

SC dismisses Punjab appeals
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has dismissed the Punjab government's appeals seeking physical remand of Imran Khan, stating that the remand is no longer applicable due to the passage of one and a half years since his arrest. Justice Hashim Kakar, while heading bench, remarked, "It has been over 18 months since the accused's arrest and the question of physical remand doesn't arise anymore."



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Polio case reported
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the NIH has confirmed a polio case from District Torghar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This is the second polio case from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the seventh case from Pakistan at large this year. The second nationwide (NID) Polio campaign of the year is currently in progress in the country.

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ANKARA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif departs for Islamabad after completion of his two day official visit to Turkiye.

Aurangzeb highlights economic stability

— seeks constructive engagement with US on trade

WASHINGTON (APP): Showcasing progress on sustainable growth, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed economic stability, reforms, investment opportunities, climate challenges, and trade during a series of high-level meetings in Washington, DC, including seeking constructive engagement with the United States on trade relations.

The finance minister is in Washington for the annual spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, according to press release issued by finance ministry here Wednesday. The minister participated in the G-24 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting and as the Second Vice Chair of the group, he highlighted Pakistan's macroeconomic stability, achieved through resilient banking systems and sustained structural reforms.

He emphasized the need to stay the course on reforms amidst global economic challenges, including geopolitical dynamics, trade fragmentation, and protectionism. Additionally, he underscored the importance of regional corridors, trade connectivity, and South-South collaboration to enhance investment and trade flows. During an IMF-hosted panel discussion titled "Revenue Mobilization in the Medium Term," the finance minister outlined Pakistan's efforts to broaden and deepen the tax base to ensure that sectors like agriculture, real estate, and retail contribute proportionally to GDP.

"These strategies include enhancing contributions from key economic sectors, transforming the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) through technological advancements and process improvements, minimizing taxpayer-collector interface, strengthening enforcement and compliance, and utilizing AI for customized audits," said the finance minister. Aurangzeb also participated in a

fireside chat at the Atlantic Council's GeoEconomics Center, addressing "Challenges and Opportunities for the Pakistani Economy through 2025 and Beyond." He outlined the government's reform agenda, which includes digitalization of FBR, enhanced provincial involvement in the tax collection, and provinces' legislation on the Agriculture Income Tax.

"Through ongoing efforts to rationalize federal spending and collaborate with provinces under a National Fiscal Pact, we're building sustainable economic foundations," added the Minister. The finance minister also addressed climate and population challenges, highlighting the World Bank's 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Pakistan. The Minister affirmed the government's commitment to launching the Panda Bond and appreciated multilateral institutions' efforts in ensuring better coordination on risk analysis and due diligence.

"We are finalizing a green taxonomy framework through the State Bank, paving the way for innovative instruments such as green bonds, green sukuk, and the country's inaugural Panda bond, proceeds of which will be linked to SDG-aligned projects," said Senator Aurangzeb.

Expressing the government's desire for improved trade relations with the US, Aurangzeb emphasized plans for constructive engagement with the US to address trade imbalances, with a high-level delegation expected to visit soon. In a meeting with institutional investors, Minister Aurangzeb provided updates on Pakistan's economic outlook, fiscal and monetary developments, and reform progress. He highlighted the country's macroeconomic stabilization and the recent credit rating upgrade by Fitch, which has opened avenues for Pakistan's return to financial markets through enhanced investor confidence that.

Trump hints at substantially cutting tariffs on China

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Donald Trump backed off from threats to fire Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell after days of intensifying criticisms of the central bank chief for not cutting interest rates. "I have no intention of firing him," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Tuesday. "I would like to see him be a little more active in terms of his idea to lower interest rates," he added.

The de-escalation drew an immediate thumbs up from Wall Street, as equity index futures jumped by nearly 2% on the resumption of trading on Tuesday evening. Stocks, bonds and the US dollar had all slumped on Monday after Trump over the Easter holiday weekend repeatedly attacked Powell for not cutting interest rates further since the president resumed office in January. "Whether this reflects Monday's brutal foretaste of what would happen in markets if he did try to fire Powell, or was the plan all along, it is a clear positive," wrote Evercore ISI Vice Chairman Krishna Guha. "It materially reduces the likelihood of worst case outcomes including stagflation and the morphing of the tariff crisis into a sovereign debt crisis, though these risks remain."

Also during his question-and-answer volley with reporters on Tuesday, Trump expressed optimism

that a trade deal with China could "substantially" cut tariffs, which also provided a boost for investors. He said a deal would result in "substantially" lower tariffs on Chinese goods, suggesting that a final deal will not "be anywhere near" current tariff rates. But "it won't be zero," he added. He said that if China does not agree to a deal on trade, the US will set the terms. Trump also told reporters he would be very nice in negotiations with Beijing.

The combination of the rocky rollout of Trump's tariffs and, more recently, his repeated barbs at Powell and the Fed had rattled investors and intensified selling of US assets including stocks, US Treasuries and the dollar. Trump's broadsides were often accompanied by threatening remarks, such as last week's social media posting that Powell's termination as Fed chair "cannot come fast enough" and more personal jabs, such as calling Powell "a major loser." The threats spooked financial markets that view the Fed's independence as critical to underpinning its credibility as the world's most influential central bank and a cornerstone of global financial stability.

But while Trump seems to have set aside those threats for now, his criticisms of Fed rate policy remain just as pointed. "We think that it's a perfect time

to lower the rate, and we'd like to see our chairman be early or on time, as opposed to late," Trump said. Trump's sour grapes with Powell date back to the Republican's first term in the White House. Trump elevated Powell from a Fed Board of Governors member to the central bank's head but was soon irritated by ongoing rate increases under Powell's watch. Trump openly mused about firing Powell, but was ultimately dissuaded by his advisers.

Whether Trump has the authority is unclear. Powell, for his part, insists that the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 that created the central bank will not allow it. Trump, meanwhile, has said that if he wanted Powell out, he would be gone "real fast." The law stipulates that the seven Fed governors, appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate to staggered 14-year terms, can only be removed for "cause" - long thought to mean misconduct, not policy disagreement.

That said, the law omits reference to limits on removal from its description of the four-year term of the Fed chair, who is one of the seven governors. Trump's harsh rhetoric came alongside court cases now proceeding over his firing of officials from other independent federal boards and agencies.

Two Levies personnel killed in Mastung

F.P. Report

MASTUNG: Two levies personnel were fatally shot during an assault on a polio team in the Union Council Mubi Killi Teeri area of Mastung district, Balochistan, on Wednesday.

According to levies officials, Nek Muhammad and Maqsood Ahmed, tasked with the security of the polio team, were killed by unidentified gunmen. The bodies were transported to Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital in Mastung. In response, security forces have secured the area and initiated operations to track down the attackers.

The provincial government strongly condemned an attack targeting Levies personnel in Mastung, aimed at sabotaging a polio vaccination campaign. Spokesman Shahid Rind underscored that a thorough investigation has been launched to examine all facets of the incident. He emphasized the unwavering resolve of the government to continue with the polio campaign despite the attack.

Rind paid tribute to the fallen Levies personnel who were guarding the polio teams and assured that security measures are being enhanced to protect healthcare workers throughout the province. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to not let such incidents derail public health efforts.

Meanwhile, a fatal road accident near Sapat on the Mekran coastal highway resulted in the death of four individuals and left four others injured on Wednesday. Rescue officials revealed that a collision occurred between a Chinken car and a truck on the highway in Lasbella district, Balochistan. The victims, all from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, were transported to Civil Hospital Uthal. The deceased underwent medico-legal procedures, while the injured received medical attention.



WASHINGTON: Finance Minister, Senator Aurangzeb participating in 13th ministerial meeting of coalition of finance ministers for climate action on the sidelines of IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2025.

Bilawal urges swift relief efforts in rain-hit G-B

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed deep sorrow over the losses caused by ongoing rains in Gilgit-Baltistan and underscored the urgent need for swift and effective relief and rehabilitation efforts.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP said that due to rains and landslides in Gilgit-Baltistan, the property of many citizens has been damaged. Therefore, the federal government and the government of Gilgit-Baltistan must take immediate steps for the relief and rehabilitation of the affected people. He emphasized the need to ensure the restoration of internet, mobile services, and electricity supply across Gilgit-Baltistan, including Ghizer and Ghanche districts. He also urged the authorities to take prompt action to reopen the roads blocked by landslides.

Bilawal said that Gilgit-Baltistan, like the rest of Pakistan, is facing unpredictable weather patterns due to climate change, adding that on one hand, the rapid melting of gla-

ciers and the bursting of glacial lakes in the northern areas pose a serious threat to local populations, while on the other hand, the southern regions of the country are experiencing severe drought.

He said that under such circumstances, the government must fulfill its responsibilities swiftly and within strict timelines to protect the people from further loss and suffering.

Meanwhile, the Central Secretary Information, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Nadeem Afzal Chan, and In-charge of Peoples Labour Bureau Pakistan, Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed have said that the PPP wants to move forward on issues like terrorism and canals by taking all parties on board.

Both PPP leaders said this while addressing a press conference at the PPP Central Secretariat in Islamabad on Wednesday morning.

Chaudhry Manzoor said that the PPP is never talked about division and the party is not into point-scoring. The PPP always protects the right of the people. If there's already a water shortage, then where will the water for new canals

come from, he asked. Farmers are already facing difficulties and like always the PPP is standing with them. The PPP is aligned with the system and democracy and not the government. Our objective is not to topple anyone, but to resolve public issues and ensure people's rights.

Nadeem Afzal Chan responding to the Punjab government's information minister said that the PML-N is not the sole representative of Punjab. The PML-N could be the heir of General Zia ul Haq but not Punjab because the heirs do not sell people's properties worth billions.

Chan further said that at the moment the country is facing multiple challenges. The PPP is ready to debate the water issue. Talks are ongoing with the government on political matters. He said that the PPP is in coalition for the parliament and with the parliamentary system and not just with the PML-N.

Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed said that the President of Pakistan has not approved the canal projects. Why hasn't a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) been called, he asked.

Khalid posted as KP Secy Info



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Khalid, a Grade-20 officer of the Provincial Management Services, has been appointed as Secretary of the Information & Public Relations Department.

This announcement was made in a notification issued by the Establishment Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

JUI-F rejects mines and minerals bill

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday ruled out a formal opposition alliance but kept the doors of cooperation open for collaboration on individual issues.

"There is no concept of a formal alliance in the opposition... that's typically a future of the government," the religio-political leader said while addressing a press conference after his party's Majlis-e-Shura meeting in Lahore.

Addressing the presser on Wednesday, Fazl noted that his party's shura has decided against forming a formal alliance," adding that the JUI-F would continue its political struggle independently from its own platform. The party chief added that any strategy for collaboration with parliamentary parties would be chalked out by the party's consultative and executive bodies.

Responding to a question, the senior politician clarified that it was the JUI-F that supported the 26th Constitutional Amendment at the request of PTI, not the other way around.

The Frontier Post



LAHORE: Motorcyclists carry solar panels on Davis Road under Punjab Chief Minister's solar scheme, aimed at reducing electricity bills for low-consumption households. —APP Photo

The Resistance Front - An Indigenous struggle against Indian oppression

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In recent Pahalgam incident, India is falsely linking TRF with LeT & Pakistan.

The Resistance Front (TRF), an indigenous Kashmiri group, as per RAW allegedly claimed responsibility for the killing of 27 individuals, including foreign nationals, from a Hindu tourist group in Pahalgam, IIOJK.

TRF was established in October 2019, following India's abrogation of Article 370, which revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special autonomous status.

In 2023, Indian authorities proscribed TRF under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), declaring it a terrorist organization.

Operating under the slogan "Resistance till Victory", TRF opposes Indian occupation and demographic manipulation in IIOJK.

In a 2019 statement, TRF warned that Indians attempting to settle in Kashmir would be regarded as RSS agents rather than civilians and would be dealt with accordingly.

TRF cited the issuance of over 85,000 domiciles to non-locals—arriving as tourists and claiming ownership of land—as justification for the Pahalgam attack.

India's attempt to link the now-defunct Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) to the incident serves as a strategic diversion; LeT, being proscribed and non-operational in Pakistan, lacks any capacity for planning or executing such activities.

The fabricated connection between Saifullah Kasuri (ex-LeT) already dead in 2020 and TRF reflects India's ongoing practice of scapegoating Pakistan to obscure internal security lapses.

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Pahalgam: An addition to India's False Flag Chronicles

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: India's habit of blaming Pakistan—without evidence—follows its hybrid war script: demonize Pakistan, distract the public, and manipulate elections. The pattern is old, but the tactics remain deadly and timed to perfection.

Notable False Flags:

- Samjhauta Express (2007): 68 dead. Pakistan blamed, but probe exposed Hindu extremists, incl. Indian Army's Major Ramesh.
- Mumbai Attacks (2008): Used to frame Pakistan globally. In 2013, ex-CBI officer Satish Verma revealed Indian govt orchestrated it to push counter-terror laws.
- April 31, 2018: Just before Kerala, MP & Rajasthan elections—Kerala tourists attacked in IOK. Political timing, again.
- Pulwama (2019): 40 soldiers killed. Modi blamed Pakistan immediately. No proof. Ex-IIOJK Governor later exposed the staged plot.
- Rajouri (2023): 5 soldiers dead. Modi was busy rallying—attack fit BJP's anti-Pak/Muslim narrative.
- Pahalgam Attack (2025): Another false flag—coincides with US VP JD Vance's visit. Aimed at framing Pak again.

IIOJ&K is under lockdown with 700,000 Indian troops—1 soldier for every 7 civilians. In such a security grid, how do these attacks even happen?

India's narrative isn't just flawed—it's exposed.

FIA cracks down on hawala network

LAHORE (APP): The Corporate Crime Circle of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore has conducted a significant operation against individuals involved in illegal hawala/hundi activities.

During the operation, a suspect identified as Hammad Hassan was arrested in Lahore for his involvement in the illegal transfer of funds through the hawala/hundi system. A spokesperson said authorities recovered over Rs 12.2 million in local currency from the suspect during a raid. In addition to the cash, hawala receipts, mobile phones and other incriminating evidence were also seized.

The suspect failed to satisfy officials regarding the source and intended use of the recovered money. Preliminary investigations indicate that he was operating an unauthorised currency exchange business without a valid licence. FIA officials have initiated a detailed investigation following the arrest.

Upgradation of DG Khan Airport for A320 operations by end of 2026



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Airports Authority held its monthly e-Kacheri today, presided over by Deputy Director General Works & Development, Mr. Sumair Saeed. A key highlight was the announcement of the upgradation of Dera Ghazi Khan Airport to accommodate A320 operations, expected to be completed by the end of next year.

During the session, Mr. Saeed also informed that airside improvement and parking facility enhancement are planned for Peshawar's Bacha Khan International Airport. Addressing flight connectivity, he shared that a business plan has been floated to airlines offering attractive incentives to initiate operations from Gwadar to Punjab and other destinations.

The Deputy DG addressed several public complaints including flight delays, missing baggage, and airline staff behavior, instructing that such matters be compiled and referred to the Civil Aviation Authority with a detailed report. He also directed that tetanus injections be included in all airport first-aid kits following a complaint from a passenger at Lahore airport.

In response to employment-related queries from airport services APS and Zhob Airport staff, Mr. Saeed assured that contract and salary matters are under active consideration and decisions are expected shortly. He concluded by thanking participants for their valuable input, affirming PAA's commitment to continuous improvement.

Strict action underway against illegal organ transplants: Salman

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has reiterated the government's commitment to cracking down on illegal human organ transplantation across the province. He made these remarks while presiding over the 34th meeting of the Monitoring Authority of the Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA), held at the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department on Wednesday.

The minister stated that, in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, PHOTA's capacity is being enhanced to curb unlawful practices and provide the best possible healthcare to citizens. He also emphasized that the PHOTA amendment bill is being actively pursued.

Director General PHOTA, Professor Muhammad Aamir Zaman Khan, presented several agendas for approval during the session. The meeting approved the minutes of the 33rd Monitoring Authority meeting and reviewed its implementation report. Registrations for renal, bone marrow, and corneal transplants at various public and private hospitals were also approved.

Proposals regarding the construction of a new building for the PHOTA Head Office were discussed during the session.

Key attendees included Additional Secretary Technical Dr. Muhammad Waseem, CEO Punjab Healthcare Commission Dr. Saqib Aziz, Professor Ashraf Nizami of the Pakistan Medical Association, Professor Nasir Chaudhry from King Edward Medical University, and other notable health professionals. Dean of the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute, Professor Faisal Saud Dar, along with representatives from the Transplantation Society, Muhammad Asif and Yasir Khan, joined via video link.

LHC holds meeting with provincial bar leaders to discuss judicial reforms

LAHORE (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Aalia Neelum on Wednesday held a meeting with the presidents of High Court Bar Associations from across the province.

The meeting was attended by Lahore High Court Bar Association President Malik Asif Nisoana, Rawalpindi High Court Bar Association President Ahsan Hameed Lilla, Multan High Court Bar Association President Malik Javed Dogar, and Bahawalpur High Court Bar Association President Ch. Nadeem Iqbal.

During the meeting, discussions were held on challenges faced by the legal community, reforms, and administrative matters. The chief justice briefed the bar leaders on judicial reforms and new standard operating procedures (SOPs). She informed the bar representatives about new SOPs for case circulation in the district judiciary, stating that these measures have been implemented on the orders of the Supreme Court to prevent bogus and fabricated cases. She emphasized that effective mechanisms have been introduced to curb fraudulent withdrawals from the government treasury using fake documents.

Justice Neelum stated that it is now mandatory to complete all case information sheets thoroughly. The information sheet must include the plaintiff's or petitioner's signature or thumb impression along with a photograph. Additionally, plaintiffs or petitioners can complete photo verification via webcam from any location. The information sheet must also include the CNIC number and mobile number of the plaintiff or petitioner, she added.

The chief justice further highlighted the heavy caseload at the Lahore High Court, noting that traditional methods are insufficient to handle the growing volume of cases. She stressed the need for modern approaches to expedite case resolutions.

Major upcoming changes include a coloured file cover system—effective from June 2025—to differentiate civil, criminal, family, and commercial cases, with specially marked covers for writ petitions. The court's digital transformation features prominently, with live cause lists now available through the Lahore High Court mobile app, and plans to install LCD screens outside courtrooms for real-time case updates, she added.

Concluding the session, LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum urged bar leaders to actively disseminate information about these reforms through their communication networks.

Books as bridges between generations and cultures

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah issued an important message on World Book and Copyright Day, stating that books serve as bridges connecting generations and cultures. He encouraged the youth to develop a friendship with books, considering it a key to progress.

The Chief Minister emphasized that reading books broadens the mind and improves society. He stressed that when libraries thrive, minds are enlightened, and literature reflects our civilization and identity.

Syed Murad Ali Shah emphasized the responsibility of promoting Urdu and Sindh language and literature, urging young people to study literature and connect with their history and heritage.

The Chief Minister highlighted the importance of promoting books for knowledge, literacy, and social development, deeming it essential for the current times. He stated that the Sindh government is taking steps to cultivate a passion for reading among the youth.

In his message on the English Language Day, the Chief Minister remarked that Shakespeare's language serves as a medium to connect the world. He highlighted the importance of English, noting that it has become a key language for global diplomacy and communication.

The Chief Minister stated that by promoting English education, global opportunities can be accessed, and efforts are being made to enhance the teaching of English in our schools and universities. He also paid tribute to Shakespeare's literary contributions.

PA unanimously condemns terrorism

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution condemning terrorism and paying tribute to the valor of Punjab Police officers who thwarted an attack in early March.

The resolution, presented by MPA and Chairperson of the Punjab Women Protection Authority, Hina Parvez Butt, recognised the heroic efforts of law-enforcement personnel during a March 2 ambush by Khawarij terrorists in the Kot Mubarak area, near the Punjab-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa border.

Mayor Karachi departs on a 3-day visit to China

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, has departed on a three-day official visit to China on the special invitation of the Mayor of Shanghai, Gong Zheng.

The purpose of this visit is to enhance bilateral relations between Karachi and Shanghai and to further expand mutual cooperation in the field of urban development. This visit is being considered a significant step forward for Karachi.

Accompanying the Mayor are KMC Municipal Commissioner S.M. Afzal Zaidi, Financial Advisor Gulzar Ali Abro, and Senior Director Sports and Culture Mehdi Maloof. The delegation will observe various urban development projects in Shanghai.

Before the visit, Barrister Murtaza Wahab held an important meeting at Bilawal House with Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. During the meeting, the Mayor briefed the Chairman on the invitation extended by the Shanghai Mayor and the details of the proposed visit.

During his stay in Shanghai, the Mayor of Karachi is expected to meet with senior Chinese officials, where they will discuss potential cooperation in key sectors including urban development, infrastructure, and transport. The aim of these meetings is to promote institutional collaboration between the two cities.

This visit could mark the beginning of a new chapter in Karachi's urban development. By learning from the experiences and development models of a modern city like Shanghai, Karachi can take important steps toward progress. Under the leadership of Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, this initiative is expected to lay the foundation for long-lasting and purposeful relations between the two cities.

Palestinian ambassador calls for Muslim unity

RAWALPINDI (APP): Dr Zaheer Zaid, Palestine's Ambassador to Pakistan, has called for Muslim unity amid the ongoing Gaza crisis, during a solidarity walk organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (RCCI) here on Wednesday.

The event, attended by Federal Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi, RCCI Group Leader Sohail Altaf, President small Traders Association, Sherjeel Mir, Muhammad Rizwan and a large number of trader and general public. The walk started from the Chamber building to the Gymkhana Club.

Protesters carried banners, Palestinian flags, symbolic coffins, and chanted slogans against Israeli aggression. "Thousands of Palestinians have been martyred by Israeli brutality. Pakistan's unwavering support is commendable," said Dr. Zaid, praising the business community for standing with Palestine.

He urged the Muslim world to unite and "become the voice of the oppressed." Sherjeel Mir emphasized the need for Muslim unity in the face of Israeli aggression in Gaza. Mir said that Muslims are united like a single body, feeling each other's pain.

He condemned the ongoing violence in Gaza as intolerable and called for decisive action. The business leader announced that Pakistani traders would observe a nationwide strike on April 26 to show solidarity with Palestinians.

He urged the complete boycott of Israeli products, describing it as a religious obligation for all Muslims. Earlier in the event, RCCI Group Leader, Sohail Altaf expressed deep regret over the Muslim world's inability to effectively respond to the crisis. "Despite our vast numbers, we have failed to stand against a small nation," he said. Participants at the solidarity walk carried Palestinian flags and symbolic coffins while chanting slogans against Israeli violence.

Pakistan fully prepared to counter any aggression: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari released a forceful video statement, responding to what she called a "false flag drama", orchestrated by India.

She warned that Pakistan is fully prepared to counter any act of aggression and will respond with strength if provoked. She expressed deep regret over the recent incident in Srinagar, questioning how such an attack could take place in a zone heavily militarised with over 700,000 Indian troops.

"Even the Indian public is asking how this could happen in such a sensitive area," she noted, pointing out that critical questions about previous incidents remain unanswered — further fueling suspicions of a staged operation.

"This is yet another cowardly attempt, just like the ones India has made in the past, aimed at falsely accusing Pakistan," Azma said.

Addressing India's rhetoric, Azma Bokhari remarked, "I've heard some empty threats being thrown around. Our tea is indeed excellent, but we don't always serve it. A guest once in a while is tolerable — but if guests become frequent, Pakistan's army, its people, and its government know how to respond accordingly."

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Sultan Fayaz	200131
Naseem Gul	200088
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Cell # 0326-8288052

Letters for the same have been dispatched to all account holders.



PHC grants status quo against cancellation of Pakistanis CNICs

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a stay order against the orders of cancellation of national identity cards and deportation of Pakistani citizens by the district administration of Bajaur, on Wednesday.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Khurshid Iqbal issued the stay order after hearing the petition. The petitioners claimed that they are Pakistani citizens by birth and have records of their national identity cards and property in Pakistan.

The petitioners' counsel argued that the revenue officers exceeded their jurisdiction by

declaring the petitioners as foreigners based on ration passes, which were meant for distribution of rations to underprivileged classes and Afghan refugees. The petitioners' counsel argued that revenue officers' role is to decide property disputes, not to determine citizenship. The court sought responses from NADRA, Ministry of Interior, Additional Assistant Commissioner, and Additional Deputy Commissioner Bajaur. The court directed that no action be taken against the petitioners until further orders.

PHC suspends Captive Power Levy on generating electricity from gas

A divisional bench of

Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Qazi Jawad has suspended the collection of the "Captive Power Levy" imposed on industries generating electricity from gas, on Wednesday.

The petitioners' counsel argued that the levy was imposed without consulting the relevant industries and without considering their production capacity and other factors.

The levy was imposed under the "Off-the-Grid (Captive Power Plants) Levy Ordinance, 2025," which was issued in January 2025. The ordinance imposed a levy of Rs. 791 per MMBTU on all captive power producers.

The counsel Shumail Ahmad Butt advocate argued that the government did not consult the relevant industries while fixing the levy rate and did not consider their production capacity and other factors.

PHC directed the government to suspend the collection of the levy until further orders. The court also directed the government to submit a detailed response to the petition.

It is worthy to mention that Islamabad High Court had also suspended the collection of a similar levy, but later lifted the stay and directed the government to refund the collected amount if the ordinance is not approved by parliament.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairs a review meeting on the ongoing anti-polio campaign.

Election Commission trying to eliminate gender gap in electoral rolls

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Election Commission is striving to eliminate the gender gap in electoral rolls. This was stated today by the Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Elections), Mr. Muhammad Fareed Afridi, while addressing a meeting of the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group held at the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting was aimed at facilitating women in obtaining their Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs).

He mentioned that the fifth phase of the Inclusive Women CNIC & Voter Registration Campaign has been launched recently by the Election Commission to reduce the gender gap in

electoral rolls. The meeting was attended by Director Elections Mr. Muhammad Nadeem Khan, spokesperson of the Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. Suhail Ahmad, representatives from NADRA, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Commission, and civil society organizations.

Mr. Fareed Afridi further stated that the previous four phases of this campaign have promoted equal electoral participation for women and other marginalized groups, thereby strengthening their involvement in the democratic process.

He emphasized that democracy flourishes when every voice is heard and every citizen is given the opportunity to shape their future through their vote. The Joint Provincial

Election Commissioner proudly shared that the Election Commission has successfully reduced the gender gap in electoral rolls from 11.8% to 7.4% as of January 2025, which is a clear testament to the tireless efforts of the Commission. He congratulated all stakeholders who worked diligently during the previous four phases of the campaign, enabling this important milestone to be achieved.

He added that the Election Commission has also developed a five-year action plan to ensure greater inclusion and representation of women and marginalized communities. A special budgeting process has been initiated in this regard.

Mr. Fareed Afridi reiterated that this campaign is not merely a publicity

drive, but a joint legal obligation of the Election Commission and NADRA.

On this occasion, Director Elections Mr. Muhammad Nadeem emphasized the need for joint efforts to ensure the registration and participation of every citizen, especially women and marginalized groups, in the electoral process.

Representatives from civil society shared their suggestions and assured full support to the Election Commission in its campaign for registering underrepresented communities, particularly women.

NADRA's Deputy Director, Mr. Shahid Khan, briefed the participants on the special measures taken by NADRA to facilitate the public, especially women, transgender persons, and senior citizens.

KPFS&HFA spurs crack down on adulteration

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFS&HFA) has intensified its crackdown against food adulteration and the sale of substandard food items, conducting major operations across Peshawar, Swabi, and Mansehra.

According to a spokesperson for the authority, food safety teams carried out inspections at various locations on Thursday. In Peshawar's Charsadda Road area, raids were conducted at spice manufacturing units located in Mirch Mandi. During the inspection, one facility was found mixing wheat husk (choker) into spices. The team seized 75 kilo-

grams of choker, 750 kilograms of adulterated spices, and 8 litres of non-food grade coloured oil. Legal proceedings initiated against the factory owners, and the seized items have been sent to the laboratory for testing.

In a separate raid in the Durankpur area of Peshawar, authorities discovered a ketchup manufacturing unit producing substandard products. Around 600 litres of substandard ketchup were discarded on the spot, while another 300 litres of processed ketchup were confiscated, and the factory was sealed.

The spokesperson further revealed that in the Chota Lahore area of Swabi, nearly 850 bottles of counterfeit and substandard cold drinks and juices

were recovered from a wholesaler. The stock was taken into government custody, and legal action was initiated.

Meanwhile, in Mansehra, food safety teams inspected multiple shops and confiscated more than 450 kilograms of substandard tea. Heavy fines were imposed on the violators.

Commenting on the actions, KP Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, said, "Those involved in food adulteration are enemies of humanity. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy against such elements. Playing with public health is unacceptable. Ensuring the supply of safe and quality food remains a top priority of the provincial government."

Toru visits high-tech central food testing lab

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru paid a detailed visit to the under-construction Central Food Testing Laboratory in Hayatabad, a flagship project of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority.

During the visit, Director General Wasif Saeed briefed the minister on the ongoing civil works, the deployment of advanced food testing equipment, and the laboratory's readiness to support scientific food safety protocols across the province.

The state-of-the-art facility is being outfitted with cutting-edge machinery including Milko Scan, Meat Testing Lab, CDR LAB, P-NIR, IDEX Solution, ELISA Reader, and incubators, which are already functional. Additional sophisticated devices such as TDS Meter, iCheck Chroma, Sonicator, Laminar Flow Hood, Autoclave, pH Meter, HPLC, UHPLC, Spectrophotometer, PCR, Proximate NIR, and BAX Q7 are installed and will soon be fully operational.

The minister was further informed that the laboratory is designed to test a wide variety of food items snacks, beverages, ghee and oil, meat, spices, milk, water, and other consumables, ensuring compliance with national and international food safety standards.

It also includes specialized systems to detect halal and non-halal ingredients in food products.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Zahir Shah Toru expressed satisfaction with the lab's partial functionality, noting that the project is now in its final stages.

He announced that the Chief Minister, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, will soon perform the formal inauguration of the facility.

"This is the first-of-its-kind high-tech food testing laboratory in Pakistan, and a major step toward strengthening scientific food regulation in the province," said the minister.

Toru added that 12 mobile food testing laboratories are already operational and providing services across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The minister reiterated the provincial government's commitment to ensuring safe, healthy, and high-quality food for all citizens, stating, "Healthy food is the foundation of a healthy society." He further emphasized that the establishment of the static laboratory will not only improve quality control at production units but will also raise awareness among stakeholders regarding food safety standards.

The provincial government is actively working to equip the Food Authority with even more modern and robust testing technologies in the near future.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid visited the Azam Park Sheikhabad Payment Camp Site in Peshawar, where she reviewed the facilities provided to deserving women collecting their quarterly Kafaalat installments.

Senator Rubina Khalid instructed BISP staff to treat elderly women with respect, maintain cleanliness at the payment centers, and ensure the availability of clean drinking water.

While addressing the deserving women, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that there is no survey form or survey fee in BISP-the survey is completely free of charge. She explained



that once a survey has been conducted, it cannot be repeated for at least two years, and she urged the women not to gather repeatedly at the camp site for survey purposes.

She further advised the women to register the mobile number currently in use during the survey process and to avoid

changing the registered number.

Senator Rubina Khalid instructed recipients to count and receive their full assistance amount and to ensure they obtain a receipt from the bank representative.

She reiterated that any deduction from the stipend amount is strictly prohibited.

In case of any deduction, recipients should immediately register a complaint by calling the BISP helpline at 0800-26477 or by contacting the nearest BISP office. Senator Rubina Khalid warned that strict action will be taken against those involved in unauthorized deductions.

Govt focuses on modernizing tourism, preserving cultural heritage

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, Zahid Chanzeb, chaired an important meeting at his office in the Civil Secretariat Peshawar with Chairman of the Standing Committee on Tourism, Culture, Archaeology, and Museums, Mian Sharafat Ali. Committee members Munir Hussain

Laghmani and Ikram Ghazi were also in attendance.

The meeting focused on aligning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism sector with modern standards, preserving the province's rich cultural heritage, and safeguarding historical sites for future generations.

Participants exchanged views on the challenges currently facing the tourism sector and pre-

sented a range of suggestions to address them.

Advisor Zahid Chanzeb provided insights on the questions submitted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly to the standing committee and shared details of the government's current strategy for tourism and cultural development.

He emphasized that tourism and culture not only hold immense potential for contributing to the

province's economic growth but also play a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for its citizens.

The meeting concluded with a consensus that immediate and priority-based actions are required to overcome barriers in the tourism sector. It was agreed that efforts will be intensified to enhance tourism infrastructure in line with international standards.



PESHAWAR: A view of national and police flags in dilapidated condition being hoisted at Traffic Police Headquarters needs attention of the authorities concerned. — INP photo

Enable digital payments for public services KPITB signs strategic agreement with 1LINK

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) has signed a strategic agreement with 1LINK, Pakistan's leading payment system and bill aggregator, to enable digital payment solutions for public sector services across the province.

This initiative is aligned with the vision of the Honorable Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote transparency, financial inclusion, and citizen convenience through digital

transformation.

Through this collaboration, a wide range of government services will be integrated with 1LINK's Bill Aggregation System (BAS), allowing citizens to make payments via internet banking, mobile applications, ATMs, and agent networks supported by all major banks and digital wallets. The system ensures real-time transaction processing through a secure and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)-compliant infrastructure.

It eliminates the need for citizens to visit physical payment counters, offering a streamlined and

accessible experience.

Additionally, it enhances government revenue collection, minimizes leakages, and ensures efficient cash flow with real-time traceability.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Science, Technology & IT, said the initiative demonstrates the government's commitment to building a digitally empowered Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By adopting smart technologies, the province is making public services more accessible, efficient, and secure for all citizens.



In brief

TMA efforts continue F.P. Report

BUNER: Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Daggar special cleanliness campaign will be continued with full swing till the end of April as per provincial government directions. This was claimed by cleaning campaign in-charge Sadaqat Khan told The Frontier Post and added that the cleanliness special campaign was started from April 14 on the instructions of the provincial government. He added that the campaign is going on in full swing in the premises of District Court Daggar, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan Colony Daggar, DHQ Hospital Daggar Bazaar and in the second phase, Daggar Kalay Bazaar, Elai Spin Toot Bazaar and Anghapur Pai China Bazaar, Bagra Bazaar, Gokand Bazaar, Krapa Bazaar and Navy Kalay Bazaar will be cleaned. The in-charge further said during this cleanliness special campaign which was launched on the instructions of TMO Zahor Ahmed Khan, garbage lying in different places will be collected and blocked drains will be cleaned/ opened by using big machinery and the garbage will be loaded in tractor trolleys and dumpers and to be transported to the already established big garbage dumping sites of the TMA.

Security steps inspected F.P. Report

BANNU: Anti-polio vaccination campaign continues across the district for the second day under strict security arrangements. Regional Police Officer and District Police Officer are present in the field. Under the directions of RPO Imran Shahid and DPO Saleem Abbas Kalachi, extraordinary security measures have been implemented throughout the district during the anti-polio campaign. On the second day, the campaign continued within a complete security cordon, where police officers and personnel are performing their duties with utmost seriousness. The RPO and DPO personally remained in the field and reviewed the ongoing security arrangements in various areas. They conducted direct inspections of BHUs (Basic Health Units), vaccination teams' security, and police deployments, issuing instructions to ensure timely response to any potential threat. During this time, SDPOs of the respective circles also visited different BHUs periodically, met with on-duty police personnel, and assessed their performance. Important instructions were given to the police officials, including staying fully alert while on duty. Use of helmets and jackets were made mandatory, mobile phone usage was strictly prohibited, and keeping a close watch on suspicious individuals. RPO Imran Shahid while talking to media stated that Bannu police is committed to public service, and is actively working for a safe future for children and is determined to provide every possible protection to the anti-polio campaign.

Lawyer Ismail passes away F.P. Report

SUJAWAL: A prominent figure in Sindh's legal community, a respected social advocate, and a powerful voice for human rights, Muhammad Ismail Memon passed away late Tuesday night at his residence in Jati town, Sujawal district, after a brief illness. He was 76 years old. His elder son, Dr. Basit Ali, reported that his father had been suffering from multiple health issues and succumbed to an asthma attack.

Wafaqi Mohtasib resolves to provide justice at doorstep



F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has called upon the government functionaries to ensure implementation of the institution's decisions for providing immediate relief to the complainants. These views were expressed by him while presiding over a meeting with the local heads of the Federal Government agencies at Abbottabad this afternoon.

He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib is in essence the poor man's court, committed to providing speedy redressal to the marginalized and backward segments of the society. He urged the government officials to spare no efforts for the resolution of public complaints.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib, on the occasion, also referred to the outgoing year 2024, terming it as eventful and productive in the sense that the office received a large number of complaints totaling 226,373, out of which, he said, 223,198 have been resolved satisfactorily. This marked an increase of 17% and 16% in the receipt and disposal respectively over the figures of 2023, he added. He also informed that more than 93% of the decisions have been implemented during 2024 as compared to the year 2023, during which the ratio stood at 85.70%.

Later, the Wafaqi Mohtasib also met the Press and Media representatives there and

apprised them of the major initiatives launched by his office for dispensing administrative relief at the door steps of the people. He said that apart from 126 Khuli Katcheries organized during 2024 across the country, 171 visits have also been undertaken under the OCR programme which led to the resolution of 4840 complaints. "The Wafaqi Mohtasib's Inspection Teams also undertook 79 Inspection Visits to the Federal Government agencies and departments generating large number of complaints", he observed.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib further informed that with a view to expanding the institution's outreach, new regional offices have been established at Muzaffarabad (AJ&K), Gilgit Baltistan and Sahiwal and now it has presence in 25 cities of the country. "A regional office shall soon be established at Dera Ghazi Khan too", he added. He expressed the view that by incorporating modern technology and commissioning of digital platforms, the general public has been facilitated to a large extent in lodging their complaints through the digital means. He also lauded the performance of the regional office Abbottabad for improving its services. The Wafaqi Mohtasib also referred to the steps initiated for ameliorating the lot of children in the country and facilitating the overseas Pakistanis.

Lower Dir sets target to enroll 24,000 out-of-school children

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Lower Dir, announced that it has achieved its target of enrolling 24,000 out-of-school children in public sector schools as part of an ongoing enrollment campaign set to continue until April 30.

The announcement was made by District Education Officer (DEO) Inayatullah Khan at the conclusion of an awareness walk held in Timergara. The event was organized under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan, to raise public awareness about the importance of education and to encourage community participation in the campaign. The walk saw participation from education officials, including Deputy District Education Officer Fayazuddin, students, and a large number of parents.

Addressing a ceremony following the walk, DEO Inayatullah, DC Muhammad Arif Khan, Additional DC Bashir Khan, DDEO Fayazuddin, and religious scholar Maulana Muhammad Nabi Shah highlighted the transformative role of education in fostering a progressive and responsible society. They stressed that access to quality education is essential for individual and collective growth.

The speakers noted that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is actively distributing free textbooks to

millions of students and is working to address a shortfall of 2,400 teachers in Lower Dir through upcoming recruitment via a competitive examination through a testing agency.

They urged all segments of society to play their part in supporting the enrollment drive to ensure no child is left behind. The event also featured patriotic songs, tableaux, and cultural performances by students, which were warmly received by the audience. As a symbolic gesture to kick off the campaign, guest officials registered new students on the spot and presented them with school bags.

Cleanliness drive: A special week-long cleanliness drive was formally launched in Balambat Tehsil as part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's public welfare agenda. The campaign began with an awareness walk, which saw active participation from administrative officials and local residents.

The initiative is being carried out under the directives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan, Gandapur, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, and Tehsil Chairman Balambat, Mr. Shakir Shoaib. Assistant Commissioner Abdul Aziz, along with Tehsil Infrastructure Officer Zohaib Hassan Shinwari, officially inaugurated the campaign.

Sanitary Inspector Shafiq ur Rehman and Junior Clerk Abbas were also present on the occasion. During the drive, clean-

liness will be ensured at various public places and marketplaces across Balambat Tehsil, with a focus on removing waste and garbage piles from key areas. Speaking at the event, AC Abdul Aziz stated that the cleanliness week is being observed in all tehsils of Lower Dir under the Chief Minister's Public Agenda. He urged all segments of society to actively participate and play their role in making the campaign a success.

Police encounters PO Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: A proclaimed offender and drug dealer named Fazal Subhan alias Khanay, was killed in encounter in the premises of Akora Khattak police station.

The police party, led by SHO Ashfaq Khan, was on routine patrol when they received information about the presence of Fazal Subhan alias Khanay, a proclaimed offender and drug dealer, in Adam Zai. When the police party reached the area, Fazal Subhan alias Khanay opened fire on them to avoid arrest. Constable Aamir, who was wearing a bulletproof jacket, was hit but remained safe. A pistol, fixed magazine, and empty charger were recovered from the deceased criminal and taken into police custody. The body of the deceased criminal was sent to the hospital for post-mortem.

Tribesmen assure return of weapons F.P. Report

KURRAM: In order to ensure the establishment of lasting and durable peace in the tribal district of Kurram, the General Officer Commanding 9, Division Major General Zulfikar Ali Bhatti, Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah and DIG Kohat Abbas Majeed Marwat have held detailed discussions with the elders of the tribes there along with the Deputy Commissioner Kurram, District Police Officer Kurram and Members of the Grand Jirga at the district headquarters Parachinar.

On this occasion, both the parties assured to fulfill their national responsibilities in the implementation of the Kohat Peace Agreement and thanked all the government institutions for demolishing about 1,000 Bunkers.

In connection with the further implementation of the agreement, both parties also assured to immediately start the process of voluntary return of the weapons.

Review meetings of the Commissioner Kohat with the district departments were also held besides the visits to different areas to review other social and developmental activities underway in the district on Wednesday. Commissioner Kohat hoped that the overall peace situation in Kurram district will further improve and normal life will be fully restored.

Enrolment campaign continue F.P. Report

KOHAT: Like other parts of the province, the "Enrollment Campaign" in government schools is underway in all areas of the entire Kohat division under the "Literate Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program".

It may be noted that the Enrollment Campaign in Kohat has already been formally inaugurated by the Chairman DDAC Kohat Shafi Jan MPA the other day. Due to the keen interest of the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the admission rate in government schools has recorded a significant increase compared to last year and district education officers are especially focusing on those areas where most children are out of school.

Influential figures of the community and social workers, along-with the officers associated with the education department, are also playing their due role in convincing the parents to admit their children to schools.

Furthermore, with the full support of elected representatives, local institutions, youth, volunteers, local elders and religious leaders, this year's Enrollment Campaign will hopefully meet a success.

It is worth mentioning here that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is providing free books along-with the school bags to newly admitted children and in the near future, an "Education Card" is also on cards, which will significantly reduce the burden on parents.

KKKUK celebrates World Book & Copyright Day

F.P. Report



KARAK: The Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) at Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak today hosted a significant event to commemorate World Book and Copyright Day, reinforcing the vital role of reading and intellectual property in society.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, and esteemed guests. Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, Chairman of DLIS, opened the proceedings by passionately advocating for the cultivation of a strong reading habit among students. He eloquently illustrated how reading has historically been a cornerstone of success for countless individuals. Drawing inspiration from the legendary Bait ul

Hikmat (House of Wisdom) library established during the reign of Harun ur Rashid. He highlighted its profound impact on the advancement of education and the widespread dissemination of knowledge.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of Anwar Jalal Khattak, Chief Librarian at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, who served as the chief guest. He delivered an insightful lecture, illuminating the profound signifi-

cance of World Book and Copyright Day. He eloquently underscored the intrinsic value of literature and the crucial importance of respecting and protecting intellectual property rights.

The commemorative event culminated in a symbolic walk, representing the collective commitment of the university community to actively promote literacy, encourage reading, and champion the preservation of knowledge for future generations.

PkMAP places graft allegation against govt officials

F.P. Report

KARAK: Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Karak president Rafiullah Khattak Pashtun has said that corruption, commission and looting continue in the Soil and Water Conservation, sub-standard work is being done with great boldness, traitors of the nation and homeland are still busy looting national treasury, political interference is at its peak to occupy resources, on Wednesday.

He has said that is the Soil and Water Conservation for specific areas

and specific and influential people or that all the union councils, village councils and villages and areas of the three tehsils have equal rights to it without discrimination by dividing it into districts. He said that some areas have been and are being neglected badly and this exploitation will not be allowed to continue any longer.

All the landowners of the district have equal rights to the Soil and Water Conservation. He said that the contractor system in Soil and Water Conservation and that too by specific private, Where

did the unregistered and tout-like contractor system come from? It is exploitation of the landlord.

The fund of Soil and Water Conservation is spent by the community, that is, the landlord work under the supervision of Soil and Water Conservation. He said that 20 percent of the landowner's share is paid only in the paperwork. He said that in the paperwork, the work is done by the landowner but in practice it is not like this. The work is not done according to the rules, laws and policies.

Solidarity with Palestinians: II to hold protest on 26th

F.P. Report

WANA: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) South Waziristan voiced unwavering support for the nationwide strike scheduled on 26th April in solidarity with the people of Gaza. The party also raised serious concerns about the treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, urging the government to reconsider its repatriation policy and instead offer them citizenship.

Addressing the media, JI South Waziristan Emir Asadullah Baheer, along with JI leader Maulana Umar Wazir, JI Youth President Salahuddin, and Bilawal Ahmed, condemned the continued Israeli aggression in Gaza. They cited that over 60,000 innocent civilians—including women and children—have been killed by Israeli forces, calling it one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time.

The leaders informed the press that JI representatives are actively engaging with local traders, business com-

munities, unions, and religious scholars to ensure a strong show of solidarity on April 26. Wana Bazaar is expected to observe a complete shutdown in response to the call.

Climate change faced almond harvesters with devastation: Almond farmers in Wana tehsil, are facing yet another devastating blow as climate change continues to wreak havoc on the region's prized almond crop. Premature fruit drop and widespread signs of disease have left hundreds of orchards compromised, triggering mounting financial losses.

Growers report that as the almonds near ripening, the kernels begin to split on the branches, with leaves turning curled and discolored—classic signs of stress and disease. This recurring phenomenon has sparked concern across the agricultural community, especially as similar damage was reported last season.

"This is the second year

in a row we're watching our orchards fail," said a frustrated local farmer. "The trees are sick, the fruit is falling early, and the authorities have done next to nothing."

Farmers alleged that the local Agriculture Department is ill-equipped to address the issue, citing a lack of scientific expertise, resources, or effective treatment plans. They claim that despite incurring losses in the millions, they've seen no meaningful response from either the provincial government or agricultural officials.

In response, a spokesperson for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agriculture Department acknowledged the growing problem. "We are aware that climate change is affecting several crops in Lower South Waziristan," the spokesperson said. "A team of specialists will soon visit the affected areas to assess the situation and recommend appropriate interventions."

SAI to protest on 26th

F.P. Report

SHAHDADKOT: Sindh Abadgar Ittehad (SAI) Qambar Shahdadt district has announced to hold a public meeting and protest on 26th April against the theft of water from the Indus River.

In this regard SAI leader Mohsin Qazi, Muhammad

Ali Hakro and Moazzam Abbasi reached the Press Club and held a press conference.

They further said that Sindh Abadgar Ittehad District Qambar Shahdadt will hold a public meeting and protest against the construction of canals under any circumstances.

of the Save Indus River Committee Syed Zain Shah, Junior Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Moazzam Ali Abbasi and other leaders have been invited because the people of Sindh are with Sindh against the controversial canals and we will not allow the construction of canals under any circumstances.

Unraveling missing persons crisis: Realities, misconceptions

Samina Mumtaz Zehri

THE issue of missing persons has become one of the most sensitive and complex human rights challenges in Balochistan. For many, it represents not only a legal and political crisis, but also a deeply personal one. Thousands of families remain trapped in a cycle of grief, uncertainty, and silence—unsure of the fate of their loved ones.

While it is often treated as a peripheral issue in the national discourse, the reality is that resolving the missing person's crisis could mark a turning point in addressing the broader Balochistan question. Interestingly, the phenomenon of enforced disappearances did not originate in Balochistan. It first appeared in Punjab and other regions, especially after 9/11, when Pakistan recalibrated its internal security strategy to meet international counterterrorism expectations.

However, Balochistan has since become the epicenter of this crisis—largely due to its his-

tory of insurgency, underdevelopment, and alienation from the federal mainstream.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of enforced disappearances are not necessarily the result of deliberate policy. In many cases, individuals find themselves "disappeared" due to structural deficiencies in Pakistan's criminal justice system.

Two key weaknesses stand out: weak investigative processes and incompetent or under-resourced prosecution services. Many arrests are made without sufficient evidence. Law enforcement agencies often act on incomplete or intelligence-based leads, without building a prosecutable case. Even when suspects are apprehended, a lack of preparation, poor training, and political pressure mean that cases collapse in court.

As a result, instead of following legal procedures, state actors may resort to extrajudicial methods—either to extract information or sideline perceived threats—further eroding the rule of law and public trust. It's also important to acknowledge a reality often overlooked: not every-

one reported as "missing" is actually a victim of enforced disappearance. Some individuals, especially young men, voluntarily leave their homes in search of better opportunities abroad—sometimes without informing their families—due to a lack of economic prospects or personal reasons. Years later, some return, while others remain abroad permanently. In the meantime, their families, left in anguish and uncertainty, become vulnerable to manipulation.

Anti-state elements often exploit their grief and confusion, using their pain as a tool to mobilize sentiment against the state and fuel propaganda campaigns that distort facts and deepen the divide. To break this pattern, we must first address the root causes within our justice system: reform the investigative capacity of police and counterterrorism departments; train prosecutors to handle high-stakes national security cases professionally; and ensure that every arrested individual is presented before a court of law within the constitutionally mandated timeframe.

The existing Commission of

Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, formed in 2011, has failed to inspire confidence. Its limited powers, opaque processes, and perceived bias have made it ineffective in resolving cases or delivering justice. A new approach is needed. The way forward requires dissolving the current commission and replacing it with a genuinely independent and representative body.

This body should include key stakeholders—such as the Baloch Yakjehi Committee (BYC), Voice of Missing Persons, and other credible civil society organizations. International human rights organizations and neutral observers can also be invited to participate in advisory or monitoring roles—not to undermine national sovereignty, but to ensure credibility, transparency, and international confidence. It's important to recognize that much of Pakistan's criticism on this issue globally stems not from facts alone, but from the perception of impunity. Changing that perception is essential.

The missing persons debate in

Pakistan is often marked by extremes—either blind support for state narratives or wholesale condemnation of national institutions.

This binary approach leaves little room for genuine dialogue, truth-seeking, or reconciliation. What we need instead is a national conversation rooted in fact, empathy, and constitutional responsibility. This can be achieved through public seminars and community town halls, particularly in affected regions, to address myths, misreporting, and exaggerated narratives. Closed-door policy roundtables should bring together law enforcement, civil society, legal experts, and families of the missing to co-design legal frameworks and protocols. Educational campaigns, especially in universities and media, can help explain legal rights, arrest procedures, and the role of institutions. Only through transparency and engagement can we begin to replace fear with understanding.

Any serious effort to address enforced disappearances must also look beyond the security dimension. The crisis cannot be resolved without tackling the

deeper grievances that have fueled alienation and conflict in Balochistan: historical marginalization and lack of political representation, economic exclusion and failure to deliver basic services, and cultural suppression and the erosion of local identity.

The missing persons issue is not just a law and order problem—it is a symptom of a much larger fracture between the state and parts of its citizenry. Healing that fracture requires a multi-pronged strategy of reconciliation, constitutional empowerment, and inclusive development.

If handled with wisdom and sincerity, the missing persons issue could be transformed from a national tragedy into a historic opportunity for reconciliation. It offers the state a chance to rebuild trust, strengthen its legitimacy, and reassert its commitment to constitutionalism and human dignity. Rather than treating the issue as a threat, it must be seen as a test of our democratic maturity and moral resolve. It is time we stopped managing this problem in the shadows—and started confronting it in the open.



BEIRUT: Members of Lebanese army forensic team inspecting a destroyed car hit by an Israeli air raid near coastal town of Damour.

‘I wanted it to work’: Ukrainians disappointed by Easter truce

KYIV (AFP): Many Ukrainians felt let down by a 30-hour Easter truce announced by Russia, even if some welcomed a brief lull in fighting after more than three years of war. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to "stop all hostilities" for the duration of the religious holiday.

While both sides reported a dip in fighting, they accused each other of hundreds of violations over the 30-hour period. Air raid sirens rang out in Kyiv shortly after Putin's announcement -- and again, when Russia resumed its drone strikes. "I really wanted it to work," said Svitlana, a 65-year-old accountant in the Ukrainian capital.

"In fact, it didn't. But at least it was a little bit quieter, and that's good. At least people could bless Easter cakes and go to church," she added. Putin announced the truce after weeks of public appeals from US President Donald Trump to stop the war, and while it fell far short of his call for a fully-fledged ceasefire, Svitlana suspected Putin was trying to placate the US leader. Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and now occupies around 20 percent of the country. "I think that Putin is flirting with America, like: 'Look, I am such a nice guy'," she told AFP.

"In fact, there was no ceasefire." At a makeshift memorial commemorating fallen soldiers on Kyiv's Maidan Square, a few Ukrainians came to lay flowers on Easter. Standing in front of a sea of blue and yellow flags, combat instructor Viktor Danylichuk came to pay tribute to his friends killed on the front line. He said the truce was "positive". "Because people are really exhausted, everyone is tired, everyone wants to go home to pay attention to their families." "Clearly, we were a little surprised by this situation, given that the Russians always promise one thing and do something completely different," he told AFP. He said Russia kept up its attacks, regardless of Putin's announcement.

"My comrades at the front noticed that there was less shelling yesterday, but that it continued nonetheless." Valentyna welcomed the truce but was also sceptical. "To be honest, my friends and I were happy with the truce, even if we didn't believe in it all the way, because we wanted people to show a little humanity," the 49-year-old said. Vitaly, a 39-year-old staff sergeant in the Ukrainian army, said he had "no faith" it would lead to anything. "Nothing has changed," he said. "Its just words". On the front line, fighting decreased in some areas

but has since resumed, according to the US-based Institute for the Study of War. Ukrainian medic Dmytro Podobriy told AFP in east Ukraine that while shelling of cities had decreased, the "volume" of attacks on the front line had not gone down.

"Russia has never kept its demands, its agreements," the 32-year-old said. Ukrainian military analysts were also sceptical. "The front may still be burning, but the public narrative in Russia and abroad will be different," military analyst Oleksiy Kopytko said on Facebook. Political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko said the truce was a "banal propaganda action". "The main goal of this 'peacekeeping action' ... is to set Ukraine up, to show Trump that Putin wants peace and that Zelensky is against it," he said. Most Ukrainians, exasperated with the fighting, want a long-term peace settlement that secures their interests instead of a short-term truce. When asked about whether she would accept peace "at any price", Valentyna, visiting the memorial in Kyiv, wept. "In every family, there are people who have died. That's why peace at any price 'is not appropriate," she said. "That's the way it is. This sentence does not reflect my attitude towards war. It's time to put an end to it."

Int'l students stripped of legal status in US piling up wins in court

ATLANTA (AP): Anjan Roy was studying with friends at Missouri State University when he got an email that turned his world upside down. His legal status as an international student had been terminated, and he was suddenly at risk for deportation. "I was in literal shock, like, what the hell is this?" said Roy, a graduate student in computer science from Bangladesh.

At first, he avoided going out in public, skipping classes and mostly keeping his phone turned off. A court ruling in his favor led to his status being restored this week, and he has returned to his apartment, but he is still asking his roommates to screen visitors. More than a thousand international students have faced similar disruptions in recent weeks, with their academic careers - and their lives in the US - thrown into doubt in a widespread crackdown by the Trump administration. Some have found a measure of success in court, with federal judges around the country issuing orders to restore students' legal status at least temporarily. In addition to the case filed in Atlanta, where Roy is among 133 plaintiffs, judges have

issued temporary restraining orders in states including New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Judges have denied similar requests in some other cases, saying it was not clear the loss of status would cause irreparable harm.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last month the State Department was revoking visas held by visitors who were acting counter to national interests, including some who protested Israel's war in Gaza and those who face criminal charges. But many affected students said they have been involved only in minor infractions, or it's unclear altogether why they were targeted. The attorney for Roy and his fellow plaintiffs, Charles Kuck, argued the government did not have legal grounds to terminate the students' status. He speculated in court last week the government is trying to encourage these students to self-deport, saying "the pressure on these students is overwhelming." He said some asked him if it was safe to leave their homes to get food, and others worried they wouldn't receive a degree after years of work

or feared their chances of a career in the US were shot. "I think the hope is they'll just leave," Kuck said. "The reality is these kids are invested."

An attorney for the government, R. David Powell, argued the students did not suffer significant harm because they could transfer their academic credits or find jobs in another country. At least 1,100 students at 174 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or their legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records. The AP is working to confirm reports of hundreds more students who are caught up in the crackdown. In a lawsuit filed by four people on student visas at the University of Iowa, attorneys detail the "mental and financial suffering" they've experienced. One graduate student, from India, "cannot sleep and is having difficulty breathing and eating," the lawsuit reads. He has stopped going to school, doing research or working as a teaching assistant. Another student, a

Chinese undergraduate who expected to graduate this December, said his revoked status has caused his depression to worsen to the point that his doctor increased his medication dosage. The student, the lawsuit says, has not left his apartment out of fear of detention. Roy, 23, began his academic career at Missouri State in August 2024 as an undergraduate computer science student. He was active in the chess club and a fraternity and has a broad circle of friends. After graduating in December, he began work on a master's degree in January and expects to finish in May 2026.

When Roy received the university's April 10 email on his status termination, one of his friends offered to skip class to go with him to the school's international services office, even though they had a quiz in 45 minutes. The staff there said a database check showed his student status had been terminated, but they didn't know why. Roy said his only brush with the law came in 2021, when he was questioned by campus security after someone called in a dispute at a university housing building.

‘Chinese citizens working at drone production site in Russia’

KYIV (Reuters): President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Chinese citizens were working at a drone production site in Russia and suggested that Moscow may have "stolen" drone technology from China.

The Ukrainian leader made the comment at a news conference in Kyiv days after he said China was supplying weapons and gunpowder to Russia, the first time he has accused Beijing of direct military aid to Moscow, something Ukraine staunchly denies. China's Foreign Ministry said it had summoned Chinese Ambassador Ma Shengkun and expressed Ukraine's "serious concerns" over Chinese involvement in the war.

Zelenskiy, in suggesting that Russia may have obtained drone technology

from China without Beijing actually knowing, appeared to be softening his tone towards China, which casts itself as neutral on the war in Ukraine. The flurry of Ukrainian allegations directed at China, the world's second largest economy, in recent days has been particularly striking at a sensitive moment for Kyiv in the US-led diplomatic effort to end Russia's war in Ukraine.

Zelenskiy said earlier this month that Russia was recruiting Chinese nationals via social media to fight in its armed forces and that Beijing officials were aware of that. He added that Kyiv was trying to assess whether the recruits were receiving instructions from Beijing. China has reaffirmed its support for peace efforts in Ukraine and said

relevant parties should avoid "irresponsible remarks," in an apparent jab at Zelenskiy's comment about Chinese citizens fighting there for Russia.

Zelenskiy told reporters that he had instructed officials to send information to the Chinese government through official channels on its findings. "Separately, I asked the Security Service of Ukraine to transfer information of a broader nature to the Chinese side regarding Chinese citizens who work at the drone factory," he said. "We believe that it may be that Russia stole - made an agreement with these citizens outside the agreements with the Chinese leadership - stole these technologies."

A Foreign Ministry statement said Ukraine expressed "serious con-

cerns about the facts of the participation of Chinese citizens in military action against Ukraine on the side of the aggressor-state and also the involvement of Chinese companies in the manufacture in Russia of military goods." It said Deputy Foreign Minister Yevhen Perebyinis "called on the Chinese side to take measures to stop supporting Russia in its aggression against Ukraine, the absence of which has been repeatedly stated by Beijing". There was no immediate comment on any of the Ukrainian statements from either Russia or China. China and Russia declared a "no limits" strategic partnership days before Russian President Vladimir Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Russian guided bombs kill woman in Ukraine

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (Reuters): Russia struck the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with two guided aerial bombs, killing a woman and injuring 26 other people including four children, regional governor Ivan Fedorov said. Russian forces also launched drone attacks on the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine and the city of Kharkiv in the northeast, regional officials said.

The attacks came as both Russia and Ukraine are under pressure from the United States to demonstrate progress towards ending the war that began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. "All of this is deliberate Russian terror that can be stopped with a single order, an order in Russia and for the Russian army," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on social media platform X, adding that there had also been attacks on Sumy, Donetsk and Odesa.

Russia did not immediately comment on the reports. Zaporizhzhia, an important logistical and industrial hub in southeastern Ukraine that is about 50 km (30 miles) from the front line, has been a frequent target of intensified Russian-guided bomb strikes. Highly destructive guided bombs are difficult for Ukrainian air defences to intercept.

Local officials posted images of a multi-storey residential building with charred upper floors and rescuers helping the wounded. Fedorov said doctors were treating the children, all boys aged 3-16, as well as others injured in the attack, during which one of the guided bombs struck a densely populated area of the city at about 11:40 a.m. (08:40 GMT). "I can't think straight. There was a bang, and the balcony was completely blown away," Alla, 73, a local resident, told Reuters. She was visibly shaking as she sat on a bench nearby. Russia partially occupies the Zaporizhzhia region, home to Europe's largest nuclear power plant. In Kherson, six people were injured and a hospital was damaged, said regional prosecutors. In Kharkiv, at least 10 people were hurt and several fires broke out as Russia targeted four of the city's districts, mayor Ihor Terekhov said.

German army approaches big firms for NATO aid

BERLIN (Reuters): The German army has asked several large firms about whether they could provide logistics support if the country needs to deploy soldiers and equipment to NATO's eastern border during a crisis, the Handelsblatt newspaper reported.

Germany - a logistical hub due to its central location in Europe - has committed to contributing 35,000 soldiers and over 200 aircraft and ships within 30 days of any major conflict as part of NATO's new model to address growing threats, particularly from Russia. The army is approaching the firms primarily for help in moving soldiers, ammunition and military equipment in the event of an attack on NATO territory by Russia, Handelsblatt reported.

The newspaper also cited industry sources as saying discussions were underway on whether Lufthansa's flight school could take over basic training for fighter jet pilots. Defence giant Rheinmetall, airline group Lufthansa and state-owned railway operator Deutsche Bahn were among the firms approached by the army, according to Handelsblatt. It said the army relies on commercial transport services to a considerable extent in crisis areas.

The Bundeswehr (armed forces) referred a request for comment to the Defence Ministry, which did not immediately respond. Lufthansa declined to comment, while Deutsche Bahn said that it was unable to provide details of military logistics. Rheinmetall, which in February struck a deal with the German army to provide logistical support for the deployment of military forces domestically and abroad, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Moscow, Kyiv blame each other for blocking truce talks

MOSCOW, KYIV (Reuters): Russia and Ukraine accused each other of standing in the way of negotiations on a moratorium on attacking civilian targets, as the warring sides jockey for the favour of a Trump administration that has threatened to abandon peace efforts.

Both sides are under pressure to demonstrate progress towards ending the war in Ukraine, now well into its fourth year, after US President Donald Trump said he was losing patience and would walk away from efforts to make peace. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who rejected a Trump proposal for a full 30-day ceasefire last month after Ukraine had agreed to it in principle, announced a unilateral one-day truce for Easter over the weekend. Kyiv largely dismissed that as a stunt and both sides accused the other of violating it.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy responded by calling for a halt to attacks on civilian targets for 30 days, and Putin said he would consider it, floating the idea of holding bilateral talks for the first time in three years. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated that Putin was interested in discussing the proposal, but Kyiv needed to "legally clear the obstacles to such contacts" to allow talks. He

did not elaborate but Moscow regularly complains about a decree signed by Zelenskiy barring negotiations with Putin.

Zelenskiy responded that "there are and will be no impasses on the Ukrainian side". "Our proposal to halt strikes on civilian infrastructure remains on the table as well. What's needed is genuine readiness from Russia to engage in this conversation," Zelenskiy said on X. Trump, who has long said he would end the war quickly, has shifted US policy from years of staunch support for Kyiv towards embracing Russia's account of the war. But so far Washington has received few concessions from Moscow, which has stood by its original demands that Kyiv cede territory and be barred from ever forming military alliances with the West.

Ukraine and its European allies say that would amount to surrender and leave Ukraine helpless to defend itself from future attacks. US, European and Ukrainian officials are due to meet in London. Zelenskiy said their primary task would be to push for an unconditional ceasefire. No direct talks are known to have been held between the warring sides since the early clear the obstacles to such contacts" to allow talks. He

Imprisoned loyalist: Colorado fights Trump admn

DENVER (AP): Colorado's chief deputy attorney general urged a federal judge to reject the Trump administration's unprecedented bid to help an imprisoned former county clerk who embraced Trump's lies that he lost the 2020 election because of fraud.

The US Justice Department in March submitted a federal court filing in support of Tina Peters' fight to be freed from prison while she appeals a state court conviction for allowing Trump supporters to access election equipment.

The federal agency said it was reviewing whether Peters' prosecution was "oriented more toward inflicting political pain than toward pursuing actual justice." But Colorado Chief Deputy Attorney General Natalie Hanlon Leh said in hearing in Denver that the government hasn't presented any evidence of potential wrongdoing. She asked Magistrate Judge Scott T. Varholak to reject the government's filing or at least strike the line suggesting political motivations.

Varholak noted that under former President Joe Biden, the Justice Department helped investigate Peters and would have access to materials in the case. The judge pressed the government to provide evidence warranting a review. But Abigail Stout, a Justice Department lawyer in Washington, said she was

not authorized to discuss any ongoing review and had no knowledge of any evidence.

The Justice Department also said it wants the court to give Peters' bid for release "prompt and careful consideration." While Colorado has argued that it appeared to be a "naked, political attempt" to intimidate the court or Peters' prosecutors, Varholak described the filing as a "tangential issue." He also asked why Colorado challenged it since that brought it more attention. Leh responded that the state needed to stand up for the integrity of its justice system and did not want to be seen as condoning the Justice Department's involvement by not saying anything.

"This cannot become a new norm," she said as two prosecutors from Peters' trial sat behind her. Varholak said he would rule after determining if he has the authority to decide the issue.

Jurors found Peters guilty in August for using someone else's security badge to give an expert affiliated with My Pillow chief executive Mike Lindell access to the Mesa County election system and deceiving other officials about that person's identity. Lindell is a prominent promoter of false claims that voting machines were manipulated to steal the election from Trump. A state judge sentenced Peters in

rately met US officials at parallel talks in Saudi Arabia last month and agreed to a pause in attacks on energy infrastructure, which both accuse the other of blocking.

Asked about an agreement to halt attacks on civilian targets, Peskov said it was a complex topic that needed to be discussed taking into account the experience of the 30-hour Easter ceasefire, without elaborating. "If we talk about civilian infrastructure facilities, we need to clearly differentiate in what situations these facilities can be a military target," Peskov said. He quoted Putin as saying that a civilian facility could become a military target if enemy combatants were meeting there. Russian forces have regularly pounded Ukrainian cities, killing thousands of civilians during the conflict and causing extensive damage to Ukraine's power supply, ports and other infrastructure. Ukraine has more recently acquired capability to attack inside Russia and has killed civilians, although in much smaller numbers. Russian forces killed at least 35 people in a missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy earlier this month in what Kyiv said was a deliberate attack on civilians. Russia said it had hit a meeting of Ukrainian military officers.

Hundreds mourn Spanish family killed

BARCELONA, Spain (AP): Hundreds of people packed into a Barcelona church to mourn a Spanish family of five who died earlier this month in a sightseeing helicopter crash in New York City and whose bodies were laid to rest in Spain.

As church bells tolled against a brilliant blue sky, mourners gathered and wept quietly as they paid respects to Agustín Escobar, Mercè Camprubí Montal and their three young children, all of whom were killed on April 11 when a helicopter broke apart midair and crashed into the Hudson River between New York City and New Jersey. "We have been in pain for the last 11 days, but they will always remain in our memories and remind us from up high to never lose our ability to smile," said the woman's father, Joan Camprubí, during the

funeral service. He thanked those who attended, which included Catalonia's regional leader Salvador Illa and Barcelona Mayor Jaume Collboni, and shared memories of his daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren. Camprubí also mentioned the passing of the Pope, saying that the pontiff believed in the transformative power of a "smile and a sense of humor." A trip that was intended to celebrate the ninth birthday of the couple's middle child ended up being the family's final moments. Shortly before the flight over the towering skyscrapers of New York City took off, a photo shows Agustín Escobar flashing a thumbs-up while his wife and children beamed big smiles.

Despite the tragedy, relatives of the Barcelona family recalled the joy that

their lost loved ones gave them and the family's love for life. Several dozen people watched the nearly two-hour service on screens set up outside the front entrance of the church, which had reached capacity. Escobar was global CEO of rail infrastructure at Siemens Mobility while Mercè Camprubí Montal worked for Siemens Energy, a separate company. Camprubí Montal's grandfather was a former president of the famous Barcelona FC soccer club. Their children Agustín, Mercè and Víctor were 10, 9 and 4.

The service ended with photos displayed of the family during previous holidays and at family gatherings. As family and friends recalled happier moments in the Barcelona family's life, the song playing was Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York."

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Space memo smear hard-sell for US satellites

AN undated internal memo, US media outlets recently obtained from the State Department, urges countries to shun Chinese satellite services, citing security concerns.

Without providing any evidence to substantiate its claim, the document, which is ostensibly to provide talking points for senior US officials meeting with the representatives of other governments, warns that Beijing could use the satellite services it provides to gather military information and sensitive intelligence.

The irony is the world knows clearly that it is the United States that has been doing that — including targeting its allies and partners — taking advantage of its dominance of the space technology and industry.

With its "Star Wars" program transformed from a tool to consume Soviet Union resources during the Cold War into a standard configuration connecting its defense, intelligence and technology strategies, using its satellite services to gather other countries' "military information and sensitive intelligence" is only a small part of the US' overall space-related undertakings.

The US has built a holistic intelligence collecting system stretching from its satellite network in space, such as those related to SpaceX's Starlink program, to the digital terminals on Earth made up of smartphones, databases and base stations and the global submarine optical cable networks under its control.

The huge US-controlled system, which is expanding and developing fast, plays a crucial role in the wars, conflicts, cyberattacks and assassinations it engineers around the world.

It is the huge hegemonic interest associated with the US' dominance in the sector that has prompted it to guard against any other competitor touching its cheese in this realm, even if latecomers, such as China, are doing nothing but carrying out peaceful and cooperative space exploration and research.

China regards space, which is public space, as an extended part of the community with a shared future for mankind and acts accordingly, working with other partners, including both developed countries and Global South countries, to jointly learn more about the universe we live in.

With its Shenzhou XX crewed spaceship scheduled to launch on Thursday, which is itself a fruit of international cooperation, China's fast rise in the space industry has provided more countries with opportunities to take part in space exploration and enjoy the benefits related to a wide range of applications in agriculture, logistics, transportation, people's livelihoods and disaster prevention, rescue and relief, among others.

In a stark contrast, the US treats outer space as its exclusive territory, a newfound land awaiting colonization. With its I-come-I-conquer expansionist view of space, the US regards space a first-come-first-served virgin land.

With a dominance of the realm that is hard to be changed by any latecomers, what the US is worried about is not only China's progress in related technology and application, but more importantly the concept Beijing has put forward which entitles even the least-developed countries to the peaceful use of outer space.

As that concept is increasingly embraced by countries as a principle for the space industry, the US' concerns that, if unchecked, it will ultimately lead to the formation of a set of inclusive and fair rules on space exploration, are understandable. If so, the US' dominance of the realm will be lost to its global obligation and responsibility.

Tellingly, the State Department memo also had advice for US officials who were asked about the Starlink satellite communication services, suggesting how they could promote it to fill the vacancy they hope will be left by their proposed ban on Chinese satellite services with reliable satellite services provided by a trusted US operator.

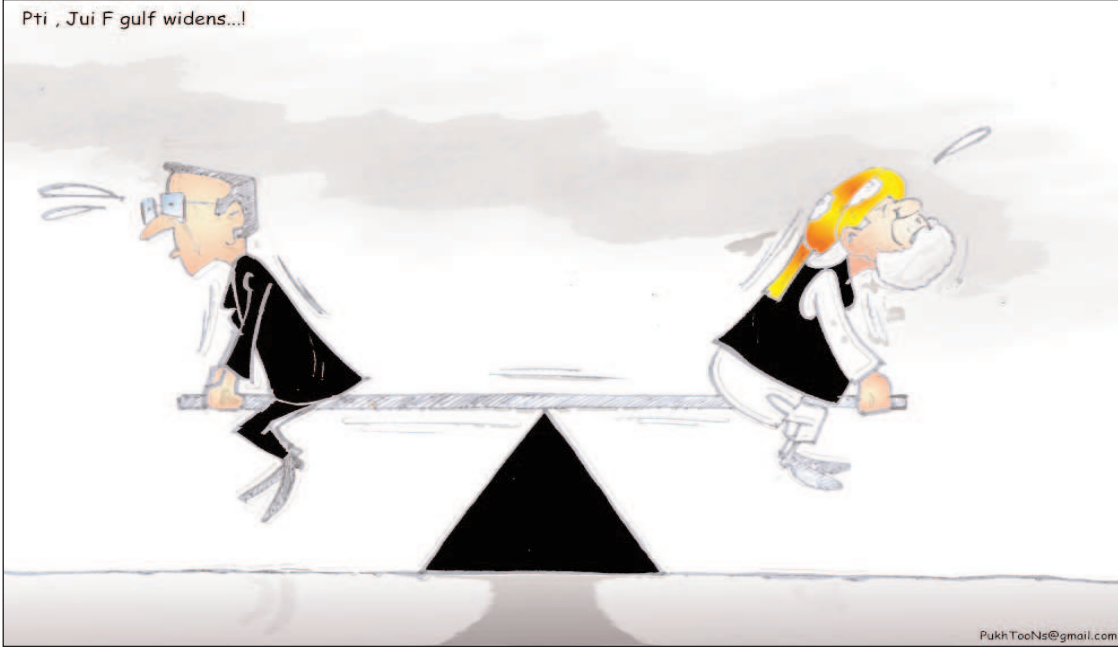
When SpaceX launched its first batch of Starlink satellites in May 2019, there were only around 2,000 operational satellites in the entire sky including a small number of high-orbit satellites. Today, that number has grown to over 11,000 most of which are low-orbit ones — nearly 7,000 of which belong to Starlink. And SpaceX has said it hopes to grow the number to 42,000 by 2027.

Looked at from that orbit, the memo is nothing but an advertising leaflet from the State Department for US business.

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Pti , Jui F gulf widens...l



We need AI that thinks in Arabic and can grasp nuance

Luma Makari

LANGUAGE is not just a collection of labels for the world — it is the blueprint for how we think, feel and experience reality. As the cognitive scientist Prof Lera Boroditsky puts it, each language “provides its own cognitive toolkit and encapsulates the knowledge and worldview developed over thousands of years within a culture”.

This is especially true of the Arabic language. Its rich linguistic range and unique expression of emotion, thought and culture often have no parallel. However, Arabic — like many other languages — is contending with the rise of AI, an advanced technology that has made its way into our daily lives.

What happens when emerging tech and AI developments fail to account for the Arabic language — especially in commonly used models such as ChatGPT and Claude that have woven themselves into our daily lives? As it stands, popular large language models and chatbots are trained predominantly on English content. According to data from Statista, less than 1 per cent of AI models are trained on Arabic content.

The result? Stilted, unnatural answers that lack nuance. As Mohammed Moneb Khaled, an Emirati Arabic AI researcher, told *AramcoWorld* magazine in June, models like ChatGPT tend to give Arabic responses that “sound unnatural, and literal translations do not have the same meaning”.

Important cultural subtext gets lost because the AI is essentially trying to force Arabic ideas into an English mould. This “AI translation” approach is not just a minor inconvenience, it can erase linguistic and cognitive diversity. So, as such technology become more ubiquitous,

the absence of Arabic-native AI is not a mere oversight, it is a cultural crisis.

Why does this matter? Because AI is not just another tech product — it is poised to become our confidant, adviser and assistant. When AI cannot speak Arabic reliably and fluently, it does not just fail on a technical level, it fails culturally.

Consider the depth lost when AI translates the rich concept of “tarab” merely as “musical enchantment” or reduces the complex emotional resilience described by “sabr” to “patience” when it encompasses so much more — a sense of graceful perseverance and faith during hardship. These are not linguistic gaps, they are chasms of cultural concepts.

These words carry emotional and cultural weight built over centuries. They resist clean translation because they emerge from Arabic’s unique cultural context. When we lose these words, we lose worlds. Crucially, these linguistic nuances are not just vocabulary, they shape emotional processing. An Arabic speaker describing their depression might say they feel a sense of “ghurba” or invoke “sabr” as a coping mechanism.

Beyond miscommunication, there is a deeper issue of identity. Language carries identity, and repeatedly encountering technology that “prefers” English can send a subtle message that Arabic is second-class in the digital world. It is disheartening for Arab users — especially younger generations — to find that talking to Siri or Alexa in Arabic is far less effective than in English, or that an Arabic prompt to a chatbot yields a gibberish answer.

Over time, people using such technology might default to English, slowly

estranging themselves from their mother tongue in professional or technical domains. This is how linguistic diversity fades — not by force, but by convenience and neglect.

We urgently need AI that thinks in Arabic — not as an act of ethnic pride, but as a necessity for a fair and rich digital future. Truly Arabic-native LLMs are essential for several reasons. An Arabic-native AI would uphold the nuances of Arabic identity instead of diluting them.

It would use Arabic proverbs, quote Al Mutanabbi’s poetry where relevant, and understand the subtext behind a phrase like “inshallah”. This affirms to users that their language — and by extension their culture — belongs in the digital age. It keeps Arabic alive and evolving on its own terms, preventing the scenario where future generations engage with technology only in English and let their Arabic atrophy. If Arabic is left behind, so are its speakers.

Second, if AI is to serve humanity it must encompass the full range of human thinking patterns. Arabic offers a fundamentally different structure — a right-to-left script, a root-based word system, and flexible word order — and has a treasure trove of classical texts on logic, law and philosophy. Training AI on these will introduce new perspectives into how the AI “thinks”.

For instance, Arabic’s logical treatises and unique grammar, such as the dual form and grammatical gender, could broaden AI’s problem-solving approaches.

More broadly, each language an LLM masters makes generative-AI programs smarter and more versatile. Including Arabic is not just good for Arabs,

it is good for AI and the world. It forces AI to learn concepts it might never encounter in monolingual training. Embracing global cognitive diversity ensures AI is not one-dimensional. Much as biodiversity strengthens an ecosystem, linguistic diversity strengthens our AI systems’ understanding, avoiding a one-size-fits-all intelligence.

Recent years have witnessed promising Arabic AI development across the region, led by pioneering institutions laying the groundwork for a more linguistically and culturally rooted digital future.

In the UAE, the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence’s Jais model, developed with US company Cerebras and Abu Dhabi tech group G42, is one of the world’s most advanced bilingual Arabic-English language models, trained to understand both Modern Standard Arabic and regional dialects.

In Doha, the Qatar Computing Research Institute has launched Fanar — an instruction-tuned Arabic model built entirely in-house, designed to handle culturally nuanced tasks and support the country’s digital priorities. Meanwhile, the Saudi Data and AI Authority, in partnership with IBM, has released ALLaM — an open-source Arabic model built to reflect national values and serve both public and private sectors.

These efforts are vital — not only technologically, but symbolically — affirming as they do that Arabic belongs at the centre of AI development, not at its margins. But to truly meet the scale of what is possible, we need sustained investment, collaborative research and infrastructure that treat Arabic not as a downstream use case, but as a primary driver of innovation.

What it means for Europe to fend for itself

Anders Fogh Rasmussen

THE US-led global order as we have known it is gone. As the tectonic plates of geopolitics continue to shift beneath us, the challenge for Europe is to keep its institutions alive and prevent the world from returning to an era of might makes right — where power accrues to strongman leaders in Washington, Moscow and Beijing.

Rising to this challenge requires a fundamental reconsideration of long-held assumptions and beliefs. Clinging to old orthodoxies is not an option. Europeans cannot preserve democracy and our way of life with soft power alone. We must dispense with entrenched taboos and relearn the language of hard power. That is the only way to deter and defend against those who directly threaten our values and interests.

Yes, since US President Donald Trump’s return to power, hundreds of billions of euros in new spending have been earmarked for defense. But these commitments are not enough. Spending 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense was a reasonable ambition for NATO in 2014, when the US still played the role, however reluctantly, of global policeman. But those days are gone. Merely to keep

pace with Russia’s military development, Europe must at least double its investment in defense. Indeed, I would go much further and say Europe should aim for 4 percent by 2028. Incoming German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s ambitions for their own countries must be replicated across the continent.

Bigger armies and more equipment will deter direct attacks, but guns and tanks are only one part of the equation. If Europe’s extra spending is confined to military procurement, it will miss an opportunity to spark its own high-tech revolution. Technological innovation is what underpins US and Chinese hard power. From artificial intelligence and quantum computing to critical infrastructure and biotech, Europe is at risk of ossifying as the major powers sprint further ahead. In this scenario, our strategic dependencies on the US and China would only increase.

To defend the rules-based system, we must rethink the composition of our community. While old formats like the G7 can still serve an important purpose, we will need new ways of convening like-minded democracies. A coalition of such democracies — a D7 — can build new tools to

promote open trade and economic cooperation, defense partnerships, intelligence-sharing and access to critical minerals. They can even create new security arrangements that cover both cyber-kinetic attacks and economic coercion by major powers, akin to an economic version of NATO’s Article 5 mutual defense provision.

To that end, the EU should work closely with traditional partners — like the UK — and seek even closer relations with Canada, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia. It should also explore new ways to collaborate with India, a democracy whose GDP has doubled in the past decade, putting it on track to become the world’s third-biggest economy before the end of this decade. The point is not to replace America, but to ensure that Europe will remain resilient with or without US support.

For too long, Europe has relied on cheap Russian energy, cheap Chinese goods and cheap American security and technology. But this naive dependency is no longer an option. In addition to mobilizing fiscal resources for defense and technology, Europe must also forge a new social contract.

Though we should not abandon what makes us

European, we do need to revisit some tenets of the old welfare state. Freedom is not free. European leaders must be honest and open about the challenge we face and about what it requires of us.

The solutions will not all be popular, but we must remember that we have entered an era of crisis. Europeans must be equipped with the skills and resources to fend for themselves. We can learn a lot from the Ukrainians and the Taiwanese about building resilience and paying the price for freedom.

Each year, I convene the Copenhagen Democracy Summit under my Alliance of Democracies Foundation. When I created the foundation in 2017, it was my long-held belief that the US would and must remain at the center of a global democratic alliance. Now, we must prepare for a world in which America is not only unreliable but even adversarial and expansionist.

New circumstances demand new strategies. Defending democracy is not a spectator sport. We will have to make some sacrifices, because the alternative is unimaginably awful. Europe has an opportunity to assume the mantle of leader of the free world. Our descendants will not forgive us if we fail to seize it.

Gaza is burning: UK NGOs must abandon failed diplomacy and fight back

Nick Dearden and Shaista Aziz

ISRAEL’S Defence Minister Israel Katz declared last week that “no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza”, effectively announcing his government’s intention to continue the collective punishment of the Palestinian enclave’s battered and besieged civilian population in blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

“Blocking this aid is one of the main pressure levers preventing Hamas from using it as a tool with the population,” he went on to say. “No one is currently planning to allow any humanitarian aid into Gaza, and there are no preparations to enable such aid.”

Many leading NGOs and international institutions, such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, have long identified Israel’s weaponisation of aid in Gaza as an act of genocide. In response to Katz’s most recent comments, they once again condemned the Israeli government’s genocidal policies and called on Israel’s Western allies to take action to enforce international law.

Such condemnations and calls to action, however, are clearly failing to produce the desired results. After 18 devastating months, Israel is still bombing, shooting at, displacing and starving Palestinians, while openly declaring its intention to continue with these crimes for the foreseeable future. And it is still doing so with the full political, military and diplomatic backing of its Western allies, including Britain. This is why we believe it is time for British NGOs to change tack.

For the past 18 months, many of us working in the human rights and aid sectors in Britain made repeated requests to our government to do the bare minimum and enforce the basic tenets of international law on its ally, Israel. We campaigned, we lobbied, we engaged, and we explained. We showed the evidence, pointed to the law, and asked our leaders to do the right thing. Our pleas fell on deaf ears. We’ve been met with nothing but indifference. To this day, Keir Starmer’s government continues to trade with and even sell arms to the Israeli government, despite being aware of the blatant crimes Israel commits day after day in Gaza and in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. It still considers Israel a key ally despite knowing that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is reviewing an allegation of genocide directed at its “war” in Gaza and that there is an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant out for its prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, for various war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Just last week, Britain’s Foreign Secretary David Lammy held talks with Israel’s Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar — the top diplomat of a government under investigation for genocide — while he was on an unannounced visit to London. The Foreign Ministry confirmed that Lammy met Sa’ar to “discuss Gaza and other pressing Middle East issues”, during what it described as the Israeli minister’s “private visit to the UK”.

This is unacceptable. British government officials should not be having any public or private meetings with senior ministers from a country accused of the most heinous crimes recognised in international law. They must not be “discussing Gaza and other pressing Middle East issues” with Israeli leaders while Israel continues to bomb refugee tents, kill journalists and medics, and block the delivery of aid to a population under relentless siege.

No politician can claim ignorance of what is happening. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed. Many more have been maimed, traumatised and displaced. Hospitals, clinics, refugee camps, schools, universities, residential neighbourhoods, water and food facilities have been destroyed. Hundreds of aid workers — both local and foreign, including Brits — have been targeted and killed, for the crime of trying to help Palestinians.

The British public at large is horrified by what Israel is doing in the occupied

Palestinian territories, and they want it to stop. We have seen this in various opinion polls and on the streets in the form of enormous protests.

And yet, our government is intransigent. The meetings that so many aid and human rights organisations had with ministers and senior civil servants — difficult to get in the first place — have had no impact. Starmer’s government is impervious to all the normal lobbying and campaign tools we employ. It is refusing to hold Israel to account for its blatant violations of international law.

It is time for us to try a different strategy. We cannot continue to engage with the British government as if we are merely having a policy disagreement. This is not a routine case of our government refusing to pay sufficient attention to a conflict or crisis, due to different priorities or conflicting interests. This is not a disagreement we can overcome through engagement and debate. Britain’s leaders today are not only ignoring the most heinous war crimes being livestreamed on our screens on a daily basis, but also insisting on supporting the perpetrators of these crimes — diplomatically, politically and militarily — against warnings and desperate pleas from the human rights sector.

We believe the only way NGOs can actually make a difference in this space is by ending all engagement with the government on this issue. By continuing to talk to the government, we are not helping Palestinians on the ground or our colleagues working with a target on their backs in Gaza. We are merely providing the government with an opportunity to say it is doing something to help those stuck in Israel’s kill zone. We must not participate in processes and engagements that will be used to whitewash Britain’s complicity in Israel’s crimes.

Rather than trying to talk to a government that has no intention of listening, we should support protests, boycotts and legal efforts to hold Israel’s leaders to account for their role in the genocide. The British government may not be willing to pay attention to our campaigns and reports, but they will eventually pay attention to the ever-growing protests on the streets and the legal decisions against their Israeli allies in British and international courts. At this point in time, continuing a dialogue with the government will only turn us into instruments of British foreign policy.

There is only one way forward. We must loudly name what’s happening in Gaza — a genocide. We should name the crime, underline our government’s complicity in it, and focus our efforts on elevating the voices of our Palestinian colleagues on the ground. Meetings with ministers and civil servants behind closed doors will not make a difference, but informing the public of what is actually happening in Gaza, with support from our government, just may. We know that our actions cannot magically put an end to the genocide in occupied Palestine, but they can still make a difference. We can add to the pressure on those who have the power to stop the carnage, which is so needed.

Additionally, stopping our fruitless engagements with the government will allow us to reorient our work, reconnect with the wider public from whom we should draw our legitimacy and strength, and focus our energy on actions that can make a real difference for people in need. The actions we, as members of the aid and human rights sector in Britain, take now, do not only matter to those in Gaza. The way our government, our leading institutions and our society at large deal with the genocide in Gaza will set a precedent for how they will deal with crises and emergencies in the future — at home and abroad. It will determine whether our country will be a force that works to uphold human rights and international law, or one that tramples on them whenever convenient. Today, we must all fight for what is right, and show our government that indifference is not acceptable in the face of genocide, lest we ourselves become complicit. History will judge how we respond to this moment.

Ongoing mass arrests of Palestinians amid genocide

SINCE the beginning of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Israeli forces have systematically targeted Palestinians, regardless of their location, arresting over one million Palestinians from across the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza, including other Arab prisoners who had participated in the Palestinian resistance. Over the years, the occupation has employed all forms of torture, abuse, medical neglect, and starvation against Palestinian political prisoners. It has used the issue of prisoners as a tool of pressure and political bargaining, in an ongoing attempt to further its long-standing project of taking control not only of Palestinian land but also subjugating its people. As part of this strategy, the occupation has systematically targeted Palestinian women and children, arresting hundreds of women and thousands of underage children, through inhumane practices that deprive them of their most fundamental rights. This has been carried out in complete disregard for international conventions and laws concerning prisoners and human rights in detention, particularly in areas of war and military occupation.

Surge in arrests

However, the scale of arrests and violations has severely spiked since October 7, 2023, when Israel launched a mass

Raed Mohammed Mahmood Amer

arrest and collective punishment campaign across all Palestinian territories—including Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank, and inside the 1948-occupied territories—in an attempt to suppress national resistance within Palestine and to exact revenge. Palestinian prisoner defense and advocacy groups have recorded over 16,400 arrests of Palestinians from across the West Bank and Jerusalem alone, in addition to thousands of others abducted from the Gaza Strip, amid what many rights groups describe as genocidal actions by Israel in Gaza. As of early April 2025, there are some 9,900 Palestinians, including 400 children and 27 women, held in Israeli occupation prisons, the majority of them held without trial or charge. They are detained in at least 30 prisons, military camps, and interrogation centers throughout the country. In the aftermath of October 7, the Israeli occupation massively abused its use of two legal frameworks that allow it to arbitrarily detain Palestinians en masse without pressing charges or allowing them to stand trial. The first is ‘administrative detention,’ a military order used against Palestinians of the occupied West Bank that can be indefinitely renewed. Until the start of April 2025, there were 3,498 Palestinians held

behind bars under this order. The second is the “Illegal Combatants” law Israel used specifically against Palestinian residents of occupied Gaza, under which some 1,747 people are held, majority in military camps as opposed to formal central prisons. Thousands more from Gaza remain forcibly disappeared, with no information available about their names, conditions, or whereabouts, as Israel refuses to cooperate with human rights and humanitarian organizations. Detainees, and particularly those abducted from Gaza, are suffering from severe abuse, torture, solitary confinement, medical neglect, starvation, and even executions inside prisons. Israel has admitted to killing over 60 prisoners -- both through direct executions and deaths resulting from abuse and neglect -- inside its prisons and newly established interrogation centers opened before and after October 7, 2023. The suffering of Palestinian prisoners is not limited to physical and psychological torture, but extends to deliberate policies aimed at breaking their spirits and dehumanizing them. Israel’s prison system is a tool of colonial control, where detention is not just a punitive measure but a means of collective punishment and intimidation meant to terrorize Palestinian society as a

whole. This raises pressing questions about the role and effectiveness of international human rights bodies and the United Nations, which appear increasingly powerless and passive in the face of ongoing crimes and abuses committed against Palestinian prisoners -- men, women, and children alike. **Failures of international organizations** Prisoners face daily abuses that are clear violations of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, which are meant to guarantee the rights of individuals under occupation. From the blanket denial on all family visits to detainees and highly limited access to legal representation, to the use of solitary confinement for extended periods, the occupation have normalized practices that meet the legal definition of crimes against humanity. Former detainees, including children, often suffer long-term psychological trauma and physical disabilities as a result of their detention and their injury during arrest. Moreover, Israel’s refusal to cooperate with international oversight bodies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN special rapporteurs, has created a complete lack of transparency over the condition

and fate of many detainees -- particularly those from Gaza. The enforced disappearance of thousands from the enclave, combined with the use of military camps as secret detention sites as well as horrific testimonies of released and current detainees shows there are mass abuses taking place including extrajudicial executions. In the face of these escalating atrocities, the silence and inaction of the international community are not only disappointing but extremely dangerous. The continued failure to hold Israel accountable emboldens further crimes and undermines the global human rights system. As Palestinian prisoners endure one of the darkest chapters in their collective history, decision makers must be reminded that if they are benefiting from the suffering of the Palestinian people, or are doing nothing to end it, they bear equal moral responsibility alongside the Israeli occupation. The question now is not only about the fate of thousands in Israeli occupation prisons, but about the moral credibility of the international legal order. If the institutions that were ostensibly created to protect human rights cannot act when they are most needed, then the foundations of international law must not only be questioned, but are in danger of complete erosion.

— AA

In Canada, genocide is on the ballot

Andrew Mitrovica

That concerned Canadian is, of course, not alone. They have been joined by thousands of like-minded Canadians who have invested time, money and energy to mobilise Arab and Muslim voters throughout Canada to exercise their agency and franchise on April 28 in solidarity with their besieged brothers and sisters in Palestine. Large nationwide and energised grassroots movements, including #ElectPalestine, MuslimsVote and Vote Palestine, are seized with the overarching imperative to fix the fate of Palestine and Palestinians at the epicentre of Canada’s political dialogue. Their “voices” must finally be heard and attended to. The predictable cultural condescension -- quick, election-time visits to mosques and cliché-ridden rhetoric meant to convey tissue-thin “sympathy” for the “sad” plight of Palestinians -- has lost what remained of its vacuous currency. Instead, powerful constituencies are demanding that Canada’s “major” political parties recalibrate fundamentally and unequivocally their longstanding backing for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu -- an indicted war criminal -- and reject outright his oft-repeated, and international law-desecrating aim to reduce Palestine to dust and memory. The crusade gathering momentum in Canada is reminiscent of the “Uncommitted” cause engineered by Arab and Muslim citizens during the 2024 US presidential election, who warned the Democratic Party and its standard bearer, Kamala Harris, that they risked losing votes in crucial swing states by continuing to arm and offer diplomatic cover to Netanyahu. Harris failed to heed the urgent alarm and, as a result, forfeited the presidency to mollify Israel, its evangelical supporters in the United States and Netanyahu’s grotesque strategic aims. Her reward? An emboldened Netanyahu has embraced Trump like a brother-in-genocidal-arms. The Democratic Party may or may not have learned an instructive lesson that may or may not influence its slavish Israel-coddling in 2028. We will, in due course, see. Meanwhile, Carney and Poilievre have been busy mimicking Harris’s scoffing at the pressing preoccupations of Arab and Muslim voters and their allies among the broader Canadian public. Poilievre is a crude, irredeemable honorary Zionist zealot, describing mass pro-Palestinian protests as “hate marches”. For his cavalier part, Carney was confronted at a rally in Ontario earlier this month by a concerned Canadian who asked the prime minister, “Why are you sending weapons to Israel via the

US to kill our families?” Carney’s response: silence.

The prime minister and his handlers ought to know that Arab and Muslim Canadians will play a decisive role in the election outcome and could determine whether or not the new parliament features a majority government.

Arab and Muslim voters make up a sizeable part of the electorate in 90 ridings -- electoral districts -- across Canada, and, of that figure, could tip the scales in more than 40 seats.

As a career-long numbers man, Carney surely understands that dismissing or alienating that many Canadians, in that many ridings, only invites disappointment and possible peril.

A recent public opinion poll commissioned by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) offers Carney a template for how he can win over Canadians who intend to vote with Gaza and the West Bank top of their minds and souls.

More than half of Canadians support a ban on weapons exports to Israel. Even more tellingly, almost 50 percent want that ban expanded into a full-blown, two-way embargo. These are not trivial findings. They represent a clear, growing consensus among Canadians who are tired of moral evasions from their leaders.

So far, Carney has been content to hedge and adopt Canada’s so-called “balanced” approach. But hedging will no longer suffice; nor will calculated complicity.

Muslim and Arab voters have watched in despair as Canada’s political elites, through their silence and inaction, subscribed to the humanitarian catastrophe being waged against innocents in the shattered remnants of Palestine.

Today, 56 percent of Canadians say that Canada should recognise the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant -- and 70 percent of Liberal voters agree.

Carney needs to do much more than endorse the loophole-laden arms embargo that Foreign Minister Melanie Joly announced in March.

If he is serious about justice, Carney has to support a two-way ban, stand with and by the ICC, and insist that Canada will not be a haven for alleged war criminals.

Anything less, and Carney will have treated Arab and Muslim Canadians with the signature disdain of his predecessors -- even when the polling, for once, is squarely on their side.

Carney still has time to do the right thing, at the right moment, for the right reasons.

I suspect that the prime minister will squander the opportunity. Mark Carney is bound, like Kamala Harris, to pay a lasting and stinging price.

— Arab News

Türkiye’s new opportunities in Europe’s security architecture

Zoltan Egeresi

SINCE the leadership transition in the United States on January 20, international politics has become increasingly volatile and unpredictable, and deepening mistrust is casting a shadow over transatlantic relations. The Trump administration’s strong rhetoric regarding the necessity of increased European military expenditure, coupled with its unilateral approach to managing the war in Ukraine without consulting European partners, raised alarm in numerous capitals across the continent. This apprehension was further exacerbated by the unsuccessful and ill-fated meeting between the American and Ukrainian presidents at the White House in late February. Military cooperation The potential resurgence of classical power politics and spheres of influence, dominated by great and middle powers, accompanied by a more reluctant US engagement, has left European states in a precarious position as the war in Ukraine continues with no clear end in sight. While Russia continues its military offensive against Ukraine despite American efforts to broker peace, the reliability of US commitments to its European allies has come under scrutiny. Consequently, European countries have been compelled to enhance military cooperation and increasingly rely on their own resources. In recent weeks,

several high-level meetings have taken place in France and the United Kingdom, attended by a range of European leaders. In early March, Türkiye also took part in the London Summit, indicating its readiness to support European security initiatives. This evolving geopolitical vacuum -- often described as “European strategic loneliness,” has elevated Türkiye, which possesses the second-largest standing army in NATO and a rapidly expanding defense industry, has emerged as a key player in European security. The country has gained significant prominence in the global defense market due to its advancements in drone technology. Moreover, the Turkish military has undergone significant modernization and capability enhancement, particularly in the areas of cross-border operations and the establishment of overseas military bases in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. In addition to land-based capabilities, recent years have witnessed notable advancements in Turkish naval power, including the commissioning of the TCG Anadolu, a short-runway carrier that enhances the country’s force projection capacity. Beyond its military capabilities, Türkiye’s geopolitical alignment with Europe has further solidified its relevance in the evolving security landscape. As a staunch supporter of Ukraine’s territorial integrity, Türkiye has actively positioned itself as a mediator between Kyiv and Moscow. Its role was instrumental in facilitating initial negotiations between the conflicting parties in the early stages of the war, and it served as a key intermediary for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, ensuring the safe transit of grain exports from designated ports.

Geopolitics as a core factor Beyond its military capabilities, Türkiye’s geopolitical alignment with Europe has further solidified its relevance in the evolving security landscape. As a staunch supporter of Ukraine’s territorial integrity, Türkiye has actively positioned itself as a mediator between Kyiv and Moscow. Its role was instrumental in facilitating initial negotiations between the conflicting parties in the early stages of the war, and it served as a key intermediary for the Black Sea

Grain Initiative, ensuring the safe transit of grain exports from designated ports. Furthermore, Türkiye’s strategic position in the Middle East and its crucial role in controlling irregular migration flows that could impact the European continent underscore its significance as an indispensable partner. However, divergent interests between Türkiye and several EU member states continue to pose challenges to cooperation. Additionally, the shifting geopolitical dynamics may provide renewed impetus for Türkiye’s EU accession process, which has remained stalled for years. If domestic political developments in Türkiye align with European expectations, the negotiation process could gain momentum. Nevertheless, several EU member states are likely to capitalize on the current geopolitical environment to strengthen their own defense industries and

establish a dominant position within the European market, making Turkish participation in joint projects plausible but not guaranteed. However, the Turkish defense industry is in a significantly stronger position than it was a decade ago. In recent years, several Central European countries, including Poland and Hungary, have procured Turkish military products, thereby securing a foothold for Turkish defense exports within the EU. The evolving geopolitical landscape and persistent instability may enhance Türkiye’s bargaining power in its relations with the European Union. Key issues such as visa liberalization and the modernization of the EU-Türkiye Customs Union Agreement (in force since 1996) will require reassessment within the broader context of European-Turkish relations. The Turkish government has remained steadfast in its pursuit of full EU membership and remains committed to this objective as part of its long-term strategic vision. In sum, Türkiye plays an increasingly pivotal role in Europe’s emerging security architecture amid the ongoing transformation of the international order. The current geopolitical shifts present an opportunity to reinvigorate cooperation between Türkiye and the European Union, offering a renewed chance to deepen ties and reestablish mutual trust.

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

The Rohingya crisis and Bangladesh’s breaking point

THE Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, one of the world’s most protracted humanitarian disasters, is teetering on the edge of catastrophe. The UN’s International Organization for Migration, alongside partners, last month appealed for \$934.5 million to provide lifesaving aid to 1.5 million people, including nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees and their host communities in Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char. This funding is critical to sustain food, shelter, healthcare and protection for a population entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance. However, the likelihood of securing these funds is dwindling, leaving Bangladesh -- a nation already stretched thin -- to shoulder an unsustainable burden. Compounding this crisis, colder-than-expected

temperatures in the camps are projected to drive a surge in gastroenteritis, escalating medical costs and threatening lives. Without urgent global action, this situation risks spiraling into a disaster of unimaginable scale. For the last eight years, Bangladesh has hosted more than 1 million Rohingya who fled genocidal violence in Myanmar. The sprawling camps in Cox’s Bazar, among the largest and most overcrowded in the world, are a testament to Bangladesh’s generosity. But this generosity comes at a steep cost. The Rohingya, stateless and barred from working, rely entirely on aid for survival. The 2025-26 Joint Response Plan, launched by the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, aims to address these needs while sup-

porting 390,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in host communities. But global donor fatigue and competing crises -- coupled with recent US aid cuts -- make it improbable that the UN will raise the full amount. In 2024, the US provided more than \$300 million, nearly half the humanitarian response budget for the Rohingya. With such a significant donor stepping back, the funding gap, already \$115.6 million for food alone, is poised to widen. The consequences of underfunding are already evident. The World Food Programme narrowly avoided halving food rations from \$12.50 to \$6 per month in early 2025 thanks to a last-minute \$73 million US contribution. However, previous ration cuts in 2023, which reduced vouchers to \$8, led to 90 percent of the camp population struggling to access adequate diets and 15 percent of

children suffering from malnutrition -- the highest rates recorded. UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi has warned of a “direct correlation between aid and lives.” Without sustained funding, hunger will deepen, driving desperation, crime and dangerous boat journeys as refugees seek to escape. For Bangladesh, this means not only a humanitarian strain but also heightened security risks and social tensions with local communities. Adding to this precarious situation is an environmental threat: colder temperatures in Cox’s Bazar. A recent study highlighted by Medical Xpress projects that lower-than-expected temperatures in the camps will increase the incidence of gastroenteritis, a leading cause of illness among refugees.

Overcrowded conditions, poor sanitation and limited access to clean water already make the camps a breeding ground for disease. Cold weather exacerbates these risks by weakening immune systems and increasing the transmission of pathogens. The study warns that gastroenteritis outbreaks could overwhelm the camps’ fragile healthcare infrastructure, driving up medical costs at a time when funding is scarce. Children, who make up a significant portion of the population, are particularly vulnerable. Malnutrition, already rampant, will worsen outcomes, potentially leading to higher mortality rates. For Bangladesh, the implications are staggering. The government, alongside local communities, is essentially “running a city of over a mil-

lion people in one of the most vulnerable areas in the world,” as Grandi noted. But international support is waning. The interim government, led by Mohammed Yunus, has sought to draw global attention, as seen during UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ visit in March. But pledges alone cannot bridge the gap. Bangladesh lacks the resources to absorb the financial and logistical burden of sustaining the camps without robust international backing. Local communities, who have shared land, water and forests, are growing resentful as their own needs go unmet. The strain on infrastructure, from healthcare to sanitation, is pushing the system to breaking point. The health crisis looming from gastroenteritis underscores the urgency. Treating widespread outbreaks will require additional medical supplies,

skills training and livelihoods could reduce dependency and give young Rohingya -- a third of whom are aged 10 to 24 -- hope for a future. Myanmar, too, must be held accountable for creating the conditions for safe repatriation, though peace in Rakhine State remains elusive. In the interim, Bangladesh needs tangible support, not just sympathy.

The Rohingya crisis is a test of global solidarity. If the world fails to act, the camps in Cox’s Bazar will become a graveyard of dashed hopes, with Bangladesh left to bear the consequences. Colder temperatures and rising diseases are not hypotheticals -- they are imminent threats. The UN’s \$934.5 million appeal is not a luxury, it is a lifeline. Without it, the Rohingya and their hosts face a disaster that is not just waiting to happen -- it is already unfolding.



SCCI's president stresses pragmatic steps to enhance bilateral trade with CARs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan underlined the need for proactive steps to enhance bilateral trade and transit trade with neighbouring countries and the Central Asian republics (CARs).

He was addressing during a session titled "The Future Trade and Commerce Relationship with Central Asian Republics" organized by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with Institute of Regional Study Peshawar here at chamber house on Wednesday.

Emphasizing on pragmatic and sustainable measures to remove hurdles and address issues allied with mutual trade and transit trade, SCCI chief said the importance of KP/Peshawar is a golden gate for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics.

Vast opportunities are

available to strengthen bilateral trade relations with neighbouring and regional countries, Moqem noted, and called for fully capitalizing these available potentials to enhance bilateral trade and transit trade and to improve export and national economy.

The chamber president called for establishment of business to business contacts, exploiting each other's potentials, experiences, and investment avenues through joint ventures to improve bilateral trade, transit trade between regional states.

Session was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, Chairman SCCI Standing Committee on Afghan-CARs Transit Trade and former president Faiz Mohammad Faizi, Chairman SCCI standing committee on Afghan-CARs Bilateral Trade promotion and former senior vice president Shahid Hussain, PAJCCI senior vice presi-

dent, former SVP and executive member Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, executive member Saifullah Khan, Ishanullah, Naeem Qasmi, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, officials and representatives of IRS Peshawar, traders, industrialists and importers and exporters.

Dr Iqbal Khalil, chairman of the IRS through his a detailed multi-media presentation briefed the house about potentials and avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and transit with Central Asian Republics through joint ventures in potential sectors.

A strong historic, religious and cultural bond establishes between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics, IRS senior official informed, adding that significance of Pakistan in the whole region is very high owing to Gwadar port, strong banking channels, natural resources, especial-

ly our country's geo-political position in the region.

Khalil said prospects are brighter to enhance bilateral and transit trade with regional countries, stating that opportunities for investors are available in oil, natural gas, electricity, renewable energy projects along with mining, minerals and other important sectors, which should be fully exploited on a reciprocal basis.

The senior IRS official highlighted the importance of the TAPI gas pipeline, Trans Afghan Railways and CASA-1000 project and asked Pakistani investors to take full benefits from these projects.

Other speakers including Faiz Mohammad, Shahid Hussain and Ziaul Haq Sarhadi also spoke on the occasion and briefed the house comprehensively about cross border trade, especially transit trade with CARs, ground realities, problems, and current scenario.

Participants said besides opportunities, there are a number of issues that are impeding bilateral trade and transit trade with regional countries.

They, however, stressed the revision on policies and resolution of bilateral and transit-trade related issues on a permanent basis.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan presenting shields amongst participants of a session at Chamber's House.

MCB Bank earned Rs11.65 per share in Q1 2025

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Board of Directors of MCB Bank Limited (MCB), met under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha, to review the performance of the Bank and approved the condensed interim financial statements for the quarter ended March 31, 2025. The Board declared a first interim cash dividend of Rs. 9.0 per share, i.e. 90%, continuing the Bank's commitment to delivering consistent shareholder returns.

MCB reported a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of Rs.29.3 billion and Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs.13.8 billion for Q1 2025, translating into Earnings Per Share (EPS) of Rs. 11.65. On a consolidated basis, PBT stood at Rs. 31.6 billion. These results underscore the Bank's prudent approach to balance sheet management, focus on core banking fundamentals, and disciplined risk framework.

The net interest income declined by 7.6% year-on-year on account of margin compression due to a normalization in the interest rate environment.

However, non-markup income remained resilient at Rs. 9.2 billion, slightly up from Rs. 9.1 billion in the corresponding period last year. Fee and commission income

stood at Rs. 5.3 billion, while foreign exchange income and dividend income contributed Rs. 2.2 billion and Rs. 1.7 billion, respectively. The Bank's continued investment in digital channels and process optimization enhanced both customer convenience and operational efficiency.

Operating expenses increased by 22% year-on-year, primarily driven by investments in talent, technology and marketing. However, the cost-to-income ratio remained efficient at 38.23%, reflecting disciplined financial management while continuing to invest in innovation and talent development.

Total assets grew by 17% over December 2024 to reach Rs. 3.2 trillion as of March 31, 2025. This growth was primarily led by a 56% increase in net investments (Rs. 658 billion), while gross advances decreased by Rs. 284 billion (-26%), in line with a measured approach to lending amid evolving macroeconomic dynamics.

The Bank achieved a milestone with current account deposits exceeding Rs.1 trillion, raising the CA ratio to 51%. Deposits reported at Rs. 2.09 trillion, reflecting a 9% increase and strengthening MCB's domestic market share to 6.04% (up from 5.74% as of December 31, 2024). The domestic cost of deposits

dropped significantly to 5.51%, compared to 10.70% in Q1 2024, supporting overall margin management.

MCB's return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) were reported at 1.88% and 24.12%, respectively, while book value per share stood at Rs. 194.82. As a leading player in the remittance segment, MCB recorded USD 1,169 million in home remittance inflows during the quarter, reflecting a 31% year-on-year growth. The Bank continues to support the State Bank of Pakistan's efforts to promote formal remittance channels and financial inclusion.

Asset quality remained strong, with Non-Performing Loans at Rs.53.5 billion, and coverage and infection ratios of 94.13% and 6.61%, respectively. These metrics underscore MCB's effective credit risk governance and diversified lending approach.

MCB maintained a robust capital position, with a Capital Adequacy Ratio of 19.10%, and a Common Equity Tier-1 ratio of 15.32%, significantly above regulatory thresholds. The Leverage Ratio stood at 6.18%, while liquidity indicators remained strong with Liquidity Coverage Ratio at 252.37% and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) at 139.24%, both comfortably above the 100% regulatory requirement.

IBA becomes AACSB accredited

F.P. Report

KARACHI: IBA's School of Business Studies (SBS) has been awarded the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation, joining the top 6% of the world's leading schools to hold this highly sought-after accreditation. Founded in 1916, AACSB is the oldest business education accreditation body headquartered in the United States. AACSB accreditation is synonymous with the highest standards in business education and is recognized worldwide for its stringent assessment process. The accreditation is awarded after a rigorous evaluation process, engagement with AACSB-assigned mentor, comprehensive review and visit by PRT consisting of deans from accredited business schools, and demonstration of alignment with the nine accreditation standards focusing on strategic management and innovation, learner success, thought leadership, engage-

ment, and societal impact. Achieving AACSB accreditation affirms IBA's unwavering commitment to developing future leaders. It reflects the institute's relentless pursuit of excellence, and the rigorous academic standards embedded across its programs. After achieving the accreditation, IBA now enters AACSB's CIR cycles, ensuring sustained progress and alignment with globally benchmarked standards.

As one of the most widely recognized accreditations in the world, AACSB will further boost the global recognition and employability of IBA graduates. According to the 2024 AACSB analysis of Fortune 500 and S&P 500 company data, 73% of CEOs at Fortune 100 companies and 75% of the highest-paid CEOs at S&P 500 companies hold degrees from AACSB-accredited schools, underscoring the impact of the AACSB-accredited institutions. Strengthened by this achievement, IBA shall continue to advance business

and society by delivering quality education and shaping graduates who go on to lead with purpose and impact.

IBA Karachi, Pakistan's leading and most prestigious institution of higher education, has nurtured generations of trailblazers, with 20,000+ alumni driving innovation and leading organizations across the globe. Equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, modern learning spaces, and cutting-edge facilities, IBA offers a world-class education that empowers students to shape the future. Committed to sustainability, IBA fosters an eco-conscious campus community, continuously reducing its carbon footprint through impactful green initiatives. With a rich legacy and an unwavering pursuit of progress, IBA continues to redefine education, leadership, and responsible innovation.

Here's to the next 70 years of Visionary Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Sustainable Impact.

Chaaye Khana unveils first-ever rooftop outlet at Amazon Mall



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - Chaaye Khana, Pakistan's popular cafe renowned for its cozy ambiance and extensive tea selection, has officially launched its first-ever rooftop cafe at the pinnacle of Amazon Mall, strategically located on the bustling GT Road. This unique branch boasts arguably the most scenic views in the Islamabad-Rawalpindi twin cities, offering patrons a breathtaking panorama while they enjoy their favourite brews and bites.

The opening ceremony was graced by Mr. Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, the developers behind Amazon Mall, alongside Mr. Danish Baloch, the owner of this Chaaye Khana outlet.

Perched atop Amazon Mall, the new Chaaye Khana provides an unparalleled vantage point overlooking the cityscape. This opening marks a significant milestone for the brand, being its premiere rooftop location. Guests can now indulge in the familiar comfort and extensive menu of Chaaye Khana - known for its diverse range of teas, coffees, snacks, breakfast items, and hearty meals - while soaking in spectacular views, making it an

ideal spot for both casual meetups and special moments.

"We are thrilled not only to bring the Chaaye Khana experience to Amazon Mall but to launch our very first rooftop cafe here," said Danish Baloch, Franchise Owner. "We believe the combination of our cherished hospitality and these incredible scenic views from this unique vantage point will create a truly memorable experience for our guests."

Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, added, "Amazon Mall already hosts a vibrant mix of brands and enjoys substantial footfall. Welcoming Chaaye Khana's first rooftop outlet to its summit not only aligns with IMARAT's vision of creating dynamic lifestyle destinations but is set to further enhance the mall's diverse offerings and appeal, providing visitors with another compelling reason to visit."

Amazon Mall, strategically located on GT Road, is one of the premier projects developed by the IMARAT Group. Already a popular destination featuring a wide array of well-known retail brands and attracting significant daily footfall, the mall stands as a modern hub for shopping,

dining, and entertainment. The introduction of Chaaye Khana's unique rooftop experience is expected to further solidify its position as a must-visit location in the twin cities.

The new Chaaye Khana at Amazon Mall is now open, inviting guests to enjoy delicious food, comforting tea, and stunning vistas from its pioneering rooftop setting.

Chaaye Khana is a leading Pakistani cafe chain celebrated for its warm, inviting atmosphere and an extensive menu featuring over seventy blends of tea, alongside coffee, traditional breakfast, contemporary snacks, and full-course meals. It has established itself as a go-to destination for conversation, relaxation, and community. This Amazon Mall outlet marks its first venture into rooftop cafe spaces.

Amazon Mall, located prominently on GT Road, is a state-of-the-art shopping and leisure complex featuring numerous popular brands and attracting high visitor numbers. A project of IMARAT Group, prominent real estate development company in Pakistan recognized for its commitment to excellence and innovation across various residential, commercial, and hospitality projects.

WIBCON 2025 empowers women

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 15th Annual "Women in Business & Leadership Conference (WIBCON 2025)", organized by PSTD, brought together a diverse group of female thought leaders, entrepreneurs, corporate professionals and trailblazers to inspire, connect and elevate on 23rd April at Serena hotel. Event was managed by Red Team.

Mega Learning Festival was hosted by the charismatic Abdul Samad Khan. Event began with a welcome address by Hasan Adnan - Board member PSTD. Romanna Dada (MD, Vitality Capital; Shark Tank Pakistan) led the opening session "Unlocking Ambition, Building Wealth & Leading with Purpose".

Her Threads of Wonder featured Zoha Imran, Roshni Noor, Nausheen Fatima, Schirish Nisa from Telenor sharing stories of courage and reinvention.

Andleeb Aslam (Zong) unpacked Imposter Syndrome in "Mental Agility."

Dr. Sonia Saleem (Socio Engineering Technologies) highlighted self-awareness and purpose-driven leadership. Reverse Playback Panel featured CXOs: Shamama Arbab (OGDCL), Atif Raza (PTCL), Hasan Adnan and Saira Gabol (Khushhali Bank) sharing insights on inclusive, equitable workplaces.

Afshan Tehseen (Human Cap Forum) unveiled "The Invisible Load," addressing unseen emotional labor and redefining success.

Rubina Jamal led "Breaking the Mold," focusing on unlearning limiting beliefs. "U in Your Universe" activity took attendees on a gamified, interactive mentorship journey.

address, Ms. Sadia Rashid stated that the scientific progress made by Russia after the Second World War is unparalleled. She emphasized that Pakistani universities-particularly Hamdard University-are eager to collaborate with Russian institutions. The aim is to enable Pakistani students to benefit from Russia's technical and scientific expertise in key fields such as medicine, surgery, computer sciences, nuclear energy, and semiconductors.

She added that Hamdard University is the practical realization of the vision of Shaheed

Hakim Mohammed Said and is the largest private university in the country. Today, students at Hamdard University are gaining advanced knowledge in several faculties across a range of modern disciplines.

Professor Dr. Ahsana Dar Farooq, Director of the



Center of Excellence at Hamdard University gave an introduction of Hamdard University, the vision of founder chancellor - Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said and University's different faculties.

During the interactive session, notable participants included Professor Dr. Syed Shabib-ul-Hasan, Vice Chancellor of Hamdard University; Kaleem Ahmed Ghyas,

Registrar; Ms. Alia Nasir, Principal of Rufaidah Hamdard College of Nursing; senior directors, including Syed Muhammad Arsalan, Director of HFP; and Shahryar Pasha, Director of Marketing at Hamdard University. A large number of students from both Hamdard University and Rufaidah Hamdard College of Nursing also attended the session.

Hamdard University, HFP organized interactive session for students

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Hamdard University and Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP) organized an interactive session for students at the Arena, Bahria Town Tower. The session was presided over by the President of HFP, Ms. Sadia Rashid. The Consul General of Russia in Karachi, Viktorovich Fedorov, the chief guest, delivered a special lecture on global politics and Russia's stance on international affairs and interacted with the students.

He stated that Israel, through its continued aggression in Gaza, has violated the Charter of the United Nations. The Palestinian nation is facing severe oppression, and Israel's policy of coercion and force is not only an act of cruelty against Gaza but also a blatant breach of international law.

"The Second World War brought unimaginable suffering and devastation to humanity. Atrocities, brutality, and horrific acts of genocide were recorded in every region. Among all nations, the Russian people endured the greatest hardships. Twenty-seven million innocent and unarmed civilians fell victim to Nazi atrocities."

"Russia remembers this as the 'Great Patriotic War,' during which tens of millions of Russians laid down their lives for their country. This courage and resilience remain a shining chapter in the history of the Russian nation, serving as a lasting source of patriotism and national resolve for generations to come."

"After the great sacrifices of the Russians that led the world to the victory against Nazis, humanity resolved to establish 'United Nations' to address

disputes among nations. The principles and laws laid down by the United Nations are recognized by all member states, including the right to self-defense in the event of a violation of territorial integrity. Russia has the right to protect its people, and this right is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations."

"For exercising this very right, Russia is facing over twenty thousand different types of sanctions. However, it is also a fact that the economic and financial sanctions imposed by the United States and Europe have had no real impact on Russia's economy or national resolve."

He told students it was only the United Nations that had authority to impose sanctions on countries that violate international agreements. Unilateral sanctions were harmful to global sta-

bility, and it was essential to discourage the West's unjust and aggressive conduct in this regard.

He further said "The establishment of the United Nations strengthened the struggle against colonial slavery, and within a few years, several new states emerged on the world map - one of them being Pakistan."

"Today, Russia seeks a relationship with Pakistan based on mutual interest. There is vast potential for cooperation between the two countries across various sectors. Russia views Pakistan as a long-term trade partner. For Pakistani students, Russian universities offer access to modern knowledge and education. Russia also provides scholarships to Pakistani students, encouraging academic exchange and collaboration."

Earlier in her welcome

NAME CORRECTION

My Father's correct name is Muhammad Shafiq while mistakenly written in my Educational documents of BISEP as Shafiq Khan please make the required corrections in it. From Asim Shafiq S/o Muhammad Shafiq

LOST & FOUND

I have lost the original documents of my plot number BWOK56C82D Blue World City Islamabad in the name of Altaf Khan son of Aqal Mir resident of Ali Masjid Tehsil Jamrud District Khyber. Contact # 03035358366

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby confirmed that Mian Asim Jan son of Tohidullah Jan Mian CNIC No. 1710144306355 owner of Plot No. 568, Sector D11, Zone No. 3, Plot 5 Marla, Regi Model Town, Peshawar, has issued a written Power of Attorney in the name his Father Tohidullah Jan Mian son of Ubaid ullah Jan Mian CNIC No. 1710135075157, through an related embassy. The plot will be transferred as per the above mentioned Power of Attorney. Public are hereby informed that if anyone has any excuse or objection to this transfer, then they should contact the PDA/RMT authorities within 15 days, otherwise the Power of Attorney will be processed. Mian Asim Jan

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Camp Court Totalai Khadukhel Buner. Appeal. No.45/13 Institution.9/5/2024-6/9/2024/ Date of hearing: 9/5/2025.Sultana Begum etc VS Rahat Sultana etc. Notice to No. 41. Muhammad Sardar s/o Gulbar.120/1. Tahir Muhammad 120/2. Fiaz sons of Rahman Gul resident of Dubai Banda Khwar Totalai Buner. 21/3.Mst Saleema d/o Yardad Khan66. Abdul Wahid Khan. 67. Said Muhammad. 68. Adil Muhammad sons of Khanpur. 40. Amir Sardar s/o Gulbar. 47.Nurul Basar s/o Dilbar. 56.Faizur Rehman. 57. Azizur Rehman sons of Said Rehman. 102. Muhammad Naeem. 103. Muhammad Fiaz sons of Abdul Waris. 95.Mubser Zada. 96.Sheren Zada sons of Perzada. 99.Iqbal Husain s/o Fazal Karim. 84. Imran s/o Shah Nazar Khan. 13/2.Shah Zaman. 13/3.Gohar sons of Khan Ghalib resident of Dabuna Totalai. 39. Muhammad Ayaz s/o Gulbar resident of Totalai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 9/5/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner. Appeal. No.12/13. Institution 20/1/2025. Date of hearing:14/5/2025.Said Habib Shah VS Said Mian Ali Shah etc. Notice to No.3. Ifthikar Ali son of Dawood Shah resident of Takhtabad tehseil Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 14/5/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Samina Sehar Civil Judge XIII Family Court-II, Bannu. Suit No. 10/FC, Institution 23-01-2025 Next date of hearing 26-04-2025. CaseTitle. Mst. Menhaja Begum Vs Gull Habib. Notice to, Gull Habib son of Noor Ali R/o Dabak Syed Khel P/o Domil Aral Saied.1, Tehsil and District Bannu Presently in U.A.E. In the above case titled the service of above defendant (s) is not possible through ordinary means. Therefore, you defendant(s) are informed through this publication that on 26-04-2025 at 08.00 AM you have to appear before this court either personally or through attorney or through counsel to pursue the suit noted above. Otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated against you.



Zimbabwe wrap up first Test win in four years

SYLHET (Agencies): Zimbabwe won their first Test match in four years with a three-wicket victory over Bangladesh in Sylhet. Chasing 174, the tourists slipped from 95-0 to 161-7, enduring a nervous finish before Wesley Madhevere closed the match with a four. Zimbabwe set up their victory in the morning session of the final day, reducing Bangladesh from 194-4 to 255 all out, with player of the match Blessing Muzarabani taking 6-72. The former Northamptonshire seamer snared the crucial wicket of

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto for 60 with the second ball of the day, and went on to remove Mehidy Hasan Miraz (four) and last man Jaker Ali (58). Brian Bennett (54) and Ben Curran (44) got the chase off to a strong start, but both fell to all-rounder Mehidy Hasan, who took 5-50 and finished with match figures of 10-102. The 27-year-old's off-breaks threatened to drag Bangladesh back into the match, but their total proved too low to defend, as Zimbabwe sealed their first Test win since beating

Afghanistan in March 2021. Zimbabwe will now seek a series victory in the second and final Test beginning in Chattogram on Monday, 28 April (05:00 BST). It would be their first series victory since beating Bangladesh in a one-off Test in August 2011, while they were facing the same opponents for their last multi-match series victory in 2004. Following this tour they will fly to England to play a one-off Test match at Trent Bridge, starting on 22 May. They last toured England for Tests in 2003, losing at Lord's and Chester-le-Street.

Sabalenka expecting 'big chance' to win on Madrid clay

MADRID (AFP): World number one Aryna Sabalenka believes she will have "big chances" to perform well on clay this season, should she recapture the level she showed during last year's Madrid Open final against Iga Swiatek. The Belarusian squandered three match points in a heartbreaking defeat by Swiatek in the Spanish capital 12 months ago, in what was a high-quality clash that earned WTA Match of the Year honours at the end of the season. Targeting a third Madrid Open crown this fortnight at the Caja Magica, Sabalenka reflects fondly on her final against Swiatek, despite coming agonisingly close to victory before falling just short. "That match was a blockbuster, and I really enjoyed playing, it was very intense, very long. If I can play like that in every match on clay, I think I have big chances to perform well on the clay court season this year,"



Sabalenka said on Wednesday. "That was amazing match, even though I lost it. "Nothing I can be upset with, to be honest, I did my best there, and she just outplayed me." Sabalenka arrives in Madrid on the back of a runner-up showing in Stuttgart, where she fell in the final to Jelena Ostapenko. The 26-year-old, who won the 2024 US and Australian Opens, is still waiting for her first title on clay since her 2023 Madrid triumph. The top seed will open her campaign against Anna Blinkova or Panna Udvardy in round two. This season is featuring

live electronic line calling on clay for the first time on the WTA and ATP tours — a decision that has been met with mixed reaction. While some players are happy to avoid arguments with umpires by solely relying on technology, others have questioned the accuracy of the technology, given the replay doesn't always match the mark visible on the clay court. "I prefer to have the Hawk-Eye system than the referee, because sometimes referees can be very weak to go there (to check the mark) and confirm that they made mistake, so yeah, I prefer to have the Hawk-Eye system," said Sabalenka. First-round action in Madrid on Wednesday saw a returning Petra Kvitová squander a 4-1 double-break lead en route to a 6-4, 6-0 defeat by American Katie Volynets. Kvitová came back from a 17-month maternity leave two months ago and was contesting her first clay-court match in two years.

South Punjab's first Padel Tennis Court to be built in 45 days

MULTAN (APP): Padel Tennis Courts are gaining popularity in Pakistan with facilities emerging in Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore. Its a racket sport played on a smaller court, one third of the size of a lawn tennis court. Unlike open atmosphere of lawn tennis courts, Padel Tennis Courts are enclosed by walls, typically made of glass and/or mesh walls, on all four sides enclosing a 10x20 meters playing area and its net is also of comparatively lower height. It is usually played in

doubles, and the scoring system mirrors tennis, progressing through 15, 30, 40. The ball can bounce off any wall but can only hit the turf once before being returned. Points can be scored when the ball does bounce twice in the competitor's field. Commissioner Khan said, sports and entertainment are symbols of a healthy society and added that public private partnership has emerged as the best model to improve and upgrade infrastructure. DG Parks and

Horticulture Authority (PHA) Multan Kareem Bakhsh said, PHA has finalized the annual auction of the Sports Courts at Rs 1.8 million. He said, the project included developing grounds, seating facilities, information center, shady places and toilet block. He said that the sports corner was opened for public after auction process completed in a transparent manner.

Ruthless O'Sullivan cruises into Crucible last 16

SHEFFIELD (Agencies): Ronnie O'Sullivan produced a ruthless display on Wednesday to thrash Ali Carter and move into the last 16 of the 2025 World Championship. Seven-time Crucible winner O'Sullivan, 49, was playing in his first match since January, when he snapped his cue and threw it in the bin following four losses in five matches at the Championship League event. After Tuesday's opening session he held a 5-4 lead over two-time finalist Carter, but O'Sullivan was on top form as he won the first five frames on Wednesday to seal a 10-4 success. It set up a last-16 tie against Chinese qualifier Pang Junxu, who defeated 12th seed Zhang Anda earlier on Wednesday. Neither O'Sullivan nor Carter had been in the best form in the opening session, with Carter taking the last two frames to leave the match finally balanced. But breaks of 59 and 117 saw O'Sullivan stretch his lead to 7-4 without Carter scoring a point. The world number 18, who had to battle through two qualifying rounds, did make a break of 43 in the 12th frame, but a missed black off the spot was brutally punished with



O'Sullivan's run of 74 taking him two frames from victory. He then compiled a superb 123 with Carter again not scoring a point. The mid-session interval gave Carter a chance to gather his thoughts, but he then left a chance for O'Sullivan early after the restart. "The Rocket" wrapped up a magnificent performance with a wonderful break of 131 for his fourth century of the match, his 211th at the Crucible and the 1,286th of his career. "Dangerous" Murphy is Reigning Masters champion Shaun Murphy also moved into the last 16 with a 10-4 victory in a high-quality match with Crucible debutant Daniel Wells. Murphy, 42, is aiming to win a second world title 20 years after his first success and could face world num-

ber one Judd Trump in the next round. Against Welsh qualifier Wells, the Sheffield crowd were treated to a fine display of snooker with every frame seeing a break of at least 50, including six centuries - three from each player. Murphy won the Masters in January and is looking to become the first player since Trump in 2018-19 to win that tournament and the World Championship in the same season. After Tuesday's first session, Murphy held a 7-2 lead and extended that with a break of 53, to move two frames from victory. But Wells, 49th in the world, made excellent breaks of 115 and 68 to pull two frames back, before Murphy moved one frame away with a superb run of 133. He then clinched the victory with a break of 71 in the final frame.

Arshad declines Neeraj Chopra's Bengaluru event invitation

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's star javelin thrower and Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem has respectfully declined an invitation from his Indian rival and fellow Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra to participate in the upcoming Neeraj Chopra Classic Throwing Championship in Bengaluru. According to reports, Chopra had personally invited Nadeem to attend the event, scheduled for May 24. It is expected to feature top-tier throwing talent from around the region. While expressing gratitude for the invitation, Nadeem confirmed that he would not be able to attend due to prior training and competition commitments. Sources close to the athlete revealed that Nadeem is currently undergoing intense training in Lahore as he prepares to represent Pakistan at the Asian Athletics Championship, scheduled to be held in South Korea from May 27. His travel to Korea is planned for the third week of May, aligning closely with the dates of Chopra's event.

Horticulture Authority (PHA) Multan Kareem Bakhsh said, PHA has finalized the annual auction of the Sports Courts at Rs 1.8 million. He said, the project included developing grounds, seating facilities, information center, shady places and toilet block. He said that the sports corner was opened for public after auction process completed in a transparent manner.

PSL 10: Multan Sultans owner Ali Tareen denies exit rumours

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Multan Sultans owner Ali Tareen has dismissed speculation suggesting he plans to part ways with the franchise after the ongoing 10th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL 10). Speaking to local media following the Sultans' 33-run win over Lahore Qalandars, Tareen stated, "I never said I'm abandoning Multan Sultans. We are simply exploring options to re-evaluate our franchise agreement after the tenth edition of the PSL." Tareen cited concerns over the financial model currently in place, calling it unsustainable. "We do have the option to renew our contract with a 25 percent increase on the current price. But at that price, we're operating at a loss," he said. The businessman indicated his intention to exit the existing agreement and re-

enter the bidding process under more favourable terms. "Hopefully, we can secure the team again at a valuation that makes financial sense, similar to the Karachi Kings' \$26 million deal over ten years." Tareen also acknowledged the struggles faced by the franchise's previous owners, saying they "suffered significant losses and couldn't continue," prompting his team to step in and stabilise operations. On the field, Tareen expressed satisfaction with the Sultans' first win of the tournament, particularly after a loss to Islamabad United earlier in the week. "The coaches and I agreed there was no need to panic. We knew once we got back to Multan, we'd get things back on track," he said. Amid muted fanfare around PSL Season 10, Tareen reaffirmed the team's commitment to its regional supporters.

"We told the players they're playing for the people of Multan. That connection, that love — it's what drives us." Tareen also highlighted the growth of his cricket academies, citing the success story of 14-year-old Sheher Bano, who progressed from the academy to represent Pakistan in the Under-19 Asia Cup and World Cup qualifiers. He further noted the performance of the franchise's development squad in the President's Trophy Grade-II, where they have shown early promise under the JDW banner. The Multan Sultans owner also revealed plans to strengthen cricket infrastructure across South Punjab. "We're working on building a stadium in DHA Multan and upgrading facilities in Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur," he said, adding that the objective is to build a robust regional network for talent development.

Lakers level NBA playoff series, Pacers and Thunder win again



LOS ANGELES (AFP): Luka Doncic scored 31 points and LeBron James added 21 as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 94-85 to level their NBA Western Conference playoff series at one game apiece on Tuesday. Slovenian star Doncic, acquired in a blockbuster February trade, also had 12 rebounds and nine assists for the Lakers, who led by as many as 22 and held on late in a bruising clash at Crypto.com Arena. The Lakers bounced back from a blowout loss on their home floor, while elsewhere the Indiana Pacers and Oklahoma City Thunder seized 2-0 leads in their best-of-seven first-round series. The Pacers withstood another big performance from Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo and the return of Damian Lillard, beating the Bucks 123-115 in the East. The Thunder followed up their crushing 51-point game-one victory over Memphis with another dominant win, beating the Grizzlies 118-99 in their Western Conference clash. After a disjointed effort in their game-one loss, the Lakers rocketed out of the gate, taking a 10-point lead with 5:07 left in the first quarter and maintaining a double-digit advantage

until midway through the fourth quarter. James, chasing a fifth NBA title in his 22nd season, added 11 rebounds and seven assists for the Lakers, who persevered in a physical game that saw the teams combine for 46 personal fouls. Caught out early by the Lakers' increased defensive intensity, the Timberwolves managed to apply some pressure in the final period, when the Lakers suddenly couldn't get a basket to fall. Lillard's three-point shot with 2:33 to play pulled the Bucks within 115-113. But Siakam responded with a three-pointer. Andrew Nembhard drilled another trey and the Pacers held on to win a game that was testy throughout. A brief scuffle in the first quarter resulted in technical fouls for Milwaukee's Gary Trent Jr. and Indiana's Benedict Mathurin. Siakam and Milwaukee's Bobby Portis received technicals with less than two minutes to play, and there was plenty of jawing in between. "It's fun," Haliburton said. "This is what everybody lives for. We're all competitors, so having a lot of fun competing right now." In Oklahoma City, the Thunder showed no sign of a letdown after delivering the most lopsided game-one victory in NBA playoffs history. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points, Jalen Williams added 24 and Chet Holmgren delivered 20 points, 11 rebounds and five blocked shots for the Thunder, who opened the game on a 9-0 run and led by as many as 23.

Lillard, playing his first game in five weeks after undergoing treatment for a blood clot in his right calf, scored 14 points and handed out seven assists for Milwaukee. Lillard's three-point shot with 2:33 to play pulled the Bucks within 115-113. But Siakam responded with a three-pointer. Andrew Nembhard drilled another trey and the Pacers held on to win a game that was testy throughout. A brief scuffle in the first quarter resulted in technical fouls for Milwaukee's Gary Trent Jr. and Indiana's Benedict Mathurin. Siakam and Milwaukee's Bobby Portis received technicals with less than two minutes to play, and there was plenty of jawing in between. "It's fun," Haliburton said. "This is what everybody lives for. We're all competitors, so having a lot of fun competing right now." In Oklahoma City, the Thunder showed no sign of a letdown after delivering the most lopsided game-one victory in NBA playoffs history. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points, Jalen Williams added 24 and Chet Holmgren delivered 20 points, 11 rebounds and five blocked shots for the Thunder, who opened the game on a 9-0 run and led by as many as 23.

United make it five in five after thrashing Sultans by seven wickets

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Islamabad United continued their winning streak in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 as they beat Multan Sultans by seven wickets in the 13th game of the tournament on Wednesday. Chasing 169, the defending champions got over the line on the first ball of the 18th over, with seven wickets in hand and 17 balls to spare. United's opening batter Sahibzada Farhan fell to Ubaid Shah early in the inning after scoring 22 off 13 balls. His opening partner, Andries Gous, was joined by Colin Munro, and the two charged the Multan Sultans' bowling lineup. The duo stitched an 81-run partnership on just 48 deliveries to put Islamabad United in a strong position in their fifth match of the PSL 10. Munro was dismissed after scoring 45 off 28 balls, with the help of five fours and two sixes. Following his dismissal, Mohammad Nawaz arrived at the crease and shared a 55-run stand with Andries Gous. Nawaz departed after scoring 21 off 19 balls, as United were 165 for three and needed just four runs to win. Andries Gous finished things off with a six off Ubaid Shah to make it five in five for Islamabad United in the PSL 10. Earlier, Yasir Khan opened the innings for Multan Sultans alongside captain Mohammad Rizwan after they opted to bat first. The two gave a solid 51-run start in 6.3 overs to the Sultans when Khan fell to Mohammad Nawaz after scoring 29 off 17 balls. Usman Khan then joined Rizwan, and the two stitched a 65-run partnership to put their side in a strong position in the game. The Multan Sultans skipper fell to Shadab Khan after scoring a sluggish 37-ball 36, with the scoreboard showing 116/2 in 13.3 overs. Michael Bracewell made nine and Iftikhar Ahmed added 10 runs to the total as Islamabad United's bowling lineup tightened the noose around the Sultans' batting lineup. Usman Khan was dismissed after scoring 61 off 40 balls, with the help of four fours and four sixes. Kamran Ghulam and Chris Jordan remained unbeaten on 13 and six, respectively as Multan Sultans finished at 168 for five in their 20 overs. Islamabad United top the PSL 10 points table, having won four out of their last four games. Multan Sultans sit at the bottom of the table, with one victory in their four games. They defeated Lahore Qalandars by 33 runs in their match a day earlier.

Shadab becomes first spinner to take 100 wickets in PSL

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Islamabad United captain Shadab Khan has become the first spinner to take 100 wickets in the Pakistan Super League during their clash against Multan Sultans in the PSL 10. The right-arm spinner reached the milestone by dismissing Multan Sultans' captain Mohammad Rizwan in their game on Wednesday. He became the fourth player and first spinner to take 100 wickets in the history of the PSL. Shadab Khan now sits in the fourth spot on the list for the top wicket-takers in the PSL. The list is led by Karachi Kings vice-captain Hasan Ali with 118 wickets in 86 innings. Most Wickets in PSL History: Hasan Ali – 118 wickets in 86 innings Wahab Riaz – 113 wickets in 87 innings Shaheen Shah Afridi – 109 wickets in 75 innings Shadab Khan – 100 wickets in 89 innings Faheem Ashraf – 79 wickets in 73 innings Meanwhile, Islamabad United continued their winning streak in the ongoing PSL 10 as they downed Multan Sultans by seven wickets at their home ground. Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Jason Holder and Riley Meredith's one wicket apiece helped the defending champions restrict Sultans to 168/5 in 20 overs.



In brief

Maid arrested with stolen ornaments

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Chaklala Police on Wednesday took immediate action and arrested a maid who stole gold ornaments from a house. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, it was reported to the police that the accused Maheen had stolen gold ornaments including four bangles and two rings worth Rs 1.5 million from a house in the absence of the owners and fled. The police registered a case and used all means including human intelligence, to trace and arrest the housemaid with the booty.

IRSA releases 115,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 115,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 150,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.91 feet which was 29.91 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 45,200 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1124.95 feet, which was 74.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 49,200 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 53,100, 43,400, 29,000 and 7,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 25,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 21,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police arrest 5 criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Wednesday arrested five criminals involved in street crime, bike lifting and other thefts from Wah Saddar and Rawalpindi City areas. A total of 11 stolen motorcycles along with other looted valuables were recovered from them. According to the police spokesman, the Wah Saddar Police busted a 4-member gang of street criminals recovering nine stolen motorcycles and Rs 35,000 in cash from their possession. The arrested accused included Jahanzeb, Naeem, Omar and Azran. Similarly, the City Police also nabbed the suspect Muhammad Amin involved in motorcycle lifting and other thefts. Five stolen LEDs, two motorcycles and Rs 5,500 obtained by the suspect from the sale of spare parts were recovered from the accused.

7 criminals arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Wednesday arrested seven criminals involved in street crime, bike lifting and other thefts from Wah Saddar, Rawalpindi City and R A Bazaar areas. A total of 15 stolen motorcycles along with other looted valuables were recovered from them. According to the police spokesman, the Wah Saddar Police busted a 4-member gang of street criminals recovering nine stolen motorcycles and Rs 35,000 in cash from their possession. The arrested accused included Jahanzeb, Naeem, Omar and Azran. Likewise, the R A Bazaar Police also nabbed a two-member gang and recovered four stolen motorcycles, batteries and Rs 11,000 from them. The accused were identified as Kashif and Hamza. Similarly, the City Police also nabbed the suspect Muhammad Amin involved in motorcycle lifting and other thefts. Five stolen LEDs, two motorcycles and Rs 5,500 obtained by the suspect from the sale of spare parts were recovered from the accused.

Oracle Corporation delegation calls on Awais Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): The delegation of Oracle Corporation led by Vice President of Industry Strategy Mike Ballard called on Federal Minister for Power Division, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari to explore opportunities for collaboration on the digitization and automation of Pakistan's power sector.

The meeting focused on modernizing the energy sector through the adoption of digital technologies, with the aim of improving operational performance, increasing transparency, and providing better services to consumers, said a press release issued here Wednesday.

Minister Leghari emphasized the importance of embracing the rapid growth of information technology. He stated that IT capabilities are advancing swiftly across the world, and Pakistan must move beyond traditional systems and adopt a logical, data-driven approach. He said that partnerships with global technology firms like Oracle can help build an efficient, transpar-

ent, and consumer-friendly system.

He further said that the purpose of digitization is not merely to ensure returns on investment, but to enhance transparency, improve accountability, and promote long-term performance.

The Oracle delegation welcomed the government's vision. The representatives shared modern solutions such as smart metering and data analytics, which not only improve system performance but also deliver quality services to consumers.

Mike Ballard highlighted Oracle's extensive experience in addressing non-technical losses in countries such as the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Japan, and expressed confidence that Pakistan could benefit from this expertise.

The Ministry of Energy reaffirmed its commitment to adopting modern digital solutions and forging global partnerships to ensure a sustainable, advanced, and consumer-centric power sector in Pakistan.

PPP calls for political consensus on national issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has reaffirmed its commitment to taking all political parties on board regarding major national issues, including terrorism and the construction of new canals.

Addressing a press conference, PPP Central Secretary Nadeem Afzal Chan and In-Charge of the PPP Labour Bureau Chaudhry Manzoor said the party does not believe in division or political point-scoring.

"We are advocating for

the rights of the people. If there is already a water shortage, then where will the water for the new canals come from?" Chan questioned. "Farmers are already facing severe challenges and we stand by them."

Chan emphasized that the PPP is aligned not with any particular government but with the democratic system. "Our aim is not to topple anyone, but to resolve public issues and ensure the protection of people's rights," he added.

On the occasion,

Chaudhry Manzoor claimed that President of Asif Ali Zardari has yet to approve the canal projects.

Chaudhry Manzoor said that the government should summon the meeting of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) to settle the canals issue with consultation of all stakeholders.

He warned that continued water scarcity could prevent farmers from cultivating crops, triggering a broader crisis.

"The PPP stands firmly with the farmers on the water issue," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman visits the art exhibition "Rekindling: The Kalash Narrative," by six accomplished artists at Gallery 06 in PNCA. —APP Photo

Polio vaccination drive reaches 350,000 children

RAWALPINDI (APP): Health authorities in Rawalpindi have vaccinated more than 350,000 children during the first three days of the week long intensive polio immunization campaign aimed at protecting 1.5 million children across the district.

Led by District Health Authority CEO Dr. Asif Arbab Niazi and District Health Officer Dr. Ehsan Ghani, the campaign has mobilized hundreds of health workers to administer vaccines in both urban and remote areas. Special focus is being given to high-risk communities,

including nomadic populations and underserved neighborhoods where vaccination rates have historically been low.

"We are committed to ensuring no child misses this life-saving vaccine," said Dr. Niazi. "Our teams are working tirelessly, going door-to-door, visiting transit points, and reaching out to mobile communities to achieve complete coverage."

The campaign faced a brief disruption earlier this week when health workers staged a protest over unresolved grievances. However, officials

confirmed that all issues have been resolved, and the vaccination drive is now proceeding without hindrance.

"No one has been dismissed from the contract, nor we have any issue presently and we are all in the field to achieve our target of vaccinating 1057000 children across the district," he added.

Authorities have set up a 24/7 monitoring cell to track progress of the campaign. Parents have been urged to cooperate with vaccination teams to help eradicate polio from the district.

10 land grabbers held in grand operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan held a press conference on Wednesday at the Rescue-15 office regarding the grand operation against the land mafia and their accomplices.

On this occasion, SSP Shoaib stated that following special directives from the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi the Islamabad Police carried out indiscriminate actions against land grabbers. In the jurisdiction of Nilore police station 10 accused involved in illegal occupation of citizens land and harassment at gunpoint

were arrested.

The arrested accused have been identified as Syed Ahmed, Shahid, Wasif Zahoor, Latif, Raja Shehraz, Akhtar Gul, Amir Hussain, Nasir Mehmood, Shabbir Ahmed and Faisal. Cases have been registered against them. Police also recovered 6 SMG rifles, one pistol, 800 bullets, magazines, mobile phones and five bundles of wire from their possession.

During the press conference, SSP Shoaib stated that Islamabad Police is actively cracking down on the land mafia and their associates. Such criminal elements will be brought to justice under any circumstances. "No individual

will be allowed to illegally occupy citizens property. The very idea of grabbing someone else land will now be eliminated from Islamabad." If there is any complaint against the land mafia bring it to us. If your claim is legitimate then why do you need so many weapons, said SSP Shoaib.

SSP Shoaib further said that, these people bring outsiders with no connection to the area to occupy land. If a police station fails to handle a case properly the matter reaches us through open courts. No one is allowed to sit on land with weapons. The presence of armed individuals in any area leads to a rise in crime.



ISLAMABAD: Representatives from various Bar Associations called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tara in the federal capital. —APP Photo

Mohsin Naqvi approves major infrastructure projects in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has approved a series of high-impact development projects focused on improving traffic flow and enhancing public amenities in the federal capital.

The approvals were granted during a high-level meeting held at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters, attended by key federal and city officials on Wednesday. One of the flagship projects includes the remodeling and expansion of the Faizabad Interchange, a major traffic node connecting key parts of the twin cities. The project will include the addition of two new lanes and widening of the current infrastructure, aimed at significantly reducing traffic bottlenecks and ensuring a smoother commute for thousands of daily travelers.

To further streamline city traffic, the construction of a 2+2 lane underpass at Faisal Chowk was also approved. The underpass is expected to alleviate congestion at one of Islamabad's busiest intersections. Minister Naqvi emphasized that the

design and execution of the project must be carried out with a forward-looking approach, considering future urban growth and traffic needs.

During the meeting, the Interior Minister directed immediate operationalization of the completed parking plaza in Blue Area, a long-awaited facility designed to address the parking woes in Islamabad's commercial hub. Naqvi also instructed the development of a sustainable business model for both the food street and the parking plaza, ensuring long-term viability and public benefit.

The CDA was also tasked with identifying additional sites for new parking plazas across Islamabad to accommodate the growing number of vehicles. The Minister stressed the need for swift action in selecting appropriate locations to prevent future congestion and facilitate better city planning.

Officials briefed the meeting on plans for a newly developed Blue Area Food Street, which will include pedestrian walkways, food stalls, designated parking areas,

public seating, and recreational spaces.

The area is being designed not only to serve commercial needs but also to provide a vibrant public space for residents and visitors alike.

The Blue Area Parking Plaza will also house a variety of commercial and recreational facilities, including retail outlets, a rooftop restaurant, a cinema, a children's playland, and other entertainment options, transforming it into a multipurpose urban center.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry, Interior Secretary Muhammad Khurram Agha, CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, CDA Board members, officials from the district administration and other senior government representatives.

These developments mark a significant step in Islamabad's urban evolution, with authorities aiming to deliver modern infrastructure and efficient city services that meet the needs of a growing population.

Islamabad seeks global partners to tackle water crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) convened international development partners on Tuesday to address Islamabad's growing water challenges.

The conference, attended by Federal Interior Secretary Muhammad Khurram Agha and CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, brought together representatives from UNICEF, World Bank, ADB, and other major organizations. "Every drop of water is invaluable - saving water means saving lives," stated Chairman Randhawa, emphasizing the city's urgent need for sustainable water solutions.

The CDA announced plans to modernize Islamabad's water infrastructure while exploring alternative sources to meet future demand. The initiatives include the establishment of Islamabad Water Agency as a central management body, implementing pipeline repair programs and public conservation campaigns and developing comprehensive data on future water requirements.

International partners expressed willingness to support these efforts with technical expertise and funding. "This collaboration marks a crucial step toward water security," noted Interior Secretary Agha, praising the joint initiative between CDA and UNICEF. The conference highlighted climate change impacts as a growing threat to water availability, with officials calling for immediate action from both authorities and citizens to prevent wastage.

Educational institutions and media organizations were urged to boost public awareness about water conservation. With Islamabad's population rapidly expanding, officials warned that current water resources may prove inadequate without significant infrastructure improvements and responsible usage.

The CDA pledged to prioritize water projects while seeking continued international cooperation.

Bosnia stands side by side with Pakistan: Mashood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan has said that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bosnia Herzegovina were based on mutual respect, shared values and solidarity.

He said, Bosnia stands side by side with Pakistan in the moment of Hermes, promoting diplomacy, humanitarian aid and cultural exchanges through the cooperation between the important partners, we are emphasizing the public's relations with the people, especially with their leadership.

Addressing the screening ceremony of Ayda film by Bosnia here Wednesday, he said today, we are not only celebrating the national day of Bosnia under the banner of the Prime Minister's Youth Program

but also ensuring the participation of the youth in the promotion of cinema's culture. He said, this is not just about sharing a powerful cinema experience, but also about cultural understanding, building peace, and strengthening our commitment to the united relations.

The Chairman PMYP said that Bosnia and Herzegovina were the countries rich in history and beauty adding that his event is a great opportunity for Pakistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The bilateral relations between the two countries are based on mutual respect, shared values and solidarity, he said and added, we do not see cultural exchange only as a tradition, but also see lasting partnerships as a bridge for peace and understanding.

Rana Mashood said in

Pakistan, more than 70 percent of our people are under 30 years of age, similarly, in Bosnia, more than one-third of the population is comprised of young people who are full of energy, creativity.

He said that both Sarajevo and Islamabad were not only forming the future of their own countries but also becoming global citizens, innovators and peace makers. What unites them is their elasticity, seeking to learn, and their hope for building a better world.

The role of the media is precious in promoting cultural dialogue and the role of the media is important in spreading messages of peace, cooperation, and understanding. This is an opportunity that brings our cultures, dates and generations closer to each other, he expressed.

IRM, Iqra university organize seminar to commemorate Earth Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Rural Management (IRM), in collaboration with Iqra University, hosted a seminar titled "Powering Earth: Unleashing Pakistan's Green Potential" to commemorate Earth Day 2025.

The event held here yesterday brought together a diverse group of government officials, climate professionals, academics, students, and concerned citizens to discuss the opportunities and challenges posed by climate change, as well as the urgent need for sustainable solutions in Pakistan.

Distinguished speakers included Dr. Roomi S. Hayat, CEO of the Institute of Rural Management and Chairperson of the Climate Action Forum (CAF); Arif Goheer, Executive Director of the Global Climate Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC); Bilal Anwar, CEO of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF); Dr. Sheheryar Khan, Head of the Social Sciences

Department at Iqra University, Islamabad Campus; and Dr. Muhammad Khan, Assistant Professor at Iqra University, Islamabad Campus.

The session was moderated by Dr. Anjum Rasheed, Head of the Regional Climate Resilience Program at the Institute of Regional Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his keynote address, Dr. Roomi S. Hayat emphasized, "Earth is the only home we have—we don't have a backup. While the countries most affected by climate change contribute the least to its causes, it is up to us to take the lead and act now. We must not wait for others to rescue us."

CEO NDRMF, Bilal Anwar, underscored the importance of collaborative efforts, stating, "Government and civil society must work hand in hand to ensure the success and sustainability of climate initiatives." Executive Director GCISC, Arif Goheer, highlighted the

role of individual responsibility, noting, "We need to reconsider our lifestyles and adopt conscious strategies that protect our environment."

Assistant Professor Iqra University, Dr. Muhammad Khan reflected on the historical roots of the crisis, sharing, "Anthropogenic activities since the 1960s have accelerated climate change. Without immediate and sustained action, its consequences will continue to intensify." Dr. Sheheryar Khan concluded by emphasizing regional disparities: "Climate change is not affecting everyone equally. Many countries, despite being among the least contributors to emissions, are among the hardest hit."

Beyond raising awareness, the seminar provided a meaningful platform for dialogue, collaboration, and action. Participants exchanged ideas, shared experiences, and explored innovative pathways for climate finance, community resilience, and sustainable development.

740 families return home

KABUL (BNA): Over 740 Afghan migrant families have returned to Afghanistan in recent days, following their departure from Pakistan and Iran. The High Commission for Addressing Migrants reported that a total of 747 families, comprising 5,115 individuals, have been forcibly repatriated through various border crossings, including Torkham in Nangarhar, Spin Boldak in Kandahar, Islam Qala in Herat, and Abrisham in Nimruz.

Bear attack kills 2 in Nuristan

KABUL (Amu TV): A bear attack in eastern Afghanistan's remote Nuristan province left two men dead, local sources said. The victims, identified as Wali Mohammad and Hassan Khan, were residents of Kunda Dara village in the Doab district, according to sources who spoke with Amu. They had reportedly gone into the mountains to collect wild herbs and small game when they were attacked by a bear on their return.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Joint Afghanistan-Kazakhstan exhibition held in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): The third Kazakh-Afghan Business Forum and a joint exhibition showcasing products from Kazakhstan and Afghanistan held in Kabul.

The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce described Kazakhstan as a friend of Afghanistan and emphasized the need to increase trade between Kabul and Astana.

Nooruddin Azizi said during the program that efforts are underway to expand agreements between the private sectors and governments of both countries. He also mentioned that the Islamic Emirate is working on establishing trade centers in the cities of Kabul and Almaty.

Azizi also described Kazakhstan as an ideal transit bridge for the transport of Afghan goods to Russia and China, while noting that Afghanistan serves as a key transit hub for goods from Central and South Asia.

Nooruddin Azizi, acting Minister of Industry and Commerce: "Alhamdulillah, we already have sufficient imports from Kazakhstan and we intend to increase them further. We also aim to balance our trade by enhancing exports as well."

The Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan announced during the program that his country is ready to implement joint infrastructure and production projects with Afghanistan in areas such as food processing, textiles, and agriculture. He stressed that Kazakhstan will also continue its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in various sectors.

Serik Jumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade of Kazakhstan: "We see major opportunities in transportation and logistics cooperation. Kazakhstan is interested in constructing and supplying equipment for infrastructure projects such as the Torgundi-Herat and Kandahar-Spin Boldak railways, as well as in developing an intra-Afghan transport corridor connecting east and west."

Meanwhile, the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) highlighted Kazakhstan's role in Afghanistan's infrastructure projects and described the third Kazakh-Afghan Business Forum as a milestone in expanding bilateral relations.

"The exchange of expertise and resources at government and expert levels is essential for progress. And you, I guess, rightly stated that Afghanistan can learn from the expertise of its northern neighbors. Central Asian countries have walked a similar path in the past. Numerous projects in Afghanistan, such as development of industrial parks, implementation of building of infrastructures, sustainable development," said Roza Otunbayeva, Head of UNAMA.

Private sector representatives also expressed their views and demands during the joint forum and exhibition: Sherbaz Kaminzada, head of the Chamber of Industries and Mines: "Afghans have shown their willingness to import from their neighbors. As an Afghan industrialist, I ask that our neighbors also purchase products made in Afghanistan."

Mohammad Younus Mohmand, deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment: "We hope regional countries, especially Kazakhstan, will support us regarding Afghanistan's frozen assets abroad and in the recognition of Afghanistan. I appreciate Kazakhstan's consistent support and call for continued attention."

Aminullah Obaid, governor of Kabul: "We invite everyone to invest in Afghanistan. Take advantage of this golden opportunity and the security we offer. Invest your assets here and help create jobs for our people."

According to statistics, the trade volume between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan in 2024 reached 545 million USD, and both countries aim to increase economic cooperation to raise their trade volume to three billion USD.

Islamic Emirate adds three districts to administrative structure

KABUL (BNA): In accordance with the decree of Amir al-Muminin, the Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (may Allah protect him), three new districts have been established within the country's administrative framework.

The newly created districts include Fardows District in Faryab Province, Farashghan District in Laghman Province, and Pamir District in Badakhshan Province.

The Administrative Commission of the Islamic Emirate, in response to the esteemed order of Amir al-Muminin, has stated that the formation of these districts was carried out by the delegation of the Ministry of Interior after thorough consideration of geographical locations, population distribution, requests from local residents, and recommendations from provincial authorities. The commission confirmed that the establishment of these new administrative units fully complies with all required standards and conditions for administrative divisions.

Simultaneously, the relevant department of the Ministry of Interior responsible for administrative units emphasized that the creation of these districts will prove beneficial for the Islamic Emirate's system from political, social, and military perspectives.

1,200 thalassemia patients received free medical services

LAGHMAN (TOLONews): Health officials in Laghman province said that last year, more than 1,200 thalassemia patients received free medical services at the Laghman Provincial Hospital.

According to officials, up to five thalassemia patients visit this hospital daily, and young volunteers donate blood for them.

Payenda Mohammad, head of the Laghman Provincial Hospital, told TOLONews: "Last year, 1,211 individuals came to this hospital to receive blood. If we divide this number by days, it means four to five thalassemia patients come to the hospital each day."

Ahmad Nabi, one of the hospital's doctors, said: "We have a list of volunteers. Whenever someone needs blood, we call them, and the volunteers come to donate. The problems of these patients are solved through the help of volunteers."

Meanwhile, some patient caretakers are calling for more free blood donations for their loved ones.

Faheem Khan, a patient caretaker, said: "My brother suffers from this disease. I ask young people and everyone to help us and donate blood."

Baheer, a resident of Laghman, said: "If our blood donation can save a life, we are ready to help. It is a duty for young people to come forward and donate blood."

Officials at the Laghman Provincial Hospital said that they have created special groups on social media to quickly mobilize young volunteers for blood donation when needed.

UNAMA urges inclusive engagement with IEA

KABUL (TOLONews): Roza Otunbayeva, the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), said in Kabul that the UN is committed to supporting Afghanistan's stability and development through a comprehensive and coordinated process with the Islamic Emirate.

According to her, the aim of this process is the full integration of Afghanistan into the international community and the adherence of the caretaker government to global commitments.

Roza Otunbayeva said: "The UN is committed to supporting Afghanistan's stability and development through the proposed comprehensive approach aimed towards a more coherent, coordinated and structured engagement between the Taliban authorities and the international community. The objective of this process should be clear end state of an Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors fully reintegrated into the international community and meeting international obligations."

The UNAMA chief also called the work of two task forces—on counter-narcotics and the private sector—crucial, and stressed the importance of active participation from all Central Asian countries.

"As part of this process, the work of the two task working groups of counter-narcotics and the private sector decided in Doha on first of July 2024, Doha, is growing work," Roza Otunbayeva, the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said.

Najib Rahman Shamal, an international relations expert, said: "We hope that the current Afghan authorities will also facilitate greater international engagement, especially from the United Nations, which has once again reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly called on the United Nations to provide the necessary grounds for official engagement with the international community and to hand over Afghanistan's permanent UN seat to the Islamic Emirate.

4.8 tons of vaccines donated to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): 4.8 tons of vaccines has been donated to Afghanistan on Wednesday, helping prevent deadly diseases like rabies, hepatitis, and influenza.

Officials from the ministry expressed their gratitude, highlighting the vaccines' essential role in preventing several dangerous diseases, including rabies, tetanus, hepatitis B, and influenza.

Afghanistan has encountered significant challenges in the public health sector in recent years.

Limited medical infrastructure and resources have made the fight against preventable diseases increasingly difficult.

Humanitarian aid and international cooperation, have played a critical role in strengthening Afghanistan's healthcare system.

3 opposition groups withdraw from alliance

KABUL (Amu TV): Three major Afghan opposition groups have formally withdrawn from the National Assembly for the Salvation of Afghanistan, citing fundamental disagreements over structure, policy direction, and leadership practices.

The National Resistance Front led by Ahmad Massoud, Jamiat-e Islami under Salahuddin Rabbani, and the Afghanistan Freedom Front headed by Yasin Zia announced their exit from the coalition in separate statements released this week.

Jamiat-e Islami said it had raised "serious concerns" from the outset about the Assembly's framework and strategic priorities, which it had communicated to allied political figures. The party stated that the failure to address these concerns undermines both the Afghan people and broader efforts to unify opposition forces against the Taliban.

The National Resistance Front voiced similar objections, stating that the Assembly was unable to uphold the political and operational standards necessary for meaningful opposition. The group said it would no longer participate in any decisions or proceedings of the Assembly.

The Afghanistan Freedom Front, in its own statement, rejected reports that it had ever joined the Assembly, stressing that it had not entered into any formal coalition. However, it reaffirmed its willingness to coordinate with anti-Taliban forces in support of national transition efforts.

The National Assembly for the Salvation of Afghanistan was formed late last year as a coalition of opposition political figures and organizations aiming to create a unified stance against Taliban rule. The withdrawal of these prominent groups underscores the ongoing challenges in forming a cohesive opposition bloc amid deepening divisions in exile politics.

Railways transport 66,000 tons of goods

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Public Works announced that Afghanistan's railways transported a total of 66,298 tons of goods in the past week.

The transported goods includes both imports and exports facilitated through key ports such as Hairatan, Aqena, Turghandi, and the Khaf-Herat route.

Among the transported goods were commercial items, including oil, non-oil products, and a variety of other commodities.

Additionally, 5,822 tons of commercial goods were transited and exported, predominantly featuring dried fruits, pomegranate juice, and potatoes.

The ministry highlighted that enhancing railway transportation and exports is crucial for fostering job growth, boosting national revenues, and progressing towards economic stability and self-reliance. Efforts are underway to improve conditions for traders and streamline the transfer process.

In recent weeks, the total volume of railway shipments has surged to 76,760 tons, reflecting a positive trend in Afghanistan's trade and economic activities.

Afghanistan, Russia discuss strengthening bilateral ties



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), held a meeting on Wednesday in his office with Zamir Kabulov, the Russian Federation's special envoy for Afghanistan.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two sides discussed the expansion of economic, trade, and political relations between the two countries, along with other important regional matters.

During the meeting, Minister Muttaqi expressed his appreciation for Russia's recent move to remove the name of the "Taliban Movement" from its official list of banned organizations, and for officially recognizing the presence of the Islamic Emirate's diplomat in Moscow.

Zamir Kabulov affirmed that Russia is keen to strengthen its ties with Afghanistan and has already taken concrete steps in this direction.

It is also worth noting that during the upcoming Kazan Forum next month, the permanent joint commission between the two nations is expected to become operational.

Work begins on 58 uplift projects in Nuristan with UN support

NURISTAN (TOLONews): Construction has begun on 58 development projects in Mandol district of Nuristan province, with a total budget of 90 million afghani.

Local officials stated that these projects include the construction of roads and agricultural canals, providing employment opportunities for hundreds of people in the province.

The construction of eleven agricultural canals is also part of these projects.

Ehsanullah Ahmad, head of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Nuristan, said: "The budget for these 58 projects is 90 million afghani. The financial support is provided by UNOPS, an international organization. Technical work is being handled by the WFP, while implementation is being overseen by the Nuristan Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development."

Faraydoon Samim, spokesperson for the governor of Nuristan, commented on the significance of the projects: "These projects will create jobs for hundreds of young people and will connect western Nuristan to other provinces such as Panjshir and Laghman."

Meanwhile, local residents are calling for the implementation of additional development projects in the district.

Faizur Rahman, a resident of Mandol district, told TOLONews: "About 10,000 people will use the road that is planned to be built. Previously, people in this area relied on animals for transportation."

Juma Gul, another resident of Mandol district, said: "In the past, people from different areas used to go to Iran for work. Now, thankfully, our region has become like Iran because there's plenty of work here."

These public projects in western Nuristan are being launched just days after the leader of the Islamic Emirate approved the budget for the construction of two hydroelectric dams in Nurgram district of the province.

Panjshir Governor to enforce decree against costly traditions

PANJSHIR (TOLONews): Mohammad Agha Hakim, the governor of Panjshir province, has announced public awareness efforts regarding the implementation of a new decree by the leader of the Islamic Emirate aimed at curbing "harmful customs and traditions" in the province.

The decree addresses the manner in which engagement ceremonies, weddings, mourning events, and celebrations for returning from Hajj and Umrah should be conducted, and it calls on the public to strictly adhere to it.

Speaking about the decree, the governor said: "We are making serious efforts to enforce this decree. Its implementation in all areas will bring convenience to the people, and hopefully, the public will positively welcome it."

Many traditional ceremonies and celebratory events across the country are known to be costly, and numerous citizens have repeatedly criticized such practices.

Residents of Panjshir also view the enforcement of this decree as beneficial in reducing the excessive and burdensome costs associated with various ceremonies.

Saifullah Ghafoori, a Panjshir resident, told TOLONews: "When customs go beyond limits, they negatively impact young people. Those who don't have a good financial situation can't get married, and if they do, they end up in debt for the rest of their lives."

Ahmad, another resident of Panjshir, said: "These customs force families to incur heavy expenses, and in the end, they are compelled to sell their land and property. Therefore, eliminating harmful traditions is a good move."

According to officials, Article 3 of this five-article decree also emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about its implementation.

Taliban confirm cuts in public offices as Education Ministry faces deep reductions

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban on Wednesday confirmed a reduction in staffing levels across public institutions, a day after a leaked document revealed the elimination of 90,000 positions in the Ministry of Education under orders from the Taliban's leader.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's chief spokesman, acknowledged the cuts in a televised interview but did not directly address Education Ministry figures. He said the reductions were part of a broader initiative to streamline government operations and improve efficiency.

"The aim is to reduce administrative inflation, curb bureaucracy, and enhance institutional performance," Mujahid said in an interview with the Taliban-run national television network. He added that the cuts extend to military bodies under Taliban control and claimed that the overall reductions were "minimal."

However, a document obtained by Amu TV and reviewed by reporters indicates a substantial reduction in positions within the Ministry of Education. According to the document, the number of official posts within the ministry has been reduced from 389,200 to 299,684 for the Afghan calendar year 1404 (2025)

— a loss of nearly 90,000 positions. The document cites multiple reasons for the move, including aligning the ministry's staffing structure with its actual operational capacity, addressing payroll shortfalls, reducing expenditures, and focusing resources on the ministry's "core priorities."

The Taliban's Ministry of Education has reportedly argued that most of the eliminated positions were either unfilled or located in areas deemed non-essential. Of 82,045 vacant posts listed in the document, 75,799 were designated as eligible for elimination.

The staffing cuts come amid broader challenges facing Afghanistan's education system, which has been hampered by funding constraints, teacher shortages, and restrictions on girls' education under Taliban rule. The ministry's internal restructuring appears to be a cost-saving measure, though critics warn it may further erode service delivery in an already strained public sector.

Taliban have not released a public version of the document or provided detailed data on how the cuts will affect provincial staffing, school operations, or educational access across the country.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur interacting with patients during his visit to Paraplegic Center.

KP CM visits Paraplegic Center Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, visited the Paraplegic Center Peshawar on Wednesday. During his visit, he received a comprehensive briefing from the relevant authorities on the medical services, facilities, and challenges faced by the center. He was accompanied by provincial cabinet members Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Ehtesham Ali, and Humayun Khan.

The Chief Minister toured various sections of the center and reviewed the quality of care being provided to the patients. On this occasion, He announced a special grant of Rs. 50 million for the Paraplegic Center. He further declared that the center's annual regular grant would be increased from Rs. 300 million to Rs. 400 million in the upcoming provincial budget. In addition, the Chief Minister directed authorities to release the remaining Rs. 75 million from the current regular grant and announced that core medical services provided at the centre would now be included under the Sehat Card Plus health insurance scheme.

CM Gandapur also instructed the immediate release of funds for land already purchased for the centre's expansion, emphasizing that the Paraplegic Centre is a unique institution dedicated to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. He reaffirmed the provincial government's full support for its mission and operations, and announced plans to expand the center's capacity to 500 beds.

Highlighting broader healthcare initiatives, the Chief Minister stated that kidney, bone marrow, liver transplants, and implants have now been included under the Sehat Card scheme to reduce the financial burden of expensive treatments on citizens. He also shared plans to include thalassemia treatment and rehabilitation services for drug addiction in the next phase of the health initiative. Expressing gratitude to philanthropists supporting the government's efforts, CM Gandapur underscored the importance of serving persons with disabilities, stating they deserve special attention and heartfelt assistance. "Disability should never be treated as a limitation," he said, adding, "We must cultivate a spirit of mutual support and collective progress. With shared determination and compassion, success is inevitable."

KP govt to enroll 1m children in schools: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif announced that a vigorous school enrollment campaign is currently underway across the province, in line with the vision of former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is personally overseeing the campaign and has directed that all available resources be utilized to ensure its success. According to Dr. Saif, the campaign aims to enroll one million children in schools. To make this initiative successful, the provincial government is engaging teachers, parents, local elders, and influential community members. Additionally, elected representatives, youth volunteers, and religious scholars are also being mobilized as part of the campaign.

In a significant move to support students and encourage enrollment, the government has decided to provide free school bags and stationery. Moreover, a new initiative titled the "Taleem Card" will be launched soon to further assist students and families. Dr. Saif appealed to parents across the province to fulfill their national duty by enrolling their children in school, emphasizing that today's children are the future of the nation and deserve every opportunity to shine.

Pakistani astronaut to join China's space station on mission

BEIJING (APP/Reuters): China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) on Wednesday said that the selection process for Pakistani astronauts is now underway following the signing of a cooperation agreement between China and Pakistan at the end of February.

Similar to the selection process for Chinese astronauts, it consists of three stages: preliminary selection, secondary selection, and final selection. The preliminary selection is being conducted in Pakistan, while the secondary and final stages will take place in China, CMSA spokesman Lin Xiqiang said during a press conference held at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.

Ultimately, two Pakistani astronauts will be chosen to undergo training in China, he added. According to the flight mission plans for the China Space Station and the progress of international cooperation, one Pakistani astronaut will participate in a joint spaceflight mission as a payload specialist. In addition to daily crew duties, the astronaut will also be responsible for operating scientific experiments on behalf of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, China is in discussions with other countries regarding their astronauts' participation in missions to the China Space Station, with further updates to be released at an appropriate time. This development comes as Beijing gears up for the launch of its Shenzhou-20 mission, which will carry three astronauts to the

Chinese space station Tiangong, at 5:17pm on Thursday local time. The main purpose of the mission is to complete the in-orbit rotation with the Shenzhou-19 crew which is scheduled to return to the Dongfeng landing site on April 29, China Manned Space Agency officials said at a press conference broadcast on CCTV.

The Shenzhou-20 spaceflight from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre will carry astronauts Chen Dong, Chen Zhongrui and Wang Jie, CCTV said. The spaceflight will be Chen Dong's third and the first for the other two - a space engineer and a former air force pilot.

They will conduct space science and application experiments, install a space debris protection device as well as extravehicular payload and equipment, and perform recovery tasks. The mission will also bring with it zebrafish, planarians and streptomycetes as research objects to carry out three life science experiments at the space station.

The crew, scheduled to return to Earth in late October, can expect a resupply mission via the unmanned Tianzhou-9 cargo spacecraft. The country's fourth batch of astronauts set to participate in Shenzhou spaceflights is currently in training, featuring for the first time astronauts from China's special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, as well as Pakistan. The Hong Kong and Macau astronauts are likely to carry out their first mission as early as 2026, Chinese media reported.

Commander of Air Force of Zimbabwe calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation led by Air Marshal John Jacob Nzvede, Commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad.

During the meeting both dignitaries engaged in extensive and fruitful discussions on matters of mutual interest. The talks underscored a shared commitment to fostering defence collaboration with a particular focus on training, modernization and technical expertise. On his arrival, a smartly turnedout contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Air Marshal John Jacob Nzvede.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared insight into various ongoing modernization projects of Pakistan Air Force's operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare. The Air Chief reiterated PAF's unwavering support to provide capacity-building assistance to the Air Force of Zimbabwe in upgradation of it's human resource, maintenance parameters and operational

training. Chief of the Air Staff also highlighted Zimbabwe's enduring role as an integral partner, noting Pakistan's historical support in structuring and training of its pioneers. He further said that both the countries have long-standing military to military ties, which are based on convergence on all important issues related to regional peace and security.

Air Marshal John Jacob Nzvede expressed his sincere gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to him underscoring the long-standing bond of friendship between Pakistan and Zimbabwe. He shared his earnest desire as regards to restructuring Zimbabwean Air Force's training framework from the ab-initio stage, seeking PAF's comprehensive support.

Recognizing PAF's globally acknowledged training standards, Commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe also conveyed his desire for the training of Zimbabwe Air Force cadets at the prestigious PAF Academy Asghar Khan to benefit from its state-of-the-art training modules.

He also articulated Zimbabwe's request for the deployment of PAF pilots, engineers and technical personnel to assist in modernizing Zimbabwe Air

Force. Both sides agreed to explore the potential for joint exchange programs to facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development, aligning Zimbabwe Air Force with contemporary air force standards. The meeting also focused on the timely procurement and delivery of 12 Super Mushak trainer aircraft to bolster Zimbabwe Air Force's operational training capacity.

The Zimbabwean delegation was highly impressed by the advanced technological infrastructure witnessed at the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park, particularly in the domains of ISR, Cyber, Space Technology, Electronic Warfare and Unmanned Aerial Systems. The visiting dignitaries expressed a strong desire to leverage PAF's expertise in these fields in order to enhance futuristic aerospace and aviation capabilities of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The meeting between Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu and the Commander of the Air Force of Zimbabwe, is a testament to the mutual resolve of both the air forces to expand their partnership through capability sharing, joint exercises and tailored training exchanges.



ISLAMABAD: Air Marshal John Jacob Nzvede, Commander of Air Force of Zimbabwe, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters.

PHC seeks response against PECA amends

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Qazi Jawad has directed the federal government to submit a response within 30 days to a constitutional petition challenging the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, on Wednesday.

The petitioner, blogger Anil Masih, challenged the amendment act, claiming it violates fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. The petition specifically challenges Section 26(A) of the act, which is alleged to be vague and conferring excessive powers.

The counsel Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate argued that the amendment violates freedom of expression, protected under Article 19 of the Constitution. The counsel contended that terms like

"false" or "objectionable" information are vague and do not meet the standards of restrictions under the constitutional framework.

The petition alleges that the amendment act has led to the registration of FIRs against bloggers and citizens who criticize government policies, damaging democratic values and freedom of expression.

The counsel argued that the law contravenes international human rights agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as Islamic principles.

The petitioner seeks a declaration that the amendment act is unconstitutional and null and void. The petition requests the repeal of Section 26(A) and other relevant provisions. The court sought responses from the Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Interior,

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Court asks govt universities to submit report regarding utilization of special grants: The

Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the administrations of public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit a response regarding the utilization of special grants provided by the government, on Wednesday.

PHC's two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Fazal Subhan directed the university administrations to submit a response. The petitioners claimed that retired employees of public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been deprived of their pensions for several years.

Earthquake shakes Istanbul, dozens hurt

ISTANBUL (Reuters): More than 150 people were injured when they jumped from buildings in Istanbul on Wednesday as one of the strongest quakes in years hit the city. Many people gathered in parks and others sat on doorsteps, or stood outside their homes in the centre of Istanbul as aftershocks from the magnitude 6.2 quake on the European side of the city continued to be felt.

"It started with a big tremor all of a sudden and we felt it very strongly," said Istanbul resident Neslisah Aygoren, sitting in a park. "I ran straight to my dog in fear, hugged it and we waited for it to end, lying on the ground. After that, we took our belongings and went straight to the street."

A total of 151 people were hurt and received hospital treatment after leaping from buildings in panic during the tremor but none were in a critical condition, the Istanbul governor's office said. It said one abandoned building collapsed in central Istanbul, but nobody was hurt there, while there was no damage to energy or water infrastructure in the city of 16 million on the European and Asian shores of the Bosphorus Strait. Some shops closed.

Two years ago, Türkiye suffered the deadliest and most destructive earthquake in its modern history. That 7.8-magnitude quake in February 2023 killed more than 55,000 people and injured more than 107,000 in southern Türkiye and northern Syria. Hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced, with many still living in temporary housing as a result of that quake.

The latest tremor also revived memories of a 1999 earthquake near Istanbul that killed 17,000. The epicentre of Wednesday's quake, which hit at 12:49pm (0949 GMT), was in the area of Silivri, some 80km (50 miles) to the west of Istanbul. It was at a depth of 6.92km (4.3 miles), Türkiye's AFAD disaster agency said.

Tehran slams 'hostile' Washington sanctions

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran's foreign ministry on Wednesday condemned new US sanctions targeting its fuel network, calling the move a sign of Washington's "hostile approach" ahead of a third round of nuclear talks.

In a statement, foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Washington's policy of imposing sanctions on the Iranian people was a "clear contradiction with the United States' demand for dialogue and negotiation and indicates America's lack of goodwill and seriousness in this regard".

The US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on an Iranian shipping network and an individual named Asadoollah Emamjomeh, who Washington says is the network's owner. It said in a statement that the network was "collectively responsible for shipping hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Iranian LPG and

crude oil to foreign markets".

"Emamjomeh and his network sought to export thousands of shipments of LPG — including from the United States — to evade US sanctions and generate revenue for Iran," said Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. "The United States remains committed to holding accountable those who seek to provide the Iranian regime with the funding it needs to further its destabilising activities in the region and around the world."

The sanctions came after Tehran and Washington held two rounds of indirect nuclear talks on consecutive Saturdays in Muscat and Rome, starting on April 12. Since returning to office in January, US President Donald Trump has reimposed sweeping sanctions under his policy of "maximum pressure" against Tehran.

In March, he sent a letter

to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, calling for talks but also warning of possible military action if they failed to produce a deal. Oman said the third round of talks, set for Saturday, April 26, would again be held in Muscat.

On Tuesday, Iran announced that a technical expert-level nuclear meeting between the two countries will also be held on Saturday. "The expert and high-level indirect talks in Oman will not be held simultaneously," state TV reported on Wednesday. "Iranian and American experts will first hold their indirect talks and convey the results of the talks to the high-level officials, who will then start their discussions," the report said. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff are leading the negotiations, with Oman mediating.

Israeli strikes kill 25 more in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP): Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas on Wednesday urged Hamas to free all hostages, saying their captivity provided Israel with "excuses" to attack Gaza, as rescuers recovered charred bodies from an Israeli strike. Israeli strikes killed at least 25 people across the besieged territory, while Germany, France and Britain urged Israel to end its blockade on aid entering.

Israel resumed its military campaign in Gaza on March 18, ending the ceasefire that had largely paused hostilities and resulted in the release of 33 hostages from Gaza and approximately 1,800 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. Talks on a new ceasefire have so far failed to produce any breakthroughs, and a Hamas delegation is currently in Cairo for renewed negotiations with Egyptian and Qatari

mediators.

"Hamas has given the criminal occupation excuses to commit its crimes in the Gaza Strip, the most prominent being the holding of hostages," Abbas said in Ramallah, seat of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. "I'm the one paying the price, our people are paying the price, not Israel. My brother, just hand them over."

"Every day there are deaths. Why? Because they (Hamas) refuse to hand over the American hostage," Abbas said of Edan Alexander, who was reportedly on a list of hostages Israel had asked to be freed in a proposal that was recently rejected by Hamas. "You sons of dogs, hand over what you have and get us out of this" ordeal, he added, levelling a harsh Arabic epithet at

Hamas.

Senior Hamas official Bassem Naim called Abbas' remarks "insulting." "Abbas repeatedly and suspiciously lays the blame for the crimes of the occupation and its ongoing aggression on our people," he said. Hamas' armed wing the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades later issued footage it said was of an Israeli hostage alive in a Gaza tunnel. He identified himself as 48-year-old Omri Miran.

Ties between Abbas' Fatah party and Hamas have been tense, with deep political and ideological divisions for nearly two decades. Abbas and the PA have often accused Hamas of undermining Palestinian unity, while Hamas has criticized the former for collaborating with Israel and cracking down on dissent in the West Bank.



and focused on fiscal discipline, calling for a clear separation between budgeting and policymaking. Dr Haque stressed that Pakistan lacks true fiscal autonomy, having relied on nearly 25 IMF programmes while maintaining stagnant growth at around 2%. He highlighted that public funds are citizens' resources and must be used with care. He also pointed to key structural problems, including an erratic tax system, inefficient state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and poor debt management. Additionally, he debunked economic myths such as overreliance on the informal economy and a limited understanding of real estate development. 'Markets must be functional, and tax systems predictable,' he concluded.

Shahid Sattar offered a sector-specific analysis, focusing on textiles, accounting for 66% of national exports. Despite its importance, he said, the sector has suffered from policy neglect and economic distortions. Adjusted for inflation and currency depreciation, he noted, export levels in 2025 mirror those of 2012. He highlighted that flawed implementation and uneven taxation have undermined the domestic cotton industry.

Locally produced cotton faces an 18% sales tax and turnover tax, while imported cotton is often exempt, discouraging local production. He also criticised the Federal Board of Revenue's reliance on single-entry accounting, which omits refund liabilities, thus impacting liquidity for export-driven industries. He called for adopting double-entry accounting and abolishing presumptive taxes that penalize compliant businesses.

Humayun Iqbal Shami described the budget-making process as stagnant and lacking innovation. With tax revenue almost entirely consumed by debt servicing, fiscal space for development remains minimal. He advocated reforming income tax structures and reducing the burden of high tax brackets, which can reach up to 49%. He also stressed strict expenditure controls but acknowledged limitations in defence austerity due to regional dynamics. He proposed eliminating redundancy across federal and provincial ministries and depoliticising income transfers. 'Our power distribution companies (DISCOs) cost the government PKR 1800 billion annually. This should be provincialised while tackling theft and inefficiency,' he suggested.