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After NA, Senate approves K-P emergency resolution by majority vote amid opposition ruckus

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The National Assembly (NA) and Senate on Wednesday endorsed President Asif Ali Zardari's proclamation of emergency in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), passing resolutions by majority votes despite opposition lawmakers' objections to the imposition of emergency measures in the province.

The developments emerged after the federal government imposed emergency and governor's rule in K-P on October 11, suspending the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led provincial administration amid a dispute over the province's security situation and counter-terrorism measures. The government has defended the move, citing a deterioration in law and order and an alleged failure by the provincial administration to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts with federal authorities.

The NA session began under the chairmanship of Speaker Ayaz Sadiq as Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry presented the resolution before the House. During the proceedings, Chaudhry moved a separate motion seeking the suspension of question hour to allow the House to take up other parliamentary business. Opposition lawmakers opposed the motion, but it was adopted by a majority vote.

The Lower House later debated the emergency measures imposed in the province, with opposition lawmakers strongly opposing the Centre's decision and raising a hue and cry during the proceedings. However, the resolution was passed by a majority vote. The NA session was subsequently adjourned until 11am on Friday. Following the approval from NA, the Senate session was held under the chairmanship of Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani. During the proceedings, the Senate also approved a motion moved by Senator Shahadat Awan to defer the question-and-answer session scheduled for the day.

Speaking in the upper house, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said Rules 132 and 133, which govern ordinary resolutions moved by private members, did not apply to a resolution introduced under a constitutional requirement. He added that the seven-day notice requirement was not applicable in this case.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Kolokoltsev called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chairs the meeting of Secretaries Committee.

CM Bugti seeks administrative reforms to improve public service delivery

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said that the reorganization and reform of all government departments are essential to make the governance system in the province effective, ensure better utilization of public resources, and provide quality services to the people.

The government will take concrete measures to prevent unnecessary increases in public expenditure and align the administrative structure with public needs. He expressed these views while speaking at a review meeting of the Secretaries Committee on Wednesday. Performance reports of several departments were presented at the meeting, while the administrative structures, workforce, non-development expenditures, and delivery of public services by government departments were reviewed. The Chief Minister of Balochistan expressed concern over unnecessary recruitment and increases in non-development expenditures in various departments. He said that every penny of the resources collected through public taxes is a national trust, and the wastage of these resources cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. "These resources are held in trust for the ordinary, poor Baloch who shivers in the cold and swelters in the heat. The fundamental purpose of government departments' expenditures is to provide better facilities to the public," he said. He stated that a large portion of the province's available resources was being consumed by non-development expenditures, despite which the public was not receiving services of the required standard. Government departments must be transformed from recruitment factories into institutions that effectively fulfil their responsibilities. The government's responsibility is to create employment opportunities according to the needs of different sectors and the market, rather than increasing the financial burden through unnecessary and excessive recruitment in government departments.



QUETTA: Former chief minister and MPA Dr Abdul Malik Baloch expressing his views on point of order during the assembly session.

Balochistan govt taking practical steps to promote women's empowerment, social protection, development: Dr Rubaba

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on the Department of Women Development, said in her message on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women that rural women in Balochistan hold exceptional importance in the province's social, economic, and agricultural life. Their hard work plays a fundamental role in farming, livestock rearing, handicrafts, cottage industries, and meeting the economic needs of their families. However, a large portion of their economic contributions does not become visible in formal economic activities and statistical data.

She said that rural women must be recognized not merely as beneficiaries of the development process but as effective partners in economic production and decision-making.

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that rural women in Balochistan face numerous challenges in accessing education, healthcare, employment, financial resources, and modern technology. According to Pakistan's Seventh National Population and Housing Census 2023, the literacy rate among women in rural areas of Balochistan is only 26.59 percent, while the literacy rate among rural men is 44.16 percent. This gap clearly demonstrates the need for more coordinated measures to educate rural girls, ensure safe access to educational institutions, and improve women's literacy. She said that an educated and economically empowered rural woman not only improves her family's standard of living but also has a positive impact on the health, education, and economic future of coming generations. The Adviser for Women Development said that rural women in Balochistan lack neither hard work nor skills or entrepreneurial abilities. What is needed is to provide them with appropriate training, capital, and opportunities to market their products effectively.

The rural economy can be strengthened by aligning women's capabilities in sectors such as traditional handicrafts, carpet weaving, embroidery, livestock rearing, and agricultural product manufacturing with modern business requirements.

COAS reaffirms Pakistan's resolve to deepen longstanding relations with Russia

Minister of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation appreciates Pakistan's contributions to regional peace, stability

RAWALPINDI, (APP): Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Vladimir Kolokoltsev called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ here at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Wednesday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest and the regional security environment, with particular emphasis on strengthening bilateral security cooperation, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

They underscored the importance of closer institutional linkages and improved coordination between the security institutions of Pakistan and Russia. The COAS reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to deepen its longstanding relations with Russia and expand tangible cooperation in areas of shared interest, particularly in the security domain.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's contributions to regional peace and stability.

PM expresses satisfaction over positive momentum in Pak-Russia relations

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further deepen its friendly relations with the Russian Federation and making effective use of existing bilateral mechanisms to advance mutually beneficial cooperation.

The prime minister received Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Kolokoltsev, who is currently on an official visit to Pakistan, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed satisfaction over the positive momentum in Pakistan-Russia relations and emphasized the importance of building on this momentum to further strengthen bilateral cooperation. He underscored the need to expand cooperation across areas of mutual interest.

Peace essential for Balochistan's development: CM Bugti

Five suspected militants killed, four injured in Washuk Operation

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has commended security forces for an intelligence-based operation in Washuk district in which five suspected militants were reportedly killed and four others injured.

Reacting to the operation, the chief minister praised the security personnel involved and said the action reflected their preparedness and commitment to protecting citizens and maintaining stability in the province.

Bugti paid tribute to the security forces for their sacrifices in countering militant activities, saying their continued efforts were important for protecting lives and property and creating conditions conducive to peace.

He said militant groups would not be allowed to create fear among the population or obstruct development activities across Balochistan.

The chief minister reiterated the provincial government's support for ongoing counterterrorism operations and said sustained efforts were necessary to address security threats and strengthen stability. He emphasized that lasting peace was essential for economic activity, development and improved public welfare, adding that the people of Balochistan needed a secure environment in which employment and investment opportunities could expand.

Governor highlights role of sports in youth development

QUETTA, (APP): Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on Wednesday said that effective collaboration among relevant institutions, sports organizations, and the private sector is essential for the promotion of boxing and other sports.

He expressed these views while meeting a delegation of International Boxing Championship officials led by Abdul Hameed Sarbrah, President of the Pakistan Professional Boxing Association.

The delegation also included national boxers Musa Hazara, Abdul Aziz Khilji, and Khuda Bakhsh Lashari. The Governor said that the province holds all its international players and athletes in high regard, considering it a responsibility to encourage and appreciate them, Balochistan has produced numerous renowned and distinguished boxers who have brought fame to Pakistan and the province on the international stage, earning honors for both.

Political consensus essential to address country's security challenges: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Wednesday blamed the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) for the circumstances that led to the imposition of an emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), calling it a "political suicide attack" on the provincial government.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he said that the PTI leadership had played a key role in creating the current political and security situation by failing to cooperate with the federal government in the fight against terrorism. "Their responsible leadership knows, even if it does not admit it publicly, that the PTI itself carried out a political suicide attack on its KP government," he said.

Bilawal said the PTI should have presented constitutional, legal or political reasons if it opposed the federal government's decision. "If the president was not supposed to sign the summary, there should have been a reason for refusing it," he said. He added that neither President Asif Ali Zardari nor the PPP had received a convincing constitutional, legal or political justification for opposing the move. Bilawal said that when the summary for imposing an emergency was first sent to the president, the PPP had called for talks with the opposition, particularly the PTI, before invoking the constitutional provision. He said the PPP wanted the federal government's concerns about the KP government to be addressed through negotiations. The federal government had accused the provincial government of failing to cooperate adequately in the fight against terrorism. The PPP chairman said his party's representatives were part of the committee holding talks with the opposition. Based on past experience, he had hoped the negotiations would succeed. He said he had received encouraging reports that the talks were progressing and that the PTI might agree to some key proposals.



RAWALPINDI: Vladimir Kolokoltsev, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, calls on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ)

Pakistan, Oman reaffirm commitment to strengthen multi-sphere ties

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan and Oman on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation across a broad spectrum of fields, including trade, investment, connectivity, logistics, energy, food security, tourism, and technology.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed during the 8th session of the Pakistan-Oman Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Oman Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi here.

Addressing a joint press stakeout following the meeting, the two leaders told the media that a key outcome of the session was the strengthening of the institutional framework through the establishment and operationalisation of several joint working groups on trade and investment, agriculture, oil and gas, and labour and human resource development, with a view to ensuring regular engagement.

They welcomed closer engagement between the business communities of both countries and encouraged greater investment in special economic zones and free zones, besides agreeing to hold a business-to-business investment forum in Pakistan in the very near future.

The two leaders announced that later in the day, both countries would sign the protocol of the 8th session of the JMC, along with an agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and official passports. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and several bilateral agreements would be inked during the Omani foreign minister's visit, covering communication and technology, historical documentation, records and archives management, and media cooperation.

Acknowledging the valuable contribution of the Pakistani community in Oman, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation in labour mobility, vocational training, and human resource development, as well as to create new opportunities for skilled Pakistani professionals and workers.

The two leaders exchanged views on the evolving situation in the Gulf, underscoring the importance of restraint, de-escalation, dialogue, and diplomacy.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and the Foreign Minister of Oman, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, in a Joint Press Stakeout at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Thursday October 15, 2026

Reality of Gaza ceasefire

Let's make something clear from the outset: the so-called Trump Gaza plan, announced on Sept. 29, 2025, which led to the Oct. 10 ceasefire, created widespread hope that international diplomacy had finally prevailed to halt the violence.

Today, however, the reality on the ground tells a different story. Despite the overwhelming global support the plan received to end the violence, the evidence suggests that Israel utilized the agreement to navigate its military challenges in Gaza while preserving much of its control over the besieged territory.

The plan did not return Gaza to the days before the genocide. The intermittent Israeli violence of the past has become daily killing, while the pre-genocide siege has tightened into a suffocating blockade imposed on a population barely surviving amid the ruins of its cities and refugee camps.

Since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, 2025, Israeli forces have killed at least 1,471 Palestinians and wounded another 5,189, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. These figures exclude those who have died from disease, lack of adequate medical care, and other consequences of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe. In almost any other conflict, such numbers would be described as evidence of a continuing war. Yet in Gaza, they are recorded under the reassuring language of a ceasefire. Even more heartbreaking is that the victims include at least 327 killed and 547 wounded children.

Not a single hospital in Gaza is fully functional, according to a joint statement issued by more than 100 humanitarian and human rights groups. The morgues continue receiving new fatalities, alongside hundreds of bodies recovered from the rubble. An estimated 10,000 Palestinians remain buried beneath destroyed buildings. What kind of ceasefire forces Gaza's Health Ministry to maintain separate records for those killed during the genocide and those killed since the supposed cessation of hostilities? What kind of ceasefire allows bombing to resume without warning, vehicles carrying civilians to be struck, homes to collapse upon their inhabitants, and families to continue burying their children?

Even the humanitarian provisions of the agreement have remained largely unfulfilled. The plan envisaged aid deliveries on a scale of approximately 600 trucks daily. Yet a UN assessment found that UN-coordinated humanitarian shipments averaged fewer than 100 trucks per day during the agreement's first 172 days. Where is the heavy machinery needed to remove the rubble, recover the dead, and begin rebuilding what Israel has destroyed?

Speaking of rubble, Gaza now contains approximately 61 million tons of it—around 20 times the debris generated by all wars worldwide over the preceding 18 years, according to figures cited by humanitarian organizations. Even the ruins are closing in on Palestinians. Last month, 21 people, including 12 children, were killed when a damaged building collapsed in Gaza City.

Meanwhile, the space available for Palestinian life continues to shrink. Since the ceasefire began, Israeli military control has expanded from approximately 53 to 63% of Gaza (some estimates put the number at 70%), according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Despite the overwhelming international backing the plan received, its supposed guarantors have utterly failed to halt Israel's ongoing oppression or enforce compliance with the agreement's central provisions. Instead, much of the political discussion has focused on disarming Palestinian resistance, as though resistance itself were the original cause of colonialism, military occupation, siege, apartheid, and genocide.

While championed by the Trump administration and its allies as a definitive solution for peace, in practice, Israel used the ceasefire to regroup and achieve objectives it had previously struggled to reach. Under this arrangement, Palestinians are expected to refrain from armed actions, even as Israeli military operations, territorial expansion, and restrictions on essential supplies continue.

Without meaningful resistance to Israel's policies—whether by Palestinians or through sustained international political and legal pressure—the danger is that Israel will escalate its push for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza. This is why Gaza must remain at the center of international attention. Public mobilization, political pressure, legal accountability, and solidarity cannot be suspended simply because an agreement has been labeled a "ceasefire."

The international community must challenge the premise that the genocide has ended merely because the language used to describe Israel's actions has changed. A ceasefire without enforcement, accountability, or an end to occupation cannot become a substitute for Palestinian freedom.

Political & security conundrum

Saleem Qamar Butt

Over the past five years (2021–2026), Pakistan has witnessed a sharp resurgence in militant violence, civil unrest, and governance breakdowns. While security challenges span all four provinces and autonomous territories, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Balochistan remain the primary epicentres of violence.

Let's glance at the security landscape over the last five years. The operational withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan in mid-2021 triggered a major shift in regional dynamics, rejuvenating militant groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which resulted in a surge in militant violence (2021–2026). Security reports from organisations like the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) and CRSS show a steady year-on-year increase in violent attacks. Militant attacks across the country rose by over 30% annually in recent years, with 2025 recorded as one of the deadliest peaks in a decade, reporting over 3,300 militant incidents and over 1,020 law enforcement fatalities.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) consistently accounts for 50% to 60% of total terrorist incidents nationwide, driven largely by TTP operations and cross-border attacks. Districts like North/South Waziristan, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Kohat, Kurram, D.I. Khan, and Swat face persistent extortion, targeted killings, and ambushes on police and security checkpoints. While KPK faces high-volume asymmetrical attacks, Balochistan suffers from a deep-rooted ethno-nationalist insurgency (foreign-supported BLA, BLF) targeting critical infrastructure, state officials, non-Baloch workers, and foreign investments (e.g., CPEC projects). Despite tactical improvements in certain urban centres, lethal high-profile ambushes and enforced disappearance grievances remain severe.

In other parts of Pakistan, i.e., Sindh, Punjab, AJK, and GB, the situation is not rosy either. In Sindh, high crime rates, banditry (katcha area dacoits along the Indus), and targeted violence in Karachi persist. In Punjab, though relatively stable against terrorism, political instability, localised crime, and sectarian tension remain periodic challenges. As for AJK and GB, both regions have witnessed unprecedented socio-economic protests, anti-taxation demonstrations, and governance friction over rights and subsidies.

Now let's see why there is a push for Governor's Rule in KPK versus other regions. Despite severe security and governance crises across Balochistan and other provinces, political discourse at the federal level frequently circles back to imposing Governor's Rule or emergency measures specifically in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The factors behind this asymmetry include: first, political polarisation and opposition control. KPK is currently governed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the primary national opposition party, placing the provincial leadership in direct political opposition to the Coalition Federal Government in Islamabad. In contrast, Balochistan, Sindh, and Punjab are governed either by parties in the ruling federal coalition or by supportive alignments, significantly reducing political motivation for federal intervention in those regions. Second is direct institutional confrontation. Tensions between Islamabad and Peshawar frequently spill over into institutional standoffs. Issues regarding law enforcement funding, police autonomy, federal security operations, and public rhetoric by provincial leadership against federal policies create persistent political friction, which federal actors leverage when raising constitutional tools like Governor's Rule. The third reason is Balochistan's political consensus versus KPK's opposition stance. In Balochistan, despite severe security threats from separatist groups and ongoing human rights concerns, the provincial government operates in close alignment with federal security institutions and political coalitions. Because provincial and federal goals align on paper, political deadlock is minimised, rendering Governor's Rule politically unnecessary for federal authorities despite the gravity of the law-and-order situation on the ground.

And last but not least, the success of the popular PTI provincial government in seeking justice for incarcerated PTI founder and ousted former Prime Minister Imran Khan is perceived as an existential threat by the incumbent ruling elite.

Resolving the friction between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provincial government led by the PTI and the federal government requires moving away from zero-sum political brinkmanship towards structured, institution-based engagement. Because the standoff involves constitutional rights, national security, and financial distribution, a sustainable "way out" lies in a multi-pronged institutional framework. Political battles often spill into public standoffs when constitutional channels are bypassed. Re-engaging formal bodies is essential, such as the Council of Common Interests (CCI), the National Finance Commission (NFC), and mechanisms for net hydel profits; establishing a fully functional Joint Counter-Terrorism Apex Committee; institutionalising security coordination rather than politicising law and order; and de-escalating political agitation and threats of direct rule, as attempting to override a clear provincial electoral mandate deepens political instability. The KPK leadership must also distinguish between legitimate political protest and state governance. When direct communications break down, neutral or cross-party political facilitators play a critical role; senior politicians, parliamentary committees, and non-aligned political figures can help negotiate ground rules for peaceful political activity, prisoner access, and parliamentary decorum. And lastly, political reconciliation hinges on the release of PTI leadership, which should come about by letting the judiciary act independently and allowing state-to-province administrative relations to function without being held hostage by individual legal proceedings.

The law-and-order situation in Pakistan over the past five years reflects a complex mix of external security shocks and internal governance vulnerabilities. However, the federal emphasis on constitutional mechanisms like Governor's Rule in KPK—while overlooking comparable or distinct crises in Balochistan and other provinces—demonstrates that security concerns are heavily intertwined with partisan power dynamics in Islamabad. A cohesive national policy requires prioritising security and governance universally over selective political manoeuvring.

The writer is a retired senior army officer with experience in international relations and military diplomacy.

From poverty to prosperity

Nadir Gul Barech

In a village near Sahiwal, some years ago, I met a woman who had taken one of our interest-free loans, 30,000 or 40,000 rupees, and opened a small roadside hotel. By the time I met her, it had four branches. She is the exception, and I know it; most of our loans buy a goat or a sewing machine, and our evaluation of the loan programme found household income roughly doubling, to about 48,000 rupees a month. Her story says in one sentence what the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) exists to do. What it leaves out is the part I now think about most: the loan explains how she got out of poverty, and nothing in it explains how she has stayed out. That is the question PPAF is putting to the International Conference on Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth in Islamabad on 13 and 14 October, under the banner From Poverty to Prosperity.

The Pakistan Economic Survey, published in June, carried the first poverty estimate since 2018-19: the share of Pakistanis below the national poverty line rose from 21.9 per cent to 28.9 per cent, and to 36.2 per cent in the countryside. A poverty rate, though, is a still photograph of a moving crowd. Many of the 28.9 per cent had climbed out and come back. A household begins to earn, and then an illness comes into the house, or a flood, or a drought, and the gain becomes a zero-sum game: what the household built goes to the hospital or to the water. What PPAF has learnt in a quarter of a century is that a household has to be helped to earn and then helped to keep what it earns, and that these are different kinds of work.

The best evidence on the second kind comes from the National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP), which PPAF designed and the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety ran, co-financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Graduation is the programme's word for a household's exit from poverty, and three economists, in a study for the International Growth Centre (IGC), followed 6,886 households in five districts of Punjab and Sindh for four years. They scored each household on the poverty scorecard (PSC), the 0-to-100 score that the National Socio-Economic Registry assigns to every family from what it owns, how many it feeds, how many rooms it sleeps in, and how far its members have been to school. The scorecard threshold is 16.17, and at the 2025 follow-up, 84 per cent of the households were above it. The economists also asked, at the same follow-up, how many had reached 23, which they take as the mark of sustainable graduation. The answer was 57.7 per cent: two households in three in Punjab, one in three in Sindh, where about three households in ten had lost the very asset the programme gave them to the floods of 2022. Getting a household earning works; keeping it earning is the part of the work still unfinished.

The Ministry sets a harder test still, under which a household counts as graduated only when it scores above 32, the ceiling for support from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), and holds that score for three consecutive years. By the Ministry's count, just over 26,000 households have, in its words, crossed the poverty line under NPGP so far. The test is the right one, and the count says how far there is to go.

Getting a household earning is the part we know how to do. Three things work: to sit with the household, make a plan for its livelihood, and put the asset in its hands; to give a son or daughter of the house a trade; and the interest-free loan, which we have made 3.69 million times, 57 per cent of them to women, who repay more reliably than men. A goat or a sewing machine earns only where there is a market to sell into, so the step above the loan is the small rural firm. In Sindh and Balochistan, where PPAF works with the International Trade Centre on such enterprises with European Union money, the outcome survey found sales up 28 per cent and profits up 38 per cent, a woman-led goat farm in Tando Allahyar and a solar-powered onion dryer in Khuzdar among them. More than half of those enterprises are now registered with the Federal Board of Revenue or the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan; graduation, done properly, creates taxpayers. Each of the three gets a household out of poverty, and none of them, alone, keeps it out.

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund.

Pakistan's universities should form character by design

Dr Asghar Zaidi

Previously, I wrote in these columns that character is stamped on us, like the mark on a coin, by what we do again and again. Universities do much of that stamping, although they do it more by default than by design. They receive young Pakistanis at around eighteen, when habits are still soft and the brain is still maturing, and send them out as doctors, teachers, engineers, civil servants and business executives. So how should such character formation begin?

It begins with clarity about who we want to be. On a university campus, it must begin with those who lead, teach and serve, because students learn who to be by watching exemplars among their teachers. The habits students pick up from their teachers last a lifetime.

A decade of research at the Oxford Character Project frames character formation in three words, BE, KNOW and DO: who to be, what to know and what to do. Our universities usually start with DO: rules, codes and disciplinary committees. Yet experiments show "don't be a cheater" reduces cheating; "don't cheat" does not. The Oxford research points to BE as the starting point. Our own tradition has long done the same, joining taleem, instruction, with tarbiyat, the character formation of the person. The lesson is that a university that informs minds without forming persons has done only half its work.

Pakistan's 280+ universities and Degree Awarding Institutions, with nearly two million students, have given the country remarkable people, yet they form character more by default than by design. The 2017 tragedy at Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan remains a painful reminder that a campus can provide education and still fail at character formation.

Those who teach need it too: a 2023 Nature analysis placed Pakistan among large research-producing nations with the highest rates of retracted papers. Most are withdrawn because of misconduct, such as plagiarism or fabricated data: failings of character, not of intellect.

The Higher Education Commission has answered with courses, most recently Understanding of Holy Quran (Fehm-e-Quran) I and II, one credit hour each, compulsory for Muslim students since Fall 2025. These are welcome, but character is not delivered like content, one credit hour at a time. We can learn from Oxford's research, which names seven strategies that form character: habituation, practising virtue in small acts until it becomes second nature; reflection, looking back honestly on our experiences; exemplars, learning from people whose lives we admire; a shared language of virtue; moral reminders at the moment of decision; systems that make good conduct the easier path; and friendships in which we help each other grow. All seven begin with one decision: who we mean to be.

Abroad, America's Wake Forest University has used these seven strategies since 2017, helping more than 75 faculty build character into their courses.

At home, Lahore's Superior University has made "Leading with Character" its guiding philosophy, from top management to students.

The lesson: a university becomes what its people decide to become.

Who we mean to be deserves to be written down as a personal mission statement. Once written, a mission statement works as a personal constitution.

Like a nation's constitution, it sets the principles against which every decision is tested and serves as a compass when the road is unclear. Research on moral reminders shows how it helps: because we want to think well of ourselves, being reminded of our commitments makes wrongdoing much harder to justify, even in our own minds.

But any constitution is only as good as the way it is honoured.

A good personal mission statement must cover every role we play. A student is also a son or daughter; and a rector, a vice chancellor or professor is also a parent, a colleague and a mentor. The accounts officer who releases a scholarship on time teaches fairness as surely as any lecture. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught that each of us is a shepherd, responsible for our flock. Each of us, then, leads someone, and none of us is exempt from the character that leadership demands.

Because our roles compete for the same hours, a personal constitution must also set priorities: which role leads when two collide, and what we will not sacrifice for success. Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) recalled that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), leader of a whole community, served his family at home and went out to pray when the time came.

BE is only the first step.

KNOW asks us to understand ourselves under pressure, the people we serve, and where a judgement matters more than rules.

DO turns both into small daily acts: one act of courage, a commitment kept when it is inconvenient, a friend with permission to tell us the truth.

The Quran puts the test plainly: "Why do you say what you do not do?" (Surah al Saff 61:2).

Toxicity, deceit, exploitation and egoism are all around us, and it is tempting to withdraw and leave change to others.

Yet "Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves" (Surah al Ra'd 13:11). Imagine campuses designed for character, where vice-chancellors, professors, staff and students have each written down who they mean to be and what guides them, and then live it every day.

Such universities would send Pakistan not only graduates with degrees, but citizens with a decision-making framework. Our campuses will form character either way. Let us form it by design, one personal constitution at a time: written, understood and lived.

Dr Asghar Zaidi is Rector at Karachi School of Business & Leadership (KSBL); he can be contacted at s.m.asgharzaidi@gmail.com

Strait of Hormuz traffic plunges once again amid new wave of Houthi attacks

LONDON, (Agencies): Crude oil and petroleum exports from the Middle East sharply dropped over the past week as Iranian-backed Yemeni Houthi militias intensified their attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting regional shipping lanes.

Maritime transit in the region suffered drastically since the US and Israel's pre-emptive joint strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, followed by Tehran's effective closure of the vital waterway and a subsequent American naval blockade.

Attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz reached a new peak this year over the past week. At least 14 incidents of attacks, attempted strikes, and obstructions were recorded in and around the Strait of Hormuz on Oct. 5-12, while six ships were attacked on Monday alone, according to the UK Maritime Trade Operations and global maritime security sources.

Commercial vessel traffic via the strategic chokepoint fell to its lowest since July 22, affecting outward energy flows.

Oil, petroleum, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports from the Middle East plummeted in the wake of the war, and while there have been signs of partial recovery, intensifying security risks sparked concerns.

Houthis increased their attacks on Saudi Arabia, threatening transit through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

Vessel transits through Bab el-Mandeb, Hormuz hit new low

Middle Eastern crude oil, petroleum, and liquid chemical exports — including shipments from the Gulf of Oman and the Red Sea — fell from 21.1 million barrels per day on Oct. 8 to 6.7 million barrels on Oct. 11, 10.4 million barrels on Monday, and 8.3 million barrels on Tuesday, according to Kpler.

The weekly average of 17 million barrels remained below the pre-war volume of around 23.3 million barrels per day.

Only six commercial ships were able to transit the Strait of Hormuz on Monday, while previously 32 ships passed through on Oct. 8, 24 on Oct. 9, 11 on Oct. 10, and 12 on Oct. 11. Meanwhile, vessel transit through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait also dropped, with 35 vessels passing through on Oct. 8, 39 on Oct. 10, 46 on Oct. 11, and 32 on Monday.

The attempts by the Houthis to establish a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia to seize control of the Bab el-Mandeb corridor added a new volatile dimension to the wider conflict.

Large-scale supply disruptions across both the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait could pressure global energy supplies and market stability even further, analysts say.



BANGKOK: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaking at the IMF-World Bank annual meetings



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting Ambassador-designate of France, Mr. Jean-Noël Poirier, following the presentation of credentials at Aiwan-e-Sadr

Lebanese President, Iranian FM stress diplomatic solutions to regional conflicts

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Lebanese President Joseph Aoun received a phone call Wednesday from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss the situation in the region amid recent developments, the Lebanese presidency said.

In a statement, the presidency said both sides agreed on the need to support diplomatic solutions as the best means of ending conflicts in the region.

The call comes as regional tensions remain high, with Israel continuing attacks on Lebanon despite a US-sponsored framework agreement providing for its gradual withdrawal from Lebanese territory, while Iran and the US remain at odds over navigation through the strategic Strait of Hormuz amid heightened maritime tensions.

Australian premier, Jordan's king discuss strengthening defense, trade

CANBERRA, (Agencies): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Jordanian King Abdullah II discussed strengthening defense, trade, and climate cooperation during a meeting in the capital Canberra on Wednesday, according to a joint statement. The leaders welcomed closer defense ties, including training, technology, defense industry cooperation, joint operations and counterterrorism efforts, and condemned terrorism and violent extremism. They also discussed the situation in the Middle East, expressing concern over tensions and calling for de-escalation through diplomacy. Australia condemned Iranian attacks on Jordan and expressed solidarity with the country. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution in the Middle East, rejected attempts to annex the West Bank and the displacement of Palestinians, and called for full implementation of the Gaza Peace Plan and unhindered humanitarian aid delivery. They also reaffirmed support for Syria's unity and sovereignty and Lebanon's efforts to strengthen state authority, as well as condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia. In opening remarks at Parliament House, Albanese said "it's never been more important for countries to work together in the interests of international security," highlighting cooperation on defense and security, humanitarian efforts, resources, and energy.

Abdullah also pointed to military and intelligence affairs as areas for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

IMF chief warns growth alone can't bring US debt under control

BANGKOK, (Agencies): Economic growth alone will not bring US public debt under control, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Wednesday, urging additional measures to cut fiscal deficits. Speaking at the IMF-World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok, Georgieva said stronger growth could help improve public finances but would not deliver the necessary adjustment quickly enough.

She said US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent recognized that federal deficits and debt had become too high and needed to return to a more sustainable path.

US authorities, however, were relying heavily on strong economic growth to reduce those imbalances, she added.

Bessent has argued that sustained growth above 3%, combined with spending restraint, could lower the debt-to-gross domestic product ratio. The administration has pointed to artificial intelligence investment, manufacturing expansion and tax cuts as drivers of economic activity.

Georgieva's warning underscored the IMF's broader demand for governments to strengthen public finances as repeated shocks erode their capacities to respond to new crises.

In opening remarks published by the IMF, she said the global economy remained resilient despite frequent shocks and uncertainty, but that resilience was approaching its limits as energy and fiscal buffers were depleted.

Inflation also remained persistently high in many economies. She urged policymakers to increase revenues, rationalize spending and improve public financial management, while ensuring that assistance amid rising energy and food prices protected vulnerable people. Georgieva said the global outlook was being pulled in opposite directions by an energy supply shock stemming from the Middle East war and stronger demand associated with artificial intelligence.

Economies closely integrated into AI supply chains were generally performing better, while low-income countries and fragile states faced particularly severe pressures, especially those dependent on energy imports or excluded from the technology boom.



MEXICO CITY: Healthcare workers employed by the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) organized a national protest march demanding salary increases and addressing shortages of medical supplies in hospitals.

French president Macron acknowledges young people's concerns amid high school protests

PARIS, (Agencies): French President Emmanuel Macron has acknowledged the "legitimate anxieties" of young people amid nationwide high school protests, while condemning violence during demonstrations, government spokesperson Maud Bregeon said Wednesday.

Bregeon said Macron believed young people's concerns had been "politically exploited and transformed into urban violence."

The president denounced what he called "unacceptable scenes" of violence during the demonstrations, particularly on Tuesday, she said.

Macron has asked the government to provide "clear and concrete answers" in the coming weeks, including measures to protect teachers and an assessment of school buildings.

The government has assigned 2,000 of the 3,000 substitute teachers it had pledged to deploy, Bregeon said.

Education Minister Edouard Geffray said earlier Wednesday that more than one-third of the 3,000 substitute teachers had already been deployed to work with students.

The movement's demands include greater education spending and opposition to the Parcoursup university admissions platform.

Macron urged demonstrators to remain calm and respect people and property.

More than 6,800 people, overwhelmingly minors, have been detained since the movement began, according to Le Parisien.



Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq participating in a panel discussion at the World Health Summit 2026 in Berlin

Woman killed, 3 injured in failed Houthi missile launch

SANAA, (Agencies): A woman was killed and three others were injured Wednesday when a missile launched by Yemen's Houthi group malfunctioned and fell in the southwestern province of Taiz, local media reported.

Media said the missile fell after a failed launch attempt by the Houthis from Al-Shamayatayn.

TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, Urban Planning & Development Department ,Quetta Division Quetta invites the sealed tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2026, Government of Balochistan, amended up-to-date from the interested Contractors / Firm for the following works:

S.#	Name of Works.	E/cost
1.	CONST OF SEWERAGE LINE, SIDE DRAINS AND TUFF TILE IN DIFFERENT STREET OF BARECH COLONY AND ADJOINING AREA OF CHALO BAWARI QUETTA PSDP # 5399 (Z2026.1882) **TSE-2627101208783**	30,000,000
2.	CONSTRUCTION OF CATHOLIC GRAVEYARD GATE LYING TUFF TILE B/WALL PULL & ROAD. DSTRICT PISHIN (PSDP NO 3603 Z2025 .0220) **TSE-2627101208803**	19,800,000

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, 2014 amended up to date. **BASIC ELIGIBILITY:** The Firm/ Contractors must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering also renewed upto date in relevant Category. Firms (Single Entity) having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in the Category C-5 & 6 or above and the relevant Specialized code. The firm must register in Balochistan Revenue Authority and presence in active tax payer list (ATL) Valid Registration with Income Tax &Presence in Active Tax Payer List in FBR (ATL) Turnover at least of last three years. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Other Mandatory conditions and Detail Criteria mentioned in the Bidding Documents. **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single Stage-Two Envelope Procedure. **ISSUANCE:** The firms/contractors can also download the bidding documents from the BPPRA website at www.bppra.org.pk. The required tender processing of Rs.2500/- and 2000/-each above must be deposited in the government treasury under the head of account C-03870 through the Green Challan Form at the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP). **Last Date of bid submission**: The bidding Documents duly filled and attached with copies of supporting documents must be delivered in sealed envelopes by hand or through registered mail to the office of the Executive Engineer Urban Planning & Development Department Zarghoon Road Quetta on or before on 02/11/2026 at 9:00 am. **Tender opening**: All tenders will be opened on same day at the Office of the undersigned at 9:30 am. .**Address Place of Bids opening**: Office of the Executive Engineer Urban Planning & Development Department Zarghoon Road Quetta Bid Validity Period: Ninety (90) Days.

DPRQ/PRQ No.1893/14-10-2026

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German economy loses momentum as energy costs, shipping disruptions weigh

BERLIN, (Agencies): Germany's economy temporarily lost momentum in the third quarter but remains on a recovery path, with high energy costs and shipping disruptions weighing on activity, the Economy and Energy Ministry said Wednesday. In its October economic report, the ministry said growth likely slowed following a recovery in the first half as global stockpiling of energy-intensive goods eased and low water levels restricted inland shipping. Domestic demand is unlikely to provide much support in the near term as higher energy prices erode purchasing power, uncertainty persists and financing costs rise.

Production in the goods-producing sector increased 2% in August from July, adjusted for prices, calendar and seasonal effects. Construction output jumped 9.3%, partly reflecting the completion of a major energy infrastructure project, while industrial output rose 0.6%. However, industrial production averaged 1.4% below its second-quarter level in July and August, with energy-intensive industries particularly weak. Manufacturing orders fell 10.6% in August from the previous month, largely reflecting fluctuations in large contracts, including defense procurement. Excluding large orders, the decline was just 0.1%.

Nominal exports of goods and services dropped 2.7% in August, their second consecutive monthly decline, although they remained 6.9% above a year earlier. Despite weaker activity, business sentiment improved. The ifo business climate index rose for a fifth consecutive month in September to its highest level since May 2023, with companies assessing both current conditions and their outlook more favorably. Annual consumer inflation accelerated to 3.3% in September, driven by an almost 15% increase in energy prices. Core inflation, excluding food and energy, remained at 2.4%.



University students stage protest outside the Ministry of Education building in Tirana, Albania



In Barcelona, Spain, Catalan farmers gathered with their tractors to protest rising production costs, falling agricultural prices, and insufficient government support

France records 4% rise in women killed by partners or ex-partners in 2025

PARIS, (Agencies): The number of women killed by their current or former partners in France rose 4% in 2025, reaching 111 victims, according to figures released Wednesday by the Interior Ministry.

Police and gendarmerie recorded 136 violent deaths involving current or former partners last year, compared with 138 in 2024, a decrease of 1%, the ministry said in its annual study.

Of the victims, 25 were men, down 19% from the previous year. On average, one person died every three days in a case involving a current or former partner, according to the report.

Authorities also recorded 445 attempted homicides involving current or former partners in 2025, accounting for 10% of the 4,365 attempted homicides recorded nationwide.

The share was up from 9% in 2024, the study said. The northern department of Nord recorded the highest number of victims, with eight, followed by Bouches-du-Rhone with seven. Alpes-Maritimes and Herault each recorded five victims, while Aisne, Gironde and Marne each reported four. In France's overseas territories, Reunion recorded three victims, while French Guiana and New Caledonia each recorded two, according to the ministry.

President Zardari for enhanced Pak-Turkiye coordination to combat human smuggling

Says Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding relations with Turkiye, rooted in shared values, cultural affinities and mutual aspirations for peace and prosperity

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, Wednesday, called for further strengthening Pakistan-Turkiye relations with a focus on achieving the mutually agreed target of $5 billion in bilateral trade, expanding investment and enhancing cooperation in strategic and emerging technology sectors.

He was talking to Amna Baloch, Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Turkiye, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

While congratulating her on her appointment the president acknowledged her successful tenure as foreign secretary and said Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding relations with Turkiye, rooted in shared values, cultural affinities and mutual aspirations for peace and prosperity. He further emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation in energy, agriculture, livestock, mining, ship-breaking, information technology, defence industries and special economic zones.

He also called for closer collaboration between universities, greater people-to-people exchanges and the promotion of cultural ties and tourism, including through Turkiye's expertise in the sector.

The president asked the ambassador-designate to maintain close engagement with the Pakistani diaspora, students and businesses in Turkiye, ensuring effective consular outreach and timely assistance when needed.

He also stressed the importance of enhanced coordination and information-sharing between Pakistani and Turkish institutions to combat human smuggling. The president asked her to convey his warm regards to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan upon presenting her credentials and wished her success in her new assignment.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Ms Amna Baloch, Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Türkiye, at Aiwan-e-Sadr



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Gemstones sector.

Govt earmarks Rs12.75bn for six major infrastructure projects

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The government has allocated Rs12.75 billion under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2026-27 for six major infrastructure projects with a combined PC-I cost of Rs1.065 trillion. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the allocation comprises Rs9.60 billion in local funding and Rs3.15 billion in foreign assistance.

The projects include major highway and motorway schemes, tunnel-related infrastructure and land acquisition for road development.

The document shows that first-quarter releases for FY2026-27 totalled Rs199.4 million, while recorded utilisation stood at Rs53.48 million. Cumulative expenditure on the six projects up to June 2026 amounted to Rs505.698 million. The largest allocation of Rs5 billion has been earmarked for the relocation of the Karakoram Highway between Thakot and Raikot due to the construction of dams on the Indus River.

Country's security, survival more important than political interests: Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday urged the nation to stand with the state and armed forces in the fight against terrorism, saying Pakistan's security and survival must take priority over political interests.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), saying the party should not ignore its past actions while criticising the government.

He said the armed forces were making sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the provincial government must fully support their efforts. "Our relationship with Pakistan takes precedence over all other relationships," he said, adding that the country's security and survival were more important than political interests.

Khawaja Asif said terrorists had killed innocent people, including children, and stressed that all political parties must unite to defeat them.

Referring to negotiations between the government and the PTI, the defence minister said the government had shown flexibility to make the talks successful, but the process had failed to produce an agreement.

He claimed that some matters agreed upon during the negotiations were later challenged by the PTI leadership. He also alleged that a party leader who was in hiding had played a role in decisions related to the talks. Asif said the country should focus on fighting terrorism instead of making the release of a political leader the main issue.

Dialogue, mutual understanding essential to resolve political disputes: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD, (APP): National Assembly Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday held the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) responsible for the breakdown of talks with the government, saying negotiations should not have been abandoned.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he recalled that government representatives were seated in his chamber while opposition members were waiting in an adjoining room during the negotiations.

He said both sides had been hopeful of a positive outcome and expected an agreement to be signed. "Everyone was happy that things were moving towards improvement and that the agreement would be signed," he said.

Ayaz Sadiq recalled that when the opposition members came out, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Allama Nasir Abbas expressed regret over the failure of the talks.

He said Allama Nasir was disappointed that the negotiations had failed and that he had to leave with a heavy heart.

Other opposition leaders also left afterwards.

The speaker said he had urged the opposition not to close the door to negotiations and to return to the table. He recalled telling them that they could come back within five minutes.

He said several people present at the time, including Rana Sanaullah and other government representatives, could confirm that both sides had agreed to continue the talks.

Ayaz Sadiq added that opposition leaders had also agreed that dialogue should continue, but they faced difficulties in making decisions.

He said the opposition had entered politics with a public mandate and was expected to make its own decisions. However, consultations with other quarters had complicated the process.

The speaker stressed the need for transparency when discussing sensitive issues, particularly the facilities being provided to PTI founder Imran Khan in prison.

Responding to allegations that basic facilities were being denied to Imran Khan, Ayaz Sadiq said details of the food and other provisions available to him had already been shared with the relevant members. These included breakfast, lunch, a milkshake and other meals, he added.

He said discussions about prison facilities should be based on facts and accurate information rather than unverified claims.

Ayaz Sadiq urged political leaders to keep communication channels open despite their differences. He said dialogue and mutual understanding were essential to resolving political disputes and building consensus.

Editorial note: The intro directly blames PTI for the breakdown of talks, but the body provided does not explicitly quote Ayaz Sadiq making that accusation. For strict accuracy, the headline and intro should reflect his recorded remarks unless the original speech or transcript confirms the stronger claim.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Balochistan Bar Council meets Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan

PM expresses displeasure over slow progress on Gemstones Pilot Project

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed displeasure over the slow progress of the Gemstones Pilot Project and delays in implementing measures for the sector's development, directing that a time-bound action plan be prepared on a priority basis.

"Measures for the development of the gemstones and jewellery sector are a priority, and no delays will be tolerated," the prime minister said while chairing a meeting to review progress in the gemstone sector.

He stressed the need to develop a complete ecosystem for value addition, covering gemstone mining, cutting and polishing.

The country suffers annual losses worth billions of dollars due to substandard gemstone mining practices and smuggling, the prime minister said.

"Pakistan has been blessed by Almighty Allah with abundant natural resources," he said, directing that measures to increase exports by harnessing the country's extensive reserves of gemstones and minerals be prioritised.

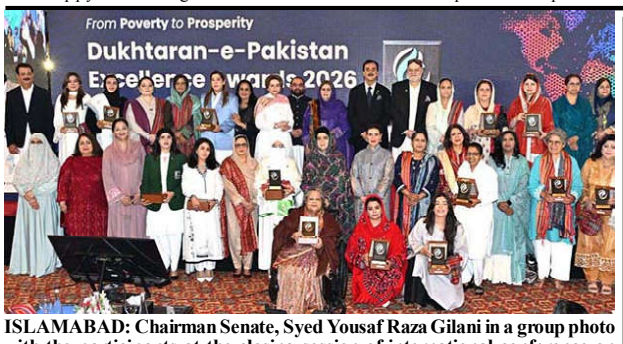
He stressed that work should be undertaken to establish Brand Pakistan for gemstones and jewellery, along the lines of other countries in the region.

He further directed that a roadmap be developed for the early establishment of Centres of Excellence for value addition.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed that all obstacles to pilot projects and the development of model gemstone mines be removed to ensure their early completion.

During the meeting, the prime minister received a detailed briefing on progress regarding the pilot project for gemstone exploration, cutting and polishing, value addition, and preparations for export.

He was informed that 4.8 kanals of land had been transferred for the Centre of Excellence project in Hussainabad, Skardu. The required funds were available, and construction would commence soon.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a group photo with the participants at the closing session of international conference on "Inclusive and Resilient Economic Empowerment and Growth"

Mohsin Naqvi, Russian Interior Minister agree to boost cooperation against organized crime

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev have agreed to strengthen cooperation between Pakistan and Russia in preventing organised crime, combating cybercrime and drug trafficking, and addressing illegal migration.

The two ministers held a meeting at the Ministry of Interior in Islamabad, followed by delegation-level talks on areas of mutual interest.

During the meeting, both sides decided to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation and information sharing to prevent organised crime. They also agreed to finalise agreements on extradition and the exchange of criminals and to implement the readmission agreement at the earliest.

The two countries agreed to enhance cooperation between Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force and relevant Russian agencies. They also decided that working groups from the interior ministries of both countries would visit each other soon to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

The talks also covered the dispatch of skilled Pakistani workers to Russia and measures to facilitate visa procedures for tourists and members of the business community. Both sides agreed to increase cooperation in preventing cybercrime and strengthen institutional links between Pakistan's National Police Academy and Russia's police academy. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the agreement on preventing organised crime would serve as an important milestone in promoting cooperation between the two countries. He said easing visa procedures would increase people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Russia.

Pakistan must align domestic production with int'l demand: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said achieving the $100 billion export target by 2035 was essential for Pakistan to break the cycle of economic dependency, ensure sustainable growth and strengthen its economic independence.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 39th International Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), themed "Mission $100 Billion: The National Race for Sustainable Export-led Prosperity," he said Pakistan must shift from consumption-driven growth to production- and export-led growth to avoid recurring economic crises.

"If Pakistan succeeds in exporting $100 billion by 2035, then we will reach the level of economic independence. But if we fail to do this, then we will never be able to break the cycle of dependency traps," he said.

The minister said a country unable to generate sufficient income to meet its needs had to rely on borrowing, which eventually constrained its decision-making, slowed development and left the aspirations of its youth vulnerable to recurring balance-of-payments crises. Comparing Pakistan's export performance with that of other countries, he said its goods exports stood at approximately $32 billion in calendar year 2024, compared with $47 billion for Bangladesh, $330 billion for Malaysia and $404 billion for Vietnam.

He said Pakistan's goods exports stood at around $6 billion in 1990, compared with $2.5 billion for Vietnam. By 2024, Vietnam's exports had surged to $404 billion, underscoring the need for Pakistan to reassess its economic choices and production strategy.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had repeatedly experienced a cycle in which economic growth increased imports, put pressure on the exchange rate and eventually necessitated restrictive measures to restore stability.

Any aggression against KSA to be viewed as threat to Pakistan: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Leaders of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Pakistan Ulema Council, Muttahida Jamiat Ahle Hadith, Muttahida Ulema Council, International Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Movement, Wifaq-ul-Madaris wal-Jamiat al-Diniya Pakistan, Ittehad-ul-Madaris Pakistan, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and various other religious and political organizations have strongly condemned Houthi missile and drone attacks targeting Makkah al Mukarramah, Madinah al Munawwarah, Umrah pilgrims, Saudi citizens, airports and other civilian infrastructure, describing them as blatant aggression against Islam, humanity, international law and universally recognized moral values. Addressing a press conference here Wednesday, Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi spoke alongside scholars, religious leaders, senior Muftis and political figures from different schools of thought

Those who engage in terrorism, kill innocent people and attack sacred places, they said, have no connection with any religion, school of thought or sect.



BANGKOK: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with representatives of S&P Global Ratings to discuss Pakistan's economic progress, sovereign credit outlook and reform priorities.

FCCP CJ, Balochistan Bar Council delegation discuss judicial reforms

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A six-member delegation of the Balochistan Bar Council met Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan on Wednesday and discussed judicial reforms, the rule of law and measures to improve the delivery of justice. During the meeting at the Federal Constitutional Court, the chief justice reaffirmed the court's constitutional mandate in ensuring constitutional interpretation through institutional expertise, upholding judicial supremacy and strengthening the rule of law. He said the court was committed to the timely and effective delivery of justice in accordance with constitutional principles.

The discussions covered the strengths and challenges of the existing judicial system, with both sides emphasizing the need for reforms to improve judicial performance, transparency and public confidence in the justice system.

The delegation also exchanged views with the chief justice on legal affairs, the functioning of the judicial system and measures to ensure effective delivery of justice. The delegation comprised Pakistan Bar Council member Munir Ahmed Khan Kakar, Vice Chairman; Jadain Dashti, Chairman of the Executive Committee; and Executive Committee members Ayaz Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Afzal Harifal, Najeebullah Kakar and Nadir Ali Chalghari. FCC Registrar Muhammad Hafeez Ullah Khan and Secretary Mazhar Javed Bhatti were also present at the meeting.

The delegation formally invited Chief Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan to visit the Balochistan Bar Council.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening cooperation between the judiciary and the legal community.



ISLAMABAD:Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, presents an award to a female participant during the International Conference

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