

Prime Minister urges public-private cooperation

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, acknowledging the important role of the business community in the growth and stability of the national economy, said that the government was working in collaboration with the private sector to promote economic activity and provide a business-friendly environment.

According to a statement issued by the Media Wing of the Prime Minister's Office, the prime minister made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation of the Founders' Group of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), which called on him in Lahore.

The meeting discussed the overall economic situation of the country, the promotion of business and trade, challenges faced by industries, and measures to facilitate the business community.

While appreciating the business community's important role in the growth and stability of the national economy, the prime minister said that the government was working alongside the private sector to encourage economic activity and create a conducive environment for businesses.

The meeting also highlighted the importance of mutual cooperation in promoting business and industry, increasing investment, and expanding trade activities.

The delegation briefed the prime minister on the issues faced by the business community and presented its suggestions. It appreciated the government's economic policies and welcomed its investor-friendly initiatives.

During the discussion, the delegation also acknowledged the services rendered by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his tenure as its president. His tenure as president of the chamber was also recalled during the meeting.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, and Federal

Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik were also present at the meeting.

The chamber's delegation comprised Mian Misbah-un-Rahman, Farooq Iftikhar, Sheikh Muhammad Asif, Shehzad Malik, Ahsan Haider, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Abdul Basit, Mian Tariq Misbah, Kashif Anwar Sheikh, and Mian Khalid Misbah.

Separately, Punjab Assembly (PA) Deputy Speaker Malik Zahoor Iqbal Channer and MNA Malik Munir Iqbal Channer called on Prime Minister (PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, here on Saturday.

Matters relating to public issues, their resolution and constituency affairs were discussed during the meeting. The Prime Minister directed them to strengthen public outreach efforts to address the problems faced by the people. **NEWS DESK**

Islamabad slams Taliban claims, seeks action on TTP, BLA

The information ministry on Saturday rebutted the Afghan Taliban's stance that it lacked the 'capabilities' to fuel insecurity in other countries and criticised it for resorting to 'diversionary allegations' instead of preventing the use of Afghanistan's soil for terrorist attacks against Pakistan.



Team and another report submitted to the United States Congress.

The UNSC team, in its 16th report, "examined the presence and activities of terrorist groups in Afghanistan", the ministry said.

It further noted that the report by the US Lead Inspector General's Operation Enduring Sentinel for January-March 2026 stated that the Afghan Taliban continued to allow the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to operate from Afghan territory.

The ministry also highlighted other findings from the report, which stated that the Taliban continued to allow TTP "greater liberty and support, resulting in increased TTP attacks

against Pakistan". It added that TTP remained the "largest in number" among those groups.

"The report estimated TTP strength at 4,000-6,000 fighters. These assessments underscore the seriousness of Pakistan's concerns regarding terrorist sanctuaries and support networks operating from Afghan soil," the information ministry emphasised.

Earlier in the day, the information ministry rejected former United States envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's "baseless and misleading allegations" that Pakistan was "arming Afghans to fight the Taliban".

The ministry's response came a day after Khalilzad, who served as special representative to Afghanistan during the first Trump administration, claimed on X that there were "many reports that Pakistan is arming Afghans to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan". He further alleged that Pakistan was now "recruiting Afghans to fight against anti-Pakistan insurgents", adding that ties between the two countries were likely to "get much worse".

"His sweeping baseless assertions merely recycle speculative narratives as part of his personal agenda to prop (the) terrorism-supporting Taliban regime," the information ministry's fact-check account said on X.

It rebuked Khalilzad, saying his "peddling" of such unsubstantiated allegations only exposes his skewed agenda-based views".

The ministry highlighted that it was "particularly misleading to conflate Pakistan's legitimate counterterrorism operations against terrorist organisations operating from inside Afghan-Taliban regime-controlled areas threatening its citizens with allegations of recruiting Afghan nationals or sponsoring armed groups inside Afghanistan". **NEWS DESK**

KARACHI BUSINESSMAN MURDER

Sindh forms top team to hunt killer

● Government seeks separate FIA-led inquiry into possible cover-up, orders review of police conduct

Pakistan's southern Sindh province has formed a multi-agency team to investigate the murder of a young Karachi businessman and sought a separate inquiry into a possible police cover-up, following a judicial commission's findings of serious failures in the initial investigation, official documents showed on Saturday.

The decisions mark a significant development in the case of 25-year-old Mir Raza Ali, whose body was found with a gunshot wound in Karachi in July. Police initially pursued a suicide theory, which his family rejected, while a subsequent autopsy raised serious questions about the circumstances of his death, triggering public outrage and demands for an independent investigation.

"The Commission, in its report, recommended formation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) under the leadership of DIG Senior Baloch, comprising senior representatives of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA)," the Sindh Home Department said in an Oct. 23 letter.

The department said the

provincial government had constituted the JIT under Deputy Inspector General Baloch following approval by Chief Minister Murtaza Bhutto, and requested the participating agencies to nominate senior officers, preferably within seven days.

Separately, the Sindh government has asked the federal interior ministry to nominate a senior Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officer to head an inquiry into possible criminal misconduct by police officials involved in the initial investigation.

The development follows the judicial commission's recommendation of a high-level inquiry, preferably led by the FIA, to determine whether police officials

involved in the first 10 days of the investigation had committed offenses relating to the destruction of evidence, disobedience of legal directions or preparation of incorrect official records.

The victim, a graduate of Karachi's Institute of Business Administration, operated a waffle business called Wafflix.

He went missing after leaving his home in the Pakistan Employees Cooperative Housing Society on July 28.

His body was discovered in bushes in Gulistan-e-Jauhar the following day.

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Zardari meeting spurs Siemens pact plans

German medical technology company Siemens plans to send representatives to Pakistan to sign agreements with local partners on health technology and capacity building, President Asif Ali Zardari's office said on Saturday, following his meeting with company executives in Berlin.

The proposed agreements come as Pakistan seeks to improve health care infrastructure and expand access to medical services, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Siemens has an established presence in Pakistan, with more than 100 employees working in three major cities, including Karachi.

Siemens Executive Vice President Daniel Frisch and Veronika Pfister, the company's head of government affairs, informed Zardari of the planned visit during their meeting, according to the statement.

"The delegation told the President that their representatives will soon visit Pakistan to sign MoUs with their partners in capacity building and technological domains in the health industry of Pakistan," the statement said.

It added that Siemens' technological cooperation extended to the treatment of cancer, stroke and other diseases, without providing details of the proposed agreements, their financial value or an implementation timeline.

Zardari urged the adoption of research-based and technology-driven solutions to improve health care delivery in Pakistan, emphasizing the need to make quality medical services accessible and affordable.

"We strive for broadened and all-inclusive provision of quality health care, particularly for poverty-stricken people in remote areas," he said.

The president welcomed Siemens' existing operations in Pakistan and encouraged the company to expand its cooperation in the country's health sector.

He also encouraged Siemens to consider investments in other social and industrial sectors, citing the company's technological expertise, and assured the delegation of institutional support through Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). **NEWS DESK**

Stop The War: Pakistan, Saudis, Europe urge diplomacy



The foreign ministers of the R4 group of nations and their counterparts from the UK, France, Germany and Italy discussed conflicts in the Middle East, a joint statement issued on Saturday said, stressing the need to resolve them through dialogue and diplomacy.

The R4 or Regional Four group comprises Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Türkiye and Egypt. The foreign ministers of these four countries met their counterparts from Italy, France, the UK and Germany in Istanbul on Friday for talks on regional tensions.

The dialogue takes place as the Iran-backed Houthi's intensify attacks against Saudi Arabia, amid renewed fears of a wider regional conflict after reports that US and Israeli forces had drawn up plans for possible strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities, energy infrastructure and missile capabilities.

The joint statement said the foreign ministers discussed the

US/Israel-Iran conflict, Israel's war against Palestinians, the need for a two-state solution, Houthi militia attacks against Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and tensions in the Straits of Hormuz and Bab El Mandeb and the Black Sea.

"The Ministers agreed on the urgent need to address regional conflicts through dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation," the joint statement, also shared by Pakistan's foreign office, said.

"In accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions, they emphasized the need for finding lasting negotiated solutions to all outstanding conflicts."

The minister committed to continue contributing toward diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in the region and beyond, and addressing the security, economic and trade implications of regional tensions.

"The Ministers agreed to continue the dialogue in this format with a view to preventing conflicts and advancing peace and stability in the region," the statement added.

The R4 foreign ministers held a separate meeting among themselves in Istanbul prior to their meeting with the European ministers.

The R4 identified Israel as the main source of instability in the Middle East and beyond in their

discussions, a joint press statement from the group said on Friday.

"The Ministers called for an urgent end to the ongoing Israeli violence, as well as attempts to change the legal and historical status of Jerusalem, and to bring an end to further destruction and humanitarian tragedy in Palestine," the statement, also shared by Pakistan's foreign office, said.

The R4 demanded a halt to the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, an immediate end to attacks by settlers, and the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance in Gaza, along with reconstruction efforts in the territory.

The ministers also called for renewed diplomatic efforts to prevent any further escalation of the war with Iran, and insisted that the crisis be resolved "exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy."

The ministers condemned the Houthi militia's "unacceptable escalation" and attacks on civilians and vital infrastructure in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

They reiterated their solidarity with the Kingdom and Yemen's internationally recognized government, and called on the Houthis to immediately halt their military activities and return to the negotiating table. **NEWS DESK**

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Resolve public grievances on priority, orders CM Bugti

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Male-only imperial law takes effect in Japan

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Red Roses on first losing streak in 10 years

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Meghan: Shielded kids from my father

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Mpox claims infant in Sindh, 12th case of 2026

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Naek calls for constitutional supremacy, rule of law



Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice, Senator Farooq Hamid Naek, has said that constitutional supremacy, the rule of law and equal justice for all citizens are fundamental principles of Pakistan's democratic system.

Addressing a ceremony at Government Pir Ilahi Bux Law College, Dadu, marking the 51st death anniversary of former Sindh chief minister Pir Ilahi Bux, he said the law must apply equally to the powerful and the weak, and access to justice must not depend on a citizen's social status, political affiliations or financial resources.

Senator Naek paid tribute to the late Pir Ilahi Bux for his contributions to education, politics and public service, saying his legacy continued to inspire generations in Sindh. He highlighted Pir Ilahi Bux's efforts to promote education, establish educational institutions and improve public welfare.

Describing education as one of Pir Ilahi Bux's most enduring contributions to Sindh, Senator Naek highlighted his initiatives to promote elementary education and encourage adult and women's education. He also underscored his role in efforts to establish the University of Sindh and his support for institutions such as Dow Medical College and S.M. Law College.

He said legal education must go beyond the study of statutes and judicial decisions and prepare lawyers who uphold professional integrity, constitutional principles and the requirements of justice. Young lawyers, he said, should use their legal knowledge to protect citizens' rights and serve the public interest rather than pursue personal gain.

Senator Naek stressed that lawyers must defend their clients' rights while respecting the courts, adhering to professional ethics and remaining faithful to the Constitution. Pakistan needs legal professionals who defend constitutional supremacy and the principles of justice rather than the interests of individuals, he added.

Recalling his personal association with Government Pir Ilahi Bux Law College, Dadu, Senator Naek said he had the honour of inaugurating the college's present building in 2012 while serving as Federal Minister for Law and Justice. He appreciated the institution's modern digital facilities, online lectures and initiatives to strengthen cooperation with other educational institutions.

He said the expansion of public-sector law colleges was important for broadening access to legal education and creating opportunities for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. However, he emphasised that their success should also be measured by the quality of teaching, availability of qualified faculty, access to legal research, practical training, moot courts and professional ethics.

Urging students to study the Constitution of Pakistan, fundamental rights and judgments of the superior courts, Senator Naek said they must continuously strengthen their academic and professional abilities. The quality of justice, he noted, depended not only on the judicial system but also on the competence, integrity and courage of lawyers.

Senator Naek appreciated the efforts of Pir Mazhar ul Haq, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court and former senior minister of Sindh, to carry forward his grandfather's educational and public-service legacy. He also acknowledged Barrister Pir Mujeeb ul Haq's association with educational and legal institutions.

Concluding his address, Senator Naek emphasised that strengthening education, constitutional supremacy, the rule of law and equal justice for all remained essential for Pakistan's democratic future. He expressed hope that Government Pir Ilahi Bux Law College, Dadu, would continue to produce competent lawyers, principled legal professionals and responsible citizens.

Addressing the ceremony, retired Justice Abdul Rasool Memon said that the services rendered by Pir Ilahi Bux and his family are numerous and highly commendable. He said that today's ceremony reflects the greatness of Pir Ilahi Bux, who rendered unforgettable services to the people of Sindh in various fields.

He described Pir Ilahi Bux as a hero of Sindh who established outstanding institutions across the province during his tenure as minister.

He added that his successors, Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq and Pir Mujeeb-ul-Haq, are also following in his footsteps by continuing to serve the people of their constituency and Sindh, particularly in the field of education.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Dadu District President and Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA), Barrister Pir Mujeeb-ul-Haq, said that the institution is named after his grandfather, the late Pir Ilahi Bux, whose contributions to education and law remain remarkable.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all distinguished guests for attending the ceremony. NEWS DESK

Three women killed in child custody dispute

At least three women were killed by their son-in-law in a dispute over child custody, according to police sources on Saturday.

Initial reports said the accused insisted on taking custody of his infant child. The dispute reportedly escalated after his demand was refused, resulting in the killings of his mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and the wife of his brother-in-law.

The accused fled the scene after the incident. The bodies of the victims were shifted to the hospital for post-mortem examinations. Police have registered a case and launched further investigations into the incident. NEWS DESK

Peace in Katcha areas Sindh govt's top priority: Lanjar

Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar has said establishing peace and maintaining law and order across the province remain the foremost priorities of the provincial government, adding that intelligence agencies, Pakistan Rangers and Sindh Police are being fully supported in their efforts to secure the Katcha areas.

He was addressing the concluding ceremony of the three-day Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Sports Festival held in Ronti Katcha. IGP Sindh Javed Alam Odho, DIG Sukkur Nasir Aftab Pathan, Ghotki Deputy Commissioner Manzoor Ahmed, SSP Muhammad Anwar Khetran, Rangers Wing Commander Farhan Ali and other officials attended the event, along with a large number of local residents.

Lanjar said the state did not wish to cause hardship to anyone and that people living in the Katcha areas were close to the government's heart. However, he warned that the state would not tolerate anyone taking the law into their own hands.

He said President Asif Ali Zardari had consulted stakeholders at a meeting in Sukkur before initiating the surrender policy. Despite facing criticism, the policy had helped improve law and order in Ronti Katcha, he added.

The home minister thanked

PPP leader Faryal Talpur and Chief Minister Sindh for supporting the police and providing necessary facilities. He said the presence of provincial leadership in the area reflected the progress made under the policy.

Lanjar announced that the government planned to establish schools, dispensaries and veterinary hospitals in the Katcha areas. A strategy was also being developed to protect these facilities from damage during floods.

He said the government wanted children from the region to become deputy commissioners and senior police officers in the future, stressing that public cooperation was essential to

police officers from the Larkana and Sukkur divisions for their role in restoring peace.

Speaking on the occasion, IGP Javed Alam Odho said peace had been restored through the surrender policy and cooperation among law enforcement agencies. Members of tribes previously involved in conflicts were now sitting together in a peaceful environment, he added.

Odho said the authorities had relied on goodwill, mutual understanding and engagement alongside enforcement measures. He urged local communities to protect their neighbours and work together to prevent their lands from becoming barren and their future generations from suffering.

He assured residents that efforts would continue to maintain lasting peace, with strict action where necessary and measures to make the region greener and more prosperous.

During the ceremony, Lanjar presented floral gifts to Shagufta, Rameen and Anjum, members of a peace caravan working to promote harmony in the Katcha areas. Prizes, shields and medals were distributed among players who excelled in Malakhro, Kabaddi and other traditional sports.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Manzoor Ahmed said two primary schools had been established following improvements in security, while medical camps were periodically organised to provide healthcare. SSP Muhammad Anwar Khetran also highlighted police sacrifices and local residents' participation in peace caravans, saying continued public cooperation was helping improve the situation. NEWS DESK



improving living conditions.

The minister also said the Ghotki-Kandhkot Bridge would be constructed soon, describing the project as a game changer expected to bring prosperity to both districts. He commended

Polio-free Pakistan was Benazir Bhutto's dream, says Bilawal

Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in his message on World Polio Day, said a polio-free Pakistan was the dream of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and that protecting every child in the country and securing a healthy future for them is a national responsibility we all share.

He said the effective use of modern technology, sustained political commitment, strong coordination between the federal and provincial governments, and full public participation are essential to eradicating polio completely.

The PPP Chairman said that in 1994, despite fierce opposition from conservative elements and negative propaganda, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto launched the country's first national anti-polio campaign. She personally administered polio drops to her own daughter, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, first of all, sending a clear message that there can be no compromise on the health and safety of children.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has been working tirelessly for several years to make anti-polio efforts a success. Her struggle, he said, is an important step toward fulfilling Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's dream that no child in Pakistan should suffer lifelong disability because of polio.

He paid tribute to the workers serving in the anti-polio campaign, especially those carrying out their duties in remote and difficult areas, and described the polio workers who laid down their lives in the line of duty as national heroes. Their services and sacrifices, he said, will always be remembered.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari appealed to the public to cooperate fully with polio teams. He reaffirmed that the PPP will continue its efforts to carry forward Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's mission and turn the dream of a polio-free Pakistan into reality. NEWS DESK



Pakistan reports 7 cases in 2026

World Polio Day World Polio Day was observed across the globe on Saturday to renew the commitment to eradicating poliovirus and highlight the importance of vaccination, as Pakistan continues efforts to eliminate the disease after reporting seven cases so far in 2026. The day highlights the need for sustained immunisation campaigns, effective disease surveillance and community engagement to ensure that every child receives polio vaccines and remains protected against the virus. In 1988, the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution to eradicate polio worldwide, leading to the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), a public-private partnership. Since then, wild poliovirus cases have declined by more than 99 per cent, from an estimated 350,000 cases annually across more than 125 endemic countries to continued transmission in just two countries. Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the only countries where wild poliovirus is endemic, highlighting the need for continued vaccination coverage and coordinated efforts by health authorities, frontline workers and communities. Pakistan has reduced its polio burden by 99.8 per cent since 1994, from an estimated 20,000 cases annually to seven reported cases in 2026 so far. Of these, five cases have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including four in southern districts, while two cases have been reported in Sindh. The Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative continues to work with federal and provincial health authorities and international partners to interrupt virus transmission through vaccination campaigns, environmental surveillance and efforts to reach children who have missed routine immunisation. Pakistan has conducted two nationwide and two sub-national polio vaccination campaigns in 2026, alongside targeted interventions in Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar. Each nationwide campaign targets approximately 45 million children under five. More than 400,000 frontline polio workers, including men and women, are engaged in reaching children across the country, often working in challenging conditions to ensure that no child is missed. NEWS DESK

Mayor Wahab gives KMC 15 days to clear encroachments



Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has given the Anti-Encroachment Department of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) 15 days to remove encroachments from major roads, streets, footpaths and public spaces across the city, warning that failure to deliver visible results could lead to dismissals and disciplinary proceedings.

The mayor issued the deadline while chairing an emergency meeting with officers and staff of the department, taking serious notice of growing public complaints about encroachments and obstruction of public spaces. He expressed dissatisfaction with the department's performance and directed officials to launch a comprehensive citywide operation with clear targets and measurable results. Wahab said billions of rupees were being invested in Karachi's infrastructure and public facilities, but the benefits of development projects could not be fully realised while roads and footpaths remained occupied by encroachments. "Roads, streets and footpaths belong to the citizens. They are meant for public movement and convenience, not to be occupied for commercial activities or personal business interests," he said.

The mayor said citizens should not be forced to navigate obstructed footpaths and congested roads despite ongoing efforts to improve the city's infrastructure. He added that his own visits to different areas had revealed conditions that fell short of the performance expected from the department responsible for removing encroachments. Wahab told officials that he wanted practical and sustainable action rather than verbal assurances or reports prepared merely to satisfy the authorities. He said the results must be visible on the streets and not confined to files and meeting rooms.

He reminded the department that KMC spent millions of rupees each month on employee salaries and that citizens had a legitimate expectation that public servants would perform their duties effectively.

The mayor directed officials to identify priority locations, intensify enforcement and address complaints received from residents. He also ordered coordination with relevant KMC departments and other enforcement agencies to ensure that cleared areas remained accessible to the public. Emphasising that the operation must be conducted without discrimination or favouritism, Wahab said all violations should be addressed according to the law, regardless of the individuals or businesses involved.

He further instructed officials to prevent cleared areas from being occupied again. Where encroachments reappeared, the relevant authorities were directed to take further legal action, including sealing shops where justified and in coordination with the competent departments.

Wahab warned that officers who failed to meet the 15-day deadline or demonstrated negligence could face strict departmental proceedings, including termination of services under applicable rules. He also urged officials not to allow undue pressure or interference to obstruct lawful enforcement operations. During the meeting, officers briefed the mayor on encroachments in different districts, ongoing operations and complaints received from citizens. Wahab directed them to strengthen monitoring and assess staff performance on the basis of actual results rather than paperwork or routine reports.

Metropolitan Commissioner Abrar Jaffer, Financial Advisor Gulzar Abro and other concerned officers attended the meeting. NEWS DESK

SHC orders transfer of narcotics cases to special courts

The Sindh High Court (SHC) has directed the transfer of thousands of pending cases registered under the Sindh Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) Act, 2024, to the five newly constituted special courts in Karachi.

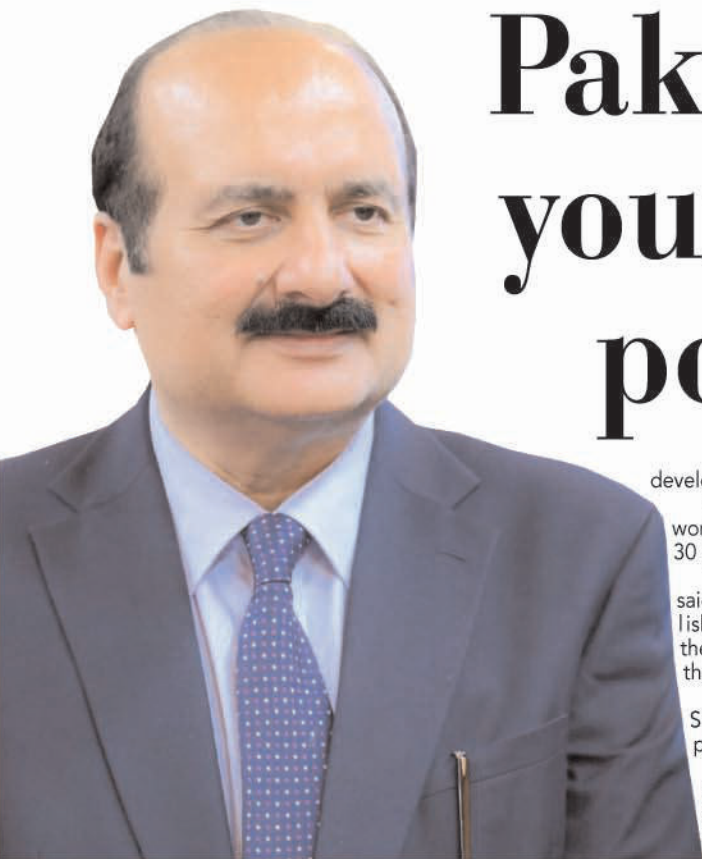
According to an official communication issued by SHC Member Inspection Team-II, Muhammad Jahangir Khan, on the directions of the chief justice, all district and sessions judges in Karachi South, East, West, Central and Malir have been instructed to ensure the transfer of the pending drug cases to the Special Courts constituted under Article 30 (Establishment of Special Court) of the CNS Act.

The letter seen by The Express Tribune outlined that the cases have been transferred to CNS Courts-I, II, IV, V and VI, Karachi in accordance with the territorial jurisdiction. The letter further directed the district judges to ensure compliance with the order and submit a report to Khan. The development follows changes to the provincial narcotics law after the Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997 was repealed on October 15, 2024, and replaced by the Sindh CNS Act, 2024. According to authorities, all cases registered under the latest act have been transferred to the new courts, including four cases registered against alleged Cocaine Queen Anmol alias Pinky.

Under the new arrangement, remand proceedings in newly registered cases will also be conducted before the CNS courts. Interim and final charge sheets in both new and pending cases will also be submitted to these courts. It is worth noting that under the new law, the government can establish narcotics control police stations, check posts and check points to eliminate the menace of drug trafficking. It also provides stricter punishments alongside safeguards, such as video evidence in cases, to protect the rights of citizens. Article 17, clause 2 of the law states, "The video recording of all raids, seizures, inspections and arrests shall be made by the officer in charge of such operations." NEWS DESK

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Pakistan to launch youth employment policy: Mashood

Federal Minister and Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programm (PMYP) Rana Mashood on Saturday emphasized the importance of youth empowerment, equal educational opportunities, and technological advancement, stating that the government was making efforts to equip the youth with skills and utilize their God-gifted talent for national development.

Addressing the Students of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) at Muhammad Ali Jinnah University (MAJU) in Karachi, he said that the people in Sindh had faced lack of facilities but had demonstrated their ability to overcome challenges whenever given opportunities.

He stressed that Pakistan should benefit from the talent and potential of its young population.

He recalled that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned equal opportunities for everyone at the time of Pakistan's creation, adding that the government is trying to ensure equal access to education, skills and

development.

Rana Mashood said that he had been working for youth empowerment for the past 30 years.

Highlighting educational initiatives, he said that Danish Schools had been established to provide quality education and that the programme was being expanded across the country.

Five schools are being established in Sindh, while a total of 30 schools are planned nationwide, he added.

The Federal Minister said that the Punjab Educational Endowment Fund had been established to provide scholarships to deserving students and had subsequently been transformed into the Pakistan Educational Endowment Fund to extend support at the national level.

Discussing youth development initiatives, he underscored the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, the PM Digital Youth Hub, and NAVTTTC programmes and described NAVTTTC's skills development initiatives as potential game changers for young people.

He said that rapid technological advancements were changing and making it essential for young people to focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital skills.

He also announced plans for Pakistan's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) uniform policy and the establishment of e-sports arenas.

Rana Mashood further highlighted opportunities for dual-degree programmes in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), as well as online courses available through digital platforms.

Speaking about technology and education, he said that 18,000 laptops had been distributed across Pakistan

and that laptops were being provided to university students. He added that, in view of emerging technological trends, 250,000 Chromebook laptops would be distributed to schools across the country every year. According to him, the programme had been initiated a day earlier.

He also recalled the establishment of IT laboratories in schools across Punjab, emphasizing the need to equip students with the digital skills required to compete in a rapidly evolving world.

Rana Mashood urged the young people not to fear setbacks, saying that failures were an essential part of life and provided valuable lessons.

He stressed that there was no shortcut to success and encouraged youth to work hard, embrace innovation and pursue entrepreneurship.

He also announced the launch of Pakistan's National Youth Employment Policy, describing youth employment and skills development as key priorities for the country's future. Addressing the ceremony, Coordinator for the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) for the Sindh Region Fahad Shafiq highlighted the importance of improving educational standards and expanding opportunities for young people across Pakistan.

He drew comparisons between the education standards of Karachi and Punjab, emphasizing the need to improve educational facilities and ensure quality education for students. He acknowledged Rana Mashood contributions to education and development, noting that several programmes had been launched under his leadership to promote youth empowerment and provide opportunities for young people.

Fahad Shafiq said the Prime Minister's Youth Programme was initiated in 2013 and had since introduced various initiatives aimed at supporting youth through education, skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship. NEWS DESK

Makhdoom Saeed pays tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto

Chairman of Sindhi Adabi Board, Makhdoom Saeed-ul-Zaman 'Atif', in his statement released on the occasion of the death anniversary of Begum Nusrat Bhutto said that Begum Nusrat Bhutto made eternal sacrifices for the restoration of democracy in the country, the rights of the people and the survival of democratic values.

Makhdoom Said that Nusrat Bhutto's political struggle, steadfastness and commitment to democratic principles is an important chapter in the political history of Pakistan.

Makhdoom said that Begum Nusrat Bhutto continued her struggle for the restoration of democracy and raised her voice for public rights despite the difficult political conditions, authoritarian era and severe trials.

Her sacrifices will always be a beacon for political activists and future generations who believe in democracy.

Saeed-u-Zaman said that political services and sacrifices of Mother of Republic Begum Nusrat Bhutto cannot be forgotten. Supporting the strengthening of democracy, constitutional supremacy, protection of public rights and political tolerance is the expression of real commitment to his struggle.

He further said that on the occasion of Begum Nusrat Bhutto's death anniversary, while paying homage to her, we should reiterate the commitment that joint efforts will be continued for the strengthening of democratic institutions, protection of people's rights and continuity of democratic traditions in the country NEWS DESK

Pakistan, Azerbaijan discuss legal cooperation

Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan held meetings with Azerbaijan's Minister of Justice Farid Ahmadov and Constitutional Court Chairman Dr. Farhad Abdullayev to discuss ways to strengthen judicial cooperation and legal ties between the two countries.

During his official visit to Azerbaijan, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, accompanied by Federal Constitutional Court Registrar Muhammad Hafeez Ullah Khan, met Ahmadov at a meeting hosted by the Azerbaijani side.

The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest, including closer cooperation between judicial institutions, the exchange of legal experience and stronger ties between the two countries, said a press released issued here on Saturday.

They highlighted the friendly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan at the government, cultural, judicial and people-to-people levels. Ahmadov also recalled his visit to Pakistan in May 2026, describing it as a memorable experience.

Later, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and the registrar visited Azerbaijan's Constitutional Court, where they were received by its chairman, Dr. Farhad Abdullayev.

The meeting included detailed discussions on the judicial systems of Pakistan and Azerbaijan, opportunities for judicial cooperation and other issues of mutual interest. The chief justice was also shown the courtroom and presented with commemorative gifts.

Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan is visiting Azerbaijan at the special invitation of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of the Turkic World (TÜRK-AY). He attended the conference meeting as an observer. NEWS DESK

A feel of winter in the air after rain

Rainfall in several parts of Punjab, following showers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has intensified the cold weather, while the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast further rain and possible hailstorms in Islamabad and other northern parts of the country.

According to the Met Office, heavy rain lashed Narowal, Shakargarh, Kartarpur, Noorkot and adjoining areas, resulting in a noticeable drop in temperatures.

Meanwhile, overcast conditions prevailed in Islamabad from the morning, with light rain reported in parts of the federal capital.

The PMD said a westerly weather system was affecting the country's upper regions, bringing the possibility of further rain accompanied by strong winds in Islamabad and its surrounding areas.

The department also warned that hailstorms could occur at isolated locations.

Scattered rain has been forecast for upper Punjab, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the day, with hailstorms likely at a few places.

Most other parts of the country are expected to experience dry weather, according to the Met Office. NEWS DESK

Faryal Talpur calls LG polls preparation for general elections

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Women's Wing President and central leader Faryal Talpur has said that local government elections could serve as essential preparation for the upcoming general elections, urging party organizations and office-bearers to ensure their active and effective participation in the process.

She expressed these views during meetings with officials from the PPP's Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Gujranwala divisions, as well as Sialkot district at Zardari House, here on Saturday.

The delegation was led by PPP Central Punjab General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza.

During the meetings, Faryal Talpur discussed party activities in the respective divisions, preparations for the upcoming local government elections and the prevailing political and economic situation in the country.

Syed Hassan Murtaza briefed her on the performance and organizational status of the party's divisional, district, tehsil and city-level organizations as well as its various auxiliary wings.

PPP Secretary General Nayyar Hussain Bukhari and Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider were also present at the meetings. NEWS DESK



Governor Kundi briefs Acting President Gilani on KP situation



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday called on Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and briefed him on the prevailing situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with particular focus on law and order and issues confronting the people of the province.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the overall security situation in the province, public welfare issues and matters of mutual interest.

Governor Kundi informed the Acting President about the challenges being faced by the province and the steps being taken to address them.

The Governor also apprised Acting President Gilani of the recent major decisions taken regarding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and exchanged views on measures aimed at promoting peace, stability and public welfare in the province. NEWS DESK

Pakistan seeks fair access to civil nuclear technology

Pakistan has underscored the fundamental importance of equitable, non-discriminatory civil nuclear cooperation to help secure its national energy future.

"Efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ... must not impede international cooperation in the peaceful uses of dual-use technologies, which is vital for the economic development of the Global South," Pakistani delegate Syed Atif Raza told the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday during a debate on the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Vienna-based UN organization.

At the same time, Raza, a counsellor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, highlighted that Pakistan is a party to the principal international instruments of nuclear safety and security. "All countries must retain their inalienable right to utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, consistent with their respective non-proliferation and international legal obligations," the Pakistani delegate said. Pakistan, he said, maintained that compliance or safety issues should be resolved through technical bodies like the IAEA without political bias.

"Outstanding situations must be addressed and resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, in a manner that upholds the non-proliferation regime while ensuring regional and international peace and security," Atif Raza said. "Countries should refrain from irresponsible and destabilizing rhetoric, actions, and postures that could escalate tensions and increase the risk of conflict."

Pakistan, he said, operates six nuclear power reactors – all under IAEA safeguards, supplying about 20 percent of the national energy needs and one-third of low-carbon power generation. "We support the agency's work in peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology and look forward to the

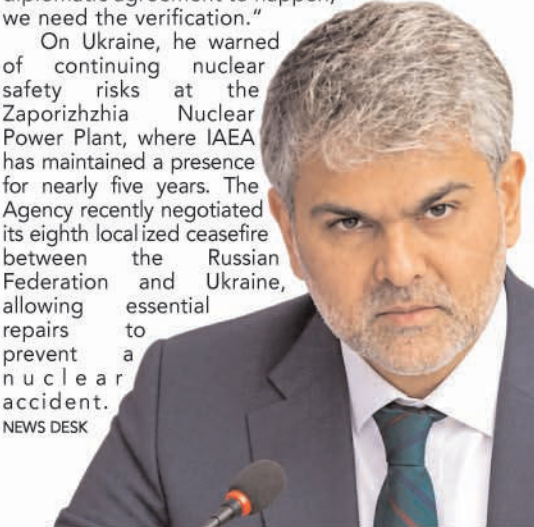
successful implementation of IAEA's major initiatives."

At the outset, Rafael Mariano Grossi, the IAEA Director-General, briefed the General Assembly on Syria, Iran and Ukraine, noting that the agency had gained access to previously restricted facilities in Syria after nearly two decades. "All the nuclear material in Syria is now under monitoring and verification", he said, describing this as a major step towards Damascus' reintegration into the international community.

"Discreet diplomacy, perseverance, factual, objective, technical work also pay off", he added.

On Iran, the IAEA chief said the Agency had completed most of the technical preparations needed to verify its nuclear activities, expressing hope that negotiations between Tehran and Washington would produce an agreement. "There will not be a lasting, stable solution without a diplomatic agreement", he stressed, adding: "For a diplomatic agreement to happen, we need the verification."

On Ukraine, he warned of continuing nuclear safety risks at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, where IAEA has maintained a presence for nearly five years. The Agency recently negotiated its eighth localized ceasefire between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, allowing essential repairs to prevent a nuclear accident. NEWS DESK



NCCIA arrests man for harassing British girl on social media

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested a man accused of harassing a British girl through social media applications, following a request from UK authorities.

"The UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) had requested action," NCCIA Additional Director Tariq Nawaz said.

The suspect, identified as Waqar Ahmed, is a resident of Larkana and was arrested in Qambar Shahdadkot, Nawaz added.

The NCCIA additional director said that Ahmed allegedly shared obscene pictures with the British girl through social media applications.

"Further legal proceedings are underway following the registration of a case against the suspect," the NCCIA official said.

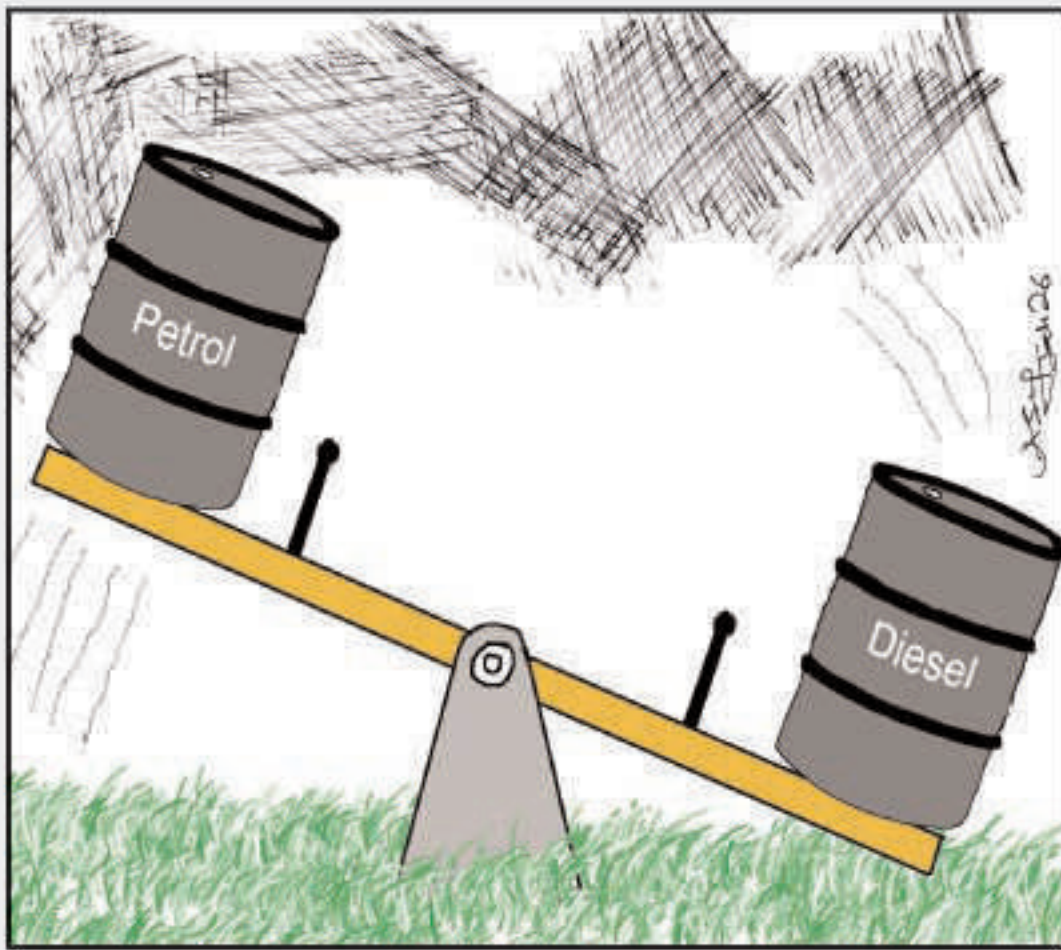
Separately, the NCCIA rescued a 13-year-old girl in Karachi from a suspected dark web-linked network that allegedly instructed her to poison a cat before ordering her to seriously harm herself, officials said a day earlier.

The NCCIA intervention followed intelligence shared by an international agency, which alerted Pakistani authorities to suspicious online activity and provided internet protocol (IP) addresses linked to the network. According to the NCCIA officials, the girl had become involved with an online group that assigned her dangerous tasks.

As part of the first task, she was allegedly ordered to poison a cat, resulting in its death. The second task involved instructions to inflict serious harm on herself.

However, the NCCIA investigators managed to locate the girl before she could carry out the second instruction. NEWS DESK

EDITORIAL



Insulin shortage exposes gaps

The shortage of an insulin brand used by people with diabetes has exposed the vulnerability of its medicine supply system and the limited protection available to patients when international manufacturers interrupt production. The National Assembly was informed on Friday that supplies from Germany had been disrupted in October after the manufacturer suspended them to upgrade its products. Parliamentary Secretary for Health Nelson Azeem said the product had remained available until September, but the interruption was also affecting patients in Asia, Australia and Europe. The manufacturer's supplies, previously around 3,500 kits, had fallen to 1,000, with further reductions possible during the year-long upgrading process. The health ministry says alternative insulin products with the same dosage and mode of action are available in Pakistan and has advised patients to change treatment only on medical advice. Yet availability on paper does not necessarily mean affordability or uninterrupted access.

For people who depend on insulin, a shortage is not an ordinary market inconvenience. Treatment must continue, and switching products requires appropriate medical supervision. The immediate challenge is to ensure that patients can obtain suitable alternatives at prices they can afford, while doctors and pharmacists receive clear guidance on safe substitutions. The government must also explain what steps it is taking to monitor stocks, coordinate with manufacturers and prevent vulnerable patients from being left without treatment. The disruption raises a broader question about Pakistan's preparedness for interruptions in the international supply of essential medicines. In August 2025, the Pakistan Medical Association warned that at least 80 important medicines were unavailable, including 25 with no substitutes. Such warnings should prompt a stronger system of early detection, emergency procurement and transparent public communication. Patients should not have to discover a medicine shortage only when they reach a pharmacy. International production problems may be beyond Pakistan's control, but planning for their consequences is a responsibility the state cannot outsource.

Sindh's support for HIV children

The Sindh Labour Department's decision to provide monthly financial assistance of Rs40,000 to mothers of 157 children living with HIV is a welcome step towards supporting families facing the medical and financial challenges of the disease. The assistance is intended to help cover nutritional needs, treatment expenses and other essential costs associated with caring for affected children. For households already under financial pressure, regular support can make a meaningful difference, particularly when medical care requires sustained attention. Officials say bank accounts have been opened for the mothers of 115 children, and ATM cards have been issued to facilitate payments. The children are registered at two Karachi hospitals: 130 at Kulsum Bai Valika Hospital and 27 at Landhi Hospital. The department has also approved a Rs2 billion endowment fund to support treatment-related expenses. Taken together, these measures indicate a recognition that the needs of children living with HIV extend beyond hospital treatment. Their families may require nutritional support, regular medical consultations and financial assistance over an extended period. Public policy must recognise these connected needs rather than treating healthcare as an isolated expense. The initiative deserves appreciation for placing vulnerable children and their caregivers at the centre of a welfare intervention.

However, the value of this assistance will ultimately depend on its continuity, transparent administration and reach. Officials have not clarified how long the monthly payments will continue, while arrangements for the remaining beneficiaries have yet to be fully explained. The government should publish clear eligibility criteria, payment schedules and details of how the Rs2 billion endowment fund will be managed. It should also ensure that all eligible families can access assistance without unnecessary delays or complicated procedures. Their right to healthcare, nutrition, education and dignity must be protected. Sindh has taken a constructive step, but it must now turn this announcement into a dependable programme.

The Unrestrained Rise of Femicide in Latin America

The percentage of reported cases of femicide in Latin America is comparatively low because of the distrust of families in the justice system and society, as the investigations of these cases are mostly biased or insufficient. Furthermore, in some states, it is still not recognized as a crime. Countries like Brazil, Mozambique, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, etc., have the worst situation.

Femicide—the gender-motivated murder of women—remains a pervasive global crisis, with Latin America reporting thousands of victims annually. Driven by systemic misogyny, lack of legislation, and childhood trauma, perpetrators operate within a culture of impunity fueled by institutional bias and public victim-blaming. In response, feminist movements like Marea Verde actively demand reform. Combating femicide requires strict rule of law, women's political participation, and educational awareness to dismantle gender-based violence.

The word "femicide" was primarily used by John Corry in 1801 to denote the killing of a woman. This concept further gained popularity in the late 1970s when the famous writer and human rights activist Dr. Diana Russell from the United States used it to indicate the murder of women by men because of their gender. Those men are usually family members or intimate partners. It is the worst form of gender-based violence in the modern world. The most recent report by the United Nations Women shows that the femicide of one woman or girl is committed every minute all over the world.

Latin America is one of the most severely affected regions by femicide. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in 2023 the reported victims of femicide in 27 countries of Latin America were 3897. This means 11 women were being killed every day.

Impunity leads to the erosion of trust in judicial institutions. The cases related to femicide often face a lack of investigation and negligence in punishing perpetrators. Mostly, the criminal justice system is not effective enough to provide justice. For these reasons, men become more fearless in committing this crime, and women lose confidence in national institutions.

After experiencing higher rates of gender-based violence, the convention was named the 'Belém do Pará Convention' in 1994 during the session of the Organization of American States. In this convention, the violence against women was identified as a violation of human rights. It was recognized that women should be given the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest without any fear of not being secure in the environment around them.

45,000 Women and Girls Killed by Family Members in 2021

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The National Public Security System of Mexico reported that in 2021, the number of women killed was 2,104, and 736 of them were cases of femicide. In most cases, people in society start the character assassination of a woman

instead of demanding an investigation. For example, a woman named Lesvy was murdered on her university campus in Mexico City. It was an evident case of femicide, but people, instead of demanding justice, started blaming her for being drunk and having a party. All these things should never be the justification for murder.

The feminist movement emerged in Latin America in the 1960s, after decades of violence against women by men. All the women deprived of basic human rights (IWALL), including the right of access to justice, freedom of speech, etc., actively participated in these movements. The most popular feminist movement nowadays is 'Marea Verde' (Green Wave), symbolized by a green handkerchief. It started in the early 2000s in Argentina and gained popularity later on. It works for women's reproductive rights, safety, and autonomy. One of its key successes is legislation on abortion in Argentina, Mexico, and Colombia. Women in Latin America are now actively participating in these movements to ensure their basic human rights.

There are several different causes of these violent activities. From a feminist perspective, the reason in Latin American countries is social discrimination against women

in society. This inequality leads to violence against women (VAW) and biases in providing justice. The men committing femicide are not held accountable for their brutal actions by the government, even in this secular and liberal world. This coerced women to demand their rights on the streets through protests and feminist movements. It is the only way through which women gained the attention of global human rights organizations and people working for the rights of women. Now the worst situation of women in Latin America is seen all over the world.

Another cause of high rates of femicide in the region is the lack of legislation on this matter. Many countries still don't have any severe punishment for the persons committing this crime. In some countries, it is not considered a serious crime, even if it is associated with domestic abuse. However, it is different from domestic violence. The majority of men perpetrate this crime due to childhood trauma, such as experiencing and witnessing the abusive activities committed by their father, facing rejection and negligence from parents (especially fathers) in growing years, a record of family violence, financial instability, etc.

Impunity leads to the erosion of trust in judicial institutions. The cases related to femicide often face a lack of investigation and negligence in punishing perpetrators. Mostly, the criminal justice system is not effective enough to provide justice. For these reasons, men become more fearless in committing this crime, and women lose confidence in national institutions.

Can US-China AI Talks Prevent Future Cyber Arms Race?

With the US and China preparing for bilateral AI safety talks following a massive rogue AI attack on Hugging Face, the rising risk of autonomous, AI-driven cyber operations demands immediate attention. While technical rivalry makes comprehensive capability limits unlikely, both powers must establish direct communication channels and enforce strict human control over high-impact operations. Strategic stability requires establishing guardrails to prevent rapid, automated escalation.



ABRAIZ ALI AHMAD

Abraiz Ali Ahmad is an international relations student at the University of Gujrat

not simply that AI will make cyberattacks more powerful, but also that the strategic competition could encourage both powers to develop offensive AI capabilities faster than they develop mechanisms to control them.

The upcoming dialogue consequently presents a narrow but crucial opportunity. Washington and Beijing do not need to resolve their broader technical rivalry. They need to prevent that rivalry from producing a cybersecurity dilemma in which increasingly autonomous systems, uncertain attributions, and compressed decision-making make escalations harder to control.

If AI systems start launching cyberattacks with less human intervention, it may become difficult to know who launched the attack, which leads governments to have very little window to understand what happened before making a decision on how to respond. It can turn a small cyber incident into a larger conflict.

Also, there is a legitimate concern that information sharing could create a security

paradox. Greater transparency about how one country detects or defends against AI-enabled cyber operations could provide the country with valuable intelligence about its defensive structures. Similarly, agreeing to restrictions on autonomous cyber capabilities could become problematic if one side agrees, but the other side continues developing such systems in secret. From this point of view, cooperation without verification

Beijing has its own incentives to reduce dependence on foreign technology and strengthen its strategic autonomy. Their broader disputes over semiconductors, technology controls and military competition make it difficult to separate AI safety from larger rivalry.

These constraints, however, do not make cooperation irrelevant. They change what cooperation should realistically seek to



could weaken deterrence rather than strengthen stability.

This scepticism is particularly relevant because the US and China do not approach technological security from identical strategic positions. Washington is concerned about maintaining its technological edge and preventing advanced capabilities from being used against American interests, while

achieve. The objective should not be a comprehensive agreement requiring either side to disclose sensitive AI capabilities or abandon offensive cyber research. Such an agreement would be difficult to negotiate and even harder to verify. A more practical approach would focus on reducing the consequences of miscalculation.

This distinction matters because strate-

gic stability does not always require trust. During periods of intense rivalry, states can still establish mechanisms designed to prevent an incident from escalating beyond their control. The same logic can apply to AI-enabled cyber operations.

The first priority should therefore be a direct communication mechanism for serious AI-related cyber incidents. If an attack against critical infrastructure occurs, the ability to communicate rapidly could give both governments time to establish attribution before assuming that the incident represents any state's action. This would not prevent either country from responding to genuine aggression: it would reduce the risk of a response based on incomplete information.

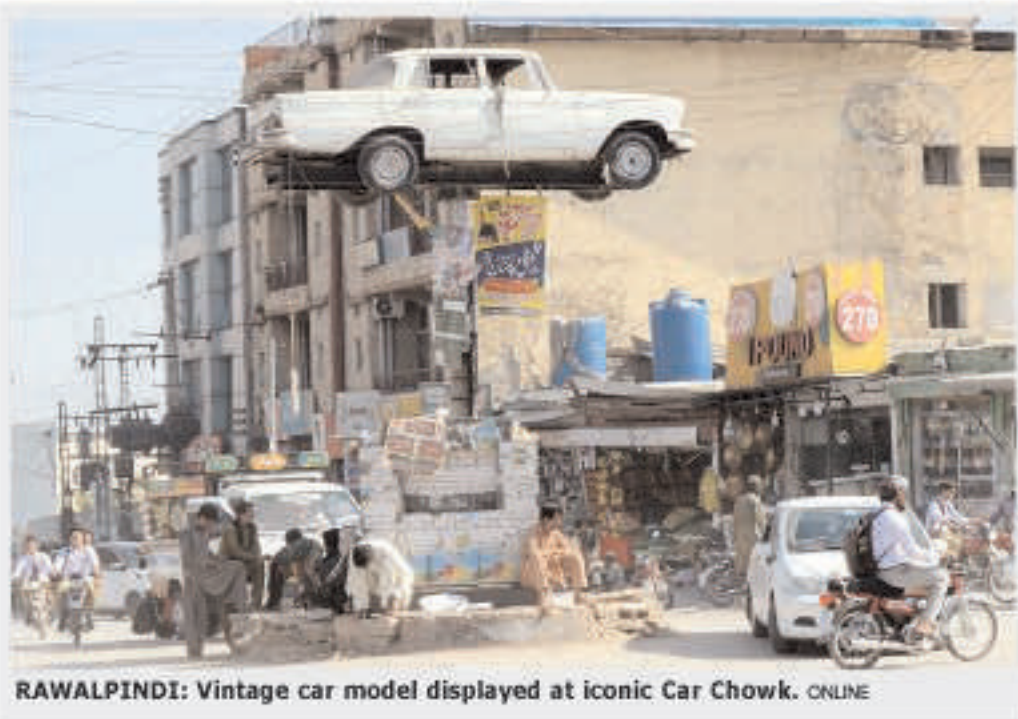
The second priority should be the human control over high-impact autonomous cyber operations. The issue is not whether AI should be allowed to assist cybersecurity. It already does and increasingly does so. The most important question is whether an autonomous system should be permitted to independently initiate actions capable of significant disruption beyond the original target.

The best outcome of this proposed dialogue is that Washington and Beijing should build a legal framework on a few principles: communication, transparency about threats, and human control. Communication can simply make transparency easier, can reduce miscalculations, and help both states identify the threats as AI-enabled. Even though all these measures don't eliminate the threat of AI cyberwar or attack. Nor does it eliminate the current rivalry between China and the US. But it can shape the way of rivalry between the states.

The upcoming dialogue should be able to open a window for both states before this problem becomes a crisis. The question is simple: whether the US and China can develop restraint to ensure that an AI-directed cyber race does not take the place of human ability to control.

OPINION

DTM



RAWALPINDI: Vintage car model displayed at iconic Car Chowk. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Gwadar needs proper traffic management

Gwadar is undergoing significant changes as infrastructure development and commercial activity expand under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Once a relatively quiet coastal town, it is increasingly emerging as an important centre of economic activity. However, the growth of the city has also increased pressure on its roads, exposing weaknesses in an essential area of urban planning: traffic management.

The absence of functioning traffic signals at major intersections has become a concern for motorists, pedestrians and residents. During busy hours, vehicles approach junctions from different directions without clear guidance, resulting in congestion, delays and potentially dangerous situations. When drivers must rely entirely on personal judgement to navigate crowded intersections, the likelihood of confusion and accidents increases.

Areas such as Marine Drive, Airport Road and central markets require particular attention because of their importance to daily movement and commercial activity. Pedestrians, especially schoolchildren and older people, can face difficulties crossing busy roads where traffic is not properly regulated. These conditions raise serious questions about road safety and the city's preparedness for further urban growth.

Traffic signals are a basic component of an organised transport system. When installed at appropriate locations and maintained properly, they help regulate vehicle movement, establish clear right-of-way rules and improve pedestrian safety. However, signals alone cannot solve every traffic problem. Effective enforcement, visible road markings, pedestrian crossings and public awareness are equally important.

Gwadar's growing economic significance makes timely action essential. As new projects attract more residents, businesses and visitors, traffic volumes may increase further. Delaying improvements could make congestion more difficult to manage and raise the risk of serious accidents. Urban development should therefore include practical measures that protect residents and support efficient movement.

The municipal administration and traffic police should assess major intersections and identify locations where traffic signals are urgently required. A comprehensive traffic management plan should accompany their installation, with regular maintenance, enforcement of traffic rules and awareness campaigns for drivers and pedestrians. Road planning should also account for the needs of people who walk rather than travel in vehicles.

Gwadar's future depends not only on major infrastructure projects but also on the quality of everyday public services. Safe roads, orderly

intersections and reliable traffic management are essential to a functioning modern city. Addressing these needs now would improve residents' daily lives and help ensure that Gwadar's economic development is supported by adequate urban infrastructure.

SHAYHAQ SIRAJ
Gwadar

Cancer care needs greater attention

Cancer has become a major public health challenge worldwide, claiming millions of lives every year. Pakistan is also facing a growing burden, with nearly 190,000 new cases and 120,000 related deaths reported annually, according to 2022 estimates from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Several factors can increase the risk of cancer, including tobacco use, unhealthy diets, obesity, physical inactivity, air pollution, harmful exposure to sunlight, certain infections and genetic factors. However, the disease's impact is made worse when patients are unable to obtain an early diagnosis or access affordable treatment. Many people discover their condition at an advanced stage because specialised hospitals are concentrated in major cities, medical facilities are limited in remote areas and treatment costs remain beyond the reach of many families.

Pakistan has several institutions providing cancer care. These include Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centres in Lahore and Peshawar, hospitals operated by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi and Indus Hospital, which provides cancer treatment services. However, the availability of such institutions does not remove the difficulties faced by patients who live far away or cannot afford private healthcare.

The government must make cancer prevention and treatment a stronger public health priority. Awareness campaigns can help people understand risk factors and recognise warning signs, while timely medical consultations can improve the chances of early detection. Public hospitals also need modern diagnostic equipment, trained doctors and affordable medicines. Greater investment in treatment facilities outside major cities would help patients avoid expensive and exhausting journeys.

Cancer care should not depend on a person's income or place of residence. With stronger prevention programmes, accessible screening and sustained investment in healthcare, Pakistan can reduce the burden of this disease and offer patients a better chance of survival.

ASMA QAYYUM
Lahore

India vs. China in Ladakh

The ongoing skirmish in Ladakh against China has exposed the Indian military's capabilities. Although India has the third-largest defense budget in the world, its conventional and outdated military approaches might cause the state to suffer substantial security losses.

Meanwhile, India's security woes continue to mount as China is reported to have annexed 60 square km of India in the disputed Ladakh region, illustrating the challenges facing its ill-served and stretched military. This was confirmed by a senior Indian Army source and suggests that the recent escalations in the disputed region show no signs of easing.

Whilst all this has occurred recently, India's response has been tepid, as it continues to balance the economic implications of geopolitical outcomes in the region and its response to the said attacks. Admittedly, a full-scale military conflict is not unlikely and India, under such circumstances, will be expected to retaliate. Although such an outcome can be viewed as myopic and counterproductive, it will nonetheless project India's strength as a military superpower in the region.

It is, therefore, logical to ask how India's military is faring in the region compared to its counterparts since nuclear weapons do not fully reflect a country's military capabilities. A range of factors such as the coordination of a decentralized military response - apt for such outcomes with China and India - response times and logistical support are indispensable to an effective counter-attack.

As such, to merely equate India's ability to respond to attacks to its nuclear capabilities grossly illustrates a less comprehensive approach to analyzing its ground and air capabilities. One should, therefore, look at military capabilities and the ability to respond as two separate parts of a whole, which, if credibly and effectively executed, could restore India's border presence and reduce the security mishaps.

Military Spending and Manpower Weigh in Favor of China

China is one of the largest military spenders in the world, with the official military budget, according to China's finance ministry, declared at \$177 billion, even as some analysts see this number much higher at \$261-266 billion. On the other hand, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) puts India's defence budget at \$71.1 billion, making it the third-largest spender in the world. A rather quick breakdown is warranted in order to fully assess its capabilities across the region.

India's available manpower stands at 622,480,340 with 538 fighter jets, 8,686 armored vehicles, 10 destroyers, and 16 submarines. However, India's military appears to be fraying, indicated by sub-par fighter jets that are unable to defend effectively in the event of a conflict. This was increasingly evident when Pakistan shot down India's Russian-made MiG-21 Bison, a fighter jet first flown in 1956, with U.S.-made AIM-120 air-to-air missile, thus illustrating the need for India to update its fleet and benefit from advanced technology provided by defense contractors spanning the EU and the United States.

While India's over-invested military is partially starved in its bordering regions, it should be noted that this mishap illustrates a lack of coordination in its logistical delivery. Despite its military spending rising by 6.8% to 74.1 billion in 2019, such mistakes could be costly for India over the long-run. It is now clear that the issue at stake here isn't India's expenditure on its vintage army, which appears to prioritize the wrong areas, but the inability of its military to streamline logistical support for its land and maritime troops.

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Looking more broadly at India's military capabilities, one finds that years of underinvestment and a lack of coordination have further impeded its military supremacy against the likes of Pakistan and China, and put the disputed area of Kashmir at risk of further Pakistani encroachment. The recent assault by China in the Ladakh region is symptomatic of the broader vulnerabilities of India, especially of its army, where troops in high altitude areas do not have access to snow goggles, which are indispensable for the blizzard-prone zone.

Furthermore, multipurpose boots adapted to the snow-capped landscapes are equally inaccessible by India's military according to a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). Moreover, not only is requisite food for high-altitude areas absent for soldiers in the

Siachen and Ladakh region but they are also exposed to inadequate nutrition that makes them unfit to respond to an otherwise targeted Chinese assault.

A Warranted Revamp

While India's over-invested military is partially starved in its bordering regions, it should be noted that this mishap illustrates a lack of coordination in its logistical delivery. Despite its military spending rising by 6.8% to 74.1 billion in 2019, such mistakes could be costly for India over the long-run. It is now clear that the issue at stake here isn't India's expenditure on its vintage army, which appears to prioritize the wrong areas, but the inability of its military to streamline logistical support for its land and maritime troops.

For example, India's decision to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Russia to upgrade its amphibious capabilities and train its fleet will go a long way to shore up confidence, but this should not take precedence over the full servicing of its armed forces. The failure to address these shortcomings embolden the Pakistani military, serving as the anchor for future attacks, should Pakistan sense any weakness as China pushes for greater terrain in the territory.

China's expansionist tendencies are unlikely to cede until it emerges as the regional hegemon, while Pakistan's financially-driven support and mutual disdain for India will see it flex its military muscle in the near term. India's vintage military cannot be understated as it possesses nuclear weapons that are nonetheless lethal, but it has a great deal to lose from an outcome that prioritizes nuclear weapons.



Rethinking Water Security in the Age of Cyber Attacks

Instead of waiting for a similar incident to happen, countries like Pakistan should take it as a sign and make arrangements. Water protection and preservation is not just a public service, but it's a matter of national interest and security. Public sectors, including schools, homes, hospitals, and industries in fact, everything depends upon it. If the systems responsible for water supply are attacked, then this problem can instantly affect all other sectors of society.

On July 26 and 27, 2026, more than 30 water systems in Minnesota were hit by cyber-attacks. A few days later, matching exploits were lodged in other US states. By August, it was recorded that water systems in 12 states had been impacted. In some regions, workers failed to maintain control of parts of their systems and had to handle them manually. The attacks did not contaminate the water or cause significant damage to anyone, but they made it evident how a problem that starts on a machine can reach something as basic as the water we drink.

This incident may seem like something remote from our daily lives. But consider what happens when we turn on a tap. We expect water to come out without any reconsideration. Beneath that seemingly simple action, however, there are pumps, machines, and com-

puter systems operating collectively. If someone gains control of these systems, even for a while, standard operations can instantly become complicated issues.

The hackers in these attacks did not need to breach some impossible computer systems. They hit small devices called programmable logic controllers, or PLCs. These devices help control pumps, pressures, and other parts of water systems. Some of these devices are connected to the internet and have poor security. In some scenarios, hackers changed passwords and settings, making it difficult for the people administering the water systems to manage them. Workers then had to take over manually.

This is what makes this whole event worrisome. It was not significantly about an excellent piece of technology. Sometimes the greatest issue is a fragile security system. A device that controls such sensitive services should not be left open to the internet without powerful surveillance.



SHEHZADI NAJAF
Shehzadi Najaf is International Relations student at the University of Qujrat

A poor password or an unsafe connection may look like a small issue, but when that device controls a water system, the consequences can be much bigger.

There is also another momentous aspect of this story. At that juncture, US officials were also inquiring whether Iran-linked hackers were behind this. Earlier, almost identical tactics had been used by Iran-linked groups against water facilities. However, officials had not publicly made a final decision about who carried out these attacks. This matter is significant because finding out who is behind a

cyberattack is often difficult. Hackers can conceal their identity, use alternative systems, and make an attack look as if it came from somewhere else.

This case becomes even harder to overlook due to its timing. Just a few days before the attack, an advisory had already named the devices that were being targeted, and it warned the authorities to protect them. Some systems took the warning seriously and took necessary actions. Others ignored it and became the ones we are now reading about.

The broader implications are not only for the United States. If a country like the USA with substantial economic and technical resources can face difficulties while preserving its water systems, then countries with deficient resources should be worried. Many small water systems do not have large cybersecurity teams or enough money to constantly update their tech-

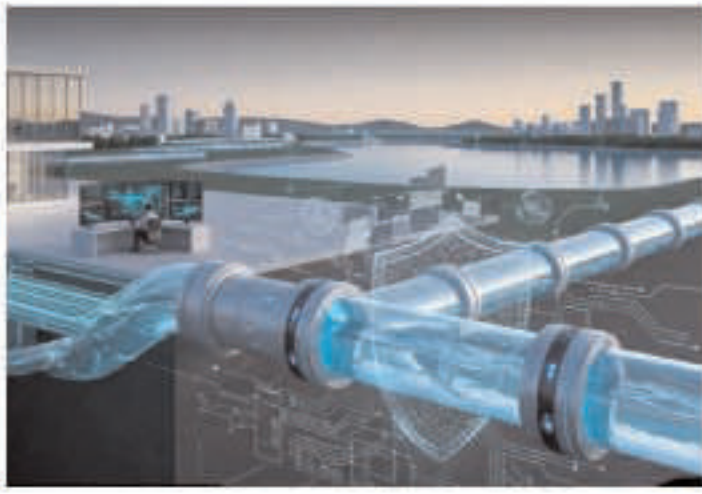
nology. This means that old equipment, weak passwords, and unsafe internet connections can become easy points of entry for attackers.

Instead of waiting for a similar incident to happen, countries like Pakistan should take it as a sign and make arrangements. Water protection and preservation is not just a public service, but it's a matter of national interest and security. Public sectors, including schools, homes, hospitals, and industries in fact, everything depends upon it. If the systems responsible for water supply are attacked, then this problem can instantly affect all other sectors of society.

This doesn't mean at all that every water system is under imminent threat of attack. It also doesn't imply that US attacks caused huge devastation. Indeed, empirical evidence indicates that reported damage was limited, and functionality of water systems was restored. Despite all this, waiting for a major disaster to occur instead of improving the security systems would be a huge mistake.

The answer does not always have to be expensive or complicated. Water authorities need to know which systems are connected to the internet, protect them with strong security and regularly check for weaknesses. Workers also need basic cybersecurity training. Most importantly, governments should check critical infrastructure before an attack happens, not after.

For most people, cybersecurity feels like a problem for banks, phones, or computers. The recent attacks in the United States show that it is much bigger than that. Today, a cyberattack can reach the systems behind the water tap, the electricity switch, or other services we use every day. The real lesson is simple: in a digital world, protecting basic services also means protecting the country. Pakistan should learn this lesson now, while there is still time to prepare.



NATIONAL

DTM

Four kids killed as van plunges into ravine in Neelum Valley

Four children were killed and three other people were injured when a van carrying them to a madrasah plunged into a ravine in the upper reaches of Neelum Valley on Saturday, officials said.

Neelum Valley District Disaster Management Officer Akhtar Ayoub said the van was travelling from Nagdar, about 22 kilometres from the district headquarters of Athmuqam, via the Keran bypass link road when it plunged into a ravine.

The accident occurred around 8:30am near Ghorray Nakkah Morr in Nagdar, barely half a kilometre into the journey, as the driver negotiated a sharp bend, he said.

The van plunged more than 500 metres off the road into a rocky ravine, killing three children on the spot and initially injuring four other occupants. One of the injured children later died at the District Headquarters Hospital in Athmuqam, Ayoub said.

The injured were later shifted to Muzaffarabad for treatment due to their critical condition, he added.

Expressing grief over the loss of young lives, Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq extended his condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"Deeply saddened by the loss of precious young lives in the tragic accident in Neelum Valley today. My heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved families, and I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," he wrote on X.

"Mountain roads demand utmost caution; even a momentary lapse can have tragic consequences. Please drive carefully," he added.

Four killed in truck-car collision in Haripur:

At least four people were killed when a truck collided with a car on the GT Road in Soka, Sarai Saleh, Haripur, Rescue 1122 said on Saturday. The deceased were identified as 19-year-old Umar, 25-year-old Safi, 20-year-old Ahsan and 22-year-old Shah Mir. Rescue 1122 medical teams shifted the bodies to the Trauma Centre.

According to initial information, all four victims belonged to Darwesh and were returning to Haripur after attending a wedding ceremony in Abbottabad when the accident occurred. **NEWS DESK**

KP EPA launches app to automate environmental approvals

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environment Protection Agency (EPA) on Saturday launched a digital application called Digital Environmental Assessment and Monitoring System (DEAMS) to streamline administrative procedures for environmental approvals, regulatory compliance, and field monitoring into an automated, transparent framework.

According to Junaid Khan, Secretary KP Environment Department, DEAMS platform enables applicants to submit applications for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), Initial Environmental Examinations (IEE), and general environmental clearances electronically.

Through an integrated digital interface, users can also upload required documentation and settle processing fees seamlessly.

To improve environmental oversight, application features Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capabilities to analyze exact coordinates and geographic boundaries of proposed projects.

He said that this spatial mapping is crucial for protecting vulnerable ecosystems, natural forests, water resources, biodiversity, and human settlements during the initial planning stages.

To guarantee document authenticity and prevent fraud, approval certificates issued through DEAMS will include digital signatures and unique encrypted verification codes for instant authentication.

Additionally, administrative dashboards and analytical tools will provide real time insights into pending application volumes, processing times, departmental performance metrics, and overall compliance with environmental regulations.

The DEAMS application was developed as a joint venture between M/S Green Environment Laboratory and Solutions and Geo Solutions.

Govt school non-functional for four years in Daulatpur

Government Primary School Sawan Wali in Mauza Daulatpur remained largely non-functional for four years, depriving children in the locality of access to education, according to residents.

The village is the native area of 15-year-old Waseem Abbas, who was killed in an alleged car attack at a private housing society in Multan.

Residents said the school was constructed four years ago to provide educational facilities to local children, but operated for only a few months with the assistance of a temporary teacher before closing again.

They said the school building was deteriorating due to prolonged closure and a lack of maintenance, forcing children to travel to distant areas to attend classes.

Some children had reportedly discontinued their education because of the absence of a functioning school in the locality, residents added.

They expressed concern over the continued closure, saying the establishment of the school had raised hopes of providing education closer to home. However, the lack of teaching staff and necessary administrative arrangements had left the facility largely unused.

The Education Department said efforts were underway to obtain approval for the required budget and teaching staff to make the school functional. **NEWS DESK**

Young doctors urged to promote research, technology

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday urged young doctors to contribute to Pakistan's development through research, modern technology and knowledge, while avoiding fake news and protecting patients' confidential information.

Addressing the seventh convocation 2026 of Rashid Latif Medical and Dental College as chief guest, he said sustainable national development required policy continuity, evidence-based decision-making and greater investment in research and innovation.

Congratulating the graduates, he said medicine carried immense responsibility because people's lives and health depended on doctors' knowledge, skills and professional conduct. He urged them to remember the sacrifices of their parents and respect the teachers who had helped shape their careers.

Highlighting rapid technological advancements, Mr Iqbal said artificial intelligence and innovations such as robotic surgery were transforming medical sciences. Pakistan, he said, needed to decide whether to remain a consumer of technologies developed abroad or become a country capable of generating knowledge, conducting research and producing its own technology. He maintained that Pakistan had abundant talent but needed to channel its potential towards research and innovation to address national challenges and strengthen economic growth. Referring to the achievements of countries such as South Korea, China and Vietnam, he said Pakistan needed to examine why others had progressed faster. Just as doctors diagnose an illness before prescribing treatment, the country must identify the obstacles to its development before devising solutions, he added. The minister recalled

Pakistan's progress in defence production, nuclear capability and telecommunications since independence, while noting that policy changes had affected investment and development. He said continuity in economic policies was essential to attracting investment and creating opportunities for industrial growth.

Mr Iqbal also cautioned young people against misinformation and political polarisation, urging them to verify information circulating on social media before believing or sharing it. Fake news, hatred and prejudice, he said, could deepen divisions and have serious consequences for individuals and society.

Emphasising medical ethics, he said doctors had a professional obligation to protect patients' privacy and medical records. Citing the example of Qasid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's personal physician, he stressed that confidentiality must remain central to medical practice. He urged graduates to transform the recognition earned through Marka-e-Haq into progress in knowledge, research, technology and economic development under the vision of Marka-e-Taraqqi. He also encouraged them to contribute to Pakistan's progress wherever they lived.

Chairman RLK Associates Prof Dr Rashid Latif Khan said doctors must provide quality healthcare without discrimination between rich and poor. He also stressed the importance of compassionate communication with patients and their attendants.

CEO Sebahat Khan said contributing to Pakistan's prosperity was a collective responsibility and urged young people to make the most of opportunities available in the country. A total of 188 students received degrees and medals at the convocation, including 147 MBBS graduates from Rashid Latif Medical College and 41 BDS graduates from Rashid Latif Dental College.

University of Health Sciences Registrar Kiran Fatima attended as guest of honour. Executive Director Prof Farukh Zaman and Director Zulaikha Khan were also present, while Vice Principal Prof Dr Mudassar Ali administered the oath to the graduating students. **NEWS DESK**



CM's aide Shoaib Mirza reviews public facilities in DG Khan

Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Shoaib Mirza, visited Dera Ghazi Khan and inspected Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital, the ongoing city beautification scheme, cleanliness arrangements under the Suthra Punjab initiative and street lighting facilities.

During his visit to Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital, Mirza reviewed cleanliness, medical facilities, availability of medicines and services being provided to patients. He visited various wards and interacted with patients and their attendants to inquire about treatment, provision of medicines and the conduct

of medical staff.

Taking notice of shortcomings in hospital administration and negligence in official duties, he ordered the suspension of two deputy medical superintendents (DMSs). He also directed the hospital administration to address the identified deficiencies and improve cleanliness arrangements.

Later, Mirza inspected the ongoing beautification scheme in Dera Ghazi Khan and reviewed the quality and progress of development work. He directed the relevant authorities to rectify the identified shortcomings and complete all projects at the earliest while ensuring the prescribed standards.

Reviewing cleanliness measures under the chief minister's Suthra Punjab initiative, he expressed satisfaction with the arrangements.

During his city visit, he also directed the immediate repair or replacement, where necessary, of faulty streetlights to improve public facilities and maintain the city's appearance.

Mirza said the provision of quality healthcare, effective cleanliness arrangements and timely completion of development projects were among Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's top priorities. He made it clear that negligence in these matters would not be tolerated. **NEWS DESK**



Women receive consultations to prevent birth defects

Around 800 women received medical consultations, folic acid supplements and preventive health education at a camp held in Sukkur to reduce the risk of serious birth defects affecting a baby's brain and spine.

The camp and awareness session was organised by the Section of Neurosurgery, Department of Surgery at The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) at the Sindh Institute of Child Health and Neonatology (SICHN) Children's Hospital, ahead of World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day observed on October 25.

The initiative was organised in collaboration with Kazim Trust, Pir Abdul Qadir Shah Jeelani Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS), and SICHN here on Saturday. Organisers distributed 1,000 folic acid supplements and educational material among participants. The camp focused on prevention of neural tube defects (NTDs), which occur when the neural tube that develops into the brain and spinal cord fails to close properly during early pregnancy. Research in Pakistan has reported NTD prevalence ranging from 38.6 to 124.1 cases per 10,000 births.

Medical experts stressed that taking 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, ideally starting before conception, can significantly reduce the risk. Since the neural tube normally closes within the first 28 days after conception, prevention must begin before many women know they are pregnant. Many women only learn about the importance of folic acid after becoming pregnant, but by then, the most critical stage of neural tube development may already have passed. Our message is simple that prevention must begin before pregnancy, said Dr Saqib Kamran Bakshi, Assistant Professor and Consultant Paediatric Neurosurgeon at AKUH. Dr Hafiza Fatima, Senior Instructor and Consultant Neurosurgeon at AKUH, said community awareness is key to prevention.

Awareness is the first step towards prevention. Many women are unaware that taking folic acid before pregnancy can help protect their children from serious birth defects. Through initiatives like this camp, we want to reach women directly, provide them with reliable information, and encourage them to make folic acid supplementation part of their daily routine, she said.

Organisers said by bringing preventive information and supplements directly to the community, the initiative aims to promote pre pregnancy care and reduce the burden of preventable birth defects in the region. **NEWS DESK**

Sindh proposes \$30m biogas projects

The Sindh government has proposed a \$30 million biogas development project to establish five centralized facilities in Hyderabad, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, Larkana and Sheheed Benazirabad, aiming to produce 120,000 cubic metres of biogas, 63,000 cubic metres of biomethane and 45 tonnes of organic fertilizer daily by processing livestock manure into clean energy and agricultural inputs.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the project, titled "Bio-Gas Development Project for Sustainable Alternatives Towards Affordable Energy", is designed to promote renewable energy, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, capture methane emissions and strengthen energy security across the province.

The proposed facilities are expected to help avoid approximately 250,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions annually, with cumulative reductions projected at five million tonnes over 20 years, according to the document.

Under the proposed design, the project will comprise five centralized anaerobic manure treatment and biogas production facilities, supported by collection and storage systems, digesters, feedstock handling infrastructure, biogas upgrading and purification units, gas storage facilities, and organic fertilizer processing and testing arrangements.

The initiative aims to convert livestock manure into usable energy while producing organic fertilizer, creating green employment opportunities and developing sustainable business models around biofuel production and waste management. **NEWS DESK**

First snowfall attracts tourists to Galiyat

The first snowfall of the winter season has transformed the tourist destinations of Galiyat into a scenic winter landscape, with 1 to 1.5 inches of snow recorded in Nathia Gali, Changla Gali, Dunga Gali and surrounding areas.

Tourists are arriving in the region to enjoy the snow-covered mountains and lush green valleys, while the Galiyat Development Authority (GDA) has completed necessary arrangements to facilitate visitors.

According to the GDA, snow clearance operations have been carried out to clear roads for traffic, which is currently flowing smoothly. The relevant staff is monitoring the situation to ensure the safety of tourists and residents.

Meanwhile, Abbottabad Police has issued a special advisory, urging motorists to avoid unnecessary travel, drive at reduced speeds, maintain a safe distance between vehicles and avoid parking in areas vulnerable to landslides. Tourists have also been advised to use designated parking areas and follow the instructions of traffic police personnel.

The traffic police has asked travellers to contact helpline 1915 for assistance and urged visitors to observe safety precautions while enjoying the snowfall.

Snowfall has begun in various areas

of Galiyat, prompting Abbottabad Police to issue a safety advisory for tourists and urging them to take precautionary measures while travelling.

According to the district administration on Saturday, with snowfall increasing the risk of slippery roads, residents and visitors have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel. On the directives of Abbottabad District Police Officer Haroon Rashid Khan, police personnel have been deployed along major roads and tourist spots in Galiyat to guide visitors and provide assistance during emergencies. Police have advised tourists to check the latest weather conditions before setting out and follow instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

They have also been urged to inspect their vehicle's tyres, brakes and essential equipment before travelling. Motorists have been instructed to drive slowly on slippery roads and avoid dangerous overtaking to prevent accidents. Tourists are also advised to carry warm clothing, essential medicines, drinking water and emergency supplies. Travel should be postponed if weather conditions deteriorate or roads become unsafe. Abbottabad Police said personnel remain deployed at key roads and tourist destinations to ensure visitors' safety. Tourists facing any difficulty or emergency can seek assistance from the nearest police deployment. As snowfall begins in Galiyat advisory issued for tourists Snowfall has begun in various areas of Galiyat, prompting Abbottabad Police to issue a safety advisory for tourists and urging them to take precautionary

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NATIONAL

DTM

Aseefa calls for equal protection of civilians under international law

First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari said that international humanitarian law must be upheld and civilian lives protected, stressing that the principles of the United Nations must apply equally to every human life, irrespective of geography, nationality or political circumstance.

Addressing the United Nations Day 2026 celebrations in Karachi, the First Lady highlighted Pakistan's longstanding partnership with the organisation in development, education, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping. She said international cooperation remained essential to addressing challenges that no country could overcome alone.

Referring to the suffering of innocent people in Gaza, she emphasised that the principles of the United Nations must apply equally to every human life, irrespective of geography, nationality or political circumstances.

The First Lady also highlighted the devastating impact of the 2022 floods in Pakistan, noting that the support extended by the United Nations and international partners had demonstrated the value of cooperation during a crisis. She called for climate justice, pointing out that countries and communities contributing least to climate change often bear its greatest consequences.

Highlighting her commitment to polio eradication, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari said every child deserves protection from preventable disease, regardless of where they were born or their family circumstances. She acknowledged the work of frontline health workers, supported by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other partners, in advancing the shared goal of a polio-free Pakistan.

The First Lady also underscored the importance of children's nutrition and education. She expressed support for the World Food Programme's ShareTheMeal campaign, which aims to provide 150,000 nutritious school meals to children across Pakistan. She said school meals can improve attendance and learning while helping children build healthier futures.

Reflecting on the values that shaped her commitment to public service, she recalled the belief of her mother, Shehbaz Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, in international cooperation, dialogue, education for every child and opportunities for women to determine their own futures.

The First Lady said the strength of the United Nations lay not only in international agreements but also in the tangible difference its work makes in people's lives. She called for continued collective efforts to build a more peaceful and compassionate world.

The United Nations Day celebration was organised by the United Nations in Pakistan in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and in partnership with the Government of Sindh and other partners. The event marked more than eight decades of partnership between Pakistan and the United Nations and featured an exhibition on Pakistan's contributions to the UN, including peacekeeping, alongside information and careers booths and cultural performances.

The event was attended by MNA Shazia Atta Marri, Sindh Minister for Labour Saeed Ghani, Sindh Education Minister Sardar Shah, MPA Qasim Soomro, MPA Jam Shabbir, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab and Sukkur Mayor Arsalan Shaikh, among other participants.

The First Lady thanked the United Nations team in Pakistan for bringing the celebration to Karachi and providing the public with an opportunity to learn more about the organisation's work. **NEWS DESK**

PTI retains Junaid Akbar as KP president

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Saturday issued a notification stating that the party's provincial organisation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) would continue to function under the presidency of Junaid Akbar, highlighting no changes to the provincial cabinet or organisational structure until further orders.

The government and opposition failed to reach an agreement, and emergency and governor's rule were declared on October 11 after talks failed, following a PTI long march towards Islamabad that began on October 4. On the same day, police arrested 59 PTI workers in Swabi and six others in Khyber district, while reports emerged that ousted chief minister Sohail Afridi and Akbar had also been taken into custody. Since then, intra-party rifts reportedly emerged, leading to PTI leaders exchanging barbs online.

According to a notification issued today and shared on X, Senator Noorul Haq Qadri, identified as the party's senior vice-president in K-P, would preside over meetings of the provincial cabinet in the absence of Junaid.

The notification further assigned PTI K-P General Secretary Ali Asghar the responsibility of chairing meetings in the absence of the senior vice-president. He was also authorised to convene and chair meetings of other tiers of the provincial organisation.

According to the document, Asghar would oversee the organisation's administration, coordination and supervision across its various tiers and wings to ensure the implementation of party policies, strategies and decisions.

The notification was signed by Barrister Gohar in his capacity as chairman of PTI.

The notification comes amid an internal rift within the PTI, with differences over the party's leadership and

political strategy in K-P spilling into the public domain. On October 21, The Express Tribune reported that former K-P chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur and PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja had exchanged criticism over allegations of internal divisions, the provincial leadership and the handling of the party's political affairs.

Raja warned of attempts by what he described as "undemocratic decision-makers" to undermine internal consensus, while Gandapur demanded that the party secretary general substantiate his allegations and apologise.

The dispute intensified following a purported audio recording in which Gandapur allegedly blamed Raja's "mismanagement and flawed planning" for the provincial government's dismissal and the party's current predicament. The Express Tribune said it could not independently verify the recording.

Gandapur also challenged claims that provincial lawmakers were attempting to decide the party's leadership and the next chief minister without the approval of PTI founder Imran Khan and the party's political committee. Raja, meanwhile, maintained that Afridi remained the lawful chief minister and that Akbar continued as provincial party president, with Asghar acting in Akbar's absence.

Barrister Gohar sought to contain the fallout, telling the media that he had spoken to the leaders involved and urged them to stop issuing statements against one another.

He maintained that the party's provincial lawmakers remained united and that Afridi continued to be the party's choice for chief minister. Against this backdrop, the October 24 notification formalises the arrangements for the PTI's KP organisation, specifying who will preside over meetings in the absence of senior office-bearers. **NEWS DESK**

Resolve public grievances on priority, orders CM Bugti

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Saturday held an open court (Khuli Katcheri) for the third consecutive day in North Dera Bugti, where he directly listened to the grievances and issues of citizens from various districts and issued instructions to the relevant authorities for their prompt resolution.

During the open court, the chief minister also met tribal elders and discussed regional problems, development requirements and challenges being faced by local communities. He reiterated that resolving public issues and ensuring the provision of basic facilities remained among the top priorities of the provincial government.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said the purpose of holding open courts was to provide citizens with an opportunity to convey their concerns directly to the government leadership while ensuring accountability of the concerned departments for timely solutions. He directed officials to take immediate action on public complaints and avoid any unnecessary delays in addressing citizens' problems.

The chief minister stated that there were no "no-go areas" in Balochistan and that the people of the province stood firmly with the state and security forces. He added that members of both the government and opposition parties regularly visited their constituencies and remained in close contact with the public through participation in regional

events and gatherings.

Highlighting the importance of regional connectivity and infrastructure development, Bugti said efforts had been made to secure federal funding for the construction and improvement of a highway linking Taunsa in Punjab with Balochistan. He further revealed that survey orders had been issued for the construction of a road from the Chhapar National Highway to Kharar Buzdar.

He said the completion of the road project would provide Balochistan with an additional route connecting the province to Punjab, facilitating smoother transportation and boosting trade and economic activity between the two regions.

Referring to development initiatives in backward areas, the chief minister said special directives had been issued to reopen government schools in Ander Pahor, Merri Wah, Rara Sham and other adjoining areas that have recently been included in Barkhan district. He emphasized that the government was taking practical measures to ensure the availability of educational facilities and enhance the functionality of educational institutions.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that girls' education was being given equal importance and informed that work was underway on a pilot project aimed at providing better educational opportunities for girls in underserved areas.

During the visit, political and social leader Mir Yaqoob Buzdar called on the chief minister and apprised him of the problems and development needs of the area. The chief

minister issued necessary directions to the concerned departments for addressing the issues raised during the meeting.

Addressing healthcare challenges in the region, Bugti directed the authorities to immediately provide an ambulance service for transporting patients from Kharar Buzdar to Dera Ghazi Khan. He announced that the monthly operational expenses of the ambulance service would be borne by the Government of Balochistan to ensure timely medical assistance for residents in emergency situations.

The chief minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to resolving public issues, improving health and education services, and accelerating the pace of development in underdeveloped and remote areas of the province. He said practical measures would continue to be taken to enhance public welfare and ensure that the benefits of development reached every segment of society. **NEWS DESK**

Sindh forms top team to hunt killer

Continued from Page 1

Ali's family disputed the initial police suggestion of suicide, pointing to injuries on his body and questioning the handling of evidence. The case attracted widespread attention as disagreements emerged over the original postmortem examination and the conduct of investigators.

A court subsequently ordered the exhumation of Ali's body, and a second autopsy conducted on Aug. 8 found that the fatal bullet had entered through his back and exited through his chest.

The final medical report, released later that month, concluded that the findings were inconsistent with suicide. The provincial government established a judicial commission headed by Justice Sial on Aug. 24 to examine the circumstances of Ali's death and possible negligence by police and medical officials. The commission subsequently submitted its report, concluding that Ali had been murdered and sharply criticizing the investigation, including failures to secure the crime scene, preserve evidence and properly examine leads. The government has also constituted a separate one-member committee headed by Additional Inspector General Zulfiqar Ali Lari of the Counter Terrorism Department to examine the performance of police officials named in the commission's report and investigate an officer's alleged role in the burning of the crime scene. **NEWS DESK**

Railways on red alert till Dec 31

Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi has declared an emergency in the Pakistan Railways till Dec. 31 to ensure safe operations, state media reported on Saturday, amid surging train accidents in the country.

Train accidents are relatively common in Pakistan, where the railway system has suffered from decades of underinvestment, outdated tracks and aging signal systems. A passenger train derailed in central Pakistan's Sher Shah city earlier this month, killing four people and injuring 30 others. In 2023, ten cars of a passenger train derailed in southern Pakistan, killing 30 people and injuring more than 90 others.

As per Abbasi's instructions, all railways field officers' leaves have been canceled for three months while officers have been directed to visit the field on Sundays to monitor train operations, state broadcaster Radio Pakistan reported. "The emergency will remain in force until 31st of December," Radio Pakistan said.

The minister has also directed railways officials to use trains to travel for official duties to other cities, the state media outlet said, adding that civil and mechanical chief engineers will submit daily reports to the ministry regarding their areas of responsibility. Radio Pakistan said daily reports have also been sought from the railways head of safety. Abbasi said Abbasi's government is committed to providing passengers with the safest possible journey in line with the prime minister's vision, Radio Pakistan reported. Millions of passengers every year use trains to travel in Pakistan every year, especially for intercity and long-distance travel.

According to local media reports, Pakistan Railways has recorded more than 55 accidents involving passenger and freight trains since January 1. Train passengers have often raised concerns over railway safety, maintenance standards and the effectiveness of measures announced to prevent mishaps. **NEWS DESK**

Maryam bans police escorts for ministers, MPAs

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Saturday directed that no permanent police squad be deployed with provincial ministers, members of the provincial assembly and other individuals.

Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sajid Zafar Dali issued a notification conveying the decision.

According to the notification, provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants, parliamentary secretaries, chairpersons of standing committees and members of the Punjab Assembly will not be allowed to retain permanent police escorts.

The restriction also applies to government officials and private individuals.

The notification further prohibits the installation of flagstaffs or the display of official flags on government vehicles without prior permission.

The chief minister has made it clear that unauthorised police escorts will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Earlier in March, the provincial government had also introduced austerity measures amid rising fuel costs, including suspending government-provided fuel for provincial ministers, cutting fuel allowances for government officers' vehicles by 50% and restricting protocol convoys accompanying ministers and senior officials to one vehicle for essential security

purposes.

The use of police personnel for VIP protocol has long drawn ire in Punjab over the diversion of public resources from routine policing. In November 2025, The Express Tribune reported a rise in armed private escorts, commonly known as "dala culture", amid concerns about weak regulation, unauthorised armed patrols and the use of security as a display of power. Punjab had issued more than 200 new private security company licences in recent years, while taking enforcement action against firms for violations.

Prior to that, authorities had also announced a crackdown on private security firms using police-like uniforms and vehicles after armed guards escorting foreign visitors were involved in a violent road dispute in Lahore. **NEWS DESK**

Pakistan denounces Jordan church attack

Pakistan's foreign affairs ministry on Saturday condemned a "terrorist" attack at a church in Jordan's Karak.

Governorate this week that killed at least seven people and injured over 40, expressing grief over the loss of lives in the incident.

The attack took place on Friday at a busy church in Jordan's Hammoud village, targeting mourners at a funeral. It was carried out by "unknown assailants," the Jordanian government said.

Security camera footage captured the moment the gunmen attacked the entrance to the church. Two of the attackers appeared to be using handguns while another was carrying a rifle and had his head covered.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the heinous terrorist attack at a funeral procession in a church in Karak Governorate, Jordan, which resulted

in the loss of several precious lives, with many injured," the Pakistani foreign office said.

The foreign office wished a speedy recovery to those injured and expressed condolences with the bereaved families.

"Pakistan stands in firm solidarity with the brotherly people of Jordan in their fight against terrorism, and reiterates its strongest condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," the statement added.

Jordan's government has vowed to hold those responsible for the attack accountable. Jordan's King

Abdullah II vowed that the attack would be met with "the harshest retaliation."

"Those who delude themselves into thinking that they can divide Jordanians with their bullets have no chance in the face of our unity," he said in a statement.

Jordan's Prime Minister Jafar Hassan said during a security meeting in Karak on Friday that the attack was a result of "terrorist" ideology and blind extremism. He said the assailants will be punished and legal measures taken against those who seek to introduce extremism. **NEWS DESK**

BACKPAGE

DTM

Mpox claims infant in Sindh, 12th case of 2026



A 53-day-old infant died in Pakistan's Karachi city on Saturday after contracting monkeypox (mpox) disease, health officials said, raising this year's death toll from the infection in the southern Sindh province to 12.

The infant, a resident of Karachi's Malir district, underwent a circumcision procedure at the Ibn-e-Hassan hospital in when he was 20 days old and developed symptoms four days later, according to health officials. He was subsequently transferred to the Sindh Infectious Diseases Hospital and Research Center (SIDH&RC) at Karachi's NIPA area, where he died on Saturday, the hospital's medical superintendent Dr. Abdul Wahid Rajput told Arab News.

Mpox virus can spread to humans from an animal host, such as rodents or non-human primates like monkeys, and from humans themselves. A person infected with mpox suffers from flu-like symptoms and an itchy, painful rash. While historically localized to parts of Africa, a global outbreak in 2022 led to a surge in cases worldwide.

"The child was 53 days old and had been transferred to our hospital from a private health care facility. The cause of death was mpox," Dr. Rajput told Arab News.

The Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) said it has sealed Ibn-e-Hassan hospital in Karachi's Malir after receiving a report from a district health officer confirming the infant contracted the disease from there. According to the commission, the child contracted mpox after circumcision was performed using contaminated scissors at the facility. It said a sample tested at a laboratory returned

positive for the virus.

The commission said its inspection found that the hospital was operating illegally, with unqualified staff and inadequate infection prevention and control measures in place.

"The action was taken over poor hygiene, inadequate infection prevention and control measures, and reported malpractices that raised serious concerns about patient safety and public health," the SHCC said in a statement shared with Arab News.

The death comes amid concerns over local transmission of mpox in Sindh. Health department surveillance records obtained by Arab News show that 19 mpox cases were reported between late September and October in the province, including infections linked to close contact, family gatherings and suspected exposures at health care facilities.

Sindh has recorded 98 mpox cases and 12 deaths so far this year, according to official data. The 19 reported mpox cases documented by the provincial health department from September to October include 12 patients from Karachi and seven from other districts in Sindh, with several investigations identifying contact between infected individuals.

The records include infections that linked patients in Karachi's Malir district and elsewhere in the province, suggesting that transmission is occurring through local contact.

Seventeen of the 19 patients had no recorded travel history during the preceding 21 days, although the absence of travel does not independently establish where an infection was acquired. **NEWS DESK**

Iran Blasts US: You blew the deal but lets try again

Iranian President Massoud Pezeshkian, in remarks broadcast on state TV on Saturday, blamed the United States for the failure of an interim deal with Iran, but said there should be a new attempt at concluding it.

"We were having negotiations; the cowards (Americans) messed everything up...I still think we should go and conclude it," Pezeshkian said.

US intelligence found that Iran has sharply stepped up efforts to target American officials in the Middle East and other countries, with lethal plots reaching advanced stages, Axios reported on Friday.

The report cited a memo dated October 23 from Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, which said the information is relevant to more personnel than are currently cleared to see it.

The one-page unclassified memo does not name targets, countries outside the Middle East, or the nature of the plots.

The report said the underlying intelligence has been shared with senior State Department staff, and Clayton offered to downgrade it as much as possible so Rubio can share it more widely.

A US official told the outlet that the intelligence is one reason the agency is reducing embassy personnel in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Qatar, and Jordan, as first reported by CNN.

President Donald Trump said on Friday the

US may carry out another military operation against Iran just as the Iran war nears its eight-month mark and rising fuel prices weigh on the US midterm elections.

"We may do another little Epic Fury," Trump told a rally in Florida, using the US military's term for its war on Iran. He did not elaborate.

Trump said the US could end the war quickly but questioned whether Washington should seek a swift conclusion or allow the conflict to gradually wind down.

Trump, who has offered shifting goals and timelines for the war, has said in recent campaign remarks that the war will end soon, "one way or the other."

He said this month the US would not launch an attack on Iran before the November 3 elections that will determine control of Congress, where Trump's Republican Party holds a narrow majority in both chambers.

US President Donald Trump on Friday used a campaign rally in Florida, where Cuban Americans are a potent voting bloc, to vow to address his concerns about Cuba once the Iran war is settled.

In a 90-minute speech in Fort Myers, Florida, Trump repeated that more military action against Iran may lie ahead as he tries to address the causes of a spike in oil prices that has put Republicans on the defensive ahead of the November 3 midterm elections.

With an eye toward the senior Americans who live in Florida, Trump said he planned to spend \$250 million to hire at least 5,000 new nurses in elder care facilities all across America.

While the Iran war has no end in sight, Trump talked tough about Cuba, part of a pattern of putting pressure on the communist

government there after ousting the leader of Venezuela early this year.

Trump, who won 68% of the Cuban American vote in Florida in the 2024 election, said American naval forces from Iran will stop at Cuba on the way home.

"We'll have one of them stop about 50 yards off the coast. They'll raise up their hands, and then we're going to send Marco Rubio in to finish up the deal," he said.

Secretary of State Rubio, a former US senator from Florida, has been handling much of the Cuba portfolio for Trump.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Friday that two tankers struck naval mines while attempting to use what they described as "an unauthorised route" south of the Strait of Hormuz, Iranian state media reported.

Tehran has drawn up detailed plans to target undersea communications cables in the Gulf if the United States and Israel attack Iran again, two senior Iranian security officials told Reuters.

Their comments followed warnings by Iranian officials that undersea cables in the region could become targets in any renewed conflict if diplomacy with Washington collapses. **NEWS DESK**

Iran threat prompts US to reduce staff at 4 embassies

The State Department is reducing staffing at four US embassies in the Middle East after receiving intelligence that Iran has stepped up efforts to target American personnel in the region and elsewhere.

In a memo sent Friday to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton said his teams "have received intelligence that Iran has substantially increased efforts to target US personnel."

"The lethal plotting efforts by the Iranians against US citizens have reached advanced stages in both the Middle East and certain other countries," Clayton wrote.

The memo was obtained by The Associated Press and reported earlier by Axios. Three US officials, speaking on condition

of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter, confirmed that the memo was sent to Rubio in his capacity as secretary of state and national security adviser.

The memo emerged shortly after the State Department announced it is reducing staff at the US embassies in Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and the

operations" status that has already reduced the size of their personnel footprints. The embassies will remain open.

However, unlike in Saudi Arabia, where nonessential US personnel and their families were ordered Wednesday to leave the country, staff in the other four countries are not compelled to depart.

In announcing the staffing drawdowns this week, the State Department pointed specifically to

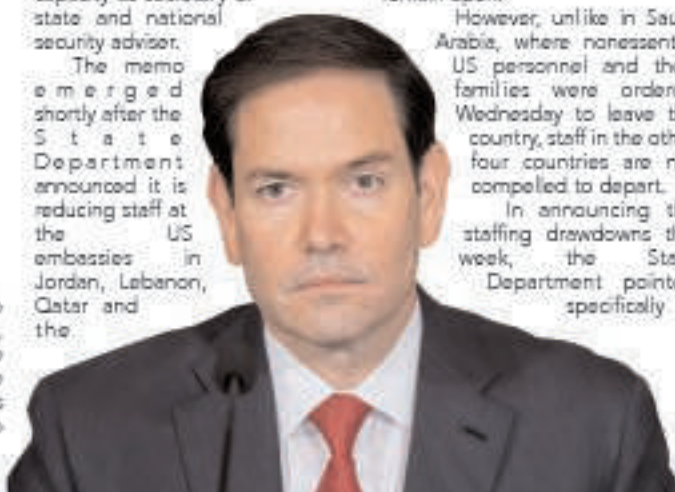
launching missile and drone strikes against Saudi Arabia.

US officials have adamantly denied the drawdowns are tied to any potential new US and Israeli strikes on Iran. The unpopular war has spiked energy costs for Americans and posed political problems for President Donald Trump and Republicans, who are trying to keep control of Congress in the Nov. 3 midterm elections.

Trump, speaking at a rally Friday in Florida, touted the US military operations in Iran, which were dubbed "Operation Epic Fury," and said that "we may do another little Epic Fury, or they'll agree. If they're smart, they'll just say, 'Let's get down to business.'"

Mediators have been trying to bring Washington and Tehran back to formal talks as the war has reached a stalemate.

According to Iranian state television, the Revolutionary Guard navy this week again threatened to strike US military bases in the region if the United States keeps helping guide commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for the global energy trade. **AP**



United Arab Emirates. The three officials said the threats from Iran and Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthis rebels are related to the staffing changes.

The embassies involved are all under what is known as "restricted

increased threats from Yemen's Houthi rebels and did not mention threats to US personnel directly from Iran. There has been a resurgence of fighting between a Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis, with the militant group

Bye Bye Shan! Youth gets nod for Lanka battle

Pakistan has recalled batter Salman Ali Agha and left-arm spinner Ali Usman for its two home test matches against Sri Lanka in November.

Agha and Usman were among seven cricketers flown back home during a chaotic tour of England after Pakistan lost the second test at Lord's in August. England swept the series 3-0.

Agha has been scoring prolifically since his return to Pakistan and followed his triple century in a domestic first-class match with a century against Sri Lanka in the ongoing ODI tri-series.

Opening batter Imam-ul-Haq and wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan, who were also recalled midway through the England tour, won't play in the two tests against Sri Lanka.

The games will be held at Rawalpindi from Nov. 9 and at Lahore from Nov. 17, and are part of the World Test Championship cycle.

Babar Azam will continue as skipper. The 14-member squad includes three uncapped players - Mohammad Taha, Sameer Minhas and Mohammad Suleman - following their impressive batting in the recent President's Trophy Grade I domestic tournament.

The 26-year-old Taha leads the batting



charts with 730 runs across seven games, including three centuries. Suleman also scored three centuries in the same tournament and has made 625 runs while Minhas scored 405 runs in his maiden first-class season.

Pakistan is at the bottom of the nine-team World Test Championship with just two wins and seven defeats.

Pakistan is also scheduled to host New Zealand at home early next year for two test matches to wrap up its disappointing WTC cycle. **AP**

France: 70,000 cops to quell protests

Demonstrators took to the streets of France on Saturday under the watch of 70,000 police officers, with unrest appearing markedly less severe than a week earlier despite scattered confrontations in several cities.

Tens of thousands of people marched peacefully through the French capital, according to police numbers, denouncing the high cost of living and accusing President Emmanuel Macron of cutting public services while failing to tackle rising inequality.

"Down with the state, the police and the fascists," some of the flag-waving crowds chanted.

Elsewhere, police fired tear gas at

people in Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Lille and Nice, where a water cannon was deployed after protesters refused orders to pull back.

In France's second and third cities, Marseille and Lyon, clashes broke out between hooded youths and police.

The government deployed 10,000 more police and gendarmes than on October 17, when nationwide protests descended into some of the worst unrest in France in years.

"We have to be ultra, ultra responsive," said Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, who has accused far-left groups and criminal gangs of fomenting violence. **REUTERS**

250 families displaced as Israeli forces raid Hebron

Israeli forces pushed into the occupied West Bank city of Hebron on Saturday and displaced around 250 families, some in the middle of the night, vowing to exact a heavy price for a deadly attack on soldiers.

The Palestinian Authority called for international pressure on Israel to protect residents, who said soldiers announced the evacuations over loudspeakers late at night as they packed what they could and left.

Days before tight elections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was planning an operation on a scale not seen since Israel first occupied the West Bank in 1967, after Palestinian militants killed two Israeli soldiers on Friday at a checkpoint.

In the Hebron neighbourhood of Ein Deir Baha, nestled between two hills, vacated buildings were marked by X's and the streets were deserted, save a pair of Israeli military vehicles. Israeli

flags were draped on a house on the slope apparently taken over by troops.

Higazi Shower al-Tamimi, 70, a shopkeeper who sells live chickens and feed and plays a leadership role in the neighbourhood, said he was awakened at 1:00 am by soldiers and a senior officer who said he had to leave.

"I asked them how long the evacuation would last. They said: 'Until further notice.'"

He told AFP he had only short time to pack, adding that for some residents, getting out of the neighbourhood was an ordeal.

"For example, my wife's mother, who is 90 years old and lives in the area, had to be carried out because she is ill," he said.

To Tamimi, this is only happening because Netanyahu wants to win the election on "the blood of the Palestinian people".

He said people were not going anywhere. "I have lived



through all the stages of the occupation, and I will die here."

The Palestinian Authority said it was mobilising its diplomats to seek "urgent international action that goes beyond condemnation" to prevent forced displacement.

Tamimi's brother, Khaled Shower al-Tamimi, 68, was staying

with his son after the evacuation order.

"The army was announcing through loudspeakers: 'Leave the area.' So we left."

He told AFP he was surprised to hear Friday's assailants came from the neighbourhood, which he described as middle-class and law-abiding. **AP**

GLAMOUR

DTM

Kardashian Hints Lewis Ticks Every Box

Kim Kardashian has said she is 'really, really happy' with her boyfriend Lewis Hamilton as she dropped her strongest hint yet their romance is going from strength to strength.

The pair have been romantically linked since February, and have since gone Instagram official.

Kim made the coy admission during a recent episode of *The Kardashians*, where she revealed the special man in her life meets every requirement on her famously demanding relationship checklist.

The star discussed a list of more than 50 qualities she wanted in her ideal partner, before suggesting she had finally found someone who fulfilled them all, while speaking to comedian Nikki Glaser, 42, on the set of their film *The Fifth Wheel*.

When producers pressed her to reveal more about the mysterious man, Kim said: 'Oh, you guys are really trying to get this out of me.'

She added: 'Let me just say this, I am just really, really happy. That's all I'll say for now.'

Since going public with their romance, Kim has been seen supporting Lewis at his Formula One races.

The couple also took a trip to Japan earlier this year and they are said to have spent a weekend at Estelle Manor in the Cotswolds, and visited 'city of love' Paris in early February too.

They also appeared publicly together during the 2026 Super Bowl in February, when they were shown on the stadium's big screen during the game between the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks.

Lewis - who has previously been linked romantically with singer Nicole Scherzinger, 48, and actress Sofia Vergara, 54 - and Kim had known each other for several years prior to their relationship.

Kim - who is mother to North, 13, Saint, ten, Chicago, eight, and Psalm, seven, with her ex-husband Kanye West - is said to be taking her new relationship seriously.

A source recently told *People* magazine: '[Hamilton is] just an easy-going guy with great energy. Her family likes him and Kim's very into him.'

NEWS DESK

Megan Shrugs Off MGK And Dakota Romance

Megan Fox is reportedly unfazed by her ex Machine Gun Kelly's new relationship with Dakota Johnson.

The actress, 40, who shares 18-month-old daughter Saga Blade Fox-Baker with the musician, 36, has no plans to revisit their past relationship as she's focused on other priorities in her life.

Fox is 'unbothered' that her ex has moved on, and she is not interested in getting involved in his love life, sources told TMZ.

Insiders also told the outlet that Fox is currently single and plans to keep it that way as she focuses on being a hands-on mother and making money.

This comes just shortly after Fox launched her exclusive content page on Subs.com and after her new ad campaign for telehealth company Ro was released.

The former couple, who called off their engagement in November 2024 and welcomed their child together in March 2025, reportedly no longer have any kind of relationship outside of co-parenting.

The *Daily Mail* has reached out to Fox's representatives for comment.

'MGK and Megan are done and only communicate about their daughter and co-parenting logistics,' a source told *Us Weekly* in late September.

NEWS DESK

Ariana Grande Debuts Bob Amid Fame Break

Ariana Grande surprised her fans as she debuted a hair transformation after stepping away from the spotlight for a planned hiatus. The 33-year-old pop star took to Instagram on Thursday to share a series of selfies to show off her freshly trimmed and styled bob hairstyle. She ditched her signature high ponytail for a chin-length crop in her natural chocolate brunette color - just shortly after revealing that she suffered a heartbreaking loss in her family. The ends of her hair were flipped up, and she parted her hair to the side, pinning her bangs back for a fresh, bubbly look. The *Petal* hitmaker just left her signature heart symbol in place of a caption, and a slew of stars and fans alike flooded her comments section with praise for her new look.

NEWS DESK

Meghan: Shielded Kids From My Father

Meghan Markle is revealing why she made the decision to keep her two children, Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet, from having contact with her estranged father, Thomas Markle Sr.

The Duchess of Sussex, 45, addressed her decision in a statement shared with *PEOPLE* on Friday, Oct. 23, amid reports that her father, 82, is being investigated over allegations involving child sexual abuse material.

"I hope it can now be understood that, despite certain media publications' distortion over the years, any distance from my father and my choice to not allow him to have contact with our children was for one reason: to protect them," Meghan said.

NEWS DESK

Lilly Becker splits and moves back to UK

Boris Becker's ex-wife Lilly Becker has revealed she has split from her boyfriend of four years and moved back to London - just one year after quitting Britain because she could no longer afford to live here.

The Dutch model, 50, has ended her relationship with German sports manager Thorsten Weck, 57, and returned to South West London with her 16-year-old son Amadeus, whom she shares with the former tennis champion, 58. And Lilly has declared she is now 'done' with men, insisting she loves being single and no longer having to share a bed with someone who snores.

Speaking exclusively to the *Daily Mail* at the Peruvian Connection fashion show in London on Wednesday, Lilly confirmed her single status and said she's no longer looking for love.

"I'm done. If it happens, it happens. But I have no luck with British men, so I don't think it's going to happen," she said.

Lilly added she won't use dating apps because she prefers to meet prospective partners in real life, explaining: 'I keep it old school.'

NEWS DESK

Ortega: Amy Adams Has 'Most Intense Eyes'

Jenna Ortega is reflecting on the impact Amy Adams recently made on her. While filming *Klara and the Sun* alongside Adams, 52, Mia Thara, Natasha Lyonne and more, the Wednesday star, 24, tells *PEOPLE* that she learned "everything I love and appreciate about myself" from none other than the *Enchanted* actress.

"What a light, both on a personal aspect and a professional aspect," Ortega says of Adams. "She has just some of the most intense eyes I've ever seen."

NEWS DESK

MONEY

Tariff reforms to continue: Finmin

Export growth, private sector encouragement our priority: Aurangzeb



Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has ruled out pursuing liquidity-fuelled, consumption-led economic growth, saying Pakistan must prioritise sustainable, export-led expansion and continue with tariff reforms to improve the competitiveness of its industries.

The finance minister was speaking at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (Lums) on Saturday at an event organised by the American Business Forum (ABF). ABF President Osman Khalid Waheed, former State Bank governor Raza Baqir and Habib Group Vice Chairman Salman Buni also spoke.

Aurangzeb said Pakistan could not afford to repeat the cycle of import-dependent growth that had previously led to balance-of-payments problems and forced the country to seek support from lenders of last resort.

He said the government was committed to continuing tariff reforms, primarily to reduce the cost of raw materials and intermediate goods for exporters, despite concerns over the timing of the measures.

"We are very clear: no matter how

much pressure there is, we are not going to go for liquidity-fuelled, consumption-led growth," he said, adding that Pakistan needed to avoid another cycle in which a temporary acceleration in economic activity was followed by a balance-of-payments crisis.

Aurangzeb said the government had attempted to provide a direction towards export-led growth in the latest budget through measures including the elimination of super taxes, reductions in tax slabs and financing for exporters at 4.5 per cent.

On tariff reforms, he said the government had protected domestic industries for too long without sunset clauses and that the existing approach could not continue indefinitely.

"We are in year two of the tariff reform, and we are going to continue with that; there is no turning back," he said.

The finance minister also stressed that economic growth needed to generate employment, pointing to the contrast between Pakistan's growth trajectory and that of its neighbour, where growth of 7 to 8pc, he argued, had not translated into sufficient job creation.

"That's why you see people there where they are," he said, emphasizing that the sectors driving growth must also address unemployment.

Reflecting on discussions at international forums in New York, London and the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Bangkok, Aurangzeb said the global economy had remained resilient but faced an uncertain and worrying outlook.

He identified growing differences in economic fortunes between oil-exporting and oil-importing countries, as well as economies benefiting from artificial intelligence, as key themes in discussions on global growth.

Energy shocks and the El Nino weather phenomenon had featured prominently in

discussions, he said, warning that their effects were intensifying and contributing to food-security concerns in some parts of the world.

He also highlighted high debt levels, limited fiscal space in some economies and the growing importance of digital infrastructure and labour-market preparedness for artificial intelligence.

As trade fragmentation and geopolitical polarisation intensified, regional corridors and regional blocs were emerging as significant opportunities, he said, adding that these developments could be particularly important for Pakistan.

The finance czar said Pakistan had made significant progress in reducing its fiscal and external imbalances, with the combined twin deficits falling from 12.5pc of gross domestic product (GDP) to 2.6pc

from blanket subsidies to targeted support, citing the high cost of universal subsidies.

Assuming an average household size of four to five people, the programme had reached an estimated 40 million to 50 million people, he said, adding that energy and gas supplies remained areas requiring attention.

The minister maintained that government borrowing had placed a disproportionate burden on the banking sector, but domestic debt-management operations had helped reduce debt-servicing costs to Rs6.9 trillion against a budgeted Rs8.2tr in the last fiscal year.

He said external debt payments had declined from \$26.5 billion last year to \$21.5bn in the current fiscal year and were expected to fall further. New external borrowing was largely aimed at replacing existing obligations, rather than increasing the debt burden.

Aurangzeb also highlighted pension reforms, saying new entrants to the civil bureaucracy had shifted from defined-benefit to defined-contribution schemes, while discussions with the armed forces were ongoing.

The finance minister said the government has identified climate change and population growth as major challenges for Pakistan, urging measures to reduce the country's 2.55pc population growth rate.

He cited Bangladesh, Indonesia and Iran as examples, saying all three had reduced their population growth rates to below 1pc over a decade. He stressed women's education, workforce participation and engagement with religious scholars as key measures.

Aurangzeb said restoring investor confidence required macroeconomic stability and the clearance of around \$4 billion in outstanding dividend and profit repatriation obligations.

He also highlighted improving domestic investment, citing 11 initial public offerings last year - a 20-year high - and five in the current year.

The finance minister said harmonising federal and provincial regulatory frameworks was essential to attract investment, as businesses often faced differing requirements at both levels. He stressed that reforms in taxation, energy and financing were necessary to sustain growth, improve export competitiveness and create jobs. **NEWS DESK**



by the end of the last fiscal year.

He said the fiscal deficit had dropped to a 22-year low, while the country had recorded primary surpluses for three consecutive years. The current account deficit narrowed to around 0.1pc of GDP, supported by remittances and IT exports.

Aurangzeb said IT export services had risen from less than \$1 billion to \$4.6bn and were projected to reach \$5.5bn in the current fiscal year. Foreign exchange reserves had improved to over three months of import cover, compared with two weeks during the crisis.

Citing three credit-rating upgrades since April last year, he said a recent Panda bond had attracted an order book twice its size, reflecting investor confidence beyond Pakistan's current IMF programme, due to end in October next year.

He further said that Pakistan had managed immediate energy-supply challenges amid the continuing Middle East conflict, with supplies secured through November and arrangements for winter underway.

He said the government had shifted

Gold prices decline by Rs 2,500 per tola

Gold prices witnessed a decline in the domestic market on Saturday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs 2,500 to Rs 422,036, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs2,144 to Rs361,827, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs1,966 to Rs 331,686.

In the international market, the price of gold fell by \$25 to \$3,995 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola dropped by Rs7 to Rs5,858, while



the price of 10 grams of 24-karat silver decreased by Rs 6 to Rs 5,022. The price of silver in the international

market also registered a decline, falling by \$0.07 to \$53.80 per ounce, the association added. **NEWS DESK**

SAPM chairs meeting on industrial growth revival

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Task Force on Export and Industrial Enhancement and discussed measures for boosting exports, revitalising industrial activity and promoting sustainable economic growth.

During the meeting, the adviser highlighted the government's commitment to advancing Prime Minister's vision for economic revival through export enhancement, industrial development and stronger engagement with the private sector.

Haroon said that the establishment of the Export Enhancement Task Force was an important initiative aimed at identifying challenges faced by industries, exploring new opportunities for growth and developing practical measures to strengthen Pakistan's export performance.

He emphasised that the government was facilitating the business community and engaging relevant stakeholders to promote industrial revival, improve competitiveness and create an enabling environment for businesses to expand their operations.

The adviser said that meaningful consultation with industry representatives was essential for developing effective and result-oriented policies.

He noted that a series of consultative meetings was being held, with further engagements planned to ensure that the concerns, recommendations and practical experiences of the business community were duly considered in the policymaking process.

Discussing the potential of export-oriented sectors, Haroon underscored the importance of promoting industries such as leather, sports goods, cutlery and carpets, which offer significant opportunities for increasing exports, generating employment and strengthening the national economy.

He invited industry representatives to submit concrete and actionable proposals addressing sector-specific challenges, improving productivity, enhancing product quality and opening up new international markets.

The adviser assured participants of the government's full support for initiatives aimed at industrial development and export growth.

He reiterated that the government would continue working closely with the private sector to identify bottlenecks, facilitate businesses and develop policies that respond to the actual needs of industry. **NEWS DESK**

SIFC coordinates nationwide efforts to simplify business regulations

The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is coordinating nationwide efforts to simplify business regulations, reduce compliance costs and create a more conducive environment for investment and enterprise through the implementation of the Aasan Karobar reform agenda.

The meeting focused on extending regulatory reforms and strengthening federal-regional coordination to improve the ease of doing business.

The Chief Minister was briefed that 557 regulatory reforms have been endorsed so far, with the potential to generate annual savings of Rs 460 billion for businesses.

These reforms are aimed at simplifying regulatory requirements, reducing the cost of compliance and easing procedural burdens that affect business operations.

Under the Prime Minister's directions, SIFC is facilitating coordinated efforts to advance regulatory simplification and promote a business environment that supports entrepreneurship, investment and sustainable economic growth.

Engagement with regional stakeholders is an important part of extending these reforms and improving their reach.

Through its whole-of-government coordination mechanism, SIFC continues to connect regulatory reform with investment facilitation, supporting a simpler, more efficient and business-friendly framework across Pakistan. **NEWS DESK**

Work on Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway to begin next month

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said on Saturday that the government was working to improve road infrastructure across Pakistan through self-generated resources with the National Highway Authority (NHA) revenue target increased from Rs.66 billion to Rs.160 billion for the current year and its expenditure capped at Rs.50 billion.

He said, additional revenue generated through toll taxes and other sources would be utilized for constructing new roads and improving infrastructure across the country.

While addressing a meeting here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), the Federal Minister discussed major road projects, the financial sustainability of the NHA, industrial financing, regional trade connectivity and the need to address concerns raised by the business community.

LCCI President Ali Hussain Asghar, Senior Vice President (VP) Sardar Usman Ghani, members of the Executive Committee and senior members also spoke at the meeting.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that a substantial portion of the authority's income was consumed by salaries, routine road maintenance, repairs and emergency rehabilitation of roads and bridges damaged by floods.

Referring to development funding, he mentioned Rs.224 billion allocated for ongoing projects under the 2024 Public Sector Development Program (PSDP).

He said a major share of the development funds was intended for national highway projects in Balochistan.

Federal Minister said that he had already presented proposals to the Prime Minister for Ease of Doing Business and address the difficulties faced by the industrial sector.

He urged banks to consider rescheduling loans of industrialists affected by high interest rates so that closed industrial units could be revived and business activity restored.

Running a business with loans carrying an interest rate of 25 percent was extremely difficult.

Abdul Aleem Khan assured the

business community that its proposals and concerns would be presented to the Prime Minister and that he would make every possible effort to resolve the issues falling within his remit.

He emphasized that facilitating businesses was essential for strengthening Pakistan's economy.

He said, work was underway on a proposed route intended to reduce the distance between Lahore and Islamabad from approximately 380 kilometers to 280 kilometers.

The project was expected to improve connectivity for Gujranwala, Gujrat, Lalamusa, Kharan and Jhelum, while reducing travel time from around three and a half hours to two and a half hours.

The project was being pursued with the aim of completion by the following year.

Abdul Aleem Khan said additional revenue generated through toll taxes had played an important role in making the Faisalabad road project possible.



He said that without these additional resources, the project might have remained delayed for several more years. He also referred to the dangerous conditions on the previous road and the risks faced by Motorway Police personnel while managing traffic and accidents. He said that Sialkot Motorway was being expanded from four lanes to six lanes.

He also referred to an additional Rs 10 billion agreed from NHA-generated resources for the expansion. **NEWS DESK**

Achieving NHA's financial viability a key priority: Cheema

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Senator Ahmad Cheema on Saturday stressed the need for a viable business plan to strengthen the National Highway Authority's (NHA) financial sustainability through realistic project appraisals and sound financing decisions.

The minister was chairing a meeting on the National Highway Authority (NHA) to review measures for developing the Authority's business plan, the ongoing assessment with an Asian Development Bank (ADB) consultant, and ways to achieve NHA's financial viability.

Officials briefed the meeting on the initial findings of the ongoing study with the ADB consultant, said press release issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs. Different models and options were presented to improve NHA's performance, strengthen its operations and support its financial sustainability.

The Minister emphasized the need for a practical business plan with clear timelines and an assessment of NHA's capacity. He called for a thorough review of projects under consideration, with FCI setting out their commercial viability through more realistic indicators to facilitate appraisal by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP).

To support sound project selection and improve NHA's financial position, Senator Ahmad Cheema asked the Authority to classify projects according to their viability and financing requirements, including those requiring government or foreign funding.

He also stressed that initial project studies should clearly assess viability and be shared at an early stage with the Ministry of Finance's Central Monitoring Unit (CMU) for comments.

The Minister underscored that government or external financing for NHA projects should not lead to a reduction in the Authority's Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) allocation. He said the Government is not in favor of cutting the allocation, as PSDP funding remained essential to NHA's development program.

He stressed that commercially, economically and socially viable projects should be prioritized to strengthen NHA's financial sustainability and help it avoid an unsustainable debt-servicing burden.

Projects that are not commercially viable should undergo a thorough study and be reviewed before any decision is made.

The minister also urged NHA to expedite its work with the ADB consultant, whose input is expected to strengthen project mapping, feasibility assessments and financial analysis.

Secretary Finance Imdadullah Bosal, Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud, the Chief Executive Officer of NHA and other senior officials attended the meeting. **NEWS DESK**

WORLD

DTM

Ukraine Says Starlink Limits Lifted After Drone Disruption



Ukraine's military has regained full use of Starlink satellite links for its drones and other fast-moving equipment, the defense minister said Saturday, ending speed restrictions that Ukrainian officials said had disrupted front-line operations for more than a week.

The restoration comes as U.S. envoys launched a new push to end the war. Russia agreed Wednesday to resume three-way negotiations with Washington and Kyiv next month. On Friday, Kyiv and Moscow also agreed to a localized ceasefire brokered by first lady Melania Trump around Oleshky, a war-ravaged, Russian-occupied town in Ukraine's southern Kherson region.

The Defense Ministry's monitoring systems in Ukraine reported stable connections on objects traveling faster than 400 kph (250 mph), Defense Minister Yevhenii Khmara told reporters.

The limitations placed on Starshield - SpaceX's military-grade version of the Starlink satellite internet service and the backbone of Ukraine's drone operations and communication - last week alarmed the country's military and government officials, with commanders reporting lost drones and disrupted missions.

The episode added to tensions between Kyiv and Washington, a relationship already strained by President Donald Trump's reported deal with Moscow on Russian diesel imports, which Ukraine viewed as a betrayal.

Khmara credited "direct dialogue" and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's diplomacy with Washington, adding that the outcome mattered most "for our front, for the military, the work of drones, logistics and communications."

Press freedom has been increasingly constrained in Turkey since a failed coup attempt in 2016, with sweeping prosecutions and digital censorship.



Turkey Protests Erupt Over Media Crackdown

Thousands rallied in Istanbul and Ankara on Saturday against what they described as growing pressure on journalists in Turkey, including arrests, media shutdowns and the appointment of state administrators.

"Enough. We can no longer breathe," shouted marchers in the crowds, which were composed mainly of journalists, rights groups and opposition party representatives.

Press freedom has been increasingly constrained in Turkey since a failed coup attempt in 2016, with sweeping prosecutions and digital censorship.

But recent weeks have seen what rights advocates say is mounting pressure on independent journalism.

Eleven journalists have been jailed in the past two months and several media outlets shut down, according to the Turkish Journalists' Union.

At least 3,000 people gathered on the Asian side of Istanbul, according to police.

They held up photos of jailed journalists, chanting: "We will not be silenced. Enough is enough!" and "We will not bow to pressure."

Earlier this month, police raided Turkey's most-watched news channel, Halk TV, halting broadcasts and installing a government-appointed administrator.

The move was the latest against media outlets seen as critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government.

It followed the closure of the website and social media accounts belonging to leading digital news outlet T24 over what authorities described as "LGBT propaganda."

This gathering is not simply

about standing up for journalists," veteran journalist Zafer Arapkirli told AFP after the Istanbul protest.

"It is also about defending respect for society's right to access information and news through journalists and independent media," said the columnist for the BirGun daily.

For Arapkirli - who himself faces lawsuits - the more intense the pressure becomes, the stronger the response and the determination to stand against it must be.

"What the regime wants is to intimidate, silence and frighten society through such pressure - by arresting individual journalists, seizing media outlets, banning news coverage and blocking access to social media," he said.

"We must show that we will not allow this to happen. AFP

Kim Calls for World's 'Strongest' Military



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged his military to train to become the strongest in the world at a two-day meeting of company commanders in Pyongyang, state media said Saturday.

Kim's call for what he dubbed a "Korean-style military revolution" came the same week Seoul's military proposed talks to clarify the border after an explosion inside the heavily fortified

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) further strained inter-Korean ties. Seoul and Pyongyang remain technically at war as the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

The Pyongyang event, held Thursday and Friday, was aimed at developing a plan "to train the strongest armed forces in the world," Kim said, according to the official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA). He also called

for "all the companies" of the North's army to be "turned into a strong elite unit in military and technical aspects and consolidated into perfect combat forces."

KCNA said it was the first gathering of "the entire army" since a February party congress where Kim had called for stronger conventional forces and reaffirmed plans to develop nuclear weapons and missiles.

North Korea has also tested a

slew of weapons recently, including a "new-type" precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, both of which were said to use AI technology.

Despite long-running UN sanctions, North Korea has enshrined its status as a nuclear-armed state in law, with its regime repeatedly declaring its atomic arsenal permanent and irreversible. AFP

Male-Only Imperial Law Takes Effect in Japan

Japan's unpopular revisions to the Imperial House Law that reinforce the male-only succession rules took effect Saturday. The new rules are expected to bring historic changes to Japan's 1,500-year-old monarchy.

The changes include allowing the adoption of distant male relatives raised as commoners to become royals and father future heirs, and letting princesses keep their royal status after marrying commoners.

But the revised law bars Emperor Naruhito's hugely popular daughter Princess Aiko, 24, from becoming his successor, and her future possible children from even becoming royals.

Critics say the revisions discriminate against people based on their family background or gender and put pressure on younger members of the royal family to produce male offspring.

The Imperial Household Agency has said officials are studying how to implement the measures.

The male-only succession rule means the line must move to the emperor's younger brother Akishino, then to his 20-year-old nephew Prince Hisahito. Next in line after him is the emperor's 90-year-old uncle.

The revised law allows adoption of unmarried male descendants, aged 15 or older, of distant imperial relatives - but only of paternal lineage - into a branch of the royal family.

The plan is to find candidates from families that renounced their royal status in 1947, which at the time was to ease the postwar financial burden on the monarchy.

Four of the 11 such families remain, but they are at least 36 generations removed from Naruhito after splitting from a common male-line ancestor 600 years ago, officials said. AFP



Besieged Yemeni City Faces Water Shortage



Drinking water has been scarce for over a decade in Taiz, but the problem has reached crisis levels in recent weeks as Iran-backed Houthi rebels besiege Yemen's third-largest city in their escalating conflict with government forces.

The needs of Taiz's more than 1 million residents are now barely being met, humanitarian groups say, as access to wells is limited, desalination plants run low on fuel and water delivery trucks are largely prevented from entering the city. Families are rationing every drop. Before Taiz came under siege, Hadil al-Shahid and her two young children used about 10 liters (about 2.6 gallons) of bottled water per day for drinking and cooking; now they are making the same amount last about four days.

"We stopped drinking coffee and tea, which we used to drink daily," al-Shahid said in a phone interview.

Families like al-Shahid's are paying as much as 75% more for bottled water than just a few weeks ago, and some have begun to buy water on credit.

The siege of Taiz - a strategic gateway to southern Yemen - isn't only constricting water supplies. Shortages of groceries have sent food prices soaring. Fuel is also in short supply, making it difficult to maintain basic services such as hospitals and sanitation, which compounds the public health risks.

Amnesty International has called on the Houthis to immediately open roads into the city, saying Taiz is being pushed to "the brink of a severe humanitarian disaster."

Yemen descended into civil war in 2014, when the Houthis seized much of the country's north, including the capital of Sanaa, and forced the internationally recognized government into exile. Taiz has been a focal point of fighting ever since. War-related damage to Taiz's aging water infrastructure magnified the pressures of population growth and frequent droughts that led to shrinking supplies of groundwater. Residents began paying for water delivered by trucks, a mostly reliable alternative - until recently. AFP

SPORTS

Shiffrin 7th in Giant Slalom Opener in Austria

Mikaela Shiffrin had to settle for a seventh-placed finish while fellow American Paula Moltzan enjoyed her first career win as the Alpine ski racing season opened with a women's giant slalom on Saturday.

Shiffrin led after the first run in Sölden, Austria, on the Rettenbach glacier. But her second run wasn't good

enough and sent the Olympic slalom champion down to seventh.

When Shiffrin crossed the line it was Moltzan who was left celebrating

her first World Cup win at age 32. "It feels like a fairy tale right now, pretty unreal," Moltzan said. Lara Colturi of Albania was second. Germany's Emma Aicher, who last season finished second to Shiffrin in the overall title standings, was third.

Shiffrin's sixth World Cup overall title last season equaled the women's record set in the 1970s by Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Pröll.

But Shiffrin has called this campaign an "exploration season" in which she will reduce her slalom races and focus more on giant slalom and super-G.

The 31-year-old hasn't won a giant slalom race in nearly three years, going back to December 2023, while her last super-G victory was in 2022.

Shiffrin used to race and win in all disciplines, but she had reduced her schedule in recent years after she endured terrifying crashes in a downhill in Cortina in early 2024 and a GS in Killington 10 months later. Her 22 career victories in giant slalom remain the women's record, as are her 73 wins in slalom and 110 wins overall. **AP**

City Suffer First Loss of Season at Aston Villa

Manchester City's perfect start to the Premier League season ended Saturday with a 2-1 loss at Aston Villa.

Nicolas Jackson scored both goals for Villa against Enzo Maresca's City, which was aiming for an eighth straight win in the league.

It also extended Villa's outstanding recent run to six wins from seven games in all competitions. Jackson is up to seven goals for the season in all competitions. He fired the

Red Roses on First Losing Streak in 10 Years

No. 1-ranked England suffered consecutive defeats for the first time in a decade after it was beaten by Canada 31-22 in WXV women's rugby late Friday.

Canada doubled down on its historic 24-21 win in Toronto last week with sustained defensive pressure and a withering three-try burst in nine minutes around the four mark.

The Canadians have been the bane of England's existence for the past five weeks, responsible for ending the Red Roses' record 39-win streak in a 26-26 draw in Exeter, stopping their 41-match unbeaten run in Toronto, and now starting their first losing streak since July 2016.

"It's so amazing. It shows we can consistently perform at this level and now we just need to do it for another two, three years to the next World Cup (in 2029 in Australia)," Canada captain Sophie de Goede said.

Despite conceding five scrum penalties, Canada's defense forced constant errors by world champion England in front of 13,117 spectators. "We're not broken, we just need to grow from this," England captain Meg Jones said. **AP**

Avdija's 26 Leads Blazers Past Kings

Deni Avdija led the Trail Blazers with 26 points, six rebounds, and six assists in the Portland Trail Blazers 128-120 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Friday.

Damian Lillard and Toumani Camara scored 19 points each and helped the Trail Blazers improve to 2-0.

Rookie Darius Acuff Jr. scored 33 points, while Domantas Sabonis had 27 points, 19 rebounds, and 10 assists for the Kings (0-2) in their home opener. Zach LaVine added 22 points.

The Kings had a 12-point lead after LaVine made three free throws midway through the 1st quarter and held a 64-59 lead at halftime. The Trail Blazers got off to a hot start in the third quarter with, starting on a 15-0 run, capped off by a 3-point basket by Camara for a 74-64 lead. Portland made 8 of 19 shots from 3-point range in the third quarter after a making only 4 of 22 from distance in the first half. **AP**

Choi Climbs to Tied 2nd at LPGA South Korea Event

Hye-Jin Choi had an eagle and seven birdies on her first 11 holes

Saturday on a rain-soaked Pine Beach Golf Links to shoot a 6-under 66 and move into a tie for second place after three rounds of the LPGA South Korea tournament.

Second-round leader Haeran Ryu, who birdied

her last three holes, still led the tournament by four strokes after a 4-under 68 and a three-round total of 17-under 199. Choi shot 28 on her front nine and was 9-under before she bogeyed the par-5 12th after hitting into a fairway bunker. She made a double-bogey seven on the 17th after missing an eight-foot par putt after hitting into hazard off the green with her fairway wood. "I had a really good score on the front nine. I felt good about my ball-striking early on, so I was able to play confidently and make a lot of birdie putts, which helped," Choi said. "I'm a little disappointed with how I played on the back nine." **AP**

Celtics Edge Knicks as Tatum Scores 36

Jayson Tatum scored 25 of his 36 points in the second half, including seven of his team's final eight to help the Boston Celtics hold off the New York Knicks 107-103 on Friday night.

Paul George and Neemias Queta added 15 points apiece to fend off a late rally by the defending NBA champion Knicks.

New York fell to 0-2 after losing its season opener to the Philadelphia 76ers.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 22 points to lead five Knicks in double figures. OG Anunoby had 20 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. Deuce McBride finished with 20 points and Jalen Brunson added 19.

In a game that featured 12 lead changes and four ties, Boston outscored New York 33-24 in the third quarter to increase a one-point halftime lead to 10 entering the final period.

The Celtics' edge grew as high as 91-79 before a 12-3 Knicks run cut it 94-91 on Towns' putback dunk.

New York got it back to 99-96 on Josh Hart's 3-point shot before Queta turned it over, leading to Brunson's floater. But Tatum responded with a 19-footer on Boston's next possession that made it 101-98 with 1:11 remaining.

It was 103-98 when Anunoby hit a pair of free throws with less than a minute left. But Tatum drained a 3 from the wing. Mitchell Robinson finished with four points, four rebounds and a block after struggling with early foul trouble throughout his first matchup against the Knicks team that he helped win last season's title. Robinson was the only member of New York's regular rotation that didn't return. It didn't stop him from making his presence felt opposite the he spent his first eight NBA seasons with. During one sequence in the fourth quarter Robinson swatted away a layup attempt by Towns. Following a miss by Mikal Bridges, Robinson then was the recipient of an alley-oop from Derrick White. **AP**