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Situation in Gulf region caused storm of inflation in world: PM

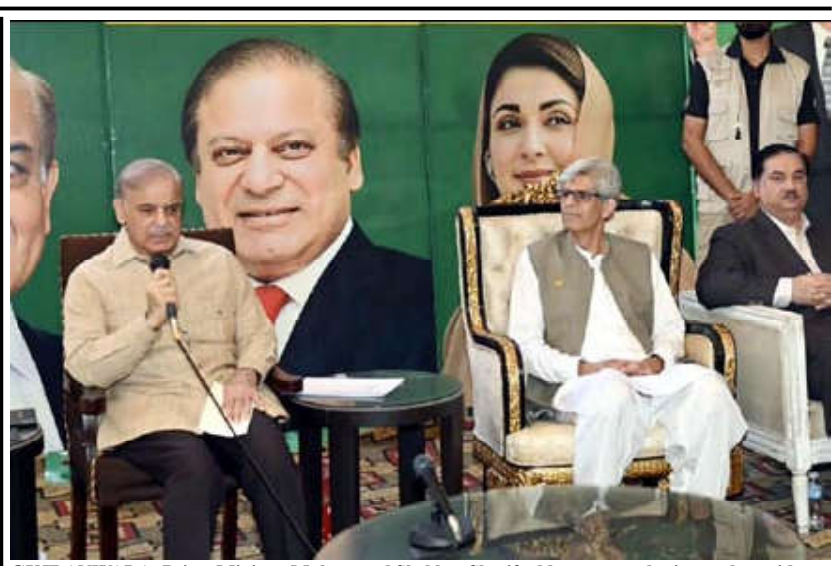
Says centre was compelled to impose emergency in KP

GUJRANWALA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said imposition of emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province became a compulsion to confront security challenges and protect the economy from instability. Talking to leaders of his party here after offering condolence over the demise of member National Assembly Bashir Mehmood Virk, he said the government was compelled to impose emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the talks failed in the end despite finalization of a draft to resolve the crisis.

He said he came to condole the death of Barrister Bashir Mehmood Virk, who was a committed and loyal associate of the party and Nawaz Sharif.

He said Bashir Virk was like a brother to him and he had a long association with him. Bashir Virk was a very decent, capable, wise and sober person and his passing away was a great loss for his family and for the party, he said adding Nawaz Sharif as a man of vision always chose Bashir Virk over others as a candidate for Parliament. He praised Maryam Nawaz Sharif for his development work in Punjab and wished him success in her future endeavours. Talking about the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said he held several meetings with the two former chief ministers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and sincerely emphasized that security challenges should be overcome and law and order situation should be improved with a united response for progress and prosperity in the province and for countering the terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. He said thousands of personnel of law enforcement agencies and army laid down their lives while fighting terrorism, adding a large number of citizens fell victim to incidents of terrorism. He said the long marches in the country in the past damaged the economy, halted exports and imports and affected lives of people. The elements behind the long marches had planned bloodshed in the country so the government was left with no choice to take action, he explained.

He said the government formed a committee which held negotiations for 48 hours and consensus was achieved on a draft in order to take back the call for long march but at the end the talks failed and emergency was imposed to avoid bloodshed. He said the government could not remain silent spectator in such a situation as it would have been criminal negligence and the future generations would not have forgiven so it took a decision in the best interest of the nation.



GUJRANWALA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a gathering at the residence of late parliamentarian Mahmood Bashir Virk.



QUETTA: Hikmatullah, a young resident who took part in rescue efforts following a training aircraft crash in Nawan Killi meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

No compromise on country's security, sovereignty: General Aamer Raza

RAWALPINDI (INP): National Strategic Command (NSC) Commander General Syed Aamer Raza has warned that Army Forces will not tolerate any cross-border aggression or violation of Pakistan's borders, and no compromise would be made on the country's security and sovereignty.

Addressing the 154th Pakistan Military Academy Long Course, 39th Technical Graduate Course, 73nd Integrated Course and 28th Lady Cadet Course passing-out ceremony at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in Kakul, General Aamer Raza declared "Safeguarding the territorial integrity of our motherland is absolute and unyielding."

The NSC Commander said that the ceremony marked the successful completion of foundational military training at "one of the world's premier military academies". He felicitated the passing cadets and their parents, saying the occasion will forever remain etched in the memory of the graduates.

The commander maintained that the rapid proliferation of disruptive technology has fundamentally altered the character and dynamics of modern warfare, dismantling traditional operational doctrines. "Fully cognisant of these shifting of paradigms, Pakistan Armed Forces have undertaken a swift multi-domain transformation to fortify our military posture," he maintained.

General Raza said that the recent shifts in geopolitics, against the backdrop of Middle East conflict, have once again underscored Pakistan's pivotal strategic importance on the international stage. "Our decisive role in restoring regional stability exemplified by the landmark Islamabad Accord which demonstrates our enduring commitment to peace and diplomatic de-escalation," he added. The NSC Commander warned enemies against any cross-border aggression.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi cuts a ribbon to inaugurate a painting exhibition by artists of the visiting Bangladeshi delegation, organized by the National Heritage and Culture Division at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA)

No room for politics of adventurism practiced by PTI: Defence Minister

SIALKOT (APP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif strongly rejected allegations that military institutions were seeking mining contracts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Talking to the media, he categorically rejected claims that the military had taken control of KP's mineral resources or it wanted to seize them. He claimed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government issued thousands of licences to PTI leaders and individuals based in the United States for mineral extraction in KP.

He said he had shared figures and relevant details on his tweeter account, adding that the media was free to seek official information from the authorities concerned to independently verify the records. The defence minister said that efforts were made to resolve the situation through dialogue to avoid invoking Articles 232, 234 and 245 of the Constitution. Khawaja Asif said the situation unfolded gradually and several rounds of discussions took place in an attempt to find a solution without resorting to constitutional measures. He said Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi tried his best to make negotiations with the PTI successful. Khawaja Asif said Mohsin Naqvi's statements in the Senate and National Assembly shed light on the actions of several prominent politicians. He said the details exposed what he described as the questionable political conduct of several prominent figures. The defence minister also highlighted the contributions of Pakistan's defence institutions over the past three years in protecting the country's economic and diplomatic interests. Referring to Operation Bunyanum-Marsoos, he said major developments involving the protection of Pakistan's national interests had been made possible through the efforts of the country's defence institutions. The minister said Pakistan's history has been written in the blood of its martyrs, civilians, police personnel and paramilitary forces, highlighting their sacrifices for the country. He said the sacrifices made by these individuals and security personnel could not be matched, highlighting their role in protecting Pakistan and safeguarding its national interests. Khawaja Asif paid tribute to Pakistan's armed forces, saying that the sacrifices of soldiers and senior military officers in defending the country represent an investment in Pakistan's future. He said military personnel had laid down their lives to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, acknowledging their contributions to national security.

Terrorism, violence can't shake resolve for democracy: Bilawal

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid tribute to the martyrs of the Karsaz tragedy, saying October 18 is a black day in Pakistan's history, when a cowardly attempt was made to target Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto through terrorism on her return to the homeland.

The Jiyalas, who had come to welcome her, however, protected their leader by laying down their lives, offering an unmatched, practical proof of their unwavering commitment to democracy and the people's right to rule. The PPP Chairman said that the blood of the Karsaz martyrs bears witness that terrorism, extremism and violence cannot shake the resolve for democracy. Their sacrifices are a shining chapter in the nation's history, one that the people will always remember.

The PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the mission of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of the people, equality, social justice, and the building of a peaceful, prosperous and developed Pakistan.

Staying true to this mission, PPP will continue its struggle to strengthen democratic institutions, protect the Constitution and uphold the rights of the people.

Two police personnel martyred in terrorist attack in Naseerabad

NASEERABAD (INP): Unidentified terrorists opened fire on a police team, martyring two police personnel within the limits of the Sadar police station in Naseerabad.

According to police, the attackers targeted the team on the Bedar Bridge, martyring Head Constable Ahmed Khan and Constable Abdul Malik on the spot. The local Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) stated that the officers were on patrol when they came under fire. The terrorists managed to escape from the scene, while police have cordoned off the area to search for the culprits. Authorities have also registered a First Information Report (FIR) against the unidentified attackers.

Earlier in May this year, at least nine policemen were martyred in a terrorist attack in the Mangi Phase III area of Quetta, Balochistan. According to the Deputy Commissioner, an exchange of fire between security personnel and the terrorists.

Every form of terrorism must be condemned unequivocally: Talal

FAISALABAD (APP): State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhary called for a united national front against terrorism, urging all political parties to rise above their differences and stand firmly with the state and security forces as Pakistan's peace and public safety must take precedence over political interests. Talking to media persons, he said that politics has its own place, but Pakistan's peace and the security of its people come first. Therefore, every form of terrorism must be condemned unequivocally, regardless of the group responsible or its political implications, he added. He said that political parties, security forces, government institutions and ordinary citizens had all suffered from terrorism as terrorists' attacks also targeted funerals and wedding ceremonies. Whether the perpetrators belonged to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the BLA or any other militant organization, they must be identified as terrorists, he added.

Talal Chaudhary also condemned terrorism originating from Afghanistan and said that the state would continue taking action against all forms of terrorism. He said that the fight against militancy was not the responsibility of a single political party or government but it demands a collective struggle of the entire state and nation.

Referring to the political dimension of the security situation, he questioned why no national or regional leader of PTI had reportedly been targeted in a terrorist attack over the past 11 years.

Balochistan's brave youth role models for future generations: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has lauded the courage, compassion and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the province's youth, saying their readiness to risk their own safety to help others makes them an inspiration for future generations.

The chief minister expressed these views during a meeting with Hikmatullah, a young resident who took part in rescue efforts following a training aircraft crash in Nawan Killi, Quetta.

In recognition of his courageous efforts and assistance in the rescue operation, Chief Minister Bugti presented Hikmatullah with an appreciation certificate on behalf of the Balochistan government. "We are proud of you. Young people like you are role models for Balochistan," Bugti told Hikmatullah, commending his willingness to assist those affected by the incident.

War against terrorism should be viewed beyond political affiliations, partisan divisions: CM Bugti

Says Balochistan's political leadership has demonstrated remarkable unity in confronting terrorism

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has stressed that national security must remain above political considerations, urging political leaders not to allow state interests to become casualties of partisan politics.

Addressing Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman in a statement posted on social media platform X, the chief minister said that while differences of opinion are an essential feature of democracy, issues relating to national security and counterterrorism require responsible discourse, unity and a commitment to national interests.

Sarfraz Bugti said he maintained a relationship of mutual respect with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and valued his political wisdom and experience. However, he emphasized that any comparison between the governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, especially in the context of terrorism, national security and the country's civil and military leadership, should be based on ground realities, the challenges confronting the state and the ongoing struggle against terrorism.

The chief minister noted that Maulana Fazlur Rehman and his party had themselves been victims of terrorist attacks. Given this background, he said, it was expected that opinions on such a sensitive national issue would also take into consideration the state's efforts against terrorism and the sacrifices rendered by security forces.

Highlighting the situation in Balochistan, Bugti said the province's political leadership, despite its differences on various issues, had demonstrated remarkable unity in confronting terrorism.



FAISALABAD: State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhary is addressing a press conference

Pakistan welcomes growing coherence in int'l mediation efforts as conflicts cannot be resolved militarily

UNITED NATIONS (APP): As Sudan's civil war and humanitarian crisis deepen without a breakthrough, Pakistan has fervently called on all parties to respect international law, emphasizing that the conflict cannot be resolved militarily. "The fragmentation of the State, or the creation of parallel political and governance structures, cannot provide a pathway to peace," the Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Usman Jadoon, told the UN Security Council which debated the situation in Sudan. Sudan has been engulfed in the conflict since April 2023, when fighting erupted between former allies—the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces militia (RSF).

What began as a power struggle metastasized into deadly conflicts across the country, with fighting in Kordofan and Blue Nile, and drone strikes threatening and killing civilians and attacks disrupting humanitarian operations,

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy said, "Sudan is a brotherly country", reaffirming the importance of preserving Sudanese State institutions.

Ambassador Jadoon said the immense suffering of the Sudanese people and the continued fighting in Kordofan underscores the need to end this bloody conflict. "The atrocities committed by Rapid Support Forces in Darfur, including in El Geneina and El Fasher, and the continuing fighting in Kordofan underline the urgency of ending the conflict," Ambassador Jadoon added.

Ultimately, he said, peace must emerge from a Sudanese-led and Sudanese-owned political process, enjoying the confidence of the Sudanese people and engaging the Sudanese authorities.

"We welcome the growing coherence in international mediation efforts", Ambassador Jadoon said, spotlighting the positive roles of the Quintet - comprising the UN, African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the European Union.

Turning to the 1591 Sanctions Regime concerning Sudan, he said continued violations of these measures should be met with an appropriate response.



ISLAMABAD: Chargé d'Affaires of the United States to Pakistan, H.E. Natalie A. Baker, presents a prize to the winning player during the prize distribution ceremony of the W-15 Islamabad Junaid Family Foundation World Tennis Women's Championships 2026.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Monday October 19, 2026

Donald Trump facing extremely heavy test

Looking at the situation U.S. President Donald Trump has fallen into in the U.S. lately, we believe it is time to open fresh debates on some issues.

First of all, if you ask what Israel's greatest influence on Trump has been, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu started a war against Iran, and that war, in its natural course, drove up oil, food and fertilizer prices across the entire world – and that wound has still not been healed today.

Everyone knows that when voters in the U.S. make their decisions, fuel prices matter. The price of a gallon of gasoline, once $2.80, has now reached nearly $4.30 to $4.50, a level to which the American public is not accustomed.

On the other hand, when the U.S. declared war on Iraq, 63% of the public stood behind Bush in that Gulf War, whereas today Trump cannot seem to push public support for the Iran war beyond 30 to 35%.

Meanwhile, with support for the war on Iran at these levels – likely because of the Gaza and Iran wars – Trump's presidential approval rating keeps falling day by day, owing to the interest-rate increases, the food prices, and the costly fuel the American public has been forced to face.

According to the research conducted by almost all polling firms, Trump's support has most recently dropped to around 30%. A president has never fallen into such a troubled position in American history. It is likely that in the coming elections, Trump, with the shortfall in votes he will suffer in both chambers of Congress – both the Senate and the House of Representatives – may find himself reduced to a lame-duck position.

On the other hand, a narrative known as the "Gaza effect" keeps reviving and preserving its vitality among the American public. At the elite universities that graduate the students who will one day govern the U.S., whichever university dared to protest Israel over the genocide met with a drastic reaction. The police have beaten up academics and students. And highly esteemed academics were arrested. The federal funding for universities was withdrawn, while the presidents and senior administrators of institutions such as MIT and Harvard came under direct government pressure.

In fact, the stance of U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance's took against Israel makes one thing clear. When he told Israel's leaders that "you can't just kill your way out of solving every single national security problem," and reminded them that Trump is "the only head of state in the entire world who is sympathetic to the nation of Israel," he was confessing a secret everybody knew. For throughout American history, Israel and the U.S. have functioned almost as a single state, and time and again Congress and the bureaucracy have placed Israel's interests ahead of America's own.

Yet, if we look at where U.S.-Israeli relations stand today, across many regions of the U.S. – New York above all – anti-Israel candidates are emerging, and socialist candidates, who normally have little real influence in the country, are finding a response in society simply because they are against Israel and pro-Palestinian.

The U.S. appears to be facing a difficult test. While Israel is losing the American public on one side, on the other, Trump may lose the election because of Netanyahu's Israel. In one sense, Iran played the election card to weaken the U.S. Although the U.S. has imposed a major embargo against Iran, Iran finds itself in a position of having to hold out until the election. Trump believes and declares that he will launch a major attack on Iran after the election. But after the election, perhaps, the Senate and the House of Representatives can directly block such reckless military ventures.

There are elections in Israel and the U.S... At the U.N., the world's news agencies not only showed Netanyahu at the podium – they also broadcast the moments of the hall emptying while he was still speaking. In a way, global Zionism, too, appears to have given up on Netanyahu.

Netanyahu has prepared the ground for the appearance of a world in which the Israeli public is violent and lawless. He destroyed the Western paradigm and has also fundamentally damaged relations between the U.S. and Israel.

To put the final point: Trump may lose the election because of Netanyahu, because of Israel, and that is not something that can easily be compensated for. And it appears that Trump has so far been unable to pursue a sound policy on this matter – and Netanyahu refuses to accept the new system Trump has set up in Gaza and continues the massacre. Trump is facing an extremely heavy test. Let us see whether he can manage to carry this heavy burden through the election.

On the front line

OMAYAIMEN

When the twin towers fell in September 2001, terrorism ceased to be a distant menace and became the defining threat of a generation. Capitals across the globe tightened their airports, rewrote their laws and debated the danger from the safety of committee rooms. Pakistan had no such luxury. While much of the world discussed terrorism, Pakistan fought it street by street, valley by valley, on the front foot and largely alone. From the liberation of Swat in Operation Rah-e-Rast to the clearing of North Waziristan under Zarb-e-Azb and the nationwide sweep of Radd-ul-Fasaad, the country took the battle to the militants rather than waiting for them at its doorstep. The cost has been staggering. The children of Army Public School Peshawar, the worshippers of Quetta and the shopkeepers of Lahore all paid with their lives.

More than 90,000 Pakistanis have been martyred and over $100 billion lost, a toll no other nation can match. This was precisely the point made at a recent conference on Pakistan's Evolving Counterterrorism Landscape: TTP, Cross-Border Threats and Regional Security, where a senior official observed that in Pakistan, counterterrorism is not simply a policy debate, but a continuous story of sacrifice and valour.

Yet terrorism, which the world insists has no religion, has acquired an address. For the past five years, that address has been Afghanistan. UN and independent assessments place more than 6,000 TTP fighters inside Afghanistan, within a broader militant presence exceeding 20,000.

Since the Taliban's return in 2021, Afghan soil has served as a recruitment ground, training camp, logistics hub and launchpad for attacks on Pakistani towns. More damning still, the 38th UN Monitoring Team report records the relocation of nearly 2,000 TTP militants and their families from border districts to locations deeper within Afghanistan.

Governments serious about dismantling terror networks do not hide them from scrutiny; they disarm them or hand them over.

The betrayal stings all the more given history. For over four decades, Pakistan sheltered more than four million Afghan refugees, sharing its classrooms, hospitals and bazaars despite crushing economic strain. Generosity on that scale deserved partnership. It has been answered instead with cross-border bloodshed. Nobody can fairly accuse Islamabad of shunning diplomacy. Recalling his three visits to Afghanistan last year and his engagements with Taliban authorities, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, made plain that Pakistan's position never wavered. Pakistan made only one demand: visible, verifiable and irreversible action against the TTP, its associated terrorist groups and their sanctuaries on Afghan soil.

He also urged the Afghan authorities to honour the counterterrorism commitments they made at Doha and to Pakistan directly.

That modest request remains unmet, recent negotiations ended without result, and sincere counsel has once more fallen on deaf ears. Part of the explanation lies in the nature of the regime itself. A government that locks girls out of schools, expels women from the workforce and sidelines minorities draws its authority from an ideology utterly alien to the compassionate spirit of Islam.

A ruling order that silences half its population while sheltering armed extremists is not simply an internal Afghan tragedy; it is a direct strategic threat to the whole region.

Let there be no confusion about one point. Pakistan's desire for calm must never be mistaken for weakness, and no sovereign nation can tolerate militants exploiting foreign sanctuaries to murder its citizens.

Where provocation has come, the response has followed, and rightly so. Encouragingly, the home front is firmer than it has been in years.

In Kohat and other scarred corners of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wounded personnel recovering in military hospitals speak of determination rather than despair, and the province's residents have declared with one voice that they want militancy uprooted permanently. Just as vital is the harmony within the state. The federal government, the Foreign Office under Senator Ishaq Dar and the armed forces stand united in purpose and action, denying enemies the divisions they once exploited so easily. Marka-e-Haq showed the world that when conflict is imposed on Pakistan, the country responds with discipline and prevails with conviction.

The same nation that holds its ground in battle has also proved adept at the bargaining table. Pakistan's recent mediation between Washington and Tehran, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with notable contributions from Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, drew broad international praise and confirmed its standing as a credible broker of stability.

Such credentials should lend weight to its warnings about Afghanistan. Islamabad genuinely wants a prosperous neighbour, one that opens trade routes to Central Asia, attracts investment and binds the region through connectivity. Yet prosperity cannot flourish beside safe havens. As the official rightly concluded, cross-border terrorist threats demand stronger regional and international cooperation, deeper intelligence sharing and genuine collective action, backed by firm accountability for Kabul's broken promises.

How can tranquillity take root while a neighbouring state continues to harbour killers?

Pakistan has stood on the front line for a quarter of a century.

The world must now stand beside it.

The writer frequently contributes to issues concerning national and regional security, focusing on matters having a critical impact on these milieus.

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Harbinger of security

SALEEM QAMAR BUTT

The signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA) on August 7, 2026, by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah represents a major security evolution in West and South Asia. Building upon the 2025 bilateral Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) and the broader Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) framework, this trilateral pact introduces a NATO-style Article 5 collective defence pledge: declaring that an armed attack against any one of the three states will be treated as an attack against all.

Ostensibly, the MJDA aims at trilateral synergy against undefined but not unknown threats by merging three distinct strategic pillars, i.e. Saudi Arabia's financial power, energy clout, and central diplomatic influence in the Islamic world; Türkiye's advanced defence technology (drones, aerospace, naval), battle-tested military infrastructure, and NATO operational expertise; and, most importantly, Pakistan's high-volume and battle-hardened military manpower, conventional deterrence capabilities, and nuclear-armed military capabilities. However, the development of a clear-cut Threat Matrix and Joint Response options will be a real test for the manifestation of political resolve vis-à-vis complicated regional and wider international geopolitical realities.

First, let's have a look at the regional impact, its pros & cons for regional peace, and potential stakeholders' reactions & strategic responses. Iranian Foreign Ministry officials stressed that "Muslims must rely on true brotherhood", while hard-line commentators and Iranian lawmakers dismissed the pact as a "paper agreement" that cannot substitute for genuine regional security.

Tehran views the pact as an attempt to assemble a Sunni security bloc against its regional axis. Yemeni Houthi forces escalated drone and missile strikes in Yemen (targeting Marib and Saudi border regions) around the time of the signing.

Houthi leadership criticised the arrangement as an attempt to enforce a blockade and sustain military pressure on Yemen.

Israel's concerns stem from Türkiye's formal integration into a binding defence alliance alongside nuclear-armed Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Israeli strategic planners view the pact as potentially circumscribing Israel's operational freedom across West Asian airspace and maritime lanes. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) noted that New Delhi is "closely watching" the developments.

India's primary strategic concerns involve the deepened military-industrial alignment between Pakistan, Türkiye, and Saudi Arabia, alongside the implications for Gulf security, where millions of Indian expatriates reside. Obviously, India finds it alarming due to its multiple agreements with Gulf States involving billions of dollars flowing to India; besides, KSA and Türkiye standing shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan in any future conflict.

As for the man behind the gun for all such abrupt developments without involving public debate/ parliaments of the three countries, i.e., the USA, will surely name it as Strategic Burden-Sharing after unpopular war weariness and depletion of resources.

American analysts highlight that it aligns with the U.S. push for regional allies to take direct responsibility for collective air and missile defence against regional threats. However, already upset due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, NATO complexity gets more tangled. While Washington welcomes reduced pressure on U.S. troop deployments, Türkiye's dual identity as a NATO member entering an independent, non-NATO mutual defence pact creates potential friction over intelligence-sharing protocols and treaty commitments.

A number of questions arise, some of which may find answers with the passage of time, while more may never be addressed. Will MJDA deter Iran and her supported Houthi proxies from attacking KSA?

What will be the trilateral response if Iran/Houthis continue their targeting in KSA, the Straits of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandab?

How will it impact Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations, especially with regards to strife in Balochistan? Has Iran been taken on board before the formation of MJDA?

Or will it create room for India and Israel to secretly mend fences with Iran? With unabated atrocities in Palestine and cat-footed progress towards realisation of the controversial 'Abraham Accord' by Israel under Trump's patronage, will Iran stop hurting Gulf Muslim countries under the pretext of targeting US' military footprints, and instead aim at "tail wagging the dog"?

After getting unhooked from the ME conflict, how soon will Trump get back to realising his dreams about Greenland, Mexico, Cuba and other countries—and its impact on Global Peace? Is China taken on board by Pakistan?

Is MJDA a precursor to a Muslim Military Alliance like NATO?

Confronted with numerous challenges at home, like the continued scourge of terrorism, political, economic and overall security crises, will Pakistan get meaningful solace by playing a major role in MJDA?

While Pakistan's " Walk on a Tight Rope" gets longer and tougher, one can hope and pray that the formation of MJDA will convert "Divided We Stand" into the much-awaited and cherished dream of "United We Stand". Of course, the Pakistani leadership should focus less on gaining transitory domestic political mileage from the current development and assert more in translating the enhanced stature into economic dividends for both the State and the People of Pakistan, who are enduring crippling economic hardships due to mounting energy prices, fragile security and political mayhem.

The operationalisation of the Iran-Pakistan oil and gas pipeline project, with the smooth flow of energy from the Gulf with MJDA's operational military and Intelligence Security Architecture in place, would be a good starting point. Pakistan Zindabad!

The writer is a retired senior army officer with experience in international relations, military diplomacy and analysis of geo-political and strategic security issues.

Pakistan's silent epidemic

DR. FAYAZ SHAWL

Pakistan has the highest rate of diabetes in the world. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that 34.5 million Pakistani adults were living with diabetes in 2024, an age-adjusted prevalence of 31.4 per cent, or nearly one adult in three. About 9.3 million remain undiagnosed, while more than 10 million others have impaired fasting glucose, which often precedes diabetes. Without stronger prevention, the number of affected adults could double to approximately 70 million by 2050. Diabetes increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, vision loss, nerve damage and amputation. Food is one area where every family can begin to act.

For Pakistani families, meals commonly include roti or rice, daal, sabzi, salan and dahi. Diabetes advice should accommodate these familiar foods while encouraging healthier portions and combinations.

What we eat and how much we eat remain central to diabetes management, but the order in which we eat may also help. Begin with vegetables, optionally accompanied by plain dahi or raita, followed by protein such as chicken, fish, eggs, lean meat, daal or chana. Finish with a modest portion of roti or rice rather than eating it first.

Starch in roti, naan and rice breaks down into glucose during digestion. People with diabetes may struggle to regulate this glucose, and large carbohydrate portions can cause substantial blood sugar rises. Small clinical studies suggest that eating vegetables and protein before carbohydrates can reduce immediate post-meal glucose spikes in people with type 2 diabetes. However, evidence of long-term benefits remains limited.

Fibre, protein and fat influence digestion, but eating vegetables first does not make large rice portions harmless.

A small serving of unsalted almonds and walnuts before a meal is another option. About 10 almonds and four walnut halves, approximately 20 grams, can be eaten 20–30 minutes beforehand with water. Count these nuts towards daily food intake rather than adding them to every meal, and avoid them if you have a nut allergy. In my clinical experience using continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), I have observed smaller glucose spikes when nuts are eaten before meals, but this is not controlled research. A small randomised study involving Asian Indians with prediabetes found benefits from 20 grams of almonds eaten 30 minutes before meals. It did not test the walnut-and-almond combination. Nuts provide fibre, protein and unsaturated fats; water supports hydration but has not been shown to reduce glucose further. Follow medical advice if you have a fluid restriction.

Start meals with vegetables such as palak, methi, bhindi, lauki, tinday, karela, gobhi or band gobhi, or a cucumber salad or kachumber. Cooked vegetables are equally suitable. Use moderate amounts of oil, ghee and salt, and eat the first part of the meal with a spoon or fork before introducing roti.

Plain dahi or raita can accompany the vegetables. My CGM observations suggest that combining plain dahi with non-starchy vegetables may be associated with smaller post-meal glucose rises, but this combination has not been tested in a controlled trial. Dahi provides protein, and strained (hung) dahi generally contains more protein than regular dahi. Unsweetened salted lassi or chaach is another option. Avoid sweetened dahi and lassi, sugar, honey and gur.

Next, eat protein such as fish, skinless chicken, eggs or moderate portions of lean mutton or beef. Daal, chana, lobia and rajma are valuable alternatives, providing protein and fibre, although they also contain carbohydrates. Plain dahi contains natural milk sugar, so neither food is without an effect on blood glucose.

Dahi need not precede meat or accompany every meal. People with lactose intolerance or dairy allergies should choose suitable alternatives. Keep oily salan, karahi, qorma gravies and fried foods occasional.

Finish with one whole-wheat roti or chapati, or a smaller portion of rice, alongside the remaining vegetables and protein.

Whole-wheat roti and rice still contain carbohydrates, so portions should reflect your activity, medicines, nutritional needs and glucose response.

There is no need for a rigid ritual or a prescribed waiting period between foods.

Cooling rice may modestly reduce its glucose impact.

Cook it in advance, refrigerate it promptly for approximately 24 hours and reheat only the required portion. Cooling converts some starch into resistant starch, which is digested less readily.

A small clinical study found that white rice refrigerated for 24 hours at 4°C and reheated produced a lower post-meal glucose response than freshly cooked rice.

Evidence remains limited, and the effect is not guaranteed.

Cooling does not remove carbohydrates or make large portions harmless.

For safety, refrigerate cooked rice in shallow containers within two hours, or within one hour in hot conditions, and keep the refrigerator at 4°C or below. Use within approximately 24 hours, reheat until steaming hot throughout (74°C), and eat promptly. Discard rice left at room temperature for more than two hours, or one hour in hot conditions.

For a meal of daal, sabzi, dahi and roti, begin with vegetables and plain dahi, follow with daal, then eat one roti with the remaining food. With chicken karahi or aloo gosht, start with salad and vegetables, followed by a moderate serving of chicken or meat with little oil or gravy, and finish with a small piece of naan or one roti. Count potatoes as starch.

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Iranian lawmaker says indirect talks with US continuing through Qatar, Oman

Tehran, Washington have exchanged conditions for negotiations as Iran awaits US response, says parliamentary committee member

TEHRAN, (Monitoring Desk): Indirect talks between Iran and the US are continuing through mediation by Qatar and Oman, an Iranian lawmaker said, as Tehran-Washington tensions remain high, according to local media.

Yaqoub Rezazadeh, a member of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told the ILNA news agency that both sides had presented conditions through the mediators.

"We have presented a set of conditions, and the other side has also presented a set of conditions. We are now waiting to see whether the conditions we announced will be accepted by the Americans," Rezazadeh said.

He said the contacts were being conducted with the involvement of Qatar and Oman.

Rezazadeh said the negotiations were being overseen by Iran's Supreme National Security Council, adding that issues under discussion were handled with the council's approval.

The lawmaker also played down speculation about an imminent new conflict between Iran and the US, saying predictions based on betting markets or reports of a possible preemptive Iranian attack were unfounded.

He said he did not expect another war before US congressional elections and elections in Israel, while acknowledging that renewed fighting remained possible.

Rezazadeh said Iran would not launch a preemptive attack but would respond if attacked, claiming that Tehran's military, air defense, and naval capabilities had significantly improved compared with the previous two rounds of fighting.

The latest reported contacts come after Iran and the US reached an understanding in Islamabad in June aimed at ending hostilities and opening the way for negotiations, with Pakistan and Qatar involved in mediation.

Under the understanding, the sides were expected to pursue further talks, but tensions subsequently resurfaced amid disputes over implementation and continuing military activity in the region.

Qatar and Oman have also maintained diplomatic contacts with Tehran and Washington as regional actors seek to prevent another escalation between the two sides.



A child who received some of the distributed food is seen with a container of food as displaced Palestinians, including numerous children holding empty containers and cooking pots, crowd around a community aid distribution center to receive hot meals in the Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza Strip, Palestine



People gather during a protest against climate change as part of the 'Sundays for Future' group, alongside students protesting the deterioration of their schools in Turin, Italy.

Yemen coalition downs 4 drones over Riyadh, eastern, southern KSA

SANAA, (Agencies): The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said on Sunday that its forces intercepted and destroyed four drones.

"We intercepted and destroyed four drones over the past few hours in the Riyadh, Eastern and Southern regions," spokesman Turki al-Maliki wrote on the US social media platform X.

No additional details were immediately available.

Yemen has been engulfed in conflict since the Houthis seized the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, and several provinces in 2014. That prompted the Saudi-led coalition to intervene in 2015 in support of the internationally recognized government.

Fighting has escalated since July and spilled into neighboring Saudi Arabia, where Houthis have targeted energy and aviation sites including airports.

EU asks Israel to reverse illegal settlement plans, warns businesses

BRUSSELS, (Agencies): European Union leaders called on Israel to immediately reverse plans to expand illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and warned businesses against bidding for construction contracts, citing serious legal, economic and reputational risks, according to a statement issued following a two-day summit in Brussels.

In conclusions adopted at the European Council meeting, EU leaders condemned Israel's continued expansion of illegal settlements and escalating violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank.

The leaders specifically demanded that Israel abandon plans for new settlement construction in the E1 area, a controversial development project that threatens to further fragment Palestinian territory and undermine prospects for a viable Palestinian state.

The European Council also urged companies and financial institutions to refrain from participating in construction projects linked to illegal Israeli settlements, warning that involvement could expose them to serious consequences under international law.

"It reiterates that businesses should not bid for construction contracts for E1 or other settlement developments," the declaration said.

The statement highlighted the legal, economic and reputational consequences facing businesses and financial institutions involved in illegal settlement construction, including the risk of serious violations of international law.

Moscow welcomes Trump's sanctions waiver as Ukraine voices alarm

MOSCOW, (Agencies): Russia welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to waive new sanctions targeting Moscow, calling it a historic move as Ukraine warned that easing economic pressure would encourage Russian President Vladimir Putin to continue the war.

Trump signed an executive order Saturday suspending the application of sanctions provisions under the Lindsey Graham Act, a law designed to increase pressure on Russia's energy and defense sectors, its officials and the network of tankers Moscow uses to circumvent Western restrictions.

The decision comes as Russian forces intensify attacks on Ukrainian cities and diplomatic efforts led by Washington remain deadlocked, raising concerns among Kyiv and its European allies that the Trump administration is easing pressure on Moscow without securing meaningful concessions.

Kirill Dmitriev, Putin's special envoy for investment and economic cooperation, praised the decision on social media, describing the suspension of the law as an "important and truly historic moment."

Dmitriev argued that the sanctions would have caused serious damage to the U.S. economy and global markets. The Kremlin and Putin had not publicly commented on the decision as of Saturday.

The waiver followed an arrangement between Trump and Putin under which Moscow agreed to release substantial quantities of diesel onto global markets amid mounting pressure on fuel prices. Trump's decision to suspend the new measures marks a diplomatic gain for Russia as Washington struggles to broker an end to the war.

The Graham Act, named after the late Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, was designed to tighten restrictions on Russia's energy and defense industries, officials linked to Putin and its so-called shadow fleet of tankers. It also included provisions targeting countries that continue to buy Russian oil and gas.

Trump's order suspends the application of the new measures under a national-interest waiver. It does not automatically remove sanctions imposed on Russia under earlier U.S. measures.

The decision has intensified concerns in Kyiv that Washington could weaken its leverage over Moscow while Russian forces continue their offensive.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized the waiver Saturday, arguing that easing sanctions would reward Russia despite its continued attacks.

"A U.S. sanctions blackout, easing pressure on the aggressor, financial rewards for Putin, all of this only encourages him to keep attacking," Zelenskyy said on social media, urging Ukraine's allies to maintain pressure on Moscow.

The sanctions decision came as Russia stepped up its attacks on Ukraine, including repeated strikes on the capital, Kyiv, as the war enters its fifth year.

Russian forces struck the southern city of Kherson on Saturday, killing one person and wounding 22, local officials said.



STOCKHOLM: Demonstrators gather in central Stockholm, Sweden, to protest Israel's ongoing military offensive and actions in the Gaza Strip.

Cockroach Janta Party emerges as source of political pressure on Modi

NEW DELHI, (Agencies): Indian police arrested Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the youth-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), according to multiple media reports, a day after detaining him ahead of a rally in Delhi that drew hundreds of protesters waving national flags and demanding the resignation of the country's election chief.

Dipke was arrested to prevent a breach of the peace and was due to appear before a special executive magistrate. Delhi police did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. The CJP, opposition groups and student organizations have staged near-daily protests this month, calling for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to resign over a revision of voter lists that they allege favors Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP. More than 130 million voters were deleted from the lists during the revision. The Election Commission has denied favoring any party and said voters who were wrongly removed can re-enroll. The BJP has accused its rivals of trying to undermine democracy by questioning legitimate electoral processes. Student activist Neha Bora, a prominent face of the protests, was also detained as she tried to reach central Delhi with dozens of supporters. She was released later. "Please, spare the people of India. Impeach Gyanesh Kumar and halt SIR (special intensive revision), so that the ordinary citizens of this country can breathe a sigh of relief, feel at ease, and have their voting rights ensured," Bora told the media after her release.



NEW DELHI: Abhijeet Dipke (R), founder of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), and Neha Bora, national president of the All India Students' Association (AISA), gesture as they address a press conference.



Relatives comfort six-year-old Istiyak Mahmud Zayan, who is receiving treatment on the floor of the overcrowded measles isolation ward of Shahid Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital after developing symptoms of measles, Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Iran denies role in Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, offers mediation

TEHRAN, (Agencies): Iran dismissed Saudi Arabia's accusations that Tehran was involved in Houthi attacks targeting the kingdom, with its Foreign Ministry offering to mediate between Riyadh and the Yemeni group to help ease tensions.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects any claim that Iran has played a role in Yemeni (Houthi) operations," foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said in a statement, reiterating Tehran's offer to act as a bridge between the Houthis and Riyadh.

Baqaei said Tehran "has always been ready to use its good offices to help end the hostilities" and remained prepared to use "all its capacities for this purpose at the request of both sides".

The Houthis are part of Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance," which also includes Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq, all united in opposing Israel.

Tehran has repeatedly denied directing Houthi operations, saying the Yemeni group acts according to its own interests.

The Houthis have repeatedly attacked Saudi targets in recent weeks, including vessels in the Red Sea, oil facilities and Riyadh's international airport, where 13 people were killed in a single attack last week.

Bangladesh struggles to contain world's worst measles outbreak

SYLHET, (Monitoring Desk): Bangladesh is struggling to contain the world's largest measles outbreak this year, with more than 1,100 deaths exposing serious gaps in vaccination coverage, emergency planning and efforts to reach vulnerable children.

The country reported 202,000 suspected measles cases, including 22,000 laboratory-confirmed infections, between mid-March and Oct. 9, according to the World Health Organization. Of the 1,147 reported deaths, 94% were children younger than 5.

The outbreak follows a decline in routine immunization coverage in 2025, reversing years of progress against a highly contagious disease that vaccines can prevent. Experts say unreliable data, inadequate preparation and failures to reach parents have further weakened the response.

A review of WHO documents, combined with interviews with more than a dozen scientists, health workers and officials, found that millions of children may have been missed by an emergency vaccination campaign launched in April.

The crisis offers a warning to other countries about the consequences of declining vaccination rates and underprepared health systems.

"This is a real warning to every country," said Mark Jit, a WHO vaccine adviser and professor at New York University's School of Global Public Health.

Preventing an outbreak through vaccination is easier, cheaper and safer than responding after infections spread, Jit said.

"The response will stop the outbreak eventually, but in the meantime, many will have had measles, and some will have died," he said.

Ziauddin Hyder, special assistant on health affairs to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, told Reuters in September that the government was doing everything possible to end the outbreak.

US Rep. Ilhan Omar challenges legality of FBI home search

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): The defense of US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar have challenged the legality of a search of her Washington home, demanding that federal prosecutors immediately return all seized property and provide recordings made during the operation, The Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

In a letter sent late Saturday, the Minnesota Democrat's legal team argued that the search, conducted by Homeland Security Investigations agents early Monday under a federal judge-approved warrant, was "neither justified nor lawful."

According to the Journal, the investigation focuses partly on how Omar, 44, obtained US citizenship after arriving from Somalia decades ago.

"There is no legitimate basis for any suggestion that she has violated any law concerning her citizenship status," the letter said.

Her lawyers alleged that agents failed to follow the judge's instructions, including a requirement to notify the US House general counsel before executing the warrant. They also said Omar and her attorneys were not given a copy of the warrant beforehand, as ordered by the judge.

The letter claimed agents prevented Omar from contacting her lawyers for more than an hour after the search began.

A Justice Department spokeswoman rejected the allegations, describing the letter as "riddled with false allegations and inaccuracies. Our attorneys and law enforcement partners complied with all court orders and legal obligations, as they always do."

Jeanine Pirro, the US attorney for Washington, defended the operation earlier this week, saying it had been approved by a federal judge mindful of constitutional protections.



KYIV: Hundreds of people gathered in front of the City State Administration building to protest and demand the resignation of Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko

Illegal Israeli settlers attack European diplomatic delegation in West Bank

RAMALLAH, (Agencies): Illegal Israeli settlers attacked a European diplomatic delegation visiting the occupied West Bank, injuring several people as representatives from France, Belgium and Poland toured the Palestinian town of Taybeh.

The attack took place after an official ceremony marking the signing of a twinning agreement between the Palestinian town of Taybeh and the French town of Saint-Pierre, Taybeh Mayor Suleiman Khourieh told media.

The ceremony was attended by the French and Belgian consuls, a Polish representative whose name was not disclosed, and Saint-Pierre Mayor Christian Ravain.

The attack targeted the delegation in the western part of the town, as well as Palestinians who were picking olives.

It left several town residents injured and shattered the window of a vehicle belonging to the Belgian delegation, Khourieh added.

Israeli Army Radio, citing witnesses and footage, also said that the occupiers hurled stones at one of the diplomatic vehicles, smashing its window.

A Washington Post journalist was also attacked by violent Israeli occupiers, in an incident condemned by the U.S. State Department.

Footage showed a member of the delegation lying on the ground after the attack. The person shown lying on the ground beside the diplomatic vehicle was Bernard Boudot, a French politician and mayor of Aulnoy-lez-Valenciennes in northern France, the broadcaster said.

Israel's Channel 12, citing the Israeli military, reported that the incident was "under review" and none had been arrested immediately.

Khourieh described the attack as "a flagrant violation of the sanctity of diplomatic and humanitarian work" and part of ongoing restrictions imposed on Palestinian farmers.

PML-N fully committed to Pakistan's development, stability, prosperity: Nawaz Sharif

Former prime minister strongly backs imposition of governor's rule in KP

LONDON: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif has strongly backed the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, declaring that the decision was necessary and should have been taken much earlier to prevent the province's deteriorating law and order situation from getting out of control.

Speaking during a meeting in London, Nawaz said the situation in KP had become increasingly alarming under the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and that the federal authorities should have intervened earlier.

He maintained that the emergency was an essential step in restoring order and addressing the security and administrative challenges facing the province.

The three-time former prime minister accused PTI of causing serious damage to KP during its nearly 13 years in power, alleging that successive PTI administrations had failed to deliver effective governance and had neglected the interests of ordinary people.

The PML-N president said the people of KP were patriotic Pakistanis who deserved better leadership and governance. He accused PTI of failing to fulfil its responsibilities towards the province and its residents.

In particularly strong criticism of the PTI leadership, Nawaz questioned the use of provincial government resources for political confrontation with the federal authorities. He asked in which country a provincial chief minister could use official resources to march on the federal capital and challenge the federation. He also questioned the justification for using the resources of one province against Islamabad and other provinces, arguing that such actions undermined the principles of responsible governance and the relationship between the federation and its constituent units.

The PML-N president said KP had finally been freed from PTI's rule, describing the development as a major relief for the province and its people.

His remarks came days after President Asif Ali Zardari approved the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in KP on October 11, following recommendations from the federal cabinet headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The federal government justified the decision by citing the worsening security situation and accusing the PTI-led provincial administration of failing to cooperate adequately in the fight against terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes reward cheques amongst the medal winners of the Asian Games.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani inaugurating the 28th Biennial international pediatric conference as chief guest.

Balochistan govt taking serious measures to ensure safety of women

Home Minister takes notice of alleged abduction of Laiba in Kalat

QUETTA, (APP): Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove took notice of the alleged abduction of Laiba Sattar in Kalat.

Special Assistant for Home Affairs Babar Yousafzai said that the provincial government is taking serious measures to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property, as well as the safety of women.

He said that Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove has sought a report on the incident from the relevant authorities.

He mentioned that the Additional Secretary for Home Affairs, along with the concerned administrative and police officials, must examine all aspects of the incident and bring the facts to light.

Pakistan's role in facilitating peaceful solutions reflects enduring value of principled, purposeful diplomacy

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Foreign Secretary Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, said that diplomacy was evolving beyond traditional statecraft to meet a changing world and emphasized that economic and public diplomacy, strategic communication, and emerging technologies are now central to how nations engage and advance their interests. "We must broaden our diplomatic horizons, embrace innovation and cultivate the ability not merely to respond to change, but to anticipate and shape it," he said in a message on the Foreign Service of Pakistan Day. The foreign secretary said the generations of Pakistani diplomats had served the nation with dedication, professionalism and quiet determination, often navigating formidable challenges with limited resources but an unwavering sense of purpose. "Their legacy is our strength, and their example our inspiration," he added. Asim Iftikhar further said that they celebrated the occasion at a particularly significant moment in Pakistan's diplomatic journey as their country's growing geopolitical relevance, expanding international engagement and increasingly recognised role in fostering dialogue, building bridges and facilitating peaceful solutions reflected the enduring value of principled and purposeful diplomacy.

PM emphasizes need to nurture domestic talent for global competitions

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, called for unhindered access to training and resources for young athletes across the country.

Speaking at a ceremony held to honour the national medalists from the recently concluded Asian Games, the prime minister announced plans to convene a comprehensive National Sports Conference.

The upcoming summit will bring together federal and provincial sports officials, legendary former sports stars, and prominent contemporary athletes to map out a strategic roadmap for reviving Pakistan's sporting prominence on the international stage.

He said the conference would discuss in detail the next steps to improve sports so the national flag can fly high again on the world stage.

The prime minister said he believed they must provide opportunities to train their athletes.

"We must provide our young players in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir with opportunities to move forward, encouraging and supporting talent wherever it exists, without discrimination," he emphasised.

The ceremony was attended by ministers, parliamentarians, relevant authorities, players, athletes and former sports legends. The prime minister, expressing his pleasure at hosting the athletes, who had won medals at the Asian Games through their hard work, tireless efforts, and the prayers of their parents, extended his heartfelt congratulations to them.

"By winning two silver and eight bronze medals, you have undoubtedly brought great honours to Pakistan in the Asian Games, but there is still plenty of room to move forward," he added.

He opined that Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with successes in different sports fields in the past. In the field of hockey, he recollected that there was a time when Pakistan's dominance was recognized worldwide, featuring legends like Hasan Sardar, Shahnaz Sheikh, Shehbaz Senior, Junior, Akhtar Rasool, and countless other hockey players who made Pakistan's name shine across the globe.

Similarly, he said in the field of cricket, Pakistan also won major events. In squash, Jahangir Khan along with Jansher Khan brought glory to the nation.

The prime minister said during his tenure in the previous government, he had directed for immediate implementation of a proposal regarding support and ownership extended to the national players.

The prime minister also distributed cheques among the winning players and said that it was a gesture to encouragement. Addressing the ceremony Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said that the prime minister had always maintained a steadfast commitment to the youth—whether it was in the field of education, technical education, IT, AI, arts and culture, science and technology, or sports, he had always encouraged the youth to step forward in every field.

He said football had a huge following in Pakistan, and the younger generation is moving forward in this field very rapidly. He highlighted that women's cricket and hockey teams were also making progress.

In sports arenas whether it is hockey, cricket, football, or other fields like volleyball, kabaddi, and numerous other sports segments, they needed to make collective efforts which also required trainers and resources.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of AJK, Syed Iftikhar Ali Gillani is meeting with PM Adviser on IPC, Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan to discuss the matters relating to the welfare of people of AJK.

Poverty eradication requires comprehensive, sustained national response: Shah

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting the dignity of citizens, reducing poverty in all its dimensions and ensuring equal opportunities for a secure, dignified and productive life.

In his message on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the minister said poverty was not merely the absence of financial resources but also a lack of opportunities, access to essential services, productive livelihoods and the means to overcome adversity.

He emphasised that poverty eradication required a comprehensive and sustained national response, placing people, particularly the most vulnerable segments of society, at the centre of public policy.

The minister said the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, recognised that inclusive economic growth must translate into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary citizens. In line with the vision of URAAN Pakistan 2024–29, the government aimed to strengthen social protection, expand economic opportunities and enhance the resilience of vulnerable households against economic hardship, unemployment, illness and climate-related disasters, he added.

Syed Imran Ahmad Shah said the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety was pursuing these objectives through its attached institutions and programmes. The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) provided an essential social safety net for deserving families, while initiatives such as Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, Benazir Nashonuma and the Benazir Hunarmand Programme supported education, improved nutrition and skills development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Syed Imran Ahmad Shah meets Mr. Halil Demir, Founder and CEO of Zakat Foundation of America, at the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Islamabad, to discuss cooperation in poverty alleviation and social welfare.

DPM orders action against hoarding, overpricing of essential commodities

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar directed the authorities to take "strict action against hoarding, artificial shortages and overpricing of essential commodities," as a government committee reviewed stock position, supply arrangements and prices, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said.

According to the post on X, MoFA said Dar chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee to review the stocks and prices of essential commodities.

The committee reviewed the "stock position, supply arrangements and prices of essential commodities", the ministry said. Dar was informed that "adequate stocks were available to meet domestic demand", with "no shortages anticipated" and prices stabilising, it added.

The deputy prime minister directed all concerned authorities to "monitor supply chains and commodity prices to facilitate domestic consumers", in line with the prime minister's directives.He stressed that "strict action would be taken against hoarding, artificial shortages and overpricing of essential commodities", the MoFA said.The meeting was attended by the ministers for National Food Security and Research and Climate Change, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa.

Russian attacks kill 8 in Ukraine, cut power to over million

MOSCOW (INP): Russian attacks killed at least eight people and injured 60 across Ukraine, hit two shopping centres and cut power to more ?than 1 million people after strikes on the energy grid, officials said.

A 71-year-old ?woman and a 58-year-old man died and 12 more people were wounded in attacks on three districts of the eastern city of Kharkiv, Governor Oleh Syniehubov said. He had earlier put the death toll at ?three. Further Russian strikes through the evening injured nine people, officials said.

Attacks in the ?frontline city of Kramatorsk in Donetsk Region killed two people and two more ?were killed in southeastern Dnipropetrovsk Region. Ukraine's energy ministry said its repair crews had ?returned power to over 1 million people who had lost it as a result of Russian ?attacks on Friday. It was not clear how many were still without power.

In the northwestern region of Volyn, which borders Poland, a drone strike on a food-processing facility killed one person and wounded eight others, ?according to Governor Roman Romaniuk. He said 370,000 people were temporarily without power in the ?morning, although 100,000 of them got supply back later on. The blackout could last for at least 24 ?hours in ?Volyn's regional capital, Lutsk, Mayor Andriy Razumovskyi said on Facebook.

Romaniuk said that drone attacks continued throughout the day, striking a customs terminal and torching about 10 trucks in the town of Kovel, which sits on a major trunk road from Kyiv to Poland. Other attacks hit at ?least two shopping centres ?one in the ?northern city of Sumy, which lies close to the front line, and one in the neighbouring region of Rivne, officials said — the latest in a ?spate of Russian assaults on malls and markets. Pictures from emergency services in Sumy showed blood spattered across the floor and shots of the centre's damaged entrance.

Balochistan Hockey Association launches training camps to revive national sport at grassroots level

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan Hockey Association (BHA) has launched training camps at two venues in Quetta to promote hockey at the grassroots level and help young players develop their skills.

The initiative is being carried out with the support of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) and Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) as part of ongoing efforts to revive the national sport and encourage participation among school students.

According to BHA General Secretary Syed Amin, the training camps are being held at Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani Hockey Ground, Ayub Stadium Quetta, and Safdar Ali Babar Hockey Ground, Gulistan Town Quetta. More than 200 students from 25 public and private schools of Quetta are participating in the programme.

The camps are aimed at introducing students to the fundamentals of hockey, including basic techniques, rules of the game and physical fitness. The initiative seeks to provide young athletes with opportunities to showcase their talent while encouraging greater engagement in sports activities.

Training sessions are focusing on the proper use of hockey sticks and balls, essential game skills and physical conditioning. Organisers believe these activities will help identify promising young players and lay the foundation for their professional development in the sport.

The Pakistan Hockey Federation and Pakistan Sports Board have also taken steps to support hockey at the school level by providing hockey kits and sports equipment to educational institutions.

The move is expected to strengthen hockey activities in schools and improve access to sports opportunities for young people.



SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif addresses the business community while congratulating newly elected Sialkot Chamber of Commerce office-bearers.



BANGKOK: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with the Ajman Bank delegation to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook and financing partnership.

Govt rejects Achakzai's demand for alternative venue for talks with PM

LAHORE (INP): The government has rejected Opposition Leader Mahmood Achakzai's demand of a third venue for his meeting with the prime minister.

In a statement, Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah made it clear that the meeting between the prime minister and the opposition leader would take place at the Prime Minister's House, ruling out any alternative venue.

Rana Sanaullah said the Prime Minister's House was state property, not anyone's personal possession. He said similar stubbornness had been displayed in the past, adding that such an approach was unacceptable. The prime minister would meet the opposition leader at the Prime Minister's House only.

He said the prime minister had written two letters to the opposition leader regarding the appointment of the chief election commissioner and members of the Election Commission. One letter was sent before the prime minister's departure for the United States, while the second was dispatched after his return. The government was awaiting a response from the opposition leader. The prime minister's adviser asked Mahmood Achakzai to specify when he intended to visit the prime minister for the meeting, adding that the government was ready to welcome him.

Rana Sanaullah said unconditional negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were possible, but talks could not be held on the condition that the emergency measures be withdrawn. He added that PTI had not given negotiations a proper chance in the first place.

He said the setup established under the emergency measures would be given adequate time.

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