

New polio case reported
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the NIH has confirmed a polio case from District Bannu. This is the third polio case from KP and the eighth case from Pakistan at large this year. The second nationwide Polio campaign of the year is currently underway, from April 21 to 27, with the goal of vaccinating 45.4m children under age of five across Pakistan.

Naqvi briefs Zardari
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi held an important meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari in Karachi, where he gave a detailed briefing in the context of India's irresponsible actions following the Pahalgam incident. Naqvi informed President Zardari about the decisions taken by the NSC and the retaliatory measures initiated in response to India's recent behaviour.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review ongoing process of privatization of PIA.

Kartarpur Corridor remained open

F.P. Report

SHAKARGARH: The Kartarpur Corridor remained open for Sikh pilgrims as usual even after tense situation following attack in Pahalgam in Occupied Kashmir on Friday.

According to the Darbar administration, 247 pilgrims arrived from the India through the corridor since the morning. On the other hand, the pilgrims expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for keeping the Kartarpur Corridor open.

Pakistan earlier closed its airspace for Indian flights for one month, and the NOTAM regarding the closure of Pakistani airspace will remain effective until midnight on May 23.

2 martyred by Indian Army

F.P. Report

RAWALAKOT: Two elderly persons from Forward Kahuta in the Poonch sector, Malik Farooq and Chaudhry Situ, were abducted and later martyred by the Indian Army, a report said on Friday.

This incident occurred when their livestock accidentally crossed the cease-fire line into Indian territory. The two men entered Indian territory to retrieve their animals, where they were captured and killed by the Indian Army. The Indian Army attempted to portray the incident as an act of militancy and staged a drama of weapon recovery. By not returning the bodies, India has exposed the facade of its secularism. The village has been abandoned due to Indian firing, with only a few impoverished families remaining.

The bereaved families have called on international human rights organizations to help them retrieve the bodies. It is worth noting that in 2017, in the same area, a former local leader, Nazir Shah, was similarly abducted and martyred by the Indian Army, accompanied by false propaganda.

CCI meeting called on May 2

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will preside over a special meeting of Council of Common Interests (CCI) on May 2 in Islamabad to discuss the canals issue.

Chief Ministers, federal ministers and other high-level government officials will participate in the meeting. In the wake of unprecedented Indian move to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, the federal government decided on Thursday to halt the contentious canals project until a consensus is evolved between the Centre and the provinces on the issue through a mutual understanding from the Council of Common Interests (CCI) platform.

The announcement was made by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari after a meeting between the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the PPP delegations at the Prime Minister House on Thursday night.

PM for ensuring PIA privatization within time

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the relevant authorities to ensure privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) within the given time frame.

Chairing a meeting to review the ongoing process of privatization of PIA here, the prime minister stressed that transparency must be central to the procedure for its privatization. The prime minister emphasizing the importance of roadshows and fully engaging investors in the privatization process, directed that in order to ensure transparency, the privatization of PIA and all future state-owned enterprises must be broadcast live on television and digital platforms.

The meeting was told that a comprehensive investor outreach strategy had been developed in collaboration with the consultant and was being fully implemented. The prime minister was also informed about the criteria of the bidding, required time period and the conditions to participate in the bidding process.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, Advisors Muhammad Ali, Syed Tauqir Shah, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, National Coordinator of the Special Investment Facilitation

Council Lt. Gen. Sarfraz Ahmed, and other senior officials.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also expressed satisfaction over the reduction in the annual rate of sensitive price index to minus 3.52 per cent. The prime minister said in the same month of 2024, this rate was 26.94 per cent, which was recorded as minus 3.52 in April 2025.

"The country's economic indicators are improving with each passing day. The government is making every effort to ensure that the people get the fruits of the improving economic indicators," he said. The Prime Minister extended his appreciation for the government's economic team.

Murad rules out canal plans sans Sindh's consent

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday made it unequivocally clear that no canal project will be allowed without the explicit approval of the province, asserting that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will not endorse any such plan against the will of Sindh's people.

Addressing a press conference at the CM House here, Shah stated that the controversial canal schemes, which were initiated under the caretaker setup, lack formal approval and have not progressed on ground. "It has become evident that the canal project was never sanctioned," he emphasized, adding that no physical work has commenced in Punjab either.

Sindh CM maintained that the PPP would block any such scheme introduced without Sindh's endorsement. He added that concerns raised by the people are legitimate and the provincial government stands with the people. "Without Sindh's approval, no canal can be constructed," he repeatedly declared. He also dismissed the impression that President

Asif Ali Zardari had authority to approve development projects. "The President does not hold any approval powers for such schemes," Shah noted, emphasizing the role of constitutional institutions like the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

Murad Ali Shah further explained that the controversial Cholistan canal project had been halted since November 2024, following Sindh's challenge of the IRSA certificate in June last year. He confirmed that the PPP had lodged its case against the canal scheme in the CCI.

According to Sindh CM, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured that Pakistan Muslim League-N representatives would withdraw support for canals. He called upon both the President and the Prime Minister to publicly declare that the canal project will not proceed. "This is the only way to halt such a scheme," he remarked.

Dismissing speculation about backdoor dealings, Shah stressed that the PPP does not engage in secret negotiations. "We are a party whose leadership has embraced martyrdom but never backed down," he

said. Shah also identified himself as a committed worker of the PPP and recalled the numerous conspiracies the party has endured over the years. He reiterated that the PPP, as a federal party, will continue to defend Sindh's rights and the sanctity of the Indus River. "The people of Sindh trust us and we will never compromise on their rights," he pledged.

Reaffirming solidarity amid regional tensions, Murad Ali Shah lauded the federal government's stance on national defense and expressed support for Pakistan's armed forces. "All political forces are united for national security," he asserted, adding that India had been cautioned against any aggression, and Pakistan is ready to deliver a resolute response if provoked.

He clarified that Pakistan has now barred Indian access to its airspace and warned that any attempt to compromise the country's sovereignty would be met with strong resistance. "We know how to counter enemy propaganda," Shah remarked, underlining confidence in Pakistan's defense institutions.

Finance Minister showcases Pakistan's economic reforms

WASHINGTON (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb concluded the fourth day of his visit to Washington, D.C., for the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank with a series of constructive meetings with key financial institutions, rating agencies, and global corporations.

The Finance Minister started his engagements by meeting with VISA's Regional Vice President, Andrew Torre. He expressed appreciation for VISA's contribution to the digitalization of Pakistan's economy and the introduction of its various financial products, according to press release issued by finance ministry here Friday.

He noted that VISA's decision to triple the size of its office in Pakistan and its collaboration with I-Link

and PayPak would significantly contribute to promoting financial inclusion, e-commerce, transaction security, and payment gateways, and facilitate remittances. He assured Torre of the government's full support in addressing any operational matters in Pakistan. Following that, Minister Aurangzeb held a meeting with Christos Harpanditis, Vice President of Philip Morris International.

Acknowledging the company's longstanding commitment to Pakistan, the Finance Minister highlighted the improving business climate and the government's taxation reforms focused on people, process, and technology. He emphasized the critical need for effective enforcement and compliance measures to curb the illicit production and sale of cigarettes.

At a seminar titled "Pakistan's Economic and Monetary Policy Outlook", hosted by JP Morgan, the

Finance Minister briefed institutional investors on Pakistan's stable macroeconomic indicators, including twin surpluses, declining inflation, robust forex reserves, and sound debt management-factors that contributed to Fitch's recent sovereign credit rating upgrade.

He also expressed deep concern over the loss of tourists' lives in a terrorist incident in India, reiterating Pakistan's unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all forms. In a meeting with Masato Kanda, President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Minister Aurangzeb congratulated him on his recent appointment and expressed appreciation for the ADB's enduring partnership with Pakistan and its contributions to the country's development through initiatives such as the Country Partnership Strategy 2026-2030 and budgetary support.

Security forces eliminate six terrorists

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces eliminated six terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The operation took place during the night between April 23 and 24, based on credible intelligence regarding the presence of terrorists (referred to as Khawarij) in the area. The ISPR stated that security forces effectively targeted the militant hideout, and after an intense exchange of fire, 6 militants were eliminated while 4 others sustained injuries.

The statement further mentioned that a clearance and sanitization operation is ongoing to ensure that any remaining threats in the area are neutralized. ISPR reaffirmed that the security forces remain committed to eradicating terrorism from the country.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday commended the security forces for eliminating six Khawarij during an operation in Bannu. He appreciated the professional capabilities of personnel of security forces.

He said the government would continue to foil the heinous designs of the terrorists, who were the enemies of humanity. "Our war against terrorists will continue till the complete elimination of terrorism from the country," he added.

President Asif Ali Zardari also lauded the security forces for eliminating six Khawarij during an operation in Bannu. He appreciated the bravery of security forces for killing the terrorists of Fitna al-Khawarij during the intelligence based operation.

He said security forces were carrying out operations for eradicating terrorism. The whole nation stood with the security forces in the fight against terrorism, he added. He reiterated the determination to completely wipe out Fitna al-Khawarij from the country.

SBP injects Rs11.855tr in market

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The central bank, Friday, injected Rs 11,854.95 billion in the market through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO).

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14-day tenors on April 25, 2025 and accepted an amount of Rs 11,597.45 billion against 35 quotes while another Rs 257.5 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO.

For the Reverse Repo Purchase, the central bank received 23 quotes for the 14-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 11,555.4 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.03% to 12.13%. SBP accepted Rs 11,150 billion against all the 23 bids at 12.03% rate of return. Total amount offered at 12.03% was RS 3,095 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 2,689 billion on a pro-rata basis.

Moreover, the SBP also received 12 bids for a 7-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 447.45 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.09 to 12.12 percent. The SBP accepted all the 12 quotes with the entire amount at 12.09% rate of return.

Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7 and 14 day tenors and injected Rs 257.5 billion. The central bank received 2 bids for 7-day tenor offering an amount of Rs 106 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.09 to 12.10%.

US not taking any position on Kashmir: Tammy

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The US State Department Spokesperson, Tammy Bruce said that the US is taking no position on the issue of Kashmir. Tammy condemned the recent terrorist attack in Indian held Kashmir and said that the US stands with India.

Tammy further said that the situation between Pakistan and India is rapidly changing and that the US is keeping a keen eye on the region. It is also pertinent to mention here that Tammy Bruce almost called the security to kick out Mr Sam, a freelance journalist from the briefing after he raised his voice a few times to be given an opportunity to ask a question about the Gaza genocide.

UN urges Pakistan, India to show 'maximum restraint': The United Nations urged India and Pakistan to show "maximum restraint" as the nuclear-armed rivals imposed tit-for-tat diplomatic measures over a deadly shooting in Occupied Kashmir.

Relations have plunged to their lowest level in years, with India accusing Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after gunmen carried out the worst attack on civilians in contested Muslim-majority Kashmir for a quarter of a century.

"We very much appeal to both the governments... to exercise maximum restraint, and to ensure that the situation and the developments we've seen do not deteriorate any further," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters in New York. "Any issues between Pakistan and India, we believe, can be and should be resolved peacefully through meaningful mutual engagement".



Senate passes resolution to respond India decisively

Pakistan reacts strongly to India's move to unilaterally revoke Indus Waters Treaty

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar issued a strong response to India's announcement of unilaterally revoking the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it a violation of international agreement and a direct threat to the national security of Pakistan.

Addressing the Senate on Friday, Dar stated, "Water is the lifeline for 240 million Pakistanis. The Indus Waters Treaty is a crucial, internationally recognized agreement that cannot be terminated by one party alone. Its annulment is only possible through mutual consent." He emphasized that the issue of water is tied directly to Pakistan's national security, warning that future wars could be fought over water. "We will not show any leniency on this matter," he said.

Dar also revealed that the National Security

Committee had made several key decisions in light of the current situation. Among them was the immediate suspension of all forms of trade with India, including indirect trade via third countries. Furthermore, the Wagah border crossing has been closed with immediate effect. "Anyone who looks at Pakistan with ill intent will receive a response just like in the past - only stronger and more decisive this time," Dar warned, highlighting that Pakistan has already taken two more countermeasures compared to India.

The foreign minister further disclosed that extensive diplomatic efforts are underway. "Yesterday, 26 foreign ambassadors were briefed on the situation. More briefings are scheduled for today," he added, noting that Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister is expected to speak with him later in the evening. In response to rising regional tensions, Dar announced that all

Indian nationals currently in Pakistan under the SAARC visa exemption must leave the country within 48 hours.

He thanked opposition parties for their unified stance against India's recent aggression, praising national unity as Pakistan's real strength. "Political leadership has given a clear message to the enemy: there will be no compromise on the defense of our homeland." Referring to the recent Pahalgam incident, Dar noted that India had not directly accused Pakistan nor provided any evidence linking the country to the event.

He also criticized India for hindering regional progress. "SAARC wants development, but one country's stubbornness holds the entire region back," he said. Concluding his address, Dar assured the nation that Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to defend the country and that the government stands united in its response to any threat.

All options on table to preserve 'lifeline' water treaty: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has said that Pakistan would do everything to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty as all options were on the table to preserve the Indus Water Treaty - a lifeline and right of 240 million people - sanctified by international law, and bilateral treaties.

"The Indus Water Treaty has been very clear. It's unambiguous... All options are on the table for Pakistan. It is our lifeline and our right. We will do everything to secure this right for our people," FO spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said while addressing the weekly press briefing.

He told the media that Pakistan was in touch with all the friendly countries to convey its position clearly, however, there were no mediation efforts so far. Reiterating the decisions taken by the National Security Committee, including the closure of Wagah Border, suspension of trade, closure of airspace, downgrading of diplomatic ties, and suspension of visas, excluding Sikh pilgrims, he said that India was in no position to make any unilateral decision to hold the water treaty in abeyance.

"Pakistan is a responsible country. It remains committed to fulfill its obligations under international law and bilateral agreements. However, it takes two to tango. India should not create a situa-

tion where we are constrained to take extreme steps... The National Security Committee has pronounced itself very clearly that any attempt to dramatically alter or stop the water treaty would be considered as an act of war," he added.

Meanwhile, Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. In his message on the occasion of International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Pakistan firmly believes that multilateralism, inclusive dialogue and respect for the UN Charter are the cornerstone of global peace and stability.

He said Pakistan has consistently upheld the central role of the United Nations as the most inclusive and representative platform for advancing multilateralism. Ishaq Dar said Pakistan remains constructively engaged across all three pillars of the UN's work - peace and security, development and human rights.

He said as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2025-2026, Pakistan believes that the complex and inter-linked global challenges of our time, many of which stem from violations of the UN Charter, can be effectively addressed through renewed commitment to the multilateral system and consis-

tent adherence to the UN Charter.

The Deputy Prime Minister said from the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza to the longstanding foreign occupation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, millions continue to endure suffering. He said the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace serves as a solemn reminder of the urgent need to reinvigorate multilateral efforts to resolve protracted conflicts and ensure that peoples living under foreign occupation, including in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the occupied Palestinian territories, can exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with relevant UN resolutions. Ishaq Dar said Pakistan believes that the world order envisioned in the UN Charter must be preserved and strengthened.

He said a just, peaceful, and prosperous world requires a multilateral system that is effective, inclusive and representative - one that upholds the UN Charter, defends human rights and ensures equitable development. The Deputy Prime Minister said in this spirit, Pakistan will continue to play a constructive and proactive role across all United Nations platforms in pursuit of lasting peace, sustainable development, and international cooperation.

19,612 HCEs registered in just three years

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission (KP HCC) has released data for the period from April 2022 to April 2025. According to spokesperson Azim Rehman, a total of 19,612 health care establishments (HCEs) have been registered in the last three years. In comparison, only 7,717 facilities were registered in 2022. Although the Health Regulatory Authority was established in 2002, no licenses were issued to any HCE in the first 20 years. However, over the past three years, the licensing process has formally begun, which involves sev-

eral stages before a facility is granted a license. During this period, 82 HCEs received full licenses, and 519 HCEs were issued provisional licenses. Additionally, 2,431 HCEs were sealed due to various violations, and 3,131 complaints submitted by the public were addressed in accordance with the Commission's regulations. Furthermore, 38,443 HCEs were geo-tagged, and 907 staff members from different HCEs were trained on "Minimum Service Delivery Standards". According to Dr. Shefa Haider, Director Registration, KP HCC, officers and staff achieved

these milestones through relentless effort despite limited resources. Major achievements include the digitization of the registration process, geo-tagging of HCEs, ensuring quality compliance, and taking fearless action against quacks. The licensing process is rigorous. It begins with staff training on healthcare quality standards, followed by a grace period to implement these standards at their facility. The Commission's goal is not policing, but to enable health institutions to provide quality services to patients, Dr. Shefa added. The next step is a formal assessment of the facility,

conducted by a team of renowned experts from across the province. If a facility fails the first assessment, it is given a second chance in accordance with the law. The objective is to improve the overall quality of healthcare services. Sealing is only carried out in cases of major violations, Dr. Shefa told. In summary, registration is the foundational step, while licensing is a comprehensive and multi-stage process. Over the last three years, the Commission has conducted 258 assessments for licensing, marking a significant achievement in the Commission's efforts to improve healthcare standards in the province.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif giving away certificates to the participants of the closing ceremony of a workshop titled "The Art of Parenting", organized by the National Institute of Psychology, Aga Khan Foundation, the National Commission on the Status of Women and other esteemed partners.

Winning players of Australian Junior C'ship welcomed Outstanding performers to be encouraged, Tashfeen Haider



E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A grand reception was held at the Directorate General Sports office in honor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's talented squash players Mahnoor Ali, Mehwish Ali and Sehrish Ali who clinched two gold medals and one silver at the

Australian Junior Open Squash Championship. Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider presented bouquets to the players and congratulated them on their achievements. Additional DG Sports Rasheeda Ghaznavi, Director Development Nematullah and other

officials were also present on the occasion. Speaking to the media DG Sports Tashfeen Haider announced that the players would receive special rewards from the provincial sports minister. He emphasized that athletes who perform exceptionally in any sport will be fully supported

and encouraged. These athletes are valuable assets of our province and we will not let their talent go to waste, he said. He further stated that having recently assumed the responsibilities as DG Sports he is committed to devoting all his efforts to the promotion and welfare of sports and athletes in the province. Every problem faced by our athletes will be addressed on a priority basis so they can shine not just nationally but internationally as well, he added. It is worth mentioning that all three sisters delivered impressive performances in the Australian Junior Open Squash championship. Mahnoor Ali won gold in the Under-13 category, Mehwish Ali secured gold in the Under-17, while Sehrish Ali claimed silver in the Under-15 category.



PESHAWAR: Afghan refugees preparing to go back to their country. — INP photo

Enduring solidarity of Pakistan and its military with Kashmir and anti-state agendas

Abdul Basit Alvi

Leaders of Pakistan, past and present, have continuously shown deep affection and commitment toward Kashmir. The country's founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, laid the ideological foundation of Pakistan's bond with Kashmir. His iconic statement-"Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan"-continues to echo through generations, symbolizing the significance of Kashmir in Pakistan's national identity. Jinnah believed that Kashmir, due to its Muslim-majority population and geographical proximity, was a natural part of Pakistan. From the very beginning, he extended diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people, setting the tone for Pakistan's enduring stance. Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, also demonstrated unwavering dedication to the Kashmir issue, playing a pivotal role in bringing the matter to the international spotlight, particularly through the United Nations. During his time in office, Liaquat Ali Khan actively engaged diplomatic avenues to push for the enforcement of United Nations resolutions advocating a plebiscite in Kashmir. He consistently underscored that Pakistan's support for the Kashmiri cause extended beyond political or territorial inter-

ests, grounding it firmly in moral and humanitarian principles-a stance that would shape Pakistan's Kashmir policy for generations. Among Pakistan's leaders, few have matched the emotional fervor and unwavering advocacy for Kashmir demonstrated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. As both Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto championed the Kashmir cause at every major international platform. At the United Nations Security Council, he famously tore up proposals he deemed unjust to the Kashmiri people and walked out in protest-an act that earned admiration both domestically and internationally. His speeches were powerful declarations of solidarity, filled with emotion and resolve. One of his most quoted statements-"We will wage a thousand-year war for Kashmir if needed"-while symbolic, captured the profound depth of Pakistan's emotional, ideological, and strategic connection to the region. In addition to his passionate advocacy, Bhutto also worked to strengthen Pakistan's defense capabilities, aligning the country's military preparedness with its stance on Kashmir. Today, Pakistan's current political and military leadership-including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari, and Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir-continue to uphold the country's

unwavering commitment to Kashmir. On every national and international platform, they reaffirm Pakistan's support, condemn human rights violations, and highlight the issue through diplomatic channels. Kashmir Solidarity Day remains a key observance, while efforts to amplify Kashmiri voices through media, international forums, and humanitarian outreach persist. Since taking over as Chief of Army Staff in November 2022, General Asim Munir has consistently reiterated Pakistan's firm resolve to support the Kashmiri people and uphold their right to self-determination. Through both his words and actions, General Asim Munir has consistently emphasized the nation's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people in their pursuit of self-determination. Speaking at the Azadi Parade on August 14, 2023, held at the Pakistan Military Academy, he reaffirmed this commitment, declaring, "No evil design can withstand the determination of the Kashmiri people." He strongly criticized India's decision to revoke Article 370 in August 2019, calling it an "ill-conceived act" intended to unilaterally alter the region's status. General Asim Munir has consistently reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He has repeatedly called on the

international community to play an active and decisive role in facilitating a UN-mandated plebiscite, enabling Kashmiris to determine their own future. During a meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in December 2023, General Munir stressed that "peace in South Asia will remain elusive until a peaceful resolution to the long-standing Kashmir dispute is achieved in line with UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people." He condemned India's unilateral actions to alter the status of Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that such moves violate international law and UN resolutions. During a visit to the Line of Control (LoC) in December 2022, General Munir reiterated that Pakistan's armed forces are "ever ready-not only to defend every inch of our motherland, but to take the fight back to the enemy if war is ever imposed on us." He emphasized that India's ambitions in Kashmir would not succeed. In February 2025, he made a bold declaration: "Pakistan has already fought three wars for Kashmir, and if ten more wars are required, Pakistan will fight them." He underlined that Pakistan would not be deterred by India's military might or technological advancements, reaffirming the country's readiness to defend Kashmir and its peo-

ple under any circumstances. During a visit to Muzaffarabad, General Munir paid tribute to the martyrs of Kashmir by laying a wreath at the Martyrs' Monument. He praised the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people and reiterated Pakistan's firm and enduring commitment to their cause. He has persistently urged the global community to ensure the implementation of UN resolutions and to hold India accountable for its unfulfilled promises to grant Kashmiris the right to self-determination through a fair and impartial plebiscite. Speaking at the Defence Day ceremony at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, General Munir strongly condemned India's occupation of Kashmir and the oppression faced by its people. He accused New Delhi of attempting to change the region's demographic makeup and warned of the genocide of Muslims in IIOJK. He emphasized that a just resolution of the Kashmir conflict is essential for sustainable peace in South Asia and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to extending political, moral, and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people until their aspirations are fulfilled. In March 2023, General Munir once again took a firm stance, reiterating Pakistan's call for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in line with UN res-

olutions. He warned India against any misadventure, stating that Pakistan's armed forces stand ready to defend every inch of the homeland and respond decisively if conflict is imposed. Together, General Asim Munir's actions and statements reflect Pakistan's steadfast resolve to stand by the Kashmiri people, while also affirming the country's commitment to peace, justice, and international cooperation. Under his leadership, Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for justice and self-determination has been further solidified. His steadfast position continues to inspire national and international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful and just resolution to the Kashmir conflict. Kashmiris and Pakistanis share a strong and heartfelt bond. However, certain self-proclaimed "well-wishers" of Kashmir, who are in fact pressure groups serving their own interests and hostile foreign agendas, are actively working to incite hatred, unrest, and division within society. These groups have been linked to anti-state, sub-nationalist, and extremist elements. They act like blackmailers, shielding criminal activities and promoting them under the guise of activism. These elements opposed government initiatives such as price regulation during Ramadan and the

testing of food items. They exploit social media and disillusioned youth to spread extremism in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a region known for its peace and harmony. Their objective is to disrupt AJK's stability, harm its economy, and damage its tourism sector, which sustains thousands of families. Despite being fully aware of the criminal charges against certain individuals, they misleadingly portray them as "missing persons" to manipulate public opinion and cover up crimes. Their support for lawlessness and extremist ideologies, along with their efforts to destabilize AJK, clearly indicate that they are operating as proxies of hostile foreign powers. Indian officials, including their Home Minister, have even acknowledged such operations. These groups also engage in anti-Pakistan propaganda, targeting the armed forces while remaining silent on Indian violations. One member even issued a violent threat to the military-language that aligns more with the narratives pushed by India. Their activities are visibly endorsed by Indian intelligence-linked social media networks, further exposing their true allegiance. In a concerning development, AJK's Home Minister recently revealed signs of involvement by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and

India's intelligence agency RAW-operating from Afghanistan-in recent terrorist incidents in the region. Concrete evidence is expected to be shared with the public soon. Despite these nefarious efforts, Kashmiris continue to stand firmly with Pakistan and its armed forces, just as Pakistan supports them. The peace we enjoy is secured by the sacrifices of our soldiers, and it is vital for citizens to recognize this and act responsibly. While the government must address the legitimate concerns of its people, citizens also have a duty to support national efforts for peace and stability. Everyone must play their role in safeguarding AJK from the threat of terrorism and ensuring the rule of law prevails. The bond between Pakistanis and Kashmiris is a remarkable, unbreakable connection that transcends political, geographical, and religious boundaries. It is rooted in shared history, culture, religion, and a collective struggle for justice. This bond continues to define the relationship between the two peoples. Kashmiris recognize and honor the remarkable contributions of Pakistan and the Pakistani military to their cause, and no force can divide them or foster hatred between them. The enduring bond between Kashmiris and Pakistanis will never be broken, and any efforts to do so will inevitably fail.

Capacity building training begins Strengthen Medical education, training CPSP, KMU join hands



E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Vice President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP), Karachi, and Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Medical University, Lahore, Prof. Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, paid a visit to Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar. Addressing the faculty at Alexander Fleming Hall, Prof. Dr. Gondal emphasized CPSP's unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards in medical education and training across the country. He highlighted various academic initiatives launched by CPSP, including a nationwide series of master-level degree workshops. Prof. Dr. Gondal shared that currently over 52,000 trainee doctors are being trained under CPSP across 88 disciplines, including

40,000 FCPS and 12,000 MCPS trainees. To facilitate this training, 14 regional centers have been established across the country. He stated that CPSP firmly believes in self-reliance and that Pakistani doctors are not only in high demand worldwide but are also recognized for their international standard of training. He added that CPSP-trained doctors are serving as medical ambassadors of Pakistan globally. A CPSP center is also being established in Kabul, which will further enhance the institution's international recognition. He informed the audience that CPSP graduates are delivering world-class healthcare services in the UK, Ireland, the USA, Europe, Australia, and several Middle Eastern countries. Earlier, KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul

Haq welcomed the distinguished guest and gave him a tour of the under-construction KMU General Hospital. During a briefing, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq informed that specialized departments in gastroenterology, breast cancer, blood cancer, diabetes, and rehabilitation are being established at the hospital. These facilities will not only provide quality medical services to patients from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and neighboring Afghanistan but will also offer international-standard training opportunities for young postgraduate trainee doctors. The visit concluded with a mutual commitment to further enhance cooperation between CPSP and KMU to promote medical education, training, and public health through all possible measures on a priority basis.

Dr. Gul Muhammad defends PhD thesis

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph. D) scholar Gul Muhammad defended his research under the supervision of Dr. Aziz ur Rahman from Quataba University, on Friday. Dr. Amir Ullah Khan Wazir from the Department of Political Science, Islamia College University Peshawar was the external examiner. The research titled "An analysis of the elite capture in Pakistan (2018-2022)".





In brief

Redressal of issues sought F.P. Report

LARKANA: Samaji Ittehad Larkana (SIL) met with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) city and demanded immediate actions for redressal of public grievances, on Friday. In this regard, SIL chairman Hafiz Bashir Ahmed Sheikh, President Liaquat Ali Umrani, General Secretary Dedar Hussain Sheikh and others held a detailed discussion on various problems and complaints of the citizens. On this occasion, SSP City Ahmed Bakhsh Rahujo assured that legitimate problems would be resolved on priority basis because having a relevant office is equal to public peace. Meanwhile, the National Highways and Motorway Police organized a seminar on "Road Safety Awareness" at Government Elementary College of Education Larkana. On this occasion, DSP Mansoor Ahmed Bughio of Motorway Police and other officers briefed the students on the basic principles of road safety, use of safety helmets, wearing seat belts, avoiding the use of mobile phones while driving and safe road crossing for pedestrians. Teachers were given detailed information about the importance of road safety and the role of National Highways and Motorway Police in ensuring the safe travel of passengers on national.

Khuli Kathehri held in Mardan F.P. Report

MARDAN: A 'Khuli Kathehri' was held at Tehsil Complex Garhi Kapoora in which the public rise various complaints and issues before the district administration, including mutations, service delivery, cleanliness and sanitation, price hike, drainage, utility stores, encroachments, repair of streets and roads, and matters related to the health sector. The chaired by Deputy Commissioner Mardan Dr. Azmatullah in which ADC General Eid Nawaz, ADC Finance and Planning Syed Fahad Ifthikhar, AAC Qaiser Hussain Mughal, TMO, Tehsildar, Revenue Staff, Rescue 1122, Education Department, Irrigation, MS THQ, WAPDA, Social Welfare, Sui Gas, Communication and Works and other departments including officers, elected chairmen and members were present while lawyers, representatives of social institutions and a large number of people placed their grievances. DC Mardan issued orders on the spot for immediate resolution of some issues, while directing the relevant departments to resolve other complaints as soon as possible. He said that the district administration is trying to resolve public issues at their doorsteps. The public should approach government officials without hesitation; we are always ready to resolve their issues.

RPO directs senior cops F.P. Report

BANNU: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Bannu chaired a meeting regarding the security of United Nations (UN) projects, operations, movements, and delegations. Representatives from various UN agencies, including UNSS, UNOPS, UNICEF, and UN-WHO-POLIO, participated in the meeting. While addressing the meeting, RPO Imran Shahid stated that the security of all United Nations projects and activities in the region is a top priority.

World Malaria Day observed in Dir



F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Health Department in Lower Dir on Friday observed World Malaria Day with a seminar and awareness walk aimed at highlighting preventive measures against the disease. The Day is observed on April 25 all over the world each year.

Addressing the seminar, District Health Officer Dr. Muhammad Nisar said malaria is a preventable disease and urged the public to adopt simple practices such as eliminating stagnant water, maintaining cleanliness, and using mosquito nets to protect themselves and their families.

Organized in collaboration with the Malaria Control Program and Indus Hospital & Health Network, the event was attended by health officials, local activists, students, and teachers. The theme for this year's campaign is "Zero Malaria — It's Possible," with a national goal to eliminate the disease by 2030.

The seminar was attended by entomologist Dr. Waris, social activist Akbar Khan, Principal Balambat Saleem Khan, Assistant Director Local Government Asif, ADC Relief Ehtisham, officials from the health department, students and teachers from local schools.

Malaria Control Program head Ibrash Pasha informed the audience about a surge in malaria cases in the region following the 2022 floods. "In 2024, a total of 146,314 people were tested for malaria in the district, of which 9,435 tested positive," said Pasha, adding that a total of 157,919 individuals were tested in 2023 with 6,549 positive cases, while in 2022, 116,000 tests were conducted and 4,006 were found positive.

He added that 800,000 mosquito nets were distributed last year, and free testing and treatment services are available at 105 centres across the district. Following the seminar, participants took part in a walk through the main town, carrying banners and chanting slogans to raise awareness. Volunteers also distributed informational leaflets among the public on the occasion.

Shutter-down strike planned in Dir on 26 to support Palestinians: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has announced a complete shutter-down strike across Lower Dir on April 26 in solidarity with the people of Palestine, responding to a nationwide call by JI's central leadership to condemn Israeli aggression in Gaza.

Addressing a press conference at the party's secretariat in Balambat, local JI leaders including Emir Maulana Asadullah Khan, former MNA Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, General Secretary Shoaib Ahmad, and Tehsil

Timergara Emir Malik Sher Bahadur Khan urged citizens, traders, and civil society to participate in the strike as a moral and humanitarian gesture.

They condemned Israel's actions in Gaza as acts of genocide and criticized the silence of Muslim leaders. "This is not a political movement but an expression of Islamic unity with our oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters," said Maulana Asadullah.

The Timergara Traders Association, District Bar Association, and other local groups have endorsed the call, vowing to keep all commercial areas closed on the day.

Meanwhile, addressing regional security concerns, Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan warned India against any aggressive designs toward Pakistan. Referring to rising tensions following the Pulwama incident, he said, "If war is imposed on us, the entire nation will become a wall of steel." He recalled the contributions of Dir's tribes in the 1971 conflict, expressing confidence that the Pashtuns of Malakand Division would again rise in defense of the nation if needed.

AIOU campaign to promote education: In a separate development, Shahid Ali Khan Orakzai, Regional Director of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), announced a new admission campaign focused on increasing enrollment across Lower Dir. Speaking during a visit to an examination center in Timergara, he emphasized the need for community-wide efforts, involving scholars, teachers, and local leaders.

He highlighted AIOU's commitment to providing affordable education and called on tutors and media personnel to help spread awareness. "Education is our most powerful tool against ignorance," he said, urging collective support for the campaign.

Calls for transparency in land settlement: Community elders from Lower Dir have voiced concerns over irregularities in the ongoing land settlement process. In conversations with journalists, they pointed out errors in ownership records and flawed genealogical data that have created confusion and potential for long-term legal disputes.

They urged the provincial government and Board of Revenue officials to simplify correction procedures and ensure transparency. "Land ownership is a sensitive matter," one elder said. "If left unresolved, these issues could lead to social unrest." The elders called for immediate reforms to build public trust in the process and ensure rightful ownership is recorded accurately.

FMD: Livestock Dept launches vaccination drive

F.P. Report

WANA: The Livestock Department has launched vaccination drive against FMD (Foot-and-Mouth Disease) in Wana. The cattle vaccinated in various areas, and the campaign is set to continue without interruption.

According to details, in response to public complaints, a special task has been assigned to Dr. Noor Sultan by the Provincial Minister for Livestock, the Secretary of Livestock, the Director General of Livestock, and the Director of Livestock for merged areas. He has been dispatched to Wana to ensure effective monitoring of the campaign. Vaccinations have been carried out in areas including Ghwa Khwa, Anzer China, and several others, aiming to protect livestock from a range of diseases.

Jirga held: A significant and historic jirga took place

in the Toi Khulla area of South Waziristan, bringing together tribal elders, civil administration, and military leadership in a renewed show of unity and cooperation. The gathering was presided over by the Inspector General Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (South), and marked a pivotal moment in the region's path toward peace and development.

The jirga was attended by senior officials from the district administration, officers of the Frontier Corps (South), and respected tribal elders of the Dotani tribe. The meeting opened with prayers and Fatihah for the brave martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism, followed by the distribution of financial aid to their families as a gesture of appreciation for their immense sacrifices.

Tribesmen blames ex-lawmakers for betrayal: In a dramatic turn of events, prominent elders of the

Ahmadzai Wazir tribe have leveled serious allegations of corruption and betrayal of public trust against former Member of National Assembly (MNA) Ali and former Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Naseer Ullah Wazir.

Addressing a hastily convened press conference at the District Press Club Wana, the tribal elders including Malik Musa Jan, Malik Khatam Wazir, Maulana Fazal (alias Fazli), Malik Ghanim Shah, Malik Jan Muhammad, and Mukhtiar Khan (alias Mamaqi) accused the two former lawmakers of "exploiting the confidence of the people" and "setting new records of corruption."

The elders expressed grave concern over what they described as a systematic denial of the community's rights, alleging that the political duo misused their positions for personal gain while ignoring the needs and aspirations of the public.

independent participation of PWDs in the democratic process.

"The Election Commission of Pakistan is fully dedicated to providing equal voting rights to all citizens," stated DEC Khalid Rashid. "Every individual, regardless of physical ability, should be able to fulfill their constitutional responsibility to vote freely and transparently. This is vital to strengthening our democratic system."

The meeting was attended by representatives from multiple government and civil society sectors, including the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the Social Welfare Department, the Higher Education Department, and non-governmental organizations working for disability rights and voter education.

DEC Rashid emphasized that,

as per the directives of the ECP, multi-stakeholder collaboration is being fostered to streamline the voter registration process and to ensure an inclusive environment at polling stations. He added that consultation with all relevant government departments and social organizations is essential to formulating an effective strategy to support marginalized groups, particularly PWDs.

Election Officer Arifa Asghar further elaborated on the importance of voter education and awareness campaigns to ensure the active participation of all societal segments. She highlighted the need for inclusive voter outreach strategies to inform PWDs about their rights and the facilities available to them on Election Day.

The meeting concluded with a joint resolution by all partici-

ADC directs to speed up enrollment campaign F.P. Report

KARAK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Karak Sahibzada Samiullah has strictly directed the Education Department to expedite the Enrollment Campaign in government schools across the district under the Program "Parha Likha Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and ensure that maximum enrollment of children in the schools.

He gave these directions while presiding over a meeting of the District Steering Committee for Education on Friday. Various issues including staff attendance, salary deductions due to absenteeism, the plight of various school buildings and student enrollment were discussed in detail in the meeting.

On this occasion, the District Education Officers Male and Female were directed to speed-up the enrollment campaign and improve new admissions. Several important decisions were also taken in the meeting regarding further improving the basic facilities in the government schools.

The ADC directed the formation of a monitoring committee to resolve the problems of schools and improve the provision of basic facilities. He also issued orders to ensure the attendance of teachers in the schools.

Qaqlasht festival concluded F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The colourful Qaqlasht Festival concluded with much funfair in the scenic Qaqlasht Valley in Upper Chitral district on Friday. The event, organised by the provincial Culture Tourism Department under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Public Agenda, showcased thrilling sports, traditional games, including polo, football, cricket, volleyball and cultural activities at the scenic tourist destination in Qaqlasht in Upper Chitral.

The week-long festival featuring various sports events concluded but the final match of polo, the "king of games and the game of kings," is expected to take place in the coming days. The finals of football, cricket, volleyball, and various traditional games were successfully held.

Upper Chitral Deputy Commissioner Haseebur Rehman Khan Khalil was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony. Additional deputy commissioner (general), ADC Finance and Planning, heads of line departments, members of the Qaqlasht Festival Committee, various political and social figures, elected public representatives, media personnel, domestic and international tourists, and thousands of enthusiastic spectators also attended the event.

The football final was played between Liger Football Club Hun and Jughoor Football Club. After an exciting and intense match, Jughoor Football Club emerged as victorious. DC Haseebur Rehman praised the successful organization of the festival, expressing gratitude to the festival committee members, department heads, local police, Chitral Upper Levies personnel, media representatives, and the municipal administrations of Morkho/Torkho and Mastuj, as well as the Health Department and Rescue 1122.

Mashood urges youth to register for PM laptop scheme

F.P. Report

SWABI: Chairman, Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan here Friday said that youth empowerment programme was a landmark initiative of the present elected Govt, urging youth to get themselves registered for the Prime Minister's laptop scheme.

He was addressing a function attended by a large number of students and faculty at Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering and Technology Topi here where he appraised them about the National Adolescent and Youth Policy and laptop registration process.

Rana Mashood said the Federal Government has initiated scores of programs for socioeconomic uplift of youth including free laptop scheme and announced that hundreds of thousands of laptops would also be provided to deserving students on interest free loans.

He announced that 100,000 laptops will be distributed at the federal level based on merit under this initiative every year, with the registration deadline set for May 20, 2025.

Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan said that registration for the laptops will be conducted through the Prime

Minister's Digital Youth Hub and all students enrolled in public sector higher education institutes across Pakistan are eligible to apply for this scheme. He said that the PM's youth program was apolitical and all facilities would be provided strictly on merit.

The Chairman PM Youth Program said vocational education training was being provided to youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and all jobs would be provided to youth through merit irrespective of political affiliation.

Rana Mashood said the laptops provided by the PMLN Govt enabled thousands of youth to get dignified jobs in the open market besides overseas which was a proud movement for them. He said PMLN Govt have made Pakistan's defense impregnable after successful six atomic explosions on May 28, 1998 in response to India's five blasts and that no country including India could cast an evil eye on our country.

He said that inimical forces wanted to create chaos and disorder in our country but all such nefarious designs would be frustrated with the power of people. He said Pakistan was a strong country of 250 million

people with a professional army and any misadventure by India would be dealt with full might. He said Govt also wanted to provide best job opportunities to youth of religious seminaries to bring them into the national mainstream after completion of their education.

He said today was an era of social media and all jobs are available in a single click on websites of Govt departments and PM's digital youth hub. He said Pakistan is ranked fourth in freelancing due to mushroom growth of social media, asking youth to take full advantage of facilities and courses provided to them under the PM's youth package.

He accused PTI for making a compromise on the Kashmir issue. On the other hand, he said PMLN leadership have exposed India's atrocities and human rights violations in held Kashmir on all world's forums including the UN General Assembly in a befitting manner.

Rana Mashood said that he would visit 25 cities in a month to appraise youth about Govt initiatives for their empowerment. He said youth were the future of Pakistan and they would shoulder future responsibilities.

Admn commits for successful enrolment drive

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Additional Deputy Commissioner has emphasized that the development and progress of any nation are directly linked to advancements in the education sector. Addressing a special meeting on the Admission Campaign 2025 in his office and later at the District Steering Committee for Education, he stressed the importance of prioritizing education for national progress.

The meeting was attended by District Education Officers from both male and female Department, Sub-Divisional Education Officers (SDEOs), Assistant SDEOs, as well

as officials from the Benazir Income Support Program, NADRA, and local government. Hammad Haider called upon all stakeholders to contribute actively to the admission campaign and achieve its goals. He directed education officers to design well-structured enrollment campaigns and include local leaders, elected representatives, mosque clerics, and members of Parent-Teacher Councils to reach the community effectively.

Awareness walks held for admission: As part of the Admission Campaign 2025, the Sub-Divisional Education Officer (SDEO) of Alpurai organized awareness walks at

Government Primary Schools in Wahab Khel and Malak Khel Kotkay.

The walks, aimed at promoting awareness about the importance of education, saw the participation of local council members, community elders, teachers, and students in large numbers. Led by SDEO Aurangzeb, the walks began from the schools, passed through the main bazaars of Wahab Khel and Malak Khel Kotkay, and concluded back at the schools. Addressing the gathering during the rally, SDEO Aurangzeb emphasized the responsibility of parents to provide education not only to their sons but also to their daughters.

PFA foils supply of 1213 kg unhygienic meat

F.P. Report

Toba TEK SINGH: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) foiled an attempt to supply 1,213 kilograms of adulterated meat in Toba Tek Singh during a raid conducted on a tip-off.

The operation was led by Deputy Director (Operations) Toba Tek Singh. A food safety team intercepted a vehicle transporting the substandard meat, which was reportedly intended for supply to various local hotels.

A veterinary expert present on-site examined the meat and declared it unfit for human consumption. The entire stock was immediately discarded. One suspect was arrested, a case was registered, and the vehicle used for transportation was impounded.

DG PFA stated that no leniency will be shown towards those involved in food-related crimes and vowed strict action

against health offenders. He added that, under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's directives, PFA teams are actively inspecting (food quality across Punjab. Citizens have been urged to report any suspicious food-related activity to the PFA helpline at 1223 to help eliminate the sale of unsafe and adulterated food products.

Commissioner directs provision of public services at doorsteps: In line with the public welfare vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, effective measures are being taken in Toba Tek Singh district to promptly address public grievances and ensure the provision of facilities at their doorstep. As part of these efforts, Commissioner Faisalabad Maryam Khan undertook a detailed visit to the district, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad

Naeem Sindhu and senior officers of the district administration.

During her visit, the Commissioner inspected the ongoing cleanliness drive under the "Suthra Punjab" initiative at Union Council No. 50, Chak No. 295 GB near Dabba Wala Bridge. Deputy Commissioner Sindhu briefed her that a former dumping point at the site had been completely removed and a public park was being developed in its place. The Commissioner lauded the efforts and expressed satisfaction over the performance of the district administration.

Later, Commissioner Maryam Khan held a public open court (khuli kacheri) at the Union Council office in Rajana, which was attended by a large number of local citizens. Participants raised issues related to sanitation, road maintenance, sewerage, revenue matters, and other municipal services.

ECP commits for inclusion of disable person in electoral process

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In a significant move toward electoral inclusivity, the District Election Commissioner of Hafizabad, Khalid Rashid, and Election Officer Arifa Asghar have reaffirmed the Election Commission of Pakistan's commitment to ensuring that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are fully accommodated in the electoral process.

Speaking at a high-level meeting of the District Voter Education Committee, the officials underscored that the ECP is taking comprehensive and targeted measures to guarantee both the registration of votes for PWDs and the availability of all essential facilities on polling day. These efforts, they said, are aimed at enabling the active and

independent participation of PWDs in the democratic process.

"The Election Commission of Pakistan is fully dedicated to providing equal voting rights to all citizens," stated DEC Khalid Rashid. "Every individual, regardless of physical ability, should be able to fulfill their constitutional responsibility to vote freely and transparently. This is vital to strengthening our democratic system."

The meeting was attended by representatives from multiple government and civil society sectors, including the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the Social Welfare Department, the Higher Education Department, and non-governmental organizations working for disability rights and voter education.

DEC Rashid emphasized that,

as per the directives of the ECP, multi-stakeholder collaboration is being fostered to streamline the voter registration process and to ensure an inclusive environment at polling stations. He added that consultation with all relevant government departments and social organizations is essential to formulating an effective strategy to support marginalized groups, particularly PWDs.

Election Officer Arifa Asghar further elaborated on the importance of voter education and awareness campaigns to ensure the active participation of all societal segments. She highlighted the need for inclusive voter outreach strategies to inform PWDs about their rights and the facilities available to them on Election Day.

The meeting concluded with a joint resolution by all partici-

pants to continue coordinated efforts to uphold the principle of electoral equality and to work collectively toward removing all barriers to participation for voters with disabilities.

Blood donation camp held at Police Lines: A significant blood donation camp was held at Police Lines Hafizabad under the auspices of the Sundas Foundation, a welfare organization known for its efforts in supporting patients with blood disorders. The initiative witnessed an overwhelming response from the police department, with officers and personnel collectively donating 127 bags of blood to benefit children suffering from thalassemia, hemophilia, and blood cancer.

The camp was graced by the presence of District Police Officer Atif Nazir, who personal-

ly participated in the donation drive. In his remarks, DPO Atif Nazir emphasized the moral, spiritual, and health-related importance of blood donation. "Donating blood is not merely an act of service, it is a profound expression of humanity. For the patient, it is a lifeline, and for the donor, it is a blessing," he stated.

Addressing common misconceptions, the DPO clarified that donating blood does not cause weakness. "Such doubts are unfounded and contradict medical evidence. According to research by the World Health Organization (WHO), regular blood donation contributes to better health by reducing the risk of various diseases and improving cardiovascular function."

DPO Atif Nazir underscored the urgent and recurring need for blood among thalassemia

patients, who often rely on transfusions every few weeks. "These children cannot produce blood on their own and are entirely dependent on voluntary donors. A single unit of blood can save up to three lives, red blood cells aid thalassemia patients, plasma benefits those with hemophilia, and platelets are crucial for blood cancer patients," he explained.

World Book Day celebrated at District Public Library: In line with global observances, World Book Day was celebrated with fervor in Hafizabad on April 23rd, reaffirming the timeless significance of reading in the digital age. A special ceremony was organized at the District Public Library Hafizabad to mark the occasion, chaired by District Education Officer (Female) Hafizabad, Soofia Jabeen.



KYIV: Paramedics and a rescuer carrying a body found under debris of an apartment building hit by a Russian missile strike in Ukraine.

French president announces economic deals with Madagascar

PARIS (AFP): France and Madagascar announced they would strengthen economic cooperation through several ambitious projects, including a major hydroelectric dam, as President Emmanuel Macron kicked off a two-day state visit to the Indian Ocean island.

The visit, the first official trip by a French president in 20 years, is intended to strengthen bilateral ties and consolidate France's presence in the Indian Ocean despite ongoing colonial-era disputes. Macron announced after talks with President Andry Rajoelina that several agreements would be concluded during the visit, covering energy, digital technology, infrastructure and tourism.

They include funding from the French development agency, AFD, and a loan from the French treasury to support the construction of a major hydropower dam in Volobe, in the east of the country, which has been in the pipeline for almost a decade. A deal is also expected to be reached for the entry of French electricity giant EDF into Madagascar's hydroelectric company, CGHV, an official told AFP. Macron called for a "partnership" between the two nations over strategic rare earth minerals needed for renewable energies, of which Madagascar has extensive reserves.

Rajoelina meanwhile urged future investment in the island's "immense potential", of which France is

already the top trading partner. Macron's trip comes with France facing challenges to its sovereignty of some of its Indian Ocean territories and the growing ambitions of China and Russia in the region.

Madagascar, a French-speaking island of 30 million people, disputes France's ownership of several small islets nearby called the Scattered Islands that stayed under French rule when its other African colonies became independent. Similarly, the neighbouring archipelago nation of the Comoros claims the right to the island of Mayotte, a French department.

Both occupy a strategic position in the Mozambique Channel, a major transit route for international trade and rich in gas and oil. Demands for the handover of these territories are about "national identity, access to resources and, moreover, a means of pressure to obtain something else from France", said Denys-Sacha Robin, an international maritime law specialist at the University of Paris-Nanterre. While Paris favours a "co-management" of the Scattered Islands, there is a push for Rajoelina to raise a full handover, similar to the 2024 deal for Britain to return the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.

Another theme running through the visit is the uncomfortable legacy of France's colonisation of Madagascar -- the fifth largest island in the world and known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources

but burdened by high poverty. While Macron has pledged to return various cultural items taken by the French occupiers, plans were called off for him to bring back the skull of a king decapitated in 1897 by French troops and taken to France as a trophy. One issue holding up the restitution of the remains of King Toera is a family request that his desecrated tomb be restored.

There are also demands for France to make a stronger admission of its colonial-era transgressions on the island, which gained full independence in 1960. This includes the establishment of a commission "to shed full light on what are called colonial abuses", said University of Antananarivo historian Jeannot Rasoloarison. The French president will also advocate for greater economic, health, maritime and security cooperation between Madagascar and France's regional possessions, including Mayotte and the island of Reunion. He will call at a summit in Antananarivo of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) for Mayotte to be included in the grouping, which is being blocked by the Comoros. Also likely to come up is the fate of dual national Paul Maillot Rafanoharana, sentenced in 2021 to 20 years in prison for an attempted coup in Madagascar. He is being held in solitary confinement. His co-accused Philippe Francois, sentenced to 10 years, was transferred to France in 2023.

China accuses US of interfering in joint space programmes with other nations

SHANGHAI (Reuters): The chief designer of China's lunar exploration programme accused the United States of interfering in Beijing's attempts to cooperate with Europe and other foreign partners in space programmes.

Wu Weiren, in a rare interview with foreign media, told Reuters that China pursued a policy of open space diplomacy, in contrast with the US, and that it remained open to cooperating on lunar exploration with developing and developed countries. Wu said the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS), an initiative led by Russia and China to establish a permanent base on the moon by 2035, was developing well, with 17 countries and international organisations already signed up as members.

But he suggested China

had not been able to attract as many lunar project partners as the US because of US interference, though he didn't provide details. "The ILRS development trend is very good but compared to the US' Artemis Accords, ours is much smaller in terms of countries because the US is always interfering in our cooperation with other countries, including with Europe," Wu said, without elaborating on the interference.

The Artemis Accords are a US-led multilateral agreement meant to establish norms of behaviour in space and on the moon and Mars, which has over 50 signatories so far. "China and Russia cooperate the best with each other now," Wu said, adding that China looked forward to further cooperation with Russia on moon-based nuclear energy. Recent Chinese

unmanned missions to the moon, to lay the groundwork to eventually build a manned lunar base, have carried foreign payloads from countries like Pakistan, Thailand, Italy and France, raising the profile of Beijing's space diplomacy.

"ILRS is the sole mission in the world that provides equal opportunities for any country to be accepted and to participate actively by proposing payloads and satellites," said Hernan Merino Choque, a deputy director at the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, an ILRS member and a multilateral grouping whose biggest funder is Beijing. China in February said it would train a Pakistani astronaut to join a future space flight next year to the country's Tiangong space station. This will be the first time a

Thailand convicts ex-prosecutors

BANGKOK (Reuters): A court in Thailand convicted two former prosecutors for misconduct in connection with a high-profile hit-and-run case involving the fugitive heir to the Red Bull energy drink empire.

Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya, the grandson of the late Thai billionaire Chaleo Yoovidhya who created the Red Bull energy drink, is accused of crashing his Ferrari into a policeman in 2012 and dragging his body under the vehicle for more than 100 metres (328 feet) before fleeing. His whereabouts is unknown and he is likely living abroad, according to media reports.

A former deputy attorney-general who oversaw Vorayuth's case, Net Naksuk, and another prosecutor were sentenced to three and two years respectively after being found guilty of misconduct in helping Vorayuth avoid prosecution and deciding not to indict him. Vorayuth, who was 27 at the time of the incident, was later charged with speeding, hit-and-run and reckless driving causing death. He ignored multiple court summons before authorities issued a warrant for his arrest five years after the incident.

He initially admitted to driving the car but denied other charges. The hit-and-run case has captured significant public attention in Thailand, stoking anger over a perception of impunity for the wealthy, with Vorayuth still at large, despite repeated promises from authorities to bring him to justice. Six others defendants in the case, including former national police chief Somyet Poompanmoung, were acquitted due to insufficient evidence. The two former prosecutors sentenced have denied wrongdoing and were appealing the verdict, according to the court. They could not immediately be reached for comment. "The actions of the defendants undermined the credibility of the justice system," the court said.

China backs Iran's nuke talks with US

BEIJING (Reuters): China supports Iran holding talks on its nuclear program with the United States and opposes the use of force and "illegal" unilateral sanctions to try to resolve the issue, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Iran's foreign minister.

Beijing is willing to deepen coordination and cooperation with Tehran on international and regional affairs, Wang told Iran's Abbas Araqchi during talks in the Chinese capital, according to a ministry statement. "The Chinese side commends Iran's promise not to develop nuclear weapons and respects Iran's right to utilise nuclear energy peacefully," Wang said.

The meeting came ahead of further US-Iran nuclear talks and after Washington imposed sanctions on some Chinese refiners for buying Iranian oil in recent weeks. The Iranian foreign ministry said that Araqchi had informed his Chinese counterpart of the latest situation of the "indirect talks between Iran and the US" and thanked China for its productive stance on Iran's nuclear programme and the lifting of sanctions. US President Donald Trump has sought to pursue a "maximum pressure" campaign on Tehran, including driving Iranian oil exports to zero.

In 2015, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions in a deal with the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. But in 2018 Trump, a year into his first term, pulled out of the pact. Tehran and Washington started negotiations again earlier this month with the aim of placing limits on Tehran's nuclear programme. China, the largest buyer of Iranian oil, has backed Tehran as US pressure mounts.

The US has so far sanctioned two China-based small independent "teapot" refiners for purchasing Iranian crude. Last month Chinese imports of Iranian oil surged to an all-time high as buyers stocked up amid worries that further US sanctions on Tehran could tighten supplies.

How US peace plan for Ukraine and Russia might look

WASHINGTON (AFP): The United States has piled pressure on Ukraine and Russia to find a peace agreement, with President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance threatening to walk away if a deal is not made. So what does Washington want? Some official demands have already been made public, and media outlets have reported on several unannounced plans for a US-led accord.

Axios, citing a US plan presented to Ukrainian officials last week, said that Washington could offer "de facto" recognition of Russia's occupation in Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. Vice President JD Vance suggested US support to "freeze the territorial lines at some level close to where they are today." But Kyiv has rejected that idea. "Our people will not accept a frozen conflict disguised as peace," said Yulia Svyrydenko, Ukraine's first deputy prime minister, in a post on X.

According to The

Washington Post, the United States has offered to recognize Crimea -- which Moscow annexed in 2014 in a widely condemned move -- as Russian territory.

That would meet a major demand of President Vladimir Putin, but the suggestion has enraged his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky. "There is nothing to talk about. It is against our Constitution. This is our territory," Zelensky told journalists this week. Trump lashed out Zelensky, saying his position will "do nothing but prolong" the war. The United States could guarantee to Russia that Ukraine will never join NATO, Axios reported, noting that admission to the European Union would still remain a possibility. Blocking Ukraine from joining the military alliance has long been a demand of Putin. According to Axios, Ukraine would get a "robust security guarantee" involving an ad hoc group of European and potentially non-European countries. It does not specify how this

peacekeeping operation would function, or if the United States would be involved, the outlet reported.

The Trump administration could lift long-standing sanctions on Russia under a future agreement, Axios and the Washington Post reported, citing the US proposals submitted to Ukrainian officials. Axios stated that Ukraine would get compensation and assistance for post-war rebuilding, but did not specify how this would be funded. The US plan refers to a Trump-backed proposal that would give the United States royalty payments on profits from Ukrainian mining of resources and rare minerals, Axios reported. Trump has framed the minerals deal as compensation for military and financial aid given to Kyiv by his predecessor, Joe Biden. Axios said the US president also wants the United States to operate the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant -- the largest such facility in Europe. Zelensky has rejected this idea.

China, Russia may build nuclear plant

SHANGHAI (Reuters): China is considering building a nuclear plant on the moon to power the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) it is planning with Russia, a presentation by a senior official showed.

China aims to become a major space power and land astronauts on the moon by 2030, and its planned Chang'e-8 mission for 2028 would lay the groundwork for constructing a permanent, manned lunar base. In a presentation in Shanghai, the 2028 mission's Chief Engineer Pei Zhaoyu showed that the lunar base's energy supply could also depend on large-scale solar arrays, and pipelines and cables for heating and electricity built on the moon's surface.

Russia's space agency Roscosmos said last year it planned to build a nuclear reactor on the moon's surface with the China National Space Administration (CNSA) by 2035 to power the ILRS. The inclusion of the nuclear power unit in a Chinese space official's presentation at a conference for officials

from the 17 countries and international organisations that make up the ILRS suggests Beijing supports the idea, although it has never formally announced it.

"An important question for the ILRS is power supply, and in this Russia has a natural advantage, when it comes to nuclear power plants, especially sending them into space, it leads the world, it is ahead of the United States," Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's lunar exploration program, told Reuters on the sidelines of the conference. After little progress on talks over a space-based reactor in the past, "I hope this time both countries can send a nuclear reactor to the moon," Wu said. China's timeline to build an outpost on the moon's south pole coincides with NASA's more ambitious and advanced Artemis programme, which aims to put US astronauts back on the lunar surface in December 2025.

Wu said last year that a "basic model" of the ILRS, with the Moon's south pole as its core, would be built by 2035. In the future,

China will create the "555 Project," inviting 50 countries, 500 international scientific research institutions, and 5,000 overseas researchers to join the ILRS. Researchers from Roscosmos also presented at the conference in Shanghai, sharing details about plans to look for mineral and water resources, including possibly using lunar material as fuel. The ILRS preceded Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 but incentives for cooperation between Roscosmos and CNSA have increased since the outbreak of the war, according to Chinese analysts.

With China's rapid technological advances and lunar achievements, and as Western sanctions prevent Roscosmos from many imports of space technology and equipment, China can now "alleviate the pressure" on Russia and help it "achieve new breakthroughs in satellite launches, lunar exploration, and space stations," Liu Ying, a researcher at the Chinese foreign ministry's diplomatic academy, wrote in a journal article last year.

Philippines to receive missile system from India

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines is set to receive its second batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles from India, its defence secretary said, which should bolster the country's coastal defence capabilities amid escalating tensions with China.

The expected arrival of the missile system will be the second of three BrahMos missile batteries Manila agreed to purchase under a 2022 deal worth \$375 million. The first batch arrived in April 2024. "Now that they're arriving, we will do what needs to be done to ensure they are used properly," Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro told reporters.

The BrahMos, which has a range of 290 km (180 miles) and can be fired from land, sea and submarine, is

part of the Philippine military's modernisation programme. The second missile battery delivery comes at a time when diplomatic and security ties between Manila and Beijing are strained due to frequent clashes in the South China Sea, which China claims mostly as its own, and recently accusations of espionage. Teodoro pushed back strongly against China's recent arrest of three Filipinos accused of spying, calling the allegations implausible. Chinese authorities arrested three Filipinos and accused them of working for the Philippine intelligence agency to gather classified information on its military, the state-run China Daily reported on April 3, citing state security officials. It said the three had confessed to the crime.

"What capability do Filipinos have to spy in

China?," Teodoro said. "What interest do we have in what goes inside their country? Our interest is what they are doing in the West Philippine Sea," he added using the term Manila uses to refer to its exclusive economic zone. Teodoro also rejected assertions the Philippine government is fuelling anti-Chinese sentiment, saying that if such sentiment exist, the blame lies with the Chinese Communist Party. "I will say without hesitation that they are the main cause of xenophobia," Teodoro said. "If there's xenophobia, it's because of the overreach of the Chinese Communist Party and President Xi Jinping, not just around the world, but even among their own people." There was no immediate comment from the Chinese Embassy in Manila on the Philippine's defence secretary's remarks.

Russian court cuts jail term for American held on drug charges

MOSCOW (Reuters): A Russian court ordered that the jail sentence of a US citizen convicted of drug trafficking be reduced to 9-1/2 years from 12-1/2, the man's lawyer told Reuters. Robert Woodland was found guilty in July 2024 of attempting to sell drugs after he was arrested while transporting about 50 grams of mephedrone, a stimulant drug in the same class as amphetamine, to a safe cache in Moscow, prosecutors said. His lawyer, Stanislav Kshevitsky, previ-

ously told Reuters that Woodland had partially admitted guilt.

It was not immediately clear why his sentence was lowered. Born in Russia in 1991 and adopted as a toddler by American parents, Woodland returned to his birth country as an adult to meet his biological mother, he told a Russian newspaper in 2020. Woodland is one of at least 10 Americans remaining behind bars in Russia following a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington earlier this

month. That exchange saw the freeing of Ksenia Karelina, a dual Russian-US citizen and Los Angeles spa worker serving a treason sentence, for Arthur Petrov, a German-Russian citizen accused by Washington of exporting sensitive micro-electronics from the US to Russia. Earlier this month, a different Russian court slightly reduced the sentence of US soldier Gordon Black, who was jailed last year for stealing \$113 from his girlfriend and threatening to kill her.

Cambodia canal's impact on Mekong questioned after China signs deal

CAMBODIA (Reuters): Cambodia should share a feasibility study on the impact of a planned China-backed canal that would divert water from the rice-growing floodplains of Vietnam's Mekong Delta, said the body overseeing the transnational river. After months of uncertainty, Phnom Penh last week signed a deal with China to develop the Funan Techo Canal when President Xi Jinping visited Cambodia as part of a tour of Southeast Asia.

It was Beijing's first explicit public commitment to the project, giving state-controlled construction giant China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) a 49% stake through a subsidiary, but also linking Chinese support to the "sustainability" of the project. The Secretariat of the intergovernmental Mekong River Commission (MRC) that coordinates the sustainable development of

Southeast Asia's longest river said it had so far received from Cambodia only "basic information" on the project.

"We hope that further details, including the feasibility study report and other relevant reports, will be provided," the Commission said in a statement to Reuters this week. That would be needed "to ensure that any potential implications for the broader Mekong Basin are fully considered," it added.

The canal has already created concern among environmentalists who say it could further harm the delicate ecology of the Mekong Delta, which is Vietnam's major rice growing region and is already facing problems of drought and salinization as result of infrastructure projects upstream. Vietnam is also a leading exporter of rice. The Cambodian government said the canal would have minimal environmental impact and "aligns with the 1995 Mekong Agreement" which

governs cooperation among riverine countries in Southeast Asia. The Mekong River, fed by a series of tributaries, flows some 4,900 kilometres (3,045 miles) from its source in the Tibetan plateau through China, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to the sea.

"Whether the Funan Techo Canal violates the 1995 Mekong Agreement depends on several factors, including its connection to the Mekong mainstream," the Commission said, offering additional guidance to Phnom Penh and other member states "to ensure compliance". Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam are members of the MRC while China and Myanmar are dialogue partners.

The Cambodian government did not respond to questions about whether it intended to share the requested documents. Vietnam's foreign ministry did not reply to a request for comment after

the deal with China was signed, but the country has repeatedly asked Cambodia to share more information about the canal to assess its impact.

Xi made no reference to the canal in his public statements in Phnom Penh but a joint communique issued at the end of his visit said China supported Cambodia in building the canal "in accordance with the principles of feasibility and sustainability". The deal signed by CCCC was for a 151.6 km (94.2 miles) canal costing \$1.16 billion. However, the Cambodian government says on the canal's official website that the waterway would stretch 180 km and cost \$1.7 billion at completion in 2028. The higher cost reflects a short section to be built by Cambodian firms as well as bridges and water conservation resources, the government told Reuters without clarifying who would pay for the bridges and water conservation.

The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

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Mass arrests of Palestinians

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.

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

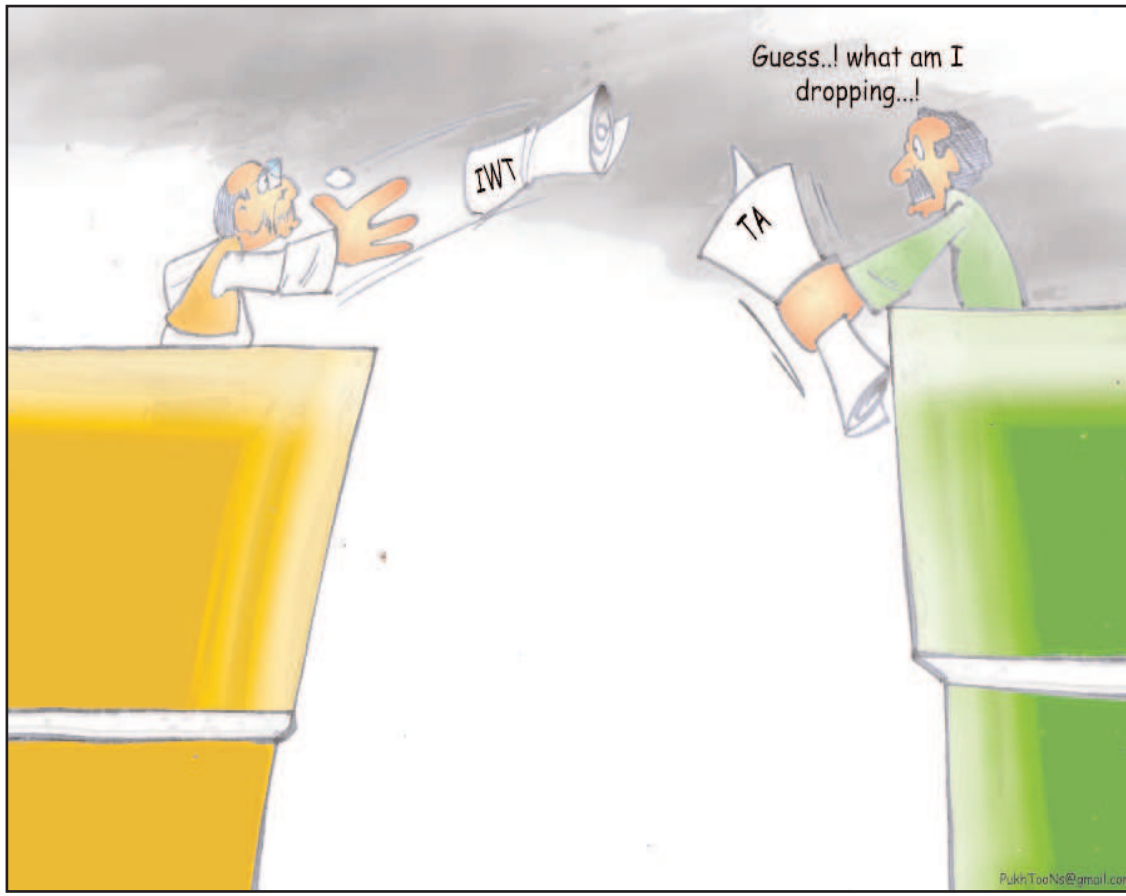
Prisoners face daily abuses that are clear violations of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, which are meant to guarantee the rights of individuals under occupation. From the blanket denial on all family visits to detainees and highly limited access to legal representation, 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.

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The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or teshil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Justice delayed justice denied

Zia ur Rehman Tajik

CCOURTS are the neutral, natural and obvious dispute resolvers. Going to court is always viewed as a last resort to solve any dispute. The civilization of a nation can be judged from the cases pending before the courts.

In Pakistan, the litigation remains pending in court for decades due to many reasons, including non-strict implementation of laws by the Judges, unnecessary adjournments and delaying by the advocates and non-cooperation of govt officials, govt departments, corporations and statutory bodies. Almost every statute provides a specific time for deciding the cases, but the cases are not decided in the specified period mentioned in the statutes.

It amounts to a violation of Article 37 (D) of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the principles of Swift justice. Article 37(D) emphasises providing inexpensive and expeditious justice. Swift justice is considered the sweetest justice. Delay in the dispensation of justice drains even a just judgment of its value. Due to delays in the dispensation of justice, litigants resort to alternate ways for settlement of their disputes without litigation and alternate dispute resolution is one of the ways for settlement of conflicts.

Alternate dispute resolution (ADR) is a way of trying to resolve a dispute without having to go to court and without a regular trial. Alternate dispute resolution is considered a vehicle for improving communication between the parties and providing a forum for creative resolution to the dispute that better meets the needs of the parties. In it, the parties use the services of a neutral person /party who assists them in reaching an agreement, avoiding litigation and working towards a voluntary consensual agreement.

There are four general types of ADR, and they work in different ways, each type of ADR is suited to different types of disputes.

1) Negotiation. In it the parties voluntarily participate in settlement of their dispute without 3rd person intervention.

2) Mediation. In it, the 3rd person (mediator/Salis) facilitates the Resolution process and assists the par-

ties in discussing the differences in their legal position to help them come to an agreement.

3) Conciliation. In it, the parties use a conciliator who meets the parties both separately and together and attempts to resolve their differences.

4) Arbitration. In it, the dispute is resolved by an arbitrator as a private judge and imposes a resolution. Arbitration often occurs when the parties to the contract agree that any future dispute concerning the agreement shall be resolved by an arbitrator.

Under Article 37(D) of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure inexpensive and expeditious justice. To ensure the inexpensive and expeditious dispensation of justice, a legislative attempt was made, and Section 89-A and order-10 Rule-1(1A) were inserted in the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 through Ordinance no 34 of 2002. The said provisions are read as follows.

Section 89-A. The court may, where it considers necessary, having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case with the object of securing expeditious disposal of a case in or about a suit, adopt with the consent of the party's alternate dispute method, including mediation and consultation.

Order-10 Rule-1(1A). It provides that the court may adopt any legal procedures not inconsistent with the provision of this code to

1) conduct preliminary proceedings and issue an order for expeditious proceeding of the case.

2) Issue with consent of the parties commission to examine witnesses, admit documents and take other steps for the purpose of the trial

3) Adopt with consent of the parties any alternative method of dispute resolution including mediation, Conciliation or any other means.

The said provisions empower the court to enable and encourage the parties to adopt ways and means for settling the dispute through the Alternative Dispute Resolution method. Such a method not only relieves the parties of expensive and lengthy agonizing litigation

but also saves time for the court. The court is also expected to encourage the parties to adopt ADR Modes.

The Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa promulgated the Alternate Dispute Resolution Act in 2020, and under section 2 of the said Act, Alternate Dispute Resolution means the process in which parties agree to resolve a dispute other than through formal adjudication by the court and includes but is not limited to negotiation, Conciliation and evaluation. Under section 3, the court,

Deputy Commissioner, or any other officer nominated by the govt can refer a civil dispute for ADR with the consent of the parties when intricate questions of facts and law are not involved. For further facilitating the reference, the court or referring authority frames issues with the parties' consent along with a timetable for completion of ADR proceedings not exceeding 3 months, and the time can be extended to another 3 months on the application of both parties. Under section 4, criminal cases which are compoundable under section 345 of the criminal procedure code can also be referred for ADR with the consent of the parties to the saliseen. The saliseen shall decide the dispute within the same period as is provided for civil cases. Saliseen or Salis are notified u/s-7 by the saliseen selection committee at the divisional level for each district on the recommendation of the District Administration. The saliseen are selected from amongst lawyers having 7 years of practice, Retired Judicial officers, retired civil servants, ulema and other persons of Integrity for a period of 3 years. Necessary training is also arranged for the saliseen in the Judicial Academy or other accredited institutions.

The referring Authority under section 8 Refers the matter for ADR with the consent of the parties to the penal of saliseen. On completion of ADR, the matter is submitted before the court under section 10 and the court under section 15(1) pronounces judgement/degree or order in terms of settlement and is executed

U/S -16 in the manner as may be prescribed. Section 17 also prohibits appeals or revisions against the said Judgement/Decree or Order.

Cases pending before the appellate or revisional court can also be referred to the ADR for settlement U/S- 23 of the Act. Section 21 has made applicable the provision of the Oath Act and has excluded the provision of Qanoon-e-shahdat. Section 24 provides that the code of conduct for the saliseen shall be framed by the Home and Tribal Affairs Department of the Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and if any Salis violate the code of conduct, shall be removed from the penal of saliseen by the saliseen selection committee. The proceedings of ADR are also kept secret and confidential as per the mandate of section 11 of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2020.

Benefits of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

ADR is a universally accepted method, being followed as less expensive, less time-consuming, less stressful, ultimately beneficial and fruitful. It saves money, speeds up settlement, and promotes reconciliation and understanding between the parties. It is fair, voluntary, confidential and led by a neutral mediator, Salis or arbitrator. In it, genuine steps are taken to resolve the dispute effectively. The litigants also show their commitment, listen to opposite views and also consider options for resolution.

ADR also helps to clear the backlog of cases from the court. The parties also mutually identify a solution which significantly reduces the cost of the dispute. The mediator or neutral person assisting the parties is mostly an expert in the field.

In Pakistan, very unfortunately, the litigants, the general public and even the advocates are not aware of the advantages of the ADR and promulgation of the Alternate Dispute Resolution Act. It is the responsibility of the govt to spread awareness among the public about the benefits and advantages of ADR through seminars and publications in print, electronic and social media.

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Con Coughlin

which decrees that the sovereign integrity of any nation is inviolable.

If Russia is allowed to drive a coach and horses through such a fundamental premise of international law, then what is to stop China from seizing Taiwan, or Argentina the Falkland Islands? Far from being a prescription for future peace, Trump's capitulation to Moscow lays the foundations for future conflict. Other aspects of Trump's so-called "peace deal" are equally unpalatable to anyone who supports the principle of defending Ukrainian sovereignty from Russian aggression. Apart from requiring Kyiv to surrender its territory, the deal demands that Kyiv abandon its aspirations to join the Nato alliance. In return, an ad hoc collection of European countries - no doubt a reference to Sir Keir Starmer's "coalition of the willing" - will commit to providing a

"robust security guarantee" to protect Ukraine from any future acts of Russian aggression. As Trump's deal makes no mention of the US providing any military support for such a force - one of Starmer's key requirements - the proposition already looks dead in the water. Trump is also offering Putin some important incentives for agreeing to the deal, such as the lifting of US sanctions that have been in place since 2014, and the offer of future economic cooperation in the energy and industrial sectors.

It almost beggars belief that Trump, who took office vowing to end the Ukraine conflict in "24 hours", could produce a document that is not just deeply flawed, but one that constitutes such a blatant threat to world peace. Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy, apparently produced this mockery of a peace deal having had four hours of talks with Putin in

Make war acceptable again: Crimea today, Taiwan tomorrow?

Elena Davlikanova

TODAY'S meeting between the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Germany and Ukraine in London was abruptly downgraded this morning after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio withdrew from the talks. The announcement came after Ukraine rejected Washington's proposal to recognize Russia's occupation of Crimea.

The United States' "final offer" does little to advance Ukraine's core interests. According to Axios, the plan would leave Ukraine with little but vague "security guarantees" provided by a coalition of European and possibly non-European states. The US itself would not participate. Even the early versions of the Franco-British deterrence plan offer clearer terms and stronger commitments.

Ukraine would regain a minor part of the Kharkiv region that is currently under Russian occupation. Yet, given Russia's worsening position on that front, this return would bring little new value. Free navigation along parts of the Dnipro River would also be restored, though any agreement here would likely collapse after the first Russian provocation.

There is a mention of financial assistance for reconstruction. But no credible funding mechanisms have been proposed. If the assistance is tied to other creative arrangements like the mineral deal, Ukraine may soon face problems no less significant than the war.

For Russia, the rewards are far greater. The US would formally recognize Moscow's control of Crimea. It would tacitly accept the occupation of nearly all of the Luhansk region as well as parts of Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. NATO membership for Ukraine would be ruled out, although the EU track might remain open.

Sanctions imposed on Russia since 2014, when Russia seized Crimea, would be lifted. Economic cooperation between Washington and Moscow would expand, especially in the lucrative energy and industrial sectors. It is not rocket science that access to capital and technology would accelerate Russia's recovery and strengthen its military-industrial base for future rounds of aggression.

In other words, the proposal would ratify the results of military aggression. Russia would gain strategic depth and buy time. Ukraine would lose territory, security and the prospect of full sovereignty to chart its own future. This is not a peace plan. It is an offer to surrender under new terms.

Ukraine may have come to terms with Washington's reluctance to support NATO membership and, after the Budapest Memorandum, will understandably distrust any security guarantees that fall short of Article 5 commitments. But recognizing Crimea as Russian is not just a red line - it is a line on the heart monitor. Such a concession would not stabilize the conflict. A repetition of 2014 would embolden Russia to further carve up Ukraine like a steak, piece by piece.

Any decisions that violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine are forbidden by Ukraine's constitution. President Volodymyr Zelensky reaffirmed this stance this month, stating that Crimea is an inseparable part of Ukrainian territory and that there could be no

negotiations about its status. It will be almost impossible to amend the Constitution to remove this obstacle.

The issue is not just legal. The vast majority of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars reject any concession. The Indigenous Crimean Tatar population, which faced mass deportations under Soviet rule in 1944 and again persecution after Russia's 2014 invasion, continues to affirm that Crimea is Ukraine. Human rights abuses in occupied Crimea, including forced conscription, property seizures and suppression of dissent, are well-documented by international organizations.

Geopolitically, Crimea holds enormous strategic value. Russia's Black Sea Fleet, stationed in Sevastopol, while reduced due to the threat of complete elimination by Ukrainian armed forces, will pose a direct threat to European NATO allies. Formalizing Russia's presence would expose southern Europe to greater risk and weaken NATO's southeastern flank.

Until recently, the US recognized these dangers. In 2018, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued the Crimea Declaration, reaffirming that the US would never accept Russia's attempted annexation. Rooted in the United Nations Charter and echoing the Welles Declaration of 1940, it made clear that the US refuses to recognize the Kremlin's claims over territory seized in violation of international law.

Abandoning this principle would set a global precedent. If the United States does not wish to find itself involved in more conflicts overseas, it should reconsider this particular concession to the Kremlin. Today, it is Russia in Ukraine. Tomorrow, it could be China in Taiwan or the South China Sea, or other revisionist powers.

Moreover, legitimizing Russia's control of Crimea would damage nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Kyiv gave up the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal in 1994. The country's subsequent dismemberment is a call for other nations to pursue nuclear weapons as their only reliable defense. A world where more countries fulfill their nuclear ambitions would be an even more dangerous place.

Supporters of a deal argue that accepting territorial losses could end the fighting and allow reconstruction. But history suggests otherwise - concessions to aggression rarely produce stability. Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, the seizure of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent interventions in Syria and Africa all show a pattern: gains achieved by force lead to further demands, not peace.

Even China, India and Iran - countries with varying degrees of sympathy toward Russia - have not recognized Crimea as Russian territory. Only isolated regimes such as North Korea, Syria and Nicaragua have done so. If the United States were to shift its position, it could trigger a domino effect, starting with smaller states and spreading to larger players, undermining international consensus. Peace in Ukraine will not come through legitimizing aggression. Thus, Ukraine's rejection of the proposal is not ideological stubbornness but another attempt to save the world from its leaders' naivety.

The Moscow Times

Trump's deal would plunge the world into war

US president Donald Trump's seven-point proposal for ending the Ukraine conflict may be many things, but it most certainly is not a peace plan. It is a blueprint for more war. Surrender, capitulation, betrayal, appeasement, abandonment. These are the words that better describe the egregious apology of a peace deal that the Trump administration is currently hawking around Europe.

For, rather than attempting to address the fundamental causes of the conflict - namely Russia's unprovoked invasion of a sovereign state - Trump and his band of fellow travellers have reached the perverse conclusion that the best way to achieve peace in Ukraine is by rewarding Russian president Vladimir Putin for his blatant act of military aggression. That certainly seems to be the essence of the terms presented in the one-page document given to Western diplomats meeting

in London yesterday. It proposes allowing Putin to keep nearly all the Ukrainian territory he has seized since launching his initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014, while giving the Ukrainians - who are unquestionably the innocent party in the conflict - next to nothing in return.

By far the most outrageous suggestion made in the proposal, which Trump has called his "final offer", is that, in return for Russia halting hostilities along the current front lines, Washington would agree to de jure recognition of Russian control of Crimea. In addition, Russia will enjoy Washington's de facto recognition of all the territory in eastern Ukraine that Moscow has captured, occupied and illegally annexed during the past decade or so. This concession not only rewards Putin's decade-long military effort to destroy Ukraine's independence; it is a flagrant breach of one of the key pillars of the post-war international order,

which decrees that the sovereign integrity of any nation is inviolable.

If Russia is allowed to drive a coach and horses through such a fundamental premise of international law, then what is to stop China from seizing Taiwan, or Argentina the Falkland Islands? Far from being a prescription for future peace, Trump's capitulation to Moscow lays the foundations for future conflict. Other aspects of Trump's so-called "peace deal" are equally unpalatable to anyone who supports the principle of defending Ukrainian sovereignty from Russian aggression. Apart from requiring Kyiv to surrender its territory, the deal demands that Kyiv abandon its aspirations to join the Nato alliance. In return, an ad hoc collection of European countries - no doubt a reference to Sir Keir Starmer's "coalition of the willing" - will commit to providing a

Moscow last week. To judge by the eventual outcome, the most charitable view of the US envoy's endeavours is that he simply took dictation from the Russian leader. Putin will certainly claim this deal - assuming he agrees to it - justifies his warmongering in Ukraine which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and left large tracts of Ukraine uninhabitable.

More importantly, it will allow Russia's battered and exhausted military to regroup and prepare to engage in future aggressive acts against Europe's borders, safe in the knowledge that, even if such attacks occurred against Nato member states, he has nothing to fear in terms of an American military response. Suddenly, Trump's quip, made during the presidential election campaign, that he would encourage Russia to attack Nato allies in Europe who did not make adequate financial provision for their defence, deserves serious

consideration by Washington's erstwhile European allies.

Given this administration's open disdain for European concerns, which saw US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Witkoff withdraw at the last minute from yesterday's London summit on the peace proposal, European leaders need to take a leaf out of Ukraine's book and acknowledge that the US can no longer be trusted to protect their interests. Judging by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's initial response to Trump's offer, Ukraine is likely to conclude that it is better to continue fighting than suffer the national humiliation of surrendering its territory to Russia.

And if European leaders need any further evidence that they must safeguard their own future security needs, then the Ukrainian "peace deal" devised by Trump's administration of mavericks should give them all the persuasion they require.

Putin wants to look like good guy by proposing ceasefires

Joshua R. Kroeker

AS Orthodox Easter approached, Russian President Vladimir Putin made a familiar move: calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine. On the surface, this might seem like a gesture of goodwill - a nod to tradition, peace and religious observance. However, beneath that veneer lies a calculated attempt to manipulate the international narrative, particularly targeting US President Donald Trump and his administration.

This Easter ceasefire is not a deviation from Russia's strategy, but a continuation. Russia has previously announced temporary truces around Christmas and during other Orthodox holy days. These gestures, however, have never been honored. Neither side observed the Christmas truce promoted by Putin around the Orthodox holiday in 2023, which Ukrainian authorities at the time labelled a "cynical trap."

The so-called energy infrastructure ceasefire promoted by US President Donald Trump in recent months was repeatedly broken by Russian missile and drone strikes. In the weeks after it started, Russia pulled out of the agreement. As we have seen in the past, Ukrainian cities remained under fire even as Russian diplomats declared temporary peace. President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Moscow of committing 3,000 ceasefire violations this weekend alone.

This pattern suggests something deeper: Russia is not attempting to end the war, but to reframe it in political terms, particularly for foreign audiences. Ceasefires are being weaponized as tools of disinformation, not diplomacy. They are not

designed to help Ukrainian civilians or promote humanitarian goodwill, but to cast Ukraine as the intransigent actor unwilling to accept peace. This is where the Easter ceasefire fits in. It is a message. Not to Ukraine, but to Trump and the US political establishment.

Since Trump's return to the White House, Putin's messaging has been more pointed than ever. The Russian president is offering a ceasefire not as a sincere attempt to de-escalate, but as a strategic gesture - a performance meant to show that Russia is the "reasonable" actor, willing to negotiate, while Ukraine is the one prolonging the conflict. This comes only days after Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that the US would withdraw from the peace process if progress is not made quickly. The implication is clear: If Ukraine continues fighting during a declared ceasefire, Russia will claim that Kyiv - and by extension, its Western backers - are the ones obstructing peace. This is classic Kremlin disinformation, aimed at sowing doubt and division within the US government and American public opinion.

Putin is not seeking peace. Rather, he is buying himself time on the battlefield by signalling to Washington that he is prepared for peace. Every Russian ceasefire attempt has served a tactical function: to buy time, rearm and consolidate positions. Military analysts and Ukrainian forces alike know that these pauses are not signs of de-escalation - they are operational breathing space, intended to prepare

for the next wave of aggression.

In the roughly 24 hours after Putin's Easter truce was declared, battles continued to rage as normal along much of the frontline. While there were reports of less artillery fire in the Donbas region, there has been little to no change in the intensity of warfare in the Russian regions of Kursk and Belgorod, or the Ukrainian regions of Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia. One source from Kherson wrote that on the evening of the ceasefire, several buildings in the city were on fire due to drone attacks, claiming nothing had changed. More importantly, however, beyond the battlefield, Putin's ceasefire is aimed squarely at the West. The Kremlin knows the political pressures facing the Trump administration. By portraying itself as open to compromise, Moscow is offering political cover for those in Washington who want to disengage.

After all, in the eyes of Trump, if Russia is offering a ceasefire and Ukraine refuses, or violates it, why should the US keep spending billions of dollars on weapons support? It is a carefully designed trap - and the kind of narrative war the Kremlin excels at. Moscow already has Trump's ear, with Steve Witkoff shuttling between Washington and Moscow, sharing Putin's vision of a peace with Trump that does not take into consideration Ukrainian concerns or sovereignty. Through this Easter Truce, Putin is effectively buying time via disingenuous goodwill.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials have long understood the dangers of

unilateral or insincere ceasefires. Every pause declared by Moscow has been followed by renewed violence, greater destruction, and deeper cynicism. Should Ukraine abide by the ceasefire, for example, it would allow Russia to bring more firepower to the contact line without having to worry about the threat of drones. For Ukraine, accepting a Russian-declared ceasefire is not only dangerous, but often suicidal. Yet if Ukraine does not cease its defensive actions, the country appears to be opposed to peace in the eyes of the US administration.

Most concerning now, however, is the risk that Washington falls for the trap. Ukraine cannot defend itself without continued international support, especially from the US Disunity within the European Union will make it difficult to replace the US in terms of weapons and humanitarian support. If Trump misreads Putin's gesture as genuine, or allows it to justify a rollback of American aid, the consequences will be catastrophic for Ukraine.

This Easter ceasefire is not about protecting life. It is about prolonging the war on Russian terms. It is about giving Putin the space and the story he needs to shift the narrative and win the political battle in Washington. True peace in Ukraine will not come through temporary gestures or public relations stunts. It will come through the defeat of Russian aggression, the restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty and the realization that war, when disguised as peace, is still war. Trump should see this ceasefire for what it is: a trap. Let us hope he does not walk into it.

Offering Trump peace in Ukraine could unlock Putin's ultimate ambition

Roland Oliphant

PEACE in our time - or something like it. That was what Ukrainian, European and American foreign ministers were meant to plan in London today. By the time world leaders gather in Rome for the Pope's funeral on Saturday, the deal to end Europe's bloodiest war since 1945 might have been in the bag. Instead, it has all fallen apart.

First, Marco Rubio, America's Secretary of State, pulled out. Then Steve Witkoff, the US envoy charged with speaking to Vladimir Putin, cancelled. In an apparent response, the French and German foreign ministers also withdrew. Now, the Foreign Secretary David Lammy has ditched the whole idea of the summit as it had been envisaged. Instead President Trump's Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, the only American official to keep the appointment, will join lower-level delegations.

Ukraine's foreign and defence ministers, plus Volodymyr Zelensky's chief of staff, have still made it to London. Together, they will discuss a seven-point plan to end the conflict, presented by the Americans at a previous meeting in Paris last week. But the downgrading of the talks adds to the sense that any hopes of an imminent deal to end the conflict hinge on events in Moscow, where Putin and Witkoff will meet this week for the fourth time. The US-devised plan would see America formally recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Ukraine renounce its quest to join Nato. Russia, in exchange, would cede two small segments of occupied territory to allow Ukraine free access to the mouth of the Dniro river. The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which sits on the Russian-controlled bank of the river, would be taken under American control. The frontline, presumably, would be frozen where it is. Ukraine would also sign the minerals deal, allowing US companies access to the country's natural resources.

Finally, America would lift sanctions imposed on Russia since 2014 and begin to cooperate with Russia on energy. It's this last point that is so telling: the objective, it appears, is not so much stopping the war, as achieving a much grander bargain between America and Russia that would sweep away decades of antagonism between Washington and Moscow.

Peace in Ukraine, it seems, is just a means to that end. The problem is that this skeleton deal is simply not up to such an ambitious task. First, the promise to lift sanctions and the conspicuous lack of security guarantees for Ukraine exposes an obvious Transatlantic rift. After all, Ukraine and most European countries consider Russia their No 1 existential security threat. Allowing Russia to rebuild its war-gearred economy without making sure it is unable to attack again is a nightmare scenario that they cannot possibly agree to.

But there is also a profound mismatch of expectations between Russia and America. President Trump wants to end the war with a quick, high-impact foreign policy victory. He has repeatedly made clear he is focused on speed above all else. "Now if for some reason one of the two parties makes it very difficult, we're just going to say: 'You're foolish, you're fools, you're horrible people, and we're going to just take a pass,'" he warned last week. On Friday, Rubio said Washington wanted to see progress in "days".

Adding to the sense of urgency, JD Vance, on Wednesday, warned Ukraine and Russia to accept the peace plan or face America walking away from further talks. "It's time for them to either say yes or for the United States to walk away from this process," the Vice President said on a visit to India.

But Vladimir Putin is focused on re-writing the entire post-Cold War order. That means not only reasserting Russia's authority over Ukraine, the rest of the former Soviet Union, and parts of Europe, but recognition as a hegemon in global affairs too. One of the axes, on a par with Washington and Beijing,

around which the new "multipolar world" will revolve. It is a project decades in the making, and no one in Moscow is naive enough to believe that it could be achieved in a week. From Moscow's point of view, at least, this mismatch can work to the Kremlin's advantage. Ukraine, one official told The Moscow Times this week, is simply the best card Russia is able to play in its bid to secure the larger settlement.

Just last week, foreign minister Sergei Lavrov made clear in an interview with the Russian daily newspaper Kommersant that Moscow's demands had not changed at all. Kyiv would still have to vacate the parts of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk and Luhansk regions it controls, and formally recognise them as part of Russia. It would also have to downsize its army, abolish laws the Russians say discriminate against the Russian language, and more.

But recent reports suggest Moscow may be prepared to step back from its maximalist position, after President Putin allegedly told Witkoff at a meeting in St Petersburg this month that Russia could give up its claim to the four partly-occupied Ukrainian regions it has not yet fully captured. That Lavrov's demands do not appear on the list being discussed in London is telling; the apparent climb-down is deliberate theatre. It gives Witkoff and Trump the impression that Putin can be flexible, if only they speak to him directly. It is intended to flatter their self-image as hard-nosed deal-makers from the world of business, able to get things done that complacent diplomats simply couldn't. In reality, though, it is not a difficult concession to make.

Russia is making steady progress in the Donetsk region, but only very slowly and at immense cost. It has no realistic prospect of taking Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the near future. More important to Moscow is the lack of security guarantees, so notable by their absence in the seven-point plan.

"Membership in Nato would be enough itself. If it's not possible, then we need to have some package which will deter Russia from attacking again or, at least, which will make them pay a high price [for doing so]," Oleksiy Goncharenko, a Ukrainian MP who backs the idea of a peace deal, tells The Telegraph. That, he says, could involve "some European boots on the ground, the mineral deal with the United States, some long-standing commitments on weaponry supply to Ukraine and so on."

Any deal short of such guarantees will prove fatal for Ukraine, Goncharenko adds. "If they [Russia] can re-invade, they will." For the Kremlin, the thwarting of Nato ambitions is a good start, but it will also want to cripple the emergence of any alternative plan to safeguard Ukraine's future, including the raft of bilateral security deals President Zelensky has already signed with a number of allies, including Britain.

That means there are two outcomes that the Kremlin can be happy with. The first is that they agree on something with Trump, saying: 'We give you this concession that we don't claim all the four regions, because you're such a skilled negotiator,' and then Trump tries to impose a [deal without any security guarantees] on the Ukrainians and Europeans. And if that works, that's perfect," says Alexander Gabuev, a Russian foreign policy expert and director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center who has been following the peace talks closely. "But if it doesn't, which it won't, because the Ukrainians will never accept this and Europeans are unlikely to accept it either, then Trump has all the legitimate reasons to walk away, wash his hands and say: 'Well, I tried. I made a deal with Putin. Putin has accepted. Putin made concessions, but ungrateful Europeans and Ukrainians have rejected this deal I brokered.'"

That's the Kremlin's plan for giving Trump what he wants - peace in Ukraine - in a manner that suits Russian objectives. But

Putin still faces problems when it comes to the greater goal of Russo-American rapprochement. On Ukraine, it is in a position to offer a powerful quid-pro-quo. But can it come up with enough concessions to persuade the transactional US leader to accept its other goals? A free hand in Europe, a new 19th-century style global carve-up of the world, a second Yalta Conference?

The Moscow Times reported this week that every Russian agency and major state business has been ordered to come up with its own sweeteners. The Kremlin is even trying to dangle the prospect of a Trump Tower in Moscow. As part of that charm offensive Kirill Dmitriev, the Kyiv-born, American-trained former banker who runs Russia's Direct Investment Fund, has been wheeled out to promise lucrative and mutually beneficial business ventures.

His proposals so far include joint space-exploration programmes, including providing a Russian nuclear power plant for Elon Musk's mission to Mars. Then there are minerals, rare-earth, energy, and real-estate opportunities. But Russian and American trade was never huge even before the full-scale invasion, and it is imbalanced in a way that will likely sit uneasy with Trump. There is no easy way for Russia to balance that book.

Then there is Iran, Moscow's key ally in the Middle East and another focus of Trump's peace-making efforts. The US President wants a deal to stop Iran getting a bomb, and again, he wants a deal quick. He's put Witkoff in charge of that effort too. American and Iranian delegations met in Rome on Saturday and will head to Oman for a second round of high-level talks on Tehran's nuclear programme this Saturday.

Could Russia ease Trump's way to another deal? Putin discussed the American-Iranian talks with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said, the leader of Oman, in Moscow this week. Moscow has form, having played a role in negotiating the previous nuclear deal that Trump pulled out of in 2018. Russia built and still provides the fuel for Iran's only functioning civilian nuclear power plant, and could act as a depository for Iranian uranium stockpiles to reassure the West that Tehran cannot build a bomb.

The Iranians are wary of Russia for historic reasons, and much prefer to speak to the Americans directly. Despite Tehran's current alliance with Moscow, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his regime are not so dependent on, or friendly to, Russia that they would feel compelled to do anything Putin demands. There is an obvious risk here. String Trump along too long and he could end up becoming as angry with Putin as he appears to be with Zelensky. In the worst-case scenario, Russian officials fear America might redouble its alliance with Ukraine and Europe.

But for Russia, the goal remains the re-writing of the global order. "If you can get that, that's perfect. The problem is whether the Americans will give it to them now," says Gabuev.

The stop-gap is a deal that profoundly weakens Ukraine, fractures the trans-Atlantic alliance, and lures Trump into a one-on-one summit where he has the impression he could clinch a deal, but which Putin would make sure aligns with Russia's goals. "That's the first step to rewriting the order efficiently. I don't think that anybody realistically expects that the US will say, okay, Russia is a big boy on the block, we're quitting Europe, and it's Russia's now, right?"

But for Ukrainians, the contradictions of the Russian-American flirtation means any chance of securing a lasting peace may be receding. "I think the Americans want to have a deal before 100 days of Trump, which is April 29, so this is the final moment," says Goncharenko. "I had hopes of the London meeting, but it looks like [it] will bring us nothing. So there's not much time left, if we're speaking about April 29. Is it still possible? I think yes, but probability is definitely coming down."

The Telegraph

Africa reflected at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum: Diplomatic wisdom in action

Dr. Tunc Demirtas

THE 4th Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF 2025) opened a discussion on whether diplomacy, under the theme of "Reclaiming Diplomacy in a Fragmented World," can remain a transformative tool amid the fractures in the global system. The atmosphere of the Forum was set by the words of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who stated at the opening of the ADF 2025, "The world is bigger than five, because humanity is bigger than five," and "A fairer world is possible."

In this context, this statement stands out as a vision of diplomacy rooted in justice, rather than a mere slogan. Indeed, this approach draws a concrete direction for how peace and development can be built on the ground in the global order, where the representation crisis is deepening.

Türkiye's Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan, who hosted the Forum, redefined diplomacy with his assessment of the nature of multipolarity, saying, "Türkiye aspires to manage multipolarity with wisdom, not with competition." This statement reflects Türkiye's foreign policy philosophy. This perspective forms the philosophical foundation for the egalitarian and complementary cooperation that Türkiye has developed with many actors in Africa. While the participants of ADF 2025, including leaders, foreign ministers, academics, and think tank representatives, sought solutions to the fragmentation in the global system, Türkiye's vision for Africa was frequently cited in these discussions.

In these global discussions, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region particularly stood out as areas of both crisis and solutions. The ADF 2025 sessions of these regions were remarkable in terms of Türkiye's foreign policy response on-site.

Somalia was one of the most frequently discussed countries at ADF 2025. The main reason is that, after decades of instability, the country is now on the path to building a new governance model, development framework, and foreign policy vision. Today, after 56 years, Somalia is trying to move to a one-person, one-vote system, according to the President, H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM). The change is not just a technical reform; it means that

people will once again have to re-contract with the state.

At the ADF 2025 for Diplomacy meeting, Somalia stands out as a concrete representation of Türkiye's vision for Africa and a model for success. The president of Somalia demonstrated that his country did not only define itself through security issues. In this context, it has been displayed that Somalia, after prolonged conflict, has not only rebuilt its security but also revived essential public services, and since 2022, more than 6 thousand teachers have been appointed, and hundreds of health personnel have been recruited. The real estate market and private sector investments reveal the true economic scope of this recovery. The evidence shows that Somalia is a state that has entered a promising recovery process.

Of course, Türkiye's contribution to this process has been pivotal. From the operation of Mogadishu Airport and Mogadishu Port to infrastructure projects, from health investment to investment in local capacity, every area Türkiye touched contributed to Somalia's standing. As noted in President HSM's speech at the Forum, the "2060" vision, which marks the 100th anniversary of Somalia, has become a strategic roadmap that aligns with Türkiye rather than just a goal.

On the other hand, Türkiye's presence in Somalia is not only about development. Türkiye's mediation in the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict reflected Türkiye's diplomatic wisdom in action. The Ankara Declaration, which was signed in this mediation process, became a crucial reference document, not only in terms of regional security but also in terms of regional security architecture. In short, it is seen that Türkiye's contribution to Somalia and the Horn of Africa is embodied by a strategy that meets President Erdogan's emphasis on justice in the field. While the example of Somalia showcases Türkiye's development diplomacy in action, another key focus at ADF 2025 was the new security paradigm and cooperation vision expressed by the Sahel trio.

As ministers of foreign affairs of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger were present at the ADF 2025 session, it is not enough to look at the issue of withdrawal from ECOWAS as an

organizational break. The three ministers clearly highlight that the process is an actual paradigm shift.

In this context, the ministers shared their achievements during this transformation process. They claimed that they reclaimed 40 percent of their territory and that the security atmosphere has improved with the withdrawal of the French forces. They stated that as of December 2024, they have transitioned to a free movement regime, established a regional market, and built a new economic order. It can be understood that this alliance is not only based on a security bloc, but it is a structure that puts its people, foreign policy, and economy at the center and emphasizes the foundation of a confederative system. Additionally, this new structure has four fundamental principles, such as a sovereign-based political structure, a governance approach that protects the dignity of the people, policies centered on the public interests, and a vision open to Pan-African solidarity.

As observed in the ADF 2025, Africa now aspires to define its development model, its own security, and its own map of international partnerships. The answer to the question of where Türkiye fits in this pursuit has exposed that Türkiye is an element of trust for Africa, as seen in the established contacts in Antalya, the messages given, and the interests shown. Türkiye's strategic influence is based on non-coercive mutual respect, extending from Somalia to Niger, from Sudan to Burkina Faso, and now it points to the reality that it goes far beyond classical diplomatic rhetoric. These multidimensional collaborations with different methods in different countries show that Türkiye is not merely an actor but a partner that builds trust.

On the other hand, it is known that we live in a world of uncertainties. We are currently in a period where rules are being questioned, trust is severely damaged, and diplomacy is often ignored. That's why it's more important than ever to reclaim the rules, build trust, and put diplomacy at the center. At this point, Türkiye stands out for its mutual needs-based foreign policy approach. In an age where interdependence and shared solutions are gaining importance,

Ukraine needs to give up on joining NATO

Owen Matthews

ACCORDING to Donald Trump, this could be the week that the Ukraine war ends. "Hopefully Russia and (sic) Ukraine will make a deal this week," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "Both will then start to do big business with the United States of America, which is thriving, and make a fortune!!!" Details of a ceasefire - or the "deal", as Trump prefers to call it - will be thrashed out in London this week as Trump's top negotiators meet with Ukrainian and European officials.

What exactly is on the table remains officially secret. But certain key details have emerged through press leaks and interviews with Steve Witkoff, the real estate investor and Trump ally who was in St Petersburg earlier this month negotiating with Putin. One key point is that membership of Nato is off the table for Ukraine. Another is that Russia wants Kyiv to officially recognise Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014, as officially Russian territory. Are both demands gross violations of Ukrainian sovereignty? Undoubtedly. They are also politically suicidal for Volodymyr Zelensky.

But it's revealing to turn the question on its head. Does Ukraine actually have any practical military or diplomatic path to winning back Crimea? Or does Kyiv have a realistic chance of actually joining Nato as a full member, against the strong objections of many key Nato states? The answer to both those questions is no. In practical terms, by conceding Crimea's new sovereign status or by becoming officially neutral Ukraine loses nothing that it has not already lost. Furthermore, at least three of the Ukrainian negotiators at the last round of face-to-face peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv in Istanbul in March 2022 have said on the record that their side was willing to concede neutrality - ie no NATO membership - as well as leaving the final status of Crimea to be discussed at a later date.

In other words, Kyiv was already come close to conceding both Crimea and Nato in the first month of Putin's invasion. Except there is one important caveat. Whatever Zelensky was or is not prepared to concede in Istanbul back in 2022 was set against a guarantee of a full Russian with-

drawal. Such a withdrawal is very much no longer on the table. Indeed Witkoff has hinted that Russia continues to demand control over the entirety of all the four provinces that it unilaterally incorporated into the Russian Federation in September 2022 - Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. That would entail Zelensky willingly conceding even more territory to the invader - another clear political impossibility. The Kremlin's uncompromising hard line, and Washington's apparent support of that hard line, raises two questions. One is whether Putin actually wants the peace talks to succeed.

The other is whether Trump has any appetite whatsoever for pressuring Putin into making concessions - for instance, as Trump has threatened in the past, imposing secondary sanctions on countries who import Russian oil, a move that would cut the Kremlin's war economy off at the knees. Putin's broken promise of an Easter ceasefire - a truce that his troops violated hundreds of times - strongly suggests that his offers of peace are a sham. The Kremlin seems to

believe that time is on Russia's side, and that the longer they press on with ground advances and aerial blitzkrieg the weaker Ukraine will become. Putin appears to be more interested in setting up Ukraine to take the blame for the talks' failure.

As for the US, there are strong signs that Trump's team have already negotiated a deal acceptable to the Kremlin and are now attempting to impose those harsh terms on Ukraine and its remaining European allies. That the demands that Trump is presenting on the Kremlin's behalf amount to the US rewriting the internationally recognised borders of Europe at the behest of an aggressive dictator apparently matters not a jot. Trump once promised a quick end to the Ukraine war. But his breezy boast has crashed against the immovable object of Putin's intransigence. His response seems to be to accept all Putin's demands - then walk away from talks with Ukraine and Europe reject them.

I tried to bring peace, he will say, and make you guys rich to boot. That way Trump can treacherously wash his hands both of the failure of his beautiful deal and the continued bloodshed that will inevitably ensue.



SCCI wants launch of a cargo train from Peshawar

Dedmands fully operational of Azakhel dryport

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry demanded the launch of a special cargo train from Peshawar to Karachi, functioning Azakhel dryport and speeding up clearance of export-laden goods vehicles.

The demand was made by SCCI president Fazal Moqeen Khan and Chairman of the Chamber Standing Committee on Railway and Dryports, former SVP, PAJCCI senior vice president and senior executive member of the chamber Ziaul Haq Sarhadi in a joint statement issued here on

Friday.

Senior office bearers welcomed the launch of Khushal Khan Khattak Express train from Peshawar.

They termed the move an important step toward improving economic development of the Pakistan Railways.

They added the move would also provide better and a cheapest travel facility and services to the business community and people of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Office bearers pointed out that the journey of Khushal Khan Khattak Express train is nearly 40 hours from Peshawar to Karachi, which would

reach to its final destination after passing through various districts of the country.

Keeping in view the long journey of the train, they suggested including an Air Conditioner or lower AC coach in the Khushal Khan Khattak Express Train to make the trip smooth and easy.

SCCI officials said transportation of trade of items are being carried out through land routes between Peshawar to Karachi and import, export and Afghan transit, all of them, are going through cargo trucks.

During the yesterday inauguration ceremony of Khushal Khan Khattak

Express Train from Peshawar to Karachi, the SCCI raised the issue of non-functionalization of Azakhel dryport and other issues being faced by the business community before Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and other senior officials concerned.

Office bearers took the stance that improvement in bilateral trade, export and economic growth would only be possible by providing facilities and resolving issues of the business community.

SCCI assured to continue its role in economic growth and betterment of Pakistan Railways.



WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb participating in a discussion with the Pakistan Bank-Fund Staff Association regarding the country's macroeconomic indicators and structural reforms in Washington D.C.

Wall St subdued as China trade uncertainty lingers

NEW YORK (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes were muted in choppy trading on Friday, as investors struggled with little clarity on the U.S.-China trade front despite signs of a possible softening in Beijing's stance.

On a brighter note, Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab leapt 3.6% after the Google-parent reported upbeat first-quarter results, easing investor worries about returns on hefty artificial intelligence-focused investment.

The overall mood, however, became jittery after U.S. President Donald Trump said in an interview he would consider it a "total victory" if the country had tariffs as high as 50% on foreign imports a year from now.

"Everybody's trying to kind of figure out what's true, what's kind of political theater and (it) really just feels more and more like headline volatility more than anything."

At 9:41 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJI), opens new tab fell 45.20 points, or 0.11%, to 40,048.20, the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab gained 6.09 points, or 0.11%, to 5,490.86 and the Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab gained 29.72 points, or 0.17%, to 17,195.76.

Alphabet's first-quarter results also lifted social media companies, with Meta Platforms (META.O), opens new tab rising 1.6%. The communication services sector (.SPLRCL), opens new tab was up 1.5%.

Most megacap and growth stocks also gained, buoying the tech-heavy Nasdaq.

Alphabet was "shaking off the whole narrative that they're getting impacted by the ongoing trade war," Allison said.

Intel (INTC.O), opens new tab dropped 7.3% following the chipmaker's dour forecast, while T-Mobile (TMUS.O), opens new tab fell 8.2% after adding fewer wireless subscribers than expected in the first quarter, both among the biggest drags on the S&P 500.

Indexes rose for the third consecutive session on

Thursday - the best winning streak for the S&P 500 since Trump's April 2 "Liberation Day" tariff announcement - and were set for strong weekly gains.

The S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab is so far up 4% for the week, while the Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab and the Dow (DJI), opens new tab have risen 5.6% and 2.4%, respectively, mainly driven by hopes of de-escalating U.S.-China trade tensions, Trump's backtracking on threats to fire the head of the Federal Reserve and some upbeat corporate results.

However, sentiment remains highly cautious amid indications of a souring economic outlook and hits to company earnings from tariffs.

The benchmark index remains below levels prior to the April 2 announcement, and is over 10% off its February record close.

AbbVie (ABBV.N), opens new tab rose 2% after the drugmaker raised its annual profit forecast on strong sales of its newer immunology drugs.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 1.36-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and by a 1.63-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P 500 posted three new 52-week highs and three new lows, while the Nasdaq Composite recorded 14 new highs and 21 new lows.

Fire broke out at Korangi Creet extinguished again

F.P. Report

KARACHI: TPL is pleased to confirm that the fire that broke out at Korangi Creek on the evening of March 28, 2025, once again extinguished naturally late last night.

This marks the second time within the past 10 days that the fire extinguished on its own. This appears to be in line with the projected 2-3 week timeline shared by industry experts and as per TPL's own internal assessment.

Following the formation of a Technical Committee on April 8 by the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), the American firm Cudd Well was engaged by the Committee to provide technical evaluation and advise on containment strategies.

The fire's decline in intensity and eventual extinguishment is primarily attributed to it being a small pocket of gas. Nonetheless, the expert committee and TPL continue to monitor the area closely for any signs of residual gas leakage.

The next course of action will be determined in alignment with the ongoing evaluations by the Government-appointed Technical Committee.

TPL extends its sincere gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, the Technical Committee led by PPL, OGDCL & PRL, the Mayor of Karachi, the local authorities, the District Administration, and the Cantonment Board Korangi Creek (CBKC) for their continued support, guidance, and swift response throughout this unusual incident.

Haji Ghulam Ali, FPCCI leaders meet Jam Kamal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level delegation comprising former Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali and former Vice Presidents of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mirza Abdul Rehman Baig and Muhammad Riaz Khattak, held a significant meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan at the Ministry of Commerce in Islamabad.

The meeting focused

on key issues faced by the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the challenges surrounding Pak-Afghan trade, the burden of excessive taxation, bureaucratic hurdles in official documentation, and the overall business environment in the province.

During the meeting, Haji Ghulam Ali emphasized the need to restore and safeguard Pak-Afghan trade from being influenced by political or security conditions.

He stressed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

which has long remained on the frontlines making immense sacrifices, now deserves practical measures to support its business community, including small and medium-sized traders.

He stated that strengthening the economy is only possible by resolving the genuine concerns of traders and facilitating a more conducive environment for commerce and industry.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal assured the delegation of his full commitment to addressing the

issues of the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the federal government considers it a duty to work towards the economic uplift of all provinces through mutual cooperation and serious efforts.

The Minister added that promoting industry and trade is the need of the hour to combat unemployment, and that the country's youth are its most valuable asset. Creating employment opportunities for them is a shared responsibility.

IPAK group records 66% increase in its revenues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Cumulative EPS for the nine months now stands at Rs. 1.40.

This growth has been driven by successful expansion into export markets and diversification into new product lines, reinforcing the Group's market leadership in the flexible packaging films sector.

On a standalone basis, IPAK reported revenue of Rs. 4.1 billion in Q3, marking a solid 51% increase over Q2 revenue of Rs. 2.7 billion. While this reflects a marginal 3% dip compared to Q3 of the previous year's Rs. 4.2 billion, it reaffirms the Company's growth trajectory.

IPAK recorded rising earnings per share on both consolidated and standalone levels, driven by higher volumes that are translating into improved profitability.

Standalone EPS for Q3 surged to Rs. 0.36, up significantly from Rs. 0.06 in Q2, and is broadly in line with Rs. 0.38 reported in Q3 of the previous year. This brings the cumulative EPS for the nine months to Rs. 0.44, signalling a strong return to consistent profitability.

EBITDA stood at Rs. 1.75 billion on a standalone basis and Rs. 3.57 billion on a consolidated basis, further reinforcing the strong cash generation and operational leverage achieved during the period.

IPAK's export business continues to scale rapidly, with the Group successfully expanding its footprint across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the US, and Europe.

Foreign exchange revenues have crossed USD 22 million during the current financial year, under scoring the Group's growing role in supporting national objectives through non-traditional

exports.

With the successful commissioning of major group-level expansions and continued stabilisation across entities, operational synergies are gradually materializing. These efficiencies—spanning shared procurement, centralized planning, and resource optimization—are contributing to a more flexible and sustainable cost structure, and will continue to strengthen going forward.

IPAK remains on an upward trajectory, with growth no longer limited to revenue alone—profitability is now gaining momentum, and operational efficiencies are improving steadily.

The Group's performance continues to outpace broader industry trends despite persistent macroeconomic volatility, and the management remains committed to driving sustainable value creation for shareholders.

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Automakers focus on the global market

Chide the US over tariffs at Shanghai's auto show

SHANGHAI (AP): Booths of big Chinese, German and Japanese automakers were bustling at Shanghai's auto show this week as the industry kept its focus on a wider global market not subject to steep U.S. tariffs on imports of cars and auto parts.

Signs are that U.S. President Donald Trump's 25% tariffs on auto imports is causing companies to recalibrate their strategies, and in some cases find new opportunities.

"When governments up above are at odds, it's going to impact the businesses down below," said Ma Lihua, general manager at Soling, a Chinese maker of domain control units and other electronics used in such things as rearview camera displays.

Soling, headquartered in Shanghai, counts Ford Motor Co., Toyota Motor Corp. and many other top tier global and Chinese automakers among its customers. It's also setting up a manufacturing base in Vietnam, whose local electric vehicle maker VinFast has ambitions to become Southeast Asia's leading automaker.

Many of the dozens of auto parts and components companies exhibiting at the Shanghai auto show have operations spanning both the Chinese and world markets.

Metal components maker Gestamp, a supplier of chassis, battery boxes and other key auto parts, has suffered from a slow-down in the U.S. and western European markets but is expanding in Asia, Latin America and Eastern

Europe.

The tariffs are now an added complication, as automakers watch to see what comes.

"In the past, supply chains usually would run like Swiss clockwork, but now it's the opposite," Ernesto Barcelo, chief ESG officer for Gestamp, said of the uncertainty now dominating the market.

"The lack of stability now, it's something very ... fluffy," Barcelo said.

A fundamental criteria for investing in any market is political stability, Wei Jianjun, chairman of Great Wall Motor Co., told reporters when asked about his company's plans to expand manufacturing overseas. That applies to countries like Hungary, where the company has not yet decided on whether to build a factory, he said, but also to the United States under Trump.

"If a country is not politically stable, it's very risky," said Wei, who also goes by the name Jack Wey.

With U.S. tariffs so high, Great Wall can focus elsewhere, such as on trade between China and Europe, which is bound to grow, he said. He didn't address the tariffs of up 45.3% that the EU has imposed on electric vehicles made in China.

Tianshu Xin, CEO of Leapmotor International, a joint venture of Stellantis and China's Leapmotor, said the U.S. market wasn't its first focus.

Now, "we want to monitor the regulatory environment, and also customer preferences are slightly different compared with other

markets," Xin said.

Japan's Nissan plans to launch 10 new EVs in China by 2027, nine of them its own brand, and to spend an extra \$1.4 billion by the end of 2026 on its expansion there. In the U.S. it has the option to ramp up its spare capacity to make up for reduced imports due to the tariffs.

"Some doors have been shut, but others have been opened," Ma said. "But any plan you make you will change it very quickly. The market changes very quickly."

Apart from higher tariffs, automakers and suppliers also must contend with national security restrictions that are an increasingly important factor in auto electronics.

Wuhan Kotei Informatics, which provides software for autonomous driving, adapted its business model to cope with sanctions. Now the company based in central China's Wuhan acts as a consultant and allows foreign customers to adapt software to local requirements, said Ye Xiongfei, general manager for the company's autonomous driving division.

"It's like I teach you how to walk if you don't know how to walk, and I will help you walk if you aren't able to walk," Ye said.

Some restrictions on technology are understandable, but too many "will hurt the innovation of the U.S. itself, hindering the speed of the development of their supply chains if it tries to only use local companies," he said.

LAHORE (PPI): In a landmark move, Lt. General (R) Nazir Ahmed Butt, Chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), inaugurated the NAB Facilitation Desk at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

Attendees included LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad and other prominent figures from the business community. The Chairman assured the business community of NAB's unwavering support, emphasizing the bureau's commitment to removing barriers hindering economic growth.

During his address, Chairman Butt reflected on the challenges faced when he assumed office two years ago, noting that immediate reforms led to significant institutional improvements. He highlighted the introduction of new Standard Operating Procedures to curb frivolous complaints, which had previously overwhelmed the bureau. Under these new measures, complainants must now submit an affidavit and face severe penalties if their claims are false.

In efforts to enhance

efficiency, NAB has also established special facilitation desks for both the general public and overseas Pakistanis. Butt encouraged LCCI to designate sector-specific focal persons and suggested regular meetings to ensure effective collaboration. He expressed optimism about Pakistan's potential to achieve a trillion-dollar economy, with the business community as a pivotal partner.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad hailed NAB as a key institution in promoting accountability and transparency. He pointed

out the detrimental effects of corruption on the economy and called for stricter penalties for financial misconduct. Shad also raised concerns about capital flight, citing significant financial transfers to Dubai in the past year.

Former LCCI President Muhammad Ali Mian commended Chairman Butt's efforts in fostering a business-friendly environment. The session concluded with calls for continued support for transparency initiatives and cooperation between government institutions and the business sector.

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Govt sets ambitious 2.2mln hectares cotton cultivation target

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has set an ambitious target to cultivate cotton over 2.2 million hectares of land during the current Kharif season (2025-26). This initiative aims to meet local demand while contributing to the development and progress of farming communities across the country. The target for cotton production has been set at 10.18 million bales, with efforts focused on ensuring the availability of certified high-yielding seeds and providing adequate supplies of agricultural inputs in key sowing areas, according to an official from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. In a related development, the Federal Committee on Agriculture has also established production targets for other major crops, including rice, maize, and sugarcane, as well as pulses such as mung, mash, and chilies. For the current season, rice will be cultivated over 3 million hectares, with a production target of over 9.17 million tons. Maize cultivation will cover 1.5 million hectares, aiming for a yield of 9.7 million tons. Sugarcane production is expected to reach 80.3 million tons from 1.1 million hectares of land, addressing domestic sugar needs. Additionally, targets for pulses such as mung, mash, and chilies have been set. For the Rabi season 2024-25, onion production is projected at 2.7 million tons from 0.17 million hectares, reflecting a 15.7% increase in output. The area under onion cultivation has also grown by 17.3% compared to last year.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar Buner. Appeal. No.29/13. Institution 4/3/2024. Date of hearing.12/5/2025. Ajmal Khan VS Sader Khan etc. Notice to No. 24/7.Mst Amriya d/o Yusafzal resident of Rega. 24/4.Mst Bakht Zaron resident of Dherai. 24/5.Mst Bakhti resident of Dherai at present Dherai.25.Shaheroz Khan s/o Nambat Khan. 34.Afaren Khan s/o Redullah Khan.41.Ashgar Khan. 42. Farman Khan sons of Meraj.66. Ashlamand. 67.Qaisar. 68.Sher Alam sons. 69. Mst Faryad Bibi.70.Mst Israr Bibi daughters of Khirati.17. Parvez Khan. 18.Hayat Khan.19. Behram Khan sons. 20. Mashtara. 21.Mst Famen. 22.Mst Nasren. 23.Mst Riasat daughters of Bahadur s/o Akbar Khan resident of Krapa. 72.Abdul Rouf. 73. Ali Bahadur sons of Amer Haider. 74. Mst Taban. 75.Hafiz Muhammad. 76.Ali Zaman sons of Abdul Manan. 77.Sher Akbar s/o Mutabar. 78.Dawod s/o Madakhel. 79. Dishad. 80.Wakil Shad. 81.Amer Shad. 82. Ali Shad sons of Zarshad resident off Banda Krapa Buner. 1/2.Muqabir Khan s/o Sader Khan resident of Krapa. 62. Mst Bakht Zeba. 63.Mst Farhad Begum. 64.Mst Shanakhat daughters of Mian Ghafor Shah resident of Banda Krapa tehseel Daggar 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 duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 12/5/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Pakistan team ready for WC after qualifier triumph

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan's women's cricket team has successfully secured a spot in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 following an impressive performance in the Qualifier tournament. The team, ranked ninth in the ODI team rankings, achieved victory in all five of their matches, outplaying higher-ranked opponents such as the West Indies and Bangladesh. The team's journey and future prospects were discussed on the PCB podcast by veteran player Aliya Riaz with senior player Sidra Amin and emerging talent Shawaal Zulfiqar. Zulfiqar emphasized the challenge of facing big teams and highlighted the importance of continuous training camps for growth and preparation. Sidra Amin, Pakistan's top run-scorer during the Qualifier, talked about the significance of preparation and adaptability for the World Cup. She noted the need to plan series by series and focus on aspects within control to handle the pressure of major events. Amin also credited her coaches for her success, particularly their advice to stay at the crease and play to her strengths. Meanwhile, Shawaal praised the supportive leadership of skipper Fatima Sana, who has been instrumental in motivating the team both on and off the field. As Pakistan joins other cricketing giants like India and Australia in the World Cup later this year, the team is set to continue its preparations for the tournament scheduled for October and November.

Marquez sets course to top Jerez practice times

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA (AFP): Alex Marquez climbed back on his bike Friday to set a Jerez course record in a flag and fall filled final practice session for the Grand Prix of Spain. The younger Marquez brother set a time of 1min 35.991sec on a Ducati Gresini, 0.103sec ahead of Italy's Francesco Bagnaia on a factory Ducati and 0.036 inside the course record the Italian set last year. Italian Franco Morbidelli was third on a VR46 Ducati. Championship leader Marc Marquez was fourth on a factory Ducati. Frenchman Fabio Quartararo, displaying the rediscovered competitiveness of his Yamaha, was fifth and the top non-Ducati. The session had been halted after nine minutes when Alex Marquez slid out as high speed on turn five. His bike rocketed across the gravel and through an air fence, forcing stewards to wave red flags while the barrier was repaired. After picking himself up, Marquez was ferried back on a scooter nursing his right hand. Alex Marquez had also crashed in the morning session but still set the fastest time. He repeated the trick in the afternoon. He returned for the final minutes of the session and quickly jumped to third before catapulting to a new record, as stewards repeatedly waved yellow warning flags. Quartararo, Jack Miller, Ai Ogura, Raul Fernandez and Joan Mir, were among riders who crashed during the session. Fermin Aldeguer, on the second Gresini bike, Johann Zarco on a Honda, KTM's Pedro Acosta, Fabio Di Giannantonio on a VR46 and Joan Mir on a Honda completed the top 10 who advance directly to the 12-rider final qualifying session on Saturday.

Pakistan Super League 10 Quetta Gladiators edge Karachi Kings in last-over thriller

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Quetta Gladiators edged Karachi Kings by five runs in a last-over thriller of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 here at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore. Chasing 143, Karachi Kings could only manage to score 137-8 in 20 overs. After being asked to bat first, Quetta Gladiators were bowled out for 142 in 19.3 overs, thanks to Karachi Kings' dominant pace bowling. The Gladiators' top four batsmen fell within the powerplay, with Hasan Ali striking early to dismiss Saud Shakeel and Finn Allen.

Rilee Rossouw's brief innings ended when Hasan trapped him LBW after 10 runs. Mark Chapman, playing his first PSL match, before being dismissed by Mohammad Nabi. Kusal Mendis provided some resistance, scoring 36 off 22 balls, but Quetta's hopes lifted with Hasan Nawaz and Faheem Ashraf's 59-run partnership. Faheem hit two sixes and four fours in his 43 runs from 27 balls. However, after Hasan Nawaz's dismissal in the 16th over, Quetta collapsed, losing wickets in quick succession. Hasan Ali finished with 3/33 in

3.3 overs, while Abbas Afridi and Mir Hamza took two wickets each. The 10th edition of the Pakistan Super League kicked off on April 11 and will run till May 18. The six-team tournament will consist of 34 matches with Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium hosting 13 matches, including the two Eliminator and the final. Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium will host 11 PSL 10 matches, including the first Qualifier on May 13, while Multan Cricket Stadium will host five matches. Karachi's National Bank Stadium has hosted five games of the ongoing edition.

Thunder take 3-0 series lead with 29-point comeback

NEW YORK (Agencies) The Oklahoma City Thunder recovered a 29-point deficit to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 114-108 and take a 3-0 series lead in the Western Conference play-offs. Trailing by 26 points at half-time, the top-seeded Thunder completed the second biggest second-half comeback in NBA play-off history to put the Grizzlies on the brink of elimination. The Grizzlies were in full control of the match at the start of the third quarter, up 77-51 and on course to strike back in the series. But an injury to Grizzlies point guard Ja Morant late in the second quarter proved a turning point, with the 25-year-old

falling hard on his hip while attempting a dunk. The Grizzlies took a 29-point lead on the next play but then collapsed without the influential American, who is now a doubt for game four on Saturday (20:30 BST). "He's going through further evaluations tomorrow, then we'll know more," said Grizzlies interim coach Tuomas Iisalo. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander top-scored for the Thunder with 31 points, while Jalen Williams added 26 of his own. The Grizzlies must win in game four to keep their play-off hopes alive. Knicks squeeze past Pistons After losing game two,

the New York Knicks established a 2-1 play-off series lead with a 118-116 win against the Detroit Pistons. Karl-Anthony Towns, Jalen Brunson, OG Anunoby and Mikal Bridges all scored more than 20 points, while Josh Hart excelled in defence with 11 rebounds and nine assists. The Pistons will rue a poor second quarter, in which they allowed a 23-6 run in the Knicks' favour to fall 13 points behind at half-time. Tim Hardaway Jr and Cade Cunningham led a spirited response, finishing with 24 points each. But it was not enough, with game four of the series in Detroit on Sunday (18:00 BST).



Sabalenka makes winning start at Madrid Open

MADRID (AFP): Aryna Sabalenka kicked off her quest for a third Madrid Open title with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Anna Blinkova in second-round action at the Caja Magica on Friday. The world number one improved her record at the tournament to 18-4, having lifted the trophy in 2021 and 2023, alongside her runner-up showing to Iga Swiatek last year. After racing to a double-break 5-0 advantage against Blinkova in the opening set, Sabalenka lost one of her breaks before taking the lead on her third set point on the 48-minute mark. The second set was a straightforward affair, with an early break of serve enough for Sabalenka to punch her ticket to the third round, where she awaits either her former doubles partner Elise Mertens or Colombia's Camila Osorio. Sabalenka's three Grand Slam titles have all come on hard courts, but the Belarusian power-hitter has shown she can contend on clay, with two trophies clinched from nine finals reached on the surface. The 26-year-old admits the French Open has proven to be a "challenge" for her and she feels she has unfinished business there after losing in the 2023 semi-finals to Karolina Muchova and the 2024 quarter-finals to Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva. "Every time I go there, it's like a challenge for me, even though I love playing on clay and I feel really good," said Sabalenka of Roland Garros. "But I like to accept tough challenges. So I real-



ly hope that one year I'll be able to get that beautiful trophy in my collection." Earlier in the day, world number nine Paula Badosa delivered another blow to the tournament as she was forced to withdraw from her home event due to a lower back injury. Badosa joins her fellow Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, who pulled out of the Madrid Open on Thursday citing a left hamstring issue and a right adductor injury. Meanwhile, Tunisian 2022 Madrid champion Ons Jabeur crashed out in her opener to Moyuka Uchijima 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 while Greece's Maria Sakkarí took a positive step towards recapturing her form by dismissing 29th-seeded Magda Linette 7-6(5), 6-3. Zverev basks on favourite court On the men's side, last week's Munich champion Alexander Zverev fired 32 winners against just 24 unforced errors in a dominant 6-2, 6-2 win over Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut. "For me, I always say that this is my favourite centre court in the entire world," said Zverev, who is a two-time Madrid champion.

"I only lost twice in my entire life here, so I hope that stays that way, throughout the next 10 days, and I can continue playing good tennis. As long as I do that, I'm happy." The top-seeded Zverev awaits Nuno Borges or Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the third round. Last year's finalist Felix Auger-Aliassime stumbled at the first hurdle, losing to Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo 7-6(5), 6-4. The Canadian former world number six had a good start to 2025, winning two titles and reaching the final in Dubai but is currently on a four-match losing streak. Auger-Aliassime is projected to drop out of the top 25 when the new rankings are released after the tournament. It was a good day for Argentines overall as Cerundolo's brother, Francisco, also advanced to the third round with a 6-3, 6-4 result against qualifier Harold Mayot. Francisco Cerundolo will next take on his compatriot Francisco Comesana, who rallied back from 1-5 down in the opening set to upset 13th-seeded Arthur Fils 7-6(4), 6-4.



LAHORE: Mohammad Amir struck early to remove David Warner.

Bodla achieves 16th Guinness World Record

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani martial artist Ahmad Amin Bodla has achieved another milestone as his 16th world record has been approved by the Guinness World Record. Bodla said his 16th Guinness World Record for 'Most One-Leg Push-Ups in 30 seconds carrying 20 lbs Weight' has been officially approved. "The reason it took three years to get approved is because Guinness had closed the 30-second record category at the time I made the attempt. However, they have now reinstated all previous record titles," he told APP. He said similarly, my Guinness World Record for 'Most Knuckle Push-Ups in One Minute,' which I attempted in 2015, has also been approved.

Street Children football training concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), in partnership with the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO (PNCU), Friday wrapped up a five-day initiative titled "Rehabilitation of Street Children through Football," held from April 21 to 25 here at the National Skills University (NSU). The event brought together over 60 children from underserved areas of the capital, offering them a unique blend of football training, emotional support, medical check-ups, and life skills development. The initiative aimed to promote social reintegration, healthy lifestyles, and informal education for vulnerable youth. The closing ceremony was graced by Wajiha Qamar, Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, who attended as the Chief Guest. The ceremony also saw the presence of prominent civil society members, educationists, community leaders, and international partners. The minister lauded the efforts of PNCU in organizing the event, highlighting its focus on vulnerable and marginalized segments of society. Aftab Muhammad Khan, Secretary General of the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO & ICESCO, emphasized the role of sports as a powerful enabler that impacts various Sustainable Development Goals. He expressed gratitude to the government, ICESCO, and other partners for their support and thanked the Minister of State for attending the event. He described the camp as a prime example of teamwork, gender equality, social inclusion, character building, and empowerment. He also encouraged the children to keep learning, playing, and believing in their dreams. This camp stands as a model for inclusive youth development, reinforcing Pakistan's and ICESCO's shared commitment to education, empowerment, and hope—one goal at a time.

Sarfaraz embraces new role as QG team director

LAHORE (PPI): Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has taken on a new challenge as the Team Director of Quetta Gladiators in the HBL Pakistan Super League. The Gladiators, champions of the 2019 edition, currently stand fifth in the ongoing PSL X, with one win and two losses. Sarfaraz, who led the Gladiators to their maiden PSL title, discussed the transition from player to director with PCB Digital, noting the excitement and challenges of the role. He emphasized the importance of evolving one's skillset and adapting to new responsibilities, drawing on his experience as a long-time member of the Quetta team. Reflecting on the league's growth, Sarfaraz acknowledged the efforts of PCB management and stakeholders in elevating the PSL's status. He expressed optimism about Quetta's prospects this season, aiming to replicate their 2019 success. Sarfaraz also commented

on the team's overseas players, expressing confidence in their suitability for the T20 format. He highlighted young talents Hasan Nawaz and Khawaja Nafay as promising assets for the future. Regarding Saud Shakeel's leadership, Sarfaraz expressed full confidence in the captain, despite the team's mixed results so far. The Gladiators will continue their campaign with five home matches in Lahore, hoping to climb the league standings.

Nida Dar takes temporary break from cricket



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's cricket former captain Nida Dar has announced a temporary break from the sport, citing mental health concerns. The decision was made public through her social media accounts, where she expressed the emotional toll recent personal and professional challenges have had on her well-being. "After careful consideration, I have decided to take a temporary break from cricket to prioritize my mental health and well-being," Nida wrote in her heartfelt message. "Recent personal and professional challenges have taken a toll on my mental health, and I need to take some time to focus on myself." Nida also opted out of the upcoming National Women's T20 Cup, choosing instead to step away from all cricketing activities for the time being. She requested privacy during this period, adding that she intends to return to the sport when she feels

mentally ready. "I appreciate your understanding and respect for my privacy during this time. I am grateful for the support of my loved ones and look forward to returning to the cricket field when I am ready," she added. Nida Dar is the most capped T20 International (T20I) player for the country and the first Pakistani—male or female—to claim 100 wickets in T20 Internationals. She is also one of only four women to have played 100 ODIs for Pakistan. She ranks second in ODI wickets for the country, behind only former captain Sana Mir.

Barcelona out to prove Clasico superiority in Copa del Rey final

BARCELONA (AFP/APP): Hansi Flick's Barcelona are closing in on a potential quadruple this season but blocking their path are eternal rivals Real Madrid. Although the Catalan giants, also in the Champions League semi-finals, are widely considered the best team in Spain at the moment, Carlo Ancelotti's faltering Los Blancos could claim both domestic titles still on the line. Madrid trail leaders Barca by four points in La Liga, with another Clasico to come in May, but first the Spanish giants butt heads in Seville on Saturday in the Copa del Rey final. Flick's Barcelona have emphatically bested Madrid on the two prior occasions they have met this season, first winning 4-0 in La Liga at the Santiago Bernabeu in October. Then Barca dismantled Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final in Saudi Arabia in January, roaring to a 5-2 victory to claim the first trophy of the Flick era. Barcelona outplayed Madrid in both games but their German coach had nothing but praise for his Italian counterpart. "Real Madrid has an

incredible team and one of the best coaches in the world... He (Ancelotti) has won everything," said Flick on Tuesday. "He's a gentleman... I have the highest respect. "On Saturday, we play the final against Real Madrid and of course against Carlo." Ancelotti will need to find ways to shut down Pedri in midfield as well as dynamic wingers Lamine Yamal and Raphinha. Madrid have lost 12 matches this season, compared to just two across all competitions in the previous campaign. Barcelona breezed past Real Betis and edged Atletico Madrid on the way to the final at La Cartuja stadium, their first since 2021, when they beat Athletic Bilbao. Real Madrid, who last won the trophy in 2023, needed an extra-time goal from Antonio Rudiger to beat Real Sociedad 5-4 on aggregate in the semi-finals. After Madrid's Champions League elimination by Arsenal earlier this month they are desperate to beat Barcelona and claim some silverware as well as restoring their pride. Both sides have lost important players in the run-

Chopra rules out Arshad's presence in Bengaluru meet

NEW DELHI (Monitoring Desk): India's Olympic javelin gold medallist Neeraj Chopra said it was now "completely out of the question" that rival Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan will attend his meet in Bengaluru next month following a deadly attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Relations between nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan have plummeted to their lowest level in years after the killing of 26 tourists on Wednesday. A day before the attack, Chopra had announced that the world's top throwers, including Paris Olympics champion Nadeem, had been invited to the first Neeraj Chopra Classic on May 24, an event he hoped would pave the way for a Diamond League meet in India one day. However, the attack in IIOJK prompted heavy criticism of Chopra's decision to invite Nadeem, even though it was unlikely the Pakistan thrower was going to attend.



In brief

IRSA releases 98,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 98,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 123,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.77 feet which was 29.77 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 40,400 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1128.50 feet, which was 78.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,600 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 67,800, 44,300, 32,200 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 22,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

5 illegal arm holders arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five illegal arm holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession during crackdown here on Friday. According to police spokesman, Waris Khan Police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Mahmood. Similarly, Sadiqabad Police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Ayan. While, Mandra Police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Shaban. Following operation, Dharmyal Police recovered 01 rifle 12-bore from Israr. Kallar Syedan Police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Rizwan. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police team and said that all legal measures are being taken against those possessing illegal weapons.

Criminal gets life imprisonment

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court has sentenced the criminal Ayub, alias Adil to life imprisonment for assaulting his niece. According to the court, the convict has been given life imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 rupees. The accused, Ayub alias Adil, is the uncle of the victim and had assaulted the 10-year-old girl in the absence of her family members. The case was registered in February 2024 at Police Station Saddar Wah Cantt. Based on solid evidence and effective follow-up, the honorable court awarded the criminal a well-deserved punishment. CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani while appreciating the investigation and the legal teams said, "Criminals who commit violence against women and children cannot escape the grip of the law."

8 drug suppliers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested eight drug suppliers and recovered drugs from their possession during crackdown here on Friday. According to police spokesman, Cantt Police recovered 1.9 kg drugs from lady drug supplier Farah Bilal. The accused revealed that "she was supplying drugs to various educational institutions". Similarly, Saddar Barooni Police held Isa and recovered 1.6 kg drugs from his possession. While, Taxila Police recovered 1.4 kg drugs from Bashir. Following operation, Gujjar Khan Police recovered 1.4 kg drugs from two drug suppliers Anwar Hayat and Ishaq. R.A Bazaar Police recovered 800 grams of drugs from Ghalib. Waris Khan Police recovered 640 grams of drugs from Adnan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan presided over a high level meeting of National Highways & Motorways Police in the federal capital. —APP Photo

Gilani calls for collective action on climate, energy challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday emphasised the need for collective global action to address pressing challenges such as climate change, renewable energy, and water scarcity, calling for joint solutions through dialogue and cooperation.

Speaking at a reception hosted in honor of a significant international diplomatic and parliamentary achievement, Gilani welcomed senators, provincial assembly speakers, and foreign dignitaries. He described the occasion as a celebration of a remarkable milestone for Pakistan's parliamentary diplomacy.

Gilani highlighted his unanimous appointment as the founding Chairman of the International Senate Conference (ISC), terming it a powerful recognition of Pakistan's commitment to promoting global dialogue and mutual respect. "This development marks a significant moment in our diplomatic journey and opens the door to new opportunities for Pakistan in the current geopolitical landscape," he said. He said that the ISC would serve as a unique platform to

strengthen multilateral, inter-parliamentary, and diplomatic ties, while also promoting trade and investment. "It is a forum designed to address global challenges that cross borders—through cooperation, not conflict," he added.

As part of this initiative, Gilani also announced the formation of a strategic partnership with Korea Water Resources Corporation to develop climate-smart technologies and improve sustainable water resource management in Pakistan. "This partnership will boost our national capacity in climate resilience and create avenues for technological exchange," he said.

Reflecting on his tenure as former Prime Minister and current Senate Chairman, Gilani stressed the importance of proactive diplomacy and strong inter-parliamentary relations. These, he said, were essential tools for improving Pakistan's image abroad and highlighting its role as a responsible and forward-looking state.

"This vision is linked to our nation's great diplomatic legacy laid down by the founding father of Pakistan,

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Quaid-e-Azam founded Pakistan's foreign policy on principles of justice, equality, and respect for international law—principles that still form part of our diplomatic strategy today. Likewise, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah played an active role in forcefully defending the country's interests on international platforms. Carrying forward this vision, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto highlighted the principles of equality and mutual respect globally," he said.

Gilani also underlined Pakistan's growing engagement in international parliamentary forums, including the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

He praised Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan's leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network (NAM PN), which, he said,

further strengthened Pakistan's ties with Central Asia and enhanced its diplomatic credibility.

Outlining his goals for the ISC, Gilani said, "My vision is to transform the ISC into a platform for serious debate and real solutions. The Seoul Declaration serves as a guiding roadmap for global peace, cooperation, and shared prosperity."

He expressed hope that the ISC would unite nations in promoting sustainability, technological exchange, and fair resource distribution. "Our goal is to green our economies together, share renewable energy innovations, and ensure fair access to water," he said.

He added that successful diplomacy paves the way for growth in trade, investment, and tourism. Strengthening international forums, he said, would also enhance initiatives like CPEC, food security, artificial intelligence, and agricultural partnerships.

"The future belongs to those who are prepared," he concluded. "Our youth, entrepreneurs, and diplomats must be ready to seize the opportunities that global cooperation can bring."

3926 challan tickets issued to violators

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi issued a total of 3,926 challan tickets for violations of traffic rules. The crackdown was part of ongoing drive to ensure road safety and discipline across the city.

According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima, Traffic police issued 4,673 driving licenses and provided other related services to citizens.

While, 859 challan tickets were issued to drivers operating vehicles without licenses and 781 challan tickets were given to motorcycle riders who were not wearing helmets. A total of 749 challan ticket were issued to drivers without number plates.

Similarly, 508 challan tickets were issued for reckless driving. 263 challan were handed out to drivers causing disruptions to traffic flow. 188 challan tickets were issued for not following lane discipline. 150 challan tickets were issued for vehicles with tinted windows, violating regulations. CTO stated that 116 challan tickets were issued to underage drivers.

CTO informed that 103 challan ticket were given to drivers operating vehicles without registration and 100 challan ticket were issued to drivers of vehicles lacking route permits. Beenish Fatima told that 51 challan ticket were handed out to Public Service Vehicle (PSV) drivers without fitness certificates and 39 challan ticket were issued for violations of one-way traffic rules. 31 challan ticket were given for signal violation. Another 31 challan ticket were issued for wrong parking. 14 challan ticket were issued for vehicles emitting excessive smoke over the last two weeks.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima urged Citizens to follow traffic rules to avoid penalties and ensure road safety.

Zero tolerance on over speed & axle load on MWs: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has directed that zero-tolerance policy be strictly enforced against over-speeding and axle load violations across all national Highways & Motorways and no leniency should be observed in this regard.

He further instructed that all commercial vehicles must obtain fitness certificates within the next three months and special training programs be arranged for their drivers, as well.

These directives were issued in a high-level meeting chaired by the Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan during his visit to the National Highways & Motorway Police Headquarters, said a press release on Friday.

Abdul Aleem Khan stressed that in order to reduce road accidents, vehicles older than 20 years should not be allowed to come on Motorways and separate certification must be issued for their tires,

accordingly. He instructed the Inspector General of Motorway Police to formulate a comprehensive and enforceable policy on these matters, as soon as possible.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan expressed concern over recurring accidents at the same location on Motorways and noted that registering FIRs for over-speeding has yielded positive outcomes. He reaffirmed that protecting human lives is top priority and the Motorway Police must continue to improve upon their already commendable standards.

During the briefing, IG Motorway Police informed the Federal Minister that 53 FIRs have been registered so far for the theft of safety barriers with 36 individuals arrested while over 2,000 meters of stolen fence has also been recovered.

Upon his arrival at the Motorway Police Headquarters, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan was presented with a guard of honor. He

was received by the Federal Secretary for Communications, the IG Motorway Police and other senior officers. Federal Minister also laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial in honor of officers who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

Aleem Khan inspected the Motorway Police Control Room and was briefed on the process of handling complaints via the helpline and ensuring their swift solution. He also emphasized the need for the Motorway Police to enhance their presence on social media in accordance with modern-day requirement.

In memory of Inspector Mansoor Asghar and other officers recently martyred on the duty, the Federal Minister offered Fateha for their departed souls. He further directed motorway officials to prioritize their own safety and proposed dedicated "shoulders" at various points along the Motorways to safely stop vehicles during emergencies.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Calls on Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi; discussions held on strengthening mutual cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan envoy meets Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Avazbek Atakhanov Friday met with the Federal Minister for Railways, Hanif Abbasi, at the Ministry of Railways.

The two dignitaries discussed ways to further enhance cooperation in the railway sector between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The envoy congratulated Hanif Abbasi on assuming office and expressed his desire to see Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan relations grow stronger.

He also acknowledged the recent economic improvements and stability achieved by Pakistan under the current government.

During the meeting, the ambassador invited the minister to attend the upcoming session of the Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan Intergovernmental Commission. Both sides engaged in a constructive dialogue on strengthening the railway network, developing trade routes and initiating technical exchanges.

Hanif Abbasi reiterated

government's commitment to expanding cooperation with Kyrgyzstan in the railway sector and emphasized the importance of improving trade relations and travel facilities between the two countries.

"Railway cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan will not only strengthen economic ties but also foster deeper people-to-people connections."

Both the sides agreed to maintain close communication and explore joint ventures in the future.

India's false flag tactics exposed: Junaid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Friday stated that India cannot deceive the international community with its repeated false flag operations.

In a statement, he firmly denounced the recent incident in Pahalgam, calling it a calculated conspiracy by India. The minister emphasized that Pakistan's defense is impregnable and warned that the enemy should not

remain under any illusion. He said that India is orchestrating fake narratives to conceal its brutalities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), but its deceit and manipulations now stand fully exposed.

"The false flag operation has laid bare the ugly face of India before the world," said Junaid Chaudhry, "proving once again that India is a threat to the regional peace."

He made it clear that the defense of the home-

land will be ensured at all costs. The minister further stated that the whole nation stands united and shoulder-to-shoulder with its armed forces.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan's Navy, Army, and Air Force are fully capable of countering any threat. Junaid Chaudhry also urged India to respect bilateral agreements, particularly the Indus Waters Treaty, noting that its suspension is not only unjust but entirely unwarranted.

Open Court held to address public complaints

RAWALPINDI (APP): Under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and the directions of Inspector General Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar, an open court was held at Police Station Pind Dadan Khan to directly address the concerns of citizens.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Region Babar Sarfraz Alpa and District Police Officer (DPO) Jhelum Tariq Aziz Sindhu were present on the occasion. A large number of people from the area participated and presented their

problems with the senior police officials.

During the open court, RPO Babar Sarfraz Alpa listened to the complaints personally and issued on-the-spot orders for the immediate resolution of many issues. He said, "We try to solve the public's problems on a priority basis."

The citizens appreciated this step and said that such open courts are a positive initiative, especially for those living in remote areas who often don't have access to higher police officials.

RPO Alpa also

informed the participants about different ways to raise awareness regarding the harassment of children and girls. He emphasized that awareness and quick action are key to protecting the vulnerable. He added that the main goal of these open courts is to bring the police closer to the people and provide justice at their doorstep.

This initiative reflects a growing focus on improving public service and trust in the police through direct communication and community engagement.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters swimming in a pond of water near Rawal Dam to cool themselves in hot weather in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Delegation of OIC steering committee visits Quaid-i-Azam University

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the facilitation of the COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad, a high-level delegation comprising participants of the 6th OIC Steering Committee Meeting visited here Friday Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad, a member institution of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence.

The delegation was warmly received by Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar (S.I.), who welcomed the esteemed guests on behalf of the university. During the meeting, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar highlighted the immense potential of Islamic countries to lead advancements in science and technology. He emphasized the importance of strategic collaboration among member states and underscored QAU's commitment to promoting scientific research and academic excellence.

“Quaid-i-Azam

University stands ready to collaborate with OIC member countries in all areas of science, research, and higher education. We believe that through mutual cooperation, we can address common challenges and harness our collective strengths,” said the Vice Chancellor.

He further stated that with the headquarters of the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) located in Islamabad, Pakistan has a special responsibility to take the lead in supporting and guiding fellow Islamic countries in their scientific and technological pursuits.

Earlier, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ishtiaq Ali, Director of ORIC, Quaid-i-Azam University, briefed the delegation on the university's academic faculties, diverse disciplines, available facilities, and key achievements. Referring the international Standing of the University he said that in 2025, the QS World University Rankings re-

cognized QAU's strength, placing it at the distinguished rank of 315th in the world, 9th in South Asia and 84th in Asia while the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2025 ranked QAU top in Pakistan and 401st globally. Prof. Dr. Taswar Hayat, Dean Faculty of Natural Sciences, QAU, Prof. Dr. Irfan Zia Qureshi, Dean Faculty of Biological Sciences, QAU, Dr. Shafiq-ur-Rehman, Registrar, QAU, and Muhammad Murtaza Noor, Media Advisor to COMSTECH, also attended the meeting.

The visit aimed to strengthen ties between the academic and research institutions of OIC countries and explore collaborative opportunities.

The delegation members appreciated the hospitality extended by QAU and acknowledged the university's valuable contributions to the advancement of science and technology in the region.

Child rescued from deep well

LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): A two-year-old child who fell into a 50-meter-deep well in the Babaji district of southern Helmand province has been successfully rescued. According to a statement from the 215 Azam Corps, the incident occurred on Thursday night. A rescue team from the Ministry of Defense arrived promptly at the scene and managed to pull the child out alive within half an hour. Sources confirmed that the child's health condition is stable.

Kandahar well-digger dies

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): A well-digger has died after falling into one of the deep wells he was digging in the Spin Boldak district of southern Kandahar province. Maulvi Ali Mohammad Haqmal, the information officer for Spin Boldak, said the incident occurred Thursday in the “Khat” area of Konchi, where the man named Sharafuddin lost his life. Haqmal explained that the primary cause of the incident was a blockage in the deep well.

Turkish Police
detains Afghan
Refugees

KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkey's police have detained 32 individuals, including Afghan refugees, in an operation across various cities. The operation targeted those without proper documentation, highlighting ongoing migration issues.

Among those arrested, six Afghan refugees were detained in Sivas for lacking legal documents. Their detention is part of Turkey's broader effort to manage undocumented migration, especially from Afghanistan.

Additionally, three human traffickers were apprehended during the operation. They are believed to be involved in smuggling refugees, including Afghan nationals, into the country and across borders.

After undergoing legal procedures, the detainees were transferred to a migrant deportation center. This step is part of Turkey's strict measures to address unauthorized immigration and ensure border security.

Previously, Turkey's coast guard detained 36 Afghan refugees attempting to migrate to Europe. The constant flow of Afghan refugees underscores the worsening situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban's control.

As economic and security conditions deteriorate in Afghanistan, more citizens, especially youth, are seeking refuge abroad. This migration trend has placed pressure on neighboring countries, particularly Turkey, to manage the influx effectively.

The Turkish authorities are intensifying efforts to curb illegal migration, with a focus on Afghan refugees. However, as the refugee crisis grows, it raises significant concerns about the humanitarian situation and the need for international cooperation to address it.

Herat sees
unprecedented
rent hikes

HERAT (TOLONews): A number of residents in Herat say that over recent months, rental prices in the province have risen to unprecedented levels. According to them, they have been searching for reasonably priced rental homes for weeks, but none are available.

Abdul Khaleq Yousufi, a resident of Herat, said: "I've been looking for a house for a month, but unfortunately, I haven't found one that suits my needs. Rent used to be 1,500 Afghanis, but now it has risen to between 4,500 and 5,000 Afghanis. I urge the government to monitor rental prices."

Mohammad Ismail Nabizadah, another Herat resident, said: "In most areas of the city, rental homes are either unavailable or very limited. There are homes for sale, but hardly any for rent — mainly because many migrants have arrived." According to data from some real estate agencies, rental prices in Herat city have increased by around 40% in recent months.

The main reason for this rise is attributed to the influx of migrants from neighboring countries, as well as the relocation of thousands of families from other provinces to Herat.

Sharif Ahmad Anwari, a real estate agent, explained: "The population in Herat city has increased as migrants from neighboring countries and other provinces have arrived. This has led homeowners to raise rental prices." Local authorities in Herat also confirm that the return of migrants and the arrival of families from different parts of the country have contributed to the increase in rental costs.

Mohammad Yousuf Saeedi, the spokesperson for the Herat governor, said: "Economic growth and business expansion in Herat province have encouraged citizens from other areas of the country to settle in the city. This has caused rental prices to rise.

The local administration is committed to organizing and regulating this process." Herat is considered one of Afghanistan's major cities, and in recent years has hosted thousands of returnee families from neighboring countries and other provinces.

Afghanistan,
Uzbekistan Agree on
Afghan-Trans Study



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works has announced that Afghanistan and Uzbekistan have agreed to begin feasibility studies for the “Afghan-Trans” railway project.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the ministry, stated that the Deputy Minister for Railways signed this agreement with the head of Uzbekistan's Railway Authority during his visit to the country.

In the same meeting, the two sides also agreed to extend the operation, maintenance, and service contract of the Hairatan–Mazar-e-Sharif railway line for another two years.

Haqshenas added that an agreement was also reached regarding the design and survey of the Herat–Mazar-e-Sharif railway line, in addition to the feasibility study of the Afghan-Trans project.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also discussed regional cooperation, economic connectivity, and the Afghan-Trans project in a phone call with his Uzbek counterpart.

In a statement, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that Ishaq Dar expressed hope that Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan would soon sign a trilateral agreement to launch the Afghan-Trans project.

Abdul Nasir Rashtia, an economic affairs analyst, said: “We hope this project will begin soon. The Islamic Emirate must seize this opportunity to transform Afghanistan into a transit hub. All existing obstacles must be removed because launching this project will boost investor confidence and create numerous job opportunities.” Given the strategic

importance of the Afghan-Trans project, several experts consider it beneficial for the region, including Afghanistan.

Abdul Zohur Modabber, another economic expert, said: “To implement this project, we need human resources, financial capital, and investments—some of which are fortunately available in Afghanistan. With the right economic and political relationships with the world, we can even resolve liquidity issues. If major national and regional projects like Afghan-Trans are properly executed, they can benefit Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan.”

Earlier, Russia's special envoy for Afghanistan stated that interim government officials would participate in the Kazan Forum, where they are also expected to hold talks on the planned 573-kilometer railway line of the Afghan-Trans project.

2 children
killed in
roof collapse
incident

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): Two children have been killed and five others injured when the roof of a room collapsed in southern Kandahar province.

Mullah Abdul Salam Omari, head of the Kandahar Disaster Management Authority, told Pajhwok Afghan News the incident took place around 9:00 PM on Thursday night in the 15th district of Kandahar city.

He said a boy and a girl lost their lives, while four boys and another girl were injured. The exact cause of the collapse remains unclear, but a family member, Nek Mohammad, said the house was old and its walls had weakened due to recent rainfall. He added the incident occurred during a family gathering, though no one else was harmed.

Medicine
output reaches
900 types:
Pharma Union

KABUL (Ariana News): Officials from the Union of Pharmaceutical Factories say investment in the country's pharmaceutical sector is expanding. According to them, 900 different types of medicines are currently being produced by various factories operating in this field, and around 100 of those have reached self-sufficiency.

Members of the union are urging all ministries, including the Ministry of Public Health, to strengthen coordination with the private sector when drafting new policies and procedures, especially those related to investment development in the pharmaceutical industry.

“Currently, production of up to 900 types of medicine is underway in various forms. Afghanistan's domestic pharmaceutical output could meet market demand with high-quality production of over 100 more medicines—if drug imports are restricted,” said Ahmad Saeed Shams, the union's head.

Meanwhile, officials at the Ministry of Economy consider the development and support of the pharmaceutical industry a priority for the Islamic Emirate, emphasizing that they are working on solutions to the challenges faced by manufacturers to help the country achieve self-reliance in drug production.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, said: “The Islamic Emirate's strategy in all sectors, including pharmaceuticals, is import substitution. We aim to increase exports in every area, and supporting domestic production is at the top of our agenda.”

Economic experts also stress the need for the government to provide more support and incentives to investors to foster the growth of the pharmaceutical industry.

Attari-Wagah
border closure hits
Afghanistan-India
trade hard

KABUL (TOLONews): The Attari–Wagah route, one of Afghanistan's shortest and cheapest transit paths for trade with India via Pakistan, has been closed due to security tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad.

This situation has also posed a serious challenge to Afghanistan's trade with India.

Meanwhile, Afghan traders and economic institutions have warned about the continuation of this situation and its potential damages.

Omid Haidari, an Afghan trader, said: “Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan have close economic relations, and we respectfully urge the leadership of India and Pakistan to resolve this matter peacefully. We hope the problem currently affecting exporters, including agri-

cultural products, will be resolved soon.”

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment stated that Afghanistan conducts about \$500 million in annual trade with India via the Wagah route. According to the chamber officials, the continued closure of this route could significantly reduce trade volume between the two countries.

Khan Jan Alokozay, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: “We have suffered significantly, especially with Afghan dried fruits. Currently, the ports are closed, and the problems are considerable.

It is now the season for dried fruits, and in two months, the season for fresh fruits will arrive. We hope the issue is resolved by then.

Unfortunately, our trade with India through this route has been completely halted.” Most of Afghanistan's dried fruits are exported to India via this route.

The Dried Fruit Exporters' Union says alternative export routes come with significant difficulties. Khalid Rahmani, spokesperson for the Kabul Dried Fruit Exporters' Union, stated: “Unfortunately, due to the lack of essential infrastructure and logistics at Chabahar port, exporters cannot make effective use of this port.”

It is worth noting that following the armed attack on tourists on April 22 in Indian-administered Kashmir, which resulted in at least 26 dead and 17 injured, India and Pakistan closed the Attari–Wagah border.

Unexploded ordnance blast
injures five in Paktia

KHOST (Amu tv): An explosion caused by left-over ordnance wounded four children and one woman in the eastern province of Paktia, Taliban said on Thursday.

According to Taliban police in Paktia, the blast occurred on Wednesday evening in the Alzo area of Zurmat district, when one of the children was reportedly playing with an unexploded artillery shell.

Muneeb Zadran, spokesperson for the provincial police command, said all five victims were transported to a nearby medical facility, where they are being treated. He

added that the incident is under investigation.

Afghanistan remains one of the world's most heavily contaminated countries with land mines and unexploded ordnance, the result of more than four decades of conflict. These hidden remnants continue to claim civilian lives, particularly among children.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has warned that children account for the majority of victims in such incidents, often injured or killed while unknowingly handling explosive devices.

According to humani-

tarian agencies, an average of 50 people are killed or injured each month in Afghanistan due to mines and unexploded munitions. Each year, an estimated 600 civilians fall victim to these deadly remnants of war, many of them children and nomadic shepherds, who stumble upon the devices during daily routines.

Despite ongoing demining efforts led by international and Afghan agencies, large swaths of rural terrain remain hazardous, especially in provinces like Paktia, where mine clearance operations are limited by funding and access.

Plastic factory construction
begins in Ghazni

GHAZNI (TOLONews): The construction of a private plastic production factory has begun in Ghazni province, with an investment of 3 million US dollars.

The factory is being built on a 20-acre plot of land and will have a production capacity of 4 to 5 tons every 24 hours. It is also expected to provide employment opportunities for hundreds of people. Sayed Farid Agha Hashemi, the factory's manager, said: “We have invested approximately 3 million US dollars in this company, and 20 acres of land have been allocated for its construction. With the establishment of this company, job opportunities will be created for hundreds of individuals.”

The Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs, speaking at the inauguration ceremony, stated that the Islamic

Emirate is committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens, and he called on Afghan investors to invest within the country.

Rahmatullah Najib, Deputy Administrative Minister of Interior, said: “We have remained steadfast in our commitment so far, and we continue to ask God to keep us firm on this path. We are ready to make every effort—and sacrifice if necessary—to protect your property, honor, and lives.”

Abdul Mateen Mowlawi Zada, head of the Afghan Workers' Union, said: “We urge Afghan businessmen living abroad to return to the country. Here, the necessary facilities and conditions for investment in various sectors have been provided.”

Meanwhile, a number of workers have called on the caretaker government and

investors to create more job opportunities for youth within the country.

Sayed Abdullah, one of the workers, said: “We ask our businessmen and investors to transfer their capital to their homeland for the sake of the country's development. Many young people are currently unemployed, and establishing such companies can provide them with employment.”

Sayed Naseem, one of the investors, said: “We urge investors to invest in their own country, and we expect the government to provide the necessary facilities for them.” At the same time, some industrialists in Ghazni have described the construction of an industrial township as a serious need, saying that their operations in residential areas are progressing slowly.

EU official pledges 250,000
for Afghan returnees



KABUL (Amu tv): A senior European Union official has announced a contribution of 250,000 to support Afghan returnees who have recently been expelled from Pakistan, as humanitarian agencies warn of growing needs among vulnerable families.

Andreas Papaconstantinou, director for the Middle East and Central Asia at the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), said the funding would go toward the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

(IFRC) to provide emergency relief inside Afghanistan.

“Many of them face poverty and uncertainty after losing the only home they knew,” Papaconstantinou wrote on X. “This support includes shelter, emergency health services, food, and water.”

He added that during a visit to Peshawar, near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, he met Afghan returnees who are receiving assistance through EU humanitarian programs. “The needs are enormous,” he wrote. “I heard their stories and was deeply moved by their resilience. We will

continue to stand by them.”

According to the United Nations, nearly 120,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan in the past three weeks alone, part of a broader deportation campaign initiated by Pakistani authorities in late 2023. Many of the returnees are living in temporary shelters and face critical shortages of food, clean water, and medical care.

Humanitarian agencies have called for increased international support to help Afghanistan absorb the influx, as the country remains in the grip of an economic and humanitarian crisis under Taliban rule.

Lost her sight, not her spirit: Sanga Hotak’s rise

KABUL (Pajhwok) Sanga Hotak is a remarkable teenage girl from Kabul who lost her eyesight in a childhood accident. Yet, she never let her blindness define or limit her.

Through her hands—hands that weave, learn, and create—Sanga has opened new doors to life and brought light into the darkness.

Now 14 years old and a resident of the Hoodkhel area in Kabul, Sanga lost her sight seven years ago. At the time, she could still see the world clearly.

She was traveling with her family to Jalalabad to attend a party, unaware that this journey would change her life forever.

A roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle during the trip. Sanga lost her vision in the blast, while the other passengers sustained only minor injuries.

She says that since then, she has not been able to see anything, except for faint perceptions of light and darkness.

Despite undergoing numerous treatments, doctors concluded that her condition couldn't be treated within Afghanistan. Sadly, her family lacked the

financial means to seek treatment abroad.

Finding light in darkness
With the encouragement and support of her family, Sanga refused to give up on her education. Day by day, she learned new skills and sought to fill her world with color and meaning.

She studied up to sixth grade at the Kabul Institute for the Blind and excelled in her classes, dedicating countless hours to mastering her subjects.

“Even when I went to family gatherings, I would bring my books and study,” she says. “I tried not to waste any time. I wanted to achieve something—and I was the top student in my class through sixth grade.”

Although she is not currently attending formal school, Sanga has turned to religious studies and has so far memorized three juz of the Holy Quran.

She says, “Every time I recite the Quran, I feel a deep sense of peace and comfort.”

Explaining her method, she adds: “People may wonder how I memorize the Quran. I listen to its audio using a Quran pen several times, and then I memorize it.”

Alongside her Quranic stud-



ies, she is also enrolled in an English language course.

Mastering the art of weaving
In addition to her academic and religious pursuits, Sanga has mastered the art of weaving—a skill she learned at school. Uniquely talented, she spends much of her time practicing this craft, unlike many other blind girls her age.

She has a deep passion for weaving and says that although she sometimes makes mistakes—like missing a stitch—she always manages to correct them. Sanga can knit sweaters, pants, scarves, and socks.

A helping hand at home
Despite her blindness, Sanga is a dedicated helper to her mother at home. She sweeps the floors, washes dishes, and kneads dough—all without the ability to see. She relies entirely on her sense of touch, experience, and careful attention to detail.

Poetry from the heart
Sanga has recently discovered a love for poetry. Although she's just beginning, she hopes to become a skilled poet. She expresses her inner world through words, crafting poems that are born from pure emotions

and a unique perspective shaped by silence and darkness. In her quiet moments, she writes verses that reflect her life and dreams.

Sanga's blindness has not stopped her from staying physically active. With her father's help, she has learned to ride a bicycle and sometimes rides or plays jump rope. She says her exercises are done either with her father's assistance or along familiar, safe paths.

She dreams of pursuing higher education and excelling in sports.

Father's support
Mohammad Qais Hotak, Sanga's father, says he has five children—two daughters and three sons—with Sanga being the eldest.

“Despite being blind, Sanga has never lost hope or given up in any part of life,” he says. “We do everything we can to support her so she can achieve great things.”

He proudly lists her talents: cycling, jump rope, running, weaving, and poetry.

He urges the international community to support his daughter and give her a chance to represent Afghanistan in the

Paralympic Games.

Among all the challenges in Sanga's life, one constant source of strength has been her brother, Zakir Naik. More than just a sibling, he is her true companion, close friend, and quiet hero—always by her side.

From walking together through the neighborhood to helping with chores and listening to her poems, Naik has been a steadfast presence. Their bond goes beyond words—a beautiful blend of understanding, respect, and deep affection.

With his help, Sanga has navigated many unseen paths. Though he seeks no recognition, he remains a silent force behind her achievements.

Recognition from school
Gul Mohammad Sajad, head of the Kabul Institute for the Blind under the Technical and Vocational Education Authority, says Sanga was one of the most outstanding students at the institute and graduated top of her class in 2024.

“Even though she is blind, her talents were never limited by her condition. Through hard work, she became one of our best students,” he said.



WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Senator Aurangzeb meeting with Jihad Azour, IMF Director for Middle East and Central Asia.

Toll from Israeli strike on Gaza home rises to 23

GAZA (AFP): GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defense agency reported on Friday that the death toll from an Israeli air strike the day before on a house in the north of the Palestinian territory had risen to 23.

"Civil defense teams recovered 11 bodies last night and this morning following the Israeli bombing that targeted a residential house ... in Jabalia," Mohammed Al-Mughayyir, an official with the agency, told AFP. "This is in addition to the 12 victims recovered at the time of the attack yesterday," he added.

Gaza's northern area of Jabalia has repeatedly been a focus Israel's military offensive since the start of the war on October 7, 2023 following Hamas's attack on Israel. The military has returned to the district several times after announcing it had been cleared of militants, saying Hamas fighters had regrouped there.

In another strike in the area on Thursday, Israel hit what was previously a police station, rescuers said. The toll from that attack has risen to 11, Mughayyir said, after initially announcing that nine people had been killed. The military said on Thursday that it had struck a Hamas "command and control center" in the area of Jabalia, without specifying the target.

Israeli strikes continued on Friday, with the civil defense agency reporting that at least five people — a couple and their three children — had been killed when their tent was struck in the Al-Mawasi area of the southern city of Khan Yunis. Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said that the deceased woman had been pregnant. Since Israel resumed its offensive on March 18 after the collapse of a two-month ceasefire with Hamas, at least 1,978 people have been killed in Gaza, bringing the overall death toll of the war to 51,355, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

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Putin, Witkoff discuss direct Russia-Ukraine talks

MOSCOW: US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff met Russian President Vladimir Putin for three hours in Moscow to discuss US efforts to end the Ukraine war, and the Kremlin said the two sides' positions had moved closer. Witkoff has emerged as Washington's key interlocutor with Putin as Trump pushes for a deal to end the war, now well into its fourth year, and has already had three lengthy meetings with the Kremlin leader.

On Thursday, video published by Russian state media showed Witkoff meeting Putin at the Kremlin, with the two smiling, shaking hands and exchanging a few words in English before beginning talks. Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov, who took part in the meeting with Witkoff on Friday, described the three-hour meeting as constructive and very useful.

"This conversation allowed Russia and the United States to further bring their positions closer together, not only on Ukraine but also on a number of other international issues," he told reporters. "As for the Ukrainian crisis

itself, the discussion focused in particular on the possibility of resuming direct negotiations between representatives of the Russian Federation and Ukraine."

Russia and Ukraine have not held direct talks since the early weeks of the war, which started when Putin ordered a full-scale invasion in February 2022. Witkoff and the White House have not yet commented on the outcome of the meeting.

His latest trip follows talks this week at which the Ukrainian and European officials pushed back against some of the US proposals for how to settle Russia's war in Ukraine, the deadliest in Europe since World War II. Trump has threatened to walk away from talks if he does not see progress towards a ceasefire.

On Thursday, after Russian attacks on Kyiv killed 12 people, Trump wrote on social media: "Vladimir, STOP!", adding "Let's get the Peace Deal DONE!" When asked how he would respond if Russia did not accept a deal, Trump said Thursday, "I won't be happy, let me put

it that way. Things will happen."

Russia, which has warned against rushing into a peace settlement, said Thursday it was "ready to reach a deal" but needed certain issues addressed first. "There are still some specific points ... which need to be fine-tuned, and we are busy with this," its foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, told CBS News.

The United States has suggested freezing the front line and accepting Russian control of Crimea, a peninsula annexed by the Kremlin in 2014, in exchange for peace. Trump was quoted in a TIME magazine interview published on Friday as saying, "Crimea will stay with Russia. And Zelenskyy understands that."

Ukraine has rejected ceding ground to Moscow, and says it will not accept Russian control of Crimea, which has been occupied by Russia since 2014. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has in recent months accepted that he might have to try to secure the return of some land captured by Russia through diplomacy once a ceasefire is in place. — Aljazeera

KP Finance Dept issue guidelines

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Finance Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued detailed circular guidelines to all relevant government departments and regional bank branches aimed at ensuring fiscal discipline and the efficient utilization of funds for the financial year 2024-25.

To streamline public financial management and avoid year-end bottlenecks, all departments have been directed to ensure uniform expenditure throughout the year and clear all valid liabilities well before the end of the fiscal year. Departments are required to complete all formalities for bill processing and procurement in a timely manner.

The finance department circular stated that the funds placed at the disposal of Departments/Offices are expended uniformly during the current financial year and all valid/accrued liabilities are promptly cleared and are not postponed towards the end of current financial year. It is mentioned that all the concerned authorities shall ensure the issuance of sanctions, completion of codal formalities and procurement of stores well in time, so that claims can be presented for pre-audit to the Accountant General/respective District Accounts Offices timely.

While all bills against the releases for financial year 2024-25 must be presented to the Accountant General, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/District Accounts Officers on or before 16, June 2025. The Accountant General, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/District Accounts Officers shall issue all cheques/pay orders by 23, June 2025 and the last schedule for the month of June would be sent to SBP before presenting of the cheque for payment.

The circular stated that the cheques of lapsable P L A s / S D A s / A s s a n Assignment Accounts, Reserve Fund/ SDF, Forest and Works Accounts must be issued well in time and get cleared from the Treasury Officer, Peshawar/DAO concerned. All cheques drawn against P L A s / S D A s / A s s a n Assignment Accounts, Forest & Works Accounts shall be encashed upto 30-06-2025. The finance department stated that the all cheques already issued or to be issued, which pertain to the financial year 2024-25, shall be valid upto 30' June 2025 except salary cheques issued to the DDOs, if any for the month of June 2025 which is payable on or after 10 day of July 2025.

PTI's Aliya released from jail

E.P. Report

JHELUM: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and PTI Punjab chief organizer Aliya Hamza has been released from District Jail Jhelum. Aliya Hamza left for Lahore under tight security soon after her release. Judicial Magistrate Qamar Abbas had approved Aliya Hamza's bail yesterday against surety bonds worth Rs. 100,000.

On April 18, Aliya Hamza, the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), was detained in Rawalpindi in a case registered at the Airport Police Station along with six party colleagues. They were accused of interfering in government affairs, blocking roads, and throwing stones at police officers.

Trump poised to offer Saudi Arabia over \$100b arms package

WASHINGTON/RIYADH (Reuters): The United States is poised to offer Saudi Arabia an arms package worth well over \$100 billion, six sources with direct knowledge of the issue told Reuters, saying the proposal was being lined up for announcement during US President Donald Trump's visit to the kingdom in May.

The offered package comes after the administration of former President Joe Biden unsuccessfully tried to finalize a defense pact with Riyadh as part of a broad deal that envisioned Saudi Arabia normalizing ties with Israel.

The Biden proposal offered access to more advanced US weaponry in return for halting Chinese arms purchases and restricting Beijing's investment in the country. Reuters could not establish if the Trump administration's proposal includes similar requirements. The White House and Saudi government communications office did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A US Defense official said: "Our defense relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is stronger than ever under President Trump's leadership. Maintaining our security cooperation remains an important component of this partnership and we will continue to work with Saudi Arabia to address their defense needs." In his first term, Trump celebrated weapons sales to Saudi Arabia as good for US jobs.

Lockheed Martin Corp could supply a range of advanced weapons systems

including C-130 transport aircraft, two of the sources said. One source said Lockheed would also supply missiles and radars. RTX Corp, formerly known as Raytheon Technologies, is also expected to play a significant role in the package, which will include supplies from other major US defense contractors such as Boeing Co, Northrop Grumman Corp and General Atomics, said four of the sources.

All the sources declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter. RTX, Northrop and General Atomics declined to comment. Boeing did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A Lockheed Martin spokesperson said foreign military sales are government-to-government transactions. Questions about sales to foreign governments are best addressed by the US government. Reuters could not immediately establish how many of the deals on offer were new. Many have been in the works for some time, two of the sources said. For example, the kingdom first requested information about General Atomics' drones in 2018, they said. Over the past 12 months, a deal for \$20 billion of General Atomics' MQ-9B SeaGuardian-style drones and other aircraft came into focus, according to one of the sources.

Several executives from defense companies are considering traveling to the region as a part of the delegation, three of the sources said. The US has long supplied Saudi Arabia with

weapons. In 2017, Trump proposed approximately \$110 billion of sales to the kingdom. As of 2018, only \$14.5 billion of sales had been initiated and Congress began to question the deals in light of the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In 2021, under Biden, Congress imposed a ban on sales of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia over the Khashoggi killing and to pressure the kingdom to wind down its Yemen war, which had inflicted heavy civilian casualties. Under US law, major international weapons deals must be reviewed by members of Congress before they are finalised. The Biden administration began to soften its stance on Saudi Arabia in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacted global oil supplies. The ban on offensive weapons sales was lifted in 2024, as Washington worked more closely with Riyadh in the aftermath of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack to devise a plan for post-war Gaza.

A potential deal for Lockheed's F-35 jets, which the kingdom has been reportedly interested in for years, is expected to be discussed, three of the sources said, while downplaying the chances for an F-35 deal being signed during the trip. The United States guarantees that its close ally Israel receives more advanced American weapons than Arab states, giving it what is labeled a "Qualitative Military Edge" (QME) over its neighbors. Israel has now owned F-35s for nine years, building multiple squadrons.

Kohat Board admn failed to control cheating mafia

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hangu district, irregularities and reports of organized cheating during the ongoing SSC examinations at Government High School Sarozai prompted action by the Assistant Commissioner Hangu.

According to the report, during a raid on the examination center on April 23, 2024, the presence of unauthorized individuals, including staff from private schools, and the distribution of cheating material to students were uncovered.

During the raid, mobile phones and other cheating materials were seized, including micro-sized answer images and pocket

guides. Disturbingly, when the seized items were requested to be handed over, the school staff refused and allegedly attempted to blackmail the Assistant Commissioner.

Furthermore, a follow-up inspection on April 25, 2025, revealed that the invigilating staff themselves solved the mathematics paper, clearly indicating no improvement in the staff's conduct. In light of these incidents, the Assistant Commissioner has recommended strict disciplinary action against the school and examination staff to ensure transparency and integrity in the examination process.

A letter from the district administration reveals that the Kohat Board administra-

tion has completely failed in its campaign against the cheating mafia. Sources claim that the examination staff has been appointed entirely on the basis of favoritism, while certain private institutions have been deliberately targeted.

Similarly, the father of a student from a school, Afrasiab, has accused the superintendent harassment. He has appealed for the safety of his son and submitted an application to the Deputy Commissioner of Hangu, stating that his son is being targeted because Afrasiab had previously initiated an inquiry against the superintendent currently posted at the exam center. He claims that his son is now facing retaliation as a result.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing during 29th Founding Day of PTI.

ATC issues warrants in May 9 vandalism

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Judge Wali Muhammad, has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for five accused individuals, including Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Arbab Wasim, in connection with the attack on Radio Pakistan on May 9, 2023, on Friday.

The accused individuals, including MPA Arbab Wasim, are alleged to have set fire to the Radio Pakistan building during a protest on May 9, 2023. A case was registered against the accused at East Cant police station and after completing the investigation, the trial commenced.

The court issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Arbab Wasim and four

other accused individuals. The court directed the accused to appear before the court by May 5. During the previous hearing, Arbab Wasim and six other accused individuals failed to appear before the court, prompting the court to issue arrest warrants.

Court convicts killer to death penalty: The Child Protection Court Peshawar has sentenced a convict, Waqas, to death and an additional 21 years of imprisonment, along with a fine of 1 million rupees, for kidnapping and murdering a minor child.

The convict was sentenced to death under Section 302 of the law, 14 years of rigorous imprisonment under Section 364A, and 7 years of rigorous imprisonment under Section 201. The convict

was also ordered to pay a fine of 1 million rupees to the heirs of the deceased minor child. In case of default, the convict will have to undergo an additional 6 months of imprisonment.

The convict, Waqas, was accused of kidnapping and murdering a minor child in the jurisdiction of Phandoo police station. The police registered a case on the complaint of the minor child's mother and initiated an investigation, during which the convict was arrested and charged under Sections 302, 364A, and 201 of the law. After completing the investigation, the police submitted the challan to the court, and the trial commenced. The court examined witnesses and considered evidence before delivering its verdict.

Interests of smaller provinces must be protected on canal-related matters: Saif

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said on Friday that the interests of smaller provinces should be given special consideration when it comes to canal-related matters.

In a statement, Saif said that the Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal project in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa should not be linked with new canal projects in the Council of Common Interests (CCI), adding that approval for the Chashma Right Bank Canal (Lift-cum-Gravity Project) was given by the CCI in 1991.

He further stated that, in light of the CCI's decision, canals were constructed in

the other three provinces, but implementation of the project in KP has not yet materialised. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also assured 35% funding for the project. The provincial adviser added that any attempt to make the Chashma Right Bank Canal project controversial in the new canal dispute would be strongly opposed.

High-level transfers in KP police

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to a notification issued by the Central Police Office Peshawar, senior reshuffling has taken place in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police department.

Grade-21 officer Muhammad Wissal Fakhar Sultan has been transferred from Additional IG Elite Force to Additional IG Investigation. Meanwhile, Grade-21 officer Kashif Alam, who previously served as Additional IG Investigation, has been appointed as Additional IG Elite Force.

DIG Special Branch Sajjad Khan has been posted as RPO Bannu, while Imran Shahid has been transferred from Bannu to serve as DIG Special Branch. Sajjad Khan is known as a brave and experienced officer, having previously served as RPO Malakand Division. He has also held key positions including DPO in Bannu, Hangu, Karak, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Mardan, as well as SSP Operations Peshawar and DPO Swabi.

Among other transfers, Khan Khail has been posted as DPO South Waziristan, Hameedullah has been appointed as DPO Chitral, and Asif Bahadur has taken charge as AIG at CPO.

4 FC troops martyred in Quetta blast

E.P. Report

QUETTA: At least four personnel of the Frontier Corps (FC) were martyred and three others injured in an explosion near a bomb disposal squad in the Margate area of Quetta on Friday.

According to media reports, the blast targeted the security forces as they were in the process of disposing of an improvised explosive device (IED) planted in the area. Among those martyred were Subedar Shahzad Amin, Naib Subedar Abbas, Sepoy Khalil, and Sepoy Zahid. The security sources confirmed the casualties and provided details on the incident.

In addition to the fatalities, Lance Naik Zafar, Lance Naik Farooq, and Sepoy Khurram Saleem sustained injuries in the blast. They were immediately rushed to a nearby medical facility, where their condition is being monitored.

Following the explosion, security forces swiftly cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to locate the suspects responsible for the attack. Authorities have vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The blast marks the latest in a series of attacks on security forces in Balochistan, which has been facing a rising tide of insurgent activities in recent months.