

Makkah Pact progress satisfies Pakistan, Saudi Arabia

Field Marshal Asim Munir and Saudi Envoy underscore deeper defence and institutional linkages

Any attack on Makkah alliance member will trigger collective response: ISPR DG

Says Pakistan providing 'whatever support' Saudi Arabia needs for its defence

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and regional security dynamics were discussed, said a press release issued by ISPR.

Both the dignitaries expressed satisfaction over the progress made under the framework of the Makkah pact and underscored the importance of strengthening defence collaboration, linkages and strategic coordination.

The COAS congratulated the envoy on his appointment and expressed confidence that his tenure would further contribute to strengthening the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, rooted in shared faith, mutual trust and strategic partnership.

Separately, ISPR Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said Pakistan is providing 'whatever support is needed' to defend Saudi Arabia amid attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels against the kingdom.

The military spokesperson's remarks - made during an interview with Independent Arabia aired on Sunday.

Responding to a query about the military support Pakistan was providing to the

kingdom amid attacks by Houthis, the DG ISPR said Saudi Arabia's "sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the security, and foremost the security of the Two Holy

Pakistan is concerned [...] So whatever support is needed to do that is being provided and will be provided," he affirmed, adding that no alliance makes public the specifics and the quantification of the support provided.

Commenting on Pakistan's reaction to the Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, the military spokesman said, "Our reaction in Pakistan, on the streets, from a young boy and girl up to our political and military leadership, is one of anger."

He declared there could be no 'ifs and buts' on the security of the holy sites.

On whether Pakistan's support to Saudi Arabia will strictly remain defensive if the Houthi attacks continue, the military spokesperson said all three members of the alliance were "absolutely clear [...] that this alliance has no offensive intent; it is purely defensive".

Citing Article 51 of the United Nations Charter that provides collective defence, he said such a mechanism "gives a very strong and clear message to those elements of instability, of chaos, in the region that if you directly or indirectly wage this war against any

of these three countries, then the response will be collective".

"If that deterrence doesn't work, then that deterrence has to be re-established by all means that are available to the three countries," he added.

Asked whether Islamabad had issued any "warning" to Tehran regarding Houthis as the Saudi deputy foreign minister linked the two, the DG ISPR stressed that Pakistan had been engaging with all parties involved, including Iran, "with the singular intent of restraint and to reduce the temperatures".

Speaking further about the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, Lt Gen Chaudhry noted, "You have seen a sinusoidal sort of pattern in this conflict, that it does down and then the agent of chaos starts and they come into play and take the entity up."

He contended that such escalations will not "resolve this conflict".

"Whether you expand it to Houthis, whether you expand it to other places, it doesn't serve anything. It only serves those who are interested in chaos in the region."

The DG ISPR added: "But at the same time, [...] Pakistan is giving very strong signals that this collective deterrence is at play, has already been actualized and we will take all necessary steps for the security and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Haramain Sharifain (The Two Holy Mosques)."

He remarked that the "message is going to everyone, whether he is in front or he is behind" the escalation.

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Pakistan never gave up on US-Iran peace: Naqvi

Naqvi highlights Pakistan's peace efforts, credits Field Marshal Asim Munir for Iran-US dialogue

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday said Pakistan made every possible effort to reduce tensions between Iran and the United States and bring both sides to the negotiating table, stressing that dialogue, trust and continued engagement are essential for peace.

Addressing the Global Security Forum 2026 in Doha, Qatar, Naqvi thanked the Qatari state for bringing countries together to discuss peace and recognised its role in diplomacy. He said Qatar had continued engaging with different sides when others chose to take positions, adding that Pakistan had worked alongside Qatar in these efforts.

Naqvi said the conflict involving Iran and the United States in recent months had created serious risks for the Middle East and the world. Pakistan responded by pursuing peace and making efforts to prevent further escalation.

He highlighted the role of Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying his personal efforts, relations with world leaders and continuous engagement with all sides helped open channels for dialogue.

The minister said he had also participated in the peace efforts alongside the Field Marshal. During visits to Tehran and meetings with senior Iranian officials, he

witnessed the difficulties involved in the negotiations. Despite moments of tension, Pakistan continued talking, listening and working to build trust.

Naqvi said peace could not be achieved through a single meeting and required patience, trust and continuous efforts.

He recalled that Pakistan hosted the Islamabad talks in April, followed by the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum in June. Days later, Pakistan and Qatar, as the two mediating parties, met at Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

Naqvi said he witnessed an extraordinary commitment during the meeting, when the Qatari prime minister and Field Marshal Asim Munir continued their discussions for more than 16 hours without a break. He said there were no cameras or announcements, only two leaders determined to prevent the talks from failing.

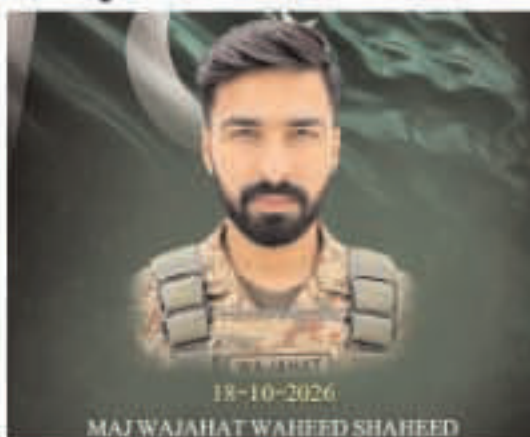
He stressed that Pakistan and Qatar were not seeking credit but wanted to prevent further conflict and save innocent lives.

The minister also referred to the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a defence pact rather than an arrangement for war. He said lasting peace could not be achieved while neighbouring countries remained in conflict.

Speaking about terrorism, Naqvi said Pakistan had lost thousands of citizens, soldiers and police personnel and continued to fight the threat. He called for stronger cooperation, improved intelligence sharing and joint efforts, describing terrorism as a common enemy.

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Major martyred, four terrorists killed in Balochistan operations: ISPR



Four terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation in Kalat, while an army major was martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack during a separate operation in Gwadar, the military's media wing said on Monday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), intelligence agencies had reported the presence of multiple hideouts of Indian-sponsored "Fitna al Hindustan" in Shadi Kaur in Gwadar district and Jattakabad in Kalat district.

Security forces launched operations in the areas to protect the local population and eliminate the reported terrorist presence, the statement said.

During an intelligence-based operation in Jattakabad on October 18, troops engaged the terrorists' location following an exchange of fire, killing four of them. A large cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered, according to the ISPR.

In a separate operation in Shadi Kaur, Gwadar district, the lead component of the security forces, led by Major Wajahat Waheed, 34, a resident of Lahore, was targeted by an IED.

The officer embraced martyrdom in the line of duty, the ISPR said.

The military said sanitisation operations would continue to eliminate any other terrorists found in the areas.

It added that counterterrorism operations under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam, approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan, would continue at full pace to eliminate what it described as foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism. NEWS DESK

Murad opens Sindh's first engineered landfill site

Rs 14bn WB-backed project to improve waste disposal; Landfill initiative to generate \$20m in carbon credits; CM seeks an additional 100 MGD from Hub Dam; Rs 13bn released for city roads

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday inaugurated the first phase of Sindh's first sanitary engineered landfill project at Jam Chakro, marking a major step towards modernising Karachi's solid waste management system.

Through scientific waste disposal, environmental protection and improved waste transportation.

The Chief Minister formally inaugurated the project by cutting a ribbon and initiating waste disposal at the site. Minister for Local Government Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Minister for Labour Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Muraza Waheed and other senior officials were also present.

During his visit, the Chief Minister inspected the landfill site, reviewed construction progress and operational arrangements, and received a briefing from Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah and Project Director Usman Musazzam.

The project, being implemented with financial and technical assistance from the World Bank, has an estimated cost of \$105 million, including \$100 million in World Bank financing and a \$5 million contribution from the Sindh government. The overall cost was also described by the Chief Minister as approximately Rs14 billion.

The project aims to establish a modern, integrated system for waste collection, transportation and scientific disposal, reducing environmental pollution and health risks associated with conventional dumping practices.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister said the launch marked the beginning of an

important phase in the transformation of Karachi's waste management system. "We are modernising the waste collection system in Karachi and taking steps to make the entire waste management process more efficient and systematic," he said.

He explained that conventional waste dumping could contaminate the surrounding environment and create conditions conducive to various diseases. The engineered landfill, by contrast, had been designed using specialised materials and multiple protective layers to minimise environmental damage.

The approximately 150-acre site is being developed with an engineered lining system, including geotextile materials, to protect the underlying soil.

contamination. A dedicated system has also been established to collect and safely manage leachate, the liquid generated as water passes through waste.

The facility will incorporate scientific waste compaction and covering procedures, while weighbridges and environmental monitoring arrangements will help improve operational control, record-keeping and accountability.

The Chief Minister said the landfill could also offer opportunities for energy generation through the collection and utilisation of methane gas produced by decomposing waste.

"Landfill sites can generate methane, which can be collected and potentially used to produce electricity. We are looking at ways to derive environmental and economic benefits from this modern system," he said.

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National



Punjab decides to ban spy devices to protect citizens' privacy

World



WFP: Gaza aid cut despite need

Money



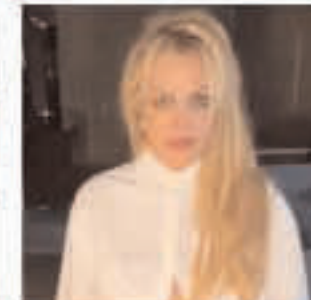
CCP to use AI to curb bid rigging

Sports



Guangdong begins Pakistan tour

Glamour



Britney: World has been hateful to me

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Petrol, diesel prices cut by Rs 5.16, Rs 7.69, respectively

NATIONAL

DTM

Governor's rule imposed due to PTI's misguided policies: Memon



Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information and Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon said that governor's rule was not imposed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for any personal gain or to acquire power, but that the province fell into the current political crisis because of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's soft approach toward terrorists and its misguided policies.

Speaking to the media in Karachi, he said the PTI itself was responsible for the entire

political crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and was now facing the consequences of its past decisions and actions.

He said the PTI founder and his provincial government had spoken about negotiating with terrorists and opening offices for them, while innocent citizens continued to lose their lives and soldiers embraced martyrdom in the war against terrorism.

Sharjeel Memon said that instead of ensuring public service and the protection of citizens, the PTI had held the province hostage to confrontational politics.

He said the Pakistan People's Party had complete faith in democracy and the strengthening of democratic institutions and had never practised politics solely for power. If the PPP were hungry for power, he said, it would have accepted Federal ministries and formally become part of the federal

government, but the party had always given priority to principled politics.

Commenting on recent statements by JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, he said that a senior and experienced politician who had personally witnessed the scourge of terrorism, and whose party had suffered significant loss of life in terrorist incidents, was expected to adopt a clear and unequivocal position against extremism.

He expressed hope that Maulana Fazlur Rehman would openly condemn terrorism and express solidarity with the families of the martyrs.

The Sindh senior minister further said that Pakistan could not tolerate any ambiguity or double standards on the sensitive issue of terrorism.

He said officers and soldiers of the armed forces were the nation's pride and remained committed and alert at all times to protect the country's children, youth and elderly. The nation saluted all its martyrs, and the Pakistan Peoples Party stood shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army in the struggle for the country's security, sovereignty and eradication of terrorism. **■**

Portuguese ambassador meets Awais Qadir, discusses bilateral ties

Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, His Excellency Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues, called on Acting Governor of Sindh Syed Awais Qadir Shah at the Provincial Assembly of Sindh in Karachi. The meeting focused on bilateral relations between Pakistan and Portugal, parliamentary cooperation, trade, investment, tourism, cultural exchanges, and opportunities for collaboration in various sectors.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. David Araujo, Political Officer of Portugal; Mr. Amin Fakir, Designated Honorary Consul General in Karachi; Secretary of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh Q.M. Umar Farooq; and Director General Media Irfan Ahmed Memon.

Welcoming the Portuguese Ambassador, Acting Governor of Sindh Syed Awais Qadir Shah described Karachi as Pakistan's economic hub and a city renowned for its cultural diversity. He invited the Ambassador to visit other cities of Sindh, particularly Sukkur, and highlighted the province's historical heritage, cultural diversity, tourist attractions, and economic potential.



Acting Governor Syed Awais Qadir Shah highlighted Sindh's historical landmarks, agricultural resources, and natural beauty, stating that visits to different parts of the province would provide an opportunity to better understand the cultural and economic potential of Pakistan and Sindh. He also assured the Ambassador of all possible cooperation and facilitation during his visits to the province.

During the meeting, the contributions of Sindh Government in the healthcare sector were also discussed, including the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), GIMS, and the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD).

The Portuguese Ambassador informed the Acting Governor that Portuguese artists would participate in the World Culture Festival in Karachi, with the support of the Sindh Culture Department. He identified renewable energy, agriculture, maritime affairs, and the development sector as important potential areas of cooperation between the two countries. The meeting also explored opportunities to enhance trade and investment between Pakistan and Portugal.

Mr. Amin Fakir, Designated Honorary Consul General in Karachi, highlighted opportunities to increase Pakistani exports, particularly in basmati rice, fruits, information technology services, and leather products.

The Portuguese Ambassador emphasised the importance of further strengthening people-to-people contacts between the two countries and appreciated the role of the Pakistani community living in Portugal. **NEWS DESK**

JIT to probe Mir Raza murder case demanded

The father of slain entrepreneur Mir Raza on Monday demanded the formation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to probe his son's murder.

Speaking to the media outside the court alongside his counsel, advocate Jibran Nasir, Mir Hussain stated that the police had shown negligence in investigating his son's case, adding that their fears were confirmed by the judicial commission's findings. He demanded that Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Faryal Talpur hand over the judicial commission's report to the family and make it public following the cabinet meeting.

He also called for action against the police officers found negligent by the judicial commission, noting that the family had repeatedly highlighted through the media the police's poor performance, shortcomings, and deficiencies in the investigation. Furthermore, he stated that the judicial commission's proceedings had validated their concerns, reiterating his demand for strict action against the responsible police officers.

Earlier, the Sindh government has received the judicial commission's report on the Mir Raza Ali case in a sealed envelope, Additional Secretary Home Javed Abro said on Thursday. Abro said the government would now decide on the next course of action in the case.

He added that the judicial commission's proceedings had been conducted in open court, while the final report had been handed over to the government in a sealed envelope.

The report's receipt marks the next stage in the case, with further decisions now resting with the Sindh government. The judicial commission headed by SHC Justice Omar Sial contains statements from 49 individuals connected to the case. The commission held 15 hearings and recorded two statements via video link.

The judicial commission was constituted on August 24. Mir Raza Ali's body was found in the Gulistan-e-Jauhar area on July 29. An initial post-mortem examination was conducted, followed by a second examination after the body was exhumed. **■**



Fire breaks out at garment factory warehouse



A massive fire broke out at a warehouse of a garments factory near Metroville in Karachi's SITE area on Monday, prompting the deployment of fire and rescue teams, according to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and Sindh Rescue 1122.

Sindh Rescue 1122 spokesperson Hassan Khan at around 6:30pm said the blaze on the second floor had been contained by the firefighters, and now efforts were underway to douse the flames engulfing the third floor. He asserted that 10 fire tenders, five water bowzers and one snorkel were on the site to contain the inferno. "Firefighters are facing difficulties due to heavy smoke inside the building," the spokesperson highlighted. He also said that the fire has extensively damaged the building's structure.

When probed about the cause of the fire, he stated that it has not been established yet. Earlier at 4:30pm, KMC Chief Fire Officer Humayun Khan had told the media that the fire was intense when firefighting teams arrived at the scene.

"The warehouse contains cardboard, wood, thread, garments, foam, plastic and other combustible materials in the upper floors, making firefighting operations challenging. Our efforts are focused on bringing the fire under control as soon as possi-

ble, after which cooling operations will begin," Khan said.

The chief fire officer also underscored that the fire was declared a "third-degree blaze" to mobilise all relevant departments, ensure their immediate attention and secure the resources required to deal with the emergency. Khan stressed that parts of the building, along with its boundary wall, had become structurally unsafe due to the fire.

Meanwhile, fire brigade officials at the site said that they were facing difficulties due to a "shortage of water".

They also revealed that firefighting operations were underway from both the exterior and interior of the building and so far the fire has engulfed the factory's second and third floors. Water Corporation pledges uninterrupted water supply to firefighters. The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) spokesperson said in a statement that the facility was providing an uninterrupted water supply to fire brigade teams responding to the factory blaze in SITE area.

CM Murad orders quick response: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken notice of the fire at a factory in Karachi's SITE industrial area and directed the administration and rescue authorities to immediately mobilise resources at the site. **NEWS DESK**

Lanjar directs effective strategy to curb street crime

A high-level meeting chaired by Sindh Minister for Home and Law Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar was held in Karachi to review the overall law and order situation and assess police measures aimed at preventing crime across the city.

The meeting discussed measures to curb street crime, robberies and snatching incidents, police performance, and ongoing operations against criminal elements.

Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar directed the police to further strengthen their measures to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property and accelerate operations against criminal elements. He emphasised that providing a safe environment for citizens remains the government's top priority, urging all relevant police officers to discharge their responsibilities diligently and professionally.

The Home Minister also directed the police to further improve patrolling and surveillance in sensitive areas. He instructed police officers to remain active in their respective jurisdictions until late at night and pay special attention to crime-prone hotspots.

Emphasising the need for a coordinated strategy to prevent street crime and robberies, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar stressed that targeted operations against criminal elements should be intensified on the basis of intelligence-led information.

He further directed that effective monitoring of police measures across all zones and districts be ensured, with relevant officers working in close coordination and maintaining effective communication. He said the outcomes of crime-prevention measures should be reviewed regularly to identify shortcomings in the existing strategy and take corrective measures accordingly. The Home Minister also directed that accountability be ensured for police personnel found negligent or derelict in the performance of their duties. He emphasised that all available resources must be utilised to maintain law and order and protect citizens, while indiscriminate action against criminal elements must continue. The meeting was attended by the Addl. IGP Karachi; DIGs East, West and South; and SSPs Keamari, West and Malir. **NEWS DESK**



No obstacles to Karachi's development will be tolerated: Mayor Wahab

Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the journey of Karachi's development and public service will continue uninterrupted under all circumstances.

Difficulties and obstacles may arise during development work, but the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) team and the Pakistan Peoples Party remain committed to resolving the problems faced by the people of the city. He said that the city's resources are held in trust for the people of Karachi and will continue to be spent transparently on public welfare and the provision of basic facilities. He added that any mistreatment of institutions, officers and employees serving the city and its citizens would not be tolerated, and legal action would be taken against those interfering in official affairs.

He expressed these views during a visit to the ongoing development works on Nasha

Khan Chakoor Nallah Road and the road connecting Nasha Khan to Pehlwan Goth. Metropolitan Commissioner KMC Abrar Jaffer and other relevant KMC officers accompanied him during the visit.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab received a detailed briefing on the incident that occurred the previous day and directed the concerned officials to ensure that development work continued without any obstruction. He said that the KMC team was working day and night to reduce the difficulties faced by citizens and was completing projects that would facilitate transportation and provide relief in their daily lives.

He said that development projects currently underway in different parts of the city, including Chakoor Nallah Expressway, were part of a coordinated effort to improve Karachi's basic infrastructure. Their completion would help resolve long-standing traffic and transportation problems faced by residents.

The Mayor said that investments had been made over the past few years in various projects, including Nasha Khan Chakoor Nallah Road, Pehlwan Goth Road,

Zia Mohyeddin Flyover, Palestine Underpass and Manzoor Colony Underpass, to address the difficulties faced



by residents of the respective areas. Traffic congestion and transportation difficulties had remained a persistent concern for

citizens in these localities. The government and KMC had therefore taken practical measures to resolve these issues.

He said that the primary objective of these development projects was to provide relief to citizens and improve connectivity

between different parts of the city.

Announcing another important initiative concerning Nasha Khan Chakoor Nallah Road, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that an additional entry point and connecting road were being constructed to link the road towards Habib University. This facility would eliminate the need for motorists to approach from the wrong side of the road and enable them to reach Pehlwan Goth conveniently.

He said that the connecting road would further improve transportation in the area, facilitate smoother traffic flow and provide citizens with an alternative route to reach their destinations. The Mayor directed the concerned officers to accelerate work on the project so that citizens could benefit from the facility at the earliest.

Appreciating the performance of the KMC team, Mayor Karachi said that the corporation's officers and employees were rendering valuable services to ease the difficulties faced by citizens. Projects such as Chakoor Nallah Road reflected the commitment to providing maximum facilities to the public despite limited resources. **NEWS DESK**

NATIONAL

DTM

Vawda draws comparison between Imran Khan and Altaf Hussain



Independent Senator Faisal Vawda, considered close to the establishment, has said that Imran Khan's politics has surpassed Altaf Hussain's by 100 times. There was a huge difference between Khan's politics during his first 12 years and during the last 3 to 4 years. Speaking on a private news channel's programme, he said he had never claimed that

ing the summer, his supporters and friends were also aware of the matter. Every person has some weakness, he added, citing his own weakness as smoking, but when a person takes a wrong step, they prepare for it beforehand. Faisal Vawda said he had remained with Imran Khan for 15 or 16 years, during which the first 12 years reflected a

Imran Khan would be unable to serve jail time. He said he had stated at the time that when Khan was taken away during

different Imran Khan, while the final few years were entirely different. He said Imran Khan was now pursuing a kind of politics that he had previously criticised in Altaf Hussain, but had now gone 100 times further than him. However, he said, Khan's own conduct and politics were responsible for the situation. He said sarcastically that there was no yardstick or barometer in the country for Toshakhana, stealing cars and other corruption-related matters. The real issue, he said, was the point to which the PTI founder had brought politics. He said today's politics was full of cunning, deceit, dis-

honesty, lies, deception and contradictions. Some political conduct involved bowing before the establishment and showing respect in closed-door meetings, but adopting an entirely opposite and aggressive narrative outside. The former Federal minister said that if respect was shown behind closed doors, the same attitude should be maintained in public, rather than folding one's hands inside and trying to act like a chief outside. He said that if anyone adopted a trend of making the national anthem and the country's flag controversial or speaking against them, it would destroy future generations and the country's future. **NP**

Govt tightens rules for civil servants returning from study leave

The Establishment Division has placed strict mandatory requirements on degree verification and watertight financial surety tracking for civil servants returning from foreign and local studies, scholarships and deputations.

joining report are immediately routed to the Training Wing of the ED to ensure permanent, synchronised central record-keeping. The federal government has also moved to plug massive financial blind spots concerning state-funded scholarships and professional training programmes, where officers previously attempted to jump ship or resign without fulfilling mandatory service tenures.

Under newly released standard operating procedures, the government has signalled that state-funded foreign training and academic excursions will no longer be treated as open-ended vacations, introducing severe career and financial penalties for non-compliance.

Bureaucrats returning from international universities or local academic programmes after study leave often delayed submitting their final credentials. But the new circular changes the game entirely. According to the new circular, officers returning from study leave or foreign scholarships must submit a certified copy of their degree certificate or official academic transcript alongside their joining report.

If an officer fails to submit their degree without a cogent, verifiable reason, they will officially be considered absent from duty. If a foreign university has delayed official degree issuance, the officer must provide verifiable institutional documentation confirming their "good academic standing" and a justifiable reason for the delay. Without this, rejoining remains blocked.

Once submitted, the degree and

To combat this, the Establishment Division has instituted a centralised statement of liability protocol for every officer who executes a surety bond. The T-Wing is now mandated to immediately supply comprehensive financial breakdowns to the Executive Wing (E-Wing). This includes the exact cost of the scholarship, training expenses and all recoverable emoluments.

The liability statement explicitly spells out the mandatory length of active service the officer must render to the state upon return. The document outlines clear thresholds for what constitutes a breach of the surety bond such as unapproved resignation or abandonment of service, along with the precise monetary penalty recoverable from the individual.

This statement of liability will form a core component of the officer's personal file and must be formally presented to competent authorities whenever any administrative decision regarding the officer's career terms is processed.

The ED has also made it clear that applying for an extension of sanctioned leave, study leave or deputation will not, by itself, justify an officer's continued absence. Officers must report on completion of their approved period even if their extension applications are still awaiting approval. **DNA**

Reports of army officer's death during ODI rejected

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's fact-checker early Monday morning rejected claims that a Pakistan Army officer had died of a heart attack during the Pakistan-Sri Lanka cricket match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, saying the deceased was a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) employee who died of electrocution.

In a post on X, the ministry said the individual was not present at the stadium during the match and had no involvement in the event.

The claim was shared by journalist Naveed Satti, who said 50-year-old Muhammad Farooq, son of Muhammad Azam, had fallen unconscious during the match and was taken to Benazir Bhutto Hospital through Rescue 1122, where he could not survive. The post further claimed that Farooq was affiliated with the Pakistan Army and was posted at a security agency in Islamabad.

However, according to the FIR attached to the ministry's fact-check, Farooq, aged around 60, died after suffering an electric shock while checking an electrical plug at his home. The report stated that his body was at Benazir Bhutto Hospital in Rawalpindi.

"He suffered electric shock following which his family contacted Rescue 1122 and he was shifted to local hospital," the ministry said in its post, adding that he was not affiliated with the Pakistan Army but was actually a PCB employee.

The fact-checker added that hospital records had identified the cause of death as "electrocution" and that further inquiry would proceed in accordance with the relevant procedure. **NEWS DESK**

One-week anti-polio drive from Nov 2

Pakistan will launch a week-long polio vaccination campaign in 97 selected districts on Nov. 2 as part of its ongoing efforts to protect children against the crippling disease, the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) said on Monday.

Polio is a highly contagious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis and, in some cases, death. It can be prevented through safe and effective polio vaccines.

Pakistan has reported six wild poliovirus type 1 cases reported so far this year, including four in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The country aims to vaccinate more than 23.9 million children during the

vaccination drive that will start on Nov. 2 and last till Nov. 8, according to the NEOC. "Providing children with a polio-free future is our shared national responsibility," the NEOC said. "To ensure the complete eradication of polio, parents must extend full cooperation to polio teams."

Over 9.278 million children are likely to be inoculated in 13 selected districts of Punjab, over 6.883 million in 20 districts of Sindh, over 4.808 million in 27 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and over 2.217 million children in 31 districts of Balochistan, according to the NEOC.

In Islamabad, over 447,000 children are likely to receive polio vaccine, while over 153,000 children will be immunized in three districts of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and over 183,000 children in two selected districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries where polio remains an endemic. Pakistan has conducted repeated nationwide and targeted vaccination campaigns as it seeks to halt the transmission of wild poliovirus. Last month, Pakistan vaccinated 29.3 million in a nationwide polio vaccine drive. **NEWS DESK**



Commission-based field workers not regular staff, rules FCCP

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has set aside a decision upholding the rejection of a petition seeking cancellation of the registration of the Field Workers Association, ruling that field workers of the State Life Insurance Corporation (SLIC) paid on commission do not fall within the definition of regular employees under the corporation's Service Rules, 1973.

A three-member bench comprising Chief Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi allowed an appeal filed by SLIC.

In a detailed judgment authored by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, the court held that the relevant forums had failed to consider important legal issues and judicial precedents while deciding the matter. According to the judgment, the Service Rules, 1973 define an employee as a full-time worker receiving a monthly salary, excluding field personnel whose earnings depend on the business generated by them. However, the rules provide certain exemptions for area managers subject to specified conditions.

The court observed that the contracts of sales managers, sales

officers and sales representatives available on record showed that their status differed from that of regular employees of the corporation. Their earnings depended on commissions linked to the insurance policies sold and the customers secured by them.

Referring to a Supreme Court judgment dated November 1, 2005, and other judicial precedents, the court noted that State Life's field workers had not been treated as regular employees of the corporation. It held that the relevant forums had failed to take these precedents into account.

State Life had challenged before the Islamabad High Court an order dated March 11, 2019, passed by the Trade Union Registrar of the National Industrial Relations Commission. The high court had upheld the decision rejecting the corporation's plea.

The corporation subsequently approached the Federal Constitutional Court against the high court's decision. The FCC held that a decision rendered without considering the relevant law and judicial precedents could not be sustained. It converted the petition into an appeal and allowed it. **NEWS DESK**

Punjab decides to ban spy devices to protect citizens' privacy

The Punjab government has decided to ban devices used for spying, including glasses, pens, watches and other everyday items equipped with hidden cameras and recording equipment, to protect citizens' privacy and personal information.

According to a spokesperson for the Punjab Home Department on Monday, strict legal action would be taken against those involved in the use, purchase and sale of spying equipment and concealed electronic devices.

The spokesperson said the deci-

sion was aimed particularly at ensuring the safety of women and children, as complaints had emerged regarding illegal surveillance, harassment and blackmail through such devices.

The government was committed to protecting citizens' fundamental rights, personal information and privacy, the spokesperson added.

The spokesperson further said that the illegal use of everyday items fitted with hidden cameras and recording devices would attract strict penalties. **NEWS DESK**

DG Khan airport to be upgraded by Jan 2028

Federal Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari has said that work to upgrade DG Khan Airport for international flights has begun, with the Rs5.5 billion expansion project to be completed by January 2028.

Talking during a visit to the airport, Leghari inspected the runway extension work and reviewed progress, the ministry said in a statement on Monday. He said teams of the Civil Aviation Authority were working on the project, including the extension of the runway.

He said upgrading the airport for international flights would provide travel facilities to the people of the area and create new opportunities for development and prosperity in south Punjab.

The minister highlighted that the prime minister had announced four major development projects for DG Khan: airport expansion, the establishment of a cancer hospital, a long-term sewerage project and the widening and rehabilitation of road networks.

The sewerage project is being designed to cater to the region's requirements for the next 50 years, while improved, wider roads will ensure smoother commuting. The completion of these initiatives will significantly enhance civic amenities and accelerate regional development, he said.

Regarding loadshedding, Leghari said it was being carried out as per a scheduled plan. He said gas supply and availability issues due to the Iran-US war were affecting power generation costs, leading to reliance on expensive sources. He said the government was introducing modern technology to curb power theft and line losses, including installation of an Anti-Power Theft Management System (APMS) on transformers across the country.

Leghari explained that APMS will identify specific transformers in high-theft areas, enabling targeted disconnections so that thousands of paying consumers on an entire feeder are not penalised for the actions of electricity thieves.

This modern system will curtail power theft, minimise line losses and optimise the electricity distribution network. Leghari said that loadshedding would continue on feeders with 30% or higher losses and there would be no leniency for electricity thieves and chronic defaulters. **NEWS DESK**



Punjab urges SC to impose consecutive sentences in heinous crimes

The Punjab government has supported the imposition of consecutive sentences in grave and heinous crimes, particularly multiple-murder cases, arguing that the practice would help restore public confidence in the criminal justice system.

The provincial government submitted its written response to the Supreme Court in a case concerning whether sentences awarded to convicts involved in multiple murders should run consecutively or concurrently.

Additional Prosecutor General Punjab Tariq Siddique submitted the response, addressing two key questions: whether a sessions court, while convicting and sentencing an accused on multiple counts, is required to direct that the sentences run consecutively or concurrently, and whether the gravity of the offences should also be considered in making that determination.

In its written submissions, the Punjab prosecution argued that courts should not routinely order sentences to run consecutively in every case. Instead, such orders should be passed through reasoned and explicit judicial decisions in exceptional cases involving particularly brutal, inhuman and heinous crimes.

The government maintained that reducing a life sentence to a substantive term of 15 years made it even more important for courts to avoid a mechanical or casual approach when ordering sentences to run concurrently, warning that such a practice could erode public confidence in the criminal justice system.

A convict involved in multiple murders should not be given the benefit of release after serving only 15 years, the response argued. It further stated that routinely ordering concurrent sentences could send a message that the justice system made

little distinction between the killing of one person and multiple victims.

Citing the principle of proportionality, the Punjab government argued that when multiple lives were unlawfully taken, each offence should carry an independent and distinct penal consequence.

Merging all sentences into a single concurrent term in multiple-murder cases would dilute the gravity of additional offences and create an artificial equivalence between taking one life and taking several, the response stated.

The government further argued that allowing all sentences to run concurrently could effectively convey the message that a person convicted of one murder or several murders could be released after the same period in prison.

Referring to the legislative treatment of heinous crimes, the response said lawmakers had recognised that such offences required special measures. It cited restrictions on the grant of remissions to certain convicts under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, and the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997, as examples of this approach.

The Punjab government maintained that consecutive sentences in grave and heinous offences would not only strengthen public confidence in the administration of criminal justice but also serve the deterrent and retributive objectives of punishment. **NP**



EDITORIAL

DTM

Pakistan Railways' recurring derailments expose safety gaps



Language barriers in healthcare

A doctor cannot treat a patient properly without first understanding the illness. Yet, in a linguistically diverse country like Pakistan, language can become a barrier between medical professionals and the people seeking their help. A new handbook developed by students of Jinnah Sindh Medical University (JSMU) offers a practical way to address this problem. Available in seven languages - English, Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, Balochi and Saraiki - the handbook aims to help medical students and young doctors take patients' medical histories more effectively.

The initiative deserves appreciation because communication is not an optional part of healthcare; it is central to diagnosis and treatment. A patient who cannot explain the location, duration or severity of pain may leave a doctor with an incomplete picture of the illness. Similarly, difficulties in discussing previous diseases, medicines and other symptoms can lead to misunderstandings. Such problems can be especially serious for patients from rural areas who are more comfortable speaking their regional languages than English or Urdu. Medical education must therefore prepare doctors not only to understand diseases but also to understand the people suffering from them. The handbook is a useful step in that direction, although its effectiveness will depend on how widely it is adopted and how accurately its translations convey medical questions. Hospitals and medical colleges should consider using it in clinical training and patient consultations. The university says the handbook is available free of charge through its website. Other medical institutions could learn from this effort and develop similar resources suited to their patients. Pakistan's linguistic diversity should not prevent people from receiving appropriate medical attention. When patients can describe their symptoms clearly and doctors can understand them, healthcare becomes more accessible, humane and effective. A simple handbook cannot solve every problem in the health system, but it can help remove one avoidable barrier between a doctor and a patient.

Bureaucrats 'foreign retirement plans

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has raised questions about the commitment of senior civil servants to Pakistan, alleging that some officials have made plans to settle abroad while continuing to serve in government positions. In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, Asif said Pakistan had many capable and honest civil servants but claimed that some had prepared to make Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries their permanent homes. He singled out Portugal as a destination for what he described as a growing movement of bureaucrats seeking to settle overseas. The minister said he had raised the issue several months ago. He also alleged that some officials involved in these plans had held powerful positions and enjoyed close links with successive governments. Asif questioned whether officials who benefited from public office could remain fully committed to the country while preparing to build their futures abroad.

The minister's remarks raise an important question about public service, but allegations alone cannot establish wrongdoing. Civil servants, like other citizens, may have personal reasons for considering a future abroad. The more serious issue is whether any official has misused public office, taken part in illegal financial dealings or failed to perform official duties while preparing to leave the country. Such questions require evidence and a proper investigation, rather than broad claims against unnamed individuals. If the minister has credible information about officials paying money for overseas residency arrangements, the relevant authorities should examine the matter and establish whether any laws have been broken. The government should also clarify whether the alleged transactions involve serving officers, retired officials or both. At the same time, the issue should not be used to question the loyalty of every civil servant who has links with another country. Pakistan needs a professional and accountable bureaucracy whose members serve the public without using their positions for personal gain. If influential officials are found to have violated the law, they should face the same legal process as other citizens.

What the Iran War Means for Pakistan-II

Thus, the Iran-US-Israel conflict cannot be viewed solely in terms of security concerns but as a strategic warning as well. It brings the price of economic dependency and the advantages of economic resilience to light. Pakistan has no control over the geopolitical scenario in the Middle East, but it can prepare to respond to the effects of the Iran War. What matters more for the country's future prospects is its capacity to turn geographical advantage into long-term economic power rather than the factors outside itself.

Turning Strategic Location into Opportunity

Interestingly, the same conflict also brings in new opportunities. The Gulf countries are transitioning to a more diversified economy, which necessitates a secure base of supply in the areas of logistics, food security, technology, manufacturing, higher education, healthcare, infrastructure, etc. Pakistan has some comparative advantages that are not being tapped. It is strategically located between the Middle East, Central Asia, Western China, and South Asia. The infrastructure offered by the Gwadar Port and the overall China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) may enable regional trade and supply chains. Pakistan is also endowed with a young workforce, digitally competent, competitive agriculture, and budding entrepreneurship.

From Geography to Geoeconomic Strategy

An important thing to remember here is that it is not just the location that makes an economy successful. The advantage of strategic location cannot be fully exploited without effective institutions, confidence, good governance, and political stability. This means Pakistan needs to move from a reactive foreign policy to a proactive geoeconomic policy. Instead of addressing each regional crisis separately, it is important for policymakers to formulate long-term regional strategies and provide special attention to economic diplomacy, export orientation, industrial upgrading, and regional connectivity.

Five Strategic Lessons for Pakistan

Several strategic lessons emerge from the current crisis. Pakistan's first step is to substantially cut reliance on imported fossil fuels by speeding up investment in renewable energy, domestic gas production, hydroelectricity, and strategic petroleum reserves. Energy security must be a part of national security.

Second, Pakistan's relations with the Gulf countries must be extended beyond the export of labor. Joint ventures, technology transfer, industrial investment,

tourism, agriculture, digital services & value-added exports need to be the priorities of bilateral cooperation. There is a great need to actively compete for contracts with Pakistan's firms associated with the expansion and reconstruction initiatives of the Gulf countries.

Third, Gwadar and CPEC should be redefined as regional commercial corridors and not limited to infrastructure projects. Better customs processes, digital trade facilitation, integrated logistics networks, industrial clusters, and other means could make Pakistan a gateway between the Gulf economies and Central Asia and Western China.

Fourth, Pakistan should follow a pragmatic and balanced foreign policy. The new Middle Eastern posture is one of being flexible, rather than being bound in alliances.

Pakistan needs to have good relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Türkiye, China, and Western countries at the same time but refrain from being involved in the regional rivalry and war. This diplomatic balance would ensure the highest economic possibilities, without sacrificing national interests.

Lastly, there is a need for domestic governance reform, which continues to be a must. In order to attract investments from the Gulf, regulatory certainty, minimal bureaucracy, the rule of law, investor protection, and policy continuity are essential. Bad domestic institutions cannot be made good by any amount of geopolitical opportunity.

A Strategic Warning and a Choice

Thus, the Iran-US-Israel conflict cannot be viewed solely in terms of security concerns but as a strategic warning as well. It brings the price of economic dependency and the advantages of economic resilience to light. Pakistan has no control over the geopolitical scenario in the Middle East, but it can prepare to respond to the effects of the Iran War. What matters more for the country's future prospects is its capacity to turn geographical advantage into long-term economic power rather than the factors outside itself.



REHMAN YAR

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The 28th Constitutional Amendment: New Provinces and Federal Restructuring-I

Pakistan is debating a potential redrawing of its administrative map, with proposals for new provinces and federal control over key cities, amidst divisions in the legal community on the constitutional process required. The current lack of consensus and the absence of a two-thirds majority needed for such changes complicate efforts toward a 28th Constitutional Amendment. The ongoing discussions include specific proposals for new provinces, reflecting a continuation of long-standing regional movements.

Pakistan is once again debating a redrawing of its administrative map. Reports suggest proposals under informal discussion include bringing Karachi and Gwadar under federal control, splitting Punjab into multiple provinces, and dividing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, all widely read as groundwork for a 28th Constitutional Amendment. The proposal has split Pakistan's two apex lawyers' bodies. The Supreme Court Bar Association has endorsed the push, while the Pakistan Bar Council insists it must proceed strictly through the constitutional process and only after building national consensus. That divide frames the questions this article examines: what the Constitution actually requires to create a new province; what six decades of jurisprudence on amending power suggest about how such a change would fare; what Pakistan's own administrative history says about redrawing internal boundaries; and whether the political arithmetic makes any of this achievable in the near term.

The Shape of the Proposal
No bill has been tabled in Parliament. Speaking to journalists in May 2026, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said he saw "no indications" of a 28th Amendment materializing imminently, while confirming that consultations with coalition partners were ongoing and that any eventual bill would proceed only once consensus was reached, explicitly invoking the Eighteenth Amendment's cross-party consensus as the model to follow.

Tellingly, Law Minister Tarar did confirm that two specific proposals were live within those consultations: the creation of a separate Hazara province and a separate Saraiki province, alongside measures on population control. He also noted that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement has for some time pressed for constitutional amendments to strengthen local government structures, a demand it has linked to threats of a "final decision" if unmet. This confirms that, whatever the fate of the wider province-restructuring package, the older, narrower Hazara and Saraiki movements discussed in Section IV below are the proposals furthest along in actual coalition-level discussion.

Beyond these two specific proposals, what circulates is a mix of ministerial statements and draft texts under wider discussion: Punjab divided into units such as North, Central and South Punjab, Pothohar and Bahawalpur; Sindh into Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur and Larkana; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into Peshawar, Hazara, Malakand and Dera Ismail Khan; and Balochistan into Quetta,

Makran, Zhob and Kalat, with Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir raised separately. Some versions couple this with a redesigned federal executive: a directly elected President as head of government, an enlarged Federal Cabinet drawing on sitting Chief Ministers, abolition of the National Assembly, and a single-chamber Senate as the sole federal legislature. None of the executive-redesign elements are confirmed government policy; they should be read as a circulating proposal, not settled text, and treated with the caution that follows from that.

The idea of a 28th Amendment is, in any case, not entirely new: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaulah has already floated the possibility as early as November 2025, tying it to unspecified "public issues" and conditioning it, even then, on political consensus, suggesting the present debate is the continuation of an eight-month-old conversation rather than a sudden development.

The Constitutional Route: Article 1 and Article 239

Article 1 of the Constitution is declaratory; it names Pakistan's provinces but supplies no free-standing mechanism for creating new ones. The operative clause is Article 239(4), which requires a two-thirds majority in the relevant provincial assembly before any bill altering a province's limits can proceed through the ordinary two-thirds majorities in the National Assembly and Senate. No party today commands a two-thirds majority anywhere in this chain, and thus, any move to create new provinces would require broad political consensus. More fundamentally, Pakistan Bar Council lawyers argue that Article 239(4) was drafted for altering an existing province's boundaries, not for creating a new one from scratch, unlike India, where Articles 2 and 3 expressly empower Parliament to form new states by ordinary legislation after consulting the affected state legislature. On this reading, an express province-creation power would first need to be inserted into the Constitution,

cleared through every provincial assembly, before any actual province could be carved out under it. Complicating matters further, Article 239(5), inserted by the Twenty-Seventh Amendment, now bars courts from questioning any constitutional amendment "on any ground whatsoever", a clause whose relevance becomes clearer once the doctrinal history behind it is traced.

A Legal Pattern Six Decades in the Making

The idea that Pakistan's Constitution has features an amendment cannot lawfully reach did not begin with the 2015 judgment most commonly cited today. Its roots lie in *Fazlul Quader Chowdhury v Muhammad Abdul Haque* (PLD 1963 SC 486), an early case exploring the limits of delegated law-making power, later cited by India's own Supreme Court in developing its basic structure doctrine. Later, in *Mahmood Khan Achakzai v Federation of Pakistan* (PLD 1997 SC 426), the Court went further and named three salient features: federalism, the parliamentary form of government, and Islamic provisions, while cautioning that a complete list could not be fixed with finality. *Wukala Mahaz Barai Tahafuz Dastoor v Federation of Pakistan* (PLD 1998 SC 1263) pressed the same argument in seeking to void an amendment outright, and *Sindh High Court Bar Association v Federation of Pakistan* (PLD 2009 SC 879) entrenched judicial independence and separation of powers as cardinal, non-negotiable features of the constitutional scheme. That fifty-year arc reached its clearest statement yet in *District Bar Association, Rawalpindi v Federation of Pakistan* (PLD 2015 SC 401), where thirteen of seventeen judges affirmed that courts may strike down a constitutional amendment that damages a salient feature, regardless of the majorities behind it, even as the bench split on how and when to exercise that power. It has since been described as the most significant assertion of substantive judicial review over the amending power in the country's history.



SAMEA BINT SAHBAN

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OPINION

DTM



RAWALPINDI: With egg demand rising in winter, workers unload crates from a delivery van. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Overpopulation is a challenge

I want to express my concern over Pakistan's rapidly growing population and the pressure it places on the country's limited resources. Population growth is not simply a matter of numbers. It affects the availability of food, housing, education, healthcare, employment and other basic necessities.

I believe that every child deserves a healthy childhood, access to education and the opportunity to live with dignity. However, when families grow beyond their financial means, providing these necessities becomes increasingly difficult. Parents may struggle to afford school fees, nutritious food and medical treatment, while children may be forced to leave education early to support their families.

The problem also affects the country as a whole. A growing population increases demand for schools, hospitals, transport, clean water and affordable housing. When public services fail to expand at the same pace, existing facilities become overcrowded and the quality of life suffers. Poverty and unemployment can become more difficult to address when economic growth fails to create enough opportunities for everyone.

I do not believe that population growth should be discussed by blaming poor families. Many parents have limited access to education, healthcare and reliable information about family planning. In some communities, social pressure and traditional attitudes also discourage couples from making informed decisions about the size of their families.

I want to stress that family planning should be treated as a matter of awareness, healthcare and personal choice. Couples should have access to accurate information, affordable contraceptives and medical advice so that they can decide when to have children and how many children they can responsibly support.

The government must also address child marriage, which can expose girls to early pregnancies and interrupt their education. Enforcing laws against child marriage, educating girls and improving women's access to healthcare can help families make informed decisions about their futures.

I believe that schools, healthcare workers and the media have an important role in explaining the relationship between family size, household resources and quality of life. Public awareness campaigns should be respectful and informative rather than frightening or insulting.

At the same time, population policy must be supported by wider economic reforms. Pakistan needs more employment opportunities, better public services, affordable housing and improved access to education.

tion. Responsible family planning cannot replace these measures, but it can form an important part of a broader development strategy.

BY A CONCERNED READER, MARDAN

Social media addiction

I want to express my concern about the growing problem of social media addiction, especially among young people and children. We live in an age of technology in which mobile phones and the internet have made our lives easier. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube help us communicate, share information and stay connected with others. However, their excessive use is becoming a serious problem in our society.

Social media addiction occurs when people spend too much time on these platforms and find it difficult to stay away from their phones. Some people check their phones every few minutes because they fear missing something important. Others use social media to overcome loneliness or escape their daily problems. However, excessive use can affect mental health, disturb sleep and reduce concentration. Students may find it difficult to focus on their studies because they spend hours watching videos and checking notifications. Comparing their lives with the seemingly perfect lives of others can also make people feel unhappy and less confident. Online harassment, hateful comments and the misuse of personal information are additional concerns. The problem is particularly worrying when it comes to children. Many young children spend hours using mobile phones instead of reading books or playing outdoor games. Too much screen time can cause eye strain and disturb healthy routines. Children may also come across inappropriate content if their online activities are not properly supervised. Parents should set reasonable screen-time limits, encourage outdoor activities and guide their children towards safe internet use. Schools can also help students understand the harmful effects of excessive social media use. Social media itself is not the enemy. It can provide knowledge, entertainment and opportunities to learn new skills when used wisely. The problem begins when it controls our time and affects our responsibilities. People should set daily limits, follow useful educational pages and make time for family, studies and physical activities. We must remember that mobile phones are tools designed to help us, not devices that should control our lives. Responsible use of technology can help us enjoy its benefits without allowing it to harm our health, relationships and future.

How Public Sector in Pakistan Works

The government of Pakistan also purchases goods and services for its economy. Pakistan imports have averaged Rs. 49,003.3 million from 1957 to 2013, reaching an all-time high of Rs. 427,531 million in May of 2013 and a record low of Rs. 96 million in April of 1959. The major imports of Pakistan are fuel, which constitutes 40% of Pakistan's total imports, followed by machinery and transport equipment (18%), chemicals (16%), food and animal or vegetable oils (13%), and manufactured goods (12%).

Water and Power Development Authority and Karachi Electric Supply Corporation are assigned the task of producing and distributing power all over the country. Apart from these two public sector companies, there are also more than 20 private power companies, which generate electricity in Pakistan.

The public sector in Pakistan has a vast role in its economy via different regulatory bodies, providing products and services in the health, energy, defense, and transportation sectors. The part of the economy concerned with providing basic government services to the people is called the public sector. It is the primary role of the government to provide a legal agenda within which all economic transactions occur. In general, the undertakings of any government fall into the following four categories:

Production of goods and services

Regulation and subsidization of private production

Purchase of goods and services, for example, defense and/or health-related

Redistribution of income, for example, transfer payment, social security, and/or unemployment benefits

The public sector in Pakistan is largely seen as being incompetent and inefficient in its work, with charges of corruption and inefficiency being cited as primary culprits.

The Public Sector's Activities

Water and Power Development Authority and Karachi Electric Supply Corporation are assigned the task of producing and distributing power all over the country. Apart from these two public sector companies, there are also more than 20 private power companies, which generate electricity in Pakistan.

As for the defense industry, ammunition, fighter jets, tanks, and armaments are produced by organizations such as the Air Weapons Complex, Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Complex, and Pakistan Ordnance Factories, among others.

Pakistan Post caters to the postal needs of the country. Founded in 1947, it offers postal services to the citizens of Pakistan such as mail deliveries, parcel posting, certificate of posting, post boxes, etcetera. It also performs various federal services such as payment to the Benazir Income Support Program beneficiaries, collection of taxes, collection of customs duty, and disbursement of financial assistance.

The government of Pakistan also provides education to its citizens on every level - elementary, secondary, or tertiary. It also has technical and vocational schools and colleges in various parts of the country. Many universities are also given a public sector chartered status such as the University of Engineering and Technology located in Lahore and Peshawar. The provincial governments have also built many schools, colleges, and universities in their respective provinces.

Subsidies

There also exist private industries and sectors in the country where the government is neither a producer nor a consumer; however, it can still influence the decisions of such private products. This influence is exercised through subsidies and taxes - both direct and indirect - and through regulations.

The government subsidizes private production in three ways:

Direct payments to producers
Indirect payments through the tax system
Hidden expenditures

The government of Pakistan subsidizes the agriculture sector the most, often by selling producer seeds and fertilizers at a subsidized rate to encourage people in agriculture. Electricity is also being distributed by WAPDA at a subsidized rate. Sometimes the Pakistan government also imposes a price ceiling on different products like wheat and sugar.

Concurrently, the government also gives special types of loans and loan guarantees, which contain low interest rates (below the market level) to facilitate businesses. The government also regulates business activity in an attempt to protect workers, consumers, and the environment to prevent anti-competitive practices and to prevent discrimination.

Regulatory Bodies

The public sector in Pakistan has different regulatory bodies to oversee the activities of different industries of the economy.

National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) was established as an independent regulatory body to improve the efficiency and availability of electric power services while protecting the interests of consumers, investors, and operators equally. It also promotes competition and deregulates power sector activities where competition exists.

The Oil and Gas Regulation Authority (OGRA) was established in 2002 for the development of the oil and gas sector, the augmentation of private sector investment, and the protection of consumer interests. It regulates various activities including construction or operation of natural gas and oil pipelines.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is a regulatory body for the telecom sector in Pakistan. It has been formed to ensure and facilitate the availability of high-quality, efficient, cost-effective, and competitive telecommunication services throughout Pakistan.

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) provides project management guidelines and action plans to the private sector involved in radio, television, and cable TV networks in the country. The main objectives of the authority include improvements in the standard of information, education, and entertainment.

Pakistan's Imports

The government of Pakistan also purchases goods and services for its economy. Pakistan imports have averaged Rs. 49,003.3 million from 1957 to 2013, reaching an all-time high of Rs. 427,531 million in May of 2013 and a record low of Rs. 96 million in April of 1959. The major imports of Pakistan are fuel, which constitutes 40% of Pakistan's total imports, followed by machinery and transport equipment (18%), chemicals (16%), food and animal or vegetable oils (13%), and manufactured goods (12%). Pakistan's main import partners are the United Arab Emirates (19%), China (15%), Saudi Arabia (10%), and Kuwait (8%). Other major import countries are Malaysia, Japan, India, and the United States.

Pakistan's Fiscal Deficit

Pakistan is under a huge deficit and has to place more taxes to balance it. A deficit occurs when a country's expenses are in excess compared to its revenues. Taxes are considered the primary source of financing government expenditures. The government of Pakistan borrowed heavily from external and internal sources to finance its fiscal deficit, due to which a huge amount of money was paid towards interest payments. All these factors relentlessly affected Pakistan's fiscal capacity to finance the fiscal deficit. During the past three years, the efforts to contain the fiscal deficit to a reasonable limit through an expenditure management strategy, austerity measures, and reforms in the public sector enterprises have yielded the following results.

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

The Lawyers' Movement was another milestone in the history of protest in Pakistan. The movement started in March 2007 when President and Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf suspended the sitting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. Lawyers staged demonstrations, boycotts, rallies, and finally long marches for the restoration of the judiciary. The movement quickly spread to the political parties, civil society, and parts of the media.

The Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) Movement.

The next big national political agitation in the country was the PNA Movement in 1977. The PNA, which was a nine-party opposition alliance, refused to accept the outcome of the general election held in March 1977 and claimed that the elections were tampered with. This came to a head in a mass protest movement, strikes, demonstrations, and clashes.

The movement later took a religious tone, and the PNA also fought for a "Nizam-i-Mustafa" system. The Nizam-e-Mustafa movement was a major 1977 political and religious campaign in Pakistan aimed at replacing the government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with an Islamic system based on Sharia.

For many months, negotiations were ongoing between the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the PNA. History has it that the deal seemed to be closed in early July. On 5th July 1977, however, Ziaul Haq staged a military coup and ousted Bhutto from the government after imposing martial law. This makes it hard to classify this movement as a success or a failure in 1977.

If the primary goal is to oust Bhutto from power, then the movement ultimately helped bring about the one that did that. When the goal was one of a democratic political settlement via elections and negotiation, however, it was a completely different story: military intervention supplanted the civilian political process.

Thus, a military dictatorship was imposed



AZHAR ALI

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on the movement, and the two were separated by a long period of military rule. In the short term, Bhutto lost her position. Broader repercussions: this led to military rule and martial law supplanting the civilian political system in the country.

The Shia Zakat Protest

In the 1980 protest against the Zakat and Ushr Ordinance by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1980, one of the most obvious examples of a protest on a specific policy that resulted in an immediate concession by the government is found.

In July 1980, Shia Muslims protested against the compulsory collection of the Zakat under the new system being implemented by the state in Islamabad. Thousands of demonstrators converged around the area of the federal government, blocking the activity of the bureaucracy.

Eventually, the government was willing to allow Shias to provide Zakat voluntarily. This case is of special significance because it proves that a protest doesn't need to bring down a government to accomplish its goal. An explicit policy requirement can be negotiated and accepted.

The immediate objective of the protest was achieved, and Shias obtained exemption from the Zakat.

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy 1983

In 1983, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) came into existence as a wide coalition against General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime.

The movement called for a restoration of democracy, the restoration of the Constitution

of 1973, and an end to military rule. It gained added strength in Sindh, where demonstrations and civil disobedience were met with a high level of repression.

Although substantial mobilization took place, the movement failed to create enough political pressure throughout the country to oust Zia. The military government persisted, and even flourished, right up to the late 1980s.

The movement, however, played a significant role in Pakistan's democratic struggle for freedom. It showed that a government can hold on to power, even in the event of a large protest movement, if the opposition is geographically localized, if the repression is widespread, and if mobilization is not widespread enough in the country.

The immediate objective of the protest was not achieved as General Zia continued to rule till his death. However, the broader impact was that the movement entered into the Pakistani democratic opposition's legacy.

Long Marches Enter the Political Mainstream 1989-93

Following the return of party-based democratic politics in 1988, long marches were gradually adopted as a means of contestation between civilian political parties. During Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's first government (1990), opposition parties marched towards Islamabad. This march was peaceful.

Benazir Bhutto initiated another long march against Nawaz Sharif's government in 1992, accusing him of rigging the last general election of 1990.

The political face-off spurred a greater crisis, which was later resolved by the Supreme Court when President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dissolved the National Assembly.

Another skirmish erupted between Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the military establishment in 1993. In the end, both the president and prime minister resigned due to the pressure of Army Chief

General Waheed Kakar.

The episodes illustrate one of the key features of the Pakistani political system in the 1990s, that is, street mobilization often was intertwined with institutional disputes between the presidency, parliament, political parties and the military.

The immediate objective of the long marches was to be removing government was not achieved in 1992. In 1993: Although this was a major political shift, it was not brought about by street mobilization alone, but by a wider institutional crisis.

The Lawyers' Movement 2007-09

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Following Musharraf's imposition of emergency rule in November 2007, and the removal of judges once more, the movement gained momentum. A second large-scale march towards Islamabad was called in March 2009. The government finally announced the restoration of the deposed judges, and the march was halted.

The movement thus fulfilled its core institutional aim of securing. It also had a broader impact. It put judicial independence, constitutionalism, and the nature of civilian institutions and military power at the center of the national political discussion.

The immediate objective of the protest was achieved, and judges were restored. However, if we look at the wider consequences, it was a significant episode of public mobilization over judicial independence and constitutional governance.

NATIONAL

DTM

Sherpao blames former PTI govt's narrative for rise in terrorism in KP

Qaumi Watan Party Chairman and former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Aftab Sherpao has attributed the alarming rise in terrorism in the province over recent years to what he termed the misleading narrative of the former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, while calling for urgent measures to restore public confidence and improve law and order under governor's rule.

Talking to the media here Monday, Sherpao said that serious efforts had been made to make negotiations successful for resolving political and security issues, but the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister had remained a major obstacle to their success. Expressing concern over the province's administrative situation, he said that ineffective governance had left the public without adequate protection for their lives and property. He maintained that the imposition of an emergency had become an unavoidable necessity and stressed that restoring public confidence and reducing terrorism must be the top priorities.

Sherpao said that governor's rule could achieve its objectives only if it brought meaningful relief to the people and helped end the prevailing uncertainty. He called for immediate and practical steps to improve the security situation and address public concerns.

Responding to a question by journalist about reports circulating on social media regarding his possible appointment as governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the former federal interior minister dismissed the reports as baseless. He said that sustainable development and lasting peace in the province required all political and administrative stakeholders to sit together and formulate a joint strategy to overcome the prevailing crises.

Commenting on the economic situation, Sherpao said that repeated increases in petroleum prices were intensifying inflationary pressures on ordinary citizens. He criticized the federal government for, what he described as, leaving Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone in its difficult circumstances. He urged the federal government to play an effective and responsible role in addressing the province's security challenges, deteriorating law and order situation and economic difficulties.

NEWS DESK

Governor Kundi says industrial growth key to economic stability in KP

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said the province had vast potential for industrial development and stressed the need for a comprehensive and practical strategy to fully utilize available opportunities for creating employment and strengthening the provincial economy.

Chairing a meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) at the Governor House, the Governor was briefed on the company's administrative structure, performance, achievements, future targets, economic zones, revenue generation and other related matters.

Advisor to the Governor on Industries Muhammad Inshad, Secretary Industries and other senior officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was informed that 15 economic zones were currently functional across the province, while plans were underway to establish seven more. It was further stated that the company had so far facilitated the creation of around 107,000 employment opportunities.

The Governor was also briefed on issues confronting various economic zones, including the Yaka Ghund Marble City, Katlang Economic Zone and other proposed industrial projects.

Governor Kundi said promotion of industries could generate thousands of employment opportunities for the people and play a vital role in ensuring sustainable economic growth. He emphasized encouraging private sector investment by providing a business-friendly environment and facilitating investors under the Ease of Doing Business policy.

He directed the authorities concerned to resolve functional issues of economic zones on a priority basis and asked them to consult the Finance Department regarding land acquisition and payment-related matters for new economic zone projects and present practical proposals.

The Governor also instructed officials to convene immediate meetings with relevant federal and provincial departments to address the issues facing economic zones, ensuring all stakeholders were taken into confidence for effective and practical solutions.

He said matters relating to federal depart-

ments should be taken up with the federal government for timely resolution and stressed the need to address security concerns, site selection and other administrative challenges affecting economic zones.

Governor Kundi said that some economic zones were located in areas facing law and order challenges and called for a comprehensive review to devise workable solutions so that industrial activities could be initiated there.

He further directed the authorities to expedite action for resolving financial issues and legal disputes, remove all obstacles affecting the functionality of economic zones and ensure early progress on pending matters.

Separately, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday inspected the ongoing anti-encroachment drive here in Garhi Qamar and vowed to eliminate illegal encroachments across the province, declaring a policy of zero tolerance against violators regardless of their influence.

The Governor received a briefing from officials of the district administration and the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) on the ongoing operation against illegal encroachments. He appreciated the efforts of the district administration and relevant departments for launching an effective campaign to reclaim public land.

Governor Kundi said the operation would not remain confined to Peshawar but would be extended across the province. He warned that if encroachments reappeared after being removed, the relevant authorities would be held responsible.

He urged people occupying public spaces illegally to remove their encroachments voluntarily, otherwise strict legal action would be taken. He said no individual, irrespective of political influence or social status, would receive any concession, adding that the era of protecting encroachments through political connections had come to an end.



The Governor criticized the previous provincial government, alleging that anti-encroachment operations were neglected during its tenure.

He said a city-wide cleanliness campaign had also been launched, while measures were being taken to improve traffic management by strengthening traffic regulations to facilitate commuters.

Speaking on the wheat issue, Governor Kundi said an inquiry had already been ordered and its report would be completed within a week before being made public.

He said the issues of electricity and gas load-shedding would be taken up with the federal government and durable solutions would be pursued through close coordination between the federation and the province.

Governor Kundi said the provincial and federal governments were now working in harmony to resolve public issues, unlike in the past when such matters were politicized.

He also stressed the need to eliminate electricity theft, saying public cooperation was essential to end the "Kunda culture", improve the power distribution system and help reduce load-shedding across the province. NEWS DESK

NCCIA warns against creating fake social media profiles of women

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) on Monday issued a stern warning against creating fake social media profiles of women, leaking their personal data and images, and blackmailing them online.

In a statement shared on social media, the NCCIA said that blackmailing women and leaking anyone's personal data were cybercrimes punishable under the law.

"Blackmailing women, leaking private pictures or creating fake profiles are crimes," the agency said, urging citizens to speak out against such illegal activities and submit complaints to the NCCIA along with relevant evidence.

The agency urged citizens not to remain silent and to expose those involved in online harassment.

"A safer digital Pakistan is a shared responsibility," the NCCIA said, encouraging the public to report online harassment, fake profiles, misuse of private images and blackmailing by contacting its helpline at 1799.

The agency also urged victims and affected individuals to come forward and report cybercrime incidents to help ensure a safer digital environment. NP

Case against Railways Police officials for kidnapping KMC City Warden

Shahra-e-Faizal Police have registered a case against Pakistan Railways Police officials for allegedly kidnapping and torturing a Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) City Warden, police said.

The case was registered on the complaint of City Wardens Director Saim Imran, who alleged that railway police officials assaulted him and took him to an undisclosed location during a dispute over road construction and traffic management in Karachi.

According to the FIR, road repair work has been underway for the past four months on the stretch from Nathi Khan Bridge to Pehlwan Goth near the Chakor

Nullah in Gulistan-e-Jauhar.

Imran stated that he was performing traffic management duties at the site on the day of the incident when Station House Officer (SHO) of the Railway Police Ahsan Rashid arrived with other police personnel.

The complainant alleged that he was beaten, forced into a police mobile and taken to an undisclosed location, where he was tied up and subjected to severe torture.

According to the FIR, the officials allegedly pressured him to hold their feet and lick their shoes. When he refused, he was allegedly beaten so severely that he lost consciousness. NP

Pay by Oct 20 or lose spot, Hajj pilgrims told

Pakistan's religious affairs ministry on Monday urged intending pilgrims to complete payment of their second Hajj installment under the government scheme before the deadline ends on Oct. 20.

Pakistan allocated 107,526 slots, including 30,000 for a shorter package, to the government scheme, while another 77,696 slots have been allocated to the private scheme for next year's Hajj.

The country completed online booking of all seats under the government Hajj scheme on Aug. 25, marking the first time the entire quota had been filled through a digital reservation system.

Islamabad allowed pilgrims to deposit second installments of their dues under the government scheme between Oct. 5 and Oct. 20, warning that applications would be canceled if payments were not made by the cut-off date.

"There is one day remaining for the payment of the second installment of Hajj dues," the Pakistani religious affairs ministry said. "Government Hajj pilgrims must complete the payment of their dues by October 20."

Pilgrims under the government scheme can deposit the second installment of Hajj dues via the 'Pak Hajj App' or the digital Hajj portal during the specified period. Pakistan this year announced that pilgrims would pay Rs1.2 million (\$4,334) for a 40-day Hajj package and Rs1.3 million (\$4,695) for a shorter, 20- to 25-day package under the government scheme.

Payments of first installment of dues for seats under the shorter government package were completed within 24 hours after the process began on Aug. 18, while the remaining seats under the scheme were booked by Aug. 25.

Preparations and bookings under the private scheme are also under way. NEWS DESK

Food Deptt raises daily wheat release quota in KP

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Department has increased the daily wheat release quota from 3,000 to 4,000 metric tonnes following a Peshawar High Court decision and directions from the Cabinet Oversight Committee.

The additional 1,000 metric tonnes will be supplied to operational flour mills from the National Reserve Centre (NRC) warehouses in Azakhel to ensure timely utilisation of stored wheat and prevent further losses.

According to a notification issued by the Food Department, the additional wheat quota will be distributed among all districts in proportion to the province's population of 43.84 million.

The Director Food has issued necessary instructions to all district food controllers and rationing controllers to implement the revised allocation.

Under the revised arrangement, Peshawar will receive an additional 116 metric tonnes daily, followed by Mardan with 67 tonnes, Swabi with 46 tonnes, Charsadda with 45 tonnes, Nowshera with 43 tonnes and Lower Dir with 40 tonnes.

Other allocations include 39 tonnes for Lower Swat, 35 tonnes for Abbottabad, 44 tonnes for Mansehra, 45 tonnes for Dera Ismail Khan, 33 tonnes for Bannu, 32 tonnes for Bajaur and 30 tonnes for Kohat. The remaining quota has been distributed among other districts according to their respective allocations.

The department decided to release the additional wheat after a report by the Storage and Enforcement Officer at NRC Azakhel highlighted damage to stored stocks caused by recent flash flooding.

According to the report, floodwater entered the warehouses and affected the lower layers of wheat bags. Six of the centre's 11 warehouses sustained damage, while the remaining five stayed safe.

The report recommended the immediate release of stocks to prevent further damage, particularly in view of forecast rainfall.

To ensure transparency, the Director Food has directed district food controllers and rationing controllers to submit verified lists of operational flour mills to the release committee before lifting wheat stocks. The move aims to maintain a proper record of wheat release and distribution.

The notification also makes it mandatory to update all records relating to wheat allocations, transportation and release on the ICT application without delay.

Relevant officials will ensure that government flour produced from the additional wheat reaches consumers through authorised dealers at officially notified prices.

The department has directed all concerned officials to strictly monitor district allocations, verify operational flour mills and ensure the sale of government flour at prescribed rates so that the benefit of the additional wheat supply reaches the public. APP

Five killed in car crash in Multran

At least five people were killed when a speeding car went out of control, hit a road divider and crashed into the wall of a vacant plot near Sabzar Metro Station on Bosan road.

According to Rescue officials, a Toyota Corolla car riding five persons was on its way when suddenly it went uncontrolled due to overspeeding and collided with road divider and then collided with the wall of empty plot. The car engine also caught fire after the incident.

As a result, all five persons sustained serious head injuries and died on the spot.

Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene, retrieved the bodies from the wreckage and brought the fire under control.

The deceased were identified as Muhammad Muzammil, 23, son of Abdul Khaliq; Muhammad Yasir, 22, son of Muhammad Ameer and Ramzan, 28, son of Ghulam Qasim residents of Shukabad. The identities of the other two victims, estimated to be around 24 and 25 years old, had not been established.

Two fire tenders, four ambulances, one motorcycle ambulance and a rescue vehicle participated in the emergency operation. The bodies were shifted to Nishtar hospital following the completion of police legal formalities. NP

FCCP upholds ruling in favour of teacher

The Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) has dismissed an appeal filed by Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Peshawar, and upheld an earlier judgment in favour of its female teacher, Syeda Laila.

During the hearing, Justice Syed Hazan Azhar Rizvi observed that the teacher had served the uni-

versity for three years after completing her PhD, yet the institution was still harassing her.

The university's counsel, Rehmanullah, argued that the government had provided the teacher with a scholarship of Rs5.6 million for her PhD, in return for which she was required to serve the university for three

years.

He said she had remained on leave for 196 days during that period.

Justice Rizvi questioned how the university could challenge the leave when it had itself approved her leave applications. The court also asked why the teacher had resigned and what action had been taken against the officials who had sanctioned her leave.

The judge further observed that the university had not selected Syeda Laila for the post of assistant professor but had instead recruited an outside candidate. He remarked that public funds had been spent on her PhD, yet another person was appointed to the position afterwards.

After examining the university's arguments, the court dismissed its appeal and upheld the earlier decision in favour of Syeda Laila. NEWS DESK



NATIONAL

DTM

‘Governor’s rule aimed at restoring peace, not seizing minerals’

Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik and Prime Minister’s Coordinator for Information in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ikhitar Wali Khan on Monday rejected allegations that the imposition of emergency and governor’s rule in the province was aimed at taking control of its mineral resources, saying the constitutional measures were intended to restore law and order, address security challenges and protect the lives and property of citizens.

Addressing a joint press conference here, the two officials said the measures had been approved by a majority after detailed deliberations in both Houses of Parliament and a joint sitting under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution. They described Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s allegations concerning mineral resources as unfounded and contrary to facts. Barrister Aqeel Malik said the provincial government had abandoned its constitutional responsibilities and remained focused on sit-ins, long marches and confrontation rather than addressing governance and security issues.

Citing official figures, he said the number of mining leases or concessions in the province had increased from 482 in 2010 to 1,762 in 2020, reaching 3,962 by February 2024 and 4,917 by October 2026.

He said the increase had taken place during successive Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) governments in the province over the past 13 years, rejecting allegations that the federal government was seeking to take control of mineral resources or issue licences to foreign powers, including the United States. He challenged those making the allegations to present evidence

or documentary proof to substantiate their claims. Referring to the security situation, Barrister Aqeel Malik said Maulana Fazlur Rehman had himself acknowledged on the floor of Parliament that the state’s writ was eroding after sunset in several districts, including his native Deri Ismail Khan, with police stations rendered ineffective.

He said security personnel, police officers and civilians were losing their lives on a daily basis, making intervention necessary to protect the public and restore the authority of the state. The minister regretted that Maulana Fazlur Rehman had remained absent from the joint sitting of Parliament when the issue was discussed, adding that no such allegations had been raised by his party’s members during the proceedings.

He said the federal government had taken the step in accordance with constitutional requirements and that an 11-member advisory council was working to improve the province’s affairs. Ikhitar Wali Khan said the previous provincial government had left several districts vulnerable to militant activity, while the police had been pushed to the point of considering a strike.

He urged Maulana Fazlur Rehman, whom he described as a senior national political leader, to exercise restraint in his public statements and avoid remarks that could hurt the people of the province and the families of security personnel and other martyrs. Rejecting the mineral-resource allegations, Ikhitar Wali Khan said no emergency had been imposed in mineral-rich districts, including Buner, Swat, Malakand, Hazara and Kohat, arguing that this demonstrated that the measures were driven by security concerns rather than an interest in mineral wealth. **NEWS DESK**



New waste facility in I-9 to become operational within three months, NA told

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhary on Monday informed the National Assembly that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) would shift solid waste dumped between sectors I-10 and I-11 to a designated depot in I-9 within the next two to three months to address environmental and public health concerns.

Responding to a Calling Attention Notice by MNA Asiya Naz Tanoli regarding the dumping of garbage between sectors I-10 and I-11, which had caused environmental pollution, foul smells, potential groundwater contamination and serious public health risks, he said the waste transfer operation had resumed, with around 700 metric tonnes of solid waste being transported daily.

He said Islamabad generated approximately 300 metric tonnes of solid waste daily, while the accumulated waste at the site had not been transferred for around six months due to certain issues. The minister said the CDA had already developed a designated facility in I-9, which was expected to become fully operational within two to three months. Once operational, the facility would receive the city’s solid waste, eliminating the need for continued dumping at the existing site.

Highlighting the need for a sustainable waste management system, he said the government had awarded a contract for solid waste management in Islamabad’s rural areas, including Zones III and IV, to a Turkish company.

He said the government planned to extend the system to the city’s sectors in the next phase through a transparent process, engaging qualified national or international firms.

Talal Chaudhary also stressed the need to introduce a fair user-fee system for waste collection, pointing out that residents in several sectors

were receiving the service without paying an adequate share of its cost.

He said the proposed fee structure would take into account the differences between rural and urban areas, with separate charges for residential sectors and rural localities.

The minister also referred to the low recovery of water charges in Islamabad, saying the government needed to improve cost recovery for municipal services to ensure their sustainable provision.

He said the government was committed to resolving the solid waste management issue on a perma-

remained a challenge.

He said solid waste management in the city’s main sectors, including I-10 and I-11, was being handled by the CDA’s own sanitation staff, while waste management services in rural areas had previously been outsourced.

The minister said the CDA had acquired modern machinery to improve sanitation services and ensure a cleaner urban environment. He added that keeping the capital clean and reducing environmental pollution were among the government’s top priorities, in line with the



nent basis through improved infrastructure, private-sector participation and a transparent fee collection mechanism.

Speaking on the issue, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said the government was taking measures to strengthen solid waste management in Islamabad, with a permanent disposal site acquired on Chak Beli Road in Rawalpindi district to address waste disposal challenges.

He said Islamabad had a comprehensive solid waste management programme, but waste collection and disposal in some rural areas

directions of the prime minister and the relevant minister.

He said temporary dumping sites had been established at different locations in Islamabad, while a permanent solid waste disposal site had now been secured on Chak Beli Road in coordination with the Rawalpindi authorities.

The minister said waste would be disposed of at the designated permanent site, while efforts were under way to improve sanitation and solid waste management across both urban and rural areas of the capital.

He expressed confidence that the measures would address public

complaints regarding waste dumping and help maintain Islamabad’s environment in line with its status as the country’s capital.

Talal Chaudhary informed the National Assembly that development work in Sector C-15 of Islamabad was around 60 per cent complete, while the process of securing possession of land was nearing completion to facilitate the allotment of plots to their rightful owners. Responding to a Calling Attention Notice moved by MNA Naeema Kishwer Khan regarding delays in balloting and allotment of residential plots in various sectors, particularly C-15, he acknowledged that prolonged delays in the Capital Development Authority’s (CDA) development projects had caused serious concern among allottees.

He said several sectors had remained incomplete for decades. Citing Sector E-12 as an example, he said allotment letters were issued in 1992 after the project was launched in 1985, but many allottees had waited for years to obtain possession.

The minister said the government had recently made significant progress in Sector E-12, with possession handed over for around 4,068 plots over the past one to one-and-a-half months. He added that commercial land in the sector, which had previously been occupied illegally, had also been cleared. The recovered commercial plots were valued at more than Rs200 billion, and their sale would generate resources for development in Islamabad, he said.

He said the government was accelerating development and possession processes in C-15 and other sectors, including E-14, through reforms at the CDA.

He added that a new member had been appointed specifically to oversee sector development and address related issues to expedite pending projects. **NEWS DESK**

Makkah Pact progress satisfies Pakistan, Saudi Arabia

Continued from Page 1

Regarding reports linking the alliance’s formation to the need to deter Iran or Israel, Lt Gen Chaudhry said the pact was not “country-specific” and did not have any “offensive intent.”

However, he added: “It is [formed] to have peace, stability and security in the region. So any actor which threatens that peace, stability and security, it automatically interacts with this collective deterrence mechanism.”

Regarding the threats to maritime navigation in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Strait of Hormuz, the DG ISPR noted that Riyadh had established a multinational maritime defence coalition, with a Pakistani naval officer serving as its deputy commander.

Asked about his message to Saudi Arabia and the Muslim world, Lt Gen Chaudhry said Muslims “need to unite”. He emphasised that there was no advantage “to these countries, any country, by vertically or horizontally escalating these conflicts.”

Regarding the expansion of the alliance, the military spokesperson maintained that the door remains open to other countries that believe in the principle of collective deterrence and share the member states’ goals related to regional security and stability. Asked about reports of Egypt and Syria’s interest in joining, he stated such decisions rest with the political, strategic and military leadership of the three countries. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan never gave up on US-Iran peace: Naqvi

Continued from Page 1

He added that Pakistan had also contributed to international security through decades of participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Pakistani military and police personnel had helped protect civilians, support local police and restore peace in conflict-affected countries.

Naqvi outlined three lessons from recent peace efforts: dialogue must never be abandoned, trust is essential for negotiations, and peace requires sincere efforts from all sides. No country, he said, could achieve regional peace alone.

He reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to dialogue, peace and cooperation, concluding that the country did not seek credit for stopping wars but wanted a future in which wars did not begin. **NEWS DESK**

Murad opens Sindh’s first engineered landfill site

Continued from Page 1

Shah thanked the World Bank for its financial and technical assistance, adding that international best practices would help strengthen the capacity of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and the Local Government Department.

Engineered Cells: During the briefing, the Chief Minister was informed that three engineered landfill cells had been completed, while overall progress on the construction package had reached 61.67 per cent.

The remaining construction work is targeted for completion by November 30, 2026. The Chief Minister said the facility had begun operations with the inauguration of its first phase and expressed confidence that the remaining cells would be completed according to the announced schedule.

Four Stations: The Chief Minister said the engineered landfill was part of a broader initiative to improve Karachi’s waste management system, including the construction of four garbage transfer stations at Sherafi Goth, Dinga Mar, Intiaz and Gutter Baghicha.

The four stations will have a combined handling capacity of 6,500 tonnes of waste per day. Waste collected at these facilities will be transferred to larger vehicles for transportation to the landfill site, making the process more efficient and organised.

Carbon Credits: Highlighting the environmental and financial potential of the project, the Chief Minister said the World Bank’s technical team had estimated that the landfill initiative could generate carbon credits worth approximately \$20 million.

Shah said the necessary progress, including project registration for carbon credits, had been made and that the initiative could generate financial benefits alongside improvements in environmental protection.

Water From Hub Dam: Speaking about Karachi’s water supply, the Chief Minister said the Sindh government had remodelled the Hub Canal to improve its capacity and had requested the federal government to increase Karachi’s allocation from Hub Dam.

He said the provincial government wanted the daily allocation to be increased from 100 million gallons to 200 million gallons. “The matter is with the federal government. We have requested an additional allocation of 100 million gallons per day for Karachi, and there is capacity in Hub Dam to provide additional water,” Murad Shah

said.

The CM expressed hope that federal approval would enable the provincial government to improve water availability for the city.

Rs13bn for Karachi Roads: The Chief Minister announced that the Sindh government had prepared a Rs13 billion programme for the construction, rehabilitation and repair of roads across Karachi, covering major thoroughfares as well as internal roads and streets under the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and town administrations.

He said the work was expected to begin in the first week of November and would be completed within three months.

“Insha’Allah, the condition of Karachi’s damaged roads will improve significantly by February,” he said.

Shanghai’s development offers lessons for Karachi: Referring to his recent visit to China, the Chief Minister said his delegation had travelled to the province of Hubei at the invitation of its government and had also held engagements in Shanghai.

He described the Sindh Investment and Trade Conference in Shanghai as successful and said he had observed considerable development in the city since his previous visit approximately 14 years ago. “Where investment comes in, development accelerates. We want to bring investment to Karachi by learning from Shanghai’s development experience,” he said.

Shah noted that Karachi and Shanghai were sister cities and said the provincial government wanted to explore opportunities for cooperation in infrastructure, investment and urban development.

New Provinces: Responding to questions from the media about proposals for the creation of new provinces, the Chief Minister said the Sindh Assembly had repeatedly passed resolutions rejecting such proposals. He said the elected representatives of Sindh had expressed the position of the province’s people through the assembly and that its resolutions could not be ignored.

Murad Ali Shah said that while everyone had the right to express an opinion, the creation of new provinces would have to follow the constitutional procedure, including the required legislative approvals and a two-thirds majority where constitutionally prescribed. He maintained that the position adopted by the Sindh Assembly remained clear on the issue.

Cooperation on Terrorism: Commenting on the issue of

Governor’s rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Chief Minister said it was not a politically desirable course of action, although the Constitution provided for it under specified circumstances.

Murad Shah stressed that the federal government and all provincial governments needed to work together to address terrorism and other security challenges facing the country.

Shah said threats from the eastern and western borders required a coordinated national response and close cooperation among the federation, provinces and relevant institutions.

The Chief Minister called for political dialogue to resolve differences between the federal and provincial governments, adding that cooperation against terrorism was essential for national security and stability.

He said dialogue and improved coordination could help resolve disputes and create conditions for moving forward.

Judicial Commission Report: The Chief Minister told the media that the sealed report of the judicial commission would be presented at the Sindh cabinet meeting scheduled for the following day.

He said the report remained sealed and would be opened at the cabinet meeting, after which the provincial government would decide on the future course of action in accordance with the cabinet’s decision.

Thar coal: Discussing the outcomes of the China visit, the Chief Minister said the delegation had held discussions with Shanghai Electric regarding investment opportunities, including a possible desalination plant.

He noted that Shanghai Electric was already involved in the Thar coal power project and referred to the electricity-generation capacity associated with Thar Coal Block-I.

He said the provincial government would present details of the investment discussions and proposed projects to the cabinet before making further information public.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the Sindh government was keen to attract investment, adopt modern technologies and use international experience to improve infrastructure, energy security, water supply and urban services across the province.

He said the Jam Chakro engineered landfill project represented an important step towards a cleaner and more environmentally sustainable Karachi, adding that the government would continue to pursue initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for the city’s residents. **NEWS DESK**

Five killed as speeding car overturns, catches fire

Five young men were killed when a speeding car overturned and caught fire on Bosen Road in Multan early on Monday, Rescue 1122 said.

The car went out of control near Sabazar Metro Station, hit a road divider, overturned and crashed into a wall, according to rescue officials. Rescue 1122 teams responded to the incident, extinguished the fire and shifted the bodies to Nishat Hospital, officials said.

The deceased were identified as Muhammad Yaseer, 22; Muhammad Muzammil, 23; Ramazan, 28; Wahab; and Kasho Khakhri. All five were from Shujasabad tehsil in Multan district. Multan City Police Officer (CPO) Akhtar Farooq also reached the scene with a heavy police contingent after receiving information about the accident and reviewed the situation. The bodies were later handed over to the families and taken to their native areas in Shujasabad. The deceased belonged to Multani Gate, Railway Station, Khakhi Banjani and Basti Khoja areas. Rescue officials said several similar accidents caused by overspeeding had previously occurred on major roads in Multan, including Bosen Road, Multan Avenue and Multan Public School Road, resulting in numerous injuries and deaths.

The accident came amid a series of fatal road crashes across the country. On October 16, eight people were killed and eight injured in two separate accidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P). Six people died when a passenger van overturned in Buner, while two children were killed after being run over by a truck near Tamab Road in Charsadda. The same day, three members of a family, including a 15-year-old boy, were killed when a 22-wheeler trailer loaded with cement crushed their car at a traffic signal in Lahore’s Garhi Shahu area. According to Rescue 1122, the car’s occupants became trapped inside the wreckage. The FIR alleged that the trailer driver had been driving recklessly. **NEWS DESK**

Historic church restored in Kotri

The restoration and renovation of a 180-year-old historic church in Kotri have been completed, with Sindh Assembly Deputy Speaker Anthony Naveed and Provincial Minister for Culture, Tourism and Antiquities Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah inaugurated the restored building on Monday.

According to a handout issued on Monday, Deputy Speaker Anthony Naveed said that built on Dec 22, 1846, the church had fallen into disrepair over the years. The restoration work was carried out while preserving its historical significance and original architectural features.

He said the Sindh government was taking steps to promote religious harmony, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths. Shah said the provincial government was committed to preserving Sindh’s historical heritage and restoring the cultural and religious sites of minority communities.

He said people belonging to different faiths had the freedom to practice their religion and stressed that respect for minorities was a shared responsibility. MPA Dr Sikander Ali Shoro described the church as an important part of Kotri’s heritage and said the provincial government had taken steps to restore the building. **NEWS DESK**

BACKPAGE

Police 'arrest' PTI MNA Nasim Ali Shah from Bannu

Police on Monday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of the National Assembly Maulana Nasim Ali Shah from his madrassa, Al-Markaz-ul-Islami, in Ghoriwala, Bannu.

Peshawar High Court (PHC), the former K-P chief minister was allegedly taken from the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar on October 11 by armed, masked men in the presence of the city's police chief. The petition sought his recovery, disclosure of his whereabouts, and a judicial inquiry into the alleged detention.

In a related incident, Afridi's lawyer, advocate Muhammad Bashir, was also reportedly picked up outside the PHC after filing a petition challenging the former chief minister's detention. He was later released, according to media reports.

Police also arrested PTI workers in several parts of the province amid the party's planned long march towards Islamabad. In Swabi, police reported arrests of party workers, while six PTI supporters were detained in Khyber district during protests against governor's rule.

Separately, PTI founder Imran Khan's sisters Aleema Khan, Dr Uzma Khan and Noreen Niaz were detained for 30 days under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance in September, ahead of the party's planned Islamabad march. Imran's nephews, Shehraz Khan and Sher Shah, were also briefly detained and later released, according to their lawyer.

The federal government imposed governor's rule and a state of emergency in K-P on October 11, citing security concerns and what it described as the provincial government's disengagement from counterterrorism efforts. PTI rejected the measures as unconstitutional and challenged them in the Peshawar High Court. **NEWS DESK**

A video circulating on social media purportedly showed police officers taking the lawmaker away. The circumstances surrounding his arrest, the cases, if any, registered against him, and his whereabouts following the operation had not been officially confirmed.

The video purportedly showing the arrest was also shared from the detained MNA's X account.

The arrest came amid a wider crackdown on PTI leaders and workers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) following the imposition of governor's rule and a state of emergency in the province on October 11.

Non-functional chief minister Sohail Afridi, PTI provincial president Junaid Akbar and K-P Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati were among the senior party figures taken into protective custody following the federal government's intervention. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry also confirmed that Afridi and some members of his cabinet had been placed in preventive custody.

According to a petition filed by Sohail Afridi's brother, Muhammad Aamir, in the



Prime Minister orders faceless tax collection rollout

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, directed an acceleration in the pace of reforms within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), noting that the initial results of ongoing reforms were encouraging.

Chairing a high-level review meeting, the prime minister emphasized that the FBR must continuously enhance its institutional capacity to effectively bridge the tax gap.

He further stressed that technology, effective professional training, transparency and accountability must remain central to ensuring that the ongoing reforms yield concrete outcomes.

Directing the swift nationwide rollout of a faceless tax collection mechanism, the prime minister said that FBR officials should enhance their performance keeping in view nation's expectations.

Underlining that the reform agenda served the broader national interests and would proceed unhindered, the prime minister called for zero-tolerance and indiscriminate action against corrupt elements within the department.

The staff showing genuine improvement in conduct and performance should be given an

opportunity to reform while there should be no room for corruption or underperformance, he emphasized.

During the meeting, officials gave a detailed briefing on ongoing interventions across technology, procedural workflows and human resource management.

It was informed that reforms implemented over the past three years had successfully narrowed the estimated tax gap from 6% to 5% of GDP while effective use of technology had substantially reduced inherent powers of FBR officials.

The new FBR inductees were undergoing specialized professional training at LUMS, complemented by continuous in-service training programs for incumbent officers. A Peer Rating System has been officially instituted to rigorously evaluate officers' performance. To strengthen financial scrutiny, 957 auditors have been recruited, on contract basis, on merit as third-party contractors, resulting in a fourfold increase in the FBR's overall audit capacity, it was further added.

The meeting was apprised that large-scale technological restructuring is underway, supported by the targeted recruitment of skilled technical talent and the introduction of a performance-linked incentive framework.

Livestock initiative

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday announced that the federal government would establish a national-level plant to produce

modern and effective livestock vaccines using indigenous resources.

The prime minister chaired a high-level meeting regarding ongoing reforms in the livestock sector, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister also directed the restructuring of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board which was established in 2007 to promote livestock breeding, increase milk and meat production, and foster the development of the livestock sector in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that the Livestock and Dairy Development Board should be transformed into an effective and functional organization by incorporating experts from the private sector.

He directed that a plan for the restructuring of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board should be presented without any delay.

The prime minister also directed that imported livestock, housed in special bonded warehouses, should be integrated into a value-addition process. He emphasized that meat and dairy products derived from imported livestock through value addition should be exported.

He also encouraged the private sector to step forward and drive the development of the livestock sector.

The prime minister directed that a strategy for establishing a livestock vaccine plant at the



National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) be presented within one week.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the progress of reforms in the livestock sector and measures taken to increase exports related to this sector. He also briefed that the process for third-party audits of slaughterhouses has commenced.

The officials during the briefing highlighted that the vaccines currently available for livestock in Pakistan are not approved by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP); therefore, steps are being taken to initiate the domestic production of purified livestock vaccines. Furthermore, they said measures are underway to establish dedicated bonded warehouses for imported livestock. **NEWS DESK**

New polio case reported from Karachi East

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Sindh has said that a new case of polio has been reported from Karachi East District in Sindh province.

According to the Sindh EOC the total number of polio cases in 2026 in the country has reached seven. Out of the seven polio cases reported this year, five are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and two from Sindh.

It added that the last polio case from Karachi was reported in December 2024. It further said that polio is an incurable

disease but it can be prevented through vaccination. The Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign will be conducted from 2 to 8 November 2026.

The EOC said that the campaign will be conducted in 97 districts across the country including all districts of Karachi. Over 23.9 million children under five years of age will be vaccinated against polio.

The EOC urged the parents to ensure that their children receive polio drops during every campaign and complete the full immunization course on time, alongside the polio vaccine.

All segments of society are urged to play their full part in supporting efforts to eradicate polio, it added. **NEWS DESK**

Dar, Tajik PM discuss bilateral cooperation, regional connectivity

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar called on the Prime Minister of Tajikistan, Qohir Rasulzoda, in Dushanbe on Monday, highlighting Pakistan's disaster management expertise and highlighting the potential for bilateral cooperation through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

The DPM/FM thanked the prime minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation and appreciated the arrangements for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting. He also congratulated Tajikistan on the 35th anniversary of its independence, a DPM's Office news



release said. The two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, energy, connectivity, defence and culture, as well as promoting people-to-people exchanges. They also underscored the importance of cooperation on climate change and water security.

They also exchanged views on regional developments. The DPM/FM reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working closely with Tajikistan to promote regional peace and deeper economic integration.

Earlier, Dar arrived in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, to lead Pakistan's delegation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting, being held on October 19-20.

Upon arrival, the DPM/FM was received by Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources and Co-Chair of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission Daler Juma, Pakistan's Ambassador to Tajikistan Irfan Ahmed and Pakistan's National Coordinator for the SCO Khalil Hashmi, along with senior Tajik government officials, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said. **NEWS DESK**

KP emergency imposed under constitutional procedure: Minister



Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Monday informed the Senate that the emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been imposed in accordance with the

He said the emergency was imposed to restore peace, which is essential for development and public welfare. The first phase would focus on clearing 12 districts, after which law and order responsibilities would be handed over to the civil administration, he said.

Refuting impression of nepotism and favoritism, he said that the provincial advisory council comprised experienced professionals and technocrats, not political nominees.

Tariq Fazal said the government had made efforts to hold negotiations, but their failure was the PTI leadership's responsibility. He said the federal government had no option but to continue the fight against terrorists until peace was restored.

The minister said the government remained ready to resolve differences through talks and that the committee formed by the prime minister was still available. However, he held the PTI leadership responsible for the failure of previous negotiations.

Referring to mining licences, he clarified that about 400 had been issued before the PTI government, while more than 4,900 were granted during its tenure.

Regarding Pakistan's defence agreement with Saudi Arabia, he said that it had been approved by Parliament.

He said Pakistan was committed to supporting Saudi Arabia and safeguarding the Haramain Sharifain, and would extend all possible assistance. **NEWS DESK**

constitutional procedure under Articles 232 and 234.

Responding to various points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, he said that presidential proclamations had been issued under Articles 232 and 234 and later endorsed by the National Assembly, the Senate and a joint sitting of Parliament. The PTI-led provincial government's lack of cooperation in the fight against terrorism had contributed to the situation, he said.

He said federal ministers had repeatedly approached the KP chief minister, but the provincial government had neither provided the required cooperation to federal institutions nor fulfilled its responsibilities.

Petrol, diesel prices cut by Rs 5.16, Rs 7.69, respectively

The government on Monday reduced the price of petrol by Rs5.16 to Rs381.14 per litre and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs7.69 to Rs389.27 per litre, effective October 20, 2026.

According to a press release issued by the Petroleum Division, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) revised the ex-depot prices of petroleum products in line with the pricing mechanism set by the federal government.

The revised prices will remain

effective for October 20.

The Petroleum Division said the change was necessitated by global

developments, including movements in Platts rates, premiums and incidentals.

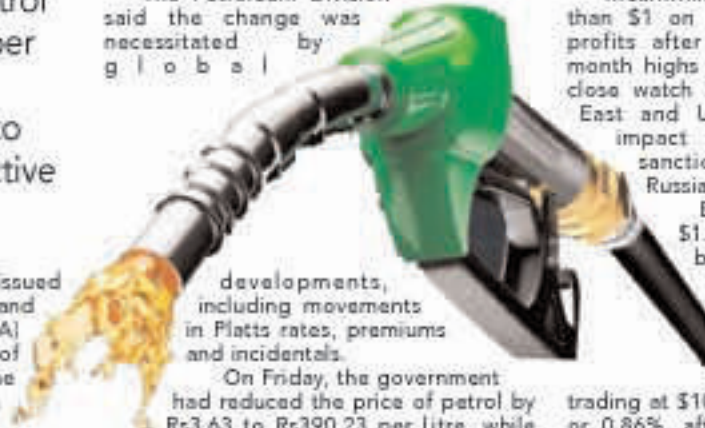
On Friday, the government had reduced the price of petrol by Rs3.63 to Rs390.23 per litre, while increasing the price of high-speed

diesel by Re0.31 to Rs396.96 per litre.

Meanwhile, oil prices slipped more than \$1 on Monday as investors took profits after prices climbed to multi-month highs last week, while keeping a close watch on conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine and assessing the impact of U.S. waivers on some sanctions and tariffs affecting Russian exports.

Brent crude futures fell \$1.72, or 1.6%, to \$108.14 a barrel at 1027 a.m. ET or 1427 GMT, after settling at their highest since May 19 on Friday.

US West Texas Intermediate crude was trading at \$100.54 barrel, down 87 cents, or 0.86%, after ending last week at its highest since September 17. **NEWS DESK**



GLAMOURDTM

Jenna Ortega in Rome as New Film Panned

Jenna Ortega was back on the red carpet on Saturday for the Roma Film Festival premiere of her new movie *Klara and the Sun*. The Wednesday star, 24, wowed in a plunging nude dress as she posed with the film's director Taika Waititi at the Auditorium Parco Della Musica.

The film's Roma premiere came as a stream of scathing reviews were released for Waititi's latest movie.

The movie, based on Kazuo Ishiguro's book, sees Jenna play the titular character, a robot girl designed to prevent loneliness.

While posing in the store's window, Klara catches the eye of Josie (Mia Goth), who persuades her mother Chrissie (Amy Adams) to buy her as a companion.

Klara befriends the teen in an alternative future where technological advances in genetic engineering have divided humans into strict, isolated classes. Steve Buscemi and Natecha Lyonne also star in the movie.

The movie premiered Thursday at the BFI London Film Festival and has racked up a stream of lacklustre reviews in the days since.

It currently holds a 20% 'rotten' critics' score on Rotten Tomatoes Tomatometer based on 10 reviews.

The Telegraph, The Times and the Guardian have all given the film one star reviews.

The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw called Waititi's adaptation 'a sentimental and labonous mess,' adding that the filmmaker 'turns Kazuo Ishiguro's AI fable into a twee, tiresome tale of love and grief.'

Variety's Guy Lodge agrees, declaring it to be 'calamitous,' writing that 'Jenna Ortega tries hard to illuminate this misbegotten Kazuo Ishiguro adaptation, but Waititi's decision to play it for strained, whimsical comedy is ruinous.'

NEWS DESK



MAYA & MICK STEAL THE SHOW!

Celebrity Traitors star Maya Jama, actor Benedict Cumberbatch and Rolling Stones singer Sir Mick Jagger were among the attendees at the second annual British Museum Ball.

The event, which raises money for the London landmark, saw multiple protests on Saturday evening, including from a pro-Palestine group opposing the museum's sponsorship by BP.

The ball is said to have been inspired by its autumn exhibitions including the loan of the Bayeux Tapestry from France.

Guest Rosanna Konarszewski was photographed outside the museum's steps wearing an eye-catching dress inspired by the 11th-century embroidered cloth.

The 70-metre (229ft) tapestry, which is made of linen with embroidered images of the Norman Conquest, arrived at the British Museum in July.

The theme of the ball this year was red with the attraction saying the colour was a 'unifying thread woven through all three of the museum's upcoming displays'.

During the evening, protesters projected 'Drop BP' and 'Blood Ball' on the building.

Earlier this week, campaign group Energy Embargo for Palestine asked supporters to stage a demonstration at the ball opposing the museum's celebration of the US and its sponsorship by BP.

Demonstrator Georgio Robertson, who said she was a guest at the event, wore a dress with the words 'Return the Marbles' on it in protest over the ownership of the Parthenon Marbles.

She said in a statement that the marbles 'must be reunited with the sculptures displayed at the Acropolis Museum in Athens'.

She added: 'Our national museum should reflect modern values, not perpetuate the legacy of colonial violence and looting. Return the marbles to their rightful home.'

The statues came from friezes on the 2,500-year-old Parthenon temple and have been displayed at the museum for more than 200 years since they were removed by Lord Elgin when he was British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century.

NEWS DESK



Mia Goth at Academy Gala After Split

Mia Goth looked incredible on Saturday as she was seen for the first time since filing for divorce from Shia LaBeouf.

The actress, 32, showed off a glamorous new look at the Academy Museum Gala, sporting bouncy blonde locks and a sleek black dress - a little over a week after filing to end her decade-long marriage to the Transformers star, 40.

The stylish black gown, which featured glittery black panels, was paired with a sparkling handbag.

Stars flocked to the sixth annual Academy Museum Gala in Los Angeles on Saturday, with Taylor Swift set to deliver a hotly anticipated performance.

Swift wrote the original song I Knew It, I Knew You for this summer's roaring box office hit Toy Story 5, making her eligible for a nomination at the next Oscars.

This year's Academy Museum Gala is honoring Oscar winner Charlize Theron, Oscar nominee Colman Domingo and Halloween director John Carpenter.

Theron will be given the Icon Award for global impact, which at past ceremonies has gone to Julia Roberts, Penelope Cruz, Meryl Streep and Rita Moreno.

Goth cited 'irreconcilable differences' as the reason for the split.

NEWS DESK



Taylor Swift in Dior and Diamonds

Taylor Swift is evoking Cinderella with an enchanting ice blue gown.

The 14-time Grammy winner, 36, turned heads in a custom Dior gown by Jonathan Anderson when she hit the red carpet at the sixth annual Academy Museum Gala in Los Angeles on Saturday, Oct. 17.

Swift dazzled in a light blue pleated silk dress, embellished with an embroidered bow at the center of the chest for the star-studded event held at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. She paired her glamorous look with Chopard diamond earrings and a platinum and diamond bracelet.

Taylor selected earrings set with 32.40-carats of diamonds, a ring in 18k gold set with 5.78-carats of diamonds and a bracelet in platinum set with 5.04-carats of diamonds, all from the Haute Joaillerie Collection.

For her glam, the 'Patient Zero' singer wore a light smoky eye with her signature winged eyeliner, paired with a soft pink blush and matching lipstick.

NEWS DESK



Ashley Graham: Having Kids Changed My Pace

Ashley Graham values a good night of sleep.

The model and mom of three tells PEOPLE that her sleeping habits have fluctuated throughout her life but definitely changed when she had kids. In particular, she says after she had her twin sons, Malachi and Roman, 4, she experienced a bout of running



cold during the night.

"I had a lot of blood loss and my body was trying to regulate," she tells PEOPLE.

However, these days she typically runs normal to "warm," which is why she was game to team up with cooling bedding brand Broescape for a sheet system.

NEWS DESK

Britney: World Has Been Hateful To Me

Britney Spears said that the world has been 'hateful' to her as she posed up a storm in a miniskirt and cropped blouse for a new Instagram video this weekend.

The 44-year-old pop star, who recently opted for a lowkey profile for lunch in NYC, got candid with her followers in the caption of the clip shared on Saturday.

The Baby One More Time hitmaker filmed herself in a dimly lit living area while sporting a patterned sweater which she began removing for the camera.

She then flashed her midriff as she tied the white blouse underneath and also opted for a gray miniskirt. For a final touch, the singer slipped into a pair of red boots. 'A lot of girls last year have definitely done the complete image I used to have when I was younger,' Spears penned. 'And yo that's cool but at least mine was real.'

The music artist added that she had been a 'nerd' back in school, before saying that 'the world has become fake.' Spears wrote it is 'a shame' that 'people who are actually real get hated on.'

NEWS DESK



Elizabeth Holmes Film Is a Theatrical Hit

North American movie theaters were flooded with new films this weekend, including a video game reboot, a big budget survival thriller and a Jane Austen adaptation.

While Paramount's "Street Fighter" took the first spot, earning \$31 million from 3,575 theaters according to studio estimates on Sunday, most of the attention and cultural discourse was elsewhere.

On the nearly three-hour Elizabeth Holmes documentary, "You Can See Everything,"



"You Can See Everything" made an extraordinary \$15 million from only 855 screens, with over 2,000 sellout showings over the weekend, according to A24. It also had the biggest opening for a film playing on under 1,000 screens since "Borat" opened to \$26.5 million in 2006, and the biggest non-music documentary opening in two decades, since "Fahrenheit 9/11" made nearly \$24 million from 868 theaters. Those numbers do not account for inflation.

NEWS DESK

Buzz and box office don't always line up, but

MONEY

GDP grows 3.65% in FY2026, economy size reaches \$450bn

Pakistan has posted a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.65% during FY2026, estimates released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Monday showed.

The growth is lower than the 3.70% estimated by the National Accounts Committee (NAC) during the previous meeting, indicating a slower pace of economic expansion than earlier expected.

"The updated growth rates in agriculture, industry, and services are 3.50%, 3.34%, and 3.81%, compared with earlier growth rates of 2.89%, 3.51%, and 4.09%, respectively," said NAC in its 118th meeting held today.

In agriculture, important crops improved from 0.65% to 1.59% due to wheat and maize; other crops have witnessed significant improvement from 2.43% to 4.28% due to higher production of pulses (6.3%), fruits (1.3%), tomato (44%), oilseed (3.4%), and green fodder (2.4%).

Meanwhile, livestock decreased slightly from 3.75% to 3.71% because of increased fodder inputs. Further, updated growth rates in forestry and fishing are 10.80% and 1.39%, respectively.



According to NAC, the updated growth in industry during FY2026 is 3.34% as compared to 3.51% estimated previously.

The mining and quarrying industry has improved from 0.38% to 1.52% due to improvement in gas (2.84%), crude oil (5.12%), and coal (2.73%). Large-scale manufacturing (LSM), which is measured through the Quantum Index of Manufacturing (QIM), has declined from 6.11% to 5.01%, the release said.

Meanwhile, the services industry has declined from 4.09% to 3.81% in FY2026, with positive contributions from all the

constituents.

"Wholesale and retail trade declined to +2.37% from 3.71% due to a decrease in manufacturing and imports.

"Transport and storage industry improved to +3.23% from 2.31% due to upward revisions reported in railways, water transport, and air transport.

"While information & communication increased from 7.52% to +9.53%, finance & insurance also improved from 0.32% to +4.23% due to improvement in the insurance industry," NAC added.

According to NAC, based on the latest figures of the national accounts

aggregates for FY2026, the overall size of the economy stands at Rs126.4 trillion, i.e., \$450.4 billion, as compared to Rs114.9 trillion, i.e., \$408.4 billion in the previous year.

Further, per capita income in PKR for FY2026 is 531,897/- i.e., \$1896/-, the NAC data showed.

The committee approved revised quarterly GDP growth rates for Q1, Q2, Q3 and a fresh growth rate for Q4 during FY2026.

Overall GDP witnessed a slight downward revision in Q1 from 3.92% to 3.89% and upward revisions in the second and third quarters from 4.05% to 4.31% for Q2, and from 3.01% to 3.79% in Q3.

"These changes mainly reflect upward revisions to annual benchmarks in agriculture, boosting growth rates from 2.95% to 3.18% in Q1, from 2.64% to 3.34% in Q2, and from 3.01% to 3.79% in Q3.

"While services declined slightly from 3.16% to 3.04% in Q1, upward revisions were observed in Q2, from 3.83% to 4.0%, and in Q3, from 4.18% to 4.54%," said NAC.

Pakistan's GDP posted a growth of 2.0% during Q4 of FY2026. Growth in agriculture, industry, and services stood at +3.71%, -4.70% and 3.62%, respectively. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan, UNIDO explore green energy push



Adviser to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday met with a delegation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and discussed industrial development, international cooperation, climate change, energy, competitiveness and productivity enhancement.

During the meeting, Haroon Akhtar highlighted the vision of Prime Minister for transforming Pakistan into a strong, export-oriented industrial economy through sustainable industrialisation, technological advancement and economic self-reliance, said a news release.

He said that under the leadership of prime minister, Pakistan is moving towards industrial growth, economic stability and the adoption of modern technologies.

Haroon emphasised that the country's large youth population represents a significant national asset, but sustainable economic progress and employment generation cannot be achieved without industrialisation.

The adviser noted that Pakistan's first-ever National Industrial Policy has been formulated to provide a strategic direction for industrial growth, enhance productivity and strengthen the country's economic foundations.

He emphasised that addressing the trade deficit requires export-led economic growth alongside the promotion of import substitution and local manufacturing.

Haroon said that Pakistan possesses considerable untapped potential in both industry and agriculture and stressed the need to utilise the country's natural resources more effectively, develop value-added industries and strengthen domestic production to create employment opportunities and improve export competitiveness.

Highlighting the challenges posed by climate change, he said that its adverse effects were significantly impacting Pakistan's agricultural output and industrial production. He underlined the importance of international cooperation, sustainable energy solutions and climate-resilient industrial development.

The adviser also highlighted Pakistan's natural resource potential, particularly in gemstones and other valuable minerals. He noted that industrial opportunities were expanding across diverse sectors, ranging from olive oil production to gemstone processing, and emphasised the need to develop local value chains to maximise economic returns from the country's resources. Discussing the transition towards cleaner transportation, Haroon said that Pakistan was witnessing significant progress in the electric vehicle sector. He noted that the New Energy Vehicle Policy had already been introduced and that efforts were underway to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles and expand charging infrastructure across the country.

The promotion of solar energy had opened new opportunities for rural communities and the agricultural sector. In this regard, he highlighted the proposed Battery Energy Storage System Policy, which would support the development of local manufacturing capabilities for electric vehicle batteries and strengthen Pakistan's domestic industrial base.

Haroon emphasised that UNIDO could play an important role in supporting Pakistan's industrial transformation through technical cooperation, technology transfer, capacity building and investment facilitation. He identified industrial development, renewable energy, climate resilience and local manufacturing as promising areas for enhanced collaboration.

He reiterated that Pakistan firmly believes in international cooperation, peaceful engagement and mutually beneficial partnerships, adding that collaboration with international institutions such as UNIDO could help accelerate sustainable industrial development and strengthen economic competitiveness.

The UNIDO delegation appreciated the opportunities for cooperation with Pakistan and highlighted the importance of sharing expertise, technical skills and best practices among member countries. The delegation identified renewable energy, particularly solar energy, as a promising area for collaboration. **NEWS DESK**

CCP to use AI to curb bid rigging

Pakistan plans to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) as part of efforts to curb bid rigging, authorities said on Monday, as Islamabad aims to strengthen competition, improve transparency and ensure fairer procurement processes.

Bid rigging occurs when companies collude to manipulate the outcome of competitive bidding processes, often by agreeing on prices or deciding in advance which bidder will win. Such practices undermine fair competition, inflate procurement costs and limit opportunities for businesses.

The Competition Commission of Pakistan's (CCP) has said that its Bid-Rigging Detection System (BRDS), which uses AI and advanced data analysis to detect cartels in public procurement, recently featured in the 'Computational Antitrust Worldwide: Fifth Cross-Agency Report' by Stanford Computational Antitrust project.

The initiative assumes particular

significance as Pakistan is estimated to spend around 15-20 percent of its Gross Domestic Product, approximately \$60 billion annually, on public procurement of goods, works and services, it says.

"Our objective in developing the Bid-Rigging Detection System (BRDS) is to promote competition, transparency and value for public money by enabling CCP to proactively identify suspicious bidding patterns in public procurement," CCP Chairman Farid Ahmad Tarar told Arab News on Monday.

"The system is at the pre-deployment phase, wherein its initial design and testing stage have been completed. Currently, work on its live integration with the federal and provincial procurement authorities, SECP's corporate registry and other relevant institutions is under process."

The Fifth Cross-Agency Report brought together first-hand accounts from

30 competition authorities and examined what computational tools enabled them to achieve that would otherwise have been "difficult — or impossible — through conventional enforcement methods." The report explained how BRDS is designed to transform detection of collusive tendering in Pakistan from a largely complaint-driven and manual process to proactive, systematic and data-led market surveillance.

Historically, the scale and fragmentation of procurement data, coupled with the absence of automated links to corporate ownership records, made it difficult to identify

sophisticated patterns such as bid rotation, cover bidding and related-party participation across multiple tenders, according to CCP.

BRDS has reached an advanced stage of development and pre-deployment preparation, whereas understandings have been reached with Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, provincial

procurement authorities and SECP for the implementation of the system.

"The system will help screen large volumes of procurement and corporate data, identify high-risk tenders and generate investigative leads; however, every alert will be independently verified and assessed through due process under the Competition Act, 2010," Tarar said.

"Ultimately, BRDS will strengthen deterrence against collusive bidding, protect honest businesses and help safeguard the national exchequer."

CCP said its contribution also set out practical lessons for competition authorities in developing economies, emphasizing investment in machine-readable data, inter-agency cooperation, controlled testing and legal defensibility.

The publication of the Fifth Cross-Agency Report places Pakistan's experience before the international regulatory and academic community and enables other competition authorities to study and build upon CCP's emerging computational-enforcement model.

"BRDS is expected to strengthen CCP's enforcement against cartelization by enabling proactive screening of procurement data, earlier identification of high-risk bidding patterns and evidence-based prioritization of investigations," the commission said.

"This will support fair competition in public procurement and help secure better value for public money." **NEWS DESK**

Gold prices remain unchanged in Pakistan

Gold prices in Pakistan saw no change on Monday, in line with the trend in the international market. In the local market, gold price per tola remained at Rs439,036.

Similarly, 10-gram gold was sold at Rs376,402 with zero change to its price a day ago, according to rates shared by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA).

On Saturday, gold price per tola reached Rs439,036 after a decline of Rs1,600 during the day.

The international rate of gold remained unchanged at \$4,165 per ounce.

Meanwhile, the price of silver increased by Rs59 to reach Rs6,234 per tola. **NEWS DESK**

Rupee gains 1 paisa against Dollar

Rupee on Monday appreciated by 1 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 276.90, compared to the previous day's, closing of Rs 276.91.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the dollar's open-market buying and selling rates were Rs 277.50 and Rs 280.20, respectively.

The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.91, closing at Rs 310.42 against the previous day's rate of Rs 311.33, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.75, and the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.03 and closed at Rs 368.87 compared to the previous day's Rs368.84.

The exchange rate of the Emirati Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 75.39, while the Saudi Riyal increased by 1 paisa to close at Rs 73.79. **NEWS DESK**

Finance Minister reviews gas sector revamp plan

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the proposed restructuring and deregulation roadmap for Pakistan's gas sector, focusing on financial sustainability, operational efficiency, consumer welfare and greater private-sector participation.

The proposed reforms aim to establish a financially sustainable, efficient and competitive gas market that supports businesses, encourages private investment and protects consumer welfare, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The meeting discussed a phased transition towards greater competition, supported by effective regulation, improved operational performance and a more sustainable approach to gas pricing and supply.

Participants reviewed key sectoral challenges, including circular debt, cross-subsidies, unaccounted-for-gas (UFG) losses and supply-demand imbalances. Discussions focused on addressing legacy liabilities, improving the financial viability of gas utilities and ensuring that existing pressures do not undermine the proposed market structure or place an undue burden on consumers.

A sustainable resolution of legacy circular debt and a clear approach to address cross-subsidies were identified as important to the viability of restructured entities and

the transition to a competitive market.

The meeting also discussed the expected outcomes of the reform framework, including enhanced energy security, increased private-sector investment, reduced fiscal and sovereign risks, greater business-to-business transactions, more stable and sustainable gas pricing, improved access to competitively priced gas for exporters, and lower system losses through stronger efficiency benchmarks and performance-based incentives.

The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of aligning all stakeholders around a practical and implementable reform architecture. The proposed framework draws on international experience, including gas-sector reforms in Türkiye and the United Kingdom, while taking into account Pakistan's institutional structure, market conditions and consumer interests.

Participants also stressed the need for careful sequencing to safeguard security of supply, protect regulated consumers and create a predictable environment for private-sector participation.

The proposed framework will be presented to the Prime Minister, following which further technical work and stakeholder consultations will help refine the reform approach and support an orderly transition.

The meeting reaffirmed the Government's commitment to advancing gas-sector reforms in a phased and consultative manner to strengthen financial sustainability, improve operational efficiency, attract investment and develop a more competitive gas market while safeguarding consumer interests. **NEWS DESK**

PSX witnesses bearish trend



The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained bearish on Monday, losing 453.63 points, a negative change of 0.27 percent, to close at 165,966.09 points against 166,419.72 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 370,941 million shares, compared to 396,904 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs19,562 billion from Rs18,679 billion. Market capitalization declined to Rs18,427 billion from Rs18,536 billion recorded a day earlier.

Out of 499 companies that traded in the ready market, 163 posted gains, 302 suffered losses, while 34 remained unchanged, reflecting a bearish trend in the market.

Pak Refinery led the volume chart with 52,931 million shares, followed by Engroshel PK with 35,789 million shares and TPL Tracker Limited with 14,356 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs118.04 to close at Rs1,298.40, while Pakistan Engineering Company Limited advanced by Rs71.10 to settle at Rs782.11.

On the losing side, PIA Holding Company Limited B declined by Rs366.67 to close at Rs14,199.66, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs142.58 to Rs25,407.42.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 97,465 million shares with a traded value of Rs7,644 billion, compared with 118,033 million shares worth Rs6,678 billion in the previous session. Of 296 companies traded in the DFC market, 91 advanced, 201 declined and 04 remained unchanged. **NEWS DESK**

WORLD

The World Food Programme said Monday it would end monthly assistance to 500,000 people in Gaza due to a funding shortfall, despite acute needs in the war-battered Palestinian territory.

With the cutbacks, 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza – still about half the population – will be receiving either food or cash assistance each month from the UN agency, in reduced amounts.

The World Food Programme said its efforts had mitigated the effects during a famine last year in Gaza – a description of the situation disputed by Israel – and warned that conditions had not improved to the point that it can take away aid.

"People are not safe. Airstrikes continue on a daily basis. People continue to be displaced," Shaun Hughes, the WFP country director, told AFP at the agency's office in east Jerusalem.

"Almost everybody remains without a permanent home to live in. And the humanitarian conditions are brutal," he said.

According to the latest assessments, 1.4 million people – or two-thirds of Gaza's population – are still "acutely food insecure" and need humanitarian assistance to survive, he said. In August last year, the UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification said that Gaza was suffering famine conditions. Israel, which has blockaded the territory and attacked it relentlessly since the unprecedented October 7, 2023

WFP: Gaza Aid Cut Despite Need



attack on it by Hamas, described the finding as a lie.

The famine classification was lifted in December, two months after a US-brokered ceasefire was announced in Gaza. Israel has kept striking Gaza since then, vowing to kill anyone involved in the October 7 attack.

Since the ceasefire, the WFP has been able to step up assistance and had been reaching between 1.5 million and 1.8 million people every month. "This has been a lifeline. But now, rather than being able to sustain and scale up that assistance, we're actually having to reduce it," Hughes said. "And that's not because we don't have humanitarian access to deliver food; that's because we don't have funding."

In addition to reducing the number of people who receive rations, the WFP has been forced to shrink the content. Families receiving food assistance will now get only one food parcel instead of two and a smaller bag of wheat flour, the WFP said in an operational note.

The 75,000 families who receive assistance in cash will see the amount reduced from 1,250 to 750 shekels (\$400 to \$240) per month.

The WFP is funded by governments as well as private donors. It has seen a sharp drop in resources, including after President Donald Trump returned to power in the United States and drastically slashed contributions to UN agencies as well as bilateral aid. **AP**

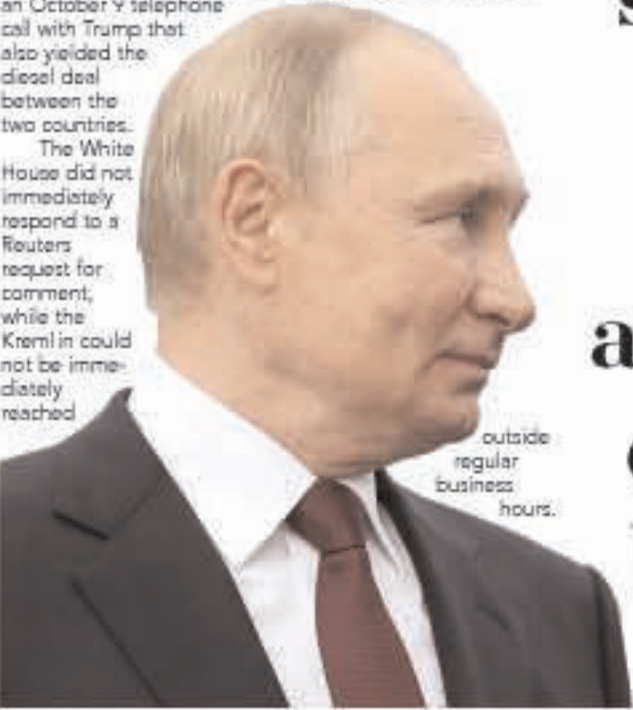
Russian President Vladimir Putin has proposed a summit next month with US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping to negotiate an end to the four-year-old Ukraine conflict that would favour Moscow, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday, citing people familiar with the discussions.

The proposed summit comes amid warming ties between Trump and Putin especially after the US President announced a deal to buy Russian diesel and signed an order on Friday waiving key sanctions on Moscow.

Citing a former Russian intelligence officer briefed on the matter, the paper said that Putin's suggestion came in an October 9 telephone call with Trump that also yielded the diesel deal between the two countries.

The White House did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment, while the Kremlin could not be immediately reached

Putin proposes summit with Trump and Xi to discuss Ukraine



The Russian and Chinese embassies in Washington did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

The Kremlin has suggested holding the trilateral dialogue on the sidelines of the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, the WSJ report said, citing people familiar with the discussions. **REUTERS**



Beijing's population expected to become super-aged by 2035

The Chinese capital Beijing is expected to become "super-aged" by 2035, with around one-third of its population aged 60 and above, the official Beijing Daily reported.

Chinese policymakers have made population planning a key part of the country's economic strategy, and this year the government faces a total potential cost of around 180 billion yuan (\$26.92 billion) to boost births, according to Reuters estimates.

One in every three residents of the Chinese capital will be aged 60 or above by 2035, the Beijing Daily reported on Saturday.

Beijing had 5.29 million permanent residents aged 60 and above at the end of last year, almost one-quarter of its population, the newspaper said.

The city's government is stepping up support for elderly residents, including raising the basic pension, the report added.

China's population has been shrinking since 2022 and is ageing rapidly, complicating government plans to boost domestic consumption and rein in debt, with hundreds of millions of people set to leave the workforce at a time when pension budgets are already stretched.

Demographers and economists argue that fewer children today could mean fewer households and slower consumption growth over time. **REUTERS**

2 drown in Aegean after migrant boats capsize

Twelve migrants drowned in two separate incidents off the Greek islands of Lesbos and Samos in the northeastern Aegean Sea on Monday, after their boats capsized as the coast guard chased them, authorities said. Five men and one woman died after a speedboat carrying migrants from Turkey made a sudden maneuver and overturned roughly four nautical miles north of Samos, the Greek coast guard said.

Fourteen men survived and a search-and-rescue operation was under way. Authorities arrested one of the survivors, an Iranian national, on suspicion of migrant smuggling.

Earlier, four men, one woman and an infant died when their boat collided with a Greek coast guard vessel and overturned off



the area of Agrilia in Lesbos. Eight survivors were taken to hospital.

Authorities arrested a 37-year-old Turkish national who was among the eight survivors and identified him as the suspected smuggler and operator of the boat.

The government vowed "zero tolerance" toward migrant smugglers, whom it blamed for the deaths.

On the incident off Lesbos, Greece's shipping minister Vassilis Kikiliadis said evidence so far indicated the speedboat struck the left side of a coast guard vessel with its bow, adding that the exact circumstances were under investigation.

"Our position is non-negotiable: zero tolerance for smugglers," he said in a post on X. **REUTERS**

300 schools get bomb threat hoax

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has said a bomb threat email sent to hundreds of schools is being treated as a hoax.

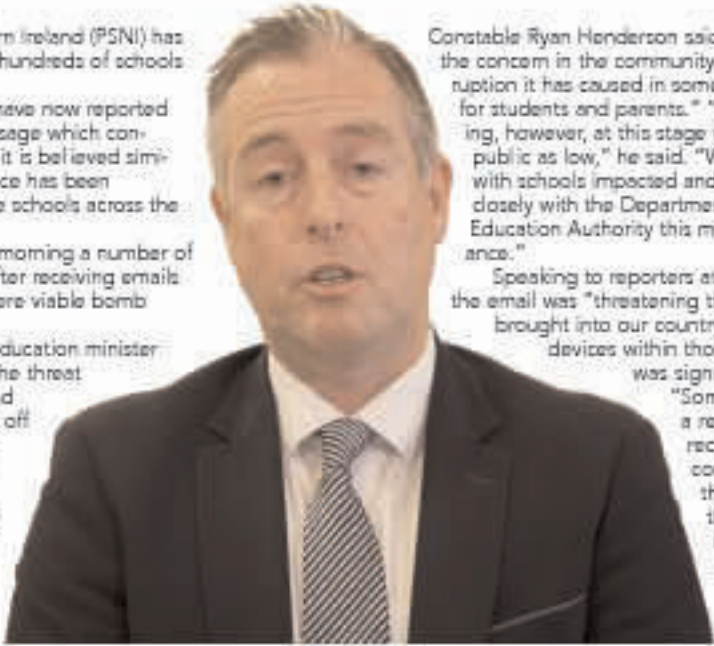
They said up to 300 schools have now reported "receiving the same emailed message which contained a generalised threat" and it is believed similar correspondence has been received by some schools across the UK.

On Monday morning a number of schools closed after receiving emails claiming there were viable bomb devices on site.

Stormont's education minister Paul Givan said the threat was "Islamist" and had been signed off "Allahu Akbar".

Police said checks and enquiries to date had not discovered anything untoward and confirmed the email originated from outside the UK.

PSNI Assistant Chief



Constable Ryan Henderson said the police "understand the concern in the community, not to mention the disruption it has caused in some school communities and for students and parents." "Our enquiries are ongoing, however, at this stage we consider risk to the public as low," he said. "We will continue to liaise with schools impacted and have been working closely with the Department of Education and the Education Authority this morning to provide reassurance."

Speaking to reporters at Stormont, Mr Givan said the email was "threatening that Sharia law will be brought into our country and that there is viable devices within those school settings and it was signed off 'Allahu Akbar'".

"Some schools have closed as a result of this threat being received through formal communication channels to those schools, something that I absolutely condemn is that there has been this level of disruption caused to young people's education," he said. **PA MEDIA**

Australian MP critically hurt in attack

Australian independent lawmaker Helen Haines was deliberately struck by a car and suffered "critical injuries" on Monday in what Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described as an attack.

Haines was hurt outside her office in Wangaratta, just over 200 kilometres (124 miles) northwest of Melbourne, police said.

The 65-year-old "suffered what has been described as critical injuries", Victoria Police Acting Superintendent Ashley Mason said, without identifying the victim in line with police custom in Australia.

The 43-year-old male driver was detained by civilians, Mason said, and then arrested by police, who found a knife in his car.

"This wasn't an accident. There was a deliberate act," Albanese told national broadcaster ABC.

He also told journalists: "All of our thoughts are with Helen, her family, her friends, her team, and her community at this extremely difficult time. We are praying for her full recovery."

The alleged attacker's motive remained unknown, Albanese said, with Australia's counter-terrorism squad activated. **AP**



SPORTS

DTM

LeBron by the Numbers: Year 24



There isn't much for Philadelphia forward LeBron James to chase this season, at least from a statistical standpoint.

He's already the NBA's career scoring leader. The leader in games, minutes, field goals and field goals attempted, too. And he's entering Year 24 of his career - another record, one he took sole possession of last year because nobody ever topped 22 seasons before he came along.

"I have a lot of experience in this game, obviously," James said. "So, I hope that I can bring that experience, bring that knowledge, bring the blueprint to guys that are trying to accomplish some things that they haven't done in their career."

So, why is he still playing? And what is he chasing?

A look at it all, by the numbers:

James isn't playing for money (he's estimated to be a billionaire), isn't playing for legacy (secured long ago), isn't playing for records (has enough of those).

He'll never catch Bill Russell's 11 titles, would need two more crowns to tie Michael Jordan's six, but James - if he wins one in Philly - would be the first player to be part of championship runs by four franchises.

He's already won with Cleveland, Miami and Los Angeles. Adding Philadelphia to the list would be quite the caper.

Nick Nurse will be the 11th coach of James' career, excluding any interim coaches and from events like the Olympics and All-Star Games.

James enters this season having gone up against 141 head coaches in his regular-season career, with four new names - Dallas' Dusty May, Orlando's Sean Sweeney, Portland's Micah Nori and the Lakers' JJ Redick - set to join that list.

James took Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's points title a few years ago. He won't be catching Abdul-Jabbar in 2-pointers; the gap there is more than 2,500 baskets.

But he could move up to No. 2 on the 2-pointers list this season. James enters the season with 13,325, or 118 behind No. 2 Karl Malone. And with 302 attempts from 2-point range, James would pass Elvin Hayes for third on that list. He likely won't be catching Abdul-Jabbar or Malone in that department.

James is sixth on the 3-pointers list for now, and will probably stay right there this season. He could actually fall one spot to No. 4 on the 3s attempted list. Portland's Damian Lillard is back this season and trails James by only nine 3s tried for that third-place spot. It's reasonable to think that Lillard will try more 3s than James will this season. **AP**

LEBRON JAMES

YEAR 24

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS • FORWARD • SEASON 2025-26

YEAR 24 RECORD
MOST SEASONS EVER IN NBA HISTORY

- CAREER MILESTONES**
- Career Scoring Leader
 - NBA All-Time Points Leader
 - Leader in Games, Minutes, & Field Goals All-Time
 - Chasing 4th Franchise Championship
 - Won with Cleveland, Miami, Lakers

CAREER AVERAGES (1622 GAMES)

POINTS	REBOUNDS	ASSISTS
27.0	7.45	7.4
(26.8 PER)	(PER)	(PER)

Never exactly 20/10/10 in a season.

- COACHING & EXPERIENCE**
- 11th Coach
 - Nick Nurse (2025-26)
 - Faced 141 Head Coaches in Career

- RECORDS & PURSUITS**
- 2-POINTERS**
13,325 MADE | 118 behind Karl Malone (No. 2) | 302 shy of Elvin Hayes for 3rd
 - 3-POINTERS**
6th ALL-TIME in 3PT Field Goals Made
 - FREE THROWS**
12,055 ATTEMPTS vs Karl Malone (13,168 | 503 Attempts behind No. 2)
 - ASSISTS**
12,096 - (63.4 ALL-TIME) | 15 away from Jason Kidd (No. 3, 12,011) | 536 away from Chris Paul (No. 2, 12,552)
 - STEALS**
28 away from Gary Payton (No. 5) | 57 away from Michael Jordan (No. 4)

Guangdong Begins Pakistan Tour

China's Guangdong men's hockey team arrived in Pakistan on Monday for a 13-day tour that includes matches against leading departmental sides and a Pakistan under-18 team, offering domestic players valuable exposure to international competition.

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) officials welcomed the visiting delegation upon arrival, presenting team members with traditional flower garlands and bouquets.

The tour features matches against MPCL, Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Customs, Pakistan Rangers and Pakistan Police, as well as a fixture against a Pakistan under-18 side in Gajra.

Guangdong will begin its competitive engagements against MPCL at MPCL Hockey Stadium in Rawalpindi on Tuesday, followed by a match against Pakistan Army on Wednesday at GHQ Stadium, Rawalpindi.

After a rest day, the Chinese side will face Pakistan Navy at Nasser Bunde Hockey Stadium in Islamabad on October 25. The team will then travel to Lahore to play Pakistan Customs at

Hockey Stadium on October 25, before taking on Pakistan Rangers at the Sports Complex in Narowal on October 26. Following another rest day on October 27, Guangdong will meet the Pakistan under-18 side at National Hockey Stadium in Gajra on October 28. The visitors will play their final match against Pakistan Police at DHA Hockey Stadium, Lahore, on October 29, before departing Pakistan on October 30.

The tour will give Pakistan's leading departmental sides an opportunity to assess their match readiness against international opposition, while allowing coaches to evaluate tactical discipline, defensive organisation and attacking efficiency. The fixture against the under-18 side in Gajra will expose emerging players to a different style of hockey and help identify promising talent and areas for improvement ahead of future competitions.

The matches will help strengthen hockey ties between Pakistan and China and support efforts to revive the national game through regular international competitions. **APP**



Mbappe Brace Sets Up El Clasico

Kylian Mbappe scored twice as Real Madrid closed the gap on LaLiga leaders Barcelona to six points with a 4-1 win over Sevilla at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday, a week before the rivals meet.

Real, who have won three straight games in all competitions following the international break, climbed to third on 21 points, one behind Atletico Madrid, while Sevilla are sixth on 14. Elsewhere, Osasuna withstood second-half pressure from Racing Santander to win 2-0 in Jagoba Arrasate's first game back as manager.

Two flying saves from Iñaki Williams denied Alaves a point in a 2-1 defeat to Celta Vigo, while Real Sociedad won 5-2 at Malaga. Despite the suspended Vinicius Jr's absence, Real produced the fluid attacking football that has been lacking of late with Arda Guler again orchestrating their best work. **REUTERS**

Svitolina, Monfils Split After 5 Years

Elina Svitolina announced on Monday she is divorcing fellow tennis star Gael Monfils after five years of marriage. Ukraine's Svitolina, the world number six, married French player Monfils in July 2021 and they have a four-year-old daughter together. "I need to find my way back to myself and I cannot do that within our marriage," the 32-year-old Svitolina said in a social media post.

"It is the hardest truth I have ever had to face and the hardest thing I have ever had to tell the person I love," Monfils, 40, retired from tennis earlier this month, despite having been expected to make farewell

appearances in Lyon and at the Paris Masters later this month. He had been given a wildcard for this week's ATP 250 tournament in Lyon, but organisers said he had withdrawn for personal reasons. **APP**

High-Flying Lazio Rout Juventus 3-0

Lazio's Danish duo made the difference in Turin as Oliver Christensen and Gustav Isaksen scored in a 3-0 win over Juventus on Sunday that lifted their side level with Inter Milan at the top of Serie A.

Christensen broke the deadlock in the 37th minute, using his height to glance home Mattia Zaccagni's cross after Lazio worked a short corner on the left.

Fellow Dane Isaksen doubled the lead in the 66th minute, collecting a pass from Tavares on the right before shifting the ball onto his left foot and bending a low finish into the far corner.

Fisayo Dele-Bashiru completed the scoring in the 89th minute, launching a counter-attack from inside his own half and driving into the box before slotting home a low finish as frustrated

home supporters jeered Juventus through to the final whistle.

Lazio have 19 points from seven matches, level with Inter, who maintained their unbeaten start to the domestic season with a 3-1 comeback victory over Bologna on Saturday.

AC Milan survived a late Atalanta fight-back to claim an entertaining 3-2 home victory earlier on Sunday.

The hosts opened the scoring in the 24th minute through a Goncalo Ramos penalty, before Adrien Rabiot doubled their advantage shortly before the break. Mario Gila made it 3-0 in the 57th minute, seemingly putting the contest beyond Atalanta.

However, Gianluca Gaetano reduced the deficit in the 66th minute and Nikola Krstovic added a second for Atalanta in the 81st to set up a tense finish. **REUTERS**

Arsenal Edge Forest, Man Utd Held

Champions Arsenal needed a late goal from Noni Madueke, their only shot on target, to scrape a 1-0 win at Nottingham Forest on Sunday and remain three points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City.

Brighton & Hove Albion's Diego Gomez struck a sensational goal from inside his own half in a 5-0 rout of Crystal Palace on Sunday to leave his side third in the table with 16 points, five behind leaders Manchester City.

Manchester United and bitter rivals Leeds United shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw at Elland Road at the end of a turbulent week for the Red Devils in which defender Lisandro Martinez

had publicly challenged the club's hierarchy.

Leeds are seventh in the table and Manchester United, who have just one win from seven games, are 13th. Bournemouth beat Sunderland 2-0 for their first league victory of the season to climb to 15th place.

Sunderland remained in the drop zone in 19th place. At the City Ground, a frustrated Arsenal finally sealed victory in the 80th minute. Ibrahim Sangare hesitated when he could have cleared the ball, leaving Forest manager Oliver Glasner visibly fuming, and second-half substitute Madueke then danced past Daniel Muñoz before hammering a shot that deflected off Jair Cunha and wrong-footed Matz Sels. **REUTERS**

