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CM Bugti vows to promote investment; economic growth through coastal resources

Balochistan to launch first commercial shrimp farming project

QUETTA, (VoM Report): An agreement has been signed between the Government of Balochistan and the House of Kasib Consortium for the establishment of Balochistan's first commercial shrimp farming project at Dam.

The agreement, reached through the efforts of the Balochistan Board of Investment and Trade, is being described as an important step towards promoting private investment in the province, developing the coastal economy, and creating new employment opportunities for the local population.

In the presence of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, House of Kasib Consortium Chief Executive Saad Zahid and Fisheries Department Secretary Tariq Qamar signed the agreement. Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan and Vice Chairman of the Balochistan Board of Investment and Trade Bilawal Khan Kakar were also present at the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the government was advancing projects under public-private partnerships to promote investment in Balochistan, ensure the effective utilisation of natural resources, and increase economic activities.

He said that the establishment of the province's first commercial shrimp farming project at Dam was an important part of this initiative, which would create new opportunities to utilise coastal resources and strengthen the local economy.

The Chief Minister said that Balochistan's extensive coastline held significant potential for economic development, aquaculture, and the promotion of exports. He said there was a need to transform these resources into productive activities through modern methods, private investment, and effective strategies.

He said the shrimp farming project was important in this regard because it would not only introduce a new commercial activity but also create opportunities for expanding the sector in the future.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the province's economic development could only be effective if its benefits reached the local population.



ISLAMABAD: The newly arrived Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti witnessing the signing ceremony of agreement between the Government of Balochistan and the House of Kasib Consortium for the establishment of Balochistan's first commercial shrimp farming project at Dam.

Balochistan capable to meet food requirements of entire country: Governor

QUETTA, (VoM Report): The Governor of Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, said that geographically, Balochistan is a highly suitable region for agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Agriculture and livestock farming are important sources of livelihood for the people of the province. Balochistan has the potential to meet the food requirements of the entire country.

He said that there is a need to develop the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors along modern scientific lines and provide local farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen with access to modern technology, resources and basic facilities. The fruits and food products of Pakistan, particularly those of Balochistan, are highly appreciated internationally for their quality, taste and natural characteristics. Therefore, it is essential to introduce these products to international markets to strengthen the local economy and create new employment opportunities. He expressed these views while inaugurating the first Balochistan Food Exhibition, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a United Nations agency, on the occasion of World Food Day. On the occasion, Head of the FAO Sub-Office Waleed Mehdi, BUITEMS University Vice Chancellor Dr. Khalid Hafeez, Agricultural College Principal Dr. Shahenshah Khan, agricultural experts were present. Addressing the participants of the International Food Day ceremony, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that it was an honour for him to be among the participants on two important occasions: the inauguration of the first Balochistan Food Exhibition 2026 and the celebration of World Food Day.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani presents Daughters of Pakistan Gender Excellence Award to Provincial Advisor for the Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi (Sitara-i-Imtiaz).

CJP Afridi welcomed as honorary bencher of the Inner Temple

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Society of the Inner Temple, United Kingdom, welcomed the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, as an Honorary Bencher at its Benchers' Night in London.

The occasion provided an opportunity to explore ways to strengthen institutional cooperation between the judicial and legal institutions of Pakistan and the United Kingdom through the exchange of knowledge, experience, and professional expertise.



Discussions focused on judicial capacity-building, particularly in case management and judgment writing, as well as opportunities to strengthen professional standards in legal ethics and advocacy. These areas offer scope for closer engagement and mutual learning between the two jurisdictions.

Continued institutional cooperation can support the sharing of best practices, enhance judicial skills, and promote legal professionalism. The Chief Justice's association with the Inner Temple as an Honorary Bencher provides a valuable link for advancing these exchanges and strengthening ties between the legal communities of Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Pakistan to chair World Bank, IMF boards in 2027 for first time since 1953

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema has been formally announced as the incoming Chair of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 2027, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Economic Affairs on Friday.

The announcement was made during the plenary session of the 2026 WBG-IMF Annual Meetings in Bangkok, marking Pakistan's return to the chairmanship for the first time since 1953. According to the statement, the forthcoming chairmanship will provide Pakistan an opportunity to contribute to global economic and development deliberations and facilitate constructive dialogue among member countries.

Following the plenary session, Cheema, who is also Pakistan's governor to the WBG, received a briefing from the WBG Corporate Secretariat on the responsibilities of the chairmanship. He also met Aradhana Kumar-Capoor, vice president and corporate secretary of the WBG, to discuss institutional support and coordination during Pakistan's term.

Cheema subsequently met Carlos Carvallo Spalding, governor of the Central Bank of Paraguay and outgoing chair of the Boards of Governors.

Dr. Rubaba honoured with Daughters of Pakistan Gender Excellence Award

ISLAMABAD, (VoM Report): Provincial Advisor for the Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi (Sitara-i-Imtiaz), was honoured with the Daughters of Pakistan Gender Excellence Award in the field of political leadership. Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani presented the award to her.

The award was presented during an international conference held on the theme of inclusive and sustainable economic empowerment and development. The conference aimed to recognize contributions to women's leadership, empowerment, effective governance and public service.

Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi received the award in recognition of her services in promoting women's development and empowering women economically and socially.

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.

Coordinated institutional measures necessary to empower women in Balochistan: Kiran Baloch

ISLAMABAD, (VoM Report): Chairperson of the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Kiran Baloch, participated in the 80th Board Meeting held at the headquarters of the NCSW in Islamabad.

On the occasion, Ms. Kiran Baloch said that protecting women's rights, promoting gender equality and providing women with equal opportunities for development are essential for building a just and prosperous society. She said that effective cooperation and a joint strategy between national and provincial institutions are urgently needed to promote women's social, economic and political development.

Kiran Baloch said that coordinated institutional measures are necessary in Balochistan to empower women, protect their rights and ensure their effective participation in the decision-making process.

Pakistan stands 'shoulder to shoulder' with KSA: PM

Strongly condemns recent escalation in Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday appreciating the remarkable progress in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations in recent years, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening existing institutional mechanisms to deepen and broaden bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

The prime minister, in a meeting with newly appointed Saudi Ambassador Dr. Rajeh Tami Albugamy, who called on him here, reaffirmed that Pakistan stood shoulder to shoulder with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

He strongly condemned the recent escalation in Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, which had resulted in the loss of precious lives and injuries to scores of innocent people, including Pakistani nationals.

He underlined that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had always stood by each other and that the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement and the Makkah Joint Defence Alliance marked historic milestones in their longstanding fraternal relations and reflected their shared commitment to regional peace and security.

Welcoming the ambassador to Pakistan, the prime minister congratulated him on assuming his new responsibilities and wished him success in his diplomatic assignment.

He thanked the Saudi leadership for its longstanding economic and financial support to Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also wished the ambassador every success in his assignment and assured him of Pakistan's full support and cooperation in further strengthening the longstanding fraternal ties between the two countries.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail addressing the participants of an event organised by FAO.

Pakistan ready to give befitting response to any aggressor: FO

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned the latest Houthi attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and reaffirmed its commitment to Saudi Arabia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, including under the Makkah Agreement for Joint Defence.

Addressing his weekly media briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Office Spokesperson Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan said Pakistan remained deeply concerned over the continuing attacks against the Kingdom.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the latest terrorist attack by the Houthi militia," the spokesperson said, extending condolences to the bereaved families and sympathies to the injured.

He said attacks on civilian populations and critical infrastructure were unacceptable and posed a grave threat to regional peace and security.

The spokesperson noted that on October 11, Pakistan joined Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey in a joint statement under the R4 group framework, condemning the Houthi attacks. The four countries expressed solidarity with Riyadh, supported its legitimate measures to protect its territory and population, and called for an immediate and unconditional end to the attacks. The spokesperson said a Pakistani national was killed and others were injured in the attack on Riyadh airport. He added that a Pakistani driver was killed in Yemen last week.

Pakistan, he said, is a member of the Makkah Agreement for Joint Defence and is fully on board. It will fulfil its obligations under the pact, and Saudi Arabia has the right to defend itself and its sovereignty. He said Pakistan is in full agreement with Saudi Arabia and Turkey on the agreement.

Asked about a possible military response under the agreement, the spokesperson said such matters fall within the domain of the security institutions. On the practical aspects of the pact, he said the ISPR and the headquarters established in Riyadh would be better placed to provide guidance.

On Yemen, he said Pakistan's position was consistent and clear: the conflict can only be resolved through dialogue. Pakistan wants regional disputes resolved peacefully.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of BCSW, Kiran Baloch, expresses her views in 80th Board Meeting of National Commission on the Status of Women.

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US underestimating strategic value of historic relationship

What Saudi Arabia can expect from the United States while under attack by Iran's allies is unclear today. The Saudi-Houthi conflict, which entered a period of relative calm after the April 2022 truce, erupted again in July, with Houthis recently striking what it describes as "sensitive sites" inside Riyadh while pressing its offensive along Yemen's Red Sea coast and deeper into the country's interior. The stakes are extremely high.

With the Strait of Hormuz already under intense pressure, the Houthis' new control over the Bab al-Mandab Strait threatens another vital artery of global commerce. The chokepoint is particularly important to Saudi Arabia because it provides maritime access between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, including a route for Saudi energy exports to markets in Europe and Asia that can bypass the Strait of Hormuz.

Yet as the fighting intensifies, Riyadh has found Washington unwilling to cross the line from providing intelligence and targeting assistance to conducting strikes of its own against the Houthis. The contrast with 1990–91 is stark. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and posed a direct threat to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members, the George H. W. Bush administration responded with overwhelming force, deploying more than half a million troops to Saudi Arabia and assembling an international coalition to drive Iraq's occupying forces from Kuwait.

Today, despite the close personal relationship between US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the White House has resisted Riyadh's calls for direct American military intervention, raising questions about the limits of Washington's security commitment to its Gulf ally. Rather than expanding the US role in the conflict, the Trump administration appears to be weighing the strategic and political costs of further escalation with Iran, including the potential economic repercussions and domestic political pressures that could intensify as the November midterm elections approach.

In this instance, the Trump administration seems to be prioritizing the protection of core American interests, particularly freedom of navigation, while leaving Saudi Arabia and its Yemeni allies to confront the Houthis. Yet Trump has faced mounting pressure from Riyadh to assume a more direct military role. After Salman urged him to authorize US strikes against the Houthis, Trump reportedly considered military options before ultimately deciding against direct US action, instead expanding intelligence and targeting support.

For Riyadh, the deeper significance of Washington's refusal may therefore lie in what the episode reveals about the limits of the US-Saudi partnership. The Saudi leadership has long regarded Washington as the Kingdom's ultimate external security partner, and Trump's decision not to intervene directly has fueled much anger in Saudi Arabia. It has also reinforced a widespread view in Saudi Arabia that the White House is underestimating the strategic value of a historic relationship whose foundations date back to the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency.

Nonetheless, even with no easy options at its disposal, Riyadh will have little choice but to act pragmatically in the face of continued attacks by the Houthis and other Iranian allies. The current hostilities between Houthis and Saudi Arabia are likely to reinforce Riyadh's longstanding efforts to diversify its international partnerships and reduce its dependence on Washington—a trend that was already well underway long before fighting with the Houthis resumed in July.

Yet Saudi policymakers also recognize the limits of that strategy. For all the uncertainties and shortcomings surrounding US security guarantees, there remains no credible substitute for Washington, as no other power in the world currently possesses both the military capabilities and willingness to assume the role the United States has long played as the GCC members' principal external security partner.

Ultimately, Saudi Arabia must realize the inherent risks of allowing its long-term security to rest indefinitely on the protection of an external guarantor. A more durable regional order would require the states of the Gulf and the broader Middle East to assume greater responsibility for their own security—anchored in mutual non-aggression agreements, confidence-building measures, and a shared commitment to preserving peace and stability in their immediate neighborhood.

As Trita Parsi has articulated, this vision calls for an inclusive, collectively governed regional security order that transcends rigid geopolitical blocs, moving beyond a system of externally backed alliances and deterrence toward durable regional institutions capable of managing and containing rivalries. Such a security order would include Iran as a full participant, while providing a pathway for Israel's inclusion contingent on an end to its illegal occupation of land outside its UN-recognized borders, alongside greater strategic autonomy for the GCC states.

At its core would be a framework bringing together Iran, Iraq, and the Gulf Arab monarchies through mechanisms for communication during times of crisis, military deconfliction, conflict prevention, mediation, arms control, confidence-building, and cooperation on shared challenges ranging from water scarcity and climate change to economic development. Under such an arrangement, the United States would remain a close diplomatic and economic partner of Saudi Arabia and the five other GCC members, providing security assistance when collectively requested by the regional actors, but would no longer serve as their permanent military guarantor. To be sure, the emergence of this order would not erase Saudi Arabia's security concerns regarding Iran or the Houthis. Nor would it eliminate the rivalries and mistrust that continue to shape the geopolitically complicated Middle East. It could, however, create the institutional mechanisms needed to contain tensions before they spiral out of control.

The Afghan chessboard - competition and challenges

INAM UL HAQUE

Last week we mentioned that in Afghanistan the 'Great Game' continues with changed players. The US would like to keep its engagement with the ruling clique – willingly or unwillingly – due to Washington's geostrategic interests in the region including counterterrorism, its ongoing competition with China and Russia, and, most of all, Afghanistan's proximity to Iran, China, Russia, Central Asia and a nuclear Pakistan. Pashtun IEA, reportedly, has been trying to be in the US good books again, irrespective of its propaganda.

Washington, on the other hand, has a history with the non-Pashtun Northern Alliance (NA) and other groups, and remained supportive of Afghanistan's pro-Western First Republic (2001-2021) during decades of Afghan nation-building. These avidly anti-Taliban Afghans may be down but are not out. Resistance by Afghan opposition to the IEA's obscurantist rule is intensifying in the non-Pashtun north, as mentioned previously.

IEA's recalcitrance on issues like human rights, women right to education and work, inclusivity in the government, and, more significantly, terrorism is not easily ignorable by the West Plus, even if ideological divergence is put aside. Deep-seated nexus among Al Qaeda, TTP and IEA and their overt jihadism keep the chances of another 9/11-type catalyst alive. In that event, the US re-focus on Afghanistan, with or without European Allies, cannot be ruled, to nudge or participate in regime change.

Short of that catalyst, the US would ensure a pliant IEA using leverages like NGO-level engagement, cash subsidies, diplomatic isolation, non-recognition, etc, but would otherwise leave Taliban alone. In West Plus's assessment (correctly), there is no viable alternative to the IEA at present. Afghan opposition gaining enough strength to challenge IEA militarily would be long drawn. Hence, the West Plus would keep nudging IEA towards self-reform and in-house change.

Russia has been sending mixed signals on Afghanistan using its regional framework like the Moscow Format. Russian motivation for engagement ostensibly stems from keeping Afghanistan-generated terrorism and narcotics trade in check; regaining lost geostrategic foothold in Afghanistan; denying space to the US/West; protecting its soft underbelly in Central Asia; exploiting Afghanistan's mineral riches; and presumably avenging the loss of Soviet Union, consequent to the Pakistan/West-supported Taliban jihad (1979-89).

Moscow has significantly ramped up its diplomatic and military engagement with Kabul. It is the first and only country to recognise the Afghan regime in July 2025. Militarily, both sides have signed a military-technical cooperation agreement to repair and restore Afghanistan's Soviet-era military hardware. Russia sees IEA indispensable in suppressing the IS-K, which is responsible for a deadly attack in Crocus city hall, Krasnogorsk (2024). Foreign Minister Lavrov, during Moscow Format consultations, committed to provide technical and intelligence support to enhance IEA's CT capabilities. Russia has repeatedly commended IEA for controlling narcotics trade from Afghanistan, and its ability to reduce opiate production by 90% since 2022. Most importantly, Moscow has issued strict warnings against Western military return to the region. Lavrov, on October 5, during Moscow Format, called 'categorically unacceptable' any US/NATO military deployment in Afghanistan, or in Central Asian countries. This ostensibly blocks any US move to reclaim or return to Bagram Air Base.

Diplomatically, Moscow has proposed reintegrating Afghanistan into SCO via a specialised contact group. Russian presidential envoy Zamir Kabulov offered to mediate between Islamabad and Kabul as an 'independent mediator' to de-escalate tensions. Other projects between Russia and Afghanistan include establishment of a dedicated trade working group to prioritise infrastructure development and jointly explore transport and energy connectivity to link Afghanistan with Central and South Asia.

Moscow's strategic motivation seems multi-layered. In CT, a softer approach secures Russia's soft Central Asian underbelly and southern flank against terrorism. Diplomatic and economic engagement enables Moscow to prevent Taliban regime from eventually tilting towards Washington, which Taliban deeply desire, the US willing. In an ostensible break with the US under Trump, India too rides the Russian bandwagon in its own competition with Pakistan. Indian manoeuvre to reduce Pakistan's space in Afghanistan may also be Russia's 'peripheral' interest, under its broader alignment with New Delhi and Modi. However, the Russia-India-Afghanistan Combine works under different geostrategic compulsions.

Russia leverages these trilateral ties against Washington; India plays to contain a resurgent China and keep Pakistan under pressure, besides protecting its Chabahar investment and its logistics for its base in Tajikistan; whereas Afghanistan wants diplomatic and economic space, both from India and Russia, and invite the US Plus's engagement in the process.

Although, New Delhi and Moscow see Taliban with weary eyes.

Regionally, the Sunni Gulf and Saudi Arabia compete for influence on the Afghan real estate, also under different motivations. Gulf and KSA want to limit Iranian influence; some in the oil-rich Gulf want to put Pakistan under pressure through insurgency-like situation in Balochistan; Iran vies for influence under its Shia credentials in Hazarajat, for example; whereas Turkey supports Turkic speaking Northern Afghanistan, especially the Uzbek enclave. Neighbouring Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan stand for respective ethnic minorities in the Northern Afghanistan.

China sees engagement with a recalcitrant Kabul, worthy of strategic payoff by: a) keeping the Uighur militancy by ETIM under check through IEA and pacifying its Muslim Turkestan (Xinjiang); b) helping stability along Pakistan's Western border to allow Islamabad greater attention towards the Indian border; c) protecting CPEC, its ambitious BRI's pilot project; and d) positioning itself to exploit Afghanistan's mineral riches beyond Aynak cooper mines.

In all this jockeying for power, IEA, even if under pressure, remains an attractive partner. Countries are induced to ignore Kabul's human rights record and political repression, for given reasons. IEA presently seems militarily and politically entrenched; however, its future consolidation and sustainment would largely depend upon situation in Northern Afghanistan and Kabul's relations with Islamabad. The Afghan North is in turmoil; and in the mid to long-term, the Pashtun South may join it, driven by economic desperation. The mute noise of discontent is already there, as reports after reports validate the increasing poverty under IEA rule across Afghanistan. That noise can become a crescendo. One will not put a timeline on it, as the trigger may be one terrorist attack, not even as spectacular as 9/11. So, IEA makes the next move on the chessboard. Meanwhile, Islamabad needs to be aware of the Indian money, Israeli technology and Afghan manpower arrayed against it.

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The Moscow test

DR. GUL.I.AYESHA BHATTI

The eighth Moscow Format consultations on Afghanistan concluded on October 5 without a joint communiqué. The immediate disagreement was between Pakistan and the Taliban over the language on terrorism. Russian envoy Zamir Kabulov admitted that participants could not agree on the final wording. Yet the disagreement revealed something more important: Afghanistan remains one of the region's most difficult security questions, with neighbouring states viewing the Taliban government through different lenses.

For Pakistan, the concern is explicit. Islamabad maintains that militant organisations operating from Afghan territory continue to threaten its security. At the Moscow meeting, Pakistan reiterated that terrorism remained at the centre of Afghanistan's problems. The Taliban have consistently rejected accusations that Afghan territory is being used to support attacks against Pakistan.

However, the problem stretches beyond this dispute.

The Taliban's relationship with militant organisations remains a complicated feature of Afghanistan's post-2021 security environment. For ordinary Afghans, this means apprehension and dread: never knowing which group's conflict might spill into their towns or whose interests might override their hopes for peace. The Taliban have fought Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), and Russia has acknowledged their efforts. Yet international monitoring continues to report the presence of other militant organisations, including Al-Qaeda, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and Jaysh al-Adl.

This raises a fundamental question about the Taliban's counterterrorism policy: does their failure to confront certain militant organisations reflect unwillingness, a tactical choice to tolerate groups whose interests overlap with their own, or an inability to control Afghanistan's fragmented militant landscape? Whatever the explanation, their continued presence concerns Afghanistan's neighbours.

Kabul's relationships with militant organisations develop their own organisational interests, networks and financing. Once they gain sufficient autonomy, controlling them becomes harder. The concern is not simply what these organisations are doing today, but whether they could eventually threaten the authority that has allowed them space to operate.

The narcotics question presents another reason for caution.

On October 1, Uzbek authorities intercepted a vehicle entering from Afghanistan at the Ayritom border crossing in Surxondaryo and seized more than 52 kilograms of narcotics. The seizure was reported on October 3, two days before the Moscow consultations. At the October 5 meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov praised the Taliban for combating narcotics and highlighted the substantial decline in Afghan opium production since 2022.

These developments are not necessarily contradictory. A decline in cultivation or production does not mean trafficking has disappeared. Existing stocks, trafficking networks and shifting production patterns can sustain cross-border flows. The Uzbek seizure illustrates why Afghanistan's narcotics problem cannot be assessed solely through production figures or official declarations.

This is where Russia's Afghan policy requires careful consideration.

Moscow has legitimate security interests in Afghanistan. It has moved from pragmatic engagement with the Taliban to formal recognition of their government in 2025 and increasingly close political and security cooperation. But engagement with Kabul must not become strategic tunnel vision.

Russia's growing concentration on the Taliban risks narrowing its relationships with other Afghan constituencies, particularly non-Pashtun political and social forces in the north and elements associated with the former republican order. Considerable resistance to the Taliban's Kabul-based rule persists among these constituencies. Afghanistan's northern politics are closely connected to Tajikistan's and Uzbekistan's security concerns. Instability does not necessarily stop at the Amu Darya. Ethnic, political, economic and security linkages connect northern Afghanistan with Central Asia, while militant movements and narcotics networks can cross borders.

The Taliban are not Russia's only Afghan interlocutors of strategic relevance. A policy centred overwhelmingly on Kabul could reduce Russia's visibility among northern constituencies precisely when instability there could threaten its Central Asian security interests.

Russia's military-technical cooperation with Kabul makes this question more significant. Moscow and the Taliban signed a military-technical cooperation agreement in May 2026, although its full scope remains undisclosed. Russia may have sound reasons for strengthening Kabul's capacity to confront organisations such as IS-K. But military cooperation carries risks that diplomatic and economic engagement do not. As military capabilities flow into Afghanistan, questions of end-use, regional stability and unintended consequences become more important.

This is particularly important while Pakistan and Afghanistan remain engaged in a serious security confrontation. Over the past two decades, Pakistan-Russia relations have moved beyond Cold War mistrust towards a pragmatic partnership, built through sustained diplomacy and mutual accommodation. Cooperation in counterterrorism, defence, energy, trade, education and regional diplomacy reflects this progress.

This hard-earned rapprochement should not become a casualty of the Afghan question. Russia's strategically significant partnership with Pakistan should not be sacrificed for the tactical necessities of engagement with the Taliban. Afghanistan should remain an area of policy coordination, not become a fault line that reverses two decades of progress in Pakistan-Russia relations.

Afghanistan is unlikely to become a simple problem. The Taliban may remain the unavoidable authority in Kabul, but their record demands caution, verification and diversified regional engagement.

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After the K-P emergency: rethinking confrontation

DURDANA NAJAM

With the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, PTI has lost the one provincial government through which it could still translate its public support into administrative decisions. For its supporters, this is another painful setback. For the party's leadership, it should also be an occasion to reflect on where its political strategy is taking it.

Before the intervention, there was at least an opportunity for dialogue. An important disagreement concerned counterterrorism policy. PTI wanted the K-P government to have a meaningful role in shaping the approach to militancy in the province. The federal authorities wanted assurances about cooperation in combating terrorism. Access to Imran Khan was another unresolved issue. The discussions ended without an agreement.

It is understandable that a party should hold firmly to a position it considers important. But political leadership also involves deciding how to advance that position when agreement proves difficult. Could some progress have been secured while keeping the remaining questions open? Was there room for an arrangement that preserved the provincial government's ability to function and allowed discussion on security policy to continue?

We cannot know that a different approach would have prevented the intervention. We can, however, ask whether permanent confrontation has helped PTI preserve its political strength or gradually deprived it of the means to use that strength. This question deserves a thoughtful answer because the attachment of millions of Pakistanis to Imran Khan is real. His popularity has survived imprisonment, restrictions and repeated setbacks. Yet the party's responsibility extends beyond demonstrating that its leader remains popular. People also place their trust in a political party because they hope it will make their lives easier.

For a family struggling to pay for medicine, the value of a provincial government lies partly in whether the public hospital works. For parents, it lies in the school their children attend. For a young person, it may lie in the possibility of finding employment. These expectations give political power its purpose. Losing the ability to meet them is a substantial loss, even when public sympathy for the party remains intact.

PTI's experience since 2022 needs to be considered in this light. After losing federal office, it had the option of becoming an organised parliamentary opposition. Its withdrawal from the National Assembly, followed by the dissolution of the Punjab and K-P assemblies in January 2023, reflected the belief that pressure would bring early national elections. That expectation was not fulfilled.

Those decisions may have been taken in the sincere conviction that they would restore the party's mandate. Looking back, however, it is difficult to overlook how much institutional space was surrendered. PTI retained a substantial following while losing opportunities to govern, scrutinise decisions and remain involved in the everyday business of the state.

There is a human difficulty here too. Once supporters have endured hardship for a cause, leaders can find it harder to recommend a compromise. They worry that an incomplete settlement will disappoint those who have sacrificed so much. But this is precisely when leadership matters. Someone has to explain why a limited gain may be worth securing, why a pause can be useful and why continuing within an imperfect system may offer more possibilities than withdrawing from it.

Pakistan's economic condition makes that judgment especially urgent. The World Bank estimates that Pakistan accounts for about 48% of those living below the $3-a-day extreme-poverty line in its Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan grouping. Nearly every second extremely poor person in this region lives in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has described economic stabilisation as "stunted and borrowed". His warning concerns the country's capacity to grow and provide opportunities in the years ahead.

Given these circumstances, one would hope that political energies would increasingly turn towards finding a workable way forward.

The years spent in confrontation are also years in which children leave school, young people remain unemployed and households fall further into debt.

Other societies have faced the difficult task of moving beyond entrenched hostility. In South Africa, the ANC entered negotiations with the apartheid government despite a history of profound injustice. Agreements concerning prisoners, returning exiles and political participation helped make further progress possible. The Pretoria Minute also recorded the suspension of ANC armed action. Cooperation developed through practical commitments while deep disagreements remained.

The circumstances were very different, but the lesson is relevant: opponents must eventually allow each other room to negotiate. Some willingness to put aside hatred is necessary before a shared political future can be built.

PTI's repeated reliance on confrontation also raises a question about political training within the party.

Are its workers being prepared to remain disciplined under provocation, and are they encouraged to see negotiation as a legitimate part of political struggle? Without that preparation, anger can become difficult to contain, and compromise difficult to explain.

Martin Luther King Jr understood this challenge. In his Letter from Birmingham Jail, written in April 1963, to eight white Alabama clergymen who had criticised the civil rights demonstrations, King explained how participants were trained for nonviolent action and asked to consider whether they could endure abuse without retaliating. For Pakistani parties, the lesson is that leadership must cultivate restraint and prepare supporters for the negotiations through which political progress becomes possible.

None of this requires PTI to abandon its principles or follow the accommodations through which other parties have compromised civilian independence. It requires a strategy that keeps its supporters represented and its capacity for public service alive.

The loss of the K-P government makes this discussion painful, but necessary. PTI has shown that it can sustain loyalty through adversity. It now needs to show how that loyalty can be turned into lasting political influence and practical relief. Its supporters deserve a future they can help build, alongside a cause they are asked to defend.

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Iran mulls tactical shift in Hormuz attacks before US midterm polls

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iran is using new tactics to target ships in the Strait of Hormuz to maintain high oil prices and influence the U.S. midterm elections, two senior Iranian officials told media.

Tehran has tried to exert control over the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Israel launched strikes against Iran on Feb. 28. It has restricted passage through the waterway, which carried about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas trade before the war, in an effort to gain leverage over Washington.

Its threats and attacks have severely curtailed traffic through the strait, driving up oil prices, though some oil has continued to transit.

The two officials declined to provide details of the new strategy, but one said that Iran had started using different offensive tactics against vessels it considered in violation of its restrictions about 10 days ago, adding that this had led to an increase in attacks on such ships.

The strategy included a change in the type as well as the pace of attacks, with one goal being to influence the outcome of the U.S. vote, they said.

"The aim is to frustrate efforts by the United States and its allies to bring down global oil prices," one of the two officials said.

The decision to adopt the new strategy had been taken at the highest levels of Iran's leadership and was fully coordinated across the country's ruling system, the officials said.

Iran using spotters

A U.S. military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that Iran had changed tactics in one significant way: after the U.S. destroyed much of Iran's radar capabilities, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had started using unarmed spotters in small boats to identify potential targets, including U.S. naval vessels, the official said.

Last week, in a previously unreported incident, the U.S. military determined that Iranian spotters were operating from a dhow, calling in targets to the IRGC, the official said.

U.S. forces confronted the vessel, told its occupants to abandon ship and then destroyed it. There were no casualties, the U.S. official said.

Unwilling to risk its remaining fast boats, Iran had been unable to prevent a ramp-up in oil exports through the strait, the official said, particularly after U.S. strikes devastated its navy.

The war – and its $3 billion monthly price tag – has become a key issue on the U.S. campaign trail for November's midterm elections, which will decide control of Congress.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been weighing next steps against Iran, but has said he will not attack again before the vote.

The U.S. has meanwhile been pressing its own naval blockade of Iranian ports and extending sanctions as it tries to pile economic pressure on Tehran to reach a deal to end the conflict.

The standoff over Hormuz has left global energy markets exposed to further disruption, with the threat of attacks and high shipping and insurance costs complicating efforts to restore normal traffic.



NEW DELHI: Neha Bora, National President of the All India Students' Association (AISA), reacts as she is detained by police during a protest against alleged assault on female protestors and journalists by Delhi Police and demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.



BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul talking to media during an event.

Germany says Trump's 'not a good guy' remark on Zelenskyy is election rhetoric

BERLIN, (Agencies): German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul on Friday played down US President Donald Trump's latest criticism of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, saying the remarks did not signal weaker US support for Ukraine. "The current statements by the American president should certainly be viewed within the context of the final phase of the election campaign in the US," he told a press conference in Berlin. "I believe we must focus on the core of what the US continues to provide — namely, support for Ukraine, in coordination with us."

Trump sharply criticized Zelenskyy on Thursday over Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil refineries, arguing that the attacks were driving up global energy prices. He also questioned Zelenskyy's leadership and willingness to negotiate, saying, "Zelenskyy is not a good guy for us to deal with."

US reportedly weighs dropping 'Mother of All Bombs' on Iran

WASHINGTON, (Agencies0; The U.S. is considering using its largest non-nuclear bomb against Iran if President Donald Trump revives the dormant war, CNN reported Thursday.

The military plans to use the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb, nicknamed the "Mother Of All Bombs," to target Iranian energy infrastructure and nuclear sites, the news outlet reported, quoting officials familiar with the matter.

Trump seeks to boost his low approval ratings ahead of November midterm elections, with polls showing the unpopular war in Iran and resulting fuel and other price increases are hurting his Republican Party.

Diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, which erupted with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran in February, have stalled since the summer.

But officials doubt the bomb's efficacy if deployed, particularly its ability to destroy suspected underground nuclear sites in the Islamic republic. "The MOAB is a massive information operations weapon that is effective for large-area clearance but not much else," a source familiar with the plans told CNN. "It is not designed as a deep penetration warhead."

The U.S. and Israel said the war was necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons – a goal Tehran has long denied pursuing. Concerns also exist about potential civilian casualties from such a large weapon. Washington has in recent weeks dialed back military operations in favor of economic pressure.

Modi faces Gen Z revolt as anger spills onto India's streets

NEW DELHI, (Agencies): Youth-led protests are mounting pressure on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as frustration over unemployment, alleged electoral manipulation and unfulfilled promises fuels demonstrations across the country.

Despite the deployment of tens of thousands of security personnel, young protesters scaled barricades, chanted anti-government slogans and clashed with police during demonstrations in New Delhi and elsewhere last week.

"Long live the revolution," one protester shouted before police bundled him into a bus.

The independent Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) says street protests in India this year are on course to reach their highest level in a decade.

Analysts say the unrest, coupled with renewed opposition activity, represents Modi's most serious political challenge since he took office in 2014.

"The nation has suddenly found its voice," said activist Yogendra Yadav, who has played a leading role in the demonstrations.

"I would not say this is the beginning of the end of the Modi regime, but this definitely is the beginning of a downward spiral."

Modi's government and his Bharatiya Janata Party declined to comment.

Anger over elections and governance

The latest demonstrations have centered on demands for the resignation of Election Commission chief Gyanesh Kumar over a voter-roll revision that opposition parties and activists allege favors the BJP and has helped it win recent state elections.

The government, the BJP and the Election Commission deny the accusations, with the ruling party attributing its electoral success to Modi's popularity and economic growth.

But the protests reflect broader dissatisfaction with the government, including frustration over unemployment, examination paper leaks, crimes against women and the influence of wealthy businessmen alleged to have close ties to Modi.

Many young Indians also accuse the government of prioritizing Hindu nationalist politics over jobs and economic opportunities, while raising concerns about violence against religious minorities, particularly Muslims.

"The fear in us is gone," said Ananya Raturi, a 21-year-old Delhi University student who joined protests in the capital.

Raturi said demonstrators were no longer deterred by the prospect of detention or police violence. Police have denied beating protesters and said officers followed established procedures.

The demonstrations have been energized by the Cockroach Janta Party, a youth-led movement that grew from online satire into a nationwide campaign in June after India's chief justice likened unemployed people to "cockroaches."

Activists have used mobile phones and independent YouTube news channels to circulate footage of the protests, gaining audiences despite what critics describe as limited coverage by India's largely pro-government mainstream media.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke and left-wing activist Neha Bora have emerged as prominent online voices, while Congress Party leader Rahul Gandhi has joined demonstrations alongside tens of thousands of supporters.

The unrest has drawn comparisons with youth-led protests in neighboring Bangladesh and Nepal that brought down governments.



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (L) and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (R) attend the second day of the European Union leaders' summit in Brussels, Belgium

EU Commission chief says

Russia failed to respect energy ceasefire, calls for more pressure

BRUSSELS, (Agencies): The European Commission president said Friday that Russia had failed to respect the energy ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump, calling for more pressure on Moscow.

"Of course, we supported President Trump's energy ceasefire, but we've seen that Russia did not respect it, not a single minute. Instead, Russia escalated, and therefore we have to increase the pressure on Russia," Ursula von der Leyen told reporters ahead of day two of an EU summit in Brussels.

On Sunday, Trump said that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to an immediate ceasefire on attacks targeting each other's energy infrastructure.

Von der Leyen said the EU is working on its 22nd sanctions package against Russia, stressing that the bloc will "not lift any sanctions unless Moscow ended the war."

Von der Leyen also said EU leaders would discuss Ukraine's winter preparedness, as well as the country's financial, budgetary, and military needs for 2026 and 2027.

European Council President Antonio Costa, meanwhile, reaffirmed the EU's commitment to Ukraine, saying the bloc's support remains "as strong as ever." "This is no time to withdraw the support to Ukraine. This is no time to relieve Russia's sanctions. Now it's time to increase our support, to increase our pressure," Costa said.



Demonstrations by university students in Tirana, the capital of Albania, continue, demanding improved educational conditions.

Iranian President warns US-Israeli war damaging ecosystems

YEREVAN, (Agencies): Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Friday that the US-Israeli war against Iran is causing serious damage to the country's ecosystems and called for international mechanisms to protect biodiversity, according to Armenian news agency Armenpress.

Addressing the COP17 Leaders' Summit in the Armenian capital Yerevan, Pezeshkian warned of the devastating environmental consequences of war, saying military aggression threatens biodiversity, natural resources and future generations.

He said wars destroy forests, fertile lands, wetlands and water resources, while weapons release hazardous chemicals and heavy metals into the environment. "The destruction of the natural environment is a direct consequence of war.



Mbatiabuh Regina Ngakum, sister of murdered woman Achiah Geraldine, is comforted as she grieves outside a mortuary chapel, Yaounde, Cameroon

Cameroon's rising femicide toll fuels protests, calls for justice

YAOUNDE, (Agencies): Geraldine Achiah had been married for barely two months when she died in September, leaving behind an 18-year-old son who is struggling to come to terms with her death and demanding justice for what relatives allege was a fatal beating by her husband.

Achiah, an elementary school teacher in her 30s, had encouraged her only child, Courage Abombi, to pursue his dream of becoming a mechanical engineer. He sat for a university entrance exam just one day after her burial.

"My mom died an unexpected and painful death," Abombi said. Her death has become part of a growing crisis of femicide in Cameroon, where nearly 70 women have been killed this year in gender-related killings, according to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The figure exceeds government estimates of at least 50 cases in 2023 and 67 in 2024.

The rising toll has prompted protests in major cities, including Douala and Yaounde, with demonstrators demanding stronger legal protections, more effective investigations and accountability for perpetrators. Many cases remain unresolved, while others go unreported.

Manfred Amambua, Achiah's husband, has denied killing her, police said. He has been charged with murder and is being held in jail awaiting trial. His lawyer was unavailable for comment.

Hospital records obtained by The Associated Press (AP) documented "several bruises on her face and lips" before her death. Ndzana Bienvenu, an officer involved in the investigation, said police had also collected phone footage showing Achiah and her husband after the alleged beating, along with a blood-stained bedsheet.

Her relatives say they want justice not only for Achiah but also for other women who have died in similar circumstances.

"We want justice for our daughter who died a violent death.



In many Italian cities, students took to the streets to protest the education policies of the right-wing coalition government led by Giorgia Meloni.

EOI NOTICE

The Procuring Agency for Goods and Services invites applications from eligible Applicants for supply of following items. **TSE-2627101209321 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.**

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6.	The bidder must provide last three years auditreportsduly audited by ICAP registered firm
7.	Non demand/ Non default certificate must beissuedfrom Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)
8.	The Bidder must have functional corporate office in Balochistan
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EOI Documents: The EOI documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed In the form of: (The NIP & EOI Document can also be downloaded from www.bppra.org.pk) 4. Issuance of EOI Documents: From the date of publication of NIP to **02 November, 2026** 10:00 AM during office hours on working days 5. Last Date of Application submission: The EOI must be submitted latest by 02 November, 2026 till 09:00 AM at the office of the undersigned. 6. EOI Opening: All EOI will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 10:00 AM 7. Address: Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Girls Cadet College, Absor, Turbat 8. The Pre-Qualification Documents can be downloaded from BPPRA Website (www.bppra.gob.pk). 9. Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 02 November, 2026 till 09:00 AM . 10. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 10:00 AM

Commandant
Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak
Girls Cadet College, Turbat

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'Trump shouldn't be dictating what Ukraine should do,' says Lukashenko

MINSK, (Agencies): Belarus' president said Friday that US President Donald Trump should not dictate who leads Ukraine, adding that the decision rests with the Ukrainian people.

Speaking to journalists, Alexander Lukashenko was asked whether peace was possible under Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, following Trump's calls for a change in leadership in Kyiv and accusations that Zelenskyy had missed several opportunities to end the war.

"It's not up to Trump," Lukashenko said, according to the state-run Belta news agency. "It is the Ukrainian people who will decide who serves as president of Ukraine."

Lukashenko noted that Zelenskyy had previously promised to serve only one term, saying that he should honor that commitment and face voters.

"Promises should be kept," he said. "In that sense, Trump is right: if you make a promise, you should keep it. But there is no need to dictate terms. Trump shouldn't be dictating what Ukraine should do."

Lukashenko also said peace could be reached in Ukraine either this year or next, saying both Moscow and Kyiv have an interest in ending the war because of its consequences for both countries.

"And this peace will come. If not this year, then next year. I am absolutely convinced of it," he said.

Russia has greater military and economic resources and could continue fighting for a long time, said Lukashenko, a key ally of Moscow, but added that the war is taking a heavy toll on its economy.

"The Russians understand this; they are ready for peace," he said.

He also warned: "As for the Ukrainians — if they don't pursue a peaceful settlement this year, it will become even more difficult next year, and eventually, it may become impossible."

Agriculture central to Pakistan's economy, food security, rural livelihoods: President

Says food security requires more than adequate production

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has called for sustained efforts to support farmers, improve nutrition and ensure the effective use of the country's agricultural resources, saying progress towards food security depends on translating innovation into practical solutions that meet the needs of the people.

In his message on World Food Day, the president said achieving food security requires cooperation at national, regional and global levels.

Governments, researchers, the private sector and international partners must work together to advance innovation, strengthen food supply chains and address the challenges that threaten food security, he said adding that dialogue, cooperation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts are essential to creating conditions in which innovation can flourish and its benefits can reach people everywhere.

Emphasising the importance of ensuring food security for our people and strengthening Pakistan's capacity to produce safe, nutritious and affordable food, the president said this year's theme, "Innovate today, Nourish tomorrow," highlights the role of science, technology and knowledge-sharing in improving agrifood systems and meeting the needs of present and future generations.

He said agriculture is central to Pakistan's economy, food security and rural livelihoods. As an agriculturist and a grower, I know from my personal and family experience the importance of this sector and the challenges faced by those who depend on it.

Our farmers and food producers sustain the country through their hard work, but they face growing challenges from climate change, water scarcity, land degradation and rising production costs. Disruptions in food supply chains, alongside regional and global uncertainties, add to these pressures. Addressing these challenges is essential to protecting agricultural productivity and the livelihoods of farming communities, the president said adding that we must modernise our agriculture and food sectors through scientific research, technological innovation and improved farming practices. This includes promoting climate-smart agriculture, conserving water and natural resources, adopting improved seeds and technologies and advancing mechanisation and digital solutions. We must also reduce post-harvest losses, strengthen value chains and improve farmers' access to markets.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani addresses the ceremony marking the Day of German Unity as the chief guest.



QUETTA: MPA Salma Kakar called on Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

Trump rules out use of nuclear weapons against Iran

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump ruled out using nuclear weapons against Iran, saying Washington did not need them and emphasizing that the "mother of all bombs" was non-nuclear.

Asked during an interview Thursday with Newsmax about reports that his administration was considering using the bomb against Iran, potentially after the US midterm elections, Trump stressed that it was a conventional weapon. "The mother of all bombs is not nuclear," Trump said, adding: "This is just an extremely large bomb." He reiterated that the weapon was not nuclear. "The mother of all bombs is one big bomb, but it's not nuclear," he said.

Trump ruled out using nuclear weapons, saying the US did not need to resort to them. "No, I wouldn't use nuclear. We don't have to," he said.

Asked whether he trusted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump responded: "I don't trust anybody, honestly."

Gilani appreciates Germany's continued support for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, has called for stronger Pakistan-Germany relations through increased economic cooperation, investment, education and parliamentary exchanges, saying 75 years of diplomatic ties provide a strong foundation for a mutually beneficial partnership. Addressing a gathering to mark German Unity Day, attended by German Ambassador Ina Lepel, diplomats and other dignitaries, Gilani congratulated the German leadership and people on behalf of Pakistan's Parliament, government and people. He described the occasion as a symbol of unity, resilience and shared prosperity. He also highlighted the longstanding friendship between the two countries, strengthened by the contributions of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Dr Ruth Pfau. The Senate chairman appreciated Germany's continued support for Pakistan in development cooperation, climate action, women's empowerment and human development.

He stressed the need for continued German support for Pakistan's participation in the GSP Plus arrangement.

He also identified Special Economic Zones, renewable energy, information technology, industrial development and value-added manufacturing as key areas for greater German investment and business cooperation.

Highlighting people-to-people ties, Gilani appreciated the contributions of Pakistani students studying at German universities.

Young people must develop solutions in line with Pakistan's ground realities: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday urged young people to move beyond criticism and develop practical, sustainable solutions to Pakistan's social and economic challenges through the National Youth Solution Sprint 2026, Round Two, under the Banu Shaheen initiative.

"Pakistan's greatest strength is its youth. Our objective is to transform young people from critics of problems into solution providers who can play a meaningful role in national development," the minister said while addressing the event.

He stressed that understanding the root causes of problems was essential to developing effective and sustainable solutions, adding that success depended not merely on proposing ideas but also on translating them into practical action.

During the second round of the National Youth Solution Sprint 2026, student teams explored critical social challenges, including drug abuse, population growth, access to clean drinking water and sanitation, out-of-school children, and malnutrition.

Team leads outlined the challenges associated with each issue and proposed community-level activities and actionable interventions to generate positive and sustainable impact.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that young people must develop solutions in line with Pakistan's ground realities, available resources and local needs to ensure their ideas delivered tangible results beyond presentations.

He also highlighted the importance of communication, leadership and other life skills alongside technical knowledge, noting that these capabilities were essential for turning ideas into meaningful outcomes.

The minister said young people should be engaged in addressing national challenges from their student years and connected with the country's development agenda through constructive participation rather than being used for political agendas.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to nurturing a generation of young leaders capable of contributing positively across all sectors.

The National Youth Solution Sprint aims to place young people at the centre of problem-solving by equipping them with the tools, methodologies and platforms needed to contribute to national development.

The initiative would also provide a continuous platform for innovation and policy engagement through monthly innovation sprints, TED-style talks, policy labs and "Dragons' Den"-style pitches, enabling participants to refine their ideas, test solutions, engage with experts and present innovative proposals.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail cutting a cake during the Balochistan's First Food Exhibition 2026.

Balochistan to get livestock ponds, water tanks under Saudi funded project

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Balochistan is set to get 30 community livestock ponds and 40 water tanks under a Saudi Fund for Development (SFD)-funded Livelihood Restoration Project, which also includes water diversion structures, wells and livelihood support initiatives to improve water access, restore livelihoods and strengthen rural infrastructure in the province.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the project is being implemented through the Project Management Unit of the Human Rights Affairs Department, Balochistan, with grant assistance from the SFD. The proposed livestock ponds aim to improve water availability for livestock-dependent communities, particularly in rural areas where access to water remains a challenge. The bidding process for the excavation of the 30 ponds was initiated in 2024, while the bid evaluation was awaiting approval from the SFD. Another component involves the construction of 10 water diversion structures and the boring and drilling of wells. The SFD has approved the bid evaluation for these works, while approval of the draft agreement remains pending. The project also envisages the construction of 40 water tanks, with the bidding process reported to be underway. The provision of sewing machines is included among the livelihood-support activities aimed at helping communities generate income. During an SFD mission to the project in February 2026, the project director briefed the delegation on progress across various activities and procurement processes. The briefing highlighted that bid evaluations for five schemes had been submitted to the SFD for concurrence. The bid evaluation for the water diversion structures and wells had been approved, while concurrence on other pending schemes was awaited. The project scope was also rationalized by removing a sub-component involving the construction of 150 rooms, resulting in estimated savings of $0.13 million.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday met Under Secretary for International Affairs US Department of the Treasury, Erin Browne

Pakistan, US discuss economic reforms, external financing

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday met Under Secretary for International Affairs US Department of the Treasury, Erin Browne and discussed Pakistan's economic outlook, reform agenda and external financing strategy.

On the sidelines of the World Bank Group–IMF Annual Meetings 2026, the minister highlighted Pakistan's US$3 billion Eurobond issuance in September and plans to diversify financing through Sukuk, Panda bonds and other instruments, said a news release.

He outlined progress under the IMF programme, tax reforms, three consecutive years of primary surpluses and foreign exchange reserves of approximately US$21.6 billion.

The discussions also covered the regional conflict's implications for energy, inflation and food security, as well as measures to ensure supplies and prepare for winter demand.

The minister emphasized export-led growth, stronger IT exports, improved goods competitiveness and debt sustainability to support progress towards a BB sovereign rating.

He also discussed privatization, airport outsourcing, engagement with Boeing and potential US EXIM Bank financing, expressing deep appreciation for continued US support.

Younger generation must be familiarized with Pakistan's history: Khichi

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi Friday stressed the need to familiarize younger generations with Pakistan's history and the sacrifices and services of its national heroes, saying that it was among the key priorities of the National Heritage and Culture Division.

He expressed these views while inaugurating a photographic exhibition at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), marking the 75th death anniversary of Shaheed-e-Millat Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister and one of the country's prominent founding leaders. Ms. Samia Liaquat Ali Khan, great-granddaughter of Shaheed-e-Millat, attended the event as guest of honour.

The federal minister appreciated the initiative, saying such exhibitions helped preserve the memory of national leaders and highlight their contributions to Pakistan's history.

He said that institutions working under the National Heritage and Culture Division were organizing activities to promote awareness of the lives, services and sacrifices of prominent national personalities. He also appreciated Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Asad Rehman Gilani for promoting such initiatives. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said that exhibitions of this nature reminded the nation of the sacrifices made by its forefathers and provided an opportunity to renew its commitment to follow in their footsteps for Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

He said efforts would be made to invite students and young people from Islamabad and Rawalpindi to visit the exhibition, enabling them to learn more about the country's history, national leaders and the struggle for Pakistan. Reaffirming the division's commitment to preserving the legacy of national heroes, the minister said their contributions must be passed on to future generations to encourage young people to play their role in national development.

Investment in human resources central to build prosperous, economically resilient Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar, on Friday said that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan is making significant progress towards agricultural modernization through advanced training and technological innovation.

Addressing the departure ceremony of the final cohort under the Prime Minister's Initiative for Short-Term Training of 1,000 Pakistani Agricultural Professionals in China, the Minister said the flagship programme reflects the Prime Minister's commitment to strengthening human capital, enhancing agricultural productivity and ensuring sustainable food security.

She highlighted that 885 Pakistani agricultural professionals have already successfully completed their training at five Chinese institutions, describing it as a significant milestone in the implementation of the Prime Minister's initiative.

She emphasized that Pakistan's agricultural sector faces challenges including climate change, water scarcity, low productivity and limited access to modern technologies.

She said the initiative would help equip professionals with advanced knowledge and practical expertise to address these challenges effectively.

The Minister noted that Pakistan-China cooperation in agricultural education, scientific research, innovation and technology transfer would further strengthen the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: – Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addressing the National Youth Solution Sprint 2026, Round Two, held under the Banu Shaheen initiative.



ISLAMABAD:Muhammad Ali Khan, Pro-Rector Planning and Resources, NUST presenting shield to Ms. Saliha Tuna, Country Head Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)

FDI, Balochistan discuss strengthening immunization services

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI) and the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) Balochistan have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening coordination to improve vaccination coverage and ensure equitable access to immunisation services across the country.

The commitment was expressed during a meeting between EPI Balochistan Provincial Coordinator Dr. Aftab Hussain Kakar and FDI Director General Dr. Musa Khan, who discussed key programme priorities and strategies for improving immunisation outcomes.

Dr. Musa Khan emphasized the importance of effective federal-provincial collaboration to expand vaccine coverage, address implementation gaps and ensure that every child receives essential vaccines. He highlighted the need for coordinated planning and sustained efforts to strengthen routine immunisation services, particularly in underserved communities where access to healthcare remains a challenge.

Dr. Aftab Hussain Kakar appreciated the leadership of the FDI and reaffirmed EPI Balochistan's commitment to improving routine immunisation and reaching children in remote and underserved areas through closer coordination with the federal government.

The discussions focused on strengthening programme implementation and ensuring that immunisation services reach eligible children across different regions without geographical or socioeconomic barriers.

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