

PTI's new media policy
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: PTI is working on a media policy to maintain discipline within the party. As per the outlines of new policy, leaders would be barred from issuing baseless statements. All the party spokesmen and leaders will be allowed to adopt only one statement publicly. Only party spokespersons and appointed leaders will be allowed to make statements.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

Bilawal congratulates nation
F.P. Report
KARACHI: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has congratulated the nation and the Pakistan Armed Forces on the success of Operation Bunyanum Marsous. He stated that this success has shattered India's military superiority in the region. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that today is a day to pay tribute to the bravery and courage of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

Vol. XXXIXII No. 108 Regd. No. 241 ZIQAAD 19 1446 -- SATURDAY, MAY 17 2025 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30

PM says resolution of Kashmir issue imperative for peace

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday said Pakistan and India should come to the negotiating table and resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir for sustainable peace in the region.

He was speaking at a ceremony held at Pakistan Monument to observe Youm-e-Tashakur. He said Pakistan wanted to live as a peaceful neighbour, adding it was upto India and Pakistan to become peaceful neighbours or act otherwise. Pakistan and India fought three wars but achieved nothing, he said adding, "We should talk about Kashmir issue, trade and terrorism."

He recounted that Pakistan lost 90,000 of its people in the war against terrorism besides enduring economic losses worth \$ 150 billion." He said Youm-e-Tashakur was a unique moment in the history as the nation celebrated the success of Pakistan's armed forces against India. This moment came after a heart breaking incident faced by Pakistan 50 years ago in 1971, he added.

The prime minister said during Marka-e-Haq, millions of Pakistanis were praying for the success of the brave officers and personnel of Pakistan Navy, Air Force, and Army so that the enemy could never cast an evil eye towards Pakistan. He said India had unleashed baseless propaganda against Pakistan about the Pahalagam incident. The prime minister noted that India rejected the offer made to it for an investigation at an international level about the Pahalagam incident and attacked Pakistan and martyred children, youth and mothers.

The enemy attacked inside Pakistan and in response Pakistan shot down six planes of India including MIG and Rafale planes and smashed the enemy's desire to impose regional hegemony, he continued. He said during the mid night

of May 9 and 10, India fired missiles in different areas of Pakistan, adding after getting his approval, the Chief of Army Staff responded with an attack on the air bases and military infrastructure of India.

During the whole situation, the military leadership was in contact with him, he recalled. In a few hours, Pakistan gave a befitting response to India which was a surprise for friends and foes alike, he added. He said after the successful attack of Pakistan on India, the Chief of Army Staff went ahead to accept ceasefire offer made by India.

India spent billions of dollars to stockpile weapons to impose its regional hegemony and was confident about its superiority in the battlefield but Pakistan crushed its false vanity, he remarked. Shehbaz Sharif said during the whole situation, the nation from Peshawar to Karachi was united and stood shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces.

He said Pakistan was created after hundreds of thousands of people sacrificed their lives in 1947 and mounted a great struggle for independence. "Now we have to achieve great status among the comity of the nations. Now the nation will have to make economic progress by utilizing the resources available. Pakistan is endowed with immense talent and human resources," he stressed.

He thanked the brotherly and friendly countries including United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United States for supporting Pakistan. He also thanked US President Donald Trump for his efforts to restore peace in the region.

He said Pakistan could not have successfully defended itself without the professional expertise and preparedness of the armed forces. He thanked Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu

and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf for their leadership during the Marka-e-Haq. The federal ministers, chiefs of the armed forces, high ranking military and civil officials and prominent people from all walks of life attended the event.

Shehbaz hoists flag to mark Youm-e-Tashakkur: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hoisted the national flag at the PM House to mark Youm-e-Tashakur (Thanksgiving Day).

Youm-e-Tashakur is being observed across the country to thank Allah Almighty for the magnificent success and victory of Pakistan against the open aggression and provocation of India. In his message in connection with the day, the prime minister highlighted that during the midnight of May 6 and May 7, India while acting cowardly attacked Pakistan resulting in the martyrdom of innocent Pakistani citizens and we were forced to respond for the sake of these innocent citizens.

He said the world saw that in just a few hours, an enemy which was many times bigger came to its knees, and the planes which were the pride of India turned into ashes and became a sign of a bitter lesson. "Our Shaheens hammered the enemy and gave it a befitting reply," he said, adding the brave and professional armed forces of Pakistan effectively and fully responded in the language of the enemy and wrote a golden chapter in the military history and foiled the designs of the enemy.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also visited the residence of Squadron Leader Usman Yousaf Shaheed, who was martyred during the recent Ma'arka-e-Haq (Battle of Truth) against India. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar accompanied the prime minister.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir visited CMH to meet solders injured during Marka-e-Haq.

Nation observe Thanksgiving Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Youm-e-Tashakur (Thanksgiving Day) is being observed across the country on Thursday to commemorate the historic victory of Marka-e-Haq and to pay tribute to the valiant armed forces and the resilient people of Pakistan.

The nation is passionately observing this historic victory with national zeal, and paying homage to the Almighty, besides prayers for our martyrs. The day dawned with special prayers in Mosques and recitation of Holy Quran.

Thirty-one-gun salute after Fajr Prayar in the Federal Capital and a twenty-one-gun salute at provincial capitals was boomed to mark the Day. Corps Commander Lahore (IV Corps), Lieutenant General Syed Fayyaz Hussain Shah, visited the mausoleum of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the Poet of the East and Thinker of Pakistan, as part of the Youm-e-Tashakur (Day of Thanksgiving) celebrations.

During the day, special meetings will be held with the families of the martyrs of Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos to pay tribute to them. The main ceremony of Youm-e-Tashakur will be held at the Pakistan Monument in Islamabad. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will be the chief guest of the ceremony, while the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Chief of Army Staff will also grace the ceremony.

FBR sets tax target

ISLAMABAD: Two days after the start of virtual talks with the International Monetary Fund regarding the upcoming fiscal budget, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Friday set a tax target of Rs14,305 billion for the upcoming fiscal year.

According to a document, due to the FBR's growth rate and inflation, tax revenue is expected to remain at Rs13,275 billion, while over Rs1,030 billion can be collected through enforcement and policy measures. Tax targets were finalised during virtual negotiations between the IMF and Pakistan's economic team.

According to IMF recommendations, Rs600 billion could be collected through enforcement actions in the next fiscal year. Additionally, the IMF has demanded documentation of the tobacco, beverages, and real estate sectors, highlighting the need for a transformation plan, real-time production data, and improvements in documentation processes.

The IMF has also insisted that Pakistan must remain committed to achieving the primary balance target during the IMF program and has called for the speedy resolution of tax cases pending in courts. It is worth noting that the FBR missed its collection target in the first 10 months of the current fiscal year by nearly Rs831 billion. — Agencies

Pak believes in peaceful resolution of conflicts: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said that it was maintaining its military readiness to respond any misadventure of India under its jingoistic and hegemonic ambitions along with its preference for ceasefire over conflict amid regional security concerns in the aftermath of Ma'arka-e-Haq.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan, at his weekly press briefing, reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to regional peace while underscoring its military preparedness and diplomatic engagements. He confirmed that tensions with India had escalated into direct hostilities in recent weeks, during which Pakistan's Armed Forces shot down six Indian aircraft.

He said that the Pakistan Armed Forces remained "ever-ready" in the face of "India's unrelenting aggression." In response, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, a limited but strategic military campaign to defend its sovereignty, strictly targeting military infrastructure in accordance with the UN Charter.

"Our response reaffirmed Pakistan's military superiority and commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty," he said. "The nation stood united in this effort." Foreign Office Spokesperson welcomed the recent Pakistan-India ceasefire as a "positive development" and acknowledged the role of several friendly nations, including the United States, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and others, in mediating the agreement.

He noted that the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries have maintained "periodic and constructive contact" and agreed on stage-wise de-escalation. He said that Pakistan returned a captured Indian Border Security Force (BSF) constable, and India reciprocated by handing over a Pakistani Rangers sepo.

"This reflects Pakistan's maturity and commitment to peace, unlike India, which must be urged to abide by its ceasefire commitments," he said. Shafqat Ali Khan emphasized Pakistan's preference for diplomacy and peaceful dialogue. He reiterated Islamabad's support for international mediation efforts, including the U.S. initiative to address the Kashmir dispute.

"The resolution of Jammu and Kashmir, a UN-recognized dispute under several resolutions, including UNSC Resolution 47, remains vital to regional peace," he said. Responding to media queries pertain-

ing to recent Indian claims of a nuclear facility being attacked, he dismissed reports as "fake, preposterous, and a product of Indian propaganda."

He urged New Delhi to "reverify such misinformation before dissemination." He expressed concern over India's continued militarization and growing defence budget, calling it "aggressive and hegemonic." He said that India's recent unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty was a violation of international norms and must be reversed immediately to restore water-sharing obligations.

"Pakistan is a sovereign nation with resilient institutions and an able populace. We are fully prepared to defend ourselves without harbouring hegemonic ambitions," he stated. He highlighted ongoing diplomatic initiatives, including the trilateral talks between Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan focused on regional security, development, and connectivity.

He reaffirmed Islamabad's close ties with Türkiye and Azerbaijan and expressed appreciation for Russia's "clear and balanced position" during Indo-Pak tensions. Regarding allegations of terrorism, the spokesperson pointed out India's double standards: "Pakistan has never hesitated to condemn terrorism, and we remain one of its biggest victims. India's role in sponsoring terrorism in the region and beyond is well-documented."

He noted that while Pakistan offered condolences to India over recent tragic event in Pahalgam, the same courtesy was never extended from the Indian side after terrorist attacks in Pakistan. On the issue of illegal foreigners, he said the repatriation drive, initiated in November 2023, is "ongoing and being handled humanely and lawfully."

He assured that Pakistan has established a 24/7 hotline to address concerns regarding harassment, property disputes, or legal aid, particularly for Afghan nationals. Concluding the briefing, he emphasized that Pakistan remained a strong advocate of peace, multilateralism, and rule-based international order.

However, he warned that continued Indian aggression, including its growing defence spending and diplomatic belligerence, could destabilize the region. "Pakistan's vision is clear — we seek peace, not provocation. But rest assured, our Armed Forces are fully prepared to respond to any misadventure. We hope India will abandon its jingoism and work towards shared regional prosperity," he concluded.

Tariff reforms unveiled

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday unveiled major tariff reforms, announcing that customs duty would be capped at a maximum of 15% and that additional customs and regulatory duties would be phased out in the next four to five years.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting on National Tariff Policy, took this historic step by approving a gradual but significant reduction in import tariffs.

"This move is being considered a major milestone toward economic improvement that will enable export-led growth. This decision is expected not only to help control unemployment but also to keep inflation in check. Besides, it will also encourage international investment, help create new job opportunities," according to a PM Office press release.

The prime minister directed that Additional Customs Duty (currently ranging from 2% to 7%) and Regulatory Duty (currently

DPM, UK's foreign secretary discuss regional developments

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy met Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday in Islamabad, where the two sides discussed the Indo-Pak ceasefire and regional developments. According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, Ishaq Dar warmly welcomed the visiting dignity and briefed him on India's violations of international law and the UN Charter. He underscored that Pakistan had exercised its right of response in line with the UN framework. During the meeting, Dar appreciated Britain's behind-the-scenes efforts to de-escalate tension between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

varying from 5% to 90%) be eliminated over the next four to five years. Similarly, the Customs Duty will be capped at a maximum of 15% as currently, for some items, the rate exceeds even 100%. The number of duty slabs has also been reduced to four to ease legal complexities related to imports and provide a level playing field to various industries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated that his government was committed to developing a strong economy, creating employment opportunities, and doing

away with inflation. He said that after thorough consultations with national and international economic experts, a comprehensive plan for fundamental economic reforms had been formulated, and the decision to reduce customs duties was also part of those reforms.

The prime minister's "historic decision" will open the economy to foreign investment and ensure that domestic industries have easy and affordable access to raw materials, intermediate goods, and capital equipment.

SBP injects over Rs 869b in market

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The central bank, on Friday, injected Rs 869.65 billion in the market through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO).

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14 day tenors on May 16, 2025 and accepted an amount of Rs 578.65 billion against 16 quotes while another Rs 291 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO.

For the Reverse Repo Purchase, SBP received 9 quotes for the 14-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 486 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.05 percent to 11.11 percent. SBP accepted Rs 355 billion against 9 bids at 11.05 percent rate of return. The total amount offered at 11.05 percent was Rs 238 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 107 billion on a pro-rata basis.

Moreover, the SBP also received 7 bids for a 7-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 223.65 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.08 to 11.13 percent. The SBP accepted all the 7 quotes with the entire amount at 11.08 percent rate of return.

Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7 and 14 day tenors and inserted Rs 291 billion. The central bank received 2 bids for 14-day tenor offering Rs 145.8 billion at 11.10 percent rate of return. SBP accepted the entire amount at the offered rate.

The central bank received 5 bids for 7-day tenor offering an amount of Rs 258.2 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.09 to 11.12 percent. The SBP accepted Rs 145.2 billion of 5 quotes at a 11.09 percent rate of return. The total amount offered at 11.09 percent was Rs 230 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 145.2 billion on a pro-rata basis.

Senators slam Modi's fascist agenda

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Senators on Friday lauded Pakistan's armed forces for giving a befitting response to enemy's illegal aggression and said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pursuing a fascist and expansionist agenda.

Participating in a debate on Indian aggression in the Senate on Friday, Senator Ali Zafar said that the recent Indian aggression has once again proven that Pakistan remains resilient, united and fully capable of defending its sovereignty against any form of aggression. He said, "The entire nation, including our armed forces, scientists, engineers, media, and youth on social media, stood together to defend Pakistan's honor and expose India's false propaganda."

The lawmaker said Pakistan's retaliatory action was measured, precise, and within the bounds of international law, demonstrating Pakistan's status as a responsible nuclear power.

Senator Zafar said India failed to secure international support while Pakistan's principled stance was appreciated globally. "China stood by us, and even neutral states began to question India's narrative and acknowledge Pakistan's responsible behavior," he added.

He paid tribute to martyrs, including the security personnel and innocent civilians. Senator Ali Zafar proposed establishing a joint parliamentary committee to monitor water issues and ensure national preparedness in future conflicts. Senator Nasir Abbas said that Narendra Modi is a fascist leader and the butcher of Gujarat, whose politics were rooted in hatred and bigotry. "His failed attempts to crush the Kashmiri people and provoke regional conflict have backfired. We must remain vigilant and united to protect Pakistan's sovereignty," he added.

Nasir Abbas said Modi had adopted a dangerous unilateral approach where

he "plays judge, jury, and executioner," posing a serious threat to regional stability and trying to destabilize the peace of the region in collaboration with Israel. "Modi is a terrorist who has repeatedly tried to impose war on our peace-loving nation. He wants to establish Indian supremacy in the region through cowardly tactics," Senator Nasir said, adding that the Pakistani nation stands united with its valiant armed forces. "Every individual in this nation has the courage to take up arms in the defence of the motherland."

Senator Abdul Qadir hailed the armed forces' response as a "historic moment of pride," congratulating the Pakistan Army, Navy, and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) for their coordinated and forceful retaliation. He said nation is observing Youm-e-Tashakur (Thanksgiving Day) today to mark the historic victory of Marka-e-Haq and to pay tribute to the armed forces.

NA approves resolution to increase CSS exam age limit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Friday approved a resolution to increase the upper age limit for candidates appearing in the Central Superior Services (CSS) examination by five years, setting the new limit at 35 years starting from 2026.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, MNA Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar sought permission to suspend the rules and present the resolution. Upon receiving approval, she introduced the resolution in the House.

According to the text of the resolution, the House urged the government to provide a five-year age relaxation for CSS aspirants. It called for fixing the upper age limit at 35 years for all candidates starting in 2026 and proposed increasing the number of attempts allowed to five.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr.

Fazal Chaudhry informed the National Assembly that the government will not be purchasing wheat during the current year.

Responding to questions during the question hour, he said that although the government will not procure wheat, farmers who are able to store their produce in their own warehouses will be compensated. The minister said that wheat is currently performing well in the open market, which is benefiting farmers and improving their income. He added that there are no restrictions on the movement or transport of wheat across the country.

He said the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) is not involved in wheat procurement this year, and its continued operation is no longer considered viable. As a result, the government has decided to close down PASSCO. A consultant has been

appointed to assess the value of PASSCO's assets, which will be sold off in a transparent manner.

The government has hired TAGM & Co to handle the evaluation and develop a winding-up plan within three months. The firm will assess the total value of PASSCO's assets, including offices and warehouses. Dr. Fazal said the decision follows the Prime Minister's directive to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) to finalize a proposal for PASSCO's closure. The directive also includes finding an alternative mechanism to maintain strategic wheat reserves, potentially through private sector involvement in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. He assured that the disposal of PASSCO's assets will be carried out according to existing rules and policies, ensuring transparency throughout the process.



PHCBA forms committee to tackle lawyers' disputes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) has formed a five-member committee to resolve personal issues and disputes of lawyers.

The committee was constituted through a notification issued by PHCBA president Amin ur Rehman Yousafzai and General Secretary Ashfaq Daudzai, on Friday. The committee comprising Ali Zaman, Lajbar Khan, Muhammad Farooq Malik, Muhammad Rafiq Mohmand Inam Ullah Alizai advocates.

The committee will look into and resolve personal issues and disputes of lawyers. The committee will also represent members in their personal cases in courts with the advice and consent of the Executive Council. The objective of forming this committee is to provide a mechanism for resolving personal issues and disputes of lawyers and to protect their interests.

Arora pays tribute to Pakistan Army

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs, Ramesh Singh Arora paid glowing tribute to the Pakistan Army, lauding its unwavering sacrifices and calling it the "guarantor of the nation's integrity" on the occasion of Youm-e-Tashakur.

Speaking to media representatives here on Friday, Arora said, "We salute the Pakistan Army for its unmatched sacrifices in safeguarding the country's sovereignty."

Arora also took the opportunity to strongly condemn the Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, criticizing what he termed "hate-driven policies."

He expressed grave concern over the rising incidents of violence and discrimination against minorities in India, calling them "deeply regrettable and condemnable."

Sindh CM announces compensation for martyrs, injured during Indian attack

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday revealed that seven individuals from Sindh were martyred during the Indian attack, including six personnel of the Pakistan Air Force in Bolari and one civilian, Mukhtiar Leghari, in Ghotki, for whom he announced compensation of Rs. 10 million each for the families of the martyrs and Rs. 1 million for injured individuals.

He made these statements while talking to the media just after performing a flag-hoisting ceremony at the New Sindh Secretariat to mark Pakistan's National Day of Gratitude as a result of the country's successful retaliation against Indian aggression. While delivering a powerful and patriot-

ic address at a flag-hoisting ceremony, the Chief Minister praised the valour of Pakistan's armed forces, stating that "defending the homeland is every Pakistani's foremost duty" and that the nation is proud of its brave sons who gave a befitting response to Indian aggression.

He paid tribute to the martyrs and commended the public's unwavering spirit of patriotism. Shah affirmed that Sindh's youth remain at the forefront of national defence and that the people of Sindh are fully aware of enemy conspiracies and stand united in the face of threats. He reiterated that the Sindh government stands firmly with the nation's defenders on all fronts.

To a question, the Chief Minister said that the cere-

mony was part of a nationwide observance announced by the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He added that he would later visit the Martyrs' Monument in Malir Cantonment and attend a special session at the Sindh Assembly focused on national unity and Pakistan's historic victory.

On budget preparations, he stated that the upcoming provincial budget is being formulated under the guidance of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari, with a focus on clean water, drainage, solar energy, education, health, and rehabilitation of flood-hit infrastructure. He emphasised that efforts are underway to finalise a people-friendly budget despite IMF constraints.

Yousaf: Govt working to resolve 65,000 Hajj applicants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday informed the National Assembly that Saudi Arabia had initially allocated a Hajj quota of 179,210 pilgrims to Pakistan this year, equally divided between government and private sectors.

During a Senate session, the minister explained that, as per Saudi government directives, all Hajj companies (both public and private) were required to complete payments for accommodations, services (Tawafa), and other expenses by "February 14, 2025".

Pilgrims registered under companies that met the deadline were successfully enrolled on the Saudi portal, while others lost their quota. Sardar Yousuf

clarified that this issue was not unique to Pakistan, as "300,000 to 350,000 pilgrims worldwide" faced similar challenges.

However, when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took notice, he personally intervened, requesting Saudi authorities for an extension. As a result, the deadline was extended until "February 21", allowing an additional "13,600 Pakistani pilgrims" to complete their payments.

Following persistent efforts, the Saudi government granted Pakistan an extra quota of 10,000 pilgrims, of which around 23,000 to 25,000 applicants have since finalized their payments. So far, approximately 115,000 Pakistani pilgrims have been approved for Hajj 2025.

The minister assured that the government continues to negotiate for the remaining 65,000 applicants, emphasizing that he has visited Saudi Arabia twice and sent follow-up appeals to officials. He dismissed claims of delayed communication, stating that private Hajj companies were repeatedly reminded via official letters to adhere to Saudi deadlines.

Sardar Yousuf reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating all eligible pilgrims, saying, "We are seriously engaged with Saudi authorities to find a solution for the remaining applicants."

Meanwhile, Senate Presiding Officer Sherry Rehman referred the matter to the Senate committee for further investigation and resolution.

Youm-e-Tashakur celebration at University Model School



FP Report

PESHAWAR : On the occasion of Youm-e-Tashakur as declared by the Honorable Prime Minister, University Model School celebrated the day with heartfelt gratitude, warmth, and national

pride. The day began with a flag hoisting ceremony, symbolizing unity and patriotism.

Following this, a solidarity walk was conducted within the school premises by the dedicated teachers and enthusiastic students, show-

ing their unwavering support and love for our valiant armed forces. After the walk, a vibrant function took place, featuring passionate speeches, national songs, and cultural performances by the talented students. The young stars of the

Junior Section, dressed in colorful traditional attire, added a delightful charm to the celebration.

Principal Mrs. Nazreen Maqsood paid a heartfelt tribute to the bravery and success of Operation Buniyan-ul-Marsous, acknowledging the immense sacrifices made for the peace and safety of our beloved homeland. The event concluded with the National Anthem, echoing pride and patriotism in every heart. The Principal, teachers, and students all participated with full dedication, warmth, and a deep sense of national pride.



Inauguration of FlyDubai Operations at Bacha Khan International Airport

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: FlyDubai launched its operations at Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA) today with the arrival of flight FZ-375 from Dubai (DXB-PEW) last night.

The inaugural flight, carrying 164 passengers, received a celebratory water cannon salute upon landing.

Following the arrival, a cake cutting event was held, attended by senior officials including the Airport Manager, Airside Manager, Duty Terminal Manager, FlyDubai Director Commercial, Chief Security Officer ASF, CFRO, DD Operations ASF, DD FIA, and FlyDubai staff.



This milestone marks a significant expansion of aviation connectivity between Peshawar and

the Gulf States, further enhancing access to European destinations.

The inaugural flight

departed at 02:20 hours, carrying 185 passengers on flight FZ-375 from Peshawar to Dubai.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan lay floral wreath during the Pakistan Rangers paying Guard of Honour at Mazar-e-Iqbal in connection with Youm-e-Tashakur. —APP Photo

FIA cracks down on human traffickers

LAHORE (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Gujranwala Zone on Friday arrested three human traffickers involved in defrauding citizens under the pretense of overseas employment.

A FIA spokesperson said that the suspects have been identified as Azhar Iqbal, Muhammad Ikram and Yousaf Ali. The arrests were made in various areas of Gujranwala and Gujrat.

The accused lured victims with promises of jobs abroad, extorting millions of rupees from them. Accused Azhar Iqbal was apprehended during a raid in Mohallah Usmanpura, Gujrat. He had extorted over Rs.6 million from citizens by falsely promising employment in Italy but instead sent them to Libya.

He also attempted to smuggle them to Europe via boat. One victim refused to take the illegal sea route and returned, but his brother and brother-in-law, who accompanied him, are still missing. Muhammad Ikram was arrested in Wazirabad, Gujranwala. He took over Rs 2.6 million from a victim under the pretext of securing a job in Italy but instead trafficked the individual to Libya.

Upon arrival, the victim was held captive, tortured and ransom was demanded. The victim managed to escape after six months and returned to Pakistan. Yousaf Ali defrauded citizens of Rs.1.8 million by promising employment in Turkey. Instead, he sent the victims to Iran via land routes and attempted to facilitate their illegal entry into Turkey.

PSX marks launch of Pakistan's First Domestic Green Sukuk

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) held a gong ceremony to mark the launch of Pakistan's first Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk, a milestone achievement in the country's capital market to encourage sustainable and responsible investing.

The event commenced with an address by the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb. Among those present were Mr. Khurram Schehzad, Advisor to the Finance Minister on Economic & Financial Reforms; Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Chairperson of PSX; Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, President & CEO of Meezan Bank Ltd; Mr. Farrukh H. Sabzwari, MD/CEO of PSX; Mr. Mohsin Mushtaq Chandna, Director General (Debt); Mr. Muhammad Ali Malik, Executive Director of the State Bank of Pakistan; Mr. Nassir Salim, Preseident HBL, Mr. Badiuddin Akber, CEO of CDC; Mr. Naveed Qazi, CEO of NCCPL; and members of the financial sector and capital market fraternity.

The primary market auction of the inaugural 3 Years Variable Rental Rate - Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk was a resounding success. The issue was oversubscribed by 5.4 times, surpassing the target amount of Rs 30 billion, with bids accepted totaling Rs 31.98 billion.

CM meets Railways Minister, discusses development initiatives

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, here on Friday.

Matters related to the current political climate, national security, ongoing development initiatives, and the advancement of modern transportation infrastructure across Punjab were discussed during the meeting.

A major highlight of the meeting was a detailed discussion on the proposed launch of Punjab's first bullet train and other high-speed rail projects aimed at revolutionizing the province's transport network. Both leaders underscored the transformative impact such initiatives would have on economic growth, employment generation, and commuter convenience.

CM Maryam Nawaz and Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi also paid glowing tributes to the Pakistan Armed Forces for their remarkable success in Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos. The CM stated, "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos is a testament to the unwavering unity between

the nation's political and military leadership in safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty and national security."

She added, "Our brave soldiers have always made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our homeland. Today, Pakistan is in capable hands, and the entire nation proudly stands with its armed forces and national institutions. The

way forward lies in political stability, unity, and sustained development."

The chief minister emphasized the urgent need to provide world-class travel facilities to the people of Punjab, noting that modern railway infrastructure will not only ease travel but also open new avenues for economic activity and job creation.

Public Notice

The general public is hereby informed that MCB Bank Limited has entered into an agreement to purchase a commercial building, identified as Plot No. 10 & 11, measuring 2400 sft (survey No.79), situated in Circular Road, Dera Ismail Khan. Any person, company, bank, firm, financial institution, or department with any objection, claim, right, charge, or interest of any kind in the aforementioned property or any part thereof must notify the undersigned in writing, along with documentary proof, either in person or via registered post, A.D., or courier within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no such claim or objection is received in writing by the undersigned within the stipulated time, it shall be conclusively presumed that the property is free from all claims, demands, charges, objections, and encumbrances.

Unit Head, Real Estate Management
MCB Bank Limited
15-Main Gulberg, Jail Road, Lahore
Contact: 0321-2121269



ZERO TOLERANCE TO CORRUPTION GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA Directorate of Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar VACANT POSITIONS					
Online applications are invited from eligible candidates having domicile of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including Newly Merged Areas/Districts) for recruitment through Educational Testing & Evaluation Agency (ETEA) against the following regular posts in Directorate of Youth Affairs Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.					
S. NO.	NAME OF POST	QUALIFICATION	AGE LIMIT	NO. OF POSTS.	QUOTA / ZONAL ALLOCATION
1.	Assistant (BPS-16)	At least Second Class Bachelor's Degree or its equivalent qualification from a recognized University.	20-32 Years	05	Female = 02 Zone-I = 01 Zone-II = 01 Zone-III = 01
2.	Computer Operator (BPS-16)	a) At least Second Class Bachelors Degree in Computer Science / Information Technology (BCS / BIT four years) or its equivalent qualification from a recognized University; or b) At least Second Class Bachelors Degree or its equivalent qualification from a recognized University with one year Diploma in Information Technology from a recognized Board of Technical Education.	18-28 Years	07	Female = 03 Disable = 01 Zone-I = 01 Zone-II = 01 Zone-III = 01 Zone-IV = 01 Zone-VI = 01
3.	Junior Clerk (BPS-11)	a) At least Second Division F.A / F.Sc or its equivalent qualification from a recognized Board; and b) A speed of thirty (30) words per minute in typing and capable to work on Computer in MS Office.	18-30 Years	11	Female = 03 Disable = 01 Zone-I = 02 Zone-II = 01 Zone-III = 01 Zone-IV = 01 Zone-VI = 01
4.	Receptionist (BPS-11)	a) At least Second Class Intermediate Certificate or its equivalent qualification from a recognized Board.	18-30 Years	01	Zone-I = 01
5.	Telephone Operator (BPS-11)	a) At least Second Class Intermediate Certificate or its equivalent qualification from a recognized Board.	18-30 Years	01	Zone-I = 01
6.	Photographer (BPS-11)	a) At least Second Division Secondary School Certificate in science or its equivalent qualification from a recognized Board b) Experience in Still and Movie Photography; and c) Experience in the operation of Movies and Slide Projectors.	18-30 Years	01	Zone-I = 01
TERMS & CONDITIONS:					
1. Candidates will be provisionally allowed to appear in the ETEA screening test based on the credentials provided. However, detailed scrutiny will be carried out by the appointing authority, and if any candidate is found ineligible in any respect at any stage of the recruitment process, he/she will be disqualified by the Appointing Authority.					
2. All the candidates will be required to create a profile on ETEA's website. After creating the profile and before applying/depositing fee for any post, such candidates will have to print E-Sahulat token from ETEA's website and get their CNIC No. verified from any NADRA E-Sahulat franchise (Kiosk). Without such verification, they will not be able to apply for any post.					
3. Interview calls letter will be issued to shortlisted candidates only.					
4. Screening of candidates will be based on a test to be prescribed and conducted by ETEA.					
5. Candidates shall be eligible in all respects by the last date of receipt of applications.					
6. Incomplete applications and applications received after due dates will not be entertained.					
7. Relaxation of age will be admissible as per existing government rules.					
8. Candidates applying against disable quota will be required to submit disability certificate issued by provincial council for rehabilitation of disabled persons as well as from respective medical superintendent / medical board showing therein the specific disability, and both the certificates must be issued before the closing date of advertisement.					
9. The candidates working in government / semi-government bodies should apply through proper channel.					
10. Candidates intending to apply for more than one post shall apply separately for each post with separate fee.					
11. Competent Authority reserves the right to increase/decrease the number of vacancies while mentioning a cogent reason thereof.					
12. Competent authority reserved the right to cancel / reject any application with assigning reason.					
13. No TA/DA is admissible for test / interview.					
14. In case of foreign degree, equivalent certificates from HEC must be provided.					
15. Errors/Omissions in number of posts are subject to rectification.					
HOW TO APPLY:					
1. Interested candidates may first visit www.etea.edu.pk and apply for the posts online.					
2. After successful submission of online application, a prescribed online deposit slip (having token number, Project code & candidates' personal information) will be generated.					
3. Take a printout of the generated deposit slip & deposit the prescribed test fee (nonrefundable) through Easypaisa app or Agent, Jazz Cash app or at any branch of UBL Bank or via UBL OMNI agent.					
4. After successful fee submission, please keep the original deposit slip (candidate copy) having bank desired stamp with yourself and do not share it with anyone else.					
5. After online apply, don't send documents/testimonials to ETEA office, copies of testimonials/ documents will however, be provided by the candidates who qualify the screening test, as and when required by the Appointing Authority for scrutiny purposes.					
6. Availability of Online Application Form on www.etea.edu.pk on 19th May, 2025					
7. Last date for submission of Online Application is 10th June, 2025.					
8. Candidates will be informed through SMS by ETEA to download and Print their Roll No. Slip from www.etea.edu.pk . Candidates are directed to do not give ported / converted mobile number.					
9. Test Date, Time and Venue will be mentioned on Roll No. Slip.					
10. No separate Call Letter will be issued to candidates for screening test through posts/courier means.					
INF/P/1966/25					
DIRECTOR, YOUTH AFFAIRS KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA					



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur leading a rally to celebrate Yom-e-Tashakkur.

PHC dismisses writ against textbook board agreement with publisher

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fahim Wali has dismissed a petition challenging the agreement between the Textbook Board and private publishers for printing and profit-sharing of textbooks.

The court allowed the Textbook Board to proceed with the tender for

printing textbooks and lifted the stay order, on Friday. The petitioners' lawyer argued that the Textbook Board's policy of 2017 allowed private publishers to participate in the tendering process for printing textbooks. The lawyer claimed that the current agreement between the Textbook Board and private publishers for profit-sharing was contrary to the previous policy, which did not provide for profit-sharing.

The lawyer argued that the agreement would harm the local industry, which was already struggling. The Textbook Board's lawyer, Shumail Ahmad Butt, argued that the agreement was in accordance with the law and the Constitution. He stated that the purpose of the agreement was to implement a uniform education system and that it had several benefits. The lawyer claimed

that the tender was awarded on merit and that there was no favoritism or bias in the process. He also noted that the provincial cabinet had approved the agreement, and it was implemented in accordance with that approval. PHC dismissed the petition and upheld the Textbook Board's decision. The court found that the tender was awarded on merit and that there was no evidence of favoritism or bias.

KMU celebrates Yom-e-Tashakkur with religious and national zeal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, observed "Yom-e-Tashakkur" with religious and national fervor in light of the directives issued by

the federal and provincial governments, commemorating the victory of Pakistan's armed forces against Indian aggression. The day was aimed at celebrating the historic triumph of truth and honoring the unmatched sacrifices of

Pakistan's brave military and people. To mark the occasion, a "Yom-e-Tashakkur Walk" was organized under the theme "Tribute to the Brave Armed Forces of Pakistan" to show solidarity with the Pakistan Army and acknowledge their unwavering services in national defense. The walk was led by KMU Registrar, Mr. Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, and was attended by a large number of faculty members, administrative staff, and students. Participants expressed solidarity and unity by passionately paying homage to the sacrifices, courage, and patriotism of the armed

forces. Students carried the national flag and raised slogans expressing love for the country, evoking a strong spirit of national pride. The banners and placards carried during the walk conveyed messages of peace, harmony, patriotism, condemnation of Indian aggression, and support for the freedom of Kashmir. In connection with the Yom-e-Tashakkur, special prayers were also held after the Friday prayers in the university's central mosque for peace, security, national unity, and the unwavering strength and commitment of the armed forces of Pakistan.

Graduation Ceremony of Senior Management Course held at NIPA



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The graduation ceremony of the 37th Senior Management Course was held today at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Peshawar. Director General Capt. (Retd.) Usman Gul was chief guest on the occasion.

While addressing the ceremony, Director General Capt. (Retd.) Usman Gul emphasized that public service is a trust and demands the highest standards of integrity and dedication. He highlighted that both the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) and NIPA

are committed to equipping civil servants with modern knowledge, skills, and ethical values in line with the evolving needs of governance and administration. He noted that the training programs are continuously upgraded to meet the challenges of the contemporary public service environment. The Director General appreciated and lauded the dedicated efforts of the faculty and staff of the Senior Management Course, as well as the administration and IT staff of NIPA Peshawar, for the successful completion of the course. He acknowledged their professionalism and commitment in delivering high-

quality training and maintaining a conducive learning environment. The ceremony was attended by faculty members of the three training institutions NIPA, PARD & PPSA, participants of the 37th Senior Management Course, 43rd Mid-Career Management Course, PMS KP Pre-Service Course, and Revenue Officers of Pre-Service Course of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On the occasion, Chief Instructor Tariq Bakhtiar presented the course report, outlining the structure, contents, and learning outcomes of the training. In the end, the Director General awarded course completion certificates among the graduating officers.

KUST pays tribute to armed forces Sahibzada Afridi

PESHAWAR: Kohat University Holds Gratitude Day Ceremony to Pay Tribute to Pakistan Armed Forces, Solidarity Walk Organized. On the special directive of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas, Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) organized a solemn and dignified ceremony to mark "Gratitude Day" in recognition of the Pakistan Armed Forces' successful military operation. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and administrative staff, aimed at expressing solidarity with the defenders of the nation and honoring their sacrifices for the homeland.

Prominent attendees included Registrar Mr. Rauf Khan, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences Dr. Dilawar Khan, Dean Faculty of Biological Sciences Dr. Muhammad Jameel, Director QEC Dr. Zeeshan Bangash, Public Relations Officer Mr. Rashid Ishaq, Co-Curricular Activities Incharge Dr. Jan Alam, Director Planning Dr. Tariq Jan, Controller of Examinations Mr. Bahadur Khan, Director Administration Mr. Asad Habib, Director ORIC Mr. Nadir Sarfraz, Director Works Mr. Altaf Hussain, Lecturer Department of Journalism Ms. Amna Gul, and Event Manager Mr. Robail Nazir, along with several other notable figures of the university. Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Dilawar Khan lauded the unmatched bravery and steadfastness of the Pakistan Armed Forces in repelling enemy aggression. He emphasized that their courageous response is a source of immense pride for the entire nation. He further urged students to take inspiration from the military's discipline, resolve, and spirit of sacrifice.

Yum-e-Tashukkar observed in Kurram F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Like other parts of the province, the "Yum-e-Tashukkar" was also celebrated with great enthusiasm in the tribal district Kurram. On the occasion of "Yum-e-Tashukkar", the flag hoisting ceremony was held at the district headquarters Parachinar under the compound of Deputy Commissioner Kurram, in which Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah participated as a special guest. Among others, Deputy Commissioner Kurram Ashfaq Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Revenue Staff, Tehsildars, Heads of Line Departments and people belonging to different schools of thought participated in the event. A minute's silence was also observed on this occasion. After hoisting the flag, special prayers were offered for the integrity and solidarity of the country. Besides this, a Rally was also organized which started from the office of the Deputy Commissioner Kurram and ended at DC Chowk.

The butchers' alliance

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

HISTORY has witnessed tyrants whose names are etched in infamy- Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, and others who drenched continents in blood and sorrow. Hitler's regime was responsible for the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of over millions of Jews, and his war of aggression caused the deaths of nearly 70 to 85 million people worldwide during World War II. Mussolini, the fascist dictator of Italy, invaded Ethiopia in 1935, killing hundreds of thousands, and was complicit in Nazi atrocities. Stalin, though remembered for industrializing the Soviet Union, orchestrated the Great Purge and state-induced famines, particularly in Ukraine, resulting in the deaths of more than 20 million people. These were men whose legacies are not debated-they are condemned. Despite the passage of time and evolving global norms, their ideological descendants still walk among us.

In today's world, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Narendra Modi of India represent a modern version of these past tyrants. Both have cultivated global images of democratic leadership, but behind the carefully managed appearances lie brutal records of human rights violations and ethnic persecution. Netanyahu has overseen repeated military operations in Gaza-Operation Cast Lead (2008-09), Operation Protective Edge (2014), and the ongoing 2023-25 Gaza offensive. According to the United Nations and international rights organizations, these Israeli operations have killed over 35,000 Palestinians, including more than 14,000 children, injured tens of thousands, and displaced over 1.7 million people. Entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubble under the pretext of targeting militants.

Narendra Modi's political rise is rooted in the 2002 Gujarat riots, which took place under his watch as Chief Minister. The riots resulted in the deaths of over 2,000 Muslims, with thousands more injured and displaced. Though cleared legally, Modi's role remains deeply controversial. Under his leadership, India has witnessed a rise in religious extremism, mob lynchings, and hate crimes, especially against Muslims. The abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and the subsequent lockdown of occupied Kashmir, involving deployment of over 900,000 Indian troops, led to widespread detentions, curfews, and communication blackouts. Since 1989, in Indian-occupied Kashmir alone, more than 100,000 Kashmiris have been killed, over 10,000 women raped, and thousands have disappeared in custody, according to human rights watchdogs.

Both Netanyahu and Modi share not just strategic ties, but also a chilling ideological harmony. Their friendship is rooted in their shared disdain for pluralism, tolerance, and international humanitarian law. From defense deals worth billions of dollars to joint counter-terrorism efforts, Israel and India have strengthened their military alliance significantly. Israel is now among India's top arms suppliers, and according to intelligence sources, Israel has been actively assisting India in its strategic objectives, including its posture towards Pakistan.

Recently, credible security analysts have highlighted the presence of Israeli military advisors and experts in Indian defense institutions, particularly in training counter-insurgency forces and enhancing electronic surveillance against Pakistan. Some of the drone strikes and precision attacks on the Line of Control (LoC) and near sensitive Pakistani installations bear the hallmark of Israeli tactical doctrine. This collaboration has moved beyond diplomacy and trade-it now constitutes an operational axis against Pakistan and Muslims in the region.

Yet, history teaches us that the powerful often overestimate their reach and underestimate the resilience of nations born through struggle. Pakistan, created through countless sacrifices in 1947, has never shied away from defending its honor. From the wars of 1948, 1965, 1971, to the Kargil conflict in 1999, and more recently, the swift and calibrated response in Operation Swift Retort (2019) after Indian aggression in Balakot, Pakistan has proven it possesses both resolve and capability. Any misadventure involving Israeli-backed Indian aggression will be met with unified resistance.

Pakistan is a nuclear power, with a well-structured, professionally trained defense system. But more than that, it has the will of its people. From the tribal areas to the streets of Karachi, from the mountains of Skardu to the plains of Punjab, Pakistanis unite when their sovereignty is threatened. No force, no alliance, and no conspiracy can break that bond. The dream of disintegrating Pakistan or turning it into a submissive state will remain unfulfilled, as did the dreams of those who underestimated it in the past.

It is a cruel irony that in an age of the United Nations, International Criminal Court, and global human rights advocacy, men like Netanyahu and Modi continue their campaigns of oppression. While Hitler's gas chambers and Stalin's Gulags have become symbols of horror, today's tools are F-16s over Gaza, pellet guns in Kashmir, digital surveillance, and economic suppression. The methods have changed, but the mindset remains the same.

Let it be clear: history may take time, but it never forgets. The tyrants of today will meet the judgment of tomorrow. Just as Hitler and Mussolini were brought down, Netanyahu and Modi's legacies, too, will be remembered not for their politics, but for the human suffering they left behind. Their names will not be carved on monuments of glory, but written in the footnotes of cruelty. And standing against them will be the people of Gaza, Kashmir, and Pakistan-resilient, unbowed, and unbroken.

MAG lauds Armed Forces, highlights digital vision for PMAD



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Military Accountant General (MAG) Kashif Ahmad Noor paid glowing tribute to the Pakistan Air Force and the Armed Forces of Pakistan for the successful execution of Operation Bunyan Um Marsoos, stating that "Almighty Allah has been kind" in granting us victory. The MAG expressed these views while addressing officers at the Controller of Accounts Air Force office during his visit to Air Headquarters Peshawar. He reaffirmed unwavering support for the country's armed forces, stating, "The Pakistan Military Accounts Department stands through thick and thin with Pakistan Armed

Forces." Sharing his vision for the future of the department, Noor emphasized the digitalization of the Pakistan Military Accounts Department (PMAD). He stated that there would be no compromise on effective service delivery and the welfare of PMAD employees. During the event, the MAG presented souvenirs to retired PMAD employees in recognition of their services and welcomed the newly recruited Senior Auditors to the department.

Later, MAG visited the under-construction building of the PMAD Housing Scheme in Peshawar, where he reviewed the development work and directed authorities to ensure timely completion of the project. Concluding his visit, the MAG toured the office of the Controller Military Accounts, Peshawar Command. He was given a comprehensive briefing on the working of the office and ongoing initiatives.

KP-CVE observes Yaum-e-Tashakkur F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan's Historic Victory Celebrated at KP-CVE 'Yom-e-Tashakkur' Ceremony has been celebrated with great zeal where officers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (KP-CVE), has hailed Pakistan's historic victory against India's cowardly and unprovoked aggression as a powerful testament to the unmatched professionalism and courage of the country's armed forces, as well as the unshakable unity of the Pakistani nation in fulfilling the sacred duty of defending its homeland. The "Day of Gratitude" ceremony held at the KP-CVE on Friday, Dr Ayaz Khan emphasized that Pakistan, while a peace-loving nation, stands fully prepared to deliver a decisive and robust response to any form of aggression or provocation.

Dr Air Cmdr Naveed Khaliq Ansaree (Retd)

IN the constantly evolving theatre of 21st-century aerial warfare, air combat has undergone a silent revolution. At the epicentre of this revolution lies the "Invisible Kill Chain" dictated not by the battle-agility of combat aircraft or machines-performance but rather a duel of ecosystem enabling who strikes first, and from an imperceptible distance. Beyond Visual Range Air to Air Missiles (BVRAAMs) have now become a cornerstone of latest-generation aerial warfare, shaping the very doctrines of Air Dominance, psychological ascendancy and strategic deterrence. Current BVRAAMs do not merely showcase the latest technologies; they are the lethal instruments of deterrence, denial and control supported by a

seamless fusion of sensors, space systems, data-links and shooting platforms; all within a distributed kill chain. The effective operational range of any BVRAAM largely depends on the lock-range of the radar of the launch platform and the launch altitude. A 5th generation fighter, like J-35 stealth aircraft currently under induction in the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), can even launch a BVRAAM without illuminating the target, thus maintaining stealth and retaining the tactical advantage. The targeting data can be communicated through a data-link facility among other options. The days are not far off when the Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles carrying BVRAAMs into contested battle space will serve as "Loyal Wingmen" of the Next Generation Air Dominance aircraft, operating both as "Bait and Blade." Lest one forget, as the engagement range increases, the

fog and friction magnify and the capability may breed fragility of the advantage. To counter a BVRAAM threat, Digital Radio Frequency Memory, Directional Infrared Counter Measures and towed-decoys have now become standard equipment on modern aerial platforms. Amongst the latest generation of BVRAAMs is Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) or AIM-120D with an academic range between 160-180 Km as claimed by the manufacturer. AMRAAM is valued as a prized possession by several air forces across the globe including the PAF. The missile employs active radar for terminal guidance augmented by GPS and an inertial navigation system, thus substantially enhancing the missile's accuracy and effective range within a distributed kill chain. Joint Advanced Tactical Missile or AIM-260 is another BVR missile developed by the

US with a reported range of over 200 Km. MBDA Meteor, with its ramjet propulsion system and claimed range of 200 Km, is also effective against manoeuvring targets. The Meteor is jointly produced by Germany, France, Sweden and the UK. Meanwhile Russian R-77 or AA-12 Adder, a BVRAAM, has claimed range of 80 Km to 110 Km depending on the launch conditions. India has developed Astra BVR missiles, and its latest variant is a solid-fuel ducted-ramjet Astra Mk-3, with a claimed range of over 300 Km. This BVR missile has issues, however, could become available to the Indian Air Force by sometime beyond 2028. The track record of excessive delays and technical snags in Light Combat Aircraft and other projects, also raises serious doubts about the claimed range and availability of Astra Mk-3 to IAF in the near future.

China's PL-15 missile is an advanced BVR missile that employs AESA active radar for terminal guidance and a data link for midcourse correction, thus significantly enhancing the BVR's engagement zone and asserting air dominance against highly agile and evasive aerial targets. Claimed range by the manufacturer is between 200-300 Km. PL-15 is integrated into contemporary combat aircraft including the J-10C, JF-17 block III and under induction J-35 with the PAF. With an impressive claimed range of 350-400 Km, PL-21 is a latest state-of-the-art Very Long Range Air to Air Missile (VLRAAM) that Pakistan is vying to acquire from China along with 5th Generation Stealth fighter J-35. With its extended-range and advanced AESA radar guidance systems, the PL-15 and PL-21 rightly represent the strategic statement rather than only a formidable

weapon on the inventory of the Chinese and Pakistan Air Force. The Pakistan Air Force has always endeavoured to retain a first-shoot edge and stay ahead of the IAF. Under the dynamic leadership of the current Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, Sidhu, the dream of inducing 5th generation stealth fighter J-35, the Crown-Jewel of the Pakistan Air Force, is likely to come true next year. With the combined AESA radar capabilities of JF-17 Block-III, J-10C and J-35, and F-16 as well as the lethal BVRAAMs held on PAF's inventory, the IAF would have to be wary of any misadventure against Pakistan. On the night of May 07, 2025, downing of three Rafales, one Su-30, one Mirage, one Mig-29 and a multimillion-dollar drone "Heron" of IAF against none of the PAF stand testimony to the vision of the Chief of the Air Staff that enabled the PAF to

earn the title of an "Undisputed King of the Skies." PAF etched an unprecedented decisive-dominance and an invisible kill-chain for the IAF, thus translating BVR capability from a tactical advantage into a strategic imperative for operationalising the doctrines of strategic reach, air dominance and escalation control, and making it an essential component of deterrence and power projection in the contested skies. Future BVRAAM will not be just a guided weapon but rather a thinking node continuously acting in flight, making its own tactical decisions within the programmed operational framework. Therefore, the next-generation aerial combat will not reward those who fly the fastest but rather those who think and perform the fastest.

The writer is Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Lahore. He can be reached at info@cassllhr.com



In brief

Pabbi press club observe Day of Gratitude F.P. Report

PABBI: Tehsil Press Club Pabbi, has observed "Day of Gratitude" to express appreciation for the Pakistan Air Force's successful strikes against Indian military installations and the country's brave response to the enemy, on Friday. A grand rally held after Asr prayers on May 16th, starting from the Pabi Press Club. The event aims to acknowledge the special blessings of Allah Almighty, the support and assistance of the Pakistan Armed Forces. The political, religious, and civil society representatives, traders, laborers, farmers, students, cultivators, landlords, and trade union representatives participated in the rally. The President of the Press Club Muhammad Ilyas organized special prayers for the country, nation, Armed Forces, martyrs of the Armed Forces, and martyrs of the nation.

Tribesmen laud Pak armed forces F.P. Report

WANA: The tribesmen observed "Yaum-e-Tashakkur" with enthusiasm, devotion, and national unity as communities across the region for resounding success of Operation Bunyaan Al-Marsous. The event, observed with fervor and deep reverence, highlighted the collective spirit of the people and their unwavering support for the nation's armed forces. The day's events commenced with a solemn prayer of thanks, drawing large crowds who gathered to offer prostration of gratitude to the Almighty for the victory. Mosques and community centers were filled with people from all walks of life, united in their expression of thankfulness. The ambiance was marked by a profound sense of humility and collective appreciation for the peace and stability restored in their homeland. A special Quran recitation session was held, followed by collective prayers, where participants earnestly prayed for the safety, peace, and continued development of Pakistan. Voices were raised in unison, seeking blessings for the nation's prosperity and security. The atmosphere echoed with the spirit of unity and collective hope, a testament to the people's deep-rooted faith and patriotism. The community also paid rich tributes to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the country's defense. Memorial gatherings were held where their sacrifices were remembered with honor and respect. Participants expressed immense pride in the nation's armed forces, acknowledging their courage and resilience in safeguarding the nation against adversities.

Eid package distributed F.P. Report

BANNU: Chairman of the Orphan Welfare Organization, Mirzajan Wazir, distributed Eid-ul-Adha packages to orphans, poor schemes and destitute children, which included clothes, bangles, henna, slippers and other things. On this occasion, Chairman of the Orphan Welfare Organization, Mirzajan Wazir, while talking to the media, said that it is the responsibility of all of us to provide free education to orphans and destitute people. He said that he wants to organize an organization to provide free education to more than hundreds of children, take care of their welfare and health. He has been passionate about serving the poor, destitute and orphans since childhood.

Events to mark 'Yaum e Tashakur' held in Lower Dir

Haileem Asad

LOWER DIR: Special events were held across various parts of Lower Dir on Friday to observe Yaum-e-Tashakur (Thanksgiving Day), in line with nationwide celebrations.

The main ceremony, held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif, drew a large number of local residents, government officials, teachers, and schoolchildren. A rally was also organized in which participants raised spirited slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad", reflecting national solidarity.

The deputy commissioner hoisted the national flag during the ceremony, while a one-minute silence was observed to honour the sacrifices of the country's martyrs and veterans.

Addressing the gathering, DC Muhammad Arif, District Education Officer Inayatullah Tajak, Maulana Abdul Rehman Al-Huzafi, and other speakers lauded the Pakistan Army's decisive response to Indian aggression on May 10.

They said the military's swift and effective action had uplifted national morale and would be remembered as a defining moment in the country's history.

The DC noted that despite the numerical strength of the adversary, Pakistan's armed forces had triumphed through a combination of strong diplomacy, advanced technology, and effective border security. Speaking on the occasion, Maulana Al-Huzafi criticized the roles of the United States, India, and Israel in global conflicts, describing them as agents of instability. He urged the Muslim Ummah to unite against the forces responsible for the suffering in Palestine and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, government and private educational institutions including the University of Malakand also arranged different events to observe the Day with spirit and zeal. The participants paid tributes to the Pakistan armed forces and political leadership for achieving a historical victory over India.

Minor girls drowned:

Two young girls tragically drowned in a pond in a village within the jurisdiction of Munda police station on Friday, amid an acute water shortage reportedly caused by the theft of water pumps from their home.

The victims, aged eight and nine, were daughters of Ikramullah and Kamran Khan. According to local residents, the girls had gone to a nearby pond to wash clothes due to the lack of water at their home. One of the girls slipped and fell into the pond, and the other drowned while trying to rescue her.

Sources said a gang of thieves has been targeting water pumps in the area, stealing them from wells during the night. On Thursday night, the family's pump was also stolen, leaving them without access to water.

The incident has caused widespread grief and outrage in the community. Residents and the bereaved families have called on the local police and administration to take immediate action against the culprits and ensure justice.

Community advisory board meeting held F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The first meeting of the Community Advisory Board was held at the University of Kamalia. After the establishment of the Community Advisory Board at the University of Kamalia, its first formal meeting was held in the main meeting hall of the university.

The aim of this meeting was to promote mutual cooperation between the local community and the university, align educational and research activities with local needs, and to include societal views in effective policy making. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Arshad Hanif (Chairman). At the invitation of the Board, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawab also attended the meeting and briefed the participants about the mission, teaching and research activities of the University of Kamalia and its relationship with the local community. He said that the University of Kamalia is not only a center of teaching and research.

Rather, it is committed to playing a key role in the welfare and development of the local community. The establishment of the Board is a practical embodiment of this vision. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the Board meetings would be held regularly to ensure the implementation of the recommendations formulated.

The participants appreciated this wise step by the university and assured all possible cooperation. University of Kamalia considers effective partnerships between educational institutions and society to be the need of the hour, and is committed to maintaining the continuity of such initiatives in the future. In this meeting, Dr. Mian Arif Saleem Arif, Dr. Muhammad Riaz, Muhammad Aslam Ansari, Malik Mohsin Ali, Abdul Qadeer Chaudhry, Amjad Islam Amjad, Ch. Tanveer Akhtar and Muhammad Nawaz were also present.

Rally held: According to details, on the occasion of Thanksgiving Day, a resolute rally was taken out at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital (THQ) Kamalia to pay tribute to the success of the Pakistan Armed Forces and the sacrifices of the martyrs. The rally was led by Medical Superintendent Dr. Mian Adeel Arif.

A large number of doctors, nursing staff, paramedical personnel, relatives of patients and citizens participated on the occasion. The participants raised slogans in favor of Pakistan Zindabad, Shuhada Paindabad and the Pakistani Army. During the rally, the participants, holding the national flag, fully demonstrated the spirit of national unity, stability and patriotism against the evil intentions of the enemy.

Dr. Mian Adeel Arif said on this occasion that the successful Operation "Bunyan Marsoos" of the Pakistani Army destroyed the war arrogance of the enemy India and gave the entire nation a sense of pride. The participants expressed their determination that the sacrifices of the martyrs will not go in vain and the entire nation stands with the Pakistani Armed Forces.

Thanksgiving Day celebrations are underway with enthusiasm across the district and tributes are being paid to the martyrs with great enthusiasm at the public level.

Youm-e-Tashakor observes in Khyber



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Like elsewhere in the country, Youm-e-Tashakor observed in district Khyber on Friday to mark the historic victory of Marka-e-Haq and to pay tribute to the armed forces and the people of the country following success of the operation Bunyan Marsoos.

The day was dawned with special prayers, offered in the mosques for the prosperity and solidarity of the country. In a simple gathering organized in forces cantonment and attended by civil and forces officials.

Commandant Khyber Rifle Col Asim Aziz Kayani flanked by tribal elders hoisted the national flag, a smart contingent of forces presented salute and the national anthem was sung. They laid floral wreath was also put at the monument of the martyrs.

Similarly a prestigious moot was organized by the police line, Shahkas; district

Khyber that was attended by District Police Officer (DPO), Khyber Rai Mazhar Iqbal as a chief guest. The district police official laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada and a police party presented a salute on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion DPO, Khyber said that the forces, police and other security had rendered matchless sacrifices for the security of the country. Praising courage and the high professionalism of the armed forces he declared the success in the Pak-India war as a joint victory of Pak forces and its people.

He appreciated the role of the tribal elders, religious scholars, students etc. in the recent Pak-India combat and said they played an effective role cementing national unity and cohesion. At the end prayers were offered for the departed souls of the martyred troops.

In the same way, a national flag hoisting ceremony was initiated in tehsil

compound, Assistant Commissioner (AC), Landi Kotal office on Friday. AC Adnan Mumtaz in the presence of a number of tribal elders raised the national flag.

Later on AC, Landi Kotal along with other administrative officials visited the village of Loy-Shelman where they laid floral wreath at the grave of the martyred soldier, Nisar Ali Shelmani who embraced Shahadat during Pak-India war in Sialkot. In connection with the Day, a simple but prestigious gathering was organized in District Headquarter Rescue 1122, Jamrud, Khyber that was attended by highup and officials of the department.

Emergency Officer Nauman Khan hoisted the national flag, presented a salute and paid tribute to the armed forces. Scores of programs had been arranged across the district to celebrate the victory of Pakistan.

Admn & TMA Daggar observe Yumi Tashakur

F.P. Report

BUNER: The District Administration and Tehsil Municipal Administration of Daggar on Friday have jointly celebrated the day of thanksgiving (yumi tashakur) for the success of Operation Banyan Marsus of the Pakistan Army.

In this regard, a procession was taken out from TMA Daggar Office to Daggar Chowk, in which district administrative officers and staff, Daggar Tehsil Municipal Administrative Officers and

Staff, Circle Daggar Police Officers and Police Personnel, teachers and students of government and private educational institutions, and local citizens participated in large numbers.

The participants of the procession were holding banners on which the slogans of Pakistan and Pak Army Zindabad were written. The participants of the procession were holding the green crescent flag of Pakistan and chanted the slogans of appreciating Pakistan and Pak Army. The participants of the procession prayed collectively

prayer with the supporting Qazi of the District Court Daggar for the motherland's integrity, security, stability, progress, prosperity and long lasting peace and success of the Pakistan Army.

They with the firm determination that the twenty-five crores people of Pakistan are ready every kind of sacrifices for their holy homeland and finally dispersed peacefully by chanting the slogan of Pakistan and Pak Army Zindabad.

SHCBA holds protest against corporate farming

F.P. Report

LARKANA : Sindh High Court Bar Bench (SHCBA) Larkana, President Advocate Athar Abbas Solangi led a protest demonstration and a symbolic hunger strike against corporate farming, the 26th Constitutional Amendment and the PECA Act from the High Court premises.

On this occasion addressing the protest, Bar Association President Advocate Athar Abbas Solangi, Advocate Javed Gopang, Advocate Sajid Hussain Mahesar and others said that in the last March with the lawyers, we had also started a movement against corporate farming and when the decision of the lawyers was reversed, at that time some friends were of opinion that the Baburloo sit-in would not be ended, but it was decided by the majority that the sit-in would be ended and a committee would be formed to hold talks with the Sindh government.

However, even though the committee was in Baburloo till May 13, no representative of the Sindh government came and the negotiation committee was dissolved. At present, lawyers and the Sindh nation are the Sindh government, they further said that want to tell you, your decision will not be made in a committee room but on the roads. If you show lawyers from Kashmir to Karachi, the Sindh nation

is rising again and you will have to withdraw the corporate farming decision. They further said that the Sindh government will not understand this, but now the Sindh nation will take the path of continuous protests to make them understand.

For this, when all the political and social parties of Sindh, national activists, students, daughters, and sisters take to the streets, the Sindh government will have to withdraw the corporate farming decision and will have to kneel before the nation. They demanded that the lands given to companies through corporate farming be returned, the 26th Constitutional Amendment be repealed, and the black law of the PECA Act be withdrawn, otherwise the lawyers' protest will continue.

SMBBM University celebrates Yom-E-Tashkur Day: On the instructions of SMBBM University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah, Chandka Medical College Larkana celebrated "Yom-E-Tashkur Day". According to the details, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University Larkana celebrated the day in connection with "Yim-E-Tashkur Day". The day began with the hoisting of the national flag by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah.

Later, a "Yom-E-Tashkur Day" walk was organized

which started from the administration block of Chandka Medical College and ended at the Mcgate of Chandka College. Faculty, officers and students carried placards of Pak Army Zindabad and flags of Pakistan in the walk. A spirited ceremony was also organized at the end of the walk. Addressing the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah said that I saw the war of 1965. I congratulate you all on victory.

The nation The spirit and courage of Pakistan's armed forces were visible, our courage is high because we are a nuclear power and all the credit goes to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who said that we will eat grass but we will definitely make an atomic bomb, the greatest power we have is the power of faith, "Operation Banyan Marsus", as the Pakistani armed forces and the Pakistani nation proved to be a wall of resistance, we pay tribute to the Pak Air Force and the entire army, while addressing the ceremony, Principal Professor Dr. Zamir Ahmed Soomro said that this was actually a war of many years, in which the enemy sometimes used weapons of fifth generation warfare, sometimes used weapons of terrorism, sometimes fought an armed war, but the Pak Army won the war of years in a few hours.

marines. The Pakistani Air Force's downing of India's French-made Rafale jets with J-10Cs showcased Chinese weaponry's prowess, altering global power dynamics. This not only embarrassed India but also struck a blow to U.S. and Israeli interests.

America's Middle East and Iran policies have lost momentum. Soon, Chinese arms will flood the region, countering U.S. and Israeli dominance. While the U.S. has routinely tested its weapons, China's first real-world trial proved decisive, cementing its advantage. Another critical shift: America's monopoly on the arms trade is over. Chinese weapons are cheaper, equally effective, and now the world's preferred choice.

What seemed like routine tension redrew the global political map. Pakistan's two-hour counter attack erased the traditional power imbalance with India, even granting Islamabad the upper hand. The Kashmir issue, long dormant, has reignited, and Pakistan now finds it easier to keep it alive internationally. The brief skirmish also reshaped global perceptions of China's role. India's fatal error was underestimating China—a violation of the fundamental principle of war: know your enemy's strength. Nations like Taiwan, observing this, will think twice before confronting China under Western provocation. Pakistan further exposed Israeli technology's vulnerabilities by downing 84 drones, reshaping Middle Eastern power equations. The

world is now undeniably bipolar. The Pakistan-China alliance is set to deepen, with visible gains for Pakistan's economy. The Pakistani Air Force's performance stunned not just India and the world but even Pakistanis themselves. The transformation from 2019 to 2025 is stark. Domestically, public support—especially from the youth during this nerve war—was exemplary. It also proved modern wars are fought by armies alone; civilians and tribes are no longer frontline actors. Victory has a hundred fathers; defeat is an orphan. India faces global condemnation. Modi's fabricated nationalism lies in tatters—exposed as no different from ISIS or RSS extremism. Religious fanaticism always harms the nation. The world now

recognizes India's false-flag operation, illegal war, and subsequent media disinformation. Its defeat humiliated not just itself but also backers like Russia, France, and Israel.

This was a war thrust upon India by America. Pakistan had no choice but to respond. Despite ceasefire appeals from the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey, Pakistan reluctantly agreed. Now, Islamabad must demand two non-negotiable terms: revisiting the Indus Water Treaty and restoring Kashmir's pre-revocation status. Pre-war, the world dismissed Pakistan as weak. This conflict proved otherwise: resources were never the issue. For the next century, India will not dare for an open war, though aerial skirmishes may persist.

Eighteen days: The consequences of tension

Sajid Anwar Wardak

FOR eighteen days, the tension between Pakistan and India was more a battle of nerves than of weapons. Two nuclear-armed nations can never engage in direct and full pledge war, nor can they occupy each other's territories. The conflict was entirely rooted in optics, perception and narrative. Unlike in the past, Pakistan masterfully maintained an element of surprise and strategic ambiguity.

This episode marks the third instance since the Ukraine-Russia war and the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan that has proven nuclear deterrence alone no longer dictates outcomes. On February 1, when Trump



Republicans push ahead on Trump tax, spending plans

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Republicans in the US Congress advanced major elements of President Donald Trump's budget package, as key committees approved tax cuts that would add trillions of dollars to the US debt, while cutting spending on healthcare for the poor and disabled.

With Democrats boycotting this top priority of Trump's, Republicans relied on their majorities in the tax-writing House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce panel overseeing Medicaid and other healthcare programs to advance the controversial package of bills.

Flexing their majority muscles, Republicans defeated all of the Democrats' amendments to the Republican-written bill. It amounts to an initial victory for Republicans, who still have many hurdles to clear before they can get the sprawling package of tax cuts, spending hikes and safety-net reductions to Trump's desk to sign into law. Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" would add trillions of dollars to the nation's debt load, which at \$36.2 trillion now equals 127% of GDP. The package calls for \$4 trillion in additional borrowing, though the total cost is uncertain at this point.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, told reporters his party was on track to pass the massive legislation before the May 26 Memorial Day holiday. But he still faced dissent from within his own party. Moderate Republican lawmakers from Democratic-leaned coastal states including New York, New Jersey and California -- critical to the party's narrow 220-213 majority -- say the bill

imposes too low a limit on how much state and local taxes can be deducted from constituents' federal income taxes. "As this stands right now, I am a 'no,' and so they're going to need to come up with a solution here and quickly if they want to stay on the schedule," said Republican Representative Mike Lawler of New York and an advocate of the so-called SALT deduction. Party hardliners, meanwhile, are demanding deeper spending cuts.

"I'm trying to get the math in order to get this country back on track, financially. And it just hasn't happened," said headline Republican Ralph Norman of South Carolina. Following a work-session that spanned more than 26 hours, the Energy and Commerce Committee voted along party lines on Republicans' plan to tighten eligibility for the Medicaid health plan, which covers 71 million low-income Americans. The Energy and Commerce panel spent much of debating abortion, prescription drug prices and healthcare costs.

Democrats failed in an attempt to remove a provision from the legislation prohibiting Medicaid funding from going to Planned Parenthood, a healthcare provider mainly for low-income women that provides abortion services in states where it is legal. Federal funding for abortions already is not allowed and Democratic Representative Lizzie Fletcher of Texas argued that the bill would stop Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood even in states where abortion is illegal and its doctors are providing essential services, such as cancer screenings and pregnancy visits.

Representative Frank Pallone, the senior Democrat on the committee, criticized Republicans for crafting healthcare policy with just cost-savings in mind in order to finance tax cuts for the wealthy -- instead of basing changes on sound health policy. "Why are we just talking about numbers, how much we're going to save to pay for these tax cuts," Pallone asked.

Republican Representative Buddy Carter argued that the changes to Medicaid would not harm those who legitimately qualify for benefits. "We are trying to stabilize this, to secure it, to save it," he said. The committee's Medicaid plan would save the federal government \$715 billion and kick 7.7 million people off the program, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. A third panel continued working on agriculture and nutrition issues, including a proposal to require some people who receive SNAP food benefits to get a job and shift some costs to states.

It would extend tax cuts passed in Trump's first term that are due to expire at the end of the year, and add new tax breaks for workers, retirees and private schools. To offset some of the cost, the package would cancel green-energy programs passed under Democratic President Joe Biden. The country's looming debt ceiling deadline this summer is also pushing Republicans to work fast. The package would raise the debt limit by \$4 trillion and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has urged lawmakers to act by mid-July to avoid a default that would upend the global economy.

Malaysia PM discusses MH17 downing with Putin

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters): Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said he discussed the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a visit to Moscow, days after a UN report found Russia responsible for the disaster. A UN aviation council found this week that Russia was responsible for the downing of MH17, which was shot down over eastern Ukraine in 2014 during fighting between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces.

Moscow has rejected the International Civil Aviation Organization Council's (ICAO) findings on the crash that killed all 298 passengers and crew, calling the ruling biased. Anwar said in a Facebook post that he would continue to press for accountability over the disaster. "Malaysia remains resolute in ensuring accountability and a just resolution for the victims and their families who continue to bear the weight of this tragedy," he said.

Anwar said that in the meeting Putin expressed condolences to the families of those killed, which included 196 Dutch citizens, 43 Malaysians and 38 Australian citizens or residents. Putin called for a thorough and comprehensive investigation that is not politicised, Anwar said. "I mentioned that this is a report made by ICAO, to which he (Putin) replied that from the beginning, he had requested that the investigation be independent and thorough."

Anwar said Putin told him that Russia is ready to provide its cooperation to ensure that the report is more credible or authoritative. Dutch prosecutors accused Russia in a 2020 court case of trying to sabotage an investigation into the crash. The court later convicted two Russian intelligence agents and a Ukrainian separatist leader in absentia for their roles in the attack. Anwar is in Russia for a three-day visit aimed at strengthening cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, agriculture, education, aerospace and energy.

Pezeshkian says Iran will 'not bow' to bullying from Trump

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country would not "bow to any bully" in response to United States President Donald Trump's criticism of Tehran during his ongoing three-day Gulf tour. "He [Trump] thinks he can come here, chant slogans, and scare us. For us, martyrdom is far sweeter than dying in bed. You came to frighten us? We will not bow to any bully," he said in comments broadcast live on state TV.

Earlier in the day, during the GCC summit in Riyadh, Trump said that while he wanted to make a deal with Iran, the country "must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars, and permanently and verifiably cease its pursuit of nuclear weapons". Washington and Tehran have held four meetings that were mediated by Oman to help reach a deal over the latter's nuclear programme. While attending a state dinner in the Qatari capital in Doha, Trump repeated his publicly stated desire for a peaceful resolution to Iran's nuclear programme and suggested the ball is in Tehran's court.

"It's a perilous situation, and we want to do the right thing," Trump said. "We want to do something that's going to save maybe millions of lives. Because things like that get started, and they get out of control." Trump said that he wanted "to make a deal with Iran", but "if Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch ... we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure". He added that he would not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. Successive US administrations have sought to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. — Ajazeera



GAZA: An injured journalist is brought to Nasser Hospital for medical treatment after the Israeli attack in Khan Younis.

US-backed aid group to start work in Gaza by end of May

UNITED NATIONS/WASHINGTON (Reuters): A US-backed humanitarian organization will start work in Gaza by the end of May under a heavily-criticized aid distribution plan, but has asked Israel to let the United Nations and others resume deliveries to Palestinians now until it is set up.

No humanitarian assistance 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 population in the enclave where Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas have been at war since October 2023. Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid, which the group denies, and is blocking humanitarian deliveries to Gaza until Hamas releases all remaining hostages. Israel has said it backs "the American humanitarian plan."

That plan was initiated by Israel and involves private companies - instead of the UN and aid groups - transporting aid into Gaza to a limited number of so-called secure distribution sites, which Israel said would be in Gaza's south. The newly created Gaza Humanitarian Foundation will run the operation. US security firm

UG Solutions and US-based Safe Reach Solutions, which does logistics and planning, would be involved, said a source familiar with the plans, speaking on condition of anonymity. At the distribution sites, the humanitarian assistance would be given to aid groups to give to civilians, the source said. Washington has urged the UN and aid groups to cooperate with the GHF. However, they raised concerns that the operation would not stick to the long-held humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

"We have made clear our problems with the sort of aid mechanism that's been proposed," deputy UN spokesperson Farhan Haq said, citing heavy criticism of the proposed operation by UN aid chief Tom Fletcher. In a letter to Israel, the foundation's executive director, Jake Wood, sought to address some of the concerns. He said the foundation would not share any personally identifiable information of aid recipients with Israel. In a separate statement, GHF said Israel has agreed to expand the number of distribution sites "to serve the entire population

of Gaza, and to find solutions for the distribution of aid to civilians who are unable to reach a SDS location." Israel's mission to the UN declined to comment.

In his letter, Wood asked Israel's military to "identify and deconflict sufficient locations in northern Gaza capable of hosting GHF operated secure distribution sites that can be made operational within thirty days." He also asked Israel to facilitate the flow of enough aid "using existing modalities" now until GHF's infrastructure is fully operational, saying this is essential to "alleviate the ongoing humanitarian pressure, as well as decrease the pressure on the distribution sites during our first days of operation." Following the GHF announcement, the International Committee of the Red Cross said concerns about the plan remained. "Humanitarian aid should not be politicized nor militarized. The level of need among civilians in Gaza right now is overwhelming, and aid needs to be allowed to enter immediately and without impediment," said ICRC spokesperson Steve Dorsey.

Maldives parliament removes two Supreme Court judges

MALDIVES: The Parliament of the Maldives has impeached two judges of the country's Supreme Court, deepening a political crisis triggered by President Mohamed Muizzu's push to amend the constitution and strip legislators of their seats if they switch political parties.

The Parliament, where the governing People's National Congress holds a supermajority, voted to remove Justices Azmiralda Zahir and Mahaz Ali Zahir on allegations of abuse of power. The vote, which passed 68 - 11, took place as dozens of opposition supporters rallied outside the Parliament House, calling for Muizzu's resignation and an end to what they called the intimidation of judges.

The move comes more than two months after the judicial watchdog, dominated by Muizzu's allies, suspended the two judges and their colleague, Justice Husnu al-Suood. At the time, the seven-member Supreme Court bench had been holding hearings into a petition challenging the anti-defection measures.

Suood later resigned from the top court, accusing Muizzu and Attorney General Ahmed Usham of intimidating all the judges of the Supreme Court to secure a judgement in their favour. The president and his lawyer deny the charges.

"I do not interfere with the judiciary," Muizzu told reporters during a 14-hour news conference on May 3. "I have never done so. I do not control the [the judicial watchdog]." The crisis has paralysed the Maldives' Supreme Court, halting hearings in all ongoing cases, including on the constitutional amendments. It has also raised fears of renewed instability in the Indian Ocean honeymoon destination, which held its first multiparty elections in 2008, but has been roiled by political turmoil since, including a coup d'etat, disputed elections, and the killings and jailing of dissidents. Azmiralda and Mahaz denounced their impeachment.

"This is an attack on the Maldivian judiciary. It is no ordinary matter to bring the Maldives Supreme Court to a halt," Azmiralda said in a statement. "My hope is that one day, when the rule of law is established in this country ... all of the various officials who took part in destroying the Supreme Court are held accountable." The case against the two judges stems from the arrest of Azmiralda's husband, Ismail Latheef, during a police raid on a spa where he was receiving a massage in the Maldivian capital, Male, on December 4 of last year. The incident happened two weeks after Muizzu ratified the anti-defection measures. The controversial amendments stipulate that legislators elected on a political party ticket would lose their seat if they switch parties, or if they resign or are expelled from their party. The provisions effectively allow Muizzu to maintain his supermajority in Parliament, where his party controls 79 of the chamber's 93 seats.

The president has argued they are necessary to "improve political stability", but opponents say they would destroy the country's system of checks and balances. At the time of Latheef's arrest, a former member of parliament had filed a petition at the Supreme Court challenging the legality of the amendments, but the bench had yet to decide to take up the case. Latheef was held overnight for more than 12 hours, on charges of soliciting a prostitute, but was released by a judge at the Criminal Court. In the ruling, the judge noted that the masseuse treating Latheef was fully clothed at the time of the raid, and that the room they were in was unlocked. The prosecutor's office later shelved the case against Latheef, citing a lack of evidence.

But after the Supreme Court began reviewing the constitutional amendments in February, the watchdog Judicial Services Commission (JSC) took up a separate case against Azmiralda and Mahaz, claiming the two judges had unlawfully lobbied lower court judges to secure Latheef's release. The JSC recommended that the Parliament impeach them last month. The judges have denied the charges, with lawyers for Azmiralda saying that the case was "manufactured by top government officials to suspend" them "in order to influence the outcome of the constitutional case before the Supreme Court".

Trump admn cuts another \$450m in Harvard grants in escalating row

WASHINGTON: The administration of United States President Donald Trump has slashed another \$450m in grants from Harvard University, amid an ongoing feud over anti-Semitism, presidential control and the limits of academic freedom.

A joint task force assembled under Trump accused Harvard, the country's oldest university, of perpetrating a "long-standing policy and practice of discriminating on the basis of race". "Harvard's campus, once a symbol of academic prestige, has become a breeding ground for virtue signaling and discrimination. This is not leadership; it is cowardice. And it's not academic freedom; it's institutional disenfranchisement," the task force said in a statement.

"By prioritizing appeasement over accountability, institutional leaders have forfeited the school's

claim to taxpayer support." The elimination of another \$450m in grants came in addition to the more than \$2.2bn in federal funds that were already suspended last week, the task force added. The feud between the president and Harvard - a prestigious Ivy League campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts - began in March, when Trump sought to impose new rules and regulations on top schools that had played host to pro-Palestinian protests over the last year. Trump has called such protests "illegal" and accused participants of anti-Semitism. But student protest leaders have described their actions as a peaceful response to Israel's war in Gaza, which has elicited concerns about human rights abuses, including genocide. Columbia University was initially a centrepiece of the Trump administration's efforts. The New York City school had seen the first major Palestine solidarity encampment rise on its lawn, which served as a blueprint for similar protests around the world. It also saw a series of mass arrests in the aftermath. In March, one of Columbia's protest leaders, Mahmoud Khalil, was the first foreign student to be arrested and have his legal immigration status revoked under Trump's campaign to punish demonstrators. And when Trump threatened to yank \$400m in grants and research contracts, the school agreed to submit to a list of demands to restore the funding.

The demands included adopting a formal definition of anti-Semitism, beefing up campus security and putting one of its academic departments - focused on Middle East, African and South Asian studies - under the

supervision of an outside authority. Free speech advocates called Columbia's concessions a capitulation to Trump, who they say has sought to erode academic freedom and silence viewpoints he disagrees with. On April 11, his administration issued another list of demands for Harvard that went even further. Under its terms, Harvard would have had to revamp its disciplinary system, eliminate its diversity initiatives and agree to an external audit of programmes deemed anti-Semitic.

The demands also required Harvard to agree to "structural and personnel changes" that would foster "viewpoint diversity" - a term left ambiguous. But critics argued it was a means for Trump to impose his values and priorities on the school by shaping its hiring and admissions practices.

Mosquito-borne killer disease threatens blackbirds

LONDON (BBC): A mosquito-borne disease freshly arrived in Britain has spread large distances, with scientists racing to understand the risks to wild birds. Infected insects can spread the deadly Usutu virus to blackbirds, raising fears for the famous songsters.

New data shows Usutu has spread across much of southern England in five years, and has been linked to declines in some blackbird populations. Scientists are monitoring its spread amid warnings that mosquitoes and the diseases they carry may expand their range under climate change. "We've seen that the virus has spread further than we thought it might do, and it's persisted," Dr Arran Folly of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) told the BBC. Scientists at the APHA in Weybridge, Surrey, have been tracking mosquito-borne diseases in wild birds for decades, amid warnings that climate change is turning Europe into a potential breeding ground for the insects.

Longer summers, hotter temperatures and heavy rainfall are creating condi-

tions for the nuisance insects to move into areas that were previously inhospitable to them. Until 2020, all results came back clear. Then, after the summer heatwave of that year, Usutu was detected in several blackbirds in Greater London.

"Blackbirds specifically are quite susceptible to the virus and since 2020 we've found a decline in blackbirds of approximately 40% in Greater London," said Dr Folly. "It gives an indication that in the future we might get other viruses that are transmitted by mosquitoes emerging in the UK." Diseases such as Usutu are a growing threat to wild birds, amid a host of other pressures, including habitat loss, climate change and pesticide use. The latest data shows that Usutu has spread further than the scientists expected. It has now been detected in wild birds across much of southern England, at least as far west as Dorset and as far north as Cambridgeshire.

How big a risk Usutu poses to wild birds is uncertain. The virus has been linked to mass die-offs of blackbirds elsewhere in

Europe, though that doesn't seem to be the case in Britain. And the blackbird remains one of the commonest garden birds with numbers holding steady in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas, and in the north. To untangle the puzzle - and gather more data on blackbird numbers - the scientists have joined forces with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). They are calling for volunteers to count blackbirds in their gardens over the summer months to find out more about the comings and goings of the birds. Around now blackbirds are breeding and raising their young, frequently seen hopping along the ground and singing from the branches of trees on summer evenings.

Lucy Love, a garden birdwatch ambassador for the BTO, knows the blackbirds in her gardens by sight and has grown fond of them. "They're beautiful birds - intelligent, friendly and they have the most beautiful song with a lovely melodic tone to it," she explained. "And we cannot lose them - they're a vital part of our ecosystem."

UN calls for calm as fighting resumes in Libya's Tripoli

TRIPOLI: The United Nations has called for calm as fighting has resumed in Libya's capital, Tripoli, a day after authorities declared order had been restored. The UN Mission to Libya (UNSMIL) warned that the situation in the country could "spiral out of control".

"UNSMIL reiterates its calls for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in all areas, allowing safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians trapped in intense conflict zones," the mission wrote on X. "Attacking and damaging civilian infrastructure, physically harming civilians, and jeopardising the lives and safety of the population may constitute crimes under international law. Those responsible will be held accountable for their actions," it added. Clashes erupted between

the Rada militia and the 444 Brigade, loyal to Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah, in key areas of Tripoli, including the port, the AFP news agency reported, quoting a security source. The official called the ongoing fighting "urban warfare" with intermittent clashes in residential areas and the use of light and medium weapons.

The fighting calmed down later after the government announced a truce, Tripoli residents told the Reuters news agency. "Regular forces, in coordination with the relevant security authorities, have begun taking the necessary measures to ensure calm, including the deployment of neutral units," the government's Ministry of Defence said. Clashes broke out after reports that Abdelghani al-Kikli, leader

of the Support and Stability Apparatus (SSA), a militia that controls the southern district of Abu Salim, was killed. According to local authorities, at least six people were killed in fighting. The fighting restarted overnight with major battles in the capital. For residents, the uncertainty brought by the attacks was "terrorising", a father of three told Reuters from the Dakhra area.

"I had my family in one room to avoid random shelling," he added. Al-Dbeibah ordered what he called irregular armed groups to be dismantled, including Rada. With the seizure of the SSA territory by factions allied with al-Dbeibah, including the 444 and 111 brigades, Rada is the last significant faction not allied with the prime minister.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Beginning of the end?

BIG plumes of smoke are visible on a screen that's providing a live feed from Ukrainian drones hovering over the outskirts of the eastern city of Pokrovsk, one of the most intense front lines in Ukraine. A few seconds earlier, Ukrainian artillery strikes Russian positions, places where we'd seen Russian soldiers moving about as they try to advance towards a key road going into Pokrovsk. At least one Russian soldier is injured, possibly dead after the strike. It's chilling to watch the live footage. It drives home the bloody consequences of the war that Russia started, in which hundreds of thousands have so far been killed, a "never-ending bloodbath" as US President Donald Trump calls it. We are in a rural house converted into a command centre for the 155th mechanised brigade of the Ukrainian army. It's a few miles from front-line artillery positions. The scale of the devastation that we see on the screens, homes and buildings completely flattened, is far greater than what we saw six months ago.

It is evidence of the fierce battle that has been fought over the past several months to defend Pokrovsk, a crucial transport hub in the Donetsk region. This week, there's cautious optimism, even among sceptical soldiers who have witnessed hopes of a ceasefire being dashed over and over again, as diplomatic efforts from the US, Europe, Turkey and others have pushed Russia and Ukraine to direct talks for the first time in three years. "I think something should happen since Russia was the first one to push for these talks. I mean since 2022, they have refused to go into any contact," says an officer who wants to be referred to with his call sign "Kozak".

"I want to believe this would be the beginning of the end of the war. "But now I see, we have been successful in destroying their rear positions and their supply lines. Russia does not have the same strength and power it had at the beginning. So I think that something will happen." Yuri, 37, used to work in a technology company before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. "They (Russia and Ukraine) have to start talking. Us soldiers, we wish this war would end. But it's important to remember that we cannot stop it because we did not start it," he says. He looks up at the screen and spots Russian soldiers moving again. He and his colleagues calculate the co-ordinates of their positions and pass them on to their artillery unit. We drive from the command centre to the artillery position, on mud tracks running through a wide expanse of open fields. Clumps of mud fly in the air, our car slips and slides, as we move as fast as possible. The speed is a mitigation against strikes from drones, which have sharply increased fatalities for both Russia and Ukraine since they were deployed in large numbers in 2023. And war technology keeps evolving. Now there's a new threat - drones equipped with a real fibre optic cable which unrolls as they fly. "We cannot detect them or neutralise them, so there are probably a lot more drones in the area right now than we know," says Yuri. As we drive into the artillery position hidden under trees and bushes, soldiers are already loading the gun. It's a French made self-propelled artillery gun called the "Caesar". Scores have been deployed in Ukraine since the start of the war, and France has been trying to ramp up production. "I'm very impressed by its accuracy, and we can use a large range of ammunition. The most important thing is that bringing it into combat is very fast. It is much more effective than the old Soviet equipment I've used," says Kozak.

Ukrainian soldiers fire four rounds, each one emitting a deafening sound. From around us, we also hear the sound of incoming shells. The battle rages on. "As you can hear, there is a wave of assaults from the enemy and we need a lot of ammunition to suppress that. We hope our international partners can give us as much ammunition as possible, because if we have to start choosing priority and non-priority targets then the enemy will be successful," says Kozak. We ask the soldiers how they feel about suggestions that Ukraine will have to make concessions, that it might have to give up land to secure peace. "It's painful to hear that. Even I want to go home to my family. My daughter is eight and I miss her so much. But we need to be strong. I don't believe that if we give up some territory, they will stop. In a couple of years, they will return and start over," says Yuri. "A person who has not come here, who hasn't felt the consequences of Russian aggression, those armchair commentators say you can give up land and everything will be over.

They will never understand how many brothers and friends we have lost. We shouldn't give up a single metre of our land," says Kozak. The cost Ukraine has paid to defend its land is visible everywhere, most acutely in the photos of smiling, young soldiers posted by the side of highways, on memorial walls in central city squares, and on rows and rows of freshly dug graves in the country. Yana Stepanenko lovingly buys her son's favourite treats - a cup of steaming hot chocolate and a chocolate roll. Then she drives out to a cemetery in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, and places them neatly by 22-year-old Vladislav's grave. She and her daughter, 13-year-old Nicole, wipe the grave with wet tissues. Before long, they break down inconsolably into each other's arms. Vladislav was a drone operator with the Ukrainian military. He was killed in combat in a Russian strike on 21 February this year. For Yana, news of direct talks resuming bring no hope.

"It seems to me that this war is eternal. Of course, I hope they will find a solution. Because people are dying here and there (in Russia). But Putin is greedy. His hunger for our land is insatiable," says Yana. Parts of the Zaporizhzhia region are currently occupied by Russia, the front line less than 40 miles from the city. But Russia has on more than one occasion demanded control of the full regions of Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Donetsk and Kherson as part of any peace deal. "No way. I want to live in Ukraine, not Russia. We have seen what they do under occupation, what they did in places like Bucha - their cruelty and torture," says Yana. "Can you imagine, they've not even spared this graveyard," she adds, pointing to a big crater nearby where a bomb exploded some months ago. Tears rolling down her eyes, she adds. "I hope my child did not die for nothing. That there will still be a victory and all of Ukraine will become free."

Important Notice

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



Mideast has changed since Trump's first term. How will he reshape it?

Aaron David Miller & Lauren Morganbesser

AS President Trump parades through the Middle East this week, he will encounter a very different region than the one he experienced during his first term. True, the Israeli-Palestinian problem remains unresolved, as do the challenges emanating from Iran's much-advanced nuclear program and the instability and dysfunction in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

But this old wine is now packaged in new bottles. Beyond the garish headlines of Trump's plan to accept a Boeing 747 as a gift from Qatar, new trends are emerging that will redefine the region, posing additional challenges for US policy.

Of all the changes in the Middle East since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, perhaps the most striking is Israel's emergence as a regional powerhouse. Aided by the administrations of Presidents Biden and Trump, and enabled by Arab regimes that do little to support Palestinians, Israel devastated Hamas and Hezbollah as military organizations, killing much of their senior leadership. With the support of the United States, Europe and friendly Arab states, it effectively countered two direct Iranian missile attacks on its territory.

Israel then delivered its own strike, reportedly destroying much of Iran's ballistic missile production and air defenses. In short, Israel has achieved escalation dominance: the capacity to escalate (or not) as it sees fit, and to deter its adversaries from doing so. Israel has also redefined its concept of border security in Gaza, Lebanon, the West Bank and Syria by acting unilaterally to preempt and prevent threats to its territory.

Converting Israel's military power into political arrangements, even peace accords, would seem like a reasonable next step. But the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seems uninterested in such options and is unlikely to be induced to change its outlook. Moreover, securing new, lasting agreements also depends on whether there are leaders among the Palestinians and key Arab states ready to take up the

challenge, with all the political risks it entails. But the Arab world remains in serious disarray. At least five Arab states are dealing with profound internal challenges, leaving them in various degrees of dysfunction and state failure. Amid this power vacuum, two alternative power centers have emerged. The first are the states of the Persian Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, the United Arab

Emirates and Qatar. Relatively unscathed by the Arab Spring and blessed with sovereign wealth funds, oil and natural gas, these stable authoritarian powers, particularly Saudi Arabia, have begun to play an outsized role in the region.

Moreover, securing new, lasting agreements also depends on whether there are leaders among the Palestinians and key Arab states ready to take up the challenge, with all the political risks it entails. But the Arab world remains in serious disarray. At least five Arab states are dealing with profound internal challenges, leaving them in various degrees of dysfunction and state failure.

Comprising non-Arab states, Israel, Turkey and Iran are the only states in the region with the capacity to project significant military power beyond their borders. While each has suffered periods of internal unrest, they currently enjoy domestic stability. Each also boasts tremendous economic potential and significant security, military and intelligence capabilities, including the capability to manufacture weapons domestically. One (Israel) is America's closest regional ally, another (Turkey) is a member of NATO and a newfound power broker in Syria, and the third (Iran) retains considerable influence despite Israel's mauling of its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran's nuclear program keeps it relevant, even central, to both Israeli and American policymaking.

All three non-Arab states engender a good deal of suspicion and mistrust among Arab regimes but are nonetheless seen as key players whom no one wants to offend. All three are at odds - with each frustrating the others' regional objectives - and all three are here to stay. Their influence will most likely only grow in the years to come, given the fractiousness of the Arab world. In the immediate aftermath of the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, it seemed that the Palestinian issue was once again front and

center, not just in the Arab world, but internationally. Those who claimed it had lost its resonance could point to the outpouring of sympathy and support for Gazan civilians as Israel's war against Hamas led to a humanitarian catastrophe. Moreover, the United Nations passed resolutions calling for an end to the war, many around the world condemned the war and Israel, the International Court of Justice took up the question of whether Israel is committing genocide, and the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu (as well as for Hamas' military commander, later found to have been killed).

Nonetheless, it has become stunningly clear that, far from pushing the Palestinian issue to the top of the international agenda, the Oct. 7 attack has actually diminished its salience and left Palestinians isolated and without good options. Continued US support for Israel's war against Hamas, despite the exponential rise of Palestinian deaths, has protected Israel from negative consequences; key Arab regimes have done next to nothing to impose costs and consequences on Israel and the US as Palestinian civilian

deaths mount. The international community appears too fragmented, distracted and self-interested to act in any concerted way in defense of Palestine. Meanwhile, the Palestinian national movement remains divided and dysfunctional, giving Palestinians an unpalatable choice between Hamas and the aging president of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. The prospects for anything resembling a two-state solution have never looked bleaker.

How the Trump administration will process these developments remains to be seen. Clearly, it has adopted a pro-Israel view, with Trump musing about turning Gaza into a Riviera-style resort. He has deployed his special envoy to the Middle East to secure the return of hostages taken by Hamas but has yet to invest in any postwar plan for the beleaguered enclave. Indeed, he has left the strategy for Gaza to Israel, which in turn has resumed its military campaign there. Trump has also acquiesced to Israel's pursuit of aggressive border defenses against both Lebanon and Syria, while enabling Israel's annexationist policies in the West Bank.

Yet Trump is nothing if not unpredictable. In April, he announced new US negotiations with Iran in the presence of Netanyahu, who himself has tried to persuade the president that the only solution to Iran's nuclear program is military action. But if US-Iranian negotiations do advance, or if Trump's interest in Israeli-Saudi normalization intensifies, he may find himself drawn into the Middle East negotiating bazaar, dealing with the intricacies of day-after planning in Gaza and a political horizon for Palestinians.

These paths are already fomenting tension between Trump, who will not be visiting Israel on his Middle East trip, and a recalcitrant Netanyahu. But given Trump's absolute control over his party, Netanyahu will have few options to appeal to Republicans if the White House proposes policies that he opposes. As most US allies have already learned, if Trump wants something, he's not averse to using pressure to get it.

The Los Angeles Times

Power plays in Germany's new government

Ulrich Schlie

GERMAN poet Hermann Hesse's statement that there is magic in every beginning may only apply to a very limited extent to the start of the government under Chancellor Friedrich Merz. The makeup of the new Cabinet remained unclear until the last moment. There were cancellations, such as that of the CDU's leading economic policy figure and person responsible for the parliamentary election campaign, Secretary General Carsten Linnemann, to join the government, and this fueled further speculation and culminated in several unexpected appointments.

The new Cabinet and the responsibilities of the ministries bear the hallmarks of the trio of party leaders, Friedrich Merz (CDU), Lars Klingbeil (SPD), and Markus Soder (CSU). They are the result of an exhausting tug-of-war between the mistrustful partners, who have not found each other in a love match. Merz honored his promise to appoint people who achieved success in business. This applies in particular to the new economics minister, Katherina Reiche, a successful energy manager who was already a member of Edmund Stoiber's shadow cabinet in 2002 and who impressed under Angela Merkel as parliamentary state secretary in several departments. The new minister for digitization and state modernization, Karsten Wildberger, has no experience in government or party politics. This newly created ministerial post is unprecedented in German government. Excessive bureaucracy and a lack of genuine reform have largely held Germany back.

The new minister of state for culture, Wolfram Weimar, is also a real surprise, an experienced journalist with no previous political experience or administrative knowledge. He faces the difficult task of depoliticizing a cultural policy previously shaped by ideology under Claudia Roth (Green Party). Remarkably, Merz largely ignored the customary proportional distribution among state party wings when making his appointments. With Johann Wadephul and Karin Prien for the Federal Foreign Office and the Education and Family Affairs Ministry, he has now appointed two politicians from the small state of Schleswig-Holstein. Criticism came above all from the eastern federal states, which feel that they were not given sufficient consideration in the new Cabinet despite the convincing appointment of Reiche from Brandenburg.

The mark of CSU Chair Soder, who had already proven himself to be a savvy professional and brilliant negotiator during the coalition negotiations, is clearly visible. With Alexander Dobrindt, Dorothee Bar, and Alois Rainer, the CSU has three favorite ministries in which it can take Bavarian interests into account to a high degree.

Dobrindt is the new strongman of the Cabinet as Soder's outpost. With responsibility for migration policy, he is in charge of the most important policy area on which the success of the new government depends. Horst Seehofer's "home-

land" portfolio - a pet project that never fit well within the Interior Ministry - was dropped. Instead, he now oversees German minorities in the east, a role that has already drawn significant political attention. Heimat (homeland) is moving to the Agriculture Ministry, also run by the CDU, where the topic is in good hands due to its responsibility for rural areas. The Research Ministry has expanded its remit to include the areas of technology and space travel, giving it the opportunity to set completely new priorities in technology policy. This is the most interesting political message of the reallocation of departmental responsibilities.

Klingbeil, the new strongman, SPD leader, and finance minister, can also be satisfied. With his proposals for the heads of the SPD-led ministries, he has shown that nobody in his party can take the reins out of his hands. He ousted his widely unpopular Co-Chair Saskia Esken in a public power struggle. Esken's wish for a place at the Cabinet table - she claimed the Development Aid Ministry - remained unfulfilled. She will soon pay for the humiliation of her defeat by not being reelected as party leader and will remain a member of the Bundestag only as an ordinary MP. Otherwise, Klingbeil endeavored to put as much distance as possible between himself and the failed three-party coalition of the SPD, Greens, and FDP by not reappointing almost all former ministers with SPD party credentials, such as former Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, former Health Minister Karl Lauterbach, and former Development Aid Minister Svenja Schulze. Only Boris Pistorius remains in office as defense minister. The popular politician, who many in his party would have liked to have seen as the SPD's top candidate during the election campaign, has been in a weight class of his own since his tug-of-war with Olaf Scholz and is standing by as the SPD's reserve party chair for future tasks.

This tension between Klingbeil's role as party leader and the demands of government office likely explains why he became vice chancellor instead of remaining parliamentary group leader. With Barbel Bas replacing Hubertus Heil, another SPD heavyweight who is also no longer in the Cabinet, as labor minister, the former Bundestag president has moved further up the internal hierarchy. By once again assuming responsibility for labor and social affairs, Klingbeil also succeeded in thwarting a key concern of the CDU and CSU to bring the economy and labor under one roof and was probably a major factor in Carsten Linnemann's decision not to join the Friedrich Merz-led government.

The new government can credibly claim a fresh start with its appointments and responsibilities. Given these challenging times, the government's untested lineup risks policy paralysis. Despite heavy publicity during the election campaign, the National Security Council is absent from the new Cabinet's structure. The merging of the Foreign Office and the Development Aid Ministry, which was recommended by many, has not materialized.

Kremlin prepared regions for peace talks

Leyla Latypova

THIS week, Russia watchers have turned their focus toward Istanbul, where officials from Moscow and Kyiv are expected to meet for the first round of direct peace negotiations in three years (you can read MT's analyses of the upcoming event here and here).

President Vladimir Putin proposed the talks in a televised address late on Saturday - a time when most residents of Russia were savoring the remainder of a long weekend break after grand commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory in World War II. Friday's Victory Day celebrations across Russia's regions already offered plenty of material for political and societal analysis. The timing of Putin's proposal has seemingly added yet another layer of complexity.

Seven million Russians

across 57 regions took part in Immortal Regiment processions on Friday, according to event organizers. St. Petersburg saw a record number of participants, with 1.2 million people marching down Nevsky Prospekt, followed by 200,000 in Chelyabinsk, 180,000 in Bashkortostan's capital Ufa and 150,000 in Tatarstan's Kazan. The Immortal Regiment, which evolved from a grassroots movement to one of the Kremlin's favorite propaganda devices, was established to allow descendants of World War II veterans to connect with their family roots by marching in the procession with a portrait of their deceased relatives on Victory Day.

Held for the first time in three years, this year's processions were a stark reflection of a country transformed by a war of aggression whose citizens

seem utterly confused about the wider meaning of the sacrifices made by their relatives 80 years ago and in the present war. This photo from Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Siberian republic of Buryatia where the Indigenous Buryat population has suffered oversized losses in the Ukraine war, perfectly encapsulates the mood.

The woman on the left - likely a Buryat - carries a photo of her son, killed in the first weeks of Russia's invasion at the age of 21, and wears a shirt that reads "My son is a hero." Her female companion, who sports a shirt with "Putin's team" written on it, carries two photos of World War II veterans. For the first time, officials this year encouraged relatives of Russian soldiers killed in the war in Ukraine to join the Immortal

Regiment processions with photos of their loved ones.

Tatarstan, which ranks second among Russia's regions in terms of total casualties, even inaugurated the construction of its first memorial complex for soldiers killed in Ukraine. "It is symbolic that in this year of the anniversary of the Great Victory, we are holding a ceremony to install a memorial stone to the participants of the Special Military Operation, who today continue the work of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers with honor," Tatarstan's head Rustam Minnikhanov said during the ceremony to lay the memorial's cornerstone.

The possible wind-down of active combat in Ukraine will always come with a risk of instability in Russia's ethnic republics, most of which sustained

wartime losses far higher than those of the rest of the country. As patriotic fervor wanes and plush military payments evaporate from bank accounts, more and more residents - especially Indigenous ones - could start questioning the true meaning of the sacrifices made by their loved ones. Reimagined as the Kremlin-endorsed act of public mourning over the Ukraine war casualties, this year's Immortal Regiment seemingly helps to delay those questions, providing an opportunity for mourners to let off steam and reinforcing myths of continuity between the two wars - just like in that photo from Ulan-Ude.

It is no coincidence that authorities in ethnic republics - especially in Sakha and Tatarstan - splurged on military parades and other accompanying celebrations while healthcare, educational and vital infrastruc-

tural projects in these areas suffer from underfunding. Whether following Moscow's orders or their own hunch as to what will please the Kremlin, local officials bet that propaganda can effectively prolong the life of the regime in Moscow and, by extension, their own.

Mythmaking over Russia's role in World War II, which long seemed a guaranteed source of loyalty to Putin's regime, is showing its first cracks. Eight decades later, more and more people are questioning the treatment of the ethnic minority soldiers who fought in the Red Army and speak up about the mass repressions and forced deportations that went hand in hand with the Soviet victory. But how long will it take for the regions' silent majority to question Russia's war in Ukraine?

The Moscow Times

West Bank under occupation: To whom, by whom, and how are Palestinian lands being sold?

IN an interview with Anadolu's Strategic Analysis Department, lawyer Robert Grabosch assessed the illegal land grabs and settlement sales of Israel in West Bank, as well as the complaint against Axel Springer, the owner of the Israeli classifieds portal Yad2.

Grabosch is a German lawyer representing Palestinians in a complaint against illegal land and settlement sales in West Bank.

Question: Hello Mr. Grabosch, you represent a group of Palestinians from the West Bank who filed a complaint in Germany against Axel Springer, alleging the company promotes illegal Israeli settlements by listing properties in occupied territories. Could you briefly explain who builds these settlements, their methods, and how they justify their expansion?

Grabosch: Indeed, I am one of more than 10 lawyers from Germany, Israel, and Palestine that support this complaint filed by Palestinian individuals and three villages in the West Bank. The complaint explains that the German media group Springer through a subsidiary, operates the online platform, on which settlers find land that is owned by Palestinians. The settlement movement in the West Bank started half a century ago, with Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory in 1967. The settlements are residential communities built by Israeli settlers on land that international law recognizes as Palestinian territory, illegally occupied Palestinian territory.

Settlements are primarily established by Israeli settlers, often supported by the Israeli government through subsidies, infrastructure development, and military protection. There are also private organizations, including foreign donors, that fund settlement activities. Sometimes, settlers act independently by creating so-called "outposts," which even Israeli law initially deems illegal but they are often later legalized retroactively. Land is often confiscated under pretexts like "security needs."

Complex legal frameworks are used to justify land acquisition and settlement expansion. The justification for settlements often draws on ideological or religious claims. Many settlers believe they have a divine or historical right to the land based on biblical texts. Others frame settlements as necessary for Israel's security or as part of a broader nationalist project. All these narratives ignore the rights of Palestinians who have lived on this land for generations.

Question: Are Palestinians coerced or forced out of their land, or do they voluntarily sell or leave it? What are the mechanisms behind land confiscation or acquisition?

Grabosch: The overwhelming evidence shows that Palestinians are not leaving their land voluntarily. Instead, they are being systematically coerced and forced out through a combination of legal maneuvers, physical violence, and administrative restrictions. There are several mechanisms of coercion and forced displacement:

For instance, Israeli authorities declare land "military zones" or "nature reserves" to justify its confiscation and then give it to settlers. Authorities also confiscate land under the guise of "security needs" or for the construction of infrastructure such as roads that are exclusively for settlers.

Settlers also frequently engage in intimidation, destruction of property, and physical violence against Palestinians. Israeli authorities rarely prosecute these assaults. Furthermore, there are restrictive Administrative Policies for Palestinians living in Area C of the West Bank, which is under full Israeli control, it is nearly impossible, to obtain building permits. And when they build without permits, their constructions are often demolished by Israeli authorities.

In addition, access to agricultural land is frequently denied or restricted by settlers or the military. Settlers also destroy crops -- especially olive trees -- which are also vital to Palestinian cultural heritage.

And then there are movement restrictions. Checkpoints, road-blocks, and settler-only roads fragment Palestinian communities and prevent access to farmland, schools, hospitals, and workplaces. This isolation contributes to economic hardship and forces many families to relocate.

Question: There is a historical claim regarding this issue that Palestinians willingly sell their land and that Israelis are acquiring the country through these purchases. Is there any truth to this?

Grabosch: Well, the claim that anyone "willingly sold" their land -- in the past or today -- would dramatically oversimplify the complex reality which is shaped by colonial frameworks, economic exploitation, and systemic violence. Today, acquisitions in the West Bank are entrenched in illegal occupation.

The 4th Geneva Convention (Article 49) prohibits any occupying power transferring civilians into the occupied territory. A Jordanian law from 1953 also prohibits any sales of land in the West Jordan territory to non-Arabs. Now, just in January, Israel advanced a bill to repeal that restriction from the Jordanian-era, and this is now esca-

Robert Grabosch

lating "questionable deals and forgeries."

But the laws of an occupying power cannot legalize the taking of land by that occupying power. And the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its Advisory Opinion of 2024 reaffirmed settlements as illegal. So, what we see in the West Bank is certainly not a natural process of voluntary migration but a systematic policy of dispossession that violates international law.

Question: How many settlements exist in the West Bank, and how many people live in them?

Grabosch: From 1967 through 2017 over 200 settlements were established in the West Bank according to the Israeli NGO B'Tselem. And since then, the number went up sharply, now approaching 300. More than 700,000 settlers live there now, 1/3 of them in East Jerusalem, according to the Organization Peace Now and the United Nations.

This settlement network makes a Palestinian state increasingly difficult to achieve. It has been widely criticized as a violation of international law, particularly Article 49(6) of the 4th Geneva Convention. So, this settlement expansion is more than a demographic or geographic issue; it undermines Palestinian rights to self-determination and exacerbates tensions in the region.

Question: Who exactly has filed the complaint and which violations do they say they experience?

Grabosch: The complainants in our case are five individual farmers whose land has been taken violently from them and their families; three villages of Iskaka, Marda, and Taybeh. They are in the Salfit and Ramallah Governorates. Their population is between 1,500 and 2,300 residents each. The rights to land, to property, and the right to water are being violated.

Question: There is a curiosity in Turkish public opinion about the specifics of land sales in the West Bank. Who exactly is selling land, and who is buying it?

Grabosch: Transfer is usually processed indirectly through settlement developer companies. Individual settlers, on the other hand, re-sell property, after taking it or inheriting it. To a lesser extent, the Israeli Land Authority lists "state land" that had been confiscated. Right-wing NGOs also play a role, they litigate to evict Palestinians, then list "vacant" land on Yad2. These properties are made exclusively available to Jewish settlers only. Listings for the Ariel settlement include clauses that exclude non-Jews. Many settlements have Admission Committees that screen buyers for their religion. Many listings say "ideal for Zionist pioneers" or they use Hebrew terms like Judea and Samaria to appeal to nationalists.

Question: How is Axel Springer involved in all of this? What connects the company to the Ariel settlement expansion, and why is it a party to this case?

Grabosch: As the complaint explains, the Axel Springer group owns an Israeli subsidiary that operates the listings site Yad2 -- which is Hebrew for "Second Hand." On that site, Jewish settlers find the land that was taken from Palestinians. So, we argue that the German head company must take reasonable measures to avoid illegal property listings, which are part of the land rights violations.

Question: What kind of company is "Axel Springer SE" and what does it do?

Grabosch: Axel Springer S.E. is one of Europe's largest media corporations. It's headquartered in Berlin, Germany, and it operates two main business segments. First, it is the most influential media company in Germany. Springer publishes major newspapers such as BILD and DIE WELT and it operates various TV channels and online news platforms.

The 2nd segment of Axel Springer's business is its classifieds division, which includes online platforms for job searches, real estate listings, and other services. This division operates globally and generates substantial revenue for the company.

Question: Is Yad2 part of the classifieds business?

Grabosch: Exactly. The online platform Yad2 is operated by an Israeli company, Coral Tell Ltd. According to the public company registries in Germany and Israel, this is a subsidiary of the Axel Springer group. In the group structure, there are four intermediary companies, and eventually, as the complaint explains, Coral Tell Ltd. is wholly owned by Axel Springer SE.

Question: And Axel Springer SE -- the German parent company -- knows about Yad2?

Grabosch: Springer certainly knows about it. And our international research team even established that the German Springer company even controls the Yad2 business, according to public reports and excerpts from company registries. The German Springer company owns 100% of the shares of the subsidiaries. Policies and reports of the parent company explicitly cover the subsidiary's business, too. So, there are more than enough reasons for the supervisory authority BAFA (Federal Office for Economic Affairs and

Export Control) to investigate the case.

Question: What is the legal basis for this complaint under German law?

Grabosch: The legal basis for this complaint is Germany's Corporate Due Diligence Act, which came into force in January 2023. This law requires large German companies to identify and mitigate human rights and environmental risks in their global operations.

In this case, Axel Springer SE is accused of failing to fulfill its due diligence obligations concerning its Israeli subsidiary Coral Tell Ltd., which operates the Yad2 platform. The complaint argues that Yad2 violates land rights of Palestinians in the West Bank by listing property for sale that is located on land illegally confiscated from Palestinians. These transactions perpetuate the forced evictions and land grabs that have already taken place, and the operation of this platform encourages further land grabbing and settlements. Axel Springer SE was made aware of these issues through an investigative report published by Hanno Hauenstein in The Intercept 1 year ago. This had stirred public criticism. But Springer chose not to act. Instead, it claimed compliance with Israeli law, ignoring its broader responsibilities under German and international law.

Question: Does the Corporate Due Diligence Act apply to Springer's operations in the Middle East?

Grabosch: It does. Without a doubt. The German DD law explicitly provides that the business operations of a company's subsidiary are part of the company's own business operations, if the company controls that subsidiary.

Question: What role does international law play here?

Grabosch: International law is the bedrock of this case. The settlement enterprise in the West Bank violates foundational principles of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law, which bind all states -- including Germany and corporations like Axel Springer SE.

1. 4th Geneva Convention (1949):

Article 49(6) explicitly prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into occupied territory.

2. ICJ Advisory Opinions and UN Resolutions

2024 Advisory Opinion: The court ordered Israel to end its occupation "as rapidly as possible," dismantle settlements, and compensate Palestinians for damages. Critically, it also held that third states must cease all aid or assistance perpetuating the occupation, including corporate complicity.

UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016): Condemned settlements as a "flagrant violation" of international law and demanded states distinguish between Israel and occupied territories in economic dealings.

3. Corporate Accountability Under International Law:

The Rome Statute classifies transferring civilians into occupied territory as a war crime (Article 8(2)(b)(viii)). While Israel isn't a party to the statute, corporations aiding such acts risk complicity. The ICJ's 2024 opinion emphasized that states must ensure businesses under their jurisdiction do not enable violations -- a duty Germany enshrined in its Due Diligence Act. In essence, international law doesn't exist in a vacuum. It demands concrete action -- like halting Yad2's listings -- to dismantle structures enabling apartheid and occupation. Silence from German authorities isn't neutrality; it's complicity.

Question: What are the obligations of Germany as a UN member state in this case?

Grabosch: Germany is a UN member state and signatory to the 4th Geneva Convention. It has clear obligations under international law to prevent and address violations stemming from Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

The German government must enforce International Humanitarian Law, which is, in this case, the Fourth Geneva Convention. Article 1 of the Convention requires all states to "ensure respect" for its provisions, including the prohibition on transferring civilians into occupied territory (Article 49(6)). The ICJ reinforced this in its 2024 Advisory Opinion, explicitly stating that all states must ensure that their corporations do not contribute to such violations in the West Bank. By letting Axel Springer's subsidiary Yad2 facilitate settlement expansion, the German government violates these obligations.

In short, Germany cannot claim to uphold a "rules-based international order" while allowing its corporations to undermine those very rules. Legal consistency is not optional -- it's a binding obligation.

Question: What do the complainants expect Axel Springer SE to do?

Grabosch: The complainants demand immediate action from Axel Springer SE to halt its subsidiary Yad2's role in enabling illegal settlements. Specifically:

Yad2 must delist all properties in occupied Palestinian territories unless sellers provide verifiable

proof of lawful ownership --something Palestinians are systematically denied in Area C due to discriminatory Israeli policies. Implement geofencing technology to block listings in settlements and adopt independent audits to verify land ownership. Axel Springer must publicly disclose these measures to ensure transparency, establish complaints mechanism for victims that actually works so that illegal listings are suspended without delay.

Question: Could successful enforcement of this complaint lead to settlements being removed or restricted?

Grabosch: Enforcing the law would at least make that expelling Palestinians from their homes and lands not very appealing anymore. If you cannot sell or buy real estate online, it is much more difficult to transfer the property and hence, the taking of the land would slow down a lot.

Every time a listing for stolen land is placed online and every time that land is transferred, the property rights are violated anew. Settlements would not be removed as a result, but their expansion would slow down and further land-rights violations would be stopped. Also, German political leaders -- including the Green Party-led Economics Ministry, and the Chancellery led by the Social Democrats' Olaf Scholz remain conspicuously silent.

Although the ICJ has confirmed settlements violate international law and human rights continue to be systematically violated..

Question: So, it seems that BAFA is not taking the case seriously? Why is that so?

Grabosch: Well, BAFA is controlled by the Federal Ministries of Economics and of Labor, so eventually politicians from the Green Party and Social Democrats decide. And there is a widespread fear of Springer. Politicians' careers depend on the Springer media's good will. It dominates the German media landscape. So it takes some bravery to uphold the law. Eventually, this silence undermines Germany's credibility as a defender of international law and human rights.

Question: Did you expect this when you took on this case?

Grabosch: Not to this extent. You know, the German government has long been explicitly against the settlements in the West Bank. For many years, the German government has called for a 2-state solution. Olaf Scholz said in an interview in November that the settlements and the settler violence have to stop.

Furthermore, in November, Germany voted in favor of a UN resolution that upholds Palestinians' sovereign rights over their territory and natural resources. So I had thought that they cannot dismiss this case would expose blatant hypocrisy. If BAFA and the politicians in charge and their entire parties remain silent, they lose all credibility. They cannot do that. But so far it seems that I was wrong and meanwhile, the violations currently intensify.

Question: What motivated you to take on this case, despite the risks?

Grabosch: I believe in the power of international law to replace conflict with peace. Accountability and trust in the rule of law are essential for ending war and establishing justice. Legally, it's clear that Axel Springer SE must not contribute to settlers' illegal land grabs, as this violates international, German, and even Jordanian law.

Our team includes Palestinian, Israeli, and German lawyers who share the same view: Stopping corporate contributions to these crimes is the only non-violent way to achieve a just and sustainable solution. As a lawyer, I believe legal tools are the most effective means for achieving peace. Dialogue at equal footing would be ideal, but until that becomes possible, we must uphold the law. And as Germans, we have a particular responsibility. Our History has understandably made it necessary for the Jewish people to establish a safe space. We must not ignore the current crisis in the West Bank, it endangers all lives there including Jewish lives. Essentially, I decided to work on this case because I believe Germany must uphold human rights for all people, and without fear or favor.

Question: What would you say to German political leaders who have remained silent on this issue despite their stated opposition to settlements?

Grabosch: My message? Demand and ensure that BAFA applies the law! The Due Diligence Act and international principles, like the protection of property, are clear. Ignoring this case undermines Germany's credibility as a defender of human rights and international law.

And don't think that this is a religious conflict. There are Jewish people, Christians, and Muslim Palestinians living in the West Bank. And not all settlers are Jewish -- some are Christian Zionists or secular individuals. Aiding and abetting land grabs and forced displacement puts everyone in the region at greater risk.

German leaders should recognize that only by respecting human rights on all sides can we create a foundation for peace. Silence in the face of injustice is complicity, and it is time for Germany to uphold its stated opposition to settlements with action, not just words.

AA

Trump's Middle East tour has more substance than the White House let on

Stephen Collinson

reach at the Middle East Institute, told CNN's Becky Anderson that the Syria move was a significant win for Trump on a trip dominated by economic concerns. "I think Trump has been very careful and very, I would say, keen on unlocking geopolitical successes, too," Maksad said. "Whatever happens in Syria doesn't stay in Syria." The president's move mirrors a willingness of some European and Middle Eastern leaders to shelve distaste for al-Sharaa's past activity in the hope he can stop a return to civil war.

Unusually, a Trump policy decision is winning praise even among some longtime critics. "I think it's a good move," Leon Panetta, a former CIA director and US defense

tions," Graham said in a statement released from Turkey. "However, we must remember that the current leadership in Syria achieved its position through force of arms, not through the will of its people."

Graham noted that Israel was especially concerned by the decision to lift sanctions on Syria and argued that the US must work together with allies to coordinate the new opening. "This newly formed government in Syria may be a good investment and could be the pathway to unifying Syria, making it a stable part of the region. However, there is a lot that must be learned before making that determination," Graham said. "A stable Syria would be a game changer for the region, but given its past, their

The president told reporters that he believed that al-Sharaa has "got a real shot at holding it together." Officials said later that Trump wants Syria to eventually recognize Israel. This would represent an extraordinary transformation in a region wracked by hate. Firas Maksad, director of outreach at the Middle East Institute, told CNN's Becky Anderson that the Syria move was a significant win for Trump on a trip dominated by economic concerns. "I think Trump has been very careful and very, I would say, keen on unlocking geopolitical successes, too," Maksad said. "Whatever happens in Syria doesn't stay in Syria." The president's move mirrors a willingness of some European and Middle Eastern leaders to shelve distaste for al-Sharaa's past activity in the hope he can stop a return to civil war. Unusually, a Trump policy decision is winning praise even among some longtime critics. "I think it's a good move," Leon Panetta, a former CIA director and US defense secretary, told "CNN News Central" on Wednesday. "I think that (Trump) is right because this individual was able to lead that rebellion, was able to depose Assad and, as far as I can see, is working to try to stabilize a difficult challenge with regards to Syria."

secretary, told "CNN News Central" on Wednesday. "I think that (Trump) is right because this individual was able to lead that rebellion, was able to depose Assad and, as far as I can see, is working to try to stabilize a difficult challenge with regards to Syria." Trump's decision to lift sanctions came at the urging of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which both want to avoid unrest in Syria spreading. There is also a desire in Riyadh, Washington and Doha to prevent a return of outside powers to Syria, which has endured decades of foreign interference from states including Iran, Russia, Turkey and Israel. But Trump is taking a risk.

While al-Sharaa is seen outside the country as Syria's best hope for stability, concern is growing that his government is not protecting religious and ethnic minorities. In Washington, meanwhile, senior members of Congress will want assurances that he's driving out ISIS elements before they agree to lift sanctions enshrined in law that the president cannot waive on his own.

To seize the moment, it will be important for the President's decision to be swiftly implemented and for the Syrian government to move quickly to address US national security concerns," Sens. Jim Risch and Jeanne Shaheen, the Republican chairman and the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a statement. "This will help Syria remain on the path to freedom from the malign influence of Iran and Russia, from China's attempt to gain an economic foothold in the Middle East, and from the resurgence of ISIS." South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Trump ally, struck a note of caution.

"I am very inclined to support sanctions relief for Syria under the right condi-

progress must be evaluated closely." If Trump is to shepherd Syria toward stability, he'll need to use the power of the United States to convene like-minded nations. This kind of work with allies is hardly a hallmark of this White House. And it's another challenge for a stretched foreign policy team hampered by chaotic staffing decisions and the inexperience of some key players - for instance, Trump's envoy for all occasions Steve Witkoff. Trump already seemed to be laying the groundwork for the laying of blame, should his decision backfire, noting several times that part of his reason for lifting sanctions was because of the advocacy of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "Oh, what I do for the crown prince," Trump said. Some of Trump's recent wins hardly suggest he's ready to do the hard work of diplomacy. He claimed he reached big trade deals with the UK and China. But they'd be better described as announcements of an intent to reach agreements. If Tuesday's sanctions move is similar, his Syria diplomacy will never reach its goals. There's another reason for anxiety. Al-Sharaa seems to have activated Trump's weakness for strongmen.

He described the former terrorist as a "great young attractive guy" and a "fighter." Jarringly, given the Syrian leader's al Qaeda associations, the president commented that he had "a very strong past." History is full of examples in which Washington put its trust in Middle East tough-guy leaders to keep countries torn by religious and tribal divides in one piece. In Iraq, such a bet ended up costing thousands of US lives. But Trump is more optimistic. "It's their time to shine," he said. "Good luck, Syria. Show something very special."



Textile exports rise by 8.41% to Rs.14.834 bln in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Textile exports witnessed an increase of 8.41 per cent during the first ten months of the current financial year (July-April) as compared to the corresponding months of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.

The textile exports from the country were recorded at \$ 14,834.390 million during the July-April (2024-25) against the exports of \$ 13,683.247 million during July-April (2023-24).

The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included knitwear the export of which increased by 15.47 percent to \$ 4,118.227 million from \$ 3,566.624 million

while the export of bed wear surged by 12.18 percent to \$ 2,569.214 million from \$ 2,290.796 million.

The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included towels, the export of which rose by 4.49 percent to \$903.331 million from \$ 864.547 million, tents, canvas, and tarpaulin by 11.65 percent to \$ 109.002 million from \$ 97.632 million; ready-made garments up by 17.52 percent to \$ 3,394.188 million this year compared to the exports of \$ 2,888.177 million last year.

Similarly, the export of art, silk and synthetic textile grew by 9.74 percent to \$ 330.862 million from \$ 301.496 million, made up articles (excl. towels and

bed wear) increased by 9.10 percent to \$ 642.646 million from \$ 589.025 million while the export of other textile materials went up by 2.59 percent to \$ 610.866 million from \$ 595.431million.

The textile commodities that witnessed negative trade growth included raw cotton the exports of which declined by 98.45 percent to \$0.871 million from \$56.086 million.

Likewise, the exports of cotton yarn declined by 31.91 percent to \$576.016 million from \$845.923 million whereas the export of cotton carded or combed dipped by 99.28 percent from \$0.837 million to \$0.006 million during the period under review.

The exports of yarn other than cotton yarn also declined by 4.08 percent to \$27.591 million from \$28.766 million.

Meanwhile, on Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the textile exports from the country witnessed a decrease of 1.35 percent during April 2025 as compared to the corresponding month of last year.

The textile exports in April 2025 were recorded \$1,220.655 million against the exports of \$1,237.313 million in April 2024.

On Month-on-Month (MoM) basis, the textile exports also decreased by 14.64 percent in April 2025 when compared to the exports of \$ 1,430.003 million in March 2025, according to PBS data.

SNGPL celebrates Yaum-e-Tashakar at all its offices



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sui Northern celebrated 'Yaum-e-Tashakar' at its Head Office and all the Regional Offices in order to commemorate

the successful completion of operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos and pay homage to the national leadership and Pakistan Armed Forces.

MD SNGPL Amer

Tufail, Senior Management and employees participated in these events and paid tribute to the bravery and courage of Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Navy.

MD SNGPL said that Sui Northern's Management and employees are standing along the armed forces for the defence and progress of our country.

Wall Street flat; set for strong weekly gains on trade optimism

NEW YORK (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes were subdued on Friday, but were still on track for robust weekly gains buoyed by a U.S.-China tariff truce and cooling inflation, while focus was on a pivotal vote on President Donald Trump's tax legislations.

U.S. equities lost some steam after a measure of consumer sentiment by the University of Michigan slipped to 50.8 for May, compared with April's 52.2, while one-year inflation expectations surged to 7.3% from 6.5%.

House Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington cautioned that Friday's planned vote on the tax bill might be delayed due to opposition to the measure.

At 10:10 a.m. the Dow Jones Industrial Average (.DJI), opens new tab rose 7.64 points, or 0.02%, to 42,330.39, the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab gained 5.46 points, or 0.09%, to 5,922.39 and the Nasdaq

Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab gained 15.17 points, or 0.08%, to 19,127.49.

All three main indexes were poised for weekly gains.

The market found its footing earlier in the week, rallying on Monday and Tuesday after Washington and Beijing agreed to a 90-day pause in their escalating trade war.

As a result, the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab catapulted back into the green year-to-date – the first time it is in positive territory since late February. Still, the benchmark index remains about 4% shy of its all-time peak.

"The combination of a deal with the UK and taking a step back from the untenable China tariffs certainly lays out a road map that we can get multiple bilateral trade deals accomplished and that's the largest of the positive catalyst," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B Riley Wealth.

Trump and British

Prime Minister Keir Starmer had announced a limited bilateral trade agreement last week.

Data from earlier in the week showed U.S. retail sales growth losing steam in April, while consumer prices staged a moderate rebound.

Focus would also be on comments from Federal Reserve policymakers, with at least two officials including Richmond Fed President Thomas Barkin slated to speak throughout the day.

Most megacap and growth stocks swung higher, with Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab leading gains with a 2.4% rise.

Big Tech was one of the biggest drivers on Wall Street this week. The information technology sector (.SPLRCT), opens new tab was heading towards an 8% gain, a weekly jump echoing the surge seen when traders first seized on clear signs the White House was ready to dial back its trade hostilities with Beijing.

Shares of UnitedHealth (UNH.N), opens new tab rose 1.4% after a near 11% drop in the last session, when the stock was rocked after a report the U.S. Department of Justice had begun a criminal investigation into the insurer.

Applied Materials (AMAT.O), opens new tab slipped 6.6% after the chipmaking equipment maker missed estimates for second-quarter revenue.

Charter Communications (CHTR.O), opens new tab rose 3% after the media company said it would buy privately held rival Cox Communications for \$21.9 billion.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 1.38-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and by a 1.29-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P 500 posted 13 new 52-week highs and no new lows while the Nasdaq Composite recorded 42 new highs and 42 new lows.



KARACHI: Advisor to Finance Minister Khayram Schehzad performing the 'Gong Ceremony' to mark the launch of the Government of Pakistan's Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi on Friday.

Finmin announces launch of first Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday announced the launch of Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk (SDGS) for development of key water related infrastructure projects across Pakistan, one of the most climate change affected countries on the globe.

The Finance Minister, addressing online to the gong ceremony held here at Pakistan Stock Exchange Karachi to mark the launch of the first ever Green Sukuk, said the inaugural issuance of Rs 30 billion will be conducted through auction and be listed on PSX.

The minister highlighted the record closing of the PSX 100 index on the previous trading day and termed it the reflection of successes achieved by Pakistan in all the spheres of life while the nation is observing 'Yaum-e-Tashakar' (Thanksgiving day) with reinvigorated spirit and zeal as well.

Things on different fronts are progressing in a positive way and this listing on this day will prove beneficial for Pakistan and PSX as well, he said and also reflected on recent meetings with bilateral and multilateral partners and friendly countries as well as investors, who appreciated our financial performance and urged on continuity of major reforms.

In the wider context, climate is an existential threat for Pakistan and we have stressed on its financing, the finance minister stated adding

that the government has taken various measures to ensure expansion of climate financing.

Senator Aurangzeb said that financing is expected from ADB at end December, Pakistan is in the 10 year country partnership with the World Bank while the most recent addition was release of \$ 1.3 billion by IMF under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)- an affordable longer-term financing to support low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries.

"This is all there for us, to use it for re-adaptation and financing and also taking very concrete reform measures which are required," he stated, emphasizing on judicious utilization of available resources. The minister also urged the private sector to step ahead on this front as well.

The finance minister said that consultation for budget 2025-26 was initiated at the early stages and proposals received from all the stakeholders were being reviewed and evaluated. "We want the budget to reflect the strategic direction of travel of Pakistan's economy very much in line with the home-grown economic agenda which was outlined by the Prime Minister", he added.

Following the address of the Finance minister, Gong Ceremony to mark the launch of 'Green Sukuk' was performed in the trading hall by Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad, CEO Meezan Bank Irfan Siddiqui, chairperson PSX Shamshad

Akhtar, CEO PSX Farrukh Sabzwari, and senior executives of SBP and other banks and financial institutes.

Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad, speaking at the occasion, said that we are facing two enormous challenges: one is climate change and the other is a rapidly growing population.

Highlighting the significant improvements in Tax to GDP, Debt to GDP and Revenue to Debt Servicing ratios of Pakistan in previous 15 months, he termed the launch of green Sukuk as a shariah compliant, purposeful and market oriented initiative in climate financing that will put the country on the global map of green financing.

In a bid to attract more climate financing, Khurram Schehzad informed that Pakistan is also ready to launch in the next quarter the Panda Bonds focused on the Chinese market. He urged the private sector to invest in these new green financial products, particularly the Islamic Banks are anticipated to play their role in the success of this sharia compliant green instrument.

Chairperson PSX, Shamshad Akhtar termed issuance of Pakistan's first sharia compliant green Sukuk as a historical milestone for PSX and hoped that it will help in development of green and sustainable infrastructure that will result in availability of more funds to the government to invest in renewable energy, green transport and housing, and sustainable agriculture and infrastructure

projects.

Highlighting the severity of climate change induced challenges she stressed on the need of starting the Living Indus project right away and urged the provincial governments to become part of this journey.

CEO Meezan Bank, Irfan Siddiqui, noting gradual growth of Islamic banking in Pakistan said that Islamic finance was introduced five years ago in the country and it was received well by the banks. Availability of the Sukuk is the only issue for Islamic banks and demand is already there, he said, adding that we will oversubscribe this issue.

CEO PSX Farrukh Sabzwari, at the occasion, hinted at the arrival of more green Sukuk in the market by the private sector following the launch of Sovereign Domestic Green Sukuk by the government of Pakistan saying that green Sukuk were in great demand around the globe.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II. Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 194/1.Institution 28/10/ 2024. Date of hearing : 23/5/2025. Case Title: Mst. Bakhtiya VS Said Wared etc. Notice to no. 6. Bakhtyar. 7.Muhammad Yaar. 8. Sher Ali.9. Ibrar.10.Israr. 11.Shafiq.12. Zahid Ali. 13. Inayatullah sons of Tajmar resident of Daggar Kalay Koza Hujra tehsel Daggar district Buner .Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 23/5/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II. Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 300/1.Institution 13/12/ 2024. Date of hearing: 3/6/2025 . Case Title: Muhammad Akbar etc VS Malak Zada etc.Notice to no. 13.Inayatur Rehman. 14.Ehsanur Rehman sons of Etibar Khan resident of Daggar Kalay tehsel Daggar district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 3/6/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II. Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 13/12-2.Institution 26/5/ 2023. Date of hearing: 26/6/2025. Case Title: Gul Muhammad Khan VS Mst Fareda Begum. Notice to no.2 /1/1.Mst Bakshat Begum widow. 2/1/2. Zain son.2/1/3. Mst. Sardara.2/1/4.Mst Iqra daughters of Malezay resident of Elai tehsel Daggar district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 28/6/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Kitchen items' prices up by 1.03pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), increased by 1.03 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on May 15, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 313.24 points as compared to 310.05 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 1.29 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100

covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 0.92 per cent and went up to 300.97 points from last week's 298.24 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, went up 1.02 percent, 0.98 percent, 1.06 percent and 1.03 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 21 (41.18%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major increase in their average prices on a

week-on-week basis included Chicken (15.95%), Eggs (8.34%), Sugar (1.97%), Long Cloth (1.74%), Powdered Milk (1.59%), Gur (1.48%), Pulse Gram (0.94%), Lawn Printed (0.77%), Mutton (0.62%), Cooked Beef (0.49%) and Energy Saver (0.31%).

The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included Tomatoes (5.20%), Garlic (3.45%), Onions (2.57%), Potatoes (1.93%), Tea Lipton (1.14%), LPG (0.90%), Rice Basmati Broken (0.54%), Vegetable Ghee 2.5 Kg (0.38%) and Vegetable Ghee 1 Kg (0.23%).

Year-on-year basis, the commodities that wit-

nessed increase included Ladies Sandal (55.62%), Chicken (47.22%), Pulse Moong (29.02%), Powdered Milk (24.02%), Sugar (21.87%), Bananas (20.80%), Pulse Gram (20.74%), Beef (18.00%), Vegetable Ghee 2.5 Kg (13.62%), LPG (12.13%), Lawn Printed (11.18%) and Firewood (10.44%).

The commodities which recorded a decrease in their average prices on year-on-year basis included Onions (53.29%), Garlic (33.18%), Potatoes (29.84%), Electricity Charges for Q1 (29.40%), Tomatoes (23.61%), Wheat Flour (21.02%), Tea Lipton (17.93%), Pulse Mash (16.27%), Chillies Powder (12.30%), Petrol (7.43%) and Diesel (6.30%).

BERLIN (Reuters): Volkswagen's (VOWGDE), opens new tab shareholders renewed their criticism of the automaker's corporate governance on Friday, demanding greater board independence and expressing growing concern over the dominance of the German company's controlling families.

At the carmaker's virtual annual general meeting, several major investors took aim at CEO Oliver Blume's dual role as head of both Volkswagen and Porsche AG (P911.p.DE), opens new tab, a contentious issue since Porsche's listing as a separate company in September 2022.

"Mr Blume, once again we make the urgent appeal: give one of your board positions up," said Ingo Speich of Deka Investment, stating that conflicts of interest across the carmaker's governance structure were "highly problematic" and causing "grave damage to reputation and enormous financial losses."

Volkswagen's share price has dropped by nearly 25% in the past year from 140.40 euros to 105.6 euros, underperforming the European auto index and Germany's DAX, according to LSEG DATA.

The carmaker, which warned last month it would likely hit the bottom end of its annual profit margin forecast, is battling challenges in all its key markets, from steep tariffs in the United States to fierce competition in China and high costs in Europe.

The Porsche and Piech families effectively control Volkswagen through their holding firm Porsche SE, which holds most of the voting rights in the Wolfsburg-based carmaker.

Wolfgang Porsche, who leads the supervisory boards of both Porsche SE and sportscar maker Porsche AG, has previously dismissed the idea that poor governance is to blame for the carmaker's languishing share price, instead blaming weak performance and high costs.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Mr Liaqat Ali Judge Banking Court-I Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No: 45/1 of 2025, Date of hearing: 23-06-2025. Suit for the Recovery of Rs.110,802.29/- UBL RHQ-KP-Peshawar, Phase 5 Hayatabad, Peshawar. Vs: Hamza Imrad. Notice Versus:- Hamza Imrad son of Imrad Ali, R/o Mohalla Abdul Salam Khan, P.O. Ghari Kapoora, Ghari Dolatzai, Tehsil and District Mardan. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.110,802.29/- Against you under section 10 (2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt / publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issue today on 08-05-2025 under my signature and seal of the Court. Registrar | Banking Court, 1 Peshawar



In brief

Tennis C'ships resumes Saturday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Tennis Association (ITA) has announced the resumption of the 37th OGDCL Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships 2025, from May 17 to 24. The event was earlier postponed due to the conflict between Pakistan and India, said a press release. The order of play for the Men's Qualifying Event on Saturday, has been released for the convenience of the players to report to the venue in time for their matches. Islamabad Tennis Association also announced that the Ladies Singles event will be held on clay as per the special request of the Pakistan Tennis Federation. This is in view of the training of the Pakistan Women's Team for participation in the forthcoming BJKC Asia Oceania Group-II event next month in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

PSL X resumes tomorrow

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The HBL Pakistan Super League X is all set to resume on Saturday, 17 May, after a nine-day hiatus with Babar Azam's Peshawar Zalmi taking on David Warner's Karachi Kings at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. With last year's runners up - Multan Sultans, who have won one out of nine games this year, ruled out of the title race in the 34-match tournament, the remaining five teams are in contention to qualify for the play-offs. While Quetta Gladiators and Karachi Kings ranked first and second with 13 and 10 points, respectively, Islamabad United, Lahore Qalandars and Peshawar Zalmi face the prospect of must-win games. Zalmi have two league games left, while Qalandars have one game to go. Both the teams, with four wins each to their name, will be fighting tooth and nail to bag crucial two points. On Sunday, 18 May, Sultans will take on Gladiators in first of the two matches, while Zalmi will be up against Qalandars in another riveting contest. Shadab Khan's United will lock horns with Kings in the last league game on 19 May. The Qualifier, Eliminator 1 & 2 and the Final are scheduled at the Gaddafi Stadium Lahore from 21-25 May with Saturday, 24 May being the rest day. Among the batters, after 26 HBL PSL X matches, Mohammad Rizwan (363 — Hanif Mohammad Cap), Sahibzada Farhan (321) and Fakhar Zaman (309) are the top three run getters. On the bowling front, Mohammad Abbas Afridi and Jason Holder are the joint leading wicket-takers (Fazal Mahmood Cap) with 15 scalps each in eight games, while Abrar Ahmed and Hasan Ali are joint-second on the ladder, having snapped 14 poles each. Peshawar Zalmi's Mohammad Haris has the most (10) dismissals to his name, while Quetta Gladiators' Rilee Rossouw has taken the most catches (11).

FA Cup success important for Man City

M A N C H E S T E R (AFP): Pep Guardiola said winning the FA Cup would still be significant for Manchester City, even if victory in Saturday's final will not mask a disappointing season by their own high standards. City were deposed as Premier League champions by Liverpool for the first time in five years and are facing a first trophyless season since Guardiola's debut campaign in 2016/17 if they do not beat Crystal Palace in this weekend's showpiece match at Wembley.

Alcaraz reaches Italian Open final and potential Sinner showdown



ROME (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz set up a potential blockbuster Italian Open final with Jannik Sinner after coming through Friday's semi-final with home hope Lorenzo Musetti a straight-sets winner, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz overcame Musetti and windy conditions in just over two hours to reach his fourth final of the season ahead of the French Open which gets underway later this month.

Alcaraz now awaits the result of Sinner's last-four clash with Tommy Paul later on Friday to see if he will get the showdown tennis fans around the world want to see.

"Both players are playing great. Everybody saw the game against Casper," said Alcaraz, who might again have to face down a partisan centre court crowd on Sunday.

"Let's see. If I'm going to play against Tommy Paul, I have to be ready for that. If I play against Jannik,

I have to be ready for that battle, and obviously deal with the crowd."

World number one Sinner is red-hot favourite to beat American Paul after dumping out Madrid Open champion Casper Ruud on Thursday with an astonishing display of tennis.

But Musetti said that he believes an in-form Alcaraz would have the better of it against Sinner if his compatriot does reach the final.

"I really rate Carlos. I think on clay that the best version of Carlos is favourite against anyone... that includes Jannik," he told reporters.

Musetti was beaten by Alcaraz in the Monte Carlo final last month and fell to his fifth straight defeat to the Spaniard after a frustrating display.

Musetti outbursts

The 23-year-old gave up three breaks of serve and made 29 unforced errors in the first set, and he was warned by umpire Renaud Lichtenstein after slamming his rack-

et into the clay as his gave up his serve to go a set behind.

Alcaraz gave Musetti an opening when he fired long at break point in the first game of the second set, before the Italian then did the exact same thing in the next game to level it up.

But Musetti fought back with another break of Alcaraz's serve and then held his with more disciplined tennis to go to 4-3 in the set, even drawing applause from Alcaraz for one spectacular backhand volley he plucked out of the sky. But Alcaraz broke back in game eight to level the set, sparking a furious reaction from Musetti who was punished with a point for the following game for smashing the ball into the stands.

Alcaraz served that game to love as Musetti continued to fume, and he ended the crowd's hopes of an all-Italian final by coming through the decisive tie-break. Earlier, Jasmine Paolini continued her bid to win the women's singles and doubles titles in Rome after reaching her second final of the week, this time alongside fellow Italian Sara Errani.

Reigning doubles champions Paolini and Errani easily beat Mirra Andreeva and Diana Shnaider 6-4, 6-4 to book a second straight final in front of delighted fans at the Foro Italico. The pair will meet either Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens or Storm Hunter and Ellen Perez in the final on Sunday, before which Paolini could already be crowned singles champion.

Late bloomer Paolini takes on Coco Gauff on Saturday aiming for her second 1000 series title at the age of 29 and to become the first Italian women to win in Rome since Raffaella Reggi in 1985.

Mitchell Starc to skip IPL before World Test final

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia bowler Mitchell Starc will not return to the Indian Premier League when it resumes on Saturday.

Starc, 35, has played in all 11 matches for Delhi Capitals, who remain in contention for the play-offs, but will not travel back to India, with Australia's World Test Championship final to follow next month against South Africa at Lord's.

Fellow quick Josh Hazlewood is nursing a shoulder issue in Australia and a decision is yet to be made whether he will return to play for Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

RCB are currently second in the standings with three games to play while Delhi sit a place outside of the play-offs in fifth.

Australia's players are set to meet in the UK on 4 June to prepare for the defence of their world Test title.

The IPL play-offs begin on 29 May with the final on 3 June, meaning

Hazlewood could play a full part in the IPL's latter stages if passed fit.

Captain Pat Cummins and batter Travis Head, also in Australia's Test squad, will return to India to compete the IPL season at Sunrisers Hyderabad before travelling to England. Sunrisers are already out of contention.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) have not confirmed whether their Test players will remain available for the remainder of the IPL, although coach Shukri Conrad said the Proteas were "not budging" on wanting their players to return on 26 May.

Mike Hesson wants Babar, Rizwan back in T20 squad

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Newly appointed Pakistan men's cricket head coach Mike Hesson is reportedly advocating for the return of Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan to the national T20 setup.

Reports suggested that the head coach considers both batters key to the team's preparations for the 2025 ACC Asia Cup and the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup.

Both senior players were previously dropped for the T20I series against New Zealand earlier this year, a move by the selection committee aimed at giving younger players international exposure.

Rizwan, Pakistan's wicketkeeper-batter, was also stripped of T20I captaincy after leading the side for just one series, making way for Salman Ali Agha to take on leadership responsibilities in the shortest format.

However, with major ICC tournaments on the horizon, Hesson appears to favor a blend of experience and youth.

While emerging talents are expected to feature prominently in the upcoming five-match home T20I series against Bangladesh, Hesson is keen to reintegrate the senior duo in the team's long-term planning.

Reliable sources confirmed that Hesson recently met with national selector Aqib Javed at the PCB headquarters to discuss the

way forward.

According to insiders, the former New Zealand coach emphasized the need to "refine" the techniques of Babar and Rizwan and encourage a more aggressive approach with the bat, particularly focusing on improving their strike rates, a key metric in modern T20 cricket.

In a private discussion, Hesson reportedly referred to the pair as "match-winners," stating that with clearly defined roles and strategic guidance, both players can still play pivotal roles in match-turning situations.

Pakistan's next T20I engagement is a five-match home series against Bangladesh, scheduled to take place from May 25 in Faisalabad and Lahore.

However, a scheduling conflict has emerged due to the resumption of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10. The league had been temporarily suspended due to political tensions between India and Pakistan, which indirectly affected domestic cricket operations.

The final of PSL 10 is now slated for May 25—the same day originally designated for the series opener against Bangladesh.

The clash in dates may force PCB to revise the bilateral series schedule, though no official announcement has been made so far.

Piastri heads Norris in Friday practice in Imola



IMOLA (Agencies): Oscar Piastri led Lando Norris to a McLaren one-two in Friday practice at the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix.

The Australian, leading the world championship from Norris by 16 points after four wins in the first six races, headed Norris in both sessions, and ended the day 0.025 seconds quicker.

Alpine's Pierre Gasly was a surprise third quickest, ahead of the Mercedes of George Russell, Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Lewis Hamilton, struggling with braking feel, was 11th fastest in the second qualifying lap. Leclerc and Hamilton both appeared to be mixing it with the McLarens for race pace later in the session.

Verstappen, in a Red Bull that is upgraded for this weekend, was off the pace on the long runs, and slower than Kimi

Antonelli's Mercedes.

The race runs were interrupted when Isack Hadjar, seventh fastest overall for Racing Bulls, lost his car on the exit of the Tamburello chicane and spun into the barriers.

The car appeared to have escaped largely undamaged, but Hadjar became stuck in the gravel as he attempted to return to the track and the session was red-flagged. It did restart, but only in time for some drivers to do a single flying lap.

Behind Hadjar in the list of fastest times, Yuki Tsunoda was eighth fastest in the second Red Bull, ahead of the Williams of Alex Albon and Carlos Sainz. Lance Stroll, given the responsibility to test Aston Martin's major upgrades, which included a new floor, was down in 17th.

Team-mate Fernando Alonso, in the previous-specification car for a back-to-back comparison, was three places higher and 0.121secs quicker.

Davis Cup juniors team arrives in Kazakhstan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Davis Cup Juniors team has arrived in Shymkent, Kazakhstan ahead of the Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying Event, taking place from May 19 to May 24, 2025.

According press release issued here on Friday, The team earned its spot in this prestigious tournament by winning the qualifying event in Kuching, Malaysia in March 2025.

The Pakistani squad includes players Abubakareel Ali Baig, and Hamza Roman with Shahzad Khan serving as the team captain.

Captain Shahzad Khan expressed confidence in his team's abilities, stating, "Our players are fully prepared and fit. We are optimistic about replicating the outstanding performance we delivered in Kuching."

Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), wished the team success, saying, "This team is a strong combination of talent and dedication. They performed exceptionally well in Kuching, and hopefully, they will continue that momentum in Shymkent."

Col. Zia-ud-Din Tufail, Secretary General of the PTF, also offered his support, saying, "Good luck to our boys. Play with heart and the results will naturally follow." The event will showcase some of the best junior tennis talent from across Asia and Oceania.

Salah criticises 'harsh' Alexander-Arnold boos

LONDON (Agencies): Mohamed Salah says Trent Alexander-Arnold did not deserve to be booed by some Liverpool fans after the defender announced he will leave his boyhood club this summer.

The right-back, 26, will depart the newly crowned Premier League champions when his contract expires at the end of June, and is expected to join Real Madrid.

Alexander-Arnold was born in Liverpool and came through the club's youth system before making his professional debut in 2016.

He played for the first time since confirming his impending exit when he appeared as a substitute in the 2-2 draw against Arsenal on Sunday and received jeers from some supporters.

"I think somehow the fans were being harsh with him," Salah told Sky Sports.

"I think he didn't deserve it at the time, he deserved the fans to treat him the best way possible because he gave it all to the fans.

"We shouldn't act this way with anyone who always appreciates the people, who came here even for six months.

"Imagine someone who gives you his all for 20 years. It's shouldn't be like this. I hope that will change next game, against Brighton or in the last game of the season, because he deserves the farewell."

Alexander-Arnold has made 353 appearances for Liverpool in all competitions, scoring 23 goals.

He has helped them win two Premier League titles, the Champions League, the FA Cup and the League Cup, and Salah believes he deserves the best send-off possible given what he has helped the club achieve.

"I really love him," he added.

"I think he deserves the best farewell leaving the club. He has done a lot for the city and done a lot for the club and he's one of probably the best players in the club's history. He gave it all." Salah, who signed a new two-year deal at Liverpool last month, said he talked with Alexander-Arnold about his decision, but did not try to convince him to stay.

"I think he needed a new challenge," Salah said. "He spoke to me about it. It's his decision for sure. He's won it all twice or three times - what more can he have done?" It's his decision - I did not try to convince him to stay because I know 20 years in a club is not easy, it's so tough."

Sadaf's five-for powers Challengers to victory over Stars

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Sadaf Shamas weaved her magic with a brilliant spell of 5-17 as her side overhauled Stars' 108-run total in the final over of Match 13 in the National Women's T20 tournament 2024-25 at the National Bank Stadium on Friday afternoon.

After winning the toss and putting Stars in to bat first, Challengers kept striking on regular intervals as Stars found themselves 16-4 and later, 32-5. Sadaf wreaked havoc with the ball as she snapped the first five wickets to fall with none of the Stars' top four entering double figures.

No.5 batter Kaynat Hafeez top-scored with a 52-ball 48 hitting four fours to push her team past the 100-run mark. Kaynat was supported by Waheeda Akhtar who remained unbeaten on 21 off 16 balls comprising two boundaries as Stars ended with 108-9 in 20 overs. Rabia Rani returned figures of 4-0-17-3.

In turn, Challengers lost both the opening batters on 24 before finding themselves reeling at 47-5.

No.4 batter Aliya Riaz and skipper Rameen Shamim took it upon themselves to ace the chase with a match-winning 65-run alliance. Aliya struck seven fours in her unbeaten 48 off 34 balls, while Rameen clubbed one six and two fours in her 19-ball 28 not out as the duo got their team over the line with one ball to spare.

For Stars, Anosha Nasir returned figures of 3-11 in her four overs, while Neelam Mushtaq and Tuba Hassan dismissed one batter each.

In the other match of the seventh round, Gull Feroza-



led Strikers bested Invincibles by a seven-wicket margin as they chased the 144-run target in 17.4 overs with player of the match Eyman Fatima scoring an unbeaten 74 off 39 balls hitting 10 fours and two sixes.

Skipper Gul chipped in with a valuable 49 off 46 balls inclusive of five boundaries as she formed a 105-run partnership with Eyman after two early blows. Eyman, who currently leads the batting charts with 253 runs at a strike rate of 151, registered her third half-century in the tournament. For Invincibles, Neha Sharmin Nadeem, Ghulam Fatima and Fatima Khan bagged one wicket apiece.

Earlier, Invincibles got off to a solid start with 72-run

opening stand between top-scorer Muneeba Ali (67, 58b, 4x4s, 2x6s) and Ayesha Zafar (36, 36b, 4x4s).

Apart from the opening batters, only Iram Javed (12, 11b, 1x6) reached double figures as Invincibles managed to score 143-5 in their 20 overs. Noreen Yaqoob dismissed two batters for 21 runs while Zunash Abdul Sattar and Anam Amin dismissed one batter each.

Scores in brief:

Match 13: Challengers beat Stars by five wickets at the National Bank Stadium

Stars 108-9, 20 overs (Kaynat Hafeez 48, Waheeda Akhtar 21 not out; Sadaf Shamas 5-17, Rabia Rani 3-17)

Challengers 112-5, 19.5 overs (Aliya Riaz 48 not out, Rameen Shamim 28 not out; Anosha Nasir 3-11)

Player of the match – Sadaf Shamas (Stars)

Match 14: Strikers beat Invincibles by seven wickets at the Oval Academy Ground

Invincibles 143-5, 20 overs (Muneeba Ali 67, Ayesha Zafar 36; Noreen Yaqoob 2-21)

Strikers 144-3, 17.4 overs (Eyman Fatima 74 not out, Gul Feroza 49; Neha Sharmin Nadeem 1-21)

Player of the match – Eyman Fatima (Strikers)

8th round fixtures, Saturday, 17 May: (both matches to begin at 3pm PKT)

Match 15: Invincibles v Stars at National Bank Stadium

Match 16: Conquerors v Challengers at Oval Academy Ground.



In brief

IRSA releases 164,253 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 164,253 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 183,318 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1464.93 feet, which was 62.93 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 91,800 cusecs and 82,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1145.95 feet, which was 95.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 37,265 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 106,037, 86,051, 55,151 and 19,300 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,470 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Minister visits PAL

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, paid an official visit to the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) here Friday. He was accompanied by the Federal Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Division, Asad Rehman Gilani. The visit included a high-level meeting attended by Chairperson of the PAL, Dr. Najeeba Arif; Director General, Abdul Basit; PAL's Administrator, Muhammad Asim Butt; Deputy Director (Awards and Programs), Mir Nawaz Solangi; Deputy Director (Research and Translation), Akhtar Raza Saleemi; and Administrative Officer, Rafiq Nazli. During the briefing, Dr. Najeeba Arif provided a comprehensive overview of the Academy's establishment, objectives, rules and regulations, initiatives for the promotion of literature in Pakistani languages, writer welfare programs, publications, international literary collaborations, and ongoing and future projects. She also highlighted some of the challenges faced by the academy. The Federal Minister and the Secretary expressed satisfaction over PAL's initiatives and assured their full support on behalf of their ministry. Minister Khichi emphasized the need for the Academy to modernize its projects and operations, maintain active engagement with national institutions, and promote its events through print and electronic media. He encouraged PAL to keep the ministry regularly informed about its projects to ensure transparency and alignment with national cultural goals. Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani also offered constructive suggestions and guidance for the Academy's development. During the visit, the minister and the secretary toured PAL's 'Aiwan-e-Aizaz' and the Literary Museum of Pakistani Languages, showing keen interest in both. In conclusion, Dr. Najeeba Arif expressed gratitude to the federal minister and secretary and presented them with sets of PAL publications.

LWMC holds Youm-e-Tashakur rally

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) on Friday organised a Youm-e-Tashakur rally to pay tribute to the courageous efforts of the Pakistan armed forces during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos.

People, Parliament stand shoulder to shoulder with armed forces: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation on the historic victory against India, expressing profound gratitude to Almighty Allah for His countless blessings. "No amount of gratitude is sufficient for the favour bestowed upon us," he said while paying glowing tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the defense of the motherland. The Speaker honored their supreme sacrifices and bravery and said "The valorous response of our courageous armed forces to the India's shameful aggression has made the entire nation proud," he added. Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan has emerged stronger and more united after the victorious day of 10th May, with a renewed sense of national pride and optimism prevailing across the country. "Pakistan at present is reflecting a

revived spirit of resilience and joy, echoing our triumph in the battle for truth and justice," he added. He emphasized that Pakistan has attained a unique and distinguished stature on the global stage as a result of its principled stand and unwavering commitment to sovereignty. Ayaz Sadiq lauded the unwavering support and unity demonstrated by the Parliament and the people of Pakistan, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Armed Forces like a fortified wall. "Every Pakistani is willing to sacrifice their life for the defense of our homeland," he affirmed. Ayaz Sadiq also appreciated the role played by Pakistani media and youth, the Speaker said that their exemplary contributions during this critical juncture would be remembered as a hallmark of national unity and strength. He also praised the patience and discipline shown by the people of Pakistan in the

face of unprovoked Indian aggression. Ayaz Sadi commended both the political and military leadership for displaying unity and commitment during testing times. "Our armed forces gave a resolute and befitting response to the enemy, thwarting its malicious designs and safeguarding the dignity and sovereignty of Pakistan." He reiterated that the sacrifices of the martyrs will never be forgotten, and that the entire nation remains a symbol of solidarity and collective resolve. "The courage and morale demonstrated by the soldiers of the Pakistan armed forces has proven that determination can defeat even the most formidable adversaries." The Speaker further underscored that all political parties, setting aside their differences, have stood united with the armed forces, reinforcing the spirit of national unity.



ISLAMABAD: Khateeb of Faisal Masjid offering dua as the nation observed Youm-i-Tashakur on Friday across the country to honour the armed forces.

BISP organizes ceremony to honor armed forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) organized a ceremony on Friday to pay tribute to the historic and heroic achievements of Pakistan's Armed Forces in defending the country's sovereignty. The event was held to mark Youm-e-Tashakur and brought together government officials, BISP staff, beneficiaries, and guests to honor the nation's unity and resilience. The ceremony was presided over by Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid, and attended by Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmed. Additional Secretary, Tahir Noor, leaders of employee associations, and other dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid praised the swift and strategic response of Pakistan's armed forces to Indian aggression, calling it the biggest combat in modern history. "Undoubtedly, the way our armed forces compelled the enemy to retreat is exemplary. Our Shaheen's made history and the way they responded will be taught in military academies around the globe," she said. She paid tribute to the armed forces while acknowledging the contributions of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma

Benazir Bhutto in strengthening Pakistan's defense, particularly in advancing missile technology. She also lauded the role of BISP staff during this critical period saying, "We pay tribute to the employees of BISP who did not leave their work during these testing times, facilitating the beneficiaries. All departments continued to function with dedication, showing the same resilience seen in our national defense." She added that BISP is engaged in its own battle against poverty and shared promising news about the expansion of the Hunarmand Programme, which will provide skill development to women and youth, enabling them to build a better future, even abroad. In his address, Secretary Amer Ali said, "Such days rarely come in the life of nations when their armed forces set an example that is remembered for generations. The entire world witnessed the historic victory of our armed forces." He emphasized that BISP, while fighting a war against poverty, draws inspiration from the unity and commitment of the armed forces. "Our military forces, whether Army, Navy, or Air Force, fought unitedly and that same spirit exists in BISP as we serve marginal-

ized segment of society against poverty without discrimination," he added. Video messages from BISP beneficiaries were presented during the ceremony, expressing heartfelt support for Pakistan's security forces and gratitude for their sacrifices. All Pakistan BISP Employees Welfare Association, Sardar Shiraz and the President of the BISP Officers Association, Sardar Azmat congratulated the organizers for arranging such an event to pay tribute to the armed forces. They emphasized that BISP is the largest institutional family in Pakistan, fighting poverty with the same dedication that the military shown in defending the homeland. They affirmed that the armed forces and cyber forces truly represent Iqbal's vision of Shaheens. A powerful tableau performance by Asiya Mughal and her team paid artistic tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of Pakistan's security forces, moving the audience emotionally and patriotically. The event concluded with renewed national resolve, expressing unity, gratitude, and determination to serve Pakistan with the same spirit of courage and professionalism shown by its armed forces.

Flag hoisting ceremony held to mark Youm-e-Tashakur

RAWALPINDI (APP): A flag-hoisting ceremony was held at the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) headquarters to mark the Youm-e-Tashakur day observed across the country. Managing Director WASA Rawalpindi Muhammad Saleem Ashraf, while hoisting the national flag, said that the people of Pakistan were connected in an eternal bond of love with the Armed Forces. He said that Operation "Banyanun Marsus" had shattered the dream of Indian supremacy and forced the enemy to cease fire. Saleem further said that the nation was proud of this success, and WASA Rawalpindi stands by the Pakistani forces. Saleem also called on the international community to play its effective role for a lasting and just solution to the Kashmir issue so that lasting peace could be established in the region. Special prayers were also offered for the security, development and the freedom of the Kashmiri people.

DRAP intensifies crackdown on counterfeit medicines

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move to combat the growing threat of counterfeit and substandard medicines, the federal and provincial health authorities have launched a nationwide crackdown set to commence on May 19. The announcement was made during a high-level Inter-Provincial Health Ministers' Conference chaired by Federal Minister for Health, Mustafa Kamal. The meeting, attended by provincial health ministers including Punjab's Khawaja Imran Nazir, Sindh's Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, and the Health Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, brought together key stakeholders including the Chief Executive Officer of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and senior officials from regulatory and enforcement bodies. According to a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health, the conference reviewed ongoing measures and concluded with a strong reaffirmation of federal and provincial cooperation to protect public health and eliminate fake medicines from the market. In line with Prime Minister directives, Minister Kamal announced the revival of the National Task Force 2025, calling it a "national responsibility" and emphasizing that counterfeit medicines represent "not just a regulatory issue, but a national emergency."

Starting May 19, extensive inspections and enforcement operations will be carried out across pharmaceutical factories, distribution networks, and retail markets. Surprise raids and targeted actions will be conducted in collaboration with Customs, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and other relevant bodies. Kamal assured the public that strict legal action would be taken against violators. To empower citizens, DRAP will launch a new mobile application that allows users to verify medicines through barcode scanning, report suspected counterfeit products, and receive alerts about drug shortages or adverse reactions.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker. —APP Photo

Naqvi meets US Acting Ambassador Natalie Baker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held an important meeting with the United States' Acting Ambassador to Pakistan, Natalie Baker, in Islamabad. The meeting focused on key issues of mutual interest, bilateral relations, and expanding cooperation between the two countries. During the discussion, both sides exchanged views on the post-ceasefire situation between Pakistan and India. Minister Naqvi expressed deep gratitude to U.S. President Donald Trump and the American

ambassador for their pivotal role in bringing about the ceasefire. "The credit for the ceasefire between two nuclear powers goes to President Donald Trump," said Mohsin Naqvi. He emphasized that President Trump had rendered a great service to humanity by helping avert a catastrophic conflict in the region. The interior minister also appreciated the U.S. President's positive remarks regarding Pakistan's leadership. "We welcome President Trump's encouraging thoughts about Pakistan's

leadership," Naqvi stated. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with the United States, Naqvi said, "We want to further enhance mutual cooperation with the U.S. across various sectors." In response, Acting U.S. Ambassador Natalie Baker said the United States values its strong relationship with Pakistan. "We have excellent ties with Pakistan and look forward to continuing cooperation in multiple fields," she said. Federal Secretary for Interior, Khuram Agha, was also present during the meeting.

Pakistan possesses rich historical, social heritage: Aleem

ISLAMABAD (INP): A high-level delegation from Pakistan, led by Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan has participated in the Kazan Forum organized under the auspices of the Russian Federation in the capital of Tatarstan. On the opening day, while addressing the session on Cultural Dialogue, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that Pakistan possesses a rich historical and social heritage, said a press release issued here on Friday. He welcomed cultural exchanges with Russia and Central Asian States, terming such initiatives a positive and promising step towards achieving a peaceful world and paving the way for harmony. Aleem Khan underscored the importance of preserving multifaceted

cultural heritage and stressed that through mutual dialogue and understanding, the world can become more peaceful, diverse and harmonious. He appreciated the organization of the "Russia-Islamic World Kazan Forum 2025" and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to playing an active role in the region, particularly in the Communications Sector, to enhance trade and strengthen the national economy. Additionally, during the Forum's Opening Session, Aleem Khan held meeting with Sultan Ahmed Bin Suleman, Chairman of Dubai International Ports. The two dignitaries discussed matters related to shipping and cargo logistics between Pakistan and Dubai Ports. The Chairman expressed strong interest in expanding bilateral trade relations and deliberated on

various potential projects. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted Pakistan's keen interest in "North to South" land connectivity and noted that the country is modernizing its communications infrastructure, following the models of Dubai and other developed nations. He mentioned that in the first phase, the use of M-Tag has been made mandatory for toll collection on Motorways and Highways. Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Suleman also expressed interest in investing in Pakistan's M6, M9, and N-25 Highways and assured full cooperation from Dubai Ports International. Both sides discussed the broader agenda of the Kazan Forum and expressed their commitment to enhancing future cooperation and strengthening bilateral relations.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Traffic jam on Expressway in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

ANF recovers over 116.36 kg of drugs worth Rs 90 mln

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting eight operations across the country, recovered as many as 116.36 kg of drugs worth over Rs 90 million and arrested 11 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday. He informed that 1000 ecstasy pills weighing 500 grams and a pistol were recovered from the possession of a suspect near Hayatabad in Peshawar. In another operation, 100 ecstasy pills weighing 56 grams were recovered from a suspect near Haji Camp. The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. As many as 15 kg of heroin were recovered from an Afghan national driving a Mazda truck near Iqbal Shaheed Toli Plaza, Attock. Similarly, 24 kg of hashish was recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle near the Hafizabad-Lahore area. As much as 7.2 kg of opium and 10.8 kg of hashish were recovered from a vehicle near Chan Da Qila, Gujranwala, and the accused was arrested.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Friday informed the National Assembly that there is no plan for an affordable housing scheme specifically aimed at low- and middle-income citizens. Responding to questions during the question hour, he said that no housing scheme is currently underway for rural or remote areas of the country. He explained that under its mandate, the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) provides plots and apartments to federal employees and other specified groups. However, he added that the Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF), working under the Ministry of Housing and Works, is running several projects focused on provid-

ing affordable housing to low- and middle-income citizens across the country. Since its establishment in 1999, PHAF has been constructing low-cost housing units on an ownership basis. These units are built to be both affordable and of good quality, targeting the general public as well as federal government employees. FGEHA has also partnered with private sector companies under joint ventures. In these partnerships, private entities contribute land and provide development services. These ventures were initially governed under the Joint Venture Policy (JVP) and the FGETLA's Joint Venture Policy Regulations, 2020. Recently, FGEHA introduced the FGEHA (Joint Venture and Public Private Partnership)

Rules 2025, which offer a detailed framework for managing joint venture and public-private partnership (PPP) housing projects. These PPPs undergo several stages of monitoring, including financial, legal, and technical assessments. Final approval is given by the Executive Board, and projects are then overseen by designated Project Directors. At present, he said, PHAF is not involved in any PPP housing development projects. However, the minister said PHAF recognizes the potential of PPPs as a useful model for expanding affordable housing and infrastructure. The minister said, any future participation in such projects will depend on policy guidelines, feasibility studies, and alignment with national housing development goals.

No plan for affordable housing in rural areas: NA Told

Fire engulfs shoe market

KUNDUZ (Amu tv): A major fire swept through a well-known shoe market in the center of Kunduz city early Friday morning, inflicting significant damage and sending thick plumes of smoke over the skyline of the northern city, according to local sources. The blaze erupted in the “Sarai Chaplaq” market, a bustling hub for shoe vendors located near Kunduz’s central intersection. Videos and photographs shared on social media showed heavy smoke blanketing the area.

Taliban flog 18 people in four provinces

KABUL (Amu tv) : In a continued wave of corporal punishments, Taliban publicly flogged at least 18 people—including three women—over the past two days across four provinces, according to statements issued by the Taliban’s Supreme Court. The latest incident took place in Kapisa province, where six individuals, including two women, were lashed in front of a crowd. The Taliban stated the individuals were convicted of “running away from home.”

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

Baradar, Minnikhanov discuss boosting economic ties



KABUL (TOLONews): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, met with Rustam Minnikhanov, President of Tatarstan, to discuss the development of economic and trade relations between the two sides. Baradar, who is leading a delegation to Tatarstan to participate in the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum, invited President Minnikhanov to visit Kabul and invest in Afghanistan’s infrastructure and energy sectors.

Khairuddin Mayel, Deputy of Trade at the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: “Tomorrow, a major memorandum of understanding will be signed between the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, Russian entities, and private sectors from other countries.”

Meanwhile, the President of Tatarstan described the participation of Afghanistan’s high-ranking delegation at the Kazan forum as significant and announced that, to enhance

bilateral relations, a Tatarstan delegation will be dispatched to Kabul. Abdul Nasir Rashtya, an economic affairs expert, said: “Russia is a large and reliable market for Afghan domestic products. The more facilities are provided and relations expand, the more we can boost our exports to Russian markets.”

More than 10,000 participants from 103 countries, including government officials, major businesspeople, investors, and bankers, attended the Kazan Forum.

Afghan Airspace remains stable amid region's tensions

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation in a statement said that regional tensions have directly impacted the transit flights through regional countries’ airspace, leading to a reduction in flights over Afghanistan’s airspace.

The ministry’s spokesperson emphasized that Afghanistan’s airspace is safe and stable, and over-flight operations are expected to return to normal in the coming days.

Hekmatullah Asifi, spokesperson for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, stated: “Some time ago, the number of overflights reached about 300 flights per day. Currently, this number has slightly decreased, but there is a possibility of an

increase again.”

The ministry also rejected reports of suspended operations by some airlines that fly to Afghanistan due to tensions between India and Pakistan.

According to the ministry, currently, two domestic and seven international airlines are operating direct flights to countries around the world.

Hekmatullah Asifi further said: “As you know, two domestic airlines and the foreign airlines that used to fly from Afghanistan’s international airports are still active and continue their flights to those countries. There is no issue, for example, that might suggest that regional tensions have led to a suspension or cancellation of these flights.”

Meanwhile, some

experts, considering the importance of Afghanistan’s air relations with the world, emphasize the need to standardize the country’s airports.

Ahmad Firdaws Bahguzin, an economic analyst, said: “We need to have a proper trade program with other countries so that we can organize more flights. The more we can generate revenue through air travel, the better position Afghanistan will be in. I hope we can increase our activities in this sector.”

This comes after the deputy minister of transport and civil aviation previously stated that due to the end of conflicts in Afghanistan and the safety of its airspace, foreign airlines have shown interest in resuming flights to the country.

Regional, Global envoys intensify diplomacy for Afghan future



KABUL (TOLONews): As part of continued diplomatic engagements related to Afghanistan, Special Representative from Pakistan Mohammad Sadiq, Uzbekistan’s Special Representative for Afghanistan Ismatulla Irgashev and Special Representative of China for Afghanistan Yue Xiaoyong, have recently held meetings aimed at enhancing coordination and cooperation regarding the situation in Afghanistan.

Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan’s special representative for Afghanistan, in separate meetings with his British counterpart, Andrew McCoubrey, and the Australian High Commissioner in Islamabad, discussed regional developments and the strengthening of cooperation on issues related to Afghanistan.

Mohammad Sadiq stated: “The meeting focused on regional developments and enhancing cooperation on Afghanistan-related issues. We discussed ways to strengthen engagement and

explore avenues for future collaboration.” Aziz Maarej, a former diplomat, said: “If the UK and Australia, along with Pakistan as strategic allies, genuinely wish to collaborate on resolving issues in Afghanistan and the region, it could be very effective. They have sufficient knowledge, provided that their objectives are clear and Afghanistan is prepared to engage.”

Meanwhile, the special representatives of China and Uzbekistan also met with officials from Turkey and Sweden to discuss issues concerning Afghanistan.

These meetings aimed to assess recent developments in Afghanistan and coordinate regional efforts, emphasizing the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan as a key element for regional security.

Ismatullah Irgashev, the special representative of the president of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, stated: “Special attention was given to exchanging views on the situation in Afghanistan and possible forms of humanitarian

cooperation.

The meeting was constructive and emphasized mutual willingness to deepen practical dialogues.” Yue Xiaoyong, China’s special representative for Afghanistan, said: “We agreed to strengthen our cooperation to support Afghanistan’s reconstruction.”

Moeen Gul Samkanai, a political analyst, remarked: “Many countries are discussing Afghanistan, which shows their intent to establish stronger political, diplomatic, and economic ties with Afghanistan.”

Najib Rahman Shumal, another political analyst, said: “Given Afghanistan’s current crises, without the support of the international community, regional and global powers, overcoming these challenges is extremely difficult. Therefore, these meetings and visits by special envoys can play a crucial role in establishing relations with the people and interim government of Afghanistan and in providing economic assistance.”



Muttaqi set to visit China and Iran in coming days

KABUL (TOLONews): A senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister, is scheduled to make regional visits ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit and the Tehran Dialogue Forum.

Zakir Jalaly, director of the second political department of the Foreign Ministry, stated that Muttaqi has received official invitations from the People’s Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran and is expected to travel to these two countries in the coming days.

Political analyst Mohammad Salim Paigir commented on the matter, saying: “The more representatives of the Islamic Emirate are invited to such forums, the better it is for both sides. It allows them to share their views directly with the Islamic Emirate. If they are absent, the discussions lose their significance.”

Some analysts view these trips as part of the Islamic Emirate’s broader efforts to gain recognition on regional and international levels. In their view, participation in diplomatic gatherings such as the Tehran Forum provides an opportunity for the interim Afghan government to demonstrate its willingness to engage with the world.

Another political analyst, Sayed Abdullah Sadiq, remarked: “Countries have their own interests, but the Islamic Emirate should act wisely to make the most of Afghanistan’s security, geography, and weak economy through the support of countries like China, Russia, and Iran.”

Ahmad Khan Andar, another political analyst, added: “The only path to political engagement and the recognition of the Islamic Emirate is through dialogue and participation in such forums — and fortunately, the Emirate’s officials have recently continued their travels.”

Despite some improvement in Afghanistan’s relations with regional and global players over the past four years, no country has yet officially recognized the interim government of Afghanistan.

Afghan Gov’t confirms 177,000 acres as state land in Kandahar

KANDAHAR (TOLONews): A total of 177,000 acres of land have been officially recognized as government property in Kandahar province.

Provincial officials say that since last year, 412,000 acres of land have been surveyed across the provincial center and districts of Kandahar. Of this amount, 177,000 acres have been confirmed as state-owned, and more than 19,000 acres have been reclaimed from land grabbers. Officials add that the reclaimed lands will be used for various public purposes.

Shams-ur-Rahman Mosa, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in Kandahar, stated: “Since the beginning of 1403 (solar year), the Commission for the Prevention of Land Grabbing, with the help of technical teams, has surveyed 412,000 acres of state land across Kandahar province. Of this, 177,000 acres have been confirmed as government property, and 19,812 acres have been reclaimed by decree and added to public ownership.”

Residents of Kandahar are urging authorities to use the recovered land for building shelters for returnees and for other development programs.

Noor Mohammad, a returnee, said: “We ask the Islamic Emirate to allocate land to us and provide basic living facilities. The reclaimed lands should be used not only to shelter returnees but also for other public purposes.”

Sediqullah, another returnee, said: “We call on the Islamic Emirate to dedicate the reclaimed lands to returnees. We have returned from Pakistan without any resources and need shelter and essential services.”

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate’s Commission for the Prevention of Land Grabbing has announced plans to establish a new ministry in the near future under the name “Ministry for Reclaiming Usurped Lands and Properties” within the framework of the caretaker government.

Afghanistan and Mordovia eye stronger economic ties



KABUL (TOLONews): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, met with Artyom Zdunov, President of the Republic of Mordovia, on the sidelines of the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum.

During the meeting, Baradar stated that the Kazan Economic Forum has created a valuable opportunity to establish cooperation between the two sides in the fields of agriculture, trade, electricity, and other sectors.

He added that Afghanistan has high-quality products in fresh and dried fruits, carpets, precious stones, and other minerals, and is ready to begin exporting these items to Mordovia.

According to a statement by the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, Baradar also noted that the Islamic Emirate is interested in importing essential goods from Mordovia to meet domestic needs. These include electrical appliances, construction materials, industrial machinery, petroleum products, natural gas, raw aluminum, rail wagons, and transportation equipment.

The statement further mentioned that Baradar invited Mordovian investors to invest in Afghanistan’s

industry, mining, and agriculture sectors.

The President of Mordovia also highlighted his country’s advancements in medicine, agriculture, energy, and pharmaceutical production and expressed readiness for joint cooperation with Afghanistan in these areas.

He added that Mordovia plans to initiate its exports to Afghanistan via the Mordovia–Kazakhstan–Uzbekistan corridor.

During the meeting, Mordovian investors also expressed interest in investing in Afghanistan, and the Deputy Prime Minister assured them of full support.

Taliban sign agreements in Tajikistan to accelerate energy project



KABUL (Amu tv): Taliban announced Friday that their representatives from Afghanistan’s state-run electricity utility, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, signed agreements with ministers from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan aimed at accelerating the completion of the long-delayed CASA-1000 regional power project.

The agreements, signed during a summit in Tajikistan, are intended to expedite the remaining construction phases of CASA-1000, an ambitious cross-border energy initiative designed to transmit surplus hydropower from Central Asia to South Asia via Afghanistan.

In a statement, Taliban said the deals were part of a broader effort to strengthen regional cooperation on energy and ensure faster delivery of electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan through Afghanistan.

CASA-1000, launched in May 2016 with an estimated value of \$1.2 billion, aims to transmit 1,300 megawatts of excess hydroelectric power from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to energy-deficient markets in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The project includes 484 kilometers of alternating current (AC) transmission lines from Datka in Kyrgyzstan to Sughd in Tajikistan, and another 789 kilometers of high-voltage direct current (HVDC) lines from Sangtuda, Tajikistan, through Afghanistan to Nowshera, Pakistan, with converter stations at both ends.

Prior to the suspension

of the project in Afghanistan following the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021, roughly 18 percent of the necessary transmission towers had been erected within Afghanistan, and 95 percent of the required equipment had been procured.

The World Bank, which had been a major financier of the initiative, halted funding after the Taliban takeover. In February 2024, however, the Bank announced plans to resume support for the Afghan segment of the project, with the caveat that all payments and financial management would be handled externally, beyond the control of the Taliban government.

This structure was designed to ensure the project’s continuation while minimizing political risk.

Returned and struggling: Deportees face dire hardship in Afghanistan

TIRINKOT (Amu tv): Thousands of families forcibly returned from neighboring countries are now grappling with deepening poverty, unemployment and lack of basic services in their homeland.

Among them is Zarghona, a 67-year-old woman who recently returned to Uruzgan Province after spending decades as a refugee in Pakistan. Her husband, Ikhtiarullah, once a laborer who spent his youth working construction jobs to support his family, now lies bedridden, unable to work.

“By God, we don’t even have bread to eat,” Zarghona said, standing outside her modest mud-brick home. “One child asks for tea, another asks for bread, but we have nothing—not in

the morning, not at night. Life has become unbearably difficult.”

Zarghona spends her days caring for her ill husband and searching for enough food to get her family through the night. With no source of income and no access to government support, their future, like that of many recently deported families, remains uncertain.

“I’m lying here helplessly,” Ikhtiarullah said in a frail voice. “I have seven or eight children. We have nothing—no food, no water, not even a cup of tea. Our condition is very bad.”

Their story is echoed by tens of thousands of Afghans who have been deported from Pakistan and Iran in recent months. According to aid organizations, the rate of forced returns has surged,



particularly since Pakistan began a second phase of mass expulsions this spring.

The International Organization for Migration estimates that over 128,000 Afghans were deported from Pakistan between April 1 and May 12 alone. Many of those returning have no homes, jobs, or relatives in Afghanistan. Some have spent their entire lives in exile and now face reintegration into a country still reeling from economic crisis and political uncertainty.

The lack of shelter, healthcare, and employment opportunities has placed severe pressure on local communities already stretched by years of war and underinvestment. Aid

groups have warned of a looming humanitarian catastrophe if immediate support is not provided.

Zarghona and her husband, now symbols of the hardship endured by returnees, say they feel abandoned. “We gave everything we had to build a life,” she said. “Now we’ve come back to nothing.”

UN projects Pakistan’s economy to grow by 2.3%

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan, a key part of the South Asian region, is expected to experience “moderate growth, stabilising after a period of economic contraction”, with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected to expand by 2.3% in 2025, according to a United Nations report.

The report, titled ‘the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025’, noted that declining inflation has allowed most of the South Asian region’s central banks to commence or continue monetary easing in 2025. Meanwhile, governments in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are expected to continue fiscal consolidation and economic reforms under International Monetary Fund (IMF)-supported programmes.

It said that the near-term outlook for South Asia is expected to remain robust, with growth projected at 5.7% in 2025 and 6.0% in 2026, “driven by strong performance in India as well as economic recovery in a few other economies”, including Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The report said the global economy is at a precarious juncture, marked by heightened trade tensions and elevated policy uncertainty. The recent surge in tariffs — driving the effective US tariff rate up steeply — threatens to raise production costs, disrupt global supply chains and amplify financial turbulence.

Uncertainty over trade and economic policies, combined with a volatile geopolitical landscape, is prompting businesses to delay or scale back critical investment decisions. These developments are compounding existing challenges, including high debt levels and sluggish productivity growth, further undermining global growth prospects. Global GDP growth is now forecast at just 2.4% in 2025, down from 2.9% in 2024 and 0.4 percentage points below the January 2025 projection.

Slower global growth, elevated inflationary pressures and weakening global trade — including a projected halving of trade growth from 3.3% in 2024 to 1.6% in 2025 — jeopardise

progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. The slowdown is broad-based, affecting both developed and developing economies. Growth in the United States is projected to decelerate significantly, from 2.8% in 2024 to 1.6% in 2025, with higher tariffs and policy uncertainty expected to weigh on private investment and consumption. In the European Union, GDP growth is forecast at 1.0% in 2025, unchanged from 2024, amid weaker net exports and higher trade barriers.

China’s growth is expected to slow to 4.6% this year, reflecting subdued consumer sentiment, disruptions in export-oriented manufacturing and ongoing property sector challenges. Several other major developing economies, including Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, are also facing growth downgrades due to weakening trade, slowing investment and falling commodity prices. India, whose 2025 growth forecast has been revised downward to 6.3%, remains one of the fastest growing large economies.

“The tariff shock risks hitting vulnerable developing countries hard, slowing growth, slashing export revenues, and compounding debt challenges, especially as these economies are already struggling to make the investments needed for long-term, sustainable development,” said United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua. While global headline inflation eased from 5.7% in 2023 to 4.0% in 2024, price pressures remain stubbornly high in many economies. By early 2025, inflation exceeded pre-pandemic averages in two-thirds of countries, with over 20 developing economies facing double-digit rates.

Food inflation, averaging above 6%, continues to hit low-income households hardest, particularly in Africa, South Asia and Western Asia. Higher trade barriers and climate shocks are further amplifying inflation risks, underscoring the need for coordinated policies — combining

credible monetary frameworks, targeted fiscal support and long-term strategies — to stabilise prices and shield the most vulnerable.

In many countries, monetary policy challenges have intensified in an uncertain economic environment. Central banks are grappling with difficult trade-offs between managing inflationary pressures — exacerbated by tariff-induced price shocks — and supporting slowing economies. At the same time, limited fiscal space, especially in developing economies, constrains governments’ ability to effectively mitigate the economic slowdown. Deteriorating global prospects and geopolitical fragmentation undermine development progress.

For many developing countries, this bleak economic outlook undermines prospects for creating jobs, reducing poverty, and addressing inequality. For least developed countries — where growth is expected to slow from 4.5% in 2024 to 4.1% in 2025 — declining export revenues, tightening financial conditions and reduced official development assistance flows threaten to further erode fiscal space and heighten the risk of debt distress.

Escalating trade frictions are further straining the multilateral trading system, leaving small and vulnerable economies increasingly marginalised in a fragmented global landscape. Strengthening multilateral cooperation is essential to address these challenges. Revitalising the rules-based trading system and providing targeted support to vulnerable countries will be critical to fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, taking place in Sevilla, Spain, from June 30 to July 3, 2025, will be a crucial platform to address issues such as strengthening multilateral cooperation, debt sustainability and more to drive concrete actions on financing for sustainable development for all, the report added. — Agencies



RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering fateha for Squadron Leader Usman Yousuf Shaheed, during his visit to his residence.

President pays tribute to nation and armed forces

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari congratulated the nation and armed forces on the success of operation Bunyanum Marsus on the occasion of Thanksgiving Day. President Zardari praised the professional skills of the Pakistani forces and the unity of the nation in response to Indian aggression.

In a statement issued from Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday, president Zardari expressed gratitude to the Almighty for bestowing victory upon them. He stated that this success is not only of the Pakistani forces but of the entire nation, which stood united like an impregnable wall against the enemy’s aggression.

Paying tribute to the brave soldiers and leaders of the armed forces, the President expressed pride in the forces that responded to Indian provocations with utmost professionalism. He further stated that the world has recognized Pakistan’s patience and operational expertise, which thwarted the enemy’s aggressive intentions.

The President affirmed that Pakistan is a peaceful country with no aggressive intentions against anyone, but it will never compromise on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. He made it clear that any aggression against their land will be met with a strong response. Rejecting any unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, he said Pakistan will utilize every means to protect its water rights. President Zardari saluted the brave soldiers who defended the beloved homeland.

In conclusion, the President assured that the government and people of Pakistan will always stand shoulder to shoulder with their armed forces, remaining steadfast like a rock in the defense of the motherland.

PPP KP to stage protest against graft

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of ticket holders of Pakistan (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held here at the Governor House, Peshawar with Provincial President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha in the chair on Friday. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi attended the meeting as special guest.

The party ticket holders presented their proposals regarding the Soba Bachao (Save the Province) Campaign against the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on May 26 and it was decided to bring this protest to the fore in a full-fledged manner. Speaking on the occasion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi said that the PPP has reservations regarding the public issues with the federal government. The party’s central leadership is serious in this regard saying he fully appreciate the feelings and sentiments of the workers and leaders of the party.

He paid tributes to the provincial president for calling a meeting of ticket holders and for his decision regarding ‘Save the Province’ campaign. Beside other unanimously passed resolutions, the meeting also saluted the brilliant performance and victory of the armed forces of Pakistan in the Operation Banyan Al-Marsoos. The resolutions stated that the party acknowledge the martyrdom of the soldiers and civilians during the operation and pray for the elevation of their eternal ranks, and also pay tributes to their families.

Fresh Israeli strikes kill 93 in Gaza

GAZA (AP): At least 93 people were killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza on Friday as US President Donald Trump wrapped up his regional trip. Strikes overnight hit across Gaza, including the outskirts of Deir Al-Balah and the city of Khan Younis. Gaza’s health ministry said hundreds more were injured in addition to those killed.

The widespread attacks come as Trump finishes his visit to Gulf states but not Israel. There had been widespread hope that his regional trip could usher in a ceasefire deal or renewal of humanitarian aid to Gaza. An Israeli blockade of the territory is now in its third month. Speaking to reporters at a business forum in Abu Dhabi on the final day of his trip, Trump said he was looking to resolve a range of global crises, including Gaza. “We’re looking at Gaza,” he said. “And we’ve got to get that taken care of. A lot of people are starving. A lot of people are — there’s a lot of bad things going on.”

Israel said Friday it was continuing its operations against militants in Gaza and that it struck 150 targets in the past day, including anti-tank missile posts and military structures. In northern Gaza, it eliminated several militants who were operating in an observation compound, it said. The strikes lasted for hours into Friday morning and sent people fleeing from the Jabaliya refugee camp and the town of Beit Lahiya. They followed days of similar attacks that killed more than 130 people, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry.

After the strikes, dark smoke was seen rising over Jabaliya as people grabbed what they could of their belongings and fled on donkey carts, by car and foot. “The army entered upon us, bombing, killing. ... We got out of the house with difficulty, killing and death, we did not take anything,” said Feisal Al-Attar, who was displaced from Beit Lahiya.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed earlier in the week to push ahead with a promised escalation of force in Israel’s war in the Gaza Strip to pursue his aim of destroying the Hamas militant group, which governs Gaza. In comments released by Netanyahu’s office Tuesday, the prime minister said Israeli forces were days away from entering Gaza “with great strength to com-

plete the mission ... It means destroying Hamas.”

An Israeli official said the strikes on Friday were preparatory actions in the lead-up to a larger operation and to send a message to Hamas that it will begin soon if there isn’t an agreement to release hostages. The official was not authorized to brief media and spoke on condition of anonymity. The same official said that Cabinet members were meeting Friday to assess the negotiations in Qatar, where ceasefire talks are taking place, and to decide on next steps.

Israeli government spokesman David Mencer told The Associated Press on Friday that Israel’s military is intensifying its operations as it has done since Hamas stopped releasing hostages. “Our objective is to get them home and get Hamas to relinquish power,” he said. He said Israel will continue pressuring Hamas while negotiating, saying that it’s getting results. On Friday, families of the hostages said they awoke up with “heavy hearts” to reports of increased attacks and called on Netanyahu to “join hands” with Trump’s efforts to release the hostages.

“Missing this historic opportunity for a deal to bring the hostages home would be a resounding failure that will be remembered in infamy forever,” the families said in a statement released by the hostage forum, which supports them. The war began when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people in an Oct. 7, 2023, intrusion into southern Israel. Israel’s retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. Almost 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a ceasefire on March 18, the ministry said.

Hamas still holds 58 of the roughly 250 hostages it took during its attack on Israel, with 23 believed to still be alive, although Israeli authorities have expressed concern for the status of three of those. The attacks come as Israel enters its third month of blockading Gaza, preventing food, fuel medicine and all other supplies from entering, worsening a humanitarian crisis. Israel says the blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release the hostages it still holds and that it won’t allow aid.

Trump says Iran has a proposal from US

Gaza are ‘starving’

ABU DHABI (AP): US President Donald Trump said Friday that Iran has an American proposal over its rapidly advancing nuclear program as negotiations between the two countries go on.

Trump’s remarks represent the first time he’s acknowledged an American proposal is with Tehran after multiple rounds of negotiations between US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Negotiations have gotten into the “expert” level — meaning the two sides are trying to see if they can reach any agreement on the details of any possible deal. But one major sticking point remains Iran’s enrichment of uranium, which Tehran insists it must be allowed to do and the Trump administration increasingly insists the Islamic Republic must give up.

Trump made the comment aboard Air Force One as he ended his trip to the United Arab Emirates, the last stop on his three-nation tour of the Middle East that also included Saudi Arabia and Qatar. At nearly every event he attended in the region, he insisted that Iran could not be allowed to obtain a nuclear bomb — something American intelligence agencies assess Tehran is not actively pursuing though its program is on the cusp of being able to weaponize.

A reporter asked Trump: “On Iran, has the US given them a formal proposal? Has Steve Witkoff handed that over?” “They have a proposal,” Trump responded. “But most importantly, they know they have to move quickly, or something bad is going to happen.” Trump did not elaborate on the substance of the proposal and Iran did not immediately acknowledge having it. On Thursday,

GAZA CITY (AFP): US President Donald Trump said on Friday “a lot of people are starving” in the besieged Gaza Strip, where rescuers reported more than 50 deaths in Israeli air strikes since midnight. Trump’s brief comments on Gaza came as he capped the first foreign tour of his second term that saw him visit several Gulf countries but excluded key ally Israel. A two-month ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed in March, shortly after Israel reimposed a total blockade on Gaza that aid agencies say has sparked critical food shortages. On Friday, Gaza’s civil defence agency said that 56 people had been killed in Israeli strikes since midnight, with medics reporting dozens more injured. When asked by AFP, the Israeli army made no comment on the strikes. “We’re looking at Gaza. And we’re going to get that taken care of. A lot of people are starving,” Trump told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

Israel cut off aid to Gaza on March 2, a tactic it has said is intended to force concessions from militant group Hamas, which is still holding dozens of Israeli hostages it seized in October 2023. Hamas insisted on Thursday that the restoration of humanitarian assistance to the war-ravaged territory was “the minimum requirement” for talks. It also warned that Gaza was not “for sale” hours after Trump again floated taking over the territory and turning it into “a freedom zone”. Israel’s latest strikes sparked panic in northern Gaza. “We were asleep when suddenly everything exploded around us,” north Gaza resident Umm Mohammed al-Tatari, 57, told AFP.

Araghchi spoke to journalists at the Tehran International Book Fair and said that Iran did not have any proposal from the Americans yet.

Araghchi also criticized what he called conflicting and inconsistent statements from the Trump administration, describing them as either a sign of disarray in Washington or a calculated negotiation strategy. Witkoff at one point suggested that Iran could enrich uranium at 3.67%, then later began saying that all Iranian enrichment must stop. “We are hearing many contradictory statements from the United States — from Washington, from the president, and from the new administration,” Araghchi said. “Sometimes we hear two or three different positions in a single day.”

Iranian and American officials have been in Oman and Rome for the

negotiations, always mediated by Oman’s Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, a trusted interlocutor between the two nations. The talks seek to limit Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of some of the crushing economic sanctions the US has imposed on the Islamic Republic, closing in on half a century of enmity.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran’s program if a deal isn’t reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels. Meanwhile, Israel has threatened to strike Iran’s nuclear facilities on their own if it feels threatened, further complicating tensions in the Mideast already spiked by the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

CJP visits PHC’s Bannu Bench

E.P. Report

BANNU: The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), Justice Yahya Afridi, visited the Bannu Bench of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) to express solidarity with the judges working under the challenging conditions and reaffirmed his commitment to the judicial independence and institutional reforms.

During his visit, the Chief Justice met with Justice S. M Attique Shah, Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court, for an in-depth discussion on strengthening institutional capacity across the judiciary and legal fraternity, according to a statement issued by the Supreme Court here on Friday.

He also interacted with the judges from the Peshawar High Court, district judiciary officials from Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and North Waziristan, as well as representatives from the legal community. Key discussions revolved around the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) agenda, highlighting the need for judicial capacity enhancement, improved legal education, and institutional synergy.

Emphasis was placed on reform initiatives, including the establishment of a dedicated Commercial Litigation Corridor, the introduction of Double Docket Courts, and expansion of court-annexed mediation. The revival of Model Criminal Courts was also discussed as a remedy to address delays in criminal trials. The CJP stressed the need for urgent judicial automation and referenced the upcoming national symposium on automation and artificial intelligence in the justice system.

He also called for prioritizing funds for underdeveloped regions, recommending foreign training and exposure visits for judges from these areas, and the posting of the most competent judicial officers in such districts. The Chief Justice introduced the concept of a Performance Excellence Index for judicial officers to ensure transparency, merit, and accountability.

He also emphasized the proposal for standardized training modules for apprentice lawyers, encouraging Bar Councils nationwide to submit a joint proposal for consideration in the upcoming NJPMC session. As part of his broader Criminal Justice System (CJS) reform agenda, the Chief Justice visited local correctional facilities. He inspected the prison hospital and kitchen, inaugurated a new Drug Rehabilitation Centre, and interacted with inmates to hear their concerns.

PHC vacates stay orders against block allocation fund

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fahim Wali has vacated the stay order on the Umbrella schemes/ Block Allocation Fund after hearing petitions filed by opposition members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, on Friday.

The petitions were filed against the provincial government’s allocation of funds for the Umbrella Schemes and the alleged disregard for opposition members in the allocation process. The court was informed that the Block Allocation Fund was being

used to fund projects based on the personal preferences of the Chief Minister, rather than on merit.

The petitioners’ lawyers argued that the block allocation fund is unconstitutional and that it allowed the government to fund projects that were not transparent or accountable. They also argued that the fund was being used to favor certain members or areas, rather than being allocated based on merit.

The Additional Advocate General Adnan Ali informed the court that the provincial government had framed rules for the Umbrella Schemes and that the funds were being used in accordance with these

rules. The provincial government informed the court that the block allocation fund being used to fund projects based on their importance and feasibility, rather than on personal preferences. The government also informed the court that the Supreme Court had upheld the rules framed for the BAF in 2021.

The government requested the court to lift the stay order, citing that it had been in place for six months and that new budget allocations were being made. PHC lifted the stay order on the block allocation fund/ umbrella schemes, allowing the provincial government to proceed with the allocation of funds.



BANNU: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi being presented a souvenir by District and Session Judge on his visit to Peshawar High Court Bannu Bench.

Russia, Ukraine agree prisoner swap, fail to reach truce

ISTANBUL (AFP): Russia and Ukraine agreed a large-scale prisoner exchange, said they would trade ideas on a possible ceasefire and discussed a potential meeting between Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Vladimir Putin in their first direct talks in over three years on Friday.

But coming out of the highly anticipated talks in Istanbul, which lasted just over 90 minutes, there were few signs of more significant progress toward ending the three-year war. Kyiv was seeking an “unconditional ceasefire” to pause a conflict that has destroyed large swathes of Ukraine and displaced millions of people.

Moscow has consistently rebuffed those calls, and the only concrete agreement appeared to be a deal to exchange 1,000 prisoners each. The two sides also said they would “present their

vision of a possible future ceasefire,” said Russia’s top negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky. Russia also took note of Ukraine’s request for a meeting of Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy, he said.

“Overall, we are satisfied with the results and ready to continue contacts,” Medinsky added. Ukraine’s top negotiator, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, confirmed the prisoner swap in a separate statement and also said a ceasefire and a possible presidential meeting had been discussed. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who presided over the talks, said the sides had “agreed in principle to meet again” and would present ceasefire ideas “in writing.”

Fidan sat at the head of a table in front of Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian flags at Istanbul’s Dolmabahce Palace for the talks — with Russian and Ukrainian dele-

gations facing each other, footage from the room showed. But progress on more fundamental issues appeared minimal. During the talks, a Ukrainian source told AFP that Russia was making “unacceptable” territorial demands in a bid to derail negotiations.

Nevertheless, the fact the meeting took place at all was a sign of movement, with both sides having come under steady pressure from Washington to open talks. Putin declined to travel to Turkey for the meeting, which he had proposed, sending a second-level delegation instead. Zelenskyy said Putin was “afraid” of meeting, and criticized Russia for not taking the talks “seriously.” Speaking at a European summit in Albania, the Ukrainian leader urged a “strong reaction” from the world if the talks failed, including new sanctions.