

Atta Tarar grieved

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Wednesday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of the brother-in-law of Tariq Mehmood Sameer - editor of the Daily Muntaz. The minister, in a condolence message, conveyed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the bereaved family.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 113

Regd. No. 241

ZIQAAD 24 1446 -- THURSDAY, MAY 22 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Indian orchastrated state terrorism

Five martyred in school bus attack

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: At least five people, including three children, were killed and several others injured when a bus carrying school students was targeted in a blast in Balochistan's Khuzdar district on Wednesday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

"In yet another cowardly and ghastly attack planned and orchestrated by terrorist state of India and executed by its proxies in Balochistan, innocent school going children bus was targeted in Khuzdar" said an ISPR news release. As per the initial reports, three innocent children and two adults have embraced Shahadat and multiple children have sustained injuries.

After having miserably failed in the battlefield, through these most heinous and cowardly such acts, Indian proxies have been unleashed to spread terror and unrest in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhawa.

Having failed in the Operation Bunnianum

Masroor and being hunted by Pakistan's military and law enforcement agencies, these Indian terror proxies are being employed as a state tool by India to foment terrorism in Pakistan against soft targets such as innocent children and civilians.

Use of terrorism as a state policy by the Indian government is abhorrent and reflective of their low morality and disregard of basic human norms.

Planners, abettors and executors of this cowardly Indian sponsored attack would be hunted down and brought to justice and heinous face of India will be exposed in front of the entire world.

Pakistan Armed Forces, with the support of its brave Pakistani nation, stand united to uproot Indian sponsored terrorism from Pakistan in all its manifestations.

President, PM condemn terrorist attack on school bus in Balochistan

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on

Wednesday strongly condemned the cowardly terrorist attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan, which claimed the lives of five individuals, including three innocent children.

In a separate statement issued by the Presidency, the president extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for strength and patience in their time of grief.

The president called the attack on school-going children an inhumane and despicable crime. The president held India responsible for backing terrorist groups involved in such atrocities. He reiterated that the state of Pakistan would fully expose India's role in sponsoring terrorism at international forums.

"Terrorists targeting education and innocent lives are enemies of humanity," the president said. He added that these acts are aimed at derailing development in Balochistan, but the nation remains resolute.

"Those who wish to disrupt the peace and



21-05-2025
SANIA SOOMRO
CLASS:8

progress of Balochistan will not succeed," he affirmed.

President Zardari also emphasized the state's unwavering commitment to completely eliminating Indian-sponsored terrorist networks and ensuring justice for the victims.

Following the President's remarks, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also issued a strong condemnation of the incident, describing it as a savage and calculated attack on the future of Pakistan. Expressing deep sorrow over the martyrdom of the children and their teachers, the prime minister conveyed solidarity with the grieving families and directed authorities to apprehend

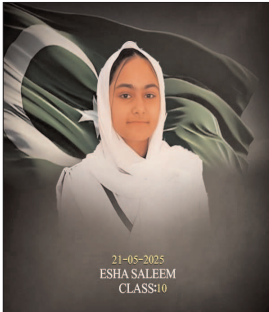


21-05-2025
HIFZA KOUSAR
CLASS:7

the perpetrators without delay. He instructed for immediate and high-priority medical treatment for those injured in the attack.

The prime minister declared that targeting school children was a vile attack on the nation's values and its future, revealing the terrorists' hostility toward education in Balochistan. "By striking a school bus, these enemies have crossed all limits of brutality," he said.

He affirmed that Pakistan would relentlessly pursue and punish those responsible. "We will not rest until these Indian-backed terrorists are brought to justice. No effort will be spared in thwarting their evil designs," the Prime Minister added.



21-05-2025
ESHA SALEEM
CLASS:10

He stated that the people of Pakistan, along with the security forces, remain committed to eradicating terrorism and protecting the peace and progress of the country.

Prime Minister, Field Marshal Asim Munir visits Quetta

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Minister of Defence, Minister of Interior, Minister of Information and Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), visited Quetta to meet the injured children and other victims of this horrific attack. Chief Minister Balochistan and Commander Quetta Corps briefed the visitors about the dastardly incident which led to martyrdom

of three innocent children and two soldiers along with 53 injured including 39 innocent children of which 8 are critical.

The Prime Minister, Federal Minister and Chief of Army Staff expressed deep grief over the loss of innocent lives and injuries to the innocent school going children. The visitors seeing the badly wounded and critically injured children expressed that such a diabolical act of terrorism through these Indian sponsored proxies is a shameful and despicable act.

These terrorist groups-masquerading under ethnic pretenses-are not only being exploited by India as instruments of state policy, but also stand as a stain on the honour and values of the Baloch and Pashtun people, who have long rejected violence and extremism.

India's reliance on such morally indefensible tactics, particularly the deliberate targeting of children, demands urgent attention from the international community. The use of terrorism as a tool

of foreign policy must be unequivocally condemned and confronted.

Pakistan's security forces and law enforcement agencies will relentlessly pursue all those involved in this barbaric act. The architects, abettors, and enablers of this crime will be held accountable and brought to justice and the truth about India's cunning role, a real perpetrator of terrorism but feigns as a victim, stands exposed before the world.

The Prime Minister expressed that entire nation stands resolute behind its Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies in the collective will to eradicate the scourge of terrorism as well as safeguard the sovereignty and security of Pakistan.

The Prime Minister and COAS highlighted that it's now time, that the nation displays a very strong resolve similar to the one shown recently against the aggression by India, to bring the fight against foreign-sponsored terrorism to its logical and decisive end.

ISPR refutes baseless allegations, hints at Indian involvement in Mir Ali tragedy

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday strongly denied allegations circulating in the wake of a tragic incident that occurred on May 19 in the general area of Mir Ali, North Waziristan District, which resulted in civilian casualties.

It described the claims implicating security personnel as entirely unfounded and part of a deliberate disinformation campaign,

an ISPR news release said.

"Following a tragic incident on 19 May 2025 in the general area of Mir Ali, North Waziristan District, which regrettably resulted in civilian casualties, unfounded and misleading allegations have been circulated by certain quarters, falsely implicating Pakistan's security forces," it said.

It said these claims were "entirely baseless" and "part of a coordinated disinformation campaign" aimed at discrediting the

security forces' steadfast efforts in ongoing counter-terrorism operations.

In response to these accusations, it said a comprehensive investigation was promptly initiated, adding, "Initial findings have established that this heinous act has been orchestrated and executed by Indian sponsored Fitna Al Khwarij."

The ISPR said it was evident that these elements, acting on behalf of their Indian Masters, continued to exploit civilian

areas and vulnerable populations as shields to conduct their reprehensible acts of terrorism.

"Such tactics aim to unsuccessfully sow discord between the local population and the security forces, who together remain resolute to uproot menace of terrorism," it added.

The security forces, it said, reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that the perpetrators of this inhuman act were brought to justice.

U.S. flays attack on school bus in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States has strongly condemned the recent attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan, which claimed the lives of innocent children and left others injured.

The brutal incident has shocked the nation and drawn international condemnation, with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker expressing deep sorrow and solidarity with the victims.

In an official statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Baker said, "We join Pakistan's leaders in condemning the brutal, unconscionable attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan. The murder of innocent children is beyond comprehension. We grieve with the families who lost loved ones, and our thoughts are with those recovering."

The attack, which targeted a vehicle carrying school children, has been described as a heinous act against the most vulnerable members of society. While investigations are still ongoing, authorities believe it may be linked to ongoing unrest in the province.

"No child should ever fear going to school," Baker emphasized in her statement. "We stand with those in Pakistan working to end this violence."

The incident has sparked outrage and mourning across Pakistan, with government officials, civil society, and international partners calling for justice and increased protection for schoolchildren in conflict-affected regions.

The U.S. Embassy's statement reflects growing global concern over violence targeting educational institutions and children.

On 74th anniversary diplomatic ties President lauds China's role in Pakistan's development

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday extended heartfelt congratulations to the governments and peoples of Pakistan and China as two countries observe the 74th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations.

The president, in his message on the anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations, said that Pakistan highly valued its historic and time-tested relationship with China, adding that ties with China remained a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy.

He said that over the past seven decades, bilateral relations between the two brotherly nations had grown from strength to strength, evolving into a

comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Describing Pakistan and China as "iron brothers" bound by an all-weather friendship, he said, "Pakistan is a staunch supporter of the 'One China' policy and will continue to stand firmly with China on its core national interests."

The president expressed gratitude to the government and people of China for consistently supporting Pakistan in times of need. He lauded China's vital role in Pakistan's economic and social development, as well as in strengthening Pakistan's defence sector.

Highlighting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a shining example of bilateral cooperation, the president noted that CPEC had posi-

tively impacted Pakistan's economy, infrastructure, and energy sector.

"Pakistan-China relations are anchored in mutual trust, respect, and goodwill, and both countries remain committed to promoting regional peace, stability, shared prosperity, and enhanced connectivity," the president stated.

He reiterated Pakistan's desire to further deepen bilateral ties in the areas of economy, technology, defence, education, and trade besides reaffirming his resolve to broaden and strengthen these relations in the future.

President Zardari also extended his best wishes to the people and leadership of China on this occasion.

Govt facilitating affordable housing schemes: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said that the government's top priority was to facilitate low-cost housing schemes.

Chairing a review meeting of the Task Force on housing sector development for low-cost housing projects chaired, the prime minister said the affordable housing projects would not only make residential units accessible to the common man but would also boost the national economy and create employment opportunities.

The prime minister further directed that the task force, in collaboration

with the ministry of finance and banks, should soon submit recommendations for financing low-cost housing projects, which should be included in the upcoming budget proposals.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharifopined that the sustainable growth of the national economy was closely linked with the development of the construction sector.

Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaiz Malik, FBR Chairman, and other senior officials attended the meeting, PM Office Media Wing said in a

press release.

The prime minister was briefed on the progress of the government's initiatives related to low-cost housing.

The meeting was informed that the Condominium Act 2025 and amendments to the Foreclosure Law were in their final stages and after approval, the said legislation would make it easier to obtain loans for the construction and ownership of homes under low-cost housing schemes.

The task force also briefed the meeting on the progress made so far regarding the initiation of construction projects, particularly low-cost housing schemes.

Special Guard of Honor held at Yadgar-e-Shuhada



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A Special Guard of Honour ceremony was held at Yadgar-e-Shuhada, General

Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi, in honour of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M).

A Special Guard of Honour ceremony was

held at Yadgar-e-Shuhada, General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi, in honour of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M).

On this solemn occasion, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada and offered Fateha to pay tribute to the martyrs of Pakistan.

The Field Marshal dedicated this honour to the entire nation, the Armed Forces of Pakistan, and in particular, to the martyrs and veterans of both civil and Armed Forces & Law Enforcement Agencies. COAS expressed that, "This honour is a tribute to the entire Pakistani Nation and the valiant men and women of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, particularly the martyrs who stood like a 'Wall of Steel' against Indian unprovoked, cowardly and unlawful aggression against Pakistan."

Pakistan want peace not only in region but across the world: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Bilawal Ali Bhutto as the head of the diplomatic delegation which will visit the capitals of different major countries of the world gave a media talk about the purpose of this visit.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasized that Pakistan's position remains clear: we want peace not just in the region, but across the world. However, peace cannot be achieved without addressing long-standing flashpoints such as the Kashmir dispute and the scourge of terrorism, which has impacted Pakistan more than any other country in the world. Our commitment is to eliminate terrorism completely.

He reminded the world that we recently witnessed

a dangerous war between two nuclear-countries following a terrorist incident. This clearly underscores the urgent need to resolve such core issues peacefully. Chairman Bilawal further stated that India's use of water as a weapon is deeply troubling and must be brought to the world's attention. "India is standing on a weak wicket by attempting to weaponize water," he said. Drawing a parallel, he noted that the world has already condemned Israel for weaponizing food in Gaza and Palestine.

Chairman Bilawal warned that if the Kashmir issue remains unresolved and water becomes another flashpoint, future generations in both Pakistan and India may find themselves locked in a far more dangerous and tragic conflict. "It is unfortunate that since

1947, the two countries have been at odds over Kashmir. We must not let water become the next cause of war," he said.

He elaborated on Pakistan's broader diplomatic agenda, stating, "We will take our message to governments, parliamentarians, media, civil society and most importantly, to the people of the world. When two nuclear powers are at war, the consequences are never limited to them alone rather the whole world is affected."

Chairman Bilawal thanked the Foreign Office for their comprehensive briefing and congratulated them for playing a proactive and responsible role during this recent crisis. "As we engage globally, we will present the truth and Pakistan's peaceful intent. This decision to send delegations abroad to

present Pakistan's perspective is a step in the right direction."

He recalled that when India levelled false accusations against Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had promptly offered an impartial, international inquiry, an offer India refused because its narrative was built on falsehoods. "During this conflict, Pakistan did not act as an aggressor, we simply defended ourselves, and we did so responsibly."

Chairman Bilawal pointed out that this is not merely a bilateral issue. The international community and global media have acknowledged Pakistan's responsible conduct. "We are on the side of truth and peace, while India continues to spread propaganda rooted in hate and division," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting of the Task Force on housing sector development for low-cost housing projects.



Polio threat persists Sindh CM calls for targeted action to protect children

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, leading the provincial polio task force meeting, stressed the urgency of eliminating polio through focused and collective efforts, warning, "Every missed child is a potential case. Polio won't be eliminated through routine; it requires targeted, urgent, and collective action. We must ensure that no child in Sindh remains unprotected."

The meeting, held at CM House, included key figures such as Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani, and representatives from various organizations. The discussions centered on recent epidemiological

trends, campaign performance assessments, and the upcoming campaign scheduled from May 26 to June 1, 2025.

Health Minister Dr. Azra revealed that 10 wild polio cases have been reported in Pakistan this year, with 4 cases in Sindh. Sewage samples also indicate ongoing virus circulation. The May campaign aims to reach over 10.6 million children under five across 1,292 Union Councils in all 30 districts of Sindh, supported by more than 80,000 trained frontline workers and 25,539 law enforcement personnel.

Addressing high-risk areas, especially in Karachi, 157 doctors have been assigned to handle 6,780 sick refusals, with

police support to reach 2,524 chronic refusals. The chief minister instructed the activation of Refusal Conversion Committees in defaulting areas.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah reiterated the importance of accountability, stating, "Every missed child is a potential case. Polio won't be eliminated through routine, it demands targeted, urgent, and collective action. Let's not allow any child in Sindh to remain unprotected."

Emphasizing collaboration, he added, "The fight against polio is a fight for trust, equity, and access. We must work hand in hand with parents, ulema, teachers, and frontline workers to ensure every child is vaccinated every time."

Three killed as car plunges into canal

LAHORE (APP): Three people lost their lives when a car plunged into a canal along Canal Road near Doctors Hospital on Wednesday morning, according to rescue officials.

A spokesperson said the vehicle lost control and veered off the road, crashing into the canal. Emergency response teams reached the site shortly after being alerted.

All three occupants of the vehicle died on the spot. Their bodies were retrieved and shifted to Jinnah Hospital. The identities of the deceased have not yet been ascertained.

Eyewitnesses told officials that the car appeared to be over-speeding before the accident occurred. Rescue operations were ongoing till the filing of this news report.

Police and other relevant authorities are present at the scene, and further investigation was underway to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Teachers protest over unpaid salaries

KARACHI (PPI): Teachers of municipal schools protested today at the New Karachi Town Office due to the non-payment of salaries. The protesters stated that they have not received their salaries for the past two months, which has increased their financial difficulties. Both male and female teachers participated in the protest, chanting slogans in support of their demands while holding banners and placards.

The teachers mentioned that there is a lack of educational facilities in the municipal schools of New Karachi Town, and the non-payment of salaries is a criminal negligence. They stated that despite the approval of the time scale, the delay in salaries is intolerable.

Chairman of New Karachi Town, Muhammad Yousuf, Municipal Commissioner Ayaz Hameed Ullah Baloch, and Vice Chairman Shoaib bin Zaheer met with the teachers and listened to their issues. Muhammad Yousuf said that he is aware of the teachers' problems and prioritizes the timely payment of their salaries.

He further mentioned that investigations into administrative irregularities are ongoing and that teachers will soon be paid their salaries according to their rights. Vice Chairman Shoaib bin Zaheer assured that steps are being taken to resolve the teachers' issues, and the salary payments will commence shortly.

The teachers participating in the protest postponed their demonstration following the administration's assurances, expressing hope that their financial issues will be resolved soon.

One dead in police encounter

KARACHI (PPI): A suspected robber was gunned down and three others arrested in three separate encounters with police at various locations in Karachi on Wednesday.

In the Sohrah Goth area, police engaged with a group of robbers at Indus Plaza, leading to the death of one unidentified perpetrator while another managed to escape. Authorities disclosed that a pistol along with ammunition was seized from the scene. The deceased's body was transported to the hospital as investigations continue.

Another incident unfolded in Azizabad's Muhammad Colony, where police apprehended a robber identified as Muhammad Imran, son of Sakha Muhammad, in an injured state. His accomplice fled the area. Law enforcement recovered a pistol, ammunition, and a motorcycle during the operation. Imran was taken to the hospital for treatment, and further inquiries are ongoing.

Meanwhile, in the Darakshan jurisdiction, police arrested two injured robbers after a confrontation. The detainees were identified as Muneer Hussain, son of Allah Ditta, and Nadeem, son of Manzoor Hussain. Officers recovered two pistols, several rounds of ammunition, four stolen mobile phones, two school bags, and a motorcycle.



KARACHI: Human Rights Council of Pakistan offering Dua for the soul of the martyred children during protest against the terrorist attack in Khuzdar at Karachi Press Club. —APP Photo

Maryam calls Bugti, flays Khuzdar terrorist attack

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday made a telephonic contact with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a school van in Khuzdar.

During the call, she expressed her deep sorrow over the tragic incident and conveyed heartfelt condolences to

the families of the martyred children. She assured full support and cooperation from the Punjab government in this hour of grief, emphasizing the shared national commitment to fighting terrorism until its complete eradication.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif also offered comprehensive assistance in ensuring the best possible medical treatment for those injured in the

attack. "The Punjab government stands shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Balochistan during this difficult time," she said.

"As a mother, I can feel the depth of grief and anguish being endured by the parents of the martyred children." She prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured and reiterated Punjab's solidarity with the people of Balochistan.

Sindh introduces Smart Surveillance for pollution control

KARACHI (APP): The provincial Secretary Environment, Climate Change & Coastal Development Agha Shah Nawaz on Wednesday said the Sindh Govt has decided to introduce a Smart Surveillance System to control environmental pollution.

Addressing the 5th major meeting on environment change, industrial pollution and coastal protection organized by FPCCI, Agha Shah Nawaz said the digitalization is the need of the hour, and the department aims to launch an automated system within a year. The system will identify old, smoke-emitting vehicles and issue e-challans in coordination with the traffic police. The meeting was attended by DG SEPA Waqar Hussain Phulpoto, Director Natural Resources Imran Sabir, industrialists, transporters, environmental experts, and other stakeholders.

FPCCI Senior Vice President Saqib Fayyaz Magoon expressed

concern that while efforts are being made to boost exports, smaller factories cannot afford wastewater treatment plants due to the high cost of doing business. He urged the government to form a comprehensive strategy to support them. "If we don't act now, we risk losing GSP+ status," he warned.

DG SEPA Waqar Hussain Phulpoto stressed that industrialists must fully comply with the Sindh Environmental Protection Act. He emphasized that industrial waste, particularly wastewater, should only be discharged after proper treatment and that hazardous waste must be incinerated through appropriate plants. He also noted that SEPA's vehicular emission campaign is ongoing and that monitoring of industrial vehicles will commence soon.

Environmental experts highlighted that the rapid destruction of mangroves due to water shortages is threatening marine life. Mangroves,

they said, are vital for protecting marine biodiversity and shielding coastal areas from natural disasters.

Responding to these concerns, Secretary Agha Shah Nawaz stated that discussions around marine life often ignore the harsh reality faced by coastal communities. "Fisher folk are suffering from hunger, disease, and unemployment," he said. "Severe water shortages in Sindh's coastal regions and the drying up of the delta have put human lives at risk. A 53% reduction in water flow has been recorded at Kotri Barrage," he added.

Agha Shah Nawaz proposed the formation of an emergency integrated committee comprising industrialists, experts, transporters, solid waste management bodies, and other stakeholders to devise an effective national strategy. He further stated that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a powerful tool that can drive coordinated environmental change, provided it is implemented sincerely.

"A malnourished child today means a Weakened Pakistan Tomorrow"

— Media urged to Champion Child Nutrition at Peshawar seminar

FP Report

PESHAWAR: Recognizing the urgent need to improve child health outcomes in Pakistan, Save the Children International, in collaboration with the Press Information Department (PID) Peshawar and with tech support from the UNICEF, organized a seminar titled "Increasing Gains in Nutrition by Engaging Media Professionals as Advocates for Advancing Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Nutrition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" at Serena Hotel Peshawar.

The seminar aimed to position media professionals as powerful allies in the national effort to combat malnutrition, promote exclusive breastfeeding, and support the enforcement of international standards on the marketing of breast milk substitutes. A strong emphasis was also placed on the importance of family-friendly workplace policies and long-term media engagement to raise public awareness and influence policy-level change.

The seminar's core message was clear and urgent: investment in child health is no longer optional—it is a national imperative. A secure and nourished child population means a secure future for Pakistan. Media professionals, with their unparalleled access to the public through digital, print, and electronic platforms, were called upon to use their platforms responsibly and consistently to advocate for child rights, spread awareness, and help drive social change. Their capacity to shape public opinion and hold institutions accountable makes them vital partners in improving maternal and child health indicators across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event began with welcome remarks from an official of the Press Information Department Peshawar, who acknowledged the significance of bringing together key stakeholders—government, development partners, and media—for a shared vision. She noted that collaborative platforms such as this seminar are instrumental in forging partnerships and advancing public health agendas.

Mr. Azam Kiani, project manager, Save the Children, provided an overview of the organization's work in Pakistan. He explained that Save



the Children began its operations in the late 1970s, initially responding to the Afghan refugee influx. Over the years, the organization expanded its efforts across Pakistan, with a strong focus on child protection, education, nutrition, and maternal health. He underscored that working hand-in-hand with the media can exponentially increase the reach and impact of the organization's work, particularly in challenging contexts like those found in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Mr. Fazal Majeed, Director Nutrition, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department, delivered a detailed presentation on the province's health landscape. He spoke about several major government initiatives aimed at improving maternal and child health, including immunization drives, nutrition programs, and improved maternal healthcare services.

A particularly notable development was the establishment of lactation corners in public spaces—an important step toward enabling mothers to breastfeed with dignity and privacy. He acknowledged ongoing challenges, such as geographic disparities and funding limitations, but emphasized that with continued coordination and community engagement, significant progress is achievable. Technical insights were provided by Ms. Shiza Hameed, nutrition coordinator Save the Children International who addressed the pressing nutritional challenges facing the province and the country. She revealed that 53 percent of children in Pakistan are not exclusively breastfed and that the infant mortality rate stands at 56 deaths per 1,000 live births. She described the deep-rooted consequences of poor nutrition, such as stunting and wasting, which not only affect individual children but also compromise the nation's future

productivity and resilience.

Ms. Shiza, who also served as moderator for the seminar, urged media representatives to highlight these issues in their coverage, bring stories of success and struggle to light, and normalize conversations around maternal and child nutrition. A dedicated Question & Answer session was also held, where media professionals actively engaged with panelists, raising pertinent questions related to breastfeeding practices, policy enforcement, access to maternal health services, and the role of media in influencing behavior change. The dialogue was dynamic and constructive, adding to the depth of understanding among all participants. This interactive exchange not only clarified technical aspects but also sparked fresh ideas for media-led advocacy.

Throughout the seminar, participants emphasized that the media's role is not merely to report facts but to shape societal attitudes, question norms, and influence behavior. Media professionals were asked to act as "mouthpieces" for child rights—to integrate messages of health, nutrition, and child protection into their storytelling, regardless of platform or beat. With their capacity to reach both grassroots communities and policy-makers, journalists are uniquely positioned to be champions of change.

The seminar concluded with a strong collective resolve to continue such engagements and build lasting collaborations between media, government departments, and development organizations. All stakeholders pledged to work together more closely in addressing malnutrition, reducing stunting, improving breastfeeding rates, and ultimately ensuring that every child in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan at large has a healthy and dignified start in life.

Minister affirms support for women entrepreneurs at PPAF GRASP seminar



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Chairman QMMB, Mr. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi attended a high-level seminar organized by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) at the Marriott Hotel, Karachi.

The event, titled "Sustainable Ecosystem for Women Entrepreneurs," was part of the Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) initiative, bringing together stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, and grassroots communities to promote inclusive economic development through women's empowerment.

CEO of PPAF, in her keynote address, highlighted the transformative potential of supporting rural women entrepreneurs. "Our goal is to create an environment where women are supported not just through access to finance, but also mentorship, digital tools, and strong market linkages," she said.

She emphasized that more than 15,000 jobs have

been created through this initiative, showcasing the vast potential of women in agriculture, enterprise, and community development.

She also stressed the importance of developing full value chains and equipping rural women with the knowledge and capacity to meet European Union export standards, positioning Pakistan for greater international competitiveness. Sindh Minister for Women Development, Ms. Shaheena, delivered a heartfelt address on the importance of collaboration and inclusivity in the empowerment journey.

"The women of Sindh are not waiting for change—they are leading it." "When we invest in women, we invest in families, in communities, and in the future of Pakistan."

"Through collaboration with the federal government and initiatives like GRASP, we can ensure that rural women are no longer left behind." She added a crucial dimension to the conversation by emphasizing the role of men:

"We must also educate and empower our men—fathers, brothers, and hus-

bands—who often play a pivotal role in supporting their daughters and families." "There are many unsung heroes who have stood up to feudal systems and jirgas, challenging regressive norms so their daughters can go to school, run businesses, and participate in society."

"These men are setting an example, and they too deserve our recognition and support as allies in this movement for gender equity." Federal Minister for National Heritage, Mr. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, in his concluding remarks, praised the collective efforts on display and reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to women's development:

"We will provide every necessary facility and extend full support at the federal level to help the women of our country thrive," he said.

"Listening to the panelists, and especially the contributions of Ms. Shaheena, it is clear we are on the right path." "What is needed now is sustained national support, and in doing so, we will unlock far-reaching benefits for our country."

Pakistan, China celebrate cultural heritage on Museum Day



F.P. Report

SWAT: The 49th International Museum Day was celebrated with grandeur across Pakistan, including in Swat, following the global trend. This year's theme, "The Future of Museums in a Rapidly Changing World," sparked detailed discussions among experts, researchers, and culture enthusiasts.

Addressing a ceremony on this occasion, the speaker highlighted the exemplary cooperation between Pakistan and China in preserving cultural heritage. Both countries, representing ancient civilizations, are actively engaged in safeguarding valuable assets of human history by learning from each other's experiences and traditions.

The speaker noted that the friendship between Pakistan and China dates

back centuries. The historical connections are reminiscent of the Silk Road, where the sound of camel bells still echoes. They mentioned that every Chinese child knows the story of Buddhist monk Xuan Zang, who traveled west in search of sacred Buddhist scriptures and spent a considerable amount of time in present-day Pakistan.

In 2019, both countries signed a formal agreement to promote cooperation in cultural heritage preservation, archaeological research, expert training, exhibition exchanges, and other fields. In 2023, China proposed the establishment of the Asian Cultural Heritage Conservation Alliance, which Pakistan enthusiastically joined. The alliance aims to foster understanding, cooperation, and preservation of

cultural heritage among Asian civilizations.

The ceremony emphasized that the integration of science, technology, and literature is enhancing the social significance of museums. The "Guardians of Gandhara" project, launched in 2023, brings together Chinese and Pakistani experts and volunteers to work on heritage restoration and education. Creative activities like "Nang Classes" are raising cultural awareness among youth.

The speaker said that under the "Preservation + Education" model, museums are not only becoming centers of knowledge but also a means to keep history alive in modern ways. In the future, Chinese experts will introduce 3D modeling and digital restoration techniques in Pakistan to scientifically preserve valuable historical sites.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairing good governance roadmap meeting of the C&W Department.

Tordher emphasize on prioritizing support for small ivestors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher, has emphasized the importance of prioritizing support for small investors in the development of new industrial estates.

He stated that effective planning should ensure maximum facilitation for local entrepreneurs, enabling them to invest with ease, as it is their fundamental right.

He issued these directives during a detailed briefing held on Wednesday at the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) office on

Kohat Road, Peshawar. The briefing focused on the upcoming Small Industrial Estates in Bajaur and Mansehra-2.

Also present on the occasion were SIDB Managing Director Abdul Hameed Khan, Deputy Managing Directors Engineer Zulfiqar Ali Sahibzada and Nauman Fayyaz, Joint Director Engineer Safdar Abbas Afridi, and Deputy Directors Engineer Zohaib Hassan and Engineer Saudul Haq.

During the session, Mr. Tordher was given a comprehensive presentation on the progress and planning of the new projects. Particular attention was given to reviewing the

master plan and design of the Bajaur Small Industrial Estate. The concerned consultants were instructed to introduce further improvements to the plan.

The briefing also included an assessment of potential for industrial growth in areas within the Malakand Division, especially those linked to the Energy Corridor. Specific sites in the Dir region were discussed for the establishment of future industrial estates.

Mr. Tordher stressed that the goal of these initiatives should be to provide dignified employment opportunities for local populations. He noted that the new industrial zones will play a piv-

otal role in promoting and strengthening local industries.

He further added that the establishment of such estates in remote regions will stimulate regional development and encourage the growth of industries tailored to the unique characteristics and resources of those areas.

Highlighting energy affordability, Mr. Tordher stated that the upcoming Mansehra-2 Industrial Estate, situated near the Jabbori Hydropower Project, a provincial power initiative, will benefit from low-cost electricity. This will enable uninterrupted industrial growth and enhance the competitiveness of local businesses.

Jewelers association delegation meets Governor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Sarafa and Jewelers Association Takht Bhai met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. During the meeting, the delegation briefed the Governor on the issues faced by the Sarafa community, particularly the problem of purchasing stolen gold jewelry, on Wednesday.

The delegation requested the Governor to con-

vene a joint meeting with the police and law departments to address this issue. The Governor approved the request and marked the matter to the relevant departments.

In the next phase, negotiations will be held between the police and law departments in the presence of the Governor's Deputy Secretary to discuss and finalize Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to resolve this issue.

The Sarafa and Jewelers

Association Takht Bhai expressed gratitude to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi for his support and direction to resolve their long-standing issue.

The delegation consisted of key office bearers of the Sarafa and Jewelers Association Takht Bhai, including president Syed Qayyum Sada, Jahangir Sadiq, Muhammad Ilyas, Chairman Niaz Ali, Muhammad Zarif, Sajjad Ahmad, Muhammad Israr, Salman Iqbal and Abad ul Islam.

Chief Secretary chairs review meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, chaired a meeting of the Livestock and Fisheries, Local Government, and Communication and Works (C&W) Departments to discuss the Good Governance Roadmap. The meeting was attended by secretaries and relevant officials.

The Good Governance Roadmap outlines prioritized areas and interventions aimed at streamlining governance in all three departments. For the Livestock and Fisheries Department, key areas of focus include improving animal health, building integrated data systems through digitization of livestock data, livelihood uplift and farmer support, developing commercial value chains for livestock, fisheries development, aquaculture expansion, livestock productivity and breed improvement, and advancing research.

The roadmap also highlights the potential for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects in the Livestock and Fisheries Department, with the PPP unit of the Planning and Development Department set to provide support. The Local Government Department's roadmap includes institutional reforms, modernizing operational processes, establishing audit mechanisms, improving financial management, citizen engagement, performance monitoring, and evaluation.

Additionally, the Local Government Department's roadmap focuses on strengthening and modernizing sanitation infrastructure, ensuring universal access to safe water, comprehensive waste management, enhancing urban landscape, and ensuring functionality and cleanliness of key public facilities. Plans for strengthening the Peshawar Development Authority were also reviewed as part of the governance roadmap.

The C&W Department's interventions include maintaining existing infrastructure, digital oversight for project delivery and resource tracking, infrastructure planning and connectivity design, building climate-resilient infrastructure, and expanding road connectivity.

CM to inaugurate Food Testing Laboratory soon

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru has announced that the province's first-ever state-of-the-art Static Provincial Food Testing Laboratory is nearing completion and will be formally inaugurated by Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the near future.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the progress on the project, the minister said that the laboratory, being established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, represents a significant milestone in the province's efforts to ensure food safety and quality.

The meeting was attended by Director General of

the Food Authority Wasif Saeed, Project Director Dr. Abbas, Director Operations Akhtar Nawaz, Director Technical Dr. Abdul Sattar Shah, and other senior officials.

Officials briefed the minister that the civil works on the laboratory are in their final stages, while the procurement of advanced high-tech testing equipments is also nearing completion. The facility is being developed in line with international standards, specifically those of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Once operational, the laboratory will offer testing services not only to food business operators but also to the general public. It will be capable of analyzing a wide range of food items

including edible oil and ghee, drinking water, flour, biscuits, yogurt, powdered milk, potato chips, snacks, honey, jams, squashes, beverages, salt, black and green tea, milk, meat, and various grains; measuring key nutritional components such as protein, carbohydrates, moisture, and other quality indicators.

The food minister noted that following the successful deployment of 12 mobile food testing laboratories in the province, this static lab marks a new chapter in institutional food safety. "This facility will play a vital role in curbing adulteration and counterfeit food products, ensuring the supply of safe and quality food to the public, and consequently reducing the burden on healthcare facilities," Zahir Shah added.

Relocation of crush plants outside Jamrud decided

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major step to address environmental pollution and public hardships, a decision has been made to relocate all crush plants operating in the Jamrud area of Khyber Tribal District to a suitable location outside populated zones. A high-level meeting chaired by Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud was held to deliberate the issue. The meeting was attended by the Khyber district administration, representatives from the Environmental Protection Department, the Department of Industries,

the Department of Minerals, and crush plant owners.

Concerns were raised during the meeting about the spread of pollution and other public difficulties caused by the 19 crush plants operating in close proximity to residential areas in Jamrud. In the greater public interest, it was unanimously decided to shift all these plants to a secure and suitable location outside the city, where all necessary facilities, including proper drainage, will be provided.

To facilitate the relocation process and determine the new site, a committee

has been formed under the leadership of the Additional Deputy Commissioner General of Khyber. The committee includes representatives from the Department of Industries, Environmental Protection Department, Department of Minerals, and crush plant owners. The committee has been directed to finalize its recommendations within a week and submit them to the Commissioner of Peshawar Division.

Following the approval of the recommendations, practical steps will be taken for the relocation of the plants.

Chief Secretary's directive leads to major financial reconciliations at DGIPRs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The recently established Recovery and Reconciliation section in the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPRs) made record recoveries from Provincial government departments and organization and reconciled the whole record.

The record of the old advertisements spanning over about four decades has also been computerized by extracting data from it and scanning its files.

These efforts enabled the DGIPRs to make record payments to the newspapers and other media outlets clearing

most of their decades old dues.

All this was made possible when the Chief Secretary directed all government departments and organisations to clear their advertisement dues and in case a department or organization lacked funds/budget they should ask the Finance Department for revised/additional budgets/grants.

He had also directed that all provincial government departments, organisations, Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners reconcile their advertisements accounts with the DGIPRs.

In compliance a section of Recovery and

Reconciliation was created in the DGIPR where not only the recoveries and reconciliations were taken up on war footings but, living within their own limited resources, data was extracted from otherwise forgotten decades old over 30 thousand case files having literally gathered a lot of dust.

The scanning of its files is under process so that its record is made secured. Simultaneously, the record of other over 17 thousand files/cases has been also reconciled with different government departments and organisations.

In terms of money the outstanding of advertisement bills worth about Rs.one billion reconciled

and Rs.250 million recoveries made. As the efforts have now started bearing fruit with full swing the DGIPRs is in a position to clear billions of Rupees of outstanding advertisement dues of different media houses.

Meanwhile, all Provincial Government departments/organisations have been asked to avoid the complications created by the lapsing of cheques on the closure of Financial Year, they should ensure the delivery of their cheques from outside Peshawar till June 20 and those local in Peshawar till June 25, so that the same are cleared from the Treasury/National Bank of Pakistan in time.

PHC issues written verdict on PTI's Sheikh Waqas plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a written order in a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Secretary of Information, Sheikh Waqas Akram, seeking details of cases registered against him.

The court has granted

him 28 days of protective bail and disposed of his petition, directing him to approach the relevant courts for legal relief within this period.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Dr. Khurshid Iqbal heard the petition. The court granted Sheikh Waqas Akram protective bail for 28

days. During this period, he can approach the relevant courts to obtain legal relief.

The petitioner's lawyers argued that after the November 24 protests, the government registered cases against PTI leaders, and the petitioner was unaware of the cases registered against him.

The court noted that every citizen has the fundamental right to be informed about the cases registered against them.

The court directed the federal government and relevant parties to provide the petitioner with the details of the cases and restrained them from arresting him in these cases.

Introduction of E-Transfer policy in WWB schools directed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour Fazal Shakoor Khan on Wednesday issued directives to the concerned authorities of the Workers Welfare Board (WWB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to take steps for introduction of an E-Transfer Policy in the WWB schools.

The provincial minister issued further directives that biometric attendance systems be implemented to ensure strict monitoring of the attendance of teachers and other staff members in WWB schools. He warned that strict action, including salary deductions, would be

taken against those who fail to comply with biometric attendance instructions while there will be no compromise in this regard.

These directives were issued by the provincial labour minister during a meeting held in his office regarding various affairs of WWB.

Secretary WWB Muhammad Tufail Khattak, Director Finance Saifullah Zafar, Director Education Muhammad Amjad, and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

Fazal Shakoor Khan said that the main purpose of the e-transfer policy is aimed at addressing the shortage of teaching staff and ensure

the provision of quality education in WWB schools.

The provincial minister was thoroughly briefed on different agendas of the meeting. It was revealed that despite an allocation of one billion rupees from the Workers Welfare Fund Islamabad, not a single penny had been disbursed to the WWB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is also includes liabilities worth Rs. 640 million for scholarships.

The provincial minister directed the concerned officials to correspond with the authorities in Islamabad for immediate release of the allocated funds. He reiterated

ed the government's commitment to resolving the issues faced by the WWB, saying that although several issues have been addressed while others will also be resolved over time. He acknowledged that reforms and improvements in the system require time and consistent effort.

Later, a Khuli Kachehri was held under the chairmanship of the provincial minister, where employees of the WWB shared their concerns and problems. After listening to their issues, the labour minister issued directives to the concerned officers for their immediate redressal on the spot.

KP-RIISP organizes training on environmental and social safeguards



FP Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment and Institutional Support Project (KP-RIISP) organized a two-day capacity building workshop for the implementing partners on the Environmental and Social Safeguards. The workshop was aimed at introducing the risks, impacts, and solutions related to potential environmental and social matters with reference to the implementation of the project activities.

The training also covered other key project aspects including stakeholder engagement, grievance redress, and effective monitoring and evaluation. The two-day workshop brought together key officials from partner line departments

which are directly involved in the implementation of KP-RIISP.

These departments include Planning and Development, Agriculture, Communication and Works, Irrigation, Public Health, Engineering, and Local Government and Rural Development. It was highlighted during the training that the environmental and social safeguard measures remain consistent with the environmental safeguard guidelines, rules, and regulations of the Government of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as in line with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).

The workshop also highlighted key project components which may have adverse environmental and social impacts such as construction

of agriculture, irrigation and roads infrastructure. As the project will be undertaking the construction of district complexes and tehsil offices in all the Merged Districts and the training will help the stakeholders to provide oversight with reference to the environmental and social safeguards of these development initiatives.

The Project Director of KP-RIISP Hamid Naveed stressed upon the importance of Environment and Social Management Plan (ESMP) as it was applied as a master planning tool for the implementation of all the suggested mitigation measures to make the project environmentally and socially sustainable. "Environmentally sound, socially acceptable, and long-term sustainable development is the project

strategic approach", he said.KP-RIISP is an initiative of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa financed by the World Bank. It supports the development of all the districts in the Merged Areas by enhancing access to citizen-centric public services, strengthening facilities for delivering basic services and developing climate-resilient infrastructure by investing in local development priorities. The project has a special emphasis on water supply and sanitation, irrigation development, agricultural productivity, livelihoods improvement, and service delivery centers. The project activities are geared towards multisectoral investments for improved service delivery, institutional development, and emergency flood response.

EOC organizes orientation session on polio eradication

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional Secretary of Health/Coordinator of Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shafiullah Khan has said that since digital media plays a key role in creating awareness

and changing perceptions of the people, we are focusing on engaging digital media influencers across the province to create awareness among the people about the significance of polio vaccination and essential immunization.

Referring to the role of social media in polio eradication,

Shafiullah Khan said that it can contribute effectively towards the national cause of polio eradication by raising awareness through sharing information, facts, and updates about polio, its symptoms as well as highlighting the importance of vaccination.

He expressed these remarks while addressing a one-day orientation session organized by EOC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with Department of Information and Public Relations for key digital media influencers of the province here on Wednesday.



In brief

Return of arms directed F.P. Report

K O H A T : Implementation on the historic Kohat Peace Agreement is actively underway to establish permanent and durable peace in the tribal district of Kurram. As per the Kohat Agreement, almost all bunkers in Kurram have been demolished and in the next phase, the collection of large scale arms has been started. In light of the Jirgas, held with the parties in the Kurram district few days back, the last date for the collection of large scale arms has been set as May 31, 2025. According to the notice issued by the Deputy Commissioner Kurram Ashfaq Ahmed Khan in this regard, the public and all the parties have been asked to return their large arms in the relevant arms centers by the 31st of this month, otherwise, in case of recovery of arms, not only the arms will be confiscated by the government but also action (imprisonment and fine) will be taken under the Arms Act. No excuse will be acceptable in this regard, he warned. Therefore, the public should prove themselves as responsible citizens by depositing the large scale arms within the stipulated period.

Mobile signals in Orakzai F.P. Report

KOHAT: Chairman District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Orakzai Aurangzeb Khan MPA while giving good news to the people of Orakzai said that work is actively underway to restore the mobile signals in the district and very soon the fastest internet facility will be there in every part of the district. He termed this facility a welcome move for the youth, students and businessmen of Orakzai. He gave this good news while presiding over an important meeting held at Kalaya Headquarters in which Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Irfanuddin and other concerned officials participated. The meeting discussed in detail the immediate restoration of mobile 4G signals across the district and access to every village. It was informed that the restoration of mobile signals in all areas of Orakzai is in full swing, formal work has already been started on 2 Towers one each in Ferozkhel Mela and Kalaya and Zong 4G data service will be activated soon. The people of Orakzai have expressed their heartfelt gratitude to MPA Aurangzeb Khan Orakzai and Deputy Commissioner Orakzai, whose personal efforts are fulfilling this long-standing demand of the people, which will usher in a new era of development.

Work on Bhai Kalay bridge F.P. Report

BUNER: The work of widening and rebuilding the narrow and old bridge of the Swat era at Bhai Kalay on the Pir Baba Jowar road has been started with the funds of former advisor and re-elected MPA Riaz Khan in PK 25 Buner on Wednesday. The estimated cost is stated Rs: 125 millions. It should be noted that the funds for this bridge were provided by the former communications advisor to CM during the previous PTI government and the plaque of this bridge was also formally inaugurated. But construction work on it was not started. Khalid Khan Nana, founder of Salarzai Construction Company, said that due to the premature end of the PTI government at that time, work on this bridge could not start and later the land owners near it took stay from court and now that the stay have ended.



D.I.KHAN: Abdul Rauf Khan, District Election Commissioner DIKhan addressing the Voters Awareness Session at Government Technical and Vocational Center (Women), Dera Ismail Khan.

Solarization of Kohat Jail tubewells resumes

F.P. Report

KOHAT: As a part of the ongoing journey of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Human Rights Aftab Alam Advocate from promises to completion, immediate work on solarization of 3 tube wells of the District Jail Kohat has formally been started which will be completed in a short period of time due to the personal interest of the minister.

It may be recalled that the Law Minister had announced the solarization

of the Kohat Jail's Tube-wells purely on the humanitarian basis during his visit to Kohat Jail the other day. With his personal interest, worked on the Solarization was started on emergency basis within 24 hours as per his commitment.

It is worth mentioning here that the Jail Superintendent had pointed out the problem of water shortage for the prisoners due to lack of electricity, on which the Law Minister Aftab Alam, in consultation with MNA Shehryar Afridi and

Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, had issued instructions to solarize the 3 water supply schemes of the jail from his own funds and Alhamdulillah, the water supply schemes of the jail is being solarized in a short time of 24 hours.

The Provincial Minister said that he has solved the water problem in the jail purely on the basis of human rights because the rights of the prisoners are more than the common people. He also assured to do more work for the welfare of the prisoners in view of the human rights.

ANP demands provision of education, health facilities

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Office bearers of Awami National Party (ANP), Landi Kotal chapter demanded of the incumbent provincial government to resolve educational and health problems being faced by the dwellers of the area.

Addressing to a press conference in Distract Press Club, Landi Kotal on Wednesday Awami National Party tehsil Landi Kotal President Zabair Wali, Jabbar Afridi and others said that being status of District Headquarter Hospital, District Health Office had been set up in Jamrud health center that was a step mother behavior towards Landi Kotal hospital.

They maintained that prolonged power off affected efficiency of the hospital and necessary departments like blood bank was suspended due to excessive electricity off.

They also criticized the doctors and other health officials for constantly being absent from their officials' duties and urged the health department to take immediate action against them.

The Awami National Party local leaders also expressed their dissatisfaction over the closing of state-run schools in the area and said that inattentive teachers in the schools put the educational career of thousands of children in doubt.

Criticizing the parliamentarians of the constituency they said that regretfully they posed as silent spectators over the problems of the tribesmen.

The Awami National Party local leaders warned that if the miseries of the tribesmen in Landi Kotal were not addressed then with support of other political parties, they would launch the "Landi Kotal Bachao" movement to safeguard interests of the people.

Years after inauguration

TMC still awaits first batch of students

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A delegation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Standing Committee on Health visited the Timergara Medical College (TMC) on Wednesday to review progress on the long-delayed project and inspect the medical equipment procured for it.

The committee was led by MPA Zar Alam Khan (PK-5) and included MPA Ubaid-ur-Rehman, MPAs Ms. Sobia Shahid and Ms. Asma Alam, Director of Infection Control, KMU Tattayab, Director General Health Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Secretary of Sub-Committee No. 2 on Health Inamullah Khan, and Assistant Secretary Malik Hassan Zaib.

The session was chaired by MPA Zar Alam Khan. Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir and Chairman of the local sub-committee, Muhammad Arif Khan, along with Principal of TMC Prof. Dr. Samiullah, briefed the committee on the project's current status.

The delegation was informed that 414 items — including medical equipment, machinery, and other supplies — had been verified. Technical staff were being trained to operationalize the non-functional machinery in the near future.

Appreciating the efforts of the deputy commissioner and the sub-committee, MPA Zar Alam Khan assured that all Terms of



Reference (ToRs) would be fully implemented and that the committee would present its formal recommendations to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also called for the swift completion of the verification process.

Timergara Medical College, a flagship project of the provincial government with an estimated cost of Rs. 3,026 million, was jointly inaugurated in 2015 by the then Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan. Although renovation work began a year later and medical equipment was procured, academic classes at the college have yet to commence.

During the visit, the committee also questioned former principal Dr. Shaikat Ali regarding the presence and status of equipment and official records.

The committee members toured various sections and

store rooms of the college, inspecting medical supplies, machinery, stock registers, and related documentation.

Later, the delegation visited Timergara Teaching Hospital, where Medical Superintendent Dr. Bakhtzada briefed the committee on available healthcare facilities and pressing issues. The team inspected multiple units, including the incinerator, surgical departments, CT scan facility, and laundry section.

The Standing Committee on Health reiterated its commitment to ensuring that all processes would be completed transparently and on merit. It directed all heads of departments to submit affidavits along with reports confirming the presence and operational status of medical equipment under their charge. The committee's final recommendations will be forwarded to the provincial government for further action.

Gender desk inaugurated to empower women

KHYBER (APP): In a landmark move to promote gender equality and social justice, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inaugurated the first-ever Gender Desk in District Khyber, established at the District Social Welfare Office here.

The initiative is designed to support women and transgender persons in accessing essential services, justice, and social protection in one of Pakistan's most underserved regions.

The inauguration ceremony was led by Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, Zakat and Ushr, and Women Empowerment, who emphasized the govern-

ment's commitment to fostering inclusive development in the merged districts.

Prominent figures present included Syed Nazir Husain Shah, Secretary of the Social Welfare Department KP; Arshad Qayum Berqi, Director for Merged Districts; representatives from UNDP, NCHR, civil society, and other key stakeholders.

The Gender Desk is a key component of the Community Stabilization Project (CSP)-a collaborative initiative between UNDP Pakistan and the Social Welfare Department (Merged Districts) under the Decentralization, Human Rights, and Local Governance Programme (DHL).

The project aims to

build community resilience, enhance service delivery, and provide livelihood training to 200 youth-both men and women-in District Khyber.

"This Gender Desk will serve as a centralized hub for health care, legal aid, counselling, civil documentation, and referrals for women, girls, and other vulnerable groups," said a UNDP official. "It is not just a desk-it's a gateway to dignity, justice, and empowerment."

The initiative also seeks to improve coordination between government departments, academia, religious scholars, and civil society to promote awareness and create an enabling environment for gender equity and human rights.



Action against illegal fuel stations demanded

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The city Mayor Himayatullah Mayar has requested the deputy commissioner Mardan and other officials concerned for taking stern action against illegal Fuel and CNG filling stations and sale points which have been run in different parts of the district, it was learned on Wednesday.

A copy of a letter by the City Mayor Mardan Mr. Himayatullah Mayar to DC and other officials was concerned was available with *The Frontier Post*, stating that 283 filling

stations and more than 300 filling dispensers or Dabba Stations were engaged for selling fuel across Mardan district.

The letter revealed and claimed that only 50 filling stations were registered and having valid documents i.e. Form-K, NOCs from relevant departments while the remaining were illegal and not having any registration or relevant documents. "Similarly, in CNG filling stations, most of the Gas is being supplied to pumps through open carriage containers on roads instead of underground

supply pipelines, which is most dangerous to human lives and requires to be stopped and sealed," the city Mayor feared.

He said that the district administration was only imposing fines during any drive instead of discouraging illegal activities and permanent sealing of the illegal business that had caused expansion of illegal selling of smuggles petrol and diesel openly and selling the low-quality petrol and diesel in plastic and metal water tanks or drums which were of low quality and also not fulfill the safety measures.

Abdul Basit Alvi

GENERAL Syed Asim Munir, now revered as Field Marshal, emerged as a pivotal figure in Pakistan's recent history, his leadership profoundly shaping the nation's trajectory both externally and internally. His ascent to the distinguished rank of Field Marshal, a rare honor bestowed only once before in Pakistan's history, is a testament to his exceptional strategic foresight and courageous command during times of profound national crisis. This expanded account delves into his remarkable role in navigating the complex challenges that defined his tenure.

The crucible of crisis for General Munir's leadership was ignited in May 2025, when escalating tensions culminated in unprovoked Indian missile and drone strikes on Pakistani airbases and cities. In the face of this unprecedented aggression, General Munir's mettle was immediately tested. Even before the retaliatory strikes, he displayed unwavering resolve, publicly affirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity. His powerful statements, often drawing inspiration from the Holy Quran and emphasizing historical instances of smaller forces

triumphing with divine assistance, were strategically designed to bolster domestic morale and send an unequivocal message to the adversary: Pakistan would not be intimidated. This blend of spiritual fortitude and firm declarations from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) meticulously set the stage for Pakistan's robust and decisive response.

Crucially, General Munir's leadership ensured the Pakistani armed forces remained on high alert, poised for immediate and effective retaliation. He maintained meticulous oversight of the entire situation, demonstrating the seamless coordination and rapid decision-making that characterized the highest echelons of his command.

General Asim Munir's most significant contribution during Operation Bunyan Marsoos was his strategic brilliance in formulating and overseeing the retaliatory plan. The operation's resounding success hinged on several critical elements, all bearing the indelible hallmarks of his visionary leadership.

The decision to launch a large-scale, coordinated strike within a remarkably short timeframe after the Indian attacks was a testament to his foresight and the military's exceptional pre-

paredness under his command. This rapid response was far from impulsive; it was a meticulously calibrated plan, designed to inflict proportional damage while meticulously avoiding civilian casualties and averting an all-out war. The swift activation of a pre-established rapid response plan, reportedly crafted precisely for such scenarios, speaks volumes about the proactive strategic thinking that defined his tenure.

Operation Bunyan Marsoos was a complex, multi-domain offensive, integrating Fatah-II ballistic missiles, precision-guided munitions from the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), long-range loitering killer munitions, and precision long-range artillery. This comprehensive approach, encompassing air, missile, and ground-based assets, showcased a profound understanding of modern warfare and the ability to effectively leverage diverse capabilities. General Munir's unwavering oversight ensured seamless coordination between the different branches of the armed forces, a critical factor in the operation's triumphant success.

The targeting of 26 specific sites in northern India, including key air force bases, military logistics hubs, and advanced air

defense systems like the S-400 battery at Adampur, highlighted a laser focus on precision and strategic impact. This was not random bombardment but a calculated effort to degrade India's offensive capabilities and challenge its perceived military superiority. The alleged destruction of the S-400 system, a high-value asset, stands as a direct reflection of superior intelligence and targeting under General Munir's decisive direction.

The reported comprehensive and effective cyber operations conducted to temporarily cripple and degrade critical Indian infrastructure and services signaled a forward-thinking approach to warfare. This seamless integration of cyber capabilities into conventional military operations showcased General Munir's deep understanding of the evolving landscape of modern conflict and Pakistan's advanced preparedness in this crucial domain.

Beyond physical destruction, General Munir's strategy aimed at delivering a potent deterrent message. The symbolic hovering of Pakistani armed drones over major Indian cities, including New Delhi, from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to Gujarat, was a powerful psychological gambit. It undeniably show-

cased Pakistan's reach and the potential for greater escalation, compelling India to seriously consider the profound costs of further aggression.

Even as the operation unfolded, General Munir played a crucial role in managing the crisis and facilitating de-escalation. While steadfastly asserting Pakistan's right to self-defense, his sagacious leadership contributed to the eventual agreement for a ceasefire. The fact that the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries made their first direct contact, leading to the cessation of hostilities, indicated that Pakistan's military, under his command, was ready to engage in diplomatic channels once its military objectives were achieved and a strong message was sent.

The immediate and profound recognition of General Asim Munir's pivotal role in Operation Bunyan Marsoos came with his unprecedented promotion to the rank of Field Marshal. This momentous decision, approved by the federal cabinet, unequivocally acknowledged his "exemplary leadership," "strategic acumen," and "courageous leadership" in ensuring national security and decisively defeating

enemy forces. It was a rare honor, only the second time in Pakistan's history that this five-star rank had been awarded, underscoring the truly exceptional nature of his contribution to the nation's defense.

General Munir's leadership during Operation Bunyan Marsoos solidified his image as a resolute and eminently capable military commander. The operation, widely regarded by many in Pakistan as a tactical and psychological triumph, not only rebalanced the strategic equation but also significantly boosted the domestic image and morale of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

His unwavering emphasis on preparedness, precision, and multi-domain warfare has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on Pakistan's military doctrine, ensuring that the critical lessons learned from Bunyan Marsoos will continue to shape its defense strategy for years to come.

While General Asim Munir's leadership in Operation Bunyan Marsoos garnered significant international attention for its external implications, his tenure as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) has been equally defined by his deep and often direct engagement with Pakistan's complex and frequently tumultuous inter-

national challenges. From pervasive political instability and a struggling economy to the relentless scourge of resurgent terrorism and deep-seated societal divisions, General Munir has played a significant role in attempting to steer the nation through a polycrisis.

General Asim Munir's role in Pakistan's internal issues is undeniably multifaceted and profoundly impactful. He has approached a nation grappling with a myriad of crises with a firm, security-first approach, relentlessly striving to stabilize the economy, decisively counter terrorism, and assert the military's crucial role in national governance. While lauded by the people of Pakistan for instilling a much-needed sense of direction and stability during turbulent times, he has, in the truest sense, won the hearts of the people through his dedication and resolve. His tenure will undoubtedly be etched as a significant chapter in Pakistan's ongoing struggle to balance national security with democratic development and economic prosperity.

The decision to elevate him to the prestigious position of Field Marshal is warmly welcomed by the populace, who wholeheartedly believe that this decision will serve as a cornerstone for the continued peace and prosperity of Pakistan.



Under attack by Trump, South Africa’s Ramaphosa responds with trade deal offer

CAPE TOWN (Reuters): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa heads to the White House on Wednesday on a delicate mission to persuade US President Donald Trump to make deals with his country rather than scold and punish it as he has done since the start of his second term.

Attacking South Africa’s land reform law aimed at redressing the injustices of apartheid and its genocide court case against Israel, Trump has cancelled aid to the country, expelled its ambassador and offered refuge to white minority Afrikaners based on racial discrimination claims Pretoria says are unfounded.

“Whether we like it or not, we are joined at the hip and we need to be talking to them,” Ramaphosa said on South African state television before flying to Washington to meet Trump.

The stakes are high for South Africa. The United States is its second-biggest trading partner after China, and the aid cut has already resulted in a drop in testing for HIV patients.

Ramaphosa will offer Trump a broad trade deal, said a spokesperson for the trade ministry, declining to give details.

For his part, Trump is likely to demand that US companies are exempted from “racial requirements”, a White House official said.

South Africa has laws to compel businesses to hire and promote Black South Africans, including a requirement for large companies in some sectors, such as mining and telecommunications, to have a 30% equity stake held by disadvantaged groups.

Ramaphosa is unlikely to agree to weaken such rules, which are core to his government’s aspiration to restore racial justice after centuries of colonialism and apartheid.

“There’s political problems here that lie at the heart of the breakdown in the relationship,” said Joshua Meservey, senior fellow at conservative US think tank the Hudson Institute, cautioning that deal-making may not be enough to overcome them.

Nevertheless, Ramaphosa plans to discuss opportunities for Tesla and Starlink, companies owned by Trump’s ally Elon Musk, who was born and raised in South Africa and has accused Ramaphosa of pursuing anti-white policies, which he rejects.

Discussions could include favourable tariffs for Tesla’s imports into South Africa in return for building electric vehicle charging stations, and licensing for Starlink, Ramaphosa’s spokesperson said.

Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen, who is travelling with Ramaphosa, said he would work to secure South African farmers’ duty-free access to the US market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and to expand access.

AGOA is at risk from Trump’s tariff regime, which is currently suspended but would hit South Africa with a 30% duty if enacted.

“I believe that with enough drive and determination we can expand access and improve relations and this means greater opportunities for South African farmers and farmworkers,” Steenhuisen told Reuters by text message from Washington.

Trump has accused South Africa of seizing land from white farmers and of fuelling disproportionate violence against white landowners with “hateful rhetoric and government actions”.

Pretoria says these claims are inaccurate and “fail to recognise South Africa’s profound and painful history of colonialism and apartheid”.

Crime statistics show no evidence that white people are disproportionately targeted. A land reform law allows judicial challenges to any expropriation orders, which can only be issued in the public interest. No expropriation has taken place.

White people, who make up about 7% of South Africa’s population, are still richer than the Black majority by every economic measure and still own three-quarters of the country’s freehold farmland.

Ramaphosa is an experienced negotiator, having headed the African National Congress’s team during the 1990s talks that led to apartheid’s peaceful end. He also built a successful investment vehicle before becoming president in 2018, and may be helped in his wooing of Trump by rich and powerful allies.

South African media reported that billionaire luxury goods tycoon Johann Rupert, the richest person in South Africa, and golfer Ernie Els have helped to bring about the meeting between Trump and Ramaphosa. Both have played golf with Trump.

Rupert, founder of the Richemont group which owns brands such as Cartier and Chloe, was quoted by News24 as saying he was very concerned about the potential loss of AGOA and its impact on jobs in his homeland.



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, member of CPC Political Bureau and Foreign Minister of the People’s Republic of China, Wang Yi and Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi held an informal trilateral meeting

US singer Chris Brown granted \$6.7 million bail for world tour



LONDON (Reuters): U.S. singer Chris Brown was granted bail by a London court on Wednesday over a charge of serious assault after promising to pay a 5 million-pound (\$6.7 million) security fee, clearing the way for his world tour to begin next month.

Brown has been charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm in what prosecutors said was an “unprovoked attack” on music producer Abraham Diaw with a tequila bottle in a London nightclub in 2023.

The 36-year-old has not yet been asked to enter a plea to the charge. He was not present at Southwark Crown Court when Judge Tony Baumgartner granted him bail.

The R&B star, a two-time Grammy Award winner known for hits such as “Loyal”, “Run It” and “Under the Influence”, is set to kick off his “Breezy Bowl XX” tour on June 8 in the Netherlands.

Brown was arrested at a hotel in Manchester, northern England last week after returning to Britain for the first time since the incident two years ago.

He was initially refused bail on Friday, but was granted bail on Wednesday on the condition he pay 4 million pounds with a further 1 million pounds due in seven days.

Brown was also required to surrender his passport, except for when he is travelling for his tour.

He will next appear at London’s Southwark Crown Court on June 20.

Mexico will elect new judges

MEXICO CITY (AP): What do an activist searching for missing Mexicans, an attorney who once represented a drug lord and a university professor trying out TikTok have in common?

They are all campaigning for positions in Mexico’s first judicial election on June 1.

More than 2,600 contenders are vying for 881 positions from Mexico’s Supreme Court down to district courts across the country. In 2027, another election is planned to elect 800 more judicial positions.

Those on the June 1 ballots won a lottery after being screened by committees made up of people from the three branches of government. In order to qualify, they had to have a law degree, at least five years of professional practice, write an essay and collect letters of recommendation from friends and colleagues.

Foreign governments, including the United States, and civil society organizations in Mexico criticized the change, warning that it would lead to a politicization of the judiciary and weaken its independence.

Electing judges was former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s way to root out corruption. Make them accountable to the people, he said. The contentious reform’s passage was among the last major acts of his presidency last September.

Here are some of the candidates:

Delia Quiroa
Age: 41

What’s she known for? She is among the hundreds of Mexicans searching for a missing relative, in her case a brother who disappeared in 2014.

Candidate for: District judge in the western state of Sinaloa.

Quiroa’s experience has been different to most other candidates’ in that she’s more accustomed to being on the victims’ side.

After her brother disappeared in the northern border state of Tamaulipas, Quiroa began searching and eventually founded a collective called “March 10” for the day he vanished.

She quickly realized there was little legal help available to help searchers like herself, so she left her engineering career and began to study law while continuing her search.

Quiroa gained notoriety a couple years ago when she proposed criminal groups consider a peace treaty to make it safer to search for the missing and she began selling a “Searcher Barbie” to raise money for her group’s activities.

Late last year, she decided to return to her native Sinaloa state to compete to be a judge.

Quiroa knows the risks of being a judge in the violent state, home to a powerful cartel of the same name, but she said that there need to be more judges who empathize with those searching for missing loved ones.

“If I become a judge, I’m not going to send legal documents and wait for authorities to answer when they feel like it,” Quiroa said. “I’m going to go out and look for the missing people.”

Aristides Guerrero
Age: 40

Rodrigo

What’s he known for? He went viral as “Justice Pork Rinds.”

Candidate for: Supreme Court.

Until the campaign started, Guerrero wasn’t well-known outside of Mexico’s National Autonomous University, where he has taught classes for more than a decade. He had also led Mexico City’s public records agency and worked at the capital’s electoral court.

But it was a homemade TikTok video that took off and launched Guerrero’s campaign. In it, a student hands him a platter of a typical pork rind dish. Playing on the turn of phrase, he says he’s “more prepared than a pork rind” to be a Supreme Court justice, before rolling into his qualifications.

Some grumps accused him of turning the race into a circus, but Guerrero said that his attempt at humor was far less harmful than having a corrupt justice on the highest court.

“You have to be colloquial sometimes in your use of language,” he said, accepting that he has tried to run a “disruptive” campaign.

If elected, Guerrero said that he would push to have the court hold hearings around Mexico to have more contact with people.

Silvia Delgado García
Age: 51

What’s she known for? She represented drug kingpin Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán in 2016.

Candidate for: Criminal court judge in northern state of Chihuahua.

Nine years ago, Silvia Delgado García was a member of Sinaloa cartel leader Guzmán’s legal team when he was temporarily held in a prison in Ciudad Juárez before being extradited to the United States.

He was eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to life in prison in the U.S.

She’s still marked by the case.

Some critics of electing judges, and a human rights litigation group called Defensorxs, have labeled Delgado García “high risk,” because “she defends alleged drug traffickers.”

The group has also identified 17 other candidates that way for being prosecuted, being members of investigated organizations, for alleged human rights violations and deals with criminal groups.

“Everyone has a right to an effective defense,” Delgado García said about her decision to represent Guzmán.

She notes that she only helped at one hearing where the power went out, and her job was to visit him in the Ciudad Juárez prison where he was being held.

“If they give me a client of that magnitude, in terms of resume that’s going to help me,” she said.

As a candidate, she highlights that she has been a litigator for 18 years and has a passion for criminal law.

“I am a citizen who believes in the law, and I am extremely prepared to carry out the job and I aim to be impartial in the decisions I hand down.”

Mauricio Tapia Maltos
Age: 30

What’s he known for? He’s a young lawyer at the Supreme Court who spends his free time campaigning in Mexico City’s central square.

Pope Leo XIV calls for aid to reach Gaza and an end to hostilities

VATICAN CITY (AP): Pope Leo XIV called Wednesday for humanitarian aid to reach the Gaza Strip and for an end to the “heartbreaking” toll on its people, as he presided over his first general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

The Vatican said that around 40,000 people were on hand for the audience, which came just days after an estimated 200,000 people attended the inaugural Mass on Sunday for history’s first American pope.

Leo, the former Cardinal Robert Prevost of Chicago, began the audience with a tour through the piazza in the popemobile and stopped to bless several babies. In addressing specific greetings to different groups of pilgrims, Leo spoke in his native English, his fluent Spanish as well as the traditional Italian of the papacy.

“I renew my heartfelt appeal to allow the entrance of dignified humanitarian aid to Gaza and to put an end to the hostilities whose heartbreaking price is being paid by children, the elderly and sick people,” he said.



The general audience on Wednesdays is a weekly appointment that popes have kept for decades to allow ordinary faithful to have a face-to-face encounter with the pontiff. It features the pope delivering a brief reflection on a theme or Scripture passage, with summaries provided by others in different languages and the pope directing specific messages to particular faith groups.

The encounter, which lasts more than an hour, usually ends with a brief topical appeal by the pope about a current issue or upcoming event. Leo began it with his now-frequent mantra “Peace be with you.” To that end, Leo on Tuesday reaffirmed the Vatican’s willingness to host the next round of ceasefire talks between Russia and Ukraine during a phone call with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, the Italian leader’s office said.

Meloni made the call after speaking with U.S. President Donald Trump and other European leaders, who asked her to verify the Holy See’s offer.

“Finding in the Holy Father the confirmation of the willingness to welcome the next talks between the parties, the premier expressed profound gratitude for Pope Leo XIV’s willingness and his incessant commitment in favor of peace,” Meloni’s office said in a statement late Tuesday.

Hacker who breached communications app used by Trump aide stole data from across US government

WASHINGTON (Reuters): A hacker who breached the communications service used by former Trump national security adviser Mike Waltz earlier this month intercepted messages from a broader swathe of American officials than has previously been reported, according to a Reuters review, potentially raising the stakes of a breach that has already drawn questions about data security in the Trump administration.

Reuters identified more than 60 unique government users of the messaging platform TeleMessage in a cache of leaked data, opens new tab provided by Distributed Denial of Secrets, a U.S. nonprofit whose stated mission is to archive hacked and leaked documents in the public interest. The trove included material from disaster responders, customs officials, several U.S. diplomatic staffers, at least one White House staffer and members of the Secret Service. The messages reviewed by Reuters covered a roughly day-long period of time ending on May 4, and many of them were fragmentary.

Once little known outside government and finance circles, TeleMessage drew media attention after an April 30 Reuters photograph showed Waltz checking TeleMessage’s version of the privacy-focused app Signal during a cabinet meeting.

While Reuters could not verify the entire contents of the TeleMessage trove, in more than half a dozen cases the news agency was able to establish that the phone numbers in the leaked data were correctly attributed to their owners. One of the intercepted texts’ recipients - an applicant for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency - confirmed to Reuters that the leaked message was authentic; a financial services firm whose messages were similarly intercepted also confirmed their authenticity.

Based on its limited review, Reuters uncovered nothing that seemed clearly sensitive and did not uncover chats by Waltz or other cabinet officials. Some chats did seem to bear on the travel plans of senior government officials. One Signal group, “POTUS | ROME-VATICAN | PRESS GC,” appeared to pertain to the logistics of an event at the Vatican. Another appeared to discuss U.S. officials’ trip to Jordan.

Reuters reached out to all the individuals it could identify seeking comment; some confirmed their identities but most didn’t respond or referred questions to their respective agencies.

Reuters could not ascertain how TeleMessage had been used by each agency. The service - which takes versions of popular apps and allows their messages to be archived in line with

government rules - has been suspended since May 5, when it went offline “out of an abundance of caution.” TeleMessage’s owner, the Portland, Oregon-based digital communications firm Smarsh, did not respond to requests for comments about the leaked data.

The White House said in a statement that it was “aware of the cyber security incident at Smarsh” but didn’t offer comment on its use of the platform. The State Department didn’t respond to emails. The Department of Homeland Security, the parent agency for FEMA, CISA, the Secret Service, and Customs and Border Protection, similarly did not respond to messages.

FEMA said in an email that had “no evidence” that its information had been compromised. It didn’t respond when sent copies of internal FEMA messages. A CBP spokesperson repeated a past statement noting that it had disabled TeleMessage and was investigating the breach.

METADATA RISK

Federal contracting data shows that State and DHS have had contracts with TeleMessage in recent years, as has the Centers for Disease Control. A CDC spokesperson told Reuters in an email Monday that the agency piloted the software in 2024 to assess its potential for records management requirements “but found it did not fit our needs.” The status of the other contracts wasn’t clear. A week after that hack, the U.S. cyber defense agency CISA recommended that users “discontinue use of the product” barring any mitigating instructions about how to use the app from Smarsh.

Jake Williams, a former National Security Agency cyber specialist, said that, even if the intercepted text messages were innocuous, the wealth of metadata - the who and when of the leaked conversations and chat groups - posed a counterintelligence risk.

“Even if you don’t have the content, that is a top-tier intelligence access,” said Williams, now vice president of research and

development at cybersecurity firm Hunter Strategy.

Waltz’s prior use of Signal created a public furor when he accidentally added a prominent journalist to a Signal chat where he and other Trump cabinet officials were discussing air raids on Yemen in real time. Soon after, Waltz was ousted from his job, although not from the administration: Trump said he was nominating Waltz to be the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

The circumstances surrounding Waltz’s use of TeleMessage haven’t been publicly disclosed and neither he nor the White House has responded to questions about the matter.

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: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

Email: 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

WHO Assembly okays pandemic agreement

There have been many questions about how well or how badly the World Health Organisation (WHO) had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 even as it spread like wildfire from China's Wuhan first to Italy and Iran, and then spread to other countries in Europe and from there to the United States and other countries in North and South America.

While the economically advanced countries and the big global pharmaceutical companies located in these countries were able to get a breakthrough Covid vaccine, and speedily made available to people at large, most of the poor countries were left totally vulnerable and without the financial means to access the vaccines. There was also the issue that the governments of advanced economies refused to share the vaccines until their own needs were met. So, the big pharma firms could not see their vaccine where they wanted to.

The WHO had however tried to organise relief, and countries like India, UAE and others tried to share the vaccines. Learning from the difficulties it had faced as a world organisation and responsible to the people of all countries, especially the poorer ones in places like Africa, during a global medical emergency of the Covid kind, WHO had been deliberating on the issue of how to help the most vulnerable who are not in a position to access the medicines and the finances to cope with the disaster.

So, the WHO has come up with a plan to enable cooperation among member-countries and the big pharma companies. It has been called the Pandemic Agreement and the WHO Assembly had passed the agreement on Monday. It starts with the caveat that the agreement will not in any way be imposed on a country where the national laws will prevail. This is to acknowledge the principle of national sovereignty of each of the member-countries.

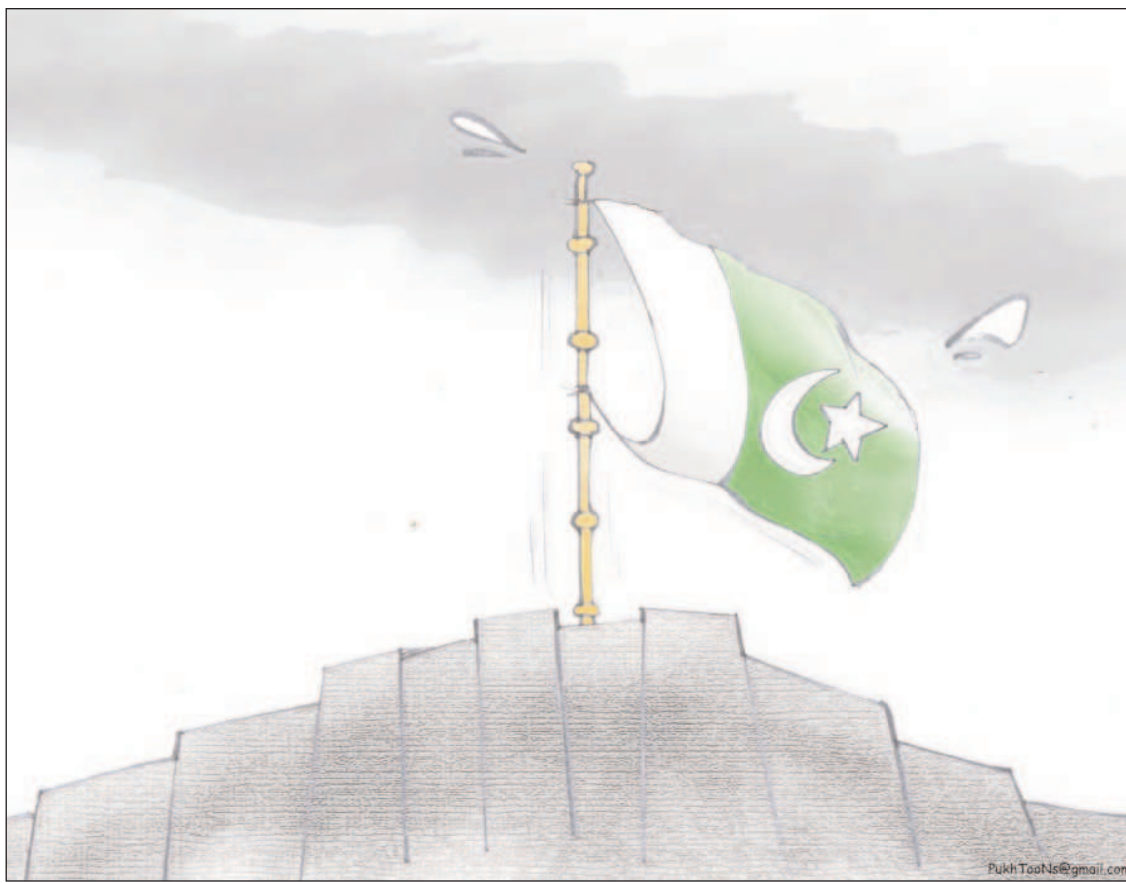
Dr. Teodora Herbosa, Secretary of the Philippines Department of Health and present president of the WHO Assembly, said, "Now that the Agreement has been brought to life, we must all act with the same urgency to implement its critical elements, including systems to ensure equitable access to life-saving pandemic-related health products." The Agreement lays stress on ways and means to closer global cooperation in the wake of a pandemic in the future. Herbosa says that relevant lessons from Covid-19 have been drawn in drawing up plans for a future emergency.

The Agreement as it stands now is incomplete. The annex, called the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing System (PABS), needs to be negotiated by the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG), and it would need to be passed in the WHO Assembly next year. The Agreement with the PABS annex will then need to be ratified by each of the 138 countries. The member-countries have asked the IGWG to set up a Coordination Financial Mechanism for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and the Global Supply Chain and Logistics Network (GSCL) which will help bring down the barriers and facilitate access to pandemic-related life-saving drugs.

The point of cheer is that all members of WHO had agreed the need to stand with each other, cooperate with each other at the time of a global emergency like the Covid. The IGWG now has to work out the mechanisms of making the agreement, which includes PABS. During Covid, WHO was only able to rustle up help in an ad hoc fashion, and it had to depend on the generosity of the member-countries. The Pandemic Agreement formally binds all the member-countries to come to the aid of WHO, which will in turn see to it that help reaches the poor and vulnerable countries.

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.



Israel belongs in Eurovision

Somdeep Sen

Just when you thought Eurovision had reached peak absurdity — with its glitter-drenched clichés, outlandish lyrics, and performances that make your local karaoke night look refined — it sank even lower in 2025. This year, Israel not only participated amid its ongoing assault on Gaza and international law, it nearly won.

In the lead-up to the contest, activists across Europe called for Israel's exclusion. Seventy-two former Eurovision contestants signed an open letter demanding that Israel — and its national broadcaster, KAN — be banned. Protests, petitions, and campaigns swept across the continent, urging the contest to uphold its supposed values of "European unity and culture" rather than spotlight a state accused of systematically starving and bombing a captive population of two million.

But Eurovision did not listen.

Instead, it handed the stage to 24-year-old Yuval Raphael — a survivor of Hamas's October 7 attack on the Nova Music Festival — who won the public televote in most countries and placed second overall, edged out only because, unlike the public, most professional juries preferred Austria's entry.

Understandably, Israel's surprising near-victory triggered a wave of backlash. With populations that have been most vocal in their criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza — such as Ireland — supposedly giving the highest marks to Raphael, widespread accusations of vote-rigging emerged. National broadcasters in Spain and Belgium filed formal complaints with the European Broadcasting Union, demanding an investigation into potential manipulation of the televoting system. Meanwhile, The Intercept's audio analysis revealed that Eurovision organisers had muted audience booing and chants of "Free Palestine" during Raphael's live performance.

Europe is also divided on whether it would honor the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Spain indicated they would comply. The United Kingdom, as usual, hedged, saying only that it would "comply with legal obligations under domestic and international law".

Meanwhile, Hungary, under Prime Minister Viktor Orban, flatly refused to enforce the warrant. And among Europe's largest players —

In the aftermath of this year's contest, the calls for Israel's exclusion from Eurovision are louder than ever before. Clearly, for many across Europe who love Eurovision — whether for its camp, spectacle, or nostalgic charm — but who also care about international law and Palestinian lives, Israel's continued inclusion is a moral failure. And yet, I believe Israel belongs in Eurovision and should stay in the competition going forward. Here's why.

For one thing, Israel's continued participation would reflect the reality of European policy. Despite growing public outrage, many European leaders have been unwavering in their support for Israel throughout its devastating campaign in Gaza. While countries like Spain and the Republic of Ireland have called for a reassessment of the European Union's relationship with Israel, for most of Europe, it's been business as usual.

In February 2025, despite mounting pressure from human rights groups, European foreign ministers met with their Israeli counterpart and insisted that "political and economic ties remain strong". A few months later, seven EU countries issued a joint statement calling for an end to what they described as a "man-made humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza. But without action, these words rang hollow.

Europe is also divided on whether it would honor the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Spain indicated they would comply. The United Kingdom, as usual, hedged, saying only that it would "comply with legal obligations under domestic and international law".

Meanwhile, Hungary, under Prime Minister Viktor Orban, flatly refused to enforce the warrant. And among Europe's largest players —

France, Germany, and Italy — the response has ranged from evasive to outright dismissive. France claimed Netanyahu enjoys immunity since Israel isn't an ICC member; Italy said arresting him would be "unfeasible"; and Germany's newly elected Chancellor Friedrich Merz even vowed to find "ways and means" for Netanyahu to visit.

Given how European leaders have shown far more enthusiasm for cracking down on Palestine solidarity activists than holding Israel accountable, it feels only fitting that Israel continues to sing and dance on the ruins of Palestinian lives — hand in hand with its European friends.

But this alliance isn't just political. Those who are promoting it suggest it's also cultural, and even "civilisational".

Many Western intellectuals have long cast Israel as an outpost of European values in a supposedly savage region. After October 7, this narrative was renewed with fresh urgency. French public intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy, while insisting he is a "militant defender of human rights", framed Israel — apartheid and all — as a moral beacon when compared to the usual "others": Russians, Turks, Chinese, Persians, and Arabs. Their imperial ambitions, he argued, pose a far greater threat to "civilisation" than Israel's "policy of colonising the West Bank". He even praised Israel's "moral fortitude" and supposed concern for civilian life in Gaza — words that have not aged well after 19 months of pure carnage.

American commentator Josh Hammer's book, *Israel and Civilization: The Fate of the Jewish Nation and the Destiny of the West*, is even more explicit. For him, Israel is the West's "agent" in a region plagued by violence and Islamic "terrorism". Those who support Palestinian rights are, in his words, "anti-American, anti-

Western jackals". UK commentator Douglas Murray echoes the same civilisational framing in the book *On Democracies and Death Cults: Israel and the Future of Civilization*, calling Israel a bulwark of good in a world of evil.

Israeli leaders have adopted this language, too. Netanyahu declared shortly after October 7 that "Israel is fighting the enemies of civilisation itself", urging the West to show "moral clarity". According to this world view, Israel doesn't just defend itself — it defends the entire Western civilisation.

All this may sound far removed from a song contest. But Eurovision has always been more than sequins and key changes. It's a projection of "Europeanness" — and "Europe," as a concept, has always been political. It's built on a colonial legacy that imagined Europe as enlightened, orderly, and rational — defined in opposition to the supposedly backward, emotional, and irrational non-European "other".

This legacy justified colonial conquests and the violent suppression of anti-colonial uprisings. Massacres were cast as the price of restoring order; ethnic cleansing, a civilizing mission. Today, that same narrative lives on in how the West frames Israel — as a beleaguered democracy standing bravely against barbarism.

So when people call for Israel to be banned from Eurovision over this year's vote-rigging allegations, I can't help but note the irony: that its genocidal campaign in Gaza didn't cross a red line for Europe — but cheating in a song contest just might.

If Eurovision were to expel Israel now, it would be the harshest penalty the continent has ever imposed on the nation — and it would be not for mass killing, but for meddling with pop music.

And so, yes — I believe Israel should stay in Eurovision.

After all, Europe and Israel deserve each other.

European elections manifest more division, less unity

Mohamed Chebaro

One must admit that Europe today is increasingly gripped by two narratives. One is clearly in favor of the West, Brussels, democracy and the rule of law, and is anti-Russia. The other is skeptical of the ruling Western elite, perceiving its style of democracy and politics as "corrupt," while having an inflated sense of patriotism. It prioritizes a conservative, us-versus-them approach, is anti-EU, anti-war in Ukraine and pro-Russian appeasement.

This clash of narratives — in addition to debates on immigration — has dominated the political space in Europe for the past decade at least, allowing the rising forces of ultranationalist, far-right firebrands to capture an oversized chunk of electoral support. These forces are modeled on the "Take Back Control" movement in the UK, "Make America Great Again" in the US, Hungary's Viktor Orban and a so-called struggle for Christianity and sovereignty within the EU.

This is a result of increasingly large parts of populations everywhere feeling the crunch due to economic stagnation, the rising cost of living and shrinking state services. Meanwhile, trust in traditional politics and state institutions is diminishing, fueled by a toxic digital realm that is pumping out a sense of despair and normalizing chaos in great swathes of the Western democratic world.

Despite all this, Europe can this week breathe easy, or at least easier, after a series of elections over the weekend. Romanian voters kept the ultra-right at bay. In Portugal, the defeat of anti-EU populists was not so clear, with Lisbon now bracing for another minority government coalition after a third election in three years. Poland, another country that is critical for EU unity and the bloc's support for Ukraine in its war against Russia, will have to wait until June 1 for a runoff election amid a very tight race for the presidency between center-right and ultra-right candidates.

But the rise of the far right continues to pose a clear and present danger for European democracies, sowing greater division and less unity. Short of actively opposing their divisive narrative through the mobilization of middle-ground, tolerant voices in society and politics, the still-marginal but highly vocal populists could, with time, become a potent force. They will continue to target disillusioned voters, even though their record when they have been in government has been poor. They have consistently failed to put more money in the pockets of those who are struggling or to find durable solutions to fixing the role of the state and meeting the rising welfare bill amid diminishing growth and tax returns.

In the Romanian presidential election, a turnout of nearly 65 percent, the highest for a quarter of a century, appears to have prevented a lurch toward the ultra-right and all that would have meant for the

country's strategic alignment and economic prospects, as well as EU unity.

New President-elect Nicusor Dan did not mince his words in the run-up to Sunday's second round of voting, claiming that it was a battle between "a pro-Western and an anti-Western Romania." He managed to beat ultranationalist George Simion by a convincing margin in the election, which was a rerun after last year's first round was annulled due to alleged Russian meddling. Dan is an example of how centrist forces can win against all odds. A modest but driven math prodigy, Dan made a name for himself fighting corrupt property developers in Bucharest before becoming the capital's crusading mayor. Now he can become a savior for his country if he succeeds in keeping it firmly on its pro-European track.

EU leaders rushed to congratulate Dan, claiming that his victory was a triumph for a "strong Europe" and the EU's continued support of Ukraine, as Bucharest plays an important logistical role in Kyiv's war against Russia. It was also a strong signal of the country's firm attachment to the Western mainstream, democracy, the rule of law and the EU, as French president Emmanuel Macron said.

Others, like the EU's so-called disrupters-in-chief Orban and Slovakia's Robert Fico, were deprived of another ally to oppose the continued EU military aid to Ukraine, common energy policy, enlargement and the bloc's budget, which is geared toward long-awaited independence in defense.

Dissatisfaction with the Romanian election result was felt even more poignantly by the Kremlin, which called the election "strange," alluding to Western meddling in the annulment of the initial election and banning of leading candidate Calin Georgescu. Russia has previously denied any role in Georgescu's campaign. He was disqualified after the authorities found evidence of Russian influence and funding on his behalf.

Dan, like many leaders in Europe, faces a daunting array of challenges. If he is to succeed, the liberal with a conservative touch — a social activist-turned-politician — needs to bank on his reputation as a calm, analytical, methodical and, above all, modest person with an untarnished reputation to reduce Romania's budget's deficit, while also repairing the damage done to a market spooked by a possible win for the far right.

The Romanian president has a semi-executive role with considerable power over foreign policy, national security, defense and judicial appointments. The new president need not ruffle the feathers of a volatile electorate, with the toxic pro-Russian narrative having already undermined the political elite.

He will have to tread carefully in his pro-EU, pro-NATO approach, while also trying not to irritate the US president.

Scorching heat in Pakistan: A public health emergency

Professor Khalid Mahmood

This summer, large parts of Pakistan, particularly South Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan, are once again reeling under an intense and prolonged heatwave. With temperatures soaring above 45°C in many areas, the blazing heat is not merely an inconvenience — it is a growing public health emergency that threatens the lives and well-being of millions, especially the poor and vulnerable.

For people living in small homes with tin roofs, with limited or no access to electricity, clean drinking water, or cooling systems, the heat can be unbearable and troublesome. Those who work outdoors — such as laborers, cart vendors, rickshaw drivers, and farmers — are at serious risk, as are children, elderly people, and patients with chronic illnesses. In such conditions, heat-related illnesses become common and potentially life-threatening.

One of the most immediate dangers is heat exhaustion, which can present with heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, and nausea. If ignored, this can progress

to heat stroke — a medical emergency in which the body's temperature regulating system fails and body loses its ability to control temperature, leading to high fever, confusion, unconsciousness, and even death as brain is cooked up in extreme body temperatures of more than 104 degree F. Dehydration is another serious issue. When the body loses more fluid than it takes in, blood pressure can drop, kidneys can suffer, and vital organs begin to shut down. This is especially dangerous in hot climates like ours, where water loss is rapid and often unnoticed until serious symptoms develop.

Extreme heat also worsens chronic illnesses. Patients with high blood pressure or heart disease may experience sudden increases in blood pressure or chest discomfort. The elderly are at a particularly high risk of strokes, as the heat concentrates the blood and puts additional stress on the cardiovascular system increasing the chances of stroke and heart attacks. For diabetic patients, fluctuations in

sugar levels are more likely in hot weather, particularly if appetite is reduced or if meals are missed. Kidney patients, already vulnerable to dehydration, can develop acute renal injury in a matter of days if fluid intake is not maintained.

Another growing concern is the rise in kidney stone formation during hot weather. When people do not drink enough water, the urine becomes concentrated, allowing salts and minerals to form stones. This can lead to painful episodes and even infections or obstruction of the urinary tract. Hot weather is a major precipitating factor for high incidence of renal stones in tropics.

Heatwaves also bring a surge in infectious diseases. As water becomes scarce and sanitation is compromised, cases of viral and bacterial diarrheas increase, especially among children. Poor storage of food, lack of refrigeration, and unsafe water sources all contribute to the problem. At the same time, mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and

dengue become more common as stagnant water accumulates in open containers, drains, and around homes. Insects and snake bites increase in numbers as these come out in large due to heat.

In recent years, another subtle but serious issue has emerged — the misuse of vitamin supplements, especially Vitamin D. Encouraged by aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies, many people now take high doses of Vitamin D without medical supervision. This trend has led to an increase in cases of hypervitaminosis D — a condition that causes nausea, vomiting, increased thirst, confusion, and in some cases, kidney damage due to elevated calcium levels in the blood and increased stone formation. During summer, when people are already dehydrated, the risk of complications from unmonitored supplement use becomes even more serious.

Despite these challenges, there are practical and low-cost steps that can

help prevent many of these heat-related health issues, even in poor or rural settings. Staying hydrated is the most important step — drinking clean water frequently, even before feeling thirsty, can prevent dehydration and kidney complications. Avoiding tea, soft drinks, or caffeinated beverages in excess is also important. People should try to stay indoors during the hottest part of the day, especially between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., and if they must go out, they should cover their heads and wear loose, light-colored clothing. Simple methods such as using wet cloths on the head and body, taking frequent baths, or sitting in shaded, well-ventilated areas can help regulate body temperature.

Communities can also support one another. Temporary "cooling corners" in mosques, local shops, or roadside tents with water and fans can provide much-needed relief for people on the move. Local leaders and mosque loudspeakers can play a role in spreading awareness and issuing warnings dur-

ing peak heat periods. It is also vital for people to recognize the signs of heat stroke and seek immediate medical help if someone faints, becomes confused, or develops a very high body temperature.

In conclusion, this heatwave is not just a weather event. It is a public health crisis that demands awareness, preparedness, and collective responsibility. By educating ourselves and those around us, by taking simple but effective preventive measures, and by demanding better support from health authorities and local governments, we can save lives.

The current situation calls not only for individual action but also for policy-level changes — including better urban planning, improved access to clean water and electricity, and strict regulation of pharmaceutical marketing.

This summer, let us face the heat with knowledge, caution, and compassion — and protect the health and dignity of every citizen, especially those who have the least resources to defend themselves.

The implications of EU’s decision to review relations with Israel

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

There was a breakthrough in the EU foreign ministers’ meeting on Tuesday. A majority of the 27 member states prevailed in supporting the Netherlands’ proposal to launch a review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement due to possible breaches of human rights in Gaza.

Kaja Kallas, the EU’s top diplomat, said after the meeting that “a strong majority” of member states backed the move, adding that “countries see that the situation in Gaza is untenable and what we want is to really help the people and unblock the humanitarian aid so that it will reach the people.”

According to reports, 17 countries supported the Dutch proposal, while nine opposed it and one abstained. Leading up to the meeting, EU officials were skeptical about the possibility of getting even a simple majority due to opposition from countries such as Germany, which carries a lot of weight in the EU voting system. German officials were quite confident they could block the move, despite being abandoned by the Netherlands, their traditional ally on issues related to support for Israel.

Hungary and other smaller EU states have been loud in their support for Israel’s actions. Budapest, for instance, last month welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu despite a warrant being issued by the International Criminal Court for his arrest on genocide charges. More recently, it blocked imposing more sanctions on Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

However, Germany has been the most effective in shielding Israel from criticism at home and within the EU. In 2016, Berlin spearheaded a move to widen the definition of antisemitism to include criticism of the Israeli government. This has since been

adopted by at least 25 EU member states, plus the US. In 2021, the European Commission published a handbook “for the practical use” of this new definition, which is being used in the current campaign to silence critics of Israel.

In 2018, Germany created the Office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight Against Antisemitism, a vast bureaucracy that includes commissioners at the state

The German position has become quite evident in recent meetings in Riyadh, Brussels and elsewhere. While circumspect in official statements, they lobbied participants behind the scenes to drop their opposition to Israeli actions. They dismiss diplomatic efforts, such as the move to review the EU-Israel Association Agreement, as useless because Germany can block any action based on that review. They also dismiss cases before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court and any attempts to censure Israel internationally as counterproductive. The only way to influence Israel, they believe, is for Arabs to “normalize” relations with Israel without conditions.

and local levels, some of whom work out of prosecutors’ offices or police stations. There are dozens of “antisemitism commissioners” throughout Germany, whose task is to monitor incidents or individuals falling afoul of the new definition of antisemitism. Their targets have included the German-Israeli sociologist Moshe Zuckermann, who was targeted for supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, Jewish South African photographer Adam Broomberg and many others questioning Israeli policies.

In 2019, the German parliament passed a resolution condemning BDS as “antisemitic,” which has had a chilling effect on German debates on Israel and led to the cancellation or disruption of many events considered to be sympathetic to

BDS or critical of Israel.

Since the war in Gaza started in October 2023, German authorities have acted with more vengeance, even violence at times, to suppress criticism of Israeli actions. They have canceled or disrupted dozens of events, withdrawn previously awarded grants, fired academics, deported foreign visitors or denied them entry, and publicly shamed those who have defied the ban on pro-Palestinian discourse.

block any action based on that review.

They also dismiss cases before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court and any attempts to censure Israel internationally as counterproductive. The only way to influence Israel, they believe, is for Arabs to “normalize” relations with Israel without conditions. Without presenting evidence, they believe that only normalization has the promise of

changing Israel’s conduct in the region.

While it is admirable for Berlin to document and remember crimes committed by the Nazis and try to prevent them from recurring in Germany, it is inexplicable how it is using their memory and the inherent guilt associated with them to justify inflicting similar crimes by Israel against the Palestinians.

Tuesday’s EU move was possibly influenced by the statement issued a day earlier by French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. They threatened “concrete actions” if Israel continued to block aid to Gaza. The UK has also halted negotiations with Israel on a free trade agreement. And France

announced that it is planning to recognize the state of Palestine, which Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot linked to Israel’s actions in Gaza. “We cannot leave the children of Gaza a legacy of violence and hatred. So all this must stop, and that’s why we are determined to recognize a Palestinian state,” he said.

Following the EU vote, Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot said he had “no doubt” about the extent of Israeli violations in Gaza and that the review could lead to the suspension of the association agreement, indicating the extent of the frustration most European governments feel with their inability to moderate Israeli actions in Gaza. However, a suspension of the deal will be very difficult to achieve given the EU’s complicated voting system, which means a small number of countries could block such action.

While the review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement is a welcome move, it is doubtful that it will lead to concrete collective action by the EU on trade with Israel. However, it adds one more piece to the EU’s diplomatic toolkit. Despite opposition by some of its member states, the EU has taken significant steps to push for a diplomatic solution to both the Gaza war and the underlying Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, it supports Saudi Arabia and Norway’s efforts to make the two-state solution a viable option. It has also supported the post-conflict Arab plan for Gaza. The EU is among the largest providers of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians and strongest supporters of the Palestinian Authority.

The strong majority in Tuesday’s meeting is likely to grow in future votes, adding pressure within the EU on Israel’s supporters and giving EU diplomacy more credibility and relevance in the Middle East and beyond.

Depriving Gaza of aid is immoral and counterproductive

Yossi Mekelberg

addition to a moral one, to not victimize a civilian population, including in a time of war and even while fighting a cruel enemy.

Israel has had problematic relations with international law for a very long time, and not only in relation to the Palestinians, although it is the Palestinians above all who are on the receiving end of Israel’s treatment of international law as a mere suggestion.

Even if, for a brief moment, one puts aside the moral and legal arguments, there is also no political wisdom in punishing an entire population that has already gone through unimaginable suffering and not accepting, like it or not, that you are destined to live with them as neighbors.

Some Israeli politicians

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini was last week unequivocal in his opinion that the blocking of humanitarian aid, including food, is being used by Israel as a weapon of war, which could be qualified as a war crime by the International Court of Justice. He added that “there is absolutely no doubt that we are talking about massive atrocities” unfolding in the Gaza Strip that “could end up to genocide.” This echoed what Fletcher told the UNSC — that “Israel is deliberately and unashamedly imposing inhumane conditions on civilians” in Gaza, allowing in no food, medicine, water or tents. Temperatures in Gaza have this week already reached 30 degrees Celsius in the shade — and there is not much shade.

Listening to Israeli officials making lame efforts to explain their blocking of humanitarian aid from entering Gaza suggests that they are still stuck in Oct. 7, as if the intervening year and a half never happened. The trauma and anger created by that event is only human and understandable, but directing it against innocent people with such ferocity and cruelty is categorically inhuman.

UNRWA, the UN agency in charge of providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians, says it has already run out of flour and food parcels, while only nine of its 27 health centers are operational at a time when the need for them is desperate and increasing. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini was last week unequivocal in his opinion that the blocking of humanitarian aid, including food, is being used by Israel as a weapon of war, which could be qualified as a war crime by the International Court of Justice. He added that “there is absolutely no doubt that we are talking about massive atrocities” unfolding in the Gaza Strip that “could end up to genocide.”

This echoed what Fletcher told the UNSC — that “Israel is deliberately and unashamedly imposing inhumane conditions on civilians” in Gaza, allowing in no food, medicine, water or tents. Temperatures in Gaza have this week already reached 30 degrees Celsius in the shade — and there is not much shade.

But if Israelis think that all this is being made up by those who hate Israel, then they can always listen to what their defense minister said last month. Israel Katz plainly declared: “Israel’s policy is clear: no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza, and blocking this aid is one of the main pressure levers preventing Hamas from using it as a tool with the population.”

In other words, using starvation and the withdrawal of medical aid, along with other basic human needs, is a tool of war. With this attitude — and when one of its most senior officials unashamedly admits it in public — Israel should not be surprised that it is being accused of war crimes.

Some Israeli politicians

Others, with even less moral fabric, are prepared to admit that the aim of depriving the Palestinians of Gaza of humanitarian aid is to make their life intolerable to the extent that they will leave as a result. No need to dwell on the morality or legality of this approach, as if those who express it are longing to end up in court in The Hague, but they should also have learned by now that this approach does not work. Instead, it only fuels hatred and radicalization and brings Israel to the brink of becoming a pariah state.

It might be the case that, for a multitude of reasons, Israel is finding it difficult to internalize this message. However, by agreeing to allow some humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza — but far from enough — it has the worst of all worlds. It exposes that the current Israeli government is susceptible to international pressure, but without changing its image as disrespectful to international law and equally as careless about the fate of more than 2 million people who face starvation.

Trump’s narrow window for Middle East peace

Taufiq Rahim

Amid the gathering of business leaders in Riyadh last week, President Donald Trump delivered a blistering critique of US foreign policy over the last three decades. “In the end, the so-called nation-builders wrecked far more nations than they built, and the interventionists were intervening in complex societies that they did not even understand themselves,” he said.

The president took the rhetorical shift a step further, announcing he would seek an end to sanctions on Syria, which prompted a sustained standing ovation in the ballroom. This administration appears willing to redefine the rules of the game across the whole of the Middle East, not just in Syria.

Before the trip, details emerged of active negotiations between the US and Hamas, facilitated through a backchannel, Palestinian businessman Bishara Bahbah. Concerning Yemen, the administration this month reached a swift detente with the Houthis after a rapid escalation.

However, it is the not-so-quiet negotiations with Iran on denuclearization that reflect the full scope of the approach. Trump went so far as to share online an interview in which former Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani discussed the scope of nuclear enrichment in a potential deal.

Is the administration on the cusp of a geopolitical step change in the Middle East? As Trump and his team settle back into Washington’s day-to-day routine, they have left behind a sense of tepid optimism in the region that transformation through peace, not war, could be possible.

Trump has been vocal about resolving global conflicts and the White House has codified this in the “peace through strength” policy doctrine. Beyond his current stance, the president has warned about the dangers of nuclear war for four decades. During his first term, despite the bellicose

rhetoric, he prioritized engagement with nuclear powers, including longtime foes like North Korea.

Clearly, the president prefers grand bargains — and all the optics they bring. While he was able to usher in the Abraham Accords during his first term and a framework agreement with China (on tariffs), broader deals with Iran, Russia and other geopolitical flashpoints eluded him.

The Middle East itself was in a very different place in 2017. Turkiye was still recovering from the dynamics of a coup. Daesh was on the march (initially). Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen were full-fledged quagmires. Several Gulf countries and Iran were almost in open conflict.

Fast forward to 2025 and the Gulf, Turkiye and Iran have partially resolved their differences. Meanwhile, countries that were previously in strife under the auspices of unorthodox forces in

some, such as Syria and Yemen. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has become a peacemaker, leading the outreach to Iran.

The stars would appear to be aligning around a new dynamic in the Middle East — almost. The Gaza crisis casts an apocalyptic shadow over the region. Perhaps the region’s changing dynamic fed into Hamas’ geostrategic calculus in carrying out the Oct. 7 attacks. Today, however, Israel may be the biggest obstacle to the region’s march forward. Its rejection of a ceasefire thwarts regional integration and a focus on reconciliation.

Trump avoided a stop in Israel on his trip, a glaring act of omission. He called out the humanitarian situation, saying, “the people in Gaza are starving.” Many of Trump’s political allies are loath to encourage an end to the Gaza crisis in any way that limits Israel’s ambitions. However, the current stance of the Israeli government is not

only holding back the region but also Trump’s ambitious agenda. And it could very much undermine his legacy.

Partisans across the aisle have responded to the trip to the Gulf with equal parts derision and ridicule. This reaction misses the point, even if legitimate criticisms are at play.

Acknowledging this window of opportunity for change in the Middle East is not about giving Trump the benefit of the doubt. Simply put, the window will not be open for long and taking advantage is to everyone’s benefit. Deeper concerns related to the Iranian regime’s commitments, Hamas’ staying power and the fragility of the Syrian government could undermine progress. The challenges ahead are still significant.

This moment in the Middle East requires entrenched interests and partisans across the aisle to work together in the common interest. That also means setting aside misgivings about the president.

A new Middle East is possible if that happens.

Foreign journalists must not abandon their Palestinian colleagues in Gaza

When Israel announced on May 5 its intention to permanently reoccupy Gaza, it did not merely declare a new phase of military domination. The expansionist state also signalled an intensification of its campaign of erasure and systematic silencing.

This move should sound an alarm for every newsroom and journalist around the globe. This is not just a territorial occupation, but a war on truth. And in that war, Palestinian journalists are among the first to be targeted.

The staggering toll of media workers killed in Gaza speaks for itself. One recent report states that more journalists have been killed in Gaza than in the two world wars, the wars in Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and Vietnam combined. It is the deadliest conflict for media professionals ever recorded.

According to Gaza’s Government Media Office, at least 222 journalists have

been killed. The Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU) summed up this deplorable state of affairs by stating that “Israel is the greatest killer of journalists in modern history.”

This is not just the consequence of war. This is a strategy. This is a media blackout enforced through bloodshed and sealed borders.

Just on Sunday, one of the bloodiest days in recent months, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) killed husband and wife journalists Khaled Abu Seif and Nour Qandil along with their little daughter in Deir el-Balah. They also murdered photographer Aziz al-Hajjar and his wife and children in northern Gaza and journalist Abdul Rahman al-Abadlah in southern Gaza. An Israeli strike on a tent in the “safe zone” of al-Mawasi killed Ahmed al-Zinati and his wife and two young children.

On Thursday, two journalists — Hassan Sammour and Ahmed al-Halou — were

killed in two Israeli attacks. Two days earlier, an Israeli drone targeted journalist Hassan Esliah in the barely functioning Nassar Medical Complex in Khan Younis. Esliah was recovering from injuries sustained when the IOF bombed a media tent on April 7. In the attack, Esliah’s colleague Hilmi al-Faqaawi was burned to death.

On April 17, Fatima Hassouna, a prominent photojournalist whose life during the genocide became the subject of a documentary, was targeted and killed in her home along with 10 members of her family. A day earlier, she had found out that the film would be screened at the Cannes Film Festival.

On May 7, when more than 100 people were killed in a single day, journalists Yehya Subeih and Noor al-Din Abdu were also targeted.

Yehya’s first child, a baby girl, had been born that very morning. He had left home to get supplies for his wife

and never returned. His daughter will grow up marking her birthday on the same day her father was killed.

Abdu was covering an Israeli massacre at a school in Gaza City when he was killed. Apart from his journalistic work, he was also documenting the devastating loss of his own extended family. On May 6, he sent the name and photo of yet another victim to add to the list he and his uncle Rami Abdo, founder of the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, were keeping. A day later, he was added to it himself.

These are just a few of the many assassinations Israel has carried out in its pursuit of a media blackout in Gaza. There are also many more cases of journalists who have survived but the trauma has silenced them.

Among them is my relative Rami Abu Shammala. Rami’s family home stood only a few blocks from the ruins of my in-laws’ home in

Ghada Ageel

Hay al-Amal in Khan Younis — or what remains of what was once a vibrant, living neighbourhood.

On May 4, a day after we marked World Press Freedom Day, an Israeli strike destroyed Rami’s home, killing his sister-in-law Nisreen and sending six children to the emergency department of the Nasser Medical Complex. Rami was not home and survived, but he fell into a state of grief so deep he could no longer bear witness.

Just two days earlier, journalist Norhan al-Madhoun lost her brother, Rizq, a photographer, in an Israeli air strike targeting a community kitchen he was volunteering in. He and five of the kitchen workers were murdered in an instant. In October, the family lost father Ahmed Khalil al-Madhoun when he was killed while delivering water and then another brother Haitham, who was killed the very next day.

Following Rizq’s killing, Norhan posted on social media the following: “With a heart that cracks from so much loss, I mourn you today, my beloved brother and my irreplaceable rib. ... Those who knew him know that he was a homeland of generosity, a haven of compassion, and a constant voice for courage and truth. But I, who have always found refuge in the word, in writing as a career, find myself helpless before the enormity of loss.”

This is what silencing a journalist looks like — not just the destruction of cameras and press vests, but the destruction of families, homes and futures. Grief and shock may silence even more than intimidation.

All of this bloodshed targeting Gaza’s journalists has been happening at a time when Israel is supposedly carrying out “limited operations”. We can only imagine what will happen as its genocidal army moves in to reoccupy the strip.

The world must no longer

turn a blind eye. Palestinian journalists’ survival and freedom to report demand urgent, global action.

Foreign journalists cannot continue to stay silent about Israel’s refusal to allow them to report freely from Gaza. Embedding with the IOF and being shown only what it wants the media to see must be publicly rejected.

Without international media access, Gaza will continue to be a closed theatre of war, a place where crimes can continue unseen. In Gaza, the absence of cameras will be as deadly as the bombs exported from the United States.

Now is the time for journalists, editors and news organisations to demand access — not only as a professional right but also as a moral imperative. Until this access is granted, newspapers and cable news networks should routinely remind readers and viewers that their journalists are denied entry by Israel.

This is not just about sol-

idity with Palestinian journalists. It is about defending the very essence of journalism: the right to bear witness, to document the stories that those in power would rather keep hidden.

It is crucial to take a stance now as we are seeing a global trend of press freedom retreat, accelerated by the silencing of Gaza. The number of countries that genuinely uphold a free and vibrant news media is steadily shrinking. Simultaneously, the technological promise of social media to be a force for democratic change — once seen in the Arab Spring — has all but vanished.

Now is the time to enter Gaza. The international media must act — not later, not when the killing stops, not when permission is granted by Israel — but now. What is required is a global demand for access, for accountability, and for the protection of those who dare to speak.

This is the moment. We must not miss it.



Formulation of pro-business policies imperative for economic stability:

Fazal stresses for taking traders on board

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan emphasized formulation of pro-business policies are crucial for economic stability, growth and progress.

The SCCI chief highlighted the role of bureaucracy is vital in framing sustainable and growth-oriented policies.

He, however, emphasised that the chamber and relevant stakeholders should be consulted before introduction of new policies, regulations and reforms in the taxation system.

Fazal Moqem was addressing members during a visit of the participants of the 43th Mid-Career Management Course Officers at National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Islamabad here at the chamber house on Wednesday.

The visiting officer delegation was headed by NIPA Islamabad Directing Staff Ms Shafaq Zaheer.

The chamber senior vice

president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, former presidents Fuad Ishaq, Haji Muhammad Afzal, Sherbaz Bilour, members of the executive committee Aftab Iqbal, Saifullah, Adnan Nasir, and former vice president WCCIP Aneela Khalid, Faiz Rasool, Saddam Gul, Aqeel Kayani, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan, traders and industrialists were present in the meeting.

A comprehensive multimedia presentation ran in the meeting which highlighted the origin of the SCCI, its main objectives, relief initiatives for the business community and future plan.

Fazal Moqem took on major issues, which were faced by the business community, mainly related to poor law and order situation, non-provision of due constitutional rights on oil, gas and electricity to KP, hurdles in flourishing trade, business, industries and attracting investment in the province.

The SCCI chief underscored the need for optimal utilization of KP' natural resources that will lead the provincial economy toward sustainable growth and prosperity.

Fazal Moqem stated that huge investment opportunities are available in natural resources-rich Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He, however, emphasized the need of special incentives and facilities to local businessmen, consequently that will also boost to the foreign investment in the country.

Fazal Moqem said bureaucracy has a vital role in reshaping economic policies, but it is crucial that these policies should be crafted in consultation with the business community and relevant stakeholders that will have positive impacts on the national economy, business and trade.

He urged visiting senior officers from various departments to frame and reshape policies while keeping in view the ground realities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to

avoid further compounding the difficulties and miseries of the province' business community.

The chamber president said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's total gas production is 410mmcfd, while the utilization is 160mmcfd, while surplus gas is being exported from the province. In addition, the province's share in the country's total oil production is 30 to 40 percent.

The SCCI chief stressed on keeping politics separate from commerce. He said that Article 158 of the Constitution is being openly violated and the constitutional rights of the province are being usurped

Fazal Moqem expressed concern over the ongoing rapid investment transfer and deforestation in the province, including brain drain, and the decline in water levels in Peshawar.

He appreciated the government's initiatives for the proper utilization and development of the mineral sector and valuable resources in the province.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan presenting Chamber's shield to NIPA Islamabad Directing Staff Ms Shafaq Zaheer.

Coordinator to PM on Commerce visits PITAD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Commerce, visited the Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD) today to review its pivotal role in shaping the nation's trade landscape.

During the visit, he was presented with an in-depth briefing on PITAD's mandate, core functions, operational scope, performance metrics, and the challenges it faces in a dynamic global trade environment, said a release issued here on Wednesday.

Established to enhance Pakistan's trade policy framework, PITAD serves as a premier institution for training professionals and strengthening international trade relations.

The project director Mr. Aslam Leghari, Mr. Abdul Waheed Mangi and other senior officials accompanied the World Bank team during the site visits.

Current macroeconomic outlook: Aurangzeb briefs Netherlands envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, on Wednesday briefed the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan on Country's current macroeconomic outlook and the government's reform agenda, with particular focus on key sectors of the economy.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Mrs. Henny de Vries, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan, at the Finance Division, Islamabad, said a release issued here.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest and

avenues for further strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.

Finance Minister emphasized the government's commitment to achieving sustainable, productivity-driven, and export-led growth, highlighting the critical role of the private sector as the real engine of economic development.

The Minister also acknowledged and appreciated the technical and financial support provided by the Netherlands to Pakistan in various areas, including development and capacity-building initiatives.

Senator Aurangzeb further welcomed the continued interest and investment by Dutch companies in Pakistan and reaffirmed the

government's commitment to facilitating foreign investment and fostering a conducive business environment.

Mrs. Henny de Vries expressed appreciation for the government's macroeconomic reforms and its focus on export-oriented policies. She reiterated the Netherlands' support for Pakistan's economic development and affirmed her country's interest in deepening economic ties and cooperation across diverse sectors.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing confidence in the strengthening of Pakistan-Netherlands bilateral relations and continued collaboration in areas of shared interest.

World Bank delegation visits Mirpurkhas

F.P. Report

MIRPURKHAS: Bilal Khalid, team task leader of Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (P&DD Component) while inspecting the under construction Jhudo-Nabisar road bridge said that objective of undertaking development activities in rural areas by the Bank is to alleviate poverty in less developed areas of Pakistan and Bank would continue to achieve this objective by upgrading infrastructure in these areas for better living conditions of people at large.

He said that the construction of this bridge would facilitate local communities in restoring connectivity and promoting economic activity among the people of Mirpurkhas, UmarKot districts and other connected areas. The under construction Jhudo-Nabisar road bridge is 68 Meters long and 8 Meters wide which would help connect a population of three lakhs. The bridge has been designed keeping in view the future flood level as the existing bridge submerged in the previous flood.

The Bank Team also vis-

ited Muhammad Khan Lashari water supply scheme in Mirpurkhas and was informed that this rehabilitated scheme would provide clean and uninterrupted water supply to 400 households with a population of 3500 people. The water supply from this scheme was stopped due to rains and people of area were forced to consume contaminated water from other sources causing health issues. The storage capacity of 2 water ponds is 0.6 million gallons of water. In addition, a hypochlorinator has been installed at the premises to

insure clean drinking water.

Satellite station at Tandojam was also visited by the Team on last leg of tour on the same day which has been established to deal with emergencies faced by locals relating to road accidents, fire and water. Mr. Bilal Khalid expressed the hope that satellite station would help people in saving precious lives in cases of emergency.

The project director Mr. Aslam Leghari, Mr. Abdul Waheed Mangi and other senior officials accompanied the World Bank team during the site visits.

PDAA to be established regulate, accelerate virtual asset economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a landmark move to embrace the future of finance, the Ministry of Finance has announced the initiation of a comprehensive strategy to regulate digital assets and accelerate the growth of Pakistan's virtual asset economy.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry on Wednesday, the government has endorsed the establishment of a dedicated body — the Pakistan Digital Assets Authority (PDAA) — to regulate blockchain-based financial infrastructure.

The aim is to ensure FATF-compliant innovation, economic inclusion and responsible adoption of digital assets, it added.

The PDAA will serve as a specialized regulatory body with a clear mandate to oversee licensing, compliance and innovation within the digital asset ecosystem. Besides, it will regulate exchanges, custodians, wallets, tokenized platforms, stable coins and DeFi applications — all under a single, agile framework.

This strategic decision aligns Pakistan with other forward-thinking economies such as UAE, Japan,

Singapore and Hong Kong — all of which have established digital asset regulators to foster innovation while ensuring compliance with global financial norms.

The PDAA is expected to regulate a \$25 billion plus informal crypto market, besides enabling tokenization of national assets and government debt as well as provide legal clarity to global and

local investors and facilitate monetization of Pakistan's surplus electricity through regulated Bitcoin mining and empower youth and start-ups to build blockchain-based solutions at scale

With the proposed PDAA, Pakistan is signaling its intent to become a competitive player in global digital economy, inviting responsible innovation, and building trust with

investors, entrepreneurs, and international partners.

"Pakistan must regulate not just to catch up — but to lead. With the PDAA, we are creating a future-ready framework that protects consumers, invites global investment, and puts Pakistan at the forefront of financial innovation," said Minister for Finance and Revenue, Chairman of PCC Muhammad Aurangzeb.



KARACHI: Consul General of UAE in Karachi Bakheet Ateeq Ali Alayan Alremethi after their meeting with Deputy CEO Sindh Bank Ltd Syed Assad Ali Shah at Consulate of UAE.

Pak's sesame exports to China reach new heights

BEIJING (INP): Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China have soared to unprecedented levels, reaching nearly \$49 million between January and April 2025.

This surge marks a significant milestone in the deepening agricultural trade relationship between the two countries, according to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN) on Wednesday.

The report says, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, credited the impressive growth to both domestic innovation and China's rising demand for high-quality imports.

He praised the contributions of local research insti-

tutions — such as the Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) and its Oilseeds Research Institute (ORI) team — for their pivotal role in driving productivity through improved seed varieties and advanced farming techniques.

"While supply-side developments such as improved seed varieties and research-led farming techniques have played a vital role, it is China's growing consumer demand, preference for high-quality imports, and competitive pricing that are driving this record-setting trend," he said.

Pakistan's rise in China's sesame import market has been dramatic. In 2019, it

ranked as the 14th largest supplier with just \$4.6 million in exports.

By 2024, it had climbed to third place by value at \$226.53 million, and second by volume, with 177,640 tons of sesame seeds exported to China.

From January to April 2025 alone, exports hit 38,828 tons, valued at \$48.58 million, representing a 337% year-on-year increase.

Gopal Khamuani, Chairman of Pakistan Sesame Exporters Association, emphasized Pakistan's competitive advantage, citing an average export price of \$1,300 per ton, as well as fast transit times of 15–20 days via sea and land.

Cutlery exports increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cutlery witnessed an increase of 3.55 percent during the first ten months fiscal year 2024-25, as against the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The cutlery exports from the country were recorded at US \$4.188 million against the exports of US \$4.490 million in April 2024. On a month-on-month basis, cutlery exports also decreased by 8.86 percent during April 2025 when compared to the exports of US \$4.595 million in March 2025, the PBS data revealed.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the cutlery exports witnessed a decline

of 6.73 percent during the month of April 2025 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cutlery from the country during April 2025 were recorded at US \$4.188 million against the exports of US \$4.490 million in April 2024. On a month-on-month basis, cutlery exports also decreased by 8.86 percent during April 2025 when compared to the exports of US \$4.595 million in March 2025, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall mer-

chandise exports from the country increased by 6.40 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

Exports during July-April (2024-25) were recorded at \$26.896 billion against \$25.278 billion during July-April (2023-24), according to PBS data.

On the other hand, imports into the country went up by 7.55 percent by growing from \$44.900 billion last year to \$48.292 billion during the first ten months of the current year.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 198/1.Institution 2024. Date of hearing.11/6/2025.Case title:Peer Malak Shah VS Guldad Shah. Notice to No.1/4. Ismail sons.1/5. Mst Raweda Bibi.1/6. Mst. Asia Bibi daughters of Guldad Shah. 2/3.Mst Aysha Bibi.2/4.Mst Rafia Bibi.2/5.Mst Mehriban Bibi daughters of Karimdad Shah.5. Abdullah.13/Mst Shazia Bibi d/o Sherendad Shah.14. Mst Muzliqa Bibi w/o Behrul Uloom d/o Sherendad Shah resident of Ashazo Mera 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 8.00 am dated 11/6/2025 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 48/1.Institution 3/3/2025. Date of hearing .13/6/2025 .Case Title: Sher Muhammad VS Ataullah Khan.Notice to Ataullah Khan s/o Said Akbar Khan(late) resident of Koza Hujra Daggar Kalay teshel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 13/6/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

The noise of being quiet

Anum Hamid

To the world, she is perfectly ordinary — perhaps even enviable. A steady voice on the phone, a calm presence at family gatherings, a dependable colleague at work, a pleasant neighbor. She carries no signs of conflict or despair. Her house runs smoothly. Her job gets done. She never raises her voice. She smiles when spoken to.

But inside, Wafa is barely holding it together.

The pressure in her life isn't the kind that's easy to describe. She doesn't complain about the housework, although it never ends. She doesn't protest the responsibilities that come with her job or her family. In fact, she often tells herself, This

is normal. Everyone does it. What Wafa lives with is something else entirely — a pressure that doesn't come from outside expectations but from the exhausting act of trying to feel normal. She is not overwhelmed by what she does. She is overwhelmed by what she suppresses.

"I'm not crushed by the weight of my schedule," she says quietly, "but by the constant effort to stay calm when my body is screaming inside."

The Pressure Behind the Calm

Every morning, before the house wakes up, Wafa gives herself a few moments in silence. Not to enjoy peace, but to collect her strength. She knows that once the day begins, she must perform a role she

cannot step out of.

She must be composed — even when her nerves are raw. She must laugh — even when her chest is tight. She must focus — even when her hands tremble slightly behind her back.

"Sometimes I'm sitting with my family, smiling and talking, while I'm barely able to breathe properly," she confesses. "But how do I explain that without alarming them? And if I do... will they even understand?"

This is the kind of pressure no one talks about. Not the pressure to perform tasks, but the pressure to perform stability. To appear unbothered. To seem emotionally balanced. To not disrupt the flow of life around her.

A Society That Likes the

Conversation-From a Distance

We live in a society that claims to celebrate conversations around mental health. Instagram posts encourage self-care. Workshops are organized. Campaigns trend.

But mention that someone is taking medication for anxiety or depression, and the silence grows thick. We praise awareness, but judge reality.

"If I ever said I was on medication," Wafa says with a dry smile, "there would be long pauses and awkward glances. Questions behind closed doors. Whispers about whether I've gone 'too deep into things.'"

The same people who share articles about emotional well-being are often

the ones who raise eyebrows when someone is genuinely struggling.

So Wafa doesn't tell anyone. She manages her symptoms privately, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing. And when she fails, she stays quiet. Because asking for space, or softness, or silence feels like too much to expect.

No One Notices

What makes Wafa's situation lonelier is the invisibility of it. She doesn't fit the image of someone in distress. She doesn't cry at the dinner table or isolate herself in her room. She functions. She contributes. She laughs at jokes.

But what they don't see is how much of her day goes into controlling her thoughts, calming her breathing, and pretending

she isn't terrified of breaking down over nothing.

They don't see the energy it takes to act unbothered when her heart is racing for no reason. They don't see how loud the world feels to her when everything is perfectly quiet. They don't see how exhausting it is to convince herself, again and again, that she is not a burden.

Wafa doesn't want acknowledgment. She doesn't need to be praised for being strong. What she truly wants is something simpler: for people to stop piling on more pressure with their assumptions, their impatience, their careless comments.

"I wish people would stop expecting me to react perfectly," she says. "Sometimes I just need

them to let things go. Not every pause means something's wrong. Not every silence needs to be filled. Their healing words often carry weight I can't carry right now."

Unnoticed, But Not Rare And while Wafa continues her days with quiet discipline, holding the invisible pieces of herself together, more Wafas are growing around us.

Women who laugh softly while managing storms inside their heads. Girls who show up on time, perform well, and nod politely — while choking on anxiety. Sisters, daughters, friends who are not asking to be saved, but simply to be left a little room to breathe.

They are not statistics. They are not headlines.

They are right here — in homes, offices, shops, and schools. They are surviving by appearing ordinary. But their struggle is anything but.

And as long as we applaud the idea of mental health while rejecting its reality, more Wafas will quietly fold into themselves, perfectly dressed and painfully alone.

"Not all storms are loud. Some rage silently — behind steady eyes, calm voices, and quiet smiles."

The writer is Lecturer in Media Studies & Mass Communication, Freelance Feature Writer & Columnist. She is passionate about education, media, and storytelling. Sharing knowledge and insights through teaching and writing.



In brief

Pacquiao announces boxing return

LAS VEGAS (Agencies): Manny Pacquiao has announced his return to the ring aged 46 and almost four years after his last fight. The Filipino says he will face WBC welter-weight champion Mario Barrios on 19 July in Las Vegas. Pacquiao is now aiming to become boxing's oldest welterweight world champion. "I'm back," Pacquiao said on social media. "Let's make history." Pacquiao currently holds the record for the oldest welterweight champion, when he beat Keith Thurman in 2019 to claim the WBA (Super) world title aged 40. The WBC controversially reinstated Pacquiao into their rankings at number five last week as speculation about his return mounted. The WBC president Mauricio Suliman defended the decision, saying: "Pacquiao has been licensed by Nevada and passed all medicals and as legendary WBC champion has been approved to fight by our organisation." Pacquiao last fought in August 2021, when he lost on points to Yordenis Ugas. The boxing legend is a four-time welterweight champion and has an overall record of 62 fights, eight losses and two draws. Since retiring from boxing he has been involved in politics in his home country, but last week failed in his bid to become elected to the Philippines senate.

London to host Laver Cup

LONDON (AFP): The Laver Cup will return to London in 2026 with the O2 Arena set to host the annual battle between Europe and the rest of the world's best male players. The event previously took place in the English capital in 2022 in what was Roger Federer's final outing before retirement. The 2026 version will take place from September 25-27. "My final match in 2022 was filled with emotion and unforgettable memories – being surrounded by my team-mates who were also my greatest rivals – it was everything I could have hoped for," said 20-time Grand Slam champion and Laver Cup co-founder Federer. "I'm really looking forward to returning to such a meaningful place, this time as a fan, and experiencing the incredible Laver Cup atmosphere once again." Named in honour of Australian tennis legend Rod Laver, the competition pits two teams of six off in a series of singles and doubles matches across three days of competition. This year's event will take place in San Francisco from September 19-21.

Archer out of West Indies series

LONDON (AFP): England fast bowler Jofra Archer has suffered yet another injury blow that could hamper plans for a Test return against India later this season. The 30-year-old express quick hurt his right thumb while fielding for Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League. He could now be out of action for at least a month, with England announcing Wednesday he had been withdrawn from the upcoming one-day international series against the West Indies. If Archer is sidelined for several weeks, it may also scupper plans England had for reintroducing him to red-ball cricket as well. Archer was expected to play for the second-string England Lions at home to India next month in the hope of making a much-anticipated return during the subsequent five-match series.



LAHORE: Dinesh Chandimal cuts on his way to an unbeaten 48.

Pakistan drop stars Shaheen, Azam and Rizwan for BD T20s

LAHORE (AFP): Pakistan dropped stars Shaheen Shah Afridi, Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan on Wednesday as they named a new-look squad for three home Twenty20 internationals against Bangladesh. Former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson will take charge for the first time after being appointed last week, replacing Aaqib Javed. Salman Ali Agha will captain Pakistan as they look towards next year's Twenty20 World Cup, to be hosted by India and Sri Lanka. Fast bowler Shaheen had played in Pakistan's last T20 series in New Zealand in March, but batsmen Azam

and Rizwan were omitted for the second consecutive T20 series after being criticised for slow scoring. "The squad has been selected based on players' performances in the ongoing Pakistan Super League, which concludes on May 25," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement. Shaheen has taken 12 wickets for Lahore Qalandars in 10 PSL matches at an economy rate of 8.20. Opener Sahibzada Farhan earned a recall after topping the PSL batting charts with 394 runs. Batsmen Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman return after missing the New Zealand tour with injuries.

Fast bowler Hasan Ali is back after being sidelined with multiple injuries since May last year. The PCB said that the matches, which have been affected by a 10-day delay to the PSL caused by the deadly India-Pakistan conflict, will be held in Lahore on May 28, 30 and June 1. Pakistan squad: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Shadab Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Wasim, Mohammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub.

Stirling hits milestone as Ireland beat West Indies

CLONTARF (Agencies): Paul Stirling became the first Irish player to reach 10,000 international runs as Ireland comfortably beat West Indies in the opening one-day international at Clontarf. A 109-run partnership between Andrew Balbirnie (112) and record-breaking captain Stirling (54) set Ireland on course for victory as they reached 303-6. Stirling has scored 5,979 runs in ODIs, 3,656 in T20s and 382 runs in Test cricket.

West Indies, who were facing the Irish in Dublin for the first time since 2019, were all out for just 179, as Barry McCarthy claimed 4-32. The sides will meet again on Friday at Clontarf in the second ODI, with the third game of the series being played at the same venue on Sunday.

Ireland lost the toss and were asked to bat first, but through the fruitful pairing of Balbirnie and Stirling they moved to 109 before the latter was dismissed by Gudakesh Motie. Cade Carmichael, who was making his debut alongside Tom Mayes and Liam McCarthy, was out for 16, but Harry Tector managed 56 with Lorcan Tucker also adding 30 to help Ireland set a high target.

Mayes claimed his first wicket for Ireland as he dismissed West Indies captain Shai Hope in the powerplay and the difficulties continued as West Indies slipped to 31-5 in the powerplay before Roston Chase (55) and Matthew Forde (38) steadied their innings.

McCarthy removed Brandon King, Keacy Carty, Amir Jangoo and Forde as the West Indies were bowled out for 179 with 15.5 overs remaining, falling to a 124-run defeat.

Gladiators beat United to qualify for PSL 10 final

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Quetta Gladiators qualified for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 final after defeating Islamabad United in Qualifier 1 at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday. Chasing 210, the defending champions were bowled out for 179 in 19.4 overs, losing the game by 30 runs. Islamabad United were off to a dismal start as Alex Hales fell in the second over for a duck.

His opening partner, Sahibzada Farhan, was joined by Rassie van der Dussen and the duo raised a 71-run partnership before the latter was removed in the ninth over. The right-handed batter made 35 off 23 balls, with the help of four fours and two sixes. Sahibzada Farhan then stitched a 22-run partnership with Salman Ali Agha until he was dismissed after scoring 52 off 35 balls. Farhan's dismissal triggered a collapse in the middle as the defending champions lost three quick wickets to stumble to 150/6 in 15.5 overs. Usman Tariq dimin-

ished United's hope for a direct qualification to the PSL 10 when he dismissed Salman Ali Agha (44) and Naseem Shah (22) in successive deliveries.

Ghazi Ghori was dismissed on four, while Salman Irshad made two as Quetta Gladiators bowled out the Islamabad United for 179. For Gladiators, Usman Tariq picked up three wickets, while Mohammad Amir, Faheem Ashraf and Wasim Jr took two wickets each.

Spinner Abrar Ahmed chipped in with a wicket. Earlier, the Gladiators lost skipper Saud Shakeel early in the inning after opting to bat first in the PSL 10 Qualifier 1.

Following his dismissal, Rilee Rossouw joined his opening partner Finn Allen and the two stitched a 44-run partnership until the former fell to Ben Dwarshuis in the fifth over after making 16 off eight balls. Hasan Nawaz was removed after scoring just six runs as Quetta Gladiators were reduced to 68/3 in 5.5 overs in Qualifier 1 of the PSL 10.

Finn Allen then joined hands with Avishka Fernando for a valuable 43-run partnership, to take Gladiators to 111 for four in 11.5 overs. Allen and Fernando fell in successive overs after scoring 41 and 32, respectively.

Faheem Ashraf and Dinesh Chandimal took charge of the inning, raising a 95-run partnership to power Gladiators to a formidable total. Faheem Ashraf scored 45 off 23 balls, while Chandimal remained unbeaten with a 28-ball 48, hitting as many boundaries.

Playing XIs Quetta Gladiators: Saud Shakeel (c), Finn Allen, Hasan Nawaz, Dinesh Chandimal (wk), Avishka Fernando, Rilee Rossouw, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Wasim, Usman Tariq, and Abrar Ahmed. Islamabad United: Sahibzada Farhan, Alex Hales, Rassie van der Dussen, Salman Agha, Shadab Khan (c), James Neesham, Ben Dwarshuis, Imad Wasim, Ghazi Ghori (wk), Salman Irshad, and Naseem Shah.

Raducanu suffers injury scare in Strasbourg loss



S T R A S B O U R G (Agencies): Emma Raducanu suffered an injury scare just four days before the French Open begins as the Briton lost to Danielle Collins in Strasbourg.

The 22-year-old produced an excellent first set but needed treatment on a lower back issue after falling 5-0 behind in the second. Seemingly uninhibited by the problem on her return, Raducanu came back from a break down in the decider - but Collins rallied again to win 4-6 6-1 6-3 and reach the quarter-finals.

Raducanu had taken a wildcard into the clay-court event in Strasbourg to get more practice on the surface before the French Open starts on Sunday. Despite the off-court medical timeout there appeared to be no obvious signs of discomfort for Raducanu, who put Collins under sustained pressure before the American pulled away.

Collins, a former Australian Open runner-up who beat Roland Garros champion Iga Swiatek in Italy last week, plays American top seed Jessica Pegula or Russian world number 30 Anna Kalinskaya in the last eight. Raducanu said she was building a relationship with clay courts after her impressive opening win over Daria Kasatkina on Monday. Victory over world number 17 Kasatkina came after Raducanu's run to the Italian Open fourth round, where she won three consecutive clay-court matches for the first time in her career.

Raducanu was rewarded for a solid start against Collins, breaking early for a 3-2 lead, with the American cutting an increasingly frustrated figure in response to her opponent's consistency.

The Briton won eight points in a row on her way to serving out the set and

joked with her team as she took to her chair, having made just six unforced errors in the first 10 games.

But momentum swung dramatically in set two as Collins broke serve twice without reply and Raducanu surpassed her first-set error count in the fourth game. Raducanu called for the physio shortly before falling 5-0 behind and, after a brief discussion, left the court.

To the relief of her team she appeared to move freely once the match resumed and ended the run of games against her - but Collins would not be denied a deciding set.

Raducanu applied significant pressure, failing to take her first eight break points before converting her ninth to force the set back on serve at 3-3.

But the former US Open champion was outlasted in the closing stages and was twice broken to love as Collins completed the turnaround after two hours and 20 minutes. Spanish third seed Paula Badosa and Russian Liudmila Samsonova are 2024 runner-up Collins' potential semi-final opponents in Strasbourg.

The other quarter-finals see American second seed Emma Navarro face Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia, and Kazakh fourth seed Elena Rybakina play Poland's Magda Linette.

Aqeel, Shoaib, Yousaf, Muzammil move in Federal Cup semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Yousaf Khalil and Muzammil Murtaza, advanced to the semifinals of the 37th OGDCL Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships here at the PTF-SDA on Wednesday.

Players delivered intense performances, thrilling spectators and advancing the tournament into its decisive stages. Second seed Aqeel Khan had to dig deep to overcome a strong challenge from rising talent Ahmad Nael Qureshi, eventually winning 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 in a gripping quarter-final clash at the 37th OGDCL Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships.

Ahmad Nael came out firing, stunned the seasoned Aqeel by taking the first set 6-4 with confident shot-making and relentless pressure. However, the experienced Khan responded with a tactical shift in the second set, employing sliced backhands, cross-court shots, and long rallies to disrupt Qureshi's rhythm. His strategy paid off as he leveled the match with a 6-3 second-set win.

In the decisive set, Aqeel Khan drew on his vast experience and regained full control, using precise placement and superior court coverage to dominate. He denied Qureshi any room to regroup, cruising through the final set 6-1 to book his place in the semi-finals.

Muhammad Shoaib showcased his top form against the talented Barkatullah, securing a solid win with consistent baseline play and strategic shot placement. Yousaf Khalil displayed control and composure as he overpowered M. Talha Khan in an entertaining encounter. Meanwhile, Muzammil Murtaza

demonstrated his dominance with a clinical performance against Sami Zeb Khan, sealing his spot in the semi-finals without dropping a set.

With the top contenders moving forward, the stage is set for an exciting semifinal lineup.

In a thrilling Ladies' Singles encounter, unseeded Noor Malik pulled off a major upset by defeating 3rd seed Soha Ali 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 to advance to the semi-finals.

After dropping the first set 4-6, Malik made strategic adjustments to her game, leveling the match by taking the second set 6-4 with determined baseline play and improved shot selection. In the deciding set, Malik quickly gained momentum, breaking Soha Ali's serve in the second game to take a 5-3 lead.

However, fading light forced the match to be suspended before completion. Resuming the match the following morning, Malik remained composed and capitalized on her overnight advantage, closing out the final set 6-3 to secure her place in the semi-finals. The Ladies' Singles semi-finals delivered high drama as both top seeds were knocked out in straight sets.

In the first semi-final, unseeded Mehak Khokhar caused the tournament's biggest upset by eliminating top seed Shiza Sajid in a well-fought encounter. Khokhar dominated the opening set 6-0 with aggressive baseline play and sharp returns. The second set was more competitive, but Khokhar held her nerve in key moments to clinch it 7-5 and secure her place in the final. In the second semi-final, Noor Malik continued her giant-killing run by overpowering 2nd seed Mahrukh Sajid. Malik

displayed supreme control and confidence throughout, winning 6-3, 6-0 in a commanding performance that left no doubt about her form heading into the final.

The final promises to be an exciting clash between two in-form unseeded players, Mehak Khokhar and Noor Malik, both of whom have taken down top seeds on their way to the title match.

Men's Singles (quarterfinals): Muhammad Shoaib beat Barkatullah 6-2 6-1, Yousaf Khalil beat M.Talha Khan 6-2 6-4, Muzammil Murtaza beat Sami Zeb Khan 6-1 6-0, Aqeel Khan beat Ahmad Nael Qureshi 4-6 6-3 6-1.

Ladies Singles (semifinals): Mehak Khokhar beat Shiza Sajid 6-0 7-5, Noor Malik beat Mahrukh Sajid 6-3 6-0.

Men's Doubles (quarterfinals): Yousaf Khalil & Barkatullah beat Kashan Tariq & Zohaib Afzal Malik 6-1 6-3; Muhammad Shoaib & Muzammil Murtaza beat Sami Zeb Khan & Huzaima A.Rehman 7-5 6-4.

In Junior 18&Under (pre-quarterfinals): M. Hazik Aasim beat Razik Sultan 6-3 6-2, Abdul Basit beat Hassan Usmani 6-2 6-3, Talha Khan beat Muhammad Rayyan 6-2 6-1, Muhammad Yahya beat Sqib Ali 6-1 6-0, Muhammad Salar beat Muhammad Ali 6-3 4-0 (Retd).

In Boys 14&Under (quarterfinals): Shayaan Afridi beat Rayyan Khan Khalil 4-1 4-0, Junaid Khan beat Ibrahim Gill 4-0 4-1, Rashid Ali beat M.Faizan 4-1 4-0, Rakib Sultan beat Waqas Janas 4-2 4-0.

In Girls 12&Under (semifinals): Khadija Khalil beat Anaya Khan 4-1 4-1, Omer Shahnoor beat Zara Aidrus 4-0 4-0.



CASTELNOVO NE' MONTI (AFP): Richard Carapaz won stage 11 of the Giro d'Italia on Wednesday as as Mexican rider Isaac del Toro kept hold of his overall lead in the Grand Tour.

Former Giro champion Carapaz claimed his first win of the year at Castelnovo ne' Monti after attacking from the peloton nine kilometres from the finish line on a tough 186km ride from Viareggio.

"From the very first climb I saw that so many of the riders were struggling," said Carapaz after the fourth Giro stage win of his career.

"I know that I didn't have good legs but I chose the right moment because I knew that I could make it to the finish. It was almost like a time trial trying to make it home today."

EF Education-EasyPost rider Carapaz shaved 14 seconds off the gap separating him from UAE rider Del Toro who finished second and stays in the pink jersey. Carapaz's win was his eighth on a Grand Tour and announced his bid to repeat his overall Giro victory from 2019, his only title from a major three-week race.

Del Toro is 31 seconds

ahead of Juan Ayuso in the general classification as the title pretenders crossed at the same time behind Carapaz. There was some local joy as Lorenzo Fortunato extended his already heavy lead in the mountains classification over Ayuso to 102 points after being first to the summit of two of the three categorised climbs of the day.

Giulio Ciccone moved up a place to seventh in the general classification after finishing third on the day, just behind Del Toro, while Antonio Tiberi is also in the hunt at just over a minute behind the overall leader.



In brief

IRSA releases 229,358 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 229,358 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 271,694 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1468.70 feet, which was 66.70 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 148,300 cusecs and 128,200 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1149.90 feet, which was 99.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 46,236 cusecs and 24,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 155,645, 110,858, 61,807 and 25,010 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 40,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 15,088 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Painting exhibition held

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi, hosted a vibrant exhibition featuring paintings and calligraphy by local artists. Dr. Mehdi Tavakoli, Director General of the Iranian Cultural Center, being the chief guest, inaugurated the exhibition. He praised the artists' skills and dedication. "Their work beautifully bridges tradition and modernity", he said. The Director Arts Council, on the occasion, shed light on the contribution of the Arts Council to promote art and culture. Visitors admired a variety of artworks, from traditional Islamic calligraphy to contemporary paintings. The exhibition also provided a platform for young artists to display their talent. At the closing ceremony, the Chief Guest distributed certificates and shields among participating artists. The Arts Council emphasized its commitment to supporting local talent by offering free gallery space for future exhibitions. The event was organized in collaboration with Afzal Art Gallery.

ANF arrests 6 smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting nine operations across the country, recovered as many as 2294.81 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 434.4 million and arrested six suspects, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Wednesday. He informed that 4.5 kg of ice was recovered from the luggage of a passenger visiting Doha at Islamabad International Airport. In another operation, 40 grams of MDMA powder were recovered from a parcel sent from Holland at a courier office in Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi. Similarly, 470 grams of ice was recovered from two parcels sent to Australia at a courier office in Harbanspura, Lahore. As much as 2.4 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused near Gojra Bus Station Toba Tek Singh. On a tip-off, two suspects, including a woman riding a rickshaw, were arrested near Chan Da Qila, Gujranwala and 2.4 kg of opium and 15 kg of hashish were recovered on the information of the arrested accused during a search of the house located in Wapda Town, Gujranwala. As many as 300 kg of opium hidden for smuggling were recovered near Hazarganji, Quetta.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong visiting the Photo Exhibition and Hanfu try-on tea break during the event "Celebrating the 74th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Pakistan and China." —APP Photo

Pakistan reaffirms commitment to regional development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan, representing Pakistan at the SCO Forum on Poverty Reduction and the 9th Silk Road International Expo, reaffirmed the country's strong commitment to regional connectivity, development, and shared prosperity. In a video message, Syedaal Khan extended gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China and the leadership of Shaanxi Province for hosting the events in Xi'an — a historic city symbolizing the enduring legacy of cooperation across the Silk Road. He praised President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a visionary framework carrying forward the spirit of the ancient Silk Road. "Pakistan is proud to be among the earliest and most active partners of BRI, particularly through the transformative China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is reshaping lives through strategic investments in infrastructure, energy, and regional integration," he noted. Highlighting the evolving nature

of bilateral ties, he said the partnership has now entered a vital new phase focused on human development, innovation, sustainability, and knowledge economy.

The Deputy Chairman underscored the relevance of platforms like the SCO in addressing critical global issues such as poverty eradication, health system strengthening, and expanded social protection, particularly in light of climate challenges and post-pandemic recovery. He applauded China's poverty alleviation achievements, calling them an inspiration for developing nations.

Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Syedaal Khan pointed to national programs like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), youth empowerment schemes, and universal health coverage, which aim to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

He emphasized agriculture as a key sector for mutual cooperation, particularly for its role in food security and rural employment. He

welcomed future collaboration under CPEC and the Silk Road Expo in areas such as smart agriculture, advanced irrigation systems, seed development, and agricultural processing.

The Deputy Chairman lauded China's training of 1,000 Pakistani agricultural professionals, noting that the first group of 300 experts is already receiving training in China. He reaffirmed Pakistan's eagerness to modernize its agricultural sector through deeper cooperation.

He also called for stronger cultural and educational exchanges, enhanced business-to-business linkages, and increased investment in Special Economic Zones (SEZs), emphasizing that such initiatives would pave new pathways for shared development.

In his concluding remarks, he said, "Let us continue building corridors of peace, prosperity, and inclusive development. Under the banner of regional solidarity and mutual respect, let us move forward together toward a shared future where progress becomes a collective legacy."

Pakistan will uproot terrorism: Tariq Fazal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday assured that Pakistan nation is committed to eradicating terrorism and defeating all anti-state elements. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said there would be no compromise on the country's sovereignty, integrity, and security. "Our armed forces are determined to eliminate every terrorist, whether local or backed by foreign powers," he added. Dr. Fazal strongly condemned recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan, blaming India for supporting such acts in response to its military setbacks. "India faced a humiliating defeat in a conflict where

Pakistan's air force, missile systems, and military forces responded decisively. Now, India is resorting to cowardly terrorism inside Pakistan," he said.

He further claimed that Indian analysts and officials have themselves admitted to backing groups involved in sabotage across Pakistan. "Their past statements — including threats to retaliate from Balochistan — clearly link them to subversive activities," he noted.

Referring to a recent incident in Balochistan, the minister confirmed the martyrdom of security personnel and injuries to many others, some of whom are in critical condition. "This was a clear act of terrorism, and we salute

the courage of our brave martyrs," he said.

Dr. Fazal also praised the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu for their strategic guidance and bold responses. He said the recent successful operations by Pakistan's security forces had added a new chapter to modern warfare.

Highlighting the nation's resilience, he said, "Pakistan has lost over 90,000 lives and suffered massive economic damage, yet we continue to stand firm and unmatched in the global fight against terrorism." He offered condolences to the families of the martyrs and prayed for the recovery of the injured.

CPO conducts open courts

RAWALPINDI (APP): In line with the Punjab Chief Minister's vision to provide immediate justice, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani held open courts at Waris Khan and Bani police stations.

Senior police officials including SP Rawal, SDPO Waris Khan, and SHOs were also present on the occasion. Citizens lodged various complaints related to crime, traffic, and policing. The CPO listened to their concerns and issued on-the-spot orders for legal action, adding he directed officers to ensure quick resolution of problems faced by citizens visiting police stations. He emphasized that providing timely and fair justice was the police's top priority.

The suggestions from the public regarding traffic management were also taken seriously, and the CPO gave immediate instructions to improve the situation, adding Rawalpindi Police making all out efforts in controlling crime and drug-related activities.

The CPO assured that the safety of citizens' lives and property remains the department's main priority. "Following the Chief Minister's vision, we are committed to delivering the best service and ensuring justice without delay," said CPO Hamdani adding that open courts would be continued to address the public grievances.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan pointed out that the launch of direct flights between Pakistan and Azerbaijan will have a positive impact on tourism for both countries. He also shared that Pakistan has established Islamabad Chamber of Commerce for Azerbaijan paving the way for enhanced bilateral cooperation and people-to-people connections. The visit concluded with a warm exchange of pleasantries and flowers between Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and Ambassador H.E. Khazar Farhadov, symbolizing the strong and growing ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Musadik Malik calls for equal dialogue, warns of consequences

ISLAMABAD (APP): Climate Minister Dr. Musadik Malik warned India that Pakistan will respond more aggressively than before, directing Pakistan's diplomatic corps to globally convey that Pakistan seeks equal dialogue and peaceful resolution.

In an exclusive talk with media channels, Dr. Musadik Malik stated that Pakistan has shattered India's arrogance, especially concerning its military capabilities, including Rafale jets. India's propaganda was exposed, and Pakistan responded strongly.

He emphasized that any threat to Pakistan's sovereignty and integrity will be met with unwavering resolve, leaving no

room for compromise.

Dr. Musadik Malik condemned India's unfounded claims, cautioning that failure to cease could lead to dire outcomes.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peaceful dialogue to address pressing concerns, including terrorism, Kashmir, and water disputes.

Malik announced that Pakistan's diplomats will reach out to multiple nations, aiming to raise awareness among the global community about what he described as India's false narratives and propaganda efforts.

Dr. Musadik Malik said that a detailed briefing was given by the Foreign Office regarding the current situation in

the region.

He condemned India's actions, citing the brutal treatment of civilians, including a young girl, as a stark example of the country's alleged atrocities.

Musadik Malik emphasized the need to raise global awareness about India's alleged human rights violations, particularly targeting civilians, mosques and innocent people.

Malik criticized India's approach, describing it as a mix of defensive offense, illogical reasoning and a blame game.

Dr. Musadik Malik stated that Pakistan will reach out to countries worldwide, sparing no effort to raise global awareness about the issue.

Minister inaugurates renovation of 167 schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui inaugurated the renovation of 167 Schools in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that under the project Provision of Missing Facilities in Educational Institutes of FDE in ICT we are going to renovate 167 schools in rural and urban areas of ICT.

Dr. Khalid said to address the issue of literacy in less developed areas of Pakistan 6 new schools will be established in Balochistan. He said that Daanish Schools will be established at Balochistan including Sibi, Musakhel,

Zhob, Baiker, Dera bugti and Killa Saifullah.

Education Minister said this is our symbol of our unwavering commitment to advancing education in all of Pakistan. Today marks not just the opening of new opportunities but also a gateway into a bright future. This initiative is part of our broader vision under the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to expand access, enhance quality, and ensure equity in education.

The newly renovated college in one of Islamabad's growing sectors reaffirms our focus on neighbourhood-based, accessible education for girls allowing them to pursue academic excellence

in a safe, modern, and well-equipped environment.

The IMCG F-10/2 campus includes, state-of-the-art IT labs, well-resourced libraries, spacious renovated classrooms and hall, culture room and pod cast room and renovated infrastructure with washrooms, electricity, doors and windows.

Khalid Maqbool said we are aware that the strength of any nation lies in its human capital and no investment yields higher returns than one made in the education of our daughters.

Through this institution, we aim to nurture the next generation of doctors, engineers, educators, scientists, and leaders.

Kamal reaffirms commitment to WHO's health agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal has paid tribute to the World Health Organization (WHO) for its pivotal role in promoting global health.

"Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the WHO's global health agenda," Kamal said during his address to the 78th session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

He appreciated the efforts of member states and the International Negotiating Body in drafting a pandemic agreement, noting that despite facing major challenges, Pakistan has made measurable progress.

He highlighted significant achievements including a reduction in maternal and child mortality rates

and improved immunization coverage.

Kamal also underscored Pakistan's strong and effective actions against infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, dengue, and hepatitis.

"Polio eradication remains our top priority," he emphasized, adding that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Pakistan is determined to become polio-free soon. Addressing regional concerns, Kamal condemned India's aggression, stating that innocent civilians including children have been targeted.

"Pakistan has given a strong response to Indian aggression," he stated.

He also strongly condemned the targeting hospitals and medical person-

nel in Palestine. "Such actions are a grave violation of international laws and an attack on the basic human right to health," Kamal asserted.

He criticized India's use of water as a weapon, calling it a serious threat to public health in Pakistan.

"The Indus River system is vital - not only for drinking water but also for irrigating 80% of our crops and powering our hospitals and sanitation infrastructure," he explained.

"Weaponizing water and targeting health infrastructure violates international law," the Health Minister concluded, urging the international community to hold India accountable for endangering millions of lives.

Minister launches Digital Services Package by PHAF

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada formally launched a comprehensive package of digital initiatives introduced by the Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF) to facilitate its members and allottees.

The event was also attended by Secretary Housing and Works, Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, officers from PHAF and representatives of National Police Foundation that was the key collaborator in the designing of this services-based package.

The Managing Director, PHAF, briefed the attendees on the new initiatives, highlighting how digitalizing fund transfers and records would help create a robust database to enable quicker and more informed decision-making.

Among the key highlights of the initiative are the launch of the PHAF Digital Portal and the PHAF Maintenance Services Portal, both designed to offer greater accessibility, transparency, and convenience to

PHAF's allottees—particularly overseas Pakistanis and potential investors in future housing schemes.

These services reflect the foundation's commitment to "Empowering Residents, Simplifying Processes."

They aim to revolutionize how allottees interact with PHAF, ensuring they can access and manage their property-related affairs with ease, from anywhere in the world.

Key features of the PHAF Digital Portal are included real-time access to property details, payment schedules, history, and allotment status, online payment facility for installment plans and dues, project announcements and updates directly communicated through the portal, membership services and exclusive insights into upcoming projects along with automated alerts and reminders about due payments and official communications.

Whereas, key features of the PHAF Maintenance Services Portal were Online Bill Payments for utilities and maintenance charges, property status tracking and Real-Time

notifications for all essential service and maintenance updates.

Moreover, a revamped official PHAF website has been launched, which now acts as a centralized information hub, enhancing accessibility and transparency for users.

Minister Pirzada and Secretary Bangash commended the PHAF team for their tireless efforts in launching these much-needed services.

The minister emphasized that the initiatives align perfectly with the government's vision of digital transformation and e-governance.

"This transition from conventional systems to modern digital platforms will not only facilitate citizens—both local and overseas but also help dispel misinformation by providing accurate data," said Minister Pirzada.

He further urged all housing organizations to adopt merit-based systems driven by digital transformation, stating that such initiatives have now become essential to ensure public service efficiency and institutional integrity.

Man died after falling into well

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A man died after falling into a well in Ab Band district of Ghazni, an official said on Wednesday. Police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok Afghan News the incident happened when a man fell into a well of a karez system in Chochorki village on Tuesday. He said the well's mouth also broke and its debris fell on the man, but residents pulled him out and evacuated him to hospital where he breathed his last Wednesday (morning).

5 individuals hurt in blast

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): Five people were injured as a result of an explosion in the Ghaziabad district of Kunar on Wednesday, an official said. Information and Culture Director Jannat Gul said the blast occurred in the Gurin area of the district, targeting local workers engaged in road construction. He explained: "Local residents were building a road in the area, using explosives to break stones. One of the devices exploded unexpectedly, injuring five individuals."

Afghan export value decreased by \$14.4 million

KABUL (TOLONews): The National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) has announced that the country's export value decreased by \$14.4 million in the first month of the solar year (Hamal, 1404) compared to the month of Hoot of last year.

The spokesperson of the authority said that the value of the country's imports also saw a decline of \$160.3 million in Hamal.

Mohammad Halim Rafi, spokesperson for the National Statistics and

Information Authority, said: "The total export value in Hoot 1403 reached 100.1 million USD; analysis of the figures shows that in Hamal 1404, exports decreased by 14.4 million USD compared to the previous month."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment and the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock attribute this decline to tensions between Pakistan and India and the lack of fresh fruit export season. They assured that efforts to increase exports

are ongoing.

Mohammad Younus Mohmand, first deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "One reason for the low export is the conflicts between India and Pakistan. Additionally, in Hamal, our dried fruits are exported to India, but fresh fruits are not yet ripe. Other goods are also exported, and we assure you that Afghanistan's relations with the world are improving."

Mirwais Haji Zada, deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock,

said: "The main reasons are the closure of the Torkham route and the Wagah border. Our traders had good exports to India, but the closure of Wagah border reduced them. Some traders had their goods stuck at the Karachi border and couldn't access them."

According to data from the National Statistics and Information Authority, most exports in Hamal went to Pakistan, India, and the UAE, while most imports came from Iran, Pakistan, and China.

Breshna Sharket's CEO meets Governor

CHARIKAR (BNA): The CEO of Breshna Sharket and Parwan Governor Discuss Expansion of Power Networks.

The CEO of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) and the Governor of Parwan met to discuss the expansion of power networks in the Barikab Industrial Park and the extension of the power transmission line.

According to a statement by Breshna Company, Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, the CEO of Breshna, met in his office with Mufti Mohammad Idris Anwari, the Governor of Parwan.

During the meeting, they discussed the development of electricity networks, the substation in Barikab Industrial Park, and the extension of a new power transmission line in the province.

The Governor of Parwan praised the recent efforts of Breshna's leadership in launching power generation and network development projects and called for electricity expansion in some newly established areas of the province.

Dr. Abdul Bari Omar assured the governor that, considering the available resources, necessary cooperation would be provided for network development.

Dr. Abdul Bari Omar added that the Barikab substation and the new power line extension are part of the company's operational plans.

It is worth mentioning that with the establishment of this substation and new line, Barikab Industrial Park and large parts of Parwan province will benefit from electricity.

Badri meets Iranian Minister in Tehran

KABUL (BNA): Mullah Hedayatullah Badri, the country's Minister of Mines and Petroleum, met with Mohsen Paknejad, Iran's Minister of Petroleum, during an official visit to Iran.

The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in various sectors, including the survey, exploration, extraction, and exploitation of mineral resources, oil, and gas.

The two ministers highlighted the significance of implementing existing memorandums of understanding, particularly in sectors such as experience and skill transfer, exploration, and development of Afghanistan's mineral, oil, and gas reserves.

The two ministers also emphasized the need for joint investments in Afghanistan's rich mineral resources and discussed strategies for improving human resource capacity in both nations.

China, Afghanistan Foreign Ministers meets in Beijing

KABUL (BNA): The country's Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met today, Wednesday in Beijing to discuss bilateral ties and foster economic cooperation between their countries.

During the discussions, Minister Muttaqi emphasized China's pivotal role as one of Afghanistan's most important economic partners. He expressed optimism about a substantial increase in trade volume in the near future, highlighting the potential for mutual benefit.

To further bolster economic ties, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi proposed the establishment of inter-governmental commissions aimed at facilitating technical discussions and cooperation.

Minister Wang Yi responded positively, reaffirming China's commitment



ment to providing ongoing political and economic support to Afghanistan. He pledged to work towards removing barriers hinder-

ing the import of Afghanistan agricultural products and other goods, thereby promoting greater economic integration.

ICRC treats over 19,000 people in Helmand

L A S H K A R G A H (Pajhwok): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says it provided free treatment to over 19,000 people in southern Helmand province

and neighbouring areas over the past solar year, including surgeries and physical rehabilitation services for the disabled.

Sewakogan, a representative of the ICRC in Helmand, told Pajhwok Afghan News they have been delivering healthcare services across a range of sectors in the province for the past 15 years.

He said that in the previous year alone, they treated 19,189 patients free of charge and the treatment also included surgical operations.

He added: "Among these patients, 393 individuals were provided with prosthetic legs and arms, 271

received wheelchairs, and thousands of others received various medical services—35 percent of them were women."

He further said that they aim to expand cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health to broaden the scope of healthcare services in the region.

He stated: "We treat individuals from Helmand and neighbouring provinces who have lost limbs due to various reasons, suffer from cerebral palsy, or have physical deformities—according to the Red Cross guidelines."

Meanwhile, patients receiving treatment at the ICRC's physical rehabilitation centre for the disabled in Lashkargah expressed satisfaction with the free and quality healthcare services.

They said they had lost limbs during previous conflicts and could not afford

artificial limbs, but this centre was now providing them with free, high-quality assistance.

Ziaul Haq, a resident of Maiwand district in Kandahar, said: "I lost one of my legs in a roadside landmine explosion. At first, I went to Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar for treatment, but they could not provide an artificial limb. I came here, and now they have made a leg for me. I received proper treatment."

Similarly, Lali Agha, a resident of Musa Qala district in Helmand, said: "Ten years ago, I lost a leg in a landmine explosion. I came here and received a prosthetic leg. I feel very happy."

According to ICRC officials, the committee provided free healthcare services to 215,000 people across Afghanistan last year.

Afghanistan among worst-hit by food insecurity in 2024

KABUL (Amu TV): Afghanistan ranks among the top nine countries with more than one million people facing emergency levels of food insecurity, according to the Global Report on Food Crises 2025, jointly produced by Food Security Information Network and partner agencies.

The report says that 3.6 million Afghans are expected to face IPC Phase 4 levels of food insecurity—the second-highest classification before famine.

The country joins a grim list that includes Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Pakistan, where conflict, economic shocks, and climate-

related disasters are pushing millions into crisis. Sudan tops the list with 8.5 million people in IPC Phase 4 and an additional 800,000 in Phase 5, categorized as famine.

The WFP in Afghanistan described the data as "not the records we want to break." While Afghanistan saw slight improvements in food security conditions in 2024, the sharp reduction in humanitarian funding remains a major concern. The GRFC warns that operational disruptions due to budget shortfalls—alongside persistent insecurity—are compounding the crisis, with nutrition services for millions of children at risk.

The WFP stressed the

need for urgent and sustained donor support to prevent a further deterioration in Afghanistan's humanitarian situation. With humanitarian funding expected to decline by up to 45 percent globally in 2025, the report warns of a worsening outlook, particularly in low-income countries like Afghanistan.

In its analysis, the GRFC attributes Afghanistan's food insecurity to a combination of economic shocks, persistent poverty, and fragile governance structures, exacerbated by a withdrawal of development aid and banking restrictions following the Taliban's return to power.

Zalmay Khalilzad's wife wants sanctions on IEA eased



KABUL (Pajhwok): Cheryl Benard, the wife of former US ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, has argued that denying women's activities in Afghanistan presents a misleading image of the country. She asserts that no one should fear returning to Afghanistan and, if the international community genuinely wishes to assist Afghans, it must ease the current sanctions.

Benard made the observations in an article she penned a month after her visit to Kabul.

Earlier in the month, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem announced the "Temporary Protected Status" (TPS) designation for Afghan refugees in the US — which expired on May 20 — would not be renewed and that the approximately 8,000 people affected should prepare to return home.

According to Noem, the

decision was based on assessments by her department, in consultation with the US State Department, which concluded the security situation in Afghanistan had improved and that the country's stabilising economy no longer constituted a barrier to repatriation.

In her article, published in The National Interest, Benard wrote the decision was criticised, immediately and at times histrionically, by the affected Afghans and by NGOs that take care of them. She commented it was only natural that the refugees would prefer to remain in the United States and continue receiving American taxpayer support for their housing, education and living costs.

She wrote: "Shawn Van Diver of AfghanEvac called the decision "insane" and sarcastically challenged Noem to go to Afghanistan if she thinks it's so safe. I don't know how many of

these distraught dissenters have been to Afghanistan recently. "I have, and I would like to issue a message of reassurance. I would also encourage Noem to take Van Diver up on his suggestion. I confidently guarantee her a warm welcome, frank conversations, and interesting insights: just as I experienced last month in Kabul."

Benard wrote: "I can claim to know Afghanistan well, having been a regular visitor since 2003 and a student of its ups and downs since the Soviet invasion. No one would describe it as -to use President Donald Trump's measure of merit - the Riviera.

"Not now, but also not during our twenty-year tenure, when violence was high and continuous, corruption was massive and social improvements were limited to the urban elites," she added.

She acknowledged there was currently no public education available for girls above grade six, calling this "undoubtedly a travesty."

However, she noted private schools continued to operate at all levels, which could be a viable option for returnees. Benard also rejected claims made by the Feminist Majority website that Afghan women were entirely excluded from eco-

nom activity, leading to economic stagnation.

Benard recalled: "Just walking around Kabul at random, I saw saleswomen in the malls, including the young proprietor of her own perfume shop; female wait staff in restaurants; and most surprisingly to me, women operating their own pushcarts on the streets, selling household goods and seasonal fruit as they navigated the traffic. In rural areas, women always worked in farming and they still do."

She further disputed Western media claims that women must be fully veiled and accompanied by a male guardian in public.

"Clearly, this is not the case," she said. "I saw many women walking alone or with female friends, most wearing only a headscarf and no face covering."

Regarding security and safety in Afghanistan, the wife of Zalmay Khalilzad said Taliban's two opponents Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah were a good example of safety.

She concluded by arguing that "the Taliban were seeking international legitimacy. If the global fraternity genuinely wanted to support the Afghan people, it should ease sanctions and allow the Afghan economy to breathe, she opined.

6-day industrial exhibition to be held in Kabul next month



KABUL (TOLONews): It has been announced that on the 6th of Jawza (solar calendar) an international exhibition for Industry Week will be held in Kabul city.

Officials from the Afghanistan Chamber of Mines and Industries said

the exhibition will feature 700 booths showcasing a variety of domestic industrial products.

Sherbaz Kaminzada, the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Mines and Industries, said: "This exhibition will have four halls

and approximately 700 booths. Everything presented at the exhibition will be domestically produced, and it will continue until the 11th of Jawza, lasting a total of six days."

Meanwhile, officials from the Afghanistan International Exhibition emphasize the importance of boosting domestic production and urge citizens to support national industries by using locally made products.

Mohammad Saber Latifi, director of the International Exhibition Center, called on the public: "Support your local products. Avoid using foreign fruits and carpets—anything that our country

can produce. Instead, use goods made in our homeland."

Sarwar Farhad, head of the Kandahar Chamber of Industries, stated: "Afghanistan has now achieved self-sufficiency in livestock feed production, and currently, livestock feed materials like oilseed cake are being exported to other countries."

According to the Afghanistan Chamber of Mines and Industries, over the course of a week, the exhibition will display products from sectors such as agriculture, carpets, mining, healthcare, banking, handicrafts, machinery, and other service and manufacturing industries.

Kabul woman turns setback into sweet success

KABUL (Pajhwok): In the heart of a narrow alley in Kabul, Susan Qazizada set out to fulfill a dream—creating Majoun, a traditional health blend of sesame, dates, and honey.

Although she completed her studies in general medicine, Susan was unable to sit the "Exit" exam, which would have qualified her to work in a medical facility. Instead, she chose to forge her own path.

A resident of the Sarkotal area in Khair Khana, Kabul, Susan graduated in 1401 (2022) from Mora University. Like many others, she had been waiting to take the Exit exam in hopes of securing employment in the healthcare sector.

However, the suspension of girls' education shattered that goal.

She reflects: "Unexpectedly, disappointment became my motivation. I was constantly searching for something beneficial—

for myself, my family, and my community—something that could serve both as a remedy and a source of income."

From medicine to making Majoun

During her internship, Susan encountered numerous patients suffering from anaemia, fatigue, stress, and chronic pain.

She also noticed a concerning number of individuals with osteoporosis, even those who regularly consumed dairy products and were exposed to sunlight. This observation planted the seed of an idea. Turning to traditional medicine and online resources, she began researching natural remedies. It was then she discovered that calcium is a rich source of calcium.

She learned that in Iran, people often consume sesame paste with date syrup as part of their daily diet. This inspired her to try something similar in

Afghanistan, where high-quality sesame is readily available.

With support of her husband, Susan began her small-scale production at home.

Launching Majoun Business with \$2,000

Six months ago, Susan launched her home-based Majoun venture with an initial investment of \$2,000. Her first customers were impressed enough to return, quickly becoming regular buyers.

Today, she produces two varieties of Majoun: A basic blend made with date syrup, honey and sesame paste.

A special version fortified with ten types of nutritious powders, including almond, fig, dried oleaster, ginger, coconut, clove, cinnamon, cardamom and ginseng.

"We use no chemical preservatives," she explains. "Instead, we rely on natural ones like clove,

cinnamon and lemon juice. Adding synthetic ingredients would only diminish its nutritional value."

The production process begins by washing and drying the sesame seeds, followed by roasting and grinding them into a paste using a specialised machine. The paste is then blended with honey and date syrup. In the premium version, the additional powdered ingredients are mixed in.

Susan packages the Majoun in 500-gram and 1-kilogram jars.

Depending on demand, she prepares 10 to 20 jars each day.

She says: "This Majoun benefits everyone—children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly, athletes and even diabetic patients. Those looking to lose weight can consume it in small amounts, while those aiming to gain weight can enjoy it with bread."

Susan dreams of one day

opening a clinic where she can recommend her product as a dietary supplement: "It's a complete food, not a medicine—but it has healing properties."

A family venture

Behind Susan's success stands her husband, Zekruddin Qazizada, who plays an active role in the business.

"I've supported my wife at every step," he told Pajhwok. "God willing, we plan to open a larger facility to produce not only elixirs but also sugar-based halwa and other nutritious breakfast items."

He currently assists with ingredient sourcing, packaging, and marketing.

Expert opinion: Women like Susan drive economic empowerment

Zahir Behzad, an economic analyst, praised Susan's initiative: "In Iran, women-led businesses contribute 12% of the national income. In Turkey and Pakistan, the figures are



even higher."

He believes that, with adequate security and a supportive environment, Afghan women entrepreneurs have the potential to generate income, create jobs, and contribute meaningfully to the national

economy.

Customers

Local shopkeeper Mahmood Omari commented: "This Majoun tastes excellent, and its quality is high. Customers often ask for it, and we use it ourselves too. Demand is

strong."

Another Kabul resident, Fresha Ghousi, has been using Majoun for six months and has noticed significant benefits: "It was particularly useful during Ramadan—I felt full throughout the day."



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meeting with Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi in Beijing.

India's proxies will be defeated: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to defeating terrorism and said India's proxies would be defeated from Pakistan's soil.

Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan, calling it a cowardly act by enemies who have failed to confront Pakistan in traditional warfare.

"This morning, a school bus was deliberately targeted in Khuzdar. Innocent children were attacked. It is a day of national mourning," he said.

Tarar said India was supporting terrorism in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Fitna al-Khawarij.

He said, "These are ene-

mies who do not know our history. When the time comes to sacrifice, even the sacrifices of our children are worthy of being written in golden words."

He praised Pakistan's armed forces for their courage and resilience in defending the nation. "Thanks to Allah, our forces have always defeated the enemy with bravery. But today's attack on schoolchildren shows how desperate our enemies have become," he added.

The minister said that after losing in direct combat, the enemy was now using proxy warfare to destabilize the country. "They lack the courage to face us openly. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, our forces have shown dominance. Having failed on the battlefield, the enemy is now trying to create unrest in Balochistan and KP

through terrorist groups," he said.

He assured the House that these attacks would not weaken the nation's resolve. "Our unity is our strength. These foreign-funded terrorists cannot match our willpower. We have previously taken down enemy airbases, missiles, and plans."

Tarar said the attack on schoolchildren has been condemned by the House. "We will not rest until every terrorist is punished. Investigations are ongoing, and those behind this attack will be brought to justice."

He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured children, some of whom are in critical condition. "May Allah grant them a quick recovery. Our resolve stands firm—India's proxies will be defeated, and terrorism will be completely wiped out," he added.

DPM, Afghan FM agree to work together on mutual interests

BEIJING (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM) Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday met with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, in Beijing.

During the meeting, both the dignitaries agreed to work together to advance mutual interests, including in the domains of trade, transit, connectivity and security, a DPM's Office news release said.

The two recalled DPM/FM's recent visit to Kabul and welcomed positive momentum in bilateral ties, including enhanced diplomatic engagement, trade, and transit facilitation.

Pakistan, China agree
The Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, China and Afghanistan on Wednesday agreed to deepen Belt and Road Initiative cooperation and extend the CPEC to Afghanistan.

The decision was made after Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Member of the CPC Political Bureau & Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi, and Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, held an informal trilateral meeting here, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The three Foreign Ministers reaffirmed trilateral cooperation as a vital platform to promote regional security and economic connectivity.

They discussed enhancing diplomatic engagement, strengthening communications, and taking practical steps to boost trade, infrastructure, and development as key drivers of shared prosperity.

The Ministers underscored their shared commitment to countering terrorism and fostering stability and development in the region.

It was agreed that the 6th Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting will be held in Kabul at an early, mutually convenient date.

Paistan fully prepared: DG ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said Pakistan is a peace-loving nation but remains fully prepared for war if one is imposed upon it. In an interview with BBC Urdu, he remarked that India has fostered arrogance and a false sense of confidence, embracing a unilateral mindset while disregarding international human rights conventions. He added that a conflict can any time be ignited in the presence of such a mindset, devoid of rationality, primarily to pacify its domestic public.

When asked about the possibility of a nuclear war between the two atomic powers of South Asia, Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry dismissed the notion as sheer stupidity, an inconceivable and absurd idea. He emphasized that Pakistan is a responsible nation and has contained escalation in the recent military conflict with India through a measured, calibrated, and proportionate response.

The Director General ISPR said India targeted innocent civilians, including women and children, to advance its political rhetoric.

At least 82 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza (AP): Israeli strikes continued to pound the Gaza Strip Wednesday, despite a surge in international anger at Israel's widening offensive. The attacks killed at least 82 people, including several women and a week-old infant, according to the Gaza Health Ministry and area hospitals.

Israel began allowing dozens of humanitarian trucks into Gaza on Tuesday, but the aid has not yet reached Palestinians in desperate need.

Jens Laerke, the spokesperson for the U.N.'s humanitarian agency, said no trucks were picked up from the Gaza side of Kerem Shalom, the Israeli border crossing with southern Gaza.

U.N. spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said Tuesday that although the aid had entered Gaza, aid workers were not able to bring it to distribution points, after the Israeli military forced them to reload the supplies onto separate trucks and workers ran out of time.

The Israeli defense body that oversees humanitarian aid to Gaza said trucks were entering Gaza on Wednesday morning, but it was unclear if that aid would move deeper into Gaza for distribution. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said its staff had waited several hours to collect aid from the border crossing in order to begin distribution but were unable to do so on Tuesday.

A few dozen Israeli activists opposed to Israel's decision to allow aid into Gaza while Hamas still holds Israeli hostages attempted to block trucks carrying supplies Wednesday morning, but were kept back by Israeli police.

A group of diplomats came under fire while visiting Jenin, a city in the Israel-occupied West Bank, according to the Palestinian Authority. The diplomats were on official mission to observe the humanitarian situation in Jenin when shots rang out.

An aid worker, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisal, said a delegation of about 20 regional, European and Western diplomats were standing near the entrance of the Jenin refugee camp when they heard gunshots just before 2 p.m., though it was unclear where the shots came from, she said. No one was injured, she added.

The Israeli military said the visit had been approved, but the delegation "deviated from the approved route" and Israeli soldiers fired warning shots to distance them from the area. The military apologized and said they will contact all of the relevant countries involved in the visit.

Footage shows a number of diplomats giving media interviews as rapid shots ring out close to the group, forcing them to run for cover. European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said firing even warning shots was unacceptable and called on Israel to investigate what happened.

The Italian government of Premier Giorgia Meloni also demanded an explanation, saying that its vice consul was among those who came under fire.

Jenin has been the site of Israel's widespread crackdown against West Bank militants since earlier this year.

On Jan. 21 — just two days after its ceasefire deal with Hamas in Gaza — Israeli forces descended on Jenin as they have dozens of times since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel. The fighting displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians, one of the largest West Bank displacements in years.

On Tuesday, the United Kingdom suspended free trade talks with Israel over its intensifying assault, a step that came a day after the U.K., Canada and France promised concrete steps to prompt Israel to halt the war. Separately, the European Union was reviewing an EU pact governing trade ties with Israel over its conduct of the war in Gaza, according to its foreign policy chief.

Israel says it is prepared to stop the war once all the hostages taken by Hamas return home and Hamas is defeated, or is exiled and disarmed. Hamas says it is prepared to release the hostages in exchange for a full Israeli withdrawal from the territory and an end to the war. It rejects demands for exile and disarmament.

Israel called back its senior negotiating team from ceasefire talks in the Qatari capital of Doha on

Tuesday, saying it would leave lower-level officials in place instead. Qatari leaders, who are mediating negotiations, said there was a large gap between the two sides that they had been unable to bridge.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes continued across Gaza. In the southern city of Khan Younis, where Israel recently ordered new evacuations pending an expected expanded offensive, 24 people were killed, 14 of them from the same family. A week-old infant was killed in central Gaza.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes, but has said it is targeting Hamas infrastructure and accused Hamas militants of operating from civilian areas.

Israeli troops also have surrounded two of northern Gaza's last functioning hospitals, preventing anyone from leaving or entering the facilities, hospital staff and aid groups said this week.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday urged world leaders to take immediate action to end Israel's siege on Gaza, issuing the appeal during a visit to Beirut, where he is expected to discuss the disarmament of Palestinian factions in Lebanon's refugee camps.

"I call on world leaders to take urgent and decisive measures to break the siege on our people in the Gaza Strip," Abbas said, demanding the immediate entry of aid, an end to the Israeli offensive, the release of detainees, and a full withdrawal from Gaza.

PHC restrains anti-corruption from arresting ex-CM Mahmood

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has restrained arrest of former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians' chief Mahmood Khan in a case related to FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption and adjourned the hearing till 18th June, on Wednesday.

PHC two-member bench comprising of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal heard the petition. The counsel Sultan Muhammad Khan, informed the court that the petitioner is former Chief Minister, facing an inquiry initiated by the Anti-

Corruption in 2018, but no information was provided to him. He later approached the High Court and was granted interim relief.

The lawyer alleged that the FIR registered against Mahmood Khan was a result of political vendetta. He stated that in Pakistan, it is a misfortune that whenever someone leaves the government, cases are registered against them. Mahmood Khan was previously a member of PTI and later formed another party, which led to him being targeted.

The lawyer informed the court that when they challenged the inquiry, they were not given access to the FIR, and it was not told to them what crime they had committed. Later,

when comments were sought on the writ petition, it was revealed that a FIR had been registered. Another petitioner, Tariq Mahmood, had already filed a writ petition for the cancellation of the FIR and was granted a stay order.

The lawyer stated that on September 3, 2024, the petitioner received a notice from the Anti-Corruption Department to appear in inquiry number 45, and some essential questions were asked, which were answered. However, despite this, the Anti-Corruption Department is trying to harass him in different ways.

The lawyer argued that the FIR registered against Mahmood Khan relates to his tenure as Minister,

which ended 10 years ago. Despite this, these tactics are being used to harass him. The Constitution clearly states that everyone has the right to defend themselves, but the petitioner is being harassed through notices and other means.

The Additional Advocate General informed the court that the petitioner has not joined the investigation so far, and there are other petitioners who have also filed petitions for the cancellation of the FIR. The court ordered that the writ petition be clubbed with other petitions and restrained the Anti-Corruption Department from arresting Mahmood Khan till 18th June.

Kundi announces 'Save the Province' protest in KP on May 26

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday announced that the protest scheduled for May 26 under the "Save the Province" campaign will be a historic event.

He made these remarks while addressing a meeting of office-bearers from the subsidiary organizations of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Also present at the meeting were PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa General Secretary Shuja Khanzada, also known as Shazi Khan,

Deputy General Secretaries Abrar Saeed Swati and Malik Saeed.

Governor Kundi strongly criticized the provincial government, saying that the current administration has devastated the province.

"Lawlessness has reached alarming levels, corruption records are being shattered, and the destruction of the province continues unabated," he said.

He emphasized that the PPP cannot remain silent like other political parties in the face of such deterioration.

He said the protest outside the provincial assembly in Peshawar on May 26 would represent the sentiments of the people. The meeting also included discussions on various suggestions regarding the upcoming demonstration.

Prominent figures who attended the meeting included PPP Women's Wing Provincial Leader and MPA Neelofar, former MPA and Women's Wing Information Secretary Mehr Sultana, Malik Amjad Awan President, Peoples Youth Organization, Rashid Khan Afridi President,

Peoples Students Federation, Riaz Yousafzai General Secretary, Peoples Students Federation, Shah Zulqarnain President Peoples Labour Bureau, Naseeb Chand President Peoples Minority Wing, Dr. Janbaz Afridi President Peoples Doctor Forum, Khawaja Yawar Nasir President Peoples Culture Wing, Gohar Rehman Khattak President Peoples Lawyers Forum, Pir Aftab Shah President Peoples Ulema and Mashaikh Wing and Sikandar Iqbal President Peoples Trade Association.

Gandpur directs to give special attention to vocational education

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting regarding the Annual Development Program held here with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur in the chair, has reviewed the progress on the projects being carried out under the Industries department. Relevant cabinet members, Additional Chief Secretary for Planning, concerned administrative secretaries, and other officials participated in the meeting.

The Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to pay special attention to the technical and vocational education sector, stating that substantial investment is needed in technical education to provide employment opportu-



nities for the youth. He instructed that the existing technical training system be aligned with the demands of national and international job markets. Additionally, he directed the establishment of an endowment fund to provide scholarships to students in the field of technical education.

In order to enable youth to secure employment in international job markets,

the Chief Minister ordered work on international certification of technical training programs. He also directed the launch of programs for the availability of master trainers to ensure the provision of quality technical training.

Furthermore, he instructed that the linkages between technical training institutions and local industries be strengthened and improved. The Chief Minister

made it clear that technical certification should be mandatory for recruitment of technical staff in government departments. He emphasized that no technical personnel—such as plumbers, electricians, or drivers—should be recruited without a recognized certificate. "Hiring unqualified candidates for technical positions is a violation of the rights of certified individuals", he remarked and added that all departments must amend relevant rules and regulations for this purpose, and violations will result in action against the responsible officials.

The Chief Minister also emphasized special attention to projects for economic and industrial zones to promote industrial and commercial activities in the province.