

**IHC grants bail to Alia
F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday granted protective bail to PTI Leader Alia Hamza and instructed her to approach the relevant court in Lahore for relief. Acting Chief Justice Sardar Sarfraz Dogar approved the protective bail of Alia Hamza and stopped the police from arresting her. Alia Hamza appeared before the court along with her lawyer.

**NAB court acquits ex-PM
F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad Tuesday acquitted former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf in three major references filed under the controversial RPPs cases. In the same verdict, as many as 17 accused including a former WAPDA chairman, Tariq Hameed have also been exonerated. NAB Court No 2 Judge Muhammad Ali Warriach announced judgements.

The Frontier Post

India supplying explosives to terrorists

Not an iota of doubt about Indian terrorism in Pakistan, Pahalgam stratagem: ISPR DG

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Tuesday India was perpetrating terrorism in Pakistan and had levelled baseless allegations about the Pahalgam massacre.

The ISPR DG, at the outset of his presser, shed light on the role of India in orchestrating terrorist activities in Pakistan. He revealed how serving Indian army officers were confessing that India was involved in terror activities in Pakistan - from Lahore to Balochistan.

Explaining the Indian terror nexus in Pakistan, he said how a serving Indian army officer was in continuous contact with a terrorist who was involved in IED blasts in Bhimber and Jalalpur Jattan. He said in these extremist activities, Majeed, the terrorist, received financial compensation from his Indian handlers: Major

Sandeep Verma alias Sameer, Subedar Sukvinder alias Sikander and Havildar Amit alias Adil Aman

Further, he provided what he called the 'irrefutable' evidence regarding the involvement of India in terror activities in Pakistan. He stated: "On April 25, an Indian-trained and sponsored terrorist, who was a Pakistani citizen, was arrested near the Jhelum bus stand from whom one IED, two mobile phones, and Rs70,000 were recovered."

He said India levelled allegation on Pakistan after orchestrating terrorism in Pahalgam and failed to provide any evidence of its claims. He added that seven days have passed since the Pahalgam attack but not a single shred of evidence has been provided to substantiate the baseless allegations made against Pakistan," he added.

This significant press briefing by the ISPR DG came at a time when

earlier today Pakistan Army shot down an Indian spying quadcopter that intruded into the country's airspace along the Line of Control (LoC). Relations between Pakistan and India have soured after attack in Pahalgam, a town in India-occupied Kashmir. At least 26 people were killed when armed men opened fire in the area. India blamed Pakistan for the incident. Following this, India announced it would suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The situation remains serious, and both countries are facing increased tensions.

Giving details about India-sponsored terrorism on Tuesday, Lt Gen Chaudhry said on April 25, a terror suspect trained in India was apprehended near the Jhelum bus terminal. Security forces recovered 2.5 kilograms of explosive material from the Jhelum bus stand during the operation. The suspect, identified as Abdul Majeed, was arrested near Jhelum

and was found in possession of an Indian drone recovered from his residence. Additionally, Rs1 million in cash was also seized from his home, he added.

Forensic analysis of the suspect's mobile phone revealed communication with contacts in India, including direct conversations with an Indian Subedar named Sukhwinder. The DG ISPR elaborated that India is actively supplying explosives to terrorists for attacks on both civilians and security personnel inside Pakistan.

He further revealed that intercepted communications revealed that four Indian Army officers were involved in terrorism-related coordination. These officers include Major Sandeep Verma, Subedar Sukhwinder, Havaldar Amit, and one sepoy, as per the ISPR chief. According to the DG ISPR, Indian handlers were instructing terrorists to "cause civilian casualties in Pakistan" and to "carry out



attacks so the world perceives Pakistan as a hub of terrorism".

He added that the handlers even sent videos explaining how to make bombs. The chief military spokesperson stated that Major Sandeep admitted to orchestrating terrorism from "Balochistan to Lahore".

On November 22, Subedar Sukhwinder guided Abdul Majeed to a location near Head Marala to retrieve an IED and a damaged drone.

On November 30, Majeed planted the IED on a military vehicle in Jalalpur Jattan, resulting in four martyrdoms. Following the completion of the task, he received Rs656,000. On March 18, Major Sukhwinder provided the location of another IED near Kotli. The next day, schoolchildren spotted a suspicious bag in the area. An army unit responded and recovered a bomb from the site.

After the bomb was recovered in Kotli, Indian media falsely claimed

PM reaffirms commitment for digital Pakistan



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday hailed around \$700 million pledges in new foreign investment in the Information Technology (IT) sector and called on international stakeholders to continue supporting Pakistan's journey as it was ready to lead global digital economy.

The prime minister addressed the Digital Foreign Direct Investment (DFDI-2025) Conference here, declaring that Pakistan is "not waiting for the future, but shaping it." The conference, attended by global tech leaders, investors, and innovation champions, marked a significant step in Pakistan's emergence as a key player in the global digital economy.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his inaugural keynote address, shared insights from his four decades in public service, observing the "sea change in

global dynamics driven by digital transformation." He reaffirmed the government's commitment to positioning Pakistan as the next major tech destination in the world.

"Our youth, aged between 15 and 30, constitute 60% of the population. They are the architects of our digital future," said the prime minister. He highlighted the government's strategic initiatives including the launch of federal and provincial IT parks, incubation centers, and a large-scale R&D ecosystem. He announced a new partnership with global technology giant Huawei, which will train 200,000 boys and girls annually through a joint skill development program.

He said that in March this year, Pakistan received a record-breaking \$4.1 billion in foreign remittances, signaling growing trust in the country's digital potential. "We're not just building a digital economy—we're creating a digital Pakistan.

Premier briefs UN Chief on South Asia tensions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday held a telephone conversation with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, which focused on recent developments in South Asia.

During the telephone call, the prime minister affirmed that Pakistan condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, while highlighting the significant sacrifices rendered by the country in the global war against terror. While rejecting Indian accusations against Pakistan as baseless, the prime minister categorically rejected any attempt to link Pakistan with the Pahalgam incident and reiterated his call for a transparent and neutral investigation into the incident.

He expressed serious concerns over India's attempts to delegitimize the Kashmiri freedom struggle by using the bogey of "terrorism", as well as its widely documented state-sponsored terrorism in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He particularly highlighted India's weaponization of the waters of the Indus Basin as unacceptable, while noting that water was the lifeline of 240 million people.

While underscoring that Pakistan shall defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity with full force in case of any misadventure by India, the prime minister encouraged the UN Secretary-General to counsel India to act responsibly and exercise restraint. He emphasized that the unresolved issue of Jammu & Kashmir remained the root cause of instability in South Asia, and urged the UN Secretary-General to play his role for its just resolution, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment towards fostering international peace and security as a responsible member of the international community and a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The UN Secretary-General appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace in South Asia and said that the world could not afford any escalation in the region at crucial time.

From transforming agriculture through AI to expanding exports with smart technology, this is the moment for global investors to join us," he said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also invited the world to invest, guide, and grow with with Pakistan. Together, we will make Pakistan a leading light in the digital era," he

(Continued on Back Page)

Canada's Liberal Party wins election

OTTAWA: Canada's governing Liberal Party has won national elections dominated by United States President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threats. Prime Minister Mark Carney, a career economist and banker who cast himself as a champion for Canada in the face of Trump's threats, led the Liberals to a fourth consecutive term on Monday, a stunning turnaround for a party that until recently was on track for a crushing defeat at the hands of the Conservative Party.

Carney, who had never held office before taking the top job in March, cast the outcome as an opportunity to "stand up for Canada" and "build Canada strong". "As I've been warning for months, America wants our land, our resources, our water, our country," Carney said in a victory speech, in which he called on Canadians to never forget the lessons of the "American betrayal".

"These are not idle threats. President Trump is trying to break us so America can own us. That will never — that will never, ever happen. But we also must recognise the reality that our world has fundamentally changed," Carney said Canada was again facing one of the "hinge moments of history" just as it did at the start of the Second World War and the end of the Cold War.

"Our old relationship with the United States, a relationship based on steadily increasing integration, is over," he said. "The system of open global trade, anchored by the United States — a system that Canada has relied on since the Second World War, a system that, while not perfect, has helped deliver prosperity for our

PM, Presidenet greet newly elected Canadian PM Carney

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday extended his felicitations to Mark Joseph Carney on his election as the Prime Minister of Canada and to the Liberal Party on their success in the recently held elections in Canada. "Congratulations to Mark J Carney on his election as the Prime Minister of Canada, and to the Liberal Party on their success in the recently held elections. Pakistan and Canada enjoy warm and friendly relations and we are proud of the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Canada," the prime minister posted on X handle.

He said that he looked forward to working together with Prime Minister Carney to further deepen their partnership and create greater opportunities for their nations. According to Tuesday projections by Canadian broadcasters, the Liberal party won Canada's federal election, while opposition leader Pierre Poilievre also conceded defeat. President Asif Ali Zardari extended warm felicitations to the Prime Minister of Canada on his party's victory in the federal elections. He stated that Pakistan and Canada enjoy excellent bilateral relations and expressed hope that ties between the two countries would continue to further strengthen under the leadership of Prime Minister Mark Carney.

country for decades — is over." Although Carney's Liberals won the most seats in the 343-member House of Commons, it is unclear if he will be able to form a majority government or need to rely on the support of a smaller party.

With the votes still being counted late on Monday, the Liberals won on course to win at least 165 seats, with the Conservatives, led by Pierre Poilievre, on track to take at least 147, according to projections by national broadcaster CBC. The Liberals last won a parliamentary majority in 2015 and had relied on the support of the left-leaning New Democratic Party to pass legislation after narrowly winning the 2021 election with 160 seats.

The election result marks an extraordinary reversal of fortune for the centre-left party, which trailed the Conservatives by more than 20 points in polls as recently as January. While Poilievre, 45, had hoped to capitalise on the widespread unpopularity of former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whom voters blamed for rising living costs and record levels of immigration, Trump's return to the White House prompted a surge in patriotic sentiment in Canada and galvanised voters around the incumbent government. After leading the race for more than two years, the Conservatives' advantage quickly evaporated when Carney replaced Trudeau as the person tasked with navigating the escalating tensions between Ottawa and Washington. — Aljazeera

Dar briefs UAE counterpart on NSC decisions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday spoke to his counterpart in the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan wherein they discussed the recent regional situation and matters of mutual concern.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar apprised the UAE deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Pakistan's National Security Committee's decisions in response to India's unfounded allegations, inflammatory rhetoric, and unilateral actions, according to a foreign ministry's press release issued in Islamabad.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan emphasized the importance of upholding regional stability, promoting dialogue, exercising restraint, and peaceful resolution of disputes. Reaffirming the strong fraternal ties between Pakistan and the UAE, both leaders committed to maintaining close coordination and consultations in light of evolving regional situation. Both sides expressed their resolve to enhancing bilateral cooperation and advancing shared objectives of peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Terrorism is a national challenge: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government on Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr. Saif, stated that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur successfully defended the constitutional rights of the province in the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

He said that the share of the merged districts in National Finance Commission (NFC) Award was the legal and constitutional right of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to Dr. Saif, the Chief Minister has briefed the Council on both critical issues and formal letters have been sent to the federal government, though no response has been received so far.

He informed that both matters would be included in the agenda of the upcoming CCI meeting. Dr. Saif added that after the merger, the merged districts were an integral and constitutional part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and it is unlawful for the federation to withhold their rightful share.

He further stressed that the development of merged districts was the top priority of the provincial government. "The federal government should stop using delaying tactics and instead support the province," he said. "Development in these regions is vital for eliminating terrorism." He warned that if the federal government is serious about eradicating terrorism, it must immediately release the funds allocated for the merged districts.

Senate voices national unity in message to India

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said on Tuesday that the Senate of Pakistan had conveyed a powerful message of national unity - a message from all Pakistanis - to India.

Speaking during a Senate session, the minister praised the constructive role played by the opposition and lauded the leadership of the federation. "In Tuesday's powerful and unified session of the Upper House, leaders from all political parties stood together to express solidarity and defend Pakistan's interests," he said.

Dr Tariq said that the focus of the session was unity and the national interest. "Today, we are not discussing politics—we are discussing Pakistan," he added. He highlighted that in a democratic system, government and opposition may change, but the Parliament remains the foundation of democracy. "This House must always

uphold the Constitution and serve Pakistan," he said.

He stressed that political disagreements are a natural part of democracy, but unity is essential when it comes to national defense and sovereignty. "The solidarity shown by the House of Federation today is admirable and has sent a strong message to the world," he added. Dr Tariq said that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation, not an aggressor. "We are not the source of terrorism—we are its victims. India is making baseless accusations while itself being involved in state-sponsored terrorism. The case of Kulbushan Jadhav and unrest in Balochistan are clear examples," he said.

The minister said the entire nation is standing firmly behind the armed forces, just as it has in previous wars fought in defense of Kashmir. "Once again, the people of Pakistan are united with our military institutions," he said. "Wars are won not only by military strength but by spiritual resolve.

Pakistan's armed forces and its people have unmatched courage and faith," he added. He appreciated the leadership of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and other senior military officials for their professionalism and dedication.

"As long as this nation has mothers who raise brave sons and fathers who bury them with honor, no enemy can harm Pakistan," the minister said. He warned the Indian government, especially Prime Minister Modi, against repeating past aggression. "Last time, you received a strong response. Today, Pakistan has even greater strength and capability to respond more decisively," he said.

Dr Tariq also praised the government's diplomatic efforts at international forums and the clear statements made by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister, Law Minister, and Information Minister in defending Pakistan's stance.

Pak Army shoots down another Indian quadcopter

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army on Tuesday shot down another Indian quadcopter on the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan Army, earlier in the day, had shot down an Indian quadcopter, in a single day it had shot down two Indian quadcopters, security sources said. The Indian quadcopter Phantom-4,

spying in Pakistani territory was shot down in the Satwal sector of the LoC.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Pakistan Army shot down another quadcopter of the Indian 5 Assam Regiment in the Manawar sector of Bhimber. Defense experts opined that the irresponsible actions by the Indian Army had led to further fuelled tensions.

Defense experts pointed

out that this incident was a clear testament to the professionalism, defensive preparedness and vigilance of the Pakistan Army. Such actions by the enemy were deliberate attempts to sabotage regional peace. Defense experts said adding the Pakistan Army was always ready to give a befitting and effective response to any kind of aggression.

Pakistan security forces kill 3 khwarij in Turbat

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan security forces killed three khwarij in an intelligence based operation in Turbat, Balochistan. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Kech District's Turbat on reported presence of Khwarij.

During the conduct of operation, the ISPR said security forces effectively engaged the khwarij location and after an intense fire exchange, three khwarij were killed. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other kharij found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," the ISPR added.

The military's media wing said that security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Kech District's Turbat on reported presence of Khwarij. During the conduct of operation, the ISPR said security forces effectively engaged the khwarij location and after an intense fire exchange, three khwarij were killed. "Sanitization operation is

7 bodies found in Ziarat

F.P. Report

ZIARAT: Seven unidentified bodies were recovered on Tuesday from the Chutair Tangi area of Ziarat district of Balochistan. According to Deputy Commissioner Ziarat, some local residents spotted seven bodies near Konchi dam and informed the authorities.

Upon receiving the information, rescue teams and Levies personnel reached the scene and shifted the bodies to a hospital. Police launched an investigation into the incident. "Details and facts will be confirmed after the investigation is complete," the deputy commissioner stated, adding that efforts are ongoing to identify the victims and determine the motive and perpetrators behind the killings. In response to the gruesome incident, local residents staged a protest and blocked the Ziarat-Chutair road, demanding immediate action from the authorities. Earlier, the Counter Terrorism Department killed nine terrorists in Pishin Balochistan, reported quoting CTD.

being conducted to eliminate any other kharij found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," the ISPR added.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Tuesday commended the security forces officials and personnel on the successful operation against terrorists in District Kech, Balochistan. He also appreciated the professional capabilities of the officers and personnel of the security forces displayed

during the operation by sending three terrorists to hell. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister reiterated continuing the fight against the cancer of terrorism till its complete elimination from the country. He said terrorists were the enemies of peace in Balochistan and were against the prosperity of its residents, reaffirming that the government would continue the journey of progress and prosperity of the province.



Moshin Naqvi meets JI Ameer in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Moshin Naqvi met with Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman at Mansoor, here on Tuesday.

The meeting focused on the prevailing regional situation, including the recent escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India and broader security concerns along the borders.

During the meeting, the interior minister briefed Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman on the decisions taken by the National Security Council (NSC) and apprised him of Pakistan's principled stance on the ongoing situation.

The interior minister

emphasized that Pakistan remains committed to peace but will respond firmly to any aggression.

Minister Moshin Naqvi said India was deliberately conspiring to destabilize regional peace and reiterated that the Pakistani armed forces are fully prepared to defend the country. "The political leadership and the people of Pakistan are united against any potential Indian aggression," he added.

Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman expressed full support for Pakistan's official position, affirming that the entire nation stands united

against India's irrational and provocative actions. "The entire Pakistani nation is standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of the homeland," he stated. "India, which has massacred millions of innocent Kashmiris, must come to its senses."

The two leaders also exchanged views on the deteriorating situation in Palestine, condemning the ongoing humanitarian crisis and reaffirming solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people.

Senior Jamaat-e-Islami leader Liaqat Baloch was also present during the meeting.

Faryal extend her heartfelt congratulations to entire nation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the rejection of the controversial canal projects, Ms. Faryal Talpur extended her heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation, especially the people of Sindh.

Ms. Faryal Talpur praised the leadership qualities of Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, stating, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has proven that raising one's voice democratically is the true path.

She further added, Under the guidance of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Sindh government has always stood firm on principles and raised its voice for its rightful Ms. Faryal Talpur expressed, Today, the resilience of the people of Sindh has written a new chapter in history, and the voice raised for Sindh's rights is a message of hope for the marginalized classes across the country.

She reaffirmed, Pakistan Peoples Party, under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, will continue to defend the rights of the people on every front.

Leave of LGH employees cancelled

LAHORE (APP): Implementing the orders of the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, the administration of Lahore General Hospital cancelled the leave of 18 employees and directed them to ensure their immediate attendance on duty.

According to the notification issued by MS Dr. Faryad Hussain, the doctors, nurses and paramedics who have gone on leave have been ordered to perform their duties in their respective departments without delay.

The Medical Superintendent directed the AMS Admin, Nursing Administration to ensure the attendance of the employees whose leave have been cancelled and submit certificates. If any employee is found absent from duty, departmental action will be taken against them, it added.

Helmet negligence causes road mishaps

KARACHI (PPI): A recent seminar organized by the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) has spotlighted a pressing issue plaguing the city's industrial zones—helmet negligence leading to fatal accidents. The gathering aimed to shed light on the critical need for strict adherence to traffic laws to enhance safety and minimize road mishaps.

During the event, SSP Traffic Korangi Syed Muhammad Ali Raza underscored the significance of traffic regulations in safeguarding lives and streamlining the traffic system in industrial areas.

IRS probationary officers embark on field postings



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The probationary officers of the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) from the 51st Specialized Training Program (STP) visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters today, marking the commencement of their field postings.

The on-service training cohort comprises 42 officers. Upon their arrival, the

officers were received by senior officials of the FBR and were escorted to the Skylight Arena for a formal briefing session.

The session was chaired by Chairman FBR, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, and was attended by Member Inland Revenue (Operations), Dr. Hamid Ateeq Sarwar, along with other senior officers of the Revenue Division.

During the interaction,

Chairman FBR welcomed the probationary officers and engaged them in a dialogue to obtain their perspectives on the structure, functions, and operational challenges of the organization. He attentively listened to their observations regarding their field experiences and appreciated their proactive engagement and interest in revenue mobilization efforts. Mr. Langrial conveyed

his best wishes to the officers as they embark on their careers in public service, expressing confidence in their potential to contribute meaningfully to the country's tax administration.

The officers, in turn, expressed keen interest in understanding the institutional framework of FBR and raised insightful questions on tax policy and administration.

Law minister reviews counter-terrorism strategy

LAHORE (APP): The second meeting of the Counter-Terrorism and Hardened the State Committee was held at the Punjab Home Department under the chairmanship of Provincial Law Minister Malik Sohaib Ahmad Bherth, here on Tuesday.

The session focused on reviewing the implementation of the National Action Plan, improving law and order and enhancing security measures across the province.

Key updates included the progress of operations against terrorism, technological upgrades for law enforcement agencies, and strategic steps being taken to curb organized crime and protect foreign nationals in Punjab.

It was informed in the briefing that Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) registered 454 cases against miscreants in a year, chal-

langed 488 suspects and secured convictions for 226 individuals. During the period, 15,776 combing operations were conducted across Punjab and convictions were secured in three cases related to terror financing.

The meeting was also briefed on the security of Chinese nationals. It was stated that installation of surveillance cameras under the Safe City project was completed in 15 districts and under Phase II, installation across Punjab will be completed by December.

Officials also presented

records of actions taken against the beggar mafia.

Home Secretary Noor-ul-Amin Mengal informed that laws were amended to impose stricter punishments on leaders of professional begging rings and separate barracks were allocated for the beggar mafia in Punjab's jails.

Addressing the meet-

ing, Law Minister Malik Sohaib Ahmad Bherth said that construction of inter-provincial check posts was ongoing to ensure peace with 31% of the construction work already completed.

He added that law enforcement agencies were being equipped with modern weapons and technology and drone surveillance will begin soon. He added that the chief minister of Punjab was working tirelessly to ensure peace in the province.

Bherth also directed that a comprehensive policy be formulated to curb the illegal sale of petrol.

The meeting was attended by Punjab Home Secretary Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, Additional IGP Punjab Chaudhry Sultan, senior officials from CTD, Special Branch, Safe City, SPU, Excise, Customs and other law enforcement agencies.

Laptop distribution begins across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat announced that the distribution of laptops will officially begin on Tuesday, starting from Lahore. He said that 110,000 laptops will be provided to students of public sector universities and colleges.

Sharing the news, the minister said the first distribution ceremony will be held at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore, marking the beginning of the province-wide initiative. He added that such ceremonies will be conducted across all divisions of Punjab, with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz personally participating in the distributions.

"Students will receive modern, high-performance laptops," said Rana Sikandar Hayat. He emphasized that the move represents the fulfillment of yet another promise made by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to the youth of Punjab.

"The Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) does not make false promises. Every commitment we make is delivered in the form of completed projects," the minister asserted.

He concluded by reaffirming that the PML-N's legacy is one of action, not just words: "Each of our promises is being realized through concrete initiatives."

Two illegal buildings demolished

LAHORE (APP): The district administration, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza, has intensified its crackdown on illegal constructions as part of a sustained campaign to enforce urban planning regulations and restore order to the city's built environment.

As part of the ongoing operation, the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) demolished two unauthorized buildings located in the Data Ganj Bakhsh and Ravi Zones. The demolitions were supervised by MCL Chief Officer Shahid Abbas Kathia.

The DC said, "No one is above the law." He added that administration is committed to upholding the rule of law and protecting the integrity of Lahore's urban planning framework.

DC Syed Musa Raza said that the operation is being conducted in a transparent and accountable manner, reflecting the administration's broader vision of a well-regulated, livable city for all residents. The MCL Planning Wing has been fully mobilized for the operation, with teams actively working to locate and report violations. Officials have confirmed that the campaign will continue until all unauthorised structures are addressed.

Chief Officer Shahid Abbas Kathia said that there will be "no leniency in actions against illegal constructions," adding that the process of identifying new violations is actively underway.

PA Speaker honours Palestinian graduates

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan attended the graduation ceremony of Palestinian students at the University of Lahore as the chief guest here on Tuesday.

The event marked a significant milestone for 27 Palestinian students who completed their Bachelor of Dentistry degrees. Addressing the ceremony, the speaker commended the graduates for their perseverance and resilience and paid tribute to their courage and academic excellence.

"This achievement reflects not just your dedication but also the enduring bond of brotherhood between Pakistan and Palestine," he said.

The speaker said that the education of Palestinian students in Pakistan exemplifies the humanitarian values upheld by the Pakistani nation. Lauding the federal government's decision to provide free education to students arriving from

Gaza, Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for setting a commendable precedent of international solidarity.

Addressing the harrowing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the speaker delivered an emotionally charged statement: "I have no words to describe the ongoing oppression in Gaza. The world turns a blind eye as hospitals are destroyed and children suffer. History will bear witness to this silence." Drawing a poignant parallel with the tragedy of Karbala, he added, "Just as innocent children were martyred in Karbala, the same is happening in Gaza today."

He also urged the Health Minister to ensure house jobs and essential professional facilities for the graduating Palestinian doctors, recognizing their potential and commitment. In a symbolic gesture, he announced that the graduates would be formally invited to attend a session of the Punjab

Assembly in honour of their accomplishments.

Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan reiterated Pakistan's commitment to advocating for the Palestinian cause at all international platforms and called for the enforcement of United Nations resolutions. "If the lives of global citizens matter, then so do the lives of Palestinians," he added. He also highlighted the parallels between the suffering in Gaza and the ongoing human rights violations in Kashmir.

The ceremony was attended by several prominent dignitaries, including Chairman Awaiz Raouf, Deputy Chairman Uzair Raouf, Palestinian Ambassador Dr. Zuhair Zahid, Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir, Minister for Specialized Healthcare Khawaja Salman Rafique, Rector Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, and President of Al-Khidmat Foundation Dr. Hafeez ur Rehman.

PM&DC implements new tuition fee structure for MBBS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to enhance the accessibility and affordability of medical and dental education in Pakistan and according to the recommendation of Committee on Medical Education Reforms constituted by the Prime Minister of Pakistan chaired by Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) in exercise of powers conferred under Section 20 (7) and (8) of the PM&DC Act, 2022, has decided to cap / fix the tuition fee with ancillary matter for MBBS and BDS programs at PKR 1.8 million for all sessions, with a 5% increase for Session 2025 and subsequent increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation

rate from Session 2026 onwards.

The institutions who have already charged fee from students over the capped / fixed fee and ancillary matters, that shall either be refunded or be adjusted in subsequent session Private medical and dental institutions wishing to impose fees beyond the set limit up to a maximum of PKR 2.5 million, must now have to provide detailed financial justifications to the PM&DC for evaluation and approval. The criteria for assessing such requests will be communicated in due course.

The PM&DC has emphasized that all private medical and dental colleges must adhere strictly to the new fee structure. Institutions failing to comply will face penalties as stipulated under current

regulations, reinforcing the importance of accountability in educational financing.

Students, parents, and stakeholders who experience non-compliance or overcharging are encouraged to voice their concerns through the PM&DC Complaint Portal, ensuring that their grievances are addressed promptly and effectively.

This massive initiative recognizing the collaborative efforts of the PM&DC and the members of PAMI under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister throughout this extensive process. The capping of medical and dental college fees is a monumental stride toward promoting fairness, transparency, and accessibility in medical and dental education across Pakistan and all stakeholders jointly worked on this gigantic task.

WHO, PM&DC discuss strategies for a sustainable healthcare system

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) visited the President of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) today to strengthen collaboration aimed at aligning medical and public health education with the evolving Primary Health Care (PHC) needs of Pakistan.

During the meeting, discussions focused on the establishment and improving of primary health care centers and units revising medical and public health curricula to better address the country's health priorities and ensure future healthcare professionals are equipped with the skills and knowledge essential for delivering comprehensive, community-centered care. The delegation emphasized the importance of producing a health workforce that can effectively respond to the growing challenges of

non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, mental health, and emerging health emergencies.

The PM&DC President welcomed the WHO delegates, and apprised that "Our shared goal is to create a responsive, equitable, and sustainable healthcare system by strengthening the foundation of medical education," said the President. "We value WHO's technical expertise and continued support in this vital endeavor."

The delegation was comprised of Mr. Ravaghi Hamid (Reginal advisor), Mataria Awad (Director), Gedik Fethya Gulin (coordinator), Dr. Mohsin Raza, (consultant health Financing), Syed Shamsuzzoha Babar (Unit head), Dr. Naveed Asghar (National professional officer health system), Ms. Tahira Ali (Community Engagement Officer) and Dr. Samia Latif (consultant communicable disease control).

The President of the



Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC), Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj, responding to several questions from the WHO delegation, highlighted the initiatives taken by PM&DC regarding the establishment and strengthening of Primary Health Care (PHC) centers and units.

He informed the delegation that PM&DC has directed all affiliated medical and dental colleges to establish outreach centers either at their teaching hospitals or by utilizing existing Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) within their respective regions. The objective of

this initiative is to enhance practical training for students, promote community health improvements, and raise public health awareness and education.

Dr. Taj pointed out that people living in remote and suburban areas of Pakistan often have to travel to major cities for even basic healthcare services, leading to financial and emotional hardship. Establishing accessible PHC centers in all provinces, particularly in underserved regions, is therefore crucial to ease the burden on these communities.

He further stated that PM&DC has initiated steps to integrate Primary Health

Care into the medical education undergraduate curriculum to help students understand its fundamental importance early in their training. He emphasized that over the past year, PM&DC has placed strong focus on these issues, ensuring that its stringent criteria are applied across the 185 medical and dental colleges in the country, in line with WHO's standards for doctor-to-patient ratios and faculty requirements.

In the course of the discussion, the President apprised the WHO delegation that Primary Health Care concepts have already been incorporated into the undergraduate

medical curriculum. He also mentioned that further integration of Public Health and Family Medicine is being planned at the postgraduate level, replicating PM&DC's obligation to comprehensive healthcare education reform. He further apprised the delegation that the PM&DC Academic Board, is a team of experts and relevant stakeholders, is actively working on new initiatives aimed at facilitating healthcare access and improving services for the public at large.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj added that, for the first time, PM&DC has introduced a curriculum comprising 1,700 hours for medical and allied health sciences education, and 75 mandatory hours specifically dedicated to Family Medicine. He shared that PM&DC had sent 123 letters to affiliated colleges requesting the inclusion of Family Health Care and Primary Health Care modules, and 44 colleges have so

far responded positively.

He also highlighted that PM&DC is working on future curriculum reforms that will include Primary Health Care leadership skills, greater integration between different healthcare disciplines, as well as a stronger focus on medical ethics and communication skills.

Concluding the discussion, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj informed the delegation that PM&DC has achieved several significant milestones over the past two years. He announced that the Council is preparing to launch Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs. Once launched, PM&DC's revalidation processes will be linked to participation in these programs, ensuring that doctors continuously enhance and refresh their skills and knowledge to meet contemporary healthcare standards.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan presenting a cash award of PKR 300,000 to Mahnoor Ali.

4th DHO conference held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 4th District Health Officers (DHO) Conference was held under the chairmanship of KP Health Advisor Ihtesham Ali. The conference was attended by Health Secretary Shahidullah, Special Secretary Polio Abdul Basit, Additional Director Generals, Regional Directors, and DHOs from all districts.

Director IMU Dr. Ijaz briefed the participants on DHO performance, medicine availability, staff attendance, and rationalization of medicines and human resources.

Regional and district-level performance was reviewed, and strategies for further improvement were discussed.

Advisor Ihtesham Ali stated that regular holding of such conferences has led to a visible improvement in DHO performance, with the performance score increasing from 50 to 70. The focus on medicine and HR rationalization is directly benefiting the public through better functionality of health facilities.

To ensure transparency in drug procurement, the CM Medicine Ordering Portal has been launched, through which 88% of the

allocated budget has been utilized so far. This system is operational in 28 districts, and it includes a standard medicine list.

Any deviation from the standard list is tracked by the system. DHOs were also issued a warning in this regard during the conference.

Health Secretary Shahidullah said that medicine rationalization is improving primary health services. He urged DHOs to utilize PCMC budget funds effectively and cover routine expenditures independently. He also issued instructions to further improve performance for the next conference.

RTI key for accountability: KPIC stressed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Information (RTI) law is a symbol of commitment to good governance. In countries where this law is implemented, corruption in institutions and public affairs is also reduced because it empowers an ordinary citizen to hold institutions accountable.

These views were expressed by Deputy Director Communication at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) Syed Saadat Jahan while addressing an awareness session held at Government Degree College

Yaka Gund in collaboration with the non-governmental organization Youth Alliance for Peace and Development. The session was attended by a large number of students, faculty members, and representatives of the district administration, including the District Sports Officer of Mohmand.

The session aimed to raise awareness about the RTI law and its benefits among students and faculty members. Students were provided with samples of RTI applications and were taught the complete process of submitting applications to obtain information from institutions.

Syed Saadat Jahan emphasized that the RTI law makes all government departments in the province obligated to disclose public information on their respective websites, enabling citizens to access the information they need from the comfort of their homes. He added that the RTI law is a people-friendly law that has made access to information extremely easy.

The RTI law empowers citizens to hold institutions accountable for their actions and decisions. By providing access to information, the RTI law promotes good governance and transparency in institutions.

Innovation in Computing Technologies conference held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The two-day international conference on "Innovation in Computing Technologies and Information Sciences" was inaugurated at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Peshawar, by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Higher Education, Archives, and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi. The conference has been organized by Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) UET Peshawar in collaboration with the Department of Computer Systems Engineering.

The aim of the conference is to create awareness and promote the latest developments in the field of computing technologies and information sciences among academics, researchers, and professionals.

UET Peshawar Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Qaiser Ali was also present at the opening ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Meena Khan Afridi welcomed the initiative and urged participants to make the most of such opportunities.

He emphasized that the platform allows learning from experts and researchers from various fields, aligned with the needs of the modern international market.

He stated that, in line with the vision of Imran Khan, the provincial government is prioritizing the inclusion of market-oriented subjects in the academic curriculum and is actively working on this front. Outdated subjects that do not align with contemporary needs are being phased out. He added that there is no lack of talent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—what's needed is the right environment to nurture it.

The minister further noted that since the 18th Constitutional Amendment, governance in higher education has remained a challenge. However, the KP government has taken sustainable measures to address the challenges facing universities in the province. He expressed hope that by the year 2025–26, universities would achieve financial stability as a result of best strategic planning.

Minister emphasised that

the promotion of higher education is essential to pull the country out of crises and stated that the government is implementing a rationalization policy in higher education. He also mentioned being in regular contact with stakeholders regarding the establishment of the Provincial Higher Education Commission and hoped the issue of appointing vice chancellors would soon be resolved effectively.

Earlier, Senior Dean, at UET Peshawar, Professor Rizwan Muhammad Gul, said in his address that the conference would offer valuable insights into innovations in computing technologies and information sciences, which would prove significant for academic research and professional growth.

The event was also attended by Vice Chancellor of Iqra National University Peshawar, Professor Dr. Asfandyar Khan served as the external examiner for thesis defense.

The scholar Mashal Khan attributed his success to the hard work and guidance of his teachers, as well as the prayers and support of his family.

He expressed his joy and satisfaction with completing his M. Phil degree and is now ready to take on new challenges in his future endeavors.

Fakhar hails Australian Junior Squash Champion Mahnoor Ali

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan, welcomed gold medalist Mahnoor Ali and her parents at his office following her exceptional victory at the Australian Junior Open Squash Championship.

During the called on meeting, the Minister presented a cash award of PKR 300,000 to Mahnoor Ali in recognition of her gold medal win in the Under-13 category.

In addition, he handed over a cheque of PKR 300,000 for Mehwish Ali for her gold medal in the Under-17 category and PKR 200,000 for Sehrish Ali for securing silver in the Under-15 category.

Minister Fakhar Jehan praised the remarkable achievements of the three sisters, stating that athletes who demonstrate excellence in their respective games deserve full encouragement and support.

"Mahnoor, Sehrish, and Mehwish Ali are valuable assets of our province.

We are committed to nurturing their talent and ensuring they receive every opportunity to excel," he added.

The three sisters, all hailing from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, showcased exceptional talent at the Australian Junior Open Squash Championship, with Mahnoor clinching gold in the Under-13 category, Mehwish securing gold in the Under-17, and Sehrish earning silver in the Under-15.

Mashal Khan defends M. Phil thesis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Master Philosophy (M. Phil) scholar Mashal Khan Safi defended his thesis in Electronics at University of Peshawar, on Tuesday.

Dr. Anwar Khan, a lecturer in the Electronics Department at the University of Peshawar, supervised the scholar in thesis.

Head of Department at the Agricultural University Peshawar Dr. Asfandyar Khan served as the external examiner for thesis defense.

The scholar Mashal Khan attributed his success to the hard work and guidance of his teachers, as well as the prayers and support of his family.

He expressed his joy and satisfaction with completing his M. Phil degree and is now ready to take on new challenges in his future endeavors.

Kundi emphasizes role of literature in shaping thought, promoting tolerance

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday highlighted the crucial role of literature in fostering intellectual development, tolerance, and a positive mindset in society.

Speaking as the chief guest at the opening session of a two-day provincial conference titled "Literature of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Contemporary Perspective", he praised the Pakistan Academy of Letters for its significant contribution to promoting national languages, culture, and history.

The conference, organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Academy here at Hayatabad, drew large participation from writers, poets, scholars, and intellectuals across the province and country. Key attendees included the Academy's Chairperson Dr. Najiba Arif, Director Dr. Gulzar Jalal, Dr. Salman Ali Shah Head of Urdu Department, University of Peshawar, renowned fiction writer Noorul Amin Yousafzai, and Syed Majid Shah.

Governor Kundi also inaugurated the "Pakhtunkhwa Writers' House" during his visit to the Academy, calling it a commendable initiative to support the province's literary community.

In her welcome address, Dr. Najiba Arif thanked the Governor and other guests, shedding light on the objectives and mission of the Academy.

Governor Kundi expressed full confidence in the creative and intellectual abilities of local writers, stating that the conference would serve as a significant milestone in contemporary literature, reflecting the region's social values and traditions.

He also recalled that the Pakistan Academy of Letters was established as an autonomous institution in 1976 under the leadership of the late Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and today stands as a beacon in the literary landscape both nationally and internationally.

He assured that the

Governor House is open to all writers and literary circles of the province and pledged continued support for the promotion of art and literature.

Stressing the importance of positive dialogue and respect for dissent whether in politics or literature he urged society to cultivate these values.

Concluding his address, the Governor emphasized the need to engage youth in literature to help them steer clear of extremism and negative thinking. He praised the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their sacrifices and ongoing contributions to national development, stressing the collective responsibility to improve the province's conditions.

Ammad wins 4th Torsam Khan PSA Setellite Squash C'ship

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: After performing well in the Under-23 World Squash Championship, Muhammad Ammad once again proved his mettle and won the 4th Torsam Khan Image PSA Satellite Squash Championship.

He defeated Abdullah Nawaz of WAPDA by 3-1 in the final.

Former world champion Jahangir Khan and Image Pakistan CEO Asad distributed prizes among the players.

Muhammad Ammad has paid tribute to Provincial Minister for Sports Syed Fakhar Jahan, Pakistan Squash Federation Secretary Amir Nawaz, former world champion Qamar Zaman, coach Tahir Iqbal, Munawar Zaman, Directorate General Sports for their cooperation. Muhammad Ammad defeated Fawad Khan by 3-0 in the first round of the championship, Anas Khan by 3-0 in the second round, and Abdullah Basit by 3-0 in the quarterfinals.



Breastfeeding & Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative workshop concludes

Manzoor.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Ziyadullah Shah, Head of the Paediatrics Department, stressed the importance of early initiation of breastfeeding for the health of mothers, infants, families, and the nation as a whole.

Dr. Hamid Bangash and Dr. Khadeeja Aziz facilitated the sessions, focusing on the ten steps of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. Key topics discussed included: Breastfeeding as the baby's first vaccine. Establishing and communicating a breastfeeding policy to all staff. Training healthcare workers on breastfeeding support techniques.

Educating pregnant women on breastfeeding benefits and preparation. Initiating breastfeeding within the first hour of birth. Teaching effective breastfeeding and lactation maintenance.

Avoiding breastmilk substitutes unless medically necessary. Practicing rooming-in (keeping mothers and babies together 24 hours a day). Encouraging on-demand breastfeeding. Discouraging the use of pacifiers and artificial nipples. Ensuring post-discharge support through breastfeeding support groups.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of avoiding infant formula promotion, strengthening staff capacity, antenatal motivation for mothers, and the critical role of colostrum as the newborn's first natural vaccine.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Rehman Gul. Doctors, nursing staff, and paramedics attended the workshop, reflecting the hospital's strong commitment to promoting breastfeeding and adopting baby-friendly practices.

CS reviews PESCO's action plan to tackle power losses

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, chaired a meeting with Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) to discuss pressing electricity issues, load management, and recovery of arrears. PESCO presented a three-month plan outlining strategies to address challenges in the electricity sector. The meeting also discussed an incentive mechanism for officials linked to the recovery campaign and participation in operations, which the Chief Secretary approved.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of prioritizing meterization to streamline distribution and directed PESCO to effectively manage load and minimize line losses, especially with summer approaching. PESCO was tasked with facilitating the Peshawar Development Authority in resolving bottlenecks around the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. The Chief Secretary

also stressed the need to promote the use of cables that reduce the risk of line loss and theft.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman BOD PESCO, Additional Chief Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs, Secretary Energy, CEO PESCO, and other officials. Updates were provided on raids and measures taken to address electricity theft, and the Chief Secretary directed officials to continue these efforts and submit daily reports to his office.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah chairs 32nd meeting of KPCP&W Commission

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 32nd meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission was held on Tuesday in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah. Senior officials from the departments of Home, Education, Law, Finance, Health, and Social Welfare, as well as representatives from UNICEF, participated in the meeting. UNICEF representative provided a detailed briefing on the measures taken at the provincial and particularly the district level for child protection and welfare in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They also shared their action plan regarding ongoing services and future initiatives for the care, rights, and protection of children. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission reviewed all legal requirements regarding the provision of government facilities for state children in the province, allocation of funds for child protection in the upcoming fiscal budget, and addressing staff shortages at the district level.

KTH achieves breakthrough in stroke care

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) has marked a historic milestone by successfully performing thrombolysis treatment on its first acute ischemic stroke patient, utilizing Inj. Alteplase. This achievement signals a new era in advanced stroke management at the institution. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sajjad Dawar announced that the thrombolysis service will be available under the Sehat Card Plus program, ensuring that all deserving patients have access to timely and life-saving treatment, with 24/7 doctor availability for stroke emergencies.

Dean of Khyber Medical College, Prof. Dr. Mahmood Aurangzeb, joined the celebration, commending the rapid intervention by Neurologist Dr. Irfan Khattak, who managed the case with exceptional skill. He shared that the patient presented with left-sided weakness within one hour of onset and received timely thrombolysis, leading to significant improvement.

Thousands of liters of substandard beverages seized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major crackdown against substandard food and beverage products, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPF&HFA) conducted large-scale operations in Peshawar and Nowshera, seizing thousands of liters of unsafe drinks and expired bakery items. The actions were carried out on the special directives of Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru against substandard cold drinks and the adulteration mafia. According to the KPF&HFA spokesperson, a raid was conducted in Peshawar on a godown following public complaints. The operation led to the recovery of 1,130 cartons of unregistered and substandard juice, while expired bakery products were immediately discarded on site. The go down, which was allegedly distributing these products to local markets, was sealed and legal proceedings have been initiated. Similarly, the food safety team also raided a beverage manufacturing unit in Peshawar, recovering 600 liters of substandard and harmful drinks. The unit was sealed, and further investigation is underway. The spokesperson further revealed that during an inspection in the Rashakai Bazaar of Nowshera, authorities seized 4,600 liters of low-quality flavored drinks from a wholesale dealer's storage facility. Heavy fines were imposed, and legal action is ongoing under the Food Safety Act.



In brief

Land record inspected F.P. Report

KARAK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General, inspected Service Delivery Center and Computerization of Land Records (CLR) at Banda Daud Shah tehsil, on Tuesday. He was on this occasion, briefed in detail on Online Mozajaat in Banda Daud Shah. He strictly directed the revenue staff to provide all possible facilities to the public and the fruits of computerization of land records should reach the general public in every way. Meanwhile, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, beside inspecting the Patwar Khana in Nari Panoos area, also went to the field and checked the Gardawari of various lands and uploaded the records on the Marastial App. The Patwari Halqa was directed to keep all records updated and provide all possible facilities to the public. Similarly, Sahibzada Samiullah also checked the staff attendance, medicine stock, stock register, X-ray and dental block at RHC Nari Panoos. He found the medicines in sufficient quantity, however, due to the non-availability of an X-ray Technician and Dental Surgeon, there is a fear of damage to the valuable machinery. He assured to resolve this important matter as soon as possible through the mediation of the authorities of the concerned institutions.

Policemen bravery lauded F.P. Report

BANNU: The newly appointed Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sajjad Khan, visited Baka Khel Police Station immediately after assuming charge. According to details, last night terrorists attacked Baka Khel Police Station, where the personnel of Bannu Police exhibited exceptional courage and professional skill, forcing the attackers to retreat. Fortunately, there were no casualties in this incident. The RPO Bannu praised the police personnel present at the station for their prompt and effective response and distributed cash rewards to encourage them. On this occasion, he issued instructions emphasizing that, given the current situation, all police stations' staff must remain alert and prepared at all times so that terrorist elements cannot succeed in their nefarious designs. RPO added, "Bannu Police is a brave force. The cowardly acts of terrorists cannot shake our resolve and determination. We will defeat these enemy elements on every front." He clarified that the police force remains vigilant and ready at all times to maintain peace and order in the area.

Facilities at DHQ hospital inspected F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The district administration of Toba Tek Singh actively engaged in ensuring the provision of quality healthcare services to citizens. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih paid a detailed visit to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Toba Tek Singh. During the visit, he reviewed the attendance of doctors and staff inspected patient care services and hospital records and interacted with attendants regarding the availability of free medicines. Speaking on the occasion, ADCG Zeeshan Labbha Masih stated that the district administration, under the leadership of the Chief Minister, is fully committed to improving healthcare facilities.

HIV, Hepatitis tests made mandatory for hotels & restaurants



Anees Takar

MARDAN: The district administration has made HIV, Hepatitis A, B, C, TB, and skin disease tests mandatory for all workers and owners of hotels, restaurants, bakeries, salons, and barber shops across Mardan.

According to the new policy, all employees must undergo medical screening through mobile labs operated jointly by the Health Department and Public Health teams. Tests must be conducted at DHQ Hospital or Mardan Medical Complex (MMC). Employees who fail medical screening will be isolated and referred for immediate treatment.

Businesses whose staff fail to provide valid medical certificates will face strict action, including possible closure. An awareness campaign will first educate owners and workers about the importance of medical screening and disease prevention. The campaign will cover food safety, hygiene practices, and public health protection.

The decision was made in a meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Dr. Azmatullah Wazir. The meeting was attended by officials from the Health Department, including Dr. Tariq Hayat Taj (Project Director, IHHTCP), Dr. Rubina Riaz (Public Health Coordinator), Mr. Abbas Durrani (Assistant Director Admin, IHHTCP), and Mr. Jalal Khan (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, IHHTCP).

Additional initiatives discussed include dengue control, clean drinking water supply, vaccination campaigns, sanitation drives, and public health awareness programs. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Azmatullah Wazir emphasized that providing citizens with clean food and a disease-free environment is a top priority, and no negligence will be tolerated.

Public bursts before federal ombuds-

man: Public piled up complaints about federal institutions and offices before Federal Ombudsman's representatives and relevant officials in an 'Kuli kachehri' held here on Monday. The Federal Ombudsman Office organized the Kuli Kachehri in Tehsil Complex Rustam meant to take appropriate steps for redressal of their problems and hurdles.

On the occasion, Regional Head of Federal Ombudsman's office Muhammad Mushtaq Jadoon, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Syed Fahad Itikhar, Tehsil Administration, heads of federal and provincial institutions, local government representatives, members of the Saddhum Loya Jirga, business community, journalists of Rustam Press Club and local elders participated in large number.

During the open-kachehri public piled up lots of complaints about federal institutions/offices before the Federal Ombudsman's officials and openly explained the problems of the area, including establishing a passport and information desk in the NADRA office Rustam, problems of electricity load shedding in Rustam and Bakhshali, replacing old and worn-out electricity wires, eliminating the shortage of electricity poles, improving PTCL service, improving the network of various private cellular companies, shortage of staff in the WAPDA office, shortage of staff in the post office, check and balance of the Benazir Income Support Program and facilitating the disbursement of money to the beneficiaries and other issues related to federal departments.

Regional head of Ombudsman's office Muhammad Mushtaq Jadoon and Assistant Commissioner Rustam Noman Pervaz noted all the issues. Muhammad Mushtaq Jadoon said that those who have complaints about federal departments should submit the application form.

Farmers hold protest against Indian aggression

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Under the aegis of the Kisan Board Pakistan, farmers and landowners from across Hafizabad district staged a forceful protest against India's alleged water aggression and breach of international agreements. Led by Ch. Amanullah Chatha and Shoukat Ali Phularwan, the demonstrators organized a protest rally starting from the District Press Club, culminating at Fawara Chowk (Fountain Square). During a press conference at the Press Club, the Kisan Board leaders strongly condemned India's alleged attempts to block Pakistan's rightful share of river waters, labeling it a part of a broader conspiratorial agenda aimed at destabilizing Pakistan's agriculture sector.

Ch. Amanullah Chatha and Shoukat Ali Phularwan asserted that India's water actions constitute a clear violation of international agreements, including the Indus Waters Treaty, brokered with the oversight of the United

Nations and the World Bank. They warned that the farming community of Pakistan, standing united with the nation and the Pakistan Armed Forces, will not tolerate such "water terrorism" under any circumstances.

The Kisan Board leaders further emphasized that Pakistan's farmers are fully aware of their rights and prepared to defend them. They pledged unwavering solidarity with the armed forces and the nation, vowing that any act of aggression by India would be met with a resolute and unified response.

Addressing allegations made by India, the Kisan Board representatives stated that India frequently blames Pakistan for acts of terrorism within its own borders and in Indian-occupied Kashmir without evidence. Referring to the recent Pahalgam incident, they criticized India's decision to suspend its obligations under the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it a blatant violation of international law and a manifestation of

its hostile agenda.

The leaders stressed that, if necessary, Pakistan's farmers, alongside relevant governmental institutions, would take their case to international forums such as the United Nations and the World Bank to safeguard the country's water rights and ensure the continued enforcement of the Indus Waters Treaty.

Highlighting Pakistan's strategic strength, they reiterated that Pakistan is a nuclear-armed nation with a deeply rooted spirit of sacrifice in both its armed forces and its citizenry. They warned that any aggression by India would be met with a powerful defense and would ultimately end in India's defeat.

Following the press conference, a large protest rally proceeded from the Press Club through Katchery Bazaar, Fawara Chowk, and Vanike Chowk. Protesters demonstrated their anger by burning effigies of the Indian Prime Minister and chanting slogans against India's aggressive policies.

Portable X-ray machine to inaugurate today F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Provincial TB Control Program (PTB) has installed the Portable X-Ray Machine at Liaquat Memorial Children and Women Hospital in Kohat to facilitate the TB patients. Through the said machine Chest X-Rays of TB patients of the area will be done free of cost.

The said Machine was formally inaugurated on Wednesday by the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr. Muhammad Ikram, in a ceremony, which beside others was also attended by the Head of the X-Ray Department Dr. Andalib, Dr. Palwasha, DTO Global Fund Dr. Tariq Aziz, DLS Kohat Haji Safer, Field Supervisor KDA Kohat Zeeshan and other officials of the X-Ray Department of LMH.

A Solar Panel and Battery have also been provided along with the Portable X-Ray machine. With the installation of this machine, TB patients have been provided with free back-side X-Ray and scoring facility even at the bed, while technicians have been given special training for the effective use of the machine. After the inauguration, a collective prayer was also offered and special thanks were expressed to the NTB, PTB and all the donor agencies.

Free medical camp for skin diseases held

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A free medical camp organized by the Mary Aid Blood Leprosy Center in Larkana with the support of the Department of Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (DPED) for the diagnosis of skin diseases in special children, on Tuesday. The camp was inaugurated by Regional Director Zahida Ghaus Kakepoto and Regional Incharge Javed Ali Magsi. Dermatologists Dr. Farooq Rehman Soomro and Dr. Nuzhat Seema Bhatti participated in the camp and diagnosed skin diseases in more than 150 special children and provided them with free medicines by the Mary Aid Blood Leprosy Center.

As many as 1370 culprits arrested in last 15; Police issued performance report in the five districts of Larkana Division, Larkana, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Qambar Shahdadkot and Kashmore-et-Kandakot, under which the arrest of absconding and declared suspects from 2025-04-10 to 2025-04-25 has been revealed.

A total of (1370) absconding and declared suspects have been arrested in the five districts of Larkana Range during the campaign, of which 550 absconding suspects and 817 declared suspects are there, while the performance of District Kashmore is the best during the last 15 days. In the press briefing, the DIG Police Range Larkana further said that anti-social elements and actions against criminals will continue across the range.

Minority leaders vow full support for army

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Pakistani minority leaders have condemned the Pahalgam incident, labeling it as India's "cowardly tactics" and reaffirming their full support for the Pakistan Army. Speaking at a press conference at the Timergara Press Club here the other day, minority leaders including Sudesh Kumar, Father Saleem, Maqbool Masih, Salamat Masih, and Riyaz Masih declared that they would stand firm with Pakistan's military.

They expressed solidarity with Pakistan, emphasizing the country's honor, religious freedom, and national integrity. The leaders also accused India of engaging in baseless accusations and supporting terrorism in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, with

solid evidence backing their claims.

They warned India not to violate the Indus Water Treaty, pledging strong retaliation if it does. The leaders further stated that the international community is aware of India's promotion of terrorism instead of peace, and vowed that Pakistani minorities would stand side by side with the military, ready to make any sacrifice.

"If India dares to attack, it will face retaliation beyond its imagination," they said, urging India to cease supporting terrorism and work towards peace.

Meanwhile, A rally was held in Chakdara in support of Pakistan and against India, with a large number of political party members and civil society individuals participating. Among those present were PPP

District General Secretary Naem Khan, President of the Traders Association Khwaja Faizul Ghafoor, PML-N President Dawood Khan, former Jamaat-e-Islami candidate Azizullah, and others.

The rally participants chanted slogans in favor of Pakistan and against India, demonstrating their solidarity with the Pakistan Armed Forces amid rising tensions with India. Addressing the rally, speakers emphasized that political differences would not affect their loyalty to the nation. "If India seeks war, we are ready for it," they declared, pledging to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army on the front lines if needed. The speakers also vowed to make any sacrifice necessary for the integrity and survival of Pakistan.

Tribesmen hold solidarity rally with armed forces

F.P. Report

WANA: As tensions simmer once again along the Pakistan-India border, a large protest rally held in South Waziristan, where locals expressed strong support for the Pakistan Army and vehemently condemned what they termed "Indian aggression."

The rally, held in the Tiarza area of South Waziristan, was organized on the call of Tiarza High School and witnessed participation from a broad spectrum of society—tribal elders, students, youth, and law enforcement officials. The march proceeded from Tiarza High School to the Frontier Corps (FC) fort in Khaisura, echoing chants of solidarity with the armed forces and denunciation of India's alleged hostile actions. Participants, waving flags and placards, shouted slogans against Indian military policies and in favor of Pakistan's armed forces. The demon-

stration comes at a time when ceasefire violations and water disputes have once again raised alarm in the region.

The school principal Masood-ur-Rehman, addressing the gathering, warned that while India may continue its provocations, the people of Pakistan stand united behind their military. "Like before, the Pakistan Army and the entire nation are fully prepared on every front," he said.

Tribal elder Malik Aalay Khan condemned the Pulwama incident and reiterated Pakistan's stance on supporting oppressed communities, particularly in Indian-administered Kashmir. "We condemn Indian atrocities in Kashmir in the strongest terms," he told reporters. "If India wants to stop water, let it do so—Pakistan will survive. We will soon raise our flag on Indian soil."

Other speakers, including elders Malik

Muhammad Khan and Malik Mir Nawaz, echoed sentiments of resistance and preparedness. "The Pashtun nation stands shoulder to shoulder with our forces," said Malik Muhammad Khan. Malik Mir Nawaz added, "We are ready to sacrifice our lives. While India talks of war, our people are already in line for martyrdom."

The participation of officials, including Colonel Syed Hamd Khan and Station House Officer (SHO) Abid Khan, added weight to the public show of unity. The rally reflects growing public mobilization in border areas amid escalating rhetoric and skirmishes between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. With water rights, territorial claims, and cross-border incidents remaining unresolved, local expressions of nationalism such as this serve as both a reflection of grassroots sentiment and a signal of the deepening divide between Islamabad and New Delhi.

Repair work on Bakhshali Road not yet completed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The construction work on the Bakhshali to Dubai Adda road could not be completed even in four years, transporters, patients and school students are facing severe difficulties, the public is demanding that Member of National Assembly (MNA) Mujahid Khan and Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Tufail Anjum take immediate notice.

According to details the Bakhshali to Dubai Adda road has been in disrepair for the past several years. Complaints have been made to the members of the assembly repeatedly but the members of the assembly are enjoying themselves in the houses intoxicated with their luxury. It should be remembered that construction work on the Bakhshali-Dubai Road began in 2021 but has not been completed yet. Due to the negligence of the assembly members sometimes lack of funds

and sometimes the contractor's slowness, the six-month project has been pending for four years due to which the patience of the people here especially transporters and students has run out.

Soon, the public will start a fundraising campaign and build the road at their own resources. The citizens have warned the members of the National and Provincial Assemblies for the last time, giving them a month to issue orders to start work on the remaining road Otherwise a protest movement will also be announced against these same members of the assembly.

Retailers Association elected new cabinet: The elections for The Retailers Association Mardan were successfully held, resulting in the election of Farooq Khan as President and Kashif Zaman as General Secretary. The polling took place at a local hall in Mardan, with the supervi-

sion of the election commission comprising Waseem Abbas, Rehman Gul, Umair Ali Shah, and Malik Atiq Ullah.

A total of 59 members cast their votes in a competitive electoral process. Farooq Khan secured the presidency with 31 votes, narrowly defeating his opponent Nasir Khan Amazai, who received 27 votes. For the position of General Secretary, Kashif Zaman achieved a decisive victory with 41 votes against Abid Ali, 17.

In their post-election remarks, the newly elected officials expressed gratitude to all stakeholders and pledged to make The Realtors Association a unique and influential platform in the province. They emphasized their commitment to safeguarding the interests of real estate professionals, investors, and the public by utilizing their full potential for the development of the real estate and marketing sectors.

Strategic doctrine of post-Hasina relation between Pak-BD

Waleed Tarakai

HEGEMONY doesn't seem any more for India in the region as losing one after another of its grip on South Asian states. Yes, the core adversary of Pakistan is just growing with its population, meanwhile after losing its influential hold on Sri Lanka and then Maldives with the change of both the states governments, Post-Hasina regime is next alarming intimidation for India.

The post-Hasina regime dynamics form a clear strategic doctrine for India, which finds itself on the brink of fragmentation, with multiple separatist movements already underway, once considered one of the largest and most diverse multicultural entities struggling to maintain its identity as a unified state. As recently an article published on Indian Defense Research Wing website with the title of "Rising Population in Pakistan and Bangladesh: A Looming Challenge for India's Borders" on 21st March 2025 exposed the fear of a state which herself has the world's third largest population, a nation of 1,460,332,407 subjects.

India got three times larger population than both of the prior east and west Pakistan, which is on edge of disintegration with multiple separatist movements already going on in one of biggest and diverse multi-cultural nation but not a full-fledged state to be called anymore.

Fundamental principles in the context of national security and military, evaluate strategic doctrine as use of force with terror to achieve political goals, which India has already been using within the region since past three to four decades if its in the form of operation "Blue Star" or NRC for India herself or state sponsored terrorism outside India, which regulated in the notion of Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, BLA and TTP in Pakistan, Strengthening terrorist group regulated from Afghanistan, moreover the previous puppet governments from rest of the South Asian nations. India always played in the light of Hindutva ideology to maintain its embalmend fake dominance in the region.

Soon after the Post-Hasina diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh, which could also be witnessed after long at D-8

submit Cairo December 2024, in which both the state had called on an exclusive meet-up for strategic ties and way forward to counter those actors which are against regional stability. This new wave of doctrine can be strategically analyzed that Bangladesh is in urge to have status like Pakistan in the region, which is only possible if previous wing gets closer to Pakistan and behave like an ally like it was at the time of partition 1947.

It can be foresighted that Pakistan and Bangladesh will jointly balance the loss of 1971, which may result in to no longer giant India soon. The practical example for Pakistan and Bangladesh strategic doctrine agenda constitutes of the ongoing agreement between two states to regularly train the military cadets from Bangladesh in Pakistan's dignified military academies as previously eastern wing Bengali cadets used to be trained for nations security. AMAN-2025 Naval drill exercise kick off with special focus on regional cooperation aiming the theme of "Together for Peace".

The future of Islamabad-Dhaka strategic relationship after

Post-Hasina era will depend on regional geopolitical dynamics, regional power equations, economic partnership and security dilemma. The doctrine shaped by both the states will also redefine the foreign policy by the civil military leadership of both the major states of South Asia. The return of Bangladesh National Party, traditionally more favorable towards Pakistan, could usher in a thaw in bilateral relations, focusing on economic and strategic cooperation. This doctrine from both nations will break the orthodox legacy of Indian supremacy in the region. Pakistan is the key for Bangladesh prosperous recognition not only regionally but globally.

Strategic doctrine of Post Hasina relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh is also beneficial for reducing the grip on Indian Ocean connecting to Pacific Ocean for big nations, as if this strategic doctrine lasts for long then states like India which are hyenas in diplomatic world order will help to counter Islamophobia and lesser the tense atmosphere at global diplomatic front.

This strategic doctrine initiated

by both the major states of this region will help to minimize the rivalry between US- China and their allies in Pacific region. The strategic doctrine will also subtract the Israeli agenda for Pakistan and Muslim World. As both the state's starting from Alphabet "I" has fascist ideology against Muslims and hurdle for the development of Asia against NATO States.

The strategic doctrine between Pakistan and Bangladesh is gradually resulting to be bridge between Central Asian States and ASEAN States. It will result in opening future economic gateway for the multiple region of Asia which shall safe guard the upcoming economic alliance for instance, SCO. As the fresh strategic alliance has not only cemented the relationship among two contemporary states Pakistan and Bangladesh but also blown a whistle against domino effect theory to counter Israel's Anti-Muslim lobby.

Pakistan is a nation with rich history to always promote peace and stability. The open-heart welcoming nature is the charm of Pakistan, which is always seen as Pakistan mission for peace keep-

ing is recognized globally. The step taken by Pakistan towards Bangladesh is strategic victory of Pakistanis to be considered as responsible state in diplomatic affairs.

Pakistan has proved to be actual guardian of the region weather its Afghan migrants or political aid to Sri Lanka and now Bangladesh. With this strategic doctrine the current government of Dhaka with the help of Islamabad, will diplomatically gain the better status which Bengal people always dreamed for. With the rapidly changing South Asian landscape, Pakistan and Bangladesh may find that mutual economic and strategic interest outweigh past conflicts, setting the stage for a more cooperative future.

If Bangladesh moves toward a more pragmatic foreign policy that prioritizes economic and strategic benefits over historical grievances, Islamabad and Dhaka could find common ground in trade, investment, and regional security. However, any significant shift will require diplomatic recalibration, trust-building measures, and a willingness to move beyond the shadows of 1971.



BARCELONA: People waiting outside a closed train station, during a major power outage in Spain.

Russia’s expulsion of Ukrainian forces from Kursk removes hurdle

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia's ejection of Ukrainian troops from the Kursk region ends the biggest incursion into Russian territory since World War Two, removing another barrier to a peace deal Moscow was reluctant to conclude with so many enemy troops on its soil. The day after Moscow announced the completion of the Kursk operation, President Vladimir Putin declared a unilateral three-day ceasefire to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies in World War Two.

Two Russian sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity that settling the war while Ukrainian troops were in Kursk was not acceptable to the Kremlin. Just over two years after Russia's 2022 invasion, Ukraine on Aug. 6 launched its boldest attack, smashing through the Russian border into the Kursk region, supported by swarms of drones and heavy Western weaponry. At its height, Ukrainian forces claimed nearly 1,400 square kilometres of Kursk, but the attack proved costly for Kyiv. Russia has since taken around 2,000 square kilometres in Ukraine and now controls a chunk of the country nearly equal to the size of the US state of Pennsylvania, according to Ukrainian open source maps. Some analysts say Russia's accelerated advance, mainly in eastern Ukraine, was aided by the diversion of Kyiv's forces to Kursk.

"Essentially, Ukraine traded territory

it values the most - its own - for territory it didn't value and that it couldn't hold forever," said Christopher McCallion, a fellow at Defense Priorities, a Washington DC think tank advocating for a strong US military with a restrained foreign policy. Ukraine, which has been retreating for weeks but still claims to have some active forces in Kursk, maintains the incursion distracted Russia from making even more gains on parts of the eastern front by forcing Russia to commit troops elsewhere. Kyiv has said its goals also included protecting its Sumy border region and gaining a territory that could be swapped in future peace talks. Those talks, driven by Washington's shuttle diplomacy, are now underway, without Ukraine's hoped-for bargaining chip. Huge differences remain that could scupper US President Donald Trump's peace effort, however. If the talks flounder, Russian forces will simply fight on, one of the sources said.

The Kremlin did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In response to a request for comment, Ukraine's military general staff denied hostilities had ended in the Kursk region and said Ukraine's defensive operation there continued. In recent weeks, Russia has stepped up attacks in Sumy, across the border from Kursk, local officials have said. On April 14, a Russian missile attack killed 35 people in Sumy's capital city. Russia said it had targeted a gathering of Ukrainian

soldiers. Despite doubts in Ukraine about whether the Kursk offensive was worth it, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has acknowledged that Kyiv's forces were now active in Russia's Belgorod region, also on the border, describing it as an effort to protect towns on the Ukrainian side.

Russia occupies slivers of land across the border from Belgorod in Kharkiv. Under US proposals, Ukraine could regain full control of its territory in Kharkiv as part of a peace deal while Russia would retain control over just under a fifth of Ukraine. For the Kremlin, the incursion into Kursk, scene of the largest ever tank battle in history between Soviet forces and Nazi Germany in 1943, was an embarrassment. The announcement of victory over Ukrainian troops comes ahead of 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over the Nazis on May 9. It gives Putin a win to showcase in front of invited dignitaries, including China's Xi Jinping and Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Despite prior warnings that an attack could come, Russian forces were surprised by the Ukrainian assault, according to Russian sources. Russian officials at the time spoke of chaos as Russian civilians fled east and Russian border guards and army tried to battle small, highly mobile Ukrainian units speeding along the country roads of Kursk with Western weaponry and vehicles.

China holds off on new stimulus, shows composure in US trade war

BEIJING (Reuters): China has advanced this year's stimulus plans but is holding off on fresh measures as it tries to maintain composure, betting on Washington blinking first in a protracted trade war. The Communist Party's elite decision-making body, the Politburo, pledged to support firms and workers most affected by triple-digit US tariffs on Chinese goods, but stopped short of announcing additional deficit spending.

The decision to withhold additional stimulus disappointed investors, leading to a 3% slump in Chinese real estate stocks, despite official efforts to assuage market concerns over a sharp downturn in growth. Beijing is already in a higher stimulus gear, which it can maintain over the coming months to mitigate the pain of losing, at least temporarily, its biggest customer, analysts and policy advisers said.

The lack of new stimulus does not point to a capitulation on its high growth ambitions this year - matching last year's growth of

around 5% - but a strategy to remain flexible amid the tariff war with President Donald Trump's administration. "It's simply too early for Beijing to go all-in," said Larry Hu, chief China economist at Macquarie. "It's much easier for Trump to walk back his tariff threat than it is for Beijing to walk back its stimulus announcement. Moreover, policymakers could announce new stimulus at any time."

China has already brought forward the implementation of its 2025 stimulus plans and that will continue, Hu said. In January-March, government spending rose 4.2% from a year earlier, while revenue fell 1.1%, resulting in a fiscal deficit of 1.26 trillion yuan (\$173 billion), the highest first-quarter reading on record, government data showed. Furthermore, local governments issued nearly 1 trillion yuan in new special bonds over that period, up nearly 60% from a year earlier. The People's Bank of China has also escalated

lending to state-backed investors to support the stock market.

Growth of China's total social financing, a broad measure of credit and liquidity, hit a 10-month high of 8.4% in March, central bank data showed. New loans to non-bank institutions hit 284.4 billion yuan in February - the second-highest reading since a peak of 886 billion yuan in July 2015, China's last major stock market crisis. Non-bank loans fell in March but analysts expect April to be strong. Policy advisers say more can be done if needed.

"We have policy reserves in place - various contingency plans have already been prepared," said a policy adviser who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the topic's sensitivity. "The timing of new policies will depend on how big the tariff impact turns out to be." A second adviser said room for policy easing remained "ample," but he added that new measures "cannot be rushed." "We cannot afford

to lose that flexibility," he said. "We still need to assess how the situation evolves before deciding how to proceed."

The Politburo statement also flagged further interest rate cuts and liquidity injections, such as by reducing the amount of cash banks are required to hold as reserves, but a source close to the PBOC said the central bank was in no rush to trim as the tariffs' ultimate impact was still unclear. "The external environment has been changing so fast," the source said, but added: "If the data starts to deteriorate in coming months, the central bank will certainly roll out monetary stimulus." The Trump administration struck a more conciliatory tone last week, saying the tariffs were unsustainable and signaling openness to de-escalating the trade war. But Beijing appears to be hunkering down, denying Trump statements that negotiations are taking place, and calling on Washington to remove the tariffs.

World does not want to wait for May 8 for ceasefire: Zelenskyy

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the world did not want to wait until May 8 for Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin's announced ceasefire in the more than three-year-old war only to be in effect for a few days.

"For some reason, everyone is supposed to wait for May 8 and only then have a cease fire to ensure calm for Putin during the parade," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "We value people's lives and not parades. We believe that the world believes that there is no reason to wait for May 8. And the cease fire should be not for a few days only to resume the killing afterward." Zelenskyy called for a "full and unconditional cease fire for at least 30 days" to provide "a basis for real diplomacy".

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy praised Ukraine's foreign intelligence service for the killing of top Russian military figures since the start of the war, but made no mention of a car bomb that killed a senior Russian officer last week. The Kremlin has blamed Ukraine for car bomb outside Moscow that killed Yaroslav Moskalik, 59, deputy head of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

Authorities in Kyiv have made no direct comment on the attack on Moskalik, the latest in a series of Russian military officers and pro-war figures killed since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Zelenskyy's remarks, on the Telegram messaging app, made no reference to any specific instance of Russian military

officers being killed.

"The head of Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence reported on the liquidation of persons from the top command of the Russian armed forces. Justice inevitably is done," Zelenskyy said, referring to the agency's head, Oleg Ivashchenko. "The head reported on further measures to counter Russian agent networks in Ukraine and saboteurs. Good results. Thank you for your work," the president said. Ukraine's SBU intelligence service said it killed Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov, a top Russian general accused by Ukraine of being responsible for the use of chemical weapons against Ukrainian troops, last December in Moscow. A Moscow court at the weekend ordered a Ukrainian national facing terrorism charges in connection with the attack on

Moskalik to be remanded in custody.

A Moskalik obituary published on Tuesday in the Russian defence ministry's official newspaper, Krasnaya Zvezda and signed by Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov, his deputies and top army commanders, described Moskalik as a "loyal son" of Russia. It said that since the start of the war, which the obituary in line with the Kremlin's stance called "a special military operation", Moskalik supervised the works of the General Staff's combat control group. It did not provide details on what that position involved. According to the obituary, from 2015 to 2021 Moskalik was involved in Russian defence ministry's international delegations working on issues relating to south-eastern Ukraine.

US dismisses all authors of National Climate Assessment

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Donald Trump's administration has dismissed all contributors to the US government's signature study that informs federal and local governments on how to prepare for climate change impacts, according to an email sent to them. The dismissal of nearly 400 contributors to the sixth National Climate Assessment, which is mandated by Congress, leaves the future of the report in doubt since the multi-year, peer-reviewed analysis is due for publication in 2028.

"At this time, the scope of the NCA6 is being evaluated in accordance with the Global Change Research Act of 1990," the email, seen by Reuters, said, referring to the legislation that kickstarted the assessments that was signed by Republican President George H.W. Bush. The climate assessment had been overseen by the Global Change Research Program, which the Trump administration dismissed earlier this month, and had coordinated input from 14 federal agencies and hundreds of external scientists.

Its findings were meant to inform federal agencies and lawmakers for decision-making around climate policy and funding priorities. The last assessment, published in 2023, said climate change was increasingly imposing costs on Americans, as prices rise for weather-related insurance or certain foods, and as medical care becomes more expensive as people face threats like extreme heat. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the email.

Trump's administration has targeted scientific research in several areas in sweeping government job cuts to curtail what it calls wasteful spending, including at the National Institutes of Health, Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The climate assessment was a target of Project 2025, the right-wing Heritage Foundation-written policy blueprint that has helped shape some of Trump's policies. Project 2025's chapter on scientific agencies said the National Climate Assessment should be reshaped to ensure contributors are better scrutinized.

Japan’s PM visits Hanoi

HANOI (Reuters): Japan and Vietnam agreed to boost bilateral trade and uphold global rules on the free flow of goods as Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba met Vietnamese leaders in Hanoi while both countries engage in talks with Washington to avoid tariffs. Ishiba's first trip to Vietnam, and his subsequent visit on Tuesday to the Philippines, mark the latest high-level East Asian meetings amid escalating global uncertainty triggered by the threat of crippling US tariffs.

"The world economy is becoming more uncertain, and the impact on the Southeast Asian region is also becoming apparent," Ishiba told reporters after a meeting with Vietnam's Prime Minister Chinh. In recent weeks, Vietnam has hosted China's President Xi Jinping and top South Korean ministers, while Tokyo has held a trilateral meeting with China and South Korea.

Early in April, the White House slapped "bilateral tariffs" of 46% on Vietnam and 24% on Japan. Those duties were later paused until July as bilateral talks are underway, but a 10% levy applies on all imports into the United States, which is a major market for both countries. "We will cooperate to maintain a free and open international order based on the rule of law," Ishiba added in a joint press conference with Chinh where journalists' questions were not allowed. Vietnam is a major assembling hub for large Japanese manufacturers, including Honda, Canon and Panasonic, with a total of \$78 billion invested in the Southeast Asian country by Japanese firms, according to Vietnam's finance ministry. Japanese banks also hold strategic stakes in top Vietnamese lenders.

Spain and Portugal scramble to restore electricity

BARCELONA, Spain (AP): Officials in Spain and Portugal were racing to restore electricity early Tuesday after a huge power outage that grounded flights, paralyzed metro systems, disrupted mobile communications and shut down ATMs. Before dawn, power was gradually returning to several regions across Spain and Portugal as the nations reeled from the still-unexplained widespread blackout that had turned airports and train stations into campgrounds for stranded travelers.

By 5 a.m., the Spanish electricity operator, Red Eléctrica, said that more than 92% of energy demand had been restored. Many city residents, including in Spain's capital of Madrid, went to sleep in total darkness. The normally illuminated cathedral spires of Barcelona's Sagrada Familia Basilica became indistinguishable from the night sky. Streets remained deserted even in neighborhoods where lights flickered back on, as people stayed home after a day of chaos.

"We have a long night ahead," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said when he addressed the European nation. "We are working with the goal of having power restored to the entire country." In Madrid, cheers erupted from balconies where the electricity had returned. But more than 16 hours after the outage first hit, people all over the Iberian Peninsula were still struggling to call their loved ones, hampered by the loss of mobile phone service. Stranded overnight at train stations and airports As metro service stopped, train stations cleared out and shops and offices closed, and thousands of people spilled onto the streets of Madrid. Some resorted to

hitchhiking. Others walked hours just to get home. Spanish national TV broadcast images of commuters clambering out of stalled trains in unlit tunnels.

Emergency workers in Spain said they rescued some 35,000 passengers stranded along railways and underground. By 11 p.m., there were still 11 trains backed up by the power loss awaiting evacuation, Sánchez said. Uncertainty about when power might return fueled frustration and anxiety in major cities. "We feel unsafe, unsure, we don't know what to do," said Curt Muriel, a French tourist with her husband and two kids who fled the darkened subway and managed to hail a rare cab to Madrid's city center from the airport. The blackout turned sports centers, train stations and airports into makeshift refuges.

"We were in the north of Portugal and did get any notifications until we got here because of internet outage," said Ian Cannons, a British tourist trying to get home who was forced to spend the night in Lisbon's airport. "We can't book any hotels. Nothing." The Barcelona municipality distributed 1,200 cots to indoor recreation centers to host residents with no way to get home and international travelers left in limbo. All over Barcelona and Madrid, people were sleeping on train station benches and floors. As internet and mobile phone services blinked offline across Spain and Portugal, battery-powered radios flew off the shelves. Those fortunate enough to find service shared whatever news updates they could with strangers on the street.

Lines snaked out of the few supermarkets running on backup generators in Barcelona and Lisbon as people stocked up on dried

goods, water and battery-powered flashlights and candles. Clerks counted euros by hand, since many cash registers had stopped working. Hector Emperador, picking his kids up from school in Barcelona, said he resorted to raiding his sons' piggybank to ensure he had cash on hand after ATMs and some online-banking services shut down. "The coronavirus pandemic will be nothing compared to this," he said. Few gas stations were operating, sending the drivers who dared navigate without traffic lights scrambling for fuel. Residents with electric door keys found themselves locked out of their homes. The many inconveniences became a threat to survival for those with medical needs like refrigeration for insulin or power for dialysis machines and oxygen concentrators. Some hospitals - but not all - stayed open with the help of generators.

Officials did not say what caused the blackout, the second such serious European power outage in as many months after a fire at Heathrow Airport shut down Britain's busiest travel hub on March 20. They said there was little precedent for this kind of widespread electric failure across all of the Iberian Peninsula, with a combined population of some 60 million. Across the Mediterranean Sea, Spain's Canary Islands, Balearic Islands and the territories of Ceuta and Melilla were spared. "We have never had a complete collapse of the system," Prime Minister Sánchez said, explaining how Spain's power grid lost 15 gigawatts, the equivalent of 60% of its national demand, in just five seconds. In his televised address, Sánchez said that authorities were still investigating what happened.

China, Philippines trade barbs over disputed reef

BEIJING (AP): The Philippines rejected China's claim to a group of three sandbars in the South China Sea, after recent displays by both sides of their national flags on the uninhabited outcroppings. The back and forth over Sandy Cay is the latest flare-up in a long-running dispute over territory in the hotly contested South China Sea, which China claims almost in its entirety.

The flare-up began last week when a Chinese state-owned newspaper posted exclusive photos of coast guard officers on Sandy Cay from mid-April, including one of them holding up a Chinese flag. Three days later, a joint Philippines coast guard, navy and maritime police team headed to the three sandbars and posed for a photo holding up their national flag. "This operation reflects the unwavering dedication and commitment of the Philippine Government to uphold the country's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea," a government state-

ment said. It was posted on X with a video and photos, including one showing team members holding up the Philippine flag. The Chinese coast guard described the Philippine landing as "illegal" and said that Chinese officers had gone ashore "to conduct on-site verification and enforcement measures." It didn't specify what those steps entailed. The sandbars are in the Spratly islands between Philippine-occupied Thitu Island and Subi Reef, which China has transformed into a base with a military-grade runway and buildings with communications facilities.

China's state-owned Global Times newspaper, which published the photos of coast guard officers on the sandbars earlier this month, said they had picked up plastic bottles and other debris and displayed the Chinese national flag "to assert sovereignty." Jonathan Malaya, the assistant director general of the Philippine National Security Council, said that there is no truth to claims that China has seized the sandbars. He

attributed the claims to the Chinese coast guard, though the agency has not said anything about the mid-April landing described in the Global Times report, and later by the military channel of state broadcaster CCTV. "We urge the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Coast Guard to act with restraint and not increase tensions in the West Philippine Sea," Malaya told a news conference. The two countries have jostled previously over Sandy Cay, known as Tixian Reef in Chinese and Pag-asa Cays in the Philippines. In January, the Chinese coast guard and a naval helicopter drove away a group of Philippines fisheries ships that were attempting to conduct a scientific survey around Sandy Cay. Philippine government vessels brought scientists to Sandy Cay in March of last year for marine research despite repeated warnings by Chinese coast guard ships. Chinese officials accused the Philippine military of attempting to build a structure on one of the sandbars in 2017.

Hispanics helped Trump retake the White House

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Love of country is so important to Navy veteran Antonio Gonzales Jr. that he keeps an American flag lit up 24/7 outside his home in Porterville, California. So while Gonzales, a 66-year-old retired surgical technologist, admits to concerns about the direction of the economy during President Donald Trump's first 100 days in office, he said he is willing to give the administration more time to back off from its trade war with China and help bring down the costs of everyday goods.

"I know there has to be hard times before there's good times," said Gonzales, who is Mexican American and voted for Trump in November. The surge in support from Hispanic voters that helped power Trump to victory has waned since he took office, with his approval rating among Latinos falling 3 percentage

points to 34% in a Reuters/Ipsos poll last week, amid concerns about the economy and the president's hardline approach to immigration.

Trump's disapproval ratings among Hispanic voters reached 61%, up 7 percentage points, compared with a 5 point increase among Americans overall, to 53%. Trump won 46% of the Hispanic vote in November's election, 14 points higher than in 2020, according to Edison Research exit polls.

While Democrat Kamala Harris won a larger share of the Hispanic vote, Trump performed better than any Republican presidential candidate since the 1970s, according to exit poll data compiled by the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank. Some cracks are appearing in Trump's coalition of supporters. While Gonzales, the Navy veteran, supports

tougher border controls, he admitted to reservations about the deportations of some people without judicial review. "It should be open-faced, so we should be able to see what is going on and that it's not secretive," he said. Trump's popularity has sagged broadly across a range of demographic groups, according to an analysis of more than 6,000 responses to Reuters/Ipsos polls that were conducted during his first month in office, from January 20 through February 20, and an additional 4,306 responses from the latest poll conducted over six days ending on April 21. The analysis combined the responses from smaller polls in the first month to get a clearer picture of demographic trends. The poll results - gathered from nationwide surveys of US adults - have margins of error between about 2 and 4 percentage points.

The Frontier Post

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Israel and Hezbollah are undermining Lebanon's new start

AS Beirutis labour to clear the debris left by another Israeli strike on their capital on Sunday – the third since a ceasefire took effect in late November – the country finds itself caught between an aggressive, occupying neighbour to the south and a foreign-backed paramilitary movement at home that puts its own agenda before the national interest.

The recent attack left plumes of black smoke billowing from the Hadath neighbourhood after warplanes and drones struck a site on Sunday that Israeli forces claimed was being used by Hezbollah to store precision missiles. Residents of Beirut's southern suburbs fled the area after receiving a warning from the Israeli military about an hour before the bombardment.

Images of enormous explosions, twisted metal and burning vehicles do little for a country that is working hard to get back on its feet. Last week, Haneen Sayed – Lebanon's Minister of Social Affairs – was in Washington seeking an additional \$200 million from the World Bank and \$100 million in grants from other donors to support Lebanon's Aman programme, a social safety net that provides cash transfers to 800,000 of the country's poorest people.

Meanwhile, her Cabinet colleague – Tourism Minister Laura Lahoud – made it clear that the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah being played out in Lebanon had deepened the country's many challenges. Ms Lahoud – writing in The National today – says the country's new government is committed to rebuilding a foundation of "stability, functional institutions and public confidence".

That process is gathering pace. Last week, Lebanese MPs approved a law aimed at removing banking secrecy in the country, a key reform demanded by the International Monetary Fund for a \$3 billion funding package to be delivered. It is a sign that the new government formed in February can drive legislative change that may benefit the whole country.

Amid these efforts, however, is the dispiriting sight of Israeli forces again striking a densely populated Beirut suburb, citing Hezbollah activity as the reason. For its part, Hezbollah remains troublingly bellicose despite its recent losses to Israel. Earlier this month, Naim Qassem, the militant group's leader, said that the organisation "will not allow anyone to disarm" it. This dogmatic position not only gives Israeli leaders the excuse to keep undermining the ceasefire with attacks, it challenges the sovereignty of the Lebanese state and its legitimate armed forces.

This quandary, far from deterring international efforts to stabilise Lebanon, should spur them on instead. Short-term, acute shocks such as Israeli strikes should not be allowed to slow or stop economic aid and support for programmes to tackle Lebanon's chronic social problems. Issues such as housing, unemployment, a collapsed currency and a loss of tourism income are arguably just as important to securing national stability as ceasefires are. There will be no perfect time to support Lebanon on its journey, and its people should not be left waiting forever.

Trump's Middle East visit

WHEN it comes to governing styles, US President Donald Trump's novel approach to policymaking is one that often leaves friends and foes guessing. However, one thing that should be unsurprising is Mr Trump's decision to make the Arabian Gulf the destination for his first official overseas visit since beginning his second term in office – to the exception of his visit to Rome this week to attend the Pope's funeral.

The US has abiding economic, security and diplomatic ties with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the three Gulf countries Mr Trump will visit next month. Regardless of the uncertainty caused by Mr Trump's trade tariffs in recent weeks, business between the US and the Emirates remains robust – according to the US government, American imports from the UAE last year were worth \$7.5 billion, up 12.9 per cent from 2023. Earlier this month, US Secretary of Energy Chris Wright met senior officials in the Emirates, and bilateral investments are robust.

Mr Trump set a precedent for Gulf in his first term by making Saudi Arabia his first international destination as President in his first term. US partnerships with the UAE, Bahrain and other Arab countries eventually resulted in the Abraham Accords, one of the boldest attempts yet to reset relations across the Middle East.

However, Mr Trump's coming visit to the Gulf will take place amid very different and arguably more unpredictable circumstances. The war in Gaza continues and Yemen's Houthi rebels more boldly threaten Red Sea shipping. A new administration in Syria is trying to stabilise the country after the collapse of the Bashar Al Assad government in December. Another new government, this time in neighbouring Lebanon, is confronted by Israeli occupation and the challenge of rebuilding a country fractured by war and years of political inertia. Iran has embarked on a talks process with the US as Tehran's regional network of armed proxies flounders.

The pace of such change makes Mr Trump's planned visit a timely one, not least because it is an opportune moment for the Gulf's voices to be heard.

The UAE has been working hard to foster international peace, having recently helped to broker the largest prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine since the conflict between the two nations broke out more than three years ago. Oman has been building on its reputation as a trusted mediator in recent weeks by facilitating the US-Iran nuclear negotiations. A rare visit by a senior Saudi figure – Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman – to Iran last week highlighted the kingdom's proactive diplomacy. The Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman as well as other Arab powers, Egypt in particular, have also consistently called for a ceasefire in Gaza and provided a detailed blueprint for post-war reconstruction.

Mr Trump's visit is an opportunity to turbocharge these efforts and is eagerly anticipated. Economic and business ties will feature high on the agenda, as prosperity and stability are interconnected.

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UK-US trade deal important but not at any price

Yossi Mekelberg

MUCH political attention in the UK last week was focused on Chancellor Rachel Reeves' visit to Washington on the occasion of the International Monetary Fund's spring talks. But the talk in Britain was mainly about how Reeves would use the visit to handle the highly delicate matter of UK-US trade negotiations.

President Donald Trump is increasingly specializing in creating volatility, uncertainty and, consequently, panic in the global economy and the UK is no exception in this regard. Worse for London, the debacle of imposing additional tariffs comes at a moment that could result in it unnecessarily rushing into agreeing an unfavorable trade deal with the US, which might contribute little to growth and perhaps even mean concessions on issues that could affect public health and social cohesion, with long-term adverse consequences.

The UK government is facing enormous dilemmas in handling the economy, which are as much political and societal as being about "pure" economics, if such a thing exists. When Labour came to power, it had to deal with the Conservatives' legacy: a horrendous 14 years of low growth, growing inequalities, low productivity, a persistent national debt that has almost tripled since the beginning of the century, and an inflation rate that is still above the Bank of England's target. Furthermore, there is the ever-lingering impact of Brexit, which has left the UK in an inferior position in trade negotiations.

It is not unreasonable for a government that was elected less than a year ago to expect some patience from the public as it tries to fix a broken economy that has been through leaving the EU, a pandemic and a general neglect of its public

services under previous Tory governments. However, patience is not a characteristic of modern politics and promises made during last year's election campaign have created expectations. The perfect storm that Reeves is facing by dint of her country no longer being part of the largest economic bloc in the world, coupled with the imperative to increase defense expenditure to support Ukraine and increased tariffs, is a real one. Objectively, it should mitigate some of the criticism she is facing, despite some questionable decisions taken since she became chancellor.

Interestingly, what should stop the British government from signing a deal under Washington's duress is paradoxically one of the country's most severe economic challenges: its long-standing structural weakness. For many decades, the UK's economy has been suffering from structural distortion, concealed by more favorable macroeconomic figures. Nationwide employment figures do not instantly reveal the substantial divide of a 10 percent-plus employment gap between the north and the south of the country in favor of the latter.

It is partly explained by the fact that the north and Wales, which largely rely on the steadily declining manufacturing sector, both suffer from markedly lower employment rates than those who rely on a prosperous services sector, which is mainly based in London and the southeast. Such a discrepancy in sources of wealth generation, and along a geographical divide, is a socially destabilizing factor and leaves the economy more vulnerable to fluctuations in the world economy.

However, in the case of US tariffs, it provides some sort

of a silver lining, as there are no tariffs on services.

Bizarrely enough, increased US tariffs were supposed to be imposed only on countries that have an export surplus with the US. At the end of last year, Britain entered what was admittedly a rare deficit in goods trade with the US, which hardly justifies even the 10 percent across-the-board tariff and 25 percent levies on cars, aluminum and steel.

What Reeves should consider in negotiating a trade deal with the US is that the official government estimate in 2019, while it was hyping up leaving the EU as the magic wand that would guarantee the UK's future prosperity, was that such a deal would increase the country's gross domestic product in the long run by no more than 0.07 percent. Not a figure to be sniffed at, but not one that merits selling the family silver, so to speak, by agreeing to the widespread deregulation that the US demands.

Moreover, being too keen to be first to get a deal does not necessarily equate to getting the best deal – rather, it hints at desperation. There are signs that there are pressures building on the US, which currently does not seem to be able to tell the difference between friend and foe, to back off from a trade war with the entire world.

Moreover, this US administration is constantly, sometimes daily, changing its policies, including on tariffs, and by that creating a nervousness that has already cost many investors, including American ones, trillions of dollars.

These are not the conditions that suggest rushing into a trade deal will be beneficial.

To lower UK tariffs on US car imports to 2.5 percent, as Reeves indicated

she was willing to consider, would do little harm, since the market for US-made vehicles imported to the UK is very limited. Nevertheless, concessions in sectors such as agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary are a different matter.

Although the UK has left the EU, many of its food standards have remained and the practices of many American farmers to use, for instance, growth hormones as a standard element of their beef production or chicken chlorine treatment, are regarded on this side of the Atlantic as creating products that are unsafe to consume. Concessions to allow the import of such goods will face resistance from consumers and health authorities, not to mention farmers.

Similarly, removing trade barriers when they are protectionist in nature is one thing, but to cave in, as was widely reported to be demanded by Vice President J.D. Vance, and backtrack on hate speech and online safety laws, as well as a digital services tax, is putting our societies at risk of being torn apart.

There is always the fear, considering that Trump's biggest supporters in the UK are the anti-European type, that Washington might try to lure London into a trade deal, realizing the difficulties the Labour government is facing, separately from the EU. This is a temptation that the Starmer government must resist.

Rightly, the British prime minister has said that the UK does not have to choose between the US and Europe. But in the current atmosphere and considering America's treatment of Ukraine, any trade deal should look at the wider geopolitical implications as much as at preserving British values. And a strong Europe is in Britain's national interest and should not be compromised.

World Economic Forum needs a visionary new leader

Chris Doyle

WITH Klaus Schwab stepping down after more than five decades at the helm of the World Economic Forum, the organization he is synonymous with stands at a historic impasse. As the world grapples with increasing economic fragmentation, geopolitical unrest and a rapidly evolving technological transformation, the time has come not just to find a new leader – but to reinvent the WEF itself. As the world shifts, the WEF must do more than change leadership. It must evolve. Reinvention is no longer optional; it is imperative.

We live in a rapidly evolving context. The assumptions that governed 20th and early 21st-century globalism no longer hold. Today, we face fragmentation, a trend toward multipolarity, fraying trust in institutions and intensifying inequality. The Global South – long marginalized in elite conversations – is now the seat of the world's future and the center of population growth. A new WEF must not just acknowledge this; it must be shaped by it.

Africa, home to a bil-

lion young people, is on the cusp of being an engine of creativity, talent and economic growth. The 21st century was once heralded as the "Asian Century" and, public health, geopolitical and economic issues notwithstanding, Asia remains the fastest-growing economic region in the world. Other emergent actors notably include the resource-endowed Gulf Cooperation Council states, which are rapidly diversifying their economies and shifting the center of global innovation and investment eastward.

The WEF's mission – to improve the state of the world – is noble, but in reality the traditional emphasis was on the needs and priorities of its corporate and government clients, those "paying to play."

In many cases, they managed to improve the state of themselves but with less regard for the underserved, the underbanked, the underrepresented and those without access to the many of the privileges reserved for the Global North and the elite circles within the Global South.

The hallowed corridors of the Davos Congress Center, where paying WEF members and government leaders mingle, was traditionally where all the action was during the forum's annual meeting. Over the course of the last decade, however, the venue has become even more the bastion of corporatism, with more deal-making and less critical thinking and exchanging of ideas.

The town of Davos and notably its promenade has been overrun by a new crowd of venture capital investors, technology entrepreneurs, thought leaders, philanthropists and activists engaging directly with WEF constituents, via side events and bilateral meetings, on the back of the WEF, but always seen as a distraction by the organization's secretariat and more of a challenge than an opportunity. The unofficial, promenade-centered Davos conference is where there is open dialogue and where there is a safe space for critical thinking.

The WEF undoubtedly owes its origin and visionary leadership to Schwab. Today, however, the organization is no

longer a private Swiss foundation. Since 2015, it has been an official multilateral institution. It therefore needs a leader who can inspire global trust, navigate and manage complexity, and deal effectively with leaders from all sectors, irrespective of politics. This person should have the experience and legitimacy to convene, foster collaboration and push innovation without losing sight of inclusivity.

For the past few decades, the WEF team has included many notable ex-CEOs, government and multilateral leaders, and subject matter experts.

Most, however, have come and gone, since the organization offered little space for dissent with the founder. Senior staff were either pushed out or opted out to achieve their potential with other platforms. A rebooted WEF needs both its conductor and an orchestra, and this can become a critical success factor for real impact if led and managed right.

If the WEF truly wishes to remain committed to improving the state of the world, then it must redefine what that world looks like – and who gets to define it. This is not revolution, it is evolution.

Wages, Worth, and the Worker's Woes

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

MAY 1 is observed worldwide as a symbol of solidarity with workers. On this day, public holiday is declared, rallies are taken out, seminars are held, and declarations are made asserting the rights of workers. The slogans raised emphasize that workers should not be exploited and must be given their due rights. However, an important question remains; can the true goals of workers' rights be achieved merely through symbolic celebrations, speeches, and rallies? This is not just a rhetorical query-it strikes at the core of how we treat the labor force in our society.

In the true sense, who is a worker? The conventional definition often remains limited to factory workers or those involved in physical labor, but in essence, anyone who offers their time, skill, or effort in return for wages qualifies as a worker. Whether they work in a field, an office, a factory, a newsroom, or even a shop, their labor contributes to the economy and the structure of society. Yet despite this vital role, their financial reality is often harsh and unforgiving.

Inflation continues to rise, but do wages follow suit? A basic question with a deeply unsettling answer. The cost of living has multiplied manifold. Utility bills, food prices, rents, transportation-everything has surged. A worker, after a full day of hard labor, must at least eat three proper meals a day to keep his energy intact for the next shift. But can the average worker afford this, let alone provide adequately for a family?

The situation is particularly bleak in the private sector, especially in industries like the media and newspapers. Journalists and media workers, who tirelessly report on social injustices and workers' issues, are themselves deprived of regular salaries and annual increments. Many have not seen a raise in years. Their payments are delayed, and some are even expected to work overtime without any additional compensation. On May Day, they might report on workers' rights but are unable to voice their own concerns. Who listens to the cries of those who amplify the voices of others?

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Celebrating May Day in air-conditioned halls, delivering eloquent speeches, and raising revolutionary slogans have become annual rituals. But the real test lies in practical action. The worker is not interested in words-he wants enforcement. He wants policies that protect his rights, timely payments, fair wages, health benefits, job security, and respectful treatment at the workplace. He wants his dignity preserved not just for a day but every day of the year.

There's also an irony in declaring May 1 a public holiday. For many daily wage earners, a holiday simply means a cut in wages. They are forced to stay home without pay while others rest. For small shopkeepers, laborers, and informal workers, the day's income is lost, and this loss is rarely compensated. Is this how we show solidarity?

To address this imbalance and genuinely improve the lives of

workers, it is essential to move from mere rhetoric to action. The government must legislate and strictly enforce a living wage policy that adjusts automatically with inflation. This would help ensure that a worker's earning can sustain his basic needs and those of his family. Moreover, it is crucial to mandate annual increments for both skilled and unskilled labor across sectors, particularly in private organizations that often escape regulation. Timely disbursement of wages should be a legal obligation, not a matter of discretion.

Workers in the media, health, education, and other essential services must be brought under labor protection laws with transparent complaint redressal systems. Establishing independent labor commissions with the authority to investigate and penalize exploitative practices can help hold employers accountable. Trade unions should be encouraged, not curbed, and their voices must be heard in policy-making forums. Additionally, social security programs including health insurance, old-age benefits, and access to affordable housing should be expanded and effectively implemented.

For daily wage earners and informal sector workers who lose income on May Day and other public holidays, a compensatory fund can be created to offset their day's loss, funded by contributions from employers, industries, and the government. In this way, solidarity can move beyond symbolism and become a tangible reality.

In Islam, the rights of workers are sacred and clearly outlined. The teachings of the Quran

place immense emphasis on justice, fairness, and timely fulfillment of obligations. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Pay the laborer his wages before his sweat dries." This hadith alone is a powerful charter of labor rights, far superior to many modern codes. Islam prohibits any form of exploitation and promotes the idea of equitable compensation. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes justice (Adl) and kindness (Ihsan) in dealings with others, particularly with the vulnerable, which includes workers.

Our society, despite commemorating May Day with fanfare, seems to have drifted far from this vision. The working class is still waiting for the fulfillment of promises, for legislation to be implemented, and for their voices to be heard not only on May 1 but throughout the year. Token gestures and media headlines are not enough. Concrete reforms are required-laws must be enforced, wages must be reviewed, and accountability must be ensured for exploiters.

May Day is not just a holiday. It is a reminder, a call for reflection, and more importantly, a day to renew our collective commitment to human dignity and labor justice. The true tribute to laborers lies not in slogans but in actions. Only when our policies, our economy, and our society begin to respect the toil of every worker, can we claim to honor the spirit of May Day-both in letter and in soul.

If Trump really is running the world, where will he take it?

DONALD Trump thinks he's running the world. His ambition is boundless. But it also reeks of dangerous hubris and raises a grave question: Where will the planet end up under the leadership of this chaotic and vengeful president?

Trump revealed his plan for global dominance in a new interview with The Atlantic. He said he had rid himself of the "crooked guys" and investigations that limited his first term. "The second time, I run the country and the world," he added.

The president is attempting a massive, simultaneous transformation of life in the United States and the American-ized global political and economic systems that have cemented Washington's primacy since World War II.

He's indisputably the most ubiquitous world figure, 100 tumultuous days since reclaiming the Oval Office. No one knows what he'll do next – not the US' allies nor its enemies. And in this upside-down era of MAGA foreign policy, it's sometimes hard to know which is which. From Moscow to New Delhi and Gaza to Rome, Trump has a finger in every geopolitical pie.

Many foreigners might be revolted by the president. But they can't ignore him. That must be especially sweet for a commander in chief whose entire life has been a quest for notoriety.

The reality of America's global role means that the person who has the top job has immense authority, said Majda Ruge, a senior policy fellow at the United States program at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

"Take Ukraine, which is on the borders of the European Union – it's practically a European issue, but the fact is that without American intelligence, military support and American nuclear deterrence, Europeans are not able to continue supporting Ukraine to the extent that is needed for Ukraine to actually advance on the battlefield," said Ruge, who was speaking from Brussels.

"Going back to the quote, 'I run the world,' there is truth to that because of America's huge impact on world politics and foreign policy," Ruge said.

"But the question is, is he actually running it in the direction that is constructive, rather than disruptive and a little bit all over the place? And secondly, is he even running it in a strategic manner to ultimately arrive at the place he wants to go?"

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Iraq and think Europe built bloated welfare states under America's generous military umbrella.

The president's bombast puts a lot of people off. But he often asks pertinent questions. For instance – did two decades of US economic engagement with China buy nothing more than a 21st-century superpower rival while destroying American manufacturing? And 80 years after the defeat of Nazism and three and a half decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, shouldn't Europeans now be taking care of their own defense?

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Signs for Trump's for-

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The problem is that Trump's approach to addressing these questions risks undermining the security and the stability of the world he professes to lead. Signs for Trump's foreign policy priorities don't look promising, especially after he launched trade wars that have rocked global markets and that have no easy way out. But perhaps his unorthodox approach can find a way to end the Ukraine war that a more traditional US president might miss. He's surely due something for his frequent genuflecting to Russian President Vladimir Putin. And after trashing the last Iran nuclear deal in his first term, he's seeking another one to forestall the horrible prospect of US military strikes. But Trump's ultra-personalized and volatile approach to the world seems as likely to backfire. The president made his name as a builder. But he's better at tearing things down. And barging into the center of global events and tunneling into the psyches of hundreds of millions of people with social media eruptions is hardly statesmanlike. Nor is making up huge tariff rates off the top of his head. Far from enhancing US power, Trump risks buckling it. His bullying is forcing foreign nations to hurriedly reevaluate their relationship with the United States. They face the same choice as university presidents, CEOs and media bosses in the US, only with greater stakes: Do they resist America's new king or flatter him? British Prime Minister Keir Starmer came to Washington with an offer of a state visit with King Charles to try to play on Trump's love for British royals. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky tried standing up to Trump – and got

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ditional allies. ... It can produce successes. But it also brings with it systemic risks."

One of those risks is the fracturing of alliances that have bolstered US power and goodwill for decades because Trump views traditional American friends as free-loaders.

He's made no secret that he'd rather sit down with tyrants such as Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping – who he regards as strongmen in his own image – than leaders of allied nations that have shed blood with the United States to protect freedom and democracy.

While Trump's foreign policy actions often seem sudden and ill-thought-out, there's a clearer ideological basis to his second-term ambitions. It's just a not very palatable one for nations that have

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The problem is that Trump's approach to addressing these questions risks undermining the security and the stability of the world he professes to lead. Signs for Trump's foreign policy priorities don't look promising, especially after he launched trade wars that have rocked global markets and that have no easy way out. But perhaps his unorthodox approach can find a way to end the Ukraine war that a more traditional US president might miss. He's surely due something for his frequent genuflecting to Russian President Vladimir Putin. And after trashing the last Iran nuclear deal in his first term, he's seeking another one to forestall the horrible prospect of US military strikes. But Trump's ultra-personalized and volatile approach to the world seems as likely to backfire. The president made his name as a builder. But he's better at tearing things down. And barging into the center of global events and tunneling into the psyches of hundreds of millions of people with social media eruptions is hardly statesmanlike. Nor is making up huge tariff rates off the top of his head. Far from enhancing US power, Trump risks buckling it. His bullying is forcing foreign nations to hurriedly reevaluate their relationship with the United States. They face the same choice as university presidents, CEOs and media bosses in the US, only with greater stakes: Do they resist America's new king or flatter him? British Prime Minister Keir Starmer came to Washington with an offer of a state visit with King Charles to try to play on Trump's love for British royals. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky tried standing up to Trump – and got

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Trump is hardly the grand master of geopolitical chess he imagines himself to be. His tariff clash with China underestimated Beijing's pride and unwillingness to fold. (China's leaders want to run the world, too.)

And, paradoxically, Trump's aggressive attempts to use US power could result in his frittering away of important areas of US leverage.

One possible outcome of the US trade war with China is a decoupling of the two deeply entwined economies. That could be a painful process for consumers in both nations. But it could also remove one of the factors that might deter Beijing from invading Taiwan: the possibility that a US trade cutoff during a time of war could destroy the Chinese economy.

A similar loss of power could be in store for the US in Europe.

If US allies follow through on vows to rearm amid fears about future US support, their independence might also weaken the Atlantic alliance that has multiplied American power for generations.

Trump's approach is also shattering the trust allies placed in Washington, draining US non-military power and influence by the day.

Not only is the president apparently willing to recognize Putin's illegal land grabs in Ukraine, he's mulling one himself in Greenland.

And he's reversed President John Kennedy's maxim that the US does not lead by the example of its power but the power of its example. His disdain for human rights and the rule of law; his elevation of despots over democrats; and his eradication of foreign aid that kept millions of Africans alive may irrevocably tarnish America's reputation.

Many US friends are now wondering whether they even share the same values as Americans who twice elected a president whose beliefs they reject.

Some US allies in Asia are starting to reexamine their assumptions about US support in a region increasingly dominated by China.

In Europe, Trump's return to office has supercharged fears that the US has other strategic priorities and that its allies must learn to fend for themselves.

"I think that Trump's election victory has, in a sense, given history a shove, and that a concern that had been in some sense theoretical or a long-term anxiety has suddenly turned into a near-term priority to address," said Lesser, who was speaking from Ankara, Turkey.

Trump may think he is running the world now, but he is almost certainly making it more difficult for future presidents to do so.

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Canada's Carney should thank Trump for his victory

Andrew Mitrovica

‘TIS the season of resurrection. The Liberal Party of Canada, led by Mark Carney, has risen from the dead – politically speaking – and will form the next federal government in Ottawa.

This is in remarkable contrast, of course, to the harrowing fate Liberals faced under Justin Trudeau's premiership only a few months ago, when Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives were cruising to an impressive mandate.

The Liberals, unlike the cocksure Poilievre, pivoted. They dispensed with the jejune Trudeau and turned to Carney, a former banker, as their saviour.

The calculated gamble paid handsome dividends last night with the Liberals winning a fourth consecutive term, while the perpetually crestfallen Tories will return, yet again, to the purgatory of the Opposition benches.

Carney owes an electoral debt to New Democratic Party leader,

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SCCI concerned over closure of highways and trade routes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) expressed grave concern over the prolonged closure of highways and trade routes due to ongoing protest by people and farming communities in Sindh province, and it is causing severe hardship to businesses, workers, and ordinary families across the country.

Fazal Moqem Khan, president of the chamber in a statement here on Tuesday urged the government and relevant authorities to resolve issues through table talks and under constitutional and legal framework.

The SCCI chief hailed the federal government for calling for an emergent meeting of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) to discuss the issue and formation of a technical committee in this regard.

Moqem said the ongoing road blockades have brought critical supply chains to a halt, stranding thousands of trucks and containers, and delaying essential goods, particularly export consignments.

The closures have also disrupted the supply of fresh vegetables, fruits, and essential commodities to urban centers, triggering shortages and price hikes, further burdening the common citizen, he added.

Similarly, he said heavy demurrage charges, spoilage of perishable items, cancellation of export orders, and port congestion are inflicting serious financial losses daily. Our exporters, already grappling with tough global competition, now face shipment penalties, risking Pakistan's trade credibility on the international stage, Moqem said.

The SCCI chief said factories and industries have

been forced to halt production due to interruptions in the supply of inputs and workers being unable to reach workplaces, exacerbating the industrial slowdown and employment instability.

Moqem demanded of the government and all stakeholders to resolve the issue through holding dialogue with demonstrators.

He also urged the government to immediately facilitate the restoration of commercial transport routes and ensure the uninterrupted movement of goods, in a manner that honors both democratic rights and economic lifelines.

The prosperity of our people — farmers, workers, traders, and exporters — depends on an uninterrupted economy, Moqem said.

He said SCCI committed to promoting unity, fairness, and the economic well-being of all Pakistanis.

Rupee gains 04 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 04 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs281.02 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.06.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs281.40 and Rs282.90, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.42 to close at Rs320.43 against the last day's closing of Rs319.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen went up by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.97, whereas an increase of Rs2.87 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs377.22 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs374.35.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 and 01 paise each to close at Rs76.50 and Rs74.91 respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of PPRA Pakistan meeting with a delegation of EU and Foreign Trade Section of Ministry of Industry and Trade of Czech Republic.

Akhtar identifies issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a meeting that identified challenges confronted in enhancing manufacturing sector's exports.

The meeting identified key issues like high electricity costs, excessive taxation, and lack of value addition, said a news release.

The SAPM emphasized that, in line with Prime Minister's vision, exports are the lifeline of Pakistan's economy. He stressed the need for taking practical measures to increase exports.

"The revival of the industrial sector and the enhancement of exports are key pillars of the Prime Minister's economic vision," he added.

Committee members underlined the importance of technology upgradation and adherence to international standards as essential steps for strengthening exports. To address the identified challenges, Haroon formed sub-committees and assigned them specific responsibilities for immediate action.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where two ships, Andreas-K and AB Olivia scheduled to load/offload Rice and Palm oil, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal respectively, while another containers ship 'Seapan Santos' also arrived at outer anchorage on Tuesday.

A total of four ships were engaged at PQA berths, out of them three ships, Georgios-P, Hai Tun Zuo and AB Olivia were expected to sail.

Cargo volume of 51,472 tonnes, comprising 47,767 tonnes imports cargo and 3,705 export cargo was handled at the port.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 808.28 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 808.28 points, a positive change of 0.71 percent, closing at 114,972.18 points as compared to 114,063.90 points on last trading day.

A total of 409,933,985 shares were traded during the day as compared to 423,938,288 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs29.067 billion against Rs26.458 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 211 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 51 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading

companies were WorldCall Telecom with 29,469,482 shares at Rs1.26 per share, Nenergyco with 14,819,788 shares at Rs7.81 per share and At-Tahur Limited with 14,772,321 shares at Rs70.86 per share.

PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs360.85 per share closing at Rs3,969.39 whereas runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company with Rs97.61 rise in its share price to close at Rs9,035.23.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs103.17 per share price, closing at Rs6,887.00, whereas the runner-up Unilever Pakistan with Rs61.00 decline in its per share price to Rs23.100.

Gold price up by Rs2,100 to Rs349,200 per

tola: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs2,100 and was sold at Rs349,200 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs347,100 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs1,800 to Rs299,382 from Rs297,582 whereas that of 10 gram 22 Karat went up to Rs274,443 from Rs272,784.

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,497 and Rs.2,998 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$.21 to \$3,310 from \$3,289 whereas silver rates were recorded at \$32.97, the Association reported.

SCF and British Asian Trust renew partnership

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Standard Chartered and The British Asian Trust have announced to renew their partnership and are thrilled to launch 'Thriving Futures', a three-year enterprise development programme that will focus on providing support to high-potential youth microenterprises to help build their capacity and attain long-term sustainability.

The previous programme enabled us to empower over 1000 young women and men to boost and sustain their Agri-enterprises by focusing on enterprise growth, marketing, quality assurance, digital literacy training which helped to increase the enterprise revenues by 25% on average. Building on learnings from the past programme, 'Thriving

Futures' will offer advanced enterprise development and tailored interventions to 900 microenterprise groups (90% of which will be women-led) to become thriving and, in doing so, create a stronger, more inclusive microenterprise ecosystem in Sindh and Punjab.

The British Asian Trust will deliver the programme in conjunction with two implementing partners - Kaarvan Crafts Foundation and Shirakat.

Kamyla Marvi, Pakistan Director of the British Asian Trust said: "We are proud to continue our partnership with Standard Chartered Foundation through the launch of Thriving Futures. Having previously worked together to support entrepreneurs in agricultural settings, this new programme reflects our

shared and continued commitment to creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for more women and youth-led enterprises across Sindh and Punjab. Through our interventions we aim to enable economic resilience, promote access to finance and increase market access."

Rehan Shaikh, CEO & Head of Coverage, SC Pakistan stated, "Standard Chartered's partnership with the British Asian Trust for the launch of Thriving Futures programme, a new three-year initiative that will enrich over 900 microenterprises, create positive social impact, and create sustainable livelihoods. This partnership reflects our dedication to supporting entrepreneurs with the tools and resources they need to succeed and thrive."

Adcom Leo Burnett wins awards at Effie Pakistan Awards



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Adcom Leo Burnett wins big at this

year's Effie Pakistan Awards. It picked up the highest number of awards- 3 Gold, 7 Silver and 2

Bronze Effies, before being crowned the Agency Network of the Year.

The wins go beyond

numbers, making a significant impact in multiple categories like tech, fashion, agri and telecom and across various touch-points. From driving innovation with Samsung, evolving a unique fashion narrative for Alkaram, to celebrating local talent with PTCL, we've focused on creating work that resonates.

Imran Syed, CEO of Adcom, says these are vulnerable, ever-evolving times which require work to be more impactful than ever. "We're here to help brands show up with purpose - authentic, valuable, and in tune with what matters today." Syed is confident his team and clients share this vision. "All 235 of us are already focused on the next Effie Pakistan," he added.

Facilitation centers, one window operations vital for trade growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has urged the government to address the pressing challenges faced by the business community on a priority basis, stressing that timely intervention is crucial for economic stability and growth.

Speaking to various business leaders from the trade and industrial sectors, the ICCI President empha-

sized the urgent need to establish Business Facilitation Centres and implement One Window Operations across the country to streamline processes and enhance the ease of doing business.

He also called for the resolution of issues related to irrational taxation, which continue to burden entrepreneurs and discourage investment.

Nasir Qureshi pointed out that despite prevailing

economic challenges, the business community—being the true engine of the national economy—remains steadfast in its commitment to contribute to the country's development.

He highlighted the problem of multiple licensing requirements, which he said hinder investment and slow down economic progress.

Addressing these bureaucratic hurdles, he noted, would allow

investors to focus more effectively on business expansion and job creation.

Underscoring the need for comprehensive and supportive policies, the ICCI President called for well-defined strategies aimed at economic revival and sustainable growth.

He affirmed that the ICCI is actively fulfilling its advocacy role to safeguard and promote the interests of the business community at all levels.

Markets boosted as Trump softens tariff pain for auto firms

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Markets rose on Tuesday following news that Donald Trump is set to let auto makers off some of his wide-ranging tariffs, boosting hopes of a less combative approach to his trade war.

A month that started with the explosion of Washington's "Liberation Day" tariffs on April 2 was on course for a more positive close as governments line up to cut deals to avert the full force of the measures.

The White House said foreign auto firms paying tariffs of 25 percent for their US car and parts shipments would not face other levies such as those on steel and aluminium, the Wall Street Journal said. Companies will also be reimbursed for fees already paid.

The move is aimed at making sure the various tariffs Trump has unveiled do

not stack up on top of each other.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the deal was "a major victory for the president's trade policy".

He said it rewarded firms "who manufacture domestically while providing runway to manufacturers who have expressed their commitment to invest in America and expand their domestic manufacturing".

Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management said the move was able to "reinforce the market's hope that, even if the US-China heavyweights are still circling each other, there's still room for incremental detente elsewhere".

While there is a hope that the president's other sweeping measures on trade partners can be tempered before a 90-day stay of execution comes to an end in July, there appears to be little movement with China.

The White House has imposed 10 percent tariffs on most US trading partners and a separate 145 percent levy on many products from China. Beijing has responded with 125 percent tariffs of its own.

Reports last week said China was considering exempting some US goods from its retaliatory tariffs but officials have said there are no active negotiations

between the economic superpowers.

On Monday, a Chinese official denied Trump's claims he had spoken recently with President Xi Jinping.

The chance of a deal between the world's two largest economies for now seems remote, with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent telling CNBC that negotiations were ongoing but the ball was in China's court.

"As I've repeatedly said, I believe it's up to China to de-escalate, because they sell five times more to us than we sell to them. So these 125 percent tariffs are unsustainable," he said in an interview aired on Monday.

While uncertainty rules on trading floors, most Asian markets pushed higher on Tuesday, with Hong Kong, Sydney, Singapore, Taipei, Mumbai and Manila in positive territory.

Seoul also rose as auto makers Hyundai and Kia were boosted by the auto tariff news. London was flat but Paris and Frankfurt edged up.

Shanghai dipped with Wellington, while Tokyo was closed for a holiday.

Data this week could give an idea about the impact of Trump's measures on companies, with tech titans Amazon, Apple, Meta and Microsoft all reporting their earnings.

PR, RWMC signed agreement

RAWALPINDI (PPI): The Pakistan Railways Rawalpindi Division has entered into an agreement with the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) to improve cleanliness services at key railway stations, in line with federal directives to enhance passenger facilities.

The agreement, signed under the supervision of Divisional Superintendent Railways Rawalpindi, Nooruddin Dawood, transfers the responsibility of sanitation at Rawalpindi, Margalla, and Chaklala stations and adjacent areas to RWMC. The initiative is part of efforts to upgrade cleanliness standards across the division to match international benchmarks.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Dawood stated that Pakistan Railways remains committed to providing passengers with hygienic and well-maintained stations, aligning with the broader vision of a modern and customer-oriented railway network.

RWMC MD Rana Sajid Safdar announced that his company would deploy trained staff and modern equipment to ensure efficient and sustainable sanitation services at the designated locations.

Officials described the partnership as a step towards the long-term objective of achieving "Clean Railway, Clean Pakistan."

Habib University hosts book talk featuring Zafar Masud's 'Seat 1C'

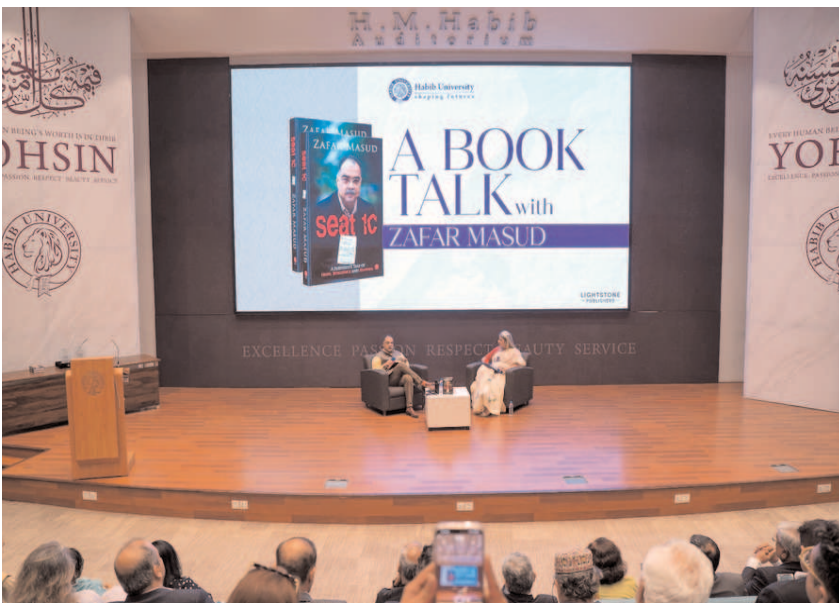
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Habib University proudly hosted a compelling book talk featuring Zafar Masud, President and CEO of the Bank of Punjab, who discussed his latest book, "Seat 1C." The event took place in the H.M Habib Auditorium and attracted a diverse audience eager to hear Masud's heartfelt journey of surviving the tragic plane crash on May 22, 2020, which claimed 98 lives.

"Seat 1C" is a part memoir, part essay that not only recounts the harrowing experience of the crash but also delves into Masud's profound reflections and takeaways. Drawing from history, literature, art, philosophy, mythology and more, Masud advocates for a life lived with empathy for oneself and others.

The event commenced with opening remarks by Ms. Aqsa Junejo, Director of Resource Development at Habib University, who introduced the esteemed author and the moderator of the talk, Naveen Naqvi, a renowned journalist and actress. Following this, Dr. Aamir Hasan, Vice President of Academic Affairs, delivered a warm welcome note, setting the tone for an insightful discussion.

"I am grateful to Zafar sahab, who has been a true champion of Habib



University. Around the world, institutions of higher learning carry a vital responsibility, not only to nurture and intellectually enrich their students, but also extend the spirit of learning and dialogue beyond its walls," he said.

During the conversation, Masud emphasized the importance of seeking therapy to heal from trauma, a topic often overlooked in the context of strong, empathetic leadership.

His reflections on the transformative event in his life provided the audience with a clearer perspective on resilience and the significance of being granted a second chance at life.

As he read various excerpts from his book, he shared some lessons he took away from the harrowing incident in his life. One of those he shared was, "What's important is how you are contributing as a human being and what you are giving to society. It is an evolution process, and the learning will never stop."

The discussion was followed by an ecstatic Q&A session, where the audience engaged with Masud on various aspects of his journey and the themes of his book, such as catharsis in writing the book, reflecting on the trauma he endured, as well what makes compassionate

banking and leadership.

The event was attended by esteemed corporate leaders including Muhammad Jawaid Iqbal (President and CEO, United Bank Limited), Arif Habib (CEO of Arif Habib Corporation), Irfan Siddiqui (CEO of Meezan Bank), Zahid Mir (CEO of Pakistan Refinery Limited) along with Zafar Masud's family, friends, and people from the wider community.

The book talk was a testament to Habib University's commitment to fostering meaningful dialogues, for serving as a platform for critical thought, and commemorating life experiences that inspire change.

SBP to remain closed on 1st May

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on 1st May, 2025 (Thursday) being public holiday on the occasion of Labour Day, as declared by the government of Pakistan.



In brief

Fitness testing program organized

ISLAMABAD (APP): As part of the preparations for the National Women's T20 Tournament, on the instructions of the Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), a fitness testing program was organised for female players across several cities. According to details, more than 100 female players participated in the fitness testing program in seven major cities. Fitness testing programs were organized for female players in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan and Bahawalpur. A total of five teams will be formed for the tournament. All matches of the National Women's T20 Tournament will be played in Karachi. The pre-tournament camp will continue from May 3 to 6. The matches of the National Women's T20 Tournament will kick off on May 7 with the final to be played on May 24.

Tennis Tournament kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 1st DHA Multan Invitational Tennis Tournament 2025 officially kicked off at the DHA Tennis Courts in Multan. This event marks a significant milestone, being the first major tennis tournament held in Multan in over 30 years, said a press release. Top-ranking players from across the country in the men's, ladies', and junior categories are participating in the event. Ms. Ayesha Ali Baig, Tournament Director and sponsor of the event, expressed her joy, saying, "This is the first tennis tournament in Multan in the last 30 years. The players are very happy, and InshaAllah, we aim to convert this into a national ranking tournament in the near future. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President-PTF, expressed his appreciation for the initiative and said, "I am delighted that this event is taking place in Multan. It will serve as a great opportunity to bring local talent into the national circuit. We aim to organize more such tournaments in cities across the country. He also thanked Ms. Ayesha for her initiative and support in organizing the event. The President-PTF thanked DHA Multan and Bodla Builders for sponsoring the event. Col. (R) Zia-ud-Din Tufail, Secretary General- PTF, extended his gratitude to Ms. Ayesha for her efforts in successfully conducting the tournament and for providing excellent hospitality to the players and officials.

O'Sullivan in control of quarter-final

SHEFFIELD (Agencies): Seven-time winner Ronnie O'Sullivan opened up a commanding 6-2 lead over Si Jiahui in the first session of their World Championship quarter-final. O'Sullivan, who is bidding for a record eighth title in the modern era, took a scrappy opener before Si responded with a wonderful century break. However, the 22-year-old from China uncharacteristically missed a series of pots to allow 'The Rocket' to pull clear at 4-1 with three half-centuries. While Si responded with a 60 of his own to briefly reduce his arrears, another miss, on a black on its spot, proved costly as O'Sullivan pinched the seventh frame. The Englishman concluded the session with a stylish 121 break to underline his superiority. In Tuesday afternoon's other last-eight contest Judd Trump produced a superb display of potting as he compiled his 101st and 102nd century breaks of the season to go 5-3 up on Luca Brecel.

Gladiators defeat Sultans by 10 wickets

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Quetta Gladiators defeated Multan Sultans by 10 wickets after bowling them out for 89 in their PSL 10 clash at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday.

Chasing 90, Gladiators got over the line in 6.5 overs without losing a single wicket. Finn Allen made an unbeaten 45 off 21 balls alongside skipper Saud Shakeel (42)* in the successful chase.

Put to bat first, the Mohammad Rizwan-led side were off to a disastrous start as they lost their opening batter Yasir Khan on the team total of seven. The right-arm pacer then sent wicketkeeping batter Usman Khan back to the dugout on a duck.

Kamran Ghulam became Shahzad's third victim in the game after scoring just three runs. Curtis Campher became the Quetta Gladiators pacer's fourth wicket in the PSL 10 game.

Campher's dismissal left Multan Sultans reeling at 20/4 in 3.5 overs, with Mohammad Rizwan firm at the other end with little to no support. Iftikhar Ahmed (6) and Michael Bracewell (0) fell to Faheem Ashraf, as Sultans were restricted to 43 for six in 9.2 overs. David Willey made seven while Usama Mir returned to the dugout after scoring 11 runs.

Mohammad Hasnain (2) and Ubaid

Shah (1) could not provide any support to their captain Mohammad Rizwan who remained unbeaten on 44 runs.

Sultans were bowled out on 89 in 17 overs, with Khurram Shahzad leading the bowling with four wickets. While Quetta Gladiators remain unchanged from their previous fixture, Multan Sultans brought in Curtis Champher, David Willey and Usama Mir in place of Shai Hope, Josh Little and Akif Javed.

The two sides have faced off 13 times in the PSL history, with Sultans well ahead by winning nine games while Gladiators won four games. Quetta Gladiators are third in the PSL 10 points table, having six points from five games, while the Multan Sultans are at the bottom with just two points in six fixtures. The 10th edition of the Pakistan Super League kicked off on April 11 and will run till May 18.

The six-team tournament will consist of 34 matches with Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium hosting 13 matches, including the two Eliminator and the final.

Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium will host 11 PSL 10 matches, including the first Qualifier on May 13, while Multan Cricket Stadium will host five matches.

Karachi's National Bank Stadium has hosted five games of the ongoing edition.

Zahid Gul: The visionary coach reigniting Pakistan's squash supremacy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a sport once dominated by Pakistani greats, one man is lighting the path back to global glory—Zahid Gul, a coaching powerhouse whose influence is sparking a squash revolution in Pakistan. Revered as one of the most dynamic and visionary minds the sport has ever seen, Zahid is not only building champions—he's resurrecting a legacy.

His impact is unmistakable. Under Zahid Gul's masterful guidance, Noor Zaman has risen to claim the title of World Squash Champion, while Hamza A has etched his name into history as the World Junior Champion. These victories are more than titles—they are a powerful message to the world: Pakistan is back.



Zahid's genius has drawn admiration from the highest echelons of the sport. Jansher Khan—a living legend, eight-time World Open winner, six-time British Open champion, and holder of the Guinness World Record for 81 consecutive professional wins—has hailed Zahid Gul's leadership, calling

him a key force in shaping a new era of excellence.

The accolades don't stop there. Former World Champion Qamar Zaman declared, "Zahid Gul has everything it takes to deliver Pakistan's first Olympic gold medal in squash. He is, without question, one of the greatest coaching talents the game has ever produced."

Zahid Gul is more than a coach—he is the heartbeat of a national comeback. With his relentless drive, tactical brilliance, and deep understanding of the game, he is leading a new generation of warriors onto the court—determined, disciplined, and destined for greatness.

The world of squash is watching. And thanks to Zahid Gul, Pakistan is once again ready to dominate.

Swiatek scrapes into Madrid Open last eight



MADRID (AFP): Defending champion Iga Swiatek reached her fifth WTA 1000 quarter-final of the season with a 6-0, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4 victory over 13th-seeded Diana Shnaider at the Madrid Open on Tuesday.

After a nationwide blackout cancelled the majority of play at the Caja Magica on Monday, power was restored at the venue on Tuesday morning, with matches commencing at midday. In her first meeting with the Russian left-hander, Swiatek saved 11 of 13 break points en route to a two-hour 34-minute victory that sent her through to a last-eight showdown with Australian Open champion Madison Keys.

Asked about the power outage, the 23-year-old Swiatek admitted she enjoyed being off the grid for a few hours. "Honestly, I liked yesterday. I think the whole world was more relaxed kind of, obviously the people who didn't lose because of this. I had time to rest," said Swiatek. "It's good that in Madrid the sun is setting pretty late. As soon as it got down and it was dark, they put the energy back in our area. "Honestly, I just chilled and used the time not thinking about what I should do. There was no signal so basically no one used their phones. It was nice, I liked it." On the men's side, Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov finally completed a 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) win over Britain's Jacob Fearnley, converting his third match point some 27 hours after his first.

The match was suspended on Monday with 15th seed Dimitrov leading 6-4, 5-4. When play resumed on Tuesday, both players held serve before Dimitrov edged the tie-break. "That shows you how quickly anything can change, in life as well. From one point, you're serving for the match, from the other you're about to receive, and then the lights went out," said Dimitrov, who will face lucky loser Gabriel Diallo in

the fourth round. "I always take these type of situations as a learning curve.

"I remember when I was a kid it (black-outs) happened a lot where I grew up. I took it like this, I felt like I had the experience for it. Of course it's not pleasant for anybody. It took us three hours to get back to the hotel yesterday. You just have to take it for what it is and move on."

De Minaur advances Earlier in the day, sixth-seeded Alex de Minaur defeated Canadian Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) and awaits Stefanos Tsitsipas or Lorenzo Musetti in the round of 16. Recording his 24th win of the season, the Australian has now tied Carlos Alcaraz for the most victories on tour in 2025.

"It was definitely something different," De Minaur said of the blackout. "It gives you a new perspective on your every day, how in tune you are with technology nowadays. At least for me, I enjoyed having a little bit of time off the grid. So it was quite fine.

"I'm glad it seems everything has been sorted out. It could have been quite dangerous for a lot of people, so I'm glad we're kind of past it and we can move on." American 11th seed Tommy Paul overcame Russian 24th seed Karen Khachanov 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Frances Tiafoe, the 16th seed, beat Alexandre Muller 6-3, 6-3 to book a fourth-round meeting with Novak Djokovic's conqueror, Matteo Arnaldi.

Both Tiafoe and Muller were among those stuck at the Caja Magica for hours waiting for cars to leave the stadium. With no food available anywhere, Muller had Pringles and orange juice for dinner, while Tiafoe settled for chocolate and water.

"It's one of those things man, super unprecedented. Just kind of hang around, chilling. Just kind of trying to find the laughs about it," said Tiafoe.



LAHORE: Khurram Shahzad ripped through the Multan Sultans top order.

Warner 's presence an asset for PSL, young players: Hasan

LAHORE (APP): Karachi Kings vice captain, fast bowler Hasan Ali has said that the best thing about Karachi Kings captain David Warner is that he is a team man and has vast experience of playing the game around the globe.

"He has served Australia Cricket for a long time and the young players in our squad are learning a lot from him," Hasan Ali termed Warner's presence an asset for PSL during an interaction with PCB Digital on Tuesday, adding that he was thankful to him for coming over to play in his maiden HBL PSL season. He also hailed the league management and PCB for roping in Warner.

Hasan Ali, who recently became the leading wicket-taker in the history of the HBL PSL, is also leading the bowling charts in HBL PSL X for Karachi Kings with 13 wickets in six matches. Karachi Kings is the third franchise, which he is representing in his 10-year HBL PSL career, after having made his HBL PSL debut for Peshawar Zalmi against Karachi Kings in February 2016 as a 22-year-old.

Prior to the HBL PSL, he returned to competitive cricket for Sialkot Region in the National T20

Cup 2025 after a nine-month hiatus due to an elbow injury. He immediately made an impact by winning the best bowler of the tournament with 13 wickets in four matches at average of 10.38.

Currently his wicket-tally in HBL PSL sits at 121 scalps in 88 matches at an average of 22.09, eight better of Wahab Riaz, who represented Peshawar Zalmi in as many matches till HBL PSL 8. Hasan overtook the left-arm pacer when he dismissed Hasan Nawaz against Quetta Gladiators at the National Bank Stadium on 18 April.

Talking about performances, Hasan, who has also sent down the highest number of overs in HBL PSL history with 332.1 overs to his name, said "I'm satisfied with my performance as I'm leading the bowling charts after six games for Karachi Kings. It feels great when you take wickets for your team regularly."

Regarding his bowling rhythm in HBL PSL X, where he has snapped 13 wickets at an average of 14.85, he remarked, "I haven't made any major changes to my bowling, instead, I've modified the basics of my bowling and worked on my fitness and diet, which has helped me

a lot this season."

On his role as vice-captain, Hasan said, "I'm enjoying the responsibility of being the vice-captain of one of the biggest HBL PSL franchises. With such responsibilities you do get a lot of confidence, which helps in your own performances as well.

In their recent game against Quetta Gladiators, Karachi went down by mere five runs and regarding the loss, Hasan said, "We had taken that game lightly given that we were on the course to win it. Cricket is a funny game and the matches can turnaround in one or two overs in the short format.

"We are still in a good position on the points-table and in our remaining four matches, we'll look to end up in the top two positions," he said.

Hasan is looking forward to Karachi's return match against arch-rivals Lahore and answering to a question regarding crowds he replied, "As players we always want to play in front of bigger crowds and we are looking forward to our 4 May fixture against Lahore Qalandars. I hope the crowds turn out in big numbers and we entertain them with our skills."

England consider Southee as bowling consultant

LONDON (Agencies): England are considering former New Zealand international Tim Southee as their fast-bowling consultant for the home summer.

James Anderson has held the position since he retired from Test cricket last summer, but is unavailable this year because of his playing commitments with Lancashire. Seamer Southee, 36, retired from international cricket in December as New Zealand's all-time leading wicket-taker.

He is good friends with England head coach Brendon McCullum, who made a presentation to Southee on the outfield in Hamilton following his final appearance for the Black Caps. If Southee joins the England set-up he would become the third New Zealander on the staff, alongside McCullum and assistant coach Jeetan Patel.

It is understood that other candidates have also been sounded out for the role. Whoever takes the position will be charged with guiding England's pace bowlers through the first part of a defining year, with a home Test series against India coming before the Ashes in Australia.

England's summer begins with a one-off Test against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge next month. A squad will be named at the end of this week.

Injuries to Chris Woakes and Mark Wood will result in an inexperienced pace-bowling department.

Gus Atkinson, with only 11 previous Tests, will be the most senior seamer. Sam Cook, 27, looks set for a first call-up after he was rested from Essex's Championship match against Somerset earlier this month at England's request.

Josh Tongue and Matthew Potts will also be in the mix. Brydon Carse is recovering from a foot problem and Jofra Archer, currently at the Indian Premier League,

could make his return to red-ball cricket for England Lions when they meet India A in June.

Shadman's ton gives Bangladesh lead in 2nd Test

CHITTAGONG (AFP): Bangladesh opener Shadman Islam smashed a century in the second Test against Zimbabwe on Tuesday, giving the hosts a lead of 64 runs at the end of the second day with three wickets in hand.

Bangladesh were 291-7 at the close, with Mehidy Hasan Miraz (16) and Taijul Islam (5) remaining not out, in response to Zimbabwe's first innings score of 227.

Shadman recorded a career-best knock of 120 and partnered with Anamul Haque in a first-wicket stand of 118 runs, only the 10th time that Bangladesh's openers had passed the 100-run mark in Tests.

Despite Shadman's century, the other batsmen

failed to exploit the dry and slow surface at Chattogram after a good start.

Anamul, who was making a comeback to the Test team after three years, scored 39.

Mominul Haque (33) and Mushfiqur Rahim (40) have also struggled to convert good starts into big scores.

Mushfiqur, who failed to pass the 50-run mark in the past 12 innings, was run out by Wessly Madhevere.

Bangladesh were 259-3 at one point but then lost their next four wickets for 20 runs.

Vincent Masekese, Zimbabwe's debutant leg-spinner, took three wickets, including those of Bangladesh's captain Najmul Hossain Shanto

and wicketkeeper batter Jaker Ali.

Zimbabwe were earlier dismissed on their overnight score of 227.

Resuming with one wicket in hand, their innings was wrapped up with Taijul's first ball of the second day.

Taijul finished with figures of 6-60.

Zimbabwe are 1-0 up in the two-Test series after winning the opener in Sylhet by three wickets.

Brief scores: Zimbabwe: 227 all out (Sean Williams 67, Nick Welch 54; Taijul Islam 6-60, Nayeem Hasan 2-42).

Bangladesh: 291-7 (Shadman Islam 120, Mushfiqur Rahim 40; Vincent Masekese 3-44) Toss: Zimbabwe.

Cavaliers thrash Miami to win play-off series 4-0



LOS ANGELES (Agencies): The Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Miami Heat 138-83 to secure a 4-0 first-round play-off series win and book their place in the Eastern Conference semi-finals.

Donovan Mitchell scored 22 points for the visiting Cavaliers, who were also helped by De'Andre Hunter adding 19 points, Ty Jerome scoring 18 points and Evan Mobley contributing 17 points as they won by the fourth-largest winning margin in an NBA play-off game.

"We came out here with a goal in mind, to keep our foot on their throat and on their neck and continue to play 48 minutes of basket-

ball," Mitchell told TNT television

The 55-point margin was Miami's biggest play-off defeat and overtook the previous record of 37 points which had been set in the third game of the best-of-seven series.

"We were humbled, but they had so much to do with how we looked," said Miami coach Erik Spoelstra.

"None of us would have guessed this series would have gone this way coming out of our two play-ins. They just took it to another level. They left us behind these past two games."

The Cavaliers will play either the Milwaukee Bucks or the Indiana Pacers in the next round,

with the latter leading that series 3-1.

In San Francisco, the Golden State Warriors took a 3-1 lead in the Western Conference first-round play-off series against the Houston Rockets with a 109-106 home win.

Jimmy Butler was back for the Warriors after missing game three with a pelvic injury and scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, while teammate Brandin Podziemski made six three-pointers in his 26 points.

The Warriors had trailed by seven points at half-time before going on an 18-1 run at the start of the third quarter, but the score was tied at 104 with one minute 20 seconds left of the contest.

Fred VanVleet scored 24 of his 25 points from three-point distance for the Rockets but missed a long-range shot in the final second that would have tied the game.

Game five will be in Houston on Wednesday, 30 April at 19:30 local time.



In brief

Training workshop held

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the instructions of City Police Officer Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, a training workshop was organized for investigation officers here at the Police Lines Headquarters on Tuesday. The workshop was held in collaboration with non-governmental organization SHARP. DSP CRO Muhammad Nadeem, Senior Legal Expert SHARP Anila Sarfaraz and other representatives gave lectures in the workshop regarding basic human rights, the rights of refugees, the protection of the rights of the deprived sections of the society, good attitude towards citizens visiting the police stations, protection of the rights of women, children and transgenders. According to Rawalpindi Police spokesman, all steps were being taken to increase the capacity of investigation officers as per the vision of Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar. At the end of the workshop, the DSP CRO thanked the representatives of SHARP, and distributed certificates and shields among the participants.

8,766 motorists fined

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) took legal action against 8,766 motorists and impounded 1,269 vehicles during the past week as part of an intensified campaign to ensure traffic discipline in the federal capital. An ITP official told APP on Tuesday that the action targeted vehicles, motorcyclists, and public transport for various traffic violations. As part of the campaign, 1,225 vehicles with non-standard number plates, 782 motorcyclists without helmets, 2,878 vehicles for illegal parking, 1,039 for wrong-way driving, 1,097 for red light violations, 324 for not wearing seat belts, and 146 for using mobile phones while driving were penalized. Additionally, 1,269 vehicles and motorcycles were impounded for serious violations and shifted to various police stations. Chief Traffic Officer Captain (retd) Syed Zeeshan Haider urged citizens to comply with traffic laws and cooperate with the ITP to ensure an efficient and safe traffic system in the city. He added that the Islamabad Traffic Police is making every possible effort to prevent road accidents and enforce the law uniformly.

32 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 32 outlaws during separate operations and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, on Tuesday. A public relations officer told APP that the Karachi Company, Women, Kohsar, Margalla, Ramna, Sumbal, Industrial Area, Noon, Shams Colony, Khanna, Humak, and Bhara Kahu police station teams arrested 16 suspects involved in various criminal activities. He said police teams recovered 5,301 grams of heroin, 432 grams of Ice, 20 bottles of liquor, nine pistols, and one rifle along with ammunition from the accused. He said that cases have been registered against the arrested individuals and further investigations are underway. He said that during a special campaign to apprehend proclaimed offenders and absconders, police teams also arrested 16 more criminals. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police is continuing its effective crackdown against crime and criminal elements to ensure peace and tranquility in the federal capital.



ISLAMABAD: Nadeem Mahbub, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT), paid an official visit to the Federal Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (FBISE).

Senate voices national unity in message to India

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said on Tuesday that the Senate of Pakistan had conveyed a powerful message of national unity — a message from all Pakistanis — to India.

Speaking during a Senate session, the minister praised the constructive role played by the opposition and lauded the leadership of the federation.

"In today's powerful and unified session of the Upper House, leaders from all political parties stood together to express solidarity and defend Pakistan's interests," he said.

Dr Tariq said that the focus of the session was unity and the national interest. "Today, we are not discussing politics—we are

discussing Pakistan," he added. He highlighted that in a democratic system, government and opposition may change, but the Parliament remains the foundation of democracy. "This House must always uphold the Constitution and serve Pakistan," he said.

He stressed that political disagreements are a natural part of democracy, but unity is essential when it comes to national defense and sovereignty. "The solidarity shown by the House of Federation today is admirable and has sent a strong message to the world," he added.

Dr Tariq said that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation, not an aggressor. "We are not the source of terrorism—we are its victims. India is making base-

less accusations while itself being involved in state-sponsored terrorism. The case of Kulbhushan Jadhav and unrest in Balochistan are clear examples," he said.

The minister said the entire nation is standing firmly behind the armed forces, just as it has in previous wars fought in defense of Kashmir. "Once again, the people of Pakistan are united with our military institutions," he said.

"Wars are won not only by military strength but by spiritual resolve. Pakistan's armed forces and its people have unmatched courage and faith," he added. He appreciated the leadership of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and other senior military officials for their professionalism and dedication.

"As long as this nation has mothers who raise brave sons and fathers who bury them with honor, no enemy can harm Pakistan," the minister said.

He warned the Indian government, especially Prime Minister Modi, against repeating past aggression. "Last time, you received a strong response. Today, Pakistan has even greater strength and capability to respond more decisively," he said.

Dr Tariq also praised the government's diplomatic efforts at international forums and the clear statements made by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister, Law Minister, and Information Minister in defending Pakistan's stance.

NAB distributes Rs 300 million among housing scheme affectees

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) distributed cheques worth Rs 300 million to over 500 affectees of four housing schemes in Rawalpindi and Islamabad during a ceremony held at its headquarters on Tuesday.

The ceremony, presided over by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lieutenant General (R) Nazir Ahmed, featured the distribution of compensation cheques to victims of four fraudulent housing schemes: Al-Haram City, Ghauri Town, Gulshan-e-Rahman, and Arain City.

It is pertinent to mention that in the first phase, billions of rupees recovered by NAB's efforts had already been distributed among the affectees of these housing schemes, and today, in the second phase, further checks were distributed among the affectees.

The ceremony was also attended by Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir, Prosecutor General NAB Syed Ehtisham Qadir Shah, Director General NAB Rawalpindi Region Waqar Ahmed Chohan, and other senior officers.

Addressing the gathering, NAB Chairman Lieutenant General (R) Nazir Ahmed emphasized that recov-

ering and promptly returning citizens' money lost to fraudulent housing schemes and investment scams remains the Bureau's highest priority.

He emphasized that the strict legal action is being taken against those elements involved in such corrupt practices. He urged citizens to invest their hard-earned money in any project only after thorough investigation and satisfaction to avoid financial losses.

Chairman NAB stressed that the general public should be wary of those who deceive false promises.

Chairman Nazir Ahmed cautioned prospective buyers to thoroughly verify critical aspects before committing to any housing scheme. He stressed the importance of confirming proper land ownership. No objection certificate (NOC), valid regulatory approvals, compliant architectural plans, and the developer's established credibility.

Furthermore, Chairman NAB announced that in the future, NAB will directly transfer the recovered amounts from the accused to the bank accounts of the affectees to provide further convenience to the public.

Chairman NAB appreciated the performance of NAB Rawalpindi, stating that NAB Rawalpindi Region

has recovered Rs 328 billion in the last 25 years and returned the looted money to the public. He commended the performance of NAB officers and staff whose continuous efforts have made the return of a record amount of looted money possible.

Director General NAB Rawalpindi Region Waqar Ahmed Chohan briefed on the investigations and cases against these housing schemes by NAB Rawalpindi. He informed that through NAB's efforts, today, cheques worth Rs 96,228 million were distributed among 207 affectees of Al-Haram City, Rs 180 million among 186 affectees of Ghauri Town, Rs 10.42 million among the affectees of Gulshan-e-Rahman, and Rs 12.529 million among the affectees of Arain City.

Chairman Nazir Ahmed reiterated NAB's resolute stance against housing scheme fraudsters, emphasizing rigorous legal action against all offenders regardless of whether they operate domestically or attempt to escape accountability by fleeing overseas.

Their National identity cards and passports will be blocked. Under the law, their properties will be confiscated and auctioned, and the return of the looted money will be ensured in every possible way.

Experts discuss Pakistan-Russia relations at international seminar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Consortium for Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) hosted an international seminar titled "Pakistan-Russia Cooperation in Non-Traditional Security" in Islamabad. The seminar convened prominent experts, researchers, practitioners, and academics from Pakistan and Russia to strengthen bilateral relations beyond traditional security frameworks. It was chaired by President CAPS Dr. Khuram Iqbal.

During the seminar, Dr. Roksolana Zigon, a Russian expert on geopolitics, stated that the unilateral suspension of the Indus Water Treaty is unacceptable, criticizing the Indian media for overly exaggerated narratives. She mentioned that Russia can play a significant role in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, as it did in securing the Tashkent agreement decades ago. Discussing non-traditional security, she highlighted how technology sharing could address Pakistan's water crisis and shared climate change concerns. These efforts, she emphasised, need to be embedded into a strategic narrative. To meet urgent

challenges, short-term plans must align with strategic agreements. According to her, the relationship is based on technological sovereignty and education.

Addressing the cultural linkages, Dr. Ilusur, a faculty member at the Department of International Relations at Kazan University, highlighted the rich yet underexplored cultural affinities between Pakistan and Russia. He reflected on the mediatory role the Soviet Union has historically played between India and Pakistan and discussed cultural linkages in three categories: political, economic, and cultural. He stated that the basis of this relationship is cultural and economic.

Dr. Shabbir Ahmed, Director of the CARS Area Study Centre at the University of Peshawar, addressed the prospects for labour exports under Russia's evolving immigration policies. He discussed untapped migration opportunities and the historical shift from traditional to non-traditional partnerships, stating, "We are natural partners."

Mr. Taimur Fahad, Associate Researcher at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, delivered an in-depth analysis of

the North-South Corridor's role in enhancing Pakistan-Russia connectivity. He further highlighted the potential opportunities under the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which is crucial for diversifying trade routes. The practice of barter trade has been immensely beneficial in maintaining smooth trade despite geopolitical changes. He proposed several policy recommendations, including focusing on institutional dialogues, prioritising bilateral relations, and promoting public-private partnerships.

Mr. Gleb Makarevich, Senior Research Fellow at the Primakov Center for World Economy and International Affairs, Russian Academy of Sciences, discussed the current state of academic collaborations, identifying bureaucratic barriers and limited awareness as major hurdles. He expressed optimism about progress in academic linkages but also pointed out several persistent problems. He concluded that substantial progress was impeded by a lack of depth in the bilateral relationship and noted a lack of expertise on both sides, particularly regarding the

poor understanding of each other's languages.

In her closing remarks, Ambassador Naela Chohan appreciated such engaging events and expressed the need for Central Asian regional study centres across the region committed to facilitating dialogue and collaboration to foster comprehensive, long-term cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

Earlier, Dr. Muhammad Shoaib, Senior Vice President of CAPS, opened the session with remarks highlighting the growing importance of nontraditional security partnerships in a multipolar world. Umair Pervez Khan, General Secretary of CAPS, moderated the session. It focused on developing practical engagement strategies in the socio-economic, academic, cultural, and energy sectors, emphasizing sustainable people-to-people linkages and institutional cooperation. The seminar concluded with an engaging Q&A session, during which participants emphasized the urgent need to overcome visa barriers, bureaucratic challenges, and limited public engagement to unlock the full potential of the Pakistan-Russia partnership.

Muqam: Pakistan vows to support Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Minister for Kashmir Affairs Eng Ameer Muqam said on Tuesday that Pakistan will continue to support the Kashmiri people. While addressing a solidarity rally for Kashmir at Rawani, he clarified that, according to the statement of the National Security Committee, the entire Pakistani nation stands with the Kashmiris.

The Minister for Kashmir Affairs stated that if India imposes war, the entire nation is ready to respond alongside the Pakistan Armed Forces. He

praised the courage and resilience of the people of Occupied Kashmir and said that despite India's oppression, their spirit for freedom has not diminished.

He further stated that whether it is the incident at Pahalgam or the Jafar Express incident, India is behind all of them. India accuses Pakistan without evidence, which is ridiculous.

Former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan also addressed the rally, saying that the Pakistani nation stands behind the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir

and the Chief of Army Staff. He appreciated the courage and struggle of the Kashmiri people.

The host of the rally, Barrister Iftikhar Gilani, stated that if India imposes war, the entire nation will stand with the Pakistan Armed Forces to counter Indian aggression. He condemned India's negative tactics.

Senior Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Azad Kashmir, Raja Mushatq Minhas, stated that no power in the world can eliminate Pakistan, and the Kashmiri people stand with the Pakistan Armed Forces.

Ayaz expresses satisfaction over decisions of CCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday expressed his satisfaction over the unanimous decisions taken during the recent meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), terming them a positive step towards strengthening the federation.

While commending the leadership of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief Ministers of all provinces, he appreciated their commitment to resolving

national matters including issues related to irrigation through mutual understanding and consensus.

He said Pakistan's political and national leadership has always prioritized national interests. "The successful meeting of CCI also demonstrated that dialogue and negotiation can lead to effective solutions," he added.

Highlighting the unity displayed at the CCI platform, the Speaker emphasized that the consensus-driven decisions have sent a clear and powerful message to adversaries

Pakistan's leadership stands united on matters of national importance.

On the incident in Pahalgam, the Speaker denounced the false allegations made by the Indian government and exposed their baseless nature. He said that despite Pakistan's offer for cooperation, India has yet to respond, which reflects its non-serious attitude. The Speaker declared that any act of aggression will be met with a resolute response and the entire nation will stand united like a solid wall in defense of the homeland.

IHC directs CDA to decide Grand Hyatt Tower lease itself

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to decide the matter itself regarding lease renewal of Grand Hyatt Tower after hearing parties.

Acting Chief Justice Sarfaraz Dogar heard the case of the private company and flat owners regarding the CDA's decision to cancel the lease. CDA's lawyer Kashif Malik Advocate appeared in the court and stated that the case is inadmissible. He prayed the court to dismiss the petitions.

In the previous hearing, the court had asked to send the matter to the CDA for a

decision. The court had said that the matter is of factual controversy, why not send it to the CDA again.

The court orders were placed before the CDA and informed that former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar had ordered a conditional lease renewal. If the company did not fulfill these conditions, the decision of the High Court's division bench has been restored.

The CDA's lawyer said that it is requested that in this situation, the case is inadmissible and prayed the bench to dismiss it. The petitioner lawyers said that the court should not reject the lease renewal applications but should proceed with the case under its

supervision. CDA lawyer Kashif Malik said that the experience of judicial supervision in the past has not been good. The petitioner lawyers said that this matter can also be resolved through independent mediation.

The CDA lawyer also opposed the independent mediation of the CDA saying that the case is inadmissible. Acting Chief Justice said that the court will decide on this matter after hearing the parties. The CDA lawyer said that the court itself should decide the case and requested the bench to hear it on daily basis. The court adjourned the hearing of the case.

Heat wave fuels surge in solar panel sales in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): As an intense heat wave continues to grip the twin cities, residents are turning to solar energy in record numbers to reduce electricity bills and frequent power outages.

Local solar panel dealers have reported a sharp rise in inquiries and installations over the past few weeks. The growing interest is driven by soaring temperatures, increased load shedding, and the rising cost of electricity.

"We have seen a significant increase in demand, with many customers looking to install solar panels to reduce their electricity bills," said Muhammad Shabbir, owner of a local solar panel business. "It's great to see more people becoming interested in renewable energy."

Salma, a resident of Islamabad, recently installed a solar system said, "It's been a lifesaver. The heat was becoming unbearable, but now I can keep my home cool without worrying about high bills," she said.

"Installing solar panels was the best decision I ever made. My electricity costs have dropped significantly, and I feel good about helping the environment."

Similarly, Saim Ali, a Rawalpindi resident, is planning to go solar. "It's a smart investment that will pay off in the long run. It's better for my wallet and better for the planet," he said.

Experts say the growing shift toward solar energy is transforming the energy landscape of the region. With increasing awareness, better affordability, and improved installation

services, solar energy is emerging as a sustainable alternative to traditional power sources.

"The solar industry is growing rapidly," said Tahir Naeem, a solar panel businessman. "There's still a lot of potential for innovation and expansion. It's rewarding to help customers achieve their energy goals."

As the demand for solar panels continues to rise, industry observers say the trend is likely to accelerate in the coming months signaling a long-term shift toward cleaner, more reliable energy in the twin cities.

As the demand for solar panels continues to rise, industry observers say the trend is likely to accelerate in the coming months signaling a long-term shift toward cleaner, more reliable energy in the twin cities.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy youngsters search and collect valuables from a garbage heap along Lehtar Road in Islamabad to earn their livelihood. —APP Photo

Mother and son killed

FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): A woman and her son have been killed by unidentified assailants in Argo district of Badakhshan, an official said on Tuesday. Police spokesman Ehsanullah Kamgar told Pajhwok that the incident occurred in Arghand village at around 11:00 p.m on late Monday night. He said the victims—a mother and her young son—were killed by unknown individuals. Kamgar added that four suspects have been arrested in connection with the case.

Three security men killed

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Three security personnel were killed and two others were injured in a gun attack at a check post in Sherzad district of eastern Nangarhar province, police said on Tuesday. Nangarhar police spokesman Sayed Tayeb Hammad wrote in a statement: “Three Mujahideen were martyred and two others were wounded when their cook opened fire at them in Sherzad district of Nangarhar at 10 am on Tuesday.”

6 health centers opened in Sangin and Kajaki

HELMAND (TOLOnews): The Director of Public Health in Helmand province has announced that six new health centers have recently been inaugurated in the Sangin and Kajaki districts of the province.

These health centers, built at a cost of 36 million afghani by the Afghan Health Services Authority, will provide medical services not only for children and mothers but also specifically for children suffering from malnutrition.

Fazal Ahmad Shafullah, the Director of Public Health in Helmand, stated: “The cost of these six centers amounts to 36 million afghani. Out of a total of 30 planned centers, 15 are now

ready for inauguration, 10 are currently under renovation and discussions with partner organizations are ongoing for the remaining five.”

Meanwhile, residents of Sangin and Kajaki districts have welcomed the opening of these centers as a significant step toward resolving healthcare challenges in their areas.

They have also called for additional healthcare services in their regions.

Khwas Aka, a resident of Sangin district, told TOLOnews: “Our request is to send us qualified doctors. We need both male and female doctors here. Also, please provide us with medicine and an ambulance for our center.”

Abdul Razaq, a resident of Kajaki district, said: “We used to face many difficulties, especially when women became ill. People here cannot afford treatment, and often no vehicle was available to transport patients. Now that this center has been established near our home, we are very grateful.”

According to the Helmand Public Health Directorate, in order to address healthcare issues in three other districts of the province, three 50-bed health centers will be completed and made operational by the end of the current solar year, providing essential healthcare services to the public.

Officials pledge swift action to address issues

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): The problems of residents in central Logar province concerning education, health, agriculture and roads would be addressed as soon as possible, officials said on Tuesday.

Based on Prime Minister's order, a special 10-member committee led by deputy governor has been appointed to resolve the problems of residents of remote districts. The committee visited Azra and Kharwar districts.

During this visit, Deputy Governor Maulvi Mohammad Anwar Dinparwar told media his visit to Azra and Kharwar districts was aimed to closely observe the people's problems and find appropriate solutions to them.

He said the residents of Azra and Kharwar districts are facing many problems in the areas of education, health, agriculture, and roads, which would be addressed soon.

According to him, Azra is a district located on a virtual border with neighboring Pakistan, and its residents are currently facing severe problems traveling to and from Pul-e-Alam city due to destruction of the road, which the relevant ministry must address.

On the other hand, Police Chief Mullah Noor Agha Noorani explained there are no security problems in Azra and Kharwar districts and there is strong coordination between security and civilian officials.

He assured the residents and tribal elders of these districts to share the problems of the highways and other problems with the IEA leadership to solve them.

Ahmad Ghani, a resident of Azra district, told Pajhwok no work has been done in the areas of education, health, agriculture, and reconstruction in Azra district in the past 20 years, and the IEA should pay special attention to the remote district.

Latifullah, a resident of Kharwar district, added the visits of government officials are beneficial to the district, because they should closely examine the problems of the people and, in addition to education, health, and agriculture, look at the poor condition of highways and find appropriate solutions.

Tehran hosts moot to boost business with Afghanistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): A conference on introducing trade opportunities and capabilities between Iran and Afghanistan was held in Tehran, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said on Tuesday.

In a statement, MoAIL said the conference was attended by Afghan delegation led by deputy minister Maulvi Sadr Azam Osmani on the sidelines of 7th Iran Export Capabilities Exhibition (Iran Expo 2025).

It said this conference assessed economic, trade, and investment opportunities and existing problems of the two countries.

Osmani emphasized the importance of joint cooperation in agriculture sector, and explained: “The IEA is trying to provide more opportunities for investment in agriculture and livestock fields in order to find wider place in global markets.”

That joint cooperation in agriculture and livestock sectors could strengthen relations between the two countries and become the basis for sustainable development for Afghanistan and Iran, he added.

According to deputy



minister, transferring agricultural experiences and technology to Afghanistan would be beneficial in development of agriculture. “Afghanistan, as an agricultural country, is ready to have extensive cooperation with Iran, especially in the fields of agriculture and irrigation.”

Also, he emphasized the importance of exchanging modern agricultural technology and the pivotal role of the private sector in economic development and

called on Iranian and international investors to invest in Afghanistan's agriculture and livestock sectors.

Osmani hoped this conference and the Iran Expo 2025 would mark the beginning of a new chapter in economic, trade, and agricultural relations between Afghanistan and Iran, which will be beneficial for people of both countries and for the stability of the region.

According to MoAIL, Abdul Sada Nissi,

Director General of the Indian Subcontinent of the Trade Development Organization of Iran, explained Afghanistan has special importance in Iran's economic policies and emphasized that developing trade relations with Afghanistan is one of the organization's strategic priorities.

He talked of increasing the level of economic exchanges between the two countries to 10 billion dollars.

21 sports grounds established in Farah province in two years

FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): Around 21 sports grounds have been established in western Farah province

over the past two years, enabling hundreds of youths to engage in sports activities daily, an official said on Tuesday.

Sports and Physical Training Director Abdul Hamid told Pajhwok Afghan News the new built facilities included 10 indoor futsal stadiums (gymnasiums) and 11 artificial turf football fields — all funded by private investors.

“Currently, 60 clubs are registered in the province,

with 158 sports teams operating under various federations,” he said.

According to Hamid, the total number of athletes in the province stands at 6,384, participating in various sporting disciplines.

Local athletes expressed satisfaction with the new developments, saying the increased number of sports grounds has motivated them to train more frequently and organize regular competitions.

Mohammad Rahimi, an athlete, said: “In recent times, several sports grounds have been built in

Farah, encouraging hundreds of young people like me to get involved in sports.”

Local investors who funded the construction of these facilities say they are happy with the outcomes. They believe their investments not only beautify the city and serve the youth but also provide a good source of income.

Qari Nematullah, a Farah city resident who owns a football field, said: “I have an artificial turf field in the Bagh Café area. I'm very happy — the ground is occupied for five to six hours every day.”

Similarly, Amir Mohammad, another sports field owner, said his ground remains busy from 7:00pm to midnight. He charges 500 afghanis per hour for usage.

Reports suggest that the construction of sports grounds has become a growing trend among local investors. However, athletes urge officials and developers to prioritize quality and standards over quantity.

Several more sports grounds are currently under construction in Farah and are expected to become operational soon.

Hanif meets top United Nations diplomat



KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Economy Qari Din Mohammad Hanif has met UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher.

The two sides discussed the continuation of humanitarian aid, taking into account the core needs and priorities

of the Afghan people, as well as the current focus of the international community and aid agencies.

A statement from the Ministry of Economy (MoE) said the meeting also covered the reintegration of returning refugees through joint efforts on infrastructure and public welfare projects in dis-

rupted residential areas across various provinces.

Additionally, the discussions covered strategies to address climate change impacts and support farmers through alternative livelihood programmes.

The UN official pledged continued cooperation with the ministry, the statement concluded.

WHO urges continued global support to eradicate polio

KABUL (TOLOnews): The World Health Organization (WHO), in a recent report, has called for sustained international support in the fight against polio, noting that over 100 positive cases of the disease were recorded in Afghanistan and Pakistan last year.

According to the report, the organization urged member states, donor agencies, and the international community to continue their support for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A section of the report states: “Despite significant progress, more than 100 children in Afghanistan and Pakistan were paralyzed by the poliovirus last year. The Subcommittee on Polio Eradication also issued a statement regarding the cessation of virus transmission in these two countries and called on member states, donors, and the international community to maintain their support,

as the last two polio-endemic countries are doubling their efforts to halt virus transmission.”

Medical professionals believe that WHO and partner organizations must not only continue conducting vaccination campaigns but also place a stronger focus on raising public awareness to achieve complete eradication.

Sayed Abdullah Ahmadi, a physician, told TOLOnews: “Recent WHO reports show that polio — or infantile paralysis — still exists in Afghanistan and neighboring countries such as Pakistan. Despite heavy investment and the wide availability of vaccination in both countries, why hasn't the disease been eradicated? One of the main reasons is the lack of an effective monitoring system. It is essential to ensure that vaccines are reaching people correctly and completely.”

Another doctor,

Noorulhaq Amin, stated: “When someone enters certain countries, they are vaccinated to prevent the spread of this disease. Therefore, if vaccination coverage increases in our country and in Pakistan, we can prevent this disease.”

FSP launched for small, medium enterprises

GARDEZ (Pajhwok): A Financial Support Programme (FSP) has been initiated for dozens of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, as well as 10 consortiums, across four southeastern provinces of the country.

Under the programme, each small entrepreneur will receive 2,000 US dollars, while each consortium will be paid 20,000 US dollars. The initiative covers Paktia, Paktika, Logar and Khost provinces.

Khan Agha Wahid Yar, head of industrial parks at the Department of Commerce and Industry, said the programme was being implemented with financial support from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and technical cooperation from the Organisation for Relief and Development (ORD).

He added in Paktia alone, 23 small businesses and two consortiums would receive financial assistance to help grow and stabilise their enterprises.

Widespread malnutrition harms children, mothers in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): The ongoing economic challenges faced by many families in Afghanistan have led to a growing malnutrition crisis among children and mothers. Numerous families report being unable to provide proper nutrition for their children.

Sayed Shah, a father who cannot afford treatment for his children, told TOLOnews: “These two children are suffering from malnutrition; I treated one of them for two years, and for the past year, I've been treating the other. They are also afflicted with other illnesses. I call on the government and the public to help me with my children's treatment.”

Meanwhile, UNICEF

has reported that in the first three months of the current year, it has provided medical services to more than 1.527 million children and breastfeeding mothers in Afghanistan. The United Nations Children's Fund also noted that during this period, over 246,000 children under the age of five suffering from malnutrition were referred to treatment programs.

Dr. Ahmad Shaqib Zaeher, a physician in Kabul, told TOLOnews: “It is essential to identify the root causes of malnutrition. Since this disease is prevalent in poor countries, it is necessary to improve the economic, political, and cultural conditions of such societies. Alongside that,



maintaining a proper diet is crucial — our food must include proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins.”

Previously, the WFP projected that by 2025, 3.5 million children in Afghanistan would suffer

from malnutrition.

According to WFP statistics, 1.2 million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in the country are currently suffering from malnutrition and are in urgent need of medical treatment and nutritional support.

Obstetricians shortage a major challenge: Dr. Shafajo



KABUL (Pajhwok): Najma-ol-Sama Shafajo, an obstetrician and gynecologist in Kabul, who has established a special hospital for women, providing job opportunities for dozens of women, identifies the shortage of obstetricians and gynecologists as a major challenge in the health sector.

She stresses that everyone should contribute in their respective fields to address the health issues in

the country.

Who is Dr. Shafajo?

Dr. Shafajo, an obstetrician and gynecologist, is a woman who emerged from the hardships of war and migration and is now the founder of one of Kabul's private hospitals. This hospital has created job opportunities for dozens of women.

She completed her primary and secondary education at a school in Jalalabad. After finishing

her secondary studies at Zarghona High School in Kabul, she passed the university entrance exam and was accepted into Kabul Medical University.

Due to the insecurity and civil wars of the 1970s, she migrated to Pakistan and studied medicine at a university there for several semesters. After some time, she returned to Afghanistan and completed her medical education at Sheikh Zayed University.

Dr. Shafajo specialized in obstetrics and gynecology at Malalai Hospital and later obtained her Master's degree in Public Health from a university in India.

Establishing the hospital

Dr. Shafajo explains, “After obtaining my specialization, I remained unemployed for a while. I started with one clinic. Then, I realized a single clinic wouldn't be enough, so I built a second clinic, and then a third. I would visit one clinic in the morning, another at noon, and the third in the evening.”

She elaborates on the creation of her hospital: “The patients at my three clinics were very scattered. I decided I should build a hospital. I established Shafajo Hospital with an investment of \$600,000.”

According to Dr. Shafajo, the hospital includes departments such as internal medicine, surgery, X-ray, laboratory, pharmacy, and an ethics department for medical practice.

Development of hospital sections

Currently, Shafajo Hospital operates in obstetrics and gynecology, providing diagnostic services, treatments, and surgical operations for patients.

Dr. Shafajo plans to expand the hospital's departments, increasing the number of beds from five to 20 in the near future.

She also intends to add pediatric surgery, urology, and infertility departments, while hiring skilled professionals for these sections.

At present, the hospital employs nearly 100 people, the majority of whom are women. With the expansion of departments and the increase in bed capacity, more women will be employed.

Dr. Shafajo says, “With the hope I have in Allah (SWT), I plan to build a 50-bed hospital initially, and later a 100-bed hospital. Insha'Allah, if I am alive and the hospital is constructed, you will witness our suc-

cess, if Allah is with us.” Afghan Women's Health from Her Perspective

Dr. Shafajo says that due to over four decades of war, the health sector, like other areas, has been severely affected, resulting in a high maternal mortality rate during childbirth.

She explains, “In Afghanistan, especially in obstetrics and gynecology, there are many challenges that require tireless efforts, and everyone must work in their capacity to address these problems.”

She views the shortage of obstetricians and gynecologists as a major challenge and stresses that special attention is needed in this area.

Balancing family life and career

Dr. Shafajo, a mother of three daughters, despite her busy schedule, has managed to take care of her children and her husband, who is also a doctor. She makes sure to spend quality time with them.

As the head of the

Afghan Obstetricians and Gynecologists Association, she says she tries to spend her Fridays and weekends with her family, taking them to restaurants or parks to enjoy happy moments together.

Dr. Shafajo's message to girls

Dr. Shafajo has an inspiring message for the girls of Afghanistan: “If today the doors of schools and universities are closed, make your home your school. Time is more precious than gold. Don't waste it... Utilize online platforms, self-education, and enroll in courses to enrich yourself with the gems of knowledge.”

She recalls the 1970s, saying, “I was one of those who, in the second year of medical school, faced a similar situation when universities were closed due to the internal wars. My father encouraged me to go to Pakistan and continue my education there. During my time in migration, I faced

numerous challenges while studying, but I made the best use of my time, never allowing myself to remain idle.”

In addition to studying medicine at the University of Ummul-Mu'minin, she also enrolled in courses such as Quran recitation, English, calligraphy, and carpet weaving.

Hospital employees' testimonials

Dr. Maryam Munir, who works in the OPD (Outpatient Department) at the hospital, shared with Pajhwok that she has been employed there for the past one and a half years. She expressed her happiness, saying, “I am glad to have found work here. It has helped my family's economy, and I am serving my people.”

Similarly, Dr. Khaleda Baqizada, another doctor at the hospital, said, “Since I started working here, I have learned a lot... I see 50 to 60 patients daily.” She too is delighted to have found a job at the hospital.



OTTAWA: Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney waving to supporters following his Liberal Party's victory in the parliamentary election.

WFP and other UN aid agencies slash jobs

UNITED NATIONS (AFP, AP): The World Food Program and the United Nations refugee agency will slash jobs because of funding cuts, mainly from the United States, officials told AP on Tuesday, warning the reductions will severely affect aid programs worldwide.

The WFP, also a United Nations organization, is expected to cut up to 30 percent of its staff. The head of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said it would downsize its headquarters and regional offices to reduce costs by 30 percent and cut senior-level positions by 50 percent. That's according to internal memos obtained by The AP and verified by two UN officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the internal personnel decisions. Other agencies like UNICEF — the UN children's agency, and OCHA — the organization's humanitarian agency — have also announced or plan to announce cuts that would impact around 20 percent of staff and overall budgets. One WFP official called the cuts "the most massive" seen by the agency in the past 25 years, and that as a result, operations will disappear or be downsized.

The cuts to the UN agencies underscore the impact of President Donald Trump's decision to pull back the US from its position as the world's single largest aid donor. Trump has given billionaire ally Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency power to redo the scale of the federal government, with a focus on slashing foreign assistance. Even before the administration's move, many donor nations had reduced humanitarian spending, and UN agencies struggled to reach funding goals. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply troubled by the drastic funding reduction." "The heads of our humanitarian agencies are being forced to take impossibly painful decisions as bud-

et cuts have an immediate and often deadly impact on the world's most vulnerable," Dujarric said in a statement to The AP. "We understand the pressures on national budgets faced by governments, but these cuts come at a time when military spending again hits record levels."

The WFP, the world's largest humanitarian organization, received 46 percent of its funding from the United States in 2024. Asked about the planned cuts, the organization said in a statement that "in this challenging donor environment, WFP will prioritize its limited resources on vital programs that bring urgently needed food assistance to the 343 million people struggling with hunger and increasingly facing starvation." The internal memo said personnel cuts will "impact all geographies, divisions and levels" in the agency. It suggested further downsizing may be needed and said the agency will review its "portfolio of programs."

In early April, The AP reported that the Trump administration had sent notices terminating funding for WFP programs in more than a dozen countries. The terminations were reversed days later in several countries but maintained the cuts in Afghanistan and Yemen, two of the world's poorest and most war-ravaged countries. The UN's top refugee agency provides help to some 43.7 million refugees worldwide, along with others among the 122 million people driven from their homes by conflicts and natural disasters.

It said a statement that the agency will "have to significantly reduce our workforce," including downsizing the headquarters and regional offices. UNHCR said some country offices will be closed, but it did not give an immediate figure of how many staff will be cut. "The impact of this funding crunch on refugees' lives is already devastating and will get far worse," the agency said. Programs providing food, clean water, medi-

cines, emergency shelter and other services "will reduce or stop."

For example, it said, reduced funding will cut access to clean water for at least half a million displaced people in Sudan, increasing the risk of cholera and other disease outbreaks. It will also hurt efforts to house and provide schooling for refugees from Sudan in South Sudan, Chad and Uganda. It warned that the lack of facilities in host countries will push more refugees to attempt dangerous crossings to Europe.

In the April 23 email to staff, the UNHCR chief said the headquarters and regional offices will be downsized to cut costs by 30 percent. It said senior-level positions will be capped to bring a 50 percent reduction. The cuts "will affect our operations, the size of our organization, and, most worryingly, the very people we are called to protect," it said. "It is critical that we prioritize, as we always have, the well-being and safety of refugees and of displaced and stateless people."

UNHCR's office in Lebanon — which is home to some 1 million refugees from Syria, is only 15 percent funded, its spokesperson Lisa Abou Khaled said. This month, it had to stop cash assistance to 347,000 refugees — two-thirds of the number it previously helped — and funding for the remaining 200,000 will last only through June, she said. It also halted primary health services for some 40,000 refugees. The UN children's agency told AP in a statement Tuesday that it projects that its funding will be at least 20 percent less in 2025 compared to 2024. "Hard-earned gains and future progress for children are at risk because of a global funding crisis in which some donors are sharply decreasing their financial support to UNICEF and our partners, as well as their contributions to international aid more broadly," a UNICEF spokesperson said.

PAF stands ready to meet any challenge

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has reiterated its unflinching commitment to protecting the nation's sovereignty, deterring aggression and maintaining peace through strength.

With a legacy of valor, innovation and unwavering resolve, PAF stands ready to meet any challenge, ensuring that Pakistan's skies remain secure for generations to come. Pakistan Air Force stands as a formidable force in aerial warfare, equipped with cutting-edge technology and multi-domain capabilities.

The induction of advanced platforms such as the J-10C and JF-17 Block-III fighter jets, armed with PL-15 Beyond Visual Range missiles, has significantly enhanced PAF's combat lethality and strategic deterrence. These state-of-the-art assets ensure that Pakistan's aerial defence remains unchallenged, sending a clear message to our adversary that the nation's skies are impenetrable.

From Saidu to Pasni, PAF maintains an indomitable presence, ensuring round-the-clock vigilance and rapid response capabilities. Under its dynamic leadership, PAF has undergone a transformative modernization drive, integrating next-generation technologies across multiple domains.

PAF has inducted and operationalized Advanced Aerial Platforms, High-to-Medium Altitude Air Defence Systems (HIMADS), Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs), Space, Cyber, Electronic Warfare capabilities and Artificial Intelligence-enabled systems at an unprecedented pace.

Weapons surrender underway

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The phased-wise surrender of weapons is currently underway in Kurram District, raising hopes for the restoration of lasting peace in the region.

Official sources on Tuesday informed that all parties involved in the conflict have begun handing over their weapons as part of a coordinated effort to ensure law and order. Since January 1, a total of 979 bunkers from both sides have been dismantled. The disarmament process, which initially began in Upper Kurram, is now being expanded across the entire district. The surrendered arsenal includes RPGs, Kalashnikov rifles, machine guns, missile launchers, mortars, heavy machine guns, and various types of ammunition.

To maintain long-term peace, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to establish a Road Protection Force (RPF) in Kurram. So far, 200 personnel have been recruited, with more inductions ongoing. The government has emphasized a zero-tolerance policy towards lawbreakers, stating that the state will deal with violators with an iron hand. The voluntary surrender of weapons by the people of Kurram is being hailed as a major step toward a peaceful and prosperous future for the region.

SC Justice Ayesha gets honorary degree

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: University of London has awarded honorary degree of Doctorate in Law to Supreme Court judge Justice Ayesha Malik.

Justice Ayesha Malik received an honorary Degree from the prestigious University of London by the Chancellor University of London, Princess Royal, Princess Ann at the prestigious Barbican Centre. The Honorary Degree was given in the light of Justice Ayesha's contribution and achievements in the field of law in Pakistan and her becoming the first female Supreme Court Justice of Pakistan.

The Vice Chancellor of University of London, Wendy Thomson, Dean Undergraduate Laws, Patricia Mckellor and Saad Wasim, Regional Head, South Asia, University of London attended the ceremony.

PIA Hajj inaugural flight departs from Islamabad

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD, QUETTA, LAHORE: The inaugural flight of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) for Hajj 2025 departed today, April 29, 2025, from Islamabad International Airport to Madinah, under the "Route to Makkah" project. Flight PK713, operated on a Boeing 777 aircraft, took off at 05:21 AM with 427 pilgrims onboard.

A special reception was held at the State Lounge where the Chief Operating Officer/Airport Manager welcomed the pilgrims. The event was graced by the presence of Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony; H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki, Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan; Zulfikar Haider, Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs; Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, a renowned religious scholar; along with the CEO of PIA, the COO/APM, and the Director Hajj.

Special arrangements were made in Lounge A2 by the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) for the comfort of the pilgrims. Pilgrims were seen off at the boarding bridge with gifts including roses, chocolates, and copies of the Holy Quran



Meanwhile, the first Hajj flight (PK-7201) from Quetta International Airport (QIAP) departed for Medina at 10:10 AM, carrying 151 pilgrims. To mark the occasion, an inaugural ceremony was held at the international departure lounge. The Honourable Governor of Balochistan, Mr. Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail, graced the ceremony as Chief Guest. Other notable attendees included Mr. Waheed Abbass, COO/Airport Manager QIAP; Mr. Ilyas Jaffar, Director Hajj Balochistan and representatives of other agencies working at the airport including the PIA. Addressing the departing pilgrims, the Honourable Governor, and other dignitaries requested special prayers for the prosperity of Pakistan and the continued success of all institutions working at the airport.

Meanwhile, the first Hajj flight of the private airline AirSial, flight PF-7700,

departed from Allama Iqbal International Airport at 8:30 AM today, carrying 147 pilgrims to Madinah. A formal inauguration ceremony was held to mark this significant occasion and to bid farewell to the pilgrims embarking on the sacred journey of Hajj.

The ceremony was graced by the Honourable Minister for Specialized Healthcare, Khawaja Salman Rafique, who presided over the event. He was accompanied by Director Hajj Mr. Rizwan Sharif and Chief Operating Officer/Airport Manager Mr. Nazir Ahmed Khan.

In his address, the Honourable Minister appreciated the selfless efforts of the Pakistan Airports Authority and all concerned departments in ensuring the smooth conduct of Hajj operations. He also extended his heartfelt wishes to the pilgrims for a safe and peaceful journey and offered prayers for their well-being.

New canal project papers thrown into dustbin: Murad

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday strongly opposed the federal government's earlier proposals for new canal construction, stating that the related project documents had been thrown into the trash.

He made these remarks upon arriving in Karachi from Islamabad while addressing party workers. The chief minister said that no new canal would be built until mutual agreement among all provinces is reached. "These canals only existed on paper," he said, "and those papers have been discarded into the wastebasket."

He also criticised those campaigning against the canal plans, suggesting that such elements were engaged in propaganda not just against the projects but even against the President of Pakistan. CM Murad expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for taking a fair stance and deciding that no canal will be constructed without provincial consensus. It is pertinent to mention that yesterday, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif chaired the 52nd meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) at the Prime Minister House, where key decisions regarding new canals were made.

The CCI fully endorsed the federal government's new policy that no canal project will proceed without mutual understanding among provinces. It was also decided that the federal government will halt any further movement on such projects until agreement is reached through the CCI platform.

As part of a long-term approach, the federal government announced its engagement with all provincial governments to develop a unified strategy for agricultural policy and water infrastructure. Water rights of all provinces are already protected under the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991 and the National Water Policy of 2018.

To further this cause, a committee is being formed with representation from both federal and provincial levels. This committee will propose a consensus-based roadmap for managing Pakistan's agricultural water needs and ensuring provincial harmony.

Recognising the constitutional importance of water and the need for fair distribution, the CCI decided to return the provisional ECNEC approval of February 7, 2024, regarding canal construction, along with the IRSA water availability certificate dated January 17, 2024.

The Planning Division and IRSA have been instructed to hold consultations with all stakeholders to maintain national cohesion and fully address provincial concerns before any new step is taken.

CCI decisions submitted to SHC in IRSA case: Additional Attorney General submitted copies of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) decisions in Sindh High Court (SHC) hearing on constitution of IRSA and the water availability certificate about construction of canals from the river.

AAG told the high court that the CCI has withdrawn the water availability certificate. Barrister Mohsin Shahwani said that the canals matter has come to an end with the certificate withdrawal. AAG said that the CCI has decided that the construction of canals could not be started without consensus.

PM reaffirms commitment

(Continued from Page 1)

Transport, Marat Karabayev, at the PM's House. During the meeting, the prime minister extended his best wishes to the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and recalled his productive interaction with him during the World Water Summit held in Saudi Arabia.

He expressed keen anticipation for President Tokayev's upcoming visit to Pakistan, describing it as an important step towards strengthening bilateral ties.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that the proposed railway link would be a "game-changer" for the entire region, as it would connect the Central Asian States directly to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, enhancing trade routes and economic opportunities.

He said that a Pakistani delegation would soon visit Kazakhstan to discuss technical matters and finalize the feasibility study. He also highlighted Kazakhstan's potential role in promoting chess and martial arts in Pakistan, noting the broader prospects for cooperation in the education sector. He proposed the establishment of Kazakhstan university campuses in Pakistan and called for the formulation of a strategy to enhance air connectivity between the two countries.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to fostering business-to-business relations, the prime minister emphasized the importance of robust economic and trade engagement. The two sides also discussed cooperation in key sectors including agriculture, economy,

trade, investment, information technology, and communications.

Kazakh Minister Marat Karabayev expressed gratitude to the prime minister for the warm hospitality extended during his visit. He noted that Kazakh traders and investors were keen on developing strong business-to-business ties with Pakistan. He underscored the strategic importance of Karachi and Gwadar ports for Kazakhstan and reaffirmed the significance of the proposed railway link between Almaty and Gwadar.

The minister also highlighted the outcomes of the 13th session of the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Joint Inter-Ministerial Commission, during which a framework agreement was signed for cooperation in 10 sectors. Additionally, several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were inked to boost collaboration in information and culture, textiles, and mineral development. A business delegation from Kazakhstan is currently visiting Pakistan and has toured the ports of Karachi and Gwadar. Business-to-business meetings were held in Karachi as part of the visit.

The meeting was attended by minister for communications Abdul Aleem Khan, minister for economic affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, minister for information and broadcasting Attallah Tarar, minister for railways Hanif Abbasi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi, and other senior government officials.

Sectarian clashes kill 13 in Syria

DAMASCUS: Authorities in Syria have assured a thorough investigation into clashes that are reported to have killed 13 people in a town near the capital, Damascus, largely populated by the country's Druze minority. The Ministry of Interior said in a statement on Tuesday that it would pursue those involved in the sectarian violence.

Syria's new rulers, rebels who led the rebellion that overthrew longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December, have struggled to maintain security for the country's minorities, despite urging national unity and inclusivity. The clashes were prompted overnight after an audio clip was circulated on social media attacking the Prophet Muhammad. The recording was attributed to a Druze leader.

Attackers from the nearby town of Maliha and other predominantly Sunni areas converged on the mostly Druze town of Jaramana. The Interior Ministry reported casualties following "intermittent clashes between groups of gunmen", adding that security forces "went to break up the clashes and protect the residents". "We affirm our keenness to pursue those involved and hold them to account," it said in a statement.

Among those killed were two members of Syria's General Security Service, a new security force comprised mostly of former rebels, according to ministry spokesman Mustafa al-Abdo. Six Druze fighters from Jaramana and three "attackers" were also killed, according to the United Kingdom-based monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. — Aljazeera

KP CM directs timely completion of projects

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has initiated preparations for its development programme for the upcoming fiscal year. Four separate meetings were held on Tuesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur in the chair to discuss the proposed projects of Sports, Information, Relief, and Auqaf departments for inclusion in the upcoming Annual Development Program (ADP).

In attendance were concerned provincial cabinet members, the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretaries, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments, and other senior officials. The meetings included a detailed review of the progress on ongoing development projects within these departments.

Chief Minister Gandapur instructed officials to finalize the ADP in a timely manner, emphasizing the need for practical, need-based projects that can be completed within the stipulated timeframe. He stressed that the projects selected must benefit the maximum number of people. The Chief Minister noted that delays in project completion lead to an increased financial burden on the public exchequer.

Therefore, the upcoming development budget will prioritize the completion of ongoing projects. He directed that a significant portion of the budget be allocated to such projects, with full funding provided for those nearing completion. Highlighting the importance of judicious spending of developmental funds, Gandapur stated that development funds come from taxpayers' money and must be used wisely and meaningfully. He also called for the elimination of duplication in development schemes across departments and advised against initiating identical projects under multiple departments.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister instructed that land availability be ensured before launching any new projects. He directed the Planning & Development Department to thoroughly assess the feasibility and public utility of all proposed projects, making it clear that only viable projects with wide-reaching benefits should be included in the new development programme. He concluded that the ADP for the next fiscal year will be designed realistically, in line with the province's financial capacity, and steps will be taken to minimize throw-forward liabilities.

PHC stops KPPRA from adverse action

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Farah Jamshed has issued interim injunction against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) decision regarding nullified a purchase order and contract for supply of two mammography machines.

The counsel Shumail Ahmad Butt advocate argued that on 11/03/2025 M/s Fujifilm a renowned brand leader in sale of bio-medical machines obtained bid. He argued before the court that

not only Fujifilm is a trusted name in sale of these breast cancer treatment products but has been licensed with US FDA and MHWL of Japan.

It has offered these machines at the lowest prices after being found technically responsive on the entire evaluation criteria, the lawyer added. He further submitted that although the company had secured highest marks in both technical and financial evaluation but a local dealership who was in competition had been making frivolous applications against Fujifilm. This rival dealer wanted to supply machines on prices at least Rs 40 Million higher than Fujifilm.

Although the government has issued a purchase order to Fujifilm after acknowledging it as the successful bidder and the company has furnished a sizable bank guarantee besides initiating transshipment of machines from Japan within delivery timelines but the competing bidder has approached the KPPRA with an appeal, the counsel stated.

The counsel argued that KPPRA technical expert who had no expertise in such machines had recommended to disqualify Fujifilm on the pretext that it didn't have US FDA approval although the same was already part of the record.