citizens across every field; Hopes Daanish School system will provide quality education across country

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, emphasized the critical need to provide equal opportunities in the education and health sectors to fulfill the true vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Daanish School Kuri, the prime minister reflected on the sacrifices made during the 1947 migration, noting that millions left everything behind with the hope of building a nation grounded in justice, fair play, and merit.

He asserted that Pakistan cannot reach its true destination without ensuring accessible, high-quality opportunities for all citizens across every field, stressing that every child from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Gilgit-Baltistan must be equipped with a quality education.

And after eighty years down the lane, he said they must take a pause and have honest self introspection what they had dreamt of in 1947. "This might be some other Pakistan, but not Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan?" he remarked while referring to two different sets of education system in the country.

"That what we and our forefathers had dreamt of in 1947, and where we stand today, that the richest of this country earned their assets through hard work or otherwise, have the opportunity to send their sons and daughters to the best schools in Pakistan, not only here, to North of America and

South of France. And imagine the plight of likes of this daughter from Bahawalpur and this daughter from KP, and this boy in front of you who also became a doctor," he added.

The prime minister emphasized that every child from Karachi to Peshawar, regardless of socioeconomic background, deserves equal access to quality education.

Contrasting the opportunities available to the elite, who can easily afford prestigious domestic or international institutions, the prime minister highlighted the plight of exceptionally bright children from impoverished families across Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He noted that these children could never dream of attending elite institutions like Aitchison College, let alone receiving a decent standard of education.

To bridge this massive gap, the prime minister shared that he first established the Daanish Schools network back in 2010, driven by the mission to uplift underprivileged youth and provide them with world-class educational opportunities.

The prime minister said that Punjab Endowment Fund now transformed into Pakistan Endowment Fund and it was now a realization of Quaid-e-Azam's vision that all children from the length and breadth of country, should get equal opportunities in education and health.

The event was attended by ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, relevant authorities, teachers and students. The prime minister cited the example of a young daughter from KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) who is a special child, but she never lost hope and

transformed the landscape of Pakistan into one of the most going countries in the world.

He expressed the hope that the graduated students from the Daanish Schools would not only transform their own lives but through their ingenuity, hard work and untiring efforts

transform the landscape of Pakistan into one of the most going countries in the world.

Earlier, the prime minister also visited different sections of the school and interacted with students and staff members.

Minister for Federal Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, in his remarks, termed it a historic day in the education sector reflecting a new vision for imparting education to new generations of the country.

He said the journey of Daanish would pave a huge way for country's progress and prosperity. Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, in his remarks

appreciated the prime minister for his public services during his tenure as chief minister Punjab. **NEWS DESK**

He said that what all they had witnessed today was not only heart touching but it was also awe inspiring.

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National



Peshawar Heartbreak: A mother's final kiss

World



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Money



Mineral Jackpot: Pakistan in spotlight

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PCB allows Rizwan to play domestic cricket

Glamour



Swift donation that keeps on giving

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Pakistan's first astronaut to embark on space mission next month: minister

NATIONAL

DTM

President pays tribute to Karsaz martyrs on 19th anniversary



President Asif Ali Zardari, Sunday, paid tribute to the martyrs of the Karsaz tragedy on its 19th anniversary, saying that their supreme sacrifices form a bright chapter in Pakistan's national history.

In his message commemorating the tragic anniversary, the president said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto remained steadfast despite grave threats to her life, adding her courage and ultimate sacrifice served as a guiding light for all champions of democracy, peace, and justice.

"The sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs will continue to serve as a perpetual source of inspiration for

future generations in building a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan," President Secretariat Media Wing in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

He further emphasized that upholding the supremacy of the constitution, ensuring the rule of the people, and safeguarding democratic values are the true embodiment of the sacrifices rendered by the Karsaz martyrs. President Zardari reiterated that these sacrifices further strengthened the nation's resolve to eradicate terrorism and extremism from the country. The president prayed for the highest ranks of the martyrs in Jannah and for the grant of patience and fortitude to their bereaved families.

PPP to continue BB's mission, says Sindh Assembly speaker

A prayer ceremony was organized in Saleh Pat by Speaker Sindh Assembly Syed Awaiz Qadir Shah in memory of the martyrs of

the Karsaz tragedy, with Quran Khwani and Niaz here on Sunday. A large number of Town Chairmen, Union Council Chairmen and workers of Pakistan Peoples Party participated.

On the occasion, paying tribute to the martyrs of the Karsaz tragedy, Speaker Sindh Assembly Syed Awaiz Qadir Shah said that October 18 is a very painful day for those who believe in democratic values. Today we remember those martyrs who participated to welcome Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her return to the homeland and sacrificed their lives. He said that despite the passage of 19 years, provision of justice to the victims of the Karsaz tragedy remains an important question and we have full confidence in our courts that justice will be served.

He said the leadership and workers of Pakistan Peoples Party have always struggled for the promotion of democratic values, equality, peace and brotherhood. **NEWS DESK**

Six countries show interest in Sindh teacher policy

The Government of Sindh's Teacher Licensing Policy has received international recognition, with representatives from six countries expressing interest in learning from Sindh's experience to strengthen teachers' professional development, improve teaching standards and enhance education systems.

and making practical progress towards its implementation.

Rasha Sharf also emphasized that Sindh's experience offered valuable guidance to other countries on addressing administrative challenges, teachers' concerns and responses during the implementation of teacher licensing. The importance of effective government and public communication regarding the policy was also highlighted. She thanked the Sindh team and the GPE-KIX EMAP Hub for facilitating this exchange of knowledge and bringing representatives from different countries together.

Drawing on Sindh's experience, representatives of participating countries, the Federal Government of Pakistan and

Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah described the development as a major achievement, saying that Sindh's Teacher Licensing Policy reflects Pakistan's leadership in introducing reforms in the field of education and teaching. He said the province's experience could help pave the way for developing countries to improve educational standards and strengthen teachers' professional capacity.

A Sindh delegation, led by Executive Director of the Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority (STEDA), Syed Rasool Bux Shah, represented the School Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, at the DHS2 Asia Pacific Conference 2026, held this month in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The conference was organized by HISP Asia in collaboration with the GPE-KIX EMAP Hub and brought together government representatives, education experts, researchers and development partners from Pakistan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

During the conference, the Sindh Government's Teacher Licensing Policy and its implementation through STEDA were highlighted. The initiative aims to strengthen teaching as a profession, improve teachers' standards and promote effective systems for assessing and enhancing quality in teacher education.

Ms Rasha Sharf, Secretary General of the Education Development Fund (EDF) and Knowledge Lead for South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa at the KIX-EMAP Hub, appreciated Sindh's Teacher Licensing initiative. She said that bringing representatives from six countries together on a common platform to learn from Sindh's experience was a positive development. She noted that Sindh had taken a leading role in the region by proposing teacher licensing



other provincial governments are expected to present their respective teacher licensing plans in January 2027. This activity will form part of the broader KIX initiative to promote knowledge exchange and education reforms.

Commenting on the development, Provincial Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah said that the implementation of the Teacher Licensing Policy in Sindh was the result of the Pakistan Peoples Party-led government's serious efforts and the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders associated with the education sector. He said the initiative had paved the way for strengthening teachers' professional development and improving teaching standards across the province.

The conference also discussed how improvements in teachers' professional competencies and teaching standards could positively influence students' academic performance and contribute to overall educational development. **NEWS DESK**

Governor stresses increasing trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan



Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi met Honorary Consul General of Tajikistan Irshad Ali S. Qasim at Governor House, where they discussed bilateral trade, investment and opportunities to strengthen cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan across various sectors.

The meeting also explored prospects for expanding bilateral cooperation in energy, industry, healthcare, transportation, agriculture, education, science and technology, culture and other areas of mutual interest.

During the meeting, Honorary Consul General Irshad Ali S. Qasim stated that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan had exceeded US\$30 million. He highlighted the strong demand in Tajikistan for Pakistani textile products, rice, pharmaceuticals and surgical instruments, noting that considerable opportunities existed to increase Pakistan's exports.

Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi stressed the need for joint efforts to expand bilateral trade and increase exports of Pakistani products to Tajikistan. He underscored the importance of strengthening business-to-business ties between the two countries and exploring new avenues for trade and investment.

Governor Sindh noted that Sindh, particularly Karachi, could play a significant role in promoting trade relations with Central Asian states. He emphasized that Pakistan could expand access for its products to Tajikistan and other Central Asian markets by leveraging Karachi's strategic commercial and economic importance.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to further strengthen economic ties and enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan, particularly in trade, investment and energy. **NEWS DESK**

Karsaz sacrifices to inspire generations

Sindh Minister for Local Government Nasir Hussain Shah has paid a red salute to the martyrs of the October 18 Karsaz tragedy, saying that their sacrifices constitute an unforgettable chapter in Pakistan's democratic history that can never be erased.

He said the martyrs laid down their lives for the restoration of democracy, protection of public rights and strengthening of the democratic system, adding that their supreme sacrifices represent a glorious and enduring chapter in the struggle of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Nasir Hussain Shah said that from the party leadership to its workers, the Pakistan Peoples Party had written an enduring history of sacrifices for democracy. He said the party's leadership and workers had consistently struggled to safeguard democratic values, uphold the people's right to rule and ensure the supremacy of the Constitution and the law. The sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs, he added, were a prominent example of this historic struggle, reflecting an unwavering commitment to democracy, determination and perseverance.

The Sindh Minister for Local Government said the Karsaz tragedy was a heartbreaking incident that had become an integral part of the nation's history and preserved the memory of those who

sacrificed their lives for democracy. The martyrs wrote a chapter of democratic struggle with their blood and set an example of courage, steadfastness and loyalty for generations to come. He said paying tribute to their sacrifices was, in essence, a reaffirmation of the commitment to democracy, public rights and the principles of peaceful political struggle.

Nasir Hussain Shah said the great sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs continued to provide renewed strength and encouragement to the Pakistan Peoples Party's struggle. These sacrifices conveyed the message that safeguarding democratic supremacy and the fundamental rights of the people required continuous struggle. He emphasized that strengthening the democratic system required adherence to the Constitution, political tolerance, protection of public rights and respect for democratic values. He further said that the struggle and sacrifices of the Karsaz martyrs would continue to serve as a guiding light for future generations.

The nation would always remember these brave martyrs and continue to draw inspiration from their struggle for democratic stability. Paying tribute to the martyrs, he reiterated that their eternal sacrifices further strengthened the resolve to continue the struggle for democratic supremacy, protection of public rights and promotion of democratic values. **NEWS DESK**



Karachi FIA exposes fake visa scams involving Canada, Bahrain

The Federal Investigation Agency's Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Karachi conducted two successful operations against human trafficking and immigration fraud, exposing fake visa scams involving Canada and Bahrain and recovering a total of Rs19 lakh for affected citizens.

According to a detailed statement issued by the FIA spokesperson, the first operation concerned Canadian immigration fraud.

A fraudulent immigration consultant allegedly took Rs11 million from a citizen, Ajmal Khan, by promising assistance in obtaining Canadian immigration and a work visa. When the fraud came to light, the victim immediately approached the FIA. The Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Karachi's investigation team promptly launched an inquiry and used professional methods to pressure the suspect.

As a result, the entire amount was recovered and handed back to Ajmal Khan.

The timely action provided significant financial relief to the victim and demonstrated the FIA's commitment to protecting the rights and interests of

complainants. The spokesperson further said that FIA Karachi's second major operation led to the arrest of another network allegedly involved in human trafficking. The central accused, Yaseen Khan, was arrested in a human trafficking case and booked under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018.

Initial investigations and records revealed that the suspect had falsely promised a citizen an attractive work visa for Bahrain. A total payment of Rs800,000 was agreed for the purpose, and the suspect had already received Rs520,000 in advance for providing the visa.

However, after serious legal doubts emerged regarding the visa and travel documents, timely action was taken to prevent the victim from travelling further. The matter was then referred to Anti-Human Trafficking Circle officials for complete legal proceedings. The FIA investigation team continues to search for other elements involved in the network and conduct a deeper investigation into all aspects of the case. **NP**

Karachi Biennale 2027 cancelled due to funding crunch

Regional wars affected funding for Karachi Biennale 2027, arguably the country's largest contemporary art event, forcing its cancellation, the organizer said on Sunday, warning the move would have adverse effect on international collaborations between Pakistani and other artists.

The Karachi Biennale Trust (KBT) was founded in 2016 by a group of art professionals and educators as a platform to promote creativity.

The Karachi Biennale is a two-week event which attracts visitors from all over Pakistan and abroad.

The KBT announced in a public post earlier this month that its fifth edition, scheduled to be held from Jan. 16-31, had been canceled on account of "the war conditions prevailing in the region and the

resultant logistical constraints and uncertainty."

"The regional wars have severely affected funding in Pakistan and Europe, and with no end to the uncertainty in sight, a citywide biennale could not responsibly be delivered," KBT chairperson Atteq Malik told Arab News.

"After considering scaled-down and postponed options, the trustees took the difficult decision to cancel."

The KBT's published curatorial vision for the fifth edition envisaged exhibitions in public spaces, ports and parks. It said the fifth edition would explore Karachi's history of migration and its relationship with the sea, alongside environmental pressures such as rising sea levels and damaged mangroves.

The war between the US and Iran, as well as recent attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels targeting civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, has sent the region into turmoil. An attack by Houthi rebels on the international airport in Riyadh killed 12 people and injured over 300, forcing several carriers such as the Pakistan International Airlines to suspend flights to the Saudi capital.

Curator Noor Ahmed told Arab News the program had engaged 103 artists, pairing Pakistani and international practitioners with communities in Pakistan to jointly produce works on water, port cities and mobility.

The cancellation has removed an exhibition platform for those collaborations, which she said were

intended to build lasting connections between Pakistan and the international art world.

Ahmed said the program was intended to bring different experiences and perspectives to issues shared across borders.

"The curatorial methodology paired international and domestic artists with communities in Pakistan for them to jointly produce a work for the Biennale so that topics of global concern were presented by diverse voices through the powerful medium of art," she said.

Alongside the 103 artists, Ahmed said she had invited three curators to develop different sections with her. An extensive section on water was being developed with Zurich-based curator Martina Huber.

Now, Ahmed said the future of artists' prepared work remained unresolved.

"As of now, KBT has not sent any way forward for the work that artists have prepared," she said.

Arab News saw a copy of the signed cancellation notice, dated Sept. 30. It said events, appointments, and engagements connected with the edition would be terminated, subject to applicable notice periods. The notice said contractual commitments would be honored.

The notice also said the KBT would contact donors to arrange refunds of funds received for the canceled exhibition.

Ahmed said she first learned of the cancellation on Oct. 1, when the

announcement was delivered to her by courier.

"In the following days, I then heard from a number of artists, cultural partners, and the KBT staff who were being contacted by KBT at different times, confused by the cancellation and expressing disappointment in how commitments to them are being handled," she said.

Malik said office-bearers had discussed the financial situation and options to scale down or postpone with Ahmed at meetings before a Sept. 25 trustees' meeting.

No artist contracts had been signed by the Sept. 30 announcement, Malik said, adding that artists and donors were promptly sent the announcement and a letter. **NEWS DESK**

NATIONAL

DTM

DRAP cracks down on 8 categories of health products

DRAP launches Pashto video to promote medicine safety reporting

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has issued a new notification bringing eight categories of commonly used health products under stricter regulatory oversight to improve product quality and protect public health.

According to official sources, the items including vitamins, dietary supplements, medicated soaps, shampoos and specialized infant milk.

Under the revised regulatory framework, products covered by the notification will be subject to applicable registration, approval and quality-control requirements before they can be manufactured or marketed in Pakistan.

The move is aimed at ensuring that products carrying medicinal or therapeutic claims meet prescribed quality and safety standards, helping consumers avoid substandard, counterfeit or potentially harmful items.

Health professionals say the measure is particularly significant for specialized infant milk products, vitamins and dietary supplements, which are widely available in supermarkets, pharmacies and other retail outlets.

They have highlighted concerns that consumers may find it difficult to distinguish between properly regulated products and those whose quality, ingredients or manufacturing standards have not been adequately verified.

Stronger regulatory oversight is expected to improve scrutiny of manufacturing processes, product composition, labelling and quality standards in accordance with applicable DRAP regulations.

The initiative may also help curb the marketing of counterfeit or substandard products sold under medicinal or antiseptic claims, while encouraging manufacturers and importers to comply with regulatory requirements.

Pharmacists and healthcare professionals have emphasized that consumers should purchase health-related products from reliable sources and seek professional advice when selecting supplements, medicated products or

specialized infant nutrition.

The regulatory development reflects broader efforts to strengthen pharmaceutical oversight, improve market surveillance and ensure that



products available to the public meet established safety and quality requirements.

Pharmacists and healthcare professionals have appreciated the DRAP for issuing a notification recognizing specified health and over-the-counter (OTC) products as therapeutic goods, describing it as an important step towards strengthening regulatory oversight and protecting public health.

They commended DRAP for issuing Notification No. S.R.O. 16880(X)2026 on October 6, 2026, saying the initiative would contribute to improved product quality, safety and compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.

They said the recognition of specified health products as therapeutic goods would help strengthen regulatory mechanisms and promote greater accountability in the healthcare sector.

They noted that effective regulation of health products was essential to safeguard consumers, ensure quality standards and support the availability of safe products in the market.

They also highlighted the importance of

coordinated efforts among regulatory authorities to improve healthcare standards and strengthen public confidence in health-related products.

They described the notification as a commendable initiative towards safer healthcare and better public health, expressing appreciation for DRAP's efforts to improve the regulatory framework governing therapeutic goods.

Meanwhile, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has developed an animated video in Pashto language to raise awareness about reporting suspected adverse events associated with medicines and improve access to medicine safety information among healthcare professionals and patients.

The video has been developed by the National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC) as part of its efforts to strengthen pharmacovigilance and encourage the timely reporting of suspected adverse reactions and other medicine-related safety concerns.

The initiative aims to overcome language barriers by providing guidance in Pashto on how healthcare professionals and patients can report adverse events through available reporting mechanisms.

DRAP has encouraged healthcare professionals and patients to report suspected adverse events to the Provincial Pharmacovigilance Centre of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or the National Pharmacovigilance Centre.

The authority emphasized that reporting suspected adverse events was essential for identifying potential medicine safety concerns, monitoring risks and supporting regulatory decisions to protect public health.

Pharmacovigilance involves the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects and other medicine-related problems. Timely reporting helps authorities gather safety information and identify potential risks that may not have been apparent before medicines were widely used.

The initiative also seeks to promote a culture of medicine safety by encouraging patients, healthcare providers and other stakeholders to play an active role in monitoring and reporting suspected adverse reactions.

DRAP has made the adverse event reporting form available online to facilitate the submission of reports and urged the public and healthcare professionals to use the available channels to contribute to safer use of medicines.

The authority stressed that greater public awareness and effective reporting mechanisms could strengthen medicine safety monitoring and help protect patients across the country. **NEWS DESK**

Historic First: US diplomat cheers Pakistan W15

United States Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker has praised Pakistan for hosting its first international women's tennis tournament at the W15 level, describing the event as a historic milestone for women's sports and an important opportunity to strengthen international relations through sports diplomacy.



Speaking at the closing ceremony of the Junaid Family Foundation (JFF) Women's W15 Futures Tournament in Islamabad on Saturday, Baker congratulated the organisers for bringing together 30 female players from 17 countries and territories to compete in Pakistan.

"I was especially pleased to learn that this is the first women's tournament at this level ever held in Pakistan. That makes it a real milestone, and everyone who helped make this happen should be very proud," Baker told players, officials and distinguished guests.

"The United States believes in the power of sports to teach teamwork, resilience, and the ability to build connections between our people and our countries. And those connections last long after the final point," she said.

Emphasizing the importance of sports diplomacy in strengthening international relations, Baker expressed hope that more Pakistani athletes would compete at major international sporting events.

"As the United States prepares to host the Summer 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, we look forward to seeing more Pakistani athletes on the world stage," she said.

The senior American diplomat praised the competitive spirit, sportsmanship and warm Pakistani hospitality experienced by international players throughout the tournament. She thanked Pakistan Tennis Federation President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Ansir and Sufia Junaid, and the Pakistan Tennis Federation for organising the championship.

Baker also paid tribute to Qureshi's historic achievement at the 2010 US Open, where he reached two doubles finals and became the first Pakistani tennis player to contest a Grand Slam final. She praised his efforts to create opportunities for the next generation of Pakistani tennis players.

The tournament was sponsored by the Junaid Family Foundation, led by Pakistani-American philanthropists Ansir and Sufia Junaid, as part of its broader commitment to women's empowerment, maternal health and education in Pakistan. French tennis player Astrid Crotte won the women's singles championship, while China's Ru Xi Wu and Thailand's Kamonwan Yodpetch secured the women's doubles title. **WP**

Police seize 31,000 illegal guns in Punjab

Under Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's 'Safe Punjab' vision, the Punjab Police have intensified their province-wide crackdown against illegal weapons, recovering a massive cache of unauthorized arms and ammunition during the ongoing year.

According to official data released by a Punjab Police spokesperson here on Sunday, police teams during various operations across the province seized 760 Kalashnikovs, 26,897 pistols, 1,342 rifles, 2,096 shotguns, and 592 revolvers used in serious crimes and illicit activities. In addition, law enforcement agencies confiscated 145,764 live rounds of ammunition during these intelligence-based operations.

Sharing details of provincial capital recoveries, the spokesperson said that Lahore Police seized 22 Kalashnikovs, 118 rifles, 140 shotguns, 4,915 pistols, 108 revolvers, and 24,331 rounds of ammunition in targeted actions across various divisions.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Abdul Karim issued strict directives to all field commanders to sustain momentum against elements involved in the illegal display of weapons, aerial firing, and the illicit manufacturing, sale, and transportation of arms.

The provincial police chief further instructed officers to conduct regular audits and scrutiny of arms dealers' licenses and sales registers. He directed stern legal action against individuals found promoting or advertising illegal weapons on social media platforms. **NEWS DESK**



Gaddafi goes pink for England clash on Oct 25

Lahore's iconic Gaddafi Stadium will turn pink on October 25 (Sunday) during the Pakistan-England ODI fixture in the tri-series involving Pakistan, England and Sri Lanka as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) observes Breast Cancer Awareness Day as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

The initiative, being organized as part of Pinktober, the global Breast Cancer Awareness Month, aims to highlight the importance of early detection, regular screening and timely treatment while encouraging greater awareness of the disease across the country.

As part of the campaign, Pakistan Men's cricket team will wear specially designed pink kit during the ODI to demonstrate solidarity with breast cancer patients and survivors.

England cricket team, match officials and commentators will also be invited to wear pink ribbons in support of the cause.

The stumps used for the fixture will be branded pink, while breast cancer awareness messages and campaign visuals will be displayed on the stadium's big screen and LED perimeter boards throughout the match. Commentators will also share awareness messages during the live broadcast to reach audiences across Pakistan and beyond.

The PCB will also undertake a series of digital and promotional activities in the lead-up to the match. Pakistan players will feature in special video messages

to encourage greater awareness about breast cancer, while the PCB's official social media platforms will amplify the campaign through dedicated content and messaging.

Special Pink Ribbon activities at Gaddafi Stadium will commence two hours before the start of the match, providing an opportunity to engage spectators and reinforce the importance of awareness, early diagnosis and support for those affected by the disease.

To further promote the initiative, the PCB was also introducing limited-edition pink-themed merchandise, including travel polo shirts and fan shirts, through its official retail store and online platforms, allowing cricket fans to demonstrate their support for the campaign.

PCB COO Sumair Ahmad Syed, in his message, reassured that PCB recognises the responsibility that comes with the immense following and influence of cricket in our country. Through this Pink Ribbon initiative, we want to use the platform of international cricket to raise awareness about breast cancer and highlight the importance of early detection and timely medical attention.

"This initiative reflects the PCB's continued commitment to fulfilling its corporate social responsibility and using cricket as a force for positive change.

We are grateful to the players, officials, broadcasters and all those supporting this important cause," he added.

PCB Director Commercial Ali Adnan Zeidi: "Cricket provides a powerful platform to connect with millions of people and through this initiative, we aim to translate that reach into meaningful awareness and engagement around breast cancer.

"We want our fans to be active participants in this campaign and help take the message of early detection and screening to their families and communities." **NEWS DESK**



Gas shutdown alert issued for Islamabad

Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has announced a temporary suspension of gas supply to various areas of Islamabad due to hookup on the major route.

According to SNGPL, gas supply will be suspended from 9:00 PM on 19 October 2026 until 6 AM on 20 October. The affected areas include Sector G-7 Blue area, Ghouri Town to Faizabad Bypass Road service road east, Iqbal Road (Khanna Pul to Burma Town), Sohan, Gulberg Town, Shakhni, Garden Town, and adjoining areas.

Residents have been advised to make alternative arrangements for their gas needs during the shutdown and to take precautions to avoid inconvenience. SNGPL has urged consumers in the affected areas to cooperate during the scheduled maintenance period. **WP**

Punjab bans trash burning

The Punjab Environment Department has placed a complete ban on burning trash in open spaces across the province to fight smog and keep the air clean.

According to a spokesperson on Sunday, Director General (DG) Environment Department Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh has ordered strict action against anyone who burns garbage in streets, roads, empty plots, or near markets. The ban also strictly applies to burning plastic, rubber, leaves, bushes, and other materials.

According to the Environment Department, burning waste releases harmful smoke and dangerous particles into the air, which makes smog worse and harms public health. Officials said the new strategy aims to stop pollution at its source before air quality gets worse.

DG Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh directed field teams to increase monitoring and take immediate action against violators, stating that burning garbage piles will not be allowed under any circumstances.

The department has also asked district administrations and local bodies to collect and dispose of waste properly and on time.

The Environment Department urged the public and business owners to use official garbage collection systems instead of burning trash, as a zero-tolerance policy is now in place to ensure clean air in Punjab. **NEWS DESK**

Maryam winning over youth: Azma Bukhari

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had formally launched the second phase of the laptop and scholarship scheme for the bright future of young people.

She said the real future of the nation's children lies not in containers, long marches

and sit-ins, but in modern technology, artificial intelligence and contemporary skills. In a statement, Azma Bukhari further said the Punjab chief minister was looking after the educational and social needs of all the province's sons and daughters like her own children.

She said Maryam Nawaz's popularity among young people was increasing day by day due to these welfare and educational initiatives, and some elements were launching personal attacks against her out of fear. She added that even those who preached morality and education were

displaying prejudice in opposing the chief minister.

In contrast, she said, the Punjab chief minister's outstanding performance was receiving widespread appreciation at the international level. Speaking about the political situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial information minister claimed that the era of so-called change and hollow slogans had ended forever in the province.

She said the PTI was primarily responsible for the imposition of emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because the party had supported terrorists instead of

prioritising the national interest and peace in the province.

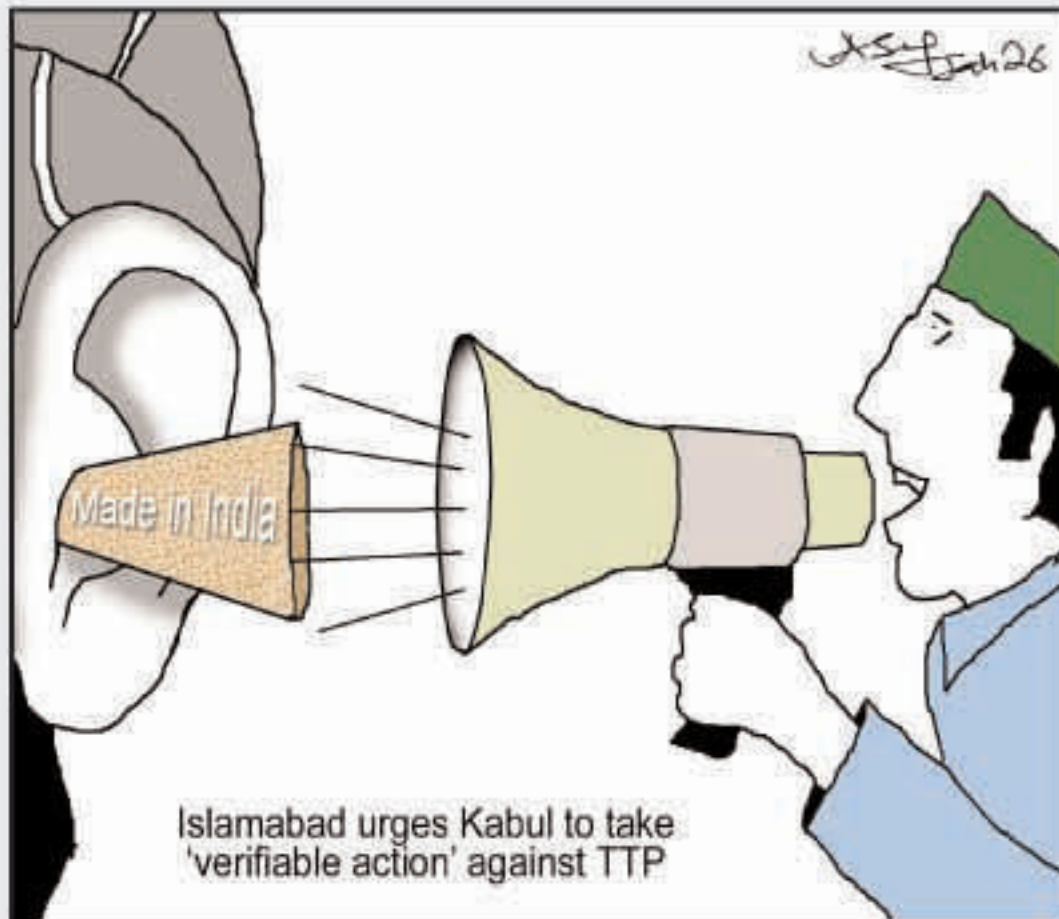
Azma Bukhari paid tribute to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army and security institutions, saying that the country's armed institutions were continuously making great sacrifices to completely eliminate terrorism.

She said issuing negative statements against security institutions in the current sensitive circumstances amounted to undermining the morale of these brave forces. The entire Pakistani nation, she added, stood like an iron wall alongside its courageous security personnel. **WP**



EDITORIAL

DTM



Islamabad urges Kabul to take 'verifiable action' against TTP

Restraint in confrontation with politicians

The federal government's decision to impose governor's rule and an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has opened another front in Pakistan's already troubled political landscape. Instead of keeping the debate focused on security and counterterrorism, the controversy is increasingly turning into a war of words between the government and opposition leaders, including Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry criticised Fazl over reports that he had sought a role in the province's new administrative arrangement. He expressed disappointment that the JUI-F leader appeared to view the change as an opportunity to secure political positions. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had earlier made similar remarks, suggesting that a political leader was unhappy at being denied a position. Fazlur Rehman, meanwhile, has questioned the federal government's motives and raised concerns about provincial rights. His criticism should be answered through constitutional arguments, evidence and parliamentary debate. Disagreement with his position does not justify treating him as an adversary whose political voice must be diminished.

Such statements risk shifting attention away from the serious questions surrounding the federal intervention in KP. The government says the arrangement is intended to restore peace and strengthen counterterrorism efforts. If security is its central concern, its actions and arguments should demonstrate that priority rather than becoming entangled in personal criticism and political accusations. The allegations linking the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are also serious. They require credible evidence and proper investigation, not merely political speeches. Claims about past contacts or the absence of attacks on particular political figures cannot, by themselves, establish responsibility or prove an organisational connection. The government must also recognise that political reconciliation remains necessary to address militancy. Security measures cannot succeed through administrative decisions alone; they require public confidence, political cooperation and a shared commitment to the Constitution.

BoP deficit exposes weaknesses in growth

The worsening balance of payments (BoP) position has raised fresh concerns about the country's external economic stability, as rising imports continue to outpace export growth. The latest figures from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) show that the BoP recorded a deficit of \$4.39 billion in September, compared with \$118 million in August. During July-September, the deficit reached \$3.12 billion, reversing a surplus of \$274 million in the same period last year. The figures point to a growing imbalance between foreign payments and earnings, highlighting the limitations of Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its external account. The merchandise trade deficit increased 21.1% to \$9.33 billion during the first quarter of fiscal year 2026-27. Imports rose 14.3% to \$17.78 billion, while exports increased by a slower 7.7% to \$8.45 billion. This gap shows that the country continues to spend more on imported goods without generating enough export revenue to cover the difference. September offered some relief, with goods exports rising 15.5% year-on-year to \$3.02 billion. However, imports grew by a much faster 22.7% to \$6.17 billion. The resulting monthly trade deficit reached \$3.16 billion, demonstrating that better export performance alone cannot correct the underlying imbalance.

The services sector presents a mixed picture. Services exports grew 22.8% to \$2.72 billion during the first quarter, supported by telecommunications, computer and information services. Technology-related exports reached \$1.25 billion, offering an important opportunity for Pakistan to earn foreign exchange. Yet this potential requires consistent government support. Frequent internet disruptions, restrictions on digital platforms and unreliable connectivity can undermine the confidence of international clients, discourage investment and disrupt the work of freelancers and software companies. Pakistan cannot expect digital exports to grow sustainably while the digital environment remains uncertain. The government must move beyond short-term measures and adopt a clear export-led economic strategy. This requires stable digital connectivity, predictable policies, better access to technology, support for productive industries and reduced dependence on imported goods.

What the Iran War Means for Pakistan-I

Rather, Pakistan needs to make a case for providing engineering services, construction expertise, information technology, logistics, agricultural products, healthcare, education, and industrial products. There are opportunities in the Gulf that Pakistan is yet to fully capitalize on, due to the region's growing infrastructure investment through various mega-projects, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and reconstruction projects following the conflict.

The Iran-US-Israel conflict is far more than merely a regional military conflict. It is a pivotal moment in reshaping the Middle East's geopolitical and economic landscape. While missile and military operations emerge as a dominating headline, the war's most enduring consequences could come in the form of disruptions to trade networks, upheavals in energy markets, shifting alliances, and the realignment of regional economic partnerships. The real threat for Pakistan, which has not been involved in the Iran War militarily, is not yet on the field but on the economy.

The recent volatility in oil prices, inflation, exchange-rate pressures, trade disruption, and financial markets has revealed the structural weaknesses of Pakistan. However, it has provided historic opportunities as well. If approached strategically, the new order in the Middle East can help Pakistan to boost its economy, increase regional trade, and redefine itself as a pivotal socioeconomic partner of the Gulf.

Energy Dependence and the Strait of Hormuz
The most significant economic impact begins with Pakistan's high dependency on imported energy from the Gulf countries. As mentioned in "The Middle East Crisis Impact on Pakistan's Trade," a policy viewpoint on PIDE's site, Pakistan imports a considerable amount of crude oil from the Gulf countries, a considerable portion of which transits via the Strait of Hormuz.

Hormuz Map

"Hormuz map" by Kleptosquirrel is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

The disruptions to this strategic waterway will instantly raise the cost of shipping, insurance prices, and global oil prices. These shocks lead to increased import bills, strain on foreign exchange reserves, and growing fiscal and current account deficits. The study rightly states that the real problem of Pakistan is not just conflict exposure but too much reliance on imported energy sources. The study is correct to highlight that the real problem with Pakistan is energy dependency and not conflict exposure.

Financial Markets and Investor Confidence

More significant is the economic impact of regional instability. Dr. Ahmad Fraz, in his policy viewpoint "From the Strait of Hormuz to the PSX: What the Iran-Israel War Reveals About Pakistan's Economic Vulnerability," has illustrated the pace at which geopolitical tensions have an impact on investor trust and financial markets. The Pakistan Stock Exchange responds promptly to Middle East events, even before official data on the economy. This is a reflection of the globalization of markets. Modern conflicts no longer impact only adjacent nations but rather trigger financial hits that are transmitted instantaneously between economies interconnected with global commerce and energy markets.

A Gulf Region Moving Beyond Oil

However, the economic costs are only part of the picture. The Middle East is in a period of dramatic change. This is because Gulf nations are increasingly shifting their focus away from oil and into logistics, renewable energy, technology, manufacturing, tourism, and digital infrastructure. These are all reforms undertaken by ambitious national development programs, including Saudi Vision 2030 and other similar ones in the

Gulf, which show the region is transitioning from an oil-based economy to a diversified geo-economic one.

From Labor Export to Contract Export

This change is the core of the argument in "Capturing the Middle East Recovery" by Dr. Nasir Iqbal, suggesting that Pakistan ought to consider revisiting the traditional approach to the Gulf. The Pak-Gulf ties have been primarily based on labor and remittances for decades now. Remittances are a critical component of bilateral economic relations, but a major share of them must not be the sole basis for such relations.

Rather, Pakistan needs to make a case for providing engineering services, construction expertise, information technology, logistics, agricultural products, healthcare, education, and industrial products. There are opportunities in the Gulf that Pakistan is yet to fully capitalize on, due to the region's growing infrastructure investment through various mega-projects, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, and reconstruction projects following the conflict.

A More Multipolar Middle East

Additionally, an analysis by Khalid Al-Jaber, titled "The Iran War and an Emerging Geopolitical Order," looks at the evolution of the order in the region in greater detail, suggesting that the recent war is playing a major role in fostering a multipolar Middle East. Gulf countries have become more pragmatic about foreign policy and have a policy of maintaining strong relations with the United States, China, Europe, and regional powers at the same time. They are no longer solely focused on security but are increasingly prioritizing economic resilience, strategic investment, regional connectivity, and diversified partnerships. In the changing landscape, there is room for middle powers like Pakistan to build up their economic diplomacy while balancing the competing regional powers.

The Inflationary Transmission Channel

Another area of Pakistan's weakness is domestic inflation. A case study, "World Oil Price Volatility, Middle East Geopolitics, and Pakistan's Inflation Dynamics" by Dr. Abuda Naurin, illustrates how these price changes in a matter of seconds are reflected in rising transportation costs, electricity tariffs, food prices, and inflation in the country. Because energy is an input in virtually every sector of the economy, oil price shocks affect the purchasing power of the economy, its production costs, and macroeconomic management. Unless Pakistan diversifies its energy resources and enhances economic resilience, the study says, the same kind of geopolitical crisis will see repeated inflationary pressures.

Strait of Hormuz

"UAE - Oman - Strait Of Hormuz" by Michael Gaylard is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Pakistan's Structural Vulnerabilities

Combined together, these five studies have a united message that Pakistan's biggest problem is not the external conflict but the fragile condition of the domestic economy. Every geopolitical crisis exposes the underlying structural weaknesses, such as over-reliance on imported energy, low export diversification, lack of competitiveness of industry, inadequate logistics infrastructure, and a lack of economic policy consistency. External shocks become crises because domestic resilience remains weak.

The Flaw in Pakistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Pakistan's 2026-27 federal budget sends a mixed signal about how the country wants to fight poverty. On the one hand, the government has increased the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to Rs 838 billion, up from Rs 716 billion last year. That is a rise of about 17%, and the program is expected to support around 12 million families. On the other hand, education and skills still receive a very small share of public money.

Federal education spending is only around Rs 118 billion in current expenditure, while development spending for education under PSDP is about Rs 82.3 billion. Pakistan allocates roughly 0.8% of GDP to education, which is a far too low figure for a country to achieve long-term progress. The aid-centric priorities do not guarantee future development, which is the main problem the government has to focus on. The real investment areas are education, vocational training, and employment. These will remove poverty from Pakistan. After 17 years of BISP, poverty is still deeply rooted. That is why Pakistan needs to move away from dependence on cash transfers and begin investing more seriously in human capability.

The Budget's Stark Priorities

The budget makes the government's priorities very clear. BISP has become one of the largest social protection programs in the country, and the latest increase shows that the state wants to expand direct support to poor households. This is understandable. In Pakistan, many families are facing harsh economic conditions because of inflation, low income, and unstable economic development. It provides a small relief to those families in this vulnerable situation.

However, the main challenge is maintaining policy balance between relief and development. Welfare spending is increased by the government, but investment in skill

development remains limited, receiving less attention and bringing fewer changes. The government's education budget is insufficient to achieve lasting improvement, reflecting its focus on symptoms of poverty rather than the root of it. Therefore, it is essential to note that poverty is not only about low income but also about other factors such as weak education, poor skills, and limited access to employment. If those deeper problems are left unchanged, then cash transfers can only keep families afloat for a while. They cannot create real mobility or dignity.

Why Financial Support is not Enough to Reduce Poverty

Financial support is helpful, but it is not the whole answer to poverty. It is necessary, especially during difficult times. But cash alone does not change a person's future. That is the main weakness of a cash-only strategy. It can reduce immediate hardship, but it does not build skills, improve productivity, or create jobs. If children are still dropping out of school, if vocational centers are weak, and if the job market remains small, then the same families will keep facing the same problems year after year.

Pakistan's low education spending makes this even worse. The education sector remains underfunded. The global standard suggests 4 to 6 percent of GDP, and Pakistan spends only 0.8 percent of GDP on it, which is insufficient to improve schools, teacher training, and skills education. As a result, youth lack technical skills to secure stable employment. This low spending creates the cycle of poverty that transfers from generation to generation.

Many beneficiary households remain poor even after years of support. This does not mean BISP is useless. It means BISP works best as a safety net, not as a full anti-poverty strategy. It can help people survive, but it cannot by itself help them rise.

Historical and International Lessons: Rejecting Dependency, Building Skills

Other countries have shown that real poverty reduction comes from skills, production, and self-reliance. The former president of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, promoted this development model. According to him, the purpose is to remove dependency, not create one. His message was simple: if someone feeds you, they can also control you. He famously said, "He who feeds you controls you." That idea still matters today. Sankara's example shows that a country becomes stronger when it builds its own capacity. The same lesson applies to poverty policy. People need education, training, and the chance to work if they are going to escape poverty in a lasting way.

China offers another important example, prioritizing cutting the roots of poverty rather than trimming it. It trained its people, taught skills, grew industries, and created employment. Millions of people were trained and brought into the labor market. That is one reason why poverty fell so sharply over time.

South Korea followed a similar path. It did not become successful through transfers alone. It became successful by developing its people first. Both countries show that skills and productive work create long-term prosperity.

Designing Transfers That Build Capacity

Pakistan does not need to remove BISP. It needs to improve it so that it supports upward mobility instead of only survival. The best approach is a "cash plus" model. That means keeping the cash support but linking it with education, health, or skills development. One efficient policy is to connect cash aid to education, skills training, and healthcare to develop families not dependent on government support.

Another policy approach is to provide an educational stipend to students that helps them to manage daily expenses while completing vocational training. This pushes

people to complete training, learn skills, and get stable jobs. This helps poor families that compromise education because of financial needs. Moreover, many institutions are providing skill, but the poverty level is not improving. The reason is that outdated skills training cannot meet current world demands. Apart from that, just teaching new skills is not enough unless it connects to practical exposure and practice, which is important to get employment in modern industries. In those places, cash support should be matched with better schools, more teachers, and stronger skills centers. That way, social protection becomes part of a wider development strategy.



MAHNOOR GUJJAR

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OPINION

DTM



RAWALPINDI: Vendors display currency and artificial garlands to attract customers outside shops in Banni. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Protection of Basmati rice heritage

Sir, I want to draw attention to the importance of protecting Pakistan's basmati rice heritage and safeguarding the interests of its farmers and exporters. Basmati rice is a valuable agricultural product of the Indo-Pak subcontinent and is known internationally for its distinctive aroma, long grains and quality. Pakistan has developed a strong reputation in the international rice market, exporting millions of tonnes of rice to different countries. Basmati is particularly important because it commands a higher price than many non-basmati varieties, providing income for growers and supporting the country's agricultural economy. The development of basmati 370 by the Rice Research Institute at Kala Shah Kaku in 1933 is an important part of Pakistan's rice-growing history. Districts including Narowal, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Lahore, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Nankana Sahib, Hafizabad, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh are among the country's important rice-producing areas. For many farming communities, basmati is not merely a crop but a source of livelihood and a product closely associated with regional agricultural traditions.

However, Pakistan's position in the international basmati market has faced challenges, particularly over the right to use the name in European markets. India's application to the European Union for geographical indication recognition of basmati rice raised concerns in Pakistan, prompting the country to challenge the claim and defend its own interests. Geographical indication protection can help connect a product's reputation and characteristics with its place of origin, making the dispute important for farmers, exporters and the wider economy. Pakistan must therefore present strong historical, agricultural and legal evidence to establish its position before the relevant European authorities. Diplomatic engagement and cooperation between government departments, research institutions, exporters and farming organisations are essential to this effort. The government should also maintain accurate production and export records, strengthen the recognition of Pakistani basmati in international markets and help farmers meet quality standards. Failure to protect the country's interests could weaken the position of its exporters in a valuable market and create uncertainty for growers who depend on the crop for their income.

LAEEQ MUGHAL
LAHORE

Pakistan's youth need opportunities

I want to express my concern over the difficulties faced by young people in Pakistan. Our youth are often described as the country's greatest asset, yet many of them struggle to obtain quality education, find decent jobs and build a secure future. I believe that a country cannot progress if its young people remain trapped between rising expectations and limited opportunities.

Pakistan has a large young population. This should be a source of strength, but it can become a serious challenge if the government and society fail to provide the facilities needed for their growth. Young people need more than speeches about their importance. They need schools that teach useful skills, universities that prepare them for practical life and an employment market that offers fair opportunities.

I am particularly concerned about the quality of education available to students from low-income families. While some students attend well-equipped schools and receive modern education, many others study in institutions that lack basic facilities, trained teachers and proper learning resources. This inequality creates a gap between young people before they even enter the job market.

I also believe that our education system needs to move beyond outdated teaching methods. Students should not be judged only by their ability to memorise textbooks and pass examinations. They should learn critical thinking, communication, technology and problem-solving skills that can help them succeed in professional life.

Unemployment is another serious concern. Many graduates spend years studying, only to discover that their qualifications do not match the demands of employers. Others accept low-paying jobs because they have no alternative. This situation causes frustration and weakens young people's confidence in their future. Mental health deserves equal attention. Academic pressure, financial difficulties, unemployment and family expectations can place a heavy burden on young people. I want to emphasize that seeking psychological support should not be treated as a weakness. Educational institutions should provide counselling services and create an environment where students can discuss their problems without fear of judgement. At the same time, I recognise the determination of young Pakistanis who are establishing small businesses, developing new technologies, volunteering in their communities and raising awareness about mental health.

IQRA KHALID
MUZAFFARGARH

China & US Walking the Tightrope

Pakistan's aspirations are not unreasonable. Small and medium powers have played a more significant part as honest brokers before. Switzerland, Qatar and Oman - the atypical small powers providing services that larger, more entangled powers cannot. If Pakistan is genuinely able to be an honest broker between adversaries, that is a real and potentially stabilising role in a broken world

Pakistan navigates a precarious geopolitical tightrope, balancing deep economic and military ties with China against a pragmatic, necessity-driven relationship with the United States. This dual alignment risks compromising Islamabad's credibility and sovereignty as both superpowers increasingly demand loyalty over neutrality. Sustainable foreign policy success requires internal stability, economic resilience, and a proactive strategic doctrine rather than reactive crisis management.

As an old axiom goes: small countries do not dance with enemies. Pakistan, however, is one up the ante: it cannot afford to lose either of the two preeminent powers in the world as friends. Islamabad has been in the news for strengthening economic cooperation with Beijing, getting close to Washington, and mediating between Tehran and the US during the last few months. As diplomatic theatre, it's quite a show. But don't get it wrong - this is also one of the most dangerous games any country can play in the 21st century.

A Common Friend, But Trusted By Neither?

The China-Pakistan relationship runs deep, is structured, and is decades old. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - the flagship project of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative - has directed tens of billions of dollars in Pakistani infrastructure. China is the largest supplier of arms to Pakistan, which, after all these years, remains aligned with Pakistan when it comes to it, and in many respects is also the biggest lifeline from an economic perspective. For Islamabad, Beijing is no less than a strategic lifesaver. The relationship with the US is older, more tempestuous, and one of convenience at best, as it lacks an ideological affinity. America needs Pakistan for its power play in the region, for cooperation on counterterrorism, and increasingly in balancing against Chinese advances into South Asia. Pakistan, in turn, requires US benevolence for International Monetary Fund bailouts, Western investment, and geopolitical legitimacy.

While Pakistan is openly mediating between Iran and Washington, it can also both signal that Islamabad will intercede something the US or China cannot do as well anywhere in the world right now: an ad hoc back channel with a potential outreach to multiple sides of different conflicting parties. This is a valuable asset. However, in the world of international politics, we found out that we have also liabilities to assets.

The Structural Issue: Two Masters, One Minor

Pakistan's greatest threat is not economic or military - it is, by its nature, a loss of credibility. The US-China rivalry is not the cold competition over spheres of power. It is a category of competition that covers technology, trade, military capabilities, and the future architecture of international order. Both powers increasingly insist on loyalty, not neutrality. The Americans have obviously grown uncomfortable with CPEC and Pakistan's military cooperation with China. American officials have also been wary of developing surveillance technology in Pakistan through Chinese ties, as well as what they view as Beijing's encroachments into Islamabad's decision-making. Every new CPEC treaty that Pakistan enters into, every joint military drill it carries out with China sends a new message to Washington, which only confirms its worst suspicions.

On the other hand, Beijing has a quietly

worried eye on Pakistan's growing appeal to Washington. China has invested unprecedented political and financial capital in Pakistan. If Seoul were to pivot too far toward the US camp, say via defense pacts, intelligence agreements, or joining US-led initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region, Beijing would consider this a breach of trust. China seems to have a long memory for the strategic blunders of partners.

Warning from History: Non-Alignment

History provides cautionary lessons. Cold War countries that attempted this sort of balancing act between the US and Soviet blocs often found themselves crushed by pressure from both sides. We know from the experience of Yugoslavia under Tito how skillfully it can be done - but remember, Tito was a genius and eventually his path proved divisive too. Swinging between superpowers, Pakistan is used to nominally serving as a front-line state for Washington - at the time of the Soviet-Afghan War - only to enjoy waning American interest once the Cold War ended.

It is not that known to be balance it impossible. This is because balancing needs tremendous diplomatic restraint, institutional cohesion and - above all - a compelling national interest that both powers will acknowledge and honour. The fundamental problem for Pakistan is that it has frequently been reactive rather than strategic - addressing crises, rather than anticipating them. To truly earn the mantle of the indispensable mediator in the US-China-Iran matrix, Islamabad needs a doctrine rather than a reflex.

The True Threat: Dependence Without Autonomy

By far the worst danger is not that Pakistan will be required to make a choice between Washington and Beijing but rather that it becomes economically and strategically dependent on both so as to give up any freedom at all in its choices. Investment repayments to China, IMF programmes in tow with their US nudging, military assistance conditionalities - all of them silently delimitize Pakistani sovereignty even as Islamabad plays the part of a sovereign actor. Only a truly sovereign state can afford to be the one saying no - to Beijing on an exploitative clause in CPEC, to Washington on a destabilising military operation. At the moment, Pakistan has less manoeuvrability to opt out of either power than its rhetoric would indicate.

The Path Forward

Pakistan's aspirations are not unreasonable. Small and medium powers have played a more significant part as honest brokers before. Switzerland, Qatar and Oman - the atypical small powers providing services that larger, more entangled powers cannot. If Pakistan is genuinely able to be an honest broker between adversaries, that is a real and potentially stabilising role in a broken world. The criteria for success, however, are stringent: a relatively stable internal order, a unified military and civilian establishment on foreign policy issues, sufficient economic output to reduce reliance, and the fortitude to withstand short-term temptations. Pakistan is still not doing well on most of these dimensions. Pakistan's balancing act between Washington and Beijing is just an insurmountable one. However, it's not enormous and very high, but the wind is nice. Politicians in Islamabad should be mindful, for there is no second time climbing again the nations that fell from such heights.



SAIKAT HALDER

Saikat Halder is an undergraduate student in the department of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

History provides cautionary lessons. Cold War countries that attempted this sort of balancing act between the US and Soviet blocs often found themselves crushed by pressure from both sides. We know from the experience of Yugoslavia under Tito how skillfully it can be done - but remember, Tito was a genius and eventually his path proved divisive too. Swinging between superpowers, Pakistan is used to nominally serving as a frontline state for Washington - at the time of the Soviet-Afghan War - only to enjoy waning American interest once the Cold War ended.

Protests and Movements in Pakistan: Containers As A Political Signal-Part I

One of the earliest big mass upsets in Pakistan after Independence was the agitation against the Ahmadis (Qadiani) community in 1953. Religious-political organizations demanded, among other things, that Ahmadis (Qadiyanis) be declared non-Muslim and that prominent government officials like Foreign Minister Sir Zafarullah Khan be ousted. The violence erupted, especially in Punjab. In March 1953, martial law was declared in Lahore by the government.

The sight of shipping containers on key roads has now become a routine feature of the streets of the federal capital of Islamabad, a warning sign of political confrontation. Major roads and entry points were once again shut down in September 2026, ahead of a planned march by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in the federal capital. Security forces were deployed in large numbers on the streets, and containers were set up around the important access points and in the Red Zone sectors of the city. The PTI later postponed its mobilization plan from September 27 to October 4, but many of the security arrangements were left unchanged.

For the common man, these containers are more than a traffic management solution. They have emerged as a tangible reflection of a recurring phenomenon of Pakistan's political activity: the politicization and confrontation of political issues in the streets and the politics of Islamabad as the main arena of political mobilization and confrontation outside parliament.

There is a long history of protests, demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, long marches, civil disobedience campaigns, and mass political movements in Pakistan. Some were successful in achieving their immediate goals, whereas others did not meet their main demands. Still others did not succeed in realizing their original purpose, but had political, constitutional, or institutional effects.

It is not possible to simply answer the question of whether a protest 'won' or 'lost' the history of protest in Pakistan. A movement can not only oust a government but also influence the public discussion. Another can force



AZHAR ALI

Azhar Ali holds a master's degree in Development Studies and has over 15 years of experience in the development sector

a government to comply with a certain demand, and at the same time yield broader institutional effects that were not intended.

This article analyzes the history of protest politics in Pakistan from early instances of collective resistance to the current days of long marches, political sit-ins, and street mobilization. It deals with what protesters demanded, how the governments and state institutions reacted, whether the protesters succeeded in fulfilling their immediate demands or not, and what kind of political, constitutional, or institutional change they created in Pakistan.

The First Time in History That People Protested

The urge to "take to the streets" against injustice is older than political parties and modern democracy. An early reported incident was in ancient Egypt in the 12th century BCE in the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses III, when labourers at the Deir el-Medina went on strike to protest the failure to pay their grain.

The workers joined forces to withhold their labour and to call for their wages, and it is generally thought to be the first recorded labour strike in human history. This is important because it marks an early instance of collective action being applied to try to make the authorities change their policies to respond to grievances, even though there were protests earlier than that, before written records were available.

The Evolution of Protest in Pakistan

Since 1947, street politics has played a role in Pakistan's political past. Students have been involved in many protests and movements that have challenged governments and institutions, including student movements,

religious campaigns, labour protests, constitutional struggles, political marches, and civil disobedience movements.

In general, the history of protests in Pakistan can be categorized into four phases.

The first was the early state-building phase (1947-1958), when religious, constitutional, student, and political campaigns arose in the wake of the creation of the new state and its direction.

The third period (1988-2007) featured the alternation of civilian regimes, opposition marches, and frequent clashes between political parties, presidents, and other state institutions.

Since, primarily from 2007 onwards, the fourth period witnessed the advent of long marches, political mobilizations over television, prolonged dharmas and the mushrooming of Islamabad as a key venue for political confrontation.

The Anti-Ahmediyya Agitation

One of the earliest big mass upsets in Pakistan after Independence was the agitation against the Ahmadis (Qadiani) community in 1953. Religious-political organizations demanded, among other things, that Ahmadis (Qadiyanis) be declared non-Muslim and that prominent government officials like Foreign Minister Sir Zafarullah Khan be ousted. The violence erupted, especially in Punjab. In March 1953, martial law was declared in Lahore by the government.

None of the main demands of the agitation were immediately accepted. Instead, it gave rise to a significant political and institutional crisis.

A government commission, the Munir Inquiry Commission, was set up to investigate the causes of the disturbances. The episode also led to the dismissal of the Punjab government led by Mumtaz Daultana and the sacking of Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin and his cabinet. The meaning of 1953 is far-reaching, with implications beyond the original demands.

It showed the political force and the dangers of political competition mixing with mass religious agitation that could have been mobilized. The next Munir Inquiry was a significant document in the constitutional and political history of Pakistan on the issue of religion, citizenship, and the state.

The immediate objective of the protest was not achieved through the agitation. However, there were more widespread consequences and a greater political/institutional impact.

Movement Against Ayub Khan

The 'Movement against Ayub Khan' of 1968-69 was one of the most impactful mass political actions in the history of Pakistan.

It started as a student movement, but quickly spread to workers, labour unions, professionals, and opposition political parties. The mobilization was brought about by a combination of economic grievances, political restrictions, and opposition to Ayub Khan's political system. This movement continued to major cities and eventually even into smaller urban centres.

A key moment was when students were killed in the police rioting at the end of 1968. Student organizations stepped up their mobilization, and political parties and labour groups began to participate in the movement.

This student-led agitation had now turned into a much larger political problem. By early 1969, the opposition against Ayub Khan grew such that it started to cast doubt on his political stability. He resigned in March 1969 and handed over power to General Yahya Khan. So, the short-term goal of getting rid of Ayub Khan was accomplished.

But the far-reaching implications were far more nuanced. The introduction of political reforms was followed by the first general elections in Pakistan based on adult franchise in 1970 by the Yahya Khan regime. The political crisis that ensued was one of the reasons behind the events of 1971 and Pakistan's disintegration.

NATIONAL

Pakistan arrests two suspected human smugglers amid crackdown on illegal immigration

Authorities launched the crackdown following a string of fatal boat accidents involving Pakistanis

Pakistan to introduce AI-based application to trace human smugglers

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency said on Sunday it had arrested two suspected human smugglers in separate operations in the country's Punjab province, amid a nationwide crackdown on illegal migration networks.

The crackdown was launched after a series of deadly boat tragedies that involved Pakistani nationals, who had been lured by human smugglers and their agents with a chance at a better life in

Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The FIA said it had arrested a suspected human smuggler, Hafiz Muhammad Ijaz, during a raid in Punjab's Sahiwal district, adding that the suspect had already been declared a proclaimed offender.

"The accused has now been arrested by FIA Sahiwal Composite Circle and further investigation is in progress," the agency said.

In another raid, FIA arrested Muhammad Mubashir who had allegedly defrauded a citizen of Rs2,385,000 (\$8,611).

"The accused person extorted an amount of Rs. 23,85,000/- from the complainant on the pretext of sending him to Spain for employment visa," the agency said. "After receiving amount, the accused person sent complainant to Mauritania."

The development comes amid Islamabad's push to dismantle networks responsible for a string of recent maritime tragedies.

Pakistan is also planning to launch an artificial intelligence-driven application to track and apprehend human smugglers by digitizing its 'Red Book' of most-wanted criminals, a senior official said this year.

Last year, FIA released a list of more than a hundred "most wanted" human smugglers in the country. Out of a total 137 wanted criminals, the FIA said Punjab's Gujranwala topped with 70 suspects, followed by Islamabad with 25, Lahore with 14 and Faisalabad with 13 suspects. **NEWS DESK**

Highlighting the massive Israeli destruction of Gaza, Pakistan has called for the full, good-faith implementation of Security Council Resolution 2803 alongside the New York Declaration to protect Palestinian territorial integrity and ensure a viable pathway to statehood.

"In Gaza, The scale of devastation is staggering," Pakistani delegate Muhammad Faheem told the UN General Assembly's Second committee, which deals with economic and financial matters.

Faheem, a second secretary in the Pakistan Mission to the UN, was commenting on a report before the Committee submitted by Yousef Chaitani, Chief of the Economic Affairs Section in the Governance and Prevention Cluster of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), on "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan."

"Beyond denying the Palestinian people their fundamental rights, Israel's policies and practices have devastated their economy, deprived them of their land and natural resources, and systematically undermined the foundations of their development and future prosperity," the

Pakistani delegate underscored.

The report notes that the economy contracted by 84 per cent compared with 2023. Reconstruction needs stand at \$71.4 billion over the next decade, while human development has been set back by 77 years. Croplands, water systems and fishing livelihoods have been destroyed, and soil and groundwater contaminated. An entire generation is being robbed of its future.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, he noted, illegal settlement expansion, land seizures and forced displacement continue unabated. The E1 settlement project threatens Palestinian territorial contiguity.

Despite the Gaza Peace Plan, the Pakistani delegate, pointed out that ceasefire violations continue - more than 1,400 Palestinians have been killed and restrictions on humanitarian access persist.

"The ceasefire must be fully upheld, aid delivered unhindered, UNRWA supported, and recovery and reconstruction advanced without delay. All settlement activities must cease, and measures advancing annexation reversed."

In the occupied Syrian Golan, Faheem said illegal settlements continue to expand, while agricultural land and water resources are exploited. Pakistan, he added, reaffirms its support for Syria's sovereignty and reiterates its call for an end to the occupation in accordance with relevant UN resolutions.

"Permanent sovereignty over natural resources is inseparable from the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination," the Pakistani delegate said.

"Israel must cease its unlawful practices, including exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, and comply with its obligations under international law and relevant UN resolutions," he said.



"Ultimately, our collective efforts must converge on a credible, time-bound and irreversible political process ending the Israeli occupation and establishing an independent, sovereign, contiguous and viable State of Palestine on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."

At the outset, while introducing his grim report, Yousef Chaitani, noted that while the ceasefire of 10 October 2025 "remained fragile but continued to hold", he noted that Israeli military operations have continued. More than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed and "in the Gaza Strip, 77 years of human development have been reversed".

In the West Bank, he said, settler violence reached its highest level since 2006, while as of March 2026, over 9,500 Palestinians were reportedly in Israeli prisons, many without charge or trial. In Gaza, nearly 1.9 million people — 90 per cent of the population — have been repeatedly displaced, "many

more than 10 times", depending "almost entirely on humanitarian assistance".

In a "high rate" of Israeli settlement activity, Chaitani cited plans for 10,000 housing units in East Jerusalem and more than 26,640 in Area C, with 925 movement obstacles recorded across the West Bank as of December 2025. In Gaza, the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 84 per cent in 2025 compared to 2023, with GDP per capita falling to approximately \$161 — "less than 50 cents a day" — while unemployment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory reached 46 per cent.

Meanwhile, around 31,000 Israeli settlers live across some 35 settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. Calling for "urgent and sustained action to address" the catastrophic situation, he stressed: "Humanitarian aid is not negotiable," further underscoring that "a lasting and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through a negotiated two-State solution". **NEWS DESK**

Peshawar Heartbreak: A mother's final kiss

Every morning, mothers send their children to school with a kiss, a prayer and the hope of seeing them return with stories of lessons learned and dreams taking shape. But for the families of 34 children killed in the collapse of Alkhair School in Peshawar's Dir Colony, one ordinary Thursday morning shattered that promise forever.

Among those who never returned home was 11-year-old Sanan Asad, whose dream of becoming a police officer ended beneath the rubble of a three-storey building that collapsed at around 8:45 a.m.

His schoolbag, books and uniform remain painful reminders of a future that will never unfold, while his mother struggles to comprehend the loss of a son she expected to see again within hours.

"Sanan was a very obedient son. I would call him just once in the morning for school and he would immediately say, 'Okay, Mama,'" she told APP, tears rolling down her face. "He always dreamed of becoming a police officer and watched police movies that motivated him."

The tragedy also claimed the lives of four of Sanan's cousins: seven-year-olds Mubazzhir Naseem, Amir Mangal and Haleema Haleem and eight-year-old Romaisa Ismail.

Their uncle, Tauseef Ahmad, rushed to the school after receiving news of the collapse. As he approached the building, he

heard children crying beneath the rubble.

"I suddenly saw Sanan's body being recovered by the rescue officials from the debris," he recalled.

At the family hujra, relatives and neighbors now gather to offer condolences following the funeral prayers and Qul for the five children.

Yet their words cannot fill the silence that has descended on a home once alive with children's laughter.

"The children who would laugh and scream, who would say, 'We need this thing, I am going to school tomorrow,' and 'It is late and the school van arrives,' they are no longer alive," Tauseef said.

"Their voices and their talk have ended forever."

He recalled opening his window at night and finding the entire neighborhood unusually quiet. For Sanan's mother, ordinary household moments have become unbearable reminders of her loss.

Beyond the grief, the collapse has raised urgent questions about the safety of educational institutions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

An initial police investigation identified the building's age and poor construction quality as major factors. The preliminary report submitted by SSP Operations to the Capital City Police Officer, Peshawar, intensified concerns about structural inspections and enforcement of building standards.

Professor Dr Ibrahim Khan, former director of education, said the children had barely begun their lives.

"They had dreams in their eyes. Their parents sent them to school in the hope that education would give them a better future. Sadly, they went to school to receive education, not to lose their lives," he told APP.

Questioning whether repeated incidents could continue to be treated as isolated accidents, he cited figures suggesting nearly 300 children



had died in similar incidents over three years.

He questioned whether education officials were fulfilling their responsibilities to inspect school buildings, ensure children's safety and enforce the law, stressing that negligence and abuse of authority must have consequences where established.

Following the tragedy, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department ordered immediate safety assessments, prioritizing schools identified as potentially dangerous through complaints, media reports and other credible sources.

Authorities have been directed to suspend classes immediately in buildings declared unsafe and relocate students to nearby schools or other secure locations. Classes may resume only after necessary repairs and certification by the relevant technical authority.

Districts have also been instructed to submit reports covering inspections, unsafe buildings, relocation arrangements and corrective measures by noon on October 21.

Education Adviser Dr Syed Amir Abdullah said a province-wide review had been launched. Private schools are to be assessed through district authorities, while unsafe public-school buildings will be repaired, vacated or closed as necessary.

The government has also announced financial assistance for bereaved families. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afiaz Wazir distributed compensation cheques worth Rs21 million among families of the deceased children on the directives of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faizal Karim Kundi.

Families who traveled to their native districts for the burials will receive assistance upon their return, officials said. The deputy commissioner also confirmed that the school owner had been arrested and an FIR registered.

For families like Sanan's, however, no compensation can measure the value of a child.

No cheque can restore a son who dreamed of wearing a police uniform and no official statement can bring back the laughter that once filled their home.

Pakistan has witnessed too many tragedies in which children

have paid the ultimate price for negligence and failures of oversight.

Condolences are offered, inquiries ordered and promises made, but grieving parents must live with their loss long after public attention fades.

The Dir Colony tragedy must therefore become a turning point. Every public and private school in the province needs a credible structural safety assessment, verifiable safety certification and regular inspections.

Where negligence or criminal misconduct is established, accountability must follow without political or administrative pressure.

Sanan, Mubashir, Amir, Haleema and Romaisa will never return to their classrooms. Their deaths must not become another statistic forgotten with time. Behind every inspection report is a child's life, and behind every school gate is a parent's trust.

The nation must turn its grief into action so that no mother ever again sends her child to school with a loving kiss in the morning, only to receive a lifeless body in return. **NEWS DESK**

KP police propose 120% allowance for southern, merged district personnel

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police have sought substantial security challenge allowances for personnel, along with billions of rupees in additional funding for weapons, modern equipment, transport and development projects. A summary outlining the proposed allowances and financial requirements has been sent to KP Governor Faizal Karim Kundi.

According to the summary, police personnel serving in southern and merged districts should receive a security challenge allowance equivalent to 120 per cent of their basic salary. An allowance of 100 per cent of basic salary has been proposed for personnel in other settled districts, while those serving in the Hazara region have been recommended an allowance of 75 per cent.

The summary states that KP Police have been fighting terrorism for the past three decades. Despite their sacrifices, police personnel in the province receive lower salaries than their counterparts in other provinces. The proposed security challenge allowances would result in additional monthly expenditure exceeding Rs5.15 billion.

The summary also seeks the release of funds allocated for police procurement in the fiscal year 2026-27 to address shortages of weapons, protective equipment, surveillance systems and transport.

More than Rs11.16 billion has been requested for police procurement in settled districts, while over Rs3.35 billion has been sought for the merged districts. In addition, the summary seeks Rs13.87 billion in additional funding for weapons, modern equipment and transport.

The proposed procurement includes submachine guns, rifles, 5.56mm firearms, bulletproof jackets, ballistic helmets, drones, thermal weapon sights, binoculars, anti-drone guns and modern counter-drone systems.

The police force has also sought armoured personnel carriers and pickup vehicles to strengthen mobility and operational readiness. The summary calls for the release of funds for ongoing police development schemes, technical upgrades and infrastructure projects. **APP**

Pakistan Army organises free medical camp in remote area along LoC

Pakistan Army, in collaboration with the Public Health Department of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, organized a free medical camp in a remote area along the Line of Control.

Expert doctors from both the Pakistan Army and the Health Department performed their duties at the camp.

Hundreds of patients underwent free medical check-ups, and deserving citizens were provided with free medicines.

Medical, surgical, pediatric, skin, gynecology, ENT, radiology and dental specialists examined and treated patients at the free medical camp. The local population paid rich tribute to the Pakistan Army and the Health Department for this commendable initiative. **APP**

NATIONAL

DTM

President calls for awareness about breast cancer

Govt committed to provide quality healthcare to people: PM

President Asif Ali Zardari commended the healthcare professionals, volunteers, patient organisations, researchers and community workers who continue to contribute to breast cancer awareness and support.

In a message on the occasion of Breast Cancer Awareness Day (19 October 2026), he said, "The efforts of doctors are important in strengthening public understanding and supporting women and their families."

He said, "I extend my greetings and best wishes to all those affected by breast cancer, particularly women living with the disease, their families and caregivers, as well as the healthcare professionals working to support them."

"Breast cancer affects thousands of families in Pakistan. Its consequences extend beyond the individual, affecting mothers, daughters, sisters and spouses and placing emotional and social pressures on families. This makes greater awareness, timely medical attention and support for those affected essential," he added.

He said, "This day provides an opportunity to remind women of the importance of paying attention to their health and seeking appropriate medical advice when they notice changes or have concerns. Greater awareness can help women make informed decisions about their health and encourage timely engagement with healthcare professionals."

"Families and communities also have an important role to play. Women should feel able to discuss their health concerns openly and seek care without fear or hesitation. Understanding and support from family members can help reduce the fear, misinformation and silence that may surround cancer," he remarked.

The President said, "We must continue to promote greater understanding of the factors that influence cancer risk and encourage healthy lifestyles. Schools, workplaces, community organisations, the media, civil society and healthcare professionals can all contribute to ensuring that accurate information reaches women and families across the country."

He said, "We must also extend compassion and support to women living with breast cancer and those who have completed treatment. They should receive the emotional, social and family support they need throughout their journey. Their strength in facing the challenges associated with the disease deserves our respect and understanding."

"On this Breast Cancer Awareness Day, let us work towards a society where women are encouraged to prioritise their health, families stand beside them and those affected by breast cancer receive the support and care they need," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the federal government was striving to ensure the availability of essential healthcare services, including specialised cancer treatment facilities, throughout the country in collaboration with provincial governments and relevant institutions at the local level. In a message on Breast Cancer Awareness Day observed on 19 October, he said, "Today, on Breast Cancer Awareness Day, Pakistan joins the international community in raising a strong and collective voice to address the serious health challenges facing women, particularly breast cancer."

He said, "Breast cancer awareness, early detection, timely treatment and continued care are matters of profound concern for every nation that values the health and lives of its daughters, mothers and sisters." He said, "As part of our concerted efforts to raise awareness about breast cancer, a comprehensive strategy has been developed to promote early detection, ensure timely medical examinations, facilitate access to quality treatment and provide continuity of care across the country."

He said, "Public awareness, a supportive environment and ease of access to healthcare are crucial to ensuring that women receive the medical attention they need without delay." "Women living in rural and underprivileged areas, where access to healthcare facilities is often limited, deserve particular attention," he said. "The government is firmly committed to ensuring that no Pakistani woman is deprived of timely and quality treatment because of her geographical location or financial circumstances."

He said, "The tireless efforts and dedicated services of Lady Health Workers in remote areas are instrumental in extending healthcare services to women. Their invaluable contributions deserve our deepest appreciation and recognition."

"As part of our breast cancer awareness initiatives, particular emphasis has been placed on training Lady Health Workers to educate women about breast self-examination, the recognition of symptoms,

the importance of seeking timely medical advice and the need to consult appropriate healthcare facilities without delay," he remarked.

He said, "Furthermore, healthcare personnel at urban and rural primary healthcare centres are receiving specialised training to strengthen their capacity for the early detection of breast cancer."

"The Federal Breast Cancer Screening Centre established at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) is providing free screening, diagnostic services and medicines, while ensuring the timely referral of suspected cases for further medical evaluation and treatment."

"The Government is also taking steps, through public health and social protection programmes and in collaboration with private organisations, to expand access to breast cancer screening. Efforts are simultaneously under way to strengthen coordination and cooperation among healthcare institutions and relevant stakeholders."

"Breast cancer is a devastating disease that can profoundly affect the social and psychological well-being of patients and their families. A supportive environment, a compassionate approach, and due consideration of patients' needs must remain central to our collective response to this disease," he noted.

The prime minister said, "My message to every daughter of Pakistan is your health is a priority for the entire nation. If you have any concerns about your health, please seek medical advice without delay. Healthy mothers are the foundation of healthy families and a brighter future for our nation."

He urged families, communities, the media, religious leaders, educational institutions, civil society and medical professionals to play their part in breaking the silence and overcoming the hesitation and stigma associated with breast cancer, and to encourage women to seek timely medical examinations and treatment.

He said, "Let us ensure that the message of awareness reaches every household and that women are equipped with the knowledge, confidence and courage to seek medical assistance without fear, hesitation or apprehension about social attitudes. My Government reaffirms its commitment to the daughters of Pakistan that we will continue to take every possible measure to protect their health and improve their access to timely, affordable and quality healthcare."

Aseefa Bhutto urges women to seek advice for breast cancer

First Lady of Pakistan Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari reminded women across Pakistan that their health matters and that they should never hesitate to seek medical advice when they have concerns about their health including breast cancer.

On the occasion of Breast Cancer Awareness Day, 19 October 2026, she said, "Breast cancer affects women and families in many different circumstances. For a woman facing the disease, the experience can bring fear and uncertainty. For her family, it can also be a difficult time. This is why awareness and support are so important."

"Early attention to changes in one's health can help women seek appropriate medical advice in time. I encourage fellow women to be attentive to their health and to speak to qualified healthcare professionals whenever they have concerns. Awareness should help us replace fear and silence with informed decisions and timely care," she added.

She said, "Families have an important role to play as well. Women should feel comfortable discussing their health concerns with those close to them and should receive encouragement when they seek medical care. A supportive family can make it easier for a woman to face the challenges that come with a serious illness."

She said, "We must also ensure that accurate information about breast cancer reaches women and families across Pakistan. Healthcare professionals, community organisations, civil society, the media and educational institutions can all help create greater awareness and encourage women to seek appropriate care."

"I also want to recognize the women who are living with breast cancer and those who have gone through treatment. Their strength deserves our respect, and they should know that they have the support of their families and communities," she added.

She said, "I appreciate the doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, volunteers, patient organisations, media workers and others who work to create awareness and support the women affected by breast cancer. **NEWS DESK**

KP people reject politics of chaos; stand for peace and development: Amir Muqam

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam here Sunday said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have rejected the politics of chaos as well as agitation and demonstrated that they stand for peace and development.

He said the emergency had been imposed in the province to improve the law and order situation and restore peace in restive districts.

Engr Amir Muqam expressed these views while addressing a large public gathering of the PML-N at Nishat Chowk, Mingora, Swat.

A grand public meeting was organized at Nishat Chowk under the leadership of Federal Minister and PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam, which was attended by thousands of PML-N workers and citizens whom chanted slogans in favour of PMLN leadership.

The gathering was held as a Day of Thanksgiving to celebrate the end of what the organizers described as the 14-year rule of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that plunged the province into problems.

The participants raised enthusiastic slogans in favour of Engineer Amir Muqam, PML-N leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Field Marshal Gen Syed Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army.

Slogans were also raised in support of peace, national security and stability.

Nishat Chowk in Mingora turned into a centre of political activity, with participants expressing strong support for their leadership.

The venue echoed with slogans including "Long Live Amir Muqam," "Long Live Nawaz Sharif," "Long Live Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif" and "Long Live Pakistan Army."

During the gathering, participants also strongly criticized the poor performance of the former PTI government and its 14-year rule. They expressed concerns over the problems confronting the province and difficulties faced by the people, while criticizing the former PTI government's style of poor governance and maladministration.

The participants voiced their political stance through slogans including "Reject the alleged 14-year failed rule of PTI and Give an account of public problems."

"Give Khyber Pakhtunkhwa peace, development and prosperity, and we reject an incompetent government of PTI."

The participants termed peace, development, employment and public welfare in the province an urgent need.

The gathering, held under the leadership of Engineer Amir Muqam, witnessed strong enthusiasm among PML-N workers. The participants expressed their resolve to continue playing their role for political stability, peace and development in the province.

Slogans were also raised in favour of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army with regard to national security and

stability. The participants conveyed a message of solidarity for Pakistan's development, prosperity and lasting peace.

The gathering in Mingora highlighted PML-N's political activities in Swat.

The participation of thousands of people, enthusiastic slogans in favour of the leadership and criticism of the former PTI government turned the event into a major political gathering.

Through the gathering, PML-N workers expressed their affiliation with the party leadership and their hopes for a peaceful, prosperous and brighter future for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Addressing the gathering, Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said the PTI former chief minister used to say that he had not come to the government for development but to secure the release of PTI founder.

He claimed that mega corruption scandals during PTI Govt tenure exposed the poor governance and maladministration of PTI rulers.

He said former CM was standing on container for political objectives and failed to deliver on all fronts.

The federal minister said the province had been left without effective governance for three months and people were continued to lift bodies on a daily basis due to PTI Govt's ambiguous and poor anti-terrorism approach.

He said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had rejected the politics of chaos as well as long marches and proved that they stood for peace and development. He said the emergency had been imposed to improve the province's



overall security situation and restore peace in restive 12 districts.

"The people of the province are welcoming the federal government's measures including Governor Rule, and people across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have celebrated their relief from these incompetent rulers of PTI, that failed to eradicate terrorism," he said. He alleged that PTI rulers have turned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into ruins where no significant development works were carried out.

Engineer Amir Muqam said all relevant institutions would have to work together to ensure lasting peace and development in the province. He said restoration of peace, elimination of terrorism and development were the top priorities of new KP Govt.

The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Army, police, Frontier Corps and other law-enforcement agencies had rendered countless sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, he said, adding that the Govt, people and security forces were on the same page in the war against terrorism.

He said there should be no compromise on law and order in the province. The government and people stood with the Pakistan Army, police, FC and other law-enforcement agencies, and all necessary resources and facilities would be provided to them. **NEWS DESK**

8 India-backed terrorists killed in Balochistan

Security forces killed eight terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan, in three intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan and recovered 490 kilograms of explosives, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), on October 17, security forces conducted three IBOs in Quetta, Nushki and Khuzdar districts of Balochistan, on the reported presence of terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al-Hindustan.

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

In Quetta's Panjaji area, security forces intercepted an attempt by terrorists

to establish a roadblock to disrupt local traffic, resulting in the killing of five Indian sponsored terrorists, the ISPR said.

The statement added that "during sanitisation operation in Nushki district, security forces busted terrorists' hideout, and after an intense fire exchange, two Indian sponsored terrorists were sent to hell," the ISPR said, adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered.

In a separate intelligence-based operation in Khuzdar, security forces engaged a terrorist hideout and killed one Indian-sponsored terrorist, according to the statement. A large quantity of explosives, weighing 490 kilograms, was also recovered.

The ISPR said sanitisation operations were underway to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists found in the areas. **NEWS DESK**

NADRA warns citizens against fake civilian arms license websites

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) on Sunday warned citizens applying for civilian arms licenses to remain vigilant against unverified websites and verify web addresses before sharing money or identity details.

The warning comes after reports revealed that citizens in Punjab were being defrauded through fake websites operating under the pretext of facilitating arms license applications. Applicants were being charged exorbitant fees while placing their sensitive personal data at risk of misuse. **NEWS DESK**



Dar stresses dialogue in call with Iran's FM

Continued from Page 1

According to the FO, the R-4 framework brings together Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia to strengthen ties and coordinate on regional issues.

The four countries have been coordinating under the R-4 framework, which was launched earlier this year to intensify consultations on regional crises, particularly the conflict involving the United States and Iran and broader efforts to promote regional stability. The grouping has held several meetings since March, with its fourth ministerial meeting taking place in Cairo in June.

Separately, Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has rejected social media claims that the US Navy is operating from Pakistani territory against Iran with Islamabad's approval, describing them as baseless propaganda.

In a post on its fact-check account, the ministry said the claim originated from a North America-based social media account and was subsequently circulated further.

"Fabricated propaganda by a

North America-based account and questioning proliferated further, that the US Navy is somehow operating from Pakistani territory against Iran, with alleged Pakistani approval, is baseless and part of wider agenda of sowing confusion, misperceptions and chaos," the ministry said.

"Truth Prevails over Falsehood," the ministry said in its statement.

The statement came hours after Pakistan temporarily suspended trade across its border with Iran in the southwestern Balochistan province over security concerns, a district official said on Saturday, as traders warned of substantial financial losses from the closure.

"Trade through the Iran border has been temporarily suspended due to security reasons," Chagai Deputy Commissioner Bakhtiar Ismail said in a post on X.

"Pakistan-Iran border closure is a temporary measure to improve border management to support counterterrorism efforts," he added.

"The border will be opened as soon as effective measures are in place." **NEWS DESK**

Kh Asif flags bureaucrats moving to Portugal

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday questioned the commitment of senior bureaucrats to Pakistan, alleging that a significant number of government officers had planned to settle abroad while still serving the country.

In a statement on X, Asif said that while Pakistan's bureaucracy had capable and honest officers, many officials had made Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries their permanent homes over the past several years.

He alleged that some officers had prepared for their relocation under a deliberate plan while employed by the Government of Pakistan, raising questions about their commitment to the country and their official responsibilities during their tenure.

Asif said Portugal had emerged as a destination for what he described as a bureaucratic exodus in recent years. He added that he had raised the issue on social media a few months ago.

The defence minister said the officers whose names had surfaced in connection with the matter had held important positions and had remained close to successive governments.

He further alleged that an individual who facilitated permanent residency (PR) arrangements had fled after collecting substantial sums of money from several influential bureaucrats. **NEWS DESK**

BACKPAGE

Pakistan's first astronaut to embark on space mission next month: minister

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday said Pakistan's first astronaut will embark on a space mission from China's space centre on November 25.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of World Space Week in Narowal, he said Pakistan aims to achieve a lunar landing by 2035, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives said in a press release.

Iqbal said cooperation with China would help Pakistan reach new heights in space exploration.

He also announced plans to establish Pakistan's first Space Museum at the University of Narowal to promote scientific awareness and inspire the next generation to pursue space science and technology.

Under the vision of the planning minister, World Space Week 2026 was celebrated for the first time in Narowal in collaboration with SUPARCO, with the aim of raising awareness among the younger generation about space science, scientific research, and modern technology.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of World Space Week in Narowal, the

minister highlighted the growing importance of space technology in agriculture, communications, climate monitoring, education and national security.

"Scientific research and space exploration are essential for technological advancement and the pursuit of knowledge," he stressed.

Iqbal said the Holy Quran encourages reflection on the creation of the universe, underscoring the importance of scientific curiosity, research and learning among young people. He noted that Muslim scholars had once made significant contributions to astronomy and scientific discovery, and called for renewed efforts to restore Pakistan's leadership in knowledge and research.

Highlighting the achievements of young Pakistanis, the minister congratulated the University of Narowal on securing first position at the Islamabad Science Festival, describing the achievement as a reflection of the talent and potential of the country's youth.

"Improved access to higher education is enabling students who have previously faced financial barriers to achieve distinction," he said. **NEWS DESK**

country's youth.

19TH ANNIVERSARY OF KARSAZ TRAGEDY

Never allow anyone to exploit faith: Aseefa Bhutto

First Lady of Pakistan Aseefa Bhutto Zardari appealed to young Pakistanis to never allow anyone to exploit their faith, frustration or aspirations to spread hatred and violence. On the 19th Anniversary of the Karsaz Tragedy on October, 18, 2026, she said.

"Nineteen years ago, on this day, hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis gathered in Karachi to welcome my mother, Shaheed Mohtama Benazir Bhutto, home after years of exile. They came with dreams of democracy, peace and a better future. That night, terrorists turned their celebration of hope into a scene of death and destruction, taking the lives of more than 180 innocent people and leaving hundreds injured."

She said, "Today, I remember those brave men and women with profound grief, gratitude and pride. They were not merely political workers. They were fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, ordinary Pakistanis who believed that their country deserved a future free from fear and violence. Their families carry the pain of that terrible night even today."

"My mother knew the dangers she faced, yet she refused to surrender to the forces of extremism. She believed that terrorism could not be allowed to dictate Pakistan's destiny or silence the democratic aspirations of its

people. She survived Karsaz, but just seventy days later, terrorism took her life too," she added.

Aseefa Bhutto said, "Today, I wish to speak particularly to the young women and men of Pakistan, who represent the overwhelming majority of our population. Most of you were children or had not even been born when the Karsaz tragedy occurred. Yet its lessons belong to your generation, because the future for which so many people sacrificed their lives is now in your hands."

"Violent extremism begins long before a bomb explodes or a gun is fired. It begins when hatred replaces reason, when intolerance silences dialogue, and when differences of faith, ethnicity, language or political opinion become excuses for violence," she continued.

She said, "Question those who preach intolerance. Reject those who glorify terrorism. Do not allow social media to become a vehicle for poisonous propaganda, incitement and the recruitment of young minds into extremism."

"Our faith teaches us the sanctity of human life. Our Constitution promises dignity and equality to every citizen. Our diversity is not a weakness to be exploited, but a strength to be cherished," she noted.

She said, "The answer to extremism is not hatred in return. It is courage, education, opportunity, justice and an unwavering commitment to peaceful coexistence."

Our young people deserve classrooms instead of conflict, employment instead of

exploitation, and a future shaped by their talents rather than by fear. As a nation, we owe them the education, opportunities and confidence to fulfil their potential."

She said, "As we remember the martyrs of Karsaz, we must also remember every innocent citizen, child, teacher, police officer and member of our security forces who has fallen victim to terrorism across Pakistan."

She asked the young people of Pakistan to honour these sacrifices not only through remembrance, but through their everyday actions. "Stand against hatred. Respect differences. Defend the dignity of others. Raise your voices against violence and injustice. Make your schools, universities, communities and digital spaces places of understanding rather than division."

Let the generation that inherited the pain of terrorism become the generation that builds a Pakistan free from its shadow."

She said, "For me, Karsaz is both a deeply personal loss and a national reminder that peace, democracy and human dignity must never be taken for granted."

She said, "May Allah Almighty grant the martyrs of Karsaz the highest place in Jannah and give strength to their families."

"May their sacrifice continue to inspire a peaceful, tolerant, democratic and prosperous Pakistan," she concluded. **NEWS DESK**



Apna Ghar loans now need only 5 documents

The government has simplified property documentation requirements for banks under the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme, reducing the number of mandatory documents for housing finance to five to facilitate access to loans for prospective homeowners.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has issued formal instructions to banks in this regard on the directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, an official spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP.

Under the revised requirements, banks will require five essential property-related documents for housing finance under the scheme, including a transfer and possession letter, a site plan, a mortgage permission letter and registration of the mortgage.

The spokesperson said the measures aimed to simplify the loan application process, reduce procedural hurdles and improve access to housing finance for people seeking to build their own homes.

Previously, complaints had been received from applicants about banks demanding a large number of documents, creating delays and complications in obtaining housing loans.

She said the revised requirements would provide significant relief, particularly to first-time homebuilders, by making the loan application process more convenient and accessible.

Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme is a nationwide housing finance initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Works, offering loans of up to Rs 10 million for home construction. **NEWS DESK**

Maldives President Mizu due in Pakistan tomorrow

President of the Republic of Maldives Dr Mohamed Muizzu will undertake a State Visit to Pakistan from October 20 to 22, the first by a Maldivian president in eleven years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Sunday.

The visit is taking place at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to the Foreign Office, President Muizzu will be accompanied by First Lady Sajidha Mohamed and a high-level delegation comprising cabinet ministers and senior officials.

During his stay, the Maldivian president will call on the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, who will also host a state banquet in his honour. He will hold restricted and delegation-level talks with PM Shehbaz Sharif.

The two leaders are expected to review the entire spectrum of bilateral ties and explore ways to deepen cooperation in trade, investment, health, education, tourism, agriculture, defence, maritime security, climate change and people-to-people exchanges. They will also exchange views on regional and international developments of mutual interest.

The visit will feature a Pakistan-Maldives Business Forum aimed at enhancing interaction between the business communities of the two countries and identifying new opportunities for trade

and investment.

A number of agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) covering diverse areas of bilateral cooperation are also expected to be signed, the statement said.

The Foreign Office noted that the visit carries special significance as the two countries commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1966.

"Pakistan and Maldives enjoy warm and fraternal relations rooted in shared faith, mutual respect, longstanding goodwill and close cooperation at regional and international forums," the statement added. **NEWS DESK**



Agha Ton Sets Up Pakistan's Winning Start in Tri-Series

Salman Ali Agha made a triumphant return to the Pakistan team with his fourth ODI century in a 37-run victory over Sri Lanka in the cricket tri-series opener on Sunday.

Agha hit 107 off 90 balls and Pakistan scored 305 all out in 49.5 overs after Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis won his fourth successive test and chose to field.

Agha was among seven Pakistan cricketers summoned back home at the end of August during a tumultuous tour of England after Agha had led the team in the first test.

Pakistan pace bowlers overcame heavy dew and threatening half centuries from Pavan Rathnayaka (79) and Janith Liyanage (60) to dismiss Sri Lanka for 268 in 48.1 overs. Captain Shaheen Afridi picked up 3-55 while Naseem Shah pinned down Sri Lanka's top-order with impressive swing bowling to finish with 2-43. Haris Rauf ran through the tail with 2-48 while seam all-rounder Faheem Ashraf grabbed 2-49, including the key wicket of Rathnayaka.

Pakistan will play England in Rawalpindi on Tuesday in the second match of the tri-series.

Avishka Fernando, making a comeback to ODIs, top-edged Shah while Kusal Mendis

struggled for 34 balls to score only 18 before he fell to Ashraf.

Kamindu Mendis (44 in 50) survived two dropped catches before Afridi struck twice in his return spell as Sri Lanka limped to 91-4 in the 20th over of its chase.

Rathnayaka and Liyanage then revived Sri Lanka's hopes with a 119-run stand with Pakistan pacers unable to reverse swing the wet ball due to heavy dew at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. But the dismissal of Rathnayaka in the 38th over provided Pakistan an opening

despite Dasun Shanaka, playing his first ODI since the start of 2024, scoring 28 off 18 balls.

After being summoned home, Agha was later not only removed as Pakistan T20 captain but also lost his place in the T20 team that beat Sri Lanka 2-1 in the recent three-match series. However, Agha scored prolifically in domestic cricket that included a triple century and forced his way back into the ODI side.

Agha revived Pakistan from 118-4 in the 22nd over with partnerships with Hasan Nawaz (37) and Arafat Minhas (18) before Sri Lanka hit back in the death overs.

Eshan Malinga (4-46) and Asitha Fernando (3-59) denied Pakistan a big finish in the final five overs with multiple strikes as Pakistan, at 279-5, went on to lose its last five wickets for 26 runs.

Malinga bowled a double-wicket maiden over before No. 11 Haris Rauf denied him a hat trick.

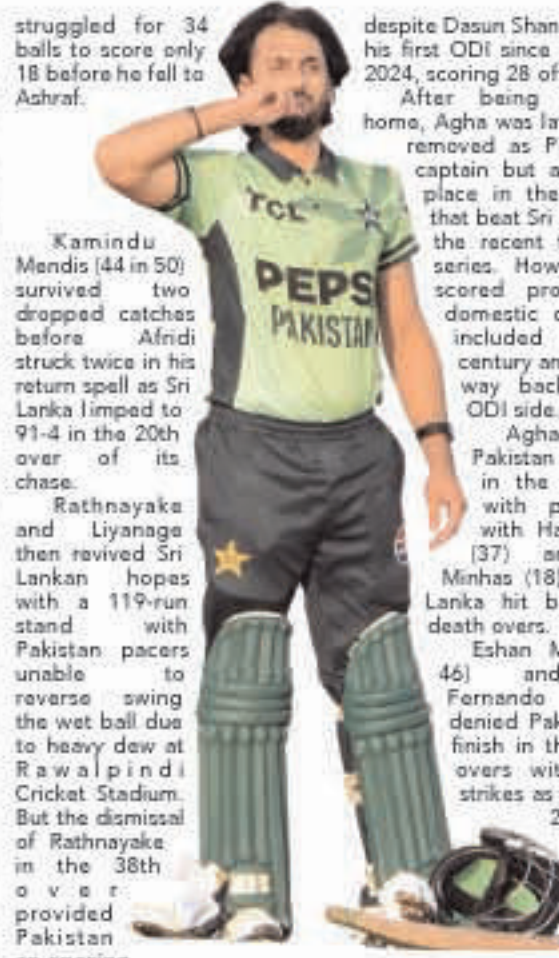
Dilshan Madushanka (2-67) removed openers Fakhar Zaman (16) and Saim Ayub (7) in his opening spell.

Babar Azam and 19-year-old debutant Saad Baig rebuilt with a 74-run third-wicket stand before Malinga removed both batters in successive overs.

Babar, who has scored just one ODI hundred in more than two years, fell for 45 off 57 balls when he pulled Malinga's short ball to mid-wicket. Baig smashed two sixes and three fours before he too was tempted to pull Malinga and holed out at deep fine leg.

Agha snatched the momentum from Sri Lanka with a 97-run stand with Nawaz. The only specialist leg-spinner Sachindu Colombage (0-61) struggled as Agha completed his half century off 48 balls and Nawaz also opened up against the leg-spinner.

Fernando returned and broke the partnership when Nawaz was well caught by Rathnayaka over his head at mid-wicket. Agha continued to bat aggressively in a 64-run stand with Minhas before raising his hundred with an edged boundary. **AP**



Karsaz martyrs' sacrifices will never be forgotten, says Sindh CM

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has paid glowing tribute to October 18 Karsaz martyrs.

According to a communiqué issued by CM House here on Sunday, he said that the Karsaz martyrs strengthened the foundations of democracy in Pakistan by laying down their lives.

Murad Ali Shah said that October 18, 2007 remains a solemn reminder of the unparalleled sacrifices made for democracy in the history of Pakistan.

The Sindh Chief Minister said that the attack on unarmed Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) workers who had gathered to accord a historic welcome to Shaheed Mohtama Benazir Bhutto was a cowardly act.

The martyrs of the Karsaz tragedy wrote a new chapter of courage in history with their blood, he said adding that despite the blasts, PPP workers risked their lives to protect Shaheed Mohtama Benazir Bhutto.

Murad Ali Shah said that the sacrifices of the martyrs will never go in vain.

The Pakistan Peoples Party remains committed to carrying forward their mission, he said.

President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are carrying forward the democratic struggle of the martyrs, Shah said adding that the grief of the Karsaz tragedy remains fresh in the hearts of Pakistanis even today. **NEWS DESK**



GLAMOURDTMUR



Model Paulina Porizkova, 61, could not be more happily coupled up after meeting and marrying TV writer Jeff Greenstein, 62, with whom she connected on the dating app Raya. But prior to their July nuptials in Italy, she says she was shocked at how invisible she'd suddenly become to men. "I was on Raya for five years, and I got, I got maybe four hits. In five years!" she tells.

PEOPLE: Older women are finding invisible on Raya. She said it wasn't just on Raya that she felt invisible. "If you want to find somebody, and you go out to events to meet people, if you are in your late 50s going out to parties, going to a bar, you're going to totally get overlooked." She says it happened to her at around age 58. "I know people don't believe me. They're like, 'Oh, you're Paulina Porizkova, how is that possible?' Well, you should just shadow me at a party and see how guys my age will just walk away and follow the 30-year-old to buy her a drink instead." After being one of the most celebrated models for decades, she admits it was a shock to the system. "It was shocking to me, because [after the divorce from ex Ric Ocasek], I was like, 'Oh, I'll do a lot of dating.' And then I was like, 'Wait, but with who?' Because when I was dating before I met my husband, I was an extremely popular date. So going from being the hottest girl in town to being an invisible 58-year-old was really shocking." NEWS DESK

Paulina Porizkova On Invisible Age

Liz Hurley's Diamond Sparks Rumors

Elizabeth Hurley set off a firestorm of engagement rumors with Billy Ray Cyrus by wearing a massive diamond ring on her left hand in a recent Instagram post. Hurley, 61, and Cyrus, 65, went public with their romance on Easter 2025 after first becoming acquainted on the set of the 2022 movie Christmas in Paradise. This week, Hurley, who recently shared she's turning Cyrus into a 'country gent,' posted a suite of behind-the-scenes images from her series The 'Burbs in which she showed off the bauble. She showed off her statuesque legs in a bathrobe as she snapped a selfie with her left hand, ensuring the dazzling jewel was in sharp evidence. Insiders have alleged the country crooner, who has six children including pop star Miley Cyrus, has proposed to Hurley after more than a year of dating, via Page Six. "She's filming The 'Burbs; I hardly think this ring is a prop," remarked another source. The Daily Mail has contacted Hurley and Cyrus' representatives for comment. Cyrus also lent credence to the rumors with a telltale Instagram post of his own on Thursday that featured a ring emoji. It was a photo of the Hannah Montana alum in profile and looking cool in aviator shades and a dark gray leather-and-denim jacket over a charcoal shirt. NEWS DESK



Krysten: Jessica Made Me Stronger

Krysten Ritter has grown a lot since first playing the titular character in Jessica Jones in 2015. The actress, 44, has played her superhero character for over a decade, and she is now reprising the role in Daredevil: Born Again after making a special appearance in season 2. While speaking with PEOPLE at New York Comic on Oct. 8, she recalls first playing the character in the television show Jessica Jones, which aired for three seasons from 2015 to 2019. "Playing Jessica was a big undertaking," she says. "It was really deep work. It was a behemoth of a show. The work that we got to do was very deep and very real, and the writing was just fantastic. It was a huge learning experience for me in every way, not just the emotional work, but carrying a show and working with the crew for that extended period of time and the stunts and all of that." NEWS DESK



Swift Donation That Keeps On Giving

Taylor Swift is well known for her songwriting skills, but the superstar paid forward her love of the written word when she once helped save a struggling public library by donating thousands of books. Back in 2011, when Pennsylvania's Reading Public Library was struggling, now 36-year-old Swift donated 6,000 books to the organization. The Reading Eagle reported at the time that the brand-new books were geared specifically toward young readers and teens, and altogether worth \$68,000. They were divided between all of the library's branches, the outlet reported. The books donated by Swift included a star on the spine and a sticker inside the cover, the outlet noted. As the library's assistant director Bronwen Gamble told the Eagle: "She adds the coolness factor to reading." NEWS DESK



Emotional Miley Pays Tribute To Dolly

Miley Cyrus honored her beloved godmother Dolly Parton during her Hollywood Bowl show. On Friday, Oct. 16, the "Bass Persuades" singer, 33, paid tribute to the late country legend with a riveting performance of "Jolene" after crying on stage. As her band began playing "Jolene," Miley told the audience that the only time she saw Parton perform live was at the historic venue. She recalled that special night, sharing how Parton would've wanted Cyrus to join her onstage. NEWS DESK



Why Didn't We Date? Hawke Asks Barrymore

Ethan Hawke is expressing surprise at the fact that he never dated Drew Barrymore — to the actress herself. In a Friday, Oct. 16 appearance on The Drew Barrymore Show, Hawke, 55, told Barrymore, 51: "I can't remember a time in my life when I was not aware of you." "That's how I feel about you!" Barrymore responded. Hawke then added: "What I can't believe is that we never dated, you know? I mean..." "Where were you?" Barrymore then jokingly replied, adding, "And by the way what me and every other girl on the planet wouldn't have given to date you. Where the Hell were you?" Hawke then said, "there was a many a night, where I went like — this would be circa the '90s, I would be going to a party and I'd think, 'Maybe Drew will be there.'" Asked why he didn't just pick up the phone and call, the actor replied, "I wanted to play it cool. I wanted it to happen organically." NEWS DESK



Sporty Spice Glams Up For amfAR

Melanie C and her husband Chris Dingwall were among the star-studded guest list at the amfAR London gala at The Chancery Rosewood on Friday night. The Spice Girl, 52, who married her partner just three months ago in July, stuck to bridal white as she stepped out in a ruched mini dress. Melanie looked glamorous in the form-fitting number, which she teamed with a pair of perspex heels and a silver metallic clutch bag. The British star wore her brunette locks in waves and opted for soft glamorous make-up to complete her evening look. She walked alongside her dapper husband Chris, who looked smart in a black suit and white shirt with a pair of dress shoes. The charity event coincides with Frieze Art Fair and BFI London Film Festival and raises vital funds for HIV/AIDS research. Other notable attendees included Rita Ora, Kelly Osbourne, DJ Fat Tony, Ed Westwick, Natasha Lyonne, Jeremy Irons and Edward Enninfu. NEWS DESK



MONEY

Mineral Jackpot: Pakistan in spotlight

Pakistan is entering a new phase in the development of its mineral economy as rising global demand for copper, gold, chromite, lithium, rare earth elements and other critical minerals creates a strategic opportunity for the South Asian country to attract investment, develop new supply chains and diversify its sources of foreign exchange.

The opportunity is significant. Pakistan has extensive mineral-bearing areas and a geological position within the broader Tethyan Metallogenic Belt, one of the world's important copper and gold regions. The country has 92 known minerals, of which 52 are commercially exploited.

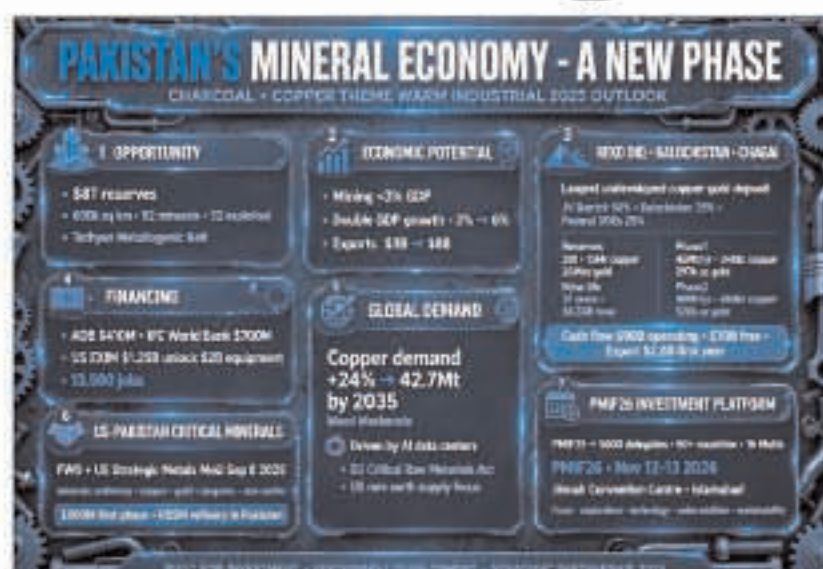
According to the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA), the country's mineral reserves are estimated to be worth around \$8 trillion and are spread across approximately 600,000 square kilometres. These resources highlight the considerable economic potential of Pakistan's mining sector.

The mining sector has historically contributed less than 3 per cent to gross domestic product (GDP), ICMA said. The institute estimated that, with improved governance and security, annual mineral exports could increase from approximately \$3 billion to \$8 billion, while GDP growth could rise from around 3 per cent to 6 per cent.

The challenge, however, is to translate geological potential into commercially viable projects, exports, employment and industrial capacity. Achieving this requires more than extraction. It calls for exploration, reliable geological data, modern technology, infrastructure, financing, predictable regulations, environmental safeguards and partnerships with international companies. Pakistan's policy direction is increasingly focused on developing this broader ecosystem.

Reko Diq Copper and Gold Project Located in Balochistan's Chagai district, Reko Diq is one of the world's largest undeveloped copper and gold deposits. The project is a joint venture in which Barrick Mining Corporation holds a 50 per cent stake, the Balochistan government holds 25 per cent, and three federal state-owned enterprises collectively own the remaining 25 per cent.

In February 2025, Barrick announced the completion of an updated feasibility



study for the Reko Diq project. The project is expected to make a major contribution to Pakistan's economy and have a transformative impact on Balochistan.

The updated feasibility study estimates a mine life of 37 years, with total capital investment of \$8.83 billion. Development will take place in two phases, with Phase 1 requiring an estimated \$5.6 billion to \$6.0 billion. First production is expected by the end of 2028.

Under Phase 1, the project will process 45 million tonnes of ore annually, producing approximately 240,000 tonnes of copper and 297,000 ounces of gold each year. Phase 2, planned for 2034, will double processing capacity to 90 million tonnes annually, increasing average annual production to 460,000 tonnes of copper and 290,000 ounces of gold during its first 10 years.

According to the feasibility study, Reko Diq has probable mineral reserves of approximately 3 billion tonnes, containing an estimated 15 million tonnes of copper and 26 million ounces of gold. Barrick estimates that the project could generate \$90 billion in operating cash flow and \$70 billion in free cash flow over its mine life.

Reko Diq is one of Pakistan's largest foreign direct investment projects and the largest of its kind in Balochistan.

International lenders have assembled a financing package exceeding \$2.6 billion. The Asian Development Bank approved \$410 million in August 2025, comprising \$300 million in loans and a \$110 million guarantee for Balochistan's equity stake.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank approved a \$700 million concessional loan in June 2025. In December 2025, the US Export-Import Bank approved \$1.25 billion in financing. The US Embassy said the financing could unlock up to \$2 billion in American mining equipment and services exports and

support approximately 13,500 jobs across both countries.

Once operational, Reko Diq's first-year shipments are projected to generate export revenues of \$2.8 billion.

Global Demand, Local Advantage

Global copper demand is forecast to increase by 24 per cent to reach 42.7 million tonnes annually by 2035, driven by electrification, according to Wood Mackenzie. The International Energy Agency has also highlighted the growing electricity requirements of artificial intelligence-driven data centres, which could further increase demand for copper and other critical minerals.

The European Union's Critical Raw Materials Act and Washington's efforts to diversify rare earth supply chains have further increased the strategic importance of developing new, reliable sources of critical minerals.

Pakistan's mining history predates Reko Diq. The Saindak copper-gold project, developed with Chinese participation, traces its origins to aerial surveys of Balochistan in the 1950s and exploration work by the Geological Survey of Pakistan during the 1960s.

On September 8, 2025, Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation and Missouri-based US Strategic Metals (USSM) signed two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) focusing on the development and processing of critical minerals, including rare earth elements, as well as logistics services.

The agreements establish a framework for cooperation across a range of critical minerals essential to the defence, aerospace and technology industries.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the partnership will begin with the export of readily available Pakistani minerals, including antimony, copper, gold, tungsten and rare earth elements. The

cooperation is intended to lay the groundwork for a USSM proprietary polymetallic refinery in Pakistan, designed to produce intermediate and finished products for the rapidly growing US market.

The first phase of the proposed arrangement envisages investment of approximately \$500 million in Pakistan's critical minerals sector.

The next steps include establishing dedicated teams to assess the potential of Pakistan's mineral resources, identifying critical minerals for immediate export and laying the foundation for long-term cooperation in exploration, extraction and processing.

The partnership is also expected to prioritise sustainability, profitability and environmental responsibility to ensure benefits for the people of both countries.

PMIF26: The Investment Platform

The Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum (PMIF) is the government's flagship platform for promoting investment in the country's mineral sector and connecting Pakistan with international investors, mining companies, financial institutions and technology providers.

The forum brings together policymakers and industry leaders to showcase Pakistan's mineral potential, facilitate partnerships and investment, and promote sustainable development and value addition across the sector.

The 2025 edition, PMIF25, attracted 5,000 delegates from more than 50 countries. The event saw the signing of 16 memoranda of understanding and featured 18 panel discussions.

The 2026 edition, PMIF26, was originally scheduled for April 8-9 at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad but was rescheduled for November 12-13, 2026, at the same venue.

Federal Minister for Energy (Petroleum Division) Ali Pervaiz Malik has said the forum aims to raise awareness about the mining sector and attract sustainable investment, noting that Pakistan's mineral wealth has remained largely unexplored for decades.

The investment-focused platform connects governments, investors, mining companies, technology providers and other stakeholders across the mineral value chain.

PMIF26 is expected to place greater emphasis on project development, exploration, technology, value addition and investment.

Its technical programme includes geological exploration and resource assessment, remote sensing, geophysics and other technologies designed to improve understanding of Pakistan's mineral geology. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan set for historic AI compact signing



Pakistan is set to become the first country to sign the Digital and AI Compact, as Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja departed for South Korea to attend the Global AI and Digital Summit 2026.

During her visit, the minister will represent Pakistan at the summit and participate in the AI and Digital Ministerial Meeting, where discussions will focus on Pakistan's priorities in artificial intelligence (AI) and digital inclusion.

Shaza Fatima will also present Pakistan's future roadmap during a session on the Digital and AI Compact, outlining the country's approach to advancing digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

The federal minister is scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with Google's vice president to discuss matters of mutual interest.

She will also meet the World Bank vice president to discuss areas of cooperation.

During the visit, she will participate in key sessions on ensuring equitable access to the internet and digital services worldwide.

These discussions will highlight the importance of digital inclusion and expanding access to emerging technologies. **NEWS DESK**

Farmers threaten to stage protest over sugarcane price



The farmers have threatened to launch a protest starting November 1st if they do not receive fair prices for their sugarcane.

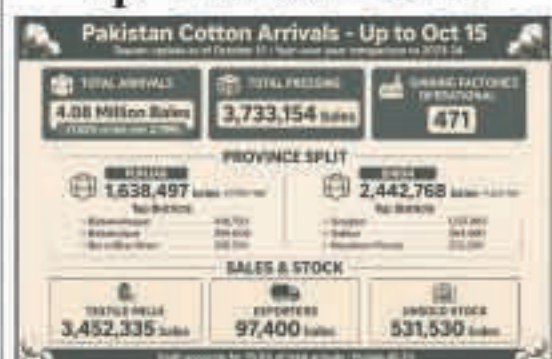
Khalid Mahmood Khokhar, Central President of the Pakistan Kisan Ittehad, stated that sugarcane production is higher this time and sugar production is expected to be higher.

Sugarcane farmers are unable to sleep at night because farmers have yet to receive payment for their sugarcane, said Khalid Mahmood Khokhar. He said sugarcane production is 16 percent higher this year.

The Kisan Bachao Tehreek President Nasser Waraich said due to the failure to secure a fair price and our wheat will end up being consumed by livestock. He demanded that a price for sugarcane must be set and paid immediately.

There is a bumper sugarcane crop this year, noted Nasser Waraich. He warned that if the sugar mills do not begin operations by November 1st, we will stage a protest. He said the government has not yet provided the subsidy. He added that the tractor scheme is of no benefit. **WE**

Cotton arrivals cross 4.08 million bales, up 7.53%: PCGA



Cotton arrivals at country's ginning factories reached over 4.08 million bales by October 15, registering a 7.53 percent increase compared to the corresponding period of last year, according to the fortnightly report issued by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners' Association (PCGA).

According to a spokesperson, the PCGA report stated that total arrivals stood at 4,081,265 bales against 3,795,637 bales recorded during the same period last season, reflecting an increase of 285,628 bales. Total pressing by factories reached 3,733,154 bales.

Province-wise data showed that Punjab received 1,638,497 bales, marking a 7.79 percent increase, while Sindh recorded arrivals of 2,442,768 bales, showing a growth of 7.35 percent.

In Punjab, Bahawalnagar district led with 418,750 bales, followed by Bahawalpur with 294,606 bales and Dera Ghazi Khan with 236,514 bales. Lodhran recorded a remarkable growth of 102.89 percent in arrivals, while Layyah registered 76.68 percent growth. Multan's arrivals grew 11.59 percent to 23,977 bales.

However, districts including Khanewal, Vehari, and Rahim Yar Khan recorded declines of 31.07 percent, 26.56 percent, and 12.66 percent respectively, while Muzaffargarh and Rajanpur experienced sharp drops of 74.51 percent and 63.80 percent.

In Sindh, Sanghar topped the district-wise arrivals with 1,137,903 bales, followed by Sukkur with 264,500 bales and Naushera Feroze with 223,200 bales.

Textile mills purchased 3,452,335 bales, while exporters and traders bought 97,400 bales, bringing total sales to 3,549,735 bales. Unsold stock currently stands at 531,530 bales compared to 630,471 bales last year.

A total of 471 ginning factories were currently operational across the country. **NEWS DESK**

PIAF hails Rs 2bn lifeline for small industry

The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has welcomed the government's approval of Rs 2 billion for implementing the revamping plan of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, describing it as a positive step towards reviving small industries, promoting entrepreneurship and creating employment opportunities.

In a joint statement, PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal and Vice Chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said the initiative could help strengthen the country's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), provided the allocated funds were utilised transparently and directed towards practical measures to address the challenges faced by businesses.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said small and medium enterprises were essential for broadening the industrial base, generating employment and encouraging investment. However, rising production costs, limited access to affordable financing, outdated machinery and regulatory hurdles continued to constrain the growth of small businesses.

"The approval of Rs2 billion is a welcome development, but its real success will depend on how effectively it translates into relief for small industrialists and entrepreneurs. Small businesses need affordable credit, modern technology and a predictable policy environment to expand their operations and compete in domestic and international markets," he said.

Saigol emphasised that SMEs should be treated as a priority sector under the country's economic development strategy. He said a strong small-industry base would

support larger industrial units through local supply chains, increase value addition and help reduce dependence on imported products.

Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal said the government should ensure that SMEDA's revamping plan addressed the practical difficulties confronting small manufacturers, particularly their limited access to bank financing and the high cost of doing business.

"Financial support must reach genuine entrepreneurs, small manufacturers and emerging businesses through simple, transparent and accessible mechanisms. Lengthy procedures and demanding collateral requirements often prevent smaller enterprises from obtaining the credit they need to maintain production and invest in expansion," he said.

Mughal stressed that greater coordination among SMEDA, banks, trade associations and industrial bodies would help identify deserving businesses and ensure that support schemes responded to actual market requirements. He added that targeted assistance could encourage investment, strengthen domestic supply chains and create opportunities for skilled workers and young entrepreneurs.

Vice Chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said the initiative should also focus on technological modernisation, workforce training, product quality and export readiness to improve the competitiveness of Pakistani SMEs.

"Small industries cannot achieve sustainable growth without access to modern machinery, technical expertise and new markets. The government should use this opportunity to help enterprises improve productivity, meet international standards and become part of export-oriented supply chains," he said.

Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry added that special attention should be given to micro-enterprises and smaller industrial units that lacked the financial resources to upgrade their operations. He said consistent policies, reduced administrative barriers and stronger institutional support would encourage entrepreneurs to formalise and expand their businesses. **NEWS DESK**

BMP Warning: Jobs at risk as industry slows

The Businessmen Panel (BMP) has expressed concern over the decline in Pakistan's large-scale manufacturing (LSM) output on a monthly basis, warning that high production costs, heavy taxation, policy uncertainty and disruptions in goods transportation are undermining industrial growth and employment generation.

BMP Chairman and former Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) president Mian Anjum Nisar said the 4.96% month-on-month contraction in LSM output in August 2026 highlighted the fragile state of industrial activity and the need for immediate measures to restore business confidence.

According to provisional data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), LSM output increased 0.67% year-on-year in August, while cumulative growth during July-August FY27 stood at 1.85%. However, the sharp monthly decline and falling production in key sectors, including iron and steel and fertiliser, raised concerns about the sustainability of the industrial recovery.

Anjum Nisar said industrial growth remained vulnerable as manufacturers continued to face high energy tariffs, expensive financing, rising input costs and an unpredictable taxation regime.

"Industrial growth cannot be sustained when the cost of production keeps rising and businesses struggle to remain competitive. The government must recognise that manufacturing is central to employment generation, investment, exports and the overall strength of the economy," he said.

He expressed particular concern over the 11.56% year-on-year decline in iron and steel production and the 9% contraction in fertiliser output during

August. He said weakness in these important sectors could affect construction, agriculture and their associated supply chains.

Nisar said the government needed to address the underlying reasons for declining industrial output rather than rely solely on headline growth figures. He called for rationalisation of energy costs, a more competitive taxation structure, affordable credit and consistency in economic policies to encourage manufacturers to expand production.

He also highlighted the impact of transportation disruptions on industrial activity, saying the uninterrupted movement of raw materials and finished goods was essential for factories to maintain production schedules and fulfil domestic and export orders.

"Disruptions in goods transportation increase costs, delay deliveries and create uncertainty for manufacturers. The government and relevant stakeholders should develop a sustainable mechanism to prevent such disruptions and ensure the smooth movement of commercial cargo across the country," he said.

The BMP chairman said the performance of the automobile sector, which recorded 11.66% year-on-year growth in August, demonstrated the potential for industrial expansion when market activity improved. However, he cautioned that higher taxes and uncertainty over automotive policies could weaken demand and discourage investment.

He urged the government to review the tax burden on automobiles and other manufacturing sectors, arguing that predictable policies would help businesses plan investment, increase capacity and generate employment.

Nisar also stressed the need to strengthen export-oriented industries and support value addition to improve Pakistan's competitiveness in international markets. He said sustained industrial growth required greater investment in technology, productivity and skills development, alongside policies that encouraged domestic manufacturing. **NEWS DESK**

WORLD

Kyiv launches more than 1,000 drones at Russia

Ukrainian attacks set an oil export terminal ablaze in St. Petersburg on Sunday, as Kyiv launched more than 1,000 drones across Russia in one of its largest ever aerial bombardments.

The attack comes amid deepening tensions between Ukraine and Washington, with U.S. President Donald Trump criticizing Kyiv for its strikes on Russian oil infrastructure.

One person was killed and five more were wounded in the attack, which sparked fires at both the Petersburg Oil Terminal and the city's Ruchi oil depot, said local Gov. Alexander Beglov. A logistics center belonging to Russian retailer Ozon and a data center for local tech giant VK were also targeted, both companies confirmed.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that its forces had destroyed 1,015 Ukrainian drones over 15 Russian regions, as well as the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and the Black Sea.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told Russian state news agency Tass that Kyiv was "resisting" Moscow's invasion, but that Ukraine could not "change the



current course of events."

Meanwhile, a woman died and at least two other people were wounded, including a 6-year-old girl, after Russia launched two attacks on the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, local officials said.

Two apartment buildings, 18 cars and an educational institution were damaged as a result of the attack, head of the Zaporizhzhia Regional Military Administration Mykhailo Semikin said.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Oct. 11 that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to an "energy ceasefire" in the 4 1/2-year-old war, but offered no details on it and Kyiv reported attacks by Moscow on energy sites after his statement.

Ukraine confirmed Thursday it had resumed attacks on Russian oil after a three-day hiatus.

Zelenskyy was outraged by Russia's continuing aerial bombardment of his country's energy infrastructure in apparent defiance of Trump's demand on Sunday for both sides to halt those attacks. The Ukrainian government initially said that it was heading the ceasefire. **AP**

Stampede at a Hindu festival in India kills 19

A stampede during a major Hindu festival in eastern India's West Bengal state has left at least 19 people dead, officials said Sunday.

The stampede in the state capital of Kolkata happened Saturday night when a crowd near a pavilion ran for cover as it began raining during Durga Puja, an annual Hindu festival celebrating the goddess Durga. According to police, some worshippers fell on the road, triggering the stampede.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari,

who visited Kolkata Medical College and Hospital where victims were taken, said 19 people had died and 25 were receiving treatment. He announced an investigation by a Special Investigation Team to be headed by a judge of the state's High Court.

Police detained some pavilion organizers, private security personnel and on-duty staff.

and launched a probe into any crowd-control and safety lapses.

Around 3,500 Durga Puja pavilions, known locally as pandals, have been set up across Kolkata for the festival. Following the stampede, authorities advised several of Kolkata's most heavily attended venues to temporarily close to visitors.

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Samurai To Steal Mars Moon Rocks

Japan is set to launch a spacecraft on the world's first mission to bring back samples from Phobos, one of the two small, potato-shaped moons orbiting Mars.

Scientists hope the mission, which is expected to take five years, will provide clues to how Phobos and its smaller sibling Deimos formed, and hopefully even shed light on the origins of life in the solar system.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's launch of the spacecraft Tuesday on a new Japanese mainstay H-3 rocket comes as the United States, China and others consider sending astronauts to Mars.

Samples from Phobos will provide useful data for scientists to consider using a Martian moon as a base for a future manned mission to the planet, said MMX project manager Yasuhiro

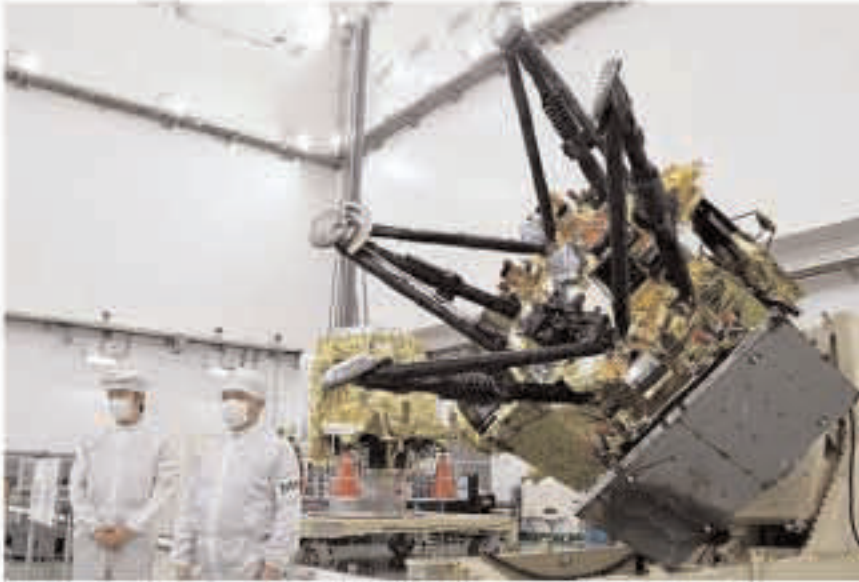
Kawakatsu.

"Despite their potential importance, Martian moons have never been fully investigated," Kawakatsu said.

"They are known as the most important unclimbed mountains in the solar system."

Japan leads the interna-

tional mission that includes equipment and communications support from NASA and other national space agencies. **AP**



US goes on the offensive in central Asia

It's dealmaking time: despite the roiling geopolitical tensions embroiling Washington on several fronts, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio headed to Central and South Asia late Saturday to boost commercial ties -- and gain an edge over Russia and China.

With the United States mired in its war with Iran, and the conflict in Ukraine showing no signs of abating, Rubio has stepped up his foreign travel with recent trips to Europe and Latin America, smack in the middle of the US midterm election campaign.

He has largely ceded control of the contentious Iran, Ukraine and Gaza situations to US President Donald Trump's special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Rubio was instead leading a massive delegation of 200 business leaders to Uzbekistan, where he will take part on Monday in a ministerial meeting of five Central Asian countries.

"This is an important relationship," Rubio said shortly

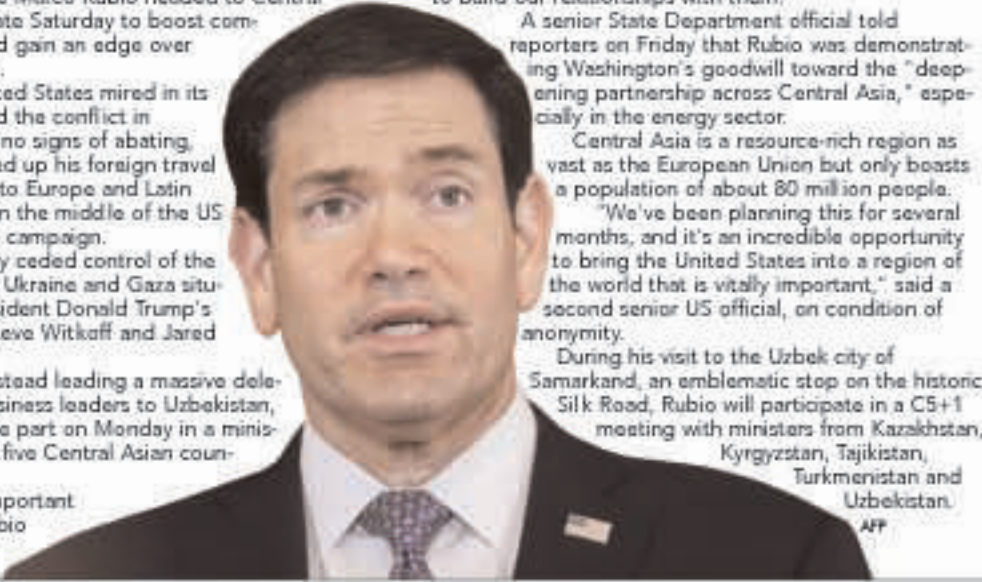
before his departure, calling the trip a strategic visit. "There's countries you'd like to get to because we want to build our relationships with them."

A senior State Department official told reporters on Friday that Rubio was demonstrating Washington's goodwill toward the "deepening partnership across Central Asia," especially in the energy sector.

Central Asia is a resource-rich region as vast as the European Union but only boasts a population of about 80 million people.

"We've been planning this for several months, and it's an incredible opportunity to bring the United States into a region of the world that is vitally important," said a second senior US official, on condition of anonymity.

During his visit to the Uzbek city of Samarkand, an emblematic stop on the historic Silk Road, Rubio will participate in a C5+1 meeting with ministers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. **AP**



Night Of Rage: 1,800 Busted In Paris Clashes

Paris police said Sunday that 1,800 people were arrested in the French capital region after violent groups clashed with officers and looted shops during a protest march that drew about 110,000 people who denounced rising living costs and poor conditions in schools.

Violent clashes, fires and looting on Saturday marred demonstrations across France. Authorities said groups of masked protesters targeted public buildings, including city halls and local government offices. Authorities said about



550,000 people took part in protests across France, while organizers said in a statement, without providing further details. French media reported a protester suffered a medical emergency in the street during the march.

Thirteen police and gendarmes officers and two firefighters were injured, the statement said. Around Paris' Place de la République on Sunday morning, dislodged cobblestones, shattered storefronts and broken glass marked the aftermath of the events. Looting and damage were reported around the square and in some other tourist and shopping areas in the city center. **AP**

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'Serious incident' at Canada base causes deaths

A "serious incident" at a military base in western Canada killed and injured multiple people and sparked a huge blaze on Saturday, the government said.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney posted on X that "a serious incident creating a major fire" had occurred at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright military base in western Alberta province.

There were "both fatalities and injuries" as a result of the incident, the country's defense minister, David McGuinty, said at a news conference. Neither offered details on

number of casualties or the nature of the incident. "We will have more to say in the coming hours and days," McGuinty added.

A doctor at a hospital in the city of Edmonton, about 200 kilometers (110 miles) northwest of the base, told public broadcaster CBC that Wainwright's health-care facilities were "completely overwhelmed" by the number of patients requiring care.

"It is more patients than any of us want to count right now," Warren Thirk said. "It's a disaster. It's a one in every 15 to 25-year disaster."

The Municipal District of Wainwright posted on social media that the fire had "spread rapidly due to high winds." **AP**



SPORTS



PCB allows Rizwan to play domestic cricket

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has granted permission to former Pakistan national team captain Mohammad Rizwan to participate in domestic cricket, ARY News reported, citing sources.

According to sources, Rizwan will play in the President's Trophy starting Monday after receiving clearance from the PCB. Mohammad Rizwan will represent Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) in the tournament.

Earlier, Mohammad Rizwan



appeared before the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in October for a case concerning allegations of online betting, gambling and leaking of team information from the dressing room during the Test series in

England earlier this year.

Neither Rizwan nor any NCCIA official were ready to respond to media queries after the cricketer came out of the agency's office after more than three and a half hours of investigation conducted by four NCCIA officials. Rizwan, 34, was served a notice by the NCCIA under the Criminal Procedure Code Section 160.

When asked how the conduct of the agency's official was and what questions he faced, a smiling Rizwan said: "I am deaf (in this connection), the conduct (of NCCIA officials) was good. I am feeling hungry; so let me go" before leaving the venue. It may be mentioned here that the NCCIA had confiscated Rizwan's mobile phone in England on Aug 30, reportedly, having some secret information.

The agency had promised that it will return the phone in three hours but it was not given to the player before he was summoned for inquiry on Friday. It is still not clear if the NCCIA has returned Rizwan's phone. And there is no information if the agency will again summon the player. **INP**

Martinez Set For Week On Sidelines

Emiliano Martinez says he will be "back in a few weeks" after undergoing surgery following a clash of heads during Chelsea's 2-0 win at Everton. Martinez collided with Jarrod Branthwaite as the pair challenged for a cross and after more than eight minutes of treatment, the Argentina international was carried off on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance.

The Argentina goalkeeper later posted a photo of himself in a hospital bed on Instagram, writing: "Thank you for all the messages, the operation went well."

Martinez had earlier played his part in Chelsea's 2-0 win that also earned his side their first Premier League clean sheet in nine months.

Speaking immediately after the match, Chelsea boss Xabi Alonso said that Martinez had been taken to

hospital for "precautionary tests".
PA MEDIA



Fokina beats Jodar to win Shanghai Masters

Alejandro Davidovich Fokina fought back to beat rising star Rafael Jodar in the final of the Shanghai Masters on Sunday to claim the biggest title of his career.

The gutsy world number 26 from Spain outlasted his tiring compatriot 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

"I don't know what to say. I don't know what I feel. Just like a huge relief," Davidovich Fokina said.

It is a first title at the prestigious 1000 level for the 27-year-old, who extended his winning streak in China to 10 matches after claiming victory at an ATP 250 tournament in Chengdu.

The 20-year-old Jodar, ranked 13 and rising fast, was ruthless to start with.

He reached over his shoulder to save a point before winning it with an overhead smash as he broke for a 2-0 lead. **AP**



Di Guglielmo's Fires Spirit Past Gotham

Lucia Di Guglielmo scored her first National Women's Soccer League goal and the Washington Spirit clinched a playoff spot with 1-0 victory over Gotham on Saturday.

In other action across NWSL, the San Diego Wave topped the North Carolina Courage 2-1; Angel City FC beat the Denver Summit 3-2; and the Kansas City Current shut out the Utah Royals 2-0. It was the first win for the Spirit (16-8-4) over Gotham since June 23, 2024.

The road loss at Audi Field denied Gotham (16-5-7) a chance to clinch the NWSL Shield and snapped a four-match unbeaten streak. Spirit midfielder Melissa Bethi delivered a pinpoint lob pass to Di Guglielmo in the 70th minute. She sneaked her shot past Gotham goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger. Spirit goalkeeper Sandy Maciver made two saves for her 10th clean sheet of the season. **AP**



Top 25 Meltdown: 5 Giants Fall

Five of the top seven teams in the AP Top 25 lost on the same day in the regular season for the first time in history. The last time anything even remotely close happened was on Jan. 2, 1989, according to Sportradar, when five of the top eight teams lost.

Shakeup Saturday was



driven by the Southeastern Conference, with No. 1 Georgia, No. 6 Alabama and No. 7 Texas going down as touchdown or more favorites.

No. 2 Notre Dame (at No. 8 BYU) and fifth-ranked Indiana (against No. 4 Ohio State) also lost, although those were less shocking.

It's the first time Nos. 1 and 2 lost on the same day in the regular season since Oregon (to Stanford) and Kansas State (to Baylor) in 2012.

The chaos, which is sure to shuffle the poll and College Football Playoff seeding forecasts, cleared a path for No. 3 Miami to take over the top poll spot after beating rival Florida State 43-35 in a double-overtime classic that ended in controversy.

The Hurricanes can only hope to do better than the No. 1 team has the last two weeks; Texas and Georgia lost to unranked teams, the first time that's happened in consecutive weeks since Notre Dame (to Stanford) and Michigan (to Michigan State) in 1990. **AP**

Fundora Beat The Bell In The Thriller



Sebastian Fundora kept his pursuit of an undisputed championship on track with a second to spare.

Fundora stopped Ermal Hadribeaj with a left hand at 2:59 of the 12th round Saturday night at The Chelsea at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas to retain his WBC super welterweight title. Fundora (25-1-1, 17 KOs) had his fourth successful title defense and handed Hadribeaj (23-1-1) his first professional loss. "It was an interesting fight," Fundora said. "I had to go back and fight on

the inside and show everyone again that I can still do that. It was dramatic to knock him out at the last second, the final second. **AP**

Sounders Held As Gomex Strikes

Sebastian Gomez scored a goal in the 66th minute for the Seattle Sounders on Saturday night in a 1-1 tie with CF Montreal.

Andrew Thomas had one save for the Sounders (11-10-9). Seattle has 42 points this season, two ahead of the LA Galaxy for the seventh in the Western Conference playoff race. Sebastian Breza had five saves for Montreal (6-17-7), which had lost back-to-back games and seven of its last



Messi Master class Dumps Atlanta

Lionel Messi scored two second-half goals 4 minutes apart after a first-half assist, and Inter Miami cruised to a 3-1 victory over Atlanta United on Saturday night. Neither team scored until Germán Berenango used assists from Messi and Luis Suárez in the final minute of the first half to score his ninth goal in his first 26 MLS appearances.

Messi tied Los Angeles FC's Son Heung-min for the league lead with his 15th assist, becoming the first player in league history with at least 15 helpers in three consecutive seasons. Messi added his league-leading 24th and 25th goals in the 56th and 60th minutes for a 3-0 advantage. Berenango assisted on both scores and Suárez snagged one on Messi's second goal. Messi won the Golden Boot Award last season with 29 goals. He and Josef Martínez are the only players in league history to score at least 25 times in a regular season twice. **AP**

