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Govt was left with no option but to impose emergency in KP: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the government had been left with no option but to impose emergency and governor rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) after efforts to resolve the situation through dialogue failed, stressing that restoring peace, improving law and order and accelerating development in the province were its top priorities.

Addressing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) parliamentary party meeting here, the prime minister said the decision had been taken after consultations with allied parties and in view of the deteriorating security situation and the need to protect the country's development trajectory.

He said the government had made sustained efforts to engage the provincial leadership in dialogue and offered cooperation to address terrorism and promote development. However, those efforts did not produce an agreement, leaving the federal government with no alternative but to proceed with the decision, he added.

"It's now or never," the prime minister recalled telling the federal cabinet while explaining the urgency of the situation.

He said the cabinet meeting, held detailed discussions before reaching the decision.

The prime minister said an advisory council has been constituted comprising experts and professionals to help improve governance and address the province's pressing challenges. He said the council included professionals from different fields, including health, education and finance, who would contribute to improving public services and supporting development initiatives. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the foremost objective was to restore peace and eliminate terrorism, while strengthening the police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), improving their capacity and establishing Safe City projects.

He said the people of KP had made immense sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and deserved peace, security and better access to essential services.

Recalling the sacrifices made by security personnel and civilians, he said terrorism had been largely eliminated from the country by 2018 through sustained efforts, particularly in KP, where people from all walks of life had suffered significant losses. He expressed concern over the resurgence of terrorist activities in the province, saying police personnel and members of the armed forces continued to lose their lives, while incidents of abduction and attacks had added to the insecurity.



ISLAMABAD: A Parliamentary delegation of Pakistan Muslim League (Q), Balochistan Awami Party, Istehkam Pakistan Party and Pakistan Muslim League (Z) meets with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairs 11th board meeting of Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA)

Federal govt not responsible for failure of talks with PTI: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi on Tuesday informed the Senate that the federal government had acted in accordance with the Constitution and was not responsible for the failure of talks with the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI).

Responding to points raised by Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Raja Nasir Abbas, the minister asked him to identify any specific constitutional provision that had been violated.

Mohsin Naqvi said the talks at Parliament House had begun with the issue of terrorism. He said Asad Qaiser had expressed willingness to cooperate, but the government had asked the PTI to consult the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government before reaching an agreement. He said the government had requested the KP chief minister to join the negotiations so that he could make decisions on security matters.

The minister said the government wanted to prevent the loss of even a single life and could not continue to see police officers and security personnel being killed while the provincial government did not stand with it. Mohsin Naqvi said the government had accepted six proposed changes despite a disagreement over paragraph four.

He said the opposition later conveyed that PTI leader Murad Saeed would respond to the proposals.

The minister said the government had evidence of contacts and financial transactions between terrorists and some PTI members. Counterterrorism was the government's sole agenda in the talks, he added.

He said permission had been granted to record a meeting with the PTI founder on Barrister Gohar Ali Khan's mobile phone, and the demands made during the meeting had been accepted.

However, the opposition said the recording would be made the following day, he added.



BANGKOK: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, participates in the World Bank's roundtable discussion on "Transforming Demographic Transition into Human Capital Gains and Job Creation" in Bangkok, highlighting the need for coordinated action on population, human capital and job creation.

Opposition demonstrated willingness to compromise during negotiations, says Allama Nasir Abbas

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Allama Raja Nasir Abbas alleged that negotiations with the government were a sham, claiming that the decision on governor's rule in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had already been made before the talks concluded.

The federal government imposed an emergency and governor's rule in K-P on Sunday under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution.

The government cited the deteriorating law and order situation and what it called a lack of support from the provincial administration in the fight against terrorism.

The upper house opened the floor for debate on the move. "The negotiations were a sham. You had already made up your mind," Abbas said, arguing that the opposition had shown flexibility by stepping back from its demand for a meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan, while the government had refused to reconsider its position.

Speaking during a Senate session chaired by Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Abbas said the opposition wanted to meet Imran to seek his guidance in light of the prevailing global situation, adding that denying access to a detained political leader raised questions about the government's commitment to political dialogue.

"We are not being allowed to meet Imran Khan, who is a prisoner and the head of a political party," he said.

Abbas maintained that the opposition had demonstrated a willingness to compromise during negotiations but alleged that the government had already decided on its course of action.

He also criticised the reported move towards imposing governor's rule in K-P, warning that such measures could deepen political tensions and undermine efforts to restore peace in the province.

Questioning the message being conveyed to young people in K-P, the opposition leader said the authorities' actions suggested that political struggle and recourse to the judiciary carried little weight.

He warned that pushing people away from democratic and political processes could increase frustration and potentially contribute to further instability and militancy.

At least seven killed, 40 injured as Rehman Baba Express derails near Multan

MULTAN, (Monitoring Desk): The death toll from the Rehman Baba Express derailment near Sher Shah Bridge in Multan rose to seven, with 40 others injured, police and rescue officials said on Tuesday.

The injured were shifted to Nishtar Hospital in Multan for treatment, while rescue teams continued operations at the accident site.

The accident occurred at around 5:15am, according to a passenger.

The train was travelling from Karachi to Peshawar, according to earlier police information.

Rescue officials said 13 coaches had been cleared, while rescue work was continuing in one coach.

Further details about the condition of the injured and the circumstances surrounding the deaths were awaited.

A passenger told reporters that workers had repaired the nuts and bolts of coach number nine near Rohri before the accident.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took notice of the incident and expressed concern over the passengers injured in the accident.

He directed the relevant authorities to speed up rescue operations and ensure the injured received the best possible medical treatment without delay.

The cause of the derailment has not yet been officially established.

President reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to regional peace under Makkah pact

ISLAMABAD, (Agencies): President Asif Ali Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and stability under the Makkah Defence Alliance (MDA) in a meeting with Lieutenant General (Rtd) Nauman Mahmood on Tuesday in Islamabad. In a post on X, the office of the president stated that Lieutenant General (Rtd) Nauman Mahmood, the first secretary general of the MDA, formerly called the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), called on President Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

"The president expressed confidence that the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed by Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia on August 7, 2026, would strengthen regional peace and stability through defensive cooperation guided by the principles of the UN Charter and international law," it added.

Governor highlights Balochistan's vulnerability to recurring natural disasters

QUETTA, (APP): Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has called for a comprehensive, long-term strategy to address the growing challenges posed by natural disasters and climate change, stressing that effective planning, timely response and sustainable resource management are essential to protecting lives and livelihoods across the province. In a message issued on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, the governor highlighted Balochistan's vulnerability to recurring natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and droughts. He observed that the province often faces one calamity after another, leaving communities struggling to recover from the destruction and economic losses caused by successive emergencies.

He said these disasters pose serious threats not only to human lives but also to critical infrastructure, agriculture, livestock and the economic resources of the public. The repeated occurrence of such events, he added, underscores the need to strengthen disaster preparedness and develop effective mechanisms to reduce risks and minimise damage. The governor stressed that funds allocated for disaster management must be utilised transparently and efficiently, with clear performance indicators to ensure accountability and confirm that relief and rehabilitation initiatives deliver tangible benefits to affected communities.

BHC orders comprehensive survey of Joint Road traffic issues, seeks detailed reports

QUETTA, (APP): The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has ordered a comprehensive survey to examine traffic congestion on Joint Road in Quetta, issues relating to shops situated opposite a proposed filling station, and matters concerning the road widening project, while seeking detailed reports from the relevant authorities. The directives were issued by a two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Malakhail and Justice Muhammad Najmuddin Mengal during the hearing of a case. The court directed the Director of the Balochistan Traffic Engineering Bureau to coordinate with the Director General Traffic Engineering Bureau and ensure a detailed survey of Joint Road in the presence of representatives of the Advocate General's Office, Pakistan Railways, and the petitioner or his legal counsel.

Skilled youth can play pivotal role in Balochistan's development: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired 11th board meeting of Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA) and directs to make a compressive plan for providing technical training in various fields to 25,000 youth across the province by next year.

Additionally, a decision was made to fast-track the program aimed at upskilling 30,000 youth and sending them abroad for employment.

The meeting reviewed ongoing initiatives to promote technical education, enhance the professional capabilities of the youth, and create employment opportunities.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti inaugurated an 'Institute Registration Portal' designed to boost the capacity of technical education and make the registration and monitoring systems for institutions more effective.

This portal will facilitate the registration of technical training institutes and help improve the system for monitoring their performance.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that fostering a conducive environment is essential for providing employment opportunities to the youth. He emphasized that promoting technical education and skills development is indispensable for steering the youth toward economic self-reliance and added that technical training should be provided in alignment with modern standards and market demands, enabling the youth to secure employment, both locally and internationally, thereby improving their families' economic conditions and playing an effective role in the country's development.

The Chief Minister directed relevant officials to formulate a comprehensive strategy to integrate 25,000 youth who would complete their technical training by next year into the national and global economies.



MULTAN: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi visits the site of the Rehman Baba Express derailment at Sher Shah Railway Station to inspect the damaged track and review relief operations

PTI's political narrative favoured terrorists; worked against law enforcement agencies: Tarar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said the country could not have two different policies on counter-terrorism, stating that the federal government had repeatedly sought a consensus-based strategy with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, but the chief minister had not agreed to it.

Accompanied by Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, he was briefing foreign media representatives on the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the federal government's counter-terrorism policy and the newly established consultative council for 12 districts of the province.

Atta Tarar said the federal government's sole objective in negotiations with the PTI and the provincial government had been to develop a unified strategy against terrorism. The PTI could continue its march and pursue its other political demands, but the federal government wanted all relevant governments to adopt a common approach to combating terrorism.

He said Pakistan could not pursue one policy towards Afghanistan at the federal level and a different approach at the provincial level. While the federal government was pursuing diplomatic engagement with the interim Afghan government to dismantle terrorist safe havens and prevent Afghan territory from being used for attacks inside Pakistan, the provincial government's approach was different.

The minister maintained that the measures taken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were legally valid under the Constitution of 1973, saying the relevant constitutional provisions had been incorporated to address such situations.

Citing figures on the security situation, Atta Tarar said terrorist incidents had increased nearly elevenfold over the past six years. A total of 3,774 incidents were reported in 2025, the highest number recorded so far, while 2,857 incidents had occurred by September 2026.

He said 6,924 terrorism cases had been registered over the preceding five years. Referring to casualties, he said 2,775 deaths had been recorded in 2026 and 3,512 in 2025.



ISLAMABAD: Provincial Advisor for Women Development Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi in a group photo with participants of international conference.

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Netanyahu must be arrested

What is happening in Gaza can no longer be seen as simply the result of war. It is an immense destruction of humanity happening before the world's eyes: killing, displacement, humanitarian suffering, and grave allegations of crimes under international law.

The international community faces a fundamental question: Will international law apply equally to everyone, including powerful political leaders?

On Nov. 21, 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, alleging war crimes and crimes against humanity. In theory, these warrants mean that no individual, regardless of political power, is above the law.

The enforcement of the arrest warrant issued against Netanyahu is not only about arresting one individual. It is also a test for the future of international law.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is severe. Tens of thousands of people have lost their lives. Children and women were killed, hospitals were bombed, families lost their homes, and millions have been displaced. The international community's silence, while a society's basic means of survival are destroyed, further widened the gap between law and power.

The ICC warrant also creates a striking contradiction. Netanyahu's address from the United Nations podium also has symbolic importance in this regard. On one side, an international court has ordered his arrest on allegations of serious crimes; on the other, a head of government speaking from the podium of the world's largest international organization.

Where does law begin, and where does political power end? If international law is applied only to weak states, then what we have is not a legal order but a power order.

Pakistan has not approached the Palestinian question as a regional issue but as one concerning the common conscience of humanity. This understanding lies at the foundation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's political stance on Palestine.

What must be done today is to ensure that what happened in Gaza is not allowed to be forgotten. When the images of war fade from the agenda, the suffering of children, women, and civilians will not disappear.

Will the law of the powerful overcome the power of law?

As Netanyahu began speaking, delegates from 77 countries walked out of the United Nations General Assembly chamber. Their departure left large sections of the hall visibly empty, in protest against Israel's military campaign in Gaza and in support of the growing international recognition of Palestinian statehood. The scene was more than a diplomatic action; it was a powerful expression of the conscience of humanity.

Law is a matter of conscience. Netanyahu is being condemned not only by the decisions of the ICC, but also by the conscience of the nations of the world.

Netanyahu must be arrested. Because the issue is greater than Netanyahu. The issue is whether the common law of humanity can endure, as it is clearly approved by the conscience of humankind.

The ecology of civic spaces

Marvi Mazhar

In Karachi, development is often imagined as an upgrade in scale — a quiet residential zone becomes commercial chaos, and an informal, difficult-to-maintain civic place is replaced by a larger, safer, more manageable and programmable space. On paper, this looks like progress. In urban life, the equation is complicated. Cities, particularly in South Asia, have a habit of mistaking expansion for continuity. The expansion of a building means that public mission has grown. When a facility offers more amenities, such as rooms, equipment, parking and programming, it is seen as advancement. But civic spaces do not live by square footage alone. They live through democratic access, repetition, informality, memory and the possibility of arrival.

This is where the debate between preservation and development in Karachi needs to be rethought. Preservation is not only about old buildings, stone façades, carved balconies or colonial-era elevations. It is also about the preservation of relationships: between a place and its street, between a room and its regulars, between a threshold and the people who feel they can cross it without permission, and without an agenda. Development, likewise, is not automatically the enemy. Cities must repair, rebuild, expand and adapt. But development turns destructive when it preserves the name while displacing the ecology that gave that name meaning. Karachi has already perfected the language of superficial preservation. We hold up façades while hollowing out interiors. We have seen this in Kanji Building, Duarte Mansion, and many more. We retain the front elevation but erase the spatial memory behind it. We allow history to remain as a surface while new commercial logic occupies the depth. This is not preservation. It is heritage as costume. The same danger exists with cultural and civic institutions. One can preserve a brand, a plaque, a founding story, even a commemorative wall, and still lose the urban life that made the institution matter.

The main characteristics between event-based large infrastructure arts councils, corporate institutions and informal community projects is that a neighbourhood-level cultural space depends on a delicate network of conditions. It needs public transport, walkability, evening life, mixed-use surroundings, casual visibility, porous thresholds, and a sense of familiarity. People must be able to drop in, not just arrive by invitation. Students, artists, writers, activists, young professionals, neighbours and strangers must feel that the space is part of their mental map of the city. Such spaces are not only attended; they are inhabited. Therefore, they are community projects and not corporate or state councils.

Karachi's grassroot community institutions understood this instinctively. Mehr Ghar in Lyari, Rangoonwala Community Centre in Bahadurabad and Ghalib Library in Nazimabad are not only buildings with programmes. They are embedded in neighbourhood histories. Their value comes from the way they sit within communities that already have their own rhythms, languages, anxieties, memories and forms of gathering. They do not need to become monumental in order to matter. Their scale is part of their intelligence. Lyari, for example, cannot be understood in isolation. It is a dense urban world of cultural production, political memory, sport, music, migration and resilience. A community space there carries a different meaning from the same programme placed elsewhere. It is not simply 'service delivery'; it is recognition. Similarly, a library in Nazimabad or a community centre near Bahadurabad belongs to a geography of everyday use. Its users are not only audiences. They are neighbours, students, families, passers-by and repeat visitors who build attachment over time.

This is also visible in newer Karachi spaces that have emerged with modest means but strong civic imagination. The Centre For Art-based Methodologies and Well-being and Nani Ghar, Darham/Marham, Kitab Ghar and Danish-o-Ramish represent a different model of public culture: smaller, intimate and community-facing. Once upon a time so was T2F. They are not trying to become grand cultural complexes. Their significance lies in creating rooms for reading, conversation, collective care, arts practice, learning, reflection and belonging. In a city where public space is scarce and often hostile, such areas become civic infrastructure on a neighbourhood level. They are not insulated from the city; they absorb it. They allow people to enter without the intimidation of institutional grandeur. They survive through trust, informality, shared labour, borrowed furniture, public generosity, uneven funding and the fragile ethics of care. They remind us that Karachi's cultural future may not only lie in large master-planned facilities, but in a constellation of smaller spaces rooted in different localities.

An industrial or employment-dominated district works differently. Its rhythms are shaped by work-hour mobility, production, institutional destinations, transport corridors and commuting patterns. It may contain communities, mixed-use pockets and important public institutions, but its dominant urban logic is not the same as that of a porous civic neighbourhood.

For want of a nail

Arifa Noor

Are the days of the government numbered? This is a question (or gossip) in Islamabad these days; I call it 'a question' because it is not the only one, which in itself reveals that it has its takers and its critics. Though this is an issue never far from anyone's mind in this city (or Pindi) no matter which government is in place, this particular session of the debate in public was sparked by the column of senior journalist Sohail Warraich. The operative part of the column was his prediction that the government's downfall would begin in July. Since then, he has been clarifying or explaining this prophecy in articles as well as interviews.

Many are eager to latch on to his views while others argue against it equally passionately. The former point out, as did the column writer himself, about the government's lack of success on the economic front and its inability to gain popularity. The government has little to offer other than its mantra of stability for five years or so. And this is frankly of little consolation to people who have experienced back-breaking inflation and a slower-than-a-tortoise economy for the past so many years. Even less needs to be said about the PML-N's lack of popularity. Even those who can't stop waxing lyrical about the 'success' of Maryam Nawaz as chief minister cannot argue that she has made the party popular.

On the other hand, those who feel the government is on solid ground point out the comfortable relationship between the prime minister and the military leadership. This is more than a hybrid regime now; it is one in which the civilian side takes no risks and asserts no power. There is only one side writing on the page, the other is simply following the moving finger. The 'same page' is far too dicey a proposition. They also point out the disaster that is the PTI, bereft of any political strategy to woo over those in power. So why would there be any rift or disagreement, ask those on this side of the argument.

However, it needs be said that even those who don't think the government is in any danger concede the economic fragility in the country. The docility of the prime minister and his generosity in giving credit where it is due might be unprecedented but perhaps so are the economic challenges facing the country and the pressures on the more vulnerable classes. And this is exactly why arguments such as those made by Sohail Warraich, and others, might sound credible, even if — as he himself says — he has no information, just analysis. Those who disagree with this sound far more confident, for they have spoken to the powers that be and heard their assurances with reference to the strong position of the government. But the argument that the government is in danger could simply be an assessment based on experience rather than knowledge.

The Pakistani establishment has considerable institutional expertise in managing public expectations and anger. Or so it had always seemed in the past (other than 1971). And this has manifested itself in two ways. The first is their ability to accept popular parties into the mainstream. This was true of the PPP in 1988, after the death of Ziaul Haq. Despite distrust of the party, which meant forcing Benazir Bhutto to accept certain cabinet choices and hindering her government, she was allowed to take power.

And this was equally true in 2007. In other words, unpopular governments or those with a questionable mandate are not kept in power indefinitely and popular parties are accepted, regardless of misgivings, which then causes considerable instability in civilian governments. It usually happens when the institution becomes uncomfortably aware of its unpopularity and feels the need to assert its more 'professional' role to gain acceptability.

This decision is linked to the second factor — governments especially those brought into power through questionable elections don't necessarily complete their terms. Back in the 1990s, the first PML-N government (brought to power in a heavily rigged election) was sent home and replaced with the PPP which, too, was sent home before time. Post Musharraf, governments completed their terms but only till the elections were largely seen to be fair, till 2018, when the electoral exercise became far too controversial and unfair. The resultant PTI government was sent packing in 2022. There are specific political issues for why each government was sent packing but it can also be argued that these quick changes prevent the building up of a pressure cooker like situation.

Unpopularity in itself doesn't necessarily lead to organised outrage; longevity also acts as a catalyst that brings disparate forces and organisations to join hands. The riots which led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina didn't just happen because she had become unpopular but also because of her long reign of nearly 15 years. Similar longevity was linked to the widespread protests against Hosni Mubarak, which the military he had led did not push back against.

In Pakistan, the populace perhaps has a shorter tolerance level and the establishment understands that. Musharraf was struggling with unpopularity within seven years, a fact his institution took advantage of.

As a result, those who remember what has happened in the past are now asking questions about what the Shehbaz Sharif government has to show after presenting five budgets. And other than not picking a fight with those who brought the government to power, it has also done little to bring any legitimacy to the set-up. So the steam continues to build up. And despite the 'sab acha hai' (all's well) mantra on news channels, it is evident to everyone.

It is a simple assessment that should also not escape some of those ruling Pakistan right now; and this includes those in Islamabad, Pindi and some of us who watch politics. Whether it shapes policy is another matter — and better known by those who have powerful zaraaye (sources).

Temple heist and Hindutva

Jawed Naqvi

Every religion has its moral code. Hinduism, better still Brahminism, has a clutch of dos and don'ts enshrined in its classical scriptures. Does Hindutva, distinct from Hinduism, subscribe to the moral code? There's a political critique of the fascist movement, which requires it to be fortified and addressed urgently, but increasingly there's an equal need for a moral probe of Hindutva. Stealing gold and priceless treasures from a temple was explicitly categorised as one of five deadly sins — mahapatakas — in classical Hindu scripture.

The ancient caution remains a compelling pointer to the reality that temples were regularly targeted in old India by robbers whether from within the precincts or without.

Some Hindu kings in southern India plundered temples for treasure, others sacked the ones of rival kings and took home the deities as trophies. Kashmir, too, records a similar experience of plunder by an ancient king. In the mediaeval era, Mahmood Ghaznavi joined the raids and his sacking of the temple of Somnath is all too well recorded.

A Persian chronicler is cited as asserting that Mahmood had a religious purpose in the raids even if Sanskrit sources of the region at the time do not express any such trauma that matches the Persian boast. Somnath, a name for Lord Shiva, according to the Persian chronicler was conflated with Manat, one of several idols expelled from Makkah as Islam advanced belief in a single invisible God. The scriptural censure in ancient texts is not the only evidence of stealing the riches offered to the temples by devotees. Other historical evidence also points to a possibly routine malaise.

Gambling, while condemned as a severe moral vice in the Vedic texts, didn't qualify as a deadly sin though drinking was. Drinking was listed among the serious mahapatakas. Gandhiji, a pious Hindu, condemned drinking but slammed tribal peasants in Gujarat for violently opposing Hindu and Parsi vendors for selling alcohol to their communities. Today, BJP-ruled Gujarat and Bihar formally observe prohibition to express cursory respect for Gandhi. The ban has created a thriving parallel market for liquor. The moment you drive out of Gujarat and into Rajasthan, a bevy of liquor shops lure clients by announcing their brands and prices in Gujarati.

The other three unforgivable mahapatakas, listed in Chandogya Upanishad and Manu Smriti, were killing a Brahmin and committing adultery with the wife of the guru. The fifth commandment, to borrow a phrase from the Old Testament, forbade keeping the company of those that participated in the committing of the first four sins.

One of the most prevalent sins today is described in the Rigveda in the famous 'Dice Hymn', where a gambler laments losing his family, wealth and respect, warning others to "play no longer with dice, but till thy tillage". The central conflict of the epic Mahabharata occurs because King Yudhishthira succumbs to a gambling addiction, losing his kingdom, brothers and wife in a rigged game of dice. Gambling, the scriptures warn, breeds dishonesty, greed and chaos. Texts like the Bhagavata Purana define gambling as one of the major pillars of 'adharma' (unrighteousness) because it destroys truthfulness. Gambling under Hindutva rule, though not exclusively because of it, has become a serious scourge with families succumbing to the addiction of their own loved one to online gambling. Sports have not been spared the merciless guile of the bookies.

A lore among the children in our predominantly Hindu neighbourhood in Lucknow was that houses needed to be more carefully watched after Diwali since it had become an occasion for serious gambling, evidently with contrived religious sanction. The losing parties were accused of often pillaging private homes to make up for their losses.

In the larger world of agrarian India, the Marxian class struggle stalks the peasantry dressed as a friend or a facilitator of monetary support at times of distress. Indira Gandhi was wary of Sukhi Lala, the uncouth and wily moneylender featured in the movie Mother India. She had barred the weather bureau from sharing monsoon forecasts with the press. The role of satellites in monitoring the climate patterns would arrive in India later. In Mrs Gandhi's calculation, the baniya exploited his insights into the pattern of the arriving rains to manipulate the helpless peasantry. David Hardiman in his amazing book on usury in colonial western India — Feeding the Baniya — records instances where the moneylender prays for drought, using tantric help to drive away rain. He maximises his profits from a peasantry in crisis. Gambling is a tradition. Will it rain? Will it not? The baniya wagers on his insight. The monsoon rains this year are said to be worryingly low, creating a loaded political possibility. Mrs Gandhi lost her grip on power after two successive failures of monsoons in the mid-1970s undermining her victory in the 1971 war.

The recent theft of large quantities of gold and ornaments from the heavily guarded Ram temple at Ayodhya is of a piece with the ancient Indian phenomenon. Someone seems to badly need the plundered wealth amid deliberate opaqueness. Reports allege that senior officials of the temple trust decreed by the supreme court and appointed by the Modi government are being spared the probe while some junior staff were arrested.

There are reports also of someone linked with high officials of the trust often leaving the temple with a loaded sack. He preferred to travel by train instead of flying out of Ayodhya.

Elections are due in Uttar Pradesh next year, which represents the most politically influential state accounting for 80 MPs. The temple heist may or may not become an electoral issue. The rural distress caused by a failed monsoon and the Iran war, however, offers a likelier chance to drub the BJP government in its stronghold state.

Qatar's Emir calls for accountability over Gaza genocide perpetrators

DOHA, (Agencies): Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani called for accountability for Israel's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip since October 2023.

"What happened in the Gaza Strip is unquestionably genocide, and its perpetrators must not be allowed to escape accountability," Tamim said during an address opening the 55th annual session of Qatar's Shura Council in Doha.

Qatar has played a mediating role in efforts to end the Israeli war in Gaza. Israel has killed more than 74,000 Palestinians and injured over 175,000 in Gaza since October 2023, most of them women and children, while around 90% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to Palestinian authorities.

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant over war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN's principal judicial organ, is also hearing a case brought by South Africa and joined by several countries accusing Israel of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

"We will continue working with our brothers and our international and regional partners to keep our region stable and secure," the Qatari emir added.

Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye mediated a ceasefire agreement in Gaza that took effect on Oct. 10, 2025, as part of a plan proposed by US President Donald Trump.

Despite the agreement, Israel's genocide has continued, killing 1,493 Palestinians and injuring 5,299 others, most of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Israel has also continued to restrict the entry of agreed quantities of food, medicine, medical supplies, shelter materials and prefabricated homes into Gaza, where around 2.4 million Palestinians live, including some 2.15 million displaced people, amid severe humanitarian conditions.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Magnus Brunner, European Union Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, called on Prime MinisterMuhammad Shehbaz Sharif



Spain's Queen Letizia greets the crowd as she leaves the City Hall in Ceuta, Spain

Spain's king, queen visit Spanish enclave in Africa for first royal trip in 19 years

MADRID, (Agencies): Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia visited Spain's North African exclave of Ceuta, marking the first royal visit to the enclave since 2007. The monarchs were welcomed by hundreds of residents waving Spanish flags and chanting patriotic slogans before attending an official ceremony at the city's Assembly Palace, Spanish daily La Vanguardia reported.

Juan Jesus Vivas, Ceuta's president, presented the king with the keys to the city, describing the enclave as a meeting point between Europe and Africa.

The visit comes as Ceuta continues to recover from a major migration crisis from this July, when tens of thousands of people entered the city from neighboring Morocco. Vivas described Ceuta as wounded but determined to overcome the crisis, calling for establishing foundations that ensure "a future of security, stability and well-being for Ceuta and its citizens".

UN chief urges US, Russia to negotiate new nuclear treaty amid growing arms risks

UNITED NATIONS, (Monitoring Desk): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on the US and Russia to negotiate a successor framework to the New START Treaty, warning that growing nuclear arsenals and weakening safeguards are increasing risks to global security.

"The United States and the Russian Federation must negotiate a successor framework to New START," Guterres said at a UN General Assembly plenary meeting marking the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The New START Treaty expired earlier this year, leaving, for the first time in more than half a century, no binding limits on strategic nuclear arsenals, according to Guterres. "This undermines not only the security of those who possess nuclear weapons, but the entire international community," he said.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was signed on April 8, 2010, in Prague by the United States and Russia and entered into force on Feb. 5, 2011. It replaced the 1991 START I treaty, which expired in December 2009, and superseded the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), which terminated when New START entered into force, according to the US-based Arms Control Association.

Guterres warned that nuclear arsenals are being expanded and modernized while technological advances are increasing the risks of mistakes and miscalculations. "Nuclear arsenals are being expanded and modernized.

IMF warns AI market correction could threaten global financial stability

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): The International Monetary Fund warned on Tuesday that a correction in artificial intelligence-related markets could threaten global financial stability if investment and profit expectations disappoint, with existing financial vulnerabilities potentially amplifying the shock.

Presenting its October Global Financial Stability Report during the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings in Bangkok, the fund said financial stability risks remain elevated despite the resilience of markets to repeated shocks and heightened uncertainty. Athanasios Vamvakidis, an official in the IMF's Monetary and Capital Markets Department, said stronger-than-expected economic growth, robust corporate earnings and optimism about AI had helped support global markets.

That resilience, however, should not be interpreted as evidence that the financial system is safe, he cautioned.

The IMF identified an AI-related market correction as one of three major risks that could spark financial stress, alongside rising sovereign bond yields and cyber incidents capable of disrupting financial services or undermining confidence.

An AI correction could emerge if expectations for investment or profitability are not met. Meanwhile, inflation pressures, fiscal imbalances and large volumes of government and private-sector borrowing are contributing to risks in sovereign bond markets.

Although the threats could be manageable individually, weaknesses already present in the financial system could magnify their effects, the fund warned.

The IMF said its banking-sector stress test, incorporating severe shocks related to AI, bond markets and energy, showed that banks remained broadly resilient.

Nevertheless, a group of weaker banks would face insufficient capital under that scenario, and the share of vulnerable institutions has been increasing.

The fund also highlighted risks in nonbank financial institutions, including insurers, pension funds, private credit providers and hedge funds.

Insurers and pension funds hold more illiquid assets, which could expose them to greater difficulties during a downturn. Private credit faces rising borrower leverage and liquidity pressures that could constrain lending.

Hedge funds can help support markets, but their borrowing and concentration in similar trades could amplify stress when conditions deteriorate. Emerging markets have also demonstrated resilience, although weaker policy buffers in some economies and less transparent alternative financing sources in certain frontier markets remain concerns.

The IMF urged policymakers to strengthen financial resilience before further shocks materialize, noting that high public debt and limited policy space could complicate their response.

Its recommendations included placing public debt on a sustainable path, preserving central bank independence, maintaining a commitment to inflation targets and communicating policy clearly.

The fund also urged stronger cyber resilience.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal addresses the launch of the National Anaemia Reduction Plan for Women, Adolescent Girls and Children (2025–2030)

Yemeni government forces claim 1,200 Houthis neutralized in 'Dawn of Yemen' operation

SANAA, (Agencies): Yemeni government forces said they intensified offensive operations against the Houthis on the eastern and southern fronts as part of the ongoing "Dawn of Yemen" operation, claiming around 1,200 Houthi fighters had been neutralized.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Majed Abdullah al-Nadhib said government forces carried out 2,200 strikes using warplanes, drones, field artillery, rocket launchers and sniper units. He said the strikes targeted command and control centers, fortifications, firing positions, observation and reconnaissance points, troop concentrations, weapons and ammunition depots, supply routes and other military targets.

In Taiz, concentrated strikes targeted Houthi convoys and reinforcements and disrupted their ability to support and reorganize their forces, according to the spokesman.

Initial battlefield estimates indicated that around 1,200 Houthi fighters had been "neutralized," while more than 440 military vehicles and pieces of equipment were destroyed or damaged across the operational fronts, he added.

Military engineering units were also continuing mine-clearing operations in recaptured areas on the western front and securing roads and passages to facilitate the return of civilians, the statement said.

The developments come amid a broader escalation in Yemen between government forces, backed by the Saudi-led coalition, and the Houthis.



FAISALABAD: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan cutting ribbon to inaugurate a cancer ward at Madina Teaching Hospital during his visit to The University of Faisalabad (TUF)

Eastern Mediterranean hardest hit by attacks on healthcare, funding cuts: WHO chief

CAIRO, (Agencies): The Eastern Mediterranean faces mounting threats to healthcare from widespread attacks and severe funding cuts affecting nearly 2,000 facilities, the World Health Organization (WHO) chief warned. Addressing the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "This region has recorded more attacks on health facilities, health workers, and patients than any other." He stressed that hospitals, ambulances and health workers are protected under international humanitarian law and "must never be a target."

He praised WHO teams operating in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon and Afghanistan, often at considerable personal risk. "The best medicine is peace," he said, urging an end to regional conflicts. Tedros also warned that sudden and severe funding cuts have affected nearly 2,000 health facilities across the region, and called for greater domestic investment in healthcare to reduce dependence on international aid.

US VP Vance says he had no advance notice of federal search at Rep. Ilhan Omar's home

WASHINGTON DC, (Agencies): US Vice President JD Vance said Tuesday that he had no advance notice of federal agents' search of Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar's home, and that authorities would investigate allegations against the congresswoman based on the facts.

"I did not have advance notice that her home was being raided," Vance told reporters before departing for Texas. Vance said the administration sought to ensure that the Justice Department operated fairly and independently in criminal investigations.

"We try to run our Department of Justice in a fair and honest way. We try to let the law follow the facts rather than creating facts just to prosecute people we don't like," he said.

Vance added that he and President Donald Trump generally sought to avoid involvement in Justice Department investigations and prosecutions.

He acknowledged that there were "some serious allegations" against Omar but stressed that any further action would depend on the evidence.

"If there's a real case there, we're going to follow the facts. If there's not a real case there, then we won't," he said. Trump said Monday that federal authorities are looking at Omar "very carefully," while denying any personal involvement in the investigation into the Minnesota congresswoman.

"I've always found her to be totally crooked, personally, but that has nothing to do with me. I think she's a terrible person, but that's really up to the DOJ — I have nothing to do with it," Trump said, referring to the Department of Justice.

Federal agents executed a court-approved search warrant at Omar's Washington, DC residence at 6 am local time (1000GMT) on Monday. The Justice Department said the enforcement action "is part of an ongoing federal criminal investigation.



ALEPPO, SYRIA: Carpet master Omar Revvas and his 17-year-old daughter Meysem, the only woman practicing the profession, restore centuries-old carpets and textiles damaged by war and the passage of time

White House says Kimberly Guilfoyle asked to resign as US ambassador to Greece

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): The White House said on Tuesday that it has asked Kimberly Guilfoyle to resign as US ambassador to Greece amid reports of alleged misconduct involving gifts and claims that she sought money in exchange for access to administration officials. In her first news conference, Katie Zacharia, who succeeded Karoline Leavitt as White House spokeswoman, was asked about the timeline for Guilfoyle's dismissal and possible replacements. "We have asked Ambassador Guilfoyle to resign. She has been a wonderful asset to the team, and we wish her well," said Zacharia.



Zacharia's comments come one day after US President Donald Trump said his administration is considering removing Guilfoyle from her position. The allegations against Guilfoyle include claims that she accepted lavish gifts while serving as ambassador and sought money in exchange for providing access to administration figures before her confirmation, according to media reports.

The State Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) is investigating Guilfoyle amid the allegations, a source familiar with the inquiry told CNN on Monday.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors explore stalls during International Conference on "Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth" organized by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) at local hotel

Lassa fever kills 268, spreads to 119 local govts in 24 Nigerian states

LAGOS, (Agencies): Nigeria has recorded 268 deaths from Lassa fever, with 1,138 confirmed cases reported in 24 states and 119 local government areas in 2026, according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC).

The figures were contained in the agency's latest situation report covering Sept. 28 to Oct. 4, corresponding to epidemiological week 40. The case fatality rate stood at 23.6%, compared to 18.6% during the corresponding period in 2025.

The NCDC said confirmed cases increased from 924 during the same period in 2025 to 1,138 in 2026, while deaths rose from 172 to 268.

Nigeria recorded 8,414 suspected cases during the first 40 weeks of the year, compared to 8,041 in the corresponding period last year.

Despite the rise in cumulative infections and deaths, new confirmed cases declined to three in week 40, down from 13 in the preceding week. The latest cases were reported in Bauchi and Benue states, with one death recorded during the week.

Five states: Ondo, Bauchi, Taraba, Edo and Benue accounted for 88% of confirmed cases recorded in 2026. Ondo had the largest share, at 36%, followed by Bauchi with 23%, Taraba with 12%, Edo with 11% and Benue with 6%, according to the NCDC.

The agency attributed the high fatality rate partly to late presentation at health facilities, high treatment costs and poor health-seeking behavior in affected communities. Lassa fever is an acute viral illness primarily transmitted to humans through contact with food or household items contaminated by infected rodents. Human-to-human transmission can also occur through contact with infected bodily fluids, particularly in health care settings without adequate infection-prevention measures. The NCDC has urged residents to keep their surroundings clean, store food in covered containers and dispose of waste properly to reduce contact with rodents.

Pakistan combating human trafficking; irregular migration through stronger legislation: President Zardari

Calls for greater opportunities for legal migration of Pakistani workers and professionals in Europe

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, Tuesday, called for greater opportunities for legal migration of Pakistani workers and professionals in Europe, stressing that Pakistan's sustained efforts to curb irregular migration should be matched by expanded legal pathways, skills-based mobility and structured cooperation with the European Union.
The president expressed these views during a meeting with Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The meeting focused on Pakistan-EU relations, cooperation on migration management, efforts to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and opportunities to facilitate legal migration. The president said Pakistan attaches great importance to its broad-based cooperation with the European Union and remains committed to implementing the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan. He highlighted Pakistan's cooperation with the EU in curbing irregular migration, noting that Pakistan continued to implement the EU Readmission Agreement and had readmitted more than 30,000 individuals over the years.
He said Pakistan remains committed to combating human trafficking and irregular migration through stronger legislation, institutional capacity, border controls and international cooperation.
Referring to the progress made in reducing irregular migration, the president noted that, according to EU figures, irregular migration from Pakistan reduced by 64% in the last eighteen months, making Pakistan the only country in the region to achieve such a reduction. He said this progress reflected Pakistan's sustained efforts and underlined the importance of expanding safe and legal avenues for migration. European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Raimundas Karoblis, Director, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Henrik Nielsen; and Cabinet Member of Commissioner Brunner, Grigorios Delavekouras accompanied the Commissioner. Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi; Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control, Muhammad Talal Chaudhry; Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla and former federal minister Naveed Qamar also attended the meeting.



MULTAN: Rescue personnel and railway staff engaged in relief operations after 14 coaches of the Karachi–Peshawar-bound Rehman Baba Express derailed near Sher Shah Railway Station at least four passengers were killed and 49 injured in the incident.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari talking to Mr Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, at Aiwan-e-Sadr

DPM expresses satisfaction over positive momentum in Pakistan-EU relations

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar discussed ways to strengthen Pakistan-European Union cooperation on migration and mobility with European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner. During a meeting here, the deputy prime minister expressed satisfaction over the positive momentum in Pakistan-EU relations, recalling recent engagements between the two sides, whereas the discussions focused on enhancing cooperation on migration and mobility, a key pillar of the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan (2019), a DPM's Office news release said.
DPM Ishaq Dar highlighted Pakistan's efforts to curb irregular migration and combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

We don't want to increase quantum of our external debt: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan will continue to "diversify its funding sources," Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said, hinting that his government could issue more Chinese yuan-based bonds and tap the Japanese market for samurai bond issuances. Aurangzeb spoke to Nikkei Asia on Monday on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which kicked off in Bangkok on the same day.
In mid-May, Pakistan issued its first panda bond worth 1.75 billion yuan ($261 million) as part of a 7.2 billion yuan program, with the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank providing partial guarantees. A panda bond is a yuan-denominated bond issued by a foreign entity to raise money in China's domestic bond market. Aurangzeb said the recent panda bond will not be a "one-time issuance" and that Pakistan intends to "keep going back and be a repeat issuer," given how China is the "second largest and deepest capital market in the world." Emerging economies such as Pakistan and Indonesia have tapped the panda bond market in a bid to expand their investor base and diversify funding sources. According to S&P Global, panda bond issuance reached roughly 160 billion yuan ($23.8 billion) in the first half of 2026, surging 68% year on year. Foreign issuers have increased, accounting for 50% of the pie compared to 39% last year. "We do not want to increase the quantum of our external debt," said Aurangzeb.

11 of Pakistan's 20 poorest districts located in Balochistan: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed that poverty alleviation, human resource development and improved social indicators must remain top national priorities to transform Pakistan into a sustainable and competitive economy.
Addressing an international conference on Pakistan's Vision for Inclusive and Resilient Economic Transformation, he said it was imperative to ensure that the benefits of development reached every citizen and region, with equitable access to economic opportunities.
He said poverty was not merely a lack of income but also limited access to education, healthcare, nutrition and decent employment.
Expressing concern over the rising poverty rate and weak social indicators in Pakistan, he stressed that addressing these fundamental challenges was essential for sustainable national development. Ahsan Iqbal said around 25 million children were out of school in Pakistan, while the rate of child stunting stood at approximately 40 per cent.
Without improvements in education, healthcare and nutrition, he said, Pakistan could not compete effectively in the global economy.
He termed early childhood development, quality education and investment in human resources fundamental to future economic growth.
The minister said the government's focus was not limited to assessing poverty levels; rather, its ultimate objective was to lift people out of poverty and enable them to achieve self-sufficiency.
He said the government was intensifying and accelerating its efforts while mobilising all relevant stakeholders to achieve this goal.
He said sustainable poverty alleviation required more than financial assistance or the provision of productive assets to deserving families, adding tey also needed skills, business capital, access to markets and reliable livelihood opportunities.
He emphasised women's economic empowerment, employment opportunities for young people and the role of universities in promoting the development of local communities.
Ahsan Iqbal said the government intended to link poverty alleviation initiatives with evidence-based policymaking, measurable outcomes and effective monitoring to ensure stable incomes, savings, improved nutrition and a better quality of life.
Calling for prosperous districts to become partners in the development of underdeveloped areas, the minister stressed promoting self-reliance and mutual support. He pointed out that 11 of Pakistan's 20 poorest districts were located in Balochistan.
He said resources and capabilities must be pooled to extend the benefits of development to every region and reduce regional inequalities. The minister urged conference participants to present actionable recommendations and a comprehensive roadmap for sustainably reducing poverty, scaling up effective development interventions.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti inaugurates 'Digital Portal' after chairing 11th board meeting of B-TEVTA

Pakistan committed to build inclusive, sustainable digital economy: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Regional telecom leaders on Tuesday unveiled a roadmap to promote digital inclusion across the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on high-speed internet, satellite networks, affordable smartphones and emerging technologies.
The three-day Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Symposium on Digital Transformation and Universal Service Fund (USF) opened in Islamabad.
The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) and USF Pakistan co-hosted it, in collaboration with the APT Secretariat.
The symposium brings together ministers, telecom regulators, industry executives and delegates from across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss ways to improve digital connectivity and modernise universal service policies.
Discussions focus on expanding high-speed fibre networks, using satellite technology, making smartphones more affordable, and developing local artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure in rural areas. Addressing the inaugural session as chief guest, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said Pakistan was committed to building an inclusive, secure and sustainable digital economy. She stressed that bridging the gap in internet usage was as important as expanding network coverage. Digital access had become an important driver of economic empowerment and social development, she added.
Under the APT Tokyo Statement 2025, Pakistan was updating its policies to improve high-speed fibre connectivity, make smartphones more affordable and develop local AI computing facilities, the minister said.
She also announced that the Universal Service Fund Pakistan had crossed $1 billion in contracted subsidies, reaching $1.054 billion. She described the milestone as a significant contribution to digital transformation and the expansion of connectivity across the country.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gailu called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Targeting innocent civilians blatant violation of Islamic teachings: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has expressed deep sorrow, condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the family of Bangladeshi Umrah pilgrim Mufti Nasrullah, who was martyred in a Houthi terrorist attack while in a state of Ahram.
He contacted injured Umrah pilgrims receiving treatment at various hospitals in Riyadh to inquire about their health and prayed for their speedy recovery.
Strongly condemning the Houthi terrorist attacks, Ashrafi said targeting the guests of Allah and innocent civilians was an act of brutality and a blatant violation of Islamic teachings and human values. He said there could be no justification for such barbaric crimes.
He expressed complete solidarity with the Saudi leadership and people in ensuring the security of the Haramain Sharifain, pilgrims and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
Ashrafi directed Mufti Hamza Shaheed-ul-Islam, head of the Islamic Centre of Bangladesh, to keep him continuously informed about the condition of the injured pilgrims and matters relating to the martyred Mufti Nasrullah, and to extend all possible assistance to the affected pilgrims and their families.
He prayed that Allah Almighty elevate the ranks of martyred Mufti Nasrullah, grant patience and fortitude to his family, bless all the injured with a speedy and complete recovery, and protect the Haramain Sharifain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the entire Muslim Ummah from all evil and discord.

Backs imposition of emergency in KP

Outcome of PTI govt's 13-year rule in KP "nothing but destruction": Vawda

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Senator Faisal Vawda said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's incumbent administrative setup could also be replaced if it failed to deliver, stressing that there was "no chance for failure" in the province.
Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the former PTI leader expressed hope that KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi would perform well, but said performance would ultimately determine whether he remained in the position.
"If Faisal Kundi does not perform, he will be replaced," Vawda said. "If they cannot perform, someone else will come, but success is certain. We have no chance for failure."
He said results under the new arrangement would start becoming visible within 60 days, while people would receive relief within 180 days.
"The public only cares about relief. Everything will now be based on performance," the senator said, adding that the new setup had come through the democratic system.
Vawda backed the imposition of emergency in KP, saying the decision had been taken in the interest of the province's people.
"The law-and-order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was alarming. The emergency had become inevitable," he said.
Taking aim at his former party, Vawda claimed the outcome of the PTI government's 13-year rule in KP was "nothing but destruction", accusing it of failing to deliver in education and health.
"You are at zero in education and health. You did nothing in 13 years," he said.
Vawda also alleged that the PTI had a "nexus with terrorists" and questioned who was responsible for what he described as a 195% increase in terrorism.
"Our soldiers are being martyred in terrorist incidents. We have to eliminate terrorism," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Vawda addressing a press conference.

Coordinated efforts essential to strengthen breast cancer awareness: Natalie

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Ms Natalie A. Baker, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States, has highlighted the importance of public awareness and early diagnosis in combating breast cancer, saying timely detection can significantly improve treatment outcomes and help save lives.
Urging women to seek timely medical advice and remain vigilant about warning signs, Ms Baker said awareness was the first step towards fighting breast cancer and preventing the disease from becoming life-threatening.
Talking to the media on the sidelines of a breast cancer awareness event at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), she said the disease affected women across the world, underscoring the need for sustained awareness campaigns and improved access to screening and healthcare services.
She expressed concern that young girls and women in Pakistan were also being affected by breast cancer, stressing the importance of educating people about its symptoms, risk factors and available treatment options.
Ms Baker said awareness initiatives played a vital role in encouraging women to recognize warning signs and consult healthcare professionals without delay.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Admiral Renato Rodrigues De Aguiar Freire, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of Brazil called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif

IMF raises Pakistan's inflation forecast to 9.9% in FY27

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): Pakistan's inflation rate is projected to rise to 9.9% in FY2026-27, while economic growth is forecast to remain at 3.5% in the current fiscal year, unchanged from the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) previous projection, according to the lender's World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released on Tuesday.
The IMF data showed that inflation is projected to increase to 9.9% in the current fiscal year from 7.1% in 2025-26. Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow by 3.5% in this fiscal year, down from 3.6% in 2025.
The country's current account balance remained unchanged in 2026, and the deficit is expected to reach 1% of GDP in the current fiscal year.
Meanwhile, the report forecasts the unemployment rate to stand at 6.5% in the current fiscal year, down from 6.9% in the previous fiscal year.
Meanwhile, the global economy will still manage to top 3% real GDP growth this year as strong AI investment offsets the energy shock from the war in the Middle East, but downside risks are mounting and more countries are being left behind and vulnerable to rising debt loads, the lender said in its report.
Despite a more protracted conflict that has kept oil prices above $100 a barrel, the IMF is forecasting 2026 global growth at 3.1%, a slight uptick from the 3.0% it predicted in July. For 2027, the IMF predicts 3.4% global growth, flat with the July forecast and up 0.2% from April. The slight improvement is largely due to continued strong investment in artificial intelligence infrastructure, prompting growth upgrades for key advanced economies building AI platforms.

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