

ISLAMABAD: The federal budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26 will be presented on June 10. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance confirmed that the federal budget will be presented in the National Assembly on June 10, while the Economic Survey will be released on June 9. Previously, the budget was scheduled to be presented on June 2.



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Indian sponsored terrorism, targeting Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lt. General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Friday hinted at a gory trail of Indian state-sponsored terrorism, targeting Pakistan and pointed out out specific dossiers that clearly established the Indian involvement in subversive activities for decades.

"Indian state-sponsored terrorism actually goes back to the inception of Pakistan [...] and it keeps on going," he said while addressing a news conference along with Secretary Interior Khurram Agha. He reminded that it was India that created the terrorist organization 'Mukti Bahini' in 1971

in the erstwhile East Pakistan [now Bangladesh], a very clear manifestation of India's nefarious designs against Pakistan.

Giving a cut of the last two decades through projector slides, the ISPR DG informed the media about all the dirty work India had been doing in parts of Pakistan, including Balochistan. In 2009, he said, the Pakistan government handed over a dossier of irrefutable evidence at Sharm El Sheikh, (Egypt) to the then Indian Prime Minister, which was part of history, adding, "The publicly disclosed documents that were released in 2010 were part of history."

In 2015, he said, Pakistan again presented a dossier to the United Nations, highlighting Indian-sponsored and abetted terrorism in Pakistan and in Balochistan. In 2016, the ISPR DG said, the world witnessed another ugly face of Indian-sponsored terrorism in Balochistan in the form of Kulbhushan Yadav, a serving Indian naval officer, who gave a detailed confession of all the heinous and vicious acts of terrorism that he had been sponsoring and funding on behalf of the state of India. It was a clear proof of India's terrorist activities, he added.

In 2019, he said another dossier, full of evidence, was presented to the

United Nations. Very recently, he said, local and international media have seen confessions and acknowledgements by multiple surrendering terrorists of this Fitna al Hindustan, who revealed how India was funding, planning, and carrying out terrorism in Balochistan. "And this goes on, till now on a daily basis." On May 21, 2025, he said, India launched a cowardly and ghastly attack targeting innocent civilians and children, describing it as the 'actual cruel and evil face of Fitna al Hindustan.'

He shared details of terrorist attacks, including killing of 12 labourers in Nushki on April 12; two labourers in Tump, Kech on April 28;

and 10 people in a blast in Harnai on February 14, during current year. He also mentioned innocent civilians and security personnel killed in Jaffer Express attack, and three barbers murdered in Lasbela on May 9. In Khuzdar on May 21, six children died, and 51 more children remain seriously injured due to terrorist attack, he added. He said terrorists, supported by India, were now targeting women and children, but the people of Balochistan stood strong. "Is there any humanity, morality, any Baloch or Pakistani identity in this?" he questioned.

(Continued on Back Page)



Pakistan to ensure it gets rightful share of Indus water: FO

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan would work to ensure it continued to receive its rightful share of the water under the Indus Water Treaty, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said here on Friday.

Speaking during the weekly press briefing, he said, "We have continued to highlight our principled position on many occasions on Indus Water Treaty." "There is no provision in the Indus Water Treaty which can allow for suspension or abrogation of the Treaty unilaterally and we will continue to work with the international community to highlight the perils involved in India pursuing this course of action," he added.

He said human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were becoming increasingly visible to the international community. "We have been highlighting this issue, particularly after this recent Pahalgam incident. We also have seen an uptick in the repression by occupying Indian armed forces, inside Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and we would continue to raise these issues, highlight the gravity of human rights violations in IIOJK to the International Community," he added.

He said, "Pakistan categorically rejects the baseless, provocative, and irresponsible allegations made by the Indian Prime Minister during a recent public address in Rajasthan. The remarks, replete with distortions, misrepresentations, and inflammatory rhetoric, are clearly aimed at stoking regional tensions for narrow political gains." "Such statements not only reflect a deliberate attempt to mislead the public but also violate the norms of responsible statecraft. Resorting to threats and boasting about military action against a sovereign nation is a grave breach of the United Nations Charter and established principles of international law. This dangerous approach undermines regional peace and stability," he remarked.

He said, "Pakistan remains a consistent and proactive partner in the global fight against terrorism. Any insinuation seeking to associate Pakistan with acts of terrorism is factually incorrect and patently misleading. It is a tactic often employed to divert attention from India's own internal challenges, as well as its repressive policies in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)." The Spokesperson said, "India's attempts to mask its serious human rights violations are well-documented and well-recognized by the

international community. The plight of the Kashmiri people and their just struggle for self-determination cannot be obscured by aggressive rhetoric and political deflection."

"Pakistan urges the Indian leadership to exercise responsibility and restraint. Escalatory statements and belligerent posturing serve no purpose other than exacerbating tensions. Rather than resorting to fictitious narratives and warmongering for electoral mileage, India should demonstrate maturity by resolving outstanding disputes through peaceful dialogue and diplomacy," he continued. He said, "Pakistan remains firmly committed to peaceful coexistence, regional stability, and constructive engagement. However, our desire for peace should not be misconstrued as weakness. The people of Pakistan and its armed forces are fully prepared and capable of defending the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"Any misadventure or aggression will be met with a resolute and proportionate response. Pakistan has demonstrated its resolve in the past and will do so again, if required," he asserted. He urged the international community to take serious note of India's aggressive posture and hate-driven narratives that threaten regional peace.

Saif flays Maryam's remarks

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, reacting to a recent statement by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, said that standing over the flowing blood of the martyred girls of the Khuzdar tragedy and declaring India to be less harmful than PTI is nothing but open favoritism toward Modi.

He said Maryam Nawaz is attacking national unity to cover up the crimes of the terrorist Modi. Her statement, in reality, is not against PTI, but rather in favor of Modi.

Barrister Dr. Saif further stated that what can be expected from a daughter whose father has never uttered a single word against Modi. He added that Maryam Nawaz should not try to repay Modi's visit to Jafu Umra by dishonoring the blood of Pakistan's martyrs. Defending a terrorist like Modi in front of students in Faisalabad and tearing apart national unity is extremely regrettable. He said that criticism of PTI from those who remained silent on Indo-Pak tensions is laughable.

Barrister Dr. Saif went on to say that instead of criticizing PTI, Maryam Nawaz should explain her criminal silence on Pakistan-India tensions. This silence is clear evidence that the Sharif family does not value the national interest. He concluded by saying that for every Pakistani, nothing is more important than national security. But for Nawaz Sharif, friendship with Modi appears to take precedence even over the nation's security.

Zardari commends IMF role

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the IMF loan programme had played a supportive role in stabilizing Pakistan's economy and would also contribute to fostering economic growth in the country.

In a meeting with a delegation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led by Director of the Middle East & Central Asia Department, Jihad Azour, in Islamabad on Friday, President Zardari highlighted the IMF's positive role in promoting economic development in developing nations.

Discussing Pakistan's current economic situation and the ongoing IMF programme, Zardari also acknowledged and appreciated the IMF's contribution to Pakistan's economic progress.

The delegation members expressed satisfaction over Pakistan's efforts for economic reforms and implementation of the IMF program, which they observed was progressing in the right direction. The delegation members emphasized that the program had assisted in reducing inflation and fiscal deficit and strengthening Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. President Zardari thanked the IMF for its continued support and cooperation with Pakistan, and also appreciated the finance ministry for its efforts to improve the national economy.



ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari shaking hands with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif prior to a meeting.

Govt, nation determined for success: Shehbaz

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday said after the success of Marka-e-Haq, the government of Pakistan and the whole Pakistani nation was determined for success and historic victory in the economic field.

He was speaking during a meeting with a delegation of Presidents of Chambers of Commerce from all across the country. He said the government in collaboration with the private sector and with the grace of Allah Almighty will emerge as a world economic power. He underscored the need for reinvigorating the private sector for achieving self-sufficiency.

He said it was foremost priority of the government of Pakistan to protect rights of the business community and provide them a conducive environment for profitable business. He said the government was taking different measures for promotion of small and medium enterprises.

He said the government was implementing a policy of easy business to bring down the cost of doing business. Steps were being taken to ensure access to easy business loans and to bring cost of electricity down, he added. The prime minister said tax evasion was absolutely unacceptable and all steps would be taken to stop it.

He underlined the need for introduction of modern technology in the country's industries. Women have an important role to play in the economic progress of the country, he remarked.

Bilawal seeks PM's guidance

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to seek guidance for high-lighting Pakistan's position in important world capitals and putting Indian aggression and provocative agenda before the global community.

Senator Sherry Rehman and former Federal Minister Hina Rabbani Khar were also accompanying the PPP Chairman during the meeting, said a news release by the Prime Minister's Office. Earlier, the prime minister had tasked Bilawal Bhutto Zardari with leading a high-level delegation presenting 'Pakistan's case for peace' on recent Indian aggression to the international community. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari thanked the Prime Minister for trusting him in this national diplomatic task and entrusting him with the leadership of the Pakistani delegation. "I hope that under your leadership, this delegation will present Pakistan's position and narrative to the world in a comprehensive and effective manner," the prime minister said.

He said the government will extend complete cooperation to the businesswomen in their economic activities so that they could play an active role in the country's progress. The members of the delegation pay tribute to the prime minister and Pakistan army for their historic win in Marka-e-Haq.

They thanked the prime minister for the correct economic policies of the government and gradual improvement in the business conditions. The performance of the stock exchange had gradually improved in the last two years which was reflective of the fact that the government economic policies were moving in the right direction, they added.

They reiterated to extend complete cooperation to the government of Pakistan for its steps for the country's development and for public welfare and well being. The members of the delegation

appreciated the reforms undertaken in the Federal Board of Revenue and gave suggestions for making the reforms business friendly.

Jinnah Square Murree Road Underpass to benefit entire nation: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the newly constructed Jinnah Square Murree Road Underpass completed in a record completion time of 35 days and termed it a nationally beneficial initiative ensuring smooth connectivity till the scenic tourist attraction of Murree.

The prime minister hailed the efforts of Interior Minister Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and his team, including Chairman Capital Development Authority Muhammad Ali Randhawa, IG Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, and others for their industrious efforts to make the critical project a success.

Two more students succumb to injuries

F.P. Report

KHUZZAR: A girl student, Malikka who was seriously injured during deadly attack on a school bus in Khuzdar embraced martyrdom. Death toll of martyred students reached to six as five girl and one boy student embraced martyrdom.

Two more students who were seriously injured in Khuzdar school bus bombing succumbed to their injuries on Friday, taking the toll of students to six martyred in the Wednesday's terrorist attack. The overall death toll now stood at eight including the driver and the conductor of the bus.

The latest victims were named as Hayder and Malikka, who were critically injured in the terrorist attack and embraced martyrdom in the hospital today. The six martyred students now included five girls and a boy.

It is necessary to mention here that India after its humiliating defeat on the border was now trying to destabilize Pakistan through its proxies. India has been using proxies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to create law and order situation.

60 people killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza

GAZA STRIP (AP): At least 60 people were killed by Israeli strikes across Gaza in a 24-hour period, Gaza's health ministry said Friday, as Israel pressed ahead with its military offensive and let in minimal aid to the strip.

The dead included 10 people in the southern city of Khan Younis, four in the central town of Deir Al-Balah and nine in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the north, according to the Nasser, Al-Aqsa and Al-Ahli hospitals where the bodies were brought. Israel is facing mounting international criticism for its latest offensive and pressure to let aid into Gaza amid a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The strip has been under an Israeli blockade for nearly three months, according to the United Nations. Experts have warned that many of Gaza's 2 million residents are at high risk of famine.

Even the US, a staunch ally, has voiced concerns over the hunger crisis. The strikes that lasted into Friday morning came a day after Israeli tanks and drones attacked a hospital in northern Gaza, igniting fires and causing extensive damage. Palestinian hospital officials said on Thursday. Videos taken by a health official at Al-Awda Hospital show walls blown away and thick black smoke billowing wreckage.

Israel said it will continue to strike Hamas until all of the 58 Israeli hostages are released — fewer than half of whom are believed to be alive, according to Israel — and until Hamas disarms. Suspect charged with murder over deaths of Israeli Embassy staffers in Washington.

The strikes come a day after two Israeli Embassy staffers were shot while leaving a reception for young diplomats at the Capital Jewish Museum, in Washington, DC. The suspect told police he "did it for Palestine," according to court documents filed Thursday

as he was charged with murder. He didn't enter a plea.

On Thursday night, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the killings in Washington horrific and blasted France, the UK and Canada for proposing to establish a Palestinian state. "Because by issuing their demand, replete with a threat of sanctions against Israel — against Israel, not Hamas — these three leaders effectively said they want Hamas to remain in power," he said.

Earlier this week the three leaders issued one of the most significant criticisms by close allies of Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the West Bank, threatening to take "concrete actions" if the government did not cease its renewed military offensive and significantly lift restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Amid pressure, Israel started letting in aid. Israeli officials said Friday they let in more than 100 trucks of aid, including flour, food, medical equipment and drugs. The trucks came in through the Kerem Shalom crossing. But UN agencies say the amount is woefully insufficient, compared with around 600 trucks a day that entered during a recent ceasefire and that are necessary to meet basic needs. UN agencies say Israeli military restrictions and the breakdown of law and order in Gaza make it difficult to retrieve and distribute the aid. As a result, little of it has so far reached those in need. The World Food Program said on Friday said that 15 of its trucks were looted Thursday night in southern Gaza while going to WFP-supported bakeries. It said that hunger and desperation about whether food was coming in is contributing to rising insecurity, and called on Israel to allow greater volumes of food to enter, faster and more efficiently.

He said that the DG ISPR has also presented evidences of India's involvement in terrorist acts inside Pakistan.

The minister said that Pakistani nation was fully united and its armed forces were fully prepared to deal with terrorism. Attaulah Tarar expressed the determination that Fitna-e-Hind will be fully exposed and its conspiracies defeated. He questioned what obsession the Modi government had with the events in Balochistan. Alluding to Jafar Express incident, he said Fatma-e-Hind terrorists were shown on Indian media. These terrorists provided the videos of the Jafar Express incident to the Indian media and it was open proof of India's direct involvement in terrorist activities in Balochistan. He made it clear that morale and determination of Pakistani nation was high and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir were fully determined to root out terrorists from the soil of Pakistan.

Tarar said that four children of a person were seriously injured but his morale was high and he said his family was ready to give more sacrifices for the motherland. Today, international and national media was brought to Khuzdar to inform them about the real situation in the area.

He lamented that India had attacked a soft target after its humiliating defeat in the Operation Bunyanun Marsus. "Kulbhushan Jadhav's arrest from Balochistan is clear manifestation of India's involvement in terrorism. Militants Gulzar Imam Shambe and Sarfaraz Bangulzai have confessed to Indian patronage," he maintained.

Even during Operation Marqa-e-Haq, 33 attacks took place in Balochistan which were foiled by security agencies, he added. Attaulah Tarar announced that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir were determined to uproot the scourge of terrorism and make Balochistan a cradle of peace.

Indian designs to destabilize Balochistan through proxies will never succeed: Tarar

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Friday that India wanted to destabilize Balochistan through its proxies and its nefarious designs will never succeed.

Talking to the media after visiting the children injured in the Khuzdar incident and meeting with their families, the minister said the children of the nation made a great sacrifice in the heartbreaking Khuzdar bus incident. "No one can defeat the morale of the Pakistani nation", he said referring to the determination and high spirits of the children affected in the Khuzdar incident.

He especially mentioned Subedar Saleem who had buried his two daughters whereas his son was seriously injured in Khuzdar bus blast. "Despite the martyrdom and injuries of his children, Subedar Saleem continued to chant slogans in favour of Pakistan in front of the ambulance," he remarked.

افسر اسسٹنٹ تحصیل آفیسر، ریگولیشن ڈیو ایمنج
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CS launches anti-polio campaign; urges public support

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A five-day anti-polio campaign is set to launch across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from May 26, aiming to vaccinate approximately 7.3 million children under the age of five. The campaign was formally inaugurated on Friday by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, at Police Services Hospital, Peshawar, where he administered oral polio vaccine drops to children.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Additional Secretary Health and EOC Coordinator Shafiullah Khan, Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, representatives from

UNICEF and WHO, and other concerned officials.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, the Chief Secretary emphasized that polio remains a dangerous disease that can cause life-long disability in children, placing immense emotional and financial strain on families.

He stressed that the presence of the poliovirus in any area continues to pose a threat to all children, making it vital that every child receives the vaccine during the campaign.

Highlighting the critical role of community support, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah urged all segments of society - particularly religious leaders, civil society, and the media - to play an

active role in eradicating the virus.

He noted that print, electronic, and social media platforms should raise awareness among parents about the importance of vaccination and the risks associated with refusing it.

He reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to eradicating polio on a priority basis. "At the district level, Deputy Commissioners and District Health Officers supervise the anti-polio drives on a daily basis to ensure effective implementation," he added.

The Chief Secretary also pointed out that a successful campaign was conducted in April due to improved strategies and public coop-

eration, which significantly contributed to achieving the set targets. He expressed hope that the upcoming campaign would yield even better results.

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has finalized all arrangements for the campaign. A total of 35,465 trained polio workers have been deployed, forming 32,155 mobile teams, 1,918 fixed-site teams, 1,225 transit teams, and 167 roaming teams. Furthermore, 8,351 area in-charges have been appointed to ensure effective monitoring of the campaign. Security arrangements have also been made across the province to facilitate polio teams during the campaign.



PESHAWAR: President of Peshawar Press Club Muhammad Riaz talking to Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah during a meeting at the latter's office.

Launching online app is a significant step Journalists' protection is priority: Judge Asim Imam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant step toward safeguarding press freedom and enhancing digital security for journalists, the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights (PCHR), in partnership with the European Union, hosted an impactful workshop at a premier hotel in Peshawar. The event brought together journalists, law enforcement officials, civil society leaders, and government representatives to address pressing challenges in media safety and digital governance.

Judge Muhammad Asim Imam, Commissioner of the Right to Public Services Commission (RTS), delivered a powerful keynote speech, emphasizing the urgent need for robust legal protections for journalists in an era of rising digital threats.

"A free and secure media is the cornerstone of democracy," declared Judge Imam. Our judicial and administrative systems must work in unison to shield journalists from online harassment, misinformation, and legal hurdles.

The Right to Public

Services Commission remains steadfast in ensuring timely justice and accountability, especially in cases involving crimes against media professionals."

The workshop also featured insights from distinguished speakers: Nasir Hussain, Vice President (P F U J), Muhammad Riaz, President Peshawar Press Club, Shafiq Chaudhry, Executive Director PCHR.

They underscored the importance of inter-institutional collaboration, stronger legal safeguards, and public awareness to

uphold journalists' rights in the digital landscape.

A highlight of the event was the launch of an innovative online mobile app, designed to empower journalists with real-time security tools and streamlined access to legal support. This initiative marks a pivotal advancement in digital governance and media protection.

The workshop concluded with a unanimous call to action: strengthening frameworks for journalist safety, fostering multi-stakeholder cooperation, and leveraging technology to defend press freedom.



PESHAWAR: MPA Arif Ahmadzai chairing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's fourth meeting of its Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

KP Food Authority seizes substandard milk, beverages, and spices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFS&HFA) has carried out a major crackdown across various localities of Peshawar yesterday, seizing large quantities of sub-standard milk, counterfeit beverages, and adulterated spices. The seized items were destroyed on-site, and heavy fines were imposed on violators, officials said.

While sharing the details, a spokesperson for KPFS&HFA stated that a food safety team raided a dairy warehouse in the Sheikh Abad area and

recovered 900 litres of spoiled milk. The milk was declared unfit for consumption and was discarded immediately.

In a separate operation at Hashnagri Phatak, officials inspected chicken shops, general stores, and eateries. The team recovered 50 litres of reused and hazardous frying oil from a local kabab outlet, which was also destroyed on the spot.

Late-night inspections were also carried out along GT Road, where food-laden vehicles were intercepted. One of the vehicles was found transporting 5,500 litres of substandard

beverages. Samples tested on-site using the Mobile Food Testing Laboratory confirmed the beverages were unsafe for consumption. Both the vehicle and the beverages were confiscated in accordance with food safety regulations.

The spokesperson further added that on Charsadda Road, several spice grinding units were inspected. The food safety team discovered 100 kilograms of adulterated turmeric and identified serious hygiene violations. Penalties were imposed, and further legal action under the KP Food Safety Act has been initiated.

Director General KP Food Authority Wasif Saeed commended the efforts of the food safety teams and affirmed that operations against the adulteration mafia would continue. "We are committed to ensuring the provision of safe and healthy food to the citizens and will not allow the sale of substandard or harmful products," he said.

KP Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru stated that food businesses endangering public health will not be tolerated.

"Those playing with the health of our citizens will face strict legal consequences," he warned.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly convened the fourth meeting of its Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), chaired by Deputy Convener MPA Arif Ahmadzai. The session took place in the Assembly's conference room and brought together a diverse group of provincial lawmakers and officials to review the alignment of development projects with the 2030 global development agenda.

Prominent members in attendance included MPAs Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Rangzeb Ahmad, Ahmad Kundi, Shehla Bano, Tariq Saeed, Jalal Khan, Malik Adeel Iqbal, Arbab Khan,

Asma Alam, Muhammad Abdus Salam, Nisar Baz, Sajjadullah, and Iftikharullah. Syed Waqar Shah, Special Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and Secretary of the Task Force, also participated in the proceedings.

Officials from the Planning and Development Department (P&D) and the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) briefed the participants on budgetary planning, project implementation, and the extent to which current schemes are aligned with specific SDG targets.

Detailed insights were shared on how provincial development strategies correspond with global goals such as poverty reduction, education reform, health-care access, and sustainable

economic growth.

In his remarks, Deputy Convener Arif Ahmadzai emphasized the province's commitment to realizing the SDGs.

"Pakistan is a signatory to Agenda 2030, and we have a shared responsibility to ensure that our policies and resources are directed toward meaningful progress," he stated. "Our aim is to reduce poverty, improve access to quality education and health services, and ensure inclusive development across all districts."

The meeting also addressed the development disparities faced by the newly merged districts. Members raised critical questions about the allocation of funds and the fulfillment of NFC commit-

ments. It was noted that the provincial government has financed several projects in these areas from its own budget, despite shortfalls in expected federal contributions.

Arif Ahmadzai further announced that a follow-up session will be held once the Annual Development Programme (ADP) and budget book are finalized, allowing the task force to analyze which projects are contributing directly to SDG targets.

"We want our development budget to truly reflect the aspirations of our people," Ahmadzai added. "This task force will continue to monitor and guide provincial initiatives to ensure alignment with the SDGs, especially in underserved areas."

PHCBA cabinet administer oath F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice S.M. Atique Shah has assured that steps are being taken to address the issues faced by lawyers on an emergency basis. He stated that his doors are open to lawyers, and they can contact him at any time in case of any issue. He also assured the newly elected cabinet that the relationship between the bench and bar will be further strengthened.

This he said during oath taking ceremony of PHC bar association new cabinet and directed the C&W Department to expedite work on car parking and instructed the security authorities to deploy plainclothes personnel and additional traffic police personnel for parking security.

He issued orders to increase the working hours and staff of the Institution Branch and directed that cases filed by 11 am should be fixed on the same day. He also instructed the relevant authorities to ensure cleanliness and beautification of the outer road. The Chief Justice discussed extending court hours until 3 pm to allow lawyers to prepare for the next day's cases and spend time with clients.

Misinformation in the era of information

Dr Anwar Aurakzai

MISINFORMATION is false or inaccurate information. Disinformation is false information deliberately misstating the facts. We can, ultimately, rely on opaque objective information in the ocean of information.

Our cognitive power can't analyze such huge information conclusively to determine lines between information either misinformation or disinformation until it's materialized. Precision or accuracy of information is vividly experimental but AI generated images made it dubious or inaccurate as well.

Misinformation is fabricated in rush when we don't have access to information. Disinformation is deliberately begotten based on interests.

The "era of information," also known as the Information Age or the Digital Age having easy access to information through digital and technological information. It's a shift from traditional to digital era. Technological misinformation made things worst propagating fake news.

In the four days trial 7-10 May, 2025, of Indo-Pak conflicts, hundreds of questions are left unanswered as lack of information. The real picturesque of the play claimed by either country is unclear. Pakistan's win-win position is scrutinized by the world's satellites graphics images. The world's technology needs more work to deliver more precised information.

Information tends to be misinformation or disinformation when it's hidden. Speculation spurge out to analyses for confirmation by advanced technology. Analysis isn't ought to be information rather self-begotten statement. The simulacrum is never what hides the truth - it is truth that hides the fact that there is none, as Jean Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation.

Fake news is circulated as real news isn't valued. Indian media propagated false news as misinformation. The claims of 6 jet fighters downing by PAF isn't confirmed by IAF. Denial is a psychological defense mechanism where an individual refuses to acknowledge real happenings, often to avoid emotional distress or discomfort of the masses. Denial of fact is refusing to show evidence. Denial of impact is minimizing the impact of loss in the event. Denial of responsibility is refusing to bear the loss of responsibility. Denial is also avoidance, repression and rationalization to show strength in weakness. The information is hidden and the folk is adversely entertained. Denial can serve as a coping mechanism, but lingering denial can hinder emotional processing.

Information is hidden for the sake of security, privacy and intellectual reasons. Misinformation is circulated when journalists are biased and Independent journalists are restricted to have access to information thus creates information warfare.

In warfare, Lacking of information can lead to chaotic situation Creating distrust and mental stress. Misinformation disturbs the balance of power and takes the shape of information which resultantly weakens the position.

How long misinformation be regulated? Information Technology will ultimately uncover the hidden information with the passage of time.

The plethora of misinformation creates cunundrum albeit based on rival states' interests.

PHC seeks reply in board chairman appointment Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has sought a response from the provincial government regarding the appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Bannu, which was made contrary to the recommendations of the Search and Scrutiny Committee, on Friday.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Jamshid heard the petition filed by Associate Professor Jehangir Khan.

The petitioner, Jehangir Khan, had applied for the position of Chairman of BISE Bannu, through the Education Department. A committee headed by the Provincial Minister for Education was formed to interview candidates, and the petitioner was recommended for the position based on merit. However, the summary was later withdrawn, and another candidate, Sifat Ullah, was appointed as Chairman, despite not being part of the original panel of three candidates recommended by the committee.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the appointment of Sifatullah was made on political grounds, and the Search and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations were ignored.

UET Peshawar, SNGPL sign MoU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) formalized a significant collaboration today through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering industry-academia linkages and supporting students through targeted financial initiatives. Under the agreement, SNGPL will offer six merit-based scholarships to students enrolled at UET's Bannu Campus. Additionally, a cash award of Rs. 200,000 will be presented to the gold medalist from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, UET Peshawar in recognition of academic excellence. The MoU was signed by Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak, Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar and Engr. Waseem Iqbal, Executive Engineer, SNGPL. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor emphasized the importance of robust partnerships between academia and industry. He extended his gratitude to SNGPL for their generous financial support. Stressing the need for practical outcomes from such agreements, he appointed Dr. Shehzad Khattak, Director Undergraduate Studies as the focal person to conduct quarterly review meetings with SNGPL to ensure the effective implementation of the MoUs and strengthen the existing agreements. The Vice Chancellor also expressed UET Peshawar's readiness to provide services in research and development, offer student internships and collaborate in addressing technical challenges faced by SNGPL. He commended Dr. Nasru Minallah, Director ORCI for his efforts in coordinating the MoU signing. Representing SNGPL, Engr. Waseem Iqbal, who is also an alumnus of UET Peshawar, expressed his appreciation for the university's continued cooperation. He shared the details of the scholarships and award noting the importance of facilitating the disbursement process for students. He also showed commitment to further enhancing the relationship between SNGPL and his alma mater. Prof. Dr. Rizwan M. Gul, Senior Dean, and Prof. Dr. Hamid Ullah, Chairman, Department of Mechanical Engineering acknowledged the valuable contributions of SNGPL particularly in establishing and supporting the Chair on Gas Laboratories at UET Peshawar. Dr. Hamid Ullah, who leads the Chair on Gas laboratory at the department, noted that it is fully operational and has consistently met expectations. "We share quarterly performance reports with SNGPL which reflect the lab's achievements and progress," he added. The ceremony was also attended by Prof. Dr. Waqar Shah, Dean, Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, Registrar, Prof. Dr. Misbah Ullah, Advisor Finance, Mr. Shahid Nawaz, Treasurer and other senior officials from UET Peshawar.

PHC verdicts vindicates Local Government: Mayor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali has welcomed the landmark decision by the Peshawar High Court which declared the controversial amendments to the Local Government Act null and void.

He termed the verdict as a victory for local representatives and a testament to their continued struggle for justice, asserting that the provincial government had, with premeditated intent, acted against the rights of elected local bodies and the people of the province.

"This ruling proves what we have been saying all along: the amendments were politically motivated and in clear violation of public rights.

For over three years, the provincial government deprived elected mayors and chairmen of funds and authority, obstructing development and the delivery of essential services to citizens," Mayor Zubair Ali stated in his official statement.

He further said that the provincial government has failed to present a single meaningful development plan for the province, especially for the city of Peshawar. "However, what they have succeeded in is setting new records in corruption.



In brief

SHCBA
observes strike
F.P. Report

LARKANA: Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA) Larkana boycotted court proceedings against the Moro incident, corporate farming, the 26th Constitutional Amendment and the PECA Act and held a symbolic hunger strike, on Friday. The acting president SHCBA Nooruddin Mahesar, Irshad Ali Chandio, Ghulam Muhammad Barejo and others, who were peacefully protesting on the Moro Bypass, were directly shot at by the police and private individuals at the orders of a provincial minister, due to which one person was martyred and many were injured who were shifted to the hospital. We strongly condemn such an unjustified incident. They said that the Sindh government is betraying the people of Sindh by handing over Sindh lands to private companies under the guise of corporate farming. They further said that there is a conspiracy to control the judiciary through the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which cannot be tolerated under any circumstances, while cases are being filed against journalists, lawyers and ordinary citizens in different cities of Sindh by implementing the PECA Act. Meanwhile, the election of the Larkana Division Gazette Officers Association (GOA) was held under the supervision of Chairman Election Committee Muntaz Soomro and Member Asadullah Chandio. In which Anees Ahmed Jalbani was elected as the President, Vice President!(Male) Ayaz Hussain, Vice President (female) Mehralnisa Khoso, and General Secretary Haq Nawaz Noonari were elected unopposed as the Press Secretary. Addressing the ceremony, he said that all the gazette officers of Larkana Division have trusted me and given me the post of President. Therefore, I will try to solve the basic problems of the officers on priority, for which the officers should join my ranks.

Committee
meeting held
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A meeting of the District Peace and Interfaith Harmony Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner to ensure law and order for promoting religious harmony, maintain cleanliness and regulate the collection of sacrificial animal hides during Eid-ul-Azha. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), officers from various departments and religious scholars from all schools of thought. Deputy Commissioner Naem Sindhu appreciated the constructive role of religious scholars in promoting peace and sectarian harmony across the district. He emphasized that the district administration has greatly benefited from the scholars' consultations in fostering an environment of religious tolerance. DC urged them to high-light messages of cleanliness, law compliance and interfaith harmony in their Eid sermons. It was informed during the meeting that comprehensive sanitation arrangements have been finalized for Eid-ul-Azha. Waste management companies will remain fully operational throughout the Eid holidays. Citizens were urged to dispose of animal waste in shopping bags and hand it over to waste management staff.

APC rejects proposed
Mines & Mineral Act

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: All Party conference has rejected the proposed Mines and Minerals Bill, declaring it an attack on the 18th Amendment of the constitution and provincial autonomy.

The district chapter of Awami National Party had hosted the moot in Lakki Marwat City on Thursday. The party's ulema wing central secretary Maulana Khanzeb chaired the conference. The participants discussed the proposed bill in detail and said that any attempt to pass it would be an attack on the authority of the provincial assembly and natural resources.

The speakers said that the formation of the special investment facilitation council was illegal and extra constitutional, making clear that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would not accept the bureaucracy's control over their natural resources. ANP's district president Malik Ali Sarwar and general secretary engineer Latifullah Khan, Tauseef Ahmads and Inamullah Begukhel of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Iqbal Hussain Advocate, Dr Sarfraz Minakhel, Qismatullah Khan, Salman Khan, Nisar Khan of Pakistan People's Party, former nazim Muhammad Yasim Khattak, Mufti Irfanullah and Ali Khan of Jamat-e-Islami, Mufti Amir Nawaz Khan Advocate, engineer Amir Nawaz Khan and Shahid Amin of JUI-F, Tareefullah and Malik Noor Badshah of PML(N), Khalid Habib and Waliullah of MQM Pakistan, Abdul Latif Usmani of JUI-N, Maulana Abdul Waheed and Sanaullah of Rabita JUIP, Asif Iqbal Advocate of district bar association and representatives of traders, journalist and literary bodies participated in the APC.

The participants said that the Mines and Mineral Bill was in conflict with the 18th Amendment to seize provincial autonomy and natural resources of the province. "Through this bill, the federal government wants to bring natural resources of the province under its control", they alleged. They said that people of the province and their elected representatives had the right to manage natural resources.

Later ANP district president Malik Ali Sarwar announced the joint declaration through which the representatives of political parties rejected the Mines and Minerals Bill and interference of the SIFC and federal minerals wing in the provincial

resources.

Three days free eye medical scheduled: A three-day eye screening camp will be held from May 26 to 28 at the Abdul Razzak Tabba Welfare Dispensary located within the premises of Lucky Cement Factory in Darra Pezu town of Lakki Marwat district.

Conducted in collaboration with Al-Shifa Trust, the camp will run daily from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. An official of the cement factory said that the initiative aimed to provide accessible eye care services to residents of the surrounding communities.

The official said that the services to be offered during the camp included general eye examinations, prescription glasses, free medicines, and cataract screening. The official said that qualified medical personnel and optometrists from Al-Shifa Trust would be on-site to conduct assessments and provide necessary treatment and referrals.

"This effort is part of Lucky Cement's broader commitment to community health, particularly in remote and underserved areas", he maintained, adding that through regular health-focused initiatives, the company continues to address critical gaps in healthcare access while strengthening long-term community wellbeing.

Police foils arm smuggling: Police claimed to have foiled a bid to smuggle weapons and arrested a suspect with a large quantity of arms and ammunition near Ghaznikhel town in Lakki Marwat district.

DPO told that after receiving credible reports about the weapons' smuggling attempt the Ghaznikhel police were alerted with directions to thwart the bid at all costs. He said that police set up a temporary checkpoint on the Indus Highway and started checking suspected vehicles.

"The cops intercepted a motorcyclist who was transporting a large sack filled with suspected goods", he claimed, adding that during the search the policemen recovered two sub machine guns, one Kalakov rifle, one repeater gun, 13 pistols, 46 magazines and 1400 bullets from the bag. DPO said that the suspect identified as Gul Aslam was arrested and his motorcycle was also impounded. He said that further investigation had been started after registering a case under relevant sections of law.

Commissioner inspects
Sweet Home facilities

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat along with the Deputy Commissioner paid a surprise visit to the Sweet Home Bait-ul-Mal Kohat. The purpose of this visit was to review the facilities and welfare programs provided in the institution.

On this occasion, Assistant Director Bait-ul-Mal Ghaffar Khan briefed in detail the distinguished guests regarding the activities of Sweet Home, administrative matters and ongoing projects for the welfare of children.

During the visit, Commissioner Kohat and Deputy Commissioner Kohat spent some time with the children and also had a lunch with them, which created a wave of happiness among the children. They also talked to them in a friendly way to encourage them and found out their needs and problems.

Commissioner Kohat also made a detailed inspection of the building, accommodation, education,

health and other facilities of the institution and directed the staff to leave no stone unturned in taking care of the children and providing for their needs.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner held a follow-up open court which beside the officers of the district administration, police and line departments, was also attended by the special persons in large numbers.

The participants identified issues related to NADRA, Ehsaas Program, Benazir Income Support Program, quota in government jobs, wheelchairs, transport and other sectors and demanded its early resolution. He while informing about the performance of the previous court, said that most of the issues presented in it have been resolved, which he mentioned one by one.

Pakistan First titled Mehfil-e-Mushaira held: In order to promote religious harmony, a Mehfil-e-Mushaira was held on the theme "Pakistan first" at

Bacha Khan Library Kohat under the auspices of District Administration Kohat. The Mushaira beside the local poets, was also attended by the poets from different minority communities and Afghans residing in Kohat. Leaders of various political parties and members of civil society also participated.

The Mehfil-e-Mushaira was presided over by the minority community poet Suraj Narayan, while prominent poet, writer and researcher Abasin Yousafzai was the chief guest on the occasion. Renowned poet Abdullah Zaheer performed the duties of comparing.

Later, prominent Urdu, Pashto and Hindko poets Athal Afghan, Jamil Siraj, Qayyum Qalamyar, Arshad Naem Qureshi, Darbar, Muhammad Jan Atif and Arif Bukhari presented their poems on the topic and received great applause from the audience. Later, shields and cash prizes were given to the poets.

Targeted drive
against dengue larva

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A targeted dengue response was launched in Tehsil Katlang after a special report from the deputy Medical Superintendent Type D Hospital Katlang revealed the presence of positive Aedes larval sites in Katlang Bazar.

The relevant health officials said, acting swiftly on the findings, Coordinator Public Health Dr. Robina Riaz, under special directives from District Health Officer Dr. Muhammad Shoaib, mobilized the Dengue Quick Response Team.

The team, including Medical Entomologist M. Afzal and Mansoor Ahmad, conducted a thorough inspection of potential mosquito breeding grounds. During the visit, several sites were identified with Aedes larvae. Immediate action was taken by health staff in collaboration with TMA Katlang to eliminate the larvae on the spot.

Larvicidal treatments were applied to stagnant water bodies and open drains, and Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) was carried out in identi-

fied hotspot areas. Health officials urged the public to not only cooperate with the dengue surveillance teams but also to maintain cleanliness so as to prevent further spread of the disease.

AWKUM 26th academic council meeting held: The 26th Academic Council meeting was held in Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jamil Ahmed.

The university officials said that various important issues were discussed in this meeting, in which the academic and research activities were reviewed and future plans were discussed. On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the teachers, administration and students and talked about the steps for the development of the university.

In addition, various important steps were also approved in the university, including reforms in the courses of integrating and updating curriculum in phases for BS level from the bodies, which aims to provide education to students according to modern

standards.

The Board of Studies of the Social Sciences, Chemical Sciences and Life Sciences Faculties was approved, which approved and updated the educational programs of these faculties. The (AD) programs of University College for Women, such as Computer Science and English, have now been converted to BS level to provide quality bachelor's education to the students.

The Higher Education Commission Islamabad approved the Affiliation Policy 2024, which is important for the upliftment and development of educational standards in the future. The recommendations of the Committee for Development Council (CDC) for the University Alumni were approved, including proposals for quality enhancement, to improve the quality of education.

Director Academic Professor Dr. Sher Afzal and heads of all departments were present on the occasion. These decisions are important milestones for improving the quality of education of the university and for the education of students.

NDM holds
protest against
alleged drone
attack

F.P. Report

WANA: The workers of the National Democratic Movement (NDM) South Waziristan Lower staged a protest rally in Wana against the recent drone strike in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. The rally aimed to express solidarity with the affected individuals and to call for an end to the ongoing violence in Pakhtun region, on Friday.

The protesters held banners and placards strongly condemning the drone attacks and demanding an end to the bloodshed in Pakhtun areas. While addressing the gathering, the leaders stated that the continued assaults not only claim innocent lives but also deeply erode the trust of the tribal population and disrupt regional peace. NDM South Waziristan Lower president Baitullah Bait demanded the immediate recovery of Imran Wazir, Deputy Director of Agriculture, South Waziristan Upper, who was abducted from Tank. He stated, we have endured countless hardships over the past decades.

PPP to
hold protest

F.P. Report

BANNU: Former provincial minister and senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, Asia Jahangir, has said that on May 26, they will demonstrate full force against the alleged mega corruption of Rs 40 billion by Imran Khan and his operatives, on Friday.

The provincial government has fixed regular rates for transfer and posting and collected Rs 100,000 per scale. It is shameful that the provincial government will collect every penny of the nation's trust and send those who looted the national wealth back to Bani Gala. The mega corruption scandal of a provincial government has exposed their true nature, she expressed these views while addressing a meeting regarding the protest to be held on May 26 and briefing the media. She said that on May 26, a campaign to save Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province will be launched so that the people of Pakhtunkhwa can get an idea of the real face of the PTI government.

Establishment of International women institute lauded: Former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Khan Durrani has said that the establishment of Kalam Bibi International Women's Institute is an agenda to educate women of the region in the veil. In the current situation, Kalam Bibi Women's University is a major source of providing higher education to women here at their doorstep.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at Durrani House, meeting a delegation and talking to media representatives. On this occasion, Zohaib Akram Khan Durrani, Kalam Bibi Women's Institute Registrar Engineer Tanveer-ul-Haq, Director Finance Engineer Rehan Ali Khan, Provincial President of Creative Engineer Engineer Haroon Durrani and other leaders were also present.

VC CECOS Varsity
visits WSSCM

— commends cleanliness efforts in Mardan



F.P. Report

MARDAN: Vice Chancellor of CECOS University, Professor Dr. Naseer Ahmad, paid a visit to the Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and inspected various sections of the organization. He was warmly received by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Engineer Adil Nawaz, who presented him with a bouquet of flowers. Principal of Mardan Youth Academy, Rashid Ahmad, also accompanied the Vice Chancellor during the visit.

Dr. Naseer Ahmad appreciated the initiatives and efforts undertaken by WSSCM for the cleanliness and beautification of Mardan. General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar and Manager HR & Admin Rahatullah briefed the visiting delegates on the compa-

ny's operations and the sanitation services being provided to the citizens of Mardan. It was shared that WSSCM is currently delivering sanitation and clean water services across 14 union councils of the city.

To effectively address public concerns, a dedicated complaints cell has been established, operational from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM six days a week. Since the company's inception, WSSCM has received 33,350 complaints, out of which 33,320 have been successfully resolved.

The Vice Chancellor was also informed about the establishment of a Citizen Liaison Cell aimed at promoting community engagement and enhancing public awareness on water and environmental conservation. As part of this initiative, weekly awareness sessions are held every Friday in major mosques, schools,

and colleges across the city, encouraging citizens to contribute toward making Mardan a cleaner and more beautiful place. A "Wall of Appreciation" has also been set up at the company's premises, showcasing positive feedback and commendations from elected representatives and community elders.

Professor Dr. Naseer Ahmad expressed his gratitude to Engineer Adil Nawaz and the WSSCM management team for their commendable efforts in providing safe drinking water and maintaining urban cleanliness. He emphasized the importance of preparing students for future challenges and announced the university's commitment to launching a joint awareness campaign with WSSCM to transform Mardan into a model city in terms of cleanliness and water conservation.

Two traffic policemen
booked for corruption

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Two cops among them an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) of traffic Police was booked for corruption and extortion from public transport drivers on Hazara road at Hassanabdal.

The police sources that on public and crew of public transport especially trucks and dumpers plying on inter province Punjab-KP and Punjab-GB route, the station house officer of Hassanabdal Sub Inspector Amjad Ali raided at the self-established picket of traffic police at railway crossing and held assistant sub inspector Zeeshan and constable Muhammad Rafi red handed extortion money from the crew of truckers and dumpers. To avert arrest, both the cops fled away from the scene successfully leaving behind the self-printed receipts of "monthly" which were confiscated accordingly.

Later a case against the cops were registered under section 155 Police order 2002, however extortion, fleeing and corruption charges were not framed against the blue-eyed cops due to reasons best known to them. A senior official of provincial traffic police

department has said that the both cops were suspended and a departmental inquiry against the said cops were initiated. It may be mentioned that public and social circles were raising their voice against the said police cops since long and even they have registered their complaints so during open courts of regional police officer and district police officer but no action was taken against these "black sheep".

Law enforcement agencies directed to complete their targets: A meeting of the District Coordination Committee Attock was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza at the DC Office Attock. The meeting was attended by DPO Attock Dr. Ghayas Gul Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed, SP Safe City Shahid Siddique, representatives of law enforcement agencies, and other relevant officers.

Key topics discussed in the meeting included the anti-encroachment drive, electricity theft control campaign, price control of essential commodities, inspections of petrol pumps, and other matters. It was informed during

the meeting that: From April 1 to April 30, a total of 6,408 traffic challans were issued under the traffic campaign, resulting in fines amounting to Rs. 3,683,750. Action against illegal petrol pumps led to the sealing of 31 petrol pumps, imposition of a fine worth Rs. 198,000, and the registration of one FIR.

Eight points selling illegal LPG cylinders were sealed, and a fine of Rs. 5,000 was imposed. Under the anti-encroachment campaign, fines worth Rs. 92,000 were imposed. As part of the anti-electricity theft campaign, 48 inspections were conducted, resulting in fines totaling Rs. 2,253 million.

In the anti-begging campaign, 43 beggars were arrested. Under the Societies Act, 97 seminars and 5 more were registered with the Federal Ministry of Education. On this occasion, DC Attock emphasized that all concerned departments should complete their assigned public welfare targets within the given timeframe. He further stated that law enforcement agencies are actively take actions against illegal activities and regularly submitting reports to senior officials.

Residents condemn shortage
of Medicines at DHQ hospital

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Residents voice frustration as patients suffer due to deteriorating conditions at the largest government hospital. The District Headquarters Hospital, once considered a lifeline for the local population, is now grappling with a severe shortage of essential medicines and a worrying lack of medical facilities. This decline in healthcare services has caused immense distress among patients across the district who rely heavily on the hospital for treatment.

According to reports, more than 2,000 patients visit the hospital's Outpatient Department (OPD) daily. However, due to the unavailability of basic medicines and inadequate medical infrastructure, patients are left helpless and often forced to seek treatment elsewhere or endure prolonged suffering. Many patients and their attendants have openly expressed their anger, citing negligent and unprofessional behavior by both doctors and hospital staff.

Further exacerbating the issue is the pattern of superficial visits by senior officials, including the Deputy Commissioner and health department representatives. These visits are widely criticized as mere photo opportunities, where officers

are shown only selected wards and given a falsely optimistic view of hospital operations. Citizens allege that these visits are stage-managed to conceal the hospital's real condition.

Bhari Shah Rehman 331st Urs festivities kicks off: The 331st annual Urs of the revered Sufi saint Hazrat Sakhi Abdul Rehman Shah, popularly known as Bhari Shah Rehman (RA), began with great spiritual fervor and cultural enthusiasm in Bhari Shah Rehman. As in previous years, the three-day event presents a vibrant blend of religious devotion, cultural expression, and social harmony, drawing thousands of devotees from across Pakistan.

The Urs festivities will continue until Friday, May 23, and are expected to attract a large gathering of spiritual seekers, including scholars, Sufi elders, and disciples from various Sufi orders. The opening ceremony was marked by the traditional Chadarposhi (ceremonial draping of the shrine) by custodians of the Naushahiya Sufi order, followed by special prayers and Fatiha Khwani at the revered shrine. The entire vicinity of the shrine was beautifully illuminated, enhancing the spiritual ambiance.

SP Investigation acts against Social Media Policy violation:

SP Investigation Hafizabad, Muhammad Imran Kalro, has taken swift action over a serious breach of the Punjab Police's social media policy. An official departmental inquiry has been formally initiated against Constable Saddam Nasir.

According to police sources, Constable Saddam Nasir of Punjab Police has been suspended for violating the department's social media guidelines. He recorded a TikTok video in police uniform while lip-syncing to an Indian song. The video went viral on social media platforms, raising concerns over the decorum and dignity of the police uniform.

Upon receiving reports of the incident, SP Investigation Hafizabad immediately suspended the constable and ordered his transfer to the police lines. A formal inquiry into the matter has also been launched. SP Investigation Muhammad Imran Kalro emphasized that discipline and professionalism are of utmost importance in the police force.

He further stated that all personnel must use social media with seriousness, responsibility, and due regard for the department's honor. Strict action will continue against those who violate the code of conduct.



Europe increases pressure on Israel over Gaza offensive

BRUSSELS (AFP): European countries ramped up pressure on Israel to abandon its intensified campaign in Gaza and let more aid into the war-ravaged territory, where rescuers said new attacks killed at least 19 people. Israel said 93 trucks had entered Gaza from Israel but the United Nations said the aid had been held up.

The UN announced that it had been cleared to send in aid for the first time since Israel imposed a total blockade on March 2, sparking severe shortages of food and medicine. The humanitarian crisis has prompted international anger, with the European Union saying it would review its trade cooperation deal with Israel over the blockade.

European Union foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas said "a strong majority" of foreign ministers from the 27 member states backed the move, adding "the countries see that the situation in Gaza is untenable... and what we want is to unblock the humanitarian aid". Sweden said it would press the EU to level sanctions against Israeli ministers. Britain suspended free-trade negotiations with Israel, summoned the Israeli ambassador and said it was imposing sanctions on settlers in the occupied West Bank in its toughest actions so far against Israel's conduct of the war.

"Blocking aid, expanding the war, dismissing the concerns of your friends and partners. This is indefensible and it must stop," Foreign Secretary David Lammy told parliament. Israel rejected the moves. The EU action "reflects a total misunderstanding of the complex reality Israel is facing," Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein said. Responding to Britain, Marmorstein said "external

pressure will not divert Israel from its path in defending its existence and security".

COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body that oversees civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, said "93 UN trucks carrying humanitarian aid, including flour for bakeries, food for babies, medical equipment, and pharmaceutical drugs were transferred" to Gaza. The spokesman for UN chief Antonio Guterres confirmed dozens of trucks were allowed in, but spoke of difficulties. "Today, one of our teams waited several hours for the Israeli green light to... collect the nutrition supplies. Unfortunately, they were not able to bring those supplies into our warehouse," Stephane Dujarric said. UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said the nine trucks cleared to enter were "a drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed".

He told the BBC that 14,000 babies could die in the next 48 hours if aid did not reach them in time. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting that the supplies were "not in sufficient amounts" but added: "We anticipate that those flows will increase over the next few days and weeks. It's important that that be achieved." The Israeli army stepped up its offensive at the weekend, vowing to defeat Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose October 7, 2023 attack on Israel triggered the current war. Israeli strikes overnight and left "19 dead, most of them children" and including a week-old baby, Gaza civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP. Several people were missing under the rubble while dozens of others were wounded in the attacks across the Palestinian territory,

Bassal said.

Israel announced one soldier was killed in Gaza but did not immediately comment on the latest strikes. The military said it had hit more than "100 terror targets" in Gaza over the past day. At a bombed petrol station, Mahmoud al-Louh carried a cloth bag of body parts to a vehicle. "They are civilians, children who were sleeping. What was their fault?" he told AFP. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel would "take control of all the territory of the Strip" with its new campaign. Israel resumed operations across Gaza on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire. Negotiators from Israel and Hamas began new indirect talks in Doha at the weekend, as the intensified campaign started. Qatar, which has been involved in mediation efforts throughout the war, said that Israel's "irresponsible, aggressive" behaviour had undermined the chances of a ceasefire. Hours later, Netanyahu's office accused Hamas of refusing to accept a deal, saying Israel was recalling its senior negotiators but leaving some of its team in Doha. A source close to Hamas alleged that Israel's delegation "has not held any real negotiations", blaming "Netanyahu's systematic policy of obstruction".

The Hamas attack in October 2023 resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Militants also took 251 hostages, 57 of whom remain in Gaza including 34 the military says are dead. Gaza's health ministry said at least 3,427 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on March 18, taking the war's overall toll to 53,573.

Palestinian minister reports 29 deaths

GENEVA (Reuters): The Palestinian health minister said that 29 children and elderly people had died from starvation-related deaths in Gaza in recent days and that many thousands more were at risk. Food aid is expected to start reaching Gazans after Israel let the first trucks through following an 11-week blockade, but Palestinian and aid officials say it is just a fraction of what is needed.

"In the last couple of days we lost 29 children," Palestinian Health Minister Majed Abu Ramadan told reporters, describing them as "starvation-related deaths". He later clarified that the total included elderly people as well as children. Asked to react to earlier comments by the UN aid chief to the BBC that 14,000 babies could die without aid, he said: "The number 14,000 is very realistic may be even underestimating (the scale)." Israel imposed the blockade on all supplies in March, saying Hamas was seizing deliveries for its fighters - a charge the group denies. Earlier this month, a global hunger monitor said that half a million people in the Gaza Strip face starvation.

Abu Ramadan said that only seven or eight hospitals out of Gaza's 36 were partially functioning, and that more than 90% of medical stocks were now at zero due to the blockade. "My information is that very few shipments went inside Gaza - 90-100 truck loads and in the south and mid zones." Asked if there are any medical supplies among them, he said: "As far as I know ...it's only flour for bakeries."

Abbas, Aoun back arms under state control

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas met in Beirut and backed placing all weapons under Lebanese state control, as they discussed efforts to disarm armed groups in Palestinian refugee camps.

A joint statement from the Lebanese presidency said the two leaders shared the "belief that the era of weapons outside Lebanese state control has ended" and backed the principle that arms should be held exclusively by the state. Abbas's three-day trip is his first to Lebanon since 2017.

The country hosts about 222,000 Palestinian refugees, according to the United Nations agency UNRWA, many living in overcrowded camps beyond state control. A Lebanese government source said Abbas's visit aimed to set up a mechanism to remove weapons from the camps. The source requested anonymity as they were not allowed to brief the media. The statement said the two sides agreed "to form a joint Lebanese-Palestinian committee to follow up on the situation of Palestinian camps in Lebanon and work on improving the living conditions of refugees, while respecting Lebanese sovereignty and committing to Lebanese laws".

By longstanding convention, the Lebanese army stays out of the Palestinian camps, where Abbas's Fatah, its rival Hamas and other armed groups handle security. Hamas claimed attacks on Israel from Lebanon during more than a year of hostilities involving its Lebanese ally Hezbollah. The clashes, sparked by the Gaza war, largely subsided after a truce in November. "The monopoly of weapons should be in the hands of the state," Aoun said in an interview with Egyptian channel ON TV.

The army, he added, had dismantled six Palestinian military training camps -- three in Bekaa, one south of Beirut and two in the north -- and seized weapons. Under the November ceasefire agreement, the army has also been dismantling militant group Hezbollah's infrastructure in the country's south. Ahmad Majdalani, a senior Palestine Liberation Organization official accompanying Abbas, said the visit came as Lebanon entered "a new era" in which it is receiving "Arab and American support". "What matters to us in this new regional context is that we do not become part of Lebanon's internal conflicts," he said, "and that the Palestinian cause is not exploited to serve any party."



MELBOURNE: New South Wales Police, emergency workers wade through floodwaters as they prepare inflatable boats to effect rescues near Taree, Australia.

Philippine president calls for all Cabinet secretaries to resign

MANILA (AP): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. asked all of his Cabinet secretaries to submit resignations in a "bold reset" of his administration following last week's midterm elections, which saw more opposition candidates win crucial Senate seats.

Marcos, the 67-year-old son of a late Philippine dictator overthrown in 1986, won the presidency in the deeply divided Southeast Asian country by a landslide in 2022 in a stunning political comeback as he made a steadfast call for national unity. But his equally popular vice-presidential running mate, Sara Duterte, later broke from him in a falling out that has sparked intense political discord.

With support from treaty ally the United States and other friendly countries, Marcos emerged as the most vocal critic of China's growing aggression in the disputed South China Sea while contending with an array of longstanding domestic issues, including inflation - and delayed fulfillment of a campaign promise to bring down the price of rice - as well as many reports of kidnappings and other crimes. "This is not business as usual," Marcos was cited as saying in a government statement. "The people have spoken and they expect results - not politics, not excuses. We hear them and we will

act."

Marcos called for the "courtesy resignation of all Cabinet secretaries in a decisive move to recalibrate his administration following the results of the recent elections," the government statement said. "The request for courtesy resignations is aimed at giving the president the elbow room to evaluate the performance of each department and determine who will continue to serve in line with his administration's recalibrated priorities," the government said. At least 21 Cabinet secretaries led by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin either immediately submitted their resignations or expressed their readiness to do so. "This is not about personalities - it's about performance, alignment and urgency," Marcos said. "Those who have delivered and continue to deliver will be recognized. But we cannot afford to be complacent. The time for comfort zones is over."

Government services will remain uninterrupted during the transition, the government said, adding that "with this bold reset, the Marcos administration signals a new phase - sharper, faster and fully focused on the people's most pressing needs." Five out of the 12 Senate seats contested in the mid-term elections were won by allies of Sara Duterte or her father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, who has been arrested and

detained by the International Criminal Court in The Hague in the Netherlands. The elder Duterte, a staunch critic of Marcos, was accused of committing crimes against humanity over a brutal anti-drugs crackdown he launched that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead.

Marcos-endorsed senatorial candidates won five Senate seats while two other seats were unexpectedly won by two liberal democrats associated with the late former President Benigno Aquino III, whose family has long been at odds with the Marcoses. Voting for half of the 24-member Senate is crucial because the government body will hold an impeachment trial for Sara Duterte in July over an array of criminal allegations, including corruption and a public threat to assassinate Marcos, his wife and House Speaker Martin Romualdez. She made those threats in an online news conference in November but later issued a vague denial that she wanted the president killed.

Sara Duterte is facing a separate criminal complaint for her threats against the Marcoses and Romualdez. Most of the seats in the House were won by candidates allied with Marcos and his cousin, Romualdez, in the May 12 elections, which many saw as a preview to the presidential elections scheduled for 2028.

Organizations sue Justice Dept to reverse hundreds of grant cancellations

WASHINGTON (AP): Five organizations that had grants terminated by the Justice Department in April are suing the department and Attorney General Pam Bondi, arguing that the cancellations are unconstitutional and asking that the money be reinstated.

The lawsuit, filed by the Vera Institute of Justice, the Center for Children & Youth Justice, Chinese for Affirmative Action, FORCE Detroit and Health Resources in Action, asks a federal judge in the nation's capital to "declare unlawful, vacate and set aside" the cancellations that were sent to more than 360 awardees ending grants worth nearly \$820 million midstream.

The lawsuit filed by the Democracy Forward Foundation and the Perry Law firm asks for class action status and also names the Office of Justice Programs and Maureen Henneberg, the acting head of that office, as defendants. The lawsuit argues that the grant termi-

nations did not allow due process to the organizations, lacked sufficient clarity, and that Henneberg's office lacked "constitutional, statutory, and regulatory authority" to terminate the grants. The lawyers also argue that the move violated the constitutional separation of powers clause that gives Congress appropriation powers.

The lawsuit notes that all the grant recipients that had money rescinded received the same form letter announcing the cancellation, with identical words saying the grant programs no longer met the agency's priorities. Lawyers argue in the lawsuit that the new agency priorities noted in the form letter are not articulated in policy or law, and that federal regulations do not allow for cancellations when the agency's priorities change "post-award." They said the rule only allows for cancellations of grants that no longer meet the agency's goals as stated when the grants were

awarded. The lawsuit says the Office of Justice Programs "is permitted to terminate an award based on agency priorities only if that basis for termination was specifically permitted by the terms and conditions of the award." That did not happen, it argues. A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment on the lawsuit. Representatives from Vera said the nonprofit received notice on April 4 that five awards worth more than \$7 million were being canceled. The other named plaintiffs, along with hundreds of other groups, received identical notices on April 22 that they should cease any activities under the grants and that they would lose access to the federal funding system.

The grants cover a wide swath of programming across the Justice Department. Among other goals, they are for community violence intervention work, combatting hate crimes, providing assistance to crime sur-

vivors and survivors of domestic or sexual abuse, improving juvenile justice, and training for law enforcement agencies. The lawsuit says none of the organizations had previously had grants terminated and many had received grants for various programs under both Democratic and Republican presidential administrations. Many of the organizations that lost the federal money said the unexpected cancellations mid-grant had meant layoffs, program closures and loss of community partnerships. In addition to staying the cancellations and reinstating the awards, lawyers also ask a judge to require state reports every 30 days to ensure compliance. "The sudden and unlawful termination of these public safety grants makes neighborhoods everywhere less safe and does irreparable harm to communities across the country," said Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward.

US judge says Trump cannot downsize federal agencies

NEW YORK (Reuters): A federal judge said President Donald Trump's administration cannot restructure and downsize the US government without the consent of Congress and that she would likely extend her ruling blocking federal agencies from implementing mass layoffs.

US District Judge Susan Illston during a hearing in San Francisco agreed with a group of unions, nonprofits and municipalities that layoffs that began last month are likely illegal and would cause widespread harm to the public. The layoffs of tens of thousands of staff across the federal government are a critical piece of a push by the Republican president and billionaire adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to shrink the federal government and drastically cut spending.

Illston on May 9 blocked about 20 agencies from engaging in mass layoffs for two weeks and required the reinstatement of workers who had already lost their jobs. That order is set to expire, and the judge at the hearing said she was inclined to extend it "with some refinement." "Agencies may not conduct reductions in force in bla-

tant disregard of congressional mandates, whether the president orders them to or not," Illston, an appointee of Democratic former President Bill Clinton, said at the beginning of the hearing. The Trump administration has asked the US Supreme Court to pause Illston's temporary ruling, saying she improperly infringed on Trump's constitutional powers to control the executive branch.

Andrew Bernie, a lawyer for the US Department of Justice, told Illston that federal agencies have broad authority to implement large-scale layoffs. And he said that Trump's executive order merely asked agencies to determine what cuts can be made and did not direct any concrete actions such as layoffs or office closures that plaintiffs could sue over at this point. "Those decisions will be disclosed when they are made, and when they are made, the plaintiffs can challenge them. Indeed, the plaintiffs have challenged individual decisions," Bernie said, citing pending lawsuits involving cuts at the departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Homeland

Security.

Illston was skeptical and questioned Bernie's claim that the executive order merely urged agencies to study whether cuts are appropriate. "It's entitled 'Implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency Workforce Optimization Initiative,'" Illston said. "Implementing." It's not 'advising about how you might consider.'"

Danielle Leonard, who represents the plaintiffs, said directives from Trump and other White House officials made clear that agencies had little say in whether to gut their workforces.

"They are saying what to cut, when to cut, where to cut, and all they're asking the agencies to do is come forward with a plan," she said. The case involves the departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Commerce, State and Veterans Affairs, among others. Trump has urged agencies to eliminate duplicative roles, unnecessary management layers, and non-critical jobs while automating routine tasks, closing regional offices and reducing the use of outside contractors.

Ukraine cannot restore post-Soviet borders

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine should abandon any notion of restoring its borders established with the 1991 collapse of Soviet rule or even those dating from the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion, the country's former military commander was quoted.

Valery Zaluzhnyi, now Ukraine's ambassador to London, was replaced as top commander in February 2024 after months of reported disagreements between him and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy and other public figures have long called for the eviction of Russian forces and a return to Ukraine's 1991 post-Soviet borders, including Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014. But as

efforts over recent months have focused on launching talks to secure a ceasefire, public statements by Kyiv have been more moderate on the question of ceding territory.

"I hope that there are not people in this room who still hope for some kind of miracle or lucky sign that will bring peace to Ukraine, the borders of 1991 or 2022 and that there will be great happiness afterward," the RBK Ukraine news site quoted Zaluzhnyi as telling a forum in Kyiv. "My personal opinion is that the enemy still has resources, forces and means to launch strikes on our territory and attempt specific offensive operations." Zaluzhnyi said Russia had been waging a war of attrition for a year and, given

Ukraine's smaller forces and difficult economic circumstances, its only hope was to rely on advanced technology. "We can speak only about a high-tech war of survival, using a minimum of economic means to achieve maximum benefit," he was quoted as saying. Opinion polls show Zaluzhnyi to be among the most popular public figures with Ukrainians. Polls also show Zelenskyy's rating rising since his confrontation with US President Donald Trump at a White House meeting in February. With Trump attempting to pressure both Moscow and Kyiv to end the conflict, Ukraine has agreed to launch direct talks with Russia but first wants a ceasefire lasting at least 30 days.

China, Netherlands pledge deeper cooperation to tackle global challenges

BEIJING (Reuters): China and the Netherlands pledged to deepen cooperation and communication amid "global challenges" by bolstering wider China-EU ties to tackle areas such as climate change and the green transition.

The two countries agreed to maintain close communication on cooperation in various fields including semiconductor technology, China's foreign ministry said in a statement following a meeting between the two nation's top diplomats. They also pledged to uphold free trade and a multilateral trading system, the statement said.

Tension between the two nations has cooled in recent months after the

Netherlands said in January it would widen export controls on semiconductors from April 1, following pressure from the United States to curb shipments to China. During the meeting in Beijing, Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Dutch counterpart Caspar Veldkamp that China was willing to help contribute to China-EU relations and the recovery of the world economy, according to a pool report. "China is willing to enhance communication and dialogue with the Netherlands, and deepen practical cooperation," Wang told Veldkamp. Veldkamp said the European Union and the Netherlands "want to work with China on the global

challenges we're facing together".

He added, "I hope we can use this visit specifically also to explore deeper cooperation on such matters as climate and green transition, upholding the multilateral system and women's rights." Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof also looks forward to a possible visit to China later this year, Veldkamp said. Beijing has repeatedly criticised Washington's strategy of pressuring allies such as the Netherlands and Japan to join export controls targeting Chinese access to cutting-edge chips and chipmaking equipment. China, the world's second largest economy, has said it opposed semiconductor

curbs, part of a trend of some countries "expanding the concept of national security and abusing export controls". The move seriously threatened the stability of global semiconductor supply chains, the state-backed Global Times newspaper said in January.

Dutch national export licence requirements for semiconductor equipment were first introduced in 2023 under pressure from the United States to limit shipments to China, and they have been expanded several times. Dutch chip equipment company, which ships lithography machines to China, has said the export measures would not affect its business outlook.

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Is oppression only happening to white people in South Africa?

ON Wednesday, US President Donald Trump and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa met. The meeting was heated as Trump accused South Africa of committing genocide against white people. Cyril Ramaphosa denied the accusations. The South African president wanted to talk about trade, but Trump started talking about white people's genocide.

Trump showed the South African president and reporters photos of white farmers fleeing South Africa and a video showing some people chanting "kill the farmers." Ramaphosa explained that these slogans do not represent government policy, but rather racial harmony in South Africa. The plane was also mentioned during the meeting. The plane was mentioned because a few days ago, the Qatari government gifted Trump a luxury plane during his visit to Qatar. Whether this meeting was successful or not, nothing can be said, but there was definitely a stir. In February, the US president and The Ukrainian president also met at the White House, and their meeting turned into a bitter one.

The Ukrainian president was in a weak position at the time, and the cutoff of American aid could have defeated Ukraine, so later Ukraine had to bow to the United States. South Africa is not facing any problems at the moment, so the South African president also responded with dignity. Some problems may arise later and relations may become bitter.

The American president is under discussion all over the world, because his announcements and decisions have troubled many countries. South Africa is not very developed economically, but it is not so weak that it cannot fight poverty. Cyril Ramaphosa wants to improve the economy in the future, so he wanted to discuss economic matters with the American president. 80 percent of the population in South Africa is black and the remaining 20 percent is made up of different races. Among these different races, European whites, Chinese, Pakistanis, Indians and some other races are also found there. South Africa is a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-lingual and multicultural country. The white race suppressed other races for quite some time. The black race did not even get the right to vote until 1994. After 1994, South Africa was introduced as a liberal and democratic country. South Africa also has international importance and is in an excellent position in terms of democracy.

This wealth It is a member of both the Commonwealth and the G20 and is the 39th largest economy in the world, but poverty is also prevalent. Human rights may be violated in South Africa, but it is not right to accuse only one of genocide. Other races may also be being oppressed, and this should not be the case. If white people are really being oppressed, the South African government must immediately stop human rights violations. If a farmer is being oppressed or a person from any other sector is being oppressed, it must be redressed immediately. If some abuses are taking place in South Africa, it does not mean that the government is also involved in these abuses. If the entire government or a member of the government is being oppressed because of race, religion or language, it is a crime. If the US President really has evidence, the South African government should immediately stop human rights violations.

Now the question also arises that is human rights being violated only in South Africa? There is also a question that is only white people being targeted? Is there not oppression happening anywhere else in the world? Why is no one seeing the people dying in Gaza? Why is the oppression happening in Kashmir hidden from the eyes of the world? In Sudan, Syria, Iraq and many other countries, oppression is reaching its limits, but it is not even mentioned. Trump admitted a few days ago that millions of people are dying of hunger in Gaza.

These dying people can be saved by giving food, but Israel has stopped their food. Human rights are being trampled on in many countries. A good person never likes oppression. No person, whether he belongs to any race or religion, should be oppressed. Be it white or black, American or Palestinian, Christian or Hindu, belonging to any language or region, and he is being oppressed, so this is a crime. We should try to stop oppression by recognizing it as a crime. The most atrocities in the world are being committed against Muslims. The atrocities that are being committed against Muslims are not mentioned.

Should we accept the accusation that genocide is taking place by looking at just a few pictures? Isn't that injustice? The whole world is seeing how entire regions are being destroyed and small children are being starved to death? To live is a basic human right and taking away this right is a great crime. South Africa is also among those who have raised their voices for the oppressed in Gaza, and South Africa has also filed the Palestinian case in the International Court of Justice. Isn't South Africa being accused so that it can be punished for raising its voice for the oppressed? No matter how much we condemn oppression, oppression should not be directed at anyone, but adopting double standards is also condemnable. On the one hand, even the smallest injustice should be taken into account and on the other hand, the biggest injustice should be ignored. Whether South Africa is committing oppression or any other state, it has no right to oppress anyone or deny anyone the right to live. The question is, is it only white people in South Africa who are being oppressed?

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Murder of innocence: India's war by proxy in Pakistan

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

THE tragedy that unfolded in Khuzdar, where innocent schoolchildren were mercilessly targeted in a despicable act of terrorism, has plunged the nation into mourning and deepened our resolve to confront the evil that stalks our land. This was not just an attack on young lives; it was a calculated strike against our future, a cowardly blow inflicted by an enemy that has repeatedly failed to subdue us on the battlefield and now turns to the slaughter of our children to quench its bitterness.

Why is it that the pure and innocent the school-going children of Pakistan are made victims of such heinous crimes? The nation still bears the scar of December 16, 2014, when terrorists stormed the Army Public School in Peshawar and massacred over 140 lives, most of them children. It was a day when the heavens wept, and the earth stood still in grief. Now, a similar nightmare has descended upon Khuzdar. The message from our enemy is unmistakable: if we cannot defeat you in combat, we will break you by murdering your young.

This strategy of targeting civilians and, worse, children, is not born of battlefield tactics but of desperation and inhuman cruelty. After the Peshawar attack, the Government of Pakistan presented a meticulously prepared dossier to the United Nations and other international bodies. That document provided clear, irrefutable evidence of Indian involvement in planning and supporting the terrorists behind the massacre. It detailed communications intercepted between operatives in Afghanistan and handlers linked to Indian intelligence agencies. It revealed funding channels traced back to Indian sources and the use of Afghan soil under Indian patronage for orchestrating the attack.

And yet, despite the gravity of these revelations, the international community remained disturbingly indifferent. The dossier, which should have led to firm diplomatic consequences and international condemnation, was quietly shelved. Justice was neither demanded nor delivered. If that evidence had been given the seriousness it

warranted, if India had been held accountable in 2014, perhaps Khuzdar would never have happened.

Allah Almighty has warned in the Holy Qur'an: "And do not kill the soul

any woman, or any elder or sick person." (Sunan Abu Dawood)

Such teachings starkly contrast with the barbarity we witnessed in Khuzdar and earlier in Peshawar. It is time we stand firm and

The dossier, which should have led to firm diplomatic consequences and international condemnation, was quietly shelved. Justice was neither demanded nor delivered. If that evidence had been given the seriousness it warranted, if India had been held accountable in 2014, perhaps Khuzdar would never have happened. Allah Almighty has warned in the Holy Qur'an: "And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right..." (Surah Al-Isra, 17:33) This divine commandment is not only a cornerstone of Islamic jurisprudence but a universal moral truth. The murder of innocent souls, particularly children, is an abomination that cries out to the heavens. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade the killing of women and children even during war. In an authentic Hadith, he said: "Do not kill any child,

which Allah has forbidden, except by right..." (Surah Al-Isra, 17:33)

This divine commandment is not only a cornerstone of Islamic jurisprudence but a universal moral truth. The murder of innocent souls, particularly children, is an abomination that cries out to the heavens. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade the killing of women and children even during war. In an authentic Hadith, he said:

"Do not kill any child,

lout against this injustice. Pakistan must revive the 2014 dossier and present it again, now alongside the new evidence emerging from the Khuzdar incident. The patterns are too similar, the motives too familiar, and the enemy too well known for this to be dismissed as coincidence. From covert operations in Balochistan to the funding of separatist and terrorist outfits, India has waged a shadow war against Pakistan for years, often targeting those least able to

defend themselves.

The world is well aware of the states that have made brutality their policy. Whether in Gaza or Kashmir, whether it is Israel or India, it is the same thirst for horror that drives bullets into the hearts of children, women, and peaceful citizens. Yet, these powerful nations hide behind diplomatic cloaks and international alliances, while the blood of the innocent continues to flow.

Pakistan must now formulate a coherent and assertive policy that goes beyond statements of condemnation. We must unite our civil and military intelligence, strengthen border surveillance, and take the diplomatic offensive. The world must be shown-again and again-what our enemy is capable of, not with accusations, but with proof, dossiers, and undeniable facts. Let the Khuzdar tragedy become a rallying cry for international justice, not a forgotten headline.

At the same time, we must prepare to respond with the same strength and strategy that has led us to victory on the battlefield. The resolve that broke the back of terrorism after Peshawar must be renewed, and our security apparatus revitalized. We must never let our enemy believe that targeting children can break our will. It cannot-and it will not.

Let this also be a moment of soul-searching for the global conscience. How many more children must die before the world acts not out of politics, but out of principle? How many more coffins must be lowered before justice is no longer selective?

The Holy Qur'an says: "Whoever kills a soul...it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one-it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:32)

Our mission, then, is not only national but profoundly human. We owe it to the martyrs of Peshawar, to the victims of Khuzdar, and to every tear-stained mother's prayer. The enemy seeks to instill fear; we must answer with unity, justice, and truth. We can no longer afford silence. The blood of our children is louder than any speech, and it demands justice with a voice no nation can dare ignore.

Game in Sudan

Tunc Demirtas

INCREASING attacks in Sudan along with deepening tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) group have brought the destructiveness of the civil war in the country to a critical point. The civil war, which has been going on for more than two years, has gone beyond the war between the two groups and has become so different that it cannot be defined as a mere power struggle.

Analyses show that the Sudanese Army and the RSF continue operations in the civil war to gain military and political legitimacy. However, during this period, the effects of the war have intensified across Sudan, from Nyla to Port Sudan. Furthermore, the increasing indirect influence of external actors such as the United Arab Emirates is clearly transforming the scope and nature of the war.

The RSF's consolidation of control in strategic locations such as Nyla and Kordofan in recent weeks and intense drone attacks on Port Sudan have created a structure that has changed the course of the civil war. The RSF's primary aim is to discredit the Sudanese army and the current administration, and it is understood that another aim is to establish a parallel civilian government in Darfur. Indeed, the alliances recently declared in Nairobi, Kenya indicate the RSF's search for political legitimacy.

The recent attacks on Port Sudan, which are far from the conflict compared to Khartoum, also reveal that Sudan's strategic infrastructure is being systematically targeted. The RSF's systematic and long-range drone attacks have changed the dynamics of the conflict on the ground. How the Sudanese Army will respond to the RSF's air superiority remains a critical question.

In addition, it is a fact that the humanitarian crisis in Sudan continues devastatingly. Power outages, water supply disruptions and health infrastructure collapse have increased disease risk and malnutrition, especially among children. A key factor reinforcing the transformation in the nature of this conflict is the growing involvement of regional actors. The influence of these actors is no longer limited to diplomatic mediation or humanitarian aid. On the contrary, they have assumed a role that directly shapes the military and political landscape on the ground. Among these actors, the UAE stands out due to the scope and nature of its engagement in Sudan.

The UAE's role in Sudan is often interpreted, across various sources, as an extension of its strategic postures in Libya and Somalia. It is a well-documented fact that the UAE has channeled Sudanese gold to Abu Dhabi markets through its past economic and military ties with RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedi. In return, the UAE has supported the RSF with military equipment and financial aid. Open-source intelligence platforms like Flight Radar indicate the existence of an air bridge transporting weapons from the UAE to the Chad border and then into Darfur. At the same time, radar systems and bases recently established in Bosaso in Somalia's federal member state Puntland suggest that this supply line functions as a logistic support center in the east. Although these claims are denied by official authorities, open-

source flight data and field reports paint a different picture.

The weapons and drone support provided by the UAE to General Khalifa Haftar in Libya can also be seen as a similar example of this strategy. This model may be understood as part of a broader proxy strategy that aims to establish regional balance and pursue geopolitical interests through local actors. Sudan's war now unfolds across multiple fronts-including the digital sphere. Close analysis shows the RSF has built a potent propaganda apparatus on social media. After bans on Facebook and X, they shifted to Telegram, where they reach tens of thousands to spread their narrative. The RSF also uses these channels to deliver humanitarian aid and to produce content designed to reinforce stability and bolster its legitimacy. At the same time, they've turned digital media into a battleground by deploying fake accounts and coordinated campaigns aimed at discrediting Sudan's government. Observers allege foreign backers allocate substantial budgets to sustain these operations.

Meanwhile, the supply chains for arms and personnel largely remain in the shadows. Satellite imagery and field photos show the RSF operating UAE-manufactured armored vehicles and Chinese-made weapons. It is also reported that the SAF receives drones from allies like Egypt and in some cases employs foreign mercenaries. These shadow supply chains not only prolong the conflict but also hinder peace efforts. In the context of the Sudan crisis, the response from the international community remains insufficient. Apart from occasional statements of condemnation by institutions like the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, there have been no tangible efforts to disrupt the supply chains fueling the conflict.

While the Sudanese government has publicly accused the UAE and severed diplomatic ties, submitting the matter to the UN Security Council, this initiative has yet to translate into any meaningful international sanctions or legal proceedings. Today, the tragedy endured by Sudanese civilians is not just a result of internal conflict. It is also a consequence of proxy warfare, regional power rivalries and international silence. The collapse of the health care system in Nyla, the disruption of essential services in Port Sudan and the displacement of thousands to border regions clearly indicate who the real victims of this war are. Thus, the international community's responsibility is not only to foster peace but also to expose and address the economic, logistical and digital dimensions of the proxy networks fueling the war.

Sudan's civil war has evolved into a tangled proxy conflict in which both frontline fighters and their covert backers exert decisive influence. The dissonance between the UAE's peace rhetoric and its on-the-ground engagements may prove pivotal in shaping the war's course. Here, diplomatic silence can be as potent a weapon as any. True and lasting peace demands more than a ceasefire; it requires full transparency and accountability to dismantle the clandestine networks perpetuating the violence. In the end, Sudan's future will hinge less on when the guns fall silent and more on how-and with whom-peace is built.

What is the Chagos deal between UK and Mauritius?

James Chater

THE UK has signed a £3.4bn (\$4.6bn) deal to hand over sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, while retaining control of a UK-US military base on Diego Garcia - the largest of the islands. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer says the 99-year agreement to lease back Diego Garcia will cost the UK £101m a year, and is necessary to protect the base from "malign influence". Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam said the agreement completed "the total process of decolonisation".

But UK opposition leaders - and some Chagossians now resident in the UK - have criticised the deal. The Chagos Islands - officially known as the British Indian Ocean Territory - are located in the Indian Ocean about 5,799 miles (9,332km) south-east of the UK, and about 1,250 miles

north-east of Mauritius. The islands, also known as the Chagos Archipelago - comprised of seven atolls with about 60 individual islands - were separated from Mauritius in 1965, when Mauritius was still a British colony. Britain purchased the islands for £3m but Mauritius has argued that it was illegally forced to give them away as part of a deal to gain independence from Britain. In the late 1960s, Britain invited the US to build a military base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the Chagos Islands, forcibly removing thousands of people from their homes in the process.

Some of those Chagossians ended up in Mauritius and the Seychelles, but others settled in the UK, mostly in Crawley, West Sussex. The UK has handed sovereignty of the archipelago to Mauritius, but will lease use of Diego Garcia for a period of 99 years - at an

average cost of £101m a year. The UK will pay £165m in each of the first three years. From years four to 13, it will pay £120m a year. After that, payments will be indexed to inflation. Sir Keir said continued use of Diego Garcia as a military base had been signed off by members of the five eyes alliance - the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The US will pay for "running costs" of the base, he said. The agreement also includes a £40m trust fund to support Chagossians.

Under the deal, although Mauritius will control Diego Garcia, it will not be allowed to resettle the island. Bernadette Dugassee is one of two Chagossian women, born on Diego Garcia, who brought a last-minute legal challenge over the deal to the UK's High Court. She told the

BBC: "I don't belong in the UK, I don't belong in Mauritius, I don't belong in the Seychelles. I belong in Diego Garcia." Their legal challenge had temporarily blocked the deal when a court injunction was granted, but the High Court went on to dismiss the challenge. Diego Garcia is the largest of the Chagos Islands. Since the early 1970s, the UK and the US have jointly run a secretive military base there. The government says its facilities include an airfield and deep-water port, as well as advanced communications and surveillance capabilities.

There are no commercial flights to the island. Access is granted by the military facility or, previously, the British authority that ran the territory. Diego Garcia is seen as having high strategic importance because of its location in

the heart of the Indian Ocean. During the US "war on terror" after the 9/11 attacks, aircraft were sent directly from the island to carry out missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Conservatives have criticised the deal. Party leader Kemi Badenoch called the deal an "act of national self-harm". "It leaves us more exposed to China, and ignores the will of the Chagossian people. And we're paying billions to do so," she said.

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said the deal was "not necessary" and played "into China's hands". The government, however, said the continued use of the military base on Diego Garcia would have been untenable without signing the deal. Defence Secretary John Healey said: "Without this deal, within weeks, we could face losing legal rulings and within just a few years the base would become inoperable". US

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in a post on X, said Washington "welcomed" the agreement which secured the "long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint US-UK military facility at Diego Garcia, which is critical to regional and global security". Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam said the deal was a "great victory for the Mauritian nation". Mauritian Attorney General Gavin Glover told the BBC: "Our country is elated that this 60-year struggle is finally over, especially for our brothers and sisters who were forced to leave their homes." Although Chagossians have differing views on the deal, one elderly woman at the headquarters of the Chagos Refugee Group headquarters in Mauritius, celebrated it. "Now I can finally go there... and die in peace," she said.

Energy activism in Turkish foreign policy

Busra Zeynep Ozdemir

ENERGY remains one of the most vital pillars of sustainable economic growth. Just as a century ago-when fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas) dominated the global energy mix-today the rapid proliferation of clean energy technologies, the growing demand for critical minerals, and the strategic importance of rare earth elements continue to place energy at the forefront of contemporary foreign policy agendas. The interdependence of global markets has, in turn, compelled both energy exporters and importers to adopt a more cautious and calculated approach to international relations.

Türkiye's energy consumption has grown steadily with its population and economy, and it has outpaced many peers in diversifying its energy mix. For over two decades, Ankara has leveraged its unique geography and deep-rooted historical ties to pursue a proactive and multidimensional energy diplomacy policy. By diversifying not only the types of energy it consumes but also the transit routes through which it imports them, Türkiye has gradually reshaped what was once an "asymmetric dependency" on hydrocarbon-rich neighbors into a framework of "mutual interdependence." Strategic investments in natural gas infrastructure-ranging from pipeline networks to LNG import capacity-have strengthened Türkiye's energy security. Its two LNG regasification facilities and three floating storage and regasification units (FSRUs) have also bolstered Türkiye's negotiating power in gas import agreements.

Beyond mere import diversification, Türkiye aspires to reduce its external dependence by transforming itself into a producer as

well as a consumer. Over the past decade, Ankara has launched ambitious efforts to conduct hydrocarbon exploration both on land and offshore within its maritime jurisdiction-backed by a deep-sea exploration and drilling fleet that places it among a select group of nations with such capabilities. Importantly, this fleet is not intended solely for domestic use. Türkiye aims to contribute to the energy security of its broader neighborhood, positioning itself as a regional power with global ambitions in energy.

Türkiye's entrepreneurial approach to foreign policy has elevated its regional presence, and energy diplomacy is increasingly central to this strategy. High-level visits and summits often include the energy and natural resources minister alongside the foreign minister-a symbolic yet significant indicator of energy's growing prominence within Ankara's diplomatic engagements.

Through state partnerships and direct involvement of its national oil company, Turkish Petroleum (TPAO), Türkiye has become an active participant in hydrocarbon ventures abroad. From Azerbaijan and Russia to Iraq and Afghanistan, Ankara has engaged in exploration and production activities. Most recently, Türkiye initiated seismic studies in Somalia's maritime zones to identify potential hydrocarbon reserves. In April, Türkiye and Somalia signed an agreement enabling TPAO to operate onshore as well-a development that not only underscores mutual trust but also deepens bilateral ties. This model of cooperation could well be replicated across the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Türkiye's partnership with

Somalia is not an isolated case. For several years, Ankara has maintained a robust diplomatic tempo aimed at expanding its energy cooperation with other friendly and allied nations. A case in point is the 2019 maritime boundary agreement with Libya, which includes provisions for Turkish hydrocarbon exploration within Libya's territorial waters-an agreement still awaiting full implementation. These efforts extend well beyond Africa. In 2024 alone, Türkiye held strategic dialogues and signed energy-related agreements with Venezuela (a global oil giant), Niger (an emerging LNG exporter), Algeria (a long-standing energy partner), China (the largest energy consumer and technology producer), and the US (the top hydrocarbon producer).

The first five months of 2025 have already seen a flurry of energy diplomacy. A recent agreement with the US on developing unconventional oil and gas reserves reaffirms Türkiye's commitment to reducing its hydrocarbon dependence. Separate agreements signed with Hungary and Pakistan enable TPAO to conduct exploration and production operations abroad, further cementing Türkiye's credibility and expertise in the sector.

Meanwhile, a deal to lease one of Türkiye's FSRUs to Egypt-historically a source of LNG imports-illustrates Ankara's willingness to deploy its critical infrastructure to support the energy security of its allies. This move reinforces the narrative that energy, when harnessed wisely, can serve as a bridge between nations.

In parallel with diplomatic outreach, Türkiye has established itself as a convening power for

energy dialogue. The Istanbul Energy Forum, held in November under the banner "An Energy-Independent Türkiye," brought together energy and natural resource ministers from Russia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Libya, Moldova, Serbia, and Uzbekistan. Executives from SOCAR, Azerbaijan's national energy company, and Oman LNG also participated. The forum produced commitments for cooperation across multiple domains, from hydrocarbons and renewables to mining and nuclear energy.

More recently, the Istanbul Natural Resources Summit-held in May under the theme "Securing Resources, Rebuilding the Future"-convened ministers from numerous countries. In the first ministerial session, Turkish Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar discussed mineral security in the energy transition with counterparts from Hungary, Somalia, Niger, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. The second session brought together ministers from Libya, Romania, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Syria, Bulgaria, and Moldova to deliberate on energy security amid emerging global risks. Multiple bilateral agreements signed during the summit reaffirmed Türkiye's growing status as a central actor in global energy governance.

Türkiye's recent strides in energy diplomacy not only secure its national interests but also position it as a regional stabilizer and a global partner. In a world increasingly defined by energy transitions and geopolitical uncertainty, Ankara's energy activism offers a compelling model of strategic engagement, technological readiness, and cooperative leadership.

AA

Trump takes new pages out of strongman’s playbook with Harvard crackdown and crypto gala

Stephen Collinson

THEY discredit democratic election systems; they seek to delegitimize the judiciary and politicize the military. The current administration is often accused of doing all this and more. President Donald Trump falsely claimed voter fraud in 2020; Vice President JD Vance told the New York Times this week it was "profoundly wrong" to say the Supreme Court can strike down presidential acts; and Trump plans to hold a vast military parade on his own birthday.

Those who worry that Trump is taking the country down an anti-democratic path had more reason to worry on Thursday when he used two more staples of the strongman's playbook. Trump aimed his most stinging shot yet at higher education - a rival source of authority, free thought and facts that often clash with his version of reality. And he fueled fears he could enable the kind of corruption that rots democracies with an event that looked a lot like a move to profit from the presidency. The escalation in Trump's battle with Harvard University came as the administration barred its capacity to enroll foreign students. Such pressure echoes the actions of authoritarian leaders like MAGA hero Viktor Orbán of Hungary, who cracked down on the academy to enhance his own power.

Then, Trump appeared at his golf club in Virginia for dinner with investors from around the world who sunk millions of dollars into his cryptocurrency meme coin, drawing concerns that foreigners are enriching the US leader and buying access. The pressure on America's democratic institutions so far bears no comparisons with the deprivations of a true totalitarian society, where there's a culture of fear, where neighbor fears neighbor and where an oppressive state imposes a deep psychological toll on citizens. But these fresh administration moves both involved the flexing of presidential power toward ends that might appear legally or ethically questionable. And they also fit into the category of presidential acts that ordinary citizens lack the capacity to influence - mirroring how autocrats corrode checks and balances by fostering cynicism about government institutions and disempowering the public.

The administration's new prohibitions on Harvard are the latest front in a multi-agency attack on the country's oldest and most prestigious university - one of the few higher education institutions to resist administration pressure. The Department of Homeland Security said the university could no longer enroll foreigners and that existing overseas students must transfer or lose their legal authorization to study in the United States.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem accused Harvard of "perpetuating an unsafe campus environment that is hostile to Jewish students, promotes-pro-Hamas sympathies, and employs racist 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' practices." The administration justifies its crackdown by saying that Harvard failed to adequately act against antisemitism during protests following the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel and during the subsequent Israeli assault on Hamas in Gaza. It also regards diversity, equity and inclusion programs that were introduced to make amends for dark aspects of the nation's history as racist in themselves.

More broadly, Republicans have long argued that elite universities have become engines of extreme progressive values that perpetuate liberal power and what they regard as un-American values that discriminate against conservatives. Trump has made a series of swings at Harvard, freezing more than \$2 billion in research funding, accusing it of failing to protect Jewish students and threatening to sever its tax-exempt status. Harvard admits that it fell short in addressing antisemitism and anti-Israeli bias, but

also that it needed to do more to address anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian sentiment. But it has refused to bow to pressure to intrude on its rights to open inquiry, free speech and conducting research, and it launched legal action.

The new barriers on foreign student enrollment represent a clear attempt to harm Harvard's financial health and therefore its capacity to operate. Foreign fees are often used to subsidize lower tuition bills for American students. And Noem left zero doubt that the administration's pressure on Harvard was an attempt to intimidate other educational institutions and to force them to obey Trump's orders. "Let this serve as a warning to all universities and academic institutions across the country," her statement said.

Harvard pledged to fight what it said was the administration's "unlawful" behavior that undermines its academic and research mission, thereby guaranteeing yet another massive court fight over a key Trump second-term policy. Ryan Enos, a Harvard University professor of government, told CNN's Brianna Keilar that it was "outrageous" that the administration was preventing the university from accepting foreign students. "It's another pattern of the Trump administration taking authoritarian actions. In the United States, the president does not have the power to target people for punishment because he doesn't like their politics," Enos said. "He is targeting Harvard because he thinks he disagrees with them. It is a political vendetta."

The administration's pressure on elite universities follows a notorious period in which some of the Ivy League's top leaders failed miserably to condemn antisemitism on campuses during anti-Israel protests. But the furor at universities was also often legitimate protest by many students and staff over Israel's attacks in Gaza, which have killed tens of thousands of civilians and are still taking place. The Trump administration, as part of its mass deportation program, has responded by rescinding visas of hundreds of foreign students it says are implicated in support for terrorism and Hamas in a way that is detrimental to US foreign policy interests. Multiple court challenges are underway, and in many cases, those targeted seem to have simply been exercising a right to speech or protest or were caught up in demonstrations by chance. The administration hasn't produced material evidence of support for terrorism.

Trump's assault on universities is natural fit for his political brand as an outsider and a populist who disdains elite opinion and progressive thought. He acts as an avatar for voters who despise establishments in areas of life that they often see as decrying traditional Christian, heartland values. Universities are also sources of power, influence and academic rigor that often contradict Trump's alternative facts and are among the institutions, along with the courts and the media, that can challenge the president's power.

The crackdown on academic freedom and foreign students threatens, however, to erode America's huge international advantage in research and may mean bright students vital to the pursuit of scientific breakthroughs will go elsewhere - possibly after the wooing of US foes like China. Curbs on foreign students also imperil the diversity of campus life and thought, which is critical to successful higher education institutions but runs counter to the political instincts of some of Trump's top aides. And in common with classic authoritarian-style leaders, the president's move will hurt individuals swept up in the undertow of far greater political forces. In this case, foreign students currently at Harvard will now need to find a new school quickly or be kicked out of

the US.

The president's dinner for the top holders of his \$Trump meme coin is typical of the way in which ethical standards that most of his modern predecessors voluntarily observed are an afterthought in his administration. Those norms are critical in retaining public confidence in the integrity of governing institutions and to the idea that each citizen has the same fair shot. Without such assurances, democracies quickly founder.

Trump's cavalier attitude toward such matters is highlighted by his refusal to accept that he may be regarded as facing conflicts of interest after Qatar offered to give the US a 747 jet to serve as a new Air Force One. The jet would be turned over to his presidential library once he leaves office. More immediate concerns surround the gala Thursday night at the Trump National Golf Club alongside a scenic stretch of the Potomac River in Virginia. The event was billed as "The most exclusive invitation in the world" and was open to 220 of the top investors in the \$Trump meme coin. Initially, the website promoting the event advertised a private White House tour - an invitation that was later removed.

The occasion is particularly disconcerting because the Trump family business profits from transaction fees on his meme coin. And CNN's Allison Morrow reported Thursday that most of the top investors in the coin appear to be based overseas. Foreigners are not allowed by law to donate to US election campaigns. But the meme coin apparently allows them to buy access to the president with the potential of boosting his personal finances, even if it is not clear that Trump is violating the law. "This is government policy up for sale. We have never seen this in the United States of America," Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon told CNN's Erin Burnett from a protest outside the Trump golf course on Thursday evening.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt denied Trump was doing anything wrong and argued that the dinner was on his "personal time" and was not an official White House event. She also said it was "absurd" to claim he was profiting off the presidency. "This president was incredibly successful before giving it all up to serve our country publicly. Not only has he lost wealth, but he also almost lost his life," Leavitt said.

The president did indeed mercifully survive two assassination attempts during the 2024 campaign. But the idea he paid a financial price for his political career is highly questionable. Forbes Magazine journalist Dan Alexander ran an analysis for CNN's "Erin Burnett Out Front" that found that Trump doubled his net worth to \$5.4 billion between March 2021 and today.

Several other Democratic senators tried to whip up a public furor over the gala dinner. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts blasted an "orgy of corruption," while Connecticut's Chris Murphy said the event suggested that this was "the most corrupt White House in the history of the country." "Just because the corruption is playing out in public where everybody can see it doesn't mean that it isn't rampant, rapacious corruption. And what is happening tonight," Murphy said, "is maybe the most corrupt of all the corruption."

Murphy challenged Secretary of State Marco Rubio about the optics and implications of the dinner during a Senate hearing this week. "I'm not the social secretary," Rubio replied, adding that he didn't know anything about the dinner and that it was "not fair" to say foreigners bought access to the president. Yet wealthy, powerful people demonstrably have the capacity to secure access to the president that regular citizens, whose only power is a single vote, lack. That's the antithesis of a functioning democracy.

Jeremy Corbyn can save Britain from Starmer

Aaron Bastani

WHILE Keir Starmer's Government is deeply unpopular, a source of consolation has been that things are even worse for the Opposition. Polling by YouGov earlier this week had the Tories in fourth place, the first time that has happened since the final, shambling days of the May government in 2019. One projection from that data gave the Conservatives just 22 Westminster seats.

But the hole in which the West's most enduringly successful party finds itself can't be detached from wider, systemic issues. In that same poll, Labour recorded just 22 percent of the popular vote. At the next general election, the share for the big two looks likely to hit a post-war low. Yet while ongoing Conservative failure can be attributed to the rise of Reform, no similar rationalisation exists for Labour. True, the Greens have continued their slow and steady rise, but that doesn't account for the governing party falling to what would be their lowest vote share since 1918.

Fundamentally, the electorate is disenchanting with the political process, and the old loyalties aren't just eroding, but close to being vanquished. Reform getting over the line in Runcorn, despite Labour's extraordinary advantage with data and postal votes, is a testament to that. The Cheshire con-

stituency was Labour's 16th safest.

All of which suggests that, rather than this being the nadir for Keir Starmer, things could deteriorate further. The Green Party is presently in the foothills of a leadership contest, with the populist Zack Polanski facing off against the Countryfile-coded Adrian Ramsay and Ellie Chown's (both represent rural, formerly Conservative constituencies).

Each side has a pitch which is coherent, but it is Polanski's offer which should most concern Labour HQ. His view is that, as the Government moves to the Right, in order to retain a growing cohort of Reform-curious voters, the Greens can pick off seats in more liberal, metropolitan areas. This isn't entirely speculative. The Greens came second in forty constituencies last July, all but one of which now have Labour MPs. These are all in major urban areas - from Sheffield Central and Liverpool Riverside, to Bristol West and Manchester Gorton.

Yet it is in London where the prize glitters brightest, with the Greens finishing second behind Labour in over two dozen seats. In theory, they could squeeze those areas much as Reform usurped Labour in places like Doncaster and Durham. Just as the median Reform voter doesn't like Starmer's historic euophilia, or his purported

commitment to the liberal zeitgeist on issues like migration, the capital's electors don't support welfare cuts alongside massive increases to defence spending, nor Starmer's increasingly belligerent rhetoric on multiculturalism.

While Ramsay and Chown's bid for co-leadership makes some sense, with both offering a continuity of recent success, Polanski would seem best placed to take advantage of that. Then there's the seemingly perennial issue of a new Left party, referenced by Jeremy Corbyn in a speech he recently gave in Huddersfield. Speaking at a gathering of "The People's Alliance for Change and Equality", a group of campaigners and independents in the Borough of Kirklees, including Iqbal Mohamed, the independent MP for Dewsbury and Batley, the former Labour leader was clear: "by next year's local elections - long before that I hope - we're going to have something in place that is very clear and everyone will want to be part of and support."

The fact that Corbyn uttered those words alongside Jamie Driscoll, who came second in last year's North-east mayoral race, and Salma Yaqoob, a stalwart of Stop the War, indicates conversations are relatively advanced. Just weeks earlier, Corbyn spoke at Foyles alongside Andrew Feinstein. The

latter stood as an independent in Keir Starmer's constituency of Holborn and St Pancras last July, finishing second. Other figures in the orbit of such a party, or even wider coalition, might include Leanne Mohammed, who almost overwhelmed Wes Streeting in Ilford last July, and Faiza Shaheen, who stood as an independent in Chingford. Any new Left formation could potentially draw on hundreds of figures like this: in contention to win locally, and at least substantial enough to cost Labour seats.

If you thought this month's local elections were bad for the Conservatives, don't be surprised if something similar happens to Labour in twelve months. Not only will the Welsh Senedd be up for grabs, with Plaid Cymru and Reform set to make major gains at Cardiff, but authorities across urban England - including every council across Greater London - will be contested too. The circumstances could not be more favourable for parties and campaigners to Starmer's Left. The liberal media has subdued the conversation for months, not least because it's their man in Number 10. But the simple truth is this: all that stands between Labour faring as badly as the Tories in the polls is whether the Left, and the Greens, can build a coordinated electoral alternative.

Stalin is making a comeback in Russia

Ian Garner

LAST week saw the unveiling of a monument to Josef Stalin in the Moscow Metro's Taganskaya station, a replica of a piece that was installed in 1950 and removed during the de-Stalinization of the early 1960s. When Vladimir Putin became president at the turn of the millennium, there were a mere handful of such Stalin monuments and statues across Russia. Today, there are well over 100, spread across the country's major cities and more remote regions. With more being unveiled each year, especially to mark the annual Victory Day commemorations, it seems that the Stalin monument is increasingly a feature of everyday life in Putin's Russia.

The growing return of the Stalinist cult of personality goes even deeper. Positive portrayals of the leader were once all but totally excised from public view, first under Nikita Khrushchev, and then again in the 1990s as the opening of archives and the start of public discussions about the past put Stalin's personal role in the crimes of the Soviet era on full display. Now, he seems to be everywhere. The state seems to have led the way, potentially in an attempt to shape social attitudes. For well over a decade, school textbooks and lessons have portrayed Stalin in an increasingly positive way, turning him from a repressive monster into a beloved public figure who won the so-called Great Patriotic War on behalf of the Russian people. Stalin is therefore portrayed as a vital - if not the most important -

element of the cult of war that shapes much of Putinist historical memory.

Indeed, it is no surprise that the replica Taganskaya monument was unveiled to coincide with Victory Day. Volgograd is now renamed "Stalingrad" during annual commemorations, conjuring up memories of the battle that turned the tables in World War II and became closely associated in late Stalinist culture with the deified leader's masterful leadership. This year, regional authorities even gave Volgograd Airport the call sign "Stalingrad" from May 8-10. In contrast, Soviet authorities preferred to use terms like "the Battle on the Volga," even in the 1970s and 80s. The cult of Stalin is therefore deeply linked to the Putinist cult of war, which has become so fervent with its catechesis, parades, holidays and temples that it functions like an official state religion. Nowhere is this more obvious than the new museum that surrounds the vast, state-funded Cathedral of the Armed Forces in Moscow, a complex that celebrates Russian militarism past and present. Inside the museum, an interactive multimedia display invites visitors to immerse themselves in the state's trauma and glory-filled narrative of the war and to hear words of wisdom from Stalin, the great leader, speaking on Red Square.

Popular culture has both followed and informed this state-led and unannounced rehabilitation of Stalin. In today's Moscow, the same commuters who walk past the new replica at Taganskaya can

buy a range of trashy calendars, miniature busts, images and pulp fiction that celebrate the leader from souvenir kiosks, shops and bookstores. Logging onto their phones, they may well come across Stalin turned into a meme character who derides the West and mocks the weak. Indeed, many of the new Stalin memorials that have sprung up in small towns and villages in Russia's regions have been funded by locals. The return of Stalin is as much a product of certain sections of the population, who long for a time of perceived national greatness under a strong leader, as it is a top-down project cooked up by Putin's propaganda masterminds.

Indeed, public attitudes toward Stalin seem to have shifted in this cultural miasma. In 2023, Ukrainian sociologists found that nearly two-thirds of Russians (63%), including nearly half of Russians aged 18-24 (48%), held a positive attitude towards Stalin. These attitudes are by no means universal, however. Unveilings of new Stalin monuments were often met with protests until the draconian crackdowns since 2022. A public outcry put a stop to the authorities' plan to install a mosaic depicting Stalin and Putin as great military leaders. Nonetheless, a significant part of Russian society seems to see Stalin as a charismatic godfather of imperial nationalism.

However, we should not assume that Putin's Kremlin permits and encourages the rehabilitation of Stalin merely as a means to revive the spirit of the Soviet

Union. Nor is it a prelude to repeating the mass murder of the 1930s. Indeed, talk of Stalin's purges is downplayed or ignored in school textbooks and Victory Day commemorations, as well as across tacky popular culture representations. Instead, in interviews and speeches, Putin refers to Stalin in two ways. Firstly, he is an example of sage leadership: a man whose harsh pragmatism made him capable of sending millions of Soviets to die for the greater good in the Great Patriotic War, even purportedly sacrificing his own son on the altar of victory. Secondly, he is a man whose absolute power created an "artificial" Ukraine. Putin is interested in celebrating Stalin as a wartime leader, not as a mass murderer.

Putin has not quite reached the demigod status that Stalin was accorded in the last years of his rule. But these ideas show Russians that the most desirable form of leadership is a cutthroat strongman who is forced by circumstances to make tough decisions.

Surrounded by enemies, Putin-like Stalin before him - may have no choice but to wage a difficult and costly war. The people may suffer as they did over 80 years ago. But the story is clear: in this highly patriarchal authoritarian system, an unshakable leader understands and foresees the best path for the nation to achieve victory against its enemies. Surrounded by images of Stalin that tell a story of pragmatic leadership, Russians are constantly nudged toward the idea that they need a father figure - Vladimir Putin - today.



BAHAWALPUR: Farmers sorting and packing onions in bags for supply to vegetable market.

SBP to launch digitalization of payments in cattle markets

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in collaboration with 22 leading commercial banks, is launching a nationwide campaign to promote the digitalization of payments in cattle markets.

Running from 15th May to 6th June 2025, the campaign aims to encourage buyers and sellers to use digital payment methods for purchasing sacrificial animals and availing related services such as

food, water, and parking.

This initiative is part of SBP's broader strategic goal to expand digital payments across the country. Building on the success of last year's campaign where over 4,000 merchants were on boarded and more than 13,000 digital transactions worth Rs. 560 million were recorded-the 2025 campaign will cover 54 major cattle markets in 21 districts.

The target for this year is to reach 100,000 digital

transactions during the campaign period. The response from the public and merchants has been overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing the demand for cashless solutions even in traditional market settings.

Throughout the campaign, the transaction limits have been enhanced to facilitate high-value purchases.

On-ground support teams and digital channels will be used to create awareness, onboard mer-

chants, and assist customers in adopting QR codes, mobile wallets, and banking apps.

Media outlets are encouraged to support the "Go Cashless in Cattle Markets" campaign by spreading awareness about the convenience, security, and modernity of digital payments.

Stories highlighting merchant experiences, customer feedback, and transaction trends will help amplify the campaign's reach and impact.

Engro secures approvals for partnership to expand telecom infrastructure

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Engro Holdings Limited is delighted to announce that Engro Corporation Limited has secured all approvals for its strategic partnership with Pakistan Mobile Communications Limited ("Jazz") and its parent company, VEON Group. Through a Scheme of Arrangement, Jazz's shareholding in Deodar (Private) Limited - which houses its telecom infrastructure assets - will vest with Engro Connect (Private) Limited, a subsidiary of Engro Corporation. In line with previous disclosures, this amalgamation marks a significant private-sector investment in Pakistan, and with all approvals secured, millions of Pakistanis are now poised to benefit from the efficiencies of shared infrastructure.

By accessing Engro's combined portfolio of over 14,000 towers, all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) will have equal access to a high-quality, nationwide infrastructure platform. This will enable them to reduce capital and operating expenditures,

focus on enhancing service quality, and pass cost efficiencies onto customers - helping millions more Pakistanis come online. Pakistan is standing at the threshold of a digital future - where financial inclusion takes off, start-ups can emerge from any corner, students can learn from global classrooms, and families can access healthcare remotely. This is a moment of shared progress and a reflection of the fact that Pakistan has a powerful growth story to tell.

As demand and technology continue to evolve, Engro's extensive tower platform is also well-positioned to support future innovations. Around the world, telecom towers are already being used for more than just mobile signals - from powering smart cities to strengthening community infrastructure. Beyond today's connectivity needs, Engro is preparing for tomorrow's possibilities, reaffirming our commitment to Pakistan's economic development and to its enduring promise as a land of opportunity and resilience.

Chairman of Engro, Mr. Hussain Dawood, commented, "This investment further reinforces our commitment to this great nation, where we believe in investing in connectivity which is the foundation of our digital future. It gives our people the empowerment, enablement, and environment to take control of their lives and thrive."

CEO of Engro Holdings, Mr. Abdul Samad Dawood, remarked, "Prosperity and progress increasingly rely on technology and connectivity - and with this milestone, Engro strengthens its role as an enabler of Pakistan's progress. This investment reinforces telecom infrastructure as a key vertical for us and we are keen on expanding access, empowering communities, and future-proofing the infrastructure that will drive growth for generations to come."

This is a special moment for all of us at Engro, as this is what we have always stood for: ENabling GROwth."

President and CEO of Engro Corporation, Mr. Ahsan Zafar Syed, shared, "Venturing into this sector in 2018 was a bold leap for

Engro into uncharted territory. But this achievement is a testament to what belief, partnership, and perseverance can deliver - made possible by the dedication of our teams, the trust of our partners at VEON Group and Jazz, and the supportive decisions of our regulators. This is everyone's success."

Engro is deeply grateful to all its stakeholders - including the Government of Pakistan, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Ministry of IT and Telecommunications (MoITT), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), VEON Group, and Jazz - for their endorsement of the transaction. We also appreciate our financial and legal partners, as well as our employees, whose tireless efforts made this dream a reality. Collectively, we have contributed to a platform that strengthens Pakistan's digital backbone and opens doors to a more connected and growth-ready future.

Court Notice

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi Mst. Haleema Bibi VS Shahid Zaman Suit Number : 184/FC, Institution Date : 04-07-2024, Hearing Date : 06-06-2025 Subject: Suit for recovery. Notice to : Shahid Zaman son Malik Aman R/o Permolli, Teh, Razar, Distt, Swabi, Dependant. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 06-06-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Court Notice

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi Amna Gul VS Arif Ullah, Suit Number : 52/FC, Institution Date : 27-02-2025 Hearing Date : 05-06-2025, Subject: Suit for recovery, Notice to : Arif Ullah son Shafi Rehman R/o Maneri Payan, Kandaray, Teh, & Distt, Swabi, Dependant. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 05-06-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Court Notice

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi Mst. Lubna Bibi VS Muhammad Saleem Khan. Suit Number : 325/FC, Institution Date : 04-11-2024, Hearing Date : 23-06-2025, Subject: Suit for recovery. Notice to : (1) Muhammad Saleem Khan, (2) Ghulam Abbas son Muhammad Aslam R/o Chak P.O Shadiya Qudrat Abad, Teh, & Distt, Mianwali, presently abroad, Saudia Arabia Dependant. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 23-06-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Court Notice

In the Court of Irum Bashir Civil Judge V, Swabi, Suit No. 129/1 Institution 28-09-2023 Next Hearing Date: 26-06-2025 title: Mumtaz bibi Vs Ghulam Akbar. Notice to: Ghulam Akbar, Taj Wali Sons of Gul Khan. Umair Khan, Nasir Khan, Perviz Khan sons of Fazal Mola. Mst. Islamia bibi wife of Fazal Mola Mst. Musarat bibi Daughters of Fazal Mola. Gul Nabi S/o Ghulam Nabi. Mst. Janat bibi D/o Ghulam Nabi, Yousaf Zari. Gohar Tajfa Daughters of Gul Khan, Zafar Khan S/o Fazal Mola R/o Speen Kani Tehsil Razal District Swabi patwari Halqa Speen Kani Girdawar Circle Village Speen Kani Tesil Haye Tehsildar /Revenue Officer Tehsil Eazar at Tehsil Head Quarter Kamal Sher Khan Kaley. The above respondents are directed to appear before this court at 8:30 am 26-06-2025 either personally or through attorney or counsel, in failure an ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against respondents. Given under my hand and seal of the court.

Akbar urges PM to cut power tariff

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Akbar Khan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Coordinator for the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), has called on the Prime Minister to fulfill his promise of reducing the electricity tariff by Rs. 7 per unit. He also demanded an end to the severe and unjust load shedding in Swat, which he says has crippled both daily life and economic activity in the region.

In a statement issued

from the FPCCI regional office in Peshawar, Akbar Khan expressed deep disappointment over the lack of implementation of the Prime Minister's announced relief. "The Prime Minister had declared a Rs. 7 per unit reduction in electricity rates, but this promise remains unfulfilled, leading to frustration and disillusionment among the business community," he said.

He criticized the government for spending millions on advertisements promoting the announcement, while no concrete

steps have been taken since.

He further stated that authorities have also failed to curb electricity theft effectively.

"On one hand, we are battling the high cost of electricity, and on the other, rising petrol prices are adding to the public's suffering. There has been no relief at all," he said. Akbar Khan urged the government to abolish the slab system in billing and end the provision of free electricity units, arguing that such policies unfairly burden paying consumers.

ICCI, FGP partners to promote youth, women entrepreneurship

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a landmark development for sustainable economic empowerment and environmental responsibility, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Chamber House here Friday.

The MoU was formally signed by Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of ICCI and Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP.

Former President ICCI Aamir Waheed, Executive Members Faisal Muzzamal, Atiq-ur-Rehman, Advisor to President Naeem Siddiqui, FGP Board's Director Urooj Raza Sayyami, Farhan Javid,

Shafqat Aziz, and Ms Amna Kayani were also present on the occasion, said a press release.

The MoU establishes a strategic partnership between the two organizations to promote youth and women entrepreneurship in collaboration with the academic institutions, conduct skills-based training programs, and collaborate on climate resilience efforts.

A flagship initiative under this partnership is the "Clean Islamabad" campaign, through which both parties will work together to eliminate the use of plastic bags and promote sustainable, plastic-free alternatives. The collaboration also includes policy dialogues, green business model development, research

support, and capacity-building activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Nasir M. Qureshi, President of ICCI, stated, "This partnership is a timely step toward inclusive growth and environmental stewardship.

ICCI strongly believes in supporting initiatives that empower youth and women entrepreneurs while promoting responsible business practices. Our collaboration with FGP reflects our shared commitment to a cleaner, greener, and economically stronger Islamabad."

Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP, expressed appreciation for ICCI's proactive role and vision and said, "This MoU marks a meaningful beginning for collaborative, people-centred

NCEG to host first gemstone and industrial mineral exhibition

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Centre of Excellence in Geology (NCEG), Peshawar will hold 1st Gemstone and Industrial Mineral Exhibition on May 29, 2025. This landmark one-day event will be held at the PUTA Hall University of Peshawar and is set to highlight Pakistan's rich and largely untapped geological resources.

The Media Coordinator of NCEG stated, "This exhibition is aimed to discover the hidden treasure of Pakistan. It will bring to light the country's vast reserves of precious and semiprecious stones.

development. FGP believes that true empowerment comes when economic opportunity is linked with sustainability. We look forward to working with ICCI to shape models that not only create livelihoods but also protect our environment and build climate resilience."

Both organizations jointly resolved to take forward their shared mission of inclusive economic development, climate adaptation, and community engagement.

They agreed to translate this partnership into tangible action, ensuring their joint efforts reach grassroots communities, young entrepreneurs, and small business leaders across Islamabad and beyond.

All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference held

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference, organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was successfully held at Mövenpick Hotel, Centaurus Islamabad.

This major national conference brought together presidents of chambers, associations, and prominent business leaders from across Pakistan. The conference aimed to promote economic growth, improve business policies, and strengthen trade cooperation.

Former Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali and Chairman of APDA (All Pakistan Car Dealers & Importers Association) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, Ghulam Bilal Javid, participated in the event. Haji Ghulam Ali attended as Patron-in-Chief of the Sarhad Business Alliance, where he highlighted the challenges faced by the business community and emphasized the need for economic reforms.

Distinguished participants included Sohail Altaf, Group Leader of the Rawalpindi Chamber, Usman Shaukat, President



of RCCI, Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman of the Businessmen Panel, along with presidents and representatives of various chambers and associations from across the country.

The conference was structured into four key sessions:

1. First Session - Chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal
2. Second Session - Chaired by Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi
3. Third Session - Chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar
4. Fourth Session - Chaired by Federal Minister for Finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb

Each session focused on critical topics such as trade facilitation, tariff reforms,

private sector engagement, and the national economic strategy.

In his remarks, Ghulam Bilal Javid discussed the importance of the National Tariff Policy, the need to reduce excessive protection for the auto sector, and streamlining import regulations. He advocated for a transparent, supportive, and competitive business environment in Pakistan.

At the conclusion of the event, Ghulam Bilal Javid signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mövenpick Hotel Islamabad, aimed at enhancing cooperation in hosting business events and facilitating trade-related initiatives. This conference served as a vital platform to promote unity among Pakistan's business chambers and laid a foundation for collaborative national economic progress.



In an outstanding feat for Pakistani mountaineering, Wajidullah Nagri from Gilgit-Baltistan has successfully scaled Mount Everest, the highest point on Earth. Nagri's remarkable endurance and achievement mark a proud moment for Pakistan's presence on the global mountaineering stage. His expedition was proudly sponsored by Atlas Honda, whose support played a key role in making this journey possible.



In brief

Squash Tournament quarterfinals on Saturday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 2nd round matches of the 1st Jansher Khan PSA Satellite Squash Tournament was held here at the Mushaf Squash Complex on Friday. The tournament has a draw of 32 players. In the matches, Saeed Abdul beat Naveed Rehman 11-7, 11-7, 11-1, Huraira Khan beat Danish Khan 11-5, 11-3, 11-2, Abdul Basit Khan Got Walk Over against Varun Asif, Muhammad Ammad beat Israr Ahmad 11-6, 13-11, 11-7, Anas Ali Shah Bukhari beat Muhammad Ahmed 11-5, 11-2, 11-6, Saddam Ul Haq beat Abdullah Nadeem Butt 11-3, 11-1, 11-0, Khaqan Malik beat Abdul Qadir 9-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3 and Abdullah Nawaz beat Anas Khan 9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 12-10. The quarterfinals of the championship will be played on Saturday.

Sybil aims high in Masters C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commonwealth Powerlifting gold medalist Sybil Sohail is set to represent Pakistan at the inaugural Asian Masters Weightlifting Championship in Doha, Qatar, from May 23 to 31. In a video message, Sohail expressed her determination to raise the Pakistani flag high at the international level. Sohail said, "I'm very excited to participate in this championship. I'm grateful to my sponsor for playing a crucial role in enabling me to represent Pakistan in this tournament. I'll do my best to win a gold medal for Pakistan," she said. The championship will feature athletes in both male and female categories, providing a platform for weightlifters to showcase their skills.

PTA badminton league concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) successfully concluded its inaugural 'PTA Badminton League', held from May 5 to 22. The tournament featured Men's and Women's Singles and Doubles events, promoting sportsmanship, teamwork, and healthy competition. Over 100 employees participated with great enthusiasm and skill, said a news release. The semifinals and finals drew a large audience, including members of the PTA Authority, who applauded the outstanding performances of the finalists. PTA appreciated the efforts of the Sports Governing Committee (SGC) and reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a vibrant organizational culture through such initiatives. This league marked a significant step in enhancing employee engagement and team spirit at PTA.

Pedersen claims fourth Giro stage victory

VICENZA (Agencies): Mads Pedersen held off Wout van Aert to claim his fourth stage victory of this year's Giro d'Italia as Isaac del Toro extended his overall lead in the general classification. Pedersen powered through on a long uphill sprint towards the end of stage 13's 180km route from Rovigo to Vicenza and was able to maintain a slender advantage over Belgian Van Aert, with Mexico's Del Toro in third. "I went a bit earlier than I really wanted to but on such a hard uphill final like this sometimes it's OK to go early because everyone has burning legs the last 100 meters," said Denmark's Pedersen. "I'm just happy with this one and adding another 50 points to the 'ciclomino' [sprint] jersey so let's see how it goes."

Afridi, Mirza, Perera power Qalandars into final

LAHORE: Kusal Perera thumped 61 off 35, Mohammad Naeem struck 50 off 25, and despite having qualified fourth into the playoffs, Lahore Qalandars leapt into the final, with their second big win in as many nights. With Abdullah Shafique, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, and Asif Ali also making strong contributions, Qalandars amassed 202 for 7. On a Gaddafi track that was decent for batting, but had a little zip in it for the quicks, this was way too much for Islamabad United, who nosedived to 107 all out, without ever looking like they could threaten the target. Opening bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Salman Mirza - both left-armers - wrecked United's innings, reducing the opposition to 33 for 4 by the end of the powerplay. United had come second in the league, but have crashed their way through the playoffs. Qalandars will go into the final against

table-toppers Gladiators. But having now won their last three matches, Qalandars also have some serious form heading into the title match. Perera and Rajapaksa motor through the middle. There was never really a slow portion of Qalandars' innings - their boundary-hitting found plentiful expression in every phase. But where often the late middle overs can be a canvas for consolidating, two left-handed Sri Lankan batters plundered 48 runs off the 28 balls they faced together. Despite being bottom-hand dominant batters, both Perera and Rakjapaksa prospered on the offside, United's bowlers tempting them to drag balls wide of off to the legside, only for these batters to nail their offside boundary options. The extra cover region got a particular peppering, but the point and long off boundaries were popular with this pair too. Rajapaksa made 22 off 13,

before being bowled by Salman Irshad in the 17th over. Perera continued batting until the 20th, hitting two successive sixes off Naseem Shah - the first over fine leg, the second carved over deep third - the second of those taking him past fifty. Naeem sets Qalandars up Naeem's might have been the most impressive of Qalandar's innings, however. Although he'd faced only one ball by the time Fakhar Zaman topped-edged one to the keeper at the end of the second over, Naeem reveled in the lime-light when he got it, reeling off three outstanding drives between mid off and cover to get his innings moving, before hitting three fours and a six off Naseem in the fifth over. Although one of Naeem's sixes was a pull shot over square leg off Naseem, his favoured areas were down the ground and through cover, United's



seamers going too full too often, perhaps looking for swing. By the end of the powerplay, he had 34 off 14 balls. He didn't really stop attacking when the field went back - he was stumped trying to launch Imad Wasim into the stratosphere at the end of the ninth over. United fails to get off the ground In a high-pressure match, a target of 203 always seemed imposing.

But before they had struck a boundary, United had lost two wickets. Afridi sent Muhammad Shahzad's middle stump on a jaunt with a vicious inswinger to end the first over, before Mirza had Sahibzada Farhan chopping one back on to his stumps two balls later. The boundaries never really got going. The wickets kept falling, though. Mirza had Rassie van der Dussen caught by a diving

Perera in the fourth over, before Imad Wasim holed out off the last ball of the powerplay. When the field went back, United needed 12.14 an over, with six wickets in hand. Agha Salman's mini-charge is halted The only United batter to get any sort of batting fluency going was Salman who hit 33 off 26 balls, often hitting through the offside as well. But Bangladesh legspinner

Rishad Hossain had him caught at long on in the 10th over, and if United's chances were not dead already, this was the wicket that felt like the final, decisive swing. In the end, Qalandars' quicks went through the formalities of blasting out the United lower order. Afridi returned the spectacular figures of 3 for 3 off 3.1 overs, as United slid to 107 all out in the 16th over. —espnricinfo

Naila Kiani scales Kanchenjunga, nears elite eight-thousander club

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiani has reached the summit of Mount Kanchenjunga (8,586m), becoming the first Pakistani woman to scale 12 of the world's 14 highest peaks over 8,000 metres, her team said on Friday. Kiani, who began her final ascent evening, braved harsh conditions including sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall to complete the climb overnight. Her success brings her closer to joining an elite group of fewer than 20 women globally to have climbed all 14 "eight-thousanders." "This summit is not just a personal milestone," Kiani said in a statement during her descent. "It's a message to every girl and woman in Pakistan and beyond: you are stronger than you think." The expedition was supported by the BARD Foundation, an initiative of Bilquis and Abdul Razak Dawood aimed at supporting Pakistani talent. "What Naila has achieved is historic," said Abdul Razak Dawood. "Her drive and purpose reflect the values we aim to champion." An aerospace engineer, banker, competitive boxer,



mother of two, and AI startup co-founder, Kiani has emerged as one of Pakistan's most prominent sportswomen. She previously received the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest civilian honour, and has also led high-altitude environmental cleanups and humanitarian missions. Her efforts have drawn congratulations from across the mountaineering community. "We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Naila Kiani on this historic feat," said Major General Irfan Arshad, Patron of the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) and Abu Zafar Sadiq, the club's president. "She is a beacon of inspiration for all Pakistanis, especially women in sports."

"This is far more than just a climb. It's a monumental milestone for Pakistan and a moment of immense national pride," said Karrar Haidri, Secretary of the ACP. "We salute her unmatched courage and perseverance." Kiani's accomplishment adds momentum to her quest to become the first Pakistani to summit all 14 of the world's tallest mountains. Her 12 summited peaks to date are: Everest, K2, Broad Peak, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum I, Gasherbrum II, Annapurna, Lhotse, Manaslu, Makalu, Cho Oyu, and now Kanchenjunga. Only two peaks - Shishapangma and Dhaulagiri remain.

Shaheen Club wins first 'Aman Football Tournament' in Tank F.P. Report

TANK: The Shaheen Club wins first ever 'Aman Football Tournament' organized in Tank with the support of the Sports Department. The football teams from across the district participated in the tournament, showcasing their talent and passion for the game. The final match featured a gripping face-off between Shaheen Sabir Club and Nadan Club. In a closely contested battle, Shaheen Club Tank emerged victorious with a narrow one-goal lead, claiming the tournament title. The final match drew a large crowd of enthusiastic spectators who cheered on the players. Farman Khan Betani, brother of MPA Usman Khan Betani was the chief guest of the final match, who praised the players for their outstanding performances. At the conclusion of the match, trophies and cash prizes were awarded to the standout performers. Speaking on the occasion, District Sports Officer Irfanullah Betani emphasized the significance of such events for promoting long-term peace and regional development. He noted that athletes serve as ambassadors of peace, fostering unity and brotherhood within society. He also commended the tournament committee for its excellent organization and pledged continued efforts to host more sporting events across the district, including football and other games.

Sri Lanka's Mathews to retire from Test cricket

COLOMBO (Agencies): Former Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews will retire from Test cricket in June. The 37-year-old, who made his debut in 2009, will make his final appearance in the first Test against Bangladesh, which starts on 17 June in Galle. He will remain available for Sri Lanka's white-ball teams, although he has not featured in a limited-overs international since last June. Mathews will retire as Sri Lanka's third-highest run-scorer in Test cricket, with 8,167 runs at 44.62 from his 118 matches to date. Only Kumar Sangakkara (12,400 runs) and Mahela Jayawardene (11,814 runs) lie ahead of him. He has also taken 33 Test wickets as a bowler. Mathews captained Sri Lanka in 34 Tests between 2013 and 2017, including overseeing a memorable series win against England in 2014. He scored a second-innings 160 in a decisive 100-run victory at Headingley. In a social media post, Mathews said: "The past 17 years of playing cricket for Sri Lanka has been my highest honour and pride. "I have given everything to cricket and cricket has given me everything in return and made me the person I am today.

Mehaq wins Federal Cup Tennis C'ships title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mehaq Khokhar bagged the ladies singles title of the 37th OGDCL Federal Cup National Ranking Tennis Championships here at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Friday. In a nail-biting final, 3rd seed Mehaq Khokhar claimed the Ladies Singles title, defeating Noor Malik of Lahore in a gripping three-set marathon: 6-3, 5-7, 7-5. Mehaq won the toss and chose to serve, quickly gaining a 4-1 lead in the opening set by breaking Noor's serve in the 2nd and 4th games, eventually sealing the set 6-3. The second set saw Noor rally back to a 3-1 lead. Although Mehaq broke back to level the score at 4-4, Noor held her nerve, breaking Mehaq in the 11th game and serving out the set to take it 7-5. The decisive third set turned into a battle of wills, with both players exchange-

ing breaks until the score reached 5-5. In a dramatic 12th game, Mehaq displayed exceptional control at the net and secured the match by breaking Noor's serve after an error at 30-40. The thrilling contest lasted 3 hours and 10 minutes. In Boys 14 & Under Singles Final: M. Junaid Khan (Peshawar) clinched the title with a commanding 4-1, 4-1 win over Shayaan Afridi. In the Men's Doubles Final: The duo of Muhammad Shoaib and Muzammil Murtaza claimed the championship in style, defeating 2nd seeds Barkatullah and Yousaf Khan in straight sets: 6-3, 6-1. In the Boys 18 & Under Singles - Semi-Finals: Muhammad Salar Khan battled past Abdul Basit in a comeback victory: 1-6, 6-0, 6-1 whereas M. Hazik Aasim (Islamabad) upset 2nd seed Muhammad Yahya in straight sets: 6-1, 7-5, to

book his place in the final. The championship has once again showcased Pakistan's emerging tennis talent, promising a bright future for the sport in the country. The finals in remaining categories are expected to be equally thrilling as the event draws to a close. The Junior 18&Under Singles Final and Men's Singles Final will be played on Saturday. Ladies Singles Final: Mehaq Khakhor beat Noor Malik 6-3 5-7 7-5. Men's Doubles Final: Muhammad Shoaib & Muzammil Murtaza beat Barkatullah & Yousaf Khan 6-3 6-1. Junior 18&Under Singles Semi Finals: Muhammad Salar beat Abdul Basit 1-6 6-0 6-1, M. Hazik Aasim beat Muhammad Yahya 6-1 7-5. Boys 14&Under Singles Final: M.Junaid Khan beat Shayaan Afridi 4-1 4-1.

Stokes strikes as England force Zimbabwe to follow on



NOTTINGHAM (AFP): Ben Stokes struck twice on his return to Test cricket as England enforced the follow-on against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge on Friday despite a record-breaking century from Brian Bennett. Zimbabwe were dismissed for just 265 after tea on the second day of the four-day match, exactly 300 runs behind England's mammoth first-innings 565-6 declared. England captain Stokes wasted no time in asking Zimbabwe to bat again as he sought to turn the screw in Nottingham. And at stumps Zimbabwe were 30-2 in their second innings, a deficit of 270 runs. This actually represented a recovery from 7-2 in what is Zimbabwe's first Test in England in 22 years. Bennett endured the other side of Test cricket when lbw for just one to Gus Atkinson before Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine also fell cheaply. Zimbabwe were dominated by England's batsmen before reaching the relative comfort of 187-3 on a flat pitch in their first innings. But all-rounder Stokes, playing his first match of the year in any form of cricket following hamstring surgery, took two wickets for no runs in 11 balls before tea to leave Zimbabwe struggling on 199-5. He had Sikandar

Raza (seven) caught behind off a lifting delivery ball that cut away before bowling Wesly Madhevere for a duck with a sharp in-ducker. Bennett, occasionally riding his luck, kept England at bay, reaching 139 off just 143 balls, including an impressive 26 fours, before he was dismissed. He reached his century in 97 balls, breaking the record for the fastest Test ton by a Zimbabwe batsman, Sean Williams's 106-ball effort against New Zealand at Bulawayo in 2016. "Huge honour" Bennett had a lifeline when dropped in the slips by Joe Root off paceman Stokes on 89 but the 21-year-old opener went to his hundred, his second in seven Tests, in style with three commanding fours off successive balls from fast bowler Atkinson. "When I play my best that is my game-plan -- to be positive," said Bennett. "I saw the ball nicely." Bennett, whose parents were in the crowd at Trent Bridge, added: "It is a huge honour to play for Zimbabwe in Test cricket, especially at such a young age." After tea, Bennett was brilliantly caught by a diving Ollie Pope at short leg as he fended at a rising delivery from the injury-plagued Tongue only for replays to reveal the fast bowler, playing his first Test in two years, had

over-stepped. But Bennett was unable to cash in. He was still on 139 when he fell to the same combination in similar fashion, with Pope taking a far simpler catch. And 246-6 became 251-7 when Shoaib Bashir, who had struck twice before tea, bowled Tafadzwa Tsiga for 22 with a sharply turning delivery. Zimbabwe's innings ended when they were nine wickets down, with injured paceman Richard Ngarava unable to bat. Bashir back in his 'happy place' Off-spinner Bashir finished with figures of 3-62 after taking just two wickets in this season's County Championship at a hugely expensive average of 152 apiece. "It was nice to get the wickets there," said the 21-year-old. "It was a pretty dominant day from us. "Walking into the dressing room, as we say you stand six-foot tall. I'm very well supported here. It's my happy place," added Bashir, loaned to Glamorgan because he struggles to get into a Somerset team where Jack Leach is the specialist spinner. England resumed Friday under sunny skies on an already-commanding 498-3, with Pope 169 not out after openers Zak Crawley (124) and Ben Duckett (140) had also made hundreds. But Pope had added just two runs when caught behind off Tanaka Chivanga, bringing in Stokes, who only managed nine runs. Harry Brook punished Zimbabwe's out-classed attack, hitting 58 off 50 balls, including six fours and three sixes. He struck Blessing Muzarabani for successive sixes, a thumping pull followed by a remarkable pick-up shot that sailed high over fine leg. Brook went to fifty with another six off Muzarabani before playing on to the persevering quick, who finished with 3-143.

Aka Khel hosts sports festival to promote youth engagement

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The "Maaraka-e-Haq" Sports Festival kicked off in Aka Khel with a vibrant opening ceremony. Major Sagib inaugurated the event as the chief guest, while notable attendees included former MPA Shafiq Afridi, Chief Organizer Malik Akbar Afridi, former Principal Nawab Gul, ex-DDEO Shah Zeb, Sohail, Zahir, and other local dignitaries. The festival features a

variety of sports competitions including cricket, volleyball, tug-of-war, and musical chairs, attracting enthusiastic participation from local youth. Addressing the event, Shafiq Afridi lauded the initiative, stating it is a positive step toward engaging the youth in healthy activities. He praised Malik Akbar Afridi's efforts and emphasized that such events foster brotherhood, competitive spirit, and peace. Afridi also highlighted

the lack of sports infrastructure from Bara to Darra Adam Khel, noting that the absence of sports complexes contributes to youth drifting toward negative influences. He urged the government to establish a modern sports complex in Bara to provide a constructive environment for the region's youth. Participants expressed hope that such festivals would play a crucial role in promoting peace, development, and harmony in tribal areas.



In brief

IRSA releases 239,742 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 239,742 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 275,753 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1469.73 feet which was 67.73 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 151,800 cusecs and 140,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1152.15 feet, which was 102.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,211 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 188,629, 129,168, 62,594 and 25,410 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 41,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 14,258 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF arrests 5 smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting three operations across the country, recovered as many as 49 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 9 million and arrested five suspects, including an Afghan national, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday. He informed that 4 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects near the university area on Belleli Road, Quetta. The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. In another operation, 43 kg of opium was recovered from an Afghan national riding a truck on Kachlak Bypass Road, Quetta. As much as 2 kg of ice was recovered from a rickshaw near Othian Stop, Sialkot, and two suspects were arrested. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

Police nab 14 law breakers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police in operations across the district on Friday nabbed 14 law breakers, including drug and liquor suppliers, illegal arms owners, gamblers and Tenancy Act violators. According to a police spokesman, six suspects were taken into custody from the areas of Taxila, Ganjmandi, New Town and Pirwadhvi police stations with 1.46 kilograms charas, 69 liters of alcohol, and weapons along with ammunition. Similarly, the Bani Police conducted a search operation in their area and detained three persons for violation of the Tenancy Act. Likewise, the Kahuta Police caught five accused red handed while gambling on cards, with the stake money of Rs 15,000 and three mobile phones.

SSP hold open court

RAWALPINDI (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police Operations Kashif Zulfiqar on Friday held an open court here at the Police Lines Headquarters. According to the police spokesman, the SSP listened to the problems of the citizens and issued orders to the relevant officers to resolve them. He directed the officers to ensure legal action on the marked applications within the given time-frame. "No negligence will be tolerated in the immediate resolution of the problems of the citizens," he warned.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Khan addressing to media persons at National Press Club. —APP Photo

Sardar Yousaf lauds national unity, media role in Pakistan-India conflict

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday expressed gratitude for Pakistan's victory in the recent escalation with India and praised the unity and resilience demonstrated by the Pakistani nation and armed forces.

Addressing a 'Thanksgiving Day' event organized by the Hazara Journalists Association at the National Press Club, the minister said, "With the grace of Allah, Pakistan emerged victorious in the recent conflict with India. This success is a testament to the strength of our nation and our armed forces," and urged the public to thank Allah in times of triumph. "Our Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) taught us to express gratitude to Allah when truth prevails over falsehood."

He criticized the Indian perception of Muslim weakness and underscored the importance of national celebration in the face of adversarial aggression. "The enemy underestimated our

strength. In response to India's provocation, the entire Pakistani nation stood as a united, impenetrable wall."

Referring to the attacks on children in Balochistan, Sardar Yousaf accused the Indian government of violating international laws and norms out of arrogance. "The Modi administration unilaterally violated the special status of Kashmir and the Indus Waters Treaty, further demonstrating its disregard for international conventions."

He emphasized that Pakistan's response was a necessary measure to safeguard national security. He contrasted India's military operation, codenamed 'Sindoor', with Pakistan's spiritually inspired code name 'Bunyan Um Marsoos' (a reference from the Quran signifying solid structure and unity).

The minister also extended congratulations to the Pakistani armed forces, the government, and the nation for their unified response, calling for Field Marshal status to be conferred upon Chief of Army Staff

General Asim Munir in recognition of his leadership. He highlighted the spiritual legacy of the Air Chief's family, noting that his father was a renowned Islamic scholar. "When believers confront non-believers, their faith transforms them into iron," he said, reinforcing his message of religious and national strength.

Sardar Yousaf also reaffirmed support for the ongoing movement for the creation of Hazara province, urging greater attention to the region's local issues.

He commended Pakistan's media for its mature and patriotic coverage during the conflict, saying it played a more responsible and impactful role than the Indian media. "Pakistan's media emerged victorious on the narrative front as well," he added.

"Pakistan desires peace, but it was India that initiated hostilities. Our response was measured, defensive, and justified," the minister concluded, revealing that Muslims from across the world had congratulated him on Pakistan's success.

Pakistan to expose India through legal diplomacy: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik, Friday vowed to expose India globally through legal channels, citing unprovoked aggression and India's purported inability to control water flows effectively.

In an exclusive interview with a local news channel, Barrister Aqeel Malik stated that Pakistan will pursue legal avenues to highlight India's alleged unprovoked aggression and its claimed inability to manage water resources.

Aqeel Malik emphasized that Pakistan will tackle these issues through a combination of robust legal frameworks and effective diplomatic strategies, ensuring a comprehensive approach to address the concerns.

Barrister Aqeel stated that Pakistan will dispatch high-level delegate teams, comprising skilled diplomats, to engage with international organizations, including the UN Security Council, to address the issues at hand.

Barrister Aqeel Malik accused India of state-sponsored terrorism, alleging its support for militant groups in Balochistan, including the TTP and BLA.

Barrister Aqeel Malik vowed that Pakistan will exhaust all avenues to expose India's alleged actions and will pursue all available legal measures to bring attention to the matter.

Responding to a query, Barrister Aqeel Malik elaborated on the Indus water issue, stating that India lacks the necessary infrastructure capability and

capacity to effectively control and manage the waters.

He alleged that instead of focusing on constructive management, India aims to weaponize water as a tool, potentially exacerbating tensions in the region.

Barrister Aqeel Malik assured that Pakistan will handle the situation with maturity and through legal means to defuse India's alleged provocations and bring international attention to the matter.

Regarding counter-terrorism efforts, Barrister Aqeel Malik stated that Pakistan has accelerated operations against terrorism and expects to yield positive results soon.

He emphasized the country's commitment to combating terrorism, protection of civilians and ensuring national security.

Governor KP meets Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday met with the Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, at the Ministry of Railways.

During the meeting, the two leaders held an in-depth discussion on the prevailing political, social and economic situation in the country, said a news release.

The discussions focused on national stability, law and order, and ongoing development projects aimed at public welfare.

Faisal Kundi emphasized the significance of reforms and advancements

in the railway sector, saying that a modern and efficient transportation system is essential for national progress.

Hanif Abbasi reiterated the federal government's commitment to strengthening and improving railway infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Both leaders agreed on enhancing regional cooperation, with special emphasis on prioritizing the developmental agenda of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and improving public services.

They also stressed the need for a joint strategy to address the political challenges facing Pakistan.

The meeting also covered critical social issues, including law and order, education, and healthcare, with a mutual agreement to take collaborative steps for their resolution.

The Governor and the Minister underscored the importance of unity and cooperation for the prosperity and advancement of the nation.

At the end, both dignitaries reaffirmed their commitment to fulfilling their respective responsibilities and pledged to continue working tirelessly for the welfare of the people and the development of the country.

Distt admins of twin cities launch joint anti-polio campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administrations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have jointly launched a door-to-door anti-polio vaccination campaign to immunize children upto the age of five years.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the national anti-polio campaign kicked off at Chungi No. 26, where senior officials from both Islamabad and Rawalpindi districts gathered to mark the start of the drive. Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad Irfan Memon, alongside his Rawalpindi counterpart and other local health authorities, attended the event.

Member of the National Assembly Tahira Aurangzeb and Additional Deputy Commissioner (East) Mehreen Baloch were also present during the inauguration. The campaign officially began when DC Irfan Memon administered polio drops to children at the ceremony.

The five-day campaign

will run from May 26 to June 1. According to officials, a total of 461,125 children will be vaccinated in the federal capital through door-to-door visits. The campaign will cover all 80 union councils of the capital city. Two additional days have been set aside for catch-up efforts to reach children who may have been missed during the initial phase.

Calling for public support, Irfan Memon emphasized the importance of community participation. He said the success of the campaign depends heavily on cooperation from residents of the twin cities.

"The effort to eliminate polio cannot succeed without the active support of the public," he stated. Health department teams, alongside local administration, are being mobilized across Islamabad and Rawalpindi to ensure maximum coverage. Authorities say security and monitoring plans are

also in place to support the campaign.

The Islamabad district administration has urged parents to ensure that children under the age of five receive the vaccine during this drive. Teams will visit homes, schools, and public spaces to reach children in every neighborhood. The administration has also appealed to community leaders and local influencers to help spread awareness and encourage families to participate in the campaign.

As the campaign progresses, health authorities will monitor the response and identify any gaps to plan follow-up activities. Officials say the goal is not only to meet vaccination targets but also to ensure that no child is left behind. With Islamabad and Rawalpindi joining hands in this effort, the campaign serves as a reminder of the shared responsibility in protecting future generations from preventable diseases.

CM's Support boosts transparency in 2025 Exams, says Board Chairman

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Chairman of the Rawalpindi Educational Board, Muhammad Adnan Khan, reiterated the board's commitment to transparency during the ongoing HSSC-I annual examinations 2025, following the directives of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

He expressed satisfaction with the conducive atmosphere and the facilities provided to students including cold water, adequate lighting, clean environments and security arrangements to allow candidates to focus on their examinations.

According to the details, the chairman made surprise visits to various examination centers on Friday to review the exam conduct and the compliance of the SOPs to combat the menace of cheating. During the visit he examined the examination halls and invigilators attendance.

Talking on the occasion, the chairman acknowledged the support of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in promoting a transparent examination system. "Rawalpindi board is taking all possible steps as per government directives to ensure transparent examination and marking process," he added.

He announced the introduction of a modern online monitoring system to ensure fairness, particularly in sensitive centers, thereby reinforcing the board's zero-tolerance policy against cheating.

According to the Board spokesman, Controller of Examinations Tanveer Asghar Awan also conducted inspections at several centers, including Government Girls High School Taxila, Government College of Technology Hattar Road, and Government Associate College for Boys Chakayaban-e-Sir Syed d. He checked students' roll number slips, examination discipline, furniture, security, and facilities.

During the inspections, two candidates were caught red-handed while cheating the questions papers, and forwarded their cases to the discipline branch.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. —APP Photo

Azerbaijan's Independence Day symbolizes sovereignty and resilience: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov on Friday said that 'Independence Day' of the Republic of Azerbaijan represents not only the declaration of sovereignty but also the spirit of resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering quest for progress that characterizes the people of Azerbaijan.

Today "we celebrate the 107th anniversary of our independence, marking the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on May 28, 1918 - first secular republic in the Muslim East." Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov said this while addressing the celebration of the 107th anniversary of independence of Republic of Azerbaijan, here in a local hotel.

Azerbaijan envoy said that within a remarkably brief span, Azerbaijan established its first parliament and government, defined its borders, instituted state attributes, and carried out crucial state-building measures. He said that important steps were taken in the field of state building, recognition of the Republic as a subject of international relations, and protection of its national interests.

The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, though it had an existence of only 23 months, played a pivotal role in the formation of democratic traditions and the history of national statehood, and laid a solid foundation for the future inde-

pendence of the Republic by strengthening the sentiments of freedom and independence, he said.

Ambassador Farhadov said that the legal successor of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the Independent Republic of Azerbaijan restored its independence in 1991 and managed to preserve its sovereignty thanks to Great leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev who has made an immense contribution to the people and the state of Azerbaijan.

The Ambassador said that Azerbaijan has been implementing the policy of Heydar Aliyev, continuing and enriching it under the leadership of H.E Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was one of the first countries that recognized the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 12, 1991, he said.

He said that the diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on June 9, 1992. The envoy said that from the first day of our independence, "we feel Pakistan's full support to the Republic of Azerbaijan both in bilateral format and within the framework of international organizations, and during the occupation of Azerbaijani lands by invader Armenia and their liberation by Azerbaijan, and in the post-conflict period."

He said that in 2020, under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-

Chief of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan liberated its internationally recognized territories from the almost 30-year long occupation by Armenia, implementing UN Security Council 4 resolutions of 1993, he said.

The Ambassador said that to prevent further large-scale provocations by Armenian forces in the Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan and to restore the constitutional order, the Azerbaijani Army conducted an anti-terror operation on September 19, 2023, which lasted just 23 hours, forcing the enemy to surrender.

Khazar Farhadov said that this victory fully restored Azerbaijan's sovereignty, and today, the Azerbaijani flag flies proudly in all territories where Azerbaijani sovereignty is established and Azerbaijan has officially declared 2025 as the Year of Constitution and Sovereignty. He said that over the past years, Azerbaijan has successfully chaired several important organizations such as the UN Security Council, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Turkic States, and many others.

In this regard, "I would like to highlight my country's successful hosting of the COP29 conference, which not only underscored our nation's growing leadership in global climate action but also provided a vital platform for international cooperation.

Nearly 4,000 police officers graduate

KABUL (BNA): Nearly 4,000 police officers have graduated from the educational centers of the General Education Command of the Ministry of Interior. The achievement follows their completion of comprehensive ideological and professional training. According to a statement released by the Ministry of Interior, the graduates hail from seven educational centers within the General Directorate of Education.

IE condemns attack on school bus

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has issued a strong condemnation of the recent attack on a school bus in the Khuzdar area of Balochistan, which led to the tragic deaths and injuries of numerous children. Mullah Hamdullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, expressed in a statement on X that any attacks targeting children and civilians are unequivocally unjustifiable.

Taliban in talks with Russia, China for trade transactions in local currencies

KABUL (Reuters): The Taliban administration is in advanced talks with Russia for banks from both sanctions-hit economies to settle trade transactions worth hundreds of millions of dollars in their local currencies, Afghanistan's acting commerce minister said.

The Afghan government has made similar proposals to China, the minister, Hajji Nooruddin Azizi, told Reuters on Thursday. Some discussions have been held with the Chinese embassy in Kabul, he said.

The proposal with Russia, Azizi said, was being worked on by technical teams from the two countries. The move comes as Moscow focuses on using national currencies to shift reliance away from the dollar and as Afghanistan faces a stark drop in the US currency entering the country due to aid cuts.

"We are currently engaged in specialized discussions on this matter, considering the regional and global economic perspectives, sanctions, and the challenges Afghanistan is currently facing, as well as those Russia is dealing with. Technical discussions are underway," Azizi said in an interview at his office in Kabul.

The Chinese foreign ministry and

the Russian central bank did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Azizi added that annual bilateral trade between Russia and Afghanistan was currently around \$300 million and that was likely to grow substantially as the two sides boost investment. His administration expected Afghanistan to buy more petroleum products and plastics from Russia, he said.

"I am confident that this is a very good option...we can use this option for benefit and interests of our people and our country," Azizi said. "We want to take steps in this area with China as well," he said, adding Afghanistan had around \$1 billion in trade with China each year. "A working team composed of members from the (Afghan) Ministry of Commerce and the Chinese embassy which is an authorized body representing China in economic programs has been formed, and talks are ongoing."

Afghanistan's financial sector has been largely cut off from the global banking system due to sanctions placed on some leaders of the ruling Taliban, which took over the country in 2021 as foreign forces withdrew. Rivalry with China and fallout from Russia's war in Ukraine have put the dollar's status as the world's domi-

nant currency under fresh scrutiny in recent years. In December, Russian President Vladimir Putin questioned the need to hold state reserves in foreign currencies since they could easily be confiscated for political reasons, saying that domestic investment of such reserves was more attractive.

The dollar has had a lock on commodity trading, allowing Washington to hinder market access for producer nations from Russia to Venezuela and Iran. Afghanistan since 2022 has imported gas, oil and wheat from Russia, the first major economic deal after the Taliban returned to power facing international isolation following 20 years of war against US-led forces.

Billions of dollars in cuts to aid to Afghanistan, accelerated this year by the United States, have meant far fewer dollars, which are flown in cash for humanitarian operations, are entering the country. Development agencies and economists say the Afghan currency has so far remained relatively stable but may face challenges in future. Azizi said that the stability of the currency and his administration's efforts to boost international investment including with the Afghan diaspora, would prevent a shortage of US dollars in the country.

Suhail Shaheen: delaying recognition of Islamic Emirate no longer logical

KABUL (TOLONews): Suhail Shaheen, the ambassador of the Islamic Emirate in Qatar, told TOLONews that regional countries, recognizing the realities in Afghanistan, have begun engaging with the caretaker government at various levels.

Shaheen warned that further delaying recognition of the Islamic Emirate is no longer logical. "The Islamic Emirate is a current reality of Afghanistan. The region and the world have come to acknowledge this, which is why they are now engaging with us."

We believe that issues can be resolved through understanding and engagement. Over the past 40 years, many global powers tried confrontation and aggression, and it didn't work," he said.

Regarding relations with Pakistan, he stated that Kabul seeks good ties with Islamabad, but those ties must be mutual, balanced, and free from



"blame games."

According to Shaheen, countries like India and Iran have also come to realize that the caretaker government operates inde-

pendently of any foreign power, a fact that has shifted their approach.

He added, "We support positive relations with

Pakistan and our other neighbors, but they must be reciprocal to be effective."

Political analyst Mohammad Aslam Danishmal said: "The Afghan government should continue its balanced policy as it has so far."

The caretaker government has repeatedly called for international recognition. In response, the international community has outlined conditions including the formation of an inclusive government, respect for human rights, and combating terrorism and drug trafficking.

OCHA: US Aid suspension deepens health crisis

KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has once again expressed concern over the suspension of US aid to Afghanistan.

According to OCHA, the aid suspension has resulted in the loss of jobs for 1,700 female healthcare workers and the closure of 188 health centers by the end of February, affecting the lives of approximately 1.6 million people.

OCHA also noted that 30 health organizations have scaled back their operations due to the situation.

One section of the OCHA report reads: "As of late-February, 188 health facilities had closed impacting 1.6 million people; 1,700 female national health workers had lost their jobs; six mine action staff and 29 third-party contractors had been terminated, resulting in a loss of quality assurance, planning, accreditation; and data management for mine action operations; while US \$3.4 million in multi-purpose cash assistance for more than 7,000 households was at risk, in addition to post-arrival and protection support for vulnerable returnees."

Dr. Mojtaba Sofi stated: "This situation has a direct negative impact on the health of our mothers and the general public. It is unfortunate that we rely on



such aid, but we must find alternatives for the future. Our government must strive to move away from financial dependency and ultimately become self-sufficient."

Findings from OCHA's first round of surveys show that:

68% of humanitarian partners in Afghanistan have reduced their operational goals,

45% have limited their geographical reach, and 42% have downsized their staff.

OCHA has warned that without US funding, fewer Afghans will be eligible for humanitarian assistance in 2025.

Abdul Ghafar Nezami, an economic affairs expert, said: "Institutions created to improve countries' economic situations should not be influenced by global political agendas. There should be no discrimination against the Afghan people, and economic challenges should not be

ignored to the point of driving Afghanistan's economy into crisis."

Given that a significant portion of US aid was allocated to humanitarian, health, and social protection projects in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Economy has once again called on the international community not to politicize humanitarian aid.

Abdul Rahman Habib, spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, stated: "We urge all donor institutions to not only continue humanitarian assistance but also cooperate in job creation and poverty reduction through development projects. This will help Afghans shift from reliance on aid to working for their own livelihoods."

Before the current government came to power, the US primarily channeled foreign aid through USAID, but Donald Trump canceled 80% of its activities.

Civil servants face new round of salary delays as Eid nears

KABUL (Amu tv): Civil servants in the country say they have gone more than two months without pay, compounding financial strain ahead of the Eid al-Adha holiday and raising broader concerns about the Taliban's ability to manage state payrolls.

Employees at three separate public institutions confirmed to Amu TV that salary payments have been delayed for over eight weeks. Taliban have not issued a formal explanation.

"For many of us, this salary is the only source of income," said one civil servant, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal. "Without it, we face mounting economic pressure — not just financially, but mentally. Some colleagues can't even afford the transport fare to reach their offices."

A source from the Taliban-controlled Ministry of Finance said salary disbursements might resume in the coming days, though no specific timetable was provided. The delays come less than two weeks before Eid al-Adha, a period when household expenses typically rise. Workers say they are increasingly unable to meet basic needs, let alone prepare for the holiday.

In addition to the pay disruptions, civil servants say they face looming job insecurity. Earlier this year, sources in Kandahar reported that Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada had ordered a 20 percent reduction in public institutions staffing. Employees now worry the cuts are being carried out in an inconsistent and opaque manner.

Six water projects inaugurated in Khost at cost of 55m AFN



KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Latif Mansoor, the Acting Minister of Energy and Water, announced that six water supply projects have been inaugurated in the center of Khost province and its districts, with a total cost of 55 million Afghanis.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a small water dam in Gurbuz district, he stated that the Islamic Emirate is implementing multiple large and small projects aimed at managing and regulating the country's water resources.

Mansoor said: "Around 50 million Afghanis from the Islamic Emirate's budget were spent on these projects. Two of them were implemented by external organizations, but their supervision was carried out by our Directorate of Water and Energy."

These six projects include the cleaning of ten traditional underground water canals (karez) in the center of Khost and the districts of Speri, Ismail Khil Mandozi, Alishir Khil, and Terezio.

Residents of Khost have welcomed the implementation of such projects as

beneficial and essential, urging the caretaker government to undertake more initiatives in water management. Khani Gul, a local resident, said: "We will benefit greatly from these projects, as there are around 2,000 to 2,500 acres of land in this area."

Sadiq Khan, another resident of Khost, stated: "We ask the Islamic Emirate to continue supporting us in the future as well, particularly in building and expanding irrigation canals." In addition, the Acting Minister of Energy and Water announced the launch of construction of a large water dam called Zambar, in the Sabri and Yaqoubi districts of Khost, with a planned cost of 550 million Afghanis.

Islamic Emirate pays 200M AFN to spin boldak traders affected by fire

Traders who suffered losses due to a fire in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province last year have received 200 million Afghanis in compensation from the Islamic Emirate.

The Acting Director of the National Disaster Management Authority stated during a visit to affected traders that the total losses were estimated at 550 million Afghanis, of which 30 percent—equivalent to 200 million Afghanis—has been paid from the Islamic Emirate's budget to 249 affected traders.

Nooruddin Turabi, the acting director, said: "A total of 550 million Afghanis in losses were incurred here; however, the leadership of the Islamic Emirate has allocated 200 million Afghanis for the victims of this incident. Each affected individual will receive compensation equivalent to 30% of their losses. This process began today."



The Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Investment has called for preventive measures in major commercial zones to avoid the recurrence of such incidents.

Mohammad Siddiq Momand, head of the chamber, said: "Our fire protection department should have been strengthened, and a master plan should have been implemented here."

With proper services in place, such a disaster could have been avoided."

Mohammad Shafiq Achakzai, head of the Spin Boldak Chamber of Commerce, added: "I urge the government to implement the master plan here, expand the distribution zones, and standardize commercial areas to prevent similar damages in the future."

Meanwhile, several affected traders have called for greater support from the government.

Abdul Ali, one of the traders, said: "Heavy losses have been incurred, and people's commercial goods have been destroyed. We therefore ask and hope for greater support from the govern-

Calligraphy exhibition in Kabul draws public

KABUL (Amu tv): A calligraphy exhibition in Kabul, titled From the Throat of the Ghazal to the Tip of the Pen, drew artists and visitors from across Afghanistan and Iran, with women and girls participating prominently as both creators and audience members.

Featuring dozens of pieces ranging from Quranic verses to classical Persian poetry, the exhibition showcased works in revered calligraphic styles such as Nastaliq and Thuluth, alongside traditional miniature painting. The event brought together established calligraphers and emerging talents to celebrate a shared artistic heritage.

Organizers said the exhibition aimed to foster cultural dialogue and preserve the region's rich visual traditions. "Calligraphy is not just an art form; it's a bridge between language, identity, and faith," one organizer noted.

"We're proud to present calligraphy that reflects centuries of cultural identity and shared artistic tradition," one of the curators said.



Among the visitors was Mian Haidari, a young participant, who noted the exhibition's value especially in the current context. "This kind of event benefits the younger generation, especially at a time when girls cannot study or pursue other opportunities," she said. "It motivates and uplifts them."

Calligrapher Shukria Hosseini echoed that view, describing the exhibition as a rare outlet amid restrictions. "With schools and parks closed, these cultural spaces are essential for women," she said. "It helps us stay connected to art and to each other."

Another visitor, Sediqa Sakandari, said the experience had a lasting emotional impact. "Doors to schools and parks are closed to us. This exhibi-

tion gave us a sense of hope," she said.

Several Iranian calligraphers also contributed their work, which drew strong interest from attendees. "People were genuinely curious about the lines and motifs in Iranian scripts," said Rafat Sadat Mousavi, one of the featured Iranian artists. "They asked thoughtful questions, and I was glad to share what I could."

The exhibition was open to the public for several days, and organizers expressed hope that similar initiatives would continue. While the event was primarily focused on the art itself, many saw it as a quiet reaffirmation of cultural engagement—and for some, a reminder of the power of creative expression in uncertain times.

Afghanistan should be integrated into regional cooperation: Uzbek officials

KABUL (Ariana News): Uzbek officials said on Thursday during a three-day conference in Termez city that Afghanistan should be integrated into regional economic and infrastructure projects as part of cooperation between Central and South Asia.

The Termez Dialogue, initiated by the government of Uzbekistan and hosted by the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of Uzbekistan, brought together around 200 participants from Central and South Asia, Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Asia, and the Middle East.

The conference was attended by senior officials, experts, and representatives from various countries, including Afghanistan, and aimed to



explore ways to strengthen economic and security ties between the two regions.

Uzbek officials emphasized that despite the Islamic Emirate not being officially recognized,

Afghanistan should not be excluded from regional economic developments.

Meanwhile, the head of Uzbekistan's Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies referred to major initiatives such as TAPI,

CASA-1000, and the Afghan Trans railway, stating that there is a strong consensus in Central Asia for deepening cooperation with South Asia and including Afghanistan in this

process.

The First Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan also highlighted the Trans-Afghan Railway, stretching from Termez to the southern seas, as a key project. He stated that the route has the potential to transform the region's trade and economic outlook and lay the foundation for a common market of nearly two billion people.

On the first day of the conference, a deputy from Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry expressed the country's readiness to participate in all regional initiatives, especially in areas such as infrastructure, transportation, trade, energy, and education. He called on the international community to recognize Afghanistan as a reliable partner and to invest in the development of its economy.

Senate passes Civil Courts (Amend) Bill

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday passed the Civil Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2025 with a majority vote. The bill was introduced by Senator Dr Shezra Mansab Ali Kharal. The primary aim of the bill is to ease the growing workload of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) by allowing certain appeals, currently heard by the IHC, to be redirected to district courts.

This legislative move is expected to streamline judicial proceedings and ensure quicker resolution of civil cases in the federal capital. The bill had already secured approval from the National Assembly, marking a significant development toward enhancing the efficiency of Islamabad's judicial system. The need for this amendment stems from the rising value of properties in Islamabad Capital Territory, which has pushed the valuation of most Regular First Appeals beyond Rs 2.5 million. As a result, the appellate workload on the IHC has increased significantly. Currently, under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 18 of the West Pakistan Civil Courts Ordinance, 1962, the IHC holds appellate jurisdiction over cases

exceeding Rs 2.5 million. In contrast, the Lahore High Court has already increased its pecuniary appellate jurisdiction to Rs 50 million through the Punjab Civil Courts (Amendment) Act, 2016.

Given this disparity, the bill seeks to shift the responsibility for appeals arising from orders or decrees by Civil Judges to the District Courts, helping to balance the judicial burden and improve access to justice. The passage of this bill marks a step forward in judicial reform by aligning Islamabad's legal framework with that of other provinces and ensuring more efficient use of court resources.

The House also referred six legislative bills to the relevant committees for further deliberation and detailed consideration. The referred bills include: The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2025], The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 2025, The Extradition (Amendment) Bill, 2025, The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2025, The Anti-Dumping Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and The Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill, 2025

The bills will now be examined in

committee before being brought back to the House for final discussion and voting. This process ensures thorough scrutiny and input from stakeholders before legislation is enacted.

Meanwhile, the House received eight reports from various committees, covering a range of legislative and policy matters. The reports presented included, The Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025, Annual Report of the Committee for the period June 2024 to March 2025, Report from the Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2024, The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, The Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, The National Institute of Health (Re-organization) (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and The Mental Health (Amendment) Bill, 2025 Also, the Minister for Human Rights laid the Annual Report 2022-23 of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) before the Senate. The report was submitted in compliance with sub-section (2) of Section 16 of the National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of International Monetary Fund led by Mr. Jihad Azour called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

G7 threatens further curbs on Russia

Convocation ceremony of PN Staff course held

F.P. Report

OTTAWA: Finance officials from the Group of Seven (G7) nations have threatened they could impose further sanctions on Russia should it fail to agree a ceasefire in its war on Ukraine.

Ending their G7 meeting in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, where foreign ministers were also convening this week, the finance chiefs said that if efforts to end Russia's "continued brutal war" in Ukraine failed, the group would look at how it could push Moscow to stop back.

"If such a ceasefire is not agreed, we will continue to explore all possible options, including options to maximise pressure such as further ramping up sanctions," a final communique following three days of meetings read. The G7, comprised of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, also pledged to work together to ensure that no countries that financed the war would be eligible to benefit from Kyiv's reconstruction.

Canadian Finance Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said that point was a "very big statement", calling it a key pillar. However, the group shied away from naming countries, including China, which the West has previously accused of supplying weapons to Russia.

The communique added that Russia's sovereign assets in G7 jurisdictions would continue to be blocked until Moscow ended the war and paid reparations to Ukraine for the damage it caused to the country. "I think it sends a very clear signal to the world ... that the G7 is united in purpose and in action," Champagne told the closing news conference.

However, the statement omitted mention of US President Donald Trump's tariffs that are disrupting global trade and supply chains and swelling economic uncertainty. Differences were also apparent in the approach to Russia's war in Ukraine. Trump has unreserved US allies by sidelining them to launch bilateral ceasefire talks with Moscow, in which US officials have adopted many of the Kremlin's narratives regarding the conflict.

In the statement, the description of the war was watered down from October's G7 statement, issued before Trump's reelection, that called it an "illegal, unjustifiable, and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine". — Aljazeera

LAHORE: The Convocation Ceremony of 54th Pakistan Navy Staff Course was held at Pakistan Navy War College (PNWC), Lahore, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

During the ceremony, degrees were conferred upon 118 graduates, including 74 officers from Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Army, and Pakistan Air Force, as well as 44 officers from friendly countries. These countries included Bahrain, Bangladesh, Türkiye, China, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Yemen, and the UAE.

In his address, the Chief of the Naval Staff congratulated the graduating officers from both Pakistan Armed Forces and friendly nations. He lauded the high professional standards upheld by Pakistan Navy War College and emphasized the importance of understanding the evolving dynamics of modern warfare and emerging maritime security threats.

He noted that the Red Sea has become a battleground for competing interests, posing a significant threat to international peace and security. He further underlined the transformation in warfare



marked by asymmetrical conflicts and the growing influence of non-state actors, and stressed the need for traditional military strategies to evolve in response to these complex challenges.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf also observed that the Indian Ocean Region remains fluid and contested, with new geopolitical realignments and ongoing power rivalries continuing to impact the regional security environment. Referring to the recent four-day crisis between India and Pakistan, he remarked that it stands as testimony to the changing nature of warfare. The conventional, one-dimensional study of war, he asserted, is now outdated and no longer applicable.

The Chief Guest highlighted that the participation of officers from friendly countries reflects the strong bonds of friendship and mutual trust they share with Pakistan Navy. He expressed hope that these fraternal ties would continue to grow stronger in the years ahead.

Earlier, the Commandant

of Pakistan Navy War College presented an overview of the 45-week-long course, covering various professional and academic activities undertaken by the participants. The ceremony was attended by senior military officers, civil dignitaries, and families of the graduating officers.

Naval Chief visits CMH: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, visited Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi to inquire about the well-being of soldiers and civilians injured during Operation Bunyanum-Marsoos.

During the visit, the Naval Chief personally interacted with each injured individual and paid tribute to their unwavering bravery, indomitable spirit, and steadfast commitment to duty. While speaking with the injured, Admiral Naveed Ashraf emphasized the unified resolve of the nation and the armed forces, affirming that any future misadventure by the adversary will be met with the same determination and vigour.

PHC seeks detail of missing person

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Attique Shah has issued notices to the provincial and federal governments, seeking their response to a petition filed for the recovery of a citizen who went missing 10 years ago from Peshawar, on Friday.

The lawyer Muhammad Hanif Afridi, informed the court that the petitioner's son, Sarfaraz, was taken away along with his father and brother from Peshawar's area of Pawka 10 years ago. Later, the petitioner and one of his sons were released, but Sarfaraz remains missing.

The lawyer stated that the petitioner had submitted applications to various authorities but received no response. He added that the age of the missing citizen was 13 years at the time of his disappearance. The petitioner's lawyer mentioned that the petitioner still receives calls from unknown numbers asking if

his son has returned or not. PHC has issued notices to the federal and provincial governments, as well as other relevant parties, seeking their response to the petition.

Court asks DG EPA, DC to respond against glacier cutting: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued notices to the Director General Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Deputy Commissioner Upper Dir in response to a contempt of court petition regarding the cutting of glaciers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Friday.

PHC two-member bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Waqar Ahmad heard the plea while the petitioner, Tariq Afghan Advocate, appeared before the court and stated that the cutting of glaciers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is ongoing, despite court orders.

The petitioner claimed that ice from glaciers is still being brought to Dir for commercial purposes. The

Deputy Commissioner Dir has failed to implement the court's orders. The cutting of glaciers is being done for commercial purposes, with ice being sold in markets. Despite a court order on May 6, which directed the Deputy Commissioners of Dir, Swat, Buner, and Mansehra to stop the use of ice from mountainous areas for commercial purposes, the practice continues, the petitioner argued.

The cutting of glaciers is done from the bottom, which causes them to melt when temperatures rise. Around 200 trucks of ice are transported daily from glaciers for commercial purposes. The petitioner highlighted that the melting of glaciers can cause floods. The cutting of glaciers is a violation of the Environmental Protection Act of 1997 and 2014. PHC has sought a response from the Director General EPA and the Deputy Commissioner Upper Dir regarding the allegations made in the petition.

Harvard sues Trump

NEW YORK: A United States judge has issued a temporary restraining order against an effort to prevent Harvard University from enrolling foreign students. Friday's ruling comes in response to an emergency petition filed earlier in the day in the federal district court of Boston, Massachusetts.

In that petition, Harvard sought immediate relief after the administration of President Donald Trump barred it from using a federal government system, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, that is required for the enrolment of international students. US District Judge Allison Burroughs agreed with Harvard that the school and its students may suffer harm if the Trump administration's decision is allowed to take effect. Her injunction is set to last for approximately two weeks, and she set hearing dates on May 27 and 29.

Friday's lawsuit against the Trump administration is Harvard's second in less than two months. The latest is a response to a decision on Thursday announced by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. Her department oversees the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, and she said she is revoking Harvard's privilege to use the system based on its failure to address Trump administration concerns.

"This administration is holding Harvard accountable for fostering violence, antisemitism, and coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party on its campus," she wrote on social media. The revocation means that Harvard can no longer accept foreign students. Those already enrolled will need to transfer to another school.

The move represents a major escalation in Trump's pressure campaign against Harvard and other top US universities. He has accused schools of allowing anti-Semitism to fester, promoting "discriminatory" diversity programmes, and pushing ideological slants. — Aljazeera

IHC judges' transfer and seniority case: Hearing continue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's constitutional bench Friday adjourned the hearing of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges' transfer and seniority case until Monday (May 26).

A five-member bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, conducted proceedings on Friday. During the hearing, lawyer Faisal Siddiqi continued his arguments, stating that in India, judges were transferred without their consent and their seniority remains intact. He argued that while the appointment of judges was mandatory for the Judicial Commission, the President was not obligated to approve a transfer.

Justice Mazhar remarked that the President had constitutional authority over transfers and cannot be compelled to act. He advised the counsel to limit his arguments to the issue of judicial transfers. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan

noted that Siddiqi had earlier stated that the presidential power regarding transfers was not being challenged. Justice Salahuddin Panhwar added that the lawyer had said his focus would be on seniority.

Faisal Siddiqi contended that judicial transfers should be time-bound, especially since judges from high courts were appointed to the Federal Shariat Court for a three-year term. Justice Mazhar questioned the relevance of this, pointing out that such appointments were considered promotions, while transfers between high courts were lateral moves.

The lawyer further argued that Justice Asif was an additional judge at the time of his transfer, and questioned how such a judge could be appointed to the IHC without a fresh evaluation by the Judicial Commission. Faisal Siddiqi referenced the Al-Jehad case, citing former Attorney General Munir A. Malik's arguments. Justice

Mazhar asked what the Constitution defines as a Chief Justice and noted that acting chief justices were nominated in the Judicial Commission. He also inquired why the transfers should be time-bound, pointing out that neither Pakistani Constitution nor India's provided for time-limited judicial transfers.

Justice Mazhar highlighted the example of a Sindh High Court Chief Justice who declined elevation to the Supreme Court and remained in his post, noting that Pakistan differed from India where judges refusing transfers must resign. He emphasized the core issue: whether a transferred judge must take a new oath, and how that impacts seniority. Siddiqi argued that a judge would need to take a fresh oath after each transfer, which would effectively reset their service and seniority each time. This, the bench noted, could create multiple seniority lists and conflicts.

Iran sees progress in N-talks after 'professional' exchange

DUBAI (Reuters): Iranian and US negotiators wrapped up a fifth round of talks on Friday, with mediator Oman saying there was some limited progress in negotiations aimed at resolving a decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Despite both Washington and Tehran taking a tough stance in public ahead of the talks on Iran's uranium enrichment, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said there was potential for progress after Oman made several proposals during the negotiations in Rome. "We have just completed one of the most professional rounds of talks ... We firmly stated Iran's position ... The fact that we are now on a reasonable path, in my view, is itself a sign of progress," Araqchi told state TV.

"The proposals and solutions will be reviewed in respective capitals ... and the next round of talks will be scheduled accordingly." There was no immediate comment from the US delegation.

The stakes are high for both sides. President Donald Trump wants to curtail Tehran's potential to produce a nuclear weapon that could trigger a regional nuclear arms race and perhaps threaten Israel. The Islamic Republic, for its part, wants to be rid of devastating sanctions on its oil-based economy. Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said on X that the talks between Araqchi and Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff had ended "with some but not conclusive progress".

Ahead of the talks, Araqchi wrote on X: "Zero

nuclear weapons = we Do have a deal. Zero enrichment = we do NOT have a deal. Time to decide." White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters on Thursday that Trump believes negotiations with Iran are "moving in the right direction". Among remaining stumbling blocks are Tehran's refusal to ship abroad its entire stockpile of highly enriched uranium - possible raw material for nuclear bombs - or engage in discussions over its ballistic missile programme.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that Washington was working to reach an accord that would allow Iran to have a civil nuclear energy programme but not enrich uranium, while acknowledging that this "will not be easy".

Indian sponsored terrorism, targeting Pakistan

(Continued from Page 1)

"In the aftermath of the despicable terrorist attack on a school bus in Khuzdar in the early morning of May 21, this cowardly attack targeted innocent children — our future — resulting in tragic loss of six children and injuries to 31 others," he deplored.

He said this was not merely an attack on a bus, but an attack on Pakistan's values, its education system, and sole fabric of society. The DG ISPR said initial findings confirmed that this attack was part of a broader pattern of violence, sponsored by India through Fitna al Hindustan, operating under the tutelage and intelligence of the Indian agency RAW. "Having miserably failed in Operation Sindoor, the terror proxies of Hindustan have been tasked to intensify their heinous acts of terrorism in Balochistan and elsewhere," he said, making it clear that the people of Pakistan would not let them succeed in their sinister designs.

"Pakistan and its people, particularly in Balochistan, reject this nefarious design. The state has the capacity and the will to dismantle these networks and bring the perpetrators and their handlers to justice. Such actions will have consequences," he said. The DG ISPR said India's attacks on May 6-7 have targeted mosques and gatherings, killing 40 civilians, including 22

children.

Despite this, the spirit of Balochistan's people remains unbroken, and Pakistan's military stands vigilant in protecting its citizens. He shared interviews with relatives of victims of Indian-sponsored terrorism and called the attacks brutal and inhuman. "Targeting sleeping workers, children, and worshippers is not based on any ideology. It is cruelty ordered and funded by India," he said.

Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif said these attacks were part of India's plan to foment unrest and instability in Pakistan, adding, "The poor and innocent in Balochistan are being deliberately targeted." He recalled that a terrorist arrested in Jhelum on April 25 had clear evidence on his phone showing direct links to an Indian Army officer. "The audio recordings proved India's military supports terrorist activities inside Pakistan."

The DG said the recordings showed daily terrorist attacks across Pakistan were ordered from outside, affirming the fact that the violence was planned and funded by foreign powers, and not local groups. He also pointed out that captured terrorists often possessed advanced weapons, mostly left behind in Afghanistan and now used in Pakistan.

The ISPR DG criticized Indian media for spreading false stories before investigations conclude, cit-

ing Mianwali incident where Indian social media and news outlets pushed a false narrative quickly, airing fake images. He also exposed how India used staged events to distract from human rights abuses in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said that when Indians demanded accountability at home, the government suppressed media and protests, shifting blame to Pakistan instead.

He said this cycle was duly planned: first, India faced a crisis; then it spreads false stories; finally, it accuses Pakistan to divert attention — questioning why India always launched such accusations immediately after its own problems were exposed. He said thousands of new social media accounts have recently been created, adding to the many fake propaganda accounts already active — all controlled by India.

He said there have been 4,664 terrorist incidents across Pakistan, with 1,612 occurring in Balochistan. Security forces have conducted 93,515 counter-terrorism operations nationwide, including 52,887 in Balochistan, he added. He added that in 2024, security forces killed 1,018 terrorists across the country, including 233 in Balochistan. So far in 2025, 747 terrorists have been killed, including 203 in Balochistan. Security forces have intensified their operations against militants.

Responding to a question, Director General of Inter-Services

Public Relations (ISPR DG) stated that India was perturbed by socio-economic development in Balochistan, and its growing frustration was evident through its support for proxies and misinformation campaigns.

He said India's escalation tactics intensified after Pakistan decisively closed illegal trade routes and curtailed the activities of anti-state elements. "India is sponsoring terror through proxies like Balochistan Yakjehti Committee (BYC), which lacks the support of even 25 people," he added. The DG ISPR highlighted that Pakistan had conducted over 73,000 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan in last seven months to eliminate terrorism and maintain peace in the province. "We are rubbing their nose in the ground, and India is howling in despair. They know Balochistan economy is at a take-off point."

He noted that the blue economy in Balochistan was thriving, and youth from the province were availing educational scholarships across Pakistan. "The Pakistan Army is not only fighting terrorists but also actively supporting socio-economic uplift of Balochistan." On the issue of missing persons, he stated that many claims were politically motivated, with BYC acting as a proxy for Indian interests in the region. "There is no ideology of terrorism — only India's attempt to establish regional hegemony," he added. To a

question the DG ISPR said "For decades, India has poured billions into its defense budget — not merely for security, but to project itself as a regional and global power..."

He said that India operated under several faulty and erroneous assumptions. They attempted to manipulate global narratives through propaganda and subversion. But they were wrong," he added. India, he said, gravely misjudged the resilience of the Pakistani state and the unity of its people, adding "The consequences of those miscalculations are now evident. Let them try again if they wish — we remain ready, firm, and more resolute than ever."

Highlighting the core issue obstructing peace in South Asia, the DG ISPR stressed that sustainable peace between Pakistan and India was impossible without a just and lasting resolution of Kashmir dispute. "Kashmir is not merely a bilateral issue — it holds regional implications involving Pakistan, India, and even China. It is an internationally recognized disputed territory, contrary to India's claims of it being an internal matter," he said.

He condemned India's military presence in the region, stating that over 700,000 troops have been deployed in Indian-Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to suppress the local population. "Incidents like the one in Pahalgam illustrate the severity and

brutality that led to detention of thousands without due process, systemic abuses, and enforced disappearances," he added.

He criticized India's domestic human rights record. "Sikhs, Christians, Dalits, and other minorities face entrenched and prolonged discrimination. These are not internal matters — they are global human rights concerns," he said. He also accused India of employing terrorism as a strategic weapon against Pakistan. "Through proxies and disinformation campaigns, India has consistently targeted civilians, laborers, and national infrastructure," he noted, adding "The evidence is clear, and the international community is watching."

In the wake of such provocations, he said Pakistan had opted for "reasonable, rational restraint" but remains unwavering in defending its sovereignty. "We seek peace, not conflict. But peace must be based on justice — not coercion," he stated. In response to a question on India's reported obstruction of water flows to Pakistan, the DG ISPR termed the act a serious breach of international law and bilateral agreements, specifically the Indus Waters Treaty. "The people and the state of Pakistan are united on this issue. The Prime Minister has been clear on this point: any unilateral attempt to alter water flows will be met with a firm diplomatic and strategic response," he vowed.