

Dar hails China's leadership

HONG KONG (APP): Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday hailed the Chinese leadership at the signing ceremony of the Convention establishing the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) in Hong Kong for ushering a new era of diplomacy. Addressing the landmark event hosted by the People's Republic of China, the deputy prime minister praised Beijing.



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DUSHANBE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a family photo with world leaders at high level international conference on glaciers' preservation (IGCP 2025) in Tajikistan.

## COAS vows to thwart hostile attempts

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Command & Staff College Quetta today and addressed Student Officers and faculty of the Command and Staff College.

Paying tribute to the Shuhada of Operation 'Bunyanum Marsoos' and expressing complete solidarity with their family members, the COAS stated that under the national leadership, the people of Pakistan became a wall of steel for the Defence of the motherland. Praising professionalism of the Armed Forces, the COAS reiterated that success of 'Ma'arkae-Haq' is a testimony to our national resolve, and complete synergy among all elements of national power.

Commenting on global and regional environment, the COAS shed light on the character of emerging conflict, with particular emphasis on India's increasingly dangerous propensity to use unprovoked military aggression against Pakistan. While reiterating the resolve to



defeat any aggression and ability to deal with threats across the entire conflict spectrum, the COAS asserted that Pakistan will never be coerced and inimical designs to distract Pakistan's efforts against war on terrorism will be comprehensively defeated. For strategic stability of South Asia, the COAS emphasized the need for peaceful resolution of long-standing internationally recognized Kashmir dispute, and warned against the unlawful and legally untenable 'hydro terrorism' by India.

Highlighting Indian state's role in sponsoring terrorism inside Pakistan, the COAS commented on the reinvigorated counter terrorism drive and expressed confidence that Nation's fight against terrorism will be driven to a logical conclusion - success

against all forms and manifestations of terrorism. Talking about leadership, the Field Marshal advised the student officers to fulfill their obligations with utmost dedication, passion and resolve. Emphasizing the need for innovative thinking and research, he lauded the Command & Staff College Quetta for grooming future military leaders who uphold the highest standards of this sacred profession.

"Training must reflect not only the current realities but also prepare us for the future battlefield, one that demands agility, innovation, and unwavering resolve," he remarked. Earlier on arrival at Quetta, the Field Marshal was received by Commander Quetta Corps and Commandant Command and Staff College Quetta.

## Ansar posted as KP DG Info

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Ansar, Press Registrar (BPS-19), Directorate General, Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been transferred and posted as Director General, Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under Section 10 of CSA, 1973.

The Post of Director General, Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was vacant after retirement of official.

## ADC martyred after terrorists attack

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Hidayat Buledi embraced martyrdom when armed assailants, belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan, attacked the residence of the deputy commissioner in Sorab city of Balochistan's Khuzdar district, according to spokesperson Shahid Rind.

In a statement, Rind said that armed terrorists, belonging to proscribed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), stormed Sorab Bazaar, looting a commercial bank and setting fire to residences of several government officials. "ADC Revenue Hidayat Baloch embraced martyrdom while courageously defending state property and lives during the attack," he said, adding that his residence, where women and children were present at the time, was also targeted.

He termed the attack a direct challenge to the writ of the state and a "cowardly attempt to destabilise the region". He added that the attack was carried out by proxies allegedly backed by India to foment unrest in Balochistan. "The martyrdom of our brave officer is a symbol of unmatched courage. He sacrificed his life to protect the nation and has set a new example of valour," the spokesperson said. Following the incident, security forces, including the Frontier Corps (FC), police, and Levies, launched a search and clearance operation in the area. Rind vowed that all anti-state elements involved in the incident would be brought to justice, asserting that efforts to disrupt peace in the province would be foiled.

## President signs bill aimed at curbing child marriages

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday signed the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill into law, aimed at curbing underage marriages.

In post on X platform, PPP Senator Sherry Rehman shared the signed copy of the bill. The bill, which seeks to protect the rights of children and eventually eradicate marriages of children under the age of 18, reached the presidency on May 27 after sailing through both houses of parliament. However, the move attracted strong opposition from religious segments of society, with the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) ruling that classifying marriage under the age of 18 as rape did not conform with Islamic law.

"The Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025 is assented to, as passed by the Parliament," the notification read. "Pakistan has

reached a milestone in the enactment of important legislation against child marriages," Sherry Rehman said in a statement.

She said that the approval of the bill was successful despite resistance from various sections, adding that President Zardari signed the bill despite pressure. "The signing of the Child Marriage Restraint Bill is a symbol of a new era of reforms in Pakistan," she said. Sherry Rehman hailed the approval as a victory for the protection of the rights of women and children, adding, "This law was possible after a long and difficult struggle."

"This bill is not just a law, it is a commitment that our girls have the right to education, health and a prosperous life," Rehman continued. She thanked PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, party leaders, other political parties, representatives of the opposition and the public for their support for the bill. She also called on other provinces to take

steps towards this important legislation.

Meanwhile, Senator Sherry Rehman has lauded the signing into law of the Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025 as a landmark moment in Pakistan's legislative history. The bill, which prohibits child marriages under the age of 18 in Islamabad, was signed by President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday after passing through both Houses of Parliament.

"This is a milestone in Pakistan's long and difficult journey toward protecting the rights of children—especially girls," said Senator Rehman. "Despite resistance from various quarters, President Zardari signed this important bill into law. His action speaks volumes about the political will to drive real reform." Senator emphasized that this was not just a piece of legislation but a party-led commitment long championed by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

tion, and climate finance; Coordinate and facilitate climate action activities across Departments; Mobilize financial resources for climate action and establish, operate and maintain the dedicated Climate Action Board Fund. The Bill, allows the Board to appoint such officers, officials, experts, advisers and consultants, as it considers necessary, to assist the Secretariat in the discharge of its functions.

He said that the cabinet approved forwarding of resolution No. 167 adopted by the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the Federal Government. The resolution passed by the Assembly on April 28, 2025, states that: "This House expresses serious concern over the repeated arrests of former Member of the National Assembly, Ali Wazir, the filing of frivolous and baseless cases against him, and his being subjected to continued political victimization. Ali Wazir is currently gravely ill and is being denied his fundamental right to proper medical treatment. He is being transferred from one jail to another on different pretexts, which is not only worsening his physical and mental health but is also a clear viola-

tion of human rights and constitutional principles."

Through the resolution, the KP assembly demanded that "Ali Wazir be released immediately and unconditionally. He be provided with adequate and quality medical facilities. All politically motivated cases filed against him be withdrawn. All political workers be granted the constitutional rights of freedom of expression and peaceful political activity. The government and relevant institutions ensure implementation of Article 10-A (Right to Fair Trial), Article 19 (Freedom of Expression), and Article 14 (Right to Dignity) of the Constitution of Pakistan. Therefore, this Assembly recommends to the provincial government to urge the federal government to take immediate and positive action in light of humanitarian considerations, constitutional obligations, and democratic values."

According to him the cabinet also approved forwarding to the Federal Government the joint resolution No. 161 adopted by the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The resolution stated that: "Whereas the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

# The Frontier Post

## Bail granted to PPP leader Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar has granted interim bail application to PPP General Secretary Humayun Khan, on Friday. Humayun Khan was nominated in FIR for protesting against the provincial government. Humayun's lawyer, Gohar Rahman Khattak, appeared in court and argued that the case against Humayun Khan was politically motivated.

## Pakistan won't allow India to cross IWT red line: PM

DUSHANBE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday, rejecting the weaponization of water, warned that Pakistan would not allow India to cross the red line by holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and endangering millions of lives for narrow political gains.

"India's unilateral and illegal decision to hold in abeyance the Indus Water Treaty, which governs the sharing of the Indus Basin's water, is deeply regrettable. Millions of lives must not be held hostage to narrow political gains, and Pakistan will not allow this. We will never allow the red line to be crossed," the prime minister said addressing the three-day High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation being held here from May 29-31, 2025.

The conference is being attended by over 2,500 delegates from 80 UN member states and 70 international organizations, including prime ministers, vice presidents, ministers, and UN assistant secretaries-general. Prime Minister Shehbaz, in his comprehensive address, touched all the relevant issues, including glacial preservation, Pakistan's climate vulnerability, 2022 floods in Pakistan, global climate action and responsibility, scientific projections on glacial melt, weaponization of water and call to protect nature and humanity's shared destiny.

"The world today bears fresh scars from the use of conventional weapons in Gaza that have left deep wounds. As if that were not enough, we are now witnessing an alarming new low-the weaponization of water," he told the international conference being hosted by Government of Tajikistan in collaboration with the United Nations, UNESCO, WMO, the Asian Development Bank, and other key partners as a historic moment for climate ambition, glacier

preservation, and international cooperation.

The 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, through a resolution, had declared 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, 21st of March as World Day for Glaciers starting in 2025, and that the Government of Tajikistan will host the International Conference on the subject in 2025. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Pakistan, being home to over 13,000 glaciers, was the most concerning as glaciers contributed nearly half of the annual flows in the Indus River system - the lifeline of our civilisation, culture and economy.

"The five great rivers that shape our geographical landscape-Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sulej-all depend on the stability of glacial systems. This makes Pakistan one of the most vulnerable countries to any climatic changes that impact glaciers," he added. He told the international gathering that Pakistan had faced the peril of glacial melt in the form of devastating floods in 2022 which destroyed millions of acres of standing crops, hundreds of thousands of houses and infrastructure, despite Pakistan's only less than half a percent contribution of the total world emissions and yet being one of the 10 most vulnerable countries.

He prayed that no other country faced such devastation, which necessitated a comprehensive plan and immediate implementation. Referring to the "sobering" scientific projections, he highlighted that glacial melt in our region was expected to accelerate flooding in the coming decades, followed by a drastic decline in river flows as glaciers recede further.

"These changes threaten our fragile ecosystem. As we inch closer to these grim new realities, we must heed the alarm bells, deflection signs

of haunting consequences-lost livelihoods, displaced families, and deep chaos," he warned. Highlighting Pakistan's commitment to shared responsibility and collective action, he called for enhanced global climate action to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

"The developed countries must meet their climate financial commitments without any delay and with a balanced focus on adaptation and mitigation as well as loss and damage. Adequate funding for climate resilience, infrastructure, and over-coming financing gaps remains critical for climate-vulnerable countries. Investment must be made in early warning systems and disaster preparedness and management," the prime minister emphasised. Prime Minister Shehbaz reflected on his childhood memories of swimming in the River Ravi, underscoring how rivers like Ravi and Tajikistan's Vakhsh river, fed by glaciers, sustained life across regions, and that the shared water sources symbolized a common ecological destiny, requiring collective efforts for their preservation. "Let us protect and preserve nature's precious bounties for our planet and our peoples," he urged.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif concluded his two-day official visit to Tajikistan and departed for Pakistan from the capital city of Dushanbe.

Tajik Deputy Prime Minister Hokim Kholiqzoda saw off the Prime Minister at Dushanbe International Airport. He was accompanied by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi. During his stay, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a significant bilateral meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon.

## Pakistan, India close to completing border troop reduction: CJCSC

SINGAPORE (Reuters): Pakistan and India are close to reducing the troop build up along their border to levels before conflict erupted between the nuclear-armed neighbours this month, a top Pakistani military official told Reuters on Friday, although he warned the crisis had increased the risk of escalation in the future.

Both sides used fighter jets, missiles, drones and artillery in four days of clashes, their worst fighting in decades, before a ceasefire was announced. The spark for the latest fighting between the old enemies was an April 22 attack in Indian Kashmir that killed 26 people, most of them tourists. New Delhi blamed the incident on "terrorists" backed by Pakistan, a charge denied by Islamabad.

On May 7, India launched missiles at what it said were "terrorist infrastructure" sites across the border and as Pakistan responded with its own attacks, both countries built up additional forces along the frontier. Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Pakistan's chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, said the two militaries had started the process of drawing down troop levels. "We have almost come back to the pre-22nd April situation... we are approaching that, or we must have approached that by now," said Mirza, the most senior Pakistani military official to speak publicly since the conflict.

India's ministry of defence and the office of the Indian chief of defence staff did not immediately respond to

Reuters' requests for comment on the remarks by Mirza. Mirza, who is in Singapore to attend the Shangri-La Dialogue forum, said while there was no move towards nuclear weapons during this conflict, it was a dangerous situation. "Nothing happened this time," he said. "But you can't rule out any strategic miscalculation at any time, because when the crisis is on, the responses are different."

He also said the risk of escalation in the future had increased since the fighting this time was not limited to the disputed territory of Kashmir, the scenic region in the Himalayas that both nations rule in part but claim in full. The two sides attacked military installations in their mainlands but neither has acknowledged any serious damage. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned Pakistan this month that New Delhi would target "terrorist hide-outs" across the border again if there were new attacks on India.

The two countries have fought three major wars, two of them over Kashmir, and numerous armed skirmishes since both were born out of British colonial India in 1947. India blames Pakistan for an insurgency in its part of Kashmir that began in 1989 and has killed tens of thousands. Pakistan says it provides only moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris seeking self-determination.

"This (conflict) lowers the threshold between two countries who are contiguous nuclear powers...in the future,



it will not be restricted to the disputed territory. It would come down to (the) whole of India and (the) whole of Pakistan," Mirza said. "This is a very dangerous trend." Reuters has reported that the rapid escalation of hostilities ended in part because of behind-the-scenes diplomacy involving the US, India and Pakistan, and the key role played by Washington in brokering peace. India has denied any third-party role in the ceasefire and said that any engagement between India and Pakistan has to be bilateral.

But Mirza warned that international mediation might be difficult in the future because of a lack of crisis management mechanisms between the countries. "The time window for the international community to intervene would now be very less, and I would say that damage and destruction may take place even before that time window is exploited by the international community," he said.

## KP cabinet urges Centre to reconsider policy regarding Kabul

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 33th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet was held here on Friday with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. Cabinet members, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretaries, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Administrative Secretaries and Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended the meeting.

While briefing about the decisions Advisor to Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif said that the Cabinet approved Climate Action Board (CAB) Bill, 2025. The financially independent Board will coordinate and oversee climate strategies across different departments of the Government. It will be a body corporate being administratively and functionally independent and will: Develop, review, amend, and oversee the execution of climate policies and action plans for the province; Conduct & maintain provincial GHG inventories and establish emission baselines; Conduct, promote and oversee supervise research on mitigation, adapta-

tion, and climate finance; Coordinate and facilitate climate action activities across Departments; Mobilize financial resources for climate action and establish, operate and maintain the dedicated Climate Action Board Fund. The Bill, allows the Board to appoint such officers, officials, experts, advisers and consultants, as it considers necessary, to assist the Secretariat in the discharge of its functions.

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According to him the cabinet also approved forwarding to the Federal Government the joint resolution No. 161 adopted by the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The resolution stated that: "Whereas the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



has been a victim of terrorism for several decades. During this time, thousands of innocent civilians and police personnel have laid down their lives. The people of the province are still yearning to be freed from this menace.

The ongoing incidents of terrorism continue to pose a constant threat to the lives and property of the public. In this regard, the policy of the Government of Pakistan concerning Afghanistan has proven to be ineffective. Instead of curbing terrorism, it has led to its escalation and has also strained the relations between the two countries and their peoples. It has further complicated the situation by promoting mutual hatred, affecting trade, and deteriorating law and order."

It says that "in this context, immediate and concrete measures have become essential to restore trust between the two brotherly nations and to establish lasting peace in the region." It recommended to the provincial government "to urge the federal government to reconsider and immediately revise its current policy regarding Afghanistan. Moreover, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be empowered to play an effective role in resolving all outstanding issues through direct and meaningful dialogue with Afghanistan, so that lasting peace and stability in the region can be ensured."

The cabinet approved forwarding of resolution No. 168 adopted by the Provincial Assembly of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the Federal Government. The resolution states that: "The House of (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly) expresses concerns over the Pahalgam incident and strongly condemns India's hostile actions, including threats pertaining to the Indus Water Treaty and acts of aggression against Pakistan. The House reaffirms its full support for the Government of Pakistan's sovereign right to safeguard National Interest through all necessary measures. We urge the international community to take immediate action of India's violation of international obligation and to play its role in preserving regional peace and stability.

(Continued on Back Page)





LAHORE: A man talking puff of Hukkah while sitting on tea stall on the eve of World No Tobacco Day is observed around the world every year on 31 May. —INP Photo

## Mayor sets precedent with new accountability initiative

KARACHI (PPI): Under the leadership of Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) Council reconvened, setting a historic precedent by holding Water Corporation officers accountable before public representatives.

This marked the first time officers were present to directly address council members' inquiries, highlighting the city's ongoing challenges regarding water supply and distribution.

Mayor Wahab emphasized the need for a democratic spirit in proceedings and proposed forming a committee with representation from all political parties to resolve water issues collaboratively.

Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad announced plans to involve K-Electric in future sessions to tackle broader city issues. COO Asadullah Khan acknowledged the significance of their appearance before the council and outlined ongoing projects, including the K-IV project under WAPDA's responsibility.

Khan noted that Karachi currently receives 550 MGD of water, far short of the 1200 MGD needed.

Mayor Wahab criticized delays in project authorizations and stressed the necessity of collective action to curb water theft and improve infrastructure. He pledged support from his team and cooperation with union council chairpersons to identify and address culprits involved in illegal hydrant operations. The meeting concluded with calls for improved revenue recovery from the Water Corporation and open discussions on infrastructure challenges.

The session saw participation from various political leaders and council members, underscoring a commitment to tackling Karachi's pressing water and infrastructure issues.

## Two peddlers arrested for selling crystal-meth

LAHORE (APP): Iqbal Town Police arrested two drug-traffickers over selling crystal methamphetamine (commonly known as 'ice'), here on Friday.

According to police officials, SHO Iqbal Town Amir Shehzad, along with a team, apprehended two individuals identified as Hamid and Mohsin from separate locations.

Hamid was arrested from the Ravi Block Market, while Mohsin was taken into custody near Doongi Ground, allegedly in possession of a quantity of ice. Police said that the two suspects were involved in the distribution of narcotics across various neighbourhoods of Iqbal Town.

A total of 1,730 grams of ice was recovered during the operation. Cases have been registered against the accused, who have been handed over to the investigation wing for further proceedings. Speaking on the operation, Superintendent of Police Dr Muhammad Umar lauded the performance of the local police team and reiterated the department's commitment to curbing drug-related crimes.

# Bangladesh High Commissioner calls on Governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Hussain called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed explored opportunities for enhancing collaboration between the two countries in diverse areas with special focus on education and trade during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Bangladesh and Pakistan are brotherly Islamic countries that share many values including history, religion and culture.

He said that the Pakistani people love their

Bangladeshi brothers and sisters, adding that there is a need to increase people-to-people contact between the two countries.

He expressed the hope that a new history will be written in the relations between the two countries under the current government of Bangladesh.

The Governor Punjab said that Bangladeshi students can pursue higher education in the fields of medical and engineering in Pakistan, adding the initiative of both countries to open the doors of higher education for students under the scholarship program is an excellent initiative.

He said the Punjab gov-

ernment can also consider providing scholarships to Bangladeshi students.

He further said Pakistan and Bangladesh can take trade relations to new heights by increasing import and export in various sectors. The Governor Punjab said Bangladesh can find export opportunities in coal and fishing sectors from Pakistan.

Bangladesh High Commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Hussain said there is vast potential for expanding relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the field of sports and culture. He said that Bangladesh is committed to strengthening ties with Pakistan in various sectors.

# Minister unveils vision for holistic energy policy

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Petroleum Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, shared the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and stressed for adoption of a holistic energy policy.

He was on his first official visit to SSGC, where he held meeting with Acting Managing Director Amin Rajput along with the senior management of the Company. He was given a comprehensive briefing on the overall structure of the organization, customer's complain redressal mechanism, Company's challenges especially in light of widening gas demand-supply scenario, steps taken to mitigate these challenges and massive rehabilitation of SSGC's pipeline infrastructure, recently conducted / being currently underway in various Company's franchise areas.

Earlier soon after his arrival he held a media meet in which he explained in detail the overall scenario of energy in the backdrop of economic factors. He said that energy sector is just like oxygen to the economy and we are taking

initiatives to keep the supply and tariffs in line with the international market. Early signs of recovery in key sectors have started showing up, but for that we need to maintain the same momentum and stability while moving forward, he said. Mr. Malik said that Prime Minister has clearly instructed to make decisions in line with all kinds of interests that can benefit the country, for which we are creating awareness and diligently moving in a focused way.

The Minister Petroleum said that issues related to downstream and upstream sectors are being worked on by the PM and the ministry. We are taking concrete steps to alleviate citizens' sufferings in the upcoming budget. He also said that government is taking all steps to put a stop on circular debt in the energy sector but for that we need time to achieve our targets in reduction of this debt despite IMF conditions.

With regards to the circular debt in gas sector he said that there are two main issues, one to break the flow for stopping it increasing any further and secondly to improve recoveries and

reduce expenditures. Besides discussions on the gas industry, the issued related to petroleum sector were also discussed in detail.

Before the conclusion of this media meet, SSGC's Acting Managing Director Amin Rajput replying to few queries raised by the journalists that were directly related to SSC's services, informed the media persons that 48 hours is the response time to resolve the customers' complaints except where road cuttings permission is required.

Replying to the PUG charges in gas bills, he said that these charges are due to slow meters which are based on an OGRA approved framework. Mr. Rajput informed that SSGC's massive pipeline network spans over 55,000 kms out of which a substantial segment has aged out and causing operational issues.

He said that unlike 150 kms annual rehabilitation of pipeline network in yesteryears, the Company has vigorously enhanced it to 2,500 kms every year, which has shown great improvement in the supplies of gas to the customers while simultaneously reducing the line losses.

# PCDMA Chief calls for reforms to curb export scheme misuse

KARACHI (PPI): Salim Valimuhammad, Chairman of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), has raised serious concerns about widespread misuse of the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS), warning that the current loopholes in the system could lead to the collapse of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) while causing significant revenue losses to the national exchequer.

In a statement here on Friday, Valimuhammad urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman to implement immediate corrective measures, emphasizing that raw materials imported under the duty-free scheme are being illegally diverted to the local market instead of being used for their intended export-oriented industrial purposes.

The PCDMA chief highlighted how the EFS, designed to allow export-oriented industries to import raw materials without sales tax, is being systematically abused. "The current practice of audits is inadequate. Why can't we verify these transactions in real time?" he questioned.

He proposed concrete measures to curb the misuse of the scheme, including linking raw material imports to verified Export Letters of Credit (LCs) and establishing fixed percentage ratios to limit duty-free imports. Goods subject to high tariffs and tax escalations are prone to exploitation under the Export Facilitation Scheme. To prevent such revenue leakages, he suggested that the government reduce the duty structure, cautioning that failure to do so would per-

petuate challenges in combating illicit trade activities.

"The ongoing abuse of EFS is creating a dual crisis - it's not just draining government revenues but also distorting the entire industrial ecosystem," Valimuhammad explained.

## SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Muhammad Saeed Amjad Judge Banking Court South Dera Ismail Khan camp Count Bannu. Case No: 13/1 Next Date: 24-6-25. Suit for recovery of Rs.1075104/86 HBL Preedy Bazar Bannu Vs. Imtiaz Khan Notice Versus: Mr. Imtiaz Khan S/o Syed Rehman Imtiaz cloth and tailoring house chai Bazar Bannu, R/o Faiz Talab Abbas Mandan Tehsil and Distt Bannu. Where is the plaintiff Bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.1075104/86 against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt / publication of the notice in the newspaper failing which an experte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.

Banking Court-II Peshawar

# Railways bridge collapse at Khanewal, one killed

LAHORE (APP): A tragic incident occurred at Khanewal Railway Station on Friday morning where a portion of the passenger bridge collapsed, resulting in the death of a railway employee and injuries to a woman. The mishap prompted immediate action from the federal government.

Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, took serious notice of the incident and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of life. He ordered strict action against those found responsible for the negligence.

Following the minister's directives, three railway officials were suspended with immediate effect. These include Grade-18 Divisional Engineer Abid Razaq, Grade-17 Assistant Engineer Raja Yousuf, and Grade-16 Bridge Inspector from Multan, Muhammad Adil.

An inquiry committee has been formed comprising the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan Railways, the Inspector General (IG) of Railways, and the Divisional Superintendent (DS) of Lahore to investigate the matter thoroughly. CEO Amir Ali Baloch

has already left for Khanewal to oversee the situation personally.

According to the railway spokesperson, the rescue operation at the site has been completed, and reconstruction work on the damaged portion of the bridge will begin soon. Despite the incident, railway traffic continues to run as per schedule.

The minister has assured the public that strict disciplinary action will be taken against those responsible for the structural failure, and steps will be implemented to prevent such incidents in the future.

## PPSC announces written exam results for SI, ASI posts

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) on Friday announced the written examination results for the posts of Sub-Inspector (SI) and Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) in various regions of the Punjab Police under the service quota.

According to PPSC Spokesperson Syed Kazim Muqaddas, the results are as follows: Sheikhupura Region (Sub-Inspector, Service Quota): 45 candidates qualified for 41 posts. Lahore Region (Sub-Inspector, Service Quota): 76 candidates qualified for 54 posts. Lahore Region (Assistant Sub-Inspector, Service Quota): 484 candidates qualified for 299 posts. Faisalabad Region (Assistant Sub-Inspector, Service Quota): 333 candidates qualified for 75 posts.

The complete list of successful candidates has been uploaded to the official PPSC website. Candidates who have qualified for the next stage are required to bring their original educational certificates, national identity card (CNIC), and all relevant documents at the time of the interview. A formal notification regarding the successful candidates has been issued by PPSC Secretary Afzal Ahmed.

## LDA seals another 97 properties

LAHORE (APP): On the directives of Director General LDA Tahir Farooq, the Town Planning Wing of the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) sealed another 97 properties in a comprehensive operation against illegal commercial buildings in LDA-controlled areas.

The crackdown was conducted in Gulberg, Faisal Town, Johar Town, Shadman, Shah Jamal, Main UBD Canal Road, Wahdat Road and Mustafa Town Scheme. In Gulberg and Faisal Town, 26 properties were sealed for unauthorized commercial use and non-payment of commercial fees. Similarly, 25 properties in blocks G2, G3, and G4 of Johar Town were also sealed.

Furthermore, LDA teams sealed 25 properties along Main UBD Canal Road, Shadman, and Shah Jamal. Another 21 properties were targeted during a recovery operation in Wahdat Road and Mustafa Town.

LAHORE (APP): A tragic incident occurred at Khanewal Railway Station on Friday morning where a portion of the passenger bridge collapsed, resulting in the death of a railway employee and injuries to a woman. The mishap prompted immediate action from the federal government.

Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, took serious notice of the incident and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of life. He ordered strict action against those found responsible for the negligence.

Following the minister's directives, three railway officials were suspended with immediate effect. These include Grade-18 Divisional Engineer Abid Razaq, Grade-17 Assistant Engineer Raja Yousuf, and Grade-16 Bridge Inspector from Multan, Muhammad Adil.

An inquiry committee has been formed comprising the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan Railways, the Inspector General (IG) of Railways, and the Divisional Superintendent (DS) of Lahore to investigate the matter thoroughly. CEO Amir Ali Baloch has already left for Khanewal to oversee the situation personally.

According to the railway spokesperson, the rescue operation at the site has been completed, and reconstruction work on the damaged portion of the bridge will begin soon. Despite the incident, railway traffic continues to run as per schedule.

The minister has assured the public that strict disciplinary action will be taken against those responsible for the structural failure, and steps will be implemented to prevent such incidents in the future.

# KP, Punjab launch joint RTI awareness initiative



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Chief Information Commissioner KP, Farah Hamid Khan called on her Punjab counterpart Malik Muhammad Phulla on May 30, 2025 in Lahore. Central theme of the meeting was working to raise awareness amongst people from different fields regarding Right to Information Law.

Launching of flagship program, to provide training on RTI especially in less privileged areas where there is a huge communication gap between local people and government officials.

Both the Commissioners vowed for adoption of joint strategy in collaboration with civil society partners to disclose proactively certain categories of information as

envisaged in the RTI Act to empower citizens and promote good governance.

In meeting both CICs agreed to continue their dialogue and explore further initiatives to bolster the implementation of RTI, including organizing joint workshops, public awareness campaigns, and further legal and procedural reforms.


# Punjab continues grant distribution to bar associations

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the legal infrastructure by continuing its grant distribution to bar associations across the province. In a landmark initia-

tive, nearly Rs. 67.5 million has been disbursed among ten bar associations at divisional, district, and tehsil levels, says a press release issued, here on Friday.

For the first time in the province's history, divi-

sional bar associations are receiving Rs. 10 million each, district bars Rs. 5 million each, and tehsil bars Rs. 2.5 million each under a wide-ranging support program launched by the Punjab government.



UBL Schedule of Bank Charges July to December 2025 has been issued. Please visit [www.ubldigital.com](http://www.ubldigital.com) or contact your nearest UBL branch for details.

**Schedule of Bank Charges**

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## INVITATION FOR BIDS

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES FOR ACQUIRING VEHICLE ON RENT BASIS UNDER OPEN FRAMEWORK CONTRACT**

- The Project Director Revamping of Non-Teaching DHQ Hospitals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, House # E/153 Canal road University Town Peshawar, invites Sealed Bids under National Competitive Bidding from consulting firm for the Procurement under Framework contract.
- Bidding shall be conducted through Single Stage One Envelopes Bidding Procedure comprising a single sealed package containing all relevant documents in compliance to Rule 14-2 (a) of KPRA Rules-2014 for selecting Best Evaluated Bid. The firm/s are bound to provide complete information of the bidder along with its postal as well as valid email address and phone number/s on each of the respective envelope.
- Interested Bidders must obtain Application Form along with complete set of bidding documents from the office of the Project Director during office hours on any working day till 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 @ Rs.1000. The Bidding Documents can also be downloaded from the following official websites:  
The detail terms & conditions are available in RFPs.
- Pre-conference meetings will be held on 05<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Office of the Project Director as mentioned. The bidders are requested to thoroughly study the Standard Bidding Documents before the pre-bid meeting for any clarification of their queries during the said meeting.
- Interested Bidders must submit sealed bids to the Office of the Project Director on or before 11:00 hours, Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025, which will be opened on the same day at 11:30 AM in the presence of those bidders or their representatives, who choose to attend the process. Bid submitted after 11:00 AM sharp and place other than the mentioned one shall not be entertained and shall be returned unopened.
- Mandatory Bid Security / Earnest Money amounting 200,000/- (fixed amount) of the quoted bid from each bidder's account in the name of undersigned is required to be submitted along with the Financial Bid within its sealed envelope. A separate photocopy of this Bids Security financial instrument should also be placed inside the sealed envelope of Technical Proposal. The Bid security shall be from the account of firm/bidder taking part in the bidding competition or otherwise shall lead to rejection of bid/s. Bid security in form of Pay Order (PO) shall not be acceptable and will lead to rejection of the bid without any further consideration.
- Bids must be computer typed & printed and the offered bid price must be written both in figures, however if mentioned in words shall be appreciated. Quotations with cutting and/or overwriting shall not be accepted to the extent of that particular quoted item having cutting / overwriting / erasing. An authorized person of the bidder / firm shall sign & stamp all pages of the bid. The same shall also contain product details in the form of original catalogue / brochures, if applicable.
- The bidders must be registered with relevant authority e.g. KPRA etc.
- The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the bids as per provisions contained in Rule 47 of KPRA Procurement Rules 2014.

**Project Director**  
Revamping of Non-Teaching DHQ Hospital  
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, pashawar  
Zero Tolerance to Corruption

INF/PJ2223/25



# PIC pioneers revolutionary intravascular lithotripsy



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) has achieved a significant breakthrough in cardiac care, becoming the first in Pakistan to successfully implement Intravascular Lithotripsy (IVL) technology. This ground-breaking procedure represents a major advancement in angioplasty, offering a safer and more effective treat-

ment for coronary artery disease.

Dr. Ali Raza, Medical Director at PIC and the cardiologist who led the IVL procedure, explained, "This cutting-edge technology uses sonic vibrations to shatter calcium deposits within hardened coronary arteries.

This makes it possible to effectively open these arteries, improving blood flow to the heart and significantly reducing the risks associ-

ated with traditional methods."

Dr. Abid, Head of Cardiology at PIC, further elaborated on the benefits. "IVL, while initially developed for kidney stone treatment, is now successfully employed to break up calcium build-up in narrowed arteries using a specialized balloon catheter.

This minimizes trauma to the artery, resulting in faster recovery times and reduced complication rates

compared to traditional drilling techniques."

He Said, "The procedure's success marks a significant improvement in the treatment of coronary artery disease in Pakistan. Patients will benefit from quicker recovery times, reduced post-operative discomfort, and a lower risk of complications.

Professor Dr. Shahkar Ahmad Shah, Dean and Chief Executive of PIC, stated, "The PIC team's success with IVL represents a new chapter in cardiac care in Pakistan. This advancement significantly elevates the standard of healthcare in our country. The Peshawar Institute of Cardiology is proud to provide world-class cardiac care to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan."

This achievement underscores PIC's commitment to providing state-of-the-art cardiac care and training healthcare professionals in the latest medical advancements. The introduction of IVL therapy marks a crucial step towards improved cardiac health outcomes for patients across Pakistan.

# Sohail reviews progress of newly constructed trauma unit at HMC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Communications and Works, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, paid an emergency visit to Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) Peshawar on Friday.

He reviewed the progress of the newly con-

structed Orthopedic, Spine, and Trauma Unit. Engineers from the C&W Department Peshawar and hospital administration officials accompanied him.

Speaking during the visit, Sohail Afridi said the project is a flagship initiative of the KP government aimed at upgrading the emergency and ICU departments of HMC with mod-

ern facilities.

He assured that the remaining construction work would be completed efficiently and on time.

Muhammad Sohail Afridi stressed the importance of timely delivery of medical equipment to make the facility fully operational.

Addressing concerns about a shortage of funds

raised by hospital management, he assured officials that the issue would be resolved through the relevant forum soon.

He emphasized that no negligence or delay would be tolerated in this vital public welfare project, and all departments must complete their work with quality and within the given timeline.

# MD SIDB says role of local industrialists is indispensable

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Abdul Hameed Khan Managing Director (MD) Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) has said that the role of local industrialists is indispensable in making Small Industries Estate Peshawar an ideal industrial zone. A tree plantation drive

will be start after Eid-ul-Fitr, in which industrialists should actively participate, he expressed these views in a meeting with a representative delegation of Small Industrialists Association Peshawar.

The delegation was led by President Waheed Arif Awan. The delegation included Haroon Shafiq,

Haji Habibullah, Haji Insaf, Gul Sharif, Haji Khalil-ur-Rehman, Nasir Muhammad Sohail, Shakeel Ahmed and Shahkar Awan. On this occasion, Director Finance Bashir Khan and Deputy MD Noman Fayyaz were also present.

MD Abdul Hameed Khan said on this occasion that practical steps have been

started to make Peshawar Small Estate clean. The administration wants this estate to have a unique identity so that the visitors know where it came from.

On this occasion, President Waheed Arif Awan congratulated Abdul Hameed Khan on his appointment as MD SIDB and termed it a good omen for the Department.

# Mechanical Engineering Project Exhibition held at UET Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Final Year Project Exhibition 2025, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UET Peshawar showcased 37 projects by the final year students the other day. Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar as chief guest inaugurated the exhibition alongwith Chairman Department of Mechanical engineering Prof. Dr. Hamid Ullah and faculty members. The event was organized by the Department of Mechanical Engineering under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Hamid Ullah, Chairman with assistance from ASHRE students' society and FYP Organizing Committee. The exhibition was sponsored by the Building Energy Research Center (BERC), UET Peshawar and Center for Intelligent Systems Network, (CISNR) UET Peshawar.

Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak as chief guest of the closing

ceremony urged collaboration between academia, industry and government. "I appreciate the students and their supervisors for presenting innovative ideas that each one of the projects has a potential for marketing. "We need to focus on the commercialization of these projects for the benefit of society and make strong collaboration with industry to provide multiple solutions to the industry, he added.

Prof. Dr. Hamid Ullah while addressing the closing ceremony said "Final Year Project Exhibition" is a regular feature of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, being arranged from the last 27 years to celebrate the achievements of the students and encourage them to communicate their project work to the public, especially the industry. He appreciated the industry and judges for their participation in the exhibition. He also appreciated the efforts of Dr. Shaukat Ali Shah Convener Final Year Project exhibition committee and Dr.

Muhammad Alamzaib Khan, President ASHRAE Muhammad Tayyab and Senior Vice President Muhammad Hashir for holding a successful project exhibition. Dr. Naveed Ahmed, Director BERC also spoke on the occasion and encouraged the students for start up and applied entrepreneurship skills that they learned during their studies.

Amongst the best design project awards, the "best green project" award was won by the students for the project, "Design of Solar integrated HVAC system for Mechanical Engineering Department (Main Campus)", supervised by Dr. Arshad Mehmood; Best Industry - University project was won by the students for project, "Design and fabrication of Assistive devices using extrusion base additive manufacturing" supervised by Engr. Adnan Rasheed while the Best research award was won by the students for the project, "Design and performance evaluation of a sustainable

HVAC system using TRN-SYS", supervised by Dr. Abid Hussain.

The first best project award was won by the students project, "semi autonomous pipeline inspection and monitoring robot for Oil and Gas industry" by Dr. M. Zeeshan Zahir, second best project award was won by the students for the project "Fabrication and Validation of Multidirectional Pin on Disc Wear Testing Machine for Novel UHMWPE", supervised by Engr. Kaleem Ullah Khalil and third best project award was won for the project, "Design and Fabrication of Energy Efficient Smart Water Heating System", supervised by Dr. Fakhr Alam Khan. At the end, Prof. Dr. Sadiq Khattak and Prof. Dr. Hamid Ullah gave shields to the winners followed by the judges, student societies and FYP organizing committee. The exhibition was attended by a large number of students, faculty and representatives from different industries.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif, presenting a cheque of Rs. 50 million to President of Peshawar Press Club Muhammad Riaz on behalf of the provincial government as financial assistance to the club.

# KhUJ Sports Gala kicks off with colorful opening ceremony

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A three-day media sports festival for members of the Khyber Union of Journalists began in a grand ceremony in collaboration with the Directorate Sports and Sports Writers Association on Friday. Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tashfeen Haider officially inaugurated the event by cutting the ribbon at the Peshawar Tahmas Khan Football Stadium.

On this occasion, DSO Peshawar Mishal Malik, RSO Kashif Farhan, President Khyber Union of Journalists Kashifuddin Syed, President Peshawar Press Club M Riaz, senior journalists Faridullah, Zia-ul-Haq and former President Khyber Union of Journalists Nasir Hussain and a large number of members were present.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider said that the journalists of the province have made great sacrifices in discharging their professional responsibilities well and that is why the



services of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa journalists in the war against terrorism have not gone unnoticed.

He said that organizing such an event is very important for the journalistic community in this suffocating environment. It is necessary, for which the leadership of the Khyber Union of Journalists deserves praise.

He said that the journalistic community is among our priorities and coopera-

tion with them will continue in the future.

Earlier, President of the Khyber Union of Journalists Kashif uddin Syed thanked the chief guest and said that the main objective of the sports festival is to provide entertainment opportunities for journalists so that they can participate in sports along with their journalistic responsibilities.

He said that the Directorate of Sports has always supported journal-

ists and he hopes that this will continue in the future as well.

Giving details about the sports festival, he said that this sports festival includes seven different sports including badminton, foot ball, swimming, musical chairs, throw ball, tug of war and archery for women. More than two hundred members are participating in these competitions, which will last for one to three days.

# Strict guidelines issued for eid cattle markets in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, the district administration of Peshawar held a key meeting to finalize preparations for the festival.

The meeting was chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Rao Hashim Azeem on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Sarmed Saleem Akram.

Officials from various departments attended the session, where detailed briefings were given on arrangements related to cattle markets, sanitation, traffic management, public facilities, and security.

The ADC directed that all cattle markets across tehils be supervised by the district administration, with full support from rel-

evant departments.

Livestock Department veterinarians will inspect animals at entry points, ensure anti-parasitic sprays are applied, and oversee hygiene in the markets. Police and traffic officials will also be deployed to maintain order and ensure smooth traffic flow.

Cattle market owners

were instructed to follow the government's code of conduct strictly, designate separate areas for animals, use bamboo fencing, and establish separate pathways for better crowd movement.

Authorities were also ordered to take immediate action against unauthorized cattle markets to avoid traffic congestion.

# Skyrocketing prices, scorching heat Buyers struggle in sacrificial animal markets

PESHAWAR (APP): Wiping sweat from his brow with a white handkerchief under the unforgiving sun, 64-year-old Fayya Khan, a retired PST teacher, scoured Peshawar's Lala Qala cattle market in search of a modest sacrificial animal he could afford.

Despite hours of bargaining on Friday, including a spirited negotiation for a Kohistani sheep priced beyond his Rs80,000 budget, he left empty-handed — a story increasingly common as Eidul Azha approaches.

"I came from WAPDA Town hoping to find a sheep or goat within my means, but prices are much higher than last year in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where sacrificial ritual will become merely a dream for many pensioners like him if not checked," said Fayaz Khan. "Now, I'm considering joining a collective qurbani with neighbours."

Markets across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — from Ring Road to Hayatabad, Charsadda Road, Amangarh and Pabbi — are seeing a surge in prices of sacrificial animals this year as the livestock dept and district administration paid a deaf years.

Cattle traders from Punjab, Sindh, and even Balochistan have flooded the KP markets with live-



stock, yet many visitors are merely surveying prices before retreating in frustration.

A survey by APP on Friday found that the high cost of sacrificial animals, compounded by inflation, transportation costs, and fodder prices, has deterred many potential buyers — especially salaried individuals and pensioners, waiting for last days with hope of reduction in prices.

"Since Sunday, I have sold only 10 goats out of 200, and just two of the 60 oxen I brought from Sahiwal," said Sohail Khan, a trader from Nowshera. "The cost of transporting 40 truckloads of animals from Punjab and feeding them here is huge."

Traders say losses due to animal deaths from heatstroke or diseases like lumpy skin can be devastating — adding pressure to sell at higher prices.

The punishing heat has also led many buyers to explore online options. Digital platforms offering home delivery of sacrificial animals have seen growing interest, denting the traditional market traffic further.

Dr Aftab Ahmad, Director of Livestock and Dairy Development KP, acknowledged the impact of online platforms but warned of other pressing concerns.

"Lumpy skin disease and heatstroke are major risks this season," he said. "We've deployed DVM veterinarians across markets and established checkpoints to inspect livestock and spray fumigants."

According to him, about 70% of the animals sold in KP are imported from Punjab to meet demand. Poor infrastructure — including lack of shelters, clean water, and sanitation — has added to the woes of

both traders and buyers. The recent torrential rains damaged local livestock availability, stakeholders point towards unchecked smuggling of sacrificial animals.

Zahid Shinwari, former President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said large-scale transportation of animals to Afghanistan is a key factor behind surging prices. He called for a tripartite agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India to regulate livestock exports and stabilize local markets.

"People in KP are forced to pay more because animals are being sold across the border for higher profits," he claimed. Despite the challenges, millions of Pakistanis prepare to perform qurbani — the symbolic act of sacrifice during Eidul Azha. Last year alone, over six million animals were sacrificed across the country, worth an estimated Rs531 billion, according to the Pakistan Tanners Association.

This year, however, many like Fayaz Khan are left hoping for a miracle — or at least a price drop on the final day before Eid.

The buyers demanded improved civic services including water and shelters at cattle markets besides regulating prices of castles to facilitate people.





## In brief

### Parties, traders join hands F.P. Report

PABBI: A joint meeting of all parties and traders' organizations has been called for today (on Saturday) at 5 pm at the Pabbi Press Club to discuss the issue of load shedding by WAPDA in the city. The meeting will be attended by representatives of various political parties and traders' organizations, including the Pakistan Peoples Party, Awami National Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Jamaat-e-Islami, and others. The objective of the meeting is to announce a collective movement against WAPDA's load shedding policy. The President of Tehsil Press Club Pabbi, Muhammad Ilyas, has stated that load shedding has made life difficult for the people of Pabi city and immediate action is needed to address this issue. The meeting will discuss measures like taking to the streets to protest, wheel jam strike and to compel the government to immediately change WAPDA's load shedding policy. The residents of Pabbi city facing severe load shedding issues for a long time, which has affected their daily lives and businesses. The traders' community has also been severely impacted due to the prolonged power outages, which has resulted in financial losses.

### AD&SJ convicts one F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Shangle Muhammad Khan Yousafzai has sentenced Amani Rome to 25 years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2 lacs. The accused was found guilty in case No. 221, dated 05/10/2024, registered at Aloch Police Station under sections 376 PPC and 53 CPA. The court delivered the detailed verdict on Friday. The verdict was welcomed by various circles, who praised it as a triumph of justice. Meanwhile, the District Resolution Council (DRC) in Shangle has been successfully resolving minor disputes through amicable settlements and mutual consent, significantly reducing the burden on the police and judiciary. Chairman of the DRC Shangle, Baharuddin, a retired DSP, stated this while presenting the council's review report. He praised the performance of DRC members, saying they have done a commendable job in resolving disputes through dialogue and mutual consent.

### Prof Jamshed assumes charge F.P. Report

BUNER: Professor Dr. Jamshed Ali Khan assumed charge of the office of Vice Chancellor of the University of Buner on Friday. Media and Protocol Officer Shahid Ali Khan said in a press release that the University of Buner is honored to announce that Professor Dr. Jamshed Ali Khan has officially assumed charge as the new Vice Chancellor of the university. Professor Dr. Jamshed Ali Khan is a renowned academic and experienced administrator with an extensive track record in higher education, research and institutional development. His appointment is a significant milestone in the university's journey towards academic excellence, innovation and community service. The university community, including faculty, staff and students, warmly welcomes Professor Dr. J.A. Khan and looks forward to his visionary leadership in shaping the bright future of the institution.

# Teacher tortures to death a student in Jamrud

Amjad Ali Afridi

JAMRUD: A student of fifth grade of a private school was beaten to death by the Principal of the school here in Sur Kamar, Bughyari area of Jamrud, district Khyber on Friday.

Confirming the incident at the police station, Jamrud official said that the school's Principal Waqar Ahmad brutally subjected the student, Ittehad Khan son of Khyalmat Khan to baton charge in morning assembly over a pretty matter and injured him seriously. The wounded learner was shifted to Jamrud hospital but succumbed to his injuries, police said.

Immediately after viral the news on the social media, District Police Officer, Khyber Rai Mazahar Iqbal took serious notice of the happen and directed the Station House Officer (SHO) Jamrud for necessary action.

SHO, Jamrud Naseem Khan along with a police party apprehended the allegedly culprit teacher and lodged First Information Report (FIR) against him, official said. DPO in his harsh reaction said that torturing and beating of children and women would be tolerated and no one would be permitted to utilize the holy professional of teaching and torture the



learner to death.

We will make the incident an example for others so that no one will dare to tyrannize children in the name of education, he added. The mishap saddened the whole area and parents demanded the

concerned authority to ensure imposition of law word and spirit, banning corporal punishment to students in educational institutions. It is worth mentioning here that the deceased student was an orphan.

# No Tobacco Day marked with call to quit smoking

F.P. Report

JEHANGIRA: Alternative Research Initiative (ARI) and its partners across Pakistan have urged the federal and provincial governments to provide free cessation services for adult smokers and establish balanced regulations for alternative tobacco products.

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, they maintained that for achieving the target of a smoke-free Pakistan, adult smokers need help to quit, ensuring free cessation services are available at the district level. "At the same time, every effort should be made to keep the young away from smoking," said Arshad Ali Syed, project director of ARI.

Arshad added that New

Zealand passed a groundbreaking law that permanently banned cigarette sales to anyone born after 2008. "Given the bulge of young population in Pakistan, the country needs such a law. As time progresses, fewer people will be legally allowed to buy tobacco, effectively phasing out smoking for future generations," he said.

Alternative tobacco products are being sold and used in Pakistan in a policy vacuum. "This needs to be addressed on an urgent basis. Less harmful alternative tobacco products can help in bringing down the smoking prevalence, provided their use is sensibly regulated."

Arshad said 20 years ago, Pakistan ratified the FCTC, but the problem of

combustible smoking persists. "With more than 31 million tobacco users, Pakistan needs to review its tobacco control framework. There is a need to explore the possibilities that alternative tobacco products offer."

He added that the world was moving toward eliminating combustible smoking, but unfortunately, Pakistan is still relying on the policy of disrupting the supply and demand of cigarettes. "Over the last two decades, this has not worked." ARI and its partner organizations believe the time for action is now. With concerted efforts from policymakers, public health advocates, and the community, Pakistan can pave the way for a healthier, smoke-free society.

# Workshop held at KUST

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: An awareness workshop highlighting the humanitarian activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) under the special directives of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas.

Representatives from the ICRC Peshawar Sub-delegation, Zeeshan Anwar (Communication Team Leader) and Salman Khan (Health Care in Danger Program Manager), were the keynote guests at the event. The workshop was

hosted and coordinated by Anwar Khan, Chairman of the Department of Journalism.

During the session, the speakers elaborated on ICRC's global and national humanitarian initiatives, its mandate, and its core principles. They emphasized the importance of humanitarian journalism, responsible reporting, and ethical standards. The speakers urged journalists to uphold the dignity and respect of individuals affected by crises during media coverage.

A special segment of the workshop was dedicated to introducing the global "Health Care in Danger" campaign, which focuses on the risks faced by healthcare workers and institutions in

emergency situations, and the need for effective strategies to ensure their protection. The role of media in addressing these challenges ethically and professionally was also discussed in detail.

The workshop was attended by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseeruddin, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences Dr. Dilawar Khan, Public Relations Officer Rashid Ishaq, faculty members of the Journalism Department including Dr. Rehman Ullah, Fazal Wahid, Zain-ul-Qamar Paracha, Aamna Gul, along with faculty, staff, and students from various departments of the university.

## RPO reviews security and development projects F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand Range, Sher Akbar Khan, paid an official visit to Lower Dir to assess the security situation and review ongoing police development projects in the district.

During the visit, RPO Sher Akbar Khan, accompanied by District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Salam Khalid, inspected multiple police posts and installations. The sites inspected included Khadagzai Police Station, Bab-e-Dir, Nasafa Check Post, Zolam Post, and the newly established Police Lines at Wali Kandao.

The RPO examined the progress and quality of ongoing construction projects at various sites and directed officials to ensure their timely completion while maintaining high standards of work.

At Timergara Police Station, RPO Sher Akbar Khan reviewed station records, registers, detention cells, and front desk operations. He instructed the police personnel to deal with the public in a courteous and professional manner.

DPO Abdul Salam Khalid briefed the RPO on both security arrangements and the status of development initiatives across the district. Commending the efforts of the Lower Dir police, the RPO emphasized that protecting the lives and property of citizens must remain the police force's foremost priority. He urged officers to make full use of available resources to ensure law and order in the region.

## ICU ward setup Benazir Institute of Trauma F.P. Report

LARKANA: A new Intense Care Unit (ICU) with 50 beds was established by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Institute of Trauma in Larkana, and an inauguration ceremony was held.

The ward was inaugurated by Sabir Memon, Executive Director of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Institute of Trauma, along with Commissioner Larkana, Vice Chancellor of SMMB University Nusrat Shah and others. On this occasion addressing the ceremony, Executive Director SMMBIT Sabir Memon said that the establishment of this new ICU ward will greatly benefit the people of Larkana and its surrounding areas. Chandka Medical College is a 1500-bed hospital. Commissioner Larkana Tahir Hussain Sangi said that the health sector has also been lost in other districts of Sindh including Sukkur, Larkana and Jacobabad, and it is especially important to have an ICU ward in the district hospital so that the patients can get the best medical facilities.

**Royal Super King Tournament held:** The final match of the ongoing Royal Super King Six 2025 tournament in Larkana was held yesterday at the PTS Ground in the city between Larkana Kings and New Laghari team, in which the New Laghari Shahdadt team won the toss and invited the Larkana Kings team to bat.

# Anti-polio campaign reviewed in Kohat F.P. Report

KOHAT: In order to review the performance of the 4th day of the ongoing polio campaign, Review Meetings were held in the all the district Headquarters of the Kohat Division under the chairmanship of the respective Deputy Commissioners.

The meetings besides others, were also attended by the respective District Police Officers, officers of the district administrations and authorities concerned of the health department. Deputy Commissioners reviewed in detail the targets set for the success of the polio campaign and issued directions to make the polio campaign a success in the coming days. They sternly directed the polio teams to ensure access to every child left from administering polio

drops during the catch-up days and wherever administrative cooperation is required, the administrations are ready for it any time.

The parents have been appealed to give their children polio drops to protect them from permanent disability and cooperate with the polio teams so that the entire Kohat Division can be made a Polio-Free Division.

Meanwhile, Former Federal Interior Minister and Member of the National Assembly Shehryar Khan Afridi has along-with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali participated in the Final Match of the Cricket Tournament at Kohat Sports Complex as a Chief Guest. On the occasion of the Final of the tournament, the enthusiasm of cricket fans and common people was

extremely exemplary.

The guests also met the players and encouraged the youth to participate in sports as much as possible. At the end of the match, a prize distribution ceremony was held in which the winner and runner-up teams were awarded with trophies and shields. Individual prizes were also distributed among the best players of the tournament.

Addressing the event, Shehryar Afridi and DC Kohat said that sports not only keep the youth engaged in positive activities but also become a source of social harmony. They said that there is great talent in the youth of Kohat but needs to be unearthed. Through sports, not only a healthy society can be formed but also prepare the youth to play an important role in the development of the nation, they concluded.

# IG inaugurates traffic driving school at Lakki F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Hameed inaugurated the traffic driving school and multipurpose Auditorium Hall at police lines in the Tajazai District Headquarters Complex.

RPO Bannu Sajjad Khan and DPO Lakki Marwat Muhammad Jawad Ishaq were also present on the occasion. Upon reaching the police lines, an alert police contingent presented a guard of honour to the provincial police officer who also visited the martyrs' monument, placed floral wreaths there and offered Fateha for the martyrs.

The district police chief

gave him a detailed briefing about the current law and order situation, police officials' performance, ongoing civil work in police stations and check posts and challenges faced by the police force. The IGP said that the establishment of a driving school would help teach citizens especially youths with basic and practical driving skills and also raise awareness about traffic laws and road safety.

"The traffic school will also play a vital role in training citizens on the principles of safe driving and reducing traffic related problems in the district", he maintained. Zulfiqar said that enhancing police personnel's capabilities and

professionalism was his top priority as it would help to improve law and order, curb crimes and eliminate terrorism in the region.

He lauded Lakki Marwat district police force for its bravery and rewarded the district police officer and other cops with commendation certificates and cash prizes. The IGP also inaugurated a newly constructed building block at the police lines in Bannu district. He also chaired a meeting attended by RPO Sajjad, DPO Saleem Abbas Kulachi and other police officials to discuss matters pertaining to law and order and actions against anti-state and anti-pace elements.

# Media calls for urgent family planning investments to secure Pakistan's future F.P. Report

QUETTA: Media professionals across Pakistan have issued a strong call for urgent government investment in family planning as a key to sustainable national development.

They emphasized that Pakistan's future hinges on child-focused policies—improving child survival, boosting nutrition, expanding education, and enabling parents to make informed family planning choices.

This consensus emerged at the Media Coalition Meeting hosted by the Population Council in collaboration with UNFPA. Speakers highlighted the media's critical role in influencing public opinion and shaping development narratives.

"Media professionals are today's frontline defenders in the battle for sustainable development," said Dr Ali Mir, Senior Director at the Population Council. He stressed that population planning is not about numbers but about ensuring every child is born into a supportive environment, with access to dignity, equity, and opportunity.

Citing the 1994 ICPD

and its reaffirmation at ICPD+25, he urged a life-long approach to reproductive health, starting with child survival.

Presenting alarming data, Ikram ul Ahad, Deputy Manager at the Population Council, revealed Pakistan's severe human capital crisis. According to WHO, nearly 675 newborns die daily, and 26 million children are out of school. Around 40% of children under five are stunted, drastically limiting cognitive development. Pakistani children reach only 41% of their potential, compared to 78% in the UK. Regional disparities further compound the crisis: Sindh's child stunting rate stands at 50%, Balochistan's primary school attendance is just 22%, and Punjab's under-five mortality is 80 per 1,000 births.

These challenges are rooted in underinvestment, with Pakistan's health and education spending falling below global standards and regional neighbors. Yet, hope lies in action. The Pakistan @2050 report indicates that reducing population growth to 1.2% by 2030 could significantly boost GDP, double per capita income, cut the number of out-of-

school children to 8%, and triple female post-secondary education.

Participants emphasized that family planning is a driver of progress across all sectors. They called for wider access to modern contraceptives—especially Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs)—tax exemptions on contraceptive imports, improved pharmacy availability, and enforcement of Article 25-A guaranteeing free, compulsory education. Gender-responsive budgeting focused on women and children was also underscored.

Dr Ghulam Farid Khan from UNFPA highlighted the media's power to drive social change, calling family planning essential to achieving sustainable development. Ali Mazhar Choudhary, Communication Director at the Population Council, urged journalists to continue shaping public perception and turning awareness into action. The meeting concluded with a unified media pledge; to act as watchdogs, demand accountability, and champion investment in family planning to secure Pakistan's future and uplift generations to come.

# Curated calm: A reality beyond the hashtag

Aiza Khawar Rahman

**I**N recent years, the language of healing has found a new home in Pakistan's urban elite. Instagram feeds are awash with muted tones and pastel affirmations: "You are enough," "Manifest the life you desire," "Protect your peace." Mental health awareness has become fashionable, boundaries are the new buzzword and therapy, once a taboo, is now almost a marker of status.

While this shift is, in many ways, a welcome departure from the stigma that once surrounded mental health, it also presents a complex set of questions about access, authenticity, and the commodification of well-being.

It does feel promising. In a country where generational trauma often goes unnamed and mental health is routinely dismissed, the act of even speaking about emotional wellbeing is quietly revolutionary. But beneath the surface of this curated calm lies a more complex, uncomfortable

question: is this truly healing, or is it performance? Is it a genuine attempt to grapple with the complexities of the human condition, or simply another way for the privileged to distinguish themselves.

Don't get me wrong — I believe in the importance of mental health, emotional reflection, and self-growth. In a country like ours, where trauma often goes unnamed and pain is inherited in silence, the very act of speaking about emotions can feel revolutionary. But lately, I've noticed how quickly this healing language is being co-opted into something curated, filtered, and at times, hollow. Take, for instance, the rise of wellness influencers, who promote a lifestyle that often feels unattainable to those outside a very specific socioeconomic bracket. But doesn't it strike you as made up?

Take manifestation, for example. What began as a deeply introspective practice is now the backbone of countless vision boards, morning routines, and "soft life" TikToks. Write down

your goals. Light a candle. Meditate. Manifest. Easy enough, right? But what happens when this narrative is handed to someone living paycheck to paycheck? Someone battling depression without access to care? Someone still negotiating safety in their own home? The danger here isn't in the practice itself, but in the illusion that individual mindset alone can erase systemic barriers.

This version of healing — the one that's algorithm-friendly, perfectly lit, and emotionally digestible — is designed for people who already live in comfort. And while they're sipping matcha and posting "high vibration only" memes, the rest of the country is just trying to afford electricity. This isn't to say that wealthy people don't experience pain, or that their struggles are somehow less valid. However, it's important to recognize the context in which these narratives emerge, and to question the impact they have on those who don't have the same access.

It's not that therapy, healing,

or manifestation are bad — quite the opposite. They're necessary. But when they're co-opted by the privileged and packaged like lifestyle trends, they lose their meaning. Healing becomes a brand. Trauma becomes content. And therapy becomes yet another thing to perform.

Even the language is telling. "Cut out toxic people." "Protect your peace." "Set boundaries." These are important tools — but not everyone has the option to use them. When your survival depends on the very people you're told to remove, self-care becomes a cruel joke. Where do those boundaries go when a young nanny is made to sit apart from the family at a restaurant? I hope the irony is not lost on you when you see it again.

Meanwhile, Pakistan is burning — sometimes literally. Inflation is suffocating, floods displace entire communities, and violence against women continues with little consequence. But instead of confronting that reality, the privileged retreat into curated self-help bubbles. Healing

becomes a bubble bath, not a political act.

The question is, how do we reclaim the language of healing?

Real healing, the kind that actually liberates — is messy and uncomfortable. It asks hard questions. It is disruptive and it demands to dismantle the very systems that created the trauma in the first place—wellness feminism, patriarchy, poverty and silence. But that's not aesthetic. It doesn't get likes. But why has trauma become aesthetic? Why is it just a moodboard for 24 hours on a story and then forgotten about.

Healing, at its best, isn't always pretty. It's raw. It often involves grief, accountability, and deep discomfort. But if we want it to be real — and not just performative — then we must ask harder questions, have harder conversations, and recognize that wellness cannot exist in isolation from justice. You cannot advocate for both and then fail to confront the latter. There is nothing apolitical about who gets to rest, who gets to speak, and who is silenced. There is nothing neutral

about who can afford a therapist, and who is shamed for breaking down.

When self-care becomes a form of escapism, it abandons the very people who need care the most. It says: your survival is your responsibility, your suffering is a mindset problem, and your healing must look beautiful to be valid. In that way, wellness culture doesn't just ignore injustice — it becomes part of the machinery that sustains it.

So, while the hashtags and affirmations may offer temporary comfort, true healing requires a confrontation with reality — a reality that extends far beyond the perfectly filtered lens of social media. A reality where class, gender and structural violence are not concepts but conditions.

So yes, post the quote. Burn the candle. Whisper your affirmations. Just don't mistake performance for progress. Because if your healing doesn't extend to your house help, your driver, your community — it's not healing. It's a luxury.





GAZA STRIP: Palestinians carrying aid supplies they received from US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, in Khan Younis.

## Cholera outbreak in Susan killed over 170 people

CAIRO (AP): A fast-spreading cholera outbreak has hit Sudan, killing 172 people, with more than 2,500 others becoming ill in the past week. Centered around Khartoum, the disease has spread as many Sudanese who had fled the country's war return to their homes in the capital and its twin city of Omdurman. There, they often can only find unclean water - a dangerous conduit for cholera - since much of the health and sanitation infrastructure has collapsed amid the fighting.

It is the latest calamity for the African nation, where a 2-year-old civil war has caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. The latest outbreak has killed 172 people, with more than 2,500 others becoming ill over the past week, according to the Health Ministry. UNICEF said that the number of reported cases surged ninefold from 90 a day to 815 a day since from May 15-25. Since the beginning of the year, more than 7,700 people have been diagnosed with cholera, including more than 1,000 children under the age of 4, it said.

Most cases have been reported in Khartoum and Omdurman, but cholera was also detected in five surrounding provinces, the ministry said. Joyce Bakker, the Sudan coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, said the group's treatment centers in Omdurman are overwhelmed with patients.

The "scenes are disturbing," Bakker said. "Many patients are arriving too late to be saved ... We don't know the true scale of the out-

break, and our teams can only see a fraction of the full picture." Khartoum and Omdurman were a battleground throughout the civil war, nearly emptying them of residents. The region of the capital was recaptured by the military in late March from its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, or RSF. Since then, some 34,000 people have returned. But the city has been wrecked by months of fighting. Many found their homes damaged. Clean water is difficult to find, in part because attacks on power plants have disrupted electricity and worsened water shortages, UNICEF said. Sanitation systems are damaged.

"People have been drinking polluted water and transferring water into unhygienic containers," said Dr. Rania Elsayegh, with Sudan's Doctors for Human Rights. Health workers fear the outbreak could spread quickly, since many people are packed into displacement centers making it difficult to isolate those infected. The health system has also broken down. More than 80% of hospitals are out of service and those that are operating have shortages of water, electricity and medication, said Dr. Sayed Mohamed Abdullah, of Sudan's Doctors Union.

The World Health Organization describes cholera as a "disease of poverty" because it spreads where there is poor sanitation and a lack of clean water. It is a diarrheal disease caused when people eat food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. It is easily treatable with rehydration solutions and anti-

otics. Most of those infected have only mild symptoms but, in severe cases, the disease can kill within hours if left untreated.

The WHO's global stockpile of oral cholera vaccines has dropped below its minimum threshold of 5 million doses, making it increasingly difficult to stop outbreaks. At the same time, cholera epidemics have been on the rise around the world since 2021, because of poverty, conflict and extreme climate events like floods and cyclones, the UN says. The civil war has devastated Sudan since it erupted in April 2023, when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF exploded into open warfare across the country.

At least 24,000 people have been reported killed, though the number is likely far higher. More than 14 million have been displaced and forced from their homes, including over 4 million who streamed into neighboring countries. Famine was announced in at least five locations with the epicenter in the wrecked Darfur region.

The fighting has been marked by atrocities including mass rape and ethnically motivated killings that the UN and international rights groups say amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Devastating seasonal floods have compounded Sudan's misery. Each year, dozens of people have been killed and critical infrastructure washed away. Cholera is not uncommon in Sudan. In 2017, cholera left at least 700 dead and sickened about 22,000 in less than two months.

## SpaceX launches another Starship rocket after back-to-back explosions

TEXAS (AP): After back-to-back explosions, SpaceX launched its mega rocket Starship again, but fell short of the main objectives when the spacecraft tumbled out of control and broke apart. The 403-foot (123-meter) rocket blasted off on its ninth demo from Starbase, SpaceX's launch site at the southern tip of Texas. Residents voted this month to organize as an official city.

CEO Elon Musk 's SpaceX hoped to release a series of mock satellites following liftoff, but that got nixed because the door failed to open all the way. Then the spacecraft began spinning as it skimmed space toward an uncontrolled landing in the Indian Ocean. SpaceX later confirmed that the spacecraft experienced "a rapid unscheduled disassembly," or burst apart. "Teams will

continue to review data and work toward our next flight test," the company said in an online statement.

Musk noted in a post on X it was a "big improvement" from the two previous demos, which ended in flaming debris over the Atlantic. Despite the latest setback, he promised a faster launch pace moving forward, with a Starship soaring every three to four weeks for the next three flights. It was the first time one of Musk's Starships - intended for moon and Mars travel - flew with a recycled booster. There were no plans to catch the booster with giant chopsticks back at the launch pad, with the company instead pushing it to its limits. Contact with the booster was lost at one point, and it slammed into the Gulf of Mexico in pieces as the spacecraft continued

toward the Indian Ocean. Then the spacecraft went out of control, apparently due to fuel leaks.

"Not looking great with a lot of our on-orbit objectives for today," said SpaceX flight commentator Dan Huot. The company had been looking to test the spacecraft's heat shield during a controlled reentry. Communication ceased before the spacecraft came down, and SpaceX ended its webcast soon afterward. The previous two Starships never made it past the Caribbean. The demos earlier this year ended just minutes after liftoff, raining wreckage into the ocean. No injuries or serious damage were reported, although airline travel was disrupted. The Federal Aviation Administration last week cleared Starship for another flight, expanding the hazard area and

pushing the liftoff outside peak air travel times. Besides taking corrective action and making upgrades, SpaceX modified the latest spacecraft's thermal tiles and installed special catch fittings. This one was meant to sink in the Indian Ocean, but the company wanted to test the add-ons for capturing future versions back at the pad, just like the boosters.

NASA needs SpaceX to make major strides over the next year with Starship - the biggest and most powerful rocket ever built - in order to land astronauts back on the moon. Next year's moonshot will fly four astronauts will fly around the moon, but will not land. That will happen in 2027 at the earliest and require a Starship to get two astronauts from lunar orbit to the surface and back off again.

## Trump admn asked Japan to increase share of costs of US troops

TOKYO (Reuters): The Trump administration asked Japan in early May to increase its share of costs for US troops stationed there, prompting Tokyo to consider boosting facility funding by tens of billions of yen, the Asahi Shimbun reported, citing government sources.

The current annual average cost borne by Japan for the stationing of US forces is about 211 billion yen (\$1.45 billion). The Japanese government has started considering an increase in the budget for the construction of facilities provided to US forces stationed in Japan, such as barracks, family housing, administrative buildings and disaster prevention facilities, the Asahi report said.

Asked about the report after meeting with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Japan's tariff negotiator Ryosei Akazawa said national security and tariff policies are different matters. However, Akazawa said the purchase of defence equipment would contribute to the US trade surplus, so "in that context, (the subject) could be considered to some extent" in the tariff talks. Akazawa is scheduled to visit the US for another round of tariff negotiations.

## Judge stabbed to death in Iran

TEHRAN (AP): A judge was stabbed to death on his way to work in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz, state media reported. A report by the official IRNA news agency called the killing a "terrorist act," adding that two unidentified assailants are still at large. It identified the judge as Ehsun Bagheri, 38, who worked for the city's judicial department.

Bagheri in the past worked as a prosecutor in the revolutionary court, which court deals with security and drug smuggling cases. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Iran has witnessed other killings of judges in the past. In January, a man fatally shot two prominent hard-line judges in Iran's capital Tehran, both of whom allegedly took part in the mass execution of dissidents in 1980s.

## Sweden to summon Israeli envoy

C O P E N H A G E N (Reuters): Sweden's foreign ministry will summon Israel's ambassador in Stockholm to protest against a lack of humanitarian aid to people in Gaza, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said.

Last week, under growing international pressure, Israeli authorities allowed a trickle of aid into the Palestinian enclave but the few hundred trucks carried only a tiny fraction of the food needed by a population of 2 million at risk of famine after nearly three months of blockade. Kristersson told Swedish news agency TT that the European Union should impose sanctions and exert diplomatic pressure on Israel to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza.

"We have been incredibly clear about that, ourselves and together with many other European countries," Kristersson told TT. "That pressure is now increasing, no doubt, and for very good reasons," he said. The Swedish prime minister's office confirmed to Reuters that Kristersson had made the statement.

Israel launched an air and ground war in Gaza after Hamas militants' cross-border attack on October 7, 2023, which killed some 1,200 people by Israeli tallies and saw 251 hostages abducted into Gaza. The Israeli campaign has since killed more than 53,900 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, and devastated the coastal strip. Aid groups say signs of severe malnutrition are widespread.

## Putin wants a pledge to halt NATO enlargement

MOSCOW (Reuters): President Vladimir Putin's conditions for ending the war in Ukraine include a demand that Western leaders pledge in writing to stop enlarging NATO eastwards and lift a chunk of sanctions on Russia, according to three Russian sources with knowledge of the negotiations.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he wants to end the deadliest European conflict since World War Two and has shown increasing frustration with Putin in recent days, warning the Russian leader was "playing with fire" by refusing to engage in ceasefire talks with Kyiv as his forces made gains on the battlefield. After speaking to Trump for more than two hours last week, Putin said that he had agreed to work with Ukraine on a memorandum that would establish the contours of a peace accord, including the timing of a ceasefire. Russia says it is currently drafting its version of the memorandum and cannot estimate how long that will take.

Kyiv and European governments have accused Moscow of stalling while its troops advance in eastern Ukraine. "Putin is ready to make peace but not at any price," said one senior Russian source with knowledge of top-level Kremlin thinking, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The three Russian sources said Putin wants a "written" pledge by major Western powers not to enlarge the US-led NATO alliance eastwards - shorthand for formally ruling out membership to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and other former Soviet republics. Russia also wants Ukraine to be neutral, some Western sanctions lifted, a resolution of the issue of

frozen Russian sovereign assets in the West, and protection for Russian speakers in Ukraine, the three sources said. The first source said that, if Putin realizes he is unable to reach a peace deal on his own terms, he will seek to show the Ukrainians and the Europeans by military victories that "peace tomorrow will be even more painful".

The Kremlin did not respond to a request for comment on Reuters' reporting. Putin and Russian officials have repeatedly said any peace deal must address the "root causes" of the conflict - Russian shorthand for the issue of NATO enlargement and Western support for Ukraine. Kyiv has repeatedly said that Russia should not be granted veto power over its aspirations to join the NATO alliance. Ukraine says it needs the West to give it a strong security guarantee with teeth to deter any future Russian attack. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's administration did not respond to a request for comment. NATO has also in the past said that it will not change its "open door" policy just because Moscow demands it. A spokesperson for the 32-member alliance did not respond to Reuters' questions.

Putin ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022 after eight years of fighting in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian troops. Russia currently controls just under one fifth of the country. Though Russian advances have accelerated over the past year, the war is costing both Russia and Ukraine dearly in terms of casualties and military spending. Reuters reported in January that Putin was growing concerned by the

economic distortions in Russia's wartime economy, amid labour shortages and high interest rates imposed to curb inflation. The price of oil, the bedrock of Russia's economy, has declined steadily this year.

Trump, who prides himself on having friendly relations with Putin and has expressed his belief the Russian leader wants peace, has warned that Washington could impose further sanctions if Moscow delays efforts to find a settlement. Trump suggesting on social media that Putin had "gone absolutely CRAZY" by unleashing a massive aerial attack on Ukraine last week. The first source said that if Putin saw a tactical opportunity on the battlefield, he would push further into Ukraine - and that the Kremlin believed Russia could fight on for years no matter what sanctions and economic pain were imposed by the West. A second source said that Putin was now less inclined to compromise on territory and was sticking to his public stance that he wanted the entirety of four regions in eastern Ukraine claimed by Russia. "Putin has toughened his position," the second source said of the question of territory.

As Trump and Putin joust in public over the outlook for peace in Ukraine, Reuters could not determine whether the intensification of the war and the toughening of positions heralds determination to reach a deal or the collapse of talks. In June last year, Putin set out his opening terms for an immediate end to the war: Ukraine must drop its NATO ambitions and withdraw all of its troops from the entirety of the territory of four Ukrainian regions claimed and mostly controlled by Russia.

## NASA astronauts Butch, Suni emerge from recovery

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, the US astronauts left on the International Space Station last year by Boeing's troubled Starliner capsule, are on the up after returning to Earth in March, emerging from weeks of physical therapy to ramp up work with Boeing and various NASA programs.

"Right now, we're just coming off of the rehab portion of our return," Wilmore, 62, told Reuters in an interview. "Gravity stinks for a period, and that period varies for different people, but eventually you get over those neurovestibular balance type of issues," Wilmore and Williams, who last year set off for an eight-day Starliner test flight that swelled into a nine-month stay in space, have had to readapt their muscles, sense of balance and other basics of Earth living in a 45-day period standard for astronauts returning from long-term space missions.

The astronaut duo have spent at least two hours a day with astronaut strength and reconditioning officials within NASA's medical

unit while juggling an increasing workload with Boeing's Starliner program, NASA's space station unit in Houston and agency researchers. "It's been a little bit of a whirlwind," Williams, 59, said in the interview. "Because we also have obligations to all of the folks that we worked with."

Williams said some of her post-spaceflight side effects were slower to clear up and she felt tired in late stages of recovery, as dozens of various muscles re-engaged. That made it hard for her to wake up as early in the mornings as she likes, until a little more than a week ago. "Then I'm up at four in the morning, and I'm like, Aha! I'm back," she said. Wilmore had some issues with his back and neck before heading to space, being unable to turn his head all the way to the side, he said. That all went away in space where "you don't have any stress on your body." When he returned in March, gravity greeted him with the neck pain he left on Earth. "We're still floating in the capsule in the ocean, and my neck

starts hurting, while we still hadn't even been extracted yet," he said, laughing. The human body, evolved over millions of years in the gravity of Earth's surface, was not meant for space-flight.

The absence of gravity triggers an array of physical effects over time, such as muscle atrophy or cardiovascular shifts that can cause a chain reaction of other health changes. Confinement in a small space and higher solar radiation in space, without the protection of Earth's atmosphere, have other effects. Propulsion system issues on Boeing's Starliner forced NASA to bring the capsule back without its crew last year and to fold the two astronauts into its normal, long-duration rotation schedule on the ISS. Boeing, which has taken \$2 billion in charges on its Starliner development, faces a looming decision by NASA to re-fly the spacecraft uncrewed before it carries humans again. Boeing spent \$410 million to fly a similar uncrewed mission in 2022 after a 2019 testing failure.

## S Dakota tribe declares state of emergency over crime

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP): The Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota has declared a public safety state of emergency on its reservation, asking for more law enforcement resources from the federal government. It's the tribe's third emergency declaration in six years as members contend with methamphetamine and other illicit drug use, trafficking and gun violence on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. The tribe previously declared states of emergency in 2019 and 2024.

Kathleen Wooden Knife, president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, wrote in the declaration that the emergency is due to "pervasive law and order and public health issues ... creating threats to public safety, the health and welfare of the general public." The declaration asked for increased patrol and investigative

support from federal agencies, cooperation from the 12 communities on the reservation and coordination between the tribe and federal government. Law enforcement is stretched thin on many reservations in the US, leading some tribes to sue the federal government. In a lawsuit the Oglala Sioux tribe filed against the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a federal judge ruled that the US government is obligated by treaty to support law enforcement on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Rosebud Indian Reservation has a dozen law enforcement officers for an area that stretches nearly 1 million acres (404,686 hectares) across five counties, said Lewis Good Voice Eagle, chief of staff to Wooden Knife. Low staffing is partially due to 2016 budget cuts, as well as

difficulty retaining officers who don't receive the same benefits as they would working elsewhere.

After previous emergency declarations, the reservation received help from the US Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Interior, though it was not enough to solve the problems, Good Voice Eagle said.

"With the shortage of law enforcement and the shortage of juris doctorate barred attorneys, it has really created another nightmare on the Rosebud Indian Reservation," he said. Crime on South Dakota's nine Native American reservations has been a long-standing issue and the subject of tense relations with former South Dakota governor and current Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.



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War of drones

RUSSIA fired its biggest-ever drone barrage on Ukraine on Monday, Kyiv said, escalating a deadly air campaign that analysts say offers little military value and instead appears intended to erode civilians' morale. While large-scale Russian drone attacks have pummeled Ukraine's cities for three consecutive nights, Ukrainian drones have targeted infrastructure and military sites deep into Russia's territory. Russia fired "355 Shahed-type drones" including decoys, as well as nine cruise missiles, between Sunday night and early Monday, in the largest drone attack of the invasion so far, Ukraine's Air Force said. An attack on Sunday killed 13 civilians, including three children from the same family, in the central Ukrainian city of Zhytomyr.

Following the strikes, President Volodymyr Zelensky called for more pressure on Moscow. "Russian strikes are becoming increasingly brazen and large-scale every night," Zelensky said in his daily address, adding that some 900 drones and missiles were launched at Ukraine in the last three days. Military analyst Alexei Alshansky said that although the scale and frequency of Russia's drone attacks have increased recently, their strategic utility remains questionable.

"There's no military objective behind ramping up drone strikes on Ukrainian cities - these kinds of attacks offer no strategic advantage to the Russian army," Alshansky told The Moscow Times. "Those drones aren't targeting military facilities and are completely indiscriminate." "This is about inflicting fear and psychological pressure on civilians - to push the Ukrainian side into making some concessions during a pseudo-peace negotiation process," Alshansky said, adding that the latest attacks didn't appear coordinated with any precision missile strikes, suggesting no tactical advantage was gained. Military analyst Yuriy Fedorov shared a similar view. "It's a consistent tactic by Russia aimed at influencing public opinion - not targeting military or even economic sites, but public sentiment [in Ukraine]," Fedorov told The Moscow Times. "Ukrainian strikes, by contrast, are mainly directed at military and military-industrial targets, which is understandable. There is no 'eye for an eye' policy," Fedorov said. Russia's concern about its vulnerability to drone warfare does appear to be growing. Moscow on Tuesday accused Kyiv of increasing its air barrages in an attempt to disrupt peace talks and said that its massive assaults on Ukraine were a "response" to Kyiv's drone attacks on Russia.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Tuesday it had intercepted 99 Ukrainian drones overnight, with the largest number - 56 drones - downed over the Belgorod border region. The republic of Tatarstan also came under drone attack on Monday, according to Russian Telegram channels. Air defenses were operational in the city of Yelabuga, where Russia assembles combat drones used in its war against Ukraine. The same day, Ivanovo regional authorities reported that four drones were destroyed in the region. Telegram channels Mash and Astra said the drones targeted the Dmitriyevsky Chemical Plant in the Kineshma industrial zone, which reportedly manufactures components for Russian military equipment and weaponry. Several Russian regions, including Yaroslavl, Vladimir, Ivanovo, Oryol, Lipetsk, Tula and Voronezh, also reported temporary mobile internet shutdowns following the drone attacks this month.

The capital Moscow faced mobile internet disruptions during the May 9 Victory Day celebrations, and flight cancellations at airports due to drone attacks have become a regular inconvenience across the country. Amid the increased attacks, Ukraine warned it was becoming difficult for its air defenses to counter the sheer number of drones Moscow was firing. "We need rational and cheaper ways to shoot them down," Ukraine's Air Force spokesman Yuriy Ignat said. A Ukrainian military source told AFP that Kyiv was "somehow fighting" with available air defense capabilities and that there was "no need to panic," but added that Kyiv "needs deliveries of Western weapons" to keep resisting the assaults.

Beyond attempting to overwhelm Ukrainian air defenses with huge numbers of drones, Russia's drone tactics also appear to be evolving. Ivan Stupak, a military expert and former officer of Ukraine's security services, told The Moscow Times. "Drones are becoming increasingly sophisticated tools for both killing and exhausting air defense systems," he said. Ukrainian Air Force spokesman Ignat said that Moscow was constantly changing the routes of its drones and trying to launch them at high altitudes, making them harder to intercept. Another tactic, he said, involves launching multiple drones at a single target - such as a town or facility - or using unarmed drones to overwhelm and distract air defense systems.

An article published by The Economist on Sunday also claimed, citing a group of Ukrainian engineers, that Russia's newest drone models were "unfazed" by Ukraine's electronic warfare, as they no longer relied on jamable GPS and were driven by artificial intelligence. The article said that drones were being controlled via Telegram bots that transmit flight data and video feeds in real-time. Military experts, however, have questioned these claims. Ukrainian electronic warfare specialist Serhii Beskrestnov, also known by the pseudonym Serhii Flash, dismissed the article as misleading. "Russian Shaheds are not controlled in flight via Telegram and do not send video broadcasts somewhere via Ukrainian mobile networks," he said, adding that "Shaheds do not have AI inside" and "still fly based on satellite navigation signals and jamming affects them."

Military analyst Alshansky also said that "integrating AI into drones would be expensive, and if such systems were used, we would likely have seen undeniable proof in the debris - sophisticated onboard devices, for instance." But some primitive automation is possible, he explained, adding that the reduced effectiveness of Ukrainian electronic warfare systems against some drones might suggest the use of more advanced defense technologies that provide greater resistance to jamming. "Instead of simply flying to GPS coordinates, a drone could theoretically compare what it sees below with a satellite image of its target. That would be a form of automated navigation - a prototype version of AI, if you will," Alshansky said.

Important Notice

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Experts see Syria on road to economic revival

Rabia Ali

AFTER more than a decade of devastating conflict, Syria's shattered economy may finally be turning a corner. With the lifting of international sanctions and increasing global engagement with the new transitional government, cautious optimism is growing among analysts and observers. "All stars appear to be aligned for Syria's economy to be revived, but it will definitely take some time," Omer Ozkizilcik, a non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council's Syria Project, told Anadolu.

"In the next one to two years, Syria's economy will be not good, but it will be decent. It will not be a catastrophe, at least." Several factors underpin Ozkizilcik's outlook, including the return of foreign investments, improved governance under a new administration, and the surprising speed at which international sanctions have been lifted. "I expect that Syria's reconstruction will cost less than the UN anticipates," he said, referring to the figure of \$400 billion cited based on UN field studies and assessments. "The Syrian people are very determined to rebuild their country. There is the will. You have the diaspora, international actors, regional states who want to help Syria, and ... sanctions being lifted in a record time, which no one expected so soon."

Syria's 13-year civil war left the country economically devastated. Its GDP halved between 2010 and 2020, local agricultural and industrial production collapsed, and dependence on imports surged. According to estimates from institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Syria's GDP stood at \$37.1 billion in 2022, \$39.5 billion in 2023, and \$29.3 billion in 2024 - a stark difference from the pre-war \$60 billion in 2010. GDP per capita similarly dropped from \$2,800 in 2010 to \$2,100 in 2022 and 2023.

With the fall of the Assad regime last December and rise of Ahmad al-Sharaa as the president, Syrians are now being encouraged to invest in their country and its rebuilding process. "The Assad regime was notorious for clientelism, nepotism, and mismanagement," said Ozkizilcik. "It appears that the new transitional govern-

ment is much more capable in governance and managing the economy." Unlike the Baathist regime's economic policies, the transitional government has adopted a liberal market-oriented approach. "We know that in contrast to the socialist economic approach ... an open market policy in terms of economic policies is much more fruitful."

The lifting of Western sanctions by the US, UK, and most recently the EU, has further accelerated Syria's reintegration into the international economic system. "With the sanctions removed, there are no obstacles that prevent Syria from being reintegrated into the international economic system and banking system," Ozkizilcik said. Many foreign countries and companies, he added, are now able to invest in Syria, which will help rebuild the country and also enable them to make a profit out of these investments.

Syria's vast diaspora, particularly refugees who gained education and work experience abroad, are now being seen as assets for reconstruction. "The Syrian refugees have the know-how. They have gained education. They have gained experience in Türkiye, in EU countries," said Ozkizilcik. "With them going back or establishing transnational enterprises, the Syrian economy will also revive." Baraa Khurfan, a former non-resident fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), emphasized the need for investments in basic infrastructure.

Approximately 70% of Syria's infrastructure has been destroyed since 2011, he noted, adding that restoring transportation, electricity, water systems, and healthcare will be essential for restarting economic activity. Ozkizilcik argues that foreign investment is indispensable to Syria's economic recovery, stressing that without it, the country cannot return to its pre-war levels of development. From Europe to the Arab countries and other regional states, all are interested in investing in Syria, he said, citing recent agreements as signs of renewed international interest. Among the countries at the forefront of investments are Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Türkiye, and European

nations such as France, Germany and, probably, Italy, said the analyst.

A French firm, he continued, has signed a contract to construct a new port on Syria's coast, while the UAE has also signed agreements for naval development and a joint commercial airline. Qatar is exploring investments in Syria's aviation and industrial sectors, while Saudi Arabia is involved in setting up a reconstruction fund. "Türkiye, as a neighboring state, has a huge potential in terms of trade and in terms of know-how capacity with the Syrian refugees it hosts. Working as a natural demographic bridge, Türkiye will be one of the major players," he asserted. Last week, Türkiye announced the completion of a natural gas pipeline connection from its southern province of Kilis to Aleppo.

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said Türkiye plans to begin gas exports to Syria in June. "That natural gas will be turned into electricity in power plants in Syria," he said during a visit to Damascus, adding that Türkiye's natural gas exports to Syria could reach 2 billion cubic meters annually, with initial deliveries going to Aleppo before expanding to Homs. According to Ozkizilcik, one particular country whose role in Syria's reconstruction is being overlooked is China.

"China has sent delegation after delegation to Syria, and China is very much interested in investing in Syria and helping it rebuild - and China has the funds," he said. "If it wasn't for the Trump administration's recent decision to lift sanctions, we would probably see China dominate the Syrian economy." By lifting the sanctions, he continued, US President Donald Trump has prevented this from happening, but China will still be one of the major players and investors in the Syrian economy. Syria's reentry into the international banking system marks a significant shift. During Assad's rule, opaque financial networks and secondary sanctions made investment extremely difficult.

"People could not get in their money, could not get out their money, and Syrians who wanted to do some

business in Syria had to rely on untransparent methods in the gray zone between illegal and legal," Ozkizilcik explained. Now, with banking channels open, legal investment can flow. The recent repayment of a \$15.5 million World Bank debt by Saudi Arabia and Qatar is expected to enable the bank to resume aid and project funding. "This payment is basically a step to open up the possibility of World Bank investments and World Bank economic aid to Syria," he said.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva also confirmed this week that the fund is prepared to help Syria rebuild and reintegrate globally. Analyst Khurfan also stressed the significance of Syria's international reintegration: "It will also boost investor confidence by reducing risks and legal complexities associated with engaging in Syrian markets, and enable greater inflows of remittances and foreign direct investments, crucial for financing reconstruction and economic revival." Despite signs of progress, both analysts agree that serious challenges remain in Syria's road to recovery. Social reconciliation is one major issue, according to Ozkizilcik. "The Assad regime pit one minority against the other, one ethnic group against another sectarian group, and there are many animosities between different spheres of the Syrian social spectrum, so social reconciliation will be key," he explained, praising the new leadership for avoiding revenge and prioritizing institution-building.

Another challenge is Syria's vulnerability to regional threats and its inability to "protect its sovereignty ... against any potential geopolitical risk," he said. "Syria cannot do anything if Israel wants to bomb Syria. If we see a change in Iraq and we see Shia militias from Iraq trying to enter and attack, then Syria has very little capacity to protect itself."

Domestically, Khurfan warns that rebuilding a skilled workforce will be difficult, particularly because of the "severe skill mismatches and education gaps created by years of conflict." "Also, market distortions, including persistent monopolies and informal economic networks created during the war, impact markets, affect fair competition and pricing stability," he said.

Trump's attack on Ramaphosa

John Dramani Mahama

THE meeting at the White House between Donald Trump and the South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa, was, at its heart, about the preservation of essential historical truths. The US president's claims of white genocide conflict with the actual racial persecution and massacres that took place during the two centuries of colonisation and nearly 50 years of apartheid in South Africa.

It is not enough to be affronted by these claims, or to casually dismiss them as untruths. These statements are a clear example of how language can be leveraged to extend the effects of previous injustices. This mode of violence has long been used against Indigenous Africans. And it cannot simply be met with silence - not any more. The Kenyan writer Mzee Ng'g'o wa Thiong'o wrote: "Language conquest, unlike the military form, wherein the victor must subdue the whole population directly, is cheaper and more effective."

African nations learned long ago that their fates are inextricably linked. When it comes to interactions with the world beyond our continent, we are each other's bellwether. In 1957, the year before my birth, Ghana became the first Black African country to free itself from colonialism. After the union jack had been lowered, our first prime minister, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, gave a speech in which he emphasised that, "our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa".

Shortly after, in 1960, was the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, which resulted in 69 deaths and more than 100 wounded. In Ghana, thousands of miles away, we marched, we protested, we gave cover and shelter. A similar solidarity existed in sovereign nations across the continent. Why? Because people who looked like us were being subjugated, treated as second-class citizens, on their own ancestral land. We had fought our own versions of that same battle.

I was 17 in June 1976, when the South African Soweto uprising took place. The now-iconic photo of a young man, Mbuyisa Makhubo, carrying the limp, 12-year-old body of Hector Pieterson, who had just been shot by the police, haunted me for years. It so deeply hurt me to think that I was free to dream of a future as this child was making the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom and future of his people. Hundreds of children were killed in that protest alone. It is their blood, and the blood of their forebears that nourishes the soil of South Africa. The racial persecution of Black South Africans was rooted in a system that was enshrined in law. It took worldwide participation through demonstrations, boycotts, divestments and sanctions to end apartheid so that all South Africans, regardless of skin colour, would be considered equal.

Nevertheless, the effects of centuries-long oppression do not just disappear with the stroke of a pen, particularly when there has been no cogent plan of reparative justice. Despite making up less than 10% of the population,

white South Africans control more than 70% of the nation's wealth. Even now, there are a few places in South Africa where only Afrikaners are permitted to own property, live, and work. At the entrance to once such settlement, Kleinfontein, is an enormous bust of Hendrik Verwoerd, the former prime minister who is considered the architect of apartheid.

Another separatist town, Orania, teaches only Afrikaans in its schools, has its own chamber of commerce, as well as its own currency, the ora, that is used strictly within its borders. It has been reported that inside the Orania Cultural History Museum there is a bust of every apartheid-era president except FW de Klerk, who initiated reforms that led to the repeal of apartheid laws. Both Kleinfontein and Orania are currently in existence, and they boast a peaceful lifestyle. Why had the America-bound Afrikaners not sought refuge in either of those places?

Had the Black South Africans wanted to exact revenge on Afrikaners, surely, they would have done so decades ago when the pain of their previous circumstances was still fresh in their minds. What, at this point, is there to be gained by viciously killing and persecuting people you'd long ago forgiven? According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, half of the population of South Africa is under 29, born after the apartheid era and, presumably, committed to building and uplifting the "rainbow nation". For what reason would they suddenly begin a genocide against white people?

Ramaphosa was blindsided by Trump with those unfounded accusations and the accompanying display of images that were misrepresented - in one image, pictures of burials were actually from Congo. Trump refused to listen as Ramaphosa insisted that his government did not have any official policies of discrimination. "If you want to destroy a people," Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, "you destroy their memory, you destroy their history." Memory, however, is long. It courses through the veins of our children and their children. The terror of what we have experienced is stored at a cellular level. As long as those stories are told, at home, in church, at the beauty and barber shop, in schools, in literature, music and on the screen, then we, the sons and daughters of Africa, will continue to know what we've survived and who we are.

Mzee Ng'g'o wa Thiong'o wrote: "The process of knowing is simple. No matter where you want to journey, you start from where you are." We journey forward with a history that cannot be erased, and will not be erased. Not while there are children dying in the mines of the Congo, and rape is being used as a weapon of war in Sudan. Our world is in real crisis; real refugees are being turned away from the borders of the wealthiest nations, real babies will die because international aid has been abruptly stopped, and real genocides are happening in real time all across the globe.

Starmer's immigrant rhetoric and politics of migration

Tim Bale

THE decision last week by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to announce a headline-grabbing tightening of the UK's immigration regime - and some of the tough talk in which he couched that announcement - is not simply a knee-jerk reaction to the stunning successes achieved at recent local elections by Nigel Farage's populist radical right party, Reform UK.

It is also an attempt - albeit not necessarily a sensible economic or political move - to clean up another mess Labour inherited from the Conservatives' largely wasted 2010-2024 government. When, in 2016, British voters decided that the country should leave the EU, many did so because they were promised it would allow the UK to "take back control" of its borders. They assumed, not unreasonably, that the end of free movement for EU citizens would

mean a significant reduction in immigration - something they had long demanded, especially in the wake of a huge and utterly unanticipated influx of people from Poland and other eastern European countries that joined the bloc in 2004. As it turned out, however, the very same Conservative politician who had done so much to help "Get Brexit Done" - Boris Johnson - then did the very opposite of what most voters wanted from it.

Worried that the end of free movement would lead to labor market shortages in a country that has traditionally relied on migrants to do the jobs that Brits cannot or will not do, his government introduced a remarkably liberal immigration regime. The result? Firstly, a massive increase, rather than a decrease, in the number of people coming (perfectly legally) to study and work in the UK - the only difference being that, instead of com-

ing from Europe, they were coming mainly from South Asia and Africa.

Secondly, and hardly surprisingly, anger on the part of Brits who had been sold a lie - anger that was rapidly compounded by growing concern (whipped up by populist politicians like Farage and the influential right-wing print media) about the growing number of people from other developing countries coming across the Channel from France in small boats in order to claim asylum - at huge cost to the taxpayer.

In a vain attempt to assuage that anger and concern, the Conservatives had belatedly introduced stricter criteria for those hoping to obtain visas to live and work in the UK, as well as passing legislation to declare asylum seekers arriving via unauthorized routes "illegals" and promising to deport them to Rwanda in west

Africa - a fate that would supposedly deter people from coming and so "Stop the Boats." Despite the millions of pounds spent on the Rwanda scheme, no deportation flights ever took off and it was abandoned by the incoming Labour government. Instead, it declared that it would seek to "Smash the Gangs" responsible for trafficking people across the Channel. That approach, which involves greater cooperation with French and other European governments, will take time to work - if it works at all.

In the meantime, the Starmer government is still left with a level of legal migration that, according to the public (and much to the confected horror of the country's right-wing politicians and news outlets), is still far too high.

So the measures were announced last week: restricting skilled work

visas to graduate jobs, ending easier entry for people working in social care, upping English language requirements, reducing the time overseas students are allowed to work freely in the UK after graduation, and insisting that migrants will need to spend 10, not five, years before they can apply for citizenship.

Hence, too, Starmer's harsh rhetoric - his claim that what he called the Conservatives' "failed experiment in open borders" - was a "squalid chapter" in the nation's history that had caused "incalculable" damage and risked making us "an island of strangers."

All this was economic, historical, and sociological nonsense, according to most experts. And it sparked moral and political outrage from the country's cultural liberal voters. Equally predictably, however, its cultural conservatives dismissed the hardline language as

nothing more than a transparent attempt to disguise the fact that the measures themselves didn't go far enough in bringing down legal migration and also would have zero impact on illegal entry.

Even if the critics are wrong and the measures do bring about a significant reduction, who knows whether any drop will serve to reassure those voters who are especially angry about immigration or simply raise the salience of the issue - much to the delight of Farage and co. It also risks further alienating the government's more progressive supporters, many of whom are already upset by its proposed cuts to welfare. The biggest risk of all, however, is that Starmer simply ends up joining a long list of British prime ministers who, on immigration (as on much else), have overpromised but underdelivered.



# Story of Chinese Americans who call Texas home

**THE state of Texas has the third-largest Asian American population in the United States, according to the US census, and Chinese people, some whose families arrived more than 150 years ago, make up the largest group. Chinese Americans trace back for generations in the Lone Star State. Their story may not be as well known as that of their counterparts in California or New York City, but it is just as intertwined with America's history.**

At Rice University, the Houston Asian American Archive, or HAAA, is keeping their stories alive and sharing them with new generations. Launched in 2009, the archive now contains the oral histories of some 500 people in its database, providing a critical window to the past. "Oral history gives you a sense of immediacy and maybe more informality. And it's also unfiltered," said Anne Chao, HAAA co-founder and program manager.

The archive also preserves memorabilia and artifacts from Asian Americans in Houston - a city known for its oil and gas industry. It is also known for space exploration and is home to NASA's Johnson Space Center. One Chinese American who found success in 1960s and '70s Houston was Albert Gee, who at the time was considered the unofficial mayor of the Chinese community. Gee appeared with Hollywood celebrities in the society pages of local newspapers and was once invited to the White House of President Richard Nixon.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1920, Gee and his family moved to New Orleans, where they operated a laundry business. When his father died in 1927, Gee's mother, who did not speak English, decided to take her children back to their home in China, hoping that

her three sons would return one by one to the US, which they did. "Albert found himself only around 11 years old, coming back to the United States," said his daughter Linda Wu. "He was just working - working and trying to send money back to his mother." Gee returned to the US with his godfather, whom he lived with for a few years in San Francisco, California. Eventually, with the help of friends and relatives, Gee ended up in Houston.

He eventually opened grocery stores and restaurants, which became a draw for Hollywood celebrities, who would stay at a nearby hotel when in town. Wu has photos of celebrities such as singer Elvis Presley and comedian Bob Hope posing at the restaurants, some next to her father. Wu said her parents saw themselves as Americans but never forgot their roots. Her mother, Jane Eng, the child of Chinese immigrants, was born and raised in Texas. "I always remember different people coming to live with us at the grocery store, family members who would start their roots here," she said.

By assisting newcomers, the established Chinese Americans helped fuel the growth of the Gee family surname in Houston. Not all the Gees in Houston were related, however. Stories about some of the city's Gees can be found in the HAAA database and in the 1998 anthology "The Gees in Houston, Texas." "For the Gee family, it's been discerned that we've come from about three to four villages in China," said Rogene Gee Calvert, who contributed stories about her father, David Gee - no relation to Albert Gee - to the anthology.

David Gee migrated from China to the US in the late 1920s, during the Chinese Exclusion Act, which allowed Chinese mer-

Elizabeth Lee

chants, diplomats and students into the country but banned laborers. Gee was 17 when he arrived, but his passport indicated he was four years younger. He was a so-called paper son. "Paper sons' and 'paper daughters' are the names given to people who buy false papers," said Casey Dexter-Lee, an educator at Angel Island State Park in San Francisco Bay. Part of the island served as a major immigration station from 1910 to 1940. "It's about \$100 for each year of life that the person claims," she said. "So a 10-year-old would cost about \$1,000 to buy false papers."

After arriving in the US, David Gee was detained at the Angel Island Immigration Station for almost a year. Eventually, he received permission to stay. David Gee worked in San Francisco with a relative. In 1938, he moved to Houston to join a family friend. He returned to San Francisco to get married, then brought his wife to Houston, where he worked in the grocery business. "There was discrimination and, of course, there were natural barriers of language and just knowing how to navigate ... how to get around and what to do," Calvert said. "So, there were some elders who were well-spoken that were respected in the mainstream community that really helped our family."

Chao said the first large group of Chinese immigrants arrived in Houston in the 1940s and '50s. At that time, racial segregation was legal in Texas and Southern states through a series of codes known as Jim Crow laws. "Even though Houston also was subject to Jim Crow law, the law wasn't applied the same way as [in] the other Southern states. And so, there's a sense of more equitable equity in Houston," Chao said, adding that people, including Chinese

Americans, settled in Houston because there was a "sense of business opportunity." Being neither Black nor white, the Chinese Texans occupied a gray area under Jim Crow law.

"They were just in between and just dependent upon how well the neighborhood or people accepted them," said Ted Gong, senior adviser to the Chinese American Museum in Washington. Albert Gee, as president of the Houston Restaurant Association, took part in the desegregation of the city's restaurants in the early 1960s. Decades later, his work in the community was immortalized in a web comic for Texas students in 2023.

The comic is part of a free website called Adventures of Asia, developed by Asia Society Texas, which also collaborated with HAAA to create lesson guides for teachers called Asia in the Classroom. "Our Asian American students in particular said they want to see themselves represented in the curriculum," said Jennifer Kapral, director of education and outreach at Asia Society Texas Center. The Asian population in the US nearly doubled from 2000 to 2019 and is expected to continue to grow, according to the Pew Research Center. But the history of the Asians who settled in the US is missing from many textbooks, Kapral said. "There was a study that looked at 30 US history textbooks from across the US, and they found that Asian American history was only mentioned in half of them. And of that half, it was an average of about one to two pages in the entire textbook. So, it's been a big gap." Asian American Houstonians are filling this void by sharing their stories, preserving artifacts from their past, and educating the next generation about how their forebears carved a place for themselves in Texas' largest city.

VOA

# How political chaos helped forge South Korea's presidential frontrunner

**BEFORE the events of 3 December 2024, Lee Jae-myung's path to South Korea's presidency was littered with obstacles. Ongoing legal cases, investigations for corruption and allegations of abusing power all looked set to derail the former opposition leader's second presidential bid.**

Then a constitutional crisis changed everything. On that night, former president Yoon Suk Yeol's abortive attempt to invoke martial law set in motion a series of events that appears to have cleared the path for Lee. Now, as the Democratic Party candidate, he is the frontrunner to win South Korea's election on 3 June. It's a dramatic reversal of fortunes for the 61-year-old, who at the time of Yoon's martial law declaration stood convicted of making false statements during his last presidential campaign in 2022.

Those charges still cast a long shadow over Lee, and could yet threaten his years-long pursuit of the top job. But they are also just the latest in a string of controversies that have dogged him throughout his political career. A rags-to-riches origin story combined with a bullish political style has made Lee into a divisive figure in South Korea. "Lee Jae-myung's life has been full of ups and downs, and he often takes actions that stir controversy," Dr Lee Jun-han, professor of political science and international studies at Incheon National University, tells the BBC.

These actions typically include attempts at progressive reform - such as a pledge, made during his 2022 presidential campaign, to implement universal basic income scheme - which challenge the existing power structure and status quo in South Korea. "Because of this, some people strongly support him, while others distrust or dislike him," Dr Lee says. "He is a highly controversial and unconventional figure - very much an outsider who has made a name for himself in a way that doesn't fit traditional Democratic Party norms."

In a recent memoir, Lee described his childhood as "miserable". Born in 1963 in a mountain village in Andong, Gyeongbuk Province, he was the fifth of five sons and two daughters, and - due to his family's difficult circumstances - skipped middle school to illegally enter the workforce. As a young factory worker, Lee suffered an industrial accident where his fingers got caught in a factory power belt, and at the age of 13 suffered a permanent injury to his arm after his wrist was crushed by a press machine.

Lee later applied for and was allowed to sit entrance exams for high school and university, passing in 1978 and 1980 respectively. He went on to study law with a full scholarship, and passed the Bar Examination in 1986. In 1992, he married his wife Kim Hye-kyung, with whom he has two children.

He worked as a human rights lawyer for almost two decades before entering politics in 2005, joining the social-liberal Uri Party, a predecessor of the Democratic Party of Korea and the ruling party at the time. While his poor upbringing has drawn scorn from members of South Korea's upper class, Lee's success in building his political career from the ground up has earned him support from working-class voters and those who feel disenfranchised by the political elite. He was elected mayor of Seongnam in 2010, rolling out a series of free welfare policies during his tenure, and in 2018 became governor of the broader Gyeonggi Province.

Lee would go on to receive acclaim for his response to the Covid-19 pandemic, during which he clashed with the central government due to his insistence on providing universal relief grants for all residents of the province. It was also during this time that Lee became the Democratic Party's final presidential candidate for the first time in October 2021 - losing by 0.76 percentage points. Less than a year later, in August 2022, he was elected as the party's leader.

From that point on, Dr Lee says, Lee dialled back on the controversial, fire-and-brimstone approach for which he had become notorious - opting instead to play it safe and keep a low profile. "After [Lee's] term as a governor, his reformist image faded somewhat as he focused more on his presidential ambitions," he says. "Still, on certain issues - like addressing past wrongs [during the Japanese colonial era], welfare and corruption - he has built a loyal and passionate support base by taking a firm and uncompromising stance." This uncompromising attitude has its detractors, with many members and supporters of the ruling People Power Party (PPP) viewing Lee as aggressive and abrasive in his approach.

Gavin Butler & Yuna Ku

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Such constant stonewalling by the Democratic Party only exacerbated Yoon's leadership struggles - which also included repeated impeachment attempts against

Lee and Yoon, and more privately in the country's increasingly extreme online discourse. In December 2023, just weeks before Lee was attacked, a survey sponsored by the newspaper Hankyoreh found that more than 50% of respondents said they felt South Korea's political divide worsening. Some claim that, as Democratic Party leader, Lee played a major role in fuelling the problem, frequently blocking motions by Yoon's government and effectively rendering him a lame duck president.

**The attack raised concerns about deepening political polarisation in South Korea - embodied perhaps most publicly in the bitter rivalry between Lee and Yoon, and more privately in the country's increasingly extreme online discourse. In December 2023, just weeks before Lee was attacked, a survey sponsored by the newspaper Hankyoreh found that more than 50% of respondents said they felt South Korea's political divide worsening. Some claim that, as Democratic Party leader, Lee played a major role in fuelling the problem, frequently blocking motions by Yoon's government and effectively rendering him a lame duck president.**

administration officials and constant opposition to his budget. Finally, as the pressure against him mounted, the former president took the drastic step of declaring martial law. Yoon's declaration of martial law on 3 December - made in a self-proclaimed bid to eliminate "anti-state forces" and North Korea sympathisers - served as the catalyst for Lee to emerge as a leading presidential candidate.

Within hours of the declaration, Lee appealed to the public via a livestream broadcast and urged them to assemble in protest outside the National Assembly building in central Seoul. Thousands responded, clashing with police and blocking military units as opposition lawmakers rushed into the assembly building, clambering over fences and walls in a desperate attempt to block Yoon's order. Lee was among them, climbing over the fence to enter the National Assembly and helping to pass the resolution to lift martial law. The Democratic Party later decided to impeach President Yoon - a decision that was unanimously upheld by South Korea's Constitutional Court on 4 April, 2025. It was then that Lee began the path to a full-fledged election bid, announcing his resignation as leader of the Democratic Party on 9 April ahead of his presidential run. In the Democratic Party presidential primary held on April 27, he was selected as the general candidate with overwhelming support.

The result of Yoon's abortive martial law attempt was a political maelstrom from which South Korea is still reeling: a constitutional crisis that ended the former president's career and left his PPP in tatters. But of the small few who have managed to leverage that chaos to their advantage, none have benefited more than Lee. Now the controversial presidential candidate awaits the verdict on his political future - not only from the South Korean people, but also the courts. If his guilty ruling is ultimately confirmed, Lee will likely lose his seat in the National Assembly. As a candidate, that would prevent him from running for president for a period of five years. But with the courts having now approved Lee's request to postpone his legal hearings until after the election, another possibility has emerged: that Lee, who remains the electoral favourite, could be convicted after winning the presidency. And that could mean that South Korea, having just endured a months-long period of political turmoil, may not be done with its leadership dramas just yet.

# Tariffs, and Trump's entire economic agenda, were just thrown into chaos

**A US federal court's ruling Wednesday against President Donald Trump's authority to levy some of his most sweeping tariffs may have also dealt a serious blow to the president's entire economic agenda. Trump's core economic policy has been his historic tariffs, but the administration has described its aggressive trade actions as just one leg of a three-legged stool. Built on tariffs, spending cuts and tax cuts, Trump's economic agenda relies on all three components to stand strong.**

But a three-judge panel at the US Court of International Trade blocked Trump's global tariffs, which he imposed citing emergency economic powers. Those trade actions include the "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariffs, 10% universal tariffs and the tariffs aimed at preventing fentanyl from entering the United States. The three-legged economic stool just lost a leg, at least for now. Without trade, Trump's whole economic policy plan could come crashing down.

Historic tariffs have persuaded dozens of US trading partners to come to the table to make deals with Trump. In theory, those trade deals could open up foreign markets to more US goods, benefiting US manufacturers and farmers. Revenue from Trump's tariffs, meanwhile, could, at least in part, help pay for Trump and congress-

sional Republicans' massively expensive tax cuts, that could boost economic growth and add certainty to the markets by raising the debt ceiling. Trump's deregulation and spending cuts, particularly via the Department of Government Efficiency, could also reduce the government's costs and negate some of the impact of the tax cuts on the surging federal debt.

Because of its fragile construction, Trump's plan to usher in a new economic Golden Age has plenty of naysayers, including most mainstream economists, who argue that the administration lacks the discipline, authority and political support to make it happen. The on-again, off-again trade policy, legal battles over DOGE and intra-party standoffs on the "Big, Beautiful Bill" serve as evidence. Elon Musk, one of Trump's biggest financial backers who was the public face of Trump's DOGE team, criticized the bill this week, saying the legislation's massive additions to America's debt effectively undermined the cost-cutting group's efforts. Now, with the potential for no tariff component to Trump's agenda, Republican deficit hawks in Congress may not support Trump's tax cuts. Many were already extremely nervous about the bill's nearly \$4 trillion price tag - even with around \$1 trillion in unpopular cuts to

David Goldman & Matt Egan

Medicaid. "Increased revenues from tariffs (approximately \$150 billion per year) could have helped offset some of the deficit from the reconciliation package," Aniket Shah, head of sustainability and transition strategy at Jefferies, wrote in a note to clients Wednesday.

With the legal outcome now uncertain, Shah said, Trump and Republicans may be forced to settle for reduced tax cuts or increased spending cuts to advance the House-approved bill through the reconciliation process with the Senate. There are more questions than answers at this point. The Trump administration has appealed the ruling, which may ultimately get overturned. "It does raise questions about how the administration will respond and how this affects, if at all, the tax package going through Congress," noted Keith Lerner, co-chief investment officer at Truist Advisory Services.

Even as the appeal makes its way through the legal system - perhaps to the Supreme Court - Wednesday's ruling could undermine Trump's much-sought trade deals with foreign partners. Those deals have been sparsely announced, even with just over a month to go in the three-month pause of Trump's "reciprocal tariffs." The administration has announced frameworks of deals

with only the UK and China. "We believe one reason bilateral negotiations had stalled was that US trading partners may have anticipated this outcome," said Shah. "Will they now view trade negotiations as a matter to be resolved by the courts, or will they re-engage with the US on trade policy?"

The setback for Trump's agenda, however, may be temporary. For businesses, the court's ruling provides little certainty - particularly because of the administration's appeal. "If anything, the ruling supercharges the uncertainty already facing businesses and consumers, because it's the first hint of a possibility that ... tariffs could be eliminated entirely," said the Yale Budget Lab's Ernie Tedeschi. "But even if they were, the Administration could try to raise tariffs using other authorities. The potential outcomes just got much more uncertain in both directions - lower or higher tariffs." The administration may have alternate pathways to imposing its tariffs and avoid legal scrutiny. That could include using Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, which was unaffected by the court's ruling. Trump has levied 25% tariffs on steel, aluminum, autos and auto parts using Section 232 authority. "It's not over," said Gary Clyde Hufbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "You give a kind of Whac-a-Mole flavor to this whole story."

CNN

# Trump's foreign policy legacy: No new wars, but new calculations

**FOR many worldwide, President Donald Trump can be many things - sometimes simultaneously. We already know that he's not a typical US leader. He's a populist who made populism politically fashionable in many countries. He's a staunch nationalist who upended American politics with his Make America Great Again (MAGA) grassroots revolution. And he's a peddler of hyperbole, never ready to admit that he's wrong about his remarks and quirky views of the world.**

But one thing Trump is not is a warmonger. One can have a long list of misgivings about the president's agenda, his fiery attitude about mainstream media - the fake news - and his enmity of the mega-rich and mighty leaders around the world. But judging from his first term, and as he always likes to remind his rivals, America did not wage new wars under his watch.

In fact, among his achievements are the signing of the Abraham Accords and proposing a somewhat unconventional settlement of the Israel/Palestine conflict, one that both sides were not ready to embrace for different reasons. As he ran for a second term, Trump rarely ventured into foreign politics, but when he did, he said that the war on Ukraine would not have happened if he was still president, just as the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel would not have

taken place. Both statements are contentious, and there is no evidence that he is right about his claims.

But in contrast to the Joe Biden presidency, much has been discussed about how Washington failed to contain the fallout from the two major crises. On the other hand, Trump promised to resolve both issues as soon as he took office. To his credit, Trump was able to force Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into accepting a ceasefire deal the day before he was sworn in on January 20. The Biden administration had tried and failed to bring a lengthy pause to the war or to initiate a genuine process of negotiations between the two sides, to the frustration of America's Arab allies.

On Ukraine, Biden had chosen to send billions of dollars in arms to Kyiv while leading a Western alliance to push Russia out of territories it occupied in the absence of a serious political process to bring both sides to the negotiation table. The conflict exhausted a divided Europe while claiming the lives of tens of thousands on both sides of the war. Trump had boasted that he could end the war in Ukraine on day one - another piece of hyperbole on his part. But he also chose a trusted friend and fellow businessman, Steve Witkoff, to handle multiple crises: Russia/Ukraine, Hamas/Israel, and a new Iran

nuclear deal. Witkoff had succeeded in securing a three-phase ceasefire deal between Hamas and Israel, which went into effect last January.

It was the most comprehensive plan yet to bring that bloody war to an end. But after Israel and Hamas concluded phase one of the deal, Netanyahu decided to change the terms so he could resume his war on Gaza. The ceasefire collapsed, and Israel enforced a tight blockade on Gaza, preventing all humanitarian aid from reaching millions of hapless civilians.

Netanyahu's decision to restart the war, whose military objectives had been greatly degraded, does not mean that the Trump administration was totally convinced of his motives. Still, he was allowed to continue because he promised a quick military victory - one that has yet to materialise. But Trump had other priorities to pursue. His historic trip to the Gulf, while sidelining Israel, underlined the president's new approach to the region, where he sought to cement old partnerships and follow a different foreign policy agenda as the dealmaker he always prided himself on being.

The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza had overshadowed his trip in many ways. Netanyahu was becoming unpopular at home over his pursuit of a war that was isolating Israel internationally. And

Trump could sense this. While remaining a staunch ally of Israel, America under Trump was not in the business of starting wars or sustaining them. In a speech during his Gulf visit, Trump lambasted the neo-cons and their regime change agenda. He believed America had no business interfering in how the region's people wanted to live.

Trump's America wanted lucrative trade deals and to do business, not to launch wars. This is not how Netanyahu viewed the region. Feeling that Trump was distancing himself from him, the Israeli premier peddled the idea that Israel wanted to implement Trump's plan for Gaza. But which plan was he referring to exactly? Trump had offered several ideas on Gaza, from the US owning the Strip to turning it into a freedom centre where people, including Gazans, can live freely.

While he is trying to launch a peace process between Ukraine and Russia, and as he pushes to reach a new nuclear deal with Iran, Trump is losing patience with Netanyahu. President Trump is in a position to end the war in Gaza, just as a majority of Israelis now want him to and all Gazans are hoping for. He can end one of the most horrific wars in modern history and would be on the right side of history if he chooses to do so as the peacemaker he always wanted to be.

Gulf News





# SCCI wants joint steps to strengthen mutual Pak-Korea economic ties

## FTA to improve economic cooperation between two countries, Korean diplomat

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Park Kijun said free trade agreement can improve bilateral cooperation and trade relations between Pakistan and South Korea.

The Korean diplomat said his country is fully committed to strengthening the mutual trade and economic relations with Pakistan as many Korean companies are keenly making investment in this country, with special focus on hydropower generation.

Mr Kijun was speaking to members during his visit to the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Chairing a meeting SCCI President Fazal Moqem invited South Korean companies to invest in hydropower generation, pharmaceutical, hydrocarbon, mining, tourism, and agriculture along with industries, trade and other potential sectors.

Moqem hoped trade relations would further cement between the two

countries by exchange of trade delegation, enhancing economic cooperation and investment in potential sectors of K-P.

KP is the golden-gate for Central Asian Republics, Iran and South Asian states, SCCI chief stated, stressing the promotion of business-friendly relations between the two countries.

Apart from the SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, Honorary Consul General of South Korea in Peshawar/KP and former president of the chamber Afan Aziz, members of the SCCI executive committee Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Abbas

Fuad Azeem, Saifullah Khan, Gul Zaman, Shamsur Rahim, Ashfaq Ahmad, Adnan Nasir, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohamad, former vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan and Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ihsanullah, Sher Ali, Sikandar Iqbal, Bakht Mir Jan Durrani,

Fazal Wahid, Asim Sheraz, Ismail Safi, Syed Ejaz Ali Shah, Mahazullah, Qurat Ul Ain, traders, importers and exporters and others were also attended the meeting.

The Korean diplomat promised to take measures to ease the visa business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting agreed to launch joint ventures and establish closer business to business contacts to further strengthen the bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Mr Kijun informed the meeting that South Korea has gained tremendous advancement in the Hi-tech industrial sector.

The diplomat said Korean bilateral trade with many countries around the world has rapidly increased.

Fazal Moqem Khan said prospects are brighter to further cement bilateral economic and trade relations between Pakistan and South Korea.

The SCCI chief

expressed satisfaction over Korean investment in multiple sectors in Pakistan.

He, however, called upon the Korean Ambassador to woo Korean companies in potential sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The chamber president said Korean capabilities and cooperation in smart mining, renewable energy, seed technology, automation and pharmaceuticals will help to highlight untapped skills of KP' youths.

Fazal Moqem hoped the South Korean will continue cooperation in financial assistance and technological sector in future.

Afan Aziz reaffirmed his commitment to strengthen Pak-South Korean bilateral cooperation by effective interaction and mutual engagement of the business community of the both countries. The Honorary Consul General said all efforts will continue to strengthen Pak-South Korea bilateral economic and trade relations.



ISLAMABAD: Mr.H.E Yerzhan Kistafin Abassador of Kazakhstan addresses the 5th CAREC Institute Annual Research Conference on "CAREC Connectivity: Promoting Trade and Trade Facilitation," in collaboration with the University of Sargodha at a local hotel.

## IBA Karachi, OGDCL launh first leadership academy

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: IBA Karachi and Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) have launched the IBA x OGDCL Leadership Academy-a first-of-its-kind platform in Pakistan focused on executive leadership, institutional transformation, and conflict resolution in the energy sector and beyond. This strategic launch was led by the IBA's Center for Executive Education (CEE).

The landmark launch, held at OGDCL's Head Office, also includes the establishment of a dedicated Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Desk,

offering out-of-court solutions for commercial and workplace disputes in the energy sector.

The MoU was signed by Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi, and Mr. Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director, OGDCL, marking a shared vision to build leadership capacity and drive innovation across the sector.

The ceremony was led by Mr. Kamran Bilgrami, Director, IBA-CEE; Mr. Shahzad Safdar, Executive Director HR, OGDCL, and Mr. Talat Haider, Chief L&D, OGDCL. In a joint statement, they emphasized the Academy as "a pioneering model for sus-

tainable growth and talent development." Programs will begin in Q1 of 2025/26, covering leadership, governance, energy innovation, policy, transformation, and ADR.

This partnership underscores a long-term commitment to leadership excellence, organizational development, and practical conflict resolution in Pakistan's energy ecosystem.

**About IBA Karachi:** IBA Karachi, Pakistan's leading and most prestigious institution of higher education, has nurtured generations of trailblazers, with 20,000+ alumni driving innovation and leading organizations across the

globe. Equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, modern learning spaces, and cutting-edge facilities, IBA offers a world-class education that empowers students to shape the future. Committed to sustainability, IBA fosters an eco-conscious campus community, continuously reducing its carbon footprint through impactful green initiatives. With a rich legacy and an unwavering pursuit of progress, IBA continues to redefine education, leadership, and responsible innovation. Here's to the next 70 years of Visionary Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Sustainable Impact.

## Pervaiz visits PARCO headquarters, reviews its strategic vision

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Honorable Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, accompanied by the Additional Secretary (Policy), Petroleum Division Mr. Zafar Abbas visited the Corporate Headquarters of Pak-Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO) today. He was received by Mr. Irteza Ali Qureshi, Managing Director, PARCO, along with the Company's senior leadership team.

During the visit, the Honorable Minister was given a comprehensive briefing on PARCO's modular growth strategy, its fifty-year legacy of operational excellence, and its future strategic roadmap. The briefing highlighted PARCO's vital role in strengthening Pakistan's energy infrastructure through innovation, efficiency, and sustainability.

The Honorable Minister acknowledged the significance of PARCO's contribution to Pakistan's energy landscape and appreciated the Company's efforts to

maintain high standards of operational excellence and strategic foresight. His visit underscores the government's support for institutions like PARCO that are playing a pivotal role in meeting the country's growing energy demand.

PARCO remains committed to fulfilling Pakistan's energy needs and continues to align its efforts with the national vision for a secure, sustainable, and

self-reliant energy future.

**About PARCO:** PAK-ARAB REFINERY LTD. (PARCO), is a Joint Venture between the Government of Pakistan (60%) and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (40%). PARCO is a leading integrated energy company with major operations in oil refining, transportation, storage, and marketing. PARCO has the most modern and largest operating refinery in

Pakistan having a capacity of 120,000 BPD, strategic storage of over 1.5 million tons, over 2,000 kms of cross-country pipeline network with its JV subsidiary Pak-Arab Pipeline Company Limited (PAPCO), and a rapidly expanding retail network of PARCO Gunvor Limited (PGL) (formerly Total PARCO Pakistan Limited) - a joint venture with Gunvor Group.



## US consumers pulling back spending; inflation slowing for now

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. consumer spending increased marginally in April, with households opting to boost savings amid mounting economic uncertainty because of a constantly changing tariff landscape.

The report from the Commerce Department on Friday suggested the economy struggled to rebound early in the second quarter after contracting in the January-March quarter for the first time in three years. Gross domestic product could, however, get a lift from a sharp contraction in the goods trade deficit last month as the front-running of imports to beat tariffs faded.

Inflation was muted in April, with a measure of underlying price pressures posting its smallest annual increase in four years. But that was unlikely to encourage the Federal Reserve to resume cutting interest rates soon as import duties are expected to raise prices. Economists say the inflationary effects of tariffs have not yet shown as businesses are probably still selling inventory accumulated before President Donald Trump embarked on his aggressive trade policy campaign.

A U.S. trade court on Wednesday blocked most of Trump's import duties from going into effect in a sweeping ruling that the president overstepped his authority. They were, however, temporarily reinstated by a federal appeals court

on Thursday, adding another layer of uncertainty over the economy's outlook.

"There is clear evidence that consumers are battenning down the hatches," said Olu Sonola, head of U.S. economic research at Fitch Ratings. "The Fed will welcome the favorable inflation reading in this report, but they are likely to interpret it as the calm before the storm."

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of economic activity, rose 0.2% last month after an unrevised 0.7% jump in March, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis said. That was in line with economists' expectations.

Spending was supported by outlays on services, mostly housing and utilities, healthcare as well as restaurants, hotels and motel stays. But goods spending softened amid cutbacks on purchases of motor vehicles and parts, clothing and footwear as well as recreational goods and vehicles.

Pre-emptive buying of goods ahead of Trump's sweeping import tariffs helped to push spending higher in the prior month. Most of the tariffs have been implemented, though higher duties on goods have been delayed until July and mid-August.

Economists have argued that Trump's aggressive trade policy will sharply slow economic growth this year and boost inflation.

Minutes of the U.S. central bank's May 6-7 meeting published on Wednesday noted "participants judged that downside risks to employment and economic activity and upside risks to inflation had risen, primarily reflecting the potential effects of tariff increases." The Fed has kept its benchmark overnight interest rate in the 4.25%-4.50% range since December.

Financial markets expect the Fed to resume rate cuts in September. The economy contracted at a 0.2% annualized rate in the first quarter after growing at a 2.4% pace in the October-December quarter, mostly depressed by a flood of imports.

With most of the tariffs in place, imports are collapsing, helping to compress the goods trade deficit by 46.0% to \$87.6 billion in April, a separate report from the Commerce Department's Census Bureau showed.

Goods imports decreased \$68.4 billion to \$276.1 billion. Exports of goods increased \$6.3 billion to \$188.5 billion. The shrinking goods trade deficit, if sustained, suggests trade could provide a major boost to gross domestic product this quarter after slicing off a record 4.90 percentage points in the first quarter.

But businesses do not appear to be restocking, with wholesale inventories unchanged last month and stocks at retailers dipping 0.1%.

That would offset some of the boost to GDP from trade.

"If imports dropped off and inventories did not fall to match, then GDP growth will be stronger," said Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics.

"However, we will be surprised if stockpiles of goods do not drop hard before the second quarter is over."

Stocks on Wall Street were trading lower. The dollar rose versus a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury yields fell.

The saving rate jumped to a one-year high of 4.9% from 4.3% in March as consumers socked away much of the 0.8% rise in personal income, which reflected Social Security retirement payments to some retirees who draw public pensions - such as former police and firefighters. Wages increased 0.5%.

Though inflation was benign in April, consumers' inflation expectations remained elevated. The Fed minutes showed some policymakers assessed that "could make firms more willing to raise prices."

The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index edged up 0.1% after being unchanged in March.

It was lifted by a 0.1% gain in goods prices, mostly recreational goods and vehicles as well as furnishings and durable household equipment. Goods prices dropped 0.5% in March.

## Gap shares slide as tariffs loom large

NEW YORK (Reuters): Gap (GAP.N), opens new tab shares fell 20% in early trading on Friday after the Old Navy owner warned that U.S. tariffs would squeeze this year's profit, even as the apparel maker aims to soften the blow by diversifying its supply chain and investing in U.S. cotton.

The company reaffirmed its annual forecasts that did not include tariff-related costs but flagged expenses of up to \$300 million, which analysts said would weigh on Gap's margins through the second half of the year and into 2026.

Shares of the company, which owns brands such as Banana Republic and ON, were trading at \$22.44. The stock has surged 30% so far this month, as investors focused on the firm's efforts to improve product innovation and store operations.

At least three brokerages trimmed price targets on the stock, with Jefferies cutting it by the most, to \$26 from \$29.

"Banana Republic and Athleta likely need much reinvestment to drive consistent positive comparable sales and margin expansion, in our view," UBS analyst Jay Sole said.

Some retailers including Best Buy (BBY.N), opens new tab have accounted for the tariffs and a few others have pulled their forecasts. However, firms like Gap have excluded the impact from their outlook, citing an ever evolving trade policy.

Under the leadership of Richard Dickson, who took helm in 2023, Gap laid out plans to double the use of America-grown cotton by 2026, with executives on a post-earnings call saying that investing in the U.S., its biggest market, remains a key priority.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Qurat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi, Tanzila VS Abu Bakar, Suit Number: 66/FC, Institution Date: 25-03-2025, Hearing Date: 25-06-2025, Subject: Suit for recovery, Notice to: Abu Bakar son Noor Muhammad R/o Menai, Teh, Topi, Distt, Swabi, presently abroad, Dubai. Dependent. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 25-06-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

## Third Harappa Int'l conference underway



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Third Harappa International Conference, themed "Human Settlements in Transition: From Historic Roots to Future Visions in South Asia," is currently underway at COMSATS University Islamabad. Organized by the Department of Architecture, the conference brings together leading scholars, urban planners, policymakers, and cultural experts from across South Asia and around the world.

The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. In his address, Dr. Chaudhry highlighted the importance of drawing lessons from South Asia's urban heritage to build inclusive and resilient cities. Dr. Chaudhry also emphasized the role of the conference in connecting the young student body of the Department of Architecture with their historical roots, encouraging

students to actively contribute to initiatives aimed at national progress. He further expressed his resolve to take recommendations from such scholarly events into consideration for policymaking and relevant governing bodies.

Addressing the occasion, Rector COMSATS University Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar, reiterated his commitment to enhancing academia's role in preserving and promoting built heritage. Dr. Qamar said that we find ourselves at a critical juncture where rapid industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancement are reshaping the very fabric of how and where we live. In this context, revisiting the lessons of the past becomes not just relevant but essential.

He said that as our cities today continue to expand in unsustainable ways, we are seeing several critical issues like Environmental degradation, Inequitable access to public spaces, for which, we must shift

towards visioning for tomorrow while being grounded in the wisdom of the past.

Delivering the keynote address, Professor Dr. Noman Ahmed, Acting Vice Chancellor of NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, stressed the urgent need for inclusive, resilient, and context-sensitive planning to address South Asia's rapidly evolving urban landscapes. A celebrated architect and urban planner, Dr. Ahmed is widely recognized for his contributions to the field.

This year's conference features 31 presenters and session chairs, including national and international experts from countries such as Türkiye, Bangladesh, and Italy.

This diverse participation enriches the dialogue on urban development, heritage preservation, and sustainable planning. The two day conference will continue in the Islamabad Campus of CUI till Saturday.

## SBP advised its entities to avoid dealing in VAs

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: With reference to the news items regarding the 14th meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, it is clarified that State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in 2018 advised its regulated entities including Banks, Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Microfinance Banks (MFBs), Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs),

Payment System Operators (PSOs), Payment Service Providers (PSPs), and Exchange Companies to avoid dealing in Virtual Assets (VAs) due to the absence of any legal and regulatory framework for the VAs; not because it was declared illegal in the country. This was done to protect its regulated entities and their customers from the risks emanating due to the absence of legal and regulatory framework for VAs in the country.

The SBP and Finance Division are currently engaged with the Pakistan Crypto Council established by the Federal Government for, among others, developing an appropriate legal and regulatory framework for VAs in Pakistan.

We understand that the legal and regulatory framework would provide the requisite clarity and legal coverage about the VAs ensuring consumer and investor protection.





In brief

Pak outplay Kyrgyzstan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan began its' in the CAVA Nation's League 2025 with a dominating performance against Kyrgyzstan, winning the match 3-0 in straight sets at Fergana, Uzbekistan. Pakistan downed Kyrgyzstan with set scores of 25-15, 25-14, 25-19. The CAVA Nation's League 2025, is being held from May 29 to June 4, said a press release. Pakistan showcased exceptional teamwork and individual brilliance in the tournament. The notable performances came from Usman Faryad Ali, Afaq Khan, Murad Khan, Kashif Naveed, Nasir Ali, Abdul Zaheer and Musawer Khan. All players displayed outstanding skills, determination, and discipline, reflecting the team's preparedness and strong spirit. The victory adds to the momentum as Pakistan aims to defend its gold medal, which it proudly won in last year's edition of the CAVA Nation's League.

Knicks beat Pacers

NEW YORK (Agencies): Jalen Brunson scored 32 points as the New York Knicks beat the Indiana Pacers to keep alive their hopes of reaching the NBA Finals. Indiana remain one win from clinching the Eastern Conference finals but the Knicks claimed a 111-94 home win to cut their deficit to 3-2 in the best-of-seven series. Karl-Anthony Towns played through a knee injury to record 24 points and 13 rebounds as the third-seeded Knicks led throughout. "I looked at the game and it was 'game five, do or die'," Towns said. "That was pretty much all I needed to see," Benedict Mathurin registered 23 points and nine rebounds off the bench for the fourth-seeded Pacers, who host game six on Saturday (01:00 BST, Sunday). "We have no room for error," Towns added. "Our backs are against the wall and every game is do or die. If we don't bring that energy or execution, our season will be over." Towns had 17 points and 10 rebounds in the first half as New York led 56-45 at half-time, before pushing their advantage to 90-73 heading into the final quarter. Indiana crept to within 12 points with just over eight minutes remaining, but Josh Hart answered with consecutive baskets and Mikal Bridges hit a jumper to make it an 18-point margin. Indiana star Tyrese Haliburton had 30 points and 15 assists in game four but was kept to eight points on Thursday, with six assists. "Rough night for me," said the 25-year-old point guard. "I've got to be better setting the tone and getting downhill. I feel I didn't do a great job of that. "They picked up the pressure a little bit and applied more as the game went on. Put it on me, I've got to be better in game six."

David Trist dies aged 77

AUCKLAND (INP): The former New Zealand coach David Trist, who helped guide the team to the Champions Trophy in 2000, then called the ICC Knockout, has died aged 77. Trist was a pace bowler for Canterbury during a 14-year playing career then went into coaching with roles with Canterbury, South Africa, Hong Kong and Netherlands before the New Zealand job in 1999 when he replaced Steve Rixon. Though he was only in the position for two years he was able to secure New Zealand's first piece of global silverware, which has since been added to for the men with the 2021 World Test Championship. In the final in Nairobi they beat India by four wickets with Chris Cairns scoring an unbeaten century.



LAHORE: Sahibzada Farhan's 74 set a great platform for Pakistan.

National Ranking Tennis C'ships first round matches held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first round matches of the 1st Emerging Pakistan National Ranking Tennis Championships 2025 were played here at the PTF Tennis Complex on Friday. More than 200 entries in 7 different categories - Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies Singles, Boys 18 & under, Boys 14 & under, and Boys 12 & under - are participating in the event from across Pakistan.

Top players including Aqeel Khan, Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil, Muzammil Murtaza, Barkatullah, Abdullah Adnan, Ahmad Nael Qureshi, Abubakar Talha, Asad Zaman, Salar Khan, Abdul Basit, Yahya Ikram, Haziq Asim, Zohaib Afzal Malik, Junaid Khan, Razik Sultan, Ushan Suhail, Meheq Khokhar, Zunaisha Noor, Lalrukh Sajid, and Mahrukh Sajid will also be in action.

In Men's Singles 1st

Round, Aqeel Khan beat Usman Ejaz 6-2, 6-2; M.Talha Khan beat M.Haziq Aasim 6-4, 6-4; Mudassir Murtaza beat Jubran ul Haq 6-1, 6-1; Shahzad Khan beat Zain Ali 6-0, 6-0; Barkatullah beat Asad Zaman 6-1, 6-2; Saqib Hayat beat M.Huzaifa Khan 6-3, 6-3; Jabir Ali beat Kamran Maqbool 6-2, 5-1 (ret'd); Hamza Roman beat Hishashi Zoomie 6-0, 6-1; Abubakar Talha beat Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-3; Muhammad Salar beat Zafar Ahmad 6-0, 6-2; Yousaf Khalil beat M.Hamza Aasim 6-0, 6-0; Sami Zeb Khan beat Muhammad Yahya 6-1, 6-1; Ahmed Nael Qureshi beat Faizan Fayyaz 6-0, 6-1; Muzammil Murtaza beat Bilal Asim 6-4, 6-2.

In Ladies Singles 1st Round, Labaika Durab beat Zainab Ali Raja 6-1, 6-0; Meheq Khokhar beat Lateefa 6-0, 6-0; Fatima Ali Raja beat Zahra 6-0, 6-0;

Zunaisha Noor beat Lalarukh Sajid 6-0, 6-1; Shandana Rabi beat Sofia Tariq 6-2, 6-2.

In Boys 18&under Singles 1st Round, Ahmed Hussain beat Maaz Wakeel 6-1, 6-1; Zohaib Afzal Malik beat Mohammad Ali 6-1, 6-0; Mohammad Ali beat Mohammad Shakib 6-0, 6-0; Muhammad Junaid beat Haziq Areejo 3-6, 7-5, 6-3; Nabeel Ali Qayum beat Dawood Khan 6-0, 6-1; Muhammad Yahya Waqas Janas 6-1, 6-2; Muhammad Salar beat M.Talha 6-0, 6-0.

In Boys 14&under Singles 1st Round, M.Ayyan beat Moazzam Babar 4-0, 4-1; Ashtar Alam Khan beat Abdullah Haider 4-2, 4-0; M.Umair Ali beat M.Ahmed Afzal 4-0, 5-3; Muhammad Danyal beat M.Hamza Khan 4-2, 4-2; Ohad e Mustafa beat Yahya Bin Zain 4-2, 4-1; M.Turrah Bhatti beat M.Shakib 4-0, 4-0.

Aminul Islam elected new BCB president

DHAKA (Agencies): Aminul Islam has been elected president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) after a board meeting in Dhaka on Friday, following the removal of Faruque Ahmed by the sports ministry. Aminul is a former Bangladesh captain who led the side at the 1999 World Cup, and was their first Test centurion in 2000.

Aminul's ascent comes less than 24 hours after Faruque lost his place as the sports ministry's representative on the board of directors, effectively ending his reign as the board president.

The sports ministry said in a statement that it took the decision after eight BCB directors tabled a no-confidence motion against Faruque. It also based the decision on a fact-finding committee's report on corruption within the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

The sports ministry made Faruque one of its two directors on the BCB board on August 21, 2024, following the resignation of Nazmul Hassan, who was also the country's sports minister during the Awami League regime. On the same day, the directors elected Faruque as the BCB president.

Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, one of the signatories to the no-confidence letter, was the other sports ministry representative in the board. Aminul made his way into the BCB through the same path. The sports ministry added Aminul as one of its representatives in the board, making him a director first. Then the nine other directors elected him board president.

ESPNcricinfo understands that Aminul will continue until the next BCB election, which is likely to take place by October this year. He has taken leave from his work as an ICC development manager based in Melbourne.



Aminul assumes the BCB president's role at a difficult time. There were several controversies during Faruque's nine months as the board chief. On his first day in charge, Faruque questioned head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe's position, before sacking him two months later. The BCB directors, in their letter to the sports ministry, said Faruque had ignored the BCB constitution, which expects the president to inform the board directors on decisions such as hiring or firing a coach.

ESPNcricinfo has learned that Faruque's handling of BPL 2025 was a key reason behind his losing his job. Bangladesh's interim government head Dr Muhammad Yunus had taken a keen interest in the BPL, but the controversy surrounding the Durbur Rajshahi franchise marred the tournament. The government had to intervene when the Rajshahi owner failed to pay players on time, even ignoring to pay their hotel bills in Chattogram and Dhaka. It led to a player revolt.

Faruque also clashed with an assistant of the sports adviser, and his fallout with board director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim also became public. Dr Yunus didn't attend the BPL's final match as planned, which many believed was viewed negatively by the sports adviser Asif Mahmud.

The BCB has continued to be mired in controversy since. The Dhaka cricket clubs were angered when the BCB was in the process of amending its constitution, before questions began to emerge about certain Dhaka Premier League (DPL) matches. The situation came to a head after a stumping incident in the Shinepukur-Gulshan club match. The start of the investigation process was also criticised after the BCB's head of anti-corruption asked the same players to enact the incident publicly at the Shere Bangla National Stadium on the following day.

Last month, Faruque said in an interview on YouTube that he would contest the upcoming board elections. Some board directors told ESPNcricinfo that his focus on the upcoming elections alienated him from the other directors. In all, Faruque lasted nine months and eight days on the hot seat.

Pakistan beat Bangladesh in second T20I to seal series

LAHORE (AFP): Opener Sahibzada Farhan notched his maiden half century and spinner Abrar Ahmed grabbed three wickets to guide Pakistan to another convincing 57-run win over Bangladesh in Lahore on Friday.

Farhan smashed a 41-ball 74 and Hasan Nawaz unbeaten 51 off 26 balls to help the home team post 201-6 before Abrar grabbed 3-19 to keep Bangladesh to 144-9 in 19 overs, with the last man Shoriful Islama unbalance to bat due to injury.

Pakistan, who won the first match by 37 runs at the same venue, take an unassailable 2-0 lead with the final match on Sunday, also in Lahore.

The win also gives a kickstart to Pakistan's new white-ball head coach Mike Hesson appointed earlier this month to stem a slide which saw them win just three of their last 13 T20Is before this series.

Bangladesh raced to 32 in the first two overs but openers Parvez Hossain (eight) and Tanzid Hasan (19-ball 33 with five boundaries and a six) fell within two runs of each other.

From 46-2, Bangladesh slumped to 56-5 with Abrar dismissing Tohid Hridoy (five) and Jaker Ali (nought) off successive deliveries while pacer Hasan Ali had skipper Litton Das for six.

Tanzim Hasan, who topscored with a career best 31-ball 50, and Mehidy Hasan Miraz, 23 off 17 balls, added 33 for the eighth wicket but it was too late, too little.

Earlier, Pakistan posted a consecutive 200-plus total with Farhan and Nawaz ably supported by Mohammad Haris whose 41 came off 25 balls after the home team won the toss and batted.

After losing fellow opener Saim Ayub to a run out for four, Farhan put the innings on a solid footing with a 103-run second wicket stand of 54 balls with Haris.

The Farhan-Haris duo smashed Bangladesh bowlers to all corners,

with Farhan hitting six sixes and four boundaries while Haris's knock had two sixes and four boundaries.

Farhan was finally caught by Litton Das off leg-spinner Rishad Hossain in the 12th over. His previous best of 39 was against Australia in Dubai in 2018.

Nawaz gave a final polish to the innings by hitting three sixes and two boundaries as Pakistan added 40 in the last five overs.

Skipper Salman Agha fell for 19 and Shadab Khan made seven.

For Bangladesh Tanzim finished with 2-36 and Hasan Mahmud took 2-47.

Pakistan is most loving country: Olympian Sabrina Filzmoser

ISLAMABAD (APP): Four-time Austrian female Olympic judoka Sabrina Filzmoser on Friday said that she has always received immense love whenever she visited Pakistan and it is important to showcase the country's positive image to the world.

"I intend to ride on a bicycle from Islamabad to K2 Base Camp via Skardu before climbing K2," she said in a press briefing here at the Pakistan Sports Complex, before starting her mission along with President Pakistan Judo Federation (PJF) Col. (R) Junaid Alam.

Sabrina was a 2005 and 2010 World bronze medalist 2008 and 2011 European Champion. 7th at the 2012 Olympic Games. Winner of the Super World Cup Tournoi de Paris 2006 and 2008. Winner of the Grand Slam in Paris twice. Bronze medalist at the Grand Prix



in Cancun in 2017. In 2019 she took bronze at the Grand Prix in Budapest as the oldest medalist ever in the Judo World Tour, and Tokyo 2020 was her fourth Olympics.

Sabrina expressed her determination to complete the K2 mission despite the difficulties, reiterating how tough it is to summit the peak, adding that Pakistanis are incredibly hospitable and that she has always felt loved in the country.

She emphasized the need to show Pakistan's positive side to the world. Filzmoser also expressed her desire to inspire women in Pakistan to take part in sports and stated that she hopes to become a role model for girls in the country.

She shared that although her bicycle broke down, local citizens came forward to help her. She said climbing K2 is a personal challenge and highlighted the importance of raising awareness about

Judo, adding that Promoting Judo is her dream and I am happy to see full support given by Pakistan Judo Federation (PJF) for a good cause.

Sabrina said that Pakistan holds a special place in her heart and that she considers it her home. She consistently refutes negative narratives about Pakistan wherever she goes. She will depart for her K2 expedition from Islamabad on Saturday.

Speaking earlier, Junaid Alam said that Pakistan Judo Federation is grateful that Sabrina chose our beautiful country for this peace mission.

She has consented to hold talent hunt and training sessions before the expedition, during the expedition as well after the expedition. Takbeer Judo Club has requested her to accept the post of Brand Ambassador of TJC which she has kindly consented, he said.

Prodhomme wins Giro stage as Del Toro holds lead

CHAMPLAN (AFP): Frenchman Nicolas Prodhomme won a sizzling stage 19 of the Giro d'Italia on Friday run over five Alpine peaks where an expected title showdown failed to fully ignite.

Overall leader Isaac del Toro of Mexico remains 43 seconds ahead of Richard Carapaz of Ecuador while Briton Simon Yates is third at 1min 21s after losing 22sec on the day. EF rider Carapaz attacked late on in the race and Del Toro again proved he could keep up. Former Giro champion Carapaz was satisfied with his day's work.

"I think we were all very tired, and in the end I just had to give it a try. But I think it was a good stage. I think we can make it with Del Toro so I've got to be happy with my performance." Visma rider Simon Yates was unable to follow the pair and said he would be reviewing the situation ahead of Saturday's blockbuster, appearing annoyed at the line.

"We'll see how the legs are. The legs are good today so hoping for the same tomorrow and that I can try something," said the pure climber who may yet take the title. His twin brother Adam Yates took it easy Friday and will help sherpa UAE teammate Del Toro on the penultimate day.

Prodhomme's face was twisted with the effort as he broke away from a large escape group. "I've waited a long time for a win. I won my first race a week ago and now I win here in the Giro d'Italia."

On a scenic route with the temperature tipping 30C (86f) the peloton set a medium pace, keeping their powder dry for a title showdown at Sestriere ski resort Saturday. Stage 20 ends with a gruelling 20km climb up the Colle delle Finestre -- the moment when the winner is likely to emerge. For now Del Toro, who took the lead on stage nine in Siena, looks to have the legs to complete the job.

Sunday's final stage will be a triumphant roll into Rome that passes through the Vatican city with hoards of Mexicans expected.

Faisalabad Club wins Youm-e-Takbeer Kabaddi Tournament

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Kabaddi Club emerged victorious in the All Punjab Youm-e-Takbeer Kabaddi Tournament by defeating Sahiwal in a thrilling final match organized under the aegis of District Sports Department at Malikpur Kabaddi Stadium.

A spokesman of District Sports Department said here on Friday that Kabaddi teams from Lahore, Sahiwal, Gujrat and Faisalabad participated in the tournament.

In the opening match, Sahiwal outclassed Lahore with a score of 37-23, securing its place in the final. Similarly, the second match saw host Faisalabad overpowering Gujrat by

42-29 and it also earned a position in the final clash.

The final match delivered on excitement as Faisalabad showcased dominant form. It beat Sahiwal 45-27 to take home the trophy and a cash prize of Rs.200,000.

MPA and President of Punjab Kabaddi Association Iftikhar Ahmed Chhachhar witnessed the final as chief guest and he also distributed trophies and prizes among the position holder teams.

The first position holder Faisalabad was awarded a cash prize of Rs.200,000 along with trophy while Sahiwal got clinched a cash prize of Rs.150,000 along with a trophy.

Similarly, Gujrat and

Lahore were awarded cash prizes of Rs.100,000 each along with trophies for securing third and fourth positions respectively.

PMLN leaders Mian Irfan Manan, Raja Daniyal Ahmed, Faqeer Hussain Dogar, President District Kabaddi Association Rana Ali Abbas, President Divisional Kabaddi Association Chaudhary Abdul Waheed Jatt, Secretary General Punjab Kabaddi Association Shahbaz Randhawa, Secretary General Divisional Association Rana Imran Ahmed Khan and Secretary General District Kabaddi Association Sajida Lateef were also present on the occasion.

Sabalenka storms into French Open fourth round



PARIS (Agencies): World number one Aryna Sabalenka produced another devastating display to reach the French Open fourth round and continue her pursuit of a first Paris title.

The three-time major winner stamped her authority on the match early on by winning the first five games against Serbia's Olga Danilovic.

The 27-year-old went on to complete a 6-2 6-3 victory on Court Philippe Chatrier to set up a meeting with American Amanda Anisimova.

The Belarusian, who has reached at least the quarter-finals at each of the past nine Grand Slams she has contested, has lost just 10 games in her first three matches in Paris.

Now in her 40th consecutive week as the top-ranked women's player, Sabalenka thanked her team for helping to lay the foundations for her continuing success.

"When I am on court, I am a completely different person, very focused, very aggressive. On the court it is about dreams and I give my all on court," she said in

her on-court interview.

"Off court, it is important to surround yourself with the right people and have fun with your crew and that's what I'm doing."

"I am really grateful to have all of them on my team, we are like family."

Sabalenka lost to Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva in the French Open quarter-finals last year after reaching the semi-finals in 2023.

The loss marked the first time Sabalenka did not reach the last four at a major since the 2022 US Open - highlighting the remarkable level of consistency she has achieved in the past four years.

Addressing her team after finishing runner-up to Madison Keys at the Australian Open in January, Sabalenka joked "as always, that's your fault guys", adding: "I don't want to see you for the next week, I really hate you!"

But they - in addition to work with a psychologist and a biomechanics expert - have helped her transition from a player who served 428 double faults - 151 more than any other player - on the WTA Tour in 2022, to a title favourite wherever she competes.





## In brief

### Gang involved in stealing sacrificial animals busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Waris Khan Police on Friday took immediate action on a call at the Helpline 15 and busted a 3-member gang involved in stealing sacrificial animals. Three stolen goats were recovered from the accused, the Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. A citizen called the Helpline 15 that three persons had stolen three goats from outside his house and fled in their cars. The Waris Khan Police immediately started checking of vehicles by setting up a roadblock in the area and managed to nab the three accused along with the goats.

### Police bid farewell to DSP Rafaqat

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday held a farewell ceremony in honour of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Malik Rafaqat, who retired after serving the police department for 38 years. He was last serving as Sub-Divisional Police Officer Waris Cricle. Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi Region Babar Sarfraz Alpa, Assistant Deputy Inspector General Malik Naeem Akhtar and other police officers attended the ceremony. RPO Alpa paid tribute to Malik Rafaqat, saying that honest and brave officers like him were the asset of the police department and a beacon of light for the new generation. His excellent services would always be remembered in the history of the Punjab Police, he added. DSP Malik Rafaqat joined the police department on September 09, 1987 as assistant sub-inspector (ASI). During his service, he served in various important departments of Punjab Police including Special Branch, CID (present CTD) and Anti-Corruption Department. During his posting in CID, he took bold and effective actions against terrorist elements. For his outstanding performance, he was awarded the President's Police Medal (PPM) and was also given a cash prize of Rs 500,000 the Punjab government. During the ceremony, the retiring DSP was presented with a shield of honour. On the occasion, Malik Rafaqat thanked Allah Almighty that he had got the opportunity to serve the country and the nation, which was an honour for him.

### 9 nabbed with 15 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday continued anti-drug operations across the district and arrested nine accused with around 15 kilograms of drugs. According to the police spokesman, the Kallar Syedan Police held an accused recovering 100 grams of ice from him. Similarly, the Dhamial and Saddar Beroni Police held two accused each with 5 kg and 4.3 kg charas respectively. Likewise, the Race Course Police also caught two accused on the recovery of 2.22 kg charas, while the Wah Cantt Police recovered 1.82 kg charas from an accused. The Pirwadhai Police also arrested an accused and recovered 1.5 kg charas from his possession.

### 10 outlaws held

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during operations against outlaws on Friday held 10 accused, including liquor suppliers and illegal arm owners from across the district. A police spokesman said operations against liquor suppliers were carried out in the areas of Wah Cantt, Race Course and Kallar Syedan police stations. Five accused were detained with 58 litres of alcohol. Similarly, the Waris Khan, Sadiqabad and Naseerabad Police conducted operations against illegal arm owners in their limits. Five accused were taken into custody on the recovery of illegal weapons and ammunition.

## PTI internally divided, driven by personal agendas: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that the party is plagued by internal divisions and guided more by personal motives than national interest.

Talking to a private news channel, he stated that PTI has never presented a unified stance on

national issues.

He said the government has always favored dialogue as a democratic path forward, but not in the way PTI demands. "We support dialogue for the country's betterment, while PTI seeks it only to secure an NRO for its former chairman," he added.

The minister claimed that PTI workers are no longer motivated, having become disillusioned by past experiences. "The

leadership abandoned them during tough times—workers were jailed while leaders escaped. People now realize that this struggle is not for the nation, but to protect individual interests," he said.

Muqam reiterated that the government remains committed to stability and progress but will not entertain any dialogue intended solely for personal relief.

## ICT bans protests amid section 144 enforcement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has warned citizens against participating in any protests, reminding them that public gatherings are currently banned in the capital under Section 144.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, the Islamabad district administration has issued a clear message ahead of a possible protest scheduled for today. The spokesman confirmed that Section 144 remains in force

across the federal capital, making all forms of public demonstrations illegal.

According to the spokesman, any attempt to hold a protest or rally in the city would be considered a violation of the law. The official added that such gatherings would also breach the Assembly Act, and legal action will be taken against those involved.

The administration also referred to a protest held yesterday, during which several participants were taken into custody. Cases were registered against those who were seen

breaking the law, the spokesman said.

Officials have warned that any repeat of such actions will lead to strict legal consequences. The administration urged the public not to engage in any illegal activity or join any protest that defies the current restrictions.

Residents of Islamabad have been advised to follow the law and stay away from gatherings that could disturb public order. Authorities say the restrictions are in place to maintain peace and prevent any disruptions in the capital.

## Teachers applaud Senate move to reinstate tax rebate

ISLAMABAD (APP): The teaching community of Islamabad welcomed the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue's approval of the Income Tax (Second Amendment) Bill 2025, which aims to reinstate critical tax relief for salaried individuals, especially teachers and researchers.

The Senate panel, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, endorsed the bill, focusing particularly on reversing recent tax burdens that had led to significant salary deductions for teachers. This development follows the Federal Cabinet's earlier decision, dated March 26, 2025, to reinstate the 25% tax rebate for full-time teachers and researchers.

The rebate had been abruptly discontinued four

months prior, drawing widespread criticism from the education sector. Reacting to the committee's approval, Mr. Fazal-e-Maula, Chairman of the Joint Education Action Committee Teachers, praised the move as a "positive step," but noted that more comprehensive measures were needed. "While the restoration of the 25% tax rebate is appreciated, it is only a small relief.

The government must go a step further and introduce an education allowance," he said. He also advocated for aligning teachers' salaries with those of other government employees in equivalent grades.

Prof. Danish Yaseen, Joint Secretary of the Federal Government Teachers Association (FGCTA),

echoed similar sentiments. "After restoration of the 25% rebate, teachers now stand where they previously were. But the government should consider further incentives, as is done in other countries. Teachers should not be burdened with financial worries, only then they can foster a peaceful and focused classroom environment."

Prof. Akram Khan Khosa, President of the FGCTA said, "Despite playing a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future, teachers continue to suffer due to low salaries, an outdated service structure, and lack of incentives," he said. Khosa urged the government to go beyond tax relief and introduce an Education Allowance to alleviate the financial struggles faced by teachers.

## Over 6,800 police deployed to curb aerial firing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired an operational commanders' conference on Friday to review the security and crime prevention measures for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

An official told APP that the meeting began with special prayers for martyred officer Sudheer Abbasi and for the speedy recovery of injured officer Jafar Jahangir. The IGP was briefed on Eid security preparations, deployment plans, crime control strategies, and interfaith harmony initiatives.

IG Rizvi said that Eid-ul-Azha symbolizes unity, sacrifice, and inter-sectarian harmony, and the police force will ensure peaceful celebrations across the capital.

IG Rizvi said six designated cattle markets have been set up in Islamabad, where more than 1,000 police officers and security guards will be deployed. Police help desks will also

be established at these markets to prevent fraud, counterfeit currency circulation, and to assist citizens.

Eid prayers, IG Rizvi informed, will be offered at 832 locations in the city, with special duty points set up at marketplaces and entry checkpoints to ensure security.

An additional 1,000 police officers, IG Rizvi added, will be deployed on duty across 44 key locations on the night before Eid.

Under a special patrolling plan, 982 officers will be assigned for regular patrols to maintain law and order during the holidays, according to IG Rizvi.

He noted that around 1,040 police personnel will be deployed at public parks and recreational spots to ensure safety for families and visitors.

Special patrols, neighborhood watch systems, and targeted duties, IG Rizvi stated, will be activated to prevent house thefts during the Eid holidays.

A comprehensive traffic

management plan will also be introduced to facilitate smooth flow of traffic and prevent congestion near key areas, IG Rizvi said.

Police help desks will be set up at all major commercial centers to provide swift assistance to citizens, according to IG Rizvi.

A specialized patrolling plan has been devised for Margalla Hills to ensure visitor safety, IG Rizvi said. Strict action will be taken against aerial firing, one-wheeling, and illegal arms possession during the Eid holidays, IG Rizvi warned.

Cattle markets must only be set up at designated spots, and officers will visit marketplaces to ensure compliance, IG Rizvi emphasized. Strict measures will also be taken against professional beggars during the holidays, and all officers have been directed to carry out visits and enforcement, IG Rizvi added. Search and sweep operations across the city will be intensified to prevent any untoward incidents, IG Rizvi said.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Youth Leadership Camp conducting by Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ), visits the Senate Museum at Parliament House. —APP Photo

## Kundi visits NDMA, briefed on potential flood threats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi visited the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) here on Friday where he was given a comprehensive briefing on the country's potential flood threats.

The session, held in the presence of NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, included detailed updates from heads of various departments.

Officials informed the Governor about water levels and potential flood risks in the Indus, Kabul, Kurram, Kunhar, and Swat rivers. The briefing highlighted that Dera Ismail Khan and surrounding areas could face significant destruction

in the coming days due to possible severe flooding.

Governor Kundi expressed concern over the increasing impacts of climate change, saying that extreme weather patterns are becoming more evident and are contributing to growing challenges.

He stressed the need for timely and effective measures to minimize loss of life and property.

Appreciating NDMA's preparedness and preemptive strategies, the Governor assured full cooperation from the Governor House. He emphasized establishing a one-window relief operation to ensure swift aid during emergencies, involving non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) as well.

Governor Kundi also mentioned that the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center intends to provide homes for flood victims in Dera Ismail Khan based on NDMA's assessments. He urged NDMA to facilitate the identification and provision of suitable land under its supervision to support the initiative effectively.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of NAVTTC, Gulmina Bilal Ahmed, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House Islamabad to discuss the promotion of technical education in the province.

Governor Kundi highlighted NAVTTC's vital role in empowering youth

and supporting economic progress through skill development programs.

The two also discussed a proposal to allocate special quotas for children of martyred security personnel from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in vocational institutes named after Shaheed IG Safwat Ghayur. The initiative was praised as a meaningful tribute to national heroes.

They also consulted on potential scholarships for KP students in UK universities. Additionally, the Chairperson handed over the NAVTTC registration certificate for Gomal University, which the Governor welcomed as a positive step for students in the province.

## EU delegation meets Secretary MoHR, discuss HR cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the European Union (EU), led by Mr. Jeroen Willems, EU Head of Cooperation in Pakistan, along with Ms. Marta Szymczyk, Programme Manager, Human Rights and Democracy, visited the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) and held a meeting with Secretary MoHR, Humera Ahmad.

The meeting was also attended by Muhammad Arshad, Director General (IC), and Muhammad Arif Leghari, Director (IC), MoHR. The Secretary welcomed the EU delegation and appreciated the European Union's long-standing partnership with Pakistan in advancing the human rights agenda. Jeroen Willems acknowledged the progress made by Pakistan and reaffirmed the EU's continued support for these efforts.

The forthcoming EU Monitoring Mission on GSP+, underscoring that the associated benefits are intrinsically linked to

sustained improvements in human rights practices, was also discussed. Highlighting the importance of protecting the rights of minorities, women, children, and persons with disabilities, Willems commended Pakistan's initiatives in these areas and encouraged ongoing collaboration.

Secretary MoHR reaffirmed the Government's strong commitment to safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups and advancing an inclusive human rights agenda. She apprised the EU delegation of key legislative milestones, including the enactment of the National Commission for Minorities Act and the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025. She also highlighted the Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package 2024 as a flagship initiative aimed at addressing gender disparities.

Emphasizing the Ministry's focus on inclusivity, she shared ongoing reforms to improve acces-

sibility and mobility for persons with disabilities. The Secretary further noted the Government's resolve to strengthen the National Commissions; NCHR, NCSW, and NCRC in accordance with the Paris Principles to ensure more effective protection, redress, and accountability mechanisms.

The ongoing EU-Pakistan collaboration under the Huqooq-e-Pakistan II (HeP-II) project was also discussed. Both sides emphasized the need to strengthen coordination among all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the 2025 work plan.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides reaffirming their shared commitment to human rights and recognizing the Ministry of Human Rights as the key focal point for advancing this agenda in Pakistan.

The importance of continued coordination and regular engagement was also emphasized.

## ANF arrests 4 smugglers with 60 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting six operations across the country, recovered as many as 60.229 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 40 million and arrested four suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday. He informed that 2 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused near the university on Balili Road, Quetta district.

The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. In another operation, 24 kg of hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza, Sheikhupura in Lahore and the accused was arrested. As many as 3.6 kg of hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused riding in a passenger bus near the Gedo Chowk in Hyderabad.

During another operation in Hyderabad, 3.6 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of a suspect. As many as 17 grams of cocaine and 20 ecstasy pills weighing 12 grams were recovered from a parcel sent from the cargo office in Lahore to Karachi. 27 kg of heroin hidden in bushes for smuggling was recovered in the Somiani area of the Hub district. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

## Ethiopia, Pakistan discuss bilateral cooperation



ISLAMABAD (APP): Ethiopia Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Friday met with Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and discussed various avenues for bilateral cooperation in the higher education sector in a bid to further strengthen the bilateral ties and foster academic excellence through potential collaborative initiatives.

The meeting took place between two officials in HEC Chairman Office in Islamabad. Both sides discussed a wide range of initiatives, including student and faculty exchange programs, curriculum development for quality assurance in higher education, exchange of knowledge and expertise in education-

al digitalization, and joint research projects in various fields such as agriculture, science and technology, medicine, engineering and Artificial Intelligence.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal highlighted the great importance attached by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to quality assurance in education and the promotion of modern technologies in the country.

He noted Pakistan's extensive experience and knowledge in higher education, which Ethiopia could leverage for its human resource development. The Ambassador also emphasized education diplomacy as a cornerstone for building lasting and sustainable ties between the two countries.

HEC Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed warmly welcomed the

Ambassador's initiative, reiterating Pakistan's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's educational aspirations. He briefed the Ambassador on the advancements in Pakistan's higher education sector, particularly in digital learning platforms and research infrastructure.

The Chairman assured the Ambassador of HEC's full support in facilitating institutional linkages and providing opportunities for Ethiopian students to pursue higher education in Pakistan's public sector universities. He also extended an invitation for the higher officials of the Education Ministry of Ethiopia and top universities in Ethiopia to attend the 6th Vice Chancellors Forum, scheduled for June 23-25, 2025, in Rabat, Morocco.



Global silence on Gaza crisis Painful

KABUL (TOLONews): Islamic Emirate Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund condemned the international response to the ongoing crisis in Gaza, calling the silence of countries, involved parties, and humanitarian organizations "painful." Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund has urged all nations to take steps to stop Israel's attacks on Gaza. In a statement, the prime minister also called on citizens to hold Quran recitations in mosques today.

India's new visa module for Afghan nationals

KABUL (Ariana News): India's Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday that the new visa module for Afghan nationals came into effect on April 29. During his weekly press briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that Afghan nationals can now apply for Indian visas under six specific categories: medical, medical attendant, business, entry, student, and UN diplomatic.

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

## Protests held in Kabul in support of Palestinians



KABUL (TOLONews): Thousands of Kabul residents held demonstrations in support of Gaza and in condemnation of Israeli attacks.

Today (Friday, May 30), thousands of residents across different parts of the capital took to the streets to show solidarity with Palestine and denounce the Israeli regime's assault on Gaza.

Carrying flags of Palestine and the Islamic Emirate, the protesters chanted slogans against Israel and its allies.

One Kabul resident, who declined to be named, said during the protest: "Gaza is ours, and Al-Aqsa is part of our Islamic values. It was the site of the Prophet's (PBUH) Ascension (Mi'raj) and is the first Qibla of Muslims. It is our duty and respon-

sibility to support it."

Several demonstrators, chanting "Allahu Akbar," called for an immediate halt to Israeli attacks and demanded the removal of obstacles blocking aid to Gaza. Another Kabul resident, also speaking anonymously, stated: "You can see that the children, women, and men of Gaza are asking for help from you, the Mujahideen."

The residents urged the international community and Islamic countries not to remain silent in the face of the ongoing violence in Palestine. Some participants described the situation in Gaza as clear genocide.

The prime minister of the Islamic Emirate also condemned the ongoing tragedy in Gaza and criticized the silence of world countries, involved parties, and humanitarian

organizations as "painful."

Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate Hamdullah Fitrat said: "The most painful aspect is that world countries, involved parties, humanitarian organizations, and relevant agencies have either remained silent or taken very limited action. We once again strongly condemn Israel's attacks and the genocide in Gaza. We call on all countries to urgently take positive steps to end this catastrophe and stop the ongoing oppression and violence there."

Despite a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel, Israeli military attacks on civilians in Gaza continue. It is worth noting that in recent days, by blocking aid deliveries to Gaza, Israel has further worsened the ongoing humanitarian crisis there.

## Amid internal rifts, Taliban leader warns against factionalism

KABUL (Amu tv): Hibatullah Akhundzada, the Taliban leader, has called on Taliban members to avoid self-interest, internal favoritism and ethnic partisanship, amid reports of growing divisions within their leadership.

Speaking at a one-day seminar for Taliban officials from Paktika Province, Akhundzada emphasized the need for unity, religious obedience, and moral conduct. His remarks were relayed by Hamdullah Fitrat, a deputy spokesperson for the Taliban.

"We must avoid disunity, selfishness, favoritism, ethnic pride, and desire

for rank," Akhundzada said. "We must embrace solidarity, persistence in Sharia, obedience to elders, and commit ourselves to justice, reform, and religious duties such as promoting virtue and preventing vice."

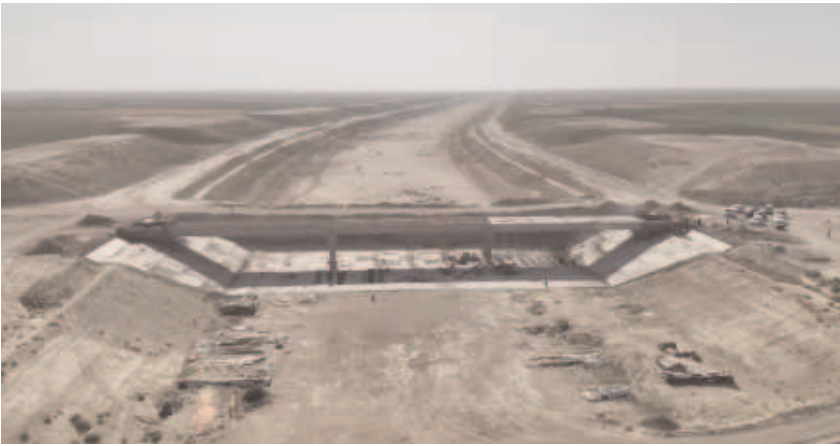
Akhundzada added that Afghanistan now provides a "suitable environment" for the full implementation of Islamic law, and he urged Taliban officials to purify their intentions, consult with religious scholars, and show humility and kindness in dealing with the population.

The comments follow a series of reports highlight-

ing internal friction between power centers in Kandahar — where Akhundzada is based — and Taliban members aligned with the Haqqani network in Kabul. Sources with knowledge of internal affairs say Akhundzada has increasingly centralized authority in Kandahar, including by relocating financial administration functions from the capital.

While Taliban have not formally addressed the reports of division, Akhundzada's message appears aimed at reinforcing loyalty and suppressing dissent within administrative ranks.

## Qosh Tepa Canal phase two reaches 90% completion



KABUL (TOLONews): The National Development Company has announced a 90% completion rate in the excavation work of the second phase of the Qosh Tepa Canal project.

According to the company's spokesperson, the construction of the headworks for this phase has also reached nearly 80% completion. The President of the National Development Company, who visited the project site, emphasized the need to further improve the project's execution process.

Nabiullah Arghandiwal, the spokesperson, stated: "The second phase of Qosh Tepa is progressing rapidly across various sections; praise be to God, 90% of the excavation work has been completed, and the remaining work is being

carried out using 2,000 pieces of machinery."

According to officials, to facilitate transportation for the public and vehicles, the construction of 11 bridges over the canal is currently underway. The project's contracting company has announced that they are striving to complete the project according to international standards.

Zabihullah Miri, General Director of the Qosh Tepa Canal, said: "The construction work on the embankments and headworks is being carried out with the highest quality, and the majority of the technical personnel, from designers to field engineers, are Afghan."

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock considers the

Qosh Tepa Canal one of the most important projects for the development of the country's agriculture and economy.

Wasim Safi, Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber, said: "The Qosh Tepa Canal is one of the most crucial canals for Afghanistan and the region. With its construction, large areas of land can be irrigated, leading to extensive agricultural development and job creation."

The Qosh Tepa Canal stretches 285 kilometers in length and 100 meters in width, beginning in Kaldar District of Balkh Province and passing through the provinces of Jawzjan and Faryab, ending in Andkhoy District. Upon completion, the canal will irrigate over 550,000 hectares of agricultural land.

## Islamic Emirate launches efforts to aid refugees in Neighboring Countries

KABUL (TOLONews): The Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office, during his visit to the refugee township in Daman District of Kandahar Province, stated that the Islamic Emirate has initiated efforts in neighboring countries to improve the situation of Afghan refugees.

Abdul Salam Hanafi further emphasized that neighboring countries should treat Afghan refugees based

on good neighborly relations and international migration principles.

He said: "Afghans living in neighboring countries possess legal residency documents and should not be subjected to unlawful treatment. We are striving to improve their situation, and at the same time, we urge neighboring countries to treat Afghan refugees according to Islamic principles or international

migration standards."

Meanwhile, the Acting Minister of Urban Development and Housing stated that around 500 million Afghanis will be allocated this year to provide shelters for refugees.

Hamidullah Noman, the Acting Minister, said: "The budget for refugee townships has been allocated on an emergency basis by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate. This year, we

have also proposed 500 million Afghanis to be spent on the construction of refugee townships."

On the other hand, several forcibly returned refugees from Pakistan have welcomed the start of the land distribution process by the Islamic Emirate.

Abdul Samad, one of the deportees from Pakistan, said: "Roads must be constructed in the townships, schools and madrasas must

be activated, and services must be expedited."

Faizul Haq, another deportee, said: "Lands must be handed over to us as soon as possible because we are currently living under tents and are in difficult conditions." According to the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, the distribution of land plots for returnees has begun in 35 townships across 25 provinces.

### 15 journalists remain in Taliban custody: Sources

KABUL (Amu tv): At least 15 journalists and media workers, along with three religious scholars critical of the Taliban, remain in Taliban custody, according to sources familiar with the situation.

Two additional sources from organizations that support journalists confirmed to Amu that some of the detained reporters have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to three years by Taliban courts.

Among them is Sulaiman Rahil, director of Khushhal Radio in Ghazni, who was recently sentenced to three months in prison, according to the Afghanistan Journalists Center.

## Afghanistan's commerce minister meets president of Kazakhstan



KABUL (Ariana News): Nooruddin Azizi, Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), has met with Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, during his official visit to the country.

According to the min-

istry's statement, the meeting was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, where both sides emphasized strengthening political and economic relations.

President Tokayev highlighted that Kazakhstan aims to increase bilateral trade with Afghanistan to over

\$3 billion. He also noted that Kazakhstan was among the first countries to keep its embassy open in Kabul following the Islamic Emirate's return to power and has maintained diplomatic relations since then.

President Tokayev added that the establishment of a

UN office in Kazakhstan to support Central Asian countries, particularly to address the challenges in Afghanistan, was one of his country's initiatives.

Meanwhile, Minister Azizi expressed his gratitude for Kazakhstan's diplomatic support and efforts to remove the name of the Islamic Emirate from the list of terrorist organizations. He welcomed Kazakhstan's interest to invest \$500 million in the Torgundi railway project and its humanitarian assistance, calling the investment crucial for job creation and economic development in Afghanistan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction with the progress in bilateral cooperation and agreed on a future visit by Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Afghanistan to further enhance political ties.

## Karzai: Ban on Girls' education key to lack of Intl recognition



KABUL (TOLONews): Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai told a Russian media outlet that the ban on girls' education by the Islamic Emirate is a major reason for the international community's refusal to recognize the current government.

Karzai described girls' education as a critical issue, stating: "The development of Afghanistan and the reduction of Afghan migration to other countries are directly linked to safeguarding girls' right to education."

The former president emphasized: "We want our girls to attend school. We want schools and universities in Afghanistan to

be open and for our girls to fully participate in the education process. For Afghans to remain in their homeland, there must be hope for a better future and strong relations with the world."

In his remarks, Karzai identified girls' deprivation of education as a major obstacle not only to the recognition of the interim government but also to the overall social welfare of the country.

He pointed out that although many members of the interim government are not opposed to girls' education, he remains hopeful that the situation will improve.

Karzai stated: "This

issue is a serious barrier to both the well-being of the Afghan people and the recognition of the government by the international community. The vast majority of the Taliban support girls' education. I am very hopeful that progress will be made in this area."

Yesterday, Karzai also expressed hope that his daughter, who recently completed her primary education, would be able to continue her studies alongside other Afghan girls through to the end of high school and pursue higher education to achieve her dreams, following the recent graduation of his son from high school in Kabul.

## 317 prisoners released from prison

N A N G A R H A R (TOLONews): Based on the amnesty decree issued by the leader of the Islamic Emirate, 317 prisoners, including women and children, were released from Nangarhar prison on the occasion of Eid al-Adha.

Sohail Saeed, Head of Prison Affairs in Nangarhar, stated that under this decree, the prison sentences of another 385 inmates have also been reduced.

Saeed said: "317 individuals, including women and children, have been included in the amnesty list, and 385 others have benefited from sentence reductions."

Meanwhile, some of those recently released said they intend to live within the framework of the law from now on. Sirajul Haq, one of the freed prisoners, said: "The Islamic Emirate sentenced me to one year in prison, of which I served ten months."

Mohammad Nader, another freed prisoner, said: "From now on, we do not want to commit crimes or engage in any wrongdoing. A decree was issued, and under it, we were pardoned. God willing, we have been freed, and from today onward, we will not make mistakes again." According to the Nangarhar prison authorities, about 1,800 people, including women and children, are currently serving their sentences in this prison.

## WFP reports slight drop in food prices in Afghanistan

KABUL (Amu tv): Food prices in Afghanistan declined slightly in the fourth week of May, driven in part by a modest strengthening of the national currency, though costs for many basic goods remain significantly above pre-pandemic levels, according to a new report from the World Food Programme.

The WFP's Countrywide Weekly Market Report shows a 0.7 percent drop in the national average price of its in-kind food basket compared to the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the basket is down 1.6 percent. However, it still stands 7 percent higher than prices recorded before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The small decline comes alongside a 1.8 percent appreciation in the Afghani against the U.S. dollar, offering temporary relief in some markets.

Despite recent easing, food prices remain elevated compared to mid-2021 benchmarks, shortly before the Taliban returned to power. The cost of cooking oil is up 18 percent compared to the same period last year, while salt prices have increased by 21 percent. Prices for other major food commodities, however, have declined.

According to the report, vegetable prices also saw week-on-week decreases, attributed to seasonal surges in domestic supply. Tomatoes are down 19 percent compared to May 2024, potatoes 13 percent, and onions 2 percent. As of late May, tomato prices ranged from 18 to 60 afghanis per kilogram across provinces, depending on location and transport costs. Potatoes sold for

between 15 and 30 afghanis per kilogram, while onions ranged from 8 to 30 afghanis.

The report says that regional disparities in pricing remain stark, with provinces near international borders benefiting from lower costs due to easier access to imported goods. Larger provincial markets continue to serve as distribution hubs, influencing price differentials across the country.

In the labor market, unskilled workers reported an average of 2.4 days of work per week, with daily wages averaging 315 afghanis. While steady compared to earlier in the year, these figures remain below pre-Covid and mid-2021 levels, indicating ongoing underemployment, the report says.

According to the report, diesel

prices also held relatively stable. The national average price stood at 56.8 afghanis per liter, virtually unchanged from the previous week and 7 percent lower than a year ago. On the global market, diesel averaged \$1.18 per liter, a slight drop from April. Agricultural input prices—including fertilizers and improved seeds—showed minimal week-on-week movement and modest year-on-year declines, suggesting stable supply conditions ahead of the main harvest season.

While the declines offer modest short-term relief, aid agencies warn that millions of Afghans continue to face food insecurity amid persistent economic uncertainty, limited job opportunities, and stalled international development assistance.



# Pakistan disrupts India's operational calculus: CASS



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a high-level national seminar titled "Military Interoperability in Modern Warfare: Transforming Pakistan's Defence Posture." The event was widely attended by academia, students, intellectuals and domain experts. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context.

The introductory remarks for the seminar were given by Ameer Abdullah Khan, Senior Research Associate at CASS Lahore. He emphasised that interoperability is no longer a technical choice but a strategic compulsion. Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan HI(M) (Retd) delivered the keynote, emphasising that airpower has fundamentally reshaped the character of joint operations. He highlighted that air superiority provides the platform for ISR dominance, precision targeting, electronic warfare, and real-time command and control.

He further noted that modern Jointness must be built on shared doctrine, integrated training pipelines, and real-time situational awareness. While pointing out potential areas for improvement, he asserted that air defence architectures should be strengthened to ensure an impregnable defence. Referring to Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, he highlighted how Pakistan's swift, measured, and integrated tri-service response disrupted India's operational calculus, showcasing the value of multi-domain convergence in real-time. He remarked that victory in future wars hinges upon a tri-service operational cycle: combined war planning, scenario-based war-gaming, and full-spectrum national joint exercises.

Lt Gen Aamer Riaz HI(M) (Retd) delivered an incisive interoperability analysis in both conventional and sub-conventional warfare. He argued that as the character of war has changed, India has been waging a continuous war on Pakistan through both direct and indirect means. Commending

the success of Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, he said that interoperability for future wars must be institutionalised through an integrated command system. Rear Admiral Syed Faisal Ali Shah HI(M) (Retd) offered a maritime perspective, identifying how the Indo-Pacific power contestation and India's pursuit of naval dominance call for interoperable and combat-ready naval networks.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, asserted that, from conventional threats to hybrid domains, Pakistan's defence posture is shifting from platform-centric to network-centric warfare, ensuring joint readiness across all domains. He noted that during Marka-e-Haq, the PAF demonstrated its prowess in the air by shooting down seven aircraft, including three Rafales and a Heron UAV. Achieving this in the largest BVR battle ever in modern times, within one hour, was no small achievement.

New and advanced home-grown technologies were integrated into the operation, including cyber, EW, space, and the effective deployment of UAVs, making it a practical manifestation of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu's vision of high-tech, multi-domain operations. Referring to Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, which took the steam out of the Indians and compelled their government to seek help from the United States, he stated that the operation also reanimated the Kashmir issue, forcing it back onto the agenda.

He added that in coordination with the Pakistan Army's missile and artillery firepower, the PAF struck 34 targets across the border, including 14 airfields, two S-400 batteries, two BrahMos missile dump sites, and various other strategic assets. Given the likelihood of future conflicts, he stressed that every service must perceive the battlefield in the same way, speak the same operational language, and act in unison to ensure effective joint force application. The seminar concluded with a lively Q&A session, engaging participants in a forward-looking discussion on joint force design and future threat readiness.

## Pakistanis in Washington celebrate victory over India

F.P. Report

WASHINGTON, D.C.: The Pakistani-American community in Washington gathered this week to commemorate Pakistan's recent military victory over India, calling for renewed diplomatic efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue. The event was hosted in honor of prominent the senior most journalists from Pakistan Ariful Haque Arif of JangGroup and Mr Zarrar Khan of AP by prominent businessman and community leader Jamal Khattak at his residence and drew a broad cross-section of political activists, diplomats, journalists, and Kashmiri representatives.

A cake-cutting ceremony marked the celebration, which participants described as a "moment of national pride." The event honored Pakistan's armed forces and highlighted unity among the diaspora in response to rising tensions in South Asia. Veteran journalist and guest of honor Ariful Haque Arif thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for, in his words, "bringing the Pakistani nation together through his

aggressive posturing." Speakers echoed the sentiment, noting that India's actions had galvanized Pakistani unity both at home and abroad. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, a Kashmiri political activist and head of a diplomatic advocacy group and lobbyist for Kashmir cause urged Islamabad to send a high-level delegation to the United States to formally thank President Donald Trump for what he termed a "timely and supportive role" during the conflict. He emphasized the opportunity for Pakistan to use global attention to push for lasting peace in Kashmir.

Pakistani Consular Tahir Jameel said Pakistan's diplomatic response was effective and helped shape international understanding of the crisis. Press minister Sarfaraz Ahmed praised local and international Pakistani media outlets for countering what he described as "false propaganda by Indian media" and for promoting factual reporting.

Sardar Zareef, advisor to the President of Azad Jammu & Kashmir in the US, said Pakistan must

capitalize on this moment to make progress on the Kashmir dispute, long a flashpoint in the region. Speakers also paid tribute to Pakistan's military leadership, including Field Marshal Hafiz Asim Munir and Air Chief Zaheeruddin Babar Sidhu, applauding their strategy and the performance of fighter pilots during the operation.

Among those who addressed the gathering were senior Pakistani journalists and diaspora leaders, including Faiz Rehman, Anwar Iqbal, Syed Asfar Imam, Aziz Ahmed, Azeem Khan, Javed Kausar, Faisal Ali, and Zazar Khan, as well as community members. Sardar Zubair Khan, Sardar Shoaib Irshad, Muhammad Anwar Qasmi, Ilyas Masih, Sajjad Baloch, Waseem, Saad Gondal, Hafiz Farooq Shahid, and Raja Abdul Qayyum Khan. The evening concluded with remarks from host Jamal Khattak and journalist Syed Asfar Imam, who thanked the participants for their continued engagement and support for Pakistan's national and diplomatic interests.

## Pakistan to appoint ambassador to Afghanistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have seen a major breakthrough as Pakistan announced on Friday the decision to appoint a full ambassador to Kabul.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the current diplomatic affairs in Afghanistan are being overseen by a temporary official, but the move to assign an ambassador marks a step forward in restoring full diplomatic engagement.

Following Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's recent visit to Kabul, relations between the two neighboring countries have shown a positive trajectory. The foreign office spokesperson expressed satisfaction with the growing pace of bilateral engagement. "This move will further enhance our mutual ties," the spokesperson stated, adding that it will deepen collaboration in key areas such as trade, security, and economic development, while also boosting high-level exchanges between the two nations.

Earlier, the Afghan Taliban on Wednesday issued stern warning to the Fitna Al-Khawarij, stating that "fighting in any country, particularly Pakistan, without the Emir's explicit order is not permissible." Commander Saeedullah Saeed of Afghan Taliban made these remarks while addressing a police passing-out ceremony.

He emphasized that individuals joining various factions to wage jihad abroad are not true Mujahideen. "It is wrong to label those who launch attacks from one place to another as Mujahideen," he said. He clarified that the authority to declare jihad only rests with the Emir of the state, not with any group or individual.

## Court indicts six more PTI supporters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad on Friday indicted six more Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters in a case related to the violent protests that followed the arrest of the party's founder on May 9.

The hearing took place at the Anti-Terrorism Court in Islamabad, where Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra framed charges against the six accused. They denied the allegations during the proceedings. This case stems from the events of May 9, 2023, when PTI workers across the country staged violent protests after the arrest of the former party chief outside the Islamabad High Court. The protests led to attacks on several government buildings and military sites.

According to police, a total of 48 individuals are now formally charged in the case. Charges had already been filed against 42 people before, while the court has now added six more names to the list of accused. The case is being heard in connection with an FIR registered at Shams Colony Police Station, which relates to the incidents of arson and vandalism during the protests.

The court has adjourned the proceedings until July 3, when it will resume hearings. The May 9 protests included demonstrations outside the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, where PTI supporters damaged security barriers and other installations.

# KP govt issues special to Peshawar Press Club

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif, visited the Peshawar Press Club where he presented a cheque of Rs. 50 million on behalf of the provincial government as financial assistance to the club. On this occasion, Secretary Information Muhammad Khalid, Additional Secretary Information Hayat Shah, office bearers of the Press Club, senior journalists, and other relevant individuals were present.

Speaking at a press conference following the ceremony, Barrister Dr. Saif stated that the Peshawar Press Club is not just an institution for him, but feels like home. He emphasized that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is undertaking concrete and sincere steps for the welfare of journalistic institutions. Public resources are being utilized transparently, fairly, and effectively to enhance the professional capacity, training, and institutional development of the journalistic community. He further remarked that when resources are utilized properly, they have a multidimensional positive impact on society. This is the vision being implemented under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, and under this vision, the Peshawar Press Club has been granted financial support twice during the current fiscal year.

In response to a question regarding the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, Barrister Dr. Saif clarified that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has made sincere efforts for political dialogue. At one point, a formal negotiation committee was established which engaged in talks with the government, but the process stalled and the committee was eventually dissolved. He asserted that PTI continues to make efforts on political, constitutional, and legal fronts to secure the release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. He stressed that without political stability, economic recovery and effective implementation of national security policies is not possible. The only way to achieve stability is to ensure swift judicial decisions on the baseless, politically motivated cases filed against Imran Khan and PTI leaders, and to release innocent political prisoners so they can rejoin the mainstream political process.

Barrister Dr. Saif highlighted that

Imran Khan has been in prison for two years but has neither sought pardon nor relief and has borne all hardships with patience. "Anyone who believes that keeping Imran Khan behind bars will change the political landscape is delusional. The interest of the state, the nation, and the government lies in finding a peaceful resolution to this mockery." Responding to a question about the protest plan to secure release of Imran Khan, he confirmed that a new protest campaign is being launched and the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been instructed by Imran Khan accordingly.

Regarding relations with neighbouring country Afghanistan, Barrister Dr. Saif revealed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has repeatedly submitted formal and informal requests to the federal government for permission to send a delegation to Afghanistan to engage directly with Afghan authorities on matters that are affecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. He emphasized that due to geographical proximity, developments in Afghanistan directly impact Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Expressing disappointment, he criticized the federal government's political incompetence and diplomatic inaction for hampering provincial efforts and preventing meaningful engagement with Afghanistan.

He clarified that the KP government does not seek to conduct an international diplomatic mission or discuss matters of national security but only wishes to address issues that directly affect the province. Criticizing the federal foreign ministry, he stated, "The Foreign Minister has traveled the world but has failed to visit Afghanistan, our neighboring country-this is a major foreign policy failure."

Addressing a question about the expulsion of Afghan nationals, Barrister Dr. Saif made it clear that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government disagrees with the federal policy in this matter. He stated that Afghan refugees are seen as brothers, and treating them with compassion and fraternity is both a humanitarian and religious obligation. "The Chief Minister has repeatedly stated that the provincial government does not endorse the federal government's approach toward Afghan refugee's repatriation. We believe Afghans

share our language, culture, religion, and faith," he said.

He emphasized that Afghan citizens are going through difficult times due to instability in their country, and turning them away is neither humane, Islamic, nor aligned with Pashtun traditions. He added that if any Afghan national completes legal documentation and wishes to re-enter Pakistan, the provincial government has no objections. Barrister Dr. Saif firmly rejected narratives blaming Afghan citizens for the province's problems, calling such claims unfair and disconnected from reality.

Speaking on the issue of political conspiracies and scandals, Barrister Dr. Saif accused the ruling coalition of adopting failed strategies that have only boosted PTI's popularity. "We are under attack from all sides-facing conspiracies and political hurdles-but by the grace of God, PTI's public support continues to grow." He added that the party is not intimidated by these scandals and, in fact, believes they are fueling public sympathy and respect for PTI.

Barrister Dr. Saif described the PPP's anti-corruption protest as the height of political hypocrisy and mockery. "The world knows that if any party is most associated with corruption, it is the Pakistan Peoples Party," he said. He cited a 2008 United Nations report listing global money launderers, where the second name belonged to a current Pakistani figure who, regrettably, now holds the office of President. "This report is publicly available on the UN website, and every Pakistani can judge the moral standing of those protesting against corruption."

Commenting on the PPP's recent protest, Dr. Saif said, "If you unlawfully enter the Red Zone and damage public property, the law will respond. The police used only legal and reasonable force-no bullets were fired, and no extrajudicial actions were taken." He reminded the public that those now complaining about being hit with batons are the same ones who previously opened fire on unarmed PTI protesters in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and D-Chowk, resulting in over 18 deaths. "Those people had no weapons. If they did, perhaps you wouldn't have dared to fire at them. But when you shoot at unarmed protesters, you lose the moral right to cry foul when law enforcement acts within legal bounds."

## KP CM directs security plans for Eid

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the special instructions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, necessary directives have been issued for ensuring arrangements ahead of Eidul Azha, in the province. In this regard, the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Peshawar, has formally issued a directive comprising twenty points to relevant departments, police, and divisional and district administrations. All Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners have been especially instructed to hold meetings with the police and other concerned departments to finalize security arrangements before Eidul Azha.

They have also been directed to devise security plans for Eid prayers at Eidgahs, Masajid, and Imambargahs. No administrative officer is allowed to leave their duty station without prior permission from the concerned Deputy Commissioner. Similarly, Deputy Commissioners and Divisional Commissioners will not leave their duty stations without the permission of the Chief Secretary. In case of unavoidable absence, substitute officers must be appointed in their place, it was directed.

The Livestock Department has been instructed to ensure mandatory monitoring of animal markets and other points of sale for sacrificial animals, along with mandatory vaccination and spraying at these locations to prevent the spread of

animal-borne diseases. The directive also includes strict monitoring of public transport fares during Eid holidays, with firm action to be taken against those charging more than the approved fare. Special traffic police squads be deployed to take strict action against one-wheeling and motorcyclists riding without helmets.

Moreover, concerned quarters have been directed to carry out special cleanliness drives in Eidgahs and marketplaces, and special plans should be devised for the timely disposal of sacrificial animal remains. The local population should be informed about these disposal plans.

Additionally, it has been directed that female police personnel be deployed in crowded women's shopping areas. Special traffic management measures must be taken on roads leading to tourist spots, with traffic police and civil defense staff deployed for this purpose. Authorities have also been instructed to ensure implementation of the existing SOPs on rivers and dams, with a clear ban on boating without life jackets. Overloading of boats and swimming in fast-flowing waters is also prohibited. Rescue 1122 should remain on high alert to respond to any untoward incidents. The Communication and Urban Development Departments should remain alert to open closed roads during Eid, and all tourist facilitation centers and helplines must remain operational round the clock.

Similarly, attention must

be paid to amusement parks, and overloading on amusement rides should be strictly prohibited. All cable car operators are to be directed to submit fitness certificates. All health centers should remain open 24/7 with the availability of essential emergency facilities, medicines, and staff. Furthermore, the availability of petroleum products must be ensured at fuel pumps, especially those near tourist areas.

Advance arrangements for traffic and sanitation must be made at Eid congregation sites. Deputy Commissioners have been instructed to visit prisons, hospitals, and orphanages in their districts. Control rooms must be established in all Deputy Commissioners' offices, and their contact numbers should be publicized for awareness among the general public.

## Public holidays for Eidul Azha

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government decided to announce a four-day public holiday for Eidul Azha, starting from June 6 to June 9, 2025.

The decision has been taken following the approval from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. A formal notification in this regard will be issued by the cabinet division.

## PHC seeks response in missing person case

Humayun Khan

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

During the hearing, the petitioner appeared in court and stated that his son, who was a rickshaw driver in Kohat, went missing three months ago. He further stated that his wife has been suffering from high blood pressure due to the distress caused by her son's disappearance.

The petitioner also mentioned that he had to take his son out of school and get him a rickshaw to drive due to financial difficulties. The petitioner informed the court that he cannot afford a lawyer.

In response, the Chief Justice assured him that he would not need a lawyer, and if necessary, the court would arrange for one. The Chief Justice also informed the petitioner that he would not need to travel from Kohat to attend the court proceedings and could appear via video link. PHC issued notices to the police, provincial, and federal governments, seeking their response to the petition. The court also directed the relevant agencies to submit reports on the case.

# KP cabinet urges Centre to reconsider policy regarding Kabul

(Continued from Page 1)

This House stands united with the people and Armed Forces of Pakistan defense of our homeland." Added Barrister Dr. Saif. Explaining other decisions of the Cabinet Barrister Dr. Saif said that the cabinet approved enhanced cost of the scheme 'construction of Police Station Jani Khel District Bannu'. The cost of the scheme as per the estimates of 2021 was Rs.100.00 Million but at the present rate its cost has increased to Rs. 140.43 million. Upon completion the scheme will strengthen the police to improve the law and order situation in the Jani Khel area of sub-division Wazir district Bannu.

The cabinet approved signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Board of Revenue Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Survey of Pakistan for initiation of a pilot project on Cadastral Mapping in Peshawar and Mohmand districts. The Government has cent per cent

computerized the land record in 9 districts while in remaining 10 districts 90% record is computerized. Service Delivery Centers have been established in all these districts: Providing digital record to the landowners, efficient Recovery of Provincial Receipts; Ensuring real time updating of Land Records thus after completion of the project all Land Records will be digitized. But Cadaster Map/ Massavis are still Manually Managed. This Digitization of Cadaster Maps makes it possible to update these maps in shortest time.

The cabinet approved nomination of the Minister and Secretary Labour department for participation in 113th Session of International Labour Conference in Geneva. The cabinet approved amendment in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department Contract appointment (Fixed Pay) Rules, 2022. The amendments in the rules relates to provision of recruitment of Dental Surgeons, technicians and Nurses; change in departmental

selection committees and slight change in condition of domicile. It is pertinent to mention here that the Health Department was unable to recruit Dental Surgeon and Nurses under the previous round of recruitment because there was no provision for the aforementioned cadres under the rules. The Cabinet also approved Rs. 153.950 million for clearing the liabilities of outsourced DHQ Hospital Wana.

The cabinet approved amendment in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Act, 2019 to empower the Board of Directors of the Culture and Tourism Authority to determine the nature of employment extensions of employment contracts for Tourism Police constables.

The cabinet approved constitution of the 4th Board of Directors (BoD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KP-EZDMC). It also approved constitution of the Board of Directors (BoD) of the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Technical & Vocational Training Authority. It also adopted the Annual Reports, (2023 and 2024) of Provincial Ombudsman. The cabinet approved Rs. 13,302,000/- for purchase of two vehicles for Anti-Terrorism Court-III, Peshawar and Anti-Terrorism Court Buner at Daggar. The approval also includes relaxation of ban on purchase of vehicle for the same.

The cabinet approved construction of additional 750 Meter Road near Odigram Bridge over river Panjkora District Lower Dir having an estimated cost of Rs. 190 million. It also approved enhanced cost of the construction of Takatak to Haya Sairai Bridge in district Dir from Rs.500.00 million to Rs. 1020.401 millions.

After detail briefing, open and thorough discussion over the report of Broad-Based Committee on Wheat Procurement & Maintenance of Strategic Reserves in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Cabinet decided that unless the clear cut policy of the

Federal Government, the Province will not procure wheat during the current year as sufficient stock was available with it.

The cabinet approved the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee headed by Minister Law which recommends exemption of stage carriage (Passenger Vehicles) from operation of Rule-57-B(I) of Motor Vehicle Rules, 1969. The committee also recommends expediting the scheme 'feasibility study of establishment of vehicles fitness and emission testing certification system Khyber Pakhtunkhwa'.

The cabinet approved amendments in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration Act, 2013. The amendment makes the Act / Rules compatible with the existing trends / requirements. It also provides for assigning Govt. Advertisements to Outdoor Advertising Agency, Digital Advertising Agency, TV Cable Operators and Social Media Influencers. It further provides for the

transfer of declaration of a newspaper to people other than family members after ten years of the authentication. The existing law totally prohibits such transfers to people other than family members.

The cabinet approved transfer/allotment of 2 kanals 12 marla state land to Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department for establishment of Rescue 1122 Station at Mouza Mina Khel Lakki City, District Lakki Marwat. The cabinet in light of Civilian Victims Compensation Regulations 2019 approved Rs. 5 million to 9 deceased persons as special compensation package to civilian victims' families of various incidents in the Province. It also approved a grant in aid of Rs. 20 million for Mehsud Welfare Association (MAWA) and Rs. 10 million to Frontier Foundation Welfare Hospital and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar. It further approved grant-in-aid of 50 Million to Lahore High Court Bar Association, Lahore. He concluded.