

ISLAMABAD (APP):Defense Minister Khawaja Asif stated on Sunday that entire Pakistan is united with its armed forces and will give a strong response to Modi government just like we responded in Pulwama incident. In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Khawaja Asif emphasized that the nation is united with its armed forces and will take a firm stance against any aggression.



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Security forces foil infiltration attempt from Afghanistan

54 Khawarij terrorists killed



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces while thwarting infiltration attempt of a large group of Khawarij terrorists through Pak-Afghan border killed 54 Khawarij in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District.

"On night 25/26 and 26/27 April 2025, movement of a large group of khawarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was detected by the security forces in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District," said a news release by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here.

"Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. As a result of precise and skillful engagement, all fifty four khawarij have been sent to hell. A large cache of weapons, ammunition & explosives was also recovered from the killed Khawarij," it further said.

Intelligence reports indicate that this group of Khawarij was specifically infiltrating on behalf of their "foreign masters" to

undertake high profile terrorist activities inside Pakistan. Such actions by Fitna al Khawarij (FAK), at a time when India is leveling baseless accusations against Pakistan, clearly implies on whose cues FAK is operating, the press release said.

Such actions amount to treason and betrayal against the state and its citizens.

The recent NSC also underscored the fact that distracting Pakistan's security forces from their focus on the war against terror seems to be the strategic intent of India to allow a breathing space to FAK which is reeling from the onslaught of our Armed Forces resolute offensive against them, it further said.

The security forces demonstrated exceptional professionalism, vigilance & preparedness and prevented a potential catastrophe.

This is the highest ever number of khawarij killed by our Security Forces in a single engagement during entire campaign against terrorism.

"The Security Forces of Pakistan remain resolute

and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers and to eradicate the menace of terrorism. Such bold and decisive actions further strengthen our collective resolve and underscore that Pakistan is winning the war against terrorism, while achieving significant successes against terrorists," it further said.

President lauds security forces for foiling intrusion from Afghanistan

President Asif Ali Zardari Sunday lauded the security forces for foiling the intrusion from Afghanistan in North Waziristan.

He appreciated the security forces for killing 54 terrorists of Fitna al-Khawarij during the timely operation.

He commended the bravery of security forces for eliminating 54 Khawarij during the operation.

He said the brave security forces of Pakistan were always ready to safeguard borders of the country.

Thwarting the intrusion of terrorists was a big success, he added.

The President expressed determination to complete-

ly eradicate terrorism and protect borders of the country.

PM praises security forces for foiling terrorist infiltration into North Waziristan

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday lauded the security forces for successfully foiling an infiltration attempt by terrorists of Fitnah al-Khawarij from Afghanistan into the Hasan Khel area of North Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement issued here, the Prime Minister paid rich tribute to the security forces for eliminating all 54 Khawarij terrorists during the operation. He commended the forces for their outstanding professionalism and timely response, which thwarted the terrorists' plans.

"The security forces have once again demonstrated excellent professional skills by intercepting the terrorists in a timely manner," the Prime Minister said.

Highlighting the nation's resolve against terrorism, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asserted that the entire nation stands firmly alongside the security forces in the ongoing war against terrorism.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan's security forces remain steadfast in their commitment to defend the country's borders and eradicate the menace of terrorism.

"These successful operations clearly indicate that Pakistan is winning the war against terrorism and achieving significant victories against the terrorists," he added.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of American financinig company World Liberty Financial called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

WLF signs significant LOI with Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: World Liberty Financial (WLF) - the decentralized finance (DeFi) platform backed by the U.S. President Donald Trump - has signed a landmark Letter of Intent (LOI) with the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC) to accelerate blockchain innovation, stablecoin adoption, and decentralized finance (DeFi) integration across Pakistan.

The WLF delegation - including Zachary Folkman, Zachary Witkoff (son of Steve Witkoff who's the United States Special Envoy to the Middle East), and Chase Herro - met with Pakistan's leadership including the Prime Minister, Chief of Army Staff, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Information and Minister of Defence to formalize cooperation, marking a major step toward positioning

Pakistan as a global leader in the digital finance revolution.

Pakistan's proactive approach demonstrates its commitment to embracing the next wave of financial innovation.

The government has signaled plans to very soon announce comprehensive crypto legalization policies, further strengthening Pakistan's position as one of the fastest-growing crypto markets in the world.

The Letter of Intent was signed during the meeting of World Liberty Financial and Pakistan Crypto Council. The meeting included the Finance Minister of Pakistan, CEO of the Council, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman SECP and Federal Secretary for IT. The Scope of Cooperation between Pakistan Crypto Council and World Liberty Financial outlines collaboration in key areas includ-

ing. Launching regulatory sandboxes for blockchain financial product testing, facilitating the responsible growth of DeFi protocols, exploring tokenization of real-world assets like real estate and commodities, expanding stablecoin applications for remittances and trade, and providing strategic advisory on blockchain infrastructure and global regulatory trends

Pakistan offers one of the world's most promising digital economies, with over 64% of its population under the age of 30. The country ranks among the top in global crypto adoption, with an estimated \$300 billion in annual crypto transactions and 25 million active crypto users.

With rising mobile penetration, a vibrant freelance economy, and strong government interest in blockchain, Pakistan's youth are uniquely positioned to drive the next wave of Web3 innovation.

"Pakistan's youth and technology sector are our greatest assets. Through partnerships like this, we are opening new doors for investment, innovation, and global leadership in the blockchain economy."

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb stated: CEO of the Pakistan Crypto Council Bilal Bin Saqib added: "Our collaboration with World Liberty Financial is more than just a partnership-it's a strategic move to empower our young population and integrate Pakistan into the future of global finance."

World Liberty Financial leadership praised Pakistan's dynamism, stating, "Pakistan's energy, vision, and talent make it one of the most exciting places in the world to build the future of decentralized finance."

Canals issue settle under Bilawal's leadership: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the matter of controversial canals has been settled under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Due to the hard work and successful strategy of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the issue has now been completely resolved.

In a statement, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, said that after the official meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on May 2, this issue will be permanently resolved.

He said that all political parties and the legal community are requested to reopen the roads to ensure the smooth flow of goods transport, so that no one suffers any further financial or economic loss.



He said that due to the closures, the public, livestock, import and export sectors, farmers, and the poor are being severely affected.

He further stated that it would be preferable if the sit-ins were discontinued; however, if they must continue, the roads should at least be opened so that the traffic flow is not hampered.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the protest must be peaceful so that people's lives become normal.

He added that they are in contact with the legal community and all political parties, and that the Sindh government is ready to hold talks with every party.

He said that political parties and the legal community should remain vigilant against mischievous elements. Given the current situation in the country, he emphasized that everyone must make decisions collectively and wisely.

MPs delegation meets GS MWL

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq held a meeting with Secretary General of Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, in Makkah. During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on promoting unity within the Muslim Ummah and matters of mutual interest, said a news release issued here Sunday.

Ayaz Sadiq appreciated the role of the Muslim World League in creating unity among Muslim countries, combating Islamophobia, promoting education for girls within Muslim societies and projecting the true image of Islam at the global level. Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa also lauded Pakistan's efforts in promoting unity and solidarity among the Muslim Ummah, saying that Pakistan is a pivotal country in the Islamic world and has consistently rendered valuable services for the cause of Muslim unity.

Pahalgam false flag operation India aims to distract world from Pakistan's counter terrorism efforts: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar firmly rejected India's propaganda over the Pahalgam incident which is being used to divert global attention from the counter-terrorism efforts of Pakistan.

Addressing the foreign media here Sunday, the minister highlighted Pakistan's position as a frontline state in the war against terror, stating, "Pakistan is a victim of terrorism as no other state has laid down 90,000 lives in the war against terror."

He highlighted the immense sacrifices made by Pakistan's armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and civilians for both national and global peace, noting the economy has suffered losses in the "hundreds of billions of dollars."

"We are the wall between the terrorists and the world, and Pakistan needs to be strengthened and supported in its war against terrorism," he urged.

"We will continue to protect our citizens and the citizens of world, and promote global peace by countering these terrorists which are trying to impose their own ideology in certain areas by spilling blood of civilian and personnel of armed forces," he remarked.

"To me, the Pahalgam episode seems like a distraction because we are gaining lot of successes in our western regions against these terrorists," he said while highlighting Indian frustration over economic improvement in Pakistan. He questioned India's

narrative surrounding the Pahalgam incident, pointing out the area's distance from the Line of Control which is over 150km, and also rapid registration of an FIR within 10 minutes of the incident.

"Is that possible for any investigative agency to register an FIR within ten minutes of incident?" he asked, adding it completely negates the standard procedures involving site visits, evidence collection, and forensic analysis.

"Why is it that the FIR is registered within 10 minutes of incident and blame put on Pakistan and it is said that it has been sponsored from across the border," he said, asking how could a country which is frontline state against terrorism, be held responsible for such events.

"I believe our neighbor

has preconceived notion about this incident and may be the sole purpose was to pin the blame on Pakistan," the minister said, adding "the reason we called for impartial and transparent investigation of incident because our hands are clean."

Tarar also highlighted internal questions being raised within India regarding the Pahalgam incident, citing reports of victims not receiving timely first aid and questionable social media narratives.

He recalled an interview of the one of the sisters of one of the victims who said her brother was not given first aid after the incident.

Tarar asked "why the photoshoot took place and nobody actually coming to check his vital signs to see if he is still alive."

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A four-week war could cost India \$750billion

Usman W. Chohan

HAS the Indian leadership worked out the magnitude of damage that would be wrought on India's economy if it were to initiate a war with Pakistan? A macro-economic analysis by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) indicates that a four-week conventional war would incur \$750 billion in economic losses to India - three-fourths of a trillion dollars in just four weeks. This analysis echoes the findings of a previous study made during the height of the 2019 India-Pakistan standoff, which found that India's losses over such a period would have exceeded half a trillion dollars - \$500 billion at a minimum back then.

This would not be a tri-

pling sum by any means for an economy that had not reached even three trillion US dollars at that time and which is now approaching \$4.2 trillion. With the exception of the Covid-19 pandemic that was very poorly handled by the Indian government, India's economy has grown larger, and so too have the economic stakes for India in the event of a confrontation with any neighbor.

The multifactor macro-economic model used in both studies (2025 post-Pahalgam and 2019 post-Pulwama) assessed aggregate output categories of consumption, government spending (civilian and military), investment, and foreign receipts, with key subcategories within each factor calculated and then normalised on a monthly basis.

It was cautioned in 2019 that, if the damage

were to approach anywhere near this mark, India would have faced a GDP decline of nearly 20 per cent, and a similar proportion today as well. This is an amount seldom seen in recent history, except in the cases of catastrophic economic dissolution as experienced in Argentina (2001) and Greece (2011) during peacetime, and Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011) in wartime. Even countries hit by the worst of Covid-19 would not countenance such destruction.

The greater number of roughly \$750 billion today (3/4 of a trillion dollars) should not be surprising when seen in light of the nature of tallying the damage of war.

A costing exercise of this sort is not merely a question of checks issued by a government as war spending, but rather an

estimation of the catastrophe arising from disrupted or destroyed human lives, military hardware, property, projects, markets, savings, morale, psychology, and any semblance of sanity in society.

At a time when India is aiming to draw greater investment from around the world, and negotiating tariffs, how would the course of fixed capital and financial investment proceed in the midst of a full-blown conventional war with a neighbor? How would economic activity maintain the semblance of normalcy?

The damage to retail activity, to FDI, infrastructure projects, to internal and external commerce would be incomparably worse than even the darkest periods of South Asian history. This does not even begin to touch the ultimate fear

- that of a very limited nuclear exchange, since the loss in that instance would be near-incalculable and long-term.

As we had noted previously, citing a 2019 example of how quickly losses are incurred in modern warfare, the reckless employment of the Indian Air force in operations when the Pakistan Air Force shot down two Indian fighters and a frigate helicopter downed resulted in a loss of over \$100 million in less than ten minutes of air action. As such, the ultimate figure in the study helps to frame India's risks and stakes as a deterrent to further violence and conflict.

As India's economy has grown, so too has the glass house in which it sits. The dividends of India's GDP growth on paper have gone almost exclusively to the top 5%

of their society, with the bottom 51% majority holding barely 3% of all economic assets. India has 1.2 billion poor people, and barely 2 million high income individuals, and the thin stratum of 'middle class' is calculated at an income of just \$10 per day.

It is those teeming masses who would suffer most as the Indian establishment works the people into a war frenzy that would cause devastation at the levels we have modelled out, if not worse.

Yet the Indian jingoism of its 'Billionaire Raj' elite is fanning a hysteria after Pahalgam on their media that would annihilate their economic futures.

They are threatening the water security of the region, and playing fast and loose with longstanding water agreements that

help address the requirements of nearly one billion people in the northern section of the subcontinent.

As it stands, India does not enjoy stable relations of trust with any of its neighbors, but as with the previous study, the updated calculation bolsters the very same claim: that peace must prevail in South Asia, for without it, the region cannot realise its full economic potential - certainly not while its largest member, India, repeatedly absolves itself of its responsibilities to its people, to its neighbors, and to the world at large.

Cooler heads must prevail, and India must dispassionately examine the consequences of militarized occupation of Kashmir for its own future. With 1.5 million military and paramilitary personnel to

tyrannize the Kashmiri people, and only to find the Kashmiris still mustering resistance to Indian atrocities, the futility of Indian policies requires a sober revision to move beyond imbrolios. Operation Swift Retort is a firm reminder of India's failures and follies.

The Indian leadership must be mindful of this and urge for peace and confidence-building, with mutual economic prosperity in mind.

That is the only way through which the economic potential of the region can be redeemed and assured in the future.

Dr. Usman W. Chohan is Advisor (Economic Affairs and National Development) at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be reached at cass.thinkers@cassstt.com



CCI meeting paves way for resolving water disputes: Kundi

LAHORE (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday emphasized the significance of the recent Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting, saying it as a vital step toward resolving the longstanding water dispute among provinces.

The Governor held an interactive session with senior journalists at the Governor House Lahore, where he addressed a range of critical issues facing the province and the country.

Former Member of the Punjab Provincial Assembly and Pakistan Peoples Party leader, Sania Kamran, was also present during the discussion. Governor Kundi said that the CCI

meeting had created a path toward the solution of the water dispute.

Furthermore, he emphasised that with the already sensitive situations in two provinces, we must ensure that no additional grievances arise in Sindh. Discussing the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Governor Kundi expressed serious concern over deteriorating infrastructure and security conditions.

He highlighted the case of a 25-kilometer road in Kurram district that remains closed due to presence of troubling elements in the province. He said that the provincial government's inability to manage even such a small stretch of road is proof of its

lacklustre administration.

He raised serious concerns about the prevalent lawlessness and unrest and called for a thorough investigation by the relevant authorities.

He further pointed out that even South KP and the merged tribal districts continue to face alarming law and order challenges, calling for immediate attention and intervention to restore stability and development in these regions.

Governor Kundi reaffirmed his commitment to raising these concerns at the highest forums and working collaboratively across political and provincial lines to ensure peace and progress for all citizens.

ANF foils bid to smuggle 720 kg drugs abroad

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Sunday foiled a plan to smuggle some 720 kilograms charas from Panjgur to Gwadar and then to Tanzania and Yemen, and arrested two accused.

According to an ANF spokesman, an ANF team on a tip-off, stopped a suspicious Hino truck and Prado vehicle near Giovanni Cross in Gwadar. The team searched the two vehicles and found some 720 kg of export quality charas concealed beneath their floors, and arrested two suspects.

The spokesman said a network of drug dealers was involved in planning to smuggle the drugs to Yemen and Tanzania. The ANF's timely and effective intelligence operation and strategy foiled the international smuggling attempt, he added.

The spokesman said an investigation was initiated after registering a case against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act. Raids were underway to arrest other suspects and drug suppliers involved in the network, he added.

The systematic and consistent operations of the ANF, he said, "demonstrate its zero tolerance policy against drug networks". He said the ANF was committed to its mandate, "one nation, one destination, a drug-free Pakistan".

36 shops sealed, 10 truckloads of goods seized

LAHORE (APP): The district administration sealed 36 shops, confiscated 10 truckloads of encroachment materials, and impounded 9 fruit vendor rickshaws in a major drive against encroachments, here on Sunday. The ongoing anti-encroachment operations are being carried out, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza, with active participation from Assistant Commissioners across various localities.

Significant operations were conducted in areas including Badami Bagh, Shahdara, Chaman Colony, Johar Town, Multan Road, and Raiwind Road. Additionally, operations were extended to Manga Mandi, Sundar Road, Raiwind Main Bazaar, Abdullah Gul Interchange, Walton Road, and Allama Iqbal Road. Anti-encroachment activities also took place in Township Market, Haji Camp, GT Road, Harbanspura, and Rizwan Garden, where illegally occupied public spaces were cleared to restore road width and improve traffic flow.



ISLAMABAD: A person taking nap on bench at Aabpara Bus Stop in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Ehsan condemns Indian propaganda

KARACHI (APP): Advisor to the Sindh Chief Minister on Inter-Provincial Coordination and Cooperative Department, Sardar Ehsan ur Rehman Khan Mazari, on Sunday strongly condemned India's aggressive stance and propaganda against Pakistan.

He expressed sorrow over the incident in Pahalgam but criticized India for habitually blaming Pakistan without evidence, according to a communique here.

He said that the Indian media constantly spreads

false propaganda against Pakistan but is consistently exposed by the truth.

Mazari emphasized that Baloch leaders are patriotic and have always stood with Pakistan through every challenge.

He urging India said that she should respect international laws and principles of foreign policy. He highlighted that Pakistan herself is a victim of terrorism.

Mazari denounced India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty as a grave violation of international law.

Referring to Jaffar Express incident, he pointed out of evidence of Indian involvement in terrorism in Balochistan.

IIQJK, Mazari said that the Modi government continues to suppress the Kashmiris' right to self-determination and shifts blame onto Pakistan to cover its own aggressive actions.

He said that India herself is committing provocations in the region and makes false allegations against Pakistan to throw dust in the eyes of the world.

Pakistan, China can collaborate on films

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that Pakistan and China have great potential to jointly produce feature and animation films, highlighting the growing scope for collaboration in the cultural and creative industries.

She made these remarks while attending the China Film Festival held in Lahore on Sunday. The event was also attended by Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren, who warmly welcomed the minister.

Speaking at the festival, Minister Azma Bukhari described the event as "a breath of fresh air" for Pakistan's film industry. She lauded China's collaboration with Pakistan across various sectors and expressed optimism about

similar partnerships in the film and culture domains.

"Pakistan and China can work together extensively in the fields of film and culture," she said, noting that cultural exchange through cinema can play a vital role in strengthening bilateral ties.

She also revealed that the Punjab government has constituted an eight-member committee dedicated to the revival of the local film industry, underlining the government's commitment to revitalizing the sector. "The grant allocated for the film industry is a clear reflection of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's deep interest in promoting culture and the arts," she added.

The minister proposed organising joint film work-

shops in Lahore and Beijing to nurture emerging talent—including actors, producers, and technical experts. She also suggested hosting joint film festivals in Lahore and Shanghai to foster people-to-people connections between the two nations.

Azma Bukhari visits Sundas Foundation: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari on Sunday visited Sundas Foundation and distributed gifts among children suffering from Thalassaemia.

According to official sources here, she also gave a scooter to a girl in Sundas Foundation on behalf of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz. She inquired after the health of Thalassaemia patients and showed empathy towards them.

Khan's leadership must to pull country out of troubles: Cheema

LAHORE (PPI) Senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamsheed Iqbal Cheema, on Sunday stated that the country needs the leadership of PTI founder Imran Khan to extricate itself from the quagmire of issues and challenges.

He expressed confidence that Imran Khan and other leaders would soon be vindicated in false cases. He made these remarks while speaking at the wedding ceremony of long-time party worker Muhammad Asad in constituency NA-121. Political and social figure Dr. Saleem, among others, was also present on the occasion.

Cheema congratulated Muhammad Asad on his wedding and stated that party workers are the crown jewels of the party. He mentioned that despite government oppression and hardships, the enthusiasm of PTI workers has not waned. He further stated that PTI's struggle will be recorded in history with golden words. The struggle to run the country according to the constitution and law is still ongoing.

‘Woman of Impact Award’ ceremony held

KARACHI (APP): The "Woman of Impact Awards 2025" was held here Sunday at the Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo Auditorium, Liaquat Memorial National Library, celebrating the inspiring achievements of women across various fields. Wisdom Tree Apex Skill Institute (WASI) organized the event began with a warm welcome from the organizing team, followed by an inspiring speech by founder Mehren Mushtaq Kazi, who emphasized the importance of women empowerment.

The ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Barrister Shahida Jameel and attended by several prominent personalities. Special guests, including Sarfaraz Ahmed Khan, Shariq Jamal, Saad Bin Aziz, Akbar Khan, Fida Hussain, Ghulam Yasin, Junaid Khan, Nikhat Shakel Khan, Shajeel Ahmed Khan, and Erum Arshad, added prestige to the event with their presence. Many well-known actors and actresses, including Yogi Wajahat, Sunger, and Anina Fida, were also in attendance.

The main sponsors of the event included National Bank, Siz Water, Quice, Salman Food Corporation Pvt. Ltd., Shandar Masala, H&A E-Store, Rose Education Society, and Farhan Essa. Throughout the afternoon, award recipients shared emotional and motivational success stories, leaving the audience deeply moved. The event also featured live performances, including a performance by M Juman son, and a special hi-tea session, offering guests opportunities for networking and celebration. The event concluded with a heartfelt note of gratitude to all participants and supporters, marking it as a memorable and uplifting tribute to women's strength and impact.

5,400-litre milk, 3,800-kg meat discarded

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) teams discarded over 5,400 litres of contaminated milk, 3,800 kilograms of unhealthy meat, and more than 2 maunds of substandard bakery products on the spot.

Inspections were conducted at five major food production units, with two facilities sealed due to poor hygiene practices and administrative violations. Fines amounting to Rs. 1.045 million were also imposed.

Early morning crackdowns were carried out at Multan Road, Ring Road, Babu Sabu, Shahdara, and Gajumatta. Teams inspected 515 milk-carrying vehicles and 41 dairy shops, examining a total of 474,000 liters of milk. Simultaneously, over 92,000 kilograms of chicken meat were inspected at Tollinton Market.

Western laid down world order is dying: Mushahid

KARACHI (APP): Senior politician Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Sunday said that the world order laid down by the west was dying now and a new world order will emerge.

Addressing a chief guest on the second day of a two-day conference titled 'Twenty Years After Bandung: The Struggle Continues', he said, today we are living in the age of turbulence and transformation.

Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that he had seen China in 1970, when it was weak, isolated and poor but now she was rising, which was a historical moment. He said that out of 193 countries, 140 counties had

trade with China.

He further said that Israel was oppressing the people of Gaza and Indian government was thrashing Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIQJK) people.

Mushahid said that the core issues for Trump were going to be Palestine and IIQJK. He said that these core issues had to be resolved otherwise there would be absence of peace.

He was of the view that there was tremendous improvement in deal with Iran by Trump. Mushahid said that Trump's slogan was not for wars, he was ending the wars and he said such things give hope.

The Chief Guest said

that he was optimist and spirit of Bandung was reviving. He said that the focus should be on democratized world in the quest for better tomorrow.

He opined that the new regionalism was very important component in the days to come. The Former Federal Minister and Senator Javed Jabbar and the former foreign secretary Tehmina Janjua also addressed the sessions during the conference.

Earlier, different sessions were held including genocide and human rights violations, global water challenges: disputes and shortages, threats to global peace and global majority in a multipolar world.

Need to focus on inner deficiencies: Shakoor

KARACHI (PPI): Our preparations to deter any external threat are excellent; however, there is a need to remove our inner deficiencies, said Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor here Sunday.

He said the whole world knows that Pahalgam drama was a false flag operation of India. He said India should not blame Pakistan for its security failure. Blaming Pakistan just five minutes after this false flag operation was ridiculous.

He said Pakistan with its successful missile testing has given India a befitting reply. He said India has already been disintegrated internally and if it dared for a war it would surely break down. He said India's decision on the Indus Water Treaty should be challenged on interna-

tional forums. He said Pakistan should also revoke the Simla Agreement. He said despite deploying one million soldiers of the occupation army of India, Modi has failed to suppress the voice of brave Kashmiri freedom fighters. He said Pakistanis stand shoulder by shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers.

He said the meddling of India into Balochistan, Sindh and KP is not hidden. He said India is not only backing the terrorist activities in Pakistan but also funding different groups to create anarchy and unrest in the country. He said our government and security agencies should take stern action in this regard.

Altaf Shakoor demanded of the government to keep a vigilant eye on the elements that are creating internal

issues in the country on different pretexts. He said creating hatred amongst different provinces is a deep rooted conspiracy.

He said blocking of national supply lines and supply chains should never be allowed under any pretext. He said all internal issues should be resolved with dialogue and mutual respect and understanding.

He said our external defence is excellent and now we should focus on resolving our internal issues. He said a small leakage could sink the whole ship and the internal rifts are these small leakages which could create a big harm for the nation and country if not plugged promptly.

He said the whole nation backs and supports our brave armed forces and if India tried to go for a misadventure it would be brow beaten.

DIG Islamabad calls for action against criminals

KARACHI (PPI): In a decisive move to strengthen law enforcement, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Police, Muhammad Jawad Tariq, convened pivotal meetings across various zones, including City Zone, Saddar Zone, Industrial Area Zone, Swan Zone, and Rural Zone.

During these crucial sessions, the DIG directed officers to carry out relentless legal action against a wide range of criminal activities, from car and motorcycle theft to drug dealing and illegal arms. A stern warning was issued to address land grabbing, kite flying, and sales, with a particular focus on intensifying efforts to dismantle criminal networks and apprehend fugitives.

The DIG scrutinized the performance of all zones, issuing mandates to bolster crime management and elevate investigative standards. He called for the swift filing of charge sheets in ongoing investigations and launched a vigorous campaign against illegal practices.

Highlighting modern policing techniques, he urged the integration of advanced technology with traditional methods to enhance law enforcement efficiency. The importance of taking uncompromising legal action against grave offenses was reiterated, alongside ensuring justice is served to offenders.

Officers were instructed to prioritize merit-based inquiries and expedite the capture of absconders, emphasizing the gathering

of robust evidence to secure convictions. Station House Officers (SHOs) were tasked with addressing public grievances effectively at the precinct level, maintaining a zero-tolerance stance on crimes against women and children.

The directive included a call for targeted patrols and the apprehension of professional beggars and their enablers, ensuring thorough legal measures are enacted. Stressing integrity, the DIG declared that misconduct and corruption would not be tolerated. He urged the force to uphold exemplary discipline, reaffirming the protection of citizens' lives and properties as the foremost duty, cautioning that any negligence would be met with strict consequences.



LAHORE: A mechanic is making padestal fans at workplace in the city. —APP Photo

3 accused killed in encounters

LAHORE (APP): Three accused were killed by alleged firing of accomplices in encounters in Kotwali, Chohang and Model Town.

There was a fierce exchange of fire between the Crime Control Department (CCD) Chohang and dacoits, a key leader of a gang active in various police stations of Lahore's divisions. Muhammad Shahzad, was killed by firing of his own accomplices.

DSP CCD Chohang, Farooq Asghar Awan said that the police team was taking the accused, who was remanded, to Chohang police station, in Bhotaban area for recovery of stolen goods and arrest of accomplices.

Unidentified accused opened indiscriminate fire on the police party to free their accomplice.

Muhammad Shahzad was seriously injured and was being shifted to hospital but he died on the way. The official vehicle was severely

damaged in the firing. DSP CCD Chohang, Farooq Asghar Awan said that a search operation is underway in the area to arrest the absconding accused.

On the other hand, there was a fierce exchange of fire between the Crime Control Department (CCD) Model Town and robbers. The leader of an inter-provincial gang, a symbol of fear in hundreds of incidents such as attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping and injuring police officers, Muhammad Arshad alias Joker was killed by firing of his own accomplices.

Inspector Imran Yousuf and his team were taking the accused, who was remanded, to the Nishtar Colony police station for recovery of stolen goods and weapons and arrest of his accomplices.

Unidentified accused opened indiscriminate fire on the police party to free their detained accomplice.

The accused, Muhammad Arshad alias Joker, was seriously injured and was being shifted to hospital, but he died on the way.

DSP (CCD 5) Model Town Chaudhry Faisal Sharif said that the accused, along with his accomplices, used to rob people at gun-point and escape by firing on citizens when they resisted.

It should be remembered that some time ago, the accused had also shot at and injured a constable during an encounter in the Baghbanpura police area. The accused was a record holder in more than 135 cases of serious crimes such as attempted murder, robbery and police encounter.

The other accomplices of the accused escaped taking advantage of the darkness. DSP (CCD 5) Model Town Chaudhry Faisal Sharif said that a search operation is underway in the area to arrest the accused.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr Muhammad Ali Saif addressing International Health Conference.

Chairman Peshawar Board, for cluster-based exam system

PESHAWAR (APP): A consultative meeting was held under the chairmanship of Riaz Khan Mehsud, Commissioner Peshawar Division and Chairman of the Peshawar Board, to discuss the implementation of the Cluster-Based Examination System for the upcoming intermediate exams.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary and Controller of the Peshawar Board, along with other senior officials. Principals from both government and private sector institutions also participated in the session.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the preparations and arrangements for the examinations. All stakeholders shared valuable



insights and suggestions aimed at making the examination system more effective, transparent, and standardized.

Riaz Khan Mehsud assured the participants

that their recommendations would be considered in formulating the examination policy.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants pledged their full support

and cooperation to the Commissioner Peshawar Division and Chairman Peshawar Board in successfully implementing the Cluster-Based Examination System.

Pahalgam incident highlights India's security failure: Sherpao

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Qaumi Watan Party, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Sunday said that Pahalgam incident is a clear evidence of India's security failure.

Speaking to the media in Tangi, Charsadda, Sherpao criticized India for adopting an aggressive stance without any evidence and blaming Pakistan for the incident within just two hours.

He emphasized that the Pakistani nation stands united with its armed forces and will firmly resist any aggression, warning that India would

face severe consequences. Sherpao praised the response of Pakistan's National Security Council to India's hostile actions, describing it as commendable.

He further accused the Modi government of engaging in baseless negative propaganda to protect its faltering image.

Referring to the attacks on the Jafar Express and the Pahalgam incident, Sherpao alleged that India is actively working to undermine the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and do not want projects like

Gwadar and CPEC to succeed in Pakistan.

The Qaumi Watan Party chief stressed that brotherly countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and others should play their role in the current situation. He also underlined China's crucial importance in the region and called for its sincere involvement.

Sherpao strongly condemned India's claim to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, terming it a blatant violation of international agreements.

He reminded that the World Bank and other international organiza-

tions are guarantors of the treaty, and warned that Pakistan would strongly resist any infringement on its water rights, vowing not to let even a single drop be unjustly taken.

Sherpao affirmed that Pakistan's armed forces are fully capable of giving a befitting response to any Indian aggression.

He concluded by asserting that Pakistan has consistently thwarted India's nefarious designs and will continue to do so, with the nation ready to defend itself by any means necessary, even if it requires taking up arms.

Governor pays tribute to Forces for successful operations

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday lauded the security forces for their successful operations against terrorists in various districts Karak, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan.

In various operations, 15 militants were eliminated, earning high praise from the Governor for the bravery and effectiveness of the forces.

Expressing deep sorrow over the martyrdom of two security personnel during the operations, the Governor paid heartfelt tribute to their sacrifice.

He extended condolences and sympathy to the families of the martyred soldiers and prayed for the elevation of their ranks and patience for the bereaved families. Governor Kundi, also commended the sacrifices of the martyred soldiers, saying that those who offer their lives for the country and nation are the nation's pride. He reaffirmed that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces.

Pehalgam attack: Unmasking conspiracy against Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Pehalgam attack has been widely believed to be architected by the RSS-backed Hinduvata Modi regime in a bid to divert global attention from human rights abuses and state terrorism in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The baseless accusations leveled by India against Pakistan following the Pahalgam incident have drawn widespread criticism from security, civil society and diplomatic experts, who claimed the attack was a "false flag operation" orchestrated by the fascist Modi regime to cover internal security lapses, separatist movements and deflect global attention from systematic state terrorism IIOJK where occupational forces unleashed terror especially after revoking its special status on August 5, 2019.

Professor Dr. Ejaz Khan, former Chairman of the International Relations Department at the

University of Peshawar told APP that India's baseless accusations lack both investigation and legal justification, terming Modi Govt stance on Pehalgam as illogical and beyond understanding.

He said that no responsible state imposed blames against others countries unless completion of its investigation and have irrevocable proof.

However, the Indian government and media have once again resorted to blaming Pakistan without presenting any credible evidence and completion of probe which was highly condemnable," Dr. Ejaz Khan said, questioning the timing of the accusations, which coincided with the visit of U.S. Vice President JD Vance to India.

He challenged the Indian false flag narrative by raising key security questions, including the absence of evidence regarding casualties and perpetrators.

"If it was truly a terror

attack, where are the bodies of the alleged terrorists? Where is the proof—weaponry, communication logs, video footage?" he asked.

He pointed out that only a single, suspicious image has circulated in Indian media, showing a woman beside a man lying on the ground with no visible injuries or destruction.

Mushtaq Ahmed Shah, Vice Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League said that Pehalgam incident was looks more like staged theater drama to defame Pakistan," noting how social media accounts linked to India's intelligence agency, RAW, began blaming Pakistan in real time—suggesting premeditation and termed Pahalgam attack was a deeprooted conspiracy against Pakistan.

He claimed India's RAW has most likely planned the attack to diver global attention from state terrorism in IIOJ&K that was virtually turned into big jail of mod-

ern era.

The gruesome violation of human rights including forced disappearance of over 8,000 innocent Kashmiris, 8,652 unmarked mass graves, imposition of longest curfew on some 10 million unarmed, extra judicial killings and human rights abuses especially against women and children have exposed India's ugly secular face.

The Kashmiri leader while referring to the September 2021's Pakistani dossier said about 8,652 unmarked graves were identified in 89 villages of six districts in the held valley while bodies of 37 Kashmiris burnt alive by Indian forces were beyond recognition.

Since 1989, he claimed over 96,000 cases of extra judicial killings, around 162,000 cases of arbitrary arrests and torture, over 25,000 pellet guns injuries, 11,250 women raped, 23,000 women widowed and over 108,000 children

ICHR-25 concludes with global experts pledging to advance health research

PESHAWAR (APP): The Third International Conference on Health Research - 2025 (ICHR-25) concluded with global experts pledging to continue advancing the mission of research and innovation in healthcare.

The conference had earlier commenced with a powerful call for collaboration, innovation, and leadership in the health sector.

More than 2,000 participants including renowned national and international scientists gathered in Peshawar for what organizers described as the most ambitious edition of the conference to date.

Hosted by Rehman College of Dentistry (RCD), ICHR-25 represents a strategic effort to elevate the standard of health research in Pakistan and beyond. The three-day event featured scientific panels, interdisciplinary workshops, and high-level discussions, serving as a critical platform for reshaping the future of healthcare.

The Chief Guest of the conference, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister KP on Information and Public Relations, appreciated the efforts of Rehman Medical Institute and praised RCD's management for organizing such a major event focused on healthcare research.

He made these remarks in the presence of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Rehman (Chairman RMI), Mr. Shafique Ur Rehman (CEO RMI), Prof. Dr. Ghulam Rasool (Principal RCD), Dr. Naseer Ahmad (Chairman ICHR), and senior faculty members from RMI institutions.

Prof. Dr. Ghulam Rasool, Patron of ICHR-25 and Principal of RCD, described the conference as a "collaborative inquiry into the future of healthcare," emphasizing the importance of sharing knowledge, challenging outdated perspectives, and fostering global partnerships. He thanked all participants for contributing to such a significant event.

Reflecting on RMI's journey, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Rehman stressed the importance of proactive healthcare, stating, "We must act before the disease strikes."

RMI CEO Shafique Ur Rehman expressed pride in RMI's role in successfully organizing a scientific gathering of this scale. He emphasized that the journey must continue, asserting that it is the right of the people of Pakistan to receive the best possible healthcare — and that advancing research is key to overcoming the challenges faced in the sector.

The conference spanned over three days and saw participation from over 2,000 delegates, with delegations from 7 countries attending in person.

Pakistan: A peaceful and brave nation with invincible defense

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

PAKISTAN has always stood as a peace-loving nation, guided by the principle of "live and let live." From the very first day of its establishment, Pakistan has adopted a responsible and peaceful approach towards all its neighbors, particularly India. Despite various provocations and challenges, Pakistan has never initiated aggression or disturbed the peace of the region. History is witness that Pakistan has always extended the hand of friendship, but unfortunately, this gesture has often been misinterpreted by India as a sign of weakness. However, whenever Pakistan has been provoked beyond limits, it has responded with strength, clarity, and resolve that has left no doubt about its capacity to defend itself.

The Pakistani nation, along with its brave armed forces, is made up of resilient, courageous, and self-sacrificing people. In times of national crisis, the entire nation becomes united like a clenched fist. The passion with which Pakistan responds to aggression transforms every child into a soldier. Our people do not fear death—in fact, the Muslim spirit considers martyrdom an honor and a divine reward. This belief grants the nation a spiritual and moral strength that no adversary can match. It is this superior will and unshakeable determination that makes us distinct from India, and this distinction will remain until the end of time.

Indian leaders and military commanders are well aware of this reality. They know that if Pakistan is pushed to the wall, it will not stay silent. The international community too has seen this unwavering spirit. There have been moments in history when Indian actions forced a strong response from Pakistan. One such occasion was when India resorted to its usual mischief, prompting the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, to warn India bluntly: "We did not make our missiles to launch on Shab-e-Barat." This bold and direct statement clearly communicated Pakistan's preparedness and seriousness in the face of Indian provocations.

A historic moment unfolded during President General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's visit to India. Amid high tensions, he attended a cricket match between Pakistan and India in an Indian stadium. During the game, General Zia leaned towards Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and firmly stated, "Mr. Rajiv, we are both watching this cricket match, but remember, Pakistan has the capability you are aware of. If you take any misstep, we will erase your country from the map. Pakistan is one of many Muslim countries, but India is the only Hindu state. Otherwise, you are a very sensible person." This was not a threat but a strong message of deterrence, emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to peace while underscoring its resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and security.

These words from a sitting President and Army Chief were not empty rhetoric—they reflected the collective national stance of Pakistan. Our peaceful posture is not born out of fear but from a desire to avoid the horrors of war. Yet, if peace is threatened and war is imposed on us, the consequences will be severe and far-reaching, especially for the aggressor.

It must be emphasized here that Pakistan is a nuclear power. Our strategic capabilities include a credible minimum deterrence policy, but if the integrity of our homeland is threatened, we possess the capacity and the will to utilize our deterrent. Nuclear weapons are not trophies—they are serious tools of national defense, and their presence is a reminder to the world that any recklessness in South Asia could have devastating global consequences. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the international community, especially the global superpowers, to counsel India not to play with fire. Any hostile adventure against Pakistan will not only endanger regional peace but could also trigger uncontrollable escalation.

Despite the passing of decades and many opportunities for escalation, Pakistan has always opted for restraint, dialogue, and peace. Even today, our desire remains to coexist peacefully with all our neighbors, including India. But this desire should never be misread as timidity. Our history, our capability, and our willpower all reflect a nation that seeks peace but stands fully prepared for any sacrifice to defend its land.

In conclusion, Pakistan's message is clear and consistent; we want peace, stability, and mutual respect in the region. However, if our goodwill is mistaken for weakness, our response will be decisive. India must abandon its policy of provocation and pursue the principle of good neighborliness. The path forward is simple—live and let live. Peace is not only in Pakistan's interest but in the interest of the entire world. Let it not be forgotten; in a war forced upon us, every Pakistani becomes a soldier, and every inch of our land becomes a line of defense.

Dr. Zahid secures 3rd prize at research competition

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Muhammad Zahid, a promising student at Frontier Homeopathic Medical College (FHMC), has made his institution proud by securing the 3rd prize at the 7th Annual Research Competition organized by Dr. Rekeeweg's company. His remarkable achievement was the result of months of dedication, rigorous research, and close mentorship under the guidance of Dr. Noor Hakeem Gelani, a respected faculty

member at FHMC. The competition, which drew participants from leading medical colleges and universities across the region, was a platform for young researchers to showcase innovative projects and scientific inquiry. Dr. Muhammad Zahid's research impressed the panel of judges with its originality, thorough methodology, and impact in the medical field. Speaking about his success, Zahid credited much of his achievement to the mentorship of Dr. Gelani,

saying, "I am deeply grateful for Dr. Gelani's constant support, encouragement, and expert guidance throughout this journey. This award is as much his as it is mine."

Dr. Gelani praised Zahid's dedication, noting, "Dr. Muhammad Zahid demonstrated an exceptional commitment to research excellence. His curiosity, hard work, and attention to detail were evident in every stage of the project."

This accomplishment not only highlights the talent nurtured at FHMC but also underscores the importance of student-teacher collaboration in advancing academic and scientific achievements.

FHMC's administration extended heartfelt congratulations to both Dr. Muhammad Zahid and Dr. Gelani, expressing confidence that such milestones would inspire other students to pursue research and contribute to the advancement of medical science.



five civilians—how could such a bold attack occur in broad daylight by killing 26 tourists?" he questioned.

Brigadier Mahmood also highlighted a pattern of similar terrorists incidents orchestrated by RAW during politically sensitive moments or international visits of VIPs.

Dr. Professor ZA Hilali, former Chairman at Political Science Department said that India was involved in sponsoring terrorism not only in neighboring countries but also in its own provinces to malign Pakistan.

He said that the arrest of serving Indian Navy Commander Kulboshan Yadev showed India's direct involvement in terrorism in Pakistan.

"These attacks always seem to happen when India wants to shift focus or build a narrative against Pakistan whether it was the Samjhauta Express attack in 2007, Mumbai assault in 2008, Pulwama shooting in

2019, or now Pahalgam gunattack in 2025," he said.

He recalled that in several previous instances, Indian officials or investigations later contradicted the official narrative of New Delhi.

For example, a former CBI officer revealed that the 2008 Mumbai attacks were used by the Indian government to push anti-terror legislation. Likewise, the ex-Governor of IIOJK had publicly stated the Pulwama attack in 2019 was avoidable and mishandled.

Dr. Hilali further criticized India's global campaign to malign Pakistan while ignoring its own involvement in international incidents, including operations targeting Sikh dissidents and butchering innocent Kashmiris at IIOJK.

"In an age of digital transformation, such staged RAW sponsored terrorism events to mask domestic failures and war crimes at

IIOJ&K will not go unnoticed," Dr. Prifessor Hilali maintained. "The international community must demand real answers—not politically motivated rhetoric from India," he reiterated.

The experts said that India must learn of shooting down of two aircrafts and capturing of its pilot during successful operation of Pakistan Air Force in 2019 and warned of not making any mistake of adventure.

They also supported Federal Govt measures that passed a strong message to India that no compromise would be made on the sovereignty and security of Pakistan.

The experts praised the Pakistani Govt offer for an international probe of the Pehalgam incident. They expressed the hope that Indian Govt would positively reciprocate to the Pakistan's offer and allow Pakistani investigators for a credible probe of the Pehalgam incident.



In brief

Tree plantation drive held

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A special event focusing on the enrollment campaign and the importance of tree plantation was organized here at Govt Primary School Mandhran Kalan No. 1. The event was participated by Sub-Divisional Education Officer (SDEO) Dr. Humayun Khattak, Assistant SDEOs, school leaders, and directors and deputy directors from the NCHD (National Commission for Human Development). Addressing the gathering, Dr. Humayun Khattak highlighted the critical role of trees in environmental protection, beautification of the land, and sustaining human life. As part of the initiative, Dr. Khattak and the NCHD team personally purchased around 500 saplings to carry out large-scale tree plantation activities within schools and surrounding communities. Speaking on the enrollment campaign, Dr. Khattak shared his experiences and urged teachers to utilize all available resources to ensure maximum students' enrollment. He emphasized the necessity of achieving government-set targets and stressed that every out-of-school child must be brought into the educational fold. "The future of our nation lies in the hands of these educated children," Dr. Khattak said. "It is our collective responsibility to enlighten our next generation with the power of knowledge and transform them into a conscious and progressive society."

Turkish official visits UAF

FAISALABAD (APP): Dr. Hakan Ozkan of Cukurova University Turkey visited University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and met with scientists from wheat group of the Plant Breeding & Genetics Department. Dr. Muhammad Kashif, Dr. Rizwana Maqbool, Dr. Aamir Shakeel, Dr. Raheel Rehman, Dr. Amara and others attended the meeting and discussed varieties of wheat and solutions to the problems being faced by the crop. They meeting expressed their views to promote relations between the two universities. Dr. Hakan Ozkan said that in his wheat breeding program, they were employing traditional and modern methods including molecular DNA markers and speed breeding in collaboration with private seed companies. He said that it is imperative to ensure an increase in the per acre yield of wheat so that the needs of growing population can be met in an efficient manner. The meeting was informed that Punjab Seed Council has approved a new wheat line "Chenab Pasta 24" developed by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Zulfiqar Ali that is a hallmark achievement. Moreover, UAF in collaboration with Washington State University is developing climate resilient lines of the wheat that will increase the production. The hybrid wheat lines are also being developed for the first time in Pakistan by University of Agriculture Faisalabad in collaboration with University of Agriculture Multan and Australia. The UAF spokesman said, Later, Dr. Hakan Ozkan also met Director CAS Dr Sultan Habib, Dr Tehseen and others in addition to visiting wheat fields of the university.

Governor Kundi vows swift uplift projects for DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday announced a series of development initiatives aimed at improving public service facilities and green revolution in the Dera Ismail Khan region.

Speaking at a gathering organized by PPP Senior Vice President in Tehsil Paharpur Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah Bukhari, Governor Kundi emphasized the Pakistan People's Party's commitment to regional development.

He said that "though the PPP not holding federal ministries but being governor, I am committed to resolving all federal-level issues for Dera Ismail Khan," he said.

He said that a passport facility will soon be inaugurated at the NADRA office in Paharpur tehsil to ease the difficulties of local people. Additionally, a new NADRA office and a post office will be established in Kirri Khaisour to better serve the local population.

Highlighting the legacy of the PPP, he recalled that founder chairman of the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had gifted the Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) project to the region, while Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has now launched the major Chashma Lift Canal project.

He confirmed that tenders for the first phase out of six phases of the project have been issued, and its inauguration will take place soon.

"After completion of this project, Damaan area and Dera region will be fertile and self-sufficient in wheat production, enabling us to supply wheat to other provinces," he added.

He further stated that the Chashma Lift Canal project would spur economic growth, leading to the establishment of more sugar mills in the region, providing employment opportunities and boosting local prosperity.

The governor also addressed issues related to

the newly established Paniala Tehsil, criticizing the provincial government for failing to meet basic infrastructure requirements, such as establishing a Tehsil Headquarters building. He pledged that federal offices, including NADRA centers, will also be opened in Paniala.

About Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Governor Kundi said that 16,000 more women from the area have received BISP cards, with another 15,000 cards in the pipeline. This will raise the number of BISP beneficiaries in the region to 54,000 women.

The governor, on this occasion, also inaugurated the solar system installed by Red Crescent at Basic Health Unit (BHU) in Kathgarh area.

Commending Syed Ghazanfar Ali Shah Bukhari for his dedication to the party, Governor Kundi urged all PPP workers and office-bearers to show the same level of commitment to strengthen the party further.

Upto 15 lakh youth to be provided jobs: Mashood

SWAT (APP): Chairman, Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan here Sunday said that upto 1.5 million youth would be provided jobs opportunities inside and outside of the country on merit and asked youth to get themselves registered on PM's digital portal for the facilities and services at their doorsteps.

Addressing a public gathering at Matta tehsil of Swat, he said that laptops, scholarships and dignified jobs are being given to youth of Pakistan including KP on merit, adding laptops on interest free loans are also being provided to youth irrespective of their political background. He asked youth to registered themselves on the Prime Minister's digital portal for laptops, jobs and others facilities in their own interests.

Rana Mashhood said that on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's directives, he has started visits of different cities and universities to

informs masses about the services and facilities being provided to them under the PM Youth Program.

He said Pakistan Muslim League has created Pakistan after heroic struggle by our forefathers on August 14, 1947 and PMLN would make it an economically and financially stronger.

Despite tough challenges, he said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has put the country's economy back on positive track and reduced policy rate, unemployment, poverty, price hike, petrol, electricity, gas prices and inflation significantly. He said then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has made Pakistan's defence impregnable after successful atomic blasts at Chaghi Balochistan on May 28, 1998.

He said now India could not dare to make an evil eye on Pakistan.

Rana Mashood said that Pakistan's rights on west-

ern rivers water has been accepted by India under Indus Water Treaty guaranteed by the World Bank.

He said India has left with no justification to stop our water. He said minorities were not safe in India and human rights violations at IIOJ&K continued.

He said that PTI has failed to address problems of people despite its 12 years rule in KP. He said that PMLN after winning 2029 election would address the long sense of deprivation of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that millions of rupees were distributed on political basis under Ramadan package in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said favouritism in disbursement of payment under CM KP Ramadan package have deprived hundreds of thousands of deserving and poor people.

Rana Mashhood said the country's future was linked with an educated youth that would shoulder future responsibilities.

Malaria on the rise in Lakki Marwat

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: With more than two thousand positive malaria cases during the first three months of the ongoing year, the health department held various activities to mark world malaria day and to raise awareness about the mosquito-borne disease and contain it through integrated efforts.

From Jan to March, the health experts screened a total of 45673 individuals with malaria symptoms at 15 microscopy, 35 public sector and 39 private rapid diagnosis centres across the district", a health official told Dawn at the side-line of a seminar organized at the district health offices in connection with world malaria day.

He said that of them, 2164 tested positive and provided free anti-malaria treatment at the health facilities.

The frontier primary health care (FPHC) in col-

laboration with the health department, Indus Hospital and Health Network and Vector-Borne Disease (VBD) KP had organized the seminar, walk and other anti-malaria awareness activities.

At the seminar, district malaria control officer Azmat Ali Shah underlined the need for joint efforts to eliminate malaria.

"Together, we can eradicate the vector-borne disease", he said, stressing an urgent need to promote investment in malaria control and prevention programme.

He said that free malaria diagnosis and treatment facilities were available in hospitals and health centers across the district.

He asked the people to ensure adherence to precautions to save themselves, especially children and pregnant women from malaria.

The health department's coordinator for lady health

workers programme Dr Faheem Wazir said that sustained momentum and renewed commitment were essential to overcoming persistent challenges, including delayed diagnosis, limited community outreach, and environmental factors that aided transmission of the disease.

He asked the officials of the health department and its partners' organisations to mobilise the community and persuade them to join and strengthen anti-malaria efforts.

PEI N-Stop officer Dr Yousof, monitoring officer Kifayatullah Zakori, malaria focal person Aziz Khan, medical entomologist Muhammad Jamil Khan, members of civil society, teachers, religious scholars and people from different segments of society participated. Later, the participants holding banners and placards attended an awareness walk on the premises of the district health offices.

Bugti takes notice of Hindu trader's abduction

QUETTA (APP): The spokesperson of the Balochistan government Shahid Rind on Sunday said that the Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken strict notice of the incident of kidnapping of a Hindu businessman in Naseerabad.

He said that the incident was extremely worrying and the government was

using all available resources for the safe recovery of the kidnapped businessman.

The spokesperson said that the police and law enforcement agencies were fully mobilized and positive progress was expected soon.

He said that the elements involved in the incident would be brought to justice and no one would

be allowed to take the law into their own hands.

Shahid Rind said that the protection of the lives and property of the people was the top priority of the Balochistan government and the Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti had clear instructions that strict action should be taken against those involved in criminal activities.



SWAT: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam addressing a public gathering.

Drone technology vital to boost sugarcane yield

MULTAN (APP): The introduction of drone technology has the potential to revolutionize the sugarcane sector in Pakistan by reducing costs, increasing productivity, and promoting environmental safety, said agricultural scientists and sugarcane experts Dr. Asif Tanveer and Dr. Shahid Afghan while talking to APP. They emphasized that urgent adoption of this precision agriculture tool could help Pakistan achieve its goal of becoming one of the world's leading sugarcane producers while doubling farmers' income.

According to Dr. Asif Tanveer, the sugarcane sector faces serious structural challenges, including low productivity of around 750 maunds per acre, uneconomic landholding size of less than five acres, poor input use efficiency, high pest losses, and minimal mechanization. He said drone technology offers a way out by ensuring precise and need-based application of fertilizers and pesticides, boosting input use efficiency, lowering production costs, and protecting farmer health.

Dr. Tanveer highlighted that drones, once seen as hobbyist tools, are now extensively used in agriculture, especially for crop scouting and spraying operations. He noted that commercial production of spray drones has made it feasible for farmers to adopt this technology at reasonable costs. "There is a labor shortage for timely fertilizer and pesticide application in sugarcane fields. Drone spraying can address this gap, while also reducing environmental pollution and health risks associated with conventional pesticide use," he stated.

Dr. Shahid Afghan added that conventional spraying methods expose farm workers and their families to dangerous chemicals, leading to serious health problems like cancer, asthma, and neurological disorders. He stressed that drones offer a safer, environmentally friendly alternative, capable of protecting both the crop and human health.

Dr. Asif Tanveer informed that currently, farmers spend about Rs. 1000 per acre for manual spraying, using about 120 liters of water. Drone spraying reduces the water requirement to just 10 liters per acre, a 90 percent saving, while lowering the spray cost to around Rs. 800 per acre compared to Rs. 1500 by tractor sprayers. Drones can spray during the day or night and complete one acre of spraying in just 5-10 minutes, compared to 4-5 hours manually.

He further explained that when spreading fertilizer manually, one person needs a full day to cover eight acres, but with a drone, the same task can be completed in an hour, and the liquid fertilizer is distributed more evenly. The operational cost of using liquid fertilizer is also lower than that of solid fertilizer, helping farmers maximize economic benefits at minimal cost.

Dr. Tanveer revealed that the absorption rate of traditional dry nitrogen fertilizer is only about 30 percent, while nano urea, which can be sprayed through drones, is absorbed up to 86 percent by crops. "Drone spraying has reduced the use of fertilizers and pesticides by 25 to 50 percent, saving up to 40 percent of total input costs while boosting yield by 10 to 30 percent," he added.

India can't stop Pak waters unilaterally: Muqam

SWAT (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam said here Monday that wind of political change started from Matta Swat is spreading across the entire province after PTI failed on all fronts.

He said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has started joining of PMLN in large numbers as it was the only party to address their problems, foreseeing a positive political revolution in the province.

"We have supported our people in every hardship—be it terrorism, floods, or earthquakes—and we will continue to do so in the future," he said while addressing a mammoth public gathering at Matta Swat.

Engr Amir Muqam said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former FATA have always been on the frontline in defending Pakistan, and even today, every Pakhtun stands ready to defend their homeland against all threats.

Strongly condemning India's baseless accusations against Pakistan after Pahalgam incident without any investigation or evidence, the Minister said, "We rejected these uncalculated for India's accusations as well as the illegal abolishment of special status of IIOJK of August 5, 2019."

He said India's statement about unilaterally

terminating the Indus Waters Treaty is irrational and foolish, adding it is an international agreement and cannot be revoked unilaterally.

Engr Amir Muqam said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand shoulder to shoulder with brave armed forces of Pakistan.

He said PMLN leadership that successfully conducted the nuclear tests on May 28, 1998 are still here, and so is our brave army.

Warning India, Engr Amir Muqam said "We will respond to any threat just as we responded to its nuclear tests back then."

If Modi Govt speak of humanity, why didn't he say a word when terrorist commander Kulbhushan Yadav was captured for spreading terrorism in Pakistan? he questioned.

He said India has been found involved in terrorism not only in Pakistan but around the world.

The Federal Minister said that India is trying to put pressure on Pakistan to abandon its support for innocent Kashmiries of IIOJ&K but "we stood with the Kashmiris yesterday, we stand with them today, and we will continue to do so." He said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's party is still in power in Pakistan, and we are fully prepared to respond to every threat and conspiracy from India.

He claimed that PTI's agenda is to spread chaos

and agitation to damage the country. The people have now realized who is working for Pakistan's progress in shape of PMLN and who is dragging it towards chaos and anarchy like PTI.

He said the youth of our province have also recognized the reality of those who ruled for twelve years that failed to address KP problems. "They are now turning towards PML-N."

Engr Amir Muqam said the bankrupt economy of the country has once again embarked on the path of progress within a year under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He said Inflation has dropped from 40% to 1.5%, and significant relief in electricity has been provided to consumers.

"PML-N's leadership has always prioritized the country's interests over politics," said Amir Muqam, adding despite multiple attacks on him, he remained firm in the field and have always stood with the oppressed and poor people.

He highlighted PMLN development projects including existing gas pipeline, establishment of grid stations and Nawaz Sharif Kidney hospital in Swat. Engr Amir Muqam said that the Section 4 imposed for establishing a grid station in Matta was removed by the former Chief Minister.

Khushal Khan Khattak varsity syndicate meeting held

F.P. Report

KARAK: The 37th Syndicate meeting of the Khushal Khan Khattak University-Karak (KKKUK) concluded successfully on Saturday in Peshawar, marking a significant step forward in the university's administrative and developmental progress. The meeting, presided over by the esteemed Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Naseer Ud Din, addressed important matters aimed at enhancing the university's operational efficiency and academic environment.

A key highlight of the session was the thorough deliberation on the recommendations put forth by the Finance and Planning Committee (F&PC) regarding the university's budget. Following extensive discussion and consideration by the Syndicate members, the F&PC budget recommendations were recommended and will now be forwarded for senate final approval. Forum also approved the minutes of 27th academic council meeting.

The 37th Syndicate meeting witnessed the participation of several key stakeholders, underscoring the collaborative spirit in the university's governance. Esteemed attendees included the representative of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad, Samina Durani, alongside principal officers

of KKKUK, Registrar Dr. Ghani Ur Rahman, Director Finance Hafiz Ismail Khan, Director Planning & Development Muhammad Rashad, Director Quality Enhancement Cell Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Deputy Director Audit Farid Jalal, Deputy Registrar Meetings Muhammad Ilyas, Deputy Director Finance Asif Ghani, faculty members from the Computer Science Department Dr. Muhammad Zubair and Dr. Shad Muhammad, Additional Registrar Abdul Salam, and representatives from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government, Additional Secretary Establishment Department Jamal Ud Din, Additional Secretary Finance Department Arshad Ali, Deputy Secretary Higher Education Archives and Libraries Department Javed Iqbal and Director Finance Muhammad Zafar from Kohat University. The Principal of Government Post Graduate College (GPGC) Karak, Muhammad Ajmal Khan, along with Tahir Gul, Naveed Bukhari, and Muhammad Jan, also contributed to the meeting's proceedings.

Earlier in the meeting, Registrar Dr. Ghani Ur Rahman presented the agenda items for the 37th Syndicate meeting, facilitating a comprehensive and engaging discussion among all participants. Notably, the Registrar lauded the Vice-Chancellor's proactive role

for the university, recognizing their potential to effectively address and resolve issues faced by university employees. This sentiment was echoed by other Syndicate members, who expressed their appreciation for Professor Dr. Naseer Ud Din's consistent efforts in tackling the university's challenges. The members also acknowledged the Vice-Chancellor's dedication to completing infrastructure projects for the university, particularly amidst challenging circumstances.

The Syndicate further demonstrated its commitment to the university's smooth functioning by making important decisions on various teaching and administrative matters. Recognizing the need for thorough consideration in specific areas, the Syndicate also resolved to form dedicated committees to address these matters in accordance with the university's established rules and regulations.

In his concluding address to the 37th Syndicate, Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Naseer Ud Din expressed his sincere gratitude to the members for their continued trust and confidence in his leadership. He reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to resolving all issues faced by university employees promptly and impartially, emphasizing his dedication to prioritizing the overall betterment and progress of Khushal Khan Khattak University-Karak.





At least nine killed in Vancouver after vehicle plows into Filipino festival

VANCOUVER (Reuters): At least nine people were killed when a man drove through a crowd at a Filipino community festival in the western Canadian city of Vancouver on the weekend before Canada's federal election, police said.

Police said they had arrested a 30-year-old Vancouver man, who was "known" to them, at the scene of the incident on Saturday evening. "At this time, we are confident that this incident was not an act of terrorism," Vancouver police said in an X post.

Speaking on Sunday morning, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said more than 20 people were injured in what police described as a car ramming attack. He said an investigation had begun into how and why the attack took place.

"Last night, families lost a sister, a brother, a mother, a father, a son or a daughter. Those families are living every family's nightmare," Carney told reporters in Hamilton, Ontario, where he also expressed his condolences to the country's Filipino community.

The suspect was initially chased down and held by festival-goers until police arrived, witnesses said. The injured were taken to multiple

hospitals, police said.

The incident happened shortly after 8 p.m. (0300 GMT) near East 41st Avenue and Fraser Street, where the Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party, celebrating a Philippine national hero, was taking place.

One witness told CTV News he saw a black vehicle driving erratically in the area of the festival just before the crowd was struck.

Canada's federal election takes place on Monday. Carney's campaign movements were delayed on Sunday morning after the tragedy, but a government official said the prime minister would head to Saskatoon on Sunday to resume campaigning.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said he was "shattered to hear about the terrible incident" and extended his "deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and to the strong and thriving Filipino community in Canada".

Jagmeet Singh, leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, was among the attendees at the event, but left minutes before the vehicle arrived, he told reporters.

"We don't know the motives, we don't know any of the details, but ultimately this is something that targeted the

Filipino community," he said.

"I was there, and I just imagined the faces of the kids I saw smiling and dancing. It's horrific," he said.

Another witness, who did not wish to be identified, said he had seen about 15 people lying on the ground after the dark SUV plunged into the crowd. The witness said the driver had tried to run but was chased down and held against a fence for about 10 minutes until police arrived.

The festival, celebrated especially in the central Philippines, honors Datu Lapu-Lapu, a Filipino chieftain who defeated Spanish forces led by Ferdinand Magellan in the Battle of Mactan in 1521.

The government of British Columbia officially recognized April 27 as Lapu-Lapu Day in 2023, acknowledging the cultural contributions of the Filipino-Canadian community, one of the largest immigrant groups in the province.

King Charles, Canada's head of state, said in a statement: "Both my wife and I were profoundly saddened to learn of the dreadful attack and utterly tragic loss of life in Vancouver, which took place as the Filipino community came together to

mark the celebration of one of their most special festivals."

The centerpiece of the festival in Vancouver is a multi-block street party in the Sunset neighborhood featuring Filipino food and traditions, live performances and cultural displays.

"I didn't get to see the driver, all I heard was an engine rev," Yoseb Vardeh, co-owner of food truck Bao Buns, said in an interview with Postmedia.

"I got outside my food truck, I looked down the road and there's just bodies everywhere," said Vardeh, his voice breaking with emotion.

"He went through the whole block, he went straight down the middle."

While mass casualty attacks are far less common in Canada than in the United States, such incidents have occurred with some regularity north of the border.

At least two of those attacks involved motor vehicles. In 2021, a man killed four members of a Muslim family by running them over with a pickup truck. In 2018, a man drove a rented van into a lunch-hour crowd in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 15 along a sidewalk thronged with pedestrians.



VANCOUVER: Vancouver Police forensics officers investigate the scene of a suspect vehicle and bodies of victims lying covered on the ground, after it drove into a crowd at a Lapu Lapu day block party, in which police say multiple people were killed and injured, in Vancouver, Canada on Sunday. — Reuters photo

Catholic faithful pay respects to Pope Francis as his tomb opens to the public in Rome basilica

VATICAN CITY (AP): Roman Catholic faithful began visiting the tomb of Pope Francis on Sunday, filing past the simple white tomb in St. Mary Major Basilica a day after he was bade farewell by the powerful of the world and a crowd of hundreds of thousands.

A single white rose was placed on the tomb that said "Franciscus" — the pope's name in Latin. A light cast its warm glow over the tomb and a reproduction of the late pontiff's pectoral cross on the wall above it.

Rosario Corrales, from Salerno, Italy, said he experienced "great emotion" at witnessing Francis' final resting place "I see all the people are truly moved. He has truly left a mark on us."

People filed past, many crossing themselves or snapping photos with their phones. Ushers urged them to keep moving to accommodate the thousands who flocked to the Rome basilica to see the tomb, forming a long line outside.

Later in the day, a group of cardinals arrived in buses and entered through the church doors to pay homage to Francis at his tomb, and for an evening vespers service.

The tomb was opened on the second of nine days of official mourning for Francis, after which a conclave will be held to elect the next pope.

"Pope Francis for me was an inspiration, a guide," said Elias Caravahal.

Caravahal lives in Rome but was unable to pay his respects to Francis when the body was lying in state in St. Peter's Basilica after his death on Easter Monday at the age of 88. He said he visited the tomb "to thank him for what he has done."

A special Mass was also celebrated in St. Peter's Square on Sunday by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, until recently the Vatican's secretary of state. Parolin is considered a possible contender to be the next pope due to his prominence in the Catholic hierarchy.

"The shepherd whom the Lord gave to his people, Pope Francis, has ended his earthly life and has left us," Parolin said in his homily,

delivered on the first Sunday after Easter. "The grief at his departure, the sense of sadness that assails us, the turmoil we feel in our hearts, the sense of bewilderment: We are experiencing all of this, like the apostles grieving over the death of Jesus."

The Mass was attended by a crowd estimated at 200,000, among them many young people who originally came to Rome for what was supposed to be the canonization of the first millennial saint, Carlo Acutis, during special holy days devoted to teenagers. Many groups of youths, some in scouting uniforms, attended Francis' funeral Saturday and again filled St. Peter's Square on Sunday.

No date has yet been set for the conclave, but it is expected to start between

May 5 and May 10. Cardinals who traveled to Rome for Francis' funeral will be meeting regularly this week ahead of the conclave as they start to chart a way forward for the 1.4 billion-strong Catholic Church.

Pope Francis chose his place of burial in St. Mary Major Basilica, near an icon of the Madonna that he revered, because it reflects his "humble, simple and essential" life, the archbishop who administers the basilica said Friday.

"Being able to see the pope and his tombstone today, it was really beautiful," Amaya Morris, a tourist from Los Angeles, California, said. "I thought it was amazing that he wanted to be buried here in this basilica. Out of all of the ones, he chose this one."



Greenland, Denmark affirm alliance amid Trump's interest in US control

COPENHAGEN (Reuters): Greenland and Denmark agreed on Sunday to strengthen their ties in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's interest in taking control of the strategically located Arctic island, their leaders said after talks in Copenhagen.

Greenland's new Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen landed in the Danish capital on Saturday for a three-day visit, in a display of unity between the mineral-rich island, a semi-autonomous Danish territory, and Denmark.

"We are in a foreign policy situation which means we have to move closer together," Nielsen said at a joint press conference with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

Nielsen's visit follows months of tension over Trump's repeated declarations that Greenland should

become part of the United States.

The leaders of Denmark and Greenland have said only Greenlanders can decide the territory's future. However, they have found themselves treading a delicate line between firmly dismissing U.S. ambitions of annexing Greenland while also trying to maintain good ties with their traditional ally.

"We are ready for a strong partnership (with the

U.S.) and more development, but we want respect ... We will never be a piece of property that can be bought by anyone," Nielsen said.

He said an ongoing expansion of the U.S. consulate in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, which was agreed before Trump took office, was causing anxiety among the people of Greenland.

Nielsen did not confirm or deny when asked if he had been in contact with the

U.S. administration since taking office earlier this month.

The warmer relations between Nuuk and Copenhagen come after Greenland's previous prime minister in December blamed Denmark for a historical "genocide" in Greenland and in January stepped up a push for independence from Denmark.

Frederiksen said Denmark was ready to invest more in Greenland and to support Greenland financially as it takes over more responsibility of domestic affairs from Copenhagen as part of what she called a "modernisation" of their relationship.

Denmark has called for increased Arctic defence collaboration with the United States, and both Nielsen and Frederiksen said on Sunday they were committed to strengthening defence in the region.



Trump's first 100 days: America First president is overturning the world order

WASHINGTON/TOKYO/BRUSSELS (Reuters): He has launched an unprecedented global tariff war and slashed U.S. foreign aid. He has disparaged NATO allies and embraced Russia's narrative about its invasion of Ukraine. And he has spoken about annexing Greenland, retaking the Panama Canal and making Canada the 51st state.

In the chaotic first 100 days since President Donald Trump returned to office, he has waged an often unpredictable campaign that has upended parts of the rules-based world order that Washington helped build from the ashes of World War II.

"Trump is much more radical now than he was eight years ago," said Elliott Abrams, a conservative who served under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush before being appointed U.S. special envoy on Iran and Venezuela in Trump's first term. "I have been surprised."

Trump's second-term "America First" agenda has alienated friends and emboldened adversaries while raising questions about how far he is prepared to go. His actions, coupled with that uncertainty, have so unnerved some governments that they are responding in ways that could be difficult to undo, even if a more traditional U.S. president is

elected in 2028.

All this comes amid what the Republican president's critics see as signs of democratic backsliding at home that have raised concerns abroad. These include verbal attacks on judges, a pressure campaign against universities and the transfer of migrants to a notorious El Salvador prison as part of a broader deportation drive.

"What we're seeing is a huge disruption in world affairs," said Dennis Ross, a former Middle East negotiator for Democratic and Republican administrations. "No one is certain at this point what to make of what's happening or what will come next."

This assessment of Trump's shakeup of the global system comes from Reuters interviews with more than a dozen current and former government officials, foreign diplomats and independent analysts in Washington and capitals around the world.

Many say that while some of the damage already done could be long-lasting, the situation may not be beyond repair if Trump softens his approach. He has already backtracked on some issues, including the timing and severity of his tariffs.

But they see little chance of a dramatic shift by Trump and instead expect many countries to make lasting changes in their relationships with the

U.S. to safeguard against his erratic policy-making.

The fallout has already begun.

Some European allies, for instance, are looking to boost their own defense industries to reduce reliance on U.S. weapons. Debate has intensified in South Korea about developing its own nuclear arsenal. And speculation has grown that deteriorating relations could prompt U.S. partners to move closer to China, at least economically.

The White House rejects the notion that Trump has hurt U.S. credibility, citing instead the need to clean up after what it calls former President Joe Biden's "feckless leadership" on the world stage.

"President Trump is taking swift action to address challenges by bringing both Ukraine and Russia to the negotiating table to end their war, stemming the flow ofentanyl and protecting American workers by holding China accountable, getting Iran to the negotiating table by reimposing Maximum Pressure," White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said in a statement.

He said Trump was also "making the Houthis pay for their terrorism ... and securing our southern border that was open to invasion for four years."

More than half of Americans, including one in four Republicans, think

Trump is "too closely aligned" with Russia, and the American public has little appetite for the expansionist agenda he has laid out, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on March 13.

At stake, say experts, is the future of a global system that has taken shape over the past eight decades largely under U.S. primacy. It has come to be based on free trade, rule of law and respect for territorial integrity.

But under Trump, who has been scornful of multilateral organizations and often views global affairs through the transactional lens of a former real estate developer, that world order is being shaken up.

Accusing trading partners of "ripping off" the U.S. for decades, Trump has set in motion a sweeping tariffs policy that has roiled financial markets, weakened the dollar and triggered warnings of a slowdown in worldwide economic output and increased risk of recession.

Trump has called the tariffs necessary "medicine" but his objectives remain unclear even as his administration works to negotiate separate deals with dozens of countries.

At the same time, he has all but reversed U.S. policy on Russia's three-year-old war in Ukraine and engaged in an Oval Office shouting match with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in

late February. He has warned to Moscow and stirred fears that he will force NATO-backed Kyiv to accept the loss of territory while he prioritizes improved relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The administration's belittling of Europe and NATO, long the central pillar of transatlantic security but accused by Trump and his aides of freeloading off the U.S., has caused deep unease.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, after winning February's election, expressed concern about European relations with the United States, saying it would be difficult if those who put "America First" actually made their motto "America Alone."

"This really is five minutes to midnight for Europe," Merz said.

In a further blow to Washington's global image, Trump has employed expansionist rhetoric long avoided by modern-day presidents, which some analysts say could be used by China as justification if it decides to invade self-governed Taiwan. With his blustery style, he has insisted that the U.S. will "get" Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish island. He has angered Canada by saying it has little reason to exist and should become part of the U.S. He has threatened to seize the Panama Canal, which was

handed over to Panama in 1999. And he has proposed that Washington take over war-ravaged Gaza and transform the Palestinian enclave into a Riviera-style resort.

Some analysts say Trump may be seeking to resurrect a Cold War-style global structure in which big powers carve up geographic spheres of influence.

Even so, he has offered no details on how the U.S. could acquire more territory, and some experts suggest he may be assuming extreme and even over-the-top positions as bargaining plays.

But some countries are taking him seriously.

"When you demand to take over a part of the Kingdom of Denmark's territory, when we are met by pressure and by threats from our closest ally, what are we to believe in about the country that we have admired for so many years?" Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told a news conference in Greenland in early April. "This is about the world order that we have built together across the Atlantic over generations." Other governments are also beginning to recalibrate.

The European Union -- which Trump has claimed, without evidence, was formed to "screw" the U.S. -- has prepared a range of retaliatory tariffs if negotiations fail.

Some countries such as Germany and France are looking at spending more on their militaries, something Trump has demanded but which could also mean investing more in their own defense industries and buying fewer arms from the U.S.

With its historic friendship with the U.S. now strained, Canada is seeking to strengthen economic and security links to Europe. This comes against the backdrop of Canada's national elections on Monday dominated by voter resentment of Trump's actions, which have triggered a nationalist wave and fueled perceptions that the U.S. is no longer a reliable partner.

South Korea too has been rattled by Trump's policies, including his threats to withdraw U.S. troops. But Seoul has vowed to try to work with Trump and preserve the alliance it regards as critical against the threat of nuclear-armed North Korea.

U.S. ally Japan is also on edge. It was taken by surprise by the magnitude of Trump's tariffs and "is now scrambling to respond," said a senior Japanese government official close to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

A key question is whether some governments will quietly hedge their bets by forging closer trade ties to China, Trump's number one tariff

target.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez met with President Xi Jinping in Beijing in early April, and China said recently it exchanged views with the EU on bolstering economic cooperation.

Beijing has cast itself as a solution for nations that feel bullied by Trump's trade approach, despite its own record of sometimes predatory practices internationally, and is also trying to fill the vacuum left by his cuts in humanitarian aid.

Aaron David Miller, a former veteran U.S. diplomat in Republican and Democratic administrations, said it's not too late for Trump to shift course on foreign policy, especially if he begins to feel pressure from fellow Republicans uneasy over economic risks as they seek to retain control of Congress in next year's mid-term elections.

If Trump holds firm, the next president could try to re-establish Washington's role as guarantor of the world order, but the obstacles could be steep.

"What's happening is not yet beyond the point of no return," said Miller, now a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "But how much damage is being done now to our relations with friends and how much adversaries will benefit is probably incalculable."

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Trump administration seeks to curtail costs

THE White House wants to defund a bipartisan board that advises the president and Congress on Social Security policy, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, as the Trump administration moves to cut costs and eliminate independent voices in government. The White House's Office of Management and Budget has notified staff at the Social Security Advisory Board that it plans to cut the board's annual budget from around \$3 million to zero, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss non-public budgetary details.

The move to defund the SSAB has not been previously reported.

Congress established it in the 1990s as an independent federal agency to provide objective analysis on how to improve Social Security, the popular programme that annually pays out \$1.4 trillion in benefits to 73 million Americans.

While the board does not have decision-making power, its research has helped shape how the SSA runs itself and facilitated legislation.

It has also played a role in important policy debates, including a 2005 effort under then-President George W. Bush to privatise the agency that ultimately failed.

The board's research was a key building block in a 2018 law that reduced the compliance burden for select categories of people appointed to receive benefits on behalf of those who cannot manage their own payments, while tightening checks for others.

While technically a separate agency, the advisory board's funding is a line item in the SSA's budget each year.

This month, OMB gave SSA its proposed budget for the next fiscal year from October 1, with funding for the board set at zero, the two sources said.

President Donald Trump and his Republican allies have been trying to downsize the government while removing or restricting voices that could serve as a check on his agenda.

His targets have included the 17 inspectors general fired in January whose job was to root out waste and fraud. Bob Joondeph, the board's chair, told Reuters he had yet to be formally notified of the funding decision.

"Its strength is its bipartisanship. It's one of the few places you can go in government and get something that a bunch of people from different parties can reach consensus on," Joondeph, one of two Democrats on the four-person board, said in an interview.

"The fact that it would be eliminated, to me is symbolic of sort of the larger trends in Washington."

Tech billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has targeted the Social Security Administration for significant cuts, triggering complaints from union officials, Democratic lawmakers and advocacy groups about longer wait times for phone service and at understaffed field offices. The agency has announced plans to eliminate 7,000 jobs, roughly 12% of its workforce.

"The Social Security Advisory Board was created to help the president and Congress strengthen the programme - but now, Trump is defunding it," Senator Elizabeth Warren said in a statement to Reuters. The SSA and the OMB did not respond to requests for comment. Neither did the two Republican-appointed members of the board. Joondeph has asked the board's staff to contact OMB for an explanation of its authority to cut funding, one of the sources said.

The bulk of the board's budget goes to paying staff. Defunding it will bring its work to a halt, but officially ending the board will require an act of Congress. Henry Aaron, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former SSAB chair, said that while the board has produced useful research over the years, its impact has been limited by the need to form a consensus between Republican and Democratic members.

Hal Daub, a former Republican congressman who was board chair from 2002 to 2006, said he believes the board has played an important role providing independent analysis, but he is sceptical it will be missed.

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USAID and the pacification industry in Palestine

Samer Jaber

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) opened its office in Palestine back in 1994. Its website, which is no longer available, used to boast that since then, it has "helped four million Palestinians lead healthier and more productive lives".

Now that the agency has been shuttered by US President Donald Trump's administration, it is pertinent to evaluate the claim that USAID was a force for good in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Undoubtedly, the shutdown of the agency has affected Palestinians, especially those benefiting from its funding for education and healthcare institutions. Humanitarian provision was also affected, with the World Food Programme, one of the main humanitarian actors in the occupied Palestinian territories, facing major disruptions.

While the short-term negative impact is apparent, the utility of USAID and other US funding becomes questionable when put in the larger political context of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

As a researcher, I have been directly and indirectly involved in assessing USAID-funded programmes for years, and I have seen first-hand how they have contributed to maintaining Israeli occupation and colonisation. The US agency was far from "helping" Palestinians lead better lives, as it claimed.

A policy of pacification USAID opened its West Bank and Gaza Strip office as part of the broader American effort to lead and shape the political settlement between Palestinians and Israelis initiated by the Oslo Accords of 1994.

The so-called "peace process" promised Palestinians an independent state on the lands occupied by Israel in 1967, with a final agreement supposed to be signed by 1999. Needless to say, such an agreement was never signed, as Israel never intended to conclude peace with the Palestinians and recognise their right to self-determination.

Instead, Oslo was used to cover up Israel's relentless colonisation of the occupied Palestinian territories in the rhetoric of peace negotiations. The creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a local governing body tasked with managing civil affairs for Palestinians in designated areas was part of this strategy.

While the official Palestinian leadership envisioned the PA as a transitional polity that would administer daily life until an independent state was established, it was ultimately designed and closely overseen by the US to function as a client regime, managing and controlling the occupied population.

To that end, the PA was obliged to engage in close coordination with Israeli security forces to suppress any form of resistance in the territories it managed. Its two main security bodies - the Intelligence

Service and the Preventive Security - were set up to fulfil this duty.

While US intelligence agencies were tasked with supporting and training the Palestinian security apparatus - funneling millions of dollars to it every year - USAID was tasked with supporting the civilian functions of the PA.

Between 1994 and 2018, USAID provided more than \$5.2bn in aid to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It funded infrastructure, health, and education initiatives, with the aim of winning public support for the peace negotiations.

A portion of its funding was funnelled through civil society organisations with two primary objectives: to depoliticise the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to cultivate a network of civil society actors who would promote this agenda.

The depoliticisation framework treated the Palestinian issue as an economic and humanitarian matter. This approach addressed Palestinian economic and social problems in isolation - detached from their primary cause: Israeli occupation.

It also sought to delegitimise Palestinian resistance by portraying it as a source of instability and chaos rather than a political response to occupation.

To distribute its funding, USAID established a complex system of background checks, alongside an Orwellian set of conditions. The vetting extended beyond the individual to their extended family, the name of the place, and even the cultural context in which the funds would be used - none of which could be associated with resistance.

In this context, it is hardly surprising that USAID programmes often failed to improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians.

Normalisation through people-to-people programmes

A lot of USAID funding went into initiatives that sought to normalise Israeli colonisation by seeking to establish connections between Palestinians and Israelis.

The premise was that the two people "can learn to live together", which of course completely ignored the realities of apartheid and occupation.

One of the USAID-funded programmes I assessed was the Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) Program, promoted under USAID's People-to-People Partnership framework. By 2018, CMM had allocated over \$230m to different initiatives and was set to distribute another \$250m by 2026.

The programme included projects targeting bereaved parents, farmers, and students to promote peacebuilding.

One such project sought to foster cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli farmers through shared farming experiences.

During one focus group discussion, I spoke to a Palestinian farmer who explained that Palestinian

olive oil production has been stagnating due to the Israeli occupation regime that restricted Palestinian farmers' access to water and, in some cases, to their land. "These programmes," he said, "don't talk about these issues."

When I asked why he participated, he explained that the project enabled him to obtain an Israeli travel permit - allowing him to work on Israeli farms and earn an income to survive.

The absurdity of this dynamic was striking: on paper, the programme spoke of fostering productive relationships between Palestinians and Israelis, building a shared, peaceful future where farmers become friends. In reality, however, Palestinian farmers signed so they could a travel permit and work on Israeli farms - many of which were established on confiscated Palestinian land. Participation in the programme did not resolve any of the problems the Palestinian farmers faced in olive farming - i.e., Israeli occupation policies.

Another USAID-funded programme I studied, Seeds of Peace, had the mission to bring together young people from conflict regions who had the potential to become future leaders in their countries. The programme's central activity was a youth summer camp in an affluent area in the US state of Maine, where participants engaged in dialogue and leadership training.

The two largest participant groups were Israelis and Palestinians. While the Israeli Ministry of Education was responsible for selecting Israeli participants, the Seeds of Peace office in Ramallah oversaw the recruitment of Palestinian participants. Each participant benefited from a heavily subsidised programme, with costs reaching up to \$8,000 per person.

A closer look at participant lists over the years revealed a striking pattern: the sons and daughters of PA leaders and affluent families frequently appeared.

Curious about this pattern, I once asked a programme officer about it. The response was revealing: "In Palestinian society, leadership often passes to the children of high-ranking officials."

This meant that the organisation's - and by extension, the US's - vision of political leadership in Palestine assumed that power in Palestinian politics is hereditary and therefore, US initiatives should focus on the sons and daughters of the current elite.

Political interference Seeds of Peace was by far not the only programme that served to support PA cadres and their families.

Some relatives of high-ranking officials have received preferential treatment in securing lucrative USAID contracts; others have led nonprofit organisations funded by the agency.

USAID has also been involved indirectly in the political scene in Palestine by supporting political

actors favoured by Washington.

Between 2004 and 2006, it implemented an expansive democracy promotion programme in the Palestinian territories in the lead-up to the 2006 legislative elections. While there is no direct evidence of financial support for specific candidates or party lists, observers have noted that civil society organisations (CSOs) linked to Fatah or the Third Way candidates were recipients of USAID funding. In some cases, this support was channelled through organisations operating in unrelated sectors.

Despite substantial funding and political support, these groups failed to secure enough seats to prevent Hamas's electoral victory. After Hamas took control of Gaza, USAID continued supporting Palestinian CSOs, in some cases dramatically increasing their funding.

USAID also supported the police force under the PA through rule of law programmes, although the bulk of funding for the PA's repressive security apparatus has come through the CIA and the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) of the US Department of State.

A more recent and stark example of problematic USAID involvement is the malfunctioning pier construction by the US military in 2024 to facilitate aid delivery into Gaza, at a cost of \$230m. The project was promoted as a humanitarian initiative and USAID was one of the organisations tasked with distributing the trickle of aid that came through it.

In reality, the pier served as a public relations stunt by the administration of former US President Joe Biden to obscure US complicity in Israel's blockade of Gaza. It was also used by the Israeli military in an operation that resulted in the killing of more than 200 Palestinians, raising serious questions about the militarisation and misuse of aid infrastructure.

The pier farce is a good illustration of the US approach to providing aid to the Palestinians: it was never done in their best interest.

It is true that some impoverished Palestinians may be affected by the shutdown of USAID operations in the West Bank and Gaza. However, it is unlikely to decisively alter the situation on the ground. The cutoff of aid will have a more dramatic impact on the US strategy of leveraging Palestinian civil society organisations to promote a pacification agenda and perpetuate empty rhetoric about peace.

In this regard, the shuttering of USAID could give an opportunity for the Palestinian civil society to reconsider its engagement with US government donors in light of its moral obligations to the Palestinian people. Millions poured into pacification clearly did not work; it is time for a new approach that actually serves the interests of the Palestinians.

In Yemen, we comfort ourselves, thinking: It is not as bad as Gaza

Manal Qaed Alwesabi

In the first week of April, the United States carried out air raids across Yemen. One strike hit just a street away from my family home in a quiet neighbourhood of the port city of Hodeidah. As is always the case with sudden attacks, everything happened quickly: the sound of the explosion, the house shaking, the children screaming and the struggle to comprehend what is happening.

Ten years have passed since the start of the war in Yemen. The air strikes of the coalition have stopped, but Israeli and American bombing have taken over. It now feels as if we are in a video game and we have just gone up a level to face another monster - far more ferocious than the previous one.

I thought living through so many attacks would have helped us conquer fear. But I was wrong. The sound of this month's blast sent my son, Tamim, running into my arms. We were all scared, but what I

wrong. Unfortunately, I had to become the bearer of the horrific news.

We later learned that her nephew, an 18-year-old named Mohamed, had been killed by the explosion. His biggest dream had been to receive a scholarship to study. He had returned home just an hour before the attack after attending classes at an English language institute.

Mohamed perhaps had never imagined that the scholarship he would receive would be for another world and that it required no qualifications other than being a Yemeni.

He became a number cited on the news a few times before being forgotten.

Two weeks later, as I began to write these lines, funerals were held for 80 people who were killed by a bombardment of the Ras Isa port. The United States saw the port as part of the supply chain of fuel for the group Ansar Allah, but it decided not to take into

.....
Most of them returned to their families as charred bodies. Some did not return at all - like 26-year-old Abdel Fattah. His body could not be found. His colleagues who survived said he was at the location where one of the missiles fell. When they searched for him, there was no trace - no phone, no shoes, no hair, not even a piece of skin. Abdel Fattah was pulverised. This is the worst nightmare for a family: having no body of a lost loved one to embrace and mourn. More days passed. More air strikes hit Hodeidah. I cannot describe how heavy the moments are after a bombardment ends. Who will be the next victim? Where is death lurking? People go into a frenzy calling loved ones. A simple decision to switch off one's phone can send a family into panic. And yet, amid all the death and destruction, Yemenis still find a way to show kindness and resilience. I often hear people say that what we are suffering cannot compare to what is happening in Gaza.
.....

saw in my little boy's eyes was pure terror. He does not recall the whole war. He is only six years old and is still discovering the world, which on that day in early April, showed its ugly face to him.

He put his hands on the sides of my face, his little fingers trembling. He then whispered a difficult question: "Is this an earthquake?"

While everyone at home was busy trying to figure out where the bomb had fallen, I was searching in my mind for an answer to my child's question.

I smiled to try to calm him down, still thinking of an answer. Should I lie and tell him yes? Or should I explain the reality of war, the fighter jet and the missile? Should I tell him the truth: that the world has abandoned us to a fate of constant, deadly bombardment?

I told him it wasn't an earthquake, that it was an airplane that had passed by and launched a missile. I decided not to share with him the gruesome details of what a missile does once it lands in civilian neighbourhoods. I did not want to distort for him his love for airplanes.

Flying above the clouds has been Tamim's dream, and he has been saving his meagre pocket money to realise it one day.

Mentioning the airplane eased his fear and got him thinking about his flying machines. What truly worries me is that one day my son will come to realise what hearing the sound of a plane really means in Yemen.

We soon found out what the target of the air strike was: a building next to which was a house I had visited before. It was the home of the sister of a close friend of mine. I was overcome by an anxious premonition and decided to call my friend who was living in a different city.

I couldn't bring myself to tell her at the start of our conversation what had happened.

She sounded so happy on the phone. But she understood from my shaky voice that something was

account the civilian workers employed there.

Most of them returned to their families as charred bodies. Some did not return at all - like 26-year-old Abdel Fattah. His body could not be found. His colleagues who survived said he was at the location where one of the missiles fell. When they searched for him, there was no trace - no phone, no shoes, no hair, not even a piece of skin. Abdel Fattah was pulverised.

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More days passed. More air strikes hit Hodeidah. I cannot describe how heavy the moments are after a bombardment ends. Who will be the next victim? Where is death lurking? People go into a frenzy calling loved ones. A simple decision to switch off one's phone can send a family into panic.

And yet, amid all the death and destruction, Yemenis still find a way to show kindness and resilience. I often hear people say that what we are suffering cannot compare to what is happening in Gaza. My fellow Yemenis see pain as a matter of comparison, not a matter of justice - as if the pain must compete against another to be recognised.

I often ask myself: Do we suffer from collective depression? Or do we possess a supernatural power that allows us to adapt to this abhorrent resignation?

Whether the air strikes increase or they stop, there is nothing that can calm our hearts down. This grief accumulates in our bodies and makes us dread what is to come.

Yemenis no longer pay attention to the rest of the world, which has reduced us to mere numbers in international agency reports and news broadcasts.

There is nothing else we can do than write. Perhaps writing can keep alive the memory of Mohamed, Abdel Fattah and hundreds of thousands of other Yemenis. Perhaps one day, our writing can help stop the missiles.

Saudi Arabia’s financial transformation is Vision 2030 success story

Dr. Yaseen Ghulam

Saudi Arabia has undertaken several reforms over the last decade, most of which are the byproduct of Vision 2030, which have transformed the financial sector and businesses, as well as society as a whole.

A key driver of this transformation was the implementation of the Financial Sector Development Program and the emergence of the Saudi Exchange, or Tadawul, as a global market. The FSDP was introduced in 2017 as a part of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 to boost the capital market.

The plan aims to transform the stock exchange into a robust international investment platform. It also aims to improve trading infrastructure, settlement processes, and market capitalization to over \$3 trillion.

This has led to increased online platforms, fintech capabilities, and transparency. Tadawul’s inclusion in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index in 2019 further solidified its global position.

Another major reform was starting fintech innovation. Since the launch of the Fintech Saudi initiative in 2018, Saudi Arabia has been a leading fintech hub in the Middle East, fostering innovation and widespread digital payments.

The Saudi Central Bank has facilitated this growth through progressive laws. This includes a regulatory sandbox for supervised testing of advanced technologies, specialist licenses for fintech businesses, and the availability of banking infrastructure and Application Programming Interfaces.

Moving to green finance, Saudi Arabia is focusing on financial sector innovation and sustainability, implementing green financing programs as a part of its Vision 2030

objectives.

Since 2022, the country has promoted environmentally friendly investment and finance green projects through sustainable laws and by issuing green bonds. These proactive initiatives have made Saudi Arabia a key player in the global transition to a more environmentally responsible

relations for public debt, and ensures good credit ratings.

This specialized body has improved public financial controls and maintained a sound fiscal position, thereby enhancing Saudi Arabia’s financial standing.

Since the launch of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia

the current Saudi banking experience.

Opening a bank account can be done online, especially beneficial in rural areas. Customers can use banking apps on their phones or computers to register and open an account in minutes. Mobile banking has boosted financial inclusion by providing credit,

funding for SMEs. The Public Investment Fund is also improving SME funding, with Saudi Aramco’s Taleded program providing over SR3 billion (\$798 million).

These funding channels were made possible by government reforms and support for smaller businesses to help improve diversification of the economy, which is the main objective of Vision 2030.

Another important development has been the rise in financial literacy. The Financial Literacy Strategy, a key component of Vision 2030, aims to enhance this aspect in the Kingdom. The Financial Literacy Entity within the FSDP has been instrumental in achieving this goal.

Fintech companies such as Darahim and Fatafeat are working to boost financial literacy.

Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Education has mandated the inclusion of a Financial Knowledge course in school curricula. In addition, Thameen and Smart Investor are awareness initiatives run by the Capital Market Authority.

A report issued in 2023 from the Saudi Central Bank indicates that financial literacy has increased, with 38 percent of adults now understanding basic financial concepts.

Future initiatives include removing cultural barriers and providing religious context.

Access to financial institutions, workshops, and mentorship programs is crucial in rural areas. Investing in regional financial literacy materials, using technology for Arabic online resources, and forming partnerships with financial institutions can help overcome barriers.

Collaboration with local institutions, Islamic banks, and experts can also establish customized financial education channels.

Jewish diasporas are not Israeli outposts

Yossi Mekelberg

government is a legitimate opinion that many of us share with those who composed this letter.

Were its authors chastised by their organization because others within it do not agree with them, or out of fear that they will be seen as disunited? What should come first? A false show of unity? Or a statement by members of a pluralist community acknowledging that at least some of them are outraged that keeping Netanyahu in power comes at the expense of so many lives, and continues to deprive more than 2 million Palestinians of food, medical supplies, and fuel, while condemning more innocent people to death and suffering, including the Israeli hostages?

To argue, as the letter does, that this “most

were unequivocally supportive of Israel in its darkest hour of need.

But considering the conduct of Israel’s military in Gaza and the West Bank, which is both morally indefensible and, in the eyes of many, compromises and threatens Israel’s long-term survival, there are those within the community who are ready to stand up and be counted in friendly opposition.

They are ready to do that because Israel’s actions conflict with their own values and what they believe is good for both sides, but also because it affects Jewish communities in the diaspora.

Needless to say, no manifestation of antisemitism, nor of Islamophobia, can ever be even remotely justified or excused, and there

For the signatories to declare that “the inclination to avert our eyes is strong, as what is happening is unbearable, but our Jewish values compel us to stand up and to speak out,” was a show of courage in the face of the unabated killings and devastation that is being unleashed for the sake of Netanyahu’s ulterior motives, not for the good of the country and its people. To argue that the reason for the return to war had more to do with maintaining Netanyahu’s coalition, as he caved in to the wishes of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, with the aim of facilitating his party’s return to the government is a legitimate opinion that many of us share with those who composed this letter.

extremist of Israeli governments is openly encouraging violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, strangling the Palestinian economy and building more new settlements than ever,” is something on which there is an international consensus, which includes the UK government. And to air this statement in public, despite a lack of consensus within the Jewish community, reflects a healthy diversity of opinion. This makes the letter even more significant than its actual content.

Michael Wegier, chief executive of the Board of Deputies, said that “taking the legitimate and often painful debate within our community to the letters pages of national newspapers, and sowing confusion about the position of the community as a whole is a short-sighted and dangerous precedent.” This response reflects a very narrow-minded view of a community within a society, and the freedom to express an opinion without being silenced.

One of the many endearing characteristics of Jewish communities around the world is that they are inherently pluralistic and find it hard to agree about almost anything. Most of them love Israel, care for its safety and prosperity, and have been united in deep sadness and grief in face of the horrific Oct. 7 massacre carried out by Hamas. In that moment of collective tragedy, all Jewish communities expressed their horror and

are those mindless, so-called pro-Palestinian activists who are exploiting the war in Gaza to unleash their own hatred of Jews. When this happens, it is a matter for law-enforcement organizations to deal with. But equally it cannot be a reason within the Jewish communities to silence voices that are critical of Israel.

Seventy-seven years after the establishment of the Jewish state, its relations with Jewish communities across the world have evolved. Israel cannot demand blind support, or indeed any support at all, if it behaves in violation of international law and international humanitarian law or, as the letter from members of the British organization makes clear, in violation of Jewish values and morality.

The natural affinity between Israel and the Jewish communities of the diaspora is not in doubt. But it should not under any circumstances be confused with automatic acquiescence to the policies of Israeli governments. There is a Jewish existence in Israel and there is one outside of it, and neither is superior to the other.

An Israeli government that would like to enjoy the full support of all Jewish people worldwide has to earn it. The current government, in its attempts to demolish both the democratic system in Israel and any chance for peace and reconciliation with the Palestinians, has done nothing to merit that full support.

UK’s growing post-Brexit int’l leadership

Andrew Hammond

One of the biggest claims made by some key Brexiters in the 2016 referendum campaign was that the UK would become a global buccaneer if it left the EU. However, multiple, subsequent UK governments were criticized for their lack of international engagement.

Fast forward almost a decade to 2025, however, and there are some signs that the UK is waking up from this diplomatic downtime.

On Thursday and Friday, for instance, the UK government co-hosted with the International Energy Agency a big international conference on energy security — ahead of the important COP30 in Brazil. Especially since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, this topic has moved up the global agenda as countries seek to respond to protect themselves from potential future shocks.

It is no coincidence that the IEA chose to host the big event in London. Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s government is one of the most politically stable in Europe right now. Whereas UK governments between 2016 and 2024 had either small legislative majorities, or were constrained by the COVID pandemic, last year’s election saw Labour win the largest margin in the House of Commons for

more than a quarter of a century.

This means Starmer can be confident of his party remaining in office for a full parliamentary five-year term till 2029, unless he or a successor decide to call an early ballot. In turn, this domestic stability has created a post-Brexit political window of opportunity for Starmer and his ministers to spend much time on foreign policy in their first year in office.

Starmer has also recommended for the UK to become a “clean energy superpower.” He and his government’s ministers used the IEA summit to advance this vision, including UK plans to accelerate a new era of clean electricity by 2030.

Dozens of attendees from government and the private sector, from Africa, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region, joined the big event. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was one of the biggest name politicians of the approximately 60 governments at the event.

The IEA event builds from the UK Investment Summit last autumn, which the government claims saw more than £60 billion (\$79 billion) in new investment announced by business,

about half in clean energy. It also follows last year’s launch of the new Great British Energy — an investment body and publicly owned energy generation company which aims to ensure a massive expansion in clean energy.

Since the Starmer government came to power last July, it also has confirmed funding to launch the UK’s first Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage sites. In a more than £20 billion commitment, two new CCUS-enabled hydrogen projects will help remove more than 8.5 million tonnes of carbon emissions each year, which is the equivalent of taking about 4 million cars off the road.

Moreover, the government overturned a nine-year ban on onshore wind power construction under the last several Conservative governments. This was followed by one of the most successful renewable auction rounds in UK history.

Given the emphasis that the UK government is putting on the energy agenda, it is no surprise that this issue will be one of the key focuses of the UK’s new, anticipated 2025 Brexit reset deal with the EU, alongside defense and fisheries. One of the energy topics under discussion

between Starmer and von der Leyen is closer alignment on electricity trading, plus greater cooperation between the EU and UK on carbon emissions trading schemes. Moreover, von der Leyen urged Starmer to build a joined-up regulatory framework for investors backing renewable energy infrastructure in the North Sea in offshore wind, marine energy, hydrogen, as well as carbon capture and storage.

Yet, as much as Starmer will have many welcome friends at the summit, there may also be more challenging ones, too. A key goal of the summit was to try to build a greater consensus on a holistic approach to energy security, ensuring governments have the tools they need for the challenges and opportunities confronting them.

US Acting Assistant Secretary of Energy Tommy Joyce attended on behalf of the US. Joyce, like Trump, is an avowed opponent of global climate diplomacy. Joyce has asserted that the US “will not sacrifice our economy or our security for global agreements for a so-called net-zero future, nor do we encourage any other nation to make that sacrifice either.”

This critique builds from

that of US Energy Secretary Chris Wright, specifically of the UK. He has slammed UK adherence to net-zero policy, in particular, for resulting in what he claims to be “higher prices and fewer jobs for UK citizens, higher global greenhouse gas emissions, and all of this is a climate policy?”

The clash between the Trump team and that of Starmer could not be much starker on this issue. The UK government’s alternative pathway to energy security is through commitment to net zero, investment in renewables, as well as phasing out fossil fuels.

As on the Ukraine agenda, where the Trump team is publicly showing much sympathy for Moscow rather than Ukraine, it is the White House that poses one of the major headaches to the UK’s advancement of its global energy security vision shared by much of the rest of the world, too. This may threaten any big climate agreement breakthrough being reached at COP30 in Brazil.

So many big battles may lie ahead with this important agenda. Yet, co-hosting the IEA event is another sign of a ramp-up in the UK’s growing post-Brexit international leadership in a geopolitical and geo-economic landscape in flux.

Africa and the path to self-reliance

Hafed Al-Ghwel

For decades after gaining independence, many African nations subsisted on a development model dependent on foreign aid and external support despite mixed results. Aid inflows might have helped build schools and clinics, but they also fostered a culture of dependence and complacency.

Now, as donors increasingly pull back, this arrangement is crumbling amid turbulent global geopolitics, coupled with a new generation of African leaders who are questioning the old reliance on hand-outs.

In 2015, Kenya’s president at the time, Uhuru Kenyatta, warned that the future of the continent could no longer be left to the good graces of outside interests, with foreign aid considered an acceptable basis for prosperity and freedom.

A decade later, his words ring more true than ever. In the past few years, several seismic shifts have rendered the status quo untenable. Now, global trade

wars are escalating, not so long after the supply chain shocks of the COVID era, and coupled with the ripple effects from the war in Ukraine. In most cases, Africa ends up bearing a disproportionate brunt of disruptions elsewhere.

Now, however, the world that enabled Africa’s aid addiction is vanishing, forcing the continent to finally confront the hard business of self-reliance.

The US, for a long time a major aid donor, has slashed or rerouted funding due to partisan politics and voter fatigue over perpetual development projects abroad. European aid budgets are under pressure, strained by shifting domestic priorities and the growing costs of crises brewing closer to home. Meanwhile, remittances from a sprawling diaspora, often a lifeline for African economies, remain fickle, booming in good times but drying up whenever global recession hits or inflation bites into migrants’ incomes.

The security environment has also changed dra-

matically. France, the former colonial guardian of the Sahel, for instance, has wound down its presence after years of fighting militants in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The French, once welcomed by beleaguered governments, were shown the door by new juntas and ceaseless protests, resulting in the tricolor being lowered at bases across the Sahel, signaling the end of “Pax Gallica” in Africa.

Meanwhile, the future of the US military’s Africa Command looks uncertain, with Washington preoccupied by great-power showdowns elsewhere. After all, Africa’s conflicts and security vacuums rank low on the Pentagon’s list of priorities, even though US special forces and drones remain active in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. But for how long? If a more isolationist mood prevails in successive US administrations, Africa could experience an even greater strategic vacuum.

That vacuum is already beckoning opportunists. In

places such as Mali and the Central African Republic, gun-for-hire outfits have swept in to replace departing Western troops, trading security services for mining concessions and geopolitical leverage. Their encroachment is a sobering reminder that if Africa does not resolve its own security problems, someone else — possibly far less benevolent or benign — will.

China, too, has shifted from being a mere investor to a strategic operator on the continent. Beijing remains Africa’s biggest trading partner and a major builder of its infrastructure, but it has grown more hard-nosed. Chinese loans are drying up after debt crises in Zambia and Ethiopia, even as Beijing secures long-term control of strategic ports and key mines. The People’s Liberation Army Navy now frequents the waters off Africa’s coasts, and a naval base in Djibouti signals that, for China at least, Africa is no longer only a business des-

tination.

The upside of these external shifts is a renewed continental resolve to become self-sufficient. Across Africa, a slogan long confined to speeches — “African solutions to African problems” — is finally gaining some traction. The African Union and other regional organizations are spearheading ambitious initiatives designed to reduce external dependencies.

Top of the list is the African Continental Free Trade Area, which was launched in 2021 to knit together 54 African countries into the world’s largest, free-trade zone. The idea is simple: tear down the internal barriers that make it easier for an African country to trade with Europe or Asia than with its next-door neighbors. Only about 15 percent of Africa’s trade is intracontinental, a pitiful figure compared to nearly 70 percent with Europe.

The free-trade zone hopes to change that

through the elimination of most intra-African tariffs and standardization of trade rules. If fully implemented, it could unlock economies of scale, boost industrial supply chains across borders, and create a truly regional market of 1.4 billion consumers. In practice, progress has been halting — negotiating schedules and customs regulations is painstaking work — but a start at least has been made.

The momentum is there: Ghana has exported its first shipment of goods to Kenya under free-trade provisions, which is symbolic of the new possibilities. As of 2023, nearly every member of the African Union had signed up to the zone, and more than 45 have ratified membership. Africa’s leaders now routinely talk of “trade not aid,” reflecting a shift in mindsets at the highest levels.

Likewise, there is a continental push for industrialization, to finally break out of the colonial pattern of exporting raw materials and importing finished goods. Countries such as Ethiopia

and Rwanda have crafted industrial policies to attract manufacturing, and the free-trade zone is intended to support this by ensuring that once a factory is set up in, say, Kenya it can easily sell its products across borders to Nigeria or South Africa, for example, without prohibitive tariffs or red tape getting in the way.

Another pillar of the self-reliance agenda is the digital economy. Africa missed previous industrial revolutions but it is determined not to lose out on the ongoing tech revolution. The continent is already a global leader in some areas of financial technology; mobile money services, born out of Kenya’s M-Pesa system, now handle more than a trillion dollars in transactions annually across Africa. By 2022 there were more than 780 million mobile money accounts on the continent, nearly half of the global total, providing financial access for tens of millions of people who never had bank accounts.

Underpinning all of



Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan have significant role in regional economic integration: Ambassador Atakhanov

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Avazbek Atakhanov has said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have a significant role in regional economic and trade integration due to their geo-strategic importance.

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan not only have importance in regional economic integration but also have huge significance in extra-regional connectivity in the future, the Ambassador said during a visit to Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Head Office the other day.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's role in regional economic and trade integration is Pivotal and Pakistan's geostrategic position

also has great significance to connect global manor markets.

He said that Kyrgyzstan is an open and liberal economy which is always striving to promote investment and trade liberalization with global and regional markets.

The Ambassador said that Pakistani businesses and investors should invest in the Kyrgyz market, Kyrgyzstan is becoming a hub of global trade in the future, from which Pakistani traders and investors can benefit.

Kyrgyz envoy said that Kyrgyzstan can connect Pakistan with the Euro Economic Zone, in terms of economic and trade sphere, which will increase

Pakistan's trade.

He said that Kyrgyzstan was an emerging economy that was not only connected with regional economies but also with China, Kyrgyzstan's bilateral trade through \$ 23 billion.

The Ambassador said that Kyrgyzstan's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth had been increasing continuously year on year.

Kyrgyzstan's annual per capita income is 3000 per capita, which has been growing continuously for the past few years, and along with this, the poverty rate in Kyrgyzstan is continuously decreasing and the standard of living of the people has been increasing, he said.

The envoy said that Renewable energy, mining, gold, tourism, and agriculture are important sectors of the national economy in Kyrgyzstan, due to which the annual GDP has increased by 30 percent in the past years.

He said that the Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan is visiting Pakistan from May 15 of the coming month, which will promote economic cooperation between the two countries.

He said that Kyrgyzstan is a country with democratic traditions where civil society is very strong and vibrant.

Responding to a question, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said that CASA-1000 is an impor-

tant and beneficial project for cooperation in the energy sector between the two countries.

He said that work was underway on CASA -1000 and after its completion, Pakistan's energy needs would be met to a large extent.

The role of youth is very important in the present era and both countries should enlighten the youth about their historical heritage and mutual relations and should make them aware about each other's culture, he said.

Kyrgyz envoy said that the role of youth is significant in accelerating the relations between the two countries and "we should transfer our friendly rela-

tions and historical heritage to the next generation."

He said that Kyrgyzstan is an important country for tourism and the Kyrgyz government is constantly striving for modern facilities to promote tourism.

He said that Kyrgyzstan is a country adorned with natural landscapes and there are vast possibilities for mutual cooperation in the tourism sector between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The role of the media of both countries is important to highlight the tourism sector and there is a need for mutual awareness between the two countries in this regard, he said.

Meanwhile, Kyrgyz Ambassador and Managing Director, Associated Press

of Pakistan (APP) Muhammad Asim Khichi has agreed to promote assistance for technical support and bilateral media cooperation between the official news agencies of the two countries.

On this occasion, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan gave suggestions regarding bilateral news exchange, technical support, training and capacity, information exchange and date sharing to highlight different potential sectors of the two countries and stressed on promoting mutual cooperation between the two news institutions in line with modern trends.

He said that APP and Kyrgyz national news Agency, 'KABAR' play a

significant role in promoting bilateral relations between the two countries, which needs to be further improved in the future.

The Ambassador said that the role of the media is very important for highlighting the culture of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan and each other's countries, and in this regard, APP and the Kyrgyz national news Agency, 'KABAR' should work to promote bilateral culture.

Meanwhile, Managing Director, APP, Muhammad Asim Khichi assured the Kyrgyz Ambassador of all kinds of cooperation and urged the national news agencies of both countries to move forward for further fruitful cooperation.

APBF highlights pivotal role of private sector in economic future

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) commends the recent economic dialogue hosted by the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC, where global financial institutions, corporate representatives, and Pakistan's economic leadership came together to discuss the country's economic turnaround. The dialogue highlighted the crucial role of the private sector in driving Pakistan's economic future, as emphasized by Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb during his keynote address.

The APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood agrees with the Finance Minister's statement that the government's role is to provide policy frameworks that ensure continuity, while the private sector leads the way in innovation and growth. This shift, likened to the transforma-

tive impact of artificial intelligence, highlights the evolving role of businesses in shaping Pakistan's economic landscape. He said that the APBF believes that the government must prioritize dialogue with the private sector and industry stakeholders when formulating policies. This collaborative approach is essential for creating an environment conducive to sustainable business growth and attracting global investment.

APBF President, Mr. Ibrahim Qureshi, applauds the Finance Minister's acknowledgment of the private sector's potential and urges the government to establish a more structured process for regular consultations with businessmen and business forums such as the APBF. He stresses that only through active engagement with the business community can the government develop policies that are both practical

and aligned with the needs of the market.

"The private sector is the engine of growth for any economy. Pakistan's businesses, especially in the IT, manufacturing, and services sectors, have the potential to drive the country's economic transformation. However, to unlock this potential, it is crucial that policymakers consult with industry leaders and business forums, ensuring that business-friendly policies are developed that support growth and job creation," Mr. Qureshi stated.

The private sector's role is particularly important in the context of Pakistan's growth in sectors such as IT, manufacturing, and services, all of which hold significant potential to boost the economy. To realize this potential, the APBF urges the government to prioritize regular dialogues with business leaders to address concerns such as ease of doing business, reg-

ulatory reforms, and access to finance.

The APBF also calls for a renewed focus on infrastructure development, particularly in sectors like technology and digital services, which are vital for long-term growth. A predictable and stable business environment, supported by comprehensive regulatory frameworks, will further encourage investment and foster a competitive business climate.

In conclusion, the APBF advocates for a strong partnership between the public and private sectors.

Only through mutual collaboration can Pakistan achieve sustainable economic growth, improve living standards, and solidify its position in the global market. The APBF stands ready to assist the government in creating policies that facilitate growth, reduce barriers to investment, and foster innovation across all industries.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor arranging and displaying watermelon to attract customers at Murree Road.

41st int'l exhibition of handmade carpets on Oct 7

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA), in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), will host the 41st international exhibition of handmade carpets from October 7 to 9 2025 at a local hotel.

The three-day event will feature manufacturers and exporters from the handmade carpet industry showcasing their products at various stalls.

The announcement was made during a PCMEA meeting attended by Patron-in-Chief Abdul Latif Malik, Chairman Mian Atiq-ur-Rehman, Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed, Chairperson of the Carpet Training Institute Ejaz-ur-Rehman, senior leader Usman Ashraf, Major (Retd.) Akhtar Nazir, Saeed Khan, and other key members here on Sunday.

Addressing the meeting, Mian Atiq-ur-Rehman and Riaz Ahmed emphasized that, with TDAP's consultation, a list of foreign buyers would be compiled to ensure targeted outreach. They stressed that this year's exhibition will feature enhanced promotional efforts aligned with modern marketing trends.

Industry leaders expressed high hopes for the upcoming exhibition, viewing it as a crucial platform to foster long-term business relationships with international buyers.

To strengthen these ties, bilateral meetings will be arranged alongside the main event.

Atiq-ur-Rehman and Riaz Ahmed welcomed TDAP's assurance of full support, terming it a source of great encouragement. They also appealed to other relevant institutions to extend their cooperation in ensuring the success of the exhibition.

Moreover, they urged the government to instruct Pakistani embassies abroad to facilitate visa issuance for international buyers, minimizing travel hurdles.

Memon for upgradation of Hyderabad Railways junction

HYDERABAD (APP): President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI), Muhammad Saleem Memon on Sunday sent a letter to Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, urging immediate reforms in Pakistan Railways' cargo services and the up-gradation of the Hyderabad Railway Junction.

He emphasized that in today's rapidly evolving business landscape, where online commerce and e-commerce are expanding at an unprecedented pace, the need for fast, secure, and cost-effective logistic services has become more crucial than ever.

The Chamber President said that Pakistan Railways has a most competitive freight rates in the market. He proposed that cargo services should be operated under a public-private partnership model where Pakistan Railways would provide the infrastructure while private entities manage operations, thus enhancing efficiency, reliability, and profitability.

Expressing grave concern over the dilapidated condition of the Hyderabad Railway Junction, Saleem Memon highlighted that the station serves as a vital gateway for millions of people from the interior Sindh region. Unfortunately, its current state is deplorable, crumbling platforms, poor sanitation, and an absence of staff at information and complaint desks, causing immense inconvenience to passengers. Basic

amenities are sorely lacking at the station, while unhygienic and unsafe food items are openly sold, posing serious public health risks.

He further lamented the absence of facilities for accompanying passengers and the lack of comfortable arrangements for senior citizens and women travelers, stressing that such negligence requires urgent government attention.

Saleem Memon recommended that Hyderabad Railway Station should be transformed into a modern commercial hub equipped with a dedicated cargo terminal, digitalized operations, and international-standard passenger amenities.

He proposed that commercial spaces within the station be leased to reputed brands to enhance revenue generation and create a cleaner, more attractive environment.

He also emphasized the need for strict quality control over food outlets and hygiene standards within the station premises.

Saleem Memon noted that Pakistan's e-commerce market was witnessing rapid growth and if Pakistan Railways positions itself effectively, it can significantly boost its revenues and contribute positively to the national economy.

The President of HCSTSI strongly urged the government to initiate immediate restoration work at the Hyderabad Railway Junction and undertake comprehensive reforms in the railway's cargo services to restore public trust, promote business activities, and transform Pakistan Railways into a modern, profitable institution.

PIAF optimistic on prospects of financial stability outlook

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Agricultural Federation (PIAF) Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol on Sunday, while addressing the ongoing developments in Pakistan's economic landscape, emphasized the crucial need for sustained structural reforms to ensure Pakistan's long-term economic growth, stability, and resilience. He referred to the recent Financial Stability Review (FSR) by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), which underscored that continued progress in structural reforms is necessary to build external buffers, reduce financing risks, and enhance financial stability in the country.

The PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and Vice chairman Tahirm Manzoor Chaudhry in a joint statement commended the SBP for its optimistic outlook on the prospects of financial stability in the near term, but cautioned that global uncertainties, particularly those arising from protec-

tionist policies and their effects on global trade and financial conditions, may challenge Pakistan's domestic economy. He emphasized that despite the positive indicators in the country's financial sector, there must be a coordinated effort to sustain these gains, especially through policy reforms that promote an enabling environment for businesses and investors.

"PIAF strongly believes that the future of Pakistan's economy rests on structural reforms that involve all sectors of the economy, particularly industrial and agricultural sectors. The government must recognize the importance of working closely with business leaders and private sector stakeholders to develop policies that foster growth, improve ease of doing business, and streamline regulatory processes," said Saigol.

Referring to the SBP's recent findings, Saigol applauded the resilience of Pakistan's banking sector, which, according to stress tests conducted by the central bank, is expected to withstand severe shocks over the next three years

while maintaining minimum capital adequacy standards. He noted that this resilience is crucial for maintaining investor confidence and facilitating credit flow to the private sector.

"Pakistan's banking sector has shown remarkable strength, but we must continue to focus on improving financial services, enhancing access to credit, and reducing barriers for businesses to expand," added Saigol. "The SBP's efforts to ensure the stability of the financial system, particularly through proactive regulatory measures, are commendable, but the real catalyst for growth will be in structural changes that allow businesses to thrive."

The PIAF Chairman also highlighted the significant decrease in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which dropped from 28.7 percent in March 2024 to 7.2 percent in March 2025. Saigol noted that the SBP's decision to reduce the policy rate by 1,000 basis points to 12 percent in January 2025 was a positive step in easing financial conditions. This reduction, combined with improvements in the

external account and stable exchange rates, is expected to boost demand for private sector credit and enhance repayment capacity for borrowers.

"The recent policy rate cuts by SBP are a step in the right direction, but we must ensure that the benefits of these policy changes are felt across the economy, particularly by industries that drive job creation and economic growth," said Saigol. "The private sector remains the engine of Pakistan's economy, and the government should continue to support business growth through conducive policy frameworks and fiscal measures."

Saigol also praised the government's continued commitment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program, with the first review of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) in March 2025 acknowledging strong program implementation. He reiterated the importance of this support in ensuring macroeconomic stability, which is vital for attracting foreign investment and driving economic recovery.

Businessmen Panel for swift implementation of CPEC, industrial relocation to Gwadar to spur growth

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) emphasizes that relocating Chinese industries to Gwadar is a crucial strategy for accelerating Pakistan's economic growth and ensuring the successful implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This move is pivotal in driving industrialization, creating job opportunities, and strengthening Pakistan's position in the global trade network.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar explained that Pakistan has faced long-standing challenges in achieving sustainable industrial growth. The country's

manufacturing sector has often struggled due to insufficient infrastructure, energy shortages, and a lack of modern technological advancements. However, the planned relocation of Chinese industries presents an invaluable opportunity to address these issues and accelerate the process of industrialization.

"The relocation of Chinese industries to Gwadar offers a chance for Pakistan to harness advanced manufacturing technologies, increase its industrial output, and improve technological capabilities," said Mian Anjum Nisar. "By doing so, Pakistan will not only address its industrial challenges but will also enhance its global competitiveness. Moreover, this move will create thousands of jobs, reduce unemploy-

ment, and improve living standards for Pakistan's local population."

The strategic importance of Gwadar as the centerpiece of the CPEC project cannot be overstated. Gwadar, with its deep-sea port, is ideally positioned to become a global gateway for trade and commerce, linking Pakistan to international markets. As part of CPEC, Gwadar will serve as an essential conduit for the movement of goods, making it an attractive location for relocating industries. However, for this vision to materialize, swift and decisive government action is needed to create a conducive environment for Chinese industries to relocate to the region.

The BMP calls on the government to prioritize the acceleration of key infrastructure development projects in Gwadar, particularly transportation networks and energy supply. Infrastructure projects such as the Eastbay Expressway, which will enhance connectivity between Gwadar Port and the rest of Pakistan, and the Gwadar International Airport, which will provide air transport facilities for goods and people, are essential to facilitate industrial growth in the region.

To ensure that Gwadar becomes a thriving industrial hub, the government must also focus on ensuring a consistent and reliable energy supply. Without a stable power infrastructure, industrial zones in Gwadar will face serious challenges, potentially impeding their growth and profitability," Mian Anjum Nisar stated.

Additionally, the BMP suggests that the government take further steps to simplify regulatory processes, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and offer incentives that will attract foreign investment. Creating a favorable business environment, with reduced red tape, will encourage Chinese industries to relocate to Gwadar and establish their manufacturing facilities there.

The government should also implement training and workforce development programs to ensure the local population benefits from these industrial developments. By investing in local human capital, the government can create a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of modern industries. These programs should focus on enhancing technical skills,

vocational training, and management expertise to equip the local population with the necessary tools to succeed in the newly established industrial zones.

Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar further emphasized the importance of security in ensuring the success of the relocation plan. "For Gwadar to attract industries and investors, we must ensure a secure environment for both foreign and local workers. Enhanced security measures will help build investor confidence and encourage the relocation of Chinese industries," he said.

Furthermore, the BMP stresses that the federal and provincial governments, regulatory bodies, and the private sector must collaborate closely to implement the relocation of Chinese industries to Gwadar. The BMP

urges all stakeholders to take immediate action and work towards making Gwadar an industrial hub that serves as a model for the future of Pakistan's economy.

"The relocation of Chinese industries to Gwadar represents a golden opportunity for Pakistan to transform its industrial sector and economy. If executed successfully, this initiative will not only boost Pakistan's economy but will also help the country realize the full benefits of CPEC, turning Gwadar into an industrial powerhouse," said Mian Anjum Nisar.

The BMP further underscores the importance of timely execution of this initiative. The potential benefits, including increased industrial output, technological advancement, job creation, and economic

growth, will only be fully realized if the relocation process is carried out efficiently and without delay. The BMP is committed to offering its full support to facilitate this process and ensure its success.

"The timely and effective implementation of this initiative will have a transformative impact on Pakistan's economic position. It will pave the way for the country to achieve the long-term objectives of CPEC and become a prominent player in global trade," Mian Anjum Nisar concluded.

The FPCCI-BMP urges all concerned parties to work collaboratively and promptly to ensure that Gwadar becomes a thriving industrial hub that contributes significantly to Pakistan's economic growth and long-term prosperity.



In brief

Bangladesh to bounce back

CHATTOGRAM (Agencies): Bangladesh will look to bounce back in the second and final cricket Test against Zimbabwe starting in Chattogram on Monday following a crushing defeat in the opener. Bangladesh failed to prove their batting mettle as they were bundled out for under 200 runs in the first innings in the series opener at Sylhet, making it impossible for them to make a comeback. In order to bolster their top-order batting, the hosts have recalled opener Anamul Haque who hit four centuries recently in the domestic circuit. "I think we know that as a unit we didn't bat properly in the first innings," Bangladesh coach Phil Simmons said on Sunday in Chattogram. "We put ourselves in problems. We want to play a brand of positive Test cricket, not just going for 200 runs in a day," he added. Zimbabwe have been revelling in the success, with the victory ending their winless drought of four years in Tests. "The win in Sylhet brought a good vibe, a good atmosphere, and also belief," Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine said at the pre-match press conference. "It's a nice place to be at the moment." Pace bowler Blessing Muzarabani was the star of the show for Zimbabwe, bagging a nine-wicket haul in the match. Bangladeshi batters failed to negotiate the pace and bounce he generated on Sylhet's pace-friendly surface. However, the pitch in Chattogram is expected to be more friendly to the spinners. In view of this, Bangladesh have included uncapped left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam in the squad.

Barcelona crush Chelsea

LONDON (AFP): Barcelona stormed into the women's Champions League final for the sixth time as their 4-1 win at Chelsea in the semi-final second leg sealed an 8-2 aggregate triumph on Sunday. The Spanish are chasing a third successive Champions League crown and they brushed aside Chelsea with ease at Stamford Bridge to set up a final showdown with Arsenal or Lyon. Lyon, who beat Barcelona in the 2022 final, hold a 2-1 lead ahead of their second leg later on Sunday. Trailing 4-1 from last Sunday's meeting at the Johan Cruyff Stadium, Chelsea were blown away by Barcelona in the first half. Two-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati got the first goal with a driving run through a non-existent Chelsea defence that culminated in a bullet finish into the roof of the net. Ewa Pajor tapped in their second four minutes before half-time to effectively finish the tie as a contest. Claudia Pina curled in the third shortly afterwards as what remained of Chelsea's resistance crumbled. A mix-up between Niamh Charles and goalkeeper Hannah Hampton in the 90th minute let in Salma Paralluelo to rubber-stamp the capitulation. Wieke Kaptein's reply in the final seconds was no consolation for out-classed Chelsea, whose wait for a first Champions League crown goes on. Chelsea will now focus on winning a sixth consecutive Women's Super League title and first under boss Sonia Bompastor. That can be achieved with victory against Manchester United on Wednesday if other results go their way. "When you want to play against the best team in Europe you have to be in all aspects of the performance. All of these aspects we were not at our best for different reasons," Bompastor said. "Barcelona are a really good team but the difference between the teams is not that much.

Assefa wins women's London Marathon in world record time



LONDON (Agencies): Tigst Assefa of Ethiopia took advantage of the warm weather to pull away late for her first London Marathon title on Sunday, setting a record time for a women's-only race in the process. Assefa made up for second-place finishes in London and the Paris Olympics last year by pulling away from Joyciline Jepkosgei near the end to finish in 2 hours, 15 minutes and 50 seconds. It was the fastest ever time in a women's-only marathon — but 25 seconds slower than the course record set by Paula Radcliffe in 2003 when it was a mixed race. Peres Jechpichirch had set the previous women's only record of 2:16:16 when she won in London last year

ahead of Assefa. Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya set the overall women's world record of 2:09:56 at last year's Chicago Marathon. The weather in London was a lot warmer this year than in 2024 — with temperature nearing 18 C (64F) by the time the elite runners were finishing — which Assefa said was to her advantage. "Last year I did have some problems with the cold, my hamstring tightened up toward the end of the race," Assefa said through an interpreter. "This year the weather suited me really well." Assefa added this win to two previous Berlin Marathon titles. She was beaten in a sprint at the Paris Olympics by Sifan Hassan last year. This time she made sure there

would be no sprint finish as she left Jepkosgei behind with a few kilometers left and ran alone along the Thames and through central London to the finish in front of Buckingham Palace. Jepkosgei, the 2021 London winner, was almost three minutes back after tiring near the end. "It was a little bit humid," Jepkosgei said. "My body was not responding well. And I said, let's preserve my energy to arrive safely at the finish line." Hassan fell behind about halfway through the race and finished third, 3:10 behind. Sebastian Sawa of Kenya won the men's race for his biggest career victory after making a solo breakaway with about 10 kilometers left.

Zverev, Sabalenka battle through in Madrid Open, Rublev defence over

MADRID (AFP): World number two Alexander Zverev was taken to the limit by Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in a gripping Madrid Open third round battle on Sunday, progressing 2-6, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/0). The Spaniard, roared on by the partisan home crowd, broke in the first and third games to claim the first set with ease. Zverev fought to get back on serve after falling a break behind at the start of the third, and saved two break points in the ninth game which would have left Davidovich Fokina serving for the match. The German won the tie break and was stronger in the third set, breaking for a 5-4 lead.

However serving for the match, Zverev was broken to love by the in-form Davidovich Fokina, ranked 29th, but it was his last hurrah as the top seed dominated the second tie-break. "The first set wasn't my best tennis, but in sport it can change very quickly, I was down a set and a break but I kept fighting and I'm very happy for the win," Zverev told TVE. "It was a very tough win... Alex was playing unbelievable tennis, the best tennis of his life and I am happy I am through." The two-time Madrid champion will face Francisco Cerundolo or Francisco Comesana in the last 16, depending who emerges triumphant from the all-Argentine battle. Earlier Andrey Rublev's Madrid Open title defence hit the rocks in a defeat by Alexander Bublik. Bublik beat Rublev 6-4, 0-6, 6-4 for his 10th win over a top 10 player, although the Russian is set to sink to 17th after his surprise exit in the Spanish capital.

Kazakh Bublik, ranked 75th, secured a break in the first game of the deciding set and held on to his advantage. He will face American Ben Shelton, seeded 12th, or Jakub Mensik in the last 16.

On Saturday record 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic crashed out, while home favourite Carlos Alcaraz pulled out injured earlier in the week.

Sabalenka safe In the women's draw last year's defeated finalist Aryna Sabalenka fought back to beat Elise Mertens and reach the last 16. Women's world number one Sabalenka progressed 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 against Belgian Mertens, ranked 26th.

"It was one of those days I didn't feel my best I got super emotional in the beginning of the first set, with myself in a tough situation," the Belarusian told TVE. "I'm really happy I was able to bring such a high level in the second and third set."

She will face Peyton Stearns or Rebeka Masarova in the fourth round. Sabalenka lost a gripping final against Iga Swiatek in Madrid last year, and the Pole also eased into the last 16 on Saturday, offering hope of a repeat. "I'm trying to take it step by step and I really hope to make it to the final and take revenge," added Sabalenka.



LAHORE: Finn Allen made 31 in 16 balls, Peshawar Zalmi vs Quetta Gladiators, PSL 2025.

Alex Marquez claims maiden MotoGP victory

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA (Agencies): Alex Marquez claimed a memorable MotoGP win on Sunday as the Spaniard secured his maiden victory at the top level.

The 29-year-old won the Spanish Grand Prix in style to take the lead in the overall MotoGP standings after five rounds from his older brother, six-time world champion Marc Marquez. The Ducati-Gresini rider came home clear of Yamaha's Fabio Alex Marquez started

Quartararo, who held off Ducati-LENovo's Francesco Bagnaia for second place. Quartararo, the 2021 world champion, started in pole position and secured his first Grand Prix podium since 2023. Marc Marquez made contact with teammate Bagnaia on a thrilling opening lap before sliding off on lap three.

The older Marquez, who won three of the first four rounds, battled back to finish in the points in 12th. Alex Marquez started

fourth on the grid and, after his brother's mishap, forced his way past Bagnaia to move into second before making an aggressive move up the inside of Quartararo to take the lead on lap 11. Marquez, who is in his sixth season in MotoGP and his third with Ducati-Gresini, gradually extended his lead to secure victory and go one point clear of his brother in the overall standings before the next race in France in two weeks.

Pogacar wins Liege-Bastogne-Liege



LIEGE (AFP): Slovenian cycling superstar Tadej Pogacar produced a stunning turn of pace to solo his way to his third Liege-Bastogne-Liege on Sunday to close the spring classics season. The 26-year-old road race world champion, who took off as expected on the Cote de la Redoute with 34km to go, finished a minute ahead of Italy's Giulio Ciccone and Ireland's Ben Healy.

His main rival, Belgian Remco Evenepoel, the winner in 2022 and 2023, was never in the hunt and finished more than three minutes behind the winner.

Pogacar has already done enough in his cycling career to be considered a legend but his third win, after 2021 and 2024, only underlines his remarkable record. Sunday's win means the UAE leader becomes only the second rider after Eddy Merckx, still considered to be the greatest of all time, to win the Tour of Flanders and Liege-Bastogne-Liege in the same year.

The reigning world champion, who wrote a note in felt-tip pen on his race number in memory of the mother of his partner who died three years ago, is the first rider to finish on the podium of six consecutive Monuments. "It's great to finish the first part of the season in such a way," said the three-time Tour de France winner. "It's been a perfect season so far and I'm very happy." "Feeling good"

It was no great surprise to see Pogacar take off on the Cote de la Redoute with 34km to go, accelerating very early on the climb, but it was to find that no one was able to follow him, including Evenepoel who hung around in 30th position. "His team controlled the race but all of a sudden all the Quick-Steps had disappeared," said a bemused Pogacar. "I thought they were saving themselves for the Redoute but when I looked around I saw that he (Evenepoel) wasn't there. That also encouraged me to speed up."

The UAE leader pulled away with disconcerting ease, without giving the impression of forcing himself at all. "I decided to test my legs a bit and see at the top if the gap was big enough to continue alone," he said. "I was feeling good so I decided to go for it."

With Pogacar gone, the focus of the race quickly shifted to the battle for second place. A group of four chasers first emerged with Tom Pidcock, Healy, Ciccone and Julian Alaphilippe. Pidcock and Alaphilippe dropped off and in the end, Ciccone beat Healy in the sprint, narrowly holding off the return of a big peloton of around 40 riders.

Pogacar now has nine Monument wins — the five biggest classics on the calendar — to his name, joining Fausto Coppi, Sean Kelly and Costante Girardengo in third place on the all-time list. Merckx holds the record with 19 Monuments, including five Liege-Bastogne-Liege wins. Pogacar's victory in Liege rounded off an intense classics campaign in which the Slovenian shone on all fronts.

His earlier wins in the Strade Bianche, Tour of Flanders and Fleche Wallonne gives him four victories and he also had three other podiums, including Paris-Roubaix, in his seven races.

Barca edge Real Madrid to win wild Copa del Rey

SEVILLE (AFP): Barcelona defender Jules Kounde struck deep in extra-time to decide a gripping Copa del Rey Clasico final on Saturday in Seville, earning his side a 3-2 win over rivals Real Madrid.

The Catalans, aiming for a quadruple this season, won the first major trophy of Hansi Flick's reign as coach and a record-extending 32nd Spanish cup in dramatic fashion. Pedri sent Barcelona ahead at La Cartuja but two Real Madrid goals in seven second-half minutes, from Kylian Mbappe and Aurelien Tchouameni, pulled the Spanish and European champions level.

However, Ferran Torres struck in the 84th minute to take the game to extra-time and Kounde drilled home to win it for the La Liga leaders.

Substituted Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger was sent off in the final seconds for appearing to throw an object onto the pitch towards the referee, and Lucas Vazquez, also replaced, was dismissed for further protest. "It was a good time to bring joy to our fans — we have to enjoy it but without forgetting the Champions League semis are coming," Torres told La 1, with Barca hosting Inter Milan on Wednesday. "They can make a party —

for today, it's OK," a delighted Flick, who has won all seven finals he has coached in his career, told Movistar.

Madrid started with top scorer Mbappe on the bench after an ankle injury and lost Ferland Mendy early on with a thigh issue. Carlo Ancelotti sent on Fran Garcia in his place, with the job of shackling Barcelona's dazzling teenage winger Lamine Yamal. The 17-year-old Spain star, who dyed his hair blond for the game, led the assault on Thibaut Courtois' goal.

The Catalans, who won the first two Clasicos this season in La Liga and the Spanish Super Cup, scoring nine goals in the process, controlled the ball. They took the lead after 28 minutes, Pedri placing the ball into the top corner with precision and power from the edge of the box.

It was a sensational goal, starting with a smart Pau Cubarsi interception in his own half. Pedri spread the play out to Yamal on the right, who cut inside and held the ball up until the Canary Islander arrived with a sight of goal. Barcelona's opener brought a defensive Madrid out of their shell — and also Mbappe off the bench to warm up. The excellent Jude



Bellingham netted but was offside, and Vinicius Junior would have won a penalty as Inigo Martinez hacked him down but had also strayed off in the build-up. Barcelona could have doubled their lead, with Dani Olmo's corner evading several players and bouncing off the far post, with Cubarsi unable to get there

as Dani Ceballos held him back. Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea was lenient with some heated Madrid tackles, perhaps cowed by Friday's drama as the Spanish champions seethed at his pre-match comments denouncing attacks on officials by the club's television channel. Madrid sent Mbappe

on for Rodrygo Goes at half-time and soon he and Vinicius began to work Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

End to end Mbappe pulled Madrid level almost on his own in the 70th minute. The striker surged forward and was brought down on the edge of the box, firing the

free-kick home off the post. Seven minutes later Madrid took the lead, Tchouameni finding space to head Arda Guler's corner past the helpless Szczesny. Barcelona responded when Yamal played a delicious pass over the top for Torres, which drew both Rudiger and Courtois, but the Spaniard pipped them there and rolled home. Controversy unsurprisingly reared its head before the match headed to extra-time. Barcelona clamoured for a penalty when Rudiger appeared to bring down Torres, and then were awarded one deep in stoppage time as Raphinha tumbled under pressure from Raul Asencio.

However the referee, called to review the incident by VAR, overturned his decision. In extra-time Barcelona were ascendent and probed for a potential winner. They eventually found it when Kounde intercepted an uncharacteristically loose Luka Modric pass and beat Courtois from outside the box, sparking wild celebrations. Rudiger's dismissal and Madrid's pre-match histrionics regarding the refereeing team will ensure the repercussions run on — and the teams meet again in La Liga in May which could decide the title race.



In brief

DIG Tariq holds open court

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Muhammad Jawad Tariq and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan held open courts at their offices. A public relations officer told APP on Sunday that on this occasion, DIG Tariq and SSP Shoaib listened to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials. Senior police officers were also present on this occasion. During the open courts, they addressed the complaints of the citizens and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. They also directed them to send reports to their offices within the given time frame. They further stated that strict action would be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption, and a zero-tolerance policy would be adopted in this regard. They also emphasized that Islamabad Police would leave no stone unturned in securing the lives and property of citizens. Such interactions will continue in the future to provide maximum relief to the citizens, DIG added. They mentioned that interactions during open courts would help promote friendly policing, ensure self-accountability and lead to the immediate resolution of citizens' problem. The protection of life, property and the self-respect of citizens comes first.

121,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 121,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 124,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1430.87 feet which was 28.87 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 39,400 cusecs and 46,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1130.30 feet, which was 80.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 42,200 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 70,600, 46,900, 36,500 and 7,400 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 21,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 12,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Criminals sentenced

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court sentenced the criminals to jail for murder, attempted murder and damage. The criminals were sentenced to a total of life imprisonment, 9 years imprisonment, Rs. 400,000.0 compensation, Rs.100,000.0 fine and Rs. 25,000.0 surety. According to the details, a clash occurred between the two parties, the case of which was registered in November 2023 at Chontra Police Station. The first-party criminal Basharat Hussain was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 400,000 for killed the woman by firing on a previous enemy. The second-party criminal Ubaid-ur-Rehman was sentenced to 07 years in prison, a fine of Rs. 100,000.0 for the crime of attempted murder, while 2 years in prison and a surety of Rs. 25,000.0 for the crime of damage. The criminal had injured the first-party Basharat by firing on a previous enemy. CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani while appreciating the investigation and the investigating and legal teams said that criminals involved in serious crimes cannot escape the clutches of the law.



ISLAMABAD: Large number of Participants participate in Run and Ride Rally in connection with World Immunization Week 2025 at Bolan Gate, F-9 Park in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Pakistan united against India

ISLAMABAD (APP): The State Minister for Religious Affairs Kheal Das Kohistani Sunday declared that Pakistan stands united and strong, unwavering in its determination to counter India's false narratives and protect its sovereignty at all costs.

Pakistan will take all necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and dignity, and will not be intimidated by India's false propaganda and hostile actions, he said while speaking to PTV news channel.

Kheal Das Kohistani, credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with successfully exposing India's

false narratives, showcasing Pakistan's resilience in the face of external pressure.

Kohistani highlighted that Pakistan has been the most affected country by terrorism globally and the international community acknowledges the immense sacrifices made by the nation in the war against terror.

Kheal Das also alleged that India is perpetrating terrorism against Pakistan, citing the recent attack on the Jaffar Express as a glaring example of such state-sponsored aggression.

He further stated that Pakistan had already communicated to India

that any changes to the Indus Water Treaty were not feasible, prompting India to orchestrate the Pahalgam issue as a means to exert pressure.

He warned that if India were to disrupt the water flow to Pakistan, it would have disastrous consequences for South Asia. Pakistan stands resolute, ready to counter any threat with unwavering determination and strength, he mentioned.

Minister emphasized that while Pakistan desires peace and wishes to coexist harmoniously, its pursuit of peace should not be misconstrued as a sign of weakness.

Two dacoits injured, arrested after firing on police

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested two dacoits in injured condition after they opened fire on police officials in the Tarnol police limits on Sunday.

An official told APP that the suspects, identified as Zubair Shah and Samiullah, were apprehended during a police operation after committing a snatching incident in the Golra police jurisdiction.

The accused attempted to flee towards Tarnol but were intercepted by the police.

He said that thanks to precautionary measures, all police personnel remained safe during the exchange of fire.

The police were conducting routine checking late at night within the Tarnol police limits when they signaled two suspicious motorcycle riders to stop.

He said that instead of complying, the suspects started indiscriminate firing on the police party. Demonstrating exceptional bravery, the Tarnol police successfully arrested both suspects.

He said that two 30-bore pistols and a motorcycle were recovered from the possession of the arrested suspects.

Initial investigations revealed that 14 cases of serious crimes had already been registered against them in Islamabad.

He said that police teams are conducting raids to apprehend the accomplices of the arrested suspects.

Meanwhile, DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq appreciated the police team's bravery and announced rewards for their courageous performance.

Chaudhry Salik meets Joe Biden to discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Sunday held an important meeting with former United States President Joe Biden at Vatican City and discussed to further robust bilateral relations between Pakistan and US.

Both emphasized on providing employment opportunities to Pakistanis in the US, said a press release issued here.

Furthermore, the federal minister visited the Pakistani Embassy in Italy and was briefed on the provision of facilities to overseas Pakistanis living in Italy. Pakistani embassies could play a key role in providing employment to Pakistanis at abroad.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain also met with the head of the interim government of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus and discussed on further strengthening relations between two countries.

During the meeting,

Pakistan and Bangladesh agreed to work together to improve the quality of labor and their skills. Muhammad Yunus said that there were vast opportunities in Bangladesh for Pakistani traders and businessmen.

The minister also met with FIFA President Gianni Infantino in Vatican City, who praised the quality of world-class football in Pakistan. The minister held meetings with ministers from UAE, Russia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Govt to not all anyone to occupy railway land

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Sunday said the government will not allow anyone to occupy railway land.

"Not even an inch of railway land will be allowed to be encroached upon," he said while launching a major operation against

Encroachments in Rawalpindi Railway Division. The operation is the result of the Minister's guidance and firm commitment, and the collective efforts of government institutions have made the fight against encroachments effective.

The operation, led by Divisional Superintendent Rawalpindi Nooruddin Dawood aimed to recover the valuable railway land. The operation has been supported by Railway Police, Anti-Encroachment staff, and the civil administration, which has significantly contributed to its success.

During the operation, illegal wooden structures, which had been present near the Murid Railway Bridge for the last two decades and had transformed from temporary shelters of nomadic people into permanent buildings, were demolished during this operation.

Before the operation, approximately 14 kanal of land was illegally occupied, with an estimated worth in millions of rupees.

Hanif Abbasi said that this operation is being conducted solely for the rule of law, the improvement of the railway system and the benefit of the public.

He also mentioned that this operation would be carried out across the entire country to recover all railway lands and send a strong message against encroachments nationwide.

The minister said this initiative of the government will not only protect the railway system but also serve the public interest.

Dozens of truckloads goods ceased

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Encroachment Squad of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) continued its anti-encroachment drive in Saddar and surrounding areas without a letup and seized dozens of truckloads of encroached goods over the last month.

After the main Saddar area, the Bank Road, Haider Road, Adamjee Road, and Kashmir Road were also now no-go areas for encroachers as a result of consistent intensive crackdown, a RCB spokesman said on Sunday.

The squad conducted four daily operations - morning, afternoon, evening, and late night - over the past month clearing the key commercial hubs including Bank Road, Haider Road, Adamjee Road, Kashmir Road, and Canning Road, he added.

On the special directives of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) Syed Irfan

Rizvi, the Anti-Encroachment Squad under the leadership of Raja Nadeem, established a dedicated field office at Bank Road Chowk.

"From this location, operations are being monitored live until 2 a.m. every night, ensuring a swift and coordinated response to any new encroachments," the spokesman said.

According to official figures, dozens of trucks filled with seized encroached goods were removed from Saddar's markets over the last month. "Permanent encroachments have been completely eradicated across the Saddar area, while temporary encroachments are being dealt with firmly and consistently through daily operations," the spokesman said.

Speaking to the media, Raja Nadeem, head of the Saddar Anti-Encroachment Squad, said all major markets in Saddar had been

cleared and were now inaccessible to encroachers.

"Any attempt at new encroachments is immediately responded to by our teams. Our mission is to keep public pathways clear, ensure smooth pedestrian flow, and facilitate businesses and shoppers alike," he added.

He said traders had been officially warned to ensure that no form of obstruction or temporary encroachment is placed in front of their shops, or otherwise, they would face strict legal action.

The efforts of the Saddar Anti-Encroachment Squad have received widespread appreciation from citizens, traders, and international visitors alike. Many have hailed the initiative as a major step towards beautifying the city, improving traffic flow, and creating a more accessible and pleasant shopping environment in Rawalpindi Saddar.

ITP facilitates 42,000 citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has successfully facilitated over 42,000 citizens and collected more than Rs 121 million in licensing revenue during the first quarter of 2025.

This achievement was made possible through the ITP's dedicated Khidmat Markaz network, mobile vans, and document collection centers. An ITP official told APP that six fully equipped centers operated at Shakarparian, F-6, Cascade Plaza, Swan Garden, G-14, and the Central Police Office (CPO), while mobile vans served remote and priority applicants.

From January to March, the Shakarparian center emerged as the leader in performance with 12,532 learner permits and 1,127 renewals. The F-6 center followed with 4,166 learner permits and 543 renewals, while other centers also showed strong results: Cascade Plaza processed 163 learner permits and 95 renewals, Swan Garden recorded 350 learner permits and 185 renewals, G-14 handled 127 learner permits and 74 renewals, and the CPO issued 103 learner permits and 67 renewals. Mobile vans processed 681 learner permits and 329 renewals.

The total service interactions, combining permits, renewals, and rejections, stood at 13,896 at Shakarparian, 4,762 at F-6,

1,023 via mobile vans, 535 at Swan, 313 at Cascade, 223 at CPO, and 207 at G-14.

Revenue collection figures for each center were impressive: Shakarparian collected Rs 62.78 million, F-6 generated Rs 49.51 million, mobile vans brought in Rs 3.18 million, Swan Garden earned Rs 2.09 million, Cascade Plaza contributed Rs 1.89 million, CPO raised Rs 915,800, and G-14 added Rs 693,200.

Additionally, the ITP received a total of 138,229 documents through circle-based collection counters: 45,750 at Industrial Area (I-9), 42,754 at Margalla (F-10), 41,328 at City Circle (Daman-e-Koh), and 8,397 at Rural Circle (Khana Bridge).

ITP also issued 288,459 challans for traffic violations during the quarter, with enforcement efforts concentrated in areas such as Faizabad, Aabpara, F-10 Markaz, I-8 Markaz, and Blue Area under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer Zeeshan Haider.

Special traffic arrangements were made during Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches, and 893 road safety workshops were conducted in schools, offices, and commercial hubs.

The ITP has also introduced a women's licensing counter and home delivery services for citizens aged 70 and above. The 2025 fee schedule includes Rs 1,000 for learner permits, Rs

6,000 for non-professional licenses, and Rs 13,000 for professional licenses.

Chief Traffic Officer Zeeshan Haider told APP that ITP is committed to citizen-centric service delivery, stating, "Whether it's a young applicant, a senior citizen, or a working woman, our goal is to provide efficient, dignified, and transparent services."

ITP organizes road safety workshop for schoolchildren: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) Police organized a road safety workshop aimed at raising awareness among schoolchildren about traffic laws and safe road practices.

A public relations officer told APP on Sunday that the event took place at Spirit School, Soan Garden Campus, and saw the participation of over 200 students in used. He said that officers from the education wing of ITP conducted the workshop in an engaging manner, focusing on critical topics such as cautious driving, the dangers of using mobile phones while driving, and the importance of seatbelt usage.

The students were also educated on the risks of riding motorcycles without helmets, respecting other road users' rights, and using pedestrian bridges and zebra crossings. The session further highlighted the dangers of overspeeding, traffic signals, lane discipline, road crossing rules, and safe walking practices.

‘Navruz’ a symbol of rebirth, unity, love, happiness

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir has said that 'Navruz' is a symbol of rebirth, unity, love and happiness in Tajikistan and other regional countries, which have been celebrating this festival for centuries in welcoming spring.

Navruz has been celebrated with enthusiasm for centuries in regional countries including Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and others Iraq, Mongolia, Bangladesh and China, which shows the mutual cultural unity between these countries, the Ambassador said.

Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir said this in reception and Exhibition of Art and Culture organized by the embassy of Tajikistan here.

The Ambassador said that the colors of the 'Navruz' festival are new and different in all countries, including the region, and the Tajik nation also has a unique way of celebrating this historical festival. Tajikistan is historically the torch bearer of a



great culture, the colors of which are prominent in the culture of Tajikistan and other festivals, including 'Navruz', which are a source of interest for other nations.

Tajik envoy said that similarly, the civilization and culture of Tajikistan has embraced 'Navruz' for many centuries and spreads its colors every year on the occasion of the festival.

The 'Navruz' ceremony in the embassy of Tajikistan in Islamabad, today is certainly unique and significant. For four days, women and men in our embassy have been busy preparing various types of Tajik traditional dishes. He said that today, the guests here will be served the special Nowruz dish "SUMANAK", which is certainly the best example of the

Cousine of the Tajik nation.

S U M A N A K , S U M A L A K , SUMANAKPAZI, is one of the Tajiks' ancient traditions of cooking the herbal dish based on the wheat grown out in the eve of 'Navruz'. Sumanak absolutely differs from other dishes. And it represents a very good food value; wheat is a basic raw for sumanak. During Navruz in Tajikistan, the main dish is sumalak, a sweet pudding made from sprouted wheat, prepared in a large cauldron and shared with the guest, he said.

Other Navruz dishes include oshy palov (Tajik pilaf), halva, dalda, sambusa, and various sweets also served to the guests today. One of the most beloved dishes in Tajikistan is pilaf, which

consists of rice, meat, onions. There are several types of pilaf in the country, for it is prepared differently in every region.

Meanwhile, highlighting the significance of this festival, he said that 'Nowruz', meaning "new day" in Persian, marks the spring equinox and the start of the new year in the Persian solar calendar. He said 'Navruz' is celebrated with diverse customs and traditions, including the Haft Seen table (seven items starting with "s" symbolizing new beginnings). 'Navruz' has roots in our region, an ancient Persian civilization, and is one of the world's oldest continuously celebrated festivals, he said.

He said the United Nations recognizes March 21st, 2009, as International Nowruz Day, acknowledging the holiday's cultural significance and the diversity of its celebrations. The envoy said this festival represents the start of the new year and renovation of nature. It's celebrated in Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries but is of a main importance in Tajikistan.

Anti-poppy drive started

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): A campaign to destroy poppy fields has begun in western Ghor province, an official said on Sunday. Police spokesman Maulvi Abdul Rahman Badri told Pajhwok the poppy eradication campaign began Sunday from Dolina district that will be extended to other districts and will continue until the illicit crop was completely destroyed. Badri asked people to avoid cultivating and trafficking drugs, otherwise they will be dealt with legally.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 29, 1446 — Monday, April 28, 2025

Man dies in traffic accident

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): One person died and two others were injured when a speedy vehicle skidded off the road and overturned. Police spokesman Ahmadullah Anas said the accident took place on Kabul-Logar highway in Kolangar area on Sunday. He said one person lost his life and two others were wounded in the mishap. Security forces evacuated the injured to Logar provincial hospital, according to Anas, who blamed the accident on reckless driving and high speed.

IEA hails Saur 8 as independence day

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has condemned the Saur 7 coup and the subsequent Soviet invasion, while celebrating Saur 8 as independence day.

In a statement, the interim government called for unity among Afghans and reaffirmed its commitment to a stable Afghanistan governed by an Islamic system.

On the 7th of Saur, 1357 (April 27, 1978), the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) overthrew the republican government of President Mohammad Daud Khan.

Subsequently, widespread resistance erupted across Afghanistan, culminating in the Soviet intervention on January 6, 1980 to bolster the communist

regime.

After years of fierce resistance, Soviet forces withdrew on February 16, 1989. On the 8th of Saur 1371 (April 28, 1992), the Mujahideen toppled the government of Dr. Najibullah and seized power.

However, divisions among Mujahideen, along with involvement from Najibullah's former generals and militias, sparked prolonged civil conflict.

The statement said: "IEA condemns the coup of Saur 7 and the ensuing communist aggression against Afghanistan, hailing Saur 8 as a historic day of our nation's independence and pride."

The statement noted the Afghan people were jubilant, believing they had

finally achieved the fruits of a 14-year jihad and would live peacefully under freedom and a Sharia-based government.

"Unfortunately, a few power-hungry groups once again dashed the Muslim nation's hopes, fuelling factional wars and internal strife," it lamented.

The IEA stressed it was established to restore Afghanistan's independence, promote unity and harmony, eliminate anarchy and implement a pure Islamic system.

"Now is the time to firmly safeguard our Islamic system," the statement concluded, calling on all Afghans to remain united and committed to the stability and strengthening of their Islamic government."

Water supply network kicks off

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): Construction of a safe water supply project has been launched in western Ghor province, which will benefit 700 families, an official said on Sunday.

In the opening ceremony, Irrigation Director Mullah Rahmatullah Amani said this project will cost 16 million afghanis in Deh Haji village of Charsada district.

The water supply project launched today is funded by the Ministry of Energy and Water. About 700 families will be provided with clean drinking water and people problems would resolve after completion of the water supply network, he added.

"Water is the substance of life that we must appreciate, and each of us must refrain from consuming too much water so that we do not miss out on this blessing from God".

Some residents of Chahar Sada district welcomed the construction of the water supply project and hoped it will be completed as soon as possible and their problem will be solved.

Three killed, one hurt in accident

PUL-I-KHUMRI (Pajhwok): Three individuals have been killed and a fourth (the driver) injured as a result of a traffic accident in Baghlan province, an official said on Sunday.

Police spokesman Maulvi Sher Ahmad Borhani told Pajhwok Afghan News the accident took place when a Passo-type car veered off the road and overturned, leaving three people dead and a fourth injured in Sang Sarakh area of Doshi district on Saturday (afternoon).

The driver and the dead bodies were shifted to Baghlan provincial hospital. Arash Doshiwal, a resident, wrote on his Facebook page the dead individuals were students of the Baghlan University. They met the accident on the way to Pul-e-Khumri.

Last week, 13 people were killed and injured in an accident involving a truck in Salang area.

10 alleged poachers detained

AIBAK (Pajhwok): Ten people have been arrested over hunting birds in Hazrat Sultan district of northern Samangan province, an official said on Sunday.

Police spokesman Hashmatullah Rahmani told Pajhwok Afghan News these individuals were arrested in Qara Sai village of Hazrat Sultan district.

He said three hunting guns, some ammunition and birds were seized from them. The suspects are under investigation.

The government has repeatedly stated that hunting wildlife is prohibited in the country and no one has the right to hunt wildlife in the country, and has asked people to try to prevent the extinction of wild animals and rare birds and to refrain from hunting them.

Retirees in Kabul protest for pension payments

KABUL (TOLOnews): A number of retirees in Kabul held a protest to insist the caretaker government pay their pensions. These retirees have been gathering and protesting repeatedly for more than three years to claim their rights.

Retiree Abdul Khaleq Amarkhail said: "It has been four or five years that we have been left wandering. Mohammad Omar Mujahid, the founder of the Emirate, used to pay people's pensions — why are they not paying now?"

Another retiree, Abdul Rauf Hamid, said: "All of us you see here are struggling with major economic problems. We have come here to demand our pension rights from the Islamic Emirate."

The retirees say that not receiving their pensions has caused them serious economic hardships.

"If our rights are not given to us, we will be



forced to go onto the streets and throw ourselves under cars to claim our rights," said protester Abdul Latif Salamzada.

Retiree Mohammad Tahir called on the caretaker government to clarify

whether pensions will be paid or not, saying: "We have been waiting day after day, but so far our pensions have not been paid. Whether they intend to act or not, they should clearly say so, so we can make our

own decisions."

The IE has not recently commented on the issue. However, on December 22 of last year, the leader of IE ordered the Supreme Court to establish a special court to address retirees' rights.

Herat silo struggles amid contract loss and aging equipment

HERAT (TOLOnews): Officials at the Herat silo say that after the closure of the bakery section, the silo is facing serious challenges.

According to officials, previously around 170 employees at the Herat silo produced nearly 20,000 loaves of bread daily. However, with the bakery section now closed, the number of employees has dropped to just 12.

Ahmad Sabit, the head of Herat silo, said: "There are two main operations at the silo: baking bread and storing wheat. Our wheat storage has also decreased, and until last year, we had a contract with Herat

Regional Hospital for bread supply. However, the private sector has taken over the contract, and now we have no contracts at all."

Emad Hussaini, the control manager of the Herat silo, said: "First, the central administration must support us, and then the local authorities. If local officials do not support us, we won't be able to continue operating, and the silo will collapse. We are already almost paralyzed. Our duties are wheat storage and bread production, but currently, we have no contracts, either military or civilian."

Herat silo, built over half a century ago, has most of

its equipment now outdated and unusable.

Farhad Mojahidzada, the manager of grain storage at the Herat silo, said: "We have many technical problems, and we ask the IE to address the issues facing the silo, which serves as a national grain reserve."

One of the silo workers, Ghulam Mohammad Amiri, said: "The silo faces many problems. The machinery and equipment are old and worn out."

However, local officials in Herat say that from now on, contracts for the bread supply to both civilian and military institutions will be signed with the Herat silo.

"The local administration of Herat has plans and programs to strengthen and better utilize the silo so that its operations can be more effective in the future," said Mohammad Yousuf Saeedi, spokesperson for the Herat governor.

Currently, five silos are active across the country, located in Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, and Baghlan provinces.

These silos are involved in three main areas: wheat and flour storage, milling, and the production of bread, cakes, and cookies.

At present, most of these silos are only used for wheat storage.

Paktia University students and lecturers set up cultural museum

PAKTIA (TOLOnews): Some lecturers and students from the Faculty of Languages and Literature at Paktia University have established a museum within the university.

Officials say the aim of creating this museum is to familiarize students with their culture and history and to protect historical artifacts.

The museum showcases more than three hundred historical, cultural, and ancient artifacts made from stone and wood.

Rahimullah Dawoodzai, the head of the Faculty of Languages and Literature at Paktia University, said: "This museum displays historical artifacts, some traditional clothing, and coins from different eras to help preserve our history and culture."

Abdullah Muslim, the Academic Deputy of Paktia University, said: "We have paid full attention to this museum and will continue to do so. We plan to build an archive that will not only store historical artifacts but also preserve the creations and various works of students."

Meanwhile, some students are asking the university officials to allocate a special space for the museum.

Rahmatullah Totakhil, a student at Paktia University, said: "There are clothes of ancient people, weapons of war, and eating and drinking utensils on display. They show us how people lived in the



past, and we learn a lot from them. This is living history."

"The museum shows us how our ancestors lived and fought against enemies. We adopt their mindset, which can help us bring positive change to our own lives," said Jahanshah Hemat, another student.

Student Nazar Mohammad Mahor requested: "If a separate

past, and we learn a lot from them. This is living history."

"The museum shows us how our ancestors lived and fought against enemies. We adopt their mindset, which can help us bring positive change to our own lives," said Jahanshah Hemat, another student.

Student Nazar Mohammad Mahor requested: "If a separate

created for the museum and the artifacts are placed in special cabinets, visitors will be able to easily find and identify each item."

Paktia University officials are also asking the residents of the province to donate any historical artifacts and valuable items they have at home to the museum for preservation.

Exports \$404m mark during last three months

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan exported goods worth 403.9 million US dollars and imported goods worth 3.142.6 billion during the past three months of 1403 solar year, the National Statistics and Information Authority said on Sunday.

In a statement, NSIA wrote Afghanistan made trade transactions worth \$3.546.5 billion with a number of countries during the past three months of 1403 solar year.

It said the value of Afghanistan's imports in last three months reached \$2.348.2 billion, showing a 33.8 percent surge compared to the same period in 1403 solar year.

According to the statement, the total value of Afghanistan's exports reached \$422.2 million in past three months of 1402 solar year, showing a 4.3 percent decrease in 1403 solar year.

Afghanistan made exports to India, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran, and most of the goods were imported from Iran, China, Pakistan and (UAE).

Imports include petroleum products and lubricants, machinery, transport vehicles and parts, textiles, and metal products, and exports include dried and fresh fruits, medicinal plants, and minerals.

Seven killed and five injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhawok): Last week, Russia invited a representative from Afghanistan to participate in the Kazan Economic Forum and Kazakhstan announced a \$500 million investment in the Torgundi-Herat railway project, Kabul said it was appointing a diplomat at the ambassadorial level in Moscow.

Casualties: Last week, seven people were killed and five others injured in various incidents across Afghanistan.

Local officials in Baghlan said a man killed his wife, brother and nephew. In Nuristan, a man was killed due to a personal feud while one person was stabbed to death and another shot dead in separate incidents in Sar-i-Pul.

Additionally, unidentified gunmen killed a man in

Uruzgan, and in Paktia, a landmine explosion injured four children and one woman.

In the previous week, 11 people had been killed and four others injured in separate incidents across the country. Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, insurgents and security personnel would get killed and maimed every week.

Kabul-Moscow ties Last week, Russia agreed to accept a diplomat from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) at the ambassadorial level.

Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi met Russia's special representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov.

A statement from the ministry said both sides dis-

cussed strengthening bilateral ties, expanding economic and trade relations and addressing various regional matters.

Muttaqi appreciated the Russian move to remove the "Taliban Movement" — a term previously used for the Islamic Emirate — from the list of banned organizations in the country.

"Minister Muttaqi thanked the Russian Federation for agreeing to accept a diplomat from the IEA at the ambassadorial level and pledged that the government will soon introduce a new ambassador to serve in Moscow," the statement added.

Muttaqi reiterated diplomatic recognition reflected a positive step toward enhancing bilateral cooperation. For his part, Kabulov said Moscow valued the

development of ties with Afghanistan and was taking practical steps to eliminate obstacles to further engagement.

He also announced a special meeting would be held of the Russia-Afghanistan Joint Permanent Commission on the sidelines of the Kazan Forum next month.

Dmitry Zhirinov, the Russian ambassador in Kabul, extended an invitation to Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, the acting minister of water and energy, to participate in the Kazan Economic Forum, slated for May this year.

Afghanistan-Kazakhstan trade ties

Last week, a high-level delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin of Kazakhstan, arrived in Kabul.

Kazakhstan pledged a \$500 million investment to develop the Torgundi-Herat railway segment in Afghanistan, marking a major step in strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin on a wide range of economic cooperation initiatives, including a significant investment in Afghanistan's railway infrastructure.

Similarly, during a meeting with the Kazakh deputy prime minister, Muttaqi requested visa facilitation for Afghan traders in order to boost trade.

NooruddinAzizi, the acting Minister of commerce and industry, said at the

opening ceremony of the Kazakh-Afghan Trade Forum that Afghanistan's trade volume had increased by 32% in 1403 (2024/25), and that he was committed to raising it to \$3 billion.

During the meeting, the deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan said his country supported a progressive and independent Afghanistan and saw significant developments occurring across various sectors.

He added Kazakhstan was ready to invest \$500 million in the implementation phase of the Torgundi-Herat section of the Torgundi-Herat-Spin Boldak railway project and to establish a logistics and transport company in Herat to support the advancement of the scheme.

At a meeting with Maulvi Hamidullah Akhundza-

da, the acting minister of transport and civil aviation, he said an air corridor between the two countries would soon be activated.

This comes as the Kazakh-Afghan Trade Expo was launched in Kabul last week, during which 17 agreements worth \$140 million were signed between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan.

Return of refugees from Pakistan

Arafat Jamal, UNHCR representative in Afghanistan, stated nearly 120,000 Afghan refugees had returned from Pakistan since the beginning of the current month.

With the start of the second phase of the forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, hundreds of families are returning to the country

daily through the Torkham and Spin Boldak crossings.

Maulvi Abdul Kabir, the acting minister of refugees, called on the international community to provide assistance for the construction of permanent shelters for refugees.

He urged humanitarian organisations to focus their aid on refugees within Afghanistan.

Pakistan has set a June 30 deadline for the voluntary repatriation of registered Afghan nationals, including those holding Proof of Registration cards. State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry said formal deportation procedures would begin after the deadline. "Afghan refugees have been, and remain, our guests. They are being sent back with dignity and respect."

Saudi delegation arrives to review ‘Road to Makkah’ project

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Saudi immigration officials designated for Karachi’s Jinnah International Airport arrived from Islamabad Sunday and were warmly welcomed by the airport management team.

Under the Road to Makkah initiative, the Saudi immigration team will carry out Saudi immigration clearance for Hajj pilgrims at eight dedicated counters at Jinnah International Airport, starting 29 April, coinciding with the departure of first Hajj flight from Karachi.

This initiative will streamline the pilgrims’ entry process into Saudi Arabia by completing immigration formalities before departure from Pakistan.

Earlier, a 45-member Saudi immigration delegation had arrived in Pakistan and was received at Islamabad International Airport. Saudi teams will be positioned at Islamabad and Karachi airports to conduct Saudi immigration processing for Hajj pilgrims.

Meanwhile, Pre-Hajj 2025 coordination meetings have been successfully completed at Islamabad, Multan, and Peshawar airports. All stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to ensure smooth operations, with all facilitation and security arrangements in place for Hajj pilgrims.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Sunday

announced that a 45-member Saudi delegation has arrived in Pakistan to assess arrangements for the ‘Road to Makkah’ project in a bid to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims during the upcoming Hajj season.

According to the ministry’s spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt, officials from the ministry warmly received the delegation at the Islamabad International Airport (IIA).

Under the ‘Road to Makkah’ initiative, a total of 50,500 Pakistani pilgrims will travel to Saudi Arabia via designated flights, he said adding that of these, approximately 28,000 pilgrims will depart from IIA, while 22,500 will fly from Karachi’s Jinnah International Airport. He further informed that 100 flights will operate from Islamabad and 80 from Karachi under the project.

Umar Butt said dedicated immigration counters for pilgrims will be established at both Islamabad and Karachi airports. Significantly, under the ‘Road to Makkah’ project, pilgrims’ immigration procedures will be completed in Pakistan, eliminating the need for clearance upon arrival in Saudi Arabia, he maintained.

Umar Butt said the ministry has issued important guidelines for pilgrims. He said it is mandatory for all pilgrims to receive essential vaccinations before departure. Pilgrims are advised to visit the nearest Hajj

Camp to receive free vaccinations against meningitis, influenza, and polio, he said adding that after vaccination, obtaining the yellow vaccination card is compulsory, as entry into Saudi Arabia without a valid vaccination certificate is not permitted.

Umar Butt said pilgrims above the age of 65 must carry their original COVID-19 vaccination card as in the absence of the card, senior pilgrims are instructed to get vaccinated at the nearest Hajj Camp and obtain a new certificate.

Umar Butt said the ministry also issued a strong warning against fraudulent Hajj permits. “Pilgrims must only travel with valid and approved Hajj permits,” he said adding that the ministry has cautioned that fraudulent companies and unauthorized advertisements could mislead pilgrims with fake permits, leading to severe consequences.

He further alerted that use of counterfeit permits can result in arrest, heavy fines, deportation, and denial of access to the holy sites in Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalifah. Furthermore, any payments made towards illegal or unverified Hajj packages will not be refunded, he added.

Umar Butt said the ministry emphasized that respect for Saudi laws is essential for the acceptance of Hajj and for ensuring a blessed pilgrimage.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Bilawal House.

Pursuit of knowledge a sacred duty: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr Muhammad Ali Saif emphasized the pursuit of knowledge and research as essential human endeavor and a sacred duty, particularly in the context of Islamic teachings.

Speaking at the International Conference on Health Research 2025, organised by a private hospital in Hayatabad Peshawar, Dr. Saif told a large audience of scholars, students, health professionals, and researchers that the quest for knowledge was divinely ordained and played a major role in the rise and fall of civilizations.

The annual event provides a platform for promotion of a culture of research in the field of healthcare. This year, the conference received over 500 research abstracts from Pakistan and

abroad, registered more than 2,000 participants, and held over 55 pre-conference workshops. The conference was conducted in a hybrid format, featuring distinguished speakers from Russia, Africa, the United Kingdom, and Italy.

Citing the Holy Quran and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Barrister Saif iterated that Muslims are bound to explore the boundaries of knowledge.

"Attaining knowledge is a sacred duty. The rise and fall of civilizations is a consequence how knowledge is used," he remarked.

He stressed that researchers bear the sacred responsibility of pushing the boundaries of the unknown, guided by reason and rationalism.

Drawing on a Quranic reference to the ever-expanding nature of the universe, he said that constant intellectual inquiry was necessary to uncover unexplored realms for the

welfare of humanity.

Tracing the historical evolution of human thought, Barrister Dr. Saif referenced philosophical traditions such as historical materialism and dialectical processes, arguing that intellectual progress has been driven by a continuous cycle of skepticism and enlightenment.

The Advisor pointed out a persistent gap between research and its practical implementation in developing countries, attributing it to systemic governance failures. "This problem is not limited to healthcare but is affecting all walks of life," he noted.

He further warned against the commercialization of knowledge, observing that materialistic ambitions overshadow collective moral responsibilities. "We are witnessing a collective mindset shaped more by economic gains than by the spirit of cooperation and human development," he said.

Quoting Allama Iqbal, Dr. Saif underlined the power of progressive ideas in shaping civilizations and called for research that fosters both material and spiritual progress. He said that the Quran repeatedly urged believers to ponder, reason, and understand, emphasizing the duty to use intellect for the greater good.

Speaking on the role of governments, Barrister Dr. Saif highlighted recent initiatives of the provincial government aimed at extending healthcare coverage for major procedures including kidney, liver, and bone marrow transplants, and cochlear implants, benefiting economically marginalized segments of population.

The conference brought together leading experts and researchers from across the country to discuss innovative approaches in health research, with an emphasis on bridging the gap between research and its practical application.

NDMA sends 15th relief consignment to Gaza



ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Sunday dispatched its 15th humanitarian relief consignment for Palestine (Gaza), marking the 26th overall aid shipment for the war-affected Middle East.

Reinforcing the nation’s unwavering support for the people of Gaza, the latest consignment – sent on the directions of the prime min-

ister in collaboration with Al-Khidmat Foundation – comprises approximately 20 tons of medicine, 5 tons of hygiene kits and 15 tons of tents. The aid was transported via a chartered flight from Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, to Amman (Jordan). Royal Medical Services Jordan will receive for onward distribution to the people of Palestine.

With this shipment,

Pakistan has dispatched a total of 1,518 tons of relief aid exclusively for Palestine, demonstrating the country’s continued commitment to supporting the people of Gaza in these difficult times. Overall, Pakistan has dispatched 2,045 tons of humanitarian aid, including 416 tons for Lebanon and 111 tons for Syria.

A send-off ceremony was held at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, attended by senior officials from NDMA and Al-Khidmat Foundation. The Government of Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to standing with the people of Palestine and will continue to provide humanitarian assistance based on the evolving needs of those affected by the ongoing crisis.

Pahalgam false flag operation

Continued from Front Page

"How can a video of an Indian couple be wrongly attributed to a naval officer who was killed in the incident," he said, highlighting how the couple came on the media later and said "this is us, not that couple which suffered in this incident."

He asked why India failed to deploy security in the tourist areas while it has deployed 900,000 security personnel across Kashmir.

"You can deploy 900,000 security personnel in Kashmir but unable to have any deployment at the tourist spot to protect your citizens and without proof pin the blame on Pakistan," he questioned.

"It seems to me the whole episode was done for one of the most valuable resources these days and that is water," he said, condemning India’s unilateral action to suspend the Indus Water Treaty.

He called the suspension of the treaty as an "immature and childish" act on the part of India.

He cited principles of public international law, saying "when there are two parties in a treaty and they agree with mutual consent... that treaty cannot be revoked, suspended and terminated unilaterally. It has to be done mutually."

He warned that targeting Pakistan’s water, crucial for its agrarian economy, would be an "act of usurpation, an unfair and unjust measure."

Tarar affirmed Pakistan’s stance, stating, "The Prime Minister and National Security Committee have made it very clear that any attempt to divert or stop water of Pakistan will be responded with full might and power."

The minister cautioned India against misinterpreting Pakistan’s stance as weakness.

"Let me reiterate they should not at all take our words as weakness. Pakistan has always defended itself and will continue to do so," he said, referring Pakistan’s response post-Pulwama.

Death toll from blast at Iran’s Bandar Abbas port rises to 28

DUBAI (Reuters): The death toll from a powerful explosion at Iran’s biggest port of Bandar Abbas has risen to at least 28, with more than 700 people injured, state media reported on Sunday, as firefighters worked to fully extinguish the fire.

Saturday’s blast took place in the Shahid Rajaei section of the port, Iran’s biggest container hub, shattering windows for several kilometres around, tearing metal strips off shipping containers and badly damaging goods inside, state media said.

The incident occurred as Iran held a third round of nuclear talks with the United States in Oman.

Chemicals at the port were suspected to have fuelled the explosion, but the exact cause was not clear and Iran’s Defence Ministry denied interna-

tional media reports that the blast may be linked to the mishandling of solid fuel used for missiles.

A spokesperson for the ministry told state TV the reports were "aligned with enemy psyops", saying that the blast-hit area did not contain any military cargo.

The Associated Press cited British security firm Ambrey as saying the port received in March sodium perchlorate, which is used to propel ballistic missiles and whose mishandling could have led to the explosion.

The Financial Times newspaper reported in January the shipment of two Iranian vessels from China containing enough of the ingredient to propel as many as 260 mid-range missiles, helping Tehran to replenish its stocks following its direct missile attacks on its arch-foe

Israel in 2024.

Plumes of black smoke rose above the site on Sunday and pieces of twisted metal and debris lay scattered across the blast site. By early afternoon, the head of Iran’s Red Crescent Society told state media the fire was 90% extinguished and officials said port activities had resumed in unaffected parts of Shahid Rajaei.

Iran’s crisis management organisation said that of the 752 people who had received treatment for their injuries, 190 were still being treated in medical centres early on Sunday.

A spokesperson for the country’s crisis management organisation appeared on Saturday to blame the explosion on poor storage of chemicals in containers at Shahid Rajaei, adding that earli-

er warnings had highlighted potential safety risks.

Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani cautioned against "premature speculation", saying final assessments would be shared after investigations. Negligence has often been blamed in a series of deadly incidents that have hit Iranian energy and industrial infrastructure in recent years.

They have included refinery fires, a gas explosion at a coal mine, and an emergency repair incident at Bandar Abbas that killed one worker in 2023. Iran has blamed some other incidents on Israel, which has carried out attacks on Iranian soil targeting Iran’s nuclear programme in recent years and last year bombed the country’s air defences.

Israeli jets strike Beirut’s southern suburbs

BEIRUT (AP): Israeli jets struck Beirut’s southern suburbs Sunday after issuing a warning about an hour earlier, marking the third Israeli strike on the area since a ceasefire took effect in late November.

In a statement following the strike, the Israeli military said it targeted a precision-guided missile storage facility for the militant Hezbollah group. It added that storing such equipment is a violation of the agreement reached to end the Israel-Hezbollah war.

A huge plume of smoke billowed over the area after the strike, which hit what looked like a metal tent situated between two buildings with three bombs, according to an Associated Press photographer on the ground and footage circulating on social media. The photographer saw two burned and destroyed trucks inside the

hangar. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

In the warning, the Israeli military said it was targeting Hezbollah facilities in the Hadath area and urged residents to move at least 300 meters from the site before the strike. Two warning strikes followed.

Fighter jets were heard over parts of the Lebanese capital before the strike near the Al-Jamous neighborhood, where gunfire was shot into the air to warn residents and urge them to evacuate, as families fled in panic.

During the last Israel-Hezbollah war, Israeli drones and fighter jets regularly pounded the southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has wide influence and support. Israel views the area, where it has assassinated several of Hezbollah’s top leaders, including chief Hassan Nasrallah, as a militant

stronghold and accuses the group of storing weapons there.

President Joseph Aoun condemned the Israeli strike on Beirut’s southern suburbs, calling on the United States and France, as guarantors of the ceasefire, to "assume their responsibilities" and pressure Israel to halt its attacks. He warned that Israel’s continued actions "undermine stability" and risk exposing the region to serious security threats.

U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis posted on X that the latest Israeli strike "generated panic and fear of renewed violence among those desperate for a return to normalcy." She urged all sides to halt any actions that could further undermine the ceasefire understanding and the implementation of the U.N. resolution that ended the war.



BEIJING: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi in a meeting with Chinese counterpart during Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference.