

POL prices likely to drop
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Petroleum prices are likely to drop in upcoming fortnightly review for the month of May 2025. Sources said the petrol price is expected to fall by Rs2.95 per litre and high speed diesel price by Rs6.80 per litre. Similarly, the price of kerosene oil is likely to dip by Rs7.16 per litre while the price of light speed diesel would remain unchanged.

1.3m refugees repatriated
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary Mukhtar Ahmad Malik informed the National Assembly on Wednesday that approximately 1.3 million Afghan refugees have been repatriated from Pakistan so far. Responding to a question raised by MNA Anjum Aqeel Khan during the National Assembly session, Malik stated that around 3 million Afghan refugees had been residing in Pakistan.

Pak takes immense pride in its brave sons

PM says valiant Armed Forces fortified by unwavering national resolve defended motherland in heroic manner

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday in his address to the soldiers deployed at the frontline areas said the valiant Armed Forces of Pakistan, fortified by the unwavering resolve of the nation, defended the motherland in a heroic manner and dealt a decisive blow to the adversary's dastardly aggression.
The prime minister accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, Minister for Planning and Development, Information Minister, visited Pasrur Cantonment, Sialkot to commend the exceptional bravery and professionalism of the troops during Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, part of The Marka-e-Haq (The Battle for Truth). Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, and Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, were also present during the visit, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.
Commending the Armed Forces on their exemplary performance in the Marka-e-Haq, the Prime Minister stated, "History will eternally record, how within few hours, Pakistan's defenders extinguished India's unprovoked aggression with unmatched precision and resolve."
During the visit, the Prime Minister received a comprehensive briefing on the conduct of the battle and the current operational preparedness of the Corps. Interacting with officers and brave men at the frontline, the Prime Minister lauded their high morale, exceptional professionalism, and unflinching readiness.
The Prime Minister further affirmed, "Pakistan takes immense pride in its brave sons; they are the crown jewels of the nation." He said that the blatant aggression against innocent civilians resulting into martyrdom of children, women and elderly and calling them terrorists is utterly shameful and against all international laws, norms and morality.
He stated that despite Pakistan's offer of neutral investigations, India deliberately evaded such a path, as

they had nothing to prove and based on a false pretext and bloated arrogance and ego, launched the offensive, "for which it has got a very befitting response, Alhumdulillah". The Prime Minister also said that our martyrs have always been our pride and the nation shall eternally remain indebted to them. Upon arrival, the Prime Minister was warmly received by the Chief of Army Staff and Corps Commander Gujranwala.
Earlier, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid a visit to the frontline areas of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos during the ongoing Marka-e-Haq (Battle for Truth), reaffirming his support and solidarity with the armed forces of Pakistan.
During his visit to the Pasrur Garrison near Sialkot, the prime minister met with officers and soldiers actively participating in the military operation, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. The PM praised their unwavering dedication and valor in defending the nation's sovereignty.
The prime minister was flanked by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal and Attaullah Tarar, Corps Commander Sialkot, and other senior civil and military officials.
In a show of continued support for all branches of the military, the prime minister is scheduled to visit various air bases and naval bases in the coming days to meet with personnel from the Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Navy. Pakistan Television (PTV) will broadcast the prime minister's address to officers and soldiers at Pasrur Garrison this evening, described as a historic interaction with the nation's defenders.
Shehbaz emphasizes Kashmir dispute solution as per UNSC resolutions imperative to ensure durable peace in SA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, during his telephonic interaction with the UN Secretary General, emphasized

that the just resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, was imperative to ensuring durable peace in South Asia and urged the Secretary General to play his role.
The prime minister held a telephone conversation with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to exchange views on the situation in South Asia, this afternoon as it was the third phone call between the two leaders in the last two weeks, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.
The prime minister expressed his deep appreciation for the Secretary-General's leadership and diplomatic efforts to defuse the tense situation in South Asia that had been gravely endangered by India's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Pakistan. He stated that the Secretary-General's continued engagement and preventive diplomacy demonstrated his enduring commitment to protection of the UN Charter's principles and purposes, as well as to fostering peace in South Asia. The prime minister noted that Pakistan had agreed to the ceasefire understanding it in the larger interest of peace in the region. He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong resolve to promote peace in South Asia, while defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs.
The prime minister denounced India's aggression on the false pretext of terrorism, while characterizing it as a dangerous precedent of which the international community should take due cognizance. He also expressed concerns over the continued provocative and inflammatory remarks by Indian leadership, as a threat to the fragile regional peace. The Secretary General welcomed the ceasefire understanding, while expressing condolences over the loss of civilians' lives. He expressed his commitment to continued engagement with both sides to advance regional peace and stability. He said it was his duty to work for promotion of international peace, which was needed by the world.
Premier thanks President Aliyev: Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif expressed his profound gratitude to President Ilham Aliyev and the brotherly people of Azerbaijan for their unwavering solidarity with and support to Pakistan during the recent tensions in South Asia.
The prime minister received Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov here at the Prime Minister's House, a news release said. During the meeting, the prime minister added it was reflective of the abiding friendship between the two nations.
While deeply appreciating the valiant Armed Forces of Pakistan for the successful conduct of "Operation Bunyanum Marsoos", the Prime Minister said Pakistani people were grateful to Allah the Almighty for this historic victory. He stressed Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and in this spirit, had agreed to accept the ceasefire understanding with India. However, Pakistan stood ready to resolutely defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity in face of any future aggression, he added.
While highlighting the excellent nature of Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations, the Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction at the positive trajectory of bilateral cooperation. He stated President Aliyev's historic visit to Pakistan last July, marked an important milestone by opening up new avenues of collaboration in the areas of economy, trade and investment. While recalling his visit to Baku in February, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's strong desire to elevate the fraternal ties to a mutually rewarding economic partnership.
Ambassador Faradov warmly felicitated the Prime Minister and the entire Pakistani nation upon the success. He appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace in South Asia. He noted President Aliyev attached great importance to the brotherly ties between the two countries.
While speaking about progress made in implementation of understandings signed at the leadership level, he assured the Prime Minister of his full commitment to enhance



cooperation between the two friendly countries, across all spheres of shared interest.
Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan desired peace in South Asia, and in this spirit, had agreed to the ceasefire understanding with India. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to uphold the understanding, as well as its iron resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs. He also made it clear that Pakistan would never permit the sanctity of the Indus Waters Treaty to be challenged.
The prime minister held a telephone conversation with President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During their warm and cordial conversation, the prime minister conveyed profound gratitude for UAE's diplomatic efforts and constructive role to defuse the recent crisis in South Asia.
He said the UAE had always stood by Pakistan, through thick and thin. The prime minister affirmed the warm, close and brotherly ties between Pakistan and the UAE. He recalled with great satisfaction that during the last one year, bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries was progressing well, especially in the areas of economy and investment. He renewed his strong resolve to transform the existing Pakistan-UAE ties into a mutually beneficial economic partnership. The UAE president welcomed the ceasefire understanding, while appreciating Pakistan's efforts for peace and said the UAE supported maintenance of peace and stability in South Asia.

Trump praised as peacemaker amidst India-Pakistan ceasefire

Jalil Afridi
WASHINGTON, D.C.: In a press briefing at the US State Department, Deputy Press Secretary Tommy Pigott fielded questions from The Frontier Post regarding the recent ceasefire between Pakistan and India, and the potential role of former President Donald Trump in brokering peace between the nuclear-armed neighbors.
The Frontier Post correspondent highlighted that Pakistan had welcomed Trump's efforts in seeking a ceasefire and even suggested he could be a contender for the Nobel Peace Prize if he succeeds in resolving the decades-long Kashmir conflict. In contrast, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was once denied entry to the US, had reportedly not embraced the same peace initiative.
Responding to the question, Pigott said, "What we are happy to see is a ceasefire. That's where our focus remains." He emphasized that the US supports direct communication between both sides, reiterating that the administration's priority is maintaining peace and fostering dialogue. Pigott praised Trump's foreign policy style, stating, "The President – President Trump – is a peacemaker. He's a dealmaker. He values peace and has demonstrated this repeatedly while pursuing an America First agenda."
A follow-up question addressed concerns over reports that India had used Israeli-made drones in its attacks against Pakistan. The Frontier Post correspondent questioned whether such military use might complicate Trump's Abraham Accords vision, which aims to promote religious harmony between Jews, Christians, and Muslims.



Pigott again underscored the US focus on ceasefire and communication. "The President stands ready to aid in the pursuit of peace. He has shown he is a peacemaker and dealmaker," Pigott said, declining to comment on the drones specifically. The briefing concluded with an expression of continued US support for peace and regional stability.

Two more soldiers embraced martyrdom

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Demonstrating extraordinary valor in defense of Pakistan, two more courageous hospitalised soldiers have embraced martyrdom, bringing the total number of martyrs to 13 as 78 brave personnel have sustained injuries while serving the motherland with unwavering resolve.
According to Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) press release, the martyred heroes are Havaladar Muhammad Naveed Shaheed of the Pakistan Army and Senior Technician Muhammad Ayaz Shaheed of the Pakistan Air Force. Their noble sacrifice stands as a timeless testament to their courage, devotion to duty, and unshakeable patriotism.
The Pakistan Armed Forces, in unity with the people of Pakistan, pay the highest tribute to these brave martyrs and extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Prayers are also offered for the swift and complete recovery of all those injured in the attack.
Their sacrifice will forever remain etched in the nation's collective memory, inspiring generations to come. The Indian Armed Forces' cowardly act of aggression during the night of 6-7 May, 2025, resulted in the deliberate targeting of defenseless civilians, including women, children, and the elderly.
Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari expressed his condolences and paid tribute to the two soldiers of the Pakistan Armed Forces who were martyred as a result of Indian aggression. He commended the services of Havaladar Muhammad Naveed Shaheed and Senior Technician Muhammad Ayaz.
The President stated that the martyrs are our national assets and their sacrifices will not be forgotten. He further added that the nation will remain grateful to its martyrs and their families. President Zardari also prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and patience for their families.

SBP receives \$1.023b loan tranche from IMF

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has received the second tranche of \$1.023 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme.
The amount will be reflected in SBP's foreign exchange reserves for the week ending on 16th May 2025, the bank said in a statement. Last week, the IMF's Executive Board formally approved a \$1 billion disbursement for Pakistan under the EFF, marking a significant step in the country's ongoing economic stabilisation efforts.
The tranche was greenlit following Pakistan's successful completion of key performance benchmarks. The EFF programme, which is designed to support countries facing balance-of-payment difficulties, spans a 37-month period. Additionally, Pakistan is also a participant in the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), which is aimed at enhancing climate resilience and spans 28 months. However, the current disbursement only pertains to the EFF.
This immediate release of funds is expected to provide crucial support to Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, ease fiscal pressure, and help maintain economic momentum amid ongoing global financial uncertainty. The IMF's decision came after Pakistan fulfilled major structural benchmarks, including improvements in the tax-to-GDP ratio, maintaining a primary fiscal surplus, and achieving provincial fiscal targets.
Economic analysts have lauded the development, noting that this financial injection is vital for Pakistan's economic stability and investor confidence. They emphasized that it will not only ease short-term fiscal challenges but also bolster Pakistan's credibility in the eyes of international lenders. Earlier, reports suggested that India had attempted to obstruct the approval process. However, the move failed, and in response, India allegedly withdrew its representative from the IMF Executive Board.
The budget talks between the global lender and the Pakistan government are set to start today. The virtual talks between Pakistan and the IMF with regard to budget preparation will now take place online as the latter's delegation could not reach the country as per its schedule on Wednesday. According to sources, budget talks with the IMF will now be held online this week, whereas the arrival of the delegation of funding agency is expected next week.
Sources said the negotiations on budget preparation were scheduled to be held on Wednesday, adding now virtual negotiations will be held this week and the delegation for talks will arrive next week. Budget proposals will be shared with IMF during the online negotiations, the sources said. The Pakistan's economic team has completed preparations for giving briefing to the IMF, and its delegation will review budget preparation during online meetings. Ministry of Finance and FBR officials will hold virtual negotiations.
The talks, which will continue till May 16, will centre around the upcoming budget. Both sides will discuss income and expenditure, with the Pakistan government briefing the lender about the tax and non-tax revenue. According to reports, special sessions will be held to convince the IMF to lessen the tax burden on the already weighed down salaried class.

President visits CMH

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday visited CMH to inquire after the health of Jawans of Pakistan Army and civilians who were injured during the Indian aggression. The president was accompanied by Minister for Interior Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Commander 10 Corps and administration authorities of the hospital, President House Media Wing said in a press release. The president met every Jawan and civilian individually and praised their valour, sacrifice and patriotism.
He said that they were proud of the sacrifices of their jawans and the entire nation saluted their brave Sepoys and civilians. The president said that Pakistani nation faced the enemy's aggression with determination and termed Indian aggression and extremist a threat to the regional peace.
He further observed that entire regional security was at risk due to the Hindutva ideology, adding Modi's government wanted to use aggression against Pakistan for its political mileage. He reiterated that they would not allow any harm to Pakistan's sovereignty and national solidarity and the entire nation was untied, spirited and vigilant to counter any aggression.

KP CM divides Malakand into two separate divisions

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, has announced to divide existing Malakand Division into two separate administrative divisions, and urged the elected public representatives of Malakand Division to mutually consult and finalize the modalities in this regard.
This, he announced while chairing a consultative session on upcoming Annual Development Programme (ADP) for Malakand Division. Elected members of the National and Provincial Assemblies from Malakand Division and other concerned officials attended the meeting.
The Chief Minister stated that Malakand is a vast and mountainous area, and for the convenience of the people, it is necessary to divide it into two divisions. "Smaller administrative units will enhance service delivery and improve governance", he remarked. The elected public representatives of Malakand Division welcomed the Chief Minister's announcement, stating that the division of Malakand into two separate divisions was a longstanding demand of the local population and a pressing need of the time. They expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister for this decision.
The meeting also reviewed the progress of the current Annual Development Programme for Malakand Division. Earlier, the Chief Minister also chaired a meeting related to the development programmes of the Departments of Forests & Environment, Minerals, Law & Justice, Transport, and Labour. Relevant cabinet members, the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary (P&D), and other concerned officials attended the meeting.
The progress of schemes under the ongoing development programme was reviewed, and proposed schemes for inclusion in the next ADP were discussed in the meeting. The Chief Minister directed that schemes nearing completion and flagship projects should be completed on time. He noted that schemes with 80% or more physical progress are being fully funded.
Detailed discussions were held on proposed projects for the upcoming Annual Development Programme, and instructions were issued to finalize them. The Chief Minister directed that realistic and viable development schemes be included in the new ADP, emphasizing that

departments should prioritize major public-interest projects over minor initiatives.
The Chief Minister stressed the need for swift implementation of the Billion Tree Plus Programme, terming it as a flagship initiative of the provincial government. He directed that implementation of the programme should begin at the very start of the new fiscal year. "We are investing substantial resources to enhance the forest cover of the province; therefore, no delay in the execution of this project will be tolerated," he said.
Furthermore, the Chief Minister instructed practical steps to harness the potential of carbon credits in the province. He agreed in principle to include solar tube well projects in the next ADP to support afforestation and instructed that feasibility studies for these projects be conducted in the first phase.
The meeting also considered projects for value chain development of local honeybees and the establishment of herbal markets across the province. The Chief Minister highlighted the significant potential of medicinal herbs in the province and stated that the basic objective is to benefit the local population.

1 dead in blast targeting convoy of PPP MPA

F.P. Report

QUETTA: One person was killed and 10 others injured when a blast struck the convoy of PPP MPA Ali Madad Jattak in Quetta on Wednesday, but the lawmaker was unharmed. Sariat Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Asif Ghafoor told media: "The convoy of PPP MP Ali Madad Jattak was attacked with hand grenades and fired upon on Sariat Road in Quetta. The incident took place near Munir Mengal Chowk. Ali Madad Jattak was unharmed in the attack, but his vehicle was partially damaged." He said five people were injured in the incident, who were immediately moved to Bolan Medical Complex Hospital and Civil Hospital. Ghafoor said a heavy contingent of police reached the spot and cordoned off the area to launch an investigation that was under way. He said Jattak was heading towards a meeting place along with his convoy to attend a victory rally.
However, a statement issued by the Balochistan Health Department said 11 injured were brought to the Civil Hospital Accident and Trauma Centre. It added that after being provided initial medical aid, the injured were shifted to the trauma centre for further treatment, while one person died during treatment.
Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti condemned the attack, saying that attacks on public leadership were attacks on the province's peace.
Bugti said that such cowardly acts could not shake the nation's collective willpower, adding that strict and fruitful action would be taken against those hostile to peace. He said that the elements disrupting peace would be exposed, and the people and elected representatives deserved complete protection. "The elements hostile to the state will be made an example of." The Balochistan government also condemned the attack and sought a report.

The prices of 20 essential vegetables, including potatoes, onions, and tomatoes, have remained stable. Moreover, notable reductions have been observed in the prices of seasonal fruits such as mangoes, peaches, and dates.

Governor pays tribute to PAF martyr, lauds forces sacrifices

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday visited the residence of Pakistan Air Force martyr Radar Technician Muhammad Ayaz, who was martyred in the line of duty during Indian aggression.

The Governor offered condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the elevation of the martyr's soul and patience for the family.

Governor Kundi also visited the martyr's grave and paid homage to his sacrifice, calling it a symbol of national pride.

"Martyr Muhammad Ayaz and all those who laid down their lives in defense against Indian aggression are the pride of the nation," he said.

He praised the armed forces for defending the country with bravery and professionalism, stating that Ayaz's sacrifice would be remembered in golden words.

Expressing sorrow over the loss of innocent lives, including women and children, during Indian attacks, the Governor said the Pakistani forces had responded robustly, boosting national morale.

He highlighted Operation "Bunyan Marsoons" as a decisive and effective military response that shattered India's arrogance.

While speaking to media representatives, Governor Kundi paid tribute to former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for initiating Pakistan's nuclear program, making the country's defense invincible and asserting Pakistan's sovereignty to the world.

He also acknowledged Shaheed Benazir Bhutto's contributions in advancing Pakistan's missile technology, which further strengthened national defense.

The Governor praised PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for representing Pakistan with diplomatic strength on international forums.

"His efforts have highlighted Pakistan's peaceful and positive stance globally, enhancing the country's image as a responsible and sovereign state," he said.

Several PPP leaders including Mardan District President Asad Khan, former district nazim Asad Kashmiri, former tehsil nazim Javed Iqbal Khan, former general secretary Aurangzeb Khan, PPP leader Irfan Khan Mohmand, Takhte Bhai Bar Vice President Shah Hussain Khan Advocate, and Mardan Division spokesperson Ibrahim Syed Yousafzai were also present at the occasion.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi offering Fateha for the departed soul of Pakistan Air Force Shaheed Muhammad Ayaz at this residence in Takht Bhai.

Tordher chairs meeting on Godown Act 2021

F.P. Report

Shahab Nawaz participated. Other attendees included officials from the Law Department and other departments, President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries Fazal Muqem, industrialist and former president of the chamber Fawad Ishaq along with several other representatives from the business community.

Stakeholders shared concerns regarding the practical application of the Act and recommended that business/stock spaces and facilities already registered under similar frameworks with other provincial departments be exempted from mandatory re-registration under this Act.

The business community also called for further clarification in the definitions of godowns, cold storages, and warehouse facilities.

Officials from the Industries Department shared their perspective on the law during the meeting. It was agreed in principle to hold a follow-up meeting involving all stakeholders to consult on potential amendments to the Act and its rules. Consensus-based proposals will be further processed for incorporation into the legislation.

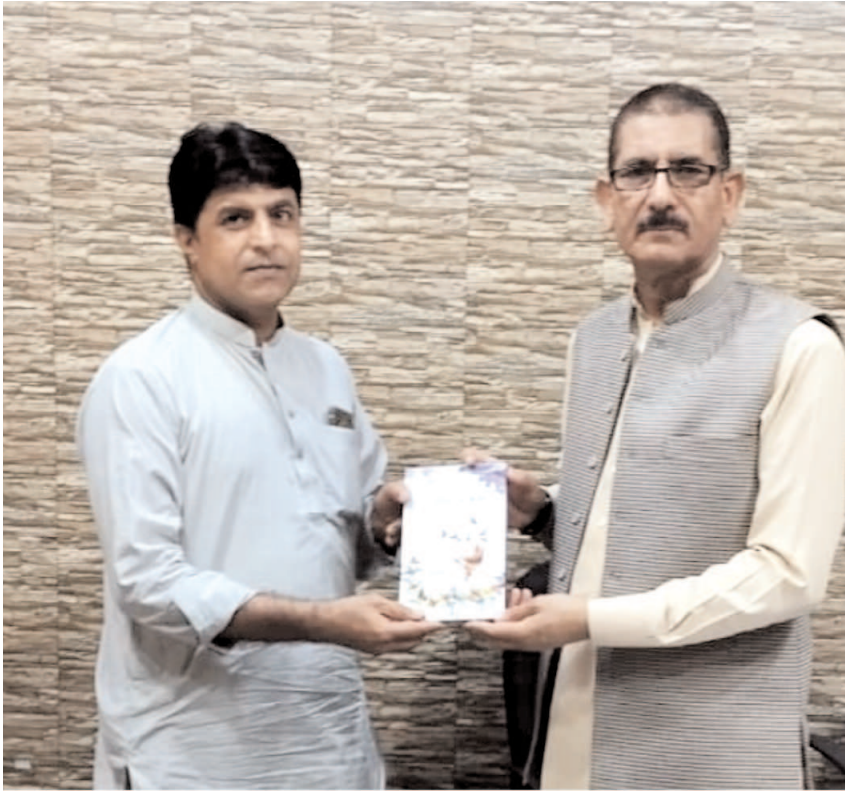
It was also clarified during the meeting that any business stock facility not previously registered with another department in accordance with the objectives of the Godown Act will be required to register with the Industries Department. Speaking at the occasion, Special Assistant Abdul Karim Tordher emphasized that government legislation is designed to facilitate the public and stakeholders.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating a business-friendly environment in the province.

He urged business leaders to educate themselves on relevant laws through their respective chambers and to engage with universities to benefit from research projects aimed at promoting trade and commerce. Addressing the traders, he highlighted the vast investment opportunities available in various sectors across the province and encouraged business leaders to invest.

He added that the revival of trade is a priority for the government and that the KP-BoIT provides necessary support, including the issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs).

The government and the department, he assured, will continue to provide full cooperation in all required areas.



PESHAWAR: Press Registrar of KP Information Department, Ansar Khelji presenting his poetry collection book 'Da Lolako Pa Atan Ki' to journalist SK Sami

Faith, patience and victory: Pakistan's moral triumph in war

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

PAKISTAN, unlike most nations, was not merely a geographical conception but a vision born of a sacred ideology. It was envisioned as a homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-Continent, where they could live according to the principles of Islam, with justice, equality, and honour. This ideological foundation has been our guiding light through every storm, and it is with unwavering determination that we have striven to uphold it. The trials we have faced have only strengthened our resolve. We believe, with unshakable faith, that the mercy and grace of Almighty Allah is the greatest force sustaining us. Yet we also know that divine assistance descends upon those who act in sincerity and struggle in His path. As the Holy Qur'an reminds us: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:11)

The history of our nation is rich with moments when we stood at the frontline of global conflicts—not to seek power or expansion, but to protect values of peace, humanity, and justice. When the Soviet forces stormed Afghanistan, it was Pakistan that bore the burden of refugees, economic disruption, and a long-term security challenge. During the war on terror, we offered not only our territory but the blood of our sons, standing firm when others chose silence and distance.

Despite our sacrifices, when we turned to our friends for support in our own trials, many of them chose their interests over our brotherhood. When we cried out in distress, they looked the other way. But once again, when calamity knocked on our door in the recent aggression by India against our sovereignty, it was the faith and unity of our people, and the valour of our armed forces, that turned the tide. With the help of Allah, victory came. Those who had nothing to do with us in the hour of darkness now speak of mediation and dialogue, forgetting their indifference just days ago. But the History answers in silence.

Let it be recorded that during this unprovoked aggression, India not only violated all international norms and the sanctity of Pakistan's sovereignty, but also stooped to the reprehensible act of targeting mosques and innocent civilians. Their attacks were based on baseless allegations, branding peaceful worshippers and bystanders as terrorists without presenting a shred of credible evidence. It was a brazen display of arrogance and disregard for international law and humanitarian values.

In contrast, Pakistan responded with dignity, restraint, and unmatched professionalism. Our armed forces, fully capable of inflicting widespread damage, instead chose a path that honoured both the rules of engagement and the ethical principles we hold dear. Only military installations were targeted in response—never innocent lives. This act of disciplined retaliation won the admiration of the world and underscored the moral superiority of Pakistan's conduct in times of conflict. Our armed forces did not act out of vengeance, but out of duty, principle, and a desire to de-escalate without compromising our honour. As the Holy Qur'an commands: "And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:8)

Throughout the ordeal, the patience and composure demonstrated by the people of Pakistan and their armed forces were truly remarkable. Despite the provocations and atrocities, we did not lose sight of our values. The restraint exercised by our leadership and military high command bore testimony to our maturity as a nation and our commitment to global peace. We fought not with hatred, but with conviction. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Do not wish to meet the enemy, but when you meet him, be steadfast." (Sahih al-Bukhari). Our steadfastness was not in vain. Today, the world watches with renewed respect, not for our weaponry, but for our will. They call for a ceasefire not out of kindness, but because they have seen that we cannot be broken.

Yet we must remain wary, for our enemy is shrewd and relentless. The fire of hostility may dim, but the embers remain. Trust is not a currency we can afford to spend. As we come to the table of talks, we must be firm and clear. The cutting off of our waters—a grave injustice that violates both international norms and the spirit of neighbourly coexistence—must be addressed. And above all, the issue of Kashmir, the heart of our ideological identity, must not be deferred. It is not merely a territorial dispute; it is the soul of the promise made to our ancestors. The world may tire of our pleas, but we must not tire of raising them.

The recent events have shown the enduring bond between the people and their defenders. Once again, the army has won not only a military confrontation but the hearts of the people. Their sacrifice has reminded us of the Prophet's assurance: "There is no man who guards the Muslims in a place where they are afraid, but he will be rewarded by Allah on the Day of Resurrection." (Sunan Abu Dawood).

In this time of reflection, we must also look within. Let this victory not be a moment of arrogance, but of gratitude. Let it inspire us to strengthen our unity, correct our weaknesses, and build a Pakistan that honours the sacrifices made for its creation and preservation. We must invest in our youth, fortify our institutions, and cultivate a culture of justice and service. For only then can we fulfil the vision of Pakistan, a land where faith, discipline, and selfless service reign supreme.

In the end, it is not alliances or arsenals that determine the fate of nations, but their adherence to truth, justice, and faith. "O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet." (Surah Muhammad, 47:7). Let us hold firmly to this promise, for it is the most trustworthy rope to which we can cling.

MD KPSDB says survival of SIBD's wood sector must

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Managing Director of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Small Industries Development Board (KPSDB), Abdul Hameed Khan, has said that the survival of the SIBD's wood sector is essential for providing quality furniture to the government institutions of the province. The Pak-German Woodworking Center is a unique institution at the government level from which not only furniture is provided to government institutions but also regular training is given to students here regarding furniture, on which students are employed in the country and abroad. It is not difficult to provide quality furniture on time for the SIBD's wood sector. Every possible effort will be made to obtain orders at the government level. He expressed these views during a briefing given regarding the wood sector. On this occasion, DMD Marketing Naseeruddin. Project Manager Abdul Rehman Khan and Assistant Muhammad Yasin were also present. On this occasion, Project Manager Abdul Rehman Khan said that the wood sector is facing difficulties due to not receiving full orders from the government level. We have hundreds of skilled employees and they are likely to become unemployed. Along with training the students, they are also given regular monthly honorarium.

19 cigarette brands comply govt standard

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Institute for Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) arranged seminar titled 'A Nationwide Market Assessment of Track and Trace Compliance in Pakistan Tobacco Industry' at Peshawar Press Club, on Wednesday.

The speakers said that data is collected from August to December 2024 and it is revealed from sale points. They claimed that data has been collected from 19 cities across Pakistan which stand at 1540 sale points.

IPOR has categorized cigarette into two types like compliant brands and non-compliant brand while latter is further divided into two groups as locally manufactured but didn't pays duty and smuggled brands.

The report reveals widespread tax evasion and open sale of smuggled cigarette brands throughout the country. According to IPOR Executive Director Tariq Junaid illegal cigarettes are being sold openly and he urged the government to curb this trade in order to prevent further loss to national revenue.

The IPOR report states that over 54% of cigarette brands are violating regulations. Out of 413 cigarette brands surveyed only 19 were found to comply with the Track and Trace System, while 332 brands were being sold below the legally mandated minimum price.

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice S.M. Atique Shah and Justice Ijaz Khan has disposed of petitions filed by Provincial Minister Aaqibullah, Karim Khan, Khalid Khan, Senator Falak Naz, and Hameeda Shah, seeking details of cases registered against them, on Wednesday.

PHC disposed of the petitions after the federal government submitted its response. The petitioners' lawyer, Alam Khan Adeenzai, argued that cases were registered against the petitioners in various cities after a protest in Islamabad's D-Chowk. The petitioners wanted to appear in court but required details of the cases registered against them.

Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah informed the court that a detailed report on the cases registered against the petitioners had been submitted, and all relevant details had been provided.

National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Prosecutor Hashmat Jahangir, stated that there were no cases against the petitioners in NAB or FIA.

The court disposed of the petitions after the federal government and other parties submitted their reports.

D&SJ acquits FC personnel

District and Sessions Court (D&SJ) Peshawar Inam Ullah Wazir has acquitted a former Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel named Khan Gul in charges related to threat-

ening government officials.

The court ruled that the prosecution failed to provide sufficient evidence to prove the allegations, on Wednesday. The defense team, comprising Khurram Shahzad Muhammadzai and Muhammad Imran advocates represented Khan Gul in the case.

According to the prosecution, Khan Gul allegedly sent threatening letters to government officials, prompting the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to register a case against him in 2020. The defense lawyers argued that the allegations against Khan Gul were baseless and that the prosecution had failed to prove the case. After hearing the arguments, the court acquitted Khan Gul, citing lack of evidence.

Unpaid salaries Islamia Collegiate School teachers announce strike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An emergency meeting of the Islamia Collegiate School Teaching Staff Association was held yesterday under the chairmanship of its president, Kafeel Ahmed.

In the meeting serious concern was expressed over the continuous delay in the salaries of second shift teachers and the non-serious attitude of the college administration.

All cabinet members unanimously decided that the college administration had assured the timely payment of second shift teachers' salaries on January 16, 2025. Based on this assurance, the association had postponed its symbolic strike. However, despite the promise, the salaries have still not been paid, leading the association to announce the resumption of the strike.

The association declared that a symbolic strike would be observed today onward (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), while a complete boycott of second shift classes would begin on Friday, May 16. Association President Kafeel Ahmed demanded that the pending salaries of

also included former Chairman Zulfiqar Ahmed Siddiqui, Mushtaq Ahmed, and former Vice Chairman Anwar Ahmed, apprised the officials of the adverse impact of the ban on thousands of individuals involved in the gemstone trade. They highlighted that the industry operates legally and contributes significantly to the economy through the generation of lawful income and foreign exchange.

The concerned officials assured the delegation of their full cooperation and pledged to take steps to facilitate the reopening of gemstone exports.

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Abid Sarwar defends PhD thesis at NCEG

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mr. Abid Sarwar has successfully defended his Ph.D. thesis at National Centre of Excellence in Geology Peshawar, marking a significant milestone in his academic journey. His research was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Ali, Assistant Professor at NCEG, with Dr. Shah Rukh as co-supervisor. The external examination panel included Dr. Saleem Ullah, Associate Professor at the Institute of Space Technology, and Dr. Asad Ullah, Director of the Centre for Plant Biodiversity (CPB) at the University of Peshawar.

According to a press release of NCEG, Mr. Sarwar's thesis, was titled "Annual Soil Loss Estimation and Its Impact on Soil Fertility and Groundwater in the Panjkora River Basin". He investigated critical environmental issues with far-reaching implications for agriculture and water resources. His research explores the effects of soil erosion on land productivity and groundwater reserves, the two essential components for sustainable land and water management. He employed geospatial tools and empirical data which gives valuable insights into the impact of soil loss on both the natural environment and local communities, particularly in the context of climate change, food security, and long-term ecological resilience.



In brief

JUP elects new cabinet F.P. Report

LARKANA: Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP) Larkana elections were held yesterday under the supervision of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan Provincial Committee Sindh members Maulana Musharraf Mahmood Qadri and Maulana Manzoor Ahmed Naeemi, in which Jamiat Ulema Pakistan District President Maulana Raza Hussain Gowar, Senior Vice President Hafiz Muntaz Ali Kolachi, and General Secretary Hafiz Roshan Ali Inqilabi were elected. On this occasion, renowned religious scholar Maulana Musharraf Mahmood Qadri said that the eternal struggle of the founder of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan is a golden chapter. At present, there is no solution to the current situation of the country except Nizam Mustafa. Just as Allama Shah Ahmed Noorani sacrificed his life and wealth in the movement of Nizam Mustafa, he set an eternal example.

Performance meeting held F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The district administration of Toba Tek Singh is fully active to ensure the availability of food items at official rates. On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih to review the performance of Price Control Magistrates. The meeting was attended by Price Control Magistrates from across the district, including DO Industries Arif Hussain. DO Industries gave a detailed briefing on the performance of the magistrates so far. The meeting was informed that from May 1 to May 13, 2025, Price Control Magistrates conducted a total of more than 99,000 inspections and imposed fines of more than Rs. 3,64,000 for various violations. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih directed the magistrates to visit the markets on a daily basis, ensure the sale of essential commodities, naan, roti and bakery items at official rates and check the presence of price lists. He clarified that indiscriminate action will be taken against those violating the Price Control Act. He said that providing relief to the consumers is the top priority of the Punjab government. Zero tolerance policy against inflation, hoarding and illegal profiteering will be strictly implemented. Zeeshan Labbha Masih directed the Price Control Magistrates to ensure their presence in the field and provide checking reports on a daily basis. He said that no compromise will be tolerated on the availability and quality of food items.

Seminar held F.P. Report

JAMSHORO: A lecture program was organized by Dr. NA Chair at Qambar Sindh University, Jamshoro. Renowned writer Jami Chandio gave a lecture on the importance of Shah Latif's poetry in the post-modern era at Sindh University's Sindh Department, Dr. Abdul Jabbar Junejo Hall. The event was presided over by Sindh University Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Khalil-ur-Rehman Kanbhani. On this occasion, Jami Chandio gave a lecture and answered questions, saying that ideals have been lost in the post-modern era, a society with false desires and hopes has been overwhelmed by capitalism and technology.

Govt introduces climate resilient agriculture policy

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agriculture Minister Major (ret'd) Sajjad Barakwal has stressed the need to create coordination among all stakeholders for the betterment of the farming community and said that only with better coordination and communication can the benefits of the policy and technical assistance reach the farmers effectively.

He said that a new agricultural policy is being formulated which will prove to be effective in dealing with emerging challenges, the crop data reporting system is being improved so that timely and accurate decisions can be made. Agricultural development decisions cannot be made well from the current data. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting on the occasion of his visit to the Agricultural Research Station Ahmedwala, District Karak.

The meeting was also attended by concerned officers. On this occasion, the provincial minister directed

to strictly follow the zoning of crops and land so that the agricultural practice is in accordance with the environmental conditions of the region. He said that special attention should be paid to developing crop varieties compatible with local soil and climate.

KKKU inaugurates Khushhal Green Campus initiative: A major step towards environmental sustainability and creating a green, healthy learning environment. The project is being launched in collaboration with Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), highlighting a shared commitment to environmental responsibility.

It was formally launched at the university's main campus, with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalili leading a tree plantation drive on the occasion. He stressed the university's dedication to promoting a sustainable campus and highlighted the important role of such initiatives in promoting environmental awareness among students

and the wider community. Prof. Dr. Khalili said.

Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major@ Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal has also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for agreeing to include the construction of Warana-Bannu Link Road in the ADP again and said that this link road will play an important role in the socio-economic development of the area.

This he said while reviewing various roads of Union Council Warana along with the concerned officials of the C&W Department. PTI workers and local elders were also present on the occasion. He said, after the Education and Health, Communication and Works is his top priority sector because the importance of communication in the progress and prosperity of any area is admitted. During the visit, the Agriculture Minister also met the elders of the area and had detailed discussions with them regarding the solution of local problems.

Female students hold protest against teachers

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A group of female students, along with their parents and local community leaders, staged a protest demonstration in front of Shangla Press Club and later in the town's main square. The protesters were demanding that the government take immediate action to address the issue of teacher absenteeism at the Pir Khan Bela Girls' Middle School.

The school has been facing a severe shortage of teachers for the past two years, with only one teacher, a T.T. teacher, present. Despite repeated transfers of teachers to the school, they have failed to report for duty, and the school's administration has not taken any action to enforce their attendance. As a result, hundreds of students have been deprived of their right to education. The protesters demanded that the government ensure that teachers are present in the

school and fulfill their duties. The protesters emphasized the need for quality education in the school, particularly in rural areas like Shangla.

Following the protest, the district administration intervened, and negotiations were held between the protesters and the education department. The District Education Officer (Female), Pervaiz Rahman, took immediate action and suspended two teachers who were absent from duty. She also directed two other teachers to take charge of the school and report for duty immediately.

The protesters welcomed the district administration's response and praised the District Education Officer's prompt action. They emphasized the need for continued monitoring to ensure that teachers attend their duties regularly. Education experts and community leaders also commended the protesters for highlighting the issue and

demanding action.

Online case law diary launched: The district administration of Shangla has launched an online case law diary to provide lawyers with easy access to their cases. The initiative, directed by District and Sessions Judge Shamrez Khan Khalil, aims to digitize all case data and make it available online.

All case data and lawyer information will be digitized and made available online. The online system will streamline the process of case management, reducing the need for physical visits to the court and improving overall efficiency. District and Sessions Judge Shamrez Khan Khalil stated that the online case law diary will provide lawyers with a convenient and efficient way to access their cases. He emphasized that the court's goal is to provide lawyers with all necessary facilities to ensure that justice is delivered efficiently.

Police commits to maintain peace

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A delegation of journalists, led by Swat Press Club President Niaz Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Muhammad Shafi Ullah and other office bearers met with District Police Officer (DPO) Swat Muhammad Omar to discuss key issues affecting the region. The meeting aimed to address concerns and find solutions to improve the overall situation in Swat.

DPO Muhammad Omar assured the delegation that the police would take strict action against any elements disturbing the

peace in Swat. He emphasized the importance of maintaining peace in the region, citing the sacrifices made by the local population.

The DPO highlighted the ongoing efforts to eradicate the drug menace in Swat. He stated that a full-scale crackdown was underway, with the police working to protect the young generation from the scourge of drugs.

DPO announced plans to increase the capacity of the traffic police to provide better travel facilities to citizens. He also mentioned a campaign against unnecessary obstacles and

encroachments. He welcomed domestic and foreign tourists visiting Swat and assured them of the police's commitment to making their stay and travel safe and comfortable. He mentioned the formation of special police tourism teams to provide guidance, protection, and assistance to tourists.

The delegation also raised issues facing the journalist community, including the need for protection and promotion of freedom of expression. The DPO assured them that the Swat Police would play a positive role in addressing these concerns.

Govt taking steps to improve education standard

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Serious and coordinated steps are being taken to ensure transparency and improvement in the education system in Kohat Division. In this regard, the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has visited various centers of the intermediate exam, including Muslimabad Higher Secondary School.

During the visit, he reviewed the facilities provided at the exam centers, conducive environment for students, monitoring system, the presence and performance of the exam staff and the overall discipline.

Commissioner Kohat while expressing his satisfaction with the arrangements, directed the authorities concerned to continue the process of continuous monitoring to further improve the facilities and avoid any kind

of negligence. He on this occasion said that making the examination process transparent, fair and impartial is essential for reforming the education system and promoting the quality of education. He strictly warned that negligence, carelessness or corruption at any level will not be tolerated.

Liaquat Ali services recognized: The District Administration Kohat has organized a special ceremony in recognition of the cultural and artistic services of the district's renowned Artist Liaquat Ali Khan and Naeem Iqbal Kohat. Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram who was the Chief Guest of the ceremony, awarded honorary shields and certificates to Liaquat Ali Khan and Naeem Iqbal Kohat. DC Kohat in his speech said that Liaquat Ali Khan is not only famous locally but internationally also.

RPO awards certificates to cops

F.P. Rpeort

BANNU: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Bannu distributed cash rewards and certificates among policemen for their outstanding performance.

According to details, at the Regional Police Office in Bannu, the Regional Police Officer Sajjad Khan presented cash rewards and certificates of appreciation to SHO Domel Arshad Khan and his team for showing exceptional performance in official duties. RPO said that such encouragement will continue for officers and personnel who demonstrate excellence in official duties.

Thanksgiving day observed

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The all government employees coordination council district chapter organized a rally at the district headquarters complex Tajazai to observe Thanksgiving Day and celebrate victory against Indian aggression.

Led by the council's chairman Haji Saeed Akhtar, the rally started from the district council hall building and converged at the sports complex main gate. Deputy commissioner Zeeshan Abdullah, additional DC Habibullah Wazir, DEO Shaukat Ali Khan, district youth officer Irshadullah, office bearers of teachers' organisations and other government employees participated.

The participants carried banners and national flags and raised slogans in favour of the armed forces of Pakistan. At the sports complex building, the participants garlanded army officers and presented bouquets and sweets to them. They paid tributes to the army for giving a befitting reply to the Indian aggression and that the nation was proud of armed forces.

Public support stressed for elimination of terrorism: Regional Police Officer Bannu has declared the people's support inevitable to completely eliminate the menace of terrorism, saying that the recent result-oriented actions against terrorists are the result of joint efforts by police and area people.

Chairing a high level meeting at the district police offices here in the District Headquarters Complex Tajazai on Tuesday, he said that the police were fully capable of giving a befitting reply to anti-peace and anti-state elements and to thwart their nefarious designs and terror mongering. Lakki Marwat DPO Muhammad Jawad Ishaq, SP Investigation Murad Wazir, sub divisional police officer, SHOs and investigation officers were in attendance. The regional police chief arrived in the district on a daylong visit with a busy schedule.

Action against power theft

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) along with district administration and police will start special campaign to eliminate electricity theft and Kunda culture in Mardan division and recover arrears worth billions of rupees.

As a result of the campaign, the duration of load shedding will be reduced and uninterrupted supply of electricity to the public will be ensured. This decision was taken in a high-level meeting chaired by Commissioner Mardan Division Nisar Ahmed, which was attended by Regional Police Officer Najeeb-ur-Rehman, PESCO Director Commercial Inam Akbar, Additional Deputy Commissioners of Mardan and Swabi, SP Security, Secretary to Commissioner Fazal Wahid, SE PESCO Ikramullah Khan and other concerned officials.

The meeting was informed that in 2023, as a result of effective action against electricity theft in Mardan with the cooperation of the administration and police, Mardan had become the first load shedding-free city in the country and the Mardan model was followed throughout the country. However, with time, electricity theft and Kanda culture have started again, against which it has been decided to launch a special campaign. It was decided in the meeting that a coordinated campaign against electricity theft will be launched in Mardan and Swabi.

For this purpose, enforcement committees will be re-activated at the district and tehsil levels. The meeting was further informed that consumers of different categories have outstanding balances of more than two billion rupees in Mardan, while in Swabi circle more than one billion 18 crore is due against consumers, the recovery of which will be ensured in this campaign.

Financial assistance awarded to heirs of police martyrs



F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Financial assistance cheques were given away to the families of police martyrs and injured persons in a ceremony held at the office of District Police Officer (DPO), Shahkas, Jamrud district Khyber last day.

A total of 103 million rupees were distributed to the heirs of 11 martyred police officials including those who laid down their lives during their service in the former Khasadar Force.

The financial support was extended to recognize the unmatched sacrifices of the police officials, rendered for the sake of their motherland. During the ceremony, cheques of 0.1 million rupees each were disbursed among the five police officials who sustained injuries in various terrorist incidents.

Speaking on the occasion DPO, Khyber Rai Mazhar Iqbal paid glowing tribute to the martyred police heroes and declared them true sons of the soil who ensured peace in the

region with sacrifice of their lives. He assured the heirs of the deceased that the Khyber police would stand by them at all times and their welfare would remain a top priority.

The families of the martyrs expressed their gratitude for acknowledging sacrifices of their dear ones and reaffirmed that they would be ready to sacrifice for their motherland if needed. They also lauded financial support of the police department extended towards them.

'Dir teacher devotes life to students'

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: At an age when most people look forward to rest and retirement, a former schoolteacher from Talash, Lower Dir has chosen the chalkboard over the comfort of home. Umar Baz Khan, a 63-year-old retired senior certified teacher (SCT), has become a symbol of devotion and selflessness in education.

After retiring from Government Higher Secondary School Ziarat Talash as SCT in grade-16, on April 11, 2022, he returned to the same school the very next day—not as a guest or honorary figure, but as a full-time, volunteer teacher.

According to the school principal, Faizul Nasir, Mr Umar Baz arrives before the morning assembly and remains engaged in teaching until the last bell. "He has not missed a single day over the past three years as I remember. He's always the first to arrive and often the last to leave," the principal told here on Wednesday.

"His dedication, punctuality, and affection for students is astonishing. It's rare to find such educators in today's world", the principal added.

The teacher was busy teaching a grade 7th class when this reporter reached

the institution for his interview. Despite no longer being on the government payroll, Mr Khan continues to take regular classes just like his colleagues. He even steps in for absent teachers and actively participates in extracurricular activities. "His behavior with students, fellow teachers, and education officials is exemplary," said one of his colleagues, Qazi Roohullah. "He is admired and respected by everyone who knows him."

Some coworkers jokingly suggest he has nothing else to do, and that's why he keeps himself busy teaching. But Mr Khan is unfazed by such remarks. Speaking to this reporter during a detailed interview, he said: "I am in love with teaching. I'm the son of a schoolteacher, and most of my family—including my wife, sisters-in-law, and four brothers—are also in this noble profession. I am proud to be a teacher, and I will continue this service until my last breath."

Over his 41-year-long teaching career, Mr Khan served in several schools across Lower Dir, including Lajbok, Dherai Talash, Bajaura, Timergara, Hayaserai, Shatai Dara, and Ziarat Talash. When asked why he chose to continue teaching specifically at the school he retired from, he

replied:

"I passed my matriculation from this very institution. It is the oldest and most central school in the entire Talash Valley, and has produced many prominent personalities. The respectful, warm attitude of the students and staff here compelled me to stay and serve". Khan added that the satisfaction and inner peace he has found through teaching in retirement far exceeds what he experienced during his service years.

"Teaching is a prophetic profession," he said. "Every sincere and honest person should feel a calling toward it." One of his fellow teachers expressed disappointment that despite his extraordinary contributions, Umar Baz Khan has not received any official recognition from the government or education department on state level.

"In a developed country, someone like him would likely be honoured at the national level", he deplored. When asked about this lack of recognition, Mr Khan humbly responded, "I don't want any awards or attention. I fear that if my service is publicized too much, it may lose its sincerity. I simply want to give back—quietly and wholeheartedly."

Govt takes critical steps for youth's skill development

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Coordinator to Chief Minister Punjab Saira Afzal Tarar has emphasized the urgent need for equipping Pakistani youth with modern skills alongside formal education to enable them to compete effectively on a global scale. She was speaking at the annual ceremony of the College of International Skills Development, where she addressed students, faculty, and dignitaries.

Highlighting the shift in global employment trends, the former Federal Minister asserted that nations now seek skilled individuals capable of adapting to rapidly changing technological and professional landscapes. "It is no longer sufficient for our youth to merely pursue degrees and wait for government employment. Instead, they must focus on acquiring contemporary, market-relevant skills that allow them to earn a respectable living both at home and abroad," she stated.

Tarar praised the growing participation of students in skill development programs, noting that the focus should now be on enabling

youth to become self-reliant. "For national prosperity and individual dignity, skill development must go hand-in-hand with education. A skilled individual can find opportunities anywhere in the world," she added.

The event was attended by several notable figures, including senior bureaucrat and former Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan, Babar Hayat Tarar, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Tanveer Yaseen, Assistant Commissioner Pindi Bhattian Jawad Hussain Malik and CEO Education Muhammad Akram Ashraf, along with a large number of students and community members.

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq echoed similar sentiments, stating, "In today's world, the most in-demand asset is skills. Traditional degrees like B.A. and M.A. no longer hold the same value without technical or professional competence. This is the age of IT, computer sciences, digital health, and emerging technologies."

Babar Hayat Tarar, in his

remarks, highlighted the diverse and practical curriculum offered by the College of International Skills Development. He noted that courses such as Medical Sciences, IT, Digital Marketing, Media Production, Beautyician Training, and E-commerce are being offered free of cost to ensure inclusivity. "Graduates from this college are not only earning a respectable living in Pakistan but are also excelling in their careers internationally," he said. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of certificates to students who successfully completed various technical and vocational training programmes.

District coordination meeting held: A District Coordination Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq to review the performance of various departments across the district. The meeting was attended by senior officials from Agencies, District Administration, Police, Civil Defence, Traffic Police, Municipal Committees and Key Departments including Health and Education.



Thursday, May 15, 2025

Houthi ceasefire followed US intel showing militants sought off-ramp

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Days before a surprise US ceasefire agreement with Houthis, US intelligence started picking up indications the Yemeni fighters were looking for an exit after seven weeks of relentless US bombings, four US officials said. Houthi leaders began reaching out sometime around the first weekend in May to US allies in the Middle East, two of the officials said. "We started getting intel that the Houthis had had enough," one of the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity to recount the internal discussions about the intelligence, which haven't been previously reported.

Interviews with current and former US officials, diplomatic sources and other experts show how a campaign that the US military's Central Command once envisioned might stretch through most of this year came to abrupt halt on May 6 after 52 days, allowing President Donald Trump to declare victory before heading to the Middle East this week. Since November 2023, the Houthis have disrupted commerce by launching hundreds of drone and missile attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, saying they were targeting ships linked to Israel in solidarity with Palestinians over the war in Gaza.

Two sources said Iran played an important role in encouraging the Iran-aligned Houthis to negotiate, as Tehran pursues its own talks with the United States over its nuclear program aimed at ending crippling US sanctions and pre-

venting a military strike by the US or Israel.

But the culmination of the ceasefire accord underscored how quickly the Trump administration moved on initial intelligence to secure what in March seemed unthinkable to many experts in the short term: a Houthi declaration it would stop striking US ships. Trump's unconventional approach included bypassing close US ally Israel, which is not covered by the agreement, and which was not told ahead of time, an Israeli official and a person familiar with the matter said.

The Houthis weren't the only ones feeling pressure. The bombing campaign has also been costly to the United States, which has burned through munitions and lost two aircraft and multiple drones. After the early May tips on the Houthis, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth initiated a series of meetings at the White House, and concluded there was a window of opportunity with the Iran-aligned fighters, one of the officials said.

Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, who was already leading US negotiations on Iran's nuclear program, worked through Omani mediators and held indirect talks with the chief Houthi negotiator and spokesperson, Mohammed Abdulsalam, two US officials told Reuters. Abdulsalam was in turn in contact with the Houthis' top leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, one of the officials said. A framework agreement was reached, one of the officials said. By May 6, Trump was ready to

announce an accord, declaring the Houthis had capitulated. "They said please don't bomb us any more and we're not going to attack your ships," he told reporters. Asked about Reuters' findings, the Houthis' Abdulsalam said the group communicated only via Oman and agreed to the ceasefire because the Houthis had been responding to the United States defensively. "So if they stopped their aggression, we stopped our response," Abdulsalam told Reuters, declining further comment. A spokesperson for Witkoff did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Each side saw some benefit to striking a deal.

For the Houthis, it offered an off-ramp that could allow them to rebuild and relieve pressure that, over months or years, could have strategically put them at risk, US officials and experts say. Washington's allies in the region also wanted out, one source said. "Because if the Houthis were under more pressure, their response was going to be to fire on the Saudis or the Emiratis," one person familiar with the matter said.

At the start of the US campaign on March 15, al-Houthi was defiant, saying in a televised address that his fighters would target US ships in the Red Sea as long as the US continued its attacks on Yemen. At the time, it appeared the United States might be locked in a costly standoff with a group known for its resiliency, as US forces used up munitions during more than 1,100 strikes.

Mali's military rulers formally dissolve political parties

BAMAKO (Reuters): Mali's military government announced that it had dissolved all political parties, approving a recommendation publicised last month that spurred unprecedented protests in the capital, Bamako. A statement read on state television said the decision had been validated by military leader Assimi Goita, who seized power in the West African country after coups in 2020 and 2021.

Last month, a national conference of political actors in Mali recommended naming Goita as president with a five-year mandate as well as dissolving the parties. In protests in Bamako on May 3 and May 4, several hundred critics carried placards displaying messages calling for multi-party elections and chanted slogans such as: "Down with dictatorship, long live democracy." The junta originally committed to holding elections in February 2022. Ahead of another planned protest on May 9, Mali suspended political activities across the country, forcing the opposition parties to call off their gathering.

Meanwhile, three opposition politicians are feared to have been abducted in recent days, according to party officials and human rights activists, raising fears of mounting repression. Human Rights Watch said in a statement last week that Abba Alhassane, secretary general of the Convergence for the Development of Mali (CODEM), was arrested by "masked gunmen claiming to be gendarmes" on May 8. The group also said "unidentified men" seized El Bachir Thiam, leader of the Yelema party, in the town of Kati outside Bamako on the same day. A member of CODEM, speaking on condition of anonymity for safety reasons, told Reuters that the party had not heard from Abdoul Karim Traore, a party youth leader, for two days and feared he had been abducted too. Mali's security ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel proposed last week that private companies would take over handing out aid in Gaza's south once an expanded Israeli offensive starts in its war there, which began in October 2023 after militant group Hamas attacked Israel. Aid deliveries have been handled by international aid groups and UN organizations. "We can save hundreds of thousands of survivors. We have rigorous mechanisms to ensure our aid gets to civilians and not to Hamas, but Israel denies us access, placing the objective of depopulating Gaza before the lives of civilians," said Fletcher. Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid, which the militant group denies, and is blocking deliveries until Hamas releases all remaining hostages.

Tanzania arrests Opp official

DAR ES SALAAM (Reuters): Tanzanian authorities arrested a senior opposition official as he was departing for a political conference in Belgium, his party said, as fears grow of an escalating crackdown ahead of an October election. While President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who plans to seek reelection, says the government is committed to respecting human rights, a recent string of high-profile arrests has thrust her record into the spotlight.

Amani Golugwa, a senior member of Tanzania's main opposition CHADEMA party, was arrested at Julius Nyerere International Airport in the capital Dar es Salaam, his party wrote on X. Tanzanian police confirmed his arrest in a post on their Instagram account, writing that Golugwa "has a trend of leaving and returning to the country without following legal procedures." "Dar es Salaam police special zone is continuing with the investigation on the matter in collaboration with other security organs," the post added. A government spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Golugwa had been due to represent his party in Brussels at a forum organised by the International Democracy Union, a grouping of centre-right parties that CHADEMA belongs to and which also counts the British Conservatives and US Republicans as members.

"The IDU strongly condemns the unlawful arrest and assault of CHADEMA's (Golugwa)," the organisation posted on X. "Silencing opposition voices violates the core of democracy. We call for his immediate release." Police arrested Tundu Lissu, CHADEMA's leader and Tanzania's main opposition figure, last month. Lissu, who was shot 16 times in a 2017 attack and came second in the last presidential poll, was subsequently charged with treason over what prosecutors said was a speech calling upon the public to rebel and disrupt the elections.



DAMASCUS: A girl holding a Syrian flag as people celebrate after US President Donald Trump said he would order the lifting of sanctions on Syria.

UN humanitarian chief slams aid plan for Gaza proposed by Israel

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): United Nations aid chief Tom Fletcher criticized an Israel-initiated and US-backed humanitarian aid distribution plan for Gaza as a "fig leaf for further violence and displacement" of Palestinians in the war-torn enclave. "It is cynical showboating. A deliberate distraction," Fletcher told the UN Security Council. No humanitarian aid has been delivered to Gaza since March 2, and a global hunger monitor has warned that half a million people face starvation, a quarter of the enclave's population.

Israel proposed last week that private companies would take over handing out aid in Gaza's south once an expanded Israeli offensive starts in its war there, which began in October 2023 after militant group Hamas attacked Israel. Aid deliveries have been handled by international aid groups and UN organizations.

"We can save hundreds of thousands of survivors. We have rigorous mechanisms to ensure our aid gets to civilians and not to Hamas, but Israel denies us access, placing the objective of depopulating Gaza before the lives of civilians," said Fletcher. Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid, which the militant group denies, and is blocking deliveries until Hamas releases all remaining hostages.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has rejected Israel's proposal, saying in April it risked "further controlling and callously limiting aid

down to the last calorie and grain of flour." The UN says any aid distribution must be independent, impartial and neutral, in line with humanitarian principles. Fletcher said the UN has met more than a dozen times with Israeli authorities about their proposed aid distribution model to find a solution but without success. Minimum conditions include the ability to deliver aid to all those in need wherever they are in Gaza, he said. Amid the stalemate, the United States last week backed a mechanism for Gaza aid deliveries to be handled by private companies, an approach that appeared to resemble Israel's proposal, but gave few initial details about the plan.

"We will not allow the old, broken system to remain in place," Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon told the council. "We appreciate the efforts to build a new mechanism, one grounded in accountability." Senior US officials were working with Israel to enable a newly established Gaza Humanitarian Foundation to "provide a secure mechanism capable of delivering aid directly to those in need, without Hamas stealing, looting or leveraging this assistance for its own ends," acting US Ambassador to the UN Dorothy Shea told the Security Council. She urged the UN and aid groups to cooperate, saying the foundation would deliver aid consistent with humanitarian principles and would "ensure its own security so that

commodities reach civilians in need." "While some humanitarian organizations may ultimately choose not to engage in these conversations, others have chosen a more constructive path, and they will be able to deliver aid in an appropriate way, hopefully very soon," Shea said.

Fletcher said the Israeli-designed distribution model was not the answer. This was in part because Israel said it would limit aid distribution to south Gaza during its planned offensive and people would have to relocate to access aid there. "It forces further displacement. It exposes thousands of people to harm," Fletcher told the council. "It restricts aid to only one part of Gaza while leaving other dire needs unmet. It makes aid conditional on political and military aims. It makes starvation a bargaining chip." Most of the 15-member Security Council expressed concern about the proposed aid distribution plans. "We cannot support any model that places political or military objectives above the needs of civilians. Or that undermines the UN and other partners' ability to operate independently," Britain, France, Slovenia, Greece and Denmark said in a joint statement before the council meeting. The war in Gaza was triggered on October 7, 2023, when Hamas killed 1,200 people in southern Israel, and took some 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, more than 52,700 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza health authorities.

Mother killed son hours after school, court told

LONDON (BBC): A mother killed her four-year-old son in east London by stabbing him dozens of times hours after collecting the boy from school, a court has heard. Kobi Dooley-Macharia was found by officers in December 2023 in his cot with dozens of knife wounds. Inner London Crown Court heard. Keziah Macharia, 43, has been charged with murdering Kobi, but she has been deemed unfit to stand trial.

Mrs Justice Thornton is holding a "fact-finding hearing" to decide if Macharia killed Kobi, but not if she murdered him. She told jurors not to "consider her state of mind and whether she is at fault", which would be needed for a murder verdict. Outlining the background to the case, Prosecutor Mukul Chawla KC said Ben Dooley and Macharia started a relationship after meeting in 2018 and their son Kobi was born in September 2019. The couple lived together with Kobi in Macharia's first-floor flat in Montague

Road, Hackney, but the relationship deteriorated after his birth, he added.

Mr Dooley moved out and started sleeping on the sofa two or three days a week but this ended after he met his current girlfriend, Sasha Sasheva, the court heard. Macharia was "very unhappy" with Kobi spending any time with Ms Sasheva, Mr Chawla said, adding Ms Sasheva blocked Macharia on her phone and on social media because of messages she received. Mr Dooley last saw Kobi alive at his school nativity play the day before the alleged attack, jurors heard. CCTV played to the court showed Macharia collecting her son from Nightingale Primary School where Kobi could be seen leaving wearing a coat and carrying a red balloon, accompanied by Macharia. "You see nothing of distress or anything out of the ordinary in terms of her demeanour", the prosecutor said. He added: "It appears that at some point that evening the defendant started drinking alcohol; when she started drinking

and how much she drank cannot be established".

The court heard later that evening Macharia sent a series of WhatsApp messages to Mr Dooley - with the final one saying "Kobi is dead". Police were then contacted and jurors were shown body-worn footage from officers taken on the night as they broke the door in on Macharia's home. Jurors were shown footage of Macharia in blood-stained clothes sitting on the living room floor in front of the sofa. Police were heard asking "who did this?" and Mr Chawla said "she raises her hand to her chest, acknowledging it was her". Officers documented her saying she tried to take an overdose and harm herself, the prosecutor added. Macharia was taken to Stoke Newington Police station and had "a very blunted muted affect" and intermittently sobbed, Mr Chawla said. "She told officers repeatedly she just wanted her baby back, and she just wanted to see his sweet face", he added. The trial continues.

Judgment day in EU chief's Covid vaccine texts case

BRUSSELS (AFP): A top court is to rule on whether the EU failed the transparency test by declining to release text messages sent by Ursula von der Leyen to the head of Pfizer as the bloc tried to secure Covid vaccines. The case before the Court of Justice of the European Union (EUCJ) is seen as a test for the EU Commission president, whose governance has at times been accused of centralised and opaque decision-making.

At its centre are elusive exchanges between von der Leyen and Albert Bourla, chief executive of Pfizer -- which was chosen by the bloc as its main vaccine supplier at the height of the pandemic. The New York Times, which revealed the existence of the messages, sued the commission in 2023 after Brussels declined to produce them following a freedom of information request. The commission argued it could not find the texts because they had not been recorded

and archived -- something it says is done only when the content is deemed "substantive". "The commission never denied the existence of text message exchanges," an EU official said. "What it was argued... is that these exchanges did not contain important information". The New York Times has asked the lower chamber of the Luxembourg-based EUCJ to quash the commission's decision not to hand it the messages.

The verdict can be appealed. The EU moved swiftly after the Covid pandemic emerged in 2020 to secure vaccines for member countries to buy for their citizens and residents at a time of massive global demand for the shots. But many aspects of the procurement from Pfizer have been kept confidential, leading to claims of a lack of transparency -- and several legal proceedings in Belgium and with EU courts. "This case presents a very important issue: whether offi-

cials may evade public transparency by communicating via text messages rather than more traditional means," a lawyer for The Times, Bondine Klooststra, said in her opening arguments in November. Lawyers for the 27-nation bloc have argued the private messages did not constitute part of the vaccine negotiation.

They might have involved side issues, such as von der Leyen and Bourla agreeing to speak on a certain day, at a certain time, they suggested. Commission workers, including its chief, do not have an obligation to record all their emails, texts and instant messaging chats, as this would be "materially impossible", an EU official said. Emails are automatically deleted after six months, he noted. A duty to archive arises only when such messages contain important information that is not "short-lived" and relates to the commission's policies, activities and decisions.

Libya clashes point to growing power of Turkey-allied PM

TRIPOLI (Reuters): The killing of a powerful militia leader in the Libyan capital sparked hours of intense clashes that drove his group from its main stronghold and may prompt a consolidation of power among armed factions aligned with the Tripoli government. The death of Abdulghani Kikli, a militia leader who had controlled swathes of Tripoli for years, could also have repercussions for the stability of the wider region.

Major energy exporter Libya, long split between rival eastern and western factions, is a jumping off point for migrants crossing the Mediterranean and a battleground for rival regional powers, drawing in Russia, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Following Kikli's death, the Government of National Unity (GNU) announced the completion of a security operation against what Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah called irregular armed groups. Gunmen loyal to Kikli, widely known by his nickname Ghaniwa, ran prisons and occupied government min-

istries and financial institutions.

"Ghaniwa was de facto king of Tripoli. His henchmen controlled the internal security agency. Other henchmen controlled the distribution of cash transfers from the central bank. They controlled numerous public companies and ministries," said Tarek Megerisi of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Consolidation of power in Tripoli would strengthen Turkish ally Dbeibah and the GNU after repeated attempts to replace him by force over recent years while bolstering his position in an overarching rivalry with eastern Libya factions. After rising tension between armed factions, pictures circulated online showing Kikli's blood-smeared body with a handgun lying by his hand.

Reuters could not verify the circumstances of Kikli's death or confirm the veracity of the pictures showing his body, but his face was widely recognised and fighting erupted across Tripoli soon after they circulated. Factions under Dbeibah's GNU rapidly

seized territory and bases long held by Kikli's Security Stabilisation Apparatus (SSA) group, including the Abu Salim district, its old powerbase. With Kikli's downfall, factions that came under the Defence Ministry and are aligned with Dbeibah, principally the 444 Brigade under Mahmoud Hamza, the 111 Brigade and the Joint Force from Misrata, may gain a bigger role. Consolidation by Dbeibah allies could result in Western Libya starting to more closely resemble the east, where commander Khalifa Haftar seized control a decade ago after eliminating rivals and forcing other groups under his sway. "This paves the way for unprecedented levels of territorial consolidation in Tripoli and an increasingly smaller number of groups," said Emad Badi, a senior fellow with the Atlantic Council.

Libya's energy facilities are mostly located in areas controlled by Haftar and clashes seem unlikely to impact output. Tripoli was calm, witnesses said, while fighters from the 444 and

111 Brigades were visible around the city centre and at the SSA's former Abu Salim headquarters, where its insignia had been erased. Fighters from a group allied to the SSA had meanwhile disappeared from the area around the Central Bank of Libya, which they had controlled security access to since last year. Libya has had little peace since a 2011 uprising against long-time autocrat Muammar Gaddafi and its split in 2014 between warring eastern and western factions. While Haftar unified groups in the east, control in Tripoli in the west remained splintered among rival armed groups. Dbeibah was installed as prime minister in 2021 as part of a UN-backed process aimed at holding elections later that year. But the election process collapsed and he remains in power, though challenged by an eastern-based parliament. Several efforts to replace him by force failed after clashes in Tripoli, and two years ago groups aligned with him ousted another major armed group, the Nawasi militia.

In birthright citizenship case, US SC gets two controversies in one

WASHINGTON (Reuters): One of President Donald Trump's most contentious policies - his attempt to restrict automatic birthright citizenship - arrives at the US Supreme Court this week with an unusual twist: The justices may focus on something else entirely.

Federal judges in Washington state, Massachusetts and Maryland issued orders blocking Trump's January executive order nationwide, finding the directive likely violated language in the US Constitution concerning citizenship for babies born in the United States. But through an emergency filing, Trump's administration has focused the Supreme Court's attention

not on the legality of the action by the Republican president but rather on the permissibility of the actions by the three judges - whether federal judges should have the power to issue broad orders that block challenged policies on a nationwide, or "universal," basis.

The administration asked the court to narrow the injunctions to let the government enforce Trump's directive - part of his headline approach to immigration - to the greatest extent possible while the legal fight over the policy plays out. The court may do so "without considering the underlying merits" of Trump's action, the administration asserted. That approach would set up the

possibility of the court, which has as a 6-3 conservative majority, allowing broad enforcement of the policy without assessing whether or not it is legal. The matter came to the court on a compressed timeline and with minimal written briefing.

The way the court is considering the case "seems quite strange," said Alan Trammell, a professor at Washington and Lee University School of Law in Virginia, because "even though the substantive question of birthright citizenship technically isn't before the court, it still looms large." "It concerns one of the most important provisions of the Constitution and implicates a raging political debate,"

Trammell said. Trump's order, signed on his first day back in office, directed federal agencies to refuse to recognize the citizenship of US-born children who do not have at least one parent who is an American citizen or lawful permanent resident. Trump's order was challenged by Democratic attorneys general from 22 states as well as individual pregnant immigrants and advocacy groups. The plaintiffs have said the directive violates a right enshrined in the US Constitution's 14th Amendment, which was ratified in 1868 and long has been understood to confer citizenship to virtually anyone born in the United States.

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Humanitarian crisis in Gaza must end

GAZA has become a living hell for the civilian population. As the occupying power, Israel must fulfill its obligations under international humanitarian law by immediately lifting its blockade and restoring full access to supplies. This was the latest call by Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, for urgent actions to bring an end to the humanitarian tragedy in the Palestinian enclave.

Speaking at a UN Security Council briefing on the humanitarian situation in Gaza on Tuesday, Fu said that humanitarian assistance must not be weaponized.

The continued blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza for almost three months by Israel is putting about 2 million Palestinians at critical risk of famine and extreme levels of food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

According to the latest report released on Monday by the multi-stakeholder global initiative aimed at enhancing food security and nutrition analysis, 1.95 million people, or 93 percent of Gaza's population, are enduring high levels of acute food insecurity, including 244,000 experiencing "catastrophic" levels, and nearly one in five facing starvation.

Even some Israeli military officials have privately concluded that Palestinians in Gaza face widespread starvation unless aid deliveries are restored within weeks, according to reports.

Israeli officials have proposed that private organizations distribute food from a handful of sites in Gaza, which would each serve several hundred thousand civilians.

But that plan has been dismissed by aid agencies, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which said it would not join the initiative because it would place civilians at greater risk.

The UN warned that the plan would force civilians to regularly pass through Israeli military lines, putting them at greater risk of detention and interrogation. It added that the plan would accelerate the displacement of civilians from northern Gaza, because the distribution centers were expected to be located far away in the south of the territory.

Israeli officials confirmed that the plan, if enacted, would help the military to intercept Hamas militants and move civilians from northern to southern Gaza. But they said the aim was not to increase civilian hardship but to separate civilians from Hamas fighters.

US President Donald Trump is now on a visit to the Middle East. As the country with the most influence on Israel, it should uphold a fair and responsible attitude and use its leverage to pressure Israel into lifting its blockade or else making a deal with the UN to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza and ensure its distribution as early as possible to ease the humanitarian crisis.

For Israel, its blockade of humanitarian assistance is an instance of the ends justifying the means, and there is no sign that it is likely to ease its blockade.

Instead, it has vowed to dramatically expand the war in Gaza to destroy Hamas and bring back the remaining hostages — twin aims that more than 19 months of war have yet to achieve.

On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was defiant, and said the military would resume fighting in the coming days "in full force to finish the job" and "eliminate Hamas".

Prolonging the fighting will only lead to more deaths and the worsening of the humanitarian crisis. Gaza has become the most dangerous place for humanitarian workers, with more than 400 humanitarian workers killed in the current conflict. China urges Israel to immediately cease its military attacks in Gaza.

The war against Hamas is one thing, humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza another. Both Hamas and Israel should be aware that it is wrong for either side to take Palestinian civilians in Gaza as hostages for their political and military purposes.

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When blood spoke louder than words

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

ALLAH Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "Every soul shall taste death" (Surah Al-Imran, 3:185). This is an unchangeable truth accepted by all religions of the world. Yet, Islam elevates the one who dies a martyr's death to a station beyond human comprehension. The Holy Qur'an declares: "And do not say of those who are slain in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Nay, they are living, but you perceive not" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:154). The martyr does not die in the true sense-his blood becomes the foundation of a nation's honour, his sacrifice a beacon of valor for generations to come.

Among the many ranks of martyrdom, one of the highest is laying down one's life in defence of the motherland. Ask the mother whose son went to the battlefield and never returned. Ask the father who buried his child wrapped in the national flag. Ask the widow who weeps silently, raising her children with the dignity her husband died preserving. Ask the children who look at a photograph to know the warmth of their father's face. The pain of these noble families cannot be measured, but their courage is the lifeblood of this nation. As someone rightly said, the death of a martyr is the life of the nation.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The martyr is granted six blessings by Allah: he is forgiven with the first drop of his blood; he is shown his place in Paradise; he is spared the torment of the grave; he is secured from the great terror; a crown

of dignity is placed on his head... and he is permitted to intercede for seventy of his relatives" (Hadith, Sunan At-Tirmidhi). What an exalted rank, reserved only for those who give everything in the path of duty, justice, and faith.

The history of Islam is rich with examples of noble martyrs-towering figures who laid down their lives for the truth, for justice, and for the preservation of righteousness. Our civilian and military martyrs today walk in the sacred footsteps of Hazrat Ameer Hamza (RA), "Syed-ul-Shuhada" and the beloved uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him); Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), the embodiment of justice; Hazrat Usman Ghani (RA), the generous and steadfast; Hazrat Ali (RA), "Saif Ullah"; Hazrat Imam Hassan (RA), the emblem of peace; Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), who sacrificed everything at Karbala to uphold the truth. These shining names of Islamic history form the vanguard of martyrdom, and our martyrs are their proud companions in spirit and in sacrifice.

On the tragic night of 6th to 7th May 2025, the Indian Armed Forces launched unprovoked and reprehensible attacks on Pakistani soil, targeting innocent civilians, including women, children, and the elderly. In their barbarity, they martyred 40 civilians-among them 7 women and 15 children-and wounded 121 more, including 10 women and 27 children. The night was dark, not merely in time but in spirit, drenched in the blood of

innocents. Yet even in mourning, Pakistan did not falter. The cowardice of the enemy was answered with the courage of the brave.

In response to this grave act of aggression, the Pakistan Armed Forces launched Marka-e-Haq-a just war-executing Operation Bunyanum Marsoos with precision and resolve. This was not merely a retaliatory campaign; it was the nation rising in dignity, reclaiming its honour. Our defenders did not seek war, but once drawn into it, they responded with unmatched valour, defending our soil and sovereignty with every drop of blood.

During this noble defence, eleven sons of Pakistan from the Armed Forces embraced martyrdom, and seventy-eight were injured. Their names will remain inscribed in the heart of the nation, not as casualties but as eternal symbols of bravery. The ever-shining stars of the Galaxy of Martyrs are Squadron Leader Usman Yousuf, Naik Abdul Rehman, Lance Naik Dilawar Khan, Lance Naik Ikramullah, Naik Waqar Khalid, Sepoy Muhammad Adeel Akbar, Sepoy Nisar, Chief Technician Aurangzeb, Senior Technician Najeab, Corporal Technician Farooq, and Senior Technician Mubashir.

Each of these martyrs stood not merely for a uniform or an institution, but for the idea of Pakistan-a land that lives free because of the sacrifice of its brave. These names shall not be lost to time; they are now written in the annals of glory.

Let it not be forgotten that as we sleep in peace

at night, it is because of the countless men in uniform-soldiers, airmen, sailors-who guard the frontiers of our nation, who remain awake under open skies, so we may close our eyes without fear. The martyr may fall, but his blood waters the tree of our liberty.

And as some returned from battle, not as martyrs but as Ghazis, they too are bearers of honour. They are the shining beacons of victory and sovereignty, living testaments of Pakistan's indomitable will. They have written with their courage a story of defiance and dignity that generations shall remember.

The Pakistan Armed Forces, alongside the entire nation, pay solemn tribute to the martyred civilians and military personnel, and extend heartfelt prayers for the swift recovery of those injured. Their grief is our collective grief; their pride, our shared honour.

Let the enemy know-and let the world bear witness-that the nation of Pakistan shall never bow before tyranny. The Holy Qur'an states: "Indeed, Allah defends those who believe" (Surah Al-Hajj, 22:38). With this divine promise in our hearts and the resolve of our defenders in the field, we stand united. Our sovereignty is sacred, and any attempt to challenge it shall be met with full-spectrum, swift, and decisive response-Inshallah.

The spirit of martyrdom is not death-it is eternal life. It is the force that shields the weak, humbles the oppressor, and secures the homeland. Today, we honour those who gave everything, so that Pakistan may live forever in dignity, freedom, and peace.

The India-Pakistan dilemma: Ideology and geopolitics

Raffiul Haq

PAKISTAN and India, as immediate neighbors sharing deep historical, cultural, and geographic ties, have remained embroiled in a complex security dilemma since Pakistan's inception in 1947. This enduring rivalry has not only shaped bilateral relations but has also had profound implications for regional peace and stability in South Asia.

At the heart of this geopolitical tension lies the Kashmir dispute-a territorial conflict that erupted immediately after partition and has since become the most volatile flashpoint between the two nations.

The unresolved status of Jammu and Kashmir has led to multiple wars, cross-border skirmishes, and ongoing diplomatic hostility. For Pakistan, Kashmir represents an unfinished agenda of partition, while India views it as an integral part of its sovereign territory. Despite numerous efforts at negotiation and mediation, the issue remains unresolved, continually fueling mistrust and military competition.

However, the conflict extends beyond borders and territory. Ideological underpinnings rooted in the very foundation of the two states have played an equally significant role in intensifying hostilities. The partition of British India was driven by the Two-Nation Theory, which argued that Muslims and Hindus constituted two separate nations with distinct religious, cultural, and social identities.

This ideology laid the groundwork for the creation of Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims, while India chose to maintain a secular democratic framework. Yet, in practice, India's secularism has often been challenged by accusations of favoring the Hindu majority, leading to questions about the equitable treatment of its Muslim minority.

In recent decades, the rise of Hindu nationalism within Indian politics-particularly under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-has further widened this ideological divide. Policies

perceived as marginalizing Indian Muslims, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, have sparked criticism both domestically and internationally. These developments have reignited fears in Pakistan and among global observers about the erosion of secular values in India and the growing influence of religious majoritarianism.

For many in Pakistan, these shifts validate the original rationale behind partition-that Muslims in a Hindu-majority India would struggle to preserve their identity, rights, and culture. Indian Muslims, who once saw themselves not merely as a religious community but as a distinct nation within a larger mosaic, now face growing concerns about their place in the republic. This perceived ideological betrayal further deepens Pakistan's resolve to position itself as a defender of Muslim rights in the region, thereby reinforcing its strategic posture

vis-à-vis India.

The security dilemma between the two countries is thus a complex interplay of territorial disputes, ideological convictions, and strategic calculations.

Each nation's actions, driven by both political necessity and historical legacy, are interpreted by the other as threatening, leading to reactive and often escalatory measures. This cycle has hampered efforts at long-term peace, despite periods of diplomatic thaw and confidence-building measures.

In a nuclearized South Asia, the stakes are higher than ever. The persistence of ideological and geopolitical tensions not only undermines bilateral relations but also poses a grave threat to regional and global security.

For lasting peace to take root, both India and Pakistan must confront not just the tangible issues of territory and security, but also the intangible but potent forces of history, identity, and ideology that continue to shape their national narratives.

Writer is Lecturer in Political Science at IUI

Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsos and India's hasty retreat Redrawing of South Asia's Strategic Map

Kousar Khan

“THE tide has turned with a thunderous roar: South Asia's once-tilted power dynamics have been irrevocably reset.” When Indian missiles dared to darken our skies, Pakistan's response ignited the dawn of a new era of deterrence. On 10 May 2025, Pakistan's Armed Forces executed Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos-an iron-clad, multi-vector response that transformed a potential crisis into a demonstrable showcase of Pakistani strategic ascendancy. What began as an unprovoked Indian missile strike on Nur Khan, Murid, and Shorkot airbases in the hush before dawn, shrouded in darkness untouched on 10th May, it became the catalyst for a campaign from Pakistan's behalf, so precise and overwhelming that New Delhi was forced into a hasty diplomatic retreat by dusk. On 10th May 2025, the sun rose on Indian provocation-and set on Indian humiliation.

In the predawn hours, Pakistan's air and cyber commands sprang into action. A swarm of unarmed UAVs penetrated Indian airspace, successfully overcoming Indian defensive measures. Simultaneously, Fatah-II ballistic missiles carved targeted pathways to twenty plus sites in India among which six critical installations were included: the BrahMos storage depot at Beas, Pathankot and Udhampur airbases, a brigade headquarters in Uri, and supply depots across Gujarat and Rajasthan. Not one of these missiles missed its mark, underscoring the lethal accuracy of Pakistan's missile fleet and the robustness of its air-defence systems. The flawless execution of each

Muslim victimhood and

While India struck nine separate targets, Pakistan's calibrated offensive struck 26, effectively doubling the scope of engagement and demonstrating the nation's capacity to fight simultaneously on eastern and western fronts. The JF-17 Thunder-Pakistan's home-grown multirole fighter-played a starring role, escorting drone formations and delivering pinpoint laser-guided munitions on forward logistics hubs. Likewise, BrahMos missiles, despite their hypersonic velocity, were systematically neutralized by Pakistan's layered air-defence umbrella-an unparalleled success for the nation's own anti-missile architecture. It proved as a feat that not only rattled regional deterrence theories but also forced a global rethink on the efficacy of hypersonic weapons against integrated defence networks. This was not mere retaliation; it was a doctrinal revolution. Pakistan surged two notches above its traditional strategy of strategic restraint, proving that its conventional forces are capable not only of staunch defense but also of overwhelming offensive thrusts when provoked. The net effect: India's hope for regional hegemony was reduced to diplomatic appeals in Washington and Riyadh, while Pakistan bolstered its deterrent credibility beyond question.

strike serves as a clear message: provocations will be answered with unmatched precision and unwavering resolve.

By midday, the once-vaunted Indian S-400 defence batteries lay silent, their radars blinded by Pakistani cyber-electronic warfare units that jammed and hijacked key command-and-control frequencies. India's much-publicized Rafale squadrons found themselves grounded-three were lost in BVR engagements, victims of Pakistan's pioneering RSF (Radar Stealth Fighter) tactics and a doctrinal emphasis on beyond-visual-range combat. In total, Pakistan claimed six air kills with zero losses, marking one of the most lopsided air battles of the 21st century, a moment that not only stunned military observers worldwide but also redefined the strategic calculus in South Asia's aerial warfare dynamics.

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Beyond the battlefield, Pakistan's international standing soared. Despite intense lobbying by India, the International Monetary Fund released its scheduled tranche, acknowledging Pakistan's economic resilience amid the crisis. China, Turkey, and the Gulf States extended diplomatic support, recognizing that Pakistan had emerged as the true stabilizer of South Asia. Only one nation-Israel-publicly echoed India's grievances, reinforcing the perception of a lone ideological outlier. The broader lesson was clear: misadventures in escalation bear no reward, and Pakistan's measured yet decisive action earned global respect.

Domestically, Pakistan's unity reached new heights. Sectarian divides and political squabbles were swept aside as Punjabis and Pashtuns, Shias and Sunnis alike rallied beneath the green flag. Military-civil synergy was on full display: tri-service coordination and swift policy alignment quelled any doubts about governance or command efficacy. Indian narratives of

Sikh marginalization within Pakistan were exposed as hollow propaganda, while Islamabad shed its outdated label of "state sponsor of terrorism" to stand vindicated as a responsible nuclear power. Regionally, the operation revived the Kashmir dispute as the focal point of South Asian geopolitics. Calls for a structured Indo-Pak dispute-resolution mechanism-rooted in United Nations resolutions and negotiated guarantees-gained fresh momentum. What once seemed a headstrong conflict now found an opening for diplomacy.

The lessons are unambiguous: no compromise on military strength, and deterrence is strongest when it is seen and felt. Pakistan's success in both defensive and offensive domains offers a template for future engagements-rapid mobilization, integrated cyber-electronic warfare, drone supremacy, and a diversified missile arsenal from Fatah-II to the indigenously upgraded Hatf series. This is not the brinkmanship of r it is 21st-century warfare at its most refined.

In the aftermath, as embassies reopened and trade corridors throbbed back to life, one truth remained absolute: Pakistan's iron will endures, and those who doubted it now stand chastened. The lion has not only roared-it has reshaped the rules of engagement. And in this new era of South Asian geopolitics, any adversary who dares tempt fate will find a fortress of lead awaiting them. Let it be a reminder; when lions roar, jackals run.

Medical professionals must speak out and act on Gaza now

I had closely followed the genocidal war in Gaza for nine months when an opportunity came around to volunteer as part of a medical mission organised by the United Nations, World Health Organization and the Palestinian American Medical Association.

As a trained nephrologist, a doctor who treats patients with kidney disease, I felt there was a critical need for specialised medical care amid the collapse of the healthcare system in Gaza and the high number of medical specialists who had been killed.

I also felt it was my duty as a Muslim to help the people of Gaza. Islam teaches us that whoever saves one life, it is as if he had saved all of humanity; taking care of others is an act of worship, and standing up against injustice is a moral obligation.

I believe my degrees are not meant to simply hang on the walls of an air-conditioned office or help me drive the nicest car or live in an expensive neighbourhood. They are a testament to the fact that I have taken an oath to dedicate my expertise to the service of humanity, to maintain the utmost respect for human life and to offer my medical knowledge and compassion to those in need.

So on July 16, I departed for Gaza with a few other medics.

We entered the strip through the Karem Abu Salem crossing. We went from observing the prosperity, comfort and wealth of the Israeli side to recoiling at the destruction, devastation and misery of the Palestinian side. We basically saw what apartheid looks like.

On our short trip through southern Gaza to reach our destination in Khan Younis, we saw many buildings bombed, damaged or destroyed. Homes, schools, shops, hospitals, mosques – you name it.

The amount of rubble was sickening. To this day, I can't unsee the landscapes of destruction I witnessed in Gaza.

We were accommodated in Al-Nasser Hospital because it was too dangerous to stay at any other place. We were welcomed and cared for so much that I felt embarrassed. We were seen as saviours.

I treated patients with kidney problems, worked as a primary care physician and sometimes

helped during mass casualty events in the emergency room.

Dialysis requires clean water, sterile supplies, reliable electricity, medications and equipment that must be maintained and replaced – none of which was guaranteed under the Israeli blockade. Each dialysis session was a challenge. Every delay increased the risk of my patients dying. Many of them did die – a fact I struggled to accept, knowing that under normal circumstances, many of them could have been saved and lived normal lives.

I remember the smiling face of one of my patients, Waleed, a young man who suffered from kidney failure caused by

On our short trip through southern Gaza to reach our destination in Khan Younis, we saw many buildings bombed, damaged or destroyed. Homes, schools, shops, hospitals, mosques – you name it. The amount of rubble was sickening. To this day, I can't unsee the landscapes of destruction I witnessed in Gaza. We were accommodated in Al-Nasser Hospital because it was too dangerous to stay at any other place. We were welcomed and cared for so much that I felt embarrassed. We were seen as saviours. I treated patients with kidney problems, worked as a primary care physician and sometimes helped during mass casualty events in the emergency room. Dialysis requires clean water, sterile supplies, reliable electricity, medications and equipment that must be maintained and replaced – none of which was guaranteed under the Israeli blockade. Each dialysis session was a challenge. Every delay increased the risk of my patients dying. Many of them did die – a fact I struggled to accept, knowing that under normal circumstances, many of them could have been saved and lived normal lives. I remember the smiling face of one of my patients, Waleed, a young man who suffered from kidney failure caused by early-onset high blood pressure, a condition that, with access to proper treatment, could have been managed appropriately. Dialysis was Waleed's lifeline, but he couldn't get an adequate number of sessions due to the Israeli blockade causing severe shortages of medical supplies. Malnutrition and worsening living conditions only accelerated his decline. I remember how short of breath he was, his body overloaded with fluid and his blood pressure dangerously high. And yet, every time I saw him, Waleed greeted me with a warm smile, his spirit somehow intact, his mother always by his side. A few months after I left Gaza, Waleed passed away. Another patient of mine was Hussein, a gentle, kind-hearted, deeply respected man. His children cared for him with love and dignity. He suffered from severe hypokalaemia and acidosis: His body's potassium levels were dangerously low, and acid built up to toxic levels. To address his condition, he needed basic medications: potassium supplements and sodium bicarbonate pills. These were simple, inexpensive, life-saving medicines, and yet, the Israeli blockade did not allow them in. Because he could not find these pills, Hussein was hospitalised multiple times for intravenous potassium supplementation.

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Despite his immense suffering, Hussein remained gracious, brave and full of faith. When speaking, he always repeated the phrase Alhamdulillah (praise be to God). He passed away a few weeks ago, I was told.

Waleed and Hussein should be here – smiling, laughing, living happily with their families. Instead, they became casualties of siege and silence. These are two of so many tragic stories I know of and I witnessed. So many beautiful lives that could have been saved were lost.

Despite this grim reality, my colleagues in Gaza continue to do their utmost for their patients. These are medics who are bruised in every way. They are not only battling the daily struggles of life like all other Palestinians in Gaza but

also witnessing daily horrors of headless babies, amputated limbs, fully burned human beings and sometimes the lifeless remains of their own loved ones.

Imagine working with no anaesthesia, limited pain medications, very few antibiotics. Imagine surgeons scrubbing with plain water, children undergoing amputations with no sedation, full-body burns patients' dressings being changed with no pain relief.

Still these healthcare heroes just keep going.

One of the nurses I worked with, Arafat, made a deep impression on me. He was living in a makeshift shelter with multiple family members. It offered no protec-

tion against the elements – the cold winter, the scorching heat or the drenching rain.

He starved – like all other Palestinians in Gaza – losing 15kg (33lb) in nine months. He walked 2km to 3km (1 to 2 miles) every day to work with worn-out sandals, facing the danger of Israeli drones bombing or shooting him in the street.

And yet, the smile never left his face. He took care of more than 280 dialysis patients, treating them with care, attentively listening to their anxious families and uplifting his colleagues with light humour.

I felt so small next to heroes like Arafat. His and his colleagues' resilience and persistence were unbelievable.

While in Gaza, I had the opportunity to visit

Al-Shifa Hospital with a UN delegation. What once was Gaza's largest and most vital medical centre was reduced to ruins. The hospital that was once a symbol of hope and healing had become a symbol of death and destruction, of the deliberate dismantling of healthcare. It was beyond heartbreaking to see its charred, bombed-out remains.

I stayed in Gaza for 22 days. It was an absolute honour to visit, serve and learn life from the resilient people of Gaza. Their relentless courage and determination will stay with me until I die.

Despite witnessing what I could have never imagined, I did not have the urge to leave. I wanted to stay. Back in the United States, I felt profound guilt that I left behind my colleagues and my patients, that I did not stay, that I did not do enough.

Feeling this constant heartache, I cannot understand the growing number of people who are accustomed to the daily reports of Palestinian deaths and images of torn bodies and starving children.

As human beings and as health workers, we cannot quit on Gaza. We cannot stay silent and passive. We must speak out and act on the devastation of healthcare and attacks on our colleagues in the Gaza Strip.

Already fewer and fewer healthcare workers are being allowed to enter Gaza on medical missions. The current blockade has prevented all medical supplies from going in.

We, as healthcare professionals, must mobilise to demand an immediate lifting of the siege and free access to medical missions. We must not stop volunteering to help the struggling medical teams in Gaza. Such acts of speaking out and volunteering give our colleagues in Gaza the hope and comfort that they have not been abandoned.

Let us not allow Gaza to be just a symbol of destruction. Instead, let it be the example of unbreakable spirit.

Stand, speak and act – so history remembers not just the tragedy but also the triumph of human compassion.

Let us uphold human dignity.

Let us tell Gaza, you are not alone!

Humanity is on your side!

— Aljazeera

This is Trump's moment to deliver peace to the Middle East

Jeffrey Sachs and Sybil Fares

THE Arab world stands at a crossroad – a moment of truth that hinges on the region's unified leadership and moral clarity. As President Trump arrives in the Gulf this week, seeking investments and strategic partnerships, the opportunity for regional peace and security is overwhelmingly clear. The Arab leaders should explain clearly to President Trump that peace and economic development in the Middle East are within reach and depend on one critical condition: The admission of Palestine to the United Nations as its 194th member state.

For this to become a reality, the United States must lift its veto on Palestine's entry to the UN. As the President meets with regional part-

In fact, Sino-Russian cooperation gave rise to the Organization in 2001. The SCO evolved from Sino-Soviet border negotiations and confidence-building measures, which after the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the formation of the "Shanghai Five", comprising China and four former Soviet republics, including Russia. The SCO was officially launched in Shanghai after Uzbekistan joined it in 2001. Over the years, the SCO has become an influential international organization with 10 full members, two observer states, and 14 dialogue partners. The SCO member states cover about 36 million square kilometers, have a combined population of more than 3.4 billion, and account for about a quarter of global GDP and more than 15 percent of international trade. Despite all their differences, the Shanghai Spirit respects diversity, supports every country's right to choose its political system and development model, promotes shared prosperity, aims to reduce disparities between the Global North and Global South, and

ners, he should hear an unambiguous message from his counterparts: All Arab partnerships with the US and of course with Israel are contingent upon a lasting peace through the two-state solution, which the US can bring about.

What is at stake is not simply a diplomatic negotiation. The two-state solution is a practical imperative and a test of international resolve. There can be no peace in the region, and no long-term development, if Israel continues to maraud its way through Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and others. Israel must be compelled – through diplomacy – to live within its own borders, and to allow Palestine to live within its legal borders, those of June 4, 1967. If the US backs the admission of Palestine to the UN, this will happen.

The stakes could not be higher. The US would receive a windfall of investments. The Middle East would achieve normalcy and the basis for a surge of economic development, and both Israel and Palestine would live in peace.

The Trump administration, in a significant departure from previous administrations, is moving towards a foreign policy centred on prag-

matic deal-making diplomacy.

Under his guidance, diplomatic negotiation channels were opened with Iran – as both countries enter their fourth round of negotiations in Oman regarding nuclear talks. President Trump has repeatedly stated his willingness to reach consensus: "I think we're going to make a deal with Iran", and is even willing to meet Iran's president. Similarly, the US reached a ceasefire agreement with the Houthis in Yemen last week, an encouraging step for both global trade and stability. Another bold diplomatic manoeuvre is the US direct negotiations with Hamas, which resulted in the release of hostage Edan Alexander.

It has become increasingly clear that President Trump holds US strategic

interests above all else, and that he correctly views peace as his country's overarching strategic interest. This translates into true potential for peace in the Middle East.

The foes of peace in Israel's extremist government want us to believe that there is an intrinsic, almost innate reason for the war on Palestine to continue. In essentially racist terms, Netanyahu and his ilk are arguing that peace with Palestinians, based on Palestinian political self-determination and self-rule, is impossible. The result is Israel's brutal destruction and de facto annexation of Gaza and Israel's ongoing war on Palestinians in the West Bank.

Netanyahu's government has two main interests: Continuing the war in Gaza and the West Bank to block a Palestinian state, and drawing the United States into direct confrontation with Iran. Both are contrary to US interests.

This Israeli government is now completely isolated in the international community. Even the United Kingdom, previously a staunch supporter of Netanyahu's war, has shifted its position. Minister for the Middle East Hamish

Falconer stated that the government's position is "crystal clear": "We strongly oppose the expansion of Israel's operations. Any attempt to annex land in Gaza would be unacceptable."

The vast majority of UN member states have already demonstrated their support for the two-state solution, most recently by adopting the UN General Assembly resolution. The will of the global community is clear: Israel's illegal occupation must end, and a Palestinian State must be established in accordance with international law. This is possible under the mantle of the United Nations, this upcoming June, during the High-level International Conference on Palestine.

Peace has been the generational clear-cut position of the League of

Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and all regional partners. The Arab Peace Initiative (API), adopted at the Beirut Summit in 2002 and reiterated consistently over the years, demands Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territory and the establishment of a Palestinian state as the basis for peace and diplomatic normalisation with Israel.

President Trump and the Arab leaders have a historic opportunity this week to end a conflict that has raged for one century. By adopting the two-state solution, Trump would not only bring peace to Israel and Palestine, but also to Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. An agreement between the US and Iran regarding nuclear non-proliferation and an end to US sanctions on Iran would immediately come within reach. Belligerents could lay down their arms, and rebuilding and economic development could come to the forefront. In short, this week offers the extraordinary opportunity for the US and the Arab world to make history, for the benefit of the entire Middle East, including Israel and Palestine, and indeed for the benefit of the entire world.

Google Search, Facebook and the iPhone may not last forever

PEOPLE aren't friending each other as much on Facebook these days. The iPhone might not feel necessary in a decade. And Google searches on one of the world's most popular smartphones are declining.

Those were some of the unusually frank admissions from two separate antitrust trials against Meta and Google. It was a rare acknowledgement from tech leaders that the once-cutting edge products their companies were founded on could someday lose their relevance.

Silicon Valley prides itself on innovation, change and a constant quest to find "the next big thing." The race for relevance is a constant one.

Still, the admissions underscore the mounting pressure tech giants face amid new threats from artificial intelligence and new social media apps – and how quickly any product can get left behind.

Apple did not respond to CNN's request for comment. A Google spokesperson pointed to the company's public statements, while a Meta spokesperson directed CNN to specific responses from CEO Mark Zuckerberg's courtroom testimony.

The three tech giants helped shape the modern web over the last two decades.

Google's search engine triumphed in the late 1990s and early 2000s due to its system of ranking results by relevance and importance rather than sorting them by topic.

And Meta, Facebook's parent company, is largely responsible for turning social platforms into an addictive feed of likes, comments and other interactions.

Fueling both of those trends was the smartphone, allowing users to access these services from almost anywhere, which Apple set the stage for with the first iPhone in 2007.

The success of those products catapulted Apple, Google and Meta to mega-valuations. But during courtroom testimony, executives indicated consumers are losing interest in some of the very tasks Facebook and Google were initially built for.

Eddy Cue, Apple's senior vice president of services, revealed last week that Google search queries on its devices decreased for the first time last month, according to Bloomberg. The comments came during his testimony in the Justice Department's antitrust trial against Google. (Google pays Apple to be the default search engine in the iPhone maker's Safari browser.)

It's another sign that consumers may be shifting to AI chatbots to ful-

fill some of the duties of a traditional search engine. Market research firm Gartner estimated last year that search engine volume would drop 25% by 2026 as

The success of those products catapulted Apple, Google and Meta to mega-valuations. But during courtroom testimony, executives indicated consumers are losing interest in some of the very tasks Facebook and Google were initially built for. Apple's senior vice president of services, revealed last week that Google search queries on its devices decreased for the first time last month, according to Bloomberg. The comments came during his testimony in the Justice Department's antitrust trial against Google. (Google pays Apple to be the default search engine in the iPhone maker's Safari browser.) Instead, Zuckerberg said the company has seen a big boost in direct messages. Zuckerberg's comments come as research shows Facebook is falling behind other online platforms with younger crowds. A Pew Research Center report from December found that Facebook usage has dropped off over the last 10 years, with just 32% of teens saying they use what was previously Meta's namesake social network. That compares to 71% in 2014 and 2015, although teens still use Instagram frequently. Meta has aggressively shaped its apps to keep up with new trends. In 2013, Facebook failed to buy Snapchat, but about three years later it introduced its own alternative in Instagram Stories. Instagram's short-form video feed, known as Reels, came to take on TikTok in 2020, and Zuckerberg said in his testimony that video content is where people are spending most of their time on Facebook these days. Even the iPhone may be at risk of losing favor over the next decade, an Apple executive said. "You may not need an iPhone 10 years from now, as crazy as it sounds," Apple's Cue said during his courtroom testimony in the Google trial, according to Bloomberg.

consumers gravitate toward AI tools.

Google said in a statement on Wednesday that it continues "to see overall query growth in search," and that includes "an increase in total queries coming from

Lisa Eadicicco

Apple's devices and platforms."

Meta, too, is seeing consumers shift away from its original use

an antitrust lawsuit brought by the Federal Trade Commission. "Even the amount of new friends that people add

... I think has been declining. But I don't know the exact numbers."

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With 19% of global smartphone shipments in the first quarter of 2025, according to the International Data Corporation, Apple's iPhone is the world's second most popular smartphone brand.

But Apple, along with other tech behemoths, is determined to figure out what comes next.

And the answer could be smart glasses that use AI to analyze the world around you to execute tasks without reaching for your phone – a vision that Meta, Samsung and Google are already betting on. Zuckerberg said in his

testimony that he believes consumers will eventually interact with content through "smart glasses and holograms," removing the need to use a "glowing rectangle" to access digital platforms.

Amazon's head of devices and services Panos Panay also didn't rule out the possibility of camera-equipped Alexa glasses similar to those offered by Meta in a February CNN interview.

Apple, too, believes the next step in computing will involve devices worn on the face, as evidenced by the \$3,500 Vision Pro. That device, while niche, could be a precursor to the types of smart glasses Apple's rivals are working on or currently selling.

At the same time, consumers aren't upgrading their phones as frequently now that mobile devices no longer dramatically change each year.

For now, consumers will continue scrolling through Instagram and typing Google Search queries on their iPhones. And change is a good thing for corporate giants like these; it lets them show Wall Street there's still room to grow while boosting their arguments to lawmakers that they face stiff competition.

What's changing, though, is that the tech companies that ruled the early 2000s and 2010s may have to fight a bit harder to stay ahead of the curve.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeem Khan in a group photo with Provincial Advisor of FTO Sardar Ali Khawaja and other officers at Chamber's House.

SCCI urges govt to make laws, rules business friendly

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeem Khan urged the government to make the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) laws and rules business-friendly.

The SCCI chief also called for amending them to provide speedy justice to taxpayers.

He made this demand during a meeting with Provincial Advisor of Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Sardar Ali Khawaja here at the chamber house on Wednesday.

Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, member of the SCCI executive committee Mujeebur

Rehman and others.

Officials from FTO secretariat Peshawar were also present on the occasion.

Fazal Moqeem Khan apprised advisor FTO regarding grievances of the business community and called for prompt actions to address them.

FTO has played a vital role in providing relief to the business community, SCCI chief said.

He asked the members to take benefits from services of FTO in case of any complaints against FBR and its subordinate institutions regarding maladministration, injustice and their discriminatory attitude with them so that will help to get speedy relief through this important institution.

Fazal Moqeem termed

the FTO as an effective forum for the business community to address their complaints about income tax, sales tax, Customs and federal excise duty.

Sardar Ali Khawaja on the occasion briefing the meeting underscored the FTO's mandate to promptly address taxpayers' concerns and provide necessary legal support.

He assured the business community that the FTO will continue its effective role against decisions on the basis of injustice and discrimination against taxpayers.

FTO is a businessmen and tax payers' friendly institution working over providing them relief in limited time by redressing complaints, Khawaja said.

Sardar Ali Khawaja

highlighted that tax-related complaints can be registered online or via telephone.

Complaints can be lodged through the Federal Tax Ombudsman's website, email, and the mobile app "FTO Portal," which also facilitates online hearings after investigations, he explained.

FTO advisor reaffirmed the institution's commitment to expediting taxpayer grievances and safeguarding their legal entitlements.

Earlier, SCCI president praised the FTO business-friendly policies and services of provision of early justice to business community and taxpayers.

He stressed the need for strengthening close liaison between the chamber and FTO department.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 39.36 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 39.36 points, a negative change of 0.03 percent, closing at 118,536.53 points as compared to 118,575.89 points on the last trading day.

A total of 609,063,142 shares were traded during the day as compared to 684,294,646 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 41.913 billion against Rs 52.586 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 451 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 207 of them recorded gains and 191 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 53 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were At-Tahur Limited with 38,761,905 shares at Rs 44.84 per share, Fauji Cement with 36,170,971 shares at Rs 47.86 per share and Sui South Gas with 32,384,781 shares at Rs 36.07 per

share.

PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 935.96 per share closing at Rs 10,295.59 whereas runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 88.92 rise in its share price to close at Rs 978.13.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 236.35 per share price, closing at Rs 22,676.15, whereas the runner-up Hoechst Pakistan Limited with Rs 137.93 decline in its per share price to Rs 3,260.00.

Rupee sheds 04 paisa against US Dollar: The Rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 04 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.71 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.67. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.25 and Rs 283.75, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.72 to

close at Rs 315.93 against the last day's closing of Rs 313.21, according to SBP.

The Japanese yen went up by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.91, whereas an increase of Rs3.24 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 375.41 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 372.17.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 and 02 paisa to close at Rs 76.69 and Rs 75.11, respectively.

Gold prices decrease Rs2,300 to 341,900 per tola: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.2,300 on Wednesday and was sold at Rs.341,900 against its sale at Rs.344,200 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.1,972 to Rs.293,124 from Rs.295,096 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat decreased by Rs.1,808 to Rs.268,706 from Rs.270,514.

The rates of per tola silver and ten gram silver remained unchanged and closed at Rs.3,482 and Rs.2,985 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market also decreased by \$23 to \$3,235 from \$3,258 whereas that of silver remained stagnant at \$33.00, the Association reported.

Over 24,832 tractors assembled

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tractors production in the country during last 10 months of current financial year was recorded at 24,832 as compared to the output of 38,699 of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-April, 2024-25, sales of tractor were recorded at 25,143 as compared to the sales of 39,838 tractors of the same period of the last year, according to the data of Pakistan Automotive Manufacturing Association.

Meanwhile, the Fiat assembled about 9,428 tractors during first 10 months of current financial year as compared to the output of 13,798 tractors of the same period of the last year, it added.

The sale of tractors assembled by the Fiat were recorded at 9,455 as compared to the sales of 13,144 tractors of the same period of the last year, the data revealed.

The output of Massey Ferguson stood at 15,725 tractors during 10 months of current financial year as compared to the production of 26,040 tractors of the same period of the last year, it added.

Meanwhile, the sale of the above mentioned company during the period under review was recorded at 15,377 tractors as compared to the sales of 25,555 tractors of the same period of the last year, the data revealed.

OGDCL secures provisional award

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), the country's leading exploration and production company, has been provisionally awarded seven new exploration blocks through a competitive bidding round held by the Government of Pakistan in April 2025.

The Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) has communicated the provisional award of new exploration blocks to OGDCL and its joint venture partners, Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Pakistan Oilfields Limited (POL), Mari Energies Limited (Mari), Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL), Turkish Petroleum Overseas Company (TPOC), and Prime Global Energies Limited (Prime). These blocks have been awarded based on the work units committed by OGDCL and its joint venture partners, subject to formal execution of Exploration Licenses and Petroleum Concession Agreements (PCAs).

OGDCL has secured 100% working interest and operatorship in the Kalat North Block located in Balochistan. The

company will also operate the Naing Sharif Block in Sindh with a 70% working interest, partnered by Prime with a 30% share. In Punjab, OGDCL will act as operator of the Khui-II Block, holding 60% working interest, while Mari holds the remaining 40%.

OGDCL has also secured a 40% working interest in the Ahmad Wal Block in Balochistan, where Mari will serve as the operator with a 60% working interest. In the Kalat South Block, also in Balochistan, OGDCL secured a 30% share, with PPL acting as the operator with 40% interest and Mari holding 30%.

In Sindh's Sukhpur-II Block, OGDCL has a 30% stake, alongside Prime (25%, operator), Mari (30%), and TPOC (15%). In the Ziarat North block in Balochistan, OGDCL secured a 24.87% working interest, with Mari acting as operator with 33.16%, and PPL, GHPL, and TPOC holding 24.87%, 7.10%, and 10% respectively.

These awards mark a significant step forward in OGDCL's strategy and business plan to strengthen its core exploration portfolio and accelerate efforts to augment the country's hydrocarbon reserves.

Business community welcomes SC's verdict

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mirza Abdul Rehman, Former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and a prominent industrialist, along with other leading businessmen and members of Pakistan's business community, has warmly welcomed the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding sales tax in the FATA and PATA regions.

In a joint statement, they emphasized that this verdict not only addresses longstanding grievances of the business community but also marks a significant milestone in paving the way for industrial growth across the country.

The decision is expected to restore investor confidence, improve the business climate, and contribute to economic stability in Pakistan.

Mirza Abdul Rehman and fellow industrialists strongly urged the federal government to ensure immediate and full implementation of this vital court decision so that businesses and industries in FATA,



PATA, and across the nation can benefit from equal opportunities for development.

They further stated that, regrettably, tax reliefs intended for FATA and PATA were misused by unrelated elements, causing severe damage to the local industry and subjecting genuine industrialists to unfair competition. This verdict, they asserted, will now play a decisive role in reviving local industries, creating employment opportunities, and boosting exports.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where six ships, Valence, Grand Ace, Chinook-I, Milaha Rass Laffan, Blue Akihabara and Nord Utopia scheduled to load/offload Container, Fuel oil, Palm oil, LNG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Engro Elengy Terminal,

Marginal Wharf-4 and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, four more ships, Gloria, UOG Harriet-G, Ginga Ocelot and Lusail carrying Soya Bean Seed, Mogas, Chemical and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage on Wednesday early morning.

A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths

during the last 24 hours, out of them containers ship 'Tanja' left the port on Wednesday morning, while two more ships, Valence and Paolo Topic expected to sail.

Cargo volume of 160,936 tonnes, comprising 117,733 tonnes imports cargo and 43,203 export cargo carried in 2,531 Containers (1,504 TEUs Imports & 1,027 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Ginga Ocelot and Lusail carrying Chemicals and LNG are expected to take berths at EVTL and PGPCL are respectively on Thursday, while another containers ship 'ONE Maxim' is due to expected arrive at outer anchorage today (Thursday).

Pak Army's strategic shift from defense to response



Abdul Basit Alvi

At the heart of international law is the recognition of a state's sovereign right to defend itself against aggression. Article 51 of the UN Charter, adopted in 1945, explicitly affirms this inherent right: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations..." This article provides a clear legal foundation for self-defense while drawing a firm distinction between prohibited acts of aggression (Article 2(4)) and legitimate defensive actions. Customary international law further reinforces this principle, as states have historically exercised the right to respond to attacks or violations of their sovereignty—even prior to the UN Charter's existence. Today, nations frequently invoke Article 51 in official com-

munications to the UN Security Council to justify responsive measures.

In addition to what it views as consistent aggression, India is involved in orchestrating false flag operations to justify hostile actions and deflect attention from internal challenges.

Two prominent examples cited are the Pulwama and Pahalgam incidents. On February 14, 2019, a suicide bombing targeted a convoy of India's Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Pulwama, resulting in 40 deaths. India responded with airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan—a significant escalation. Pakistan categorically denied involvement in the Pulwama attack, with government officials, military representatives, and independent observers suggesting that the incident may have been engineered by Indian intelligence to vilify Pakistan and galvanize public opinion. Notably, leaked messages from Indian journalist Arnab Goswami allegedly indicating prior knowledge of the military response—have further fueled suspicions of a premeditated narrative.

More recently, in April 2025, an attack in Pahalgam led to the deaths of several Indian tourists. Indian authorities quickly blamed Pakistan-based militants, despite the absence

of conclusive evidence. Pakistan, along with several independent analysts, denied involvement and characterized the attribution as another potential false flag operation designed to justify future military actions and suppress dissent in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Critics, including defense analysts and political commentators, argue that such rapid accusations serve political agendas, particularly during election cycles or periods of domestic unrest. The timing of the Pahalgam attack—occurring alongside major political developments in India—led to skepticism about its authenticity. The incident further inflamed regional tensions, prompting heightened military posturing and sharp rhetoric from both sides. The international community voiced concern over the potential for further escalation, urging both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint and pursue dialogue. The recurring cycle of violence and mutual blame hindered efforts toward lasting peace and stability in South Asia. Following both the Pulwama and Pahalgam incidents, India launched substantial military responses, including airstrikes and artillery shelling. Pakistan regards these actions as acts of

aggression, often framed as retaliation for attacks that may have been engineered to serve political agendas.

In the wake of the Pulwama attack, India carried out airstrikes on Balakot, Pakistan—the first time since 1971 that Indian aircraft had crossed the Line of Control. Similarly, following the Pahalgam incident, India launched missile strikes on Pakistani targets, resulting in civilian casualties. Pakistan condemned these strikes as violations of its sovereignty and pledged to defend its territory against any form of aggression. Analysts suggest that India's military actions were not solely motivated by security concerns but were also politically driven. The timing of these operations often coincides with electoral cycles, raising accusations that they were aimed at bolstering the ruling government's image and consolidating nationalist support. This trend sets a dangerous precedent for the use of military force for domestic political purposes.

The ongoing allegations of false flag operations and subsequent military escalations highlighted the need for independent, transparent investigations into incidents such as Pulwama and Pahalgam. Pakistan has consistently called for

impartial inquiries, but India has refused. Without such investigations, the cycle of blame and retaliation is likely to persist, further destabilizing the region. Tensions between India and Pakistan have intensified significantly in recent years, particularly with a series of cross-border attacks, drone strikes, and artillery shelling, all centered around the disputed region of Kashmir. India wrongly accused Pakistan of targeting over a dozen cities, including crucial military sites, causing widespread power outages across northern and western India. Meanwhile, Pakistan denied involvement and retaliated with its own allegations of illegal Indian aggression, claiming to have downed dozens of Indian drones and inflicted substantial casualties.

The Pulwama attack of February 14, 2019, and the Pahalgam incident of April 2025, are key moments in the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict. These incidents are seen by people as alleged false flag operations orchestrated by India to justify military action and divert attention from internal issues. India's aggression against Pakistan has often been based on assumptions rather than proof. Furthermore, it is well-documented that India's military actions have resulted in civilian casualties, while Pakistan has generally exercised restraint to avoid harming civilians.

India's adoption of the "Cold Start Doctrine" and rhetoric surrounding surgical strikes and preemptive actions reflects an aggressive stance that contradicts international norms prohibiting unilateral military action without a direct, imminent threat. In contrast, Pakistan maintains a deterrence-based defense posture, focused on defending against aggression rather than initiating conflict. Pakistan's nuclear strategy, based on credible minimum deterrence, underscores a defensive security framework aimed at preventing war, not provoking one. Pakistan has consistently called for dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution, as demonstrated by its commitment to initiatives such as the Simla Agreement (1972), the Agra Summit (2001), and numerous offers of bilateral talks on Kashmir. In recent years, Pakistan has expressed a willingness to normalize trade, open religious corridors (such as Kartarpur), and support back-channel diplomacy, even in the face of India's refusal to engage. Meanwhile, India tends to externalize its internal

issues, particularly in Kashmir, by placing blame on Pakistan. The indigenous Kashmiri freedom struggle is often wrongly labeled as terrorism, while India's military actions in the region constitute state-sponsored aggression against unarmed civilians. Instead of addressing the grievances of the Kashmiri people, India has hardened its position, revoking Article 370 in 2019 and launching diplomatic efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally—an act of non-military aggression. India has repeatedly initiated conflicts, violated agreements, escalated tensions, and militarized diplomacy. Whether through full-scale invasions, border skirmishes, or surgical strikes, India is perceived as the aggressor attempting to assert dominance over the subcontinent. In contrast, Pakistan maintains a record of strategic restraint, with its military actions framed as defensive responses to safeguard territorial sovereignty and regional stability. Pakistan consistently advocates for peace, dialogue, and multilateral resolution, particularly on the Kashmir issue.

Tensions escalated sharply when India launched another military offensive against Pakistan, driven by unsubstantiated

allegations. The missile and drone strikes that targeted Pakistani territory were widely condemned as a severe act of aggression, triggering outrage across the nation. These attacks resulted in civilian casualties, prompting the Pakistani government and military to announce their intent to respond. This decision was met with overwhelming public support, as people believed the time had come to go beyond passive defense and assert Pakistan's right to respond to such blatant hostility. The Pakistani military retaliated swiftly and with precision, striking only the Indian military sites responsible for the attacks on civilians. Pakistan mounted a comprehensive and effective response across all dimensions of warfare. The unity and resilience of the Pakistani people were remarkable, with the entire nation standing firmly behind its armed forces. This united resolve should serve as a wake-up call to both internal and external adversaries, demonstrating that the people of Pakistan stand firmly with the Pak Army, which remains fully prepared to defend the nation's sovereignty and respond decisively to any future acts of aggression.

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In brief

Street child football team begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-month training camp for the Pakistan Street Child Football Team is currently underway at the Islamabad Sports Complex, as part of preparations for the Norway Cup 2025. The camp includes 60 young players who were selected from more than 2,100 participants during trials held across 27 districts under the Maidan Project. The final squad for the Norway Cup will be chosen from this group during the camp. During the training camp, players are receiving professional football coaching along with full boarding and other necessary facilities. Pakistan is set to take part in the Norway Cup 2025, scheduled to begin on July 26. The team previously won a silver medal in the 2023 edition of the tournament and reached the semi-finals in 2024.

Ronaldo 'proud' of son

ZAGREB (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo said he was "very proud" of his eldest son after he made his debut for Portugal Under-15s. Cristiano Ronaldo Jr came on in the 54th minute of a 4-1 win against Japan in a tournament Croatia on Tuesday. The 14-year-old was watched on by grandmother Dolores Aveiro, Ronaldo Sr's mother. It was also reported, external that scouts from Manchester United - a former club of Ronaldo Sr - and several other top European clubs were in attendance to watch Ronaldo Jr. Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo Sr said on Instagram: "Congratulations on your debut for Portugal, son. Very proud of you." Rafael Cabral scored a hat-trick for Portugal before Ronaldo Jr came off the bench. Ronaldo Sr, 40, has scored 136 goals for Portugal, a record in men's football. He captained Portugal to their first major title at Euro 2016 and the Nations League title in 2019. Ronaldo Jr is at Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia with his father, who signed for the Pro League club in 2022. Ronaldo Sr forward has four other children - twins Eva and Mateo, 7, Alana Martina, 7, and Bella, 3. Portugal U15s are playing at the Vlatko Markovic tournament, where they will face Greece on Wednesday and England on Friday.

King loses appeal against match-fixing ban

S H E F F I E L D (Agencies): Snooker player Mark King has lost his appeal against a five-year ban for match-fixing. King was handed the ban in November 2024 after an independent disciplinary committee found the Englishman guilty of one count of match-fixing and one count of providing inside information on a match. The former Northern Ireland Open champion was suspended by the sport's world governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA), on 18 March 2023. That was after suspicious betting was reported on his match against Joe Perry on 13 February that year at the Welsh Open, which King lost 4-0. Perry was not accused of any wrongdoing. King was ordered to pay over £68,000 in costs and banned from the sport for five years. King, 51, contested the punishment and his appeal was heard by an independent appeals committee on 8-9 April 2025. The former world number 11 presented four points to be heard within his appeal, one of which he chose to abandon at the start of the hearing. He stated that bettors placing large sums on 4-1 and 4-2, as well as the actual result of 4-0, weakened the argument that he had agreed to lose 4-0.

Alcaraz sweeps past Draper and into Italian Open semis



ROME (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz strode into the semi-finals of the Italian Open on Wednesday after putting in a powerful display to down Jack Draper in straight sets, 6-4, 6-4.

Third seed Alcaraz will face one of reigning Rome champion Alexander Zverev and home hope Lorenzo Musetti, the day's final pairing on centre court, in the last four at the Foro Italico.

His impressive win over Draper kept alive his chances of a third title of the season and also moved him up to number two in the world rankings behind Jannik Sinner.

The Spaniard also bagged a top-two seeding at the French Open which begins later this month, but in the meantime the four-

time Grand Slam winner continues his bid for a first Rome crown.

Alcaraz had to be at his best to down fifth seed Draper, who put in another strong showing on clay in Italy after losing the Madrid Open final to Casper Ruud.

Draper was trying to become the first British man to reach the last four in the Italian capital since 2016, when Andy Murray was beaten by Novak Djokovic in the final.

But he lost control of the first set when after taking a two-game lead he was broken twice by Alcaraz who then took the lead in the match. And Alcaraz made sure of victory by saving two break points in a 10-minute game eight of the second set, before breaking

Draper to love to go 5-4 ahead in the set and then serve out the match at the first time of asking.

Ruud's attempt at a Madrid and Rome double has a Jannik Sinner-shaped obstacle in its way after the world number seven won his postponed match with Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-4.

Sixth seed Ruud was supposed to play on Tuesday but an afternoon downpour forced his match to be moved back a day, and he convincingly secured a quarter-final date with Sinner. "It was a little bit tough, you're waiting all day yesterday to try to play and you don't get on... I'm proud of the way I handled it," said Ruud, who has won more matches on clay than any other player on the men's tour in the last five years.

"Tomorrow will be one of toughest matches of the year, probably. I got beaten pretty bad by Jannik last time in Turin (at the ATP Finals)... Let's see, he's been looking good since the first match."

Gauff eases through Earlier, Coco Gauff marched into the women's semis by beating Mirra Andreeva in straight sets, 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

American Gauff has guaranteed herself number two in the women's world rankings with her solid displays in Rome, where she

saw off seventh seed Andreeva on centre court.

Former US Open winner Gauff said that she had "a lot of confidence" for the last four, where she could face tournament favourite Aryna Sabalenka with the world number one taking on Zheng Qinwen later on Wednesday. "Maybe some



points weren't my best. I still managed to be successful," said Gauff.

Gauff, 21, is looking for her first title of the season, ahead of Roland Garros starting later this month, after losing the Madrid final to Sabalenka.

Indian Wells champion Andreeva, at 18 years old the youngest woman to reach the last eight at the Foro Italico since Gauff in 2021, put up surprisingly little resistance in a low-key first set. And Gauff had too much for her in the second, quickly responding to each of Andreeva's breaks of serve before coming through a tricky tie-break.

PCB announces update on tickets for upcoming PSL X matches

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Wednesday ticket details regarding the remaining eight Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 matches to be played in Rawalpindi and Lahore from May 17 to 25.

The fans who had bought tickets for the May 8 Peshawar Zalmi v Karachi Kings, May 9 Peshawar Zalmi v Lahore Qalandars and May 10 Islamabad United v Karachi Kings fixtures can now use the same tickets for the corresponding May 17, 18 and 19 fixtures, respectively.

With May 18 being a double-header day at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, the previously issued May 9 ticket can be used to attend both games, the PCB said in a statement. Additionally, fans who

have bought tickets for Eliminator 1, 2 and the Final can use them as per the newly announced dates of the respective matches.

The tickets for the remaining league games and the playoffs can also be bought from www.pcb.tcs.com.pk and designated courier company centres.

The fans can avail a refund for the May 5 and 10 Multan contests, earlier scheduled in Multan, and the previously scheduled Qualifier in Rawalpindi.

Online and corporate refunds will be transferred to the accounts used at the time of booking.

Physical tickets will need to be refunded in person at designated centres. The date for the refunds will be announced in due course.

As of the suspension, 27 matches had been com-

pleted, with Quetta Gladiators leading the points table. They have already secured a spot in the playoffs with six wins, two losses, and one no-result from nine matches.

The Karachi Kings hold second place with 10 points, having won five out of eight matches. Defending champions Islamabad United are in third place, also with 10 points, after five wins and four losses in nine games.

The Lahore Qalandars are placed fourth with nine points from four wins, four losses, and one no-result, while Peshawar Zalmi sit fifth with eight points, secured through four wins in their nine games.

The Multan Sultans have been eliminated from playoff contention, managing just one win and suffering eight losses in their nine matches.

Neha shines as Invincibles down Conquerors

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Invincibles' left-arm pacer Neha Sharmin Nadeem picked up 3-14 in four overs to help her team overcome Fatima Sana's Conquerors in the sixth round of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2024-25 at the National Bank Stadium on Wednesday afternoon.

Neha provided the Invincibles with a head-start as she dismissed both the opposition opening batsmen for golden ducks before casting Najha Alvi for a run-a-ball 16 to leave Conquerors 37-3.

Skipper Fatima, who is currently leading the batting charts with 252 runs, continued her fine form with the bat as she contributed 41 runs off 32 balls with the help of seven fours, while also partnering with Hafsa Khalid (24, 35b, 4x4s) for a 33-run stand.

Fatima fell prey to Tania Saeed, who returned figures of 4-0-18-2, as Conquerors were restricted to 107-8 in 20 overs.

In turn, Ayesha Zafar (47, 35b, 8x4s) and Omaira Sohail (44 not out, 41b, 7x4s) forged a 91-run alliance for the second wicket after Humna Bilal landed an early blow to remove Muneeba Ali. Invincibles reached the target in 15.5 overs with eight wickets in hand.

In the other sixth round fixture at the Oval Academy Ground, Strikers rolled over Stars by nine wickets as they chased the 98-run target in 12.4 overs to bag their second win in the tournament.

Skipper Gull Feroza (37 not out, 42b, 3x4s) and player of the match Noreen Yaqoob (28, 21b, 4x4s,

1x6) put on a 56-run opening stand before Stars' Tuba Hassan removed the latter. Eyman Fatima struck two fours and as many sixes in her unbeaten 14-ball 28 to take the team over the line.

Earlier, Stars' bid to win the toss and bat first fell flat as they slipped to 26-3 and then 55-5 as opening batter Sana Urooj contributed 19 runs off 17 balls hitting four boundaries.

Tuba Hassan, batting at no.6, top scored with a 25-ball 30 inclusive of four fours, Hurraina Sajjad (14 not out, 15b, 1x4) and Sidra Nawaz's (14, 27b, 2x4s) contributions pushed the Stars 97-7 in the allotted 20 overs.

For Strikers, Anam Amin and Ayesha Bilal snapped two wickets each, while Noreen, Diana Baig and Rehmat Noreen dismissed one batter each.

Scores in brief: Match 11: Invincibles beat Conquerors by eight wickets at the National Bank Stadium

Conquerors 107-8, 20 overs (Fatima Sana 41, Hafsa Khalid 24; Neha Sharmin Nadeem 3-14, Tania Saeed 2-18)

Invincibles 108-2, 15.5 overs (Ayesha Zafar 47, Omaira Sohail 44 not out)

Player of the match - Neha Sharmin Nadeem (Invincibles)

Match 12: Strikers beat Stars by nine wickets at the Oval Academy Ground

Stars 97-7, 20 overs (Tuba Hassan 30, Sana Urooj 19; Anam Amin 2-14, Ayesha Bila 2-16)

Strikers 98-1, 12.4 overs (Gull Feroza 37 not out, Eyman Fatima 28 not out, Noreen Yaqoob 28)

Player of the match - Noreen Yaqoob (Strikers).

Pedersen takes third stage win of Giro d'Italia



MATERA (AFP): Mads Pedersen won a tight sprint to the line on Wednesday to collect his third stage win of this year's Giro d'Italia and cement his overall lead.

The Danish Lidl-Trek rider was just the length of his bike ahead of Edoardo Zambanini and Tom Pidcock at the finish line of the fifth stage in the picturesque hill town of Matera.

Of his three stage wins so far, Pedersen had to work hardest for this one after falling behind the pack led by his own teammate Mathias Vacek two kilometres from the finish line.

Dressed head to toe in the leader's pink, Pedersen fought his way back into contention as the route wound its way through the

town where scenes for the James Bond film "No Time to Die" were shot.

Then in the final metres, he spearheaded the trio of himself, Zambanini and Pidcock.

"The last 20 kilometres were unbelievably hard, I was really suffering on that last climb," Pedersen said.

"I was behind but I knew it was still possible. But I really got tired chasing Mathias from behind. Thankfully I still had a little bit in the tank to win the sprint."

The Dane, world champion in 2019, reflected on his three stage wins out of five, declaring: "It's more than I could ever have dreamt of."

"What a Giro! And what a team I have."

His latest success came hours after he announced he was staying with his American outfit until the end of his career.

He should enjoy his time in pink as his days as overall leader are numbered.

He is in the peloton to help teammate Giulio Ciccone, Lidl-Trek's main chance of overall victory, once the race enters the mountains.

But for the moment he is savouring his time at the top of the general classification which he now leads by 17 seconds from Primoz Roglic (12th in the stage) and 24sec from Vacek.

Ciccone is 1min 1sec off the lead in 19th.

Thursday's sixth stage is a hilly 227km ride from Potenza to Naples.

Squash Legend calls for fair elections in PSF

MUZAFFARABAD (PPI): International squash player Zubair Jahan Khan has urged for elections within the Pakistan Squash Federation and Balochistan Squash Association to be overseen by observers from the Pakistan Sports Board and Balochistan Sports Board.

During a press conference at Quetta Press Club alongside Qaseem Khan Kakar, Imran Hazara, and others, Khan expressed concerns over the lack of genuine leadership in the Balochistan Squash Association. He argued that the absence of proper governance is stifling local talent, as the current cabinet has failed to organize any squash events during its term. Describing the election of the current cabinet as fraudulent, Khan stressed the need for transparent elections to rejuvenate the sport in the region.

Khan announced plans to organize an international squash championship in Balochistan in December 2025, emphasizing his family's historical role in promoting squash in the area. He highlighted his family's legacy, noting that three members were world champions and he himself achieved an eighth-place world ranking. Despite financial struggles, Khan has brought recognition to Pakistan and Balochistan through his achievements.

He appealed to the provincial government for support to make the upcoming international championship a reality.

Pacers oust top-seeded Cavs, Nuggets on brink

LOS ANGELES (AFP): The Indiana Pacers came from behind to send the Cleveland Cavaliers crashing out of the NBA playoffs on Tuesday as the Oklahoma City Thunder overcame a dazzling Nikola Jokic display to push the Denver Nuggets to the brink of elimination.

Cleveland -- the top seeds in the Eastern Conference -- saw their postseason come to an abrupt halt after Tyrese Haliburton scored 31 points to power the Pacers to a 114-105 victory, sealing a 4-1 series triumph.

Western Conference top seeds Oklahoma City grabbed a 112-105 victory over Denver to edge into a 3-2 lead in their titanic duel with the 2023 champions.

Three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic delivered a towering performance for Denver, the Serbian star finishing with 44 points, 15 rebounds and five assists.

But Jokic's heroics were in vain as the Thunder -- who had trailed for most of the game -- unleashed a fourth-quarter bombardment to outscore Denver 34-19 and seal a pulsating

win.

Jokic's rival for this season's MVP award, OKC's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, scored 31 points on a night when six Thunder players finished in double figures.

"Throughout the game it's full of swings -- you make shots, you miss shots. We just trusted in our principles, and two games in a row now we've been able to pull out a W (win)," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

"You're only as good as your weakest link and all 10 of our guys are ready to go... All we care about is winning the game. We got one tonight and we got one more."

The loss leaves Denver facing a must-win game six in Colorado on Thursday to avoid an early end to their postseason.

"This is a really disappointing loss, and the guys should be disappointed," Denver's interim head coach David Adelman said.

"We have to bounce back quickly to win game six and give ourselves a chance to come back."

Haliburton drives

already making their summer holiday plans after bowing out to the Pacers in Cleveland.

A flurry of six three-pointers from Haliburton helped Indiana wrap up a series victory as the Cavaliers' promising season fizzled out in disappointing fashion on their home court.

Haliburton's scoring was backed by 21 points from Pascal Siakam while Aaron Nesmith contributed 13 points with 13 rebounds. Andrew Nembhard scored 18 points.

"We're talking about eight more wins for an NBA championship," Pacers head coach Rick Carlisle said after guiding his team into the Eastern Conference finals for a second straight year.

"The league is wide open this year. There are a lot of great teams but it's wide open. We've just gotta keep believing."

Trailing 3-1 heading into Tuesday's game five, Cleveland looked ready to keep the series alive after surging into a 19-point lead midway through the second quarter at the Rocket Arena.

But Haliburton sparked

into life to drain five-of-five from three-point range in a 15-point second quarter to slash Cleveland's advantage to 56-52 heading into half-time.

The Pacers' scoring onslaught continued into the third quarter with the visitors outscoring Cleveland 33-20 to open up a commanding 85-76 lead as the fourth quarter got under way.

Cleveland threatened to rally in the final frame after 16 points from Donovan Mitchell, who was clearly still troubled by the sore left ankle that had threatened to rule him out of the contest.

Mitchell, who finished with 35 points, six rebounds and eight assists, reduced the Indiana lead to 98-97 with just over five minutes remaining after nailing a three-pointer.

But the Cavaliers' failure to threaten from three-point range -- they managed to convert just nine-of-35 attempts from beyond the arc -- continued to be a problem and hopes of a comeback were snuffed out by the Pacers defense.

Cleveland coach Kenny



Atkinson lamented his team's stalled playoff campaign which followed a dominant 64-win regular season.

"They were the better team, they deserved it and they played great," Atkinson said of Indiana.

"But the truth of the matter is we didn't get to the level we wanted to get to."

"I do think we made strides. We took a jump -- and now we've got to figure out this last piece, and how to get over this

hump." Fourth-seeds Indiana will meet either the Boston Celtics or arch-rivals the New York Knicks in the Eastern Conference finals, with the winner advancing to next month's NBA Finals.



In brief

Kamal asks NIH to enhance vaccine production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal on Wednesday visited the National Institute of Health (NIH) and directed significant enhancement in local vaccine production. During his visit, the Minister also called for a comprehensive national strategy on water and sanitation. He toured various facilities at the NIH, including the vaccine production unit, public health laboratories, the Polio Regional Reference Laboratory, and the Water and Food Testing Laboratory. He also inspected the National Health Data Center. The visit concluded with a detailed briefing by NIH Chief Executive Officer Dr Muhammad Salman. Speaking to scientists and staff, Kamal emphasized the potential of NIH in advancing public health and urged full utilization of its capacities. He stressed the need for Pakistan to achieve self-reliance in vaccine development and production. "The NIH must lead efforts in strengthening indigenous vaccine capabilities to protect our population and reduce dependency on imports," Kamal stated. Highlighting the impact of contaminated water on public health, the Minister directed that water and sanitation must become a core focus of NIH's disease prevention strategy. "Most diseases affecting our people are waterborne. Without addressing water contamination, we cannot realize the vision of a healthy Pakistan," he said. Kamal also called for nationwide awareness campaigns and active stakeholder engagement to tackle these challenges.

Liquor suppliers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested seven liquor suppliers and recovered 65 liters liquor and 12 bottles from their possession during crackdown here on Wednesday. According to police spokesman, the crackdown was conducted on the instructions of City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs said that eradicating the scourge of drugs is the top priority for which all steps are being taken. Meanwhile, Police have netted four illegal arm holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession. Police carried out operations in different areas of Saddar Wah, Gujjar Khan, Dharmyal and Kahuta police stations. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress.

IGP lauds DSP for blood donations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar lauded DSP Imran Abbas Chadhar of Gujranwala for his efforts in organising blood donations for patients suffering from thalassemia and hemophilia. AIG Welfare Abdul Rahim Shirazi and PSO to IG Punjab SP Hamza Amanullah were also present. The IG said, "Officers like DSP Imran Abbas are a beacon of inspiration for the entire police force." According to a spokesperson for the Punjab police, DSP Imran Abbas has collected more than 7,000 blood donations over the past three-and-a-half years. Imran said that the collected blood donations, primarily from Punjab Police personnel, are provided to various organisations in need. Dr Usman Anwar shared that children of Punjab Police employees affected by thalassemia and hemophilia are given quarterly financial support of Rs 45,000. This year alone, over Rs 7 million has been allocated for such children, while last year.

Kazakhstan envoy meets with Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Wednesday met with Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Yerzhan Kistafen, and discussed for enhancing mutual cooperation between the two countries in the railway sector.

During the meeting, the minister emphasized that, "Pakistan is committed to further strengthening its relations with Kazakhstan, and we will take every possible step to enhance trade, economic and developmental ties between the two countries."

On the occasion, Yerzhan Kistafen highlighted that serious discussions are ongoing about several new and important agreements with the Government of Pakistan, aimed at further strengthening the economic relations between our two countries.

They discussed the enhancement of connectivity between Central Asian states and Pakistan via rail network. "New rail routes should be established for regional connectivity to improve trade relations and facilitate better communication between people," the minister added.

Hanif Abbasi said other brotherly Muslim countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan could also be included, which

would promote economic development and connectivity across the entire region.

He thanked the Ambassador and expressed, "We are ready to take the relations between the two countries to new heights and are eager to increase cooperation at all levels." The envoy reaffirmed that further cooperation in the railway sector between the two countries is possible, and it was discussed that in the future, imports from Central Asian states could be facilitated through rail.

The Ambassador noted that this step would not only improve trade relations but also further stabilize economic relations between the two countries.

This meeting is expected to be a crucial step in furthering economic and developmental ties between the two nations, opening new opportunities in the railway sector.

Yerzhan Kistafen also congratulated the minister Hanif on assuming the office of the Minister for Railways and expressed Kazakhstan's commitment to further strengthening ties with Pakistan through cooperation. At the end, Yerzhan Kistafen invited the minister to visit Kazakhstan to further enhance the relations between the two countries.

Two more brave soldiers embrace Shahadat, bringing toll to 13

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Indian Armed Forces blatant and cowardly aggression which was launched on the night of 6-7 May 2025, targeted innocent civilians, including women, children, and the elderly.

While defending the motherland with exemplary courage and unwavering resolve, two more valiant sons of the soil embraced shahadat today who were hospitalised,

bringing the total number of martyred personnel of the Pakistan Armed Forces to 13 while 78 have sustained injuries in the line of duty.

The martyred heroes are Havaldar Muhammad Naveed Shaheed of the Pakistan Army and Senior Technician Muhammad Ayaz Shaheed of the Pakistan Air Force.

Their noble sacrifice stands as a timeless testament to their courage, devotion to duty, and

unshakeable patriotism.

The Pakistan Armed Forces, in unity with the people of Pakistan, pay the highest tribute to these brave martyrs and extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Prayers are also offered for the swift and complete recovery of all those injured in the attack.

Their sacrifice will forever remain etched in the nation's collective memory, inspiring generations to come.

23,000 gain safe water as Sangjhani gets filtration plant

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Office, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), has launched a project to ensure access to clean drinking water in rural areas, under which three new solar-powered water filtration plants have been installed.

The initiative aims to reduce the spread of waterborne diseases in areas that previously lacked safe water sources. In this regard, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (East), Islamabad, and the Country Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Pakistan jointly inaugurated one of the plants in Sangjhani. This facility is one of three built in different rural parts of the capital.

The filtration plants have been set up to serve thousands of people in remote areas where access to clean water has remained limited. Many of these communities have long relied on unsafe water sources, putting residents at risk of water-borne

illnesses.

The project is a joint effort by the DC Office, WHO Pakistan, and the Government of Canada. In Sangjhani alone, the newly installed filtration plant will provide safe drinking water to over 23,000 people, including members of host communities and Afghan refugees. The solar-powered system ensures uninterrupted access to filtered water in areas where the electricity supply is often unstable. By using renewable energy, the initiative also reduces operational costs and supports environmental sustainability solutions.

During the inauguration ceremony, officials emphasized the importance of safe drinking water and its link to public health. They noted that improving water quality in underserved regions is a step toward controlling the spread of diseases caused by contaminated sources.

The new filtration plants are expected to bring major relief to residents, particu-

larly children, who are more vulnerable to infections linked to unsafe water. Community members welcomed the development, expressing hope that the new facilities would reduce illness and improve everyday living conditions. The DC Office plans to continue working with partners to improve water infrastructure in other rural parts of Islamabad.

As the capital's population grows and more pressure is placed on limited water resources, such initiatives are seen as essential to maintaining public health and preventing disease outbreaks. The project is also part of a wider push to improve living standards in areas often left out of mainstream development efforts.

The filtration plant in Sangjhani will operate daily and is designed to meet the needs of a large population without relying on the grid. Community members will be able to collect water from the plant throughout the day.

NAB partners with CCP to curb bid rigging

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration in combating bid rigging and promoting fair competition in public procurement.

The agreement was signed by the Secretary CCP, Maryam Parvez and NAB's Director General Operations, Muhammad Tahir, in the presence of Chairman NAB Lieutenant General (Retd) Nazir Ahmed and Chairman CCP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu.

Under this agreement, there will be an exchange of information between NAB and CCP to promote transparent procurement and fair competition. Both organizations will also collaborate on technical cooperation and joint strategies. The agreement will ensure access to bid data, identification of risks, and compliance with

relevant laws.

On this occasion, NAB Chairman, Lieutenant General (Retd) Nazir Ahmed said that NAB will play a pivotal role in ensuring transparency by strictly adhering to the rules and regulations in use of public resources.

He further emphasized that NAB will proceed against those engaging in illegal practices. He also mentioned that tackling corruption and collusion is a joint responsibility of both NAB and CCP. NAB will utilize CCP's expertise in data analysis to protect the national exchequer from the losses caused by corruption in public procurement.

Chairman NAB added that NAB will assist CCP in addressing cartels and collusion in public procurement. He emphasized that procurement procedures and laws have become outdated, and there is a need for more vigilant oversight of mega contracts.

Dr. Kabir Sidhu, Chairman of the Competition Commission, said that strict monitoring of cartelization in government tenders is essential. He confirmed that both CCP and NAB have agreed to undertake joint action against collusion in public procurement. He further stated that the exchange of data and evidence between the two institutions would expedite investigations. Recently, the CCP exposed cartelization in power distribution companies' tenders, and collusion in government procurement results in a significant loss of national resources.

Dr. Sidhu also mentioned that CCP can provide NAB with evidence-based data for criminal proceedings. To date, the CCP has identified 136 potential cartel cases, and it has made the largest recovery in its history, amounting to a fine of 100 million rupees.



ISLAMABAD: Members of the Sunni Ulema Council hold a rally to mark Thanksgiving Day, expressing gratitude for the success of Operation 'Bunyan al-Marsoos'. —APP Photo

PUC calls for 'Day of Gratitude' following national security triumph

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday expressed gratitude over what he described as a "decisive victory" for Pakistan in the face of recent regional tensions, calling for a nationwide 'Day of Gratitude' this Friday.

Speaking at a press conference here, Ashrafi noted that scholars from all schools of thought had joined in thanksgiving for the strength and unity demonstrated by Pakistan's armed forces and citizens.

Ashrafi strongly criticized India, particularly in the context of the recent Pahalgam incident, accusing it of placing "baseless allegations" on Pakistan. "India rejected Pakistan's offer for an international investigation and chose the path of confrontation instead," he claimed. These assertions could not be independently

verified.

"The Pakistani nation has proven that national defense rests in strong hands," Ashrafi remarked, commending the armed forces, including the army, air force, and navy, for what he called "discipline, restraint, and professionalism." Ashrafi asserted that no civilian targets were harmed by Pakistani forces and claimed India had requested a ceasefire due to battlefield setbacks.

Ashrafi thanked Muslim-majority countries including Turkey, Iran, and Azerbaijan for their diplomatic support. Chairman urged the international community, including the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to help resolve longstanding issues like Kashmir.

The Chairman PUC welcomed the reported lifting of certain U.S. sanctions on Syria and encouraged the Muslim world to actively engage in

resolving the Kashmir dispute. Ashrafi also warned against any potential Indian move to restrict Pakistan's water supply, saying, "If India tries to stop our water, we will stop its breath."

Ashrafi went on to say that Pakistan's armed forces, including its pilots, had acted with courage and spiritual conviction, and that many were prepared for martyrdom. "Even children in Pakistan are ready to serve in the defense of the country," he added.

Emphasizing interfaith unity, Ashrafi praised the contributions of Christian, Hindu, and Sikh communities during times of national crisis. "Non-Muslims are our younger brothers. We are one nation," he said. Chairman Ashrafi reiterated that Friday would be observed nationwide as a "Day of Gratitude" in commemoration of what he termed a "battle for truth."



RAWALPINDI: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visits CMH Rawalpindi to inquire about the well-being of those injured in the aftermath of the recent Indian attack on Pakistan. —APP Photo

Practical exams cancelled for 30 students after cell phones recovery

RAWALPINDI (APP): High School B-Block Rawalpindi, examiner board has cancelled the practical examination of 30 girl students after cell phones were recovered from them.

According to the details, the students were found copying the solutions to the given questions during the Chemistry practical exam.

According to the spokesman Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Rawalpindi, a surprise visit by the board inspection team was made at the practical lab of Government MC Girls

High School B-Block Rawalpindi, examiner board was found violating standard operating procedures (SOPs). Following initial investigations, the chemistry practical exams of 30 female students were canceled, and the examiner's mobile phone was confiscated for further inquiry.

The examiner was immediately suspended, and a replacement was appointed. The inspection was directly led by the Controller Examinations Tanveer Asghar Awan.

Moreover, a detailed report of the incident was submitted to the Chairman

Board Adnan Khan, who took serious notice and directed the School Education Department to take action under the PEDA Act. Both the chairman and controller reiterated that the board has zero tolerance for corruption or rule violations and will continue strict measures to uphold transparency in examinations.

Chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Rawalpindi, Muhammad Adnan Khan, and Controller of Examinations Tanveer Asghar Awan conducted surprise inspections of

various examination centers to ensure transparency and discipline in the examination process.

Chairman Adnan Khan said that the use of modern technology and online monitoring systems have significantly improved the fairness of exams, with all centers under constant surveillance by the Central Monitoring Cell.

He emphasized that the board has adopted a comprehensive strategy against cheating mafias, producing positive results, and strict legal actions are being taken against violators.

E-Procurement: Over 28,000 firms register on PPRA platform

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Managing Director Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi has announced the successful launch of Pakistan's e-procurement system with over 28,000 suppliers already registered, including 400 foreign firms the platform represents a significant step toward streamlined and transparent public procurement aligning with the Prime Minister's vision for a digital and transparent economy.

He stated that PPRA, following a robust framework and international standards, has introduced the e-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (e-PADS), which has automated the entire procurement process. "Thousands of vendors have already registered on this modern e-procurement platform, including foreign companies which can now register within 24 hours after verification by the Federal Board of Revenue and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan," Qureshi added.

MD PPRA said that suppliers can

participate in public procurement from their mobile phones or laptops, and obstacles such as visiting the office and paying for tender documents have been removed. All the tasks— from procurement planning, tender submission, and bid analysis to awarding contracts—are now performed through a safe, innovative, and user-friendly online platform, he added.

He elucidated that e-PADS is a foolproof automated system that entirely restricts human intervention, even no individual including MD PPRA could interfere in its operations. "Regular security audits are conducted and access to records is made possible through the log system in case of complaints. This inbuilt security system and reduction of human interference is further promoting transparency and accountability, he observed.

He further explained that in the wake of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, procurement being a provincial subject, provinces can

enact their own procurement bodies and regulation frameworks. Despite the fact, all provinces including Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, are using PPRA's e-PADS while Balochistan will adopt the platform in the coming month.

He apprised that internet facilities have been improved in remote areas of the country, enabling supplier's accessibility to PPRA's e-procurement system. If any issues arise, vendors can seek assistance from provincial and federal PPRA through its helplines, which operates from 8 AM to midnight, and can visit offices in person to resolve any complex situation, he added.

The Pakistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) is an autonomous regulatory body formed under the PPRA Ordinance. The main objective of the body is to regulate the procurement of goods, construction, and consultancy services in government institutions under the PPRA Rules 2004 to promote transparent, efficient, and fair procurement practices.

Authorities seize tanker

KHOST (BNA): Khost's anti-deforestation forces, operating under the provincial security command, intercepted a tanker truck loaded with smuggled timber in the center of the province. Spokesperson Tahir Ahrar of the Khost Security Command told Bakhtar News Agency that the "Green Unit" tasked with forest protection, in collaboration with Shamal Domanda Police, confiscated the vehicle transporting illegally logged firewood to Kabul Province.

The Frontier Post

Zulqaidah 17, 1446 — Thursday, May 15, 2025

Development projects started

SAMANGAN (BNA): Officials from Samangan Province's Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department have announced the commencement of 30 projects valued at nearly 48 million Afghanis. Molavi Akhtar Mohammad Misbah, the department's director, told Bakhtar News Agency that the projects—funded by the World Bank at a cost of 47,697,750 Afghanis—are being implemented in Khurm Sarbagh District.

IE welcomes Trump's move as constructive

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry says the recent announcement by the US Department of Homeland Security on the suspension of the Temporary Protective Program Status (TPS) program for Afghans was a "positive step" and acknowledgement of an improved situation in Afghanistan.

The Trump administration said Monday it was ending the TPS program that offered deportation protection to thousands of people from Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said Wednesday this move "affirms progress in Afghanistan's security and economic environment".

The IEA views this as "a clear recognition of progress made in national

security, economy and other areas".

According to a statement, "Afghanistan is the shared home of all Afghans, and all have the right to free movement."

The IEA also stated that it is ready to engage in constructive dialogue with the US and other countries regarding the repatriation of Afghans who no longer meet criteria to remain in host countries.

"IEA underscores the importance of bilateral mechanisms and consular services for its citizens, in line with established standards, to prevent complications, address national security concerns, and ensure the dignity and rights of returnees," the statement read.

The US Department of Homeland Security said Monday it will end the program on July 12.

The TPS program allows migrants to get work permits and temporary reprieve from deportation if the US government determines it is unsafe for them to return to their home countries due to war, natural disaster or other issues.

Over 8,000 Afghans were approved for TPS as of last year, according to federal statistics.

TPS was last extended for Afghanistan in 2023, and it was set to expire in May unless the Trump administration chose to grant another extension.

"This decision is unconscionable and will have long-lasting ripple effects," AfghanEvac, a group that helps relocate Afghans, said in a post on X early this week.

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The US Department of Homeland Security said

105 ancient coins moved to museum

PAKTIA (Khaama Press): Authorities in Paktia discovered 105 ancient coins, seizing them from smugglers and transferring them to the local museum.

Cultural officials in Afghanistan's Paktia province have announced the discovery and seizure of more than 100 ancient coins. These historical artifacts, recovered by local security forces, were subsequently transferred to the provincial museum for safekeeping and documentation.

According to the Paktia Directorate of Information and Culture, the operation was carried out in cooperation with investigative bodies and resulted in the confiscation of 105 coins believed to be of significant archaeological value. The coins are now housed in the local museum, where preservation measures are underway.

Local authorities have stated that this discovery is part of broader efforts to curb the smuggling of cultural and historical artifacts in the region. They also noted that over the past 14 years, hundreds of ancient items have been voluntarily turned in by residents or recovered by officials, reflecting a growing public awareness of cultural preservation.

Officials in Paktia report that the directive has led to measurable success in identifying and recovering looted artifacts before they leave the country.

Paktia is known for its deep-rooted historical legacy, making it a prime target for illegal antiquities trafficking. In recent years, cultural officials have voiced increasing concern over the loss of irreplaceable artifacts to foreign markets. The current recovery efforts, paired with strengthened museum infrastructure and regulatory mandates, are aimed at reversing this trend and preserving Afghanistan's national identity.

OCHA reports sharp drop in humanitarian funding

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has announced a significant reduction in funding for humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, prompting a re-prioritization of aid delivery across the country.

In a statement released, via its official X account, OCHA said that assistance efforts have been refocused to address the most severe needs of 12.5 million people.

The agency stated that it requires \$1.62 billion to reach the most vulnerable populations.

For the entirety of 2025, OCHA has requested a total of \$2.42 billion to fund humanitarian operations in Afghanistan.

However, due to limited financial resources, only 145 out of 401 districts across the country have been designated as high-priority areas for aid delivery.

Irgashev emphasized the expanding ties between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan since the establishment of the Islamic

IE officials seek enhanced medical support from MSF

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Acting Minister of Public Health and the Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have emphasized that the Islamic Emirate is paying close attention to the country's health sector.

In separate meetings with Mickael Le Paih, the head of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Afghanistan, the two officials of the Islamic Emirate urged for closer cooperation in advancing the health sector, improving health services for citizens, and enhancing the capacity of healthcare workers.

Zia Ahmad Takal, head of the public relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated: "Mr. Le Paih expressed his gratitude for the cooperation from the Islamic Emirate, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and assured continued support in the areas of maternal and child health and the capacity building of health personnel."

During these meetings, Le Paih emphasized the importance of improving and expanding health services in Afghanistan and reaffirmed that MSF will continue its support for the country's health sector.

Afghan doctors consider the presence of organizations like MSF particularly beneficial and valuable for delivering health services, especially in remote areas.

Dr. Asadullah Halimi stated: "Whether among



mothers and children or between men and women, non-communicable diseases appear everywhere and must be given special attention. Their projects should be expanded because deaths from non-communicable diseases have increased."

Another doctor in Kabul, Tamimi Hakimi, added: "We need such organizations, whether foreign or domestic, whose staff are

mostly Afghans. Polio and maternal and child mortality, which occur due to the lack of health personnel and supplies in remote provinces, are serious issues where we need help."

Previously, the Ministry of Public Health had emphasized the goal of self-sufficiency in the country's health sector and stated that efforts are ongoing to achieve this goal.

Transport Ministry installs GPS in vehicles to boost safety

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation says the process of installing GPS devices in vehicles is ongoing.

These devices, also known as smart locks, allow vehicles to be tracked at all times and help control speed, playing a significant role in preventing traffic accidents.

Hekmatullah Asifi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, told TOLOnews: "The Ministry has installed more than eight thousand GPS devices in passenger and cargo vehicles. Installing these devices provides many facilities for citizens and is

a significant step for preventing traffic incidents and ensuring passenger safety."

Meanwhile, some drivers and transport companies also consider the installation of GPS devices essential for monitoring vehicle speed and even assessing drivers' behavior. They believe GPS contributes to enhancing passenger safety.

Driver Wali Mohammad said: "The advantage of installing this device is that the government can monitor. The authorities can know where you are, how you're driving, and if your speed is high, they can call you and say your speed is too high, putting passen-

gers' lives at risk, so reduce it." Tawfiq Ahmad, a representative of a transport company, said: "Installing GPS is a convenience and helps keep vehicles under control."

Meanwhile, businessmen consider the installation of tracking devices on commercial, transit, and passenger vehicles effective for transport security and safe delivery of passengers and goods.

Businessman Omid Haidari told a TOLOnews reporter: "When we export to foreign countries, all vehicles are equipped with GPS, which facilitates and can enhance the process of

exports and imports. This initiative also contributes to progress in the transport sector."

The legal speed limit for passenger vehicles is set at 105 km/h, and these devices report any violations. Furthermore, the central office remains in contact with drivers and continuously monitors their speed.

This plan, developed in 2022, is said to be part of the caretaker government's efforts to regulate transportation and utilize modern technologies. It is expected that the expansion of this system will significantly increase transparency and efficiency in the country's transit sector.

Afghanistan delegation presents gift to Uzbekistan

KABUL(BNA): A delegation from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, led by Dr. Mullah Abdul Wasea, General-Director of the Prime Minister's Office, recently visited Uzbekistan to strengthen bilateral ties.

During their visit, the delegation presented gift of 4,000 square meters of marble from the Chesht Sharif mine in Herat—designated for the shrine of Imam Bukhari.

The ceremony took place at the International Common Market in Sarkhan Darya Province, attended by key officials including Esmatullah Irgashev, Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, and Ogulbek Kasimov, Governor of Sarkhan Darya Province.

Irgashev emphasized the expanding ties between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan since the establishment of the Islamic



Emirate, noting improvements in cultural, social, political, and economic areas. He stressed the importance of these developments at the regional level and highlighted Uzbekistan's commitment to enhancing cooperation with Afghanistan.

Dr. Mullah Abdul Wasea echoed this sentiment, expressing the desire for amicable relations with all neighboring countries based on mutual respect. He urged Uzbek investors to explore opportunities in Afghanistan's agriculture, mining, health, and energy

sectors.

Mullah Mohammad Yousuf Wafa, the governor of Balkh, remarked on the historical ties between Balkh and Bukhara, commending Uzbekistan's cultural and humanitarian efforts towards Afghanistan and their ongoing support.

Animal product processing center opened



GHAZNI (TOLOnews): An animal products processing center has been inaugurated in Khwaja Omari district of Ghazni province with financial support from the Netherlands Committee.

This newly established center for processing animal products has the capacity to process around 2,000 liters of milk in a 24-hour period.

Feraidoon Qayoumi, the program officer of the Netherlands Committee in Ghazni, told TOLOnews: "More than a hundred livestock owners bring milk to this center daily. If production increases, the center can process up to 2,000 liters of milk every 24 hours."

Meanwhile, several livestock owners in the provi-

nce are calling on officials to address their challenges. They say that more animal product processing centers should be established, and there should be marketing for their products.

Ghulam Sanayee, a livestock owner in Ghazni, said: "This is a processing center. The more such centers there are, the better. Even if ten centers are established, it would benefit the people."

Ahmad Zia, another livestock owner in Ghazni, said: "Facilities should be set up to store our yogurt and milk. This way, these products could be sold at higher prices like milk."

The Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Ghazni says efforts are underway to

establish more animal product processing centers in various districts of the province to support livestock owners.

Mohammad Esmail Shakeeb, the director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Ghazni, said: "We are trying, through the private sector, cooperating organizations, or the Ministry of Agriculture, to increase the number of dairy processing centers."

Although most residents of remote areas in Ghazni sustain their daily livelihoods through farming and livestock, only two animal product processing centers are currently active in the province, and most animal products are processed traditionally and marketed accordingly.

IE delegation attends Kazan Economic Forum



KABUL (BNA): A high-ranking delegation of the Islamic Emirate, led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, departed for the Republic of Tatarstan today, Wednesday to attend in the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum.

According to the Economic Deputy Office of the Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund and members of the delegation are expected to hold meetings

on the sidelines of the forum with senior officials from various countries. These discussions aim to explore investment opportunities, economic cooperation, and trade relations between Afghanistan and regional as well as global countries.

It is stated that the Kazan International Economic Forum is one of the most important regional economic gatherings, held annually in the Republic of Tatarstan with the participation of high-level representatives from

different countries.

Afghanistan's participation in this event is regarded as a step toward attracting investment, showcasing the country's economic potential, and strengthening global economic interactions.

It is worth noting that this is not the first time representatives of the Islamic Emirate are participating in such events; however, attending the Kazan Economic Forum is particularly significant due to the high level of international participation.

Taliban dismiss more than 200 university staff in southeastern Afghanistan: Sources

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban have dismissed more than 200 professors and university employees in the southeastern provinces of Khost and Paktia as part of a sweeping campaign to downsize public institutions, according to four academic and administrative sources familiar with the matter.

In Khost, 120 faculty and staff members at Sheikh Zayed University were removed from their posts in a single day, a source at the university told Amu. The majority of those dismissed held advanced degrees, including master's and doctorates, and had worked in government prior to the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

In neighboring Paktia,

three sources confirmed that 90 employees at the province's public university were also terminated.

Among those dismissed were faculty members, junior administrative staff, and medical personnel affiliated with the university hospital.

The mass firings appear to align with a broader directive reportedly issued by Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada to reduce the size of public sector institutions by 20 percent, including within the Taliban's own security forces.

A source close to Sheikh Zayed University said many of those let go were seen as politically inconvenient, either because of their previous affiliations with the former Afghan

government or because of academic independence that clashed with Taliban ideology.

Mohammad Asif Seddiqui, a former deputy speaker of the Afghan Senate, told Amu that the dismissals may reflect deeper internal tensions within the Taliban's ranks. "Hibatullah Akhundzada wants to remove individuals aligned with the Haqqani network or other factions that oppose him," Seddiqui said. "There are also financial motives, as the Taliban struggle with budget constraints. They are sidelining experts from the republic era after having learned from them, and replacing them with loyalists."

In Logar Province, simi-

lar purges are underway. A Taliban source told Amu that 1,080 members of the Taliban's security forces had been removed from their positions, including 600 from the police command, 400 from the Defense Ministry, and 80 from intelligence units.

Sources allege that the firings have been selective, sparing individuals with close ties to Taliban leadership, while disproportionately affecting those without political backing or those who had previously served in the former government.

Some civil servants say the layoffs appear to be targeting women and former republic-era staff under the guise of administrative reform. Several officials

interviewed by Amu expressed concern that the process lacks transparency and fairness.

Economic experts warn that the reduction of qualified personnel could exacerbate the country's already fragile economic conditions. Critics argue that the Taliban's reliance on loyalty over expertise risks further institutional degradation.

While the Taliban have yet to issue an official response, the Taliban's chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, acknowledged the downsizing earlier this month in an interview with Taliban-run state television. He described the move as part of efforts to "streamline" governance.

PPP to celebrate Pakistan victory against India today

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said the whole Pakistani nation is celebrating this historic win together. Celebrations in this regard are also being organized by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). A rally has been organized on Wednesday in Hyderabad, and more celebrations have also been planned by the Sindh government and the PPP for tomorrow.

He underlined the point that Pakistan always remained active in the war against terrorism. India was enjoying the fruits of terrorism when Pakistan was fighting it. He hinted that Indian and terrorist groups might have common interests that could be used to undermine the efforts of Western nations in their battle against terrorism and could possibly support each other on this front.

Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that terrorist India imposed a war on peaceful Pakistan through acts of terrorism, to which Pakistan gave a befitting response. He said that India now stands isolated on the global stage and has suffered a historic defeat-one that serves as a powerful lesson for the country.

He added that the entire nation is proud of the achievements of Pakistan's armed forces, particularly the exceptional bravery of Pakistan Air Force pilots. How Pakistani pilots annihilated Indian planes-once a matter of pride for India-is a world example of bravery and military prowess. How these planes were destroyed is being talked of around the world.

He added that in this war, Pakistan broke the pride related to Indian fighter aircraft like the Rafale and MiG-29 and successfully downed 84 Israeli-made drones. The destruction of the Rafale jets, he said, has cast serious doubts over India's air superiority on the international stage.

He said that, Alhamdulillah, following the ceasefire, Pakistan gained a significant diplomatic advantage over India. International media reported that India initiated the ceasefire, which further strengthened Pakistan's position on the global stage. Pakistan received support from friendly nations, and international analysts regarded the conflict as both a military and diplomatic success for Pakistan. The National Interest described it as a clear victory for Pakistan, while The Financial Times noted that the ceasefire had given Pakistan a diplomatic edge.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam



Memon added that, in contrast to India, Pakistan had called for an impartial and internationally monitored investigation into the Pahalgam incident. India, however, responded with an extreme action without providing any evidence. He criticized Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for endangering the lives of 1.5 billion people across the subcontinent. He recalled that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had rightly referred to Modi as the "Butcher of Gujarat" and the "Butcher of Kashmir." However, in light of recent events, he said, it is now appropriate to call Narendra Modi the "Butcher of South Asia." He emphasized that the war initiated by Modi had the potential to result in extremely grave consequences for the entire region.

He stated that Narendra Modi imposed war on Pakistan with the intention of waging a prolonged conflict, aiming to portray himself as an "Asian Tiger." However, he failed miserably in achieving that objective. Pakistan had made its position clear: if you start it, we will finish it-and that the timing and target would be of Pakistan's choosing. Pakistan fulfilled that commitment.

He added that while India initially targeted innocent civilians, Pakistan responded with precision and professionalism. Pakistani fighter pilots selectively targeted Indian military aircraft-an action that stands as an unprecedented example of restraint and strategic excellence in modern warfare.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Modi's track record clearly shows he exploits incidents for political gain rather than delivering justice or promoting internal accountability. He emphasized that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation and welcomes President Trump's efforts to promote peace.

He said, India not only failed to acknowledge the positive role played by the US President, but also criticized him for urging restraint and discouraging reckless military action.

According to Memon, anyone who opposes Modi's war-mongering agenda is labeled an enemy by him. He said that now it must be clear to the world who the real enemy of peace is. Pakistan wants peace, whereas Modi promotes hatred and exports it.

He explained that India has been the actual beneficiary of the war on terror globally. Post-9/11, India has capitalized on the situation by delegitimizing the rightful struggle for self-determination as terrorism. India used terrorist attacks as a pretext for years to pursue its hate-based strategic interests. He noted that after the Pahalgam incident, India unilaterally suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, and after the Balakot incident, it abrogated Articles 370 and 35A of its constitution.

Despite the decades-long struggle of the Kashmiri people, India has consistently marginalized and ignored their demands, further alienating them from the democratic process. Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that all of India's neighboring countries are increasingly unhappy and uneasy with its behavior. Whether it's China, Bangladesh, or Nepal-none are satisfied with India's actions.

He praised the role of Pakistani media during the recent events, saying that the way media outlets advocated for Pakistan's stance deserves commendation. In contrast, India imposed strict restrictions on Pakistani media, YouTubers, vloggers, and artists-individuals widely recognized as ambassadors of peace and culture. This, he said, is a clear reflection of India's narrow-mindedness and intolerance.

He said that this war was fought by the entire nation-from those who prayed for the armed forces from their homes to the media representatives who actively defended Pakistan's narrative. Everyone played a role. He highlighted that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari strongly advocated for Pakistan on the international stage. In this war, we witnessed the legacy and spirit of three generations of the Pakistan People's Party: Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, President Asif Ali Zardari, and now Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Their leadership and commitment were reflected in Pakistan's unified stance during this critical time.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the international media was eager to hear Pakistan's position, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari effectively presented it in a comprehensive and articulate manner. He said that a new Pakistan has emerged after the war-a Pakistan that stood united during a time of great challenge.



RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari visited CMH to inquire after the health of Jawans of Pakistan Army and civilians who were injured during the Indian aggression.

Mubarak Zeb residence bombed

F.P. Report

KHAR: Advisor to the Prime Minister and Member National Assembly Mubarak Zeb residence in Bajaur has been bombed which has damaged the main gate of his house, but fortunately, no casualty reported, on Wednesday.

The explosion took place in the Shah Nari area of Khar Tehsil, Bajaur. According to district police officer Bajaur, Waqas Rafiq, a bomb was planted near the house and exploded with a loud blast. The blast completely destroyed the gate of Mubarak Zeb's house.

DPO added that no one was injured in the blast, as Mubarak Zeb was not present at home at the time of the explosion. The police have initiated an investigation into the incident.

Advisor to the Prime Minister Mubarak Zeb took to Facebook to share details of the incident, saying that his residence main gate was blown up with a bomb. He expressed gratitude that no one was injured and vowed that such cowardly acts would not deter him from pursuing his goals.

He stated that he would continue to work towards realizing his martyred brother's vision. The incident highlights the security concerns and threats faced by public figures in the region.

80 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP): Gaza rescuers said at least 80 people were killed in Israeli bombardment across the Palestinian territory on Wednesday, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to US envoy Steve Witkoff about the release of hostages.

Negotiations for the release of the captives held in Gaza have been ongoing, with the latest talks taking place in the Qatari capital Doha, where US President Donald Trump was visiting on Wednesday. Netanyahu's office said the premier had discussed with Witkoff and his negotiating team "the issue of the hostages and the missing."

Witkoff later said Trump had "a really productive conversation" with the Qatari emir about a Gaza deal, adding that "we are moving along and we have a good plan together." Fighting meanwhile raged in Gaza, where civil defense official Mohammed Al-Mughayyir told AFP 80 people had been killed by Israeli bombardment since dawn, including 59 in the north.

AFP footage from the aftermath of a strike in Jabalia, northern Gaza, showed mounds of rubble and twisted metal from collapsed buildings, including young children, picked through the debris in search of belongings. Footage of mourners in northern Gaza showed women in tears as they knelt next to bodies wrapped in bloodstained white shrouds.

"It's a nine-month-old baby. What did he do?" one of them cried out. Hasan Moqbel, a Palestinian who lost relatives, told AFP: "There are no homes fit for living. I have no shelter, no food, no water.

Wings of valor - How PAF soared amid rising tensions

Izmi Herlani

IN the shadow of the Pehlgam incident, a storm brewed across the skies of South Asia. The drums of conflict beat louder as tensions between India and Pakistan reached a boiling point. Amidst this charged atmosphere, Pakistan Air Force emerged-not just as a guardian of the skies, but as a symbol of courage, precision and unwavering national spirit.

When clouds of war loomed heavy, it was the PAF that rose with unmatched resolve. The events that followed weren't merely military maneuvers-they were defining moments of modern aerial warfare, carved with boldness and brilliance. The heroism displayed during response to Indian Operation Sindoor and the masterstroke of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos are tales that will echo through generations-tales of grit, skill and unshakable patriotism.

The Pehlgam incident was more than just a skirmish; it was a spark that ignited a regional standoff. As Indian forces mobilized near the Line of Control, Pakistan stood firm. The PAF didn't just prepare-it responded with strength

and strategy, determined to protect every inch of the homeland.

During India's aggressive military campaign-Operation Sindoor-it was the PAF that turned the tide. In a stunning display of aerial prowess, five Indian fighter jets were taken down with remarkable precision. These weren't just victories in the air-they were statements of resilience. India's lethal Heron UAV and killer drones, meant to unsettle and surveil, met their fate at the hands of Pakistan's vigilant defenders. By shooting down these threats, PAF shattered India's reconnaissance efforts and safeguarded its skies with pride. But the story didn't end there.

With the fire of retaliation burning bright, the PAF launched Operation Bunyanum Marsoos-a bold counterstrike in response to unprovoked aggression. This wasn't a haphazard move; it was a meticulously crafted mission, targeting India's military backbone. Airfields, defense systems, logistics hubs and ammunition stores-each strike was delivered with pinpoint accuracy. The message was clear: Pakistan would never bow to intimidation.

What made this operation even more extraordinary was the flawless execution.

Not a single PAF asset was lost. That's not just operational success-it's a testament to the brilliance of its leadership and the fierce dedication of every officer, airman and civilian of PAF. Behind every mission, there stood visionary commanders-leaders who didn't just give orders, but inspired their teams to transcend limits. They embraced modern warfare, pushed for cutting-edge training, and cultivated unity across branches. Their foresight transformed challenges into opportunities, forging a force that was agile, lethal, and ready for any storm.

These operations weren't just military wins-they were moral victories. They lifted the nation's spirit, reminded the world of Pakistan's strength, and reaffirmed the Air Force's role as the guardian of the skies and the soul of the nation's defense.

As the regional balance remains delicate, the Pakistan Air Force stands vigilant. It is more than a fleet of fighter jets-it is a symbol of national pride, discipline and an enduring will to protect peace. Guided by visionary leadership and fortified by unwavering resolve, the PAF is ready to face whatever lies ahead, writing new chapters of valor in the sky.

PHC upholds sentences awarded by military courts

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Fazal Subhan has dismissed petitions filed by three convicts, upholding the sentences awarded to them by a military court, on Wednesday.

The petitions were filed by Izzat Begum, Dilshad Begum, and Bakht Nasiba, challenging the sentences awarded to their family members by a military court.

The convicts, Sher Rahman, Syed Usman Shah, and Umar Ali, were sentenced to 20 years, 16 years, and life imprisonment, respectively, on charges of having links with banned organizations.

The petitioners claimed that the convicts were civilians and could not be tried under the Army Act. They argued that the sentences were unconstitutional and that the military court had failed to follow due process. The petitions also claimed that the convicts had been in custody for over 15 years and had not been provided with the right to choose their own lawyers.

The Additional Attorney General, Sana Ullah, argued that the convicts had been tried and sentenced in accordance with the law. He stated that the military court had followed due process and that the convicts had been provided with their chosen lawyers. Additional Attorney General also argued that the convicts had confessed to their crimes before a judicial magistrate and that the sentences were based on solid evidence.

PHC divisional bench

comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Fazl Subhan, dismissed the petitions after hearing arguments from both sides. The court held that the military court's sentences were lawful and that the petitioners had failed to demonstrate any irregularities in the trial.

The court also noted that its powers of judicial review in such cases are limited to examining whether the trial was conducted in accordance with the law and whether any irregularities had occurred.

Court restrain Anti-corruption from actions against ex CM Mahmood Khan: A divisional bench of Acting Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Ijaz Khan has granted permission to former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan to withdraw his petition seeking cancellation of a First Information Report (FIR) registered against him by the Anti-Corruption Department. The court also restrained the Anti-corruption from taking any action against Mahmood Khan.

The counsel Sultan Muhammad Khan advocate argued that the FIR was registered against Mahmood Khan and claimed that he was not provided with any information about the case despite approaching the high court.

The lawyer argued that the FIR was a result of political vendetta, as Khan had left the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and formed his own party. The lawyer, Sultan Muhammad Khan, argued that the FIR was registered with mala fide intentions and that the petition being harassed. He claimed that the Anti-

Corruption Department was trying to target Khan due to his political affiliation.

The counsel cited previous judgments of the superior courts, emphasizing that every citizen has the right to defend themselves. The court's decision allows Khan to file a new petition seeking cancellation of the FIR, which will be heard and decided on its merits.

Court to hear petition against amendments in LG Act: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fahim Wali adjourned the hearing of a petition challenging the amendments made to the Local Government Act 2022 by the provincial government, which stripped elected representatives of their powers, on Wednesday.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai advocate argued that the provincial government amended the Local Government Act after the local government elections in 2022, depriving the elected representatives of their powers, including the authority to utilize funds.

The petitioners claimed that the amendments transferred most of the powers from the Act to the rules, effectively stripping the local government representatives of their authority. The amendments to sections 23A and 25 of the Local Government Act have paralyzed the local government system for the past three years due to the lack of powers and funds, the lawyer added. Justice Syed Arshad Ali directed the petitioners to bring their written arguments and informed them that the court would hear detailed arguments on the petition today (Thursday).

Massive blackout in Spain, Portugal

MADRID (Reuters): An abrupt loss of power generation at a substation in Granada, followed by failures seconds later in Badajoz and Seville, triggered an unprecedented blackout across Spain and Portugal on April 28, Spain's energy minister said on Wednesday.

Energy Minister Sara Aagesen told lawmakers that the three initial incidents, whose cause has yet to be determined, led to a generation loss of 2.2 gigawatts of electricity, which triggered a series of grid disconnections. Several investigations are looking into the power outage, but it is the first time Spanish authorities have pointed to a specific origin. Establishing the cause of the outage will take time and there will likely be no simple answers to what appears to be a complex issue, Aagesen said.

"We are analysing millions of pieces of data. We also continue to make progress in identifying where these generation losses occurred and we already know that they started in Granada, Badajoz and Seville," Aagesen said. She said the government's investigation is also looking at reports by operators of volatility in the days before the blackout and is examining excessive voltage as one possible cause for the loss of generation.

Investigators, Aagesen said, had ruled out any cyber-attack on grid operator REE, an imbalance in supply and demand or insufficient grid capacity. She also denied suggestions by some opposition lawmakers that the government had received and ignored warnings from experts that a major blackout could occur, adding that it would be premature to attribute responsibilities until it's known what happened that day. "There was no alert, no warning," she said. Spain's use of renewable energy as an increasing part of its electricity generation has come under scrutiny since the blackout, as has its plan to phase out nuclear energy by 2035. Critics have said that one possible contributor to the outage may have been a lack of so-called "grid inertia" because of the relatively small share of nuclear and fossil fuel generation in Spain's power mix.

IHC reserves decision on plea seeking Imran's release

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday reserved its verdict regarding the objections on petition seeking release of PTI founder on parole.

Acting Chief Justice Sardar Sarfraz Dogar, hearing the case, said that the court would pass an order regarding the objections of registrar on the petition. At the outset of hearing, Justice Dogar inquired the petitioner's lawyer that if they want to take this matter to the Division Bench. Lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa said that the Assistant Registrar raised objection stating the plea as non-maintainable. This court has to see whether the application is admissible or not.

Khosa argued that anyone is respectful to this court. There is an impres-

sion that this person is not getting justice which should be end. he said. Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur appeared before the court with his lawyer Latif Khosa.

The court said, that this is the government's job, you go to it, why did you come here. The lawyer said that probation and parole are two separate matters. The appeal is pending with you, if the government does not entertain our request. The court said that if the government does not do it, then come.

Khosa said that they have already filed an application and it is still pending with the provincial government. The court said that this is not even within our jurisdiction. The lawyer said that the presence of the founder of PTI outside is very important in the current situation. This application also comes within your

jurisdiction, he said. The court asked, do you want to send this application to the division bench.

The prosecutor said that the contempt of court applications related to meetings were also under hearing. He said that the applications for meetings were approved, the contempt of court applications are still pending.

Latif Khosa said that this week, case seeking suspension of sentence in 190 million pounds reference was to be fixed but it was not scheduled. This parole case should also be fixed along with the suspended sentence case, the lawyer prayed. Justice Dogar remarked that this is a completely different matter. I will look into it separately. The court said that it will pass an order regarding the objections of office and adjourned the case.

Iran must cease support of proxies as part of N-deal: Trump

RIYADH (AP): President Donald Trump told Gulf leaders on Wednesday that he urgently wants "to make a deal" with Iran to wind down its nuclear program but that Tehran must end its support of proxy groups throughout the region as part of any potential agreement.

Iran "must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars, and permanently and verifiably cease pursuit of nuclear weapons," Trump said in remarks at a meeting of leaders from the Gulf Cooperation Council hosted by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the Saudi capital. "They cannot have a nuclear weapon." The US and Iran have engaged in four rounds of talks since early last month focused on Iran's nuclear program. Trump has repeatedly said he believes brokering a deal is possible, but that the window is closing.

The president's strongly worded push on Iran to cease support of Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthis in Yemen come as its proxy network has faced signifi-

Qatar Airways signs deal for 160 Boeing jets during Trump visit

DOHA (Reuters): State carrier Qatar Airways signed a deal on Wednesday to purchase jets from US manufacturer Boeing during President Donald Trump's visit to the Gulf Arab country. Trump said the deal was worth \$200 billion and included 160 jets. Trump and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani witnessed the signing ceremony in Doha. The deal was signed during Trump's second stop on a tour of Gulf states after he struck a string of deals with Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

Trump said Boeing CEO Kelly Orterberg, who signed the deal with Qatar Airways CEO Badr Mohammed Al-Meer next to Trump and the Qatari emir, told him "it's the largest order of jets in the history of Boeing, that's good". Trump added: "It's over \$200 billion but 160 in terms of the jets, that's fantastic. So that's a record, Kelly, and congratulations to Boeing. Get those planes out there, get them out there."

cant setbacks in the 19 months since Hamas launched its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel. In Iran, Foreign Minister Araghchi called Trump's remarks "deceitful" but did not directly address the US leader's call on Iran to cease support of proxy groups.

Trump added that he believed the moment was ripe "for a future free from the grip of Hezbollah terrorists." Hezbollah is severely weakened after its war last year

with Israel in which much of its top leadership was killed, and after losing a key ally with the fall of former Syrian President Bashar Assad, a conduit for Iran to send arms.

Trump's comments on Iran came after he met Wednesday with Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, a face-to-face engagement with the one-time insurgent leader who spent years imprisoned by US forces after being captured in Iraq.