

**Eidul Azha likely on June 7**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) has predicted that Eidul Adha 2025 is likely to be celebrated across Pakistan on Saturday, June 7, based on astronomical calculations. According to SUPARCO, the birth of the new moon for the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah will occur on May 27, 2025, at 08:02 am (Pakistan Standard Time).



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# President, PM confer baton of Field Marshal on COAS

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday jointly conferred the baton of Field Marshal upon Syed Asim Munir, Chief of the Army Staff during a special investiture ceremony at President House here.

The prime minister handed over the baton to Field Marshal Asim Munir during the ceremony. Quaid of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Nawaz Sharif, federal cabinet ministers, governors, chief ministers, members of Parliament and services chiefs attended the ceremony.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were also in attendance. In his remarks, the President said, "Today, we are gathered here to honour our valiant armed forces and heroes of the Army, Navy, and Air Force who defended the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our motherland against unprovoked Indian aggression. The entire nation is proud of all of you."

"It is a matter of great pleasure for me to confer the baton of Field Marshal upon Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir Nishan-e-Imtiaz Military in recognition of extraordinary service to Pakistan during this turbulent period, and with full confidence in his command and character."

"I, as President of Pakistan, hereby promote General Syed Asim Munir to the full rank of Field Marshal and confer the baton of the Field Marshal. As Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, I was more than happy to approve the conferment." The President said, "Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, your military career is forged with courage and refined by wisdom, a



commitment to lead with vision, strength and honour at the highest level of our armed forces." Under Field Marshal Asim Munir's wise leadership, Pakistan's Armed Forces created an unprecedented level of operational cohesiveness, he remarked. He noted that throughout three weeks of Marka-e-Haq, Field Marshal Asim displayed a pragmatic understanding of the need to avoid escalation.

"Our diplomatic response was also appreciated by the world. Our media also played a role in highlighting the truth." He thanked the entire Pakistani nation, who stood united and resilient in the face of the enemy's aggression. "Our brave Armed Forces and citizens presented a united front and became a solid wall. Our victory was both military

and moral. The world witnessed our strength, our restraint, and our resilience."

He reiterated that Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and believed in peaceful coexistence. "But our desire for peace must never be mistaken for weakness. We will not tolerate any attack upon our soil, and if needed, we will fight for every inch in the air, sea, rivers, jungles, and deserts. Any act of aggression will be met with full force at our command," he asserted.

President Zardari said, "This conferment of the rank of Field Marshal is a national recognition of the Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir's remarkable services to the homeland. It is an acknowledgement of his firm leadership in defending Pakistan's frontiers."

## Pakistan to take control of rivers: ISPR DG

ISLAMABAD: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry warned India that Pakistan will take control of all six rivers flowing from Kashmir if it violated the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). In an interview with Al Jazeera TV, the ISPR DG said that the Pakistan's armed forces gave befitting reply to Indian aggression.

"India will never forget our response," he remarked. He said that the military strategy adopted by Pakistan would be studied for decades to come. He added that Pakistan had successfully thwarted India's objectives in the recent confrontation, claiming the nation's military superiority was evident. "Our armed forces' morale and superiority over India have further deepened public trust and affection towards the military, which now stands as a symbol of pride and honour," he said.

The ISPR DG dismissed Indian media's narratives and said that it ran fabricated stories after the Pahalgam attack. "The world saw Indian forces waving white flags at several points along the Line of Control," he added. He said that Pakistan did not respond in the darkness of night like cowards.

"We publicly declared our intention to respond, selected 26 targets, and successfully hit all of them," he said. Chaudhry also accused India of launching an information war filled with lies and propaganda. He also criticized India's internal political and social dynamics. — Aljazeera

## Pakistan won't be intimidated by use or threat of force

**Army top brass vows to decimate India-backed terrorist proxies with full force**

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, chaired the 270th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters, Rawalpindi.

The Forum commenced with Fateha for the martyrs of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos and the heinous terrorist attack in Khuzdar, Balochistan, an atrocity perpetrated through India-sponsored proxies which resulted in the loss of four innocent children and two adults. The Forum unequivocally condemned this barbaric act, noting its deliberate targeting of non-combatants, particularly children, as a reprehensible violation of all norms of humanity and international conduct.

The Forum also paid solemn tribute to all martyrs of Marka-e-Haq who laid down their lives in defence of the nation during India's unprovoked aggression. It reaffirmed that the sacred blood of the Shuhada shall not go in vain and safety and security of the people of Pakistan will continue to be the foremost priority of the Armed Forces. The Forum extended its felicitations to the Army Chief on his conferment as Field Marshal, acknowledging his strategic foresight, resolute leadership, and enduring contributions to national defence. A comprehensive review of the prevailing internal and external security environment was undertaken, with particular emphasis on the successful conclusion of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, a decisive chapter of Marka-e-Haq.

The Forum lauded the professionalism, synergy, courage, and resilience of Pakistan's Armed Forces and the unwavering support of the nation, which together repelled aggression with exemplary precision and resolve. The forum acknowledged Pakistan's media and information warriors who stood in step with the State against Indian propaganda onslaught, fake news and war hysteria, while accurately portray-

ing facts and figures thereby fostering public trust and countering misinformation.

The forum wholeheartedly recognized the spirit and dynamic contributions of the Pakistani youth, whose passion and patriotism rallied the National spirit as well as projection of national narrative. The Forum saluted the political leadership for their foresight and steering the Nation during the Marka-e-Haq with utmost clarity, conviction and resolve.

It was noted that history would recall with pride Pakistan's swift and resolute defensive posture, which neutralized a grave threat within hours of its emergence. Pakistan responded with strategic restraint and operational clarity, upholding both deterrence and moral authority. The Forum reaffirmed Pakistan's unyielding resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any act of aggression or misadventure.

Reiterating Pakistan's strategic stance, the Forum declared: "No one can coerce Pakistan through the use or threat of force. The nation will take all measures necessary to safeguard its vital interests." The Forum deliberated in depth on the threat posed by India-backed terrorist proxies operating in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was observed that following its military failure in the wake of the Pahalgam incident, India so called and self-claimed victim of terrorism but actually a perpetrator of terrorism and epicenter of regional instability, has upscaled the use of covert means, employing non-state actors to pursue its destabilization agenda. The Forum resolved that Pakistan will never allow its peace to be compromised by externally sponsored terrorism. The Armed Forces, in close synergy with intelligence and law enforcement agencies, will pursue all proxies and facilitators of terrorism with unrelenting resolve. These hostile elements, trained and financed to incite chaos and fear, will be dismantled and decimated with full force of national will and institutional strength, In Sha Allah.

## India will never forget defeat: PM

**F.P. Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said India would never forget the defeat in the recent "briefest yet most effective war" against India that also falsified those who thought Pakistan lagged behind in conventional war.

"Some thought Pakistan was behind in conventional warfare - this war proved them wrong. Our unity, courage, and faith will lead us to economic progress and ultimate victory... India will never forget this defeat. And Insha Allah, the day will dawn when Kashmir becomes part of Pakistan," he said while addressing a ceremony for distribution of compensation cheques among the families of those martyred in recent Marka-e-Haq - the recent Pakistan-India war. He was joined by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq and Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam, who lauded the leadership and valor shown by the Armed Forces and civilians. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif stated that Pakistan's measured, yet forceful military response, to Indian aggression had rewritten history and proven Pakistan's defensive capabilities to the world.

The prime minister reflected on the recent conflict, triggered by what he described as India's "false flag" Pahalgam operation, and lauded the unwavering courage of the Armed Forces and citizens of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). "A few days ago, India's baseless accusations over the Pahalgam incident attempted to sabotage regional peace. In response, Pakistan offered a full international investigation.

But instead of accepting the offer, India launched attacks on Bahawalpur and AJK, resulting in 35 martyrs and 55 injured. We responded decisively downing six Indian jets including their Rafale and MiG-29 - and defended with honour using Al-Fatah missiles," he said.

The prime minister recounted pivotal moments

## IMF lauds Pakistan's economic progress

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reaffirmed his government's commitment to fast-track institutional reforms alongside macroeconomic stabilization, asserting that Pakistan was now firmly on the path to economic development, following a period of recovery and stability.

The Prime Minister expressed these remarks during high-level meeting with a delegation from International Monetary Fund (IMF) led by Jihad Azour at the PM's Office. "With the grace of Allah, Pakistan is now moving from economic stability toward sustainable growth," Shehbaz Sharif said. He emphasized that the government's top priority was not only to sustain macroeconomic gains but also to expedite comprehensive institutional reforms, crucial for long-term resilience.

During the meeting, the discussions focused on the implementation and progress of ongoing IMF programme in Pakistan. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the economic reforms undertaken by the government and their accruing positive outcomes. The IMF delegation acknowledged the progress made under the reform agenda and assured the Prime Minister of continued support from the Fund in Pakistan's efforts for economic stability and inclusive growth. The meeting was also attended by key cabinet members including Federal Ministers Ahsan, Iqbal Cheema and Muhammad Aurangzeb, Secretary Finance Imdadullah Bosal, FBR Chairman Rashid Mehmood Langrial, and senior officials.

of the conflict, describing the early morning call from now Field Marshal COAS Asim Munir, confirming Indian missile strikes, and the decision to retaliate. "This was the briefest yet most effective war, where Pakistan defended without harming civilians. Our forces led by COAS Asim Munir turned the tide. By May 10, India was pleading for a ceasefire. It was Allah's Will and our soldiers' courage that avenged past wounds, including the memory of 1971," said the prime minister, praising national unity and Armed Forces' prowess across land, air, and sea.

Shehbaz Sharif told the gathering that the government had announced a comprehensive compensation package for the families of martyrs and the injured with Rs10 million per martyr's family and Rs2.5 million per injured individual.

Besides the families of martyrs of Armed Forces would be given Rs19-42 million each for housing, full salaries and allowances until their retirement dates, free education for bereaved

children, and Rs1 million marriage grant for their respective daughters. "No amount can equal the lives lost. But it's our duty to support these heroic families with dignity," he said. "Their reward lies with Allah, and this nation stands indebted forever." He also reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmir cause, noting that his brother ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and all political parties had consistently advocated for Kashmir's right to self-determination.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, welcomed the prime minister and lauded his compassionate leadership.

"The Rs10 million compensation for the martyrs and Rs2 million for the injured is a commendable step," Muqam stated, also lauding "unmatched" overwhelming spirit in both troops and civilians. The families of martyrs have shown a level of zeal and courage that is nothing short of extraordinary, he added.

## Pakistan kicks out another Indian HC staffer

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Declaring another Indian High Commission staffer as persona non grata, Pakistan has expelled the diplomat asking him to leave the country within 24 hours, the second such expulsion in this month.

The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday summoned Charge d'Affaires Geetika Srivastava and handed her a protest demarche. According to a statement released by the Foreign Office in Islamabad on Thursday, Indian Charge d'Affaires Geetika Srivastava was summoned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A letter of protest was handed over to the Indian Charge d'Affaires, and was instructed to prevent Indian diplomatic personnel from being involved in negative activities."

The statement further said "An official of the Indian High Commission in Pakistan was declared persona non grata. The Indian official was found to be involved in activities contrary to his diplomatic status. The said Indian official was ordered to leave Pakistan within 24 hours."

A day earlier, India had also expelled a Pakistani official working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on charges of involvement in espionage. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the staffer at the Pakistan mission has been declared "persona non grata" for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status and that he has been given 24 hours to leave India.

On May 13, India expelled another Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage. Following India's action, Pakistan had also expelled an Indian staffer posted at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Tensions between Pakistan and India escalated after the Pahalgam attack, which claimed 26 lives. Following which India carried out missile attacks on civilian targets in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir on May 7, following which Pakistan destroyed multiple targets including several Indian jet fighter planes in its retaliation.

## Thank You for Strengthening Pakistan's Energy Backbone



Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Dar  
Deputy Prime Minister



Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif  
Prime Minister



Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik  
Federal Minister for Petroleum



Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb  
Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue



Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema  
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs & Establishment



Mr. Momin Agha  
Secretary Petroleum

**We commend the Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan for resolving the Sales Tax matter impacting oil refineries for this fiscal year.**

**To permanently resolve, we strongly urge the government to restore the taxable status of petroleum products in the upcoming federal budget, to ensure investor confidence and progress on over USD 6 billion investment in refinery upgrades critical to energy security.**



ARGLIS





## Pakistani Ambassador attends guinness record ceremony



**F.P. Report**

DUBAI: Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, joined a special event at Pakistan Association Dubai (PAD), where a UAE flag made from 24,514 handprints was recognized by Guinness World Records. Consul General Hussain Muhammad also attended.

The flag, symbolizing unity, featured

prints from over 100 nationalities. It was a joint effort by PAD, Emirates Loves Pakistan, and artist Rubab Zahra. Ambassador Tirmizi praised the project as a heartfelt expression of community spirit and mentioned a new book by Pakistani author Khan Zaman on Sheikh Zayed's legacy. PAD President Dr. Faisal Ikram thanked all contributors, calling the achievement a proud moment for the community.

## Paramedics at KBM hospital stage protest

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Paramedical and Class IV staff at Nasrullah Khan Memorial Hospital held a protest on Thursday against the provincial government's failure to increase salaries in light of rising inflation.

The demonstration, organized under the banner of the All Government Employees Coordination Council (AGECC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was part of a province-wide campaign demanding fair wage increases for government

employees.

Speaking at the protest, Muhammad Asif Khan, President of Nasrullah Khan Memorial Hospital, expressed disappointment over the government's priorities. "It is unfortunate that salaries of parliamentarians are being increased while government employees continue to struggle without any relief," he said.

Asif Khan criticized the provincial government for its inaction, calling the lack of salary adjustment during soaring inflation "an act of hostility towards

employees." He also strongly opposed recent pension reforms, accusing the government of attempting to "snatch the last morsel of bread from pensioners."

He urged the government to immediately accept their demands, which include a salary increase in proportion to inflation and a reversal of the controversial pension reforms. "If our demands are not met, we will be forced to expand our protest movement," Asif Khan warned.

## India involved in recent terrorism in Balochistan

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the nation stood united in the face of Indian aggression, demonstrating unwavering solidarity. India is involved in the recent terrorism in Balochistan. Punjab local government institutions are of prime importance in the development of the country. He expressed these views while meeting the under training officers from Punjab Local Government Academy Lala Musa in Governor House Lahore. Various issues including the training of officers were also discussed in the meeting.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that India used the Pahalgaon incident as an excuse to target innocent people and mosques in the dark of night. He said that Pakistan had categorically denied involvement in the Pahalgaon incident. The Punjab Governor said that on the contrary, India continued its nefarious activi-

ties. He said that the Pakistan Army retaliated by targeting several Indian installations and crushed its pride. The Punjab Governor said that India



will remember the destruction of Pakistani forces on its soil for many generations. The Punjab Governor said that India is involved in the recent terrorism in Balochistan.

He said that these terrorists who play with innocent human lives will not be forgiven under any circumstances. The Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan further said that the institutions of the Punjab Local Government have special importance in

the development of the country. He said that the local government system is the foundation of any democratic system.

The Governor of Punjab

## Funeral prayers of martyred offered

**F.P. Report**

OKARA: The funeral prayer for Martyr Hafza Kausar, who was a passenger on the bus targeted in a terrorist attack in Khuzdar, was held in her native village, Chak 52-2L, Okara. The ceremony was attended by Pakistan Army personnel, political and social figures, local residents, and family members.

The atmosphere in the area was mournful, with every eye tearful. Hafza Kausar, who was residing in Khuzdar, Balochistan, with her family for educational purposes, lost her life in this attack.

Hafza Kausar's father, Ifthikhar, who is employed in the Pakistan Army, stated on this occasion that he is willing to sacrifice everything for his country. He considered his daughter's sacrifice significant for the nation and expressed his determination to make an example out of the terrorists. After the funeral prayer, prayers were offered at Hafza Kausar's grave, and floral wreaths were laid. The local community expressed pride in the Pakistani armed forces and praised the martyr's sacrifice.

## Mob attack on hospital sparks outrage

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) today issued a strong condemnation following a violent mob attack on Kohi Goth Hospital in Landhi, Karachi, which left hospital staff assaulted, ambulances damaged, and essential healthcare services disrupted.

The incident involved a mob from nearby villages storming the 250-bed facility, targeting staff with sticks and stones, and vandalizing critical infrastructure. This hospital, which offers free medical treatment to the poor and underprivileged, including specialized care for women, is now facing significant operational challenges.

The PMA expressed deep sadness and outrage over what it describes as a "crime against humanity," emphasizing that healthcare facilities are sanctuaries for the sick and injured. They argue that any attack on such institutions is an assault on the fundamental right to health and a disservice to the community.

## Three killed in Mardan

**F.P. Report**

MARDAN: Three persons including father and two sons were gunned down over a land dispute in Garyala locality in the limits of Shahbazgarh Police station here on Thursday.

The officials of Shahbazgarh Police Station said that the slain persons were identified as Ibad Khan 60, his sons Sheraz 24 and Ali 21. As per the preliminary investigations, the officials said that the deceased persons were working in their agricultural fields when their rivals armed with automatic weapons rushed to the spot and opened indiscriminate firing over them which led to their instant death.

The alleged killers, who were identified as three brothers named Kosar, Zawar and Rehmat, fled the spot after committing the triple murdered case. The police had lodged an FIR on the complaint of Farukh Siyar, sister of the victim Ibad Khan, against the alleged killers. The police officials said that they had not only begun further investigations into the triple murdered case but also accelerated their efforts to arrest the alleged killers as soon as possible.

Commissioner South Javed Nabi Khoso received an explanation notice.

To underline the seriousness of the issue, Shah personally signed the attendance registers in the offices of the absent officers. He emphasized the critical importance of punctuality, admonishing officials for their absence as late as 9:30 AM, a situation he described as intolerable.

## Effective leadership brings down crime and wins public trust: DPO

**Saqib Mushtaq**

LODHHRAN: In a commendable display of leadership and community-focused policing, District Police Officer (DPO) Ali Bin Tariq has delivered outstanding performance over the past 30 days, significantly improving law and order in District Lodhran.

Under DPO Ali Bin Tariq's direction, the district has witnessed a noticeable decrease in street crime and theft, with recent statistics showing a 70% reduction compared to the same period last year.

Both government officials and local residents have praised the officer's focus on intelligence-based operations and community policing. "DPO Ali Bin Tariq has not only strengthened the operational capacity of the police force but also built strong relationships with the community through regular open courts (khuli kachehris) and awareness campaigns," said Malik Allah Nawaz Channer, president of the District Bar Association.

DPO Ali Bin Tariq's initiatives, including a crackdown on drug trafficking and the introduction of a digital complaint management system, have enhanced transparency and accountability. Additionally, the successful resolution of several high-profile cases has earned him widespread acclaim.

Citizens have reported improved response times and a renewed sense of safety, especially in previously high-risk areas. "We finally feel heard and protected," said a local resident, highlighting the visible police presence and proactive patrolling. As the district moves forward, the leadership and dedication of DPO Ali Bin Tariq stand as models of modern and effective policing, driven by integrity, strategy, and public service.

Shortly after DPO Ali Bin Tariq took over, he familiarized himself with the district, leading to changes in some Station House Officers (SHOs) to enhance efficiency. He held meetings with local traders' associations, members of the peace committee, civil society representatives, lawyers, and the media to implement effective crime prevention strategies.

Ali Bin Tariq also conducted special meetings with Investigation Officers (IOs) throughout the district to ensure that case files (challans) were presented in relevant courts promptly, enabling timely punishment for criminals. He reviewed the security measures at the Sessions Court and ordered further improvements. He also visited a mock exercise organized by Civil Defense and Lodhran Police alongside Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Dr. Lubna Nazir.

The people of Lodhran District hope for a zero-tolerance policy



against corruption, assurance that false cases will not be registered, and respect for the sanctity of homes (Chadar Char Divari) to prevent police intrusions. They expect that complaints submitted at police stations will be listened to respectfully, with full assistance provided.

Plans are in place to eliminate tout mafias from police stations. Employees who have been posted in the same position for more than three years will be replaced or reassigned to allow new personnel a chance. Direct access for the public to SHOs and the DPO will be ensured, and corrupt SHOs will be removed from the district. Furthermore, assistance and empathy will be extended to the families of martyrs at every level.

## Govt to vanish Indian proxies at any cost: Mir

**F.P. Report**

HUB: Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives Balochistan, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, has strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack on a bus carrying innocent children in Khuzdar. In his statement of condemnation, he described the incident as a cowardly act, saying that those involved are India's pet dogs, which are devoid of humanity. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that, what kind of bravery or Baloch pride is it to target innocent children? He said that after suffering a historically humiliating defeat at the hands of the Pakistani army on the battlefield, India has lost its senses and is now trying to destabilize the peace in Balochistan through cowardly incidents like Khuzdar.

Expressing deep sorrow and sympathy with the parents of the martyred children, he stated, India and its allies have attacked our future. Every eye is tearful over the martyrdom of these innocent children. We share in the grief of the parents and families and assure

them that the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain. We will not rest until those responsible are sent to hell. He said that the attack on the children's van was carried out with Indian backing and is a continuation of the nefarious agenda of Indian intelligence agencies in Balochistan. The enemy will not succeed in its objectives.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri made it clear that the brave and patriotic people of Balochistan will never let the conspiracies of the enemy and its handful of corrupt agents who survive on Indian scraps succeed. We will soon settle the score with these vile elements.

He called on security institutions to immediately arrest those involved in the incident and make them an example for others. He also demanded that strong international action be taken against India's interference in Balochistan. He added more that this is not a time for silence—it's a time to deliver a decisive response to the enemies. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri further stated that the Khuzdar attack was

planned in India and executed by its pawns in Balochistan. Very soon, God willing, these vile elements will be sent to hell and brought to their rightful end.

He said that after India's defeat in the battle of truth, its true ugly face has been exposed to the world. The world is cursing India for how it, in the arrogance of its supposed military superiority and under the cover of darkness, launched missiles at peaceful Pakistan and started a war. But Pakistan's brave armed forces responded wisely, shattered India's arrogance, and foiled its plan to ignite war in the region. This proved to the world that while Pakistan desires peace, it will deliver a crushing response to anyone who dares cast an evil eye on its soil. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri reaffirmed that just as the Pakistani nation has faced challenges alongside its courageous armed forces in the past and defeated enemies, it will once again uproot the cancer of terrorism spread by India and its allies from its roots.

## Ambassador of KSA visit Sialkot Airport

**F.P. Report**

SIALKOT: Sialkot International Airport had the distinct honour of receiving His Excellency Mr. Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Malki the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, who was graciously welcomed upon arrival by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of Sialkot International Airport.

Following a warm reception, His Excellency engaged in a cordial meeting with the airport leadership, where matters of mutual interest were discussed in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.

The dialogue was both meaningful and forward-looking, with special focus on enhancing bilateral ties through aviation connectivity. The Ambassador while appreciating the pivotal role of Sialkot's business community in development and continued success of the airport, acknowledged it's high standard of services being provided to the passengers.

He expressed optimism about future collaboration and assured that Saudi Airlines (the Kingdom's national carrier), is actively

considering to commence its operations from Sialkot, a move poised to strengthen air connectivity and deepen economic and cultural relations between the two brotherly nations.

The meeting concluded on a positive and promising note, symbolised by the exchange of souvenirs/ gifts and sharing appreciation for the growing partnership. His Excellency was seen off with profound respect and gratitude, marking a memorable moment in the ongoing friendship between Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## New school to educate 660 children

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: In a shining example of public-private collaboration to combat illiteracy in Sindh, Green Crescent Trust (GCT) has announced a transformative partnership with the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) and two leading charitable organizations to educate 660 out-of-school children in the underserved rural belt of District Malir, near Education City.

This initiative marks a major milestone in GCT's ongoing mission to provide quality education to children from marginalized communities. The school, previously operating for over a decade in a modest building in Bakhsu Goth—on land generously donated by a GCT benefactor—will

now move into a newly constructed state-of-the-art campus.

The new school building has been constructed by Mohammad Shafi Trust, which fully financed the development, while Khuddam Education Trust donated the land. SEF will continue to support the project by covering the recurring academic expenses, ensuring sustainability and long-term impact.

The upgraded facility will initially enroll 330 children from 22 nearby villages, with plans to double the enrollment to 660 students in two shifts, providing education up to Class 10. These villages collectively house a population of over 10,000 residents, many of whom have had limited access to educational opportunities.

The inauguration ceremony of the new school is expected to be a high-profile event, with Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani likely to preside.

## Police apprehend suspects in fatal shooting

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: Two suspects involved in the fatal shooting of 24-year-old Kamran Abbas during a robbery in Gulshan-i-Iqbal on May 14 have been apprehended in a police encounter in New Karachi Industrial Area.

The arrested individuals, identified as Sajjad alias Sajawal and Nadir, were captured in a firefight with police in the early hours on Thursday. Their identities were confirmed through CCTV footage and other evidence.

The suspects are accused of fatally shooting Kamran Abbas in the head during a robbery outside a Bank Islami branch in Gulshan-i-Iqbal. A murder case (FIR

302/2025) under sections 302, 397, and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code has been registered at Gulshan-i-Iqbal Police Station. Following their arrest, the suspects were found in possession of a motorcycle that had been snatched in Gulistan-i-Jauhar. A separate case (FIR 28/2025) under sections 397 and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code has been filed at Gulistan-i-Jauhar Police Station regarding the motorcycle theft.

Both suspects are known criminals with a history of involvement in street crimes, including motorcycle thefts. Police officials have stated that further investigations are underway to identify and apprehend their accomplices.

**FIA arrests accused:** The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has apprehended a suspect involved in illegal currency exchange operations during a raid in Karachi's I.I. Chundrigar Road. The arrested individual, identified as Muneeb, was found operating an unlicensed currency exchange business. During the operation, FIA officials seized \$13,000 in US dollars from his possession. Muneeb was unable to provide satisfactory explanations regarding the source of the recovered currency. The FIA has initiated an investigation into the matter and is taking further legal action against the suspect.

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## Chief Secretary cracks down on absenteeism

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: In a decisive move to enforce discipline, Chief Secretary Sindh Asif Hyder Shah today conducted an unannounced inspection of various offices within the Sindh Secretariat on Thursday.

During his visit, he expressed strong displeasure over the absence of several key officials during working hours, leading to immediate

administrative actions. The Chief Secretary took corrective measures by issuing show-cause notices to Director General Colleges Naveed Rab Siddiqui, Regional Director Colleges Karachi Faqir Muhammad Lakho, and Director Private Colleges Karachi Syed Abdul Qadir Shah. Additionally, Nazir Ahmed Khaskheli, the In-charge of the Human Rights Commission, faced suspension, while Deputy

Commissioner South Javed Nabi Khoso received an explanation notice.

To underline the seriousness of the issue, Shah personally signed the attendance registers in the offices of the absent officers. He emphasized the critical importance of punctuality, admonishing officials for their absence as late as 9:30 AM, a situation he described as intolerable.

**پی ایے ایف بیس پشاور**

**کنزرویٹنسی کنٹرولنگ**

**برائے سال 2025-26**

ٹینڈروں کے لئے کنزرویٹنسی ایلیٹن سال 2025-26 کے لئے سال کی مدت کے لئے پی ایے ایف

بیس پشاور سے کوڈ کرکٹ اٹھانے کے لئے سربراہ ٹینڈر مطلوب ہیں۔ صرف گورنمنٹ رجسٹرڈ

کنٹرولنگ ٹینڈر مینج کرانے کے لئے ہوں گے۔ سربراہ ٹینڈر ایلیٹن سال 2025-26 کے لئے پی ایے ایف

**2025** 10 بجے تک وصول کے جائیں گے۔ ٹینڈر ایلیٹن دن 10:30 بجے تک وصول کے

جائیں گے۔ جس میں انتظامیہ کو فن حاصل ہے کہ وہ ٹینڈر دعوئی بنا کر کوئی بھی ٹینڈر مسٹر کر دے۔

ٹینڈر کے کوڈ اور ضوابط پر سٹیل اسکوڈر آفس، بیس پشاور سے حاصل کئے جاسکتے ہیں۔

مزید معلومات کے لئے فون نمبر 091-9210777 Ext 5037 اور موبائل

نمبر 0323-9411312 پر رابطہ کریں۔

آفیسر کاٹرنگ، ایلیٹن ورگ

پی۔ اے۔ ایف بیس، پشاور





PESHAWAR: Lady Health Workers talking to Provincial Minister for Health Ehtesham Ali after which the LHWs announced to end their sit-in.

## LHWs end sit-in after successful negotiations with government

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Lady Health Workers (LHWs) have ended their two-day sit-in protest in front of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly after successful negotiations with the provincial government. Provincial Minister for Health, Ehtesham Ali, assured the protesting workers that all their demands would be addressed.

According to details, the announcement was made on Thursday afternoon during a press briefing by Ishrat Malik, General Secretary of the Shaheen Union of Lady Health Workers. She stat-

ed that in response to the protest held under extreme heat conditions by LHWs from across the province, the Provincial Minister initiated formal talks with the union representatives. The negotiation team included Shaheen Union's Provincial President Akhtar Bibi, Provincial General Secretary Ishrat Malik, Rafasiyat Qamar, Naeema Bibi, and other union officials. During the talks, the Health Minister assured them that the minutes of the meeting would be shared within two days. He also confirmed that the health department had taken official steps toward the promotion and regularization of 12,439 LHWs

under a four-year policy framework. Under the agreed formula, promotions will be granted based on seniority and a percentage system: 40% of LHWs will be promoted to scale 9, while 30% to scale 9. The minister presented official documentation to the union's negotiation team and assured that the summary would soon be forwarded to the Finance Department. He acknowledged the vital role LHWs play in providing health services in remote and conflict-affected areas of the province and emphasized the government's commitment to addressing their

concerns on a priority basis. He also appealed to the protesting women to return home, acknowledging the hardships they endured by traveling from far-flung areas in extreme heat. In response, the Shaheen Union of Lady Health Workers announced the end of the sit-in, expressing gratitude to the Provincial Minister for his cooperation and transparency. General Secretary Ishrat Malik also extended her thanks to the media for their support and coverage, which she said played a crucial role in bringing their demands to the government's attention.

## Government to resolve issues of Galiyat hotel industry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, Zahid Chanzeb, with a representative delegation of the Galiyat Hotel Association at the committee room of the Department of Tourism and Culture. The meeting was attended by Secretary

Tourism and Culture Dr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, DG Galiyat Development Authority Shahrukh Ali, officials from the Finance Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, Excise and Taxation Department, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority. The hotel industry was represented by Sardar Hameed, Waseem Ahmed

Abbasi, Muhammad Azeem, and others. During the meeting, the Galiyat Hotel Association delegation presented their concerns and demands, which included the lump sum recovery of excise tax from 2022 to 2024, the duration of the tourism season, tax rates, and issues related to double taxation. The Advisor for Tourism and Culture stated that there is a deep connection between the hotel industry

and tourism, and this sector plays a vital role in providing quality accommodation, food, and recreation for tourists while also creating employment opportunities for the local population. Referring to the clear directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, he assured that the government will extend full support to the hotel industry to enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations.

## Exploring new tourist destinations vital for robust economic development

PESHAWAR (APP): Amid growing tourist congestion at popular destinations of KP like Swat's Kalam and Malam Jabba and Mansehra's Naran and Kaghan, the provincial government is now spotlighting lesser-known but equally breathtaking sites to diversify its tourism portfolio for robust rural economic development. With traditional tourism sites such as Nathiagali and Thandiyani Abbottabad nearing saturation during peak summer seasons in the province, the KP Culture and Tourism Authority pivoted toward unlocking the potential of hidden gems—from the serene Chitral valleys to the untouched beauty of Gabor Jabba, Shahi Bagh in Swat, and Kumrat Dir Upper. These breathtaking areas, once accessible only to seasoned trekkers and mountaineers of tour groups, are now being developed with eco-friendly infrastructure and modern amenities by increasing the flow of foreign and domestic tourists to northern KP.

In 2024 alone, KP has welcomed over 10 million domestic tourists, driven by interest in the province's natural beauty, lakes/waterfalls and historical landmarks such as the Gandhara civilization sites, Saiful Malook lake and Trich Mir, the highest peak in the Hindu Kush range in Chitral. Building on this momentum, the government is expanding its tourism landscape with new projects in northern KP designed to absorb the increasing visitor volume especially during summer. According to Omair Khattak, GM Investment at KP Tourism Authority, four Integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) ie Ghanool (Mansehra), Mankiyal (Swat), Madaklasht (Chitral), and Thandiyani (Abbottabad) are planned with World Bank support. Ghanool and Mankiyal are being prioritized as pilot projects, with budgets of Rs5.5 billion and Rs2.9 billion respectively.

"These ITZs, modeled after international benchmarks in Malaysia and Indonesia, will not only boost tourism but expected to reduce tourist load on established hilly sta-

tions in KP," he said. He informed that these ITZs are expected to generate up to 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and attract \$2.8 billion in investment. New facilities have been developed at emerging sites including Larum Top and Shahin Bin Shahi in Lower Dir, Broghal and Sorlaspur in Upper Chitral, and Shangla, Samana (Haripur), and Sulatharn (Swat). Road upgrades and visitor centers are being established to improve accessibility and visitor experience. Camping pods have also been introduced at scenic locations like Gabeen Jabba, Jazz Banda and Sharan to provide budget-friendly accommodation for families. With daily rates between Rs3,500 to Rs5,000—significantly lower than hotel rates in Naran or Galiyat—these pods offer two to four beds, a washroom, a kitchenette, and security provided by tourism police. Ten more such pods are set to become operational at various sites including Jargo, Sulatanr (Swat), Broghal Valley, and Kalam, with more in the pipeline. Plans are underway for three new ski resorts in Kaghan, Chitral, and Swat, alongside the much-anticipated Battakundi-Lalazar chairlift and Dir-Chitral cable car project. Waterfalls like Sajkot, Noori, and Jarogo are being upgraded, while trekking routes and eco-resorts in remote valleys such as Broghal, Kumrat, and Sheikh Badin are also seeing investment. Dr. Muhammad Naeem, former Chair of Economics at the University of Peshawar, emphasized the economic significance of developing new destinations that not only spreads tourism footfall but revitalizes rural economies and controls price hikes in established areas. Habib Arif, Director General, KP Tourism and Culture Authority said the government's Host Tourism Project (HTP) empowers locals by offering interest-free loans of up to Rs3 million through the Bank of Khyber. Residents can renovate or build rooms for tourist accommodation in

areas such as upper Kalam, Kumrat, and Chitral. Special incentives are being extended to women and educated youth to encourage inclusive participation, he said. "The goal is not just promotion of tourism but rural development," said Zahid Chan Zab, KP's tourism advisor. "Through homestays, craft promotion, and community training, we're making tourism a tool for sustainable rural development." In Chitral, the vibrant Kalash Valleys are experiencing renewed interest due to improved roads and digital marketing of cultural festivals. Similar initiatives are fostering growth in remote Kohistan, where eco-lodges and guided treks now attract nature lovers. With 2025 declared as Tirich Mir Mountain Year by the KP Govt, the government allocated Rs180 million for the repair of the Kalash Valley road, reinforcing its commitment to mountain tourism. As KP positions itself as a premier destination for eco-tourism and adventure travel, its focus on responsible development is crucial. International donors, private investors, and local communities are now co-authors of a shared vision where tourism not only entertains but empowers people. "Kalam's fresh air and Mahudhand Lake's tranquility are unmatched," said Noor Khan, a tourist from Peshawar. "But poor road conditions and hotel prices need urgent attention." "Before Kalam visit, I travelled to Kumrat valley where I realised that was pathetic and tourists were forced either to hire jeeps on very high rate ie Rs1000 per kilometers while many travelled miles for foot," he said, adding poor waste management, lack of healthcare services and reduced mobile network make communication difficult for tourists. However, with key initiatives like ITZs, community homestays, and nature-based tourism projects, KP is redefining the travel experience in Pakistan, offering not just a scenic escape, but a deeper connection to culture, nature, and local livelihoods.

## KP government releases Rs. 21 billion for development projects

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has released over Rs. 21 billion through the Finance Department for various development projects across the province. These funds are part of the Provincial Annual Development Program (ADP), the development program for merged districts, and the Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP).

According to official sources on Thursday, the Finance Department has issued Rs. 16.93 billion under the Provincial ADP. The allocations include Rs. 430 million for agriculture, Rs. 870 million for clean drinking water and sanitation, Rs. 280 million for health development projects, and Rs. 100 million for the Higher Education Department. Additionally, Rs. 312.3 million has been allocated

for road construction, while Rs. 2.84 billion is earmarked for water resource projects. The Finance Department has also released Rs. 1 billion for the development of merged districts, prioritizing salaries, utility-based schemes, and completion of ongoing projects. Under the AIP, Rs. 3.76 billion has been disbursed. This includes Rs. 500 million for the

Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Rs. 250 million for health, Rs. 379.9 million for domestic affairs, and Rs. 1 billion each for road and water resource projects. The provincial government reiterated its commitment to timely funding of essential development initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and public services throughout the region.



PESHAWAR: Focal person of Pakistan Federal Forum on Women Health Nazish Hayyat addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club.

## KP govt didn't submit response PHC adjourns hearing on Sher Afzal Marwat's plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshid has adjourned hearing on Member National Assembly Sher Afzal Marwat plea seeking cancellation of FIRs registered against him till 26th June 26, as the provincial government failed to submit its report, on Thursday.

The petitioner Sher Afzal Marwat informed the court that numerous cases were registered against him after 9th May 2023 vandalism, and the provincial government has not submitted its report yet. He stated that he is not aware of the details of the FIRs registered against him. After the hearing, Sher Afzal Marwat told the media that he has been running from pillar to post for a year and a half, seeking

bail from the courts. He expressed frustration with the provincial government's inaction, saying that it is not making any decisions. Sher Afzal Marwat criticized the PTI leadership, saying that they are making decisions based on bad intentions rather than compromising. He stated that only capable people can lead a protest movement for the release of the PTI founding chairman, and the current leadership is not up to the

task. Sher Afzal Marwat acknowledged his personal differences with Aimal Wali but condemned the incident with PTA chairman. He said that the PTA chairman has disrespected the committee, and the army chief should take notice of the allegations made. He supported Aimal Wali's demand for the removal of the PTA chairman, saying that such people are unfit for the position.

## Stakeholders discuss Child Protection Prevention Framework

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Urgent need for a collaborative approach to prevent violence against children in any form was highlighted in a high-level stakeholders' consultation on the development of a National Child Protection Framework (CPFF). The consultation was jointly organised by Save the Children and UNICEF on Thursday and brought together representatives of provincial child protection mechanisms, international organisations and civil society organizations. In his opening remarks, Project Manager Save the Children M Azam Kiyani briefed the participants about the objectives of the consultation. He shared that the session is part of the series of consultations held across the country to finalise the Child Protection Framework (CPFF). Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Chief KPCP Commission Ijaz Muhammad Khan presented the landscape of the

child protection issues in the context of KP and the measures taken by the provincial government to improve the situation. Sohail Ahmed Child Protection Specialist UNICEF thanked all the participants for their support and valuable input. Following that, child rights expert Rabeea Hadi gave an overview of the current situation and existing protection mechanism. She said that while Pakistan has existing child protection laws, enforcement remains weak, and there is a lack of standardized prevention mechanisms across the country at both federal and provincial level. The participants were of the view that current responses are often reactive, focusing on victim support rather than prevention. She said that said that CPFF aims to bridge these gaps by developing a structured framework that integrates primary (community-based prevention), secondary (targeted intervention for at-risk children), and tertiary (long-term recovery and prevention of recurrence) prevention

strategies. She shared that The Framework will also establish key performance indicators and monitoring framework to assess and improve child protection efforts and will ensure regional adaptability by integrating the framework into long-term child protection policies, endorsed by provincial and regional authorities. The Framework will also have special focus on strengthening inter-agency collaboration among government institutions, law enforcement, social welfare bodies, and civil society to standardize prevention efforts nationwide. After an extensive group work, the participants gave their feedback on proposed Child Protection Framework (CPFF) targeting three key risks including child labour, child marriage, and violent discipline or physical and humiliating punishment. The discussion centered on strengthening preventive measures to reduce cases of violence against children and improving inter-agency coordination to ensure effective child protection

and prevention mechanisms. The participants identified that all the issues related to child protection are exacerbated by poverty, lack of education and awareness, population, weak monitoring mechanisms and legal system and limited access to facilities. Participants stressed the need for stronger interventions to prevent children from being forced into labour, child marriage and provide them with protected environment. They highlighted Pakistan's widespread child protection challenges, emphasizing that despite national and international commitments, millions of children remain vulnerable to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The consultation underscored the necessity of shifting from reactive approaches to a prevention-focused framework that addresses root causes and reduces harm before it occurs. The stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to working collectively to enhance child protection measures in Pakistan.

## Consultative meeting held with industrialists and traders at the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the supervision of Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance and Interprovincial Coordination Muzammil Aslam, a consultative meeting was held at Sarhad Chamber of Commerce ahead of the upcoming budget. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Excise Mian Khaliq ur Rehman, Special Assistant to CM for Industries Abdul Karim Tordher, Secretary Excise Khalid Ilyas, Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPPRA) Fauzia Iqbal, Additional Collector Abdur Razzaq Khan and officials from the Revenue department. Cabinet members of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce, along with traders, industrialists, and investors, participated in this special consultative meeting. Advisor Finance Muzammil Aslam stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is financially dependent on the federal government for 93 percent of its budget, and the province itself collects only 7 percent of its total revenue. He noted that revenue collection in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is lower compared to other provinces. He further mentioned that the provinces are also under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has increased both tax and non-tax revenues in the current fiscal year. Muzammil Aslam announced that Rs. 2 billion has been released for the Peshawar Safe City Project and assured that all legitimate concerns of traders and industrialists would be addressed. He said that last year, the property rental tax was reduced from 16% to 10%, and taxes on educational institutions have been fixed at a very low rate. Similarly, the property transfer tax was brought down from 6.5% to 3.5%, and vehicle registration fees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are lower than in other provinces. Provincial Excise Minister Mian Khaliq ur Rehman said that a universal number plate scheme has been launched for vehicle registration, and every Tuesday will be observed as Open Day by the Secretary Excise, during which public issues will be addressed.





## In brief

### Forest fire control strategy directed F.P. Report

BUNER: Deputy Commissioner Buner has taken notice against destruction of valuable trees, medicinal herbs, animals, birds, and insects due to forest fire incidents across the district in the last one month. DC Kashif Qayyum has called a meeting in which ADC Relief Syed Akram Shah, DFO Forest, Deputy Warden Civil Defense, AD Local Government Tehsil Gagra District Emergency Officer Rescue participated. He expressed his anger over the absence of DD Local Government and DFO Wildlife and termed the measures taken by DFO Forest to prevent and extinguish the fire as unsatisfactory and issued instructions that forest fires will not be tolerated under any circumstances. DC devised strategy in this regard, to make the task force more active, all departments in each sub-division under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners, including the Village Council Secretary and volunteers would be involved in this national cause. He has said in two words that the relevant departments should identify those who set fire to the mountains and register FIRs against them and discourage this trend in every case and protect precious forests, plants, animals, birds and insects.

### Agri dept arranges training F.P. Report

KARAK: Agriculture (Extension) Department Karak has arranged a training program on Saffron cultivation and its look-after in Karak district the other day. Director Agriculture (Extension) Karak, Dr. Jan Muhammad, delivered a special, comprehensive and informative lecture on saffron cultivation, look-after, production and disease management. The training was largely attended by the field staff and local farmers associated with saffron cultivation. Former Director Agriculture and President Model Farm Service Center Nizam Khan, while delivering a lecture on the importance of agriculture, appreciated the steps taken by the department on saffron cultivation and other agriculture related activity in the district. Agriculture Officer Kashif Aqeel, in his lecture on saffron, provided information and experiences to the participants about the experimental and incentive plots of saffron planted in Karak district. The training program covered topics such as saffron cultivation and maintenance techniques, methods for increasing its production, disease prevention and economic benefits of saffron cultivation. This training program will not only become a source of promotion of saffron cultivation and provision of information to farmers about its look-after and production, but also encouraged them to adopt various new trends and techniques and methods to increase saffron production.

**Elimination of encroachments**  
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chief Officer (CO) Municipal Committee Kamalia Ali Raza said that illegal encroachments will not be tolerated under any circumstances because these people repeatedly violate the law. He further said that according to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, we are taking continuous action against illegal encroachments.

# KKKUK VC honored with HEC best researcher award



### F.P. Report

KARAK: Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalily, the esteemed Vice Chancellor of Khushal Khan Khattak University, has been awarded the prestigious Best Research Award in the field of Social Sciences at the 10th Higher Education Commission (HEC) Best Research Awards ceremony. The event, held today in Islamabad, recognized outstanding contributions to research across various disciplines.

The award was presented by Chairman HEC, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, who congratulated all the recipients.

ents and emphasized the merit-based selection process. Prof. Dr. Ahmad highlighted the importance of research in the current technological era and reiterated HEC's commitment to supporting faculty and universities nationwide. The ceremony saw a significant gathering of senior faculty, administrative officers from numerous universities, and distinguished guests from across Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Khalily is a highly respected figure in Pakistan, renowned for his expertise in clinical psychology and his significant contributions to research. He also brings extensive

administrative experience from various organizations.

Upon receiving the accolade, He expressed his immense pride. "This is a proud moment for Khushal Khan Khattak University," he stated. "I am committed to working even harder in the field of social sciences to contribute further to knowledge and research."

The entire faculty and staff of KKKUK have extended their heartfelt congratulations to the Vice Chancellor for this remarkable achievement, which further solidifies the university's commitment to academic excellence and groundbreaking research.

# Cancer patient appeals for financial assistance

### F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Roshan Ali, a member of the Tablighi Jamaat from Kamach in Shangla, has made a heartfelt appeal for financial assistance to support his treatment for cancer. Roshan Ali and his child are both battling the disease, and their family is facing severe financial difficulties.

Roshan Ali's situation is dire. He is unable to work due to the severity of his condition, which has affected one of his legs. The family is struggling to make ends meet, and they are in urgent need of financial support to cover medical expenses.

In his appeal, Roshan Ali has reached out to philanthropists and charitable organizations, requesting assistance to help him and his child receive the necessary treatment. He has provided his contact information, hoping that those who can help will reach out to him.

The situation is particularly challenging for Roshan Ali's child, who has also been diagnosed with cancer. The family is finding it impossible to afford the treatment and medication required to manage the child's condition.

Roshan Ali has provided his contact information for those who wish to reach out and offer assistance. It is hoped that his appeal will be met with kindness and generosity, enabling him to access the treatment he so desperately needs.

### University of Shangla hosts first book fair:

The University of Shangla recently organized its first-ever book fair, which was a resounding success. The event was arranged by the students themselves and featured a wide range of books on various subjects.

The book fair had multiple stalls showcasing books on different topics, which were appreciated by students and faculty members alike. The book fair was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Sardar Khan, who was the chief guest at the event. He cut the ribbon to mark the beginning of the fair.

During his address, Dr. Sardar Khan emphasized the importance of books in a student's life. He noted that while young people today are often engaged with social media and other non-academic activities, books remain a vital source of knowledge and inspiration. He encouraged students to prioritize reading and to focus on their studies.

### Educated nation a collective responsibility:

**SDEO:** Sub-Divisional Education Officer (SDEO) Aurangzeb Khalil emphasized the collective responsibility of preparing the nation's children for future challenges through quality education. Addressing an introductory meeting of head teachers from the Chakesar sub-division, he stated that only by working with sincerity and passion can we earn the pleasure of Almighty Allah; otherwise,

we will be accountable in both this world and the hereafter. The meeting was also addressed by ASDEO Circle Najeeb Ullah.

Aurangzeb Khalil highlighted the need for modern and purposeful education, aligned with contemporary demands, to ensure national progress. He stressed that if teachers fulfill their duties with dedication and treat every student as their own child, they will not only fulfill their professional responsibilities but also help produce capable leaders, scientists, engineers, doctors, and responsible citizens who can contribute to the nation's development. He acknowledged the government's provision of facilities in public schools and emphasized that creating a conducive learning environment is now the responsibility of educators.

Importantly, he announced that the Elementary and Secondary Education Department has extended the school admission campaign until May 30. He urged all teachers to work tirelessly to ensure that every out-of-school child in the sub-division is enrolled. He also made it clear that there would be no compromise on duty in the region.

Absenteeism will be strictly dealt with, and no leniency will be shown. The meeting also included a prayer (Fatihah) for the late SS Kifayatullah and teacher Sharifullah, who tragically passed away in a road accident while on duty a day earlier.

# Students compelled to attend classes in open air

### F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Amid the ongoing intermediate examinations in Hafizabad, thousands of students enrolled in government high and higher secondary schools are being compelled to attend classes outdoors under the blazing sun due to the unavailability of classrooms. This situation has raised serious concerns among parents and education advocates about student welfare and administrative priorities.

According to reports, classrooms in several government schools across Hafizabad have been designated as examination centers, further exacerbating an already critical shortage of space in these institutions. As a result, regular academic activities are being conducted in the open, exposing young students to

extreme heat and humidity.

Several incidents of students fainting due to heat exhaustion were reported yesterday, with eyewitnesses attributing the cause to prolonged exposure to the sun without adequate shelter or cooling arrangements. Despite these dire conditions, officials from the District Education Department, including Chief Executive Officer Education Muhammad Akram Ashraf, were reportedly working from air-conditioned offices.

The lack of contingency planning and failure to provide temporary arrangements such as tents, fans, or alternate classroom spaces has drawn criticism from local residents and civil society. Many are questioning the department's commitment to student welfare, urging immediate intervention to ensure a safe and

conducive learning environment.

**Students frustrated over delay in distribution of papers:** Students across the district appearing in the ongoing FA/FSc examinations expressed deep frustration over delays in the distribution of question papers and the denial of compensatory time to complete their exams. The issue has sparked concern among educational stakeholders, who are calling for immediate corrective measures.

According to reports, a significant amount of time, ranging from 10 to 15 minutes, is routinely lost during the distribution of exam papers, particularly at female examination centers. However, students are not granted additional time to make up for the delay, leaving many unable to complete their papers within the allocated time frame.

## Court convicts rapist for death penalty Syed Waliullah Shah

PESHAWAR: District and Sessions Judge (D&SJ) Nowshera Muhammad Asif convicted Ab Dar, for death penalty and imposed a fine of one million rupees for raping and killing a minor girl named Awaiz Noor. The incident occurred nearly five years ago, where the accused raped the 7-year-old girl and then threw her into a water tank, resulting in her death, on Thursday.

D&SJ ordered that in case of non-payment of fine, the convict will undergo one month of rigorous imprisonment. Seven years of imprisonment and a fine of one million rupees.

D&SJ ordered payment of two hundred thousand rupees to the legal heirs of the deceased. In case of non-payment, the convict will undergo six additional months of imprisonment.

The accused had filed an appeal in the Peshawar High Court, which was later remanded back to the Nowshera District and Sessions Court for further proceedings. After completing the evidence and hearing the arguments, the court upheld the sentence.

## Advocacy events organized F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The students were sensitized to promote peace and to play their due role to counter extremism through theater-based advocacy events organized in the City University and IM Sciences, Peshawar last day.

The Society for Human Rights and Prisoners' Aid (SHARP) under its AMAN-KAAR project, initiated the activities as part of its continuous efforts to support societal cohesion, youth empowerment and peace building. The initiative was supported by the European Union, in collaboration with UNODC and NACTA.

The events held using the powerful medium of theater, the performers conveyed key messages on nonviolent communication, critical thinking, and the importance of empathy in addressing polarization and misinformation. The performances were followed by interactive dialogue sessions, facilitated by SHARP Project manager Zahid Usman and Theatre Director Safer Ullah Khan.

These sessions offered students and faculty a safe space to explore issues of peace building, social justice, youth leadership, and community resilience. Participants were deeply moved by the narrative, with many expressing renewed commitment to fostering peaceful coexistence in their communities.

Launched in 2025, the AMAN-KAAR initiative has actively engaged youth across districts including Peshawar, Swat, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, Usta

Muhammad, and Islamabad, using participatory theatre as a powerful tool for advocacy and positive behavioral change.

The project's core objective is to mobilize young people as ambassadors of peace, equipping them to promote inclusive narratives, foster empathy, and build cohesive communities through creative expression, dialogue, and civic engagement.

## DRC's role hailed F.P. Report

MARDAN: Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) held a meeting with Dispute Resolution Council members at City Police Station, on the directives of District Police Officer Mardan. The meeting was attended by DRC Chairman Ihsan Ullah Bacha along Alamzeb Khan and other members.

SDPO Zahid Alam Khan praised the services of DRC members, saying that they play a key role in resolving disputes and issues of the public. He stated that DRCs assisting and support to citizens without any discrimination, reducing the burden on police stations and courts, and resolving public disputes easily, which is commendable.

# All bunkers demolished in Kurram

### F.P. Report

PARA CHINAR: 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.

**Federal ombudsman advisor held 'Kuli Katcheri':** Advisor of the Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Peshawar, Mushtaq Ahmed Jadoon has in collaboration with the district administration, held 'Kuli Katcheri' in Tehsil Lachi Kohat district on Thursday. The court beside others was also attended by the Tehsil Chairman Lachi Muhammad Ehsan, Assistant Commissioner Lachi Salman Yousaf, heads of federal departments, TMA Lachi and the general public.

Most of the issues and complaints presented in the open court were related to the drinking water, gas and electricity.

Explaining the aims and objectives of the open court, Mushtaq Jadoon said that there is no fee for filing a complaint with the Federal Ombudsman nor there is a need for a lawyer, but each case is decided within 60 days. He said that the public can approach the Federal Ombudsman Office directly or through WhatsApp at any time in

case of complaints related to the federal departments and institutions.

Jadoon said that the public should be informed about the progress of the issues and complaints presented in the today open court through WhatsApp. He further said that the public can also present their problems on WhatsApp at any time apart from the open court.

Tehsil Chairman Muhammad Ehsan, while welcoming the holding of the open court by the Federal Ombudsman, said that the problems of gas and electricity in Tehsil Lachi are very serious and require immediate solution. He expressed the hope that this court will reduce them to some extent. Referring to the problem of drinking water, he said that we have done a lot of work in this regard and Inshallah, this problem is expected to be resolved to great extent in the next 2 months.

Earlier, District Monitoring Officer of RTS Commission Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tashfeen Israr informed the participants in detail about the activities related to the public services of the RTS Commission.

# DPO lauds media role in promotion of peace

### F.P. Report

WANA: District Police Officer (DPO) Lower Waziristan Khan Khel on Tuesday paid a special visit to the Wana Press Club. During the visit, he held an interactive session with local journalists and acknowledged the crucial role media plays in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, DPO Khan Khel commended the journalist community for their responsible reporting and active involvement in highlighting key public issues. He emphasized the importance of media as a bridge between the public and law enforcement, noting that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without mutual trust and collaboration.

"In our efforts to restore and maintain law and order in Lower Waziristan, we consider the media not just as observers but as key partners," the DPO stated. "We will continue to work closely with journalists and seek their guidance in

addressing the challenges faced by the region."

The meeting concluded with a mutual consensus to strengthen cooperation between the police and media through regular dialogue, positive engagement, and a shared commitment to serving the people. The DPO assured full support and open access to information within legal boundaries to ensure transparency and build public trust.

**Polio staff awarded with certificate of appreciation:** In a ceremony held at the office of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Khalid Qayyum Shah, police officers and polio field staff were honored with certificates of appreciation for their outstanding contributions to the recent anti-polio drive in the region.

The event, organized under the auspices of COMNet, highlighted the critical role played by the police in ensuring the safety of health teams during the campaign. Those recognized included DSP Rahim Khan, SI Haji Israr Khan

(LO), SI Usman Khan (SHO Wana City), SI Sadiq (SHO Toi Khullah), and ASI Nizam (Line Muharrar), who were lauded for their strategic and effective security arrangements.

In addition to the law enforcement officers, several frontline polio workers received accolades for their dedication in reaching children under five at their doorsteps with life-saving polio drops. These health workers served across various union councils of Wana and were commended for their tireless efforts.

Com Net Officer Amir Abbas Wazir presented the certificates during the ceremony, which was attended by local dignitaries and health officials. Speaking on the occasion, ADC Khalid Qayyum Shah praised the collaborative efforts of the District Health Officer Dr. Israr Ahmad, Polio Officer Amir Abbas, FMSO Dr. Hameedullah, WHO Representative Dr. Ismat Khan Wazir, and other members of the polio eradication team.

# Anti-polio vaccination preparation reviewed

### F.P. Report

HANGU// ORAKZAI: Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah has visited Orakzai and Hangu districts to review the arrangements for the anti-polio campaign starting from May 26. Commissioner Kohat reviewed the micro-plans prepared for the anti-polio campaign in detail and expressed satisfaction over the ongoing arrangements.

Commissioner Kohat declared that a comprehensive strategy and effective implementation at all levels

are essential to eradicate a fetal disease like polio from the country. During his visit, Mr. Shah also inspected various areas of Hangu district, including examination halls, Government Higher Secondary School Muhammad Khawaja, a road under construction in Kahi, Doaba Hospital, Animal Husbandry Kahi and Naryab Dam. He closely reviewed the ongoing work on development projects and directed the authorities concerned to complete the projects in time without compromising on its construction quality.

Highlighting the importance of the anti-polio campaign, the Commissioner Kohat Division appealed the parents to vaccinate their children below the age of 5. He added that a polio-free Pakistan is our national dream, which can be realized only with the cooperation of the people and the effective performance of institutions. He directed all the concerned departments to utilize all their capabilities and resources to make the anti-polio campaign a success so that every child is protected from the deadly polio virus.

# Plantation a key for fight against climate change

### F.P. Report

LARKANA: A social organization Sindh Green Foundation (GSF) in collaboration with Daem Social Welfare organized an event titled "Climate Change Solution through Tree Planting, Possible" at Begum Nusrat Bhutto Girls College in the city.

Addressing the event, Sindh Green Foundation President Zulfiqar Ali Magsi, College Principal Samina Naz Abro and others said that climate change is increasing due to lack of trees, due to which agricultural crops and gardens are being destroyed due to high-speed winds and storms in the country, due to which human lives, wildlife and aquatic life are being affected and the temperature is increasing day by day due to climate change.

**Mohenjo-Daro excavation work resumes:** A team of experts under the supervision of American archaeologist Dr. Mark Kinase has resumed excavation work at Mohenjo-Daro, a world-famous tourist site in Sindh's Larkana district, which will continue until May 31 of this month.

The excavation team is part of this effort. Deputy Director of Archaeology Madam Zahida Qadri told the media that in 1950, British foreign expert Sir Mortimer Wheeler excavated the SD area, DK area 75 years ago, during which the ancient defensive wall of the ancient city of Mohenjo-daro was revealed.

**Civil society movement demands protection of hospitals from quacks:** It has continued for 121 days through the platform of the "Hospital Bachayo Committee". Despite the symbolic hunger strike organized by

the committee at the city's central Koto Moto Chowk, not a single person of the Sindh Health Department has come to the citizens to solve the problems of the hospital.

On this occasion talking to the media, the Chairman of the "Hospital Bachayo Committee" Muhammad Hayat Tunio, Hubdar Mirjat, Zulfiqar Ali Magsi and others protested and said that we are facing problems such as lack of basic facilities, lack of expert doctors in the hospital established for the convenience of the people of Shahdadkot, complete lack of cleanliness inside the hospital, release of employees assigned to the hospital through the visa system, open corruption in the budget of millions of rupees received by the appointed Medical Superintendent Dr. Israr Lashari.





GAZA STRIP: A boy gestures as displaced Palestinians collect portions of cooked food at a charity distribution in Jabalia.

## NK defectors urge UN to hold country's leader accountable

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Eunju Kim, who escaped starvation in North Korea in 1999, was sent back from China and fled a second time, told the United Nations that the country's leader must be held accountable for gross human rights violations.

Gyuri Kang, whose family faced persecution for her grandmother's religious beliefs, fled the North during the COVID-19 pandemic. She told the General Assembly that three of her friends were executed - two for watching South Korean TV dramas. At the high-level meeting of the 193-member world body, the two women, both now living in South Korea, described the plight of North Koreans who UN special investigator Elizabeth Salmón said have been living in "absolute isolation" since the pandemic began in early 2020.

Thousands of North Koreans have fled the country since the late 1990s, but the numbers have dwindled drastically in recent years. Salmón said North Korea's closure of its borders worsened an already dire human rights situation, with new laws enacted since 2020 and stricter punishments, including the death penalty and public executions. In another rights issue, she said, the deployment of North Korean troops to support Russia in its war against Ukraine has raised concerns about "the poor human rights conditions of its soldiers while in service, and the government's widespread exploitation of its own people."

The North's "extreme militarization" enables it to keep the population under surveillance and it exploits the work force through a state-controlled system that finances its expanding nuclear program and military ventures, Salmón said. North Korea's UN Ambassador Kim Song called the allegations that his country violates human rights "a burlesque of intrigue and fabrication" and insisted that tens of millions of North Koreans enjoy human rights under the country's socialist system. He accused the West of being the bigger violator, through racial discrimination, human trafficking and sexual slavery. But the two defectors and human rights defenders detailed numerous abuses.

Kim, who said her father died of starvation, told UN diplomats that after making it to China across the Tumen River the first time, she, her mother and sister were sold for the equivalent of less than \$300 to a Chinese man. Three years later, they were arrested and sent back to the North. In 2002, they escaped again across the river. Kang, who was banished to the countryside as a 5-year-old because of her grandmother's religious beliefs, said she became the owner of a 10-meter (33-foot) wooden fishing boat and escaped on it in October 2023 with her mother and aunt. She said she was lucky to have access to information about the outside world and to have been given a USB with South Korean TV dramas,

which she said she found "so refreshing and more credible than North Korea state propaganda," though she knew being caught could mean death.

"Three of my friends were executed, two of them in public for distributing South Korean dramas," Kang said. "One of them was only 19 years old. ... It was as if they were guilty of heinous crimes." She expressed hope that her speech would "awaken the North Korean people" and help them "to point in the direction of freedom." Kim accused North Korea of sending soldiers to fight in Ukraine without them knowing where they were going and using them as cannon fodder to make money. "This is a new and unacceptable form of human trafficking," she said. Kim called for the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, to be investigated and held accountable by the International Criminal Court.

Addressing the world's nations, she said: "Silence is complicity. Stand firm against the regime's systematic atrocities." Sean Chung, head of Han Voice, who spoke on behalf of a global coalition of 28 civil society organizations, called on China and all other countries to end forced repatriations to North Korea. He called on UN member nations to urge the Security Council to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court, and to impose and enforce sanctions on "every official and entity credibly found to be responsible for North Korea's atrocity crimes."

## China to give \$500m to WHO in next five years

GENEVA (Reuters): China will give an additional \$500 million to the World Health Organization over five years, an official told the World Health Assembly, as the UN agency seeks extra funding to offset the expected loss of its top donor, the United States. China's Vice Premier of the State Council Liu Guozhong made the announcement in a speech in Geneva.

"The world is now facing the impacts of unilateralism and power politics bringing major challenges to global health security... Multilateralism is a sure pass to addressing difficulties," Liu told delegates. The WHO has already revised down its 2026-2027 budget by 21% to \$4.2 billion due to its financial difficulties, caused mainly by the Trump administration's decision.

The new budget set to be decided by the assembly will increase countries' mandatory fees by 20% over the next two years and will make China the new top state donor. It was not immediately clear if the \$500 million donation from China already included that fee increase.

## EU curbs 3 pro-Kremlin activists

BERLIN (Reuters): The European Union announced sanctions against three pro-Russia activists whose activities promoting the Kremlin's agenda inside Germany were first revealed in a Reuters investigation in 2023. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Elena Kolbasnikova and her husband Max Schlund have been organising pro-Kremlin rallies in Germany to urge Berlin to abandon its military support for Kyiv.

In the sanctions listing, the EU said both Kolbasnikova and Schlund, who also goes by the name of Rostislav Teslyuk, had taken part in "destabilising activities". It said Kolbasnikova had promoted "violent acts" committed by her husband including organising car rallies to "intimidate Ukrainian minors" who were seeking refuge in Germany. The listing said the couple had close ties with, and were financially supported by, Rossotrudnichestvo, a Russian government cultural promotion agency.

The sanctions mean any assets the three targeted activists - including a Russian associate of Kolbasnikova and Schlund - have inside the EU will be frozen, and they will be barred from entering any of the bloc's member countries. On a public Telegram group run by both Kolbasnikova and Schlund, the pair denounced the sanctions. "PEOPLE WHO FIGHT FOR PEACE ARE BEING SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS," they wrote. "IDIOCY." When reached by phone for comment, Schlund told the Reuters reporter to "fuck off" before hanging up. Reuters first reported on the couple in 2023, detailing how they were at the centre of an effort in Germany to turn public opinion against the German government's continued support for Ukraine. In its report, Reuters revealed how the couple had received plane tickets from a Russian cultural promotion body that is part of Rossotrudnichestvo to travel to a forum for civil society activists in Moscow that was co-organised by the Russian government. Kolbasnikova and Schlund left Germany last year after they said authorities there had barred them from re-entering the country.

The sanctions listing said a criminal investigation against the pair over their alleged support for pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's Donbas region was ongoing. Reuters in 2023 also reported that the couple had donated funds to a Russian army division fighting in Ukraine, and that it had used the money to purchase walkie-talkie radios, headphones and telephones. In the same listing, Europe also imposed sanctions on Andrei Kharkovsky, a Russian citizen residing in Germany who is a member of a Cossack organisation endorsed by the Kremlin. In the 2023 report, Reuters wrote that Kharkovsky provided security for Kolbasnikova and Schlund at pro-Moscow rallies they held in Germany.

## New US-backed Gaza aid plan & why UN doesn't like it

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): A US-backed organization aims to start work in the Gaza Strip by the end of May overseeing a new model of aid distribution in the Palestinian enclave, but the United Nations says the plan is not impartial or neutral, and it won't be involved.

Aid deliveries in Gaza will be overseen by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which was established in February in Switzerland, according to the Geneva commercial registry. The foundation intends to work with private US security and logistics firms - UG Solutions and Safe Reach Solutions - according to a source familiar with the plan. A second source familiar with the plan said the GHF has already received more than \$100 million in commitments. It was not immediately clear where the money was coming from.

Senior US officials were working with Israel to enable the GHF to start work, acting US Ambassador to the UN Dorothy Shea told the Security Council earlier this month, urging the UN and aid groups to cooperate. Israel has said it will allow the foundation's work without being involved in aid deliveries. According to a GHF document circulating among the aid community earlier this month, the foundation would initially operate from four "secure distribution sites" that could each serve 300,000 people with food, water and hygiene kits. Israeli officials have said those hubs would be in Gaza's south. The private US companies would transport the aid into Gaza to the hubs where it would be then distributed by aid groups - not the private companies, the first source said. Israel's UN

Ambassador Danny Danon has said a few aid groups have agreed to work with the GHF. The names of those groups are not yet known.

Israel has agreed to expand the number of distribution sites and find ways for aid to get to civilians who are unable to reach a distribution site, the foundation has said. The foundation has asked Israel's military to identify "locations in northern Gaza capable of hosting GHF operated secure distribution sites that can be made operational within 30 days." GHF has also said it would not share any personally identifiable information of aid recipients with Israel. The United Nations says the US-backed distribution plan does not meet its long-held principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence. UN aid chief Tom Fletcher has said time should not be wasted on the alternative proposal. In a briefing to the Security Council, he explained what was wrong with the Israel-initiated plan: "It forces further displacement. It exposes thousands of people to harm ... It restricts aid to only one part of Gaza, while leaving other dire needs unmet. It makes aid conditional on political and military aims. It makes starvation a bargaining chip."

Israel stopped all aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2 after accusing Hamas of stealing aid, which the Palestinian militants deny, and demanding the release of all remaining hostages taken during an October 2023 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies. That assault triggered the war, which Gaza authorities say has killed 53,000 people. In early April, Israel proposed what

it described as "a structured monitoring and aid entry mechanism" for Gaza. It was swiftly rejected by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who said it risked "further controlling and callously limiting aid down to the last calorie and grain of flour." Since then pressure had been growing on Israel to allow aid deliveries to resume. A global hunger monitor last week warned that half a million people face starvation - about a quarter of the population in the enclave - and US President Donald Trump acknowledged that "a lot of people are starving in Gaza." Amid the stalemate over Israel's plan, Washington backed the newly-created GHF to oversee aid distribution. The GHF then announced last week that it aims to start work in Gaza by the end of May.

In the meantime, Israel has allowed limited aid deliveries to resume under the existing distribution model - with five trucks entering Gaza, which Fletcher described as "a drop in the ocean." The UN said it has received Israeli approval for about 100 more aid trucks to enter Gaza. Throughout the conflict, the United Nations has described its humanitarian operation in Gaza as opportunistic - facing problems with Israel's military operation, access restrictions by Israel into and throughout Gaza and looting by armed gangs. But the UN has said its aid distribution system works and that was particularly proven during a two-month ceasefire, which was abandoned by Israel in mid-March. Israel would first inspect and approve aid. It was then dropped off on the Gaza side of the border, where it was picked up by the UN and distributed.

## US expects Russia offer soon

WASHINGTON (AFP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he expected Russia to present a Ukraine ceasefire outline within days that will show if it is serious, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Moscow of buying time. President Donald Trump spoke separately by telephone to Zelensky and Russia's Vladimir Putin, after Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Istanbul for their first direct talks on the conflict in three years.

Putin has consistently rejected proposals for a 30-day truce put forward by Kyiv and its Western allies. But Rubio said that Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov indicated they would present their own terms "maybe in a number of days, maybe this week hopefully." The Russians will offer "just broad terms that would allow us to move towards a ceasefire, and that ceasefire would then allow us to enter into detailed negotiations to bring about an end of the conflict," Rubio said. He said that the presentation will "tell us a lot about their true intentions."

"If it's a term sheet that's realistic and you can work off of it, that's one thing. If it makes demands that we know are unrealistic, I think that will be

indicative." Putin after Trump's call said he was ready to work with Ukraine on a "memorandum" outlining a possible roadmap and different positions on ending the war. And Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said that Pope Leo XIV was willing "to host upcoming discussions between the parties at the Vatican," according to her office. Rubio insisted to critical lawmakers that Putin "hasn't gotten a single concession" from Trump. But Russia has also not indicated any new flexibility since Trump took office in January with vows to end the war through dialogue. "It is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupation," Zelensky said in a post on social media. Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Rubio that Putin's refusal to go to Istanbul despite the stated willingness of both Zelensky and Trump to meet showed "he believes it's in Russia's interest to carry out this war as long as possible."

The European Union formally adopted its 17th round of sanctions on Moscow, targeting 200 vessels of Russia's so-

called shadow maritime fleet. Kirill Dmitriev, the head of Russia's Direct Investment Fund and lead economic negotiator with Washington, attacked the move, saying: "Western politicians and the media are making titanic efforts to disrupt the constructive dialogue between Russia and the United States." Rubio said that Trump for now opposed new sanctions for fear that Russia would no longer come to the table.

Moscow appears confident, with its troops advancing on the battlefield and Trump ending Western isolation of the Kremlin. The memorandum mentioned by Putin "buys time for Russia," Russian political analyst Konstantin Kalachev said. "The cessation of hostilities is not a condition for it, which means that Russia can continue its offensive," he added. Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and has since destroyed swathes of the country's east, killed tens of thousands and now controls around one-fifth of its territory. People who spoke to AFP both in Kyiv and Moscow were skeptical about peace prospects and thought the Putin-Trump call had not brought them closer.

## Russia is only playing for time in Ukraine peace talks: Germany

BRUSSELS (Reuters): German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of not really being interested in peace in Ukraine, saying he was only playing for time in talks with the United States. Europe needs to increase the pressure on Russia by imposing more sanctions, especially on Russia's energy sales, Pistorius added.

"We have seen massive (Russian) attacks again in recent days ... These speak louder than the lip service (to the peace process) we have heard for so long," Pistorius said before a meeting of EU defence and foreign affairs ministers in

Brussels. "Putin is clearly playing for time, unfortunately we have to say Putin is not really interested in peace." Russia and Ukraine are set to start negotiations after Putin spoke to US President Donald Trump, but Putin said the process would take time. After Trump briefed them on his call, European leaders agreed to increase pressure on Russia through fresh sanctions. Ahead of meeting, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot accused Putin of hypocrisy. "I believe that when Vladimir Putin continues to uphold his hypocritical language, everyone has understood that he will carry on with his colonial

war to the end if we do not put a stop to it."

"Let us push Vladimir Putin to put an end to his imperialist fantasy by adopting (EU) sanctions that are truly dissuasive." EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the United States needed to join the bloc in increasing pressure on Russia. "We all agreed and said ... that if they don't agree to unconditional ceasefire, like Ukraine has agreed over 60 days ago, there will be strong action," Kallas said ahead of the meeting. "And that is what we want to see from all the parties who have said that they will act in accordance," she said.

## Japanese farm minister resigns following gaffe over rice

TOKYO (Reuters): Japanese farm minister Taku Eto resigned after remarks he made this week about rice triggered a firestorm of criticism from voters and lawmakers, posing a fresh challenge to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's embattled government.

Eto has been in hot water since media reports exposed comments he made at a weekend political fundraising party that he had "never had to buy rice" thanks to gifts from supporters. The comment led to a frenzy of criticism from voters, already angry about the historically high price of the staple food due to a poor

harvest and elevated demand from a boom in tourism.

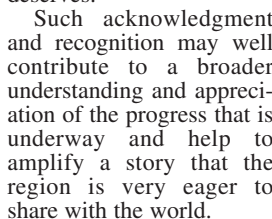
"I made an extremely inappropriate remark at a time when citizens are suffering from soaring rice prices," Eto told reporters after handing in his resignation at the prime minister's office. Public broadcaster NHK and other media reported that former Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi would replace him. The doubling of rice prices from a year ago has become a top concern for Japanese voters, long accustomed to years of deflation and suffering from stubbornly low inflation-adjusted wages.

The government has taken steps since March to tame prices by releasing rice from its emergency stockpile, but the moves have had little impact. Data showed retail prices rising again in the week through May 11 after falling for the first time in 18 weeks. That has increasingly led to retailers and consumers seeking out cheaper, foreign rice. Attacking Eto for being tone-deaf and Ishiba for initially refusing to sack him, opposition parties had agreed to consider submitting a no-confidence motion against the farm minister. "I bear full responsibility for making the appointment,"

Ishiba told reporters after accepting Eto's resignation. He added that he had yet to decide on Eto's successor. Social media lit up with angry comments directed at both Eto and Ishiba, with one user responding, "then quit", referring to the premier's apology for naming Eto to the post. Eto's departure threatens Ishiba's already-shaky grip on power ahead of key upper house elections in July. His Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner Komeito lost their majority in the more powerful lower house in a snap election Ishiba called in October shortly after taking office.



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national Leadership Council of Yemen's international. Led by Rashad Al Alimi, unite an otherwise divided dimensions within the council. Earlier this month, prime arak said he was stepping an year in office, blaming in making "necessary ns. With different council ilitary representation on become a tool for exerting ance. This is largely down legal framework regulat- and defining its members' ner. The ambiguity sur- t functions and authority ly resulted in allegations control against some of the control. The result of this at incapable of asserting d politically against the idable forces.

Yemenis who have lost faith in their respective rulers – whether in Houthi or government-controlled areas – are now looking elsewhere for hope. Talks between the US and Iran about a new nuclear agreement are continuing and experts believe that Iran could make concessions, including pulling its financial and intelligence support to the Houthis in exchange for sanctions relief. The declaration of the Republic of Yemen on May 22, 1990, was a decisive moment for the country. But the optimism that greeted this new start has long since faded. Whether Yemen's conflict is the cause of some of today's problems in the Middle East, or simply a reflection of them is a moot point for ordinary Yemeni civilians who, once again, have fallen victim to decisions made by local and regional powers, when all they really need is food on the table, hospitals to treat them and a nation they can call home.

—The National



# World leaders have a huge new problem: Trump’s Oval Office smackdowns

**IT’S the new Hunger Games of world politics — the televised Oval Office take-down by President Donald Trump.** South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was the latest leader to become a MAGA prop Wednesday, as Trump lectured him on false claims that White South African farmers are the victims of a genocide.

Foreign leaders now enter the hallowed lair of the US president — who runs press conferences like they’re WWE cage matches — at their peril.

Trump’s dressings-down are a metaphor for a US foreign policy that is erratic, politicized and awash in conspiracy theories. As Ukraine and Jordan also found out, the more vulnerable a country, the more hostile a reception they tend to get.

Giving the growing political risks of appearing in the Oval Office, it would not be surprising if some leaders reconsider what was once a coveted invitation but is now a political trap. This could have diplomatic consequences, with Global South nations like South Africa now looking more to China than the US.

Ramaphosa knew what was coming. He was joined by his White agriculture minister in the new multiracial coalition government. Trump’s friends the South African major champion golfers Ernie Els and Retief Goosen were also drafted in.

But that didn’t stop Trump dimming the lights and rolling out a multimedia show of right-wing propaganda about South Africa. “Death, death, death,” he said, as he displayed articles about the killings of White Afrikaners.

The question of more equitable land ownership is one of the most complex legacies of South Africa’s years of minority rule. But as Ramaphosa explained, there’s no systematic attempt to wipe out a community based on race or ethnicity — the definition of genocide. And most victims of violent crime are Black.

Every Oval Office meeting now takes place in the haunting shadow of the brutal inquisition of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky by Trump and Vice President JD Vance in February.

Ramaphosa seemed to have learned from that shocker. While rattled, he reacted with bemusement rather than outright anger to the president’s ambush. He patiently tried to explain the facts to Trump — not that it made any difference.

“They’re being executed, and they happen to be White, and most of them happen to be farmers,” Trump said. “I don’t know how you explain that.”

With most presidents, Oval Office photo-ops are

dull affairs. Press poolers are rushed in to hear each leader mouth platitudes about the strong relationship between the two countries. Sometimes reporters get to throw in a few questions before they are herded out to await a formal press conference later in the day.

This has changed in Trump’s second term, which has shattered even those barriers of decorum that the president left in place in his first go around.

The Oval Office is now more crowded and rowdier. Vance often sits on the White House sofa alongside Cabinet members wait-

Stephen Collinson

efit of one man — Elon Musk. The South African-born mogul was in the room with Ramaphosa on Wednesday after complaining on X about discrimination against Whites in South Africa.

Musk’s views also got an airing during a visit to the Oval Office by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, when Vance complained about what he said were free speech crackdowns in the UK on American-owned tech firms. Starmer, schooled by his weekly appearances at Prime Minister’s Questions

m a k i n g amends.

The most successful Oval Office visitors are those who dole out praise for Trump without debasing themselves too much.

With a theatrical flourish, Starmer pulled out a letter from King Charles III inviting Trump for a state visit, and waxed on about how this was a great honor since Trump had already had a similar invite from the late Queen Elizabeth II. Starmer is not known as a natural politician, and he got top marks at home for his unusually deft performance.

French President

Every Oval Office meeting now takes place in the haunting shadow of the brutal inquisition of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky by Trump and Vice President JD Vance in February. Ramaphosa seemed to have learned from that shocker. While rattled, he reacted with bemusement rather than outright anger to the president’s ambush. He patiently tried to explain the facts to Trump — not that it made any difference. “They’re being executed, and they happen to be White, and most of them happen to be farmers,” Trump said. “I don’t know how you explain that.” With most presidents, Oval Office photo-ops are dull affairs. Press poolers are rushed in to hear each leader mouth platitudes about the strong relationship between the two countries. Sometimes reporters get to throw in a few questions before they are herded out to await a formal press conference later in the day. This has changed in Trump’s second term, which has shattered even those barriers of decorum that the president left in place in his first go around. The Oval Office is now more crowded and rowdier. Vance often sits on the White House sofa alongside Cabinet members waiting to pounce. This is an unusual role for the veep. During the Obama administration, then-Vice President Joe Biden often shunned the spotlight at the back of the room. Trump’s visitors must run the gauntlet of the MAGA media pack looking, like the president, for viral moments. During Zelensky’s visit, one such reporter asked the president, who wears a military-style field jacket to honor frontline troops, why he wasn’t wearing a suit to show respect. Many deep problems remain in South Africa since the end of apartheid and years of corrupt and chaotic leadership by the African National Congress after President Nelson Mandela stepped down. It’s safe to say none of those issues were helped at all by Trump’s antics. But that was clearly not the point. The president’s Oval Office shows are about signaling to the MAGA base — apparently, in this case, its White nationalist elements.

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Trump’s brand is based on being an outsider and a disrupter. He returned to office determined to tear down global political and trading systems that boosted US power but that he says are ripping Americans off. What better way can there be to demonstrate “America first” strongman credentials than berating foreigners on TV?

Sometimes, the spectacle seems to be for the ben-

in the House of Commons, made short work of the complaint. “We’ve had free speech for a very, very long time in the United Kingdom and it will last for a very, very long time.”

Trump’s ritual humiliation of his visitors means world leaders now have a complex new dimension to their prep work.

They must consider how they will come across to their electorates back home. If they fail to stand up to Trump, they will look weak. If they push back hard, they might get a domestic boost — like Zelensky — but could damage their national interests if they leave Trump nursing a grudge.

And leaders must try to avoid being trapped on camera while Trump says or does something that underscores their relative weakness compared to the United States.

In February, for example, King Abdullah of Jordan looked deeply uncomfortable as Trump pressed him to accept refugees from Gaza. Such an influx could topple Jordan’s fragile political balance and the monarchy itself. Yet Abdullah also knew his country depends on US aid for security, so he couldn’t rebut his host.

Zelensky was another supplicant. After he was kicked out of the White House for reacting angrily to Vance’s demands for gratitude, he spent weeks

Emmanuel Macron created the second-term playbook for correcting Trump’s wild falsehoods when he laid his hand on the US president’s wrist when he falsely claimed Europe would get back aid it has poured into Ukraine. “No, to be frank, we paid. We paid 60% of the total effort,” Macron said.

Macron seemed to be relishing the high-wire political act of the Oval Office showdown. But he was careful to leaven his own statements with a large helping of “Dear Donalds.”

Another leader vying to be the bridge between Europe and Trump is Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. As a right-wing populist who often visits Mar-a-Lago, Meloni had the advantage of being among friends.

But as a strong supporter of Ukraine, she was on sensitive ground that she smoothed with slick political skills. At one point, Meloni interrupted her own interpreter and assumed translation duties herself to make sure Trump fully understood a point about Italy increasing defense spending.

And she curried favor by adopting the Trumpian vernacular, telling the president that they could “make the West great again.”

No foreign leader faced as much domestic pressure in the Oval Office as Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. After all, he

had just won an election that was dominated by hostility over Trump’s demands to annex Canada by wrapping himself in the maple leaf flag.

Carney tried talking to Trump in terms the real estate-magnate-turned-president would understand. “There are some places that are never for sale,” he said. “Having met with the owners of Canada over the course of the campaign ... it’s not for sale, won’t be for sale ever.”

When Trump said, “Never say never,” Carney turned to the cameras and the True North and mouthed, “Never, never.”

Trump, however, had the host’s prerogative of the last word — another hazard for world leaders visiting the Oval Office. He went on a tirade about how unfair it was that the US bears much of the cost for defending Canada militarily, then told the press to leave. Carney couldn’t get a word in edgewise.

Leaders never know quite what might happen with Trump.

Which brings us to Pope Leo XIV.

Vance was at the Vatican last weekend for the pontiff’s inaugural mass and handed over an impressive white envelope bearing the presidential seal that contained an invitation for a visit to the White House. Leo was heard to say “at some point” — perhaps referring to his intention to take up the offer.

But the former Robert Prevost of Chicago didn’t seem to be in a rush. Maybe that’s because it’s almost inconceivable to envision the man viewed by Roman Catholics as God’s representative on Earth willingly submitting to the Oval Office bear pit and Trump’s somewhat secular rhetoric.

Any visit is likely to follow intense negotiations with the Vatican about protocol.

But the spectacle of the two most famous Americans on the planet in the storied office would be something to behold.

— CNN

# UK’s tight immigration controls could also keep out workers

Gavin Esler

**WHEN I need to get to London’s Heathrow Airport at an awkward hour, I call a taxi company owner who is a migrant success story. He is from Iraqi Kurdistan and now runs several small businesses. If he is free, he drives me himself.**

We have had long conversations about migration. He left Kurdistan as a teenager and began a very, very long walk through Turkey. He arrived in Britain with nothing. Nowadays he enriches our country through his hard work.

Our conversations come to mind when I hear about various government initiatives to “control” migration — initiatives that sometimes sound as likely to be successful as planning to “control” the weather. US President Donald Trump, for instance, promised to “build a wall and make Mexico pay for it”.

Former German chancellor Angela Merkel once said “Wir schaffen das” — meaning “we can do it” — when there was

In the UK, Nigel Farage’s latest political vehicle, the Reform UK party, did well in recent local elections although — an important caveat — most English voters can’t be bothered to turn out for local council elections. The results, therefore, tend to be skewed towards those who are energised to vote, and immigration is a great energiser. In various democracies, so many governments have tied themselves in knots over promises to limit immigration, stop the boats, build the walls, and so on — but often without much success. Like my Kurdish friend, many migrants simply have no choice but to leave their homeland and somehow get round the migration barriers. Mr Trump’s second term has begun with forcible arrests and deportations of supposedly “illegal” migrants, promising a hostile environment for newcomers. In Britain, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced a new “get tough” policy. Opinion polls suggest it has gone down well with half the electorate while others are angry at echoes of the country’s troubled past on immigration control. In 1968, the MP Enoch Powell — a man with ambitions to become prime minister — told a Conservative party audience that immigration of workers mostly from the Caribbean and South Asia meant that “I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood”. This classical reference to the Roman poet Virgil and the inflammatory prospect of some kind of race war effectively ended Powell’s ambitions. Mr Starmer this month offered his own prophecy on migration, namely that without controls, “we risk becoming an island of strangers — not a nation that walks forward together”. We shall see how effective these new controls are over the next few years. But British people remain sceptical, especially after 14 years of failed migration policies and promises of the erstwhile Conservative government.

an enormous influx of migrants. One result was the rise of resentment and the German far right. Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy and now the UK have also seen the rise of far-right political parties energised by migration as the hottest issue to enrage voters.

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As home secretary, Theresa May promised “a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants”. Migration went up. Then-prime minister David Cameron promised net migration falling to fewer than 100,000 a year. It peaked at about 900,000. Britain also left the EU. That meant fewer EU migrants, but gaps in the workforce for often low-paid jobs were then filled by other migrants, many of them from India, Pakistan and Africa.

When I recently asked

a migration expert to define the “problem” of migration, the response was clear. It wasn’t that Britain is a racist country. It wasn’t even the numbers. For most British people, I was told, the most visible flashpoint issue is the small number of boats run by criminal gangs bringing migrants across the channel from France. This is understandable. British people are right to be outraged by pictures on television that show that the UK does not seem to be in control of its own borders.

Those pictures also provide a great photo-opportunity for the likes of Mr Farage and his anti-migrant campaigning. He is often photographed on the English coast near Dover complaining that the government has “lost control”, even if the small boats are a tiny part of the migration figures. The highest number of migrants crossing the channel in small boats was 45,774 in 2022. Of course criminal gangs trafficking in human misery have to be stopped.

but net (legal) migration in 2023 was, as mentioned, 20 times greater, at 900,000.

The Starmer plan will try to make migration to the UK more difficult. It will attempt to get a grip. But it will also leave gaps in low-paid jobs often done by migrants, including social care, in nursing homes and in the health service. Another island nation, Japan, tightly controls immigration but the falling birth rate and ageing population mean that one in 10 Japanese citizens is over the age of 80.

So which problem do British policymakers want to solve? Is it the number of newcomers? Is it arresting boat traffickers and other criminals? And above all, will tight immigration controls also mean keeping out hard-working young people who — like my Kurdish friend — enrich the UK through their skills and determination?

Real solutions are difficult, while political promises glide off the tongue.

# One planet, all species living in harmony

**NATURE is the foundation of civilization and humanity’s most powerful ally. From the air we breathe to the food we eat, our lives are inextricably linked with the natural world, and by extension, all other living things which, like us, depend on it for survival.**

Natural habitats are not just home to countless species critical to maintaining the delicate balance of the planet’s ecosystems, but also act as carbon sinks, protecting us against climate change. Forests alone absorb nearly 16 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, while regulating global temperatures.

However, currently, around the world, from the deepest oceans to the tallest mountains, nature is under immense threat. Biodiversity is in serious decline, with species going extinct at a faster rate than any time in history.

Against this backdrop, the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework — agreed to at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022 under China’s pres-

idency — paved a path to better safeguard the planet and promote coexistence with nature. It set 23 specific targets to be achieved by 2030, alongside four long-term objectives for 2050.

While some progress has been made toward achieving these goals, there is still much work to be done. Since 2020, for example, protected areas have increased by less than 0.5 percent globally. This leaves a land area roughly the size of Brazil and Australia combined, and at sea an area larger than the Indian Ocean, to be designated in order to meet the global target of protecting 30 percent of terrestrial, marine and freshwater spaces by 2030.

Sustainably protecting the world’s increasingly fragile ecosystems will require significantly enhanced efforts and accelerated actions. To this end, China’s continued pursuit of an “ecological civilization” has been an important commitment. Indeed, during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, China has made significant strides by improving its natural resource management, establishing con-

servation systems, and strengthening legislation for protected areas, which currently account for 18 percent of the country’s landmass.

Moving ahead, it will be critical to accelerate momentum by building on this work and further expanding conservation efforts to increasingly

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Similarly, the Kunming Biodiversity Fund announced by China in 2021, and launched last year, provides an international financing vehicle for developing countries to access additional funding needed to advance conservation efforts.

However, further accelerating financing at the speed and scale needed will require global, collective efforts. To that end, the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in June will be a critical opportunity to unite countries around the world in reforming domestic and international financing and catalyzing greater investments toward sustainability. It will also be an opportunity for large creditor countries to consider debt repurposing to free up more resources for the protection of nature.

Finally, with the rapid emergence of revolutionary new technologies and cutting-edge digital

tools, it will be critical to harness the transformative potential of these advancements and direct them toward development challenges, including biodiversity protection. Innovations like artificial intelligence offer ways to process vast amounts of environmental data, identify critical patterns and break down silos that have traditionally hindered conservation. UNDP has supported more than 50 countries in using AI to align national policies with global biodiversity goals.

At UNDP, we look forward to continue building on our decades-long partnership with China in strengthening biodiversity protection to advance progress on the SDGs and promote harmony with nature.

We can still protect the planet through meaningful, decisive action, but it must happen now, and it must happen collectively. The stakes have never been higher, but together we can and must turn ambition into impact to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for all life on Earth — one in which nature and humanity will not only coexist, but also thrive.



East Anglia, Bangor University, Canada West, and various other universities from the UK, USA, Australia, and Canada.

Atif Aslam, Director of Operations and Linkages, welcomed the participants and presented the company's performance. He stated that the company, which started with one office in 2019, now Alhamdulillah comprises 31 offices and has facilitated the admission of over 2500 students

The program concluded with the CEO of Paragon, Usama Naseer, announcing three upcoming projects. On this occasion, he stated that Paragon will be opening its offices in various countries under the name "Paragon Global." Additionally, they are launching a significant project in Lahore under the name "JAADA SCHOOLS," which will offer O Levels education to children.





# French Open odds against Djokovic as time running out for record 25th Slam

BERLIN (Reuters): If there is one tennis player who knows how to beat the odds when they are stacked against him, it is 24-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic.

The 38-year-old Serbian's bid for a fourth French Open crown looks more unlikely than in many years, with Djokovic struggling for form since his run to the Australian Open semi-finals back in January before retiring injured.

Since then Djokovic, who has 99 tour titles to his name and is in the twilight of a glorious career, has reached only one final and has not lifted a trophy

this year.

After two early losses in Monte Carlo and Madrid, it was clear that Djokovic's attempt to claim a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam could be his hardest yet.

"(It is) kind of a new reality for me, I have to say, trying to win a match or two, not really thinking about getting far in the tournament," Djokovic said after his early Madrid exit.

He was expected to jumpstart his clay campaign in Rome before returning to Paris, where he won Olympic gold last year, but he skipped the Italian Open without giving a reason.

Instead he picked up a surprise wild card for the Geneva Open this week, in what looks like a last-ditch attempt to get some more matches on clay under his belt before Paris.

News of the wild card came as Djokovic split with his coach Andy Murray after only a few months working together.

Djokovic appointed fellow former world number one Murray ahead of this year's Australian Open and the Serb said at the Qatar Open in February that he would continue working with the Scot for an indefinite period.

That time, however, ended abruptly last week with the Djokovic-Murray

partnership yielding no titles and one losing final in Miami.

Their partnership is now officially over as Djokovic heads towards the French Open in a cloud of uncertainty over his form and future.

The world number six has struggled to assert his dominance after winning three out of the four Grand Slams in 2023.

There is even more uncertainty over his chances of reaching the last major goal in his illustrious career: adding that elusive 25th record Grand Slam to his collection to move past Margaret Court on the all-time winners' list.



DALLAS, TEXAS: Tyler Seguin #91 of the Dallas Stars scores a goal past Stuart Skinner #74 of the Edmonton Oilers during the first period in Game One of the Western Conference Final of the 2025 Stanley Cup Playoffs at American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas.

## Duckett sparkles with century as England punish Zimbabwe

NOTTINGHAM, England (Reuters): England opener Ben Duckett scored a rapid century on his home ground as he punished Zimbabwe's tame seam attack to help his side to 295 for one at tea on the opening day of the one-off four-day test at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Thursday.

Duckett smashed 140 from 134 balls before he was caught at cover by Ben Curran off the bowling of Westley Madhevere, having put on an opening stand of 231 with Zak Crawley in 41.3 overs.

Crawley, who has been short of test runs in recent times, will resume after tea on 93 from 139 balls, along with Ollie Pope, who has 49 from 46 deliveries.

Zimbabwe's military medium pace, coupled with an inability to create pressure through a consistent line and length, allowed England's batters to make

hay as the sun peaked out from behind overcast clouds in the afternoon.

Left-hander Duckett reached his century from exactly 100 balls with 15 fours as he drove and cut the wayward visiting attack.

He added two sixes before he was out to another innocuous delivery, rocking onto the back foot and slapping the short ball

to a grateful Curran.

There would be no let-up for the visitors when Pope came to the crease as he raced along at more than a run a ball.

Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine won the toss and put England into bat, hoping the cloudy and cold morning conditions would force an early breakthrough.

Zimbabwe's first test in England in more than 20

years represents a rare opportunity for the southern Africans to gauge themselves as the hosts prepare for the series against India before the Ashes in Australia.

England handed a debut to seamer Sam Cook as well as a return to the test arena, after a two-year injury-enforced absence, for fellow fast bowler Josh Tongue.



## Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis enters final stage

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 37th edition of the OGDCL Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships has entered its final stages after a week of competitive and high-energy matches here at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex.

In the Men's Singles semifinals, top seed Muhammad Shoaib cruised into the final with a commanding performance, defeating Yousaf Khalil 6-1, 6-0.

The second semifinal witnessed a major upset as 3rd seed Muzammil Murtaza overcame veteran 2nd seed Aqeel Khan (WAPDA) in a gripping three-set battle. Although Aqeel took the first set 6-3

and initially led 4-1, Muzammil displayed remarkable resilience. He bounced back to win the second set 6-3, showcasing powerful serves and precise cross-court and down-the-line shots.

In the deciding set, Muzammil broke early to lead 3-0, at which point Aqeel retired due to fatigue, handing Muzammil a place in the final.

In the Junior 18 & Under category, the match of the day featured an exciting clash between Muhammad Yahya and Rayyan Khan Khalil. Youngster Rayyan, hailing from Peshawar, stunned the 2nd seed Yahya in the opening set with his aggressive shot-making

and pinpoint cross-court winners. However, Yahya regained control, taking the second set 6-3 and dominating the third set 6-1 to secure his place in the final.

The finals of the 37th OGDCL Federal Cup promise thrilling encounters as top-ranked players battle for national ranking supremacy. Tomorrow Ladies Singles final will be played between Mehaq Khokhar and Noor Malik and Boys 14&Under Singles Finals at 9am.

Men's Singles (semifinals): Muhammad Shoaib beat Yousaf Khalil 6-1 6-0, Muzammil Murtaza beat Aqeel Khan 3-6 6-3 3-0 (Retd).

Men's Doubles (semi-

nals): Muhammad Shoaib & Muzammil Murtaza beat Ahmad Nael Qureshi and Saqib Hayat 6-1 7-5; Barkatullah & Yousaf Khalil beat Abdullah Adnan & Saifullah Khan 6-3 6-4.

Junior 18&Under Singles (quarterfinals): Muhammad Salar beat M.Junaid Khan 6-1 6-2, Abdul Basit beat Haziq Arejo 6-0 6-1, M.Haziq Aasim beat M.Talha Khan 6-1 6-3, Muhammad Yahya beat Rayyan Khan Khalil 2-6 6-3 6-1.

Boys 14&Under Singles (semifinals): Shayaan Afridi beat Rashid Ali 4-1 3-5(3) 4-1.

Girls 12&Under Singles (final): Khadija Khalil beat Umer Shahnoor 4-1 4-0.

## Pacers beat Knicks in overtime after late comeback

NEW YORK (BBC): The Indiana Pacers overturned a 17-point deficit in the fourth quarter before beating the New York Knicks in overtime to win the opening game of their NBA Eastern Conference finals series 138-135.

Jalen Brunson ended the night with 41 points for the Knicks and helped them to lead 69-62 at half-time.

The hosts continued to pull away and were 14 points clear with two minutes and 51 seconds left to play.

However, Indiana scored six straight three-pointers - five by Aaron Nesmith - before Tyrese Haliburton forced overtime with a two-point shot on the buzzer.

Momentum remained with the Pacers in overtime as they recorded a famous victory at Madison Square



Garden.

"I'm so proud of the resilience of this group, we've shown it all year. We've had to win in so many different, random, unique ways and we just kept going, kept fighting, and man, that's fun," Haliburton told TNT.

"We played a lot of games where it felt like the other team had control. "It ain't over until it's

over, until it hits zero. That's a hell of a win. But I really do think there's a lot for us to improve on."

Haliburton thought he had won the game in regulation time when attempting a three-pointer - even mimicking Hall of Famer Reggie Miller's infamous 'choke' celebration - but replays showed his toe was on the line and it only counted for two.

It is the fourth time the Pacers have won from being 15 points or more behind during the post-season.

"There's obviously a disappointment when you fall short," said Knicks head coach Tom Thibodeau.

"We got to be ready for game two, and that's all you look at. So, the disappointment, we've got to turn that into more determination."

The second game of the best-of-seven series takes place in New York at 01:00 BST on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander - who led Oklahoma City Thunder to victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves in game one of the Western Conference finals - has been named as the NBA's Most Valuable Player for 2024-25.

## Amorim offers to quit if Man United board want new boss

BILBAO (Reuters): Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim said that he was confident he was still the right man for the job after the club's woeful Europa League loss to Tottenham Hotspur, but would quit with no compensation if the club's board believed otherwise.

Amorim and his men had hoped to salvage something from a woeful season that has them languishing 16th in the Premier League with one game remaining.

Instead, Brennan Johnson bundled in a first-half goal in a 1-0 win that clinched Spurs a spot in the Champions League next season -- leaving United out of European football entirely.

"In this moment, I am not going to be here defending myself, it is not my style," Amorim told reporters. "I cannot do it, it is really hard for me.

"So I have nothing to show to the fans and say 'I'm going to improve because of this, I have these problems,' I will not do nothing.

"In this moment, it is a little bit of faith. Let's see. I'm always open, if the board and the fans feel that I am not the right guy, I will go the next day without any conversation about compensation."

Missing out on the Champions League is costly with co-owner Jim Ratcliffe estimating the financial benefit of qualification between 80 and 100 million pounds (\$107 - \$134 million) in broadcast, matchday and commercial income.

"It is tough for a club like us not to be in the Champions League but now we have to deal with that with a different plan, even with the market," Amorim said. "But that means we have more time, more time to think and work during the week and to be better in the Premier League. This will be our focus.

"I know it's going to be tough, I know we lost to an English team, I know the pressure of the fans is going to be really short in the next season. But I guarantee you I will not quit, I will not go away, so I am really confident."

United played like a team more afraid to lose than one focused on winning on Wednesday, particularly in the first half, which proved costly as terrible defending led to Spurs' goal.

United fared better in the second half and threatened to equalise in the dying minutes with Rasmus Hojlund, Alejandro Garnacho and Luke Shaw all forcing terrific saves.

# Tottenham beat Man United to lift first trophy in 17 years

BILBAO, SPAIN (BBC): Tottenham ended their 17-year wait for a trophy as Brennan Johnson's first-half goal was enough to beat Manchester United in the Europa League final.

Victory means under-fire head coach Ange Postecoglou has fulfilled a promise to deliver silverware in his second season at Spurs.

Postecoglou, who said he would "never be a clown" in his pre-match address, brought smiles and unbridled joy to the faces of the 15,000 official, and many unofficial, Tottenham fans in Bilbao's San Mames Stadium.

Victory may not save Postecoglou from a Spurs exit in the coming weeks. But the Australian will leave as a hero after joining Bill Nicholson and Keith Burkinshaw in winning a European trophy with the north London giants.

In addition to following the lead of Newcastle and Crystal Palace in making this a season of glory for clubs who rarely, if ever, win a trophy, Tottenham are also set to benefit from a £100m windfall after qualifying for next sea-

son's Champions League.

As had to happen in a battle between the two lowest-placed teams ever to contest a European final, for the losers, there was no silver lining.

Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim will send his side into the final Premier League game of the season against Aston Villa on Sunday with huge questions over his ability to make them competitive following their worst season since the 1973-74 relegation campaign.

Amorim enjoys the backing of the ownership but his decision to pick Mason Mount ahead of Alejandro Garnacho in an attacking role did not work. And with skipper Bruno Fernandes unusually subdued, United lacked the guile to drag themselves back into the game once they had fallen behind.

They came close to an equaliser with a Rasmus Hojlund header, following Guglielmo Vicario's error, that was acrobatically cleared off the line by Micky van de Ven midway through the second half.

Vicario then made a



dramatic late save to keep out Luke Shaw's header.

The goal was scruffy, with some debate over whether Johnson got the last touch - and was totally in keeping with the tepid domestic seasons of these

two underperforming sides, but no-one at Spurs will care about that.

On a night of clear tension and nerves, evident from both sides from the first minutes, and afflicting even the most experi-

enced performers, it was always likely to require a little bit of luck to claim victory.

When Pape Matar Sarr floated over his cross as the first-half ticked to its conclusion, Johnson got

ahead of Shaw to get the first touch.

It wasn't a particularly good touch and looked unlikely to trouble Onana. But once the ball hit Shaw at close quarters, the Manchester United goal-

keeper was scrambling. Johnson lunged at the ball a second time. Whether he got there was debatable. But the damage was already done. Onana couldn't keep it out.

Up to that point, Tottenham had not had a shot on target. They were not to have another. It didn't matter a jot.

In his 100th game as Spurs boss, Postecoglou got his second season trophy, just as he did with South Melbourne and Brisbane Roar in Australia, Yokohama F Marinos in Japan and Celtic in Scotland. The first English club to win a European competition had become the latest to do so, beating a English opponent for the second time after overcoming Wolves in the 1972 Uefa Cup final. Postecoglou also won the Asian Cup two years after becoming Australia boss - and the Scottish championship in both seasons with Celtic.

The seven minutes of stoppage time signalled brought hope for United that they could save themselves in a European final, just as they did so famously back in 1999.

But those days are long gone.

Even more recent heroes in the form of Rio Ferdinand and Wayne Rooney, both present in Bilbao this week, can only lament what their old club has become.

Where there used to be invention and danger, now there is just poor decision making. It starts at the top of the club but was evident on the field deep in stoppage time when, with Bruno Fernandes on one side and Amad Diallo on the other, Leny Yoro decided he was the best option to shoot from 25 yards. It was off target.

Hojlund scooped a header over the bar. Amad was dangerous and in the dying embers of injury time, Vicario turned away a decent header from substitute Joshua Zirkzee.

But there was no great belief. Garnacho hooked the last chance into the side-netting.

United will have no European football next season for only the second time since English clubs were readmitted by Uefa in 1990. They will play in the Carabao Cup in August.





## In brief

### FIA holds session

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) organized an awareness session at NICON College, Rawalpindi, to educate students and teachers about the dangers of illegal migration and human trafficking. FIA officials shared real-life stories and warned about fake job offers abroad. They advised students to always verify such offers through official government sources before making any decisions. The session was part of FIA's ongoing campaign to protect young people and the community from human smugglers. At the end of the session, students asked questions and promised to spread the message among their friends and families.

### 236,487 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 236,487 cusecs water from various run stations with inflow of 268,593 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1469.15 feet which was 67.15 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 149,200 cusecs and 140,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1151.00 feet, which was 101.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 43,026 cusecs and 20,120 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 186,347, 113,268, 61,807 and 25,010 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 40,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 11,730 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Australia Day celebrated

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian High Commission hosted its annual Australia Day in Spring reception in Islamabad, celebrating the strong and growing connections between the people of Australia and Pakistan. This year's event focused on the theme of people-to-people ties, brought to life through a vibrant mix of cultural experiences. Guests were welcomed by kangaroos painted in Pakistani truck art style, the sounds of native Australian birds, and digital displays highlighting the natural beauty of Australia's six states and two territories. In his remarks, High Commissioner Neil Hawkins emphasized the deep roots and bright future of the bilateral relationship. "This relationship is powered by people," he said. "From the Baloch camelers who helped shape Australia's outback, to the more than 100,000 Pakistanis who now call Australia home, and the 20,000 students currently studying in Australia—our ties are living, growing, and deeply rooted." Hawkins highlighted over four decades of cooperation in agriculture and water management, as well as long-standing defence collaboration. He also pointed to Australia's continued support for climate resilience, education, and gender equality in Pakistan through grassroots partnerships. "Ours is a relationship built on cooperation and shared experience—scientists tackling salinity together, girls playing cricket, alumni shaping Pakistan's future," he said. "This friendship is not just official—it's about connections between ordinary people.

# ICT admin conducts crackdown against professional beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration of Islamabad on Thursday intensified actions against professional begging in the federal capital and detained 23 individuals from the Blue Area.

The operation is part of a broader effort to discourage street begging and involve citizens in reporting such cases.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, in a recent operation, the district administration officials detained 23 people from the Blue Area. The group included 8 women, 5 children, and 10 men. All of them were taken into custody and transferred to local police stations.

This operation comes under the orders of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, who has asked for increased action across the capital. The anti-begging campaign aims to control the growing presence of street beggars, especially in public and commercial spaces like the Blue Area, where such activities are more visible.

The Deputy Commissioner has also appealed to

the public for help in identifying and reporting beggars. He encouraged residents of Islamabad to inform the administration through the official DC helpline if they see individuals begging anywhere in the city.

DC Memon said that public cooperation is essential to make the campaign successful. He urged citizens to report the presence of beggars without delay so that the district administration can respond quickly.

The campaign has been gaining pace, especially in central areas where the number of beggars appears to be on the rise. The authorities are focusing on areas like shopping centers, markets, traffic signals, and busy intersections where begging is common.

Officials say that most of the individuals involved in begging are part of organized groups. These networks often include women and children, who are seen on roadsides or outside commercial buildings, approaching people for money.

The administration believes that removing these groups from public spaces can help reduce

related concerns such as child exploitation, harassment of passersby, and misuse of public areas.

To support this effort, the district administration is planning further operations in other parts of the city. These will be carried out with the help of police teams and social welfare officers. In some cases, children found begging are handed over to child protection institutions. Adults, particularly repeat offenders, are dealt with under the law.

Officials have clarified that the goal of the campaign is not just to detain beggars but to break the system that allows begging to become a regular means of income. The administration wants to discourage professional beggars while offering support to those in genuine need through government-run shelters and support programs.

According to the district administration, reducing street begging will not only improve public order but also help in identifying those who need real support. It will also discourage criminal elements who use begging as a front for other activities.

## Exhibition opens at Pakistan National Council of Arts

ISLAMABAD (APP): An exhibition titled "Perspectives on Pakistan: A Photographic Journey" opened at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Thursday capturing the essence of Pakistan's vast cultural tapestry from snow-capped peaks and ancient Buddhist relics to vibrant tribal festivals and bustling urban life.

The exhibition, inaugurated by the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khichi, presented a compelling visual narrative of the country's diversity, resilience and natural beauty.

Curated by Mariam Ahmed, Director Visual Arts Division at PNCA, the exhibition brought together the work of renowned and emerging photographers Amir Khan, Anita Schneider, Luke Myers, and Shahzad Ahmad.

Each frame told a story—of landscapes, people, traditions, and places often hidden from the mainstream lens.

From the majestic Karakoram to Rawal Lake in the heart of Islamabad, and from the heritage site

of Takht-i-Bahi to the unique celebrations of Kalash and Derajat, the exhibition spanned a rich geographical and cultural spectrum.

Featured locations also included Deosai National Park, Shigar Valley, Gojal in Upper Hunza, Lower Hunza, Skardu, Swat's Gaben jaba, and Karachi's Clifton coast.

Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khichi, who graced the event, remarked, "I have seen many photographic exhibitions, but the work displayed here is marvelous. Every picture speaks for itself."

"We are thankful to the artists for bringing the essence of Pakistan under one roof. As a minister, my office and associated institutions stand available to support such creative endeavours. PNCA deserves appreciation for promoting Pakistani culture." Director General PNCA, Ayoub Jamali, was also present on the occasion. He praised the exhibition as a vital cultural initiative and said,

"Photography has the power to transcend language and geography. This exhibition is a beautiful

representation of Pakistan's landscapes, heritage, and people. PNCA remains committed to supporting such artistic expressions that celebrate our diversity and heritage."

Curator Mariam Ahmed highlighted the inclusion of new talent: "The keyword is diversity. This platform beautifully captures the many shades of our country's landscapes and cultures. It was a valuable opportunity to provide an opportunity to the artists to bring fresh perspectives."

Luke Myers spoke about photography as a global storytelling tool, while Amir Khan, active in the field for over 16 years, shared his dedication to capturing Pakistan's under-represented narratives.

The exhibition will remain open from May 22-25 in Gallery 2, PNCA, Islamabad. A special Photography Workshop will also be held on May 23 at 10:00 am.

The exhibition invites all art lovers, cultural enthusiasts, and storytellers to explore Pakistan through the eyes of those who have journeyed far and wide to frame its essence.

## ITP holds free medical camp in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) in collaboration with a private organization organized a free medical camp for professional and heavy vehicle drivers to assess their health and raise awareness about traffic rules and road safety.

An official told APP on Thursday that the primary objective of the camp was to ensure smooth traffic flow and reduce the number of road accidents by educating drivers and identifying potential

health issues.

He said specialist doctors conducted important medical examinations, including blood pressure, blood sugar, eyesight, hearing, and mental stress assessments. Based on the reports, several drivers were given medical advice and referred for further treatment where necessary.

He said traffic police officers also briefed drivers on traffic laws, safe driving practices, and accident prevention meth-

ods.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (ret'd) Syed Zeeshan Haider said that the protection of citizens' lives and property is the top priority of ITP. CTO Zeeshan emphasized that driver health assessments and awareness campaigns directly contribute to reducing traffic accidents and ensuring public safety.

He said similar initiatives will be organized in the future as part of ITP's ongoing road safety campaign.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain cutting ribbon during opening ceremony of a workshop.

## Minister commends Secretary on his retirement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Thursday paid tribute to Secretary Housing and Works Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash for his exemplary services.

Speaking at a farewell ceremony held in the Committee Room of the Ministry upon the retirement of Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash from the government service, the minister lauded Dr. Bangash's dedication, professionalism and significant contributions during his tenure.

"Your hard work and commitment have left a lasting impact on the Ministry," he said.

In response, Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash expressed heartfelt gratitude, acknowledging the minister's leadership and support.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of a souvenir to Dr. Bangash in recognition of his service.

Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash officially retired on May 22 after a distinguished career of over thirty years in public service.

## Capital to get world-class public library

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad will soon have a state-of-the-art public library in F-9 Park, equipped with digital facilities, a children's play area, and research labs.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday.

The library will follow international standards, featuring an e-library, digital indexing, co-working spaces, and a social zone.

It will also house over 500,000 books and include conference halls for events.

"The design must meet global benchmarks, with all modern amenities to ensure visitors face no difficulties," said Randhawa.

He directed authorities to digitally link the library with national and international libraries.

Additionally, the meeting discussed upgrading Islamabad's nursery and arrested 11 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday.

He informed that 2 kg of heroin was recovered from parcels being sent to the UK at the cargo shed of Islamabad International Airport, and three suspects were arrested. As many as

## Australian HC urges young professionals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, said that Australia was proud to support young Pakistani professionals through various educational scholarship programmes.

He said, "Investing in Pakistan's future and helping the young Pakistani professionals to come to Pakistan to shape future of their country".

In an exclusive interview with the APP, the High Commissioner said that scholarship program is one of the most important ones — there are long-term and short-term scholarship programmes for young professionals.

Neil Hawkins said,

"This relationship is powered by people," adding, "From the Baloch camelers who helped build Australia's outback, to the more than 100,000 Pakistanis who now call Australia home, and the 20,000 students currently studying in Australia—our ties are living, growing, and deeply rooted."

Replying to a question, the High Commissioner said, like Pakistan, climate change is also a big problem for Australia: "We have floods and we have droughts".

With shared experiences, he said, "We can come up with solutions and cope with the challenge of climate change." He said, "We can help and learn

from each other." He said Australia's support continues to strengthen climate resilience, education, and gender equality through grassroots partnerships that uplift Pakistani communities.

Hawkins said, "We are exporting Australian cows to Pakistan as these are very popular here, "The Australian cows are different from the European cows as they are used to hot weather conditions and give good milk, he added.

The High Commissioner also highlighted the enduring cooperation of more than 40 years of working together to build resilience in the agriculture and water sectors, and the longstanding defence ties.

## FIA cracks down on human smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched a nationwide crackdown against organized criminal networks involved in human smuggling, fake identity documents, and illegal currency exchange.

In Islamabad, the FIA Counter-Terrorism Wing (CTW) arrested three suspects belonging to an international gang accused of issuing fake Pakistani ID cards, machine-readable passports, and Saudi work visas to Afghan nationals.

The arrested individuals — Muhammad Alam Zeb, Asif Khan, and Haroon Rasheed — allegedly issued dozens of fraudulent documents, with Alam Zeb alone facilitating visas for 31 Afghan nationals, and Haroon Rasheed for 58.

Investigations are underway into the possible involvement of NADRA and passport office officials. Raids are continuing to arrest more members of the gang.

In Karachi, the FIA Corporate Crime Circle arrested Muhammad Nadeem, involved in hawala/hundi and illegal currency exchange. Acting on intelligence, FIA recovered over Rs. 71 million and 11,900 US dollars.

The illegal operation was reportedly run from Dubai, using local agents and riders. Nadeem confessed to working for two Dubai-based agents and led authorities to a second raid on a jewelry shop.

Separately, the FIA Anti-Corruption Circle Karachi arrested another suspect, Muneeb, from Chundrigar Road, recovering 13,000 US dollars. He was operating an unlicensed currency exchange and failed to provide a valid explanation for the recovered funds.

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In Gujranwala, FIA Director Abdul Qadir Qamar held an open court (Khuli Kachehri) to address public complaints related to human smuggling, immigration fraud, and corruption.

Citizens were encouraged to report wrongdoing, and the Director assured immediate legal action.

He stated that FIA's doors are always open for public support and emphasized zero tolerance for human smugglers.

"Victims of human trafficking will be given full legal support, and the criminals will be made an example," said Qamar.

Citizens praised the FIA's ongoing efforts and expressed full confidence in the agency's leadership.

FIA continues to conduct operations across the country to dismantle criminal networks and ensure the rule of law.

## ANF arrests 11 smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force, conducting six operations across the country, recovered as many as 106.530 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 10.8 million and arrested 11 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday.

He informed that 2 kg of heroin was recovered from parcels being sent to the UK at the cargo shed of Islamabad International Airport, and three suspects were arrested. As many as

74 ecstasy pills weighing 130 grams were recovered from a parcel sent from the UK at the courier office in Chaklala, Rawalpindi.

Similarly, 60 kg of hashish was recovered from secret compartments of a vehicle near Shamkot Toll Plaza, Khanewal, and four suspects were arrested.

In another operation, 37.2 kg of hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Jamali Bridge on Sohrah Goth Road, Karachi, and a suspect was arrested.

As much as 4.8 kg of hashish was recovered from secret compartments of a vehicle near Kam Bridge on Islamabad Expressway, and three suspects were arrested. On a tip-off, 2.4 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused near Sahianwala Interchange, Faisalabad.

Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

## HEC hosts 10th best research award

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), hosted on Thursday the 10th HEC Best Research Awards ceremony to celebrate the exceptional achievements of Pakistani researchers and faculty in various fields.

During the ceremony, graced by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed as chief guest, HEC conferred a total of nine awards, three each in the categories of Best Publication, Best Researcher, and Best Young Researcher across three broad disciplinary domains of Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Law, Education, Management, Public Policy; Physical Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Computer Science, Statistics, Mathematics; and, Life

Sciences, Biological Sciences, Health, Pharmacy, Agriculture, Veterinary Sciences. The awards comprised Rs. 1 million for the Best Publication, Rs. 500,000 for the Best Researcher, and Rs. 500,000 for the Best Young Researcher.

Prof. Dr. Abdul Majid from University of Gujrat, Prof. Dr. Jawad Abbas from University of Central Punjab, and Prof. Dr. Abdul Rashid from Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission of Pakistan (PAEC) have won the Best Publication Awards. The Best Researcher Awards have been clinched by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalily from Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU) Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Usman Akram from

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Islamabad, and Prof. Dr. Abdul Qayyum Rao from the University of the Punjab. Likewise, Dr. Waris Ali from University of Sahiwal, Dr. Muhammad Qasim Mehmood from Information Technology University Lahore, and Dr. Massab Umair from National Institute of Health Sciences have been awarded the Best Young Researcher Awards.

It is pertinent to mention here that the HEC Research Awards Programme was launched in 2009, aiming to recognize and reward outstanding research conducted by faculty members of higher education institutions. Over the past nine ceremonies, 279 awards

have been conferred, setting a strong precedent for academic recognition in Pakistan.

Addressing the ceremony, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed lauded the contributions of Pakistan's academic and research community towards the socio-economic development of the country. He emphasized the need for determined efforts to inspire researchers to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan, as he underlined that, "our existence lies in the existence of Pakistan."

He added that, "We are indebted to our motherland and must do our part to ensure its prosperity. This nation deserves to be a prosperous country."

Discussing higher edu-

cation's impact, Dr. Ahmed said that the government, through HEC, has injected a massive amount into the sector, with over 400,000 scholarships awarded and an enabling state-of-the-art research facilities and a thriving research ecosystem.

He maintained that the investment is bearing the fruit. He said that while Pakistan's research output is high, there must now be a focus on 'impact'.

The Chairman affirmed that nations only succeed when they work in tandem, combining knowledge, innovation, and patriotism. He proudly shared that the Pakistani university graduates and scholars and the recipients of HEC scholarships are making remark-

able technology contributions to the country. He stressed that it is critical to sustain the contributions through continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment.

He informed the audience that 279 awards have been presented over the last nine cycles of the HEC Research Awards. He said that the 2024 call received an encouraging response, as a total of 151 applications were received.

He added that 130 applicants stood eligible, while 43 were shortlisted for review. He concluded while paying homage to the academia and researchers, saying: "Pakistan recognizes your efforts. We are proud of our universities and researchers."

The convenors of the scrutiny committees also expressed their views and shed light on the transparency and fairness in the rigorous evaluation process. They also highlighted the effective use of HEC's Research Grants Management System (RGMS).

The ceremony was organized by the Research & Innovation Division of HEC, which plays a pivotal role in strengthening the research ecosystem of the country. R&I Division connects academia with industry and promotes the development of high-impact, technology-driven solutions to address national priorities. A large number of Vice Chancellors, faculty members and researchers attended the event.



1 killed, 3 hurt in collision

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): An individual has been killed and three others have been injured as a result of a traffic accident in eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Thursday. Police spokesman Syed Taib Hamad told Pajhwok Afghan News a passenger bus and a truck collided in the Pir Bagh area of Surkhrod district Thursday morning. He said a man was killed while three others suffered injuries in the collision. The injured were evacuated to hospital.

184 tankers sent back

KABUL (Pajhwok): 180 tankers of low-quality fuel were denied entry at ports in Farah, Nimroz and Balkh last month, MoF said on Thursday. MoF said it denied entry to 184 fuel tankers at customs in Nimroz and Farah provinces last month. Eight petrol tankers were sent back from Hairatan customs, 115 tankers of diesel, four tankers of petrol in Nimroz, 55 tankers of diesel in Farah customs, one tanker of diesel and another tanker of gas in Torghondi customs were rejected.

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

‘War-weary Afghans deserve compassion’

KABUL (BNA): The Amir al-Mu'minin (Hafizullah) stated during a one-day seminar for municipal officials that the people of Afghanistan have endured immense suffering due to prolonged wars, and now they are deserving of mercy and compassion.

According to a statement released today by the Presidential Palace, Amir al-Mumineen participated in and delivered a speech at a one-day educational and reformative seminar held in Kandahar for municipal authorities. The Mayor of Kabul was also in attendance at the event.

In his remarks, Amir ap Momeineen praised the efforts and services of all municipalities across the country and offered impor-

tant advice to the participants. He emphasized that responsibility is not a privilege or honor, but rather a trust, a burden that rests heavily on one's shoulders, and a duty to uphold the rights of the people.

"You now bear the responsibility for serving the people," he said. "It is incumbent upon you to protect the rights of the people in accordance with Islamic principles and to serve them sincerely."

Addressing the mayors, Amir al Momeineen stressed that the funds of the municipalities are, in fact, the people's money, their rightful dues, which they provide for public services. He urged that this money must be used in ways that bring happiness

and benefit to the general public.

Towards the conclusion of his speech, Amir al Momeineen reiterated that the people of Afghanistan have suffered deeply due to many years of war, and now, more than ever, they are entitled to mercy and compassion. "Treat the people kindly," he urged. "Assist them, do not use force or coercion against them, and do not burden them with pressure. Work harder to ensure the cleanliness and maintenance of the cities, safeguard public property and the nation's wealth, stay away from negligence, remain steadfast in Sharia, and know that the people are greatly pleased with your service and dedication."

Nine agri irrigation networks to be built

NANGARHAR (BNA): The Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Department of Nangarhar province has started the construction of 9 agricultural water networks in the Goshta and Kama districts of the province.

Zakerullah Zaki, the Government and Social Coordination Officer of the Nangarhar Agriculture Department, told Bakhtar News Agency that this project is being implemented under the Rapid Water Resources Rehabilitation Program, with nearly 3 million Afghanis in funding support from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in the Goshta and Kama districts.

He added that upon completion of this project, nearly 1,800 jerbis (about 360 hectares) of dry and barren land will be irrigated and made ready for agriculture. He noted that during the implementation of this project, employment opportunities will also be provided for thousands of local residents.

Additionally, Mawlawi Mohammad Wali Mohsin, Head of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in Nangarhar, called the implementation of this project a positive step towards water resource management in his remarks. He urged supporting organizations to also provide necessary training to farmers in the mentioned districts regarding the value and management of water for more effective project implementation.

Groundwater may run dry by 2030

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Japan Times, in a report titled "Afghan capital losing race against water shortages," stated that the situation in Kabul is clearly deteriorating.

The report, citing information and perspectives from several experts, mentioned that if no action is taken regarding Kabul's groundwater, there will be no groundwater left in Kabul by 2030. It said that population growth has outstripped urban planning, and climate change drives below-average precipitation. Japan Times notes that up to 80% of Kabul's groundwater is contaminated and more than 100,000 unregulated wells extract water in the city, which are frequently drilled deeper.

Groundwater can be recharged, but more is drawn each year than is replenished in Kabul, with an estimated annual 76-million-cubic-meter deficit, experts say, according to the report.

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Officials at Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar added that efforts are also being accelerated to increase the capacity of the hospital's medical staff.

Otunbayeva and Omari discuss security situation



KABUL (Pajhwok): The first deputy interior minister has discussed the security situation in Afghanistan with UNAMA head.

In a statement, the Ministry of Interior wrote first deputy interior minister

Maulvi Mohammad Nabi Omari met with United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan chief Roza Otunbayeva on Thursday.

It said the meeting took place at the office of MoI and both sides discussed

various topics, especially the security situation in the country.

According to the statement, the meeting emphasized bilateral cooperation for greater stability and security in Afghanistan.

Mirwais Hospital launches new departments

K A N D A H A R (TOLOnews): Officials at the Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar say that, in addition to beginning the construction of an oxygen production plant, five new departments have been inaugurated at the hospital.

They also reported that over the past month, 41,000 patients from eleven provinces have received treatment at the hospital.

Abdul Qayum Ayubi, the chief physician at Mirwais Regional Hospital, told TOLOnews: "We have activated the laparoscopy, ultrasound, echocardiography, and

endoscopy departments, and we resolved the issues in the medicine storage section."

Munawar Ahmad Munawar, the head of the Kandahar Regional Hospital, said: "Last month, 41,000 patients were registered and treated across various departments of Mirwais Hospital."

Currently, the hospital provides health services to patients in 11 units and 34 departments.

Meanwhile, a number of patients said that the medical facilities at the hospital have improved compared to the past.

Rahmatullah Rahmati, a

resident of Kandahar, told TOLOnews: "The hospital has now expanded. In the past, its services were not very good, but now it operates at about seventy percent satisfactory level, and we hope it will improve even more."

Abdul Qadeer, a resident of Urzgan who came to Kandahar, said: "My father has a heart disease and is hospitalized here. I am satisfied with the hospital services."

Officials at Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar added that efforts are also being accelerated to increase the capacity of the hospital's medical staff.

Media as a teacher: Education initiative in Afghanistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some students, teachers, and experts have welcomed educational programs aired by certain media outlets in the country and are calling for their expansion.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Culture also emphasized increasing such programs.

Recently, several visual and audio media outlets, as well as YouTube channels, have begun focusing on school curriculum content.

These programs are followed not only by girls who have been barred from attending school but also by a large number of other students.

Students' accounts of educational media programs

Mohammad Elias, a 16-year-old tenth-grade student at the private "Mashal Jawidan" high school in Kabul, sits in front of the television at 3 p.m. every day—not to watch cartoons or entertainment shows, but to attend a lesson.

He is working hard to pursue his lofty dreams.

At 2:50 p.m., Elias places his math notebook on the table and picks up the TV remote. He has to be ready ten minutes before the start of his favorite show—Maktab-i-Tamadon, which airs daily on the private Tamaddon TV channel.

He says: "I watch the Maktab-i-Tamadon program on Tamaddon TV. It's a very good program, and I watch it every day."

He believes such programs are effective in raising students' knowledge and urges his peers to make use of these televised lessons.

Elias is not the only one benefiting from these educational media programs—thousands of other boys and girls also follow them.

Hadisa Salehi, another student, says: "Tamaddon TV broadcasts are good lessons for us. My mother encourages me to watch this program."

She, who hopes to become a doctor in the future, calls on the Islamic Emirate to allow all girls to attend school so that Afghan girls, like girls in other countries, can be adorned with the jewel of knowledge and education.

Continue education: Lida's struggle for learning

Lida Rezaeye, a resident of Dasht-i-Barchi area in Kabul, is another fan of educational programs on media. She says that during the political transition in August 2021, she was a sixth-grade student at Zainab Kobra High School.

She adds: "After being confined to home, I started thinking and looked for a solution. That's when I found out about online lessons on TV."

She explains that in the beginning, when she started online learning, power outages and internet cuts created problems.

However, now that she follows the Maktab-i-Tamadon program on Tamaddon TV, her problem is resolved, as the program is broadcast three times a day.

Rozita Momenzada, another viewer of the program, is happy that such educational shows are being broadcast and says more such programs should be introduced.

She also turned to online classes after lessons beyond the sixth grade were halted for girls.

She says: "At first, I had no experience. I wondered—how would it go? Would it be effective? Would I learn anything? But I had no choice

but to try online lessons, so I started."

Rozita says she has gained good results from online lessons.

She concludes: "My message to both boys and girls is to make use of educational media programs, always study, and continue learning. I also urge the government to reopen our girls' schools so we can continue our education."

All interviewees welcomed the educational programs broadcast by media and called for their continuation and expansion.

Experts' views on educational programs

Abdullah Kakar Nisari, an education expert, says that learning—regardless of how it is delivered—is extremely important. Broadcasting educational content through audio-visual media is very beneficial.

He says: "After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of online education became clear to the world. We live in the 21st century and must adapt ourselves to the circumstances and make effective use of technology." According to him, online or media-based educational programs are both economical and accessible, and they are not limited by time or place.

Meanwhile, Mahbubullah Moahad, another education expert, praises the broadcast of educational content via audio and visual media, as it significantly enhances students' knowledge.

He adds: "Recently, a number of media outlets, both audio and visual, have launched several educational programs, and on the other hand, online schools have been established on social media. Many people are working hard in those spaces."

Afghan Mines Minister tours Iran's steel plant



KABUL (BNA): Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, Afghanistan's Minister of Mines and Petroleum, inspected Mobarakeh Steel Company, Iran's largest iron ore processing facility,

during an official visit to Isfahan province, where he also met with the provincial governor.

Ministry of Mines stated that Mobarakeh Steel executives briefed Badri on the

plant's operations and expressed keen interest in investing in Afghanistan's untapped mineral reserves, particularly iron ore deposits.

Badri welcomed the potential partnership, pledging

full cooperation to facilitate Iranian investment in mining sector. Isfahan's governor reciprocated by emphasizing stronger bilateral collaboration in mineral resource development.

Silk farming industry sees significant revival in Herat

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Herat Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock said that the silk farming industry has significantly improved in the province this year.

According to officials from the directorate, more than 6,000 boxes of silkworms have been distributed to farmers and villagers by various institutions this year.

It is said that each box of silkworms can yield up to ten kilograms of cocoons. The price of each kilogram of cocoons ranges between 1,000 to 1,500 afghani in the markets.

Fahim Fayeze, the head of the bird, fish, and insect

section of the Herat Directorate of Agriculture and Irrigation, said: "In the past, due to the problems in the country, the silk industry had declined. Now, more institutions and the Agriculture Directorate are working to further develop this industry."

Ahmad Shah Qawami, deputy head of the Herat Silk Farming Union, told TOLOnews: "About 5,500 to 6,000 people are engaged in collecting leaves, working, and raising silkworms in Zindajan district. Silk farming is an industry that engages the entire community, from

seven-year-old children to eighty-year-old elders. The

silkworm cultivation process takes about a month, and during this time, a family with four to five boxes of silkworms can earn 50,000 to 60,000 afghani."

Seventy percent of the activities in this industry are carried out by women, and the main center of silk farming in Herat is Zindajan district.

The process of cocoon production, from beginning to harvest, takes about a month. Farmers say the industry has played a vital role in improving their economic conditions.

Abdul Qadeer Esmati, one of the farmers, told TOLOnews: "Silk farming

is labor-intensive and puts a burden on women; however, it is economically beneficial. If the cocoons are purchased and exported, it would be good and would help people economically."

Nisar Ahmad, another farmer in Herat, said: "Silk farming has a good and legal income in 10 to 20 days. We work day and night and earn good amount of money."

Silk farming and weaving are ancient industries in Herat which according to local officials, have a history of over two thousand years. Thousands of people in several districts of Herat, especially Zindajan, are engaged in this industry.

OCHA warns of negative impact as US shifts disaster policy

KABUL (Pajhwok): The suspension of the US foreign aid for humanitarian programs in Afghanistan has a negative impact as recently Washington handed over responsibility for dealing with natural disasters to its State Department's refugees division.

After returning to the White House, US President Donald Trump issued an executive order suspending US foreign development assistance for 90 days for review. Trump canceled more than 90 percent of foreign aid contracts for the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID), equivalent to about \$54 billion.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) said suspension of US foreign aid has had widespread impacts on humanitarian programs in Afghanistan.

Recently, OCHA explained with the cessation of aid, the process of stockpiling items and preparing for various events, especially natural disasters, has encountered

difficulties and obstacles.

Delays in aid have had negative impacts on programs related to health services, mine clearance, cash assistance, and food in Afghanistan, the report added.

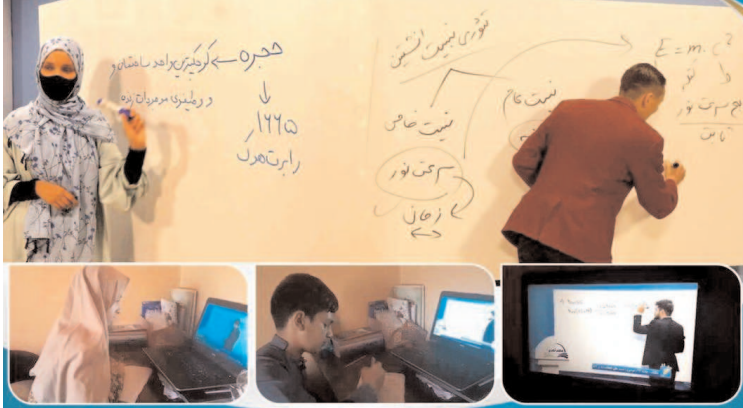
Reuters reported the US State Department has transferred responsibility for responding to natural disasters abroad, previously handled by USAID, to the Department's Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Affairs.

According to reports, the State Department has

informed all its embassies in various countries to cooperate with the Department's Citizens and Immigration Affairs Division in responding to natural disasters.

Recently, Trump explained the budget cuts to USAID and its aid programs around the world have had a "devastating" impact.

"We've spent a lot, it's a huge, huge problem that's going on in many countries. There are a lot of problems. The US is always being asked for money, no one else is helping".



15 teachers. Science subjects are prioritized, and each subject is taught for about six months.

According to the source, the program is aired daily from 8 to 9 a.m., 3 to 4 p.m., and 10 to 11 p.m.

Teachers' view

Nargis Rahmati, one of the teachers in Maktab-i-Tamadon, says she has been teaching biology for the past three years. She previously taught at private schools and notes that teaching online is very different from in-person teaching and somewhat more difficult.

Hojat Mohammadi, another teacher in the program, said he has been teaching basic concepts in various courses for 14 years and is now involved in teaching in the Tamaddon TV program.

He praised the experience of online teaching and said they had used it successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic as well.

Other media outlets involved

In addition to Tamaddon TV, TOLO TV, Arman Radio, Arezo Radio, Lemar, Kiliid Radio, and some

other outlets also broadcast similar educational programs.

View of the Ministry of Information, Culture

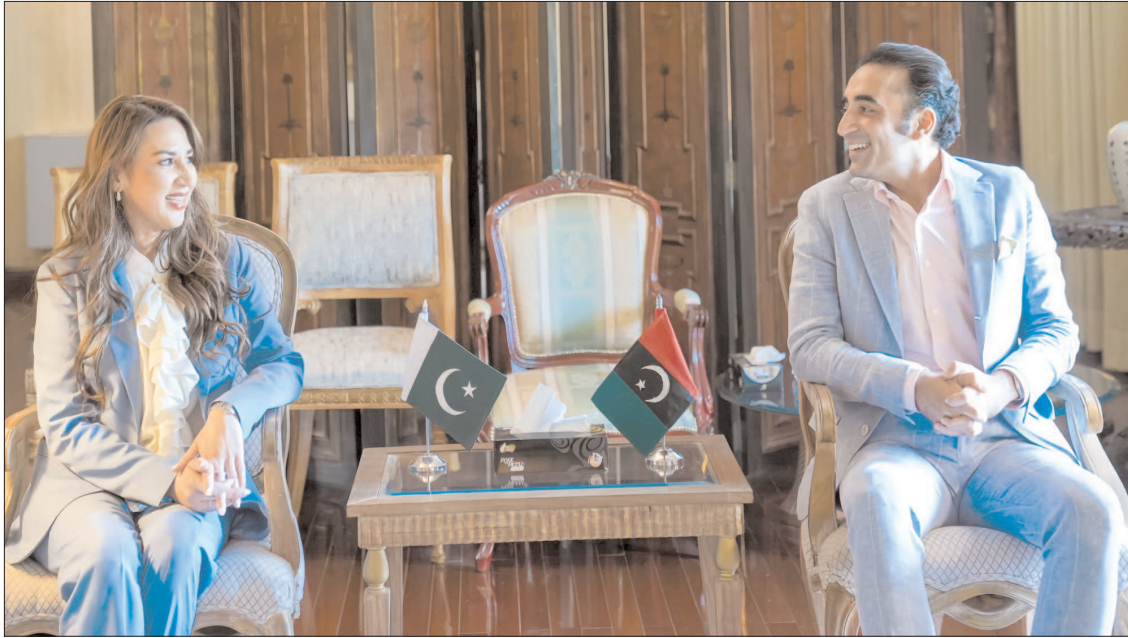
Khabib Ghafraan, spokesman for the Ministry, also considers the broadcast of educational content through media to be effective and a critical need, urging media outlets to expand such efforts to raise public knowledge.

He stated that currently, about 10 media outlets, mostly TV and radio stations, have been broadcasting educational and instructional programs.

He added: "The goal of the Ministry of Information and Culture this year and in the coming years is to explore how we can make media more specialized, scientific, and educational—especially educational, scientific, and social programs."

Such programs greatly affect the minds, understanding and create awareness, so it is essential that media outlets producing such content be highly professional, skilled, and committed so that the people can benefit as much as possible."





ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d' Affaires to Pakistan, Ms Natalie Baker called on Chairman Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Zardari House.

## Israeli strikes kill 51 Palestinians in Gaza — aid groups collect limited supplies

GAZA: Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed dozens of Palestinians since dawn, medical sources said, as limited supplies of humanitarian aid trickled into the Palestinian territory after Israel eased its total blockade.

Medical sources told Al Jazeera that at least 51 people were killed in Israeli attacks on Thursday, including 25 in Gaza City and northern areas of the Strip. At least 10 people, including nine members of the same family, were killed in an Israeli attack that hit an area housing displaced people in the al-Baraka area of Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

Five people were killed in an Israeli attack on the Bakhit family home in the as-Saftawi area, in northwest Gaza, Wafa reported. In Beit Lahiya on the northern edge of the enclave, a tank shell hit a medicine warehouse inside Al-Awda Hospital and set it ablaze, the health ministry said. Rescue workers had been trying to extinguish the fires for hours, it added. Tanks are stationed outside the hospital, medics say, effectively blocking access to the facility.

The attacks come as aid groups collected humanitarian supplies carried by about 90 trucks that have entered Gaza since Israel began allowing limited goods in earlier this week, the United Nations said on Thursday. Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Humanitarian agency OCHA, said the trucks that entered carried medicine, wheat flour and nutrition supplies.

Aid groups face significant challenges distributing the aid because of insecurity, the risk of looting and coordination issues with Israeli authorities, Laerke added. The Gaza Government Media Office said late on Wednesday that 87 aid trucks were allocated to international and local organisations to meet "urgent humanitarian needs". Al Jazeera's Tarek Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir el-Balah, said the food trucks entered on Wednesday and "successfully off-loaded" at designated UN distribution centres.

Since then, some bakeries have

"resumed operations", he said, citing Gaza's media office. "This has been a significant logistical step forward," Abu Azzoum said, but noted that the supplies were still a "trickle" compared with the needs of the population in Gaza, where experts warn of a looming famine. Due to security concerns, food aid has also not yet reached the northern part of Gaza, where thousands of civilians are also under siege, our correspondent said.

"The question here remains whether Israel would allow an unconditional flow of aid to the Gaza Strip," he said, adding that the UN has been demanding at least 500 food trucks be allowed into the territory daily after more than 80 days of a complete blockade. On Wednesday, the UN said it was trying to get the desperately needed aid as quickly as possible into the hands of Palestinians amid delays because of fears of looting and Israeli military restrictions and strikes. Palestinians have been scrambling for basic supplies after weeks of near-total isolation, with Israel's blockade leading to critical food and medicine shortages, and fears of a widespread famine.

According to the UN, half a million people, or one in five people in the Gaza Strip, are facing starvation while the entire population continues to face a critical risk of famine. Pope Leo XIV described the situation in Gaza as "worrying and painful" and called for "the entry of sufficient humanitarian aid".

In recent days, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Israel is days away from implementing a new aid system in Gaza that has come under heavy international criticism. He said Israel later plans to create a "sterile zone" there, free of Hamas, where the population, which has repeatedly evacuated and relocated throughout the war, would be moved and receive supplies. Gaza's health ministry said at least 3,509 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on March 18. At least 53,655 have been killed since Israel launched its assault on Gaza in October 2023, according to Palestinian health authorities. — Aljazeera

## CS KP takes steps to improve governance

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In an effort to promote good governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah has initiated a series of effective reforms across multiple government departments. These reforms are aligned with the vision of the Chief Minister, aiming to provide improved public services and ensure a more transparent administrative system.

Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah has prioritized enhancing administrative efficiency, eliminating corruption, and ensuring the prompt delivery of services to the public. Under his leadership, performance monitoring systems have been introduced in key departments including health, education, and local government. Officers have been directed to strictly follow office timings, and several significant changes have already been observed.

Sources reveal that the core objective of these changes is to make government institutions more active and responsive. Special focus is being placed on addressing public complaints at the district level, with accelerated efforts for timely resolution. The Chief Secretary has also conducted visits to various districts to personally review the performance of local administrations.

These initiatives reflect the practical implementation of the Chief Minister's vision to establish a clean, transparent, and citizen-friendly government. Analysts believe that if these reforms continue, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could soon emerge as a model province in terms of good governance.

## Saif: Start polygraph tests with Nawaz, not Imran

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, has called for immediate polygraph tests of all politicians who own properties abroad. He asserted that Imran Khan has no foreign assets or properties and has already been declared "Sadiq and Ameen" (truthful and trustworthy) by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

In a statement released from his office, Barrister Dr. Saif specifically named Nawaz Sharif, stating that his silence during recent Pakistan-India tensions raises questions and warrants a polygraph test. "The first polygraph test should be of Nawaz Sharif," he emphasized.

He further said that the people of Pakistan effectively conducted a polygraph test of both Imran Khan and the Sharif family through their vote on February 8, 2024. "How can a fake government with a fake mandate subject Imran Khan to a polygraph test? Such a regime is even capable of fabricating the results," he added. Dr. Saif demanded polygraph tests for all those who filed false cases against Imran Khan, stating that it would expose all lies and political conspiracies. He also called for polygraph tests of the entire Sharif family. He strongly criticized the current rulers, labeling them as a mafia imposed on the country. "They are looting the national treasury with both hands and building properties abroad while showing no concern for the people of Pakistan," he said.

## Imran willing to initiate dialogue for sake of country: KP CM

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI, PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday said that the restoration of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) mandate is not merely a party concern, but a necessity for the country's democratic stability.

Speaking to reporters outside Adiala Jail following a meeting with PTI founder Imran Khan, Gandapur claimed the incarcerated leader was willing to initiate dialogue "for the sake of Pakistan." Briefing the media, CM Gandapur stated, "This was my first meeting with the party founder in two months. I updated him on governance matters and the upcoming budget. Imran Khan said, 'The darkest hour is just before dawn' and warned that a state cannot be run through force."

He cautioned that if party leaders are denied access to Khan, PTI would reconsider its cooperation with the government, including on key issues like compliance with IMF conditions. "Let every institution perform its constitutional duty — we stand by the words of our leader, and they reflect the party's unified stance," he asserted. Calling for expedited judicial proceedings, the KP CM said, "The cases against Imran Khan are politically motivated. We demand that they be heard in court and dismissed on merit." Criticising the suppression of dissent, he added, "It is easy to criticise with a microphone in hand, but difficult to serve the people. We protested peacefully and were met with bullets — our goal is not to endanger our workers, but to protect them."

Reiterating the party's resolve, the KP chief minister declared that the PTI founder remains unwavering and has reappointed him to lead the protest movement. "Our fight is constitutional,



and our demand is justice. We will ensure our leader's release by all legal and political means," he concluded.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, stated that the provincial government is working on multiple small and large-scale projects to fully utilize the province's hydropower potential. Timely completion of these projects is a key priority for the government, and the required financial resources will be provided on a priority basis for this purpose. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the Energy and Power Department on Thursday. Relevant cabinet members, the Additional Chief Secretary for Planning and Development, and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the progress so far made on the projects being carried out under the Annual Development Program by the Energy and Power Department. The concerned officials gave a detailed briefing on the financial

and physical progress of these projects. The Chief Minister directed that financial progress on these projects must be ensured at 100% by the end of the current fiscal year. He also instructed that physical progress on these projects be ensured in accordance with the set targets. Ali Amin Gandapur stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has considerable hydropower potential; timely and quality completion of ongoing hydro power projects is essential to fully benefit from it. On this occasion, the Chief Minister directed that measures be taken to supply electricity from the under-construction Balakot Hydropower Project to local industries. He also emphasized ensuring significant progress on the solarization project, stating that solarization is a flagship initiative of the current provincial government. He instructed that any obstacles hindering progress on the project be removed promptly and that strict compliance with prevailing laws and regulations be ensured during the project's implementation.

## KP govt imported finance minister from Karachi: PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Attique Shah has granted interim bail to former speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser, restraining authorities from arresting him, on Thursday.

PHC granted interim bail to Asad Qaiser for 20 days. The court also directed the authorities to provide details of the cases registered against him. The lawyer informed the court that the petitioner wanted to appear in court but feared arrest. The lawyer stated that 15 cases had been registered against Asad Qaiser.

During the hearing, Acting Chief Justice SM Atique Shah asked Asad Qaiser about his plans for the province's youth. Asad Qaiser replied that he is raising his voice in the National Assembly for the people. The Chief Justice emphasized the importance of providing IT training to the youth, citing the example of a neighboring country that exports IT services worth \$840 billion.

The Chief Justice stressed that the government has a responsibility to provide IT training to the youth, given that 70% of the population is young. Asad Qaiser informed the court about the colleges and universities he had established in Swabi and his efforts to raise the voice of the people in the assembly.

In the meantime, the acting Chief Justice remarked that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has imported finance minister from Karachi as seems that the province lacking financial experts. Similarly, PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Jamshid heard Asad Qaiser petition seeking details of the cases registered against him. The court granted him protective bail and directed the federal government to provide

## Court stops adverse action against Law Dept employees

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Naeem Anwar and Khurshheed Iqbal has stopped any adverse actions against 163 employees who were recruited in the Law Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and sought a response from the government regarding the cancellation of their appointments, on Thursday.

The court was hearing a petition filed by the employees who were appointed as computer operators, junior clerks, drivers, naib Qasids, Chowkidars and sweepers in the Law, Parliamentary Affairs, and Human Rights Department. The petitioners applied for various posts in the department and qualified in the written tests and interviews. Based on merit, the selection committee recommended their appointments, and they were issued appointment letters on February 12, 2021. However, their appointment letters were canceled without any reason, which led them to approach the Peshawar High Court. The court ordered their reinstatement on March 12, 2021. Some unsuccessful candidates challenged the appointments in court, and the Peshawar High Court directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate the matter. NAB submitted its report, and the provincial inspection team also conducted an inquiry, highlighting some irregularities. However, the petitioners claimed that they were selected based on merit and experience. The petitioners' counsel argued that the inquiry committee's recommendation to cancel the appointments was beyond its mandate. The committee's task was to investigate and recommend action against the selection committee members, not to cancel the appointments.

details of the cases.

Former Speaker Asad Qaiser said that the Prime Minister had made a statement that PTI leaders are taken to India to participate in TV shows. Asad Qaiser countered that if PTI leaders have appeared on Indian TV shows, they have done so to present their viewpoint. Asad Qaiser stated that the government is trying to undermine national unity. He criticized the treatment of PTI founder in Adiala Jail, saying that it is unlawful and that no one is allowed to meet him. He also expressed concerns about the influence of the executive on the judiciary.

Asad Qaiser condemned drone attacks in Pakistan, saying that they are unacceptable and result in the loss of

innocent lives. He emphasized that PTI's stance on drone attacks is the same as that of its founder. He directed the provincial government to take measures to prevent drone attacks. Asad Qaiser announced that PTI would soon launch a protest movement for the release of its founder. He said that the party had postponed the movement due to the Indian attacks but is now consulting with its allies to plan a new strategy.

Asad Qaiser questioned the legitimacy of the current government, saying that it is a product of Form 47 and that the Prime Minister is sitting in power without a clear mandate. He emphasized that the government is not functioning in the best interests of the country.

## Iran warns will hold US responsible for Israel attack

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran warned it would hold the United States responsible for any Israeli attack on its atomic facilities, on the eve of a new round of nuclear talks between Washington and Tehran. The warning came after CNN, citing unnamed US officials, reported on Tuesday that Israel was making preparations to strike Iranian nuclear sites despite the ongoing US-Iran talks.

"We believe that in the event of any attack on the nuclear facilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Zionist regime, the US government will also be involved and bear legal responsibility," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a letter to the United Nations published on Thursday. "Iran strongly warns against any adventurism by the Zionist regime and will respond decisively to any threat or unlawful act by this regime," Araghchi added.

The nuclear talks, which began on April 12, are the highest-level contact between the long-time foes since the United States in 2018 pulled out of a landmark deal between Iran and world powers, during President Donald Trump's first term in office. Oman, which has mediated the talks, said that a fifth round will take place in Rome on Friday.

The US delegation will

include Steve Witkoff, Trump's friend and globe-trotting negotiator, and Michael Anton, the head of policy planning at the State Department who has been involved in technical details, according to a source familiar with arrangements. A key sticking point in the negotiations has been enrichment. The 2015 deal with Iran, which was negotiated by former president Barack Obama, allowed Iran to enrich uranium at low levels solely for civilian energy. The Islamic republic currently enriches uranium to 60%, far above the 3.67% limit set in the 2015 deal but below the 90% needed for a nuclear warhead.

Trump, who has vowed to improve on the Obama deal, said last week on a trip to Qatar that he believed Iran had agreed to key conditions and that his diplomacy would avoid military conflict. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, testifying on Wednesday before Congress, again said that the Trump administration would insist on no enrichment. "Iran cannot have an enrichment capability, because that ultimately makes them a threshold nuclear power," Rubio said.

Iran is looking for relief from sweeping sanctions imposed in 2018 by Trump, which include penalties on all countries to prevent them from purchasing Iran's key export of petrol. Rubio,

questioned by a lawmaker, suggested that the United States would maintain sanctions over Iran's development of ballistic missiles, a topic that was not addressed explicitly under the 2015 agreement. "There are sanctions related to terrorism, sanctions related to their ballistic missiles programme, and the like. Those sanctions, if they're not part of the deal, they'll remain in place," he said.

Rubio did not comment on the CNN report, but said it was no secret that Israel has been studying military options. Israel — Iran's sworn enemy — has been threatening to use force against Iranian nuclear sites but has faced resistance from Trump. On Thursday, Ali Mohammad Naini, the spokesman for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, warned of a "devastating" response in case of an Israeli attack.

"If the delusional Zionist regime commits a foolish act and launches an attack, it will definitely receive a devastating and decisive response in its small and vulnerable geography," said Naini, according to ISNA news agency. Also on Thursday, the Iranian army's ground forces unveiled three new drones, adding two reconnaissance and one kamikaze drone to its arsenal, the official IRNA news agency reported.

## No new direct Russia-Ukraine peace talks scheduled

MOSCOW (AP): Russia and Ukraine have no direct peace talks scheduled, the Kremlin said Thursday, nearly a week after their first face-to-face session since shortly after Moscow's invasion in 2022 and days after US President Donald Trump said they would start ceasefire negotiations "immediately."

"There is no concrete agreement about the next meetings," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "They are yet to be agreed upon." During two hours of talks in Istanbul on May 16, Kyiv and Moscow agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each, in what would be their biggest such swap. Apart from that step, the meeting delivered no significant breakthrough.

Several months of intensified US and European pressure on the two sides to accept a ceasefire and negotiate a settlement have yielded little progress. Meanwhile, Russia is readying a summer offensive to capture more Ukrainian land, Ukrainian government and military analysts say.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this week that Moscow would "propose and is ready to work with" Ukraine on a "memorandum" outlining the framework for "a possible future peace treaty."