

Cop succumbed to injuries  
F.P. Report

KARAK: Policeman Niaz Marjan, who was injured in firing by unknown persons within the limits of Karak police station three days ago, succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar. Policeman Niaz Marjan was on his way to appear in court yesterday when unknown persons opened fire on him, resulting in him being seriously injured.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 95

Regd. No. 241

ZIQAAD 06 1446 -- SUNDAY, MAY 04 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## Security forces kill five terrorists in KP operations

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces killed five khwarij, while two were apprehended during three separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Saturday.

It said three separate operations were conducted on April 30, and May 1, 2025. An intelligence based operation was conducted by the security forces in Bajaur District, on reported presence of khwarij.

During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and after an intense fire exchange, three khwarij, including HVT Kharji Fareed Ullah, were sent to hell.

Another intelligence based operation (IBO) was conducted in general area Dossali, North Waziristan District. In ensuing fire exchange, two Khwarij were effectively neutralised by the security forces. In third encounter that took place in Mohmand District, the security forces successfully busted a kharji hideout and apprehended two khwarij, including HVT Kharji Lal Ameer @Ibrahim.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from these khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities. According to ISPR, sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out

the menace of terrorism from the country.

**Two terrorists killed in Lakki Marwat:** Police claimed to have thwarted the terrorists' plan to attack a police post in Shah Tora area and killed two of them during an exchange of fire on Saturday. An official said that after receiving credible information about the presence of terrorists in darga forest, the policemen reached there and besieged them.

He said that a fierce gunfight took place in the forest leading to the killing of two terrorists. Police said that they had seized arms and ammunition from the venue and shifted the bodies to a local hospital. Separately, police have repulsed a terrorist attack on a police post in the Gandhi area. A police official said that an intense exchange of fire occurred when terrorists launched the midnight attack on the post with light and heavy weapons.

"Though the attack was repulsed, a local resident who had come out of his house to assist police lost his life while a policeman and a watchman were also injured", he maintained. He said that the building of the police post was partially damaged in the attack.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday appreciated the security forces for killing five Khwarij in North Waziristan and Bajaur and arresting two others in Mohmand during three different operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

province.

The president and the prime minister also commended the forces for killing a highly wanted Khwarij leader and arresting another one. The president reiterated the resolve of continuing actions against Khwarij and appreciated security forces' operations for eliminating these elements, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

He said their determination for the eradication of terrorism and the defence of the motherland was resolute. The prime minister said that they would continue foiling the nefarious designs of the enemies of humanity. He also reaffirmed continuing the fight against terrorism till its complete elimination from the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has commended the security forces for eliminating five terrorists in three separate operations in Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and for successfully apprehending two others.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP said that terrorists are enemies of humanity—they belong to neither any religion nor any race, adding that the nefarious designs of terrorists will continue to be crushed in this manner. He further said that the entire nation stands united and determined to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the country.

## Pakistan test-fires ballistic missile

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan on Saturday conducted a successful training launch of the Abdali Weapon System—a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 450 kilometers as part of Ex INDUS.

According to a statement by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability features.

The training launch was witnessed by the Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officials from the Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, as well as scientists and engineers from Pakistan's strategic organizations.

The President, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and Services Chiefs extended their congratulations to the participating troops, scientists, and engineers. They expressed complete confidence in the operational preparedness and technical proficiency of Pakistan's Strategic Forces to ensure credible minimum deterrence and safeguard national security against any aggression.

## Dar, Swiss FM discuss situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammd Ishaq Dar Saturday held a telephone conversation with the Swiss Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister, Ignazio Cassis and briefed him on the evolving regional security situation.

DPM expressed grave concern over India's recent provocative actions, including baseless allegations, inflammatory propaganda, and its unilateral decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance — an outright violation of international legal obligations. He reiterated Pakistan's call for an independent & transparent international investigation to establish the facts. He underscored Pakistan's commitment to exercising restraint in the interest of regional peace and security, while reserving the right to protect its sovereignty and national interests.

FM appreciated Pakistan's commitment to peace, and endorsed its proposal for an investigation. He expressed Switzerland's readiness to offer its good offices and explore appropriate mechanisms to facilitate an impartial investigation. The two leaders agreed to remain in close contact on the evolving situation.

## Asif warns India

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif slammed India on Saturday for its attempts to breach the Indus Water Agreement, saying its actions have been exposed globally and failed to garner the expected narrative support.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned India of severe consequences if it continues to violate the Indus Water Agreement, emphasizing that any further aggression on water resources will be met with resolute action.

He emphasized that Pakistan remains committed to the agreement but will not hesitate to take all necessary measures to protect its rights and interests. Khawaja Asif stated that if India continues to violate the Indus Water Agreement, Pakistan will take the matter to legal forums to protect its rights.

## Indian provocative actions Pak's response responsible: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that despite India's provocative actions following the Pahalgam incident, Pakistan's response was responsible and measured. He reiterated that Pakistan had always condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye Dr. Irfan Neziroglu who called on him at the Prime Minister House. The prime minister emphasised that India had failed to share any evidence and was falsely trying to link Pakistan to the Pahalgam incident, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

India had yet to respond to Pakistan's offer to have a credible, transparent and neutral international investigation to ascertain the facts behind the Pahalgam incident, he said, adding Pakistan would cooperate fully with such an investigation and would welcome

if Türkiye joined it. The prime minister also enumerated that Pakistan had rendered great sacrifices in its counter-terrorism efforts, including 90,000 casualties and over USD 152 billion in economic losses over the years.

He further said that India's actions would distract Pakistan from its counter-terrorism efforts. During the meeting, the prime minister conveyed his warmest wishes and greetings to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and fondly recalled his recent visit to Ankara where the two leaders had excellent discussions on advancing Pakistan-Türkiye relations across all spheres.

He thanked President Erdogan for his strong statement of support for Pakistan during the prevailing situation in South Asia as well as his call for peace in the region. The prime minister noted that Türkiye's support to Pakistan was reflective of the historic, deep-rooted, and time-tested brotherly relations between the two countries and their peoples.

He reaffirmed government of Pakistan focus on economic recovery and growth for which it required peace and security in its neighbourhood. The Turkish ambassador informed the prime minister that Türkiye appreciated Pakistan's position and expressed its solidarity with Pakistan while calling for de-escalation and urging restraint in the current crisis to maintain peace and security in South Asia.

**Shehbaz congratulates Australia's PM Albanese on re-election:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Saturday warmly congratulated Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election. In a post on X, he said, "Warm congratulations to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election. I wish him continued success in serving the people of Australia."

"I look forward to working together to further strengthen Pakistan-Australia relations and advance our shared commitment to peace, development, and regional cooperation," he added.

## Govnt taking steps for welfare of journalists: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Saturday that the government was taking all possible steps for the protection, welfare and professional training of journalists.

In his message on World Press Freedom Day, he said only a responsible and informed media could help the country deal with the challenges it faced. "The government is committed to ensuring freedom of the press and continuing a constructive dialogue with media institutions," Attaulah Tarar remarked.

He said that freedom of the press was the guarantor of democracy, transparent governance and protection of human rights. Media in Pakistan has always played a key role in strengthening democracy, rule of law and awakening public consciousness, Attaulah Tarar maintained.

The minister for information paid tributes to Pakistani media for playing an effective role in high-

## Social media account of Atta also blocked in India

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: After blocking the social media accounts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Director General Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in India, now social media account of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar has also been blocked. Attaulah Tarar had exposed India's state repression, human rights violations and efforts to suppress the voice of the Kashmiri people on the international media. In retaliation, India blocked his official social media account.

lighting the ongoing barbarity in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, serious human rights violations and Israeli atrocities on the Palestinian people. "The journalist community played a courageous role in shaking the global conscience and bringing the voice of the oppressed to global forums", Attaulah Tarar said.

The minister opined that the free and conscious journalism was the real spokesperson for human compassion and truthfulness. Attaulah Tarar appreciated the media's cautious, responsible and national interests-first attitude

towards Indian aggressive measures.

"Pakistan's media is effectively highlighting the state's position at the global level, which is very important for national security, foreign policy and national unity", Attaulah Tarar added. The minister said that the Government of Pakistan fully believed in freedom of expression and all media institutions had the right to carry out their professional duties independently. He said that freedom of expression and access to information were the hallmarks of any democratic society.

## 3 babies among 11 killed in Israel strike on Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP): Gaza's civil defense agency said Saturday that an overnight Israeli strike on the Khan Yunis refugee camp killed at least 11 people including three babies up to a year old.

Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal reported 11 killed "after the bombardment of the Al-Bayram family home in the Khan Yunis camp" in southern Gaza at around 3:00 am (0000 GMT). Bassal told AFP that eight of the dead had been identified and were all from the same extended family, including a boy and girl, both one-year-olds, and a month-old baby.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strike. Israel resumed its military offensive in Gaza on March 18 after a two-month truce in its war against Hamas that was triggered by the Palestinian militant group's October 7, 2023 attack.

On Friday the civil defense agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 42 people across the war-ravaged territory, which has been under a total Israeli blockade since March 2. Israel halted aid deliveries to Gaza, saying Hamas had diverted supplies. Israel says the blockade is meant

to pressure the militants into releasing hostages held in the Palestinian territory. UN agencies have urged Israel to lift restrictions, saying that Gazans were experiencing a humanitarian catastrophe and warning of famine.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defense agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 42 people Friday in the Palestinian territory, devastated by war and under a total Israeli aid blockade for two months. Israel resumed its military campaign in the Gaza Strip on March 18 after the collapse of a ceasefire that had largely halted the fighting.

Nine people were killed when an Israeli air strike hit a home in Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, civil defense official Mohammed Al-Mughayyir told AFP. AFP footage in the aftermath of a strike on Bureij camp showed Palestinians searching for casualties in the rubble of a flattened building.

"They gave us no warning, no phone call — we woke up at midnight to smoke, rubble, stones, and shrapnel raining down on us," said Mohammed Al-Sheikh, standing among collapsed concrete slabs. "We pulled out martyrs — bodies and limbs from under the rubble."

Another six people were

killed in a strike targeting the Al-Masri family home in the northern city of Beit Lahia, civil defense official Mughayyir added. In Gaza City, a strike on a community kitchen claimed the lives of six more, the civil defense agency reported. Across the Gaza Strip, at least 21 other deaths were reported in similar attacks, the agency said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said on Thursday that at least 2,326 people have been killed since Israel resumed its campaign in Gaza, bringing the overall death toll since the war broke out to 52,418. The war erupted after Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023. That attack resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures.

Militants also abducted 251 people, 58 of whom are still being held in Gaza, including 34 the Israeli military says are dead. The Israeli government says its renewed campaign aims to force Hamas to free the remaining captives, although critics charge it puts them in mortal danger. Israel halted aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2, days before the collapse of the ceasefire which had come into effect on January 19.

## People stand with Pakistan Army: Muqam

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Strongly condemning India's baseless accusations against Pakistan, Engr Amir Muqam, Federal Minister said on Saturday that our desire is peace, but if India imposes war, the entire nation will stand alongside the Pakistan Army to defeat the enemy.

Addressing different bar associations at Shangla district, Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs said the people of Kashmir are full of spirit and have immense love for Pakistan and the Pakistan Army. "This spirit is invincible."

"I salute their spirit and love for Pakistan," Amir Muqam said, adding the entire nation is united, just as our forefathers played a role in the freedom of Kashmir. "Whatever I am today is because of the love of the people of Shangla. My life and wealth are at their service." He said the people of Shangla made sacrifices for the entire country and bravely faced terrorism, writing history in the process.

"Now, whenever the integrity of the country is at stake, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Shangla will be ready." He said whenever he get the opportunity, he will play his role in the development of Shangla.

He administered the oath to the newly elected body of the District Bar Association, Alpuri. The Federal Minister congratulated the newly elected members and expressed his best wishes. "Shangla Bar has a special status. It has always raised its voice for truth and issues, and I have supported it," he said. He announced a special grant for the Bar Association and expressed his gratitude for being made an honorary member of the Bar Association.

## APNS demands PPRA amend's withdrawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) has formally requested Chief Minister Punjab, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, to revisit and withdraw the amendment introduced in the Punjab Procurement Rules (PPRA) in October 2024, which bars the publication of tender advertisements in newspapers.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, APNS President Senator Sarmad Ali highlighted that this decision has inflicted severe financial strain on the newspaper industry across Punjab and has also undermined long-standing government-media relations.

The APNS believes that the amendment aims to exclude the print media from the public procurement process and damages the transparency of government transactions. "Curtailing the publication of tender notices not only affects newspapers' revenues but also restricts the flow of crucial information to potential bidders," the letter stated. "This undermines public access to procurement opportunities and violates principles of transparency."

The Society emphasized that newspaper advertisements remain a critical tool for disseminating public information widely and equitably. Removing this

access harms both the media and public participation in governance. Reaffirming its historic support for the Punjab Government — particularly during previous PML-N tenures — the APNS expressed hope that under Ms. Maryam Nawaz's leadership, the current administration would reconsider the decision and restore publication rights for tender advertisements in print media.

The APNS has called for the immediate withdrawal of the amendment, urging the Punjab Government to uphold transparency, support the media industry, and maintain strong press-government relations.

## PPP concerned over usurpation of provincial resources

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PPP Human Rights Cell President ex Senator Farhatullah Babar has expressed grave concern over the Mines and Minerals Bill in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a blatant attempt by the federation to usurp, in violation of the Constitution, the provincial mineral resources.

This he said today while addressing a seminar on federalism under the auspices of Peshawar Literary Festival in Peshawar on Saturday. He demanded answers to three questions. One, what mineral exploitation projects have already been undertaken by the federal government subsidiaries in the merged districts due to which these areas have been kept separate from the rest of the province in the Bill until December 2030?

Two, what are the so called 'strategic minerals' over which the provincial

government shall have little say to exploit? Three, what is the rationale of a federal mineral body to impose unsolicited 'advice' to the provincial mineral department?

He said that KP was being treated most unfairly as its share in the NFC was not revised upward after the merger of the tribal districts and the consequent increase in the province's population, a major determinant of the NFC Award. He said that the integrity of the federation was not served by the setting up of extra constitutional bodies with the centre's dominance to oversee economic development and other issues that fall exclusively within the domain of provinces under the 18th Amendments.

He said that federal parliamentary system was threatened by the continuing disregard for the Constitution and trichotomy of powers, blatantly manipulating the mandate

of people and power transfer, the rise of the de-facto government sidelining the de-jure government, elite capture of state resources, populism, political polarization and fake news. He also called upon the political parties to put their own house in order to confront these emerging challenges to the federal system in addition to raising of voice by the civil society against the strident militarization of state and society.

Meanwhile, on the eve of the World Press Freedom Day today the President Human Rights Cell of the PPP ex Senator Farhatullah Babar has issued the following statement: "It is a grim thought that on the world press freedom day today Pakistan, according to the 'Reporters Without Borders' has earned the dubious distinctions of joining the ranks of those 42 countries.





## CM launches 'Apni Zameen, Apna Ghar' programme

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif formally launched the 'Apni Zameen, Apna Ghar' programme by pressing its e-portal button, here on Saturday.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, she said that people could apply for free plots on the e-portal: azag.punjab.gov.pk. 300 new homes are being built every day across Punjab, she said.

CM Maryam announced that in the first phase, 2,000 plots would be distributed across 23 housing schemes in 19 districts, including Jehlum, Pattoki, Mamun Kanjan, Lodhran, and Renala Khurd. Successful applicants will not only receive free 3-marla plots but also be eligible for loans to construct their homes.

Reflecting on the success of the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' program, the Chief Minister stated that nearly

34,000 houses are under construction within just six months, with 2,000 already completed. "These aren't just houses — they are prayers," she remarked, acknowledging the social and emotional impact of the housing initiatives.

She added that 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' is particularly close to her heart and aligns with the vision of Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. "It brings him great joy to hear about homes being completed for the underprivileged," she shared.

The CM emphasized that the program offers an easy application process, a three-month grace period for construction, and loan repayment in installments. She expressed concern that many families in Punjab still lack access to land and reiterated that initially 2,000 applicants will be

given free plots, with more to follow.

CM Maryam Nawaz highlighted that no previous government had built 34,000 homes even over an entire term. "A sense of security comes with having a home," she said. "But for a common person, owning one remains a distant dream — something we are determined to change." Under 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar', existing plot holders from 1 to 10 marla can also apply for construction loans to build their homes.

Earlier, Provincial Minister for Housing Bilal Yasin briefed the audience on the program's financial scope, noting that Rs 36 billion in loans is being allocated to construct homes for 33,500 beneficiaries. He thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for her leadership and unwavering dedication to the people of Punjab.



KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing a press conferences. —INP Photo

### Chinese delegation visits PU's history department

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from China visited the Department of History and Pakistan Studies at Punjab University, here on Saturday. Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Prof. Dr. Mahboob Hussain, warmly welcomed the guests and provided a detailed overview of the department's academic programs, research initiatives, and faculty, said a spokesperson.

The visit featured discussions focused on academic collaboration, cultural exchange, and exploring future partnerships between Punjab University and Chinese institutions. Dr. Mahboob Hussain noted that the visit represents a positive step toward strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation in the fields of history and regional studies. He expressed hope for long-term academic ties and meaningful shared learning experiences in the future.

### Turkish Consulate marks National Sovereignty Day

KARACHI (APP): The Consulate of Republic of Türkiye in Karachi, in collaboration with Pak Turk Maarif Schools, organized 23rd National Sovereignty and Children's day and the 105th anniversary of opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly here on Saturday. Both the events were celebrated with great joy and pride.

Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye Cemal Sangu was the chief guest of the events. The first event was held in cooperation with the Department of Sports and Youth of Sindh and the Karachi Police Club - CPK, where 105 saplings were planted by the students of Pak-Turk Maarif Schools and at the same time, the Earth Day was observed as well.

On the Occasion The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth of Sindh, Director Generals, officials of Karachi Police, teachers and students participated in this event. Cemal Sangu said the second event was organized in cooperation with Lucky One Mall, the largest shopping mall in Karachi.

Approximately 1500 students from Pak-Turk Maarif Schools and Colleges in Karachi and in Hyderabad campuses, teachers, parents and hundreds of mall visitors attended and watched the event, which included music, folk dances, theater, marbling and calligraphy workshops, traditional games such as three stones, mangala, tug of war, dodgeball, wrestling, handkerchief snatching, painting, poetry reading and costume competitions, exhibitions of photographs, handicrafts and archery equipment from different regions of Turkey.

### Alhamra showcases handcrafted flower installation

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Arts Council (Alhamra), in collaboration with Roses of Humanity, inaugurated an art exhibition at Ustad Allah Bux Gallery, here on Saturday. The exhibition features an installation of 15,000 handcrafted flowers.

## Announcement of a peaceful Million March for Gaza

KARACHI (PPI): The Nizam-e-Mustafa Party has announced its support for a peaceful million march for Palestine, declaring it a crucial necessity of the time.

The party's chairman, Dr. Haji Muhammad Hanif Tayyab, along with other leaders, has appealed to the public to participate in the march from Noorani Chowrangi to Tibet Center.

The chairman of Nizam-e-Mustafa Party, Dr. Haji Muhammad Hanif Tayyab, President Mian Khalid Habib Illahi Advocate, and General Secretary

Professor Abdul Jabbar Qureshi, along with other party leaders, have supported this march. They stated that Muslim rulers have not shown practical unity on the Gaza issue.

The leaders criticized the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), saying it has confined itself to condemnatory resolutions while maintaining silence on the largest massacre in Gaza's history.

The leaders also mentioned that anti-Islam forces are united, while the rulers of Muslim countries are divided. They

noted that the Israeli-American alliance continues atrocities in Palestine, and the India-Israel nexus is pushing Pakistan towards war.

The leaders stated that the peaceful million march is being organized to awaken the conscience of Muslim rulers and unite Muslims. The public is urged to participate in the march today, Sunday, 4th May, after the Zuhur prayers, from Noorani Chowrangi to Tibet Center, to demonstrate national solidarity and love for the Palestinian people.

## Governor Kundi calls for unity to tackle climate change

KARACHI (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Saturday emphasized the importance of compassion, solidarity, and collective efforts in addressing the pressing challenges of the modern world, saying that serving humanity is the highest purpose.

He made these remarks while addressing the Rotary International District Conference 2025 at Karachi. "Rotary International is not just an organization, but a global spirit dedicated to service, humanity, and the promotion of peace," said Governor Kundi.

The conference brought together a host of prominent personalities, including Senate Chairman Syed

Yousaf Raza Gillani, Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, MNA Dr. Farooq Sattar, Planning and Development Committee Chairman Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani, Rotary Club officials and members, as well as experts and figures from various sectors of society.

In his address, Governor Kundi praised the Rotary Club's exemplary services at both local and international levels and stressed the need to instill the spirit of service in the younger generation. "Introducing youth to the mission of humanitarian service is essential so that they can dedicate their lives to the well-being of others," he added.

Highlighting the multifaceted issues faced by

Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as climate change, social inequality, and fundamental human rights, the Governor emphasized that these challenges can only be tackled through collective awareness, sustained efforts, and mutual cooperation.

He urged the public to make service their identity and work towards creating a fairer, more peaceful world. Governor Kundi also acknowledged the persistent threat of polio in Pakistan and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, lauding Rotary's relentless efforts in healthcare, peace, and community service.

He reaffirmed his full support to Rotary Club initiatives in these areas.

## Minister vows to ensure safe patient care in hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the provincial government is taking concrete steps to ensure the provision of safe and quality treatment in hospitals across the province.

He made these remarks on Saturday while addressing the second Surgical Conference at Akhtar Saeed Medical and Dental College in Bahria Town as the chief guest.

The minister congratulated the college administration for organizing the event on such a critical topic, emphasizing that the Punjab government, under the leadership of

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, is committed to overhauling the health sector.

"The improvement of healthcare services is the top priority of the Chief Minister," he said. He highlighted key government initiatives such as the Chief Minister's Children's Heart Surgery Program, Dialysis Program, and Special Initiative for Transplant Program, describing them as flagship projects.

Khawaja Salman Rafique also revealed that Asia's largest Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research is under construction in Lahore, alongside state-of-

the-art cardiology institutes being developed in Lahore and Sargodha. He added that efforts are being made to address the shortage of doctors and nurses in public hospitals.

The event was attended by notable medical professionals including Dean PKLI Professor Faisal Saud Dar, Principal Prof. Nadeem Hafeez Butt, Prof. Farooq Saeed Khan, Prof. Fariha Farooq, Dr. Sabir Ayaz Malik, Prof. Muhammad Saleem, Dr. Umair Farooq, Prof. Atiqa, Prof. Javed Raza Gardezi, and Prof. Majeed Chaudhry, among many others from the medical fraternity.



LAHORE: Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal speaking at the 10th UMT Budget Summit. —APP Photo

### CM orders restoration of smooth traffic operation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed serious concern over the heavy traffic congestion in the port area following the reopening of Baber Loi Road after an 11-day closure.

The CM said this road blockage had halted cargo movements from upcountry, and upon resumption, the simultaneous influx of inbound and outbound traffic resulted in significant gridlock. He emphasised that recurring traffic congestion, especially during the berthing of multiple ships at China Port (SAPT) or after public disruptions, leads to substantial economic losses and inconvenience.

Mr. Shah has directed the traffic police to address the current crisis and implement measures to prevent future occurrences.

## Farhatullah Babar slams decline in Press Freedom

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD : On the eve of the World Press Freedom Day today the President Human Rights Cell of the PPP ex Senator Farhatullah Babar has issued the following statement:

"It is a grim thought that on the world press freedom day today Pakistan, according to the 'Reporters Without Borders' has earned the dubious distinctions of joining the ranks of those 42 countries where either there is no press freedom at all or if there is some semblance of it the profession of journalism has become "most dangerous" occupation.

"It is no less an agonizing thought that according to the same report Pakistan touched a new low of ranking 158 in terms of freedom of press in the comity of nations and is bracketed

with Afghanistan and some other countries facing a "very serious situation" in respect of freedom of press.

The dubious distinctions places Pakistan almost at par with Palestine, at serial 163 on the scorecard, where Israeli forces killed nearly two hundred journalists during the last 18 months, 42 of them during the performance of their journalistic duties.

Farhatullah Babar said that the year 2025 started on a most inauspicious note for journalists as it began with changes to the PECA law that has exposed journalists reporting online to intimidation, harassment and subjected to grave abuse of judicial processes by the FIA with impunity and without accountability, as never before.

Farhatullah Babar called upon the political parties

and members of Parliament to ensure implementation of section 53 of the PECA Act and compel the FIA to place six monthly reports before Parliament detailing the actions taken by it under the PECA.

The failure of the Parliament to do so has emboldened the FIA to get away with torturing and humiliating journalists with total impunity. This situation cannot and must not be allowed to persist, he said.

The PPP Human Rights Cell also expresses deep concern over the weakening of the economic model of media undermining press freedoms. It also strongly condemns the blatant advertising restrictions on some media outlets by the government who refuse to peddle the 'official truth and official narrative'.



## Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

### Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

#### Medical Consultants:

- Consultant Anaesthetist
- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant in Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician in Emergency Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon

- Consultant Urologist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist

#### Senior Instructors:

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology

#### Fellowships:

- Fellow in Anesthesia
- Fellow in Breast Surgery
- Fellow in Clinical & Radiation Oncology

#### CPSP Fellowship:

- Fellow in Medical Oncology

#### MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION & TECHNICAL:

- Assistant Manager Engineering & Maintenance
- Assistant Bio Medical Engineer
- Human Resources Executive

Note: All Senior Instructor positions for Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on [www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk](http://www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk)

Apply now at: [bit.ly/SKMCHJobs](http://bit.ly/SKMCHJobs)

Only online applications will be entertained. Please share your CV at the email address given below and do mention the position applied for in the subject line. We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

**We are an equal opportunity employer, and we strongly encourage female candidates to apply**

### Human Resources Department

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre  
5-B, Sector A-2, Office Enclave, Phase V,  
Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan.

Tel: +92 91 5885000 Ext. 3538, 3541

Email: [careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk](mailto:careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk)





World Press Freedom Day:

## Governor saluting torchbearers of truth

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Saturday paid rich tribute to the journalists and media professionals who continue to uphold the values of truth, accountability, and democratic integrity often at great personal cost.

In his official message, on the occasion of 'World Press Freedom Day,' the Governor Kundi described press freedom as one of the foundational pillars of a democratic society.

"A free press is not a luxury it is a necessity. It is the lifeblood of any functioning democracy, providing citizens with the information they need to make informed decisions and hold those in power accountable," he said.

The Governor acknowledged that the journalists of Pakistan, and particularly those from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have operated in some of the most difficult and dangerous environments in the world.

"Despite threats, intimidation, and even loss of life, our journalists have shown extraordinary bravery and resilience," he said. "They have reported from

the frontlines of conflict, exposed injustice, amplified marginalized voices, and remained steadfast in their duty to the truth."

He said that journalists are the guardians of democracy, ensuring that power remains accountable and the public stays informed. A free and independent press is essential for the health and strength of any democratic society, he added.

Governor Kundi expressed concern over the growing challenges to press freedom, both globally and domestically. He pointed to issues such as censorship, harassment, digital surveillance, and the spread of misinformation as emerging threats to credible journalism.

"We are living in an age where truth itself is under attack. This makes the role of a free, independent, and ethical press more critical than ever," he remarked.

He further emphasized that the safety and freedom of journalists must be a national priority.

"We cannot allow fear or coercion to dictate the press narrative. A society that stifles its journalists stifles its future," he said. "government is committed to fostering an environment

where journalists can work without fear and with full constitutional protection."

However, Governor Kundi also highlighted that with great freedom comes great responsibility. He urged the media to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, objectivity, and integrity.

"Press freedom must go hand-in-hand with ethical journalism. In a time of polarized discourse, the media must act as a bridge, not a barrier uniting, not dividing," he added.

In his concluding remarks, the Governor paid

homage to journalists who have laid down their lives in the line of duty.

"Their sacrifice is a solemn reminder of the price some have paid for the truth. We owe it to them to safeguard the values they stood for," he said.

"As we observe World Press Freedom Day, let us renew our collective commitment to protect and promote the freedom of the press. It is through a strong, independent media that we can truly build a more informed, just, and democratic Pakistan," the Governor concluded.

### Kundi hails successful test of Abdali Missile

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Saturday congratulated the nation, armed forces, scientists, and engineers on the successful test of Pakistan's Abdali Missile, which has a range of 450 kilometers.

Calling it a "remarkable addition to national defense," Governor Kundi said the successful launch demonstrates the operational readiness and technical proficiency of Pakistan's Strategic Forces. He emphasized that this achievement strengthens Pakistan's defensive capabilities and sends a clear message to adversaries.

"Let no enemy be mistaken Pakistan's defense is in strong hands," he said.

Issuing a stern warning to India, the Governor added, "If India tries to impose war, Pakistan will respond with full strength and deliver a decisive response."



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Dr. Saif meeting with Minister of Political Section and Acting Deputy Head of Mission Zach Harkenrider at US Embassy.

## Peshawar Literary Festival kicks off with vibrant opening

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The second season of the Peshawar Literary Festival began with a lively opening ceremony on Saturday at Nishtar Hall, bringing together writers, intellectuals, journalists, artists, and literature lovers from across the province.

This two-day event, themed "Literature, State, and Politics," aims to explore the role of literature in shaping political thought and addressing social issues in today's world.

The opening ceremony was attended by Secretary of the Youth Affairs Department Zia-ul-Ha, Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider, former Senator Farhatullah Babar Educationist Nasir Jamal Khattak, well-known journalists and writers, as well as a large number of students from schools, colleges, and universities.

Abdur Rahman chief organizer of the festival In his welcome address thanked all those involved in making the event possible. He said there is hard work of whole team behind

all this. This festival was driven by passion rather than profession. He thanked the Directorate of Youth Affairs and The Bank of Khyber for sponsoring the event.

Zia-ul-Haq Secretary of the Youth Affairs Department has praised this initiative saying such events are an excellent effort to bring youth together and engage them in meaningful dialogue. Events like this add great value to our society. Youth engagement is especially important, as a significant portion of our population consists of

young people. They are the ones who will shape and lead the future of this country. Nations that invest in their youth and human capital are the ones that truly prosper. I urge young people to take ownership of their future and become responsible, productive citizens.

The ceremony concluded with captivating performances, including a musical presentation by the Orchestra Band and a graceful Kathak dance by Asfandiyar Khattak, which left the audience thoroughly impressed.



PESHAWAR: Activists of Khyber Union of Journalists hold protest on occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

## South Asia's test: Truth in the flames of propaganda

Asif Ali Yousafzai

From a journalist's perspective based in the UAE, South Asia today stands at a dangerous crossroads. On one side lies the hope for peace, development, and regional harmony. On the other, propaganda, hostility, and manufactured crises continue to push the region toward instability. As a witness to these shifts, I offer this analysis with the intent to provoke truth and inspire unity.

**India's narrative: Blame without evidence**

Following the Pahalgam incident, India quickly blamed Pakistan without credible evidence—a recurring strategy, just as seen after the Pulwama attack in 2019. These reactions often come at times of domestic political tension in India, where external threats are exaggerated to gain nationalistic support.

**Role of Indian media: Fueling hostility**

Instead of reporting with balance, Indian mainstream media has often become a mouthpiece of state narratives. The aggressive tone, selective facts, and anti-Pakistan rhetoric have deepened mistrust and eroded journalistic integrity. In this echo chamber, truth has become the first casualty.

**India's poor: Victims of propaganda**

While billions are spent on militarization and anti-Pakistan campaigns, over 230 million Indians still live below the poverty line. Issues like unemployment, inflation, and lack of health infrastructure are sidelined in favor of emotional nationalism. This has created a divide between political spectacle and the people's real needs.

**Pakistan's position: Seeking peace, ensuring security**

Pakistan, despite provocations, continues to call for peace and stability. However, it remains firm that any aggression will be answered with strength and dignity. The national focus remains on internal development, regional cooperation, and resisting tactics that aim to derail progress.

**Economic impact on South Asia**

Rising tensions between the two nuclear powers directly affect regional trade, tourism, and international investments. South Asia cannot afford another conflict. Tensions scare away investors, break supply chains, and shrink the economic future of over 1.8 billion people.

**Gulf region and global role**

Gulf states, with strong diplomatic ties to both India and Pakistan, must play a proactive role in encouraging dialogue. The international community also has a duty to hold warmongers accountable and support regional de-escalation through transparency and responsible diplomacy.

**A call to journalists and leaders**

Media must rise above state control and serve the truth. Political leaders must prioritize their people's needs over headlines. And the people of South Asia deserve more than fear—they deserve food, education, health, and hope.

**Conclusion**

Peace is not a luxury—it is a necessity. Propaganda may be loud, but it is truth that ultimately shapes history. Let this be a moment when South Asia turns the page from rivalry to reason, and from hatred to humanity.

asifyousafzai737@gmail.com

### KP repatriates 1,296 more Afghan nationals

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued repatriation of Afghan refugees, sending 1,296 undocumented individuals to Afghanistan.

According to a Saturday statement from the provincial home department, 33 more undocumented Afghans were repatriated via the Angoor Adda border.

In addition to 1,296 Afghans who crossed at Torkham. Since September 2023, a total of 530,286 people have been sent back to Afghanistan from the province, including 32,503 Afghan Citizen Card holders and 19,228 undocumented individuals through Torkham.

### KP to introduce eco-friendly tourism

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is set to boost eco-friendly tourism in Ayubia National Park with introduction of glamping projects.

According to a statement released Saturday by Latiur Rehman, Assistant Director, Department of Climate Change, Forests, Environment and Wildlife, the initiative will feature innovative ecotourism and "glamping" (glamorous camping) accommodations.

The aim is to foster environmental education and sustainable tourism, offering tourists immersive nature experiences while promoting biodiversity conservation and responsible exploration.

This move signifies a significant step towards a greener

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasizing both conservation and community involvement.

## MPA backs youth empowerment efforts by Metrix Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Secretary Information of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Malik Adeel Iqbal, was presented with a commemorative shield by the founder and CEO of Metrix Pakistan, Hassan Nisar, in recognition of his support for youth-led development initiatives across the province.

The shield was handed over by Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan, during a brief meeting held at the University of Haripur. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shafiqur Rehman and Registrar Riaz Muhammad were also present.

Metrix Pakistan, a youth-driven non-profit organization, has gained prominence for its efforts to empower young people in rural and underserved areas through education, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship.

The organization has been conducting youth summits, training programmes, and outreach initiatives aimed at equipping students and aspiring professionals with practical skills and access to technology.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Iqbal lauded the contributions of Metrix Pakistan and said that such platforms were vital for guiding the province's youth towards a productive

and self-reliant future.

"This initiative is enabling talented individuals to pursue education and innovation, which ultimately contributes to provincial and national development," he said.

He emphasised the need for greater support from both government and academic institutions to promote youth engagement and skill-building. "Empowering youth with modern tools and direction is not just necessary, it is critical to ensuring stability and progress," he added.

Prof. Dr. Shafiqur Rehman described the collaboration between the university and organisations

like Metrix Pakistan as essential for bridging the gap between academia and real-world application. Registrar Riaz Muhammad echoed this sentiment, noting that coordinated efforts were key to addressing the challenges faced by students in remote regions.

Founder Hassan Nisar thanked the university administration and Mr. Iqbal for their encouragement, and expressed hope for sustained public and institutional backing. "With continued support, we aim to expand our reach and ensure that more youth across the province have access to opportunity and growth," he said.

## Training workshop concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): The two-day training workshop arranged by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) for stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism sector concluded at University of Swat on Saturday.

Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, Vice Chancellor University of Swat, was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. Besides KPCTA Director Admin and Finance Umar Arshad Khan, Deputy Controller Muhammad Tanvir, Manager Regulation Zeeshan Majeed, Deputy Manager (Hotels and Restaurants) Shahid Raza, the workshop was also attended by students, journalists, vloggers, students, hotel and restaurant representatives and members of journalist community.

Speaking on the occasion, VC Dr. Hassan Sher said that the university had a dedicated Hospitality and Tourism Department where students received academic and practical training in the tourism field.

He expressed the desire to jointly celebrate World Tourism Day with the KPCTA this year and announced that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would also be signed to facilitate collaboration on

future programs.

Director Admin & Finance Umar Arshad said that in this era of information technology, it was crucial for all stakeholders and youth involved in the tourism industry to receive

training in Management Information Systems (MIS), digital marketing, and artificial intelligence.

Later, VC Dr. Hassan Sher and Director Umar Arshad distributed certificates among the participants.



PESHAWAR: Peoples covered their head with piece of cloth to protect from sun heat.

## Study on COVID-19 response highlights 'Trust in Vaccines' as cornerstone to effective immunization strategy

PESHAWAR (APP): A recent study examining Pakistan's COVID-19 response, underscores trust in vaccines as the cornerstone of an effective immunization strategy. The findings emphasize the need to prioritize public confidence in both vaccines and the healthcare delivery system to ensure successful vaccination campaigns.

By documenting critical lessons from the pandemic, the study reinforces that building trust is essential for improving vaccine uptake and strengthening future health crisis responses.

"The Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) rollout serves as a prime example of how trust, built through an effective communication

and reliable service delivery, achieved vaccine acceptance," reads the study carried out by Jhpiego, a global health organization, with the support of GAVI, the Vaccines Alliance and Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI).

The study was conducted under the project "Pakistan's COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Best Practices and Learnings" aimed at consolidating best practices and lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic response to support the government in strengthening routine immunization.

"Building trust in vaccines requires a strong and reliable healthcare system that ensures transparency, accessibility, and accounta-

bility. When people trust the institutions responsible for immunization, they are more likely to accept vaccines without hesitation," study noted.

The study found that bottom-up approaches, although prescribed in the public health literature, are not actually practiced in real life. Some of the policy decisions without consultation from the grassroots can turn into pitfalls, it continued.

The study also mentioned building trust for making introduction of a new vaccine, Human Papillomavirus, in Pakistan successful for prevention of cervical cancer.

The dissemination of study was organized by Jhpiego at an event with Dr.

Shabana Saleem, DG Federal Directorate of Immunization as chief guest.

Representatives from World Health Organization-Pakistan, UNICEF Pakistan, Gates Foundation, Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative, Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative and other stakeholders also attended the event.

Sharing finding of the study, Project Lead, Dr. Fahad Abbasi informed participants that the COVID-19 pandemic was a defining moment for global public health, testing the resilience of healthcare systems worldwide.

In Pakistan, he continued, the crisis brought immense challenges but also provided an opportuni-

ty to strengthen immunization efforts, introduce innovative solutions, and enhance collaboration between government and partners.

The report, Pakistan's COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Best Practices and Learnings, is the result of a comprehensive learning activity conducted under the CDS-III initiative. It captures key insights through a qualitative exploratory study as well as provincial co-creation workshop from diverse stakeholders.

The findings of the study presented here are based on extensive desk reviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions conducted at both federal and provincial level, Dr.

Fahad added.

The study also made a recommendation of adopting same approach exhibited at national level for COVID-19 immunization to make the routine indicators for immunization successful, including those for eradication of poliomyelitis from the country. The study's suggestions included Political ownership and commitment to health at all levels for a successful response to emergencies.

Continued investment in immunization infrastructure is essential and ought to continue for sustaining the gains achieved during COVID-19. Strengthening intersectoral collaboration between government, private sector, and community

organizations to ensure better preparedness for future health emergencies and improve overall vaccination coverage.

Health system to integrate outbreak response within routine immunization (RI) systems by building on existing RI infrastructure, personnel, and planning mechanisms.

Governments to avoid coercive vaccine policies and instead focus on informed consent and voluntary participation to foster a rights-based approach to immunization.

In her address, Dr. Shabana Saleem highlighted that the project's findings will play a pivotal role in guiding future health policy, enhancing system

preparedness, and ensuring that no child is left behind in immunization efforts across Pakistan.

Dr. Aminah Khan, Country Director, Jhpiego Pakistan apprised participants about working of her organization in immunization sector and completion of different projects of public health in the country.

She said Jhpiego's team has worked hard on this study to document key lessons from Pakistan's COVID-19 response and these learnings are valuable as they will guide national and provincial policies to improve immunization programs, strengthen our healthcare system and prepare for any future health emergency.





## In brief

### Uplift project reviewed F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Advocate has said that several projects like BRT and dualization of KDA Sheikhan to Dam Road are under consideration to provide better travel facilities to the people of Kohat. He added, after the education and health, communication sector is his priority. This he said while jointly reviewing the dualization of KDA Sheikhan to Dam Road along with the Chairman DDAC Kohat Shafi Jan MPA, Daud Shah Afridi MPA and Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali. During the visit, the authorities concerned briefed in detail the elected leadership of Kohat about the proposed dualization project. The Law Minister said, several important projects including the proposed project of dualization of the said road are under consideration in consultation with the MNA Shehryar Afridi, and a comprehensive development strategy for this effect is in the offing. Aftab Alam while terming the said project as crucial for improving public convenience and smooth flow of traffic, directed the quarters concerned to implement it at the earliest. He declared that there can be no compromise on people welfare projects adding that no negligence or lincency will be tolerated in this regard.

### Residents hold protest F.P. Report

SHAHADAKOT: In Warh city of Qambar Shahdadt Kot district, there are 3 circles and 42 Dehs in the Revenue Department, due to the lack of tappers in 12 tapas offices including Tapo Gaji Khuhawar, Tapo Hamal, Tapo Jogi, Tapo Lalu Rainak, Tapo Waggan and others villages the residents protested against the lack of tappers in the offices. According to the information received in this regard, the residents of Gaji Khuhawar of Warh taluka demanded from the higher authorities against such action of the Mukhtiar Kar Warah that the Revenue Department is corrupting the clerks by opening the market for bribes, while no legitimate work of the residents is possible without bribes. While in 42 Dehs of Warh taluka, the residents are being harassed in various ways including seal certificate, removal of land ownership, changing the record of deceased quota, TO form, agricultural passbook, keeping property and plot entries. The revenue office clerks are stealing with both hands. If this method continues in the revenue office, very important steps will be taken.

### Encroachment to be vanish F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Attock, Anil Saeed, has said that all possible measures will be taken to eliminate encroachments from the city. He further stated that all available resources will be utilized to promote environmentally friendly initiatives. He expressed these views during his visit to Attock city, accompanied by relevant officials. As part of the anti-encroachment campaign, he ordered the sealing of two shops and issued warnings to other shopkeepers. The ADCG instructed all shopkeepers to stop using polythene bags in accordance with the directives of the Government of Punjab.

# Providing quality healthcare, education priority, says Tareen



F.P. Report

LODHRAIN: Jahangir Khan Tareen visited the Free Eye Camp organized by the Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP), where he reviewed the medical facilities being provided to the patients. The beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the services and extended their gratitude to Mr. Tareen for his continued support.

Dr. Abdul Saboor, CEO of LPP, briefed Mr. Tareen

that 44 free eye camps have been held so far, benefitting over 70,000 individuals with free medical check-ups, medicines, and surgeries. At the ongoing camp alone, 426 patients were examined, and 90 surgeries are being conducted.

Jahangir Tareen also visited the under-construction building of the Tareen Institute of Computer Education and Resources (TICER) to inspect progress on the project. Mr. Akbar Khan, CEO of the Tareen

Education Foundation, shared that the IT University is being built at a cost exceeding Rs. 2 billion and is expected to be completed by August this year. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Jahangir Khan Tareen stated: "Our mission to serve humanity in need will continue. Providing quality healthcare and education is my foremost priority." During the visit, Mr. Tareen also laid the foundation stone for a mosque within the TICER campus.

## ASJ acquits alleged murderer

F.P. Report

PABBI: Additional Sessions Judge Pabbi Muhammad Ilyas acquitted alleged murderer due to lack of evidence.

The lawyer Mian Zakir Ullah Advocate appeared on behalf accused. According to prosecution

on date June 16, 2022 Rahmat Ali son of Qarun alias Malang charged in killing case at Jalozi police station.

The court heard the arguments from both sides, reserved the verdict, and later acquitted the accused due to lack of evidence.



## Journalists mark World Press Freedom Day

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: World Press Freedom Day observed in the country including Khyber to inform the community that freedom of the press and freedom of expression are basic human rights.

In this connection a simple gathering was organized in the District Press Club, Landi Kotal on Saturday that was attended by a number of local media persons. Speaking on the occasion President of the press club Aman Ali Shinwari said that the main purpose of the Day was to uphold the international right of press of freedom and to promote responsible journalism.

He maintained that the journalist community across the world risked their lives to bring positive change in the society by unearthing truth. Paying



tribute to the martyred journalists across the world including more than seven-teen martyred tribal media persons; he added that they lay down their lives in the line of duty.

It is need of time to initiate measures for the safety and security of the journalist enabling them to freely report on important issues without fear, Shinwari remarked. He went on that the tribal journalists executed their duties with efficiency contrary to the unfavorable prevailed situation. He demanded enquiry

and arrest of killers of the deceased local journalist, Khalil Jibran, murdered by unknown armed persons last year and establishing a media colony for the Khyber media persons. At the end prayers were offered for the departed souls of late journalists. It is to be stated here that 3 May; the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek is celebrated as World Press Freedom Day after it was proclaimed World Press Freedom Day by the United National General Assembly in December 1993.

## PFA conducts 3,333 inspections in Toba Tek Singh

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Punjab Food Authority has intensified its efforts across the province to ensure the supply of safe, high-quality and adulteration-free food. Under the supervision of Director General Punjab Food Authority and Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, Muhammad Naem Sindh, coordinated and effective actions are underway throughout the district.

During April 2025, teams of the Punjab Food Authority, led by Deputy Director Operations Yasir Mushtaq, conducted 3,333 inspections across the district. As a result, 1,355 improvement notices were issued and fines amounting to Rs. 4.18 million were imposed for 355 violations. Additionally, 25 food samples were collected for laboratory analysis, and 5 FIRs were registered against those found selling substandard food items.

The Authority also issued 14 Emergency Prohibition Orders and received 88 e-license applications during the period. In the course of operations, 1,213 kilograms of substandard meat, 5,868 liters of adulterated milk, 22 kilograms of spices, and 18,776 kilograms of prohibited and expired food items

were discarded. Furthermore, 925 liters of unidentified chemicals and 112 liters of low-quality cooking oil were confiscated.

Fake bottled products, mislabeled items, and illegal packaging materials were also seized. Deputy Director Operations Yasir Mushtaq stated that ensuring food quality remains a top priority and that the Authority is strictly implementing a zero-tolerance policy against substandard food. He emphasized that the Food Authority teams are conducting daily inspections and responding promptly to public complaints. He appealed to the citizens to report any instances of food adulteration or low-quality products by contacting the Punjab Food Authority helpline at 1223 for immediate action.

**Revenue Khuli Katcheris held:** The second day of Revenue Public Service Open Courts concluded successfully across the district, focusing on swift relief and prompt justice for citizens. Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naem Sindh, Revenue Khuli Kacheris were held in all tehsils of Toba Tek Singh. Assistant Commissioners remained present on-site to listen to citizens' complaints

related to revenue matters and ensured immediate resolution. The open courts were attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), Assistant Commissioners, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Girdawars and Patwaris, who provided citizens with services related to revenue records, issuance of fard, mutations, corrections, registries, income certificates, domicile, and other key issues.

DC Muhammad Naem Sindh stated that the objective of these revenue courts is the swift and transparent resolution of public issues. He stressed that all applications would be acted upon the same day, and no delays or bureaucratic tactics would be tolerated. He further emphasized that the continuity of these open courts is a practical reflection of the Chief Minister's vision of public service and trust-building, where relief is provided to citizens under one roof without the hassle of running from office to office.

The initiative was widely appreciated by the public, who termed it a positive and welcome step. The Deputy Commissioner assured that the series of open courts will continue to ensure that public concerns are addressed on a priority basis.

## Agri & Sport govt top priority: Barakwal F.P. Report

KARAK: Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major Sajjad Barakwal has said that the upcoming budget will be people-friendly. Priority will be given to agriculture, sports and people-friendly projects.

The previous budget was not as per public expectations due to lack of time. We did not even have the salaries of government employees. There is 169 billion fed without any new taxes. We can pay 3 months of salaries. The public will get a huge relief in this budget and it will be an excellent budget. All arrears will be paid before June 30.

The provincial government will pay one year in terms of royalty. Addressing a press conference at the Press Club, Major Sajjad Barakwal said that no project of former members in my constituency on which some work has been done will be dropped. The public should not be worried in this regard. Funds for incomplete projects will be released. So that they are complete, we have convinced Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to pay the arrears for Kohat division.

We want to end old traditions. It is necessary to end prejudice and differences for the sake of differences. We do not believe in personal likes and dislikes. The entire PTI leadership is on a path to resolve regional and public issues. At present, in view of the country's situation, all the leadership should play a positive role. Protests and rallies are everyone's democratic right. The demands and reservations of the people of Takht Nusrati Headquarters will be eliminated. Oil and gas royalty has been increased to 10 to 15 percent and it has been approved and its implementation.

## 3 killed as building collapses F.P. Report

SHANGLA: In a deeply tragic incident in Islamabad, three laborers from Shangla, Tehsil Alpuri, lost their lives when the roof of an under-construction building collapsed due to a sudden and powerful storm.

The deceased individuals have been identified as: Ghaffar, son of Sardar Ali, Ikram, son of Rehmani Gul – Residents of Laree Liloni Fazal Mereen, son of Jabingay – Resident of Tangon Liloni. All three were residing in Islamabad for labor work and were present at the construction site at the time of the incident.

The bodies of the deceased have been transported to their native village, Liloni, District Shangla, for funeral and burial rites. The tragic event has sparked deep sorrow among family members, locals, and community representatives. We pray to Almighty Allah to grant the deceased eternal peace, elevate their ranks in Jannah, and give patience and strength to their families.

## Police blamed for backing land mafia Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Police have allegedly become a private security agency for land grabbers, who are using their wealth and police influence to occupy citizens' land. A recent incident in Pir Sabak, Nowshera, highlights the issue, where land grabbers, led by Zahid Khan, attempted to occupy 42 kanals of land belonging to Engineer Fahad Hussain.

The victim, Engineer Fahad Hussain, held a press conference at the Nowshera Press Club, alleging that land grabbers, armed with weapons, attacked him and his companions when they went to inspect their land. The land grabbers, led by Zahid Khan, allegedly used force and abusive language to intimidate Engineer Fahad and his companions. Despite being informed about the incident, the police took Engineer Fahad's companions into custody and locked them up in a cell, while the land grabbers remained at large.

## Dir teacher's services lauded

F.P. Report



LOWER DIR: Senior educator Muhammad Haleem retired after 37 years of dedicated service in the field of education. To mark the occasion, he was honored with a grand farewell and escorted in a celebratory procession to his native village, Soghalay Talash.

Along the way, flower petals were showered on the procession at various points by well-wishers. A farewell ceremony was held in his honor, attended by a large number of students, teachers, local elders, and education department officials. Students and fellow staff members presented numerous gifts as tokens of respect and admiration. Speakers at the event paid glowing tributes to Mr. Haleem's lifelong academic and social contributions.

Addressing the gathering, District Education Officer Inayatullah Khan, senior politician Senator Ahmad Hassan Khan, former provincial finance minister Muzaffar Said Advocate, and retired principals including Alhaj Muhammad Hafeezullah Khan, Aftab Alam Khan, and Haji Khaliq-ur-Rehman highlighted the vital role teachers play in shaping society.

They emphasized that quality education, increased literacy, and efforts to curb academic dishonesty require collective responsibility from all segments of society. They also stressed the need for

students, teachers, and parents to equally contribute to creating a healthy academic environment. Speakers further urged the younger generation to utilize modern media positively and for research purposes. They warned that the decline of the Muslim Ummah is largely due to its growing distance from knowledge, research, and modern sciences. Muhammad Haleem was lauded for his exemplary educational, intellectual, and social services during the ceremony, which concluded with warm expressions of gratitude and admiration for his lifelong dedication.

**ANP leaders pay tribute to late Jamal Shah Yousafzai:** Awami National Party (ANP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Mian Iftikhar Hussain and ANP central general secretary Salim Khan visited Malak Abad Balambar village in Lower Dir district to offer condolence on the death of party worker and Khudayi Khidmatgar Mian Jamal Shah Yousafzai.

Mian Jamal Shah Yousafzai succumbed to cancer yesterday after a

long battle of over a year and was laid to rest in his native graveyard. Mian Iftikhar Hussain paid rich tribute to the deceased, highlighting his tireless efforts towards Pashtoon unity. He noted that Jamal Shah Yousafzai's poetry preached love and unity reflecting his commitment to the ideology of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Baba.

The ANP leader described Jamal Shah Yousafzai as a true follower of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Baba and a dedicated Khudayi Khidmatgar. ANP president Aimal Wali Khan also expressed deep sorrow at Jamal Shah Yousafzai's demise stating that the void created by his death would be felt for a long time.

Mian Jamal Shah Yousafzai was the brother of Shah Faisal Yousafzai advocate former president of the District Bar Timergara and uncle of Jehan Alam Yousafzai president of World Yousafzai Jirga and Sajad Khan Yousafzai ANP Lower Dir senior vice president, Ali Bakht Yousafzai and brother-in-law of Shahid Hussain Yousafzai journalist.

## Education sector uplift govt top priority: Toru

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru visited Government High School Toru Mardan, where he met with teachers and students and discussed with the matters pertaining to various school affairs. On this occasion, the Food Minister inspected the school building, classrooms and other facilities.

The school principal gave the provincial minister a detailed briefing regarding the facilities provided to the students and the quality of education being imparted there. Zahir Shah Toru appreciated the educational environment and termed the hard work of the teachers and the interest of the students as encouraging. He said that the development of the education sector is among the top priorities of the current gov-

ernment and a major part of the provincial budget is being spent on the education sector.

**BISEM commits for transparent exams:** Chairman BISE Mardan, Prof. Jehan Zeb, chaired a pivotal meeting with District Education Officers (DEOs) male/female and JMC Coordinators from District Nowshera. The agenda focused on ensuring cheating-free and fair HSSC Annual-I Examinations 2025.

Prof. Jehan Zeb underscored the board's core mission to conduct transparent and impartial examinations. He emphasized that achieving this goal requires the collective effort of all stakeholders to uphold the integrity of the examination process. The Chairman reiterated his commitment to preparing students for the challenges

of the modern world by fostering values of honesty and highlighting the detrimental impact of cheating on creativity and personal growth.

Acknowledging the exemplary role of DEOs (Male and Female) from District Nowshera in the successful conduct of the SSC Annual-I Examinations, Prof. Jehan Zeb expressed confidence that their continued support would ensure the HSSC Annual-I Examinations 2025 are conducted with even greater efficiency. To enhance transparency in the appointment of supervisory staff, the Chairman announced that a draw-based selection process has been implemented. Prof. Jehan Zeb reiterated the board's zero-tolerance policy towards the use of cellphones at examination centers.

## Three dacoits killed in alleged police encounter

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In an alleged encounter late Wednesday night, three dacoits were killed while three others managed to escape during a confrontation with the Counter Crime Department (CCD) police near Chak Gujran, along Sheikhupura Road in Hafizabad district.

According to details outlined in the FIR lodged at the Kassoki Police Station, CCD personnel were patrolling Sheikhupura Road when they spotted two suspicious motorcycles, each carrying three individuals. Upon signaling them to stop for inspection, the suspects reportedly opened fire on the police vehicle. The police returned fire in self-defense.

During the crossfire, three of the suspects sustained critical injuries. According to the FIR, the injuries appeared to be caused by firing from their own accomplices. The wounded suspects were immediately transported to the Trauma Center, where they succumbed to their injuries.

The deceased have been identified as Maratab, Zaigham, and Jahangir individuals with known criminal histories and multiple charges of robbery and violent crime registered against them in various police stations. Law enforcement sources confirmed their involvement in several high-profile robbery cases in the region. The remaining three suspects managed to

flee the scene under the cover of darkness. A search operation has been launched to apprehend the fugitives. Authorities stated that further investigation is underway to determine the full scope of the suspects' criminal activities and to verify the circumstances surrounding the shootout.

**Revenue open court held:** In compliance with the directives of the Government of Punjab, a Revenue Open Court (Khuli Katcheri) was held at the District Complex Hafizabad to address public grievances related to land and revenue matters. The initiative is part of the provincial government's ongoing efforts to enhance transparency and deliver prompt justice at the grassroots level.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Tanveer Yasin, presided over the Open Court and personally listened to the complaints of citizens. A large number of men and women attended the session to present their revenue-related issues.

Officials from the Revenue Department, Registration Branch, and Land Record Center were also in attendance to facilitate on-the-spot resolution of complaints. The presence of all relevant departments under one roof enabled efficient handling of various applications.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq stated that the monthly organization of

Revenue Open Courts is being carried out on the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He emphasized that the objective is to provide timely and effective resolution of public issues related to land, registration, and record verification, ensuring transparency and accessibility.

"The purpose of these Open Courts is to offer real relief and justice to the people by resolving their grievances without delay," he said, adding that immediate orders are issued on-site to address genuine concerns.

Several attendees submitted written applications concerning their land and revenue matters. The Deputy Commissioner issued directives for prompt resolution of the issues raised and assured the public of the administration's continued commitment to citizen-centric governance.

**Roofwall collapses:** A tragic incident occurred in the village of Lakrian Wala, where a strong dust storm caused the roofwall of a double-story building to collapse, resulting in the death of a man and serious injuries to his young son.

According to eyewitnesses and local sources, the incident took place as Haji Muhammad Ramzan, a resident of the area, was constructing a double-story house for his son-in-law. During the construction, a powerful dust storm swept through the village, leading to the sudden collapse of the building's scaffolding.





Sunday, May 04, 2025



GAZA CITY: Palestinians, struggling to survive under difficult conditions, carrying pots to collect food at a charity kitchen.

## Romanian presidential election could bring ultranationalist to power

BUCHAREST (Reuters): Romanians vote in a presidential election re-run that could propel ultranationalist George Simion to power, an outcome likely to cause unease in the European Union and NATO and unsettle investors.

The hard-right eurosceptic leads opinion polls before the first round of voting in the EU and NATO member state, five months after the original vote was cancelled because of alleged Russian interference. Moscow has denied the allegations. Simion hopes to benefit from widespread public anger over the cancellation after taking over from far-right contender C7lin Georgescu, who topped voting in the cancelled ballot but is now barred from running.

Simion, 38, opposes military aid to neighbouring Ukraine, is critical of the EU's leadership and has supported US President Donald Trump's Make America Great Again movement. A conservative Christian, he supported a failed 2018 referendum intended to prevent same-sex couples from being able to marry. A Simion victory could isolate Romania abroad, erode private investment and make the country a less predictable and cooperative member of NATO over military aid to Kyiv, playing into the hands of Russia as it wages war in Ukraine. "It is very clear that a strong anti-Western trend has been built up and Romania's path (direction) is at unprecedented risk," said Cristian Pirvulescu, a political scientist.

Simion is polling at around 30% in opinion surveys, giving him a comfortable lead over two centrists but suggesting he will not win enough votes to avoid a second-round runoff on May 18 against whoever comes second. His main election rivals are two centrists, former senator Crin Antonescu and Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan. Antonescu, 65, is backed by the three parties in the current pro-Western government. Dan, 55, is running as an independent on a reform platform. Both are pro-EU and NATO and back Ukraine. Antonescu would be likely to back the current government if he won the election. Dan has said he would favour a new pro-Western government.

Many voters have responded positively to Simion, who finished fourth in the original vote and then rallied behind Georgescu, who faces charges over his support for fascist groupings and campaign-funding issues. Election authorities are also looking into Simion's campaign funding. "He stood by the man who only wanted the best for this country, he has shown honesty compared with the other candidates and I hope that he restores democracy in Romania through his actions," said Vlad Popa, a 50-year-old lawyer. Some other voters are wary of Simion's youth and lack of political experience. "I don't care about his beliefs, the problem ... is he is too young," said 80-year-old pensioner Traian Caravan in the central

village of Vasilati. Romania's president is limited to two five-year terms, and has a semi-executive role which includes commanding the armed forces and chairing the security council that decides on military aid.

The president represents Romania at EU and NATO summits, can veto important EU votes and appoints the prime minister, chief judges, prosecutors and secret service heads. JP Morgan said an Antonescu win would imply the status quo and that victory for Simion would carry the "largest risk of re-adjusting the ruling coalition and thus the highest uncertainty." The election re-run has stalled government efforts to lower the EU's largest budget deficit, putting the country at risk of a ratings downgrade to below investment level. The next president will have to navigate any economic fallout from a potential trade war and face pressure to increase defence spending. The president is also likely to try to mend fences with Washington after members of Trump's administration criticised the decision to cancel the original ballot. If elected, Simion has said he will make public "how much we contributed to the war effort in Ukraine to the detriment of subsidies for Romanian children and pensions for our elderly." Simion has supported restoring Romania to its 1940 borders, which include territories now in Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine, and is banned from entering the latter two.

## US lawmakers ask Rubio for answers on Chinese fighters in Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US lawmakers have asked the State Department to brief them about Russia's use of Chinese fighters in its war in Ukraine, saying in a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Moscow could only employ Chinese mercenaries with Beijing's "tacit approval." Earlier this month, Ukraine said its forces had captured two Chinese men in eastern Ukraine and that at least 155 Chinese nationals were fighting on the Russian side.

US officials have confirmed the intelligence to Reuters, but described the men as mercenaries who do not appear to have a direct link to China's government. The letter, sent by the House of Representatives' select committee on China, reflects a growing desire among China hawks in

Congress to see President Donald Trump's administration pressure China over its alignment with Russia.

The Republican chair of the committee, John Moollenaar, and its top Democratic Representative, Raja Krishnamoorthi, said the presence of Chinese fighters in Ukraine showed those deepening ties. "Given the Chinese Communist Party's broad control in Chinese society, it is clear that Russia's recruitment campaign of PRC (People's Republic of China) nationals could not exist without at least the tacit approval of the Party," the lawmakers told Rubio in the April 30 letter seen by Reuters. They asked the State Department to outline for Congress whether the US has confronted Beijing about the developments and what actions it was

pursuing to address it.

China, which has declared a "no-limits" partnership with Russia, has condemned "irresponsible remarks" about its nationals fighting in Russia's war in Ukraine. Beijing has tried to position itself as an actor in attempts to negotiate an end to the war, though it has refrained from criticizing Moscow's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. China's embassy in Washington reiterated that the Chinese government always asks Chinese nationals to "avoid any form of involvement in armed conflict, and in particular avoid participation in any party's military operations." The State Department has called the reports of Chinese men fighting in Moscow's war "disturbing." In a separate statement to Reuters, Krishnamoorthi said the

Trump Administration "must demand that the PRC immediately remove its citizens from the battlefield in Ukraine and take action to hold Beijing accountable for its broader military and dual-use support" for the war. Moollenaar said China was "not a neutral actor" in the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said Russia was recruiting Chinese nationals via social media to join its armed forces and that Beijing officials were aware of that. China has for years provided Moscow with material support for its war effort, primarily in the shipment of dual-use products - components needed to maintain weapons such as drones and tanks. It has also supplied Russia with lethal drones to use on the battlefield.

## Philippines signs military pact with New Zealand to widen alliances

MANILA (AP): The Philippines signed a military pact with New Zealand, allowing their forces to hold joint exercises as Manila continues to build security alliances as it faces an increasingly aggressive China in the disputed South China Sea. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. witnessed the ceremony in Manila, where Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and his New Zealand counterpart, Judith Collins, inked the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement. The treaty sets the legal framework to allow military engagements of both countries, including joint drills in each other's territory and other cooperative activities. It has been approved by New Zealand officials, but still needs to be ratified by the Philippine Senate for it to take effect.

China has frowned on the security alliances being pursued by the

Philippines, one of the staunchest allies of the United States in Asia, under Marcos. When the Philippines signed a similar agreement with Japan in July, China's Foreign Ministry said the region did not need "military blocs, let alone small groupings that instigate bloc confrontations or a new Cold War." Philippine officials said then that China has no business meddling with their domestic affairs. "These partnerships have become very important in the face of all that is happening," Marcos said during ceremony.

Ahead of the signing, Collins said in a statement that "we are committed to reinvigorating our security relationships, to playing our part and working with regional partners such as the Philippines to uphold the international rules-based order." Teodoro told The Associated Press in an interview last month that

the Philippines would continue to build security alliances with other friendly countries to deter China's aggression. China's hostile actions, Teodoro said, should be regarded as a global threat because they could eventually restrict movement in the South China Sea, a key global trade route crucial for global supply chains.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and has deployed coast guard and navy fleets and suspected militia ships to guard what it says is its territory and airspace. It has used water cannons and dangerous blocking maneuvers against Philippine coast guard and fisheries vessels in the disputed waters, causing collisions and injuries on a number of occasions. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also lay claims that clash with China's, but territorial confrontations have particularly flared between Beijing and

Manila in the last two years. The Philippines has visiting forces agreements with the US and Australia, which has been participating in large-scale combat exercises between American and Filipino forces that include live-fire exercises in or near the South China Sea and in northern Philippine islands just a sea border away from southern Taiwan. The agreement signed with Japan has been ratified by the Philippine Senate and is expected to be approved by the Japanese legislature in the next few months. Canada and the Philippines have also concluded talks for such a pact, which is expected to be signed "very soon," Teodoro said in a news conference with Collins. French and Philippine officials have been separately holding initial talks also for a visiting forces agreement ahead of formal negotiations.

### Russia's FM visits the Dominican Republic

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP): Russia expects to open its first embassy in the Dominican Republic as Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov defined the Caribbean country as a "promising partner" during an official trip. Lavrov, who met behind closed doors with Dominican Foreign Minister Roberto Alvarez, said Russia plans to strengthen its commercial and economic ties with the Dominican Republic, saying there are "mutual opportunities."

"We also discussed how things are developing in the context of the various discussions on United Nations reform and the trends we see in the context of the creation of the multipolar order," Lavrov said. He did not provide further details. Meanwhile, Alvarez said a key conversation topic was "the profound political, security and humanitarian crisis affecting Haiti and how this impacts the Dominican Republic." Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola. Authorities in the Dominican Republic have recently cracked down on illegal migration, deporting more than 180,000 people since October as gang violence surges in Haiti. A UN-backed mission led by Kenyan police to help quell gang violence in Haiti is struggling given a shortage of funds and personnel.

The US and others once pushed for a UN peacekeeping in Haiti as a solution, but the proposal was dropped following opposition from Russia and China. Alvarez said he told Lavrov that the Dominican Republic is advocating "for more effective, coordinated and urgent action" by the multinational force. "We hope the United Nations will play a central and more active role in logistics and financing to ensure its effectiveness," he said. Lavrov, who arrived in the Dominican Republic, was expected to also meet with President Luis Abinader. He did not say when the Russian embassy would open in Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital.

### Philippines condemns killing of journalist

MANILA (Reuters): The killing of a veteran Filipino journalist in his home was a "heinous act" that was being investigated by police, the Philippines' Presidential Task Force on Media Security said. Juan "Johnny" Dayang, 89, who served as president emeritus of the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc, was shot by an unidentified assailant in his home in the central province of Aklan, and died before reaching the hospital, the task force said.

"We are closely coordinating with all concerned agencies to ensure the immediate resolution of this case," Jose Torres Jr., the task force's executive director, said in a statement. "We stand in solidarity with the media community as we mourn the passing of Dayang, a figure regarded as a pillar of Philippine journalism whose contributions greatly enriched our democratic discourse," Torres added.

Despite a media environment that ranks as one of the most liberal in Asia, the Philippines is one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists, particularly in its provinces. More than 200 journalists have been killed in the country since democracy was restored in 1986, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, including 32 in a single incident in 2009. "The death of Dayang represents a significant loss to the Philippine media and political landscape," the Publishers Association said in a statement on its Facebook page.

## China taps Korean War and AI memes to hit back at Trump

BEIJING (Reuters): China is leveraging its propaganda machine to hit back at US tariffs, rolling out videos using Cold War imagery to lambaste "imperialists" and send a simple message - capitulation to bullies is dangerous, and we won't back down. Beijing has made little effort to contain its anger at the tariffs, which it says are tantamount to bullying and will do nothing to address issues such as fentanyl abuse and cannot stop the rise of the world's second-largest economy.

China's foreign ministry released a video, complete with a voice-over in American-accented English, on its social media feeds that likened yielding to US President Donald Trump's 145% tariffs to "drinking poison". "China won't kneel down, because we know standing up for ourselves keeps the possibility of cooperation alive, while compromise snuffs it out," the narration said, over footage of a Chinese MiG-15 fighter shooting down a US jet in the Korean War.

"Imperialists are always

arrogant. If they show a bit of reason it's only because they are forced to do so," it added, this time over footage of the signing of the armistice that ended the war. China's top diplomat Wang Yi likened Trump's trade policy to "the open return of the law of the jungle," during a meeting of foreign ministers from developing nations in Brazil.

"If we choose to stay silent or compromise, it will only embolden the bully further," Wang told his BRICS bloc counterparts, according to a foreign ministry readout. One Chinese official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said Beijing's view is that yielding or compromising now would only weaken China in the future and allow Trump to change the terms later. Messaging such as "Do Not Kneel" conveys this to a domestic and international audience, the person said.

On Chinese social media, where censors scrub anything sensitive, such as alleged human rights abuses, tariff memes abound. "The King has

come up with new tariffs! Peasants, peasants, listen up!" run the lyrics to an up-tempo, electro-beat song on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, referring to comments from Vice President J.D. Vance who used the term "peasants" to refer to Chinese people earlier this month. "Tariffs for you even if you are not human!" the song continues, showing a picture of a penguin, after US levies were applied to uninhabited Antarctic islands. One AI-generated image on WeChat shows Trump, Vance and Tesla boss Elon Musk assembling sneakers and cheap flip-flops at a factory. Another shows a picture of Trump next to a pig's snout. Still, not all Chinese social media perspectives are positive for Beijing. On Zhihu, China's equivalent to Quora, many of the answers to a question about the foreign ministry's video were negative. "Our foreign propaganda department is really poor in terms of ability. If you don't know how to do propaganda, then just don't do it," wrote one user.

## New CIA videos aim to lure Chinese officials

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The CIA rolled out two Chinese-language videos aimed at enticing officials in China to leak secrets to the US, the latest public effort by the intelligence agency to ramp up human intelligence gathering on Washington's strategic rival.

The move comes after the CIA in October launched a drive to recruit new informants in China, Iran and North Korea by posting instructions online on how to securely contact the agency, following what it said was successful efforts to enlist Russians. The CIA is confident that the videos are penetrating China's "Great Firewall" internet restrictions and reaching the intended audience.

"If it weren't working, we wouldn't be making more videos," a CIA official told Reuters, adding that China was the agency's foremost intelligence priority in a "truly generational competition" between the US and China. The two short videos posted to the CIA's social media accounts depict fictional scenes in which a senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) official and a more

junior government worker with access to classified information become disillusioned with China's system and approach the CIA. The videos appear aimed at tapping into possible discontent in the Chinese government and senior echelons of the CCP, as Beijing has purged top officials and military leaders, some considered close allies of President Xi Jinping himself.

"As I rise within the party, I watch those above me being discarded like worn-out shoes, but now I realize that my fate was just as precarious as theirs," the narrator says in Mandarin Chinese in one of the videos as the camera shows empty seats around a lavish dinner table. "My family's fate cannot rest in their hands," the man says before the video depicts him contacting the CIA using a tablet computer. It ends with the CIA logo and dark web contact details for the agency. The CIA official said that the US was not just interested in counterintelligence, but was also seeking information on advanced science, military and cyber technology, valuable economic

data, and China's foreign policy secrets. China's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the videos, but it has previously accused the US of waging a systematic disinformation campaign against China, and said any attempts to drive a wedge between the Chinese people and the CCP would fail. US intelligence agencies said in March that China remains the top military and cyber threat to the US, noting that China has the ability to hit the United States with conventional weapons, compromise US infrastructure through cyber attacks and target its assets in space, and that Beijing seeks to displace the US as the top AI power by 2030. CIA Director John Ratcliffe said no adversary had ever posed a more formidable challenge to the US than the CCP. "It is intent on dominating the world economically, militarily, and technologically," he said in a statement. "Our agency must continue responding to this threat with urgency, creativity, and grit, and these videos are just one of the ways we are doing this."

## Turkey stresses opposition to decentralisation in Syria

ANKARA (Reuters): Turkey rejects any plans that undermine the central government in Syria or threaten its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Turkish sources said, responding to demands from Kurds for Syria to adopt a decentralised system of government.

Turkey backed rebels against former President Bashar al-Assad for years and is seen as the closest foreign ally of Syria's new Islamist leaders, vowing to help them rebuild and stabilise a country devastated by 14 years of war. Ankara sees decentralisation demands by Syria's Kurds as a threat because of what it says are their cross-border links to Kurdish militants in Turkey, while it looks to end a decades-old conflict with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militia.

Rival Syrian Kurdish parties, including the dominant Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the northeast, agreed at a meeting on a common political vision for the country's Kurdish minority and decentralisation, a call rejected by Syria's leadership. Turkish sources elab-

orated on comments by President Tayyip Erdogan, who said that decentralisation demands in Syria were "nothing more than a raw dream".

"Turkey does not accept any initiative that targets Syria's territorial integrity, that will damage its sovereignty, or that allows weapons to be carried by others not in the Syrian central authority," a Turkish Foreign Ministry source said. Turkey, a NATO member, views the US-backed SDF as a terrorist organisation. Ankara welcomed a March deal between the SDF and Damascus to merge Kurdish-led governing bodies and security forces with the central government, but said it must also ensure the dismantling of the YPG militia spearheading the SDF, and of the SDF's chain of command. The source said Turkey had provided "the necessary space" for Damascus to address Turkey's concerns over Kurdish militants in Syria. Ankara has previously warned of military action if its concerns are not alle-

viated.

A Turkish defence ministry source said that demands for autonomy could harm Syria's sovereignty and regional stability. "We cannot consent to the disintegration of Syria's territorial integrity and the deterioration of its unitary structure under any guise," the source told a briefing in Ankara. "We are against autonomous region and/or decentralised rhetoric or activities, just as is the new Syrian administration." Late, Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Oncu Keceli said all regional countries must contribute to Syria's security and stability, calling on Israel to halt "its air strikes that harm the unity and integrity of Syria". Israel has been mounting air strikes inside Syria, which Turkey has called an unacceptable provocation to harm Syria's unity in the post-Assad era. Ankara has been a fierce critic of Israel since it launched the Gaza war. Ankara also wants all Western sanctions imposed on Syria to be fully lifted and for US troops stationed in the northeast to withdraw.

### EU preparing new sanctions on Russia

PARIS (AFP): French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that the European Union is preparing to hit Russia with a 17th round of sanctions, describing President Vladimir Putin as the "sole obstacle" to peace in Ukraine. The 27-nation bloc has imposed unprecedented

penalties on Russia in response to its invasion, and said this year it would not lift sanctions before Putin's "unconditional" withdrawal of forces from Ukraine.

"We Europeans will accompany this American (sanctions) initiative with a 17th package of sanctions and

I committed yesterday to (US Senator) Lindsey Graham that we would try to coordinate both the substance and the timing of these two packages of sanctions," Barrot told AFP in an interview. Graham has rallied dozens of lawmakers from both parties to support a plan to impose additional

sanctions on Moscow as well as tariffs on countries that buy Russian energy, the Wall Street Journal has reported.

Barrot took aim at Russia's president during the interview, saying: "It is now crystal clear that the only obstacle to peace today in Ukraine is Vladimir Putin."



**The Frontier Post**

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

**100 days**

**U**S President Donald Trump's first 100 days ~ completed on Tuesday ~ of his second term in office offer a revealing glimpse into a presidency shaped by an unusual combination of forceful action and sharp political division. Unlike many politicians who temper campaign rhetoric once elected, Mr Trump has moved swiftly to enact much of what he promised, staying remarkably consistent with the platform he campaigned on.

From the beginning, Mr Trump made clear he would challenge the status quo. His actions ~ from tightening immigration controls to reworking trade policies and rethinking America's foreign commitments ~ mirror the agenda that won him the presidency. For supporters, this follow-through is refreshing, a sign that the political class is finally being held to its word. They see a leader who is willing to withstand criticism and ins titutional resistance to deliver for his voters. However, governing is not simply about resolve; it also demands flexibility, coalition-building, and an understanding of complex realities. Mr Trump's early initiatives, though bold, have sometimes revealed the limits of unilateral action. Moves like the tightening of immigration rules, while fulfilling campaign pledges, sparked legal challenges and widespread protests.

Similarly, trade actions aimed at revitalising American manufacturing have led to heightened tensions with traditional allies and economic uncertainty in some sectors. His leadership style ~ combative, direct, and often personal ~ continues to redefine political norms in Washington. By relying heavily on loyalists and challenging traditional processes, the President has managed to break through bureaucratic inertia but has also exposed his administration to episodes of internal disorganisation and policy inconsistency. Critics argue that this approach risks undermining the very institutions that lend American democracy its resilience. Supporters counter that disruption was precisely the point ~ a necessary shock to a system they viewed as stagnant and unresponsive. On the global stage, Mr Trump's impact has been just as significant. By withdrawing from multilateral agreements and renegotiating long standing alliances, he has signalled a shift toward a more transactional, interest-driven foreign policy.

Whether this realignment strengthens or isolates America over the long term remains an open question. What is clear after these 100 days is that Mr Trump has remained largely faithful to his campaign promises. This is both his strength and his greatest gamble. Staying true to a campaign vision satisfies core supporters but risks alienating moderates and complicating broader governance. Despite the intense scrutiny, the public remains deeply polarised. Opinion polls show a resilient base that feels vindicated by his confrontational approach, while critics fear long-term erosion of democratic norms. This divergence suggests that the next phase will be shaped as much by public reaction as by policy outcomes. As Mr Trump moves beyond the symbolic 100-day mark, the challenges of leadership will only intensify. The ability to balance steadfastness with pragmatism ~ to know when to persist and when to adapt ~ will define not just the success of his presidency, but also its lasting legacy.

**New Canadian leader**

**M**ORE in sorrow than in anger, Mark Carney, Canada's newly elected prime minister, lamented his country's breakup with the United States. "Our old relationship ... is over," he said early Tuesday morning after his Liberal Party won the federal elections. "The system of open global trade anchored by the United States ... is over. These are tragedies, but it's also our new reality. We are over the shock of the American betrayal, but we should never forget the lessons. We have to look out for ourselves."

Carney owes his job to President Donald Trump. He has acknowledged that he would not be where he is had Trump not imposed steep tariffs on America's northern neighbor and repeatedly demanded that Canada become the 51st state. In January, the Liberal Party was down 23 points in the polls, but after Trump set the US-Canada crisis in motion, Conservative front-runner Pierre Poilievre struggled to recalibrate a "Canada First" platform that too much echoed Trump's own campaign last fall. Poilievre lost even his own seat in Parliament.

Canada is not the only Western country where conservative allies of Trump who once hoped to ride his populist wave to power now find themselves crashing into the rocks. A similar dynamic might unfold on Saturday when Australia holds its national election. Conservative opposition leader Peter Dutton has fallen behind in polls because of popular backlash to Trump's 25 percent tariff on steel and aluminum. Dutton's party had been promising to "make Australia great again" and create a US DOGE Service-like initiative. The latest poll from the Sydney-based Lowy Institute finds that only 36 percent of Australians believe the United States can be trusted to act responsibly on the world stage, down from 56 percent last year. This is the lowest reading ever recorded. Even Nigel Farage, in Britain, has lately distanced himself from Trump. For years, the Reform U.K. leader had been a consistent presence at Mar-a-Lago and Trump rallies, but he's stopped hyping these connections. He has recently criticized Trump for giving "far too much" to Russia in negotiations aimed at ending its war in Ukraine. He compared Trump's tariffs with former prime minister Liz Truss's mini-budget, which sunk the pound to a 37-year low and created so much economic turmoil that she was forced from office after only 49 days.

The hard truth is that neither country will "win" a trade war. Tit-for-tat retaliation between Ottawa and Washington will hurt both sides. This is why both the United States and Canada should work to de-escalate, not decouple. The two countries exchange nearly \$1 trillion worth of goods a year; each is the other's largest trading partner. Central bankers don't tend to make dynamic politicians, but voters have turned to Carney largely because of his experience leading the Bank of Canada through the 2008 financial crisis and then the Bank of England through Brexit in 2016. Back home in Canada, he's now calling for shared sacrifices to endure difficult years ahead. Carney, a product of Goldman Sachs, is the ultimate creature of Davos, Switzerland, where the World Economic Forum convenes every winter. Both he and Trump know how to talk tough but then sit down to negotiate mutually beneficial deals. Carney is ready to deal with Trump. And Trump, if he wants to rally the free world to counter China, needs to repair America's friendship with Canada.

**Important Notice**

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

**Myanmar earthquake a double blow to junta**

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

**O**N March 28, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, leveling communities, killing more than 3,700 people and leaving tens of thousands homeless. The epicenter, near Mandalay, shook the nation's heart, collapsing bridges, pagodas and homes and exposing the fragility of a country already fractured by a brutal civil war.

Beyond the physical devastation, this catastrophe has reshaped the psychological landscape of Myanmar's conflict, delivering a profound boost to the resistance forces battling the junta. In a nation steeped in superstition, many rebels interpret the quake as divine retribution against the military government, fueling their morale and momentum in a war that has raged since the 2021 coup. The civil war, pitting the junta against a coalition of ethnic armed groups and the People's Defence Force under the national unity government, has been a grinding, multi-front struggle. The earthquake has added a new dimension, straining the junta's resources and exposing its vulnerabilities. Mandalay, a junta stronghold, suffered extensive damage, with more than 65,000 buildings affected, including critical infrastructure like hospitals and bridges.

The military, already stretched thin by resistance offensives, has been forced to divert troops and funds to relief efforts, weakening its grip on contested regions. In Sagaing, where the city remains under junta control but the countryside is dominated by resistance militias, the quake's destruction has disrupted supply lines and communication networks, hampering military operations.

This logistical burden comes at a critical moment. The resistance has made significant gains since the launch of Operation 1027 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance in October 2023. The alliance, comprising the Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, has seized key territories, including Lashio in Shan State. The earthquake's timing has created openings

for further advances. As political analyst Kyaw Hsan Hlaing noted, the junta's preoccupation with disaster response has allowed groups like the Arakan Army to consolidate control over towns like Falam in Chin State. The national unity government's truce declaration, allowing only defensive operations until April 20, enabled

outlets, describe the earthquake as "the earth rejecting the generals' tyranny" and a sign that "the heavens stand with the people." This narrative resonates deeply in a country where omens and portents shape perceptions of legitimacy.

The psychological boost cannot be overstated. In a war where morale is as critical as ammunition, the

**Since the 2021 coup, the military has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and razed civilian infrastructure, earning widespread hatred. The quake's devastation of junta-controlled areas, particularly Mandalay's cultural and religious sites, has been interpreted by some rebels as cosmic justice. Social media posts from resistance fighters, reported by local outlets, describe the earthquake as "the earth rejecting the generals' tyranny" and a sign that "the heavens stand with the people." This narrative resonates deeply in a country where omens and portents shape perceptions of legitimacy.**

resistance forces to exploit these gaps, while the junta's continued airstrikes - more than 120 since the quake, according to the UN - have drawn international condemnation and further alienated civilians.

But the earthquake's impact transcends material losses. In Myanmar, where Buddhist cosmology and superstition permeate daily life, natural disasters are often imbued with spiritual significance. For many in the resistance, the quake is seen as a divine verdict on the junta's brutality. Since the 2021 coup, the military has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and razed civilian infrastructure, earning widespread hatred. The quake's devastation of junta-controlled areas, particularly Mandalay's cultural and religious sites, has been interpreted by some rebels as cosmic justice. Social media posts from resistance fighters, reported by local

outlets, describe the earthquake as "the earth rejecting the generals' tyranny" and a sign that "the heavens stand with the people." This narrative resonates deeply in a country where omens and portents shape perceptions of legitimacy.

belief that righteousness is on their side has galvanized the resistance fighters. The junta's legitimacy, already eroded by its violent suppression of protests and conscription drives, has taken another hit. Reports from displaced communities in Kayah State highlight a growing sense among civilians that the junta's misfortunes signal its impending collapse. This sentiment is amplified by the resistance's narrative warfare, with sympathetic media outlets framing the quake as a turning point. The capture of strategic locations post-quake, often unreported as ceasefire violations by pro-resistance platforms, underscores how this perception of divine favor is translating into battlefield gains.

However, the resistance's momentum is not without constraints. China, a key backer of the junta, has exerted significant influence over the conflict's

trajectory. The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army's decision this month to hand Lashio back to the junta, under Chinese pressure, highlighted Beijing's ability to dictate outcomes. China's growing economic stakes in Myanmar, including the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, make it wary of prolonged instability. While the earthquake has temporarily shifted focus to humanitarian aid - China dispatched more than 30 rescue teams and some \$13.7 million in relief - Beijing's long-term strategy remains stabilizing the junta to protect its interests. This external pressure could temper the resistance's advances, particularly in northern Shan State, where Chinese influence is strongest. The international response, or lack thereof, further complicates the picture. This geopolitical vacuum has allowed authoritarian powers to bolster the junta's position through aid, undermining the resistance's narrative of global support. The UN has criticized the junta for breaching the ceasefire, but its calls for humanitarian access have gone largely unheeded. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' attempts at mediation, led by Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim, have yielded little beyond temporary pauses in fighting.

For the resistance, the earthquake has been both a tactical opportunity and a psychological catalyst. The junta's weakened state, coupled with the rebels' belief in divine endorsement, has injected new vigor into their campaign. However, the path forward is fraught with challenges. The resistance must navigate China's influence, international indifference and the junta's relentless airstrikes. The quake has shifted the ground - literally and figuratively - but its ultimate impact on Myanmar's civil war remains uncertain. As Richard Horsey, a Myanmar expert, cautioned, the disaster's effects are "hard to predict." What is clear is that in a nation where the spiritual and political are intertwined, the earthquake has given the resistance a powerful symbol of hope and righteousness, one they will wield as they continue their fight for freedom.

But is he really? Surely I cannot be alone in detecting a whiff of hypocrisy here. Since 1967, excluding Trump, there have been 10 US presidents: Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden. While most of them have paid lip service to various UN resolutions, all of them without exception have in practice accepted Israel's right to occupy and populate the territory it seized by force that year, along with the vast

**Talks or no talks**

Gavin Butler

**O**N Friday morning, a spokesperson for China's ministry of commerce announced that Beijing was assessing the possibility of tariff negotiations with the United States. It was news the rest of the world had been waiting to hear as astonishingly high tariffs - up to 245% on some Chinese exports to the US - throttle trade between the world's two biggest economies, raising the spectre of a recession.

"US officials have repeatedly expressed their willingness to negotiate with China on tariffs," the spokesperson told reporters. "China's position is consistent. If we fight, we will fight to the end; if we talk, the door is open... If the US wants to talk, it should show its sincerity and be prepared to correct its wrong practices and cancel unilateral tariffs." The statement comes a day after a Weibo account linked to Chinese state media said the US had been seeking to initiate discussions, and a week after Trump claimed discussions were already underway - a suggestion Beijing denied.

"China has no need to talk to the United States," Yuyuquantian, a Weibo account affiliated with China Central Television (CCTV), said in Thursday's post. "From the perspective of negotiations, the United States must be the more anxious party at present." Such comments follow a cycle of assertions and denials from both the US and China, as each side refuses to publicly initiate discussions. The question is not whether those discussions will take place, but rather when, under what circumstances and at whose behest. Experts characterise the tussle as a game of chicken between Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, as both men attempt to save face while covertly pursuing a mutually beneficial outcome - namely, a de-escalation of the trade war. "I expect some of this back-and-forth, because neither Washington nor Beijing wants to look like they are the side that's giving in," says Ja Ian Chong, assistant professor of political science at the National University of Singapore.

"[But] a de-escalation would be to the overall benefit of both sides, so there is some overarching incentive to do so." Wen-Ti Sung, an academic member of the Australian Centre on China in the World, puts it another way: "It's like two race cars going at each other: whoever swerves first will be seen as the weaker of the two parties. And at this juncture, neither party wants to look soft." The leader who admits he was the first to initiate tariff talks would be seen as the one compromising his position in negotiations. "Whoever seems desperate loses bargaining leverage," Mr Sung says. "Both sides want to portray the other side as the more desperate one." This peculiar stalemate - where both parties seek the same outcome, but neither wants to be the first to suggest it - has resulted in a tactic of "constructive ambiguity": the deliberate use of language so vague that each party could arguably claim to be in the right. It is this tactic that Mr Sung points to as an explanation for Yuyuquantian's Weibo post.

"This is Beijing trying to explore the possibility of using word games to create an off-ramp for both sides, so that they can gradually climb their way down from

this escalation spiral," he says. One way to escape this game of chicken is when a third party mediates, offering both sides an off-ramp. The other option, Mr Sung explains, is a "much looser understanding of what 'the other side has reached out' means". That way, the side that does indeed come to the table first is still able to characterise it as a response rather than the first move. In Trump and Xi's case, it would also mean that tariff negotiations could begin with both leaders claiming to have achieved some kind of victory in the trade war. The optics here are important. As Mr Chong points out, de-escalation is one thing - but another top priority for Trump and Xi is to "deliver a win for their domestic audiences".

"Trump obviously wants to show that he has made Beijing capitulate. And on the People's Republic of China side, Xi probably wants to show his own people and the world that he's been able to make Trump become more reasonable and moderate and accommodating," Mr Chong says. On the domestic front, both leaders are facing tariff-induced headwinds. Trump this week struggled to quell fears of a recession as fresh data indicated the US economy contracted in its first quarter for the first time since 2022. Meanwhile, Xi - who before the tariffs was already battling persistently low consumption, a property crisis and unemployment - must reassure China's population that he can weather the trade war and protect an economy which has struggled to rebound post-pandemic. "Both [Trump and Xi] recognise that at this point of the trade war, it's not going to be a winner-takes-all outcome for either side anymore," Mr Sung says.

"Trump recognises he's not going to get anywhere near 100% of what he wants, so he's trying to find a concession point where China can let him have just enough winning, especially for domestic purposes." While China is not unwilling, he adds, "they are very much stuck on what's the right price point". For Xi, Mr Sung described the situation as a "two-level game". "The China side needs to manage US-China bilateral negotiations, while domestically Beijing needs to save enough face so that the Chinese leadership can hold on to this narrative of 'the East is rising and the West is declining'," he says.

"A kowtowing of the East towards the West is not a rising East." At the time of writing, the US has not denied China's claims that it has been attempting to initiate talks. But the fact that both sides have now made that assertion indicates there is "some sort of contact," according to Mr Chong. "The two sides are talking," he says. "And that is a sign that there is some possibility that some accommodation could be reached." But the start of negotiations does not mean that the US-China relationship - which was rocky even before Trump kicked off a trade war - is close to being steadied. Mr Chong isn't holding his breath. For one, he believes the "posturing" suggests the two sides have not reached the point "where they are both trying to seek a way out".

"[Each party] may hope that there are concessions from the other side, so they're going to have this standoff until they see which side blinks first."

**How the road to Ukraine began in 1967**

Ross Anderson

**T**HERE is much angst among the Western liberal cognoscenti over the "peace agreement" with Russia currently being foisted on the Ukrainian people by the Trump administration in Washington, chiefly on the ground that it is less a peace agreement and more a capitulation.

Russia's reward for more than three years of naked aggression will be to keep the 20 percent of Ukrainian territory it now occupies, including the Crimean Peninsula it annexed in 2014. The only crumb of comfort for Kyiv is that, while the US will recognize Russian sovereignty over this captured territory, Ukraine need not - and nor need anyone else. With the possible exception of China, it seems unlikely that anyone will. Currently, the only countries that recognize Crimea as Russian are Afghanistan, Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela: peculiar

company for the US to be keeping.

Vitriol has been directed at Donald Trump in particular for his personal role in driving this process forward, and it is true that he and his various administrations have executed some bewildering U-turns on the issue. In 2014, when he was still best known as a reality TV host and the White House was no more than a glint in his eye, Trump was already expressing his admiration for Vladimir Putin: "I think he's a very capable leader... what he did with Crimea is very smart."

Four years later, however, when Trump had been president for two years and had perhaps learned that being the powerful "leader of the free world" came with certain responsibilities, his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made clear what the official view was: "The US reaffirms as policy its refusal to recognize the Kremlin's claim of sovereignty over territory seized by force in contravention of

international law."

What Pompeo was "reaffirming" was the Welles Declaration, issued by a predecessor, Sumner Welles, after the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1940. "The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force," Welles said. Washington refused to recognize Moscow's sovereignty over the three Baltic states for 50 years, until the Soviet Union collapsed and they gained their independence. The declaration was followed in 1941 by the Atlantic Charter, signed by the US and the UK, in which Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill insisted that there should be "no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." All this,

Trump's critics say, has been official US policy for 85 years - until now. The charge against the president is that, in recognizing Russia's right to govern territory captured by force in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, he is upending the policy of every White House administration since Roosevelt's, including his own first term.

But is he really? Surely I cannot be alone in detecting a whiff of hypocrisy here. Since 1967, excluding Trump, there have been 10 US presidents: Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden. While most of them have paid lip service to various UN resolutions, all of them without exception have in practice accepted Israel's right to occupy and populate the territory it seized by force that year, along with the vast

tracts of Palestinian land it has settled since. The "freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned," to repeat the grand words of the Atlantic Charter, appear no longer to matter.

Unlike the Palestinians in the West Bank whose land they have stolen, who suffer under arbitrary military law, settlers enjoy the luxury of being subject to Israeli civilian law: evidence that Israel considers this stolen land to be part of Israel. If anyone doubts the malign intent behind any of this, I urge you to watch "The Settlers," a documentary by the filmmaker Louis Theroux broadcast last week by the BBC. The film is Theroux's second attempt to delve inside the heads of Israeli settlers. His first, "The Ultra Zionists," in 2011, was merely disturbing: the new one is positively chilling.

Theroux describes people pursuing "an openly expansionist ethnonationalist vision while enjoying the benefits of a separate and privileged

legal regime." One settler claimed to be living in "the heart of Judea." Another said: "I believe that Gaza is ours and we need to be living there." A rabbi said Lebanon should be "cleansed of these camel riders." Another settler declared: "We were in this land planting vineyards before Muhammad was in the third grade," displaying a level of gratuitously offensive religious bigotry and ignorance that beggars belief - this is about land, not religion. As for the historical claim, it has always been absurd; by settler logic, the tribal elders of the Lenape people, the original inhabitants of Manhattan who now live in Oklahoma and Wisconsin, have the right to establish a reservation on Fifth Avenue.

Remember all this the next time someone tells you that Trump has overturned decades of settled US policy against the capture and occupation of other people's land by force: that ship sailed nearly 60 years ago.



# Trump looming over Australia’s election

**IN Western Sydney, an audience of Stetson-wearing Australians are sitting in their fold-up camping chairs, swigging beers and eating a spiralled fried potato on a skewer known as a 'chip on a stick'. People here are enjoying bull rides, barrel racing and bucking broncos. It feels like a slice of Americana in New South Wales perhaps - but that would miss the point that here, rodeo has become very much an outback Australian tradition in its own right.**

In recent months, politics here in Australia could be compared to watching a rodeo. Between conflict in Europe, the Middle East and more recently US President Donald Trump and his threat of global trade wars, every day has brought with it a sharp jolt that changes the dynamics of the campaign trail. Politicians, like these cowboys, have been thrown off course despite their best efforts. "Tariffs are great," exclaims rodeo fan Guy Algozzino, who's dressed in a cowboy hat, a waistcoat and a Western-style bolo tie with an engraved image of a cowboy riding a bull. "We should have had tariff protection many years ago - it looks bad now [but] America's fantastic ... Trump's the best thing America ever had." Other spectators are more nuanced. "It's going nuts," admits Jared Harris, when asked about world politics. "I'm just sitting back and watching. It's a bit like a show. It's quite interesting to watch, it's entertaining. It probably affects me more than I realise, but I just choose to ignore it."

Australia didn't worry too much about President Trump's second coming when he won power back in November. The country had already witnessed a Trump presidency - and weathered it. Australia felt far removed from the shores of America. But Trump's second term is panning out very differently. Tariffs - imposed on ally and adversary alike - have travelled the whole world.

Trump doesn't care about making enemies. But Australia does. People here pride themselves on 'mateship' - a value that embodies friendship and loyalty - and that extends to politics too. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said as much when Trump initially announced tariffs without exemptions. This was not 'the act of a friend,' said Albanese, while he also committed to not responding in kind.

All of this comes as the country heads to a federal election on 3 May. Candidates would rather focus on domestic issues they can control: cost-of-living, housing and healthcare. Instead, they are forced to grapple with a question that goes right to the heart of Australia's role in the world: how to deal with a US president as unpredictable as Trump? In the final few days of campaigning before up to 18 million Australians go to the polls, the Labor Party's Albanese, who entered power three years ago after promising to invest in social services and tackle climate change, went on a speedy tour of six states. That effort appears to be paying off, with the latest YouGov poll putting Labor on 54 per cent of the two-party vote, versus 47 per cent for the opposition Coalition (an alliance of the Liberals and Nationals). This is a modest turnaround from the beginning of the year, when Labor was consistently lagging the Coalition in polls. "It's not the campaign either party thought they would be having," says Amy Remeikis, chief political analyst at the Australia Institute

think tank. "The looming figure of Trump is overshadowing the domestic campaign but also forcing Australia's leaders to do something they haven't had to do in a long time - examine Australia's links to the US."

The US-Australia relationship has perhaps been taken for granted in these parts. Australia likes the fact the US has long been a dominant military force in the Pacific. Australia relies on its funding and benefits from being part of alliances like Aukus - the far-reaching defence pact between Australia, the UK and the US, designed to counter China - and the

***“We don’t have anywhere else to turn,” says David Andrews, senior policy advisor at the National Security College, which is part of the Australian National University in Canberra. “We are physically isolated from everyone. As long as we’ve had European settlement here, we’ve always been concerned about the distance [and] isolation, which is why we’ve always maintained such a strong relationship with first Britain and then the US as the dominant maritime power.” While only 5% of Australia’s exports go to the US (China is by far Australia’s biggest trading partner), the US still dominates the conversation here. “This isn’t a time to end alliances,” says Justin Bassi, director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a think tank. “That would be cutting off our nose to spite our face.” And, perhaps counter to the majority view here, Bassi thinks that Australia should support Trump’s moves. “We should continue to make it clear that any measures the US takes against Australia are unjustified but we should welcome and support American measures to counter Beijing’s malign actions - or for that matter Russia,” he says.***

Anglo-intelligence alliance Five Eyes. The rise of China has made Australia even more conscious about having the US on its side. Beijing has expanded its military presence in the Pacific, launching various military exercises in recent years - including one live-fire drill in February that saw Chinese naval vessels just 340 nautical miles from the New South Wales coast. Australia recently announced efforts to expand its navy and now hosts four US military bases - decisions fuelled in part by the rise of China. It's all placed extra value on Canberra's alliance with Washington DC - one that Trump may be throwing into doubt. Back in February, Trump held a meeting with the UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. He was asked whether they would be discussing Aukus.

"What does that mean?" Trump asked the reporter. After being given an explanation of Aukus, he continued. "We'll be discussing that ... we've had a very good relationship with Australia." Australia collectively held its breath, then let it out in a big sigh of relief. A blip maybe - but an indication perhaps of how little Trump thinks about Australia right now. However, Australia, like much of the world, is thinking about the US. "We don't have anywhere else to turn," says David Andrews, senior policy advisor at the National Security College, which is part of the Australian National University in Canberra. "We are physically iso-

lated from everyone. As long as we've had European settlement here, we've always been concerned about the distance [and] isolation, which is why we've always maintained such a strong relationship with first Britain and then the US as the dominant maritime power." While only 5% of Australia's exports go to the US (China is by far Australia's biggest trading partner), the US still dominates the conversation here.

"This isn't a time to end alliances," says Justin Bassi, director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a think tank. "That would be cutting off our nose to spite our face." And, perhaps counter to the majority view here, Bassi thinks that Australia should support Trump's moves. "We should continue to make it clear that any measures the US takes against Australia are unjustified but we should welcome and support American measures to counter Beijing's malign actions - or for that matter Russia," he says. "Not to keep Trump happy but because it is in Australia's interests to constrain the adversary that is undermining our strategic interests." A poll published by the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper last month found that 60% of Australians felt Trump's victory was bad for Australia. That was up from last November when it was just 40%. And a Lowy Institute poll published two weeks later showed almost two in three Australians held 'not very much' or no trust 'at all' in the US to act responsibly.

Big questions on transnational alliances are not part of normal campaigning. But when Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton faced each other in their first televised debate, the first question asked by the audience was one on Trump. Dutton has long stressed that he would be the politician best suited to dealing with the US President. He often cites his experience as a cabinet minister during tariff negotiations in Trump's first term. But that strategy doesn't always serve him well. "He went into the election telling people he

and Trump were similar enough that they would get on better, that he was the sort of personality Trump liked," says Remeikis. "He's not repeating that now because people don't want someone to get on with Trump - they want someone who will stand up to him." Dutton has had to do some back-peddalling on comments he made earlier in the year. Back in February, after Trump said he had plans to eject Palestinians from Gaza, Dutton called the US president "a deal-maker ... a big thinker."

And he has come in for some criticism amid accusations of copying the US president. He's talked about cutting public sector jobs, for example. And his Liberal party appointed Jacinta Nampijinpa Price as shadow minister for government efficiency, not too dissimilar to the Doge. But when Senator Price recently started talking about wanting to 'Make Australia Great Again' on the campaign trail, Dutton avoided questions over the comments. Albanese of course has to tread a careful line too. In a world that's being turned upside down, he's trying to reassure people he's a safe pair of hands; that those alliances remain. That may turn out to be in his favour. Indeed, some analysts say that Trump's conduct may be helping Albanese, with voters rushing to support the incumbent during a time of perceived crisis. Just a few months ago, Labor's re-election was thought unlikely as it consistently polled behind the Coalition. But the final YouGov polling model of the election, published a few days ago, predicted that Labor will win 84 of the 150 seats in the House of Representatives - an increased majority. For Professor Gordon Flake, CEO at Perth USAsia Centre, a think tank, it paints a stark parallel with this week's election result in Canada - in which the Liberal Party won re-election by riding a backlash of anti-Trump sentiment.

"What we have seen in Canada has been a dramatic shift back towards the incumbent government and that is a rallying around the flag based on attacks on that country," he says. "The attacks on Australia haven't been as severe so it's not the same degree, but at the same time you're also seeing a rallying around the current Labor government. Six months ago you thought their re-election would be unlikely; today on the cusp of the election here in Australia, it seems more likely than not - and one of the important factors in that has been developments in Washington DC." But whoever wins, they will have a big job on their hands to navigate Australia's future with its allies. "We have to make do with the hand we've been dealt," says Andrews. "I expect that we are going to have to be much more ruthlessly self-interested and that's not comfortable because our foreign policy has generally been based around cooperation, collaboration and multilateralism - so that shared sense of threat that middle powers have of working together to maximise their output." Back at the rodeo, the sun's gone down, the cheerleaders are out and the audience gets ready to watch bucking broncos - the riders shortly afterwards holding on to their steer for as long as possible before being violently thrown to the ground. Flying above the arena are the flags of Canada and the US, alongside Australia, New Zealand and Brazil. There may not be much of a team spirit among allies right now - but voters here will be keen to see how their next leader rides out the storm.

## Burning river that fuelled a US green movement

**OHIO'S Cuyahoga River used to be so polluted it regularly went up in flames. Images of one dramatic blaze in 1952 shaped the US's nascent environmental movement, long after the flames went out. The last time Ohio's Cuyahoga River notably caught fire was 22 June 1969. At mid-day, debris floating in an oil slick on the river ignited after sparks fell from a nearby passing train.**

While locals reported the flames reached five stories high, firefighters extinguished them in less than 30 minutes. Two railroad trestles sustained a total of \$50,000 in damage (\$428,500 in today's money, or £321,000). But the event was over before reporters could arrive.

"All we have photographed of the Cuyahoga fire in '69 is pictures of firemen mopping up, spraying the trestle, and then Carl Stokes, the mayor, on the tracks the next morning talking to the press about it," says David Stradling, professor of history at the University of Cincinnati, US. Earlier images of fires on the same river, such as that pictured above in 1952, nevertheless began to be circulated when the 1969 blaze occurred. And yet, this short-lived fire on the Cuyahoga River became a powerful moment in the growing environmental activism movement in the United States. The images of the river's previous fires ignited national conversations on pollution and social justice, just as the US's nascent environmental movement was gathering pace.

The history of the river's dire pollution stretches back long before its final blaze. By the late 1800s, Cleveland and the Cuyahoga had become a hub for the Industrial Revolution. Stradling says it started with steel mills towards the head of navigation (the farthest point upstream on a river where boats can travel, often defined by a dam or other physical barrier). The river made it easy for boats to transport ore. "Once the steel industry became established in Cleveland, all these other ancillary industries were good to have nearby," he says.

With all of this steel production came excess chemicals and grease, says Stradling, and since there were virtually no environmental regulations at the time, a lot of it ended up in the river, along with raw sewage. "We didn't treat our wastewater, so anything that you flushed down the toilet was piped straight into the river," says Adam Schellhammer, Mid-Atlantic regional director of the non-profit, American Rivers. Then, in the early 1900s amid World War One, industrialisation ramped up and the river pollution got worse. "With that uptick in manufacturing, these rivers were bearing the brunt of all that, and there were no restrictions on what went in," says Schellhammer.

By the 1930s, the Cuyahoga had essentially become an open sewer, infamous for its foul smell and telltale sheen of oil slick. Unsurprisingly, the fauna that typically reside in and around the river steered clear, or died. "The Cuyahoga was a completely dead river for decades," says Stradling. "There were no fish, no water fowl." Those who lived nearby cautioned that if you fell in, you had to be rushed to the hospital. And, occasionally, the massively polluted river burned.

The first fire on the river was in 1868, and there were at least 12 subsequent fires, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The biggest ones occurred in 1936, 1941, 1952 and 1969. Local protests and dogged advocacy by Mayor Carl B. Stokes had already led to a \$100m bond for river cleanup passing in 1968 (equivalent to more than \$900m today). When the river burned again in 1969, Stokes acted quickly.

"It was a right place, right time situation," says Anne Vogel, former director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and current EPA region 5 administrator. "Cleveland was also a place, at the time, where environmental and social situations intersected." Stokes was the first black mayor of a major city in the US, and he was acutely aware of how racial inequality in the industrialised parts of Cleveland was reflected in the water

Ally Hirschlag

pollution issue since poorer, predominantly black communities lived in those areas.

"He's a black man in a majority white city surrounded by almost entirely white suburbs," says Stradling. "So he doesn't have a whole lot of political allies, but he could have allies in the press who can get things before the people and talk about the Cuyahoga as a regional problem, not just Cleveland's problem." Connecting the social and environmental challenges of the area marks him out as forward-thinking in his work on what came to be called environmental justice, says Stradling. "There's no point in working on public health if you're not going to solve water and air pollution problems."

To drive the point home, Stokes gave a much-photographed pollution tour to reporters the day after the 1969 river fire. The tour went beyond Cleveland's confines to showcase the surrounding area's sewer system. He was making it abundantly clear that in order to clean up the Cuyahoga, the city would need help from its neighbours and the federal government. Convincing the neighbouring suburbs was the real challenge, says Stradling, since they weren't as aware of the pollution accumulating downstream. On that tour was Betty Klaric, one of the US's earliest specialist environmental reporters, writing for the Cleveland Press, who dedicated much of her career to reporting on the health of the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie, which the river feeds. Her reporting of the 1969 fire was resurfaced several times by more prominent, national publications.

Stradling recalls a compelling photo of Stokes and reporters standing on a railroad bridge after the fire, its metal distorted from the heat. In the image, Stokes is talking to Klaric. "There are a whole bunch of other press around, including the television [crews] with their cameras, but I just love that that photograph is of him talking to Betty, because I think he knew that she was the most important person besides him on that bridge," he says.

The story reported by Klaric and others was soon picked up nationally. A 1969 Time magazine spread on water pollution reproduced images of the earlier blaze on the river in 1952 - a menacing frontline of flames and black, billowing smoke engulfing a tug boat as it fights to contain a raging fire on the oil-slicked water (the same 1952 image is reproduced at the start of this article). Long, powerful streams of water from fire-fighters on a nearby bridge cascade over the river, offering backup. "It was late summer when Time magazine ran a story about water pollution in the United States," says Stradling, who co-wrote Where the River Burned, a history of the

infamously polluted Cuyahoga, with his brother Michael Stradling. "[The article] mentioned lots of places, but one that was mentioned most frequently was the Cuyahoga River and how it had become a fire hazard." The book notes that Time did not clarify that the photos of the fire had been taken 17 years prior, and it remains unclear whether the publication "mistakenly used the older photo or did so deliberately, perhaps thinking the more dramatic scene would grab readers' attention". (Time magazine was contacted for clarity on the matter, but did not respond by the time this article was published.)

The photo of the 1952 fire came to symbolise how waterway pollution in the US had grown out of control, and it fed the flames of public outcry over environmental crises. "It was a culmination of events, and the Cuyahoga [fire] was so visible that the calls for unified approaches to environmental protection could not be ignored any longer," says Schellhammer. While the first Earth Day, on 22 April 1970, is considered the official start of the environmental movement in the US, the idea had been planted years earlier in 1962 with the release of Rachel Carson's book on the misuse of pesticides, Silent Spring. Eight years later, when 20 million people marched to advocate for nationwide environmental protections, US President Richard Nixon responded by establishing

the EPA.

Two years after that, the Clean Water Act followed, which laid the groundwork for the restoration of the Cuyahoga. While not a direct cause and effect, the river fires are often cited as the prime example of water pollution at its worst in the US. The Cuyahoga River in particular, Schellhammer and others note, comes up time and again in this context. But Stradling adds that it was far from alone - as the Clean Water Act was being formulated, most members of Congress named a river in their jurisdiction that needed protection. The Clean Water Act was actually an amendment to the existing Federal Water Pollution Control Act, which was passed in 1948, but the changes to the framework were so significant that it took on a new name.

"It put restrictions and parameters on what could be discharged," says Schellhammer. "There was a set limit. Out of that [came] the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, also enacted in 1972, which framed what the entire area needed to do to clean up that river." Schellhammer says the Clean Water Act also acknowledged the need for wastewater treatment, which was virtually nonexistent before then. One new initiative that stemmed from the Act was connecting more of Cleveland's suburbs to an expanded sewage treatment plant, something Stokes had long argued for.

Then, the industries in the city began to clean up their act. "Mills were already investing in some technologies that would dramatically decrease the amount of problematic effluent that went into the river, so that was really helpful," says Stradling. "A lot of the most problematic industries [like oil refinement] simply closed and left in Cleveland." The new environmental restrictions played a significant part in shuttering the factories that supported the steel industry in Cleveland. "It [was] this balance of regulatory framework, legal precedence and public outcry," Schellhammer says of the industrial retreat.

Despite these developments, river cleanup on the Cuyahoga was gradual from the 1970s to the late 1980s. "Water quality definitely improved; we wouldn't call it restored," says Schellhammer. Some of the river's more significant restoration projects have been dam removals. Dams can be major impediments to the health of a river. They act as bottlenecks, limiting fish migration and increasing turbidity. In 2020, the Breckville Dam, which was initially built to move water into the Ohio and Erie Canals, was taken out.

"It was pretty straightforward, but really awesome to show the benefit of that dam removal, because basically you're connecting the water and fish populations of Lake Erie to more upstream habitats," says Jennifer Grieser, director of natural resources for Cleveland Metroparks and Cuyahoga Area of Concern board member. "We immediately started to see more species recruitment throughout the whole length of the river." The next big project on the docket is the removal of the over 100-year-old Gorge Dam, considered the largest remaining impediment to the Cuyahoga River's health. Grieser has overseen the removal of five impairments in the Cuyahoga's Area of Concern, including lifting restrictions on consuming fish from the river in 2019, and also the 50-year anniversary of the 1969 fire. She has four left, which she aims to complete within the next five years. Yet people are already enjoying the cleaner state of the river. It's now considered a water trail, often dappled with kayakers, anglers and birdwatchers hoping to see blue herons or bald eagles, which returned to the area in 2006. The water is not considered pristine yet, but the "crooked river" has come a long way since it caught on fire over half a century ago. "That's the amazing thing about this restoration story: it happened in a lifetime," says Grieser. Today, the US is at another pivotal point for the future health of its natural resources. In March, the Supreme Court weakened the reaches of the Clean Water Act, and the EPA cancelled over 400 grants. "Federal investments played a huge role in why [the Cuyahoga] River is functional again," says Schellhammer.

BBC

## Trump’s ‘reverse Nixon’ gambit with Russia is more like a reverse-Reagan

**SOME foreign policy observers defend President Trump's concessionary approach to Russia in its war in Ukraine as a "reverse Nixon." They claim to see geostrategic purpose in the president's shameful aligning with Vladimir Putin despite his flagrant aggression and rampant war crimes. Trump's supposed aim is to entice Russia away from its "no-limits strategic partnership" with China.**

The unspoken premise of the rationale is that the China engagement policy launched by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger was good for US national security and for world peace. But history has shown that it was hardly an unvarnished success story for either. On the contrary, the four-decade accommodationist China policy that it spawned may be the most serious foreign policy blunder in US history - with potentially the worst consequences yet to unfold as China increasingly threatens war over Taiwan, the Philippines, and others in the region.

Years later, Nixon himself expressed regret at what he and Kissinger had wrought with their opening to China, saying "We may have created a Frankenstein." Of course, Nixon did not create Mao Zedong, the greatest mass murderer in history, who exceeded Hitler's crimes by orders of magnitude. But he did provide international legitimacy to Mao's regime and opened the door to the massive transfer of Western wealth, technology and

diplomatic prestige to the implacably hostile Chinese Communist Party.

Similarly, Trump did not create the criminal monster that is Putin, the former KGB officer who has called the dissolution of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century." His intermittent wars against Chechnya from 1994 to 2009 were waged to prevent further breakaways by Russian dissidents, and his invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 were intended to reconstitute parts of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Empire. But Trump's unabashed fawning over Putin's authoritarian "genius" is clearly intended to do for Putin what Nixon, and especially Kissinger, did for Mao's communist regime: welcome it back into "the family of nations" after universal condemnation and isolation.

Even so, the effect of Trump's management of the Russia-China-US geostrategic triangle is accomplishing not a reverse-Nixon strategy but, inadvertently, a reverse-Reagan. President Ronald Reagan showed that "peace through strength" is not limited to the wielding of military capabilities but also depends critically on the demonstration of steadfastness and will - even in a domestic context. During a federal labor dispute in 1981, just months after Reagan taking office, America's air traffic controllers went on strike. Reagan said the illegal walkout endangered

Joseph Bosco

the flying public and ordered the controllers back to work within 48 hours, warning they would lose their jobs if they refused. Since the union had broken with organized labor and endorsed Reagan's candidacy in 1980, it saw little risk in calling the neophyte president's bluff.

Despite a similar scenario having played out in the first Nixon administration with Transportation Secretary John Volpe (I served as his special assistant), the striking controllers defied Reagan, and he fired more than 11,000 of them en masse. World leaders had been watching America's labor confrontation as the first real test of the new president. Reagan's political courage, clear communications and moral determination "made a strong impression on foreign adversaries," according to Andrew E. Busch, author of "Reagan's Victory and Truman's Triumphs." His resolute handling of what had been a purely domestic crisis established his persona as an American leader whose crisis management and decisiveness was not to be trifled with.

The contrast between Reagan's performance in the air traffic controllers' strike and Trump's first 100 days managing trade, government reorganization and other domestic issues is stark. His erratic, on-again-off-again tariff decisions and his reversals on policy and personnel have not inspired confidence in allies or enemies that

The Hill





# Ahsan calls for export-led economy to propel growth

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the urgent need for Pakistan to transition to an export-based economy to achieve rapid economic growth.

Speaking at the 10th budget summit, organised by the University of Management and Technology (UMT) on Saturday, the minister highlighted the critical role of exports in ensuring sustainable development and reducing reliance on foreign aid.

Addressing a gathering of students, academics, and policymakers, Iqbal reflected on Pakistan's developmental journey since its inception in 1947. He noted that the country, which began with scarce resources, has achieved significant milestones, includ-

ing becoming the seventh nuclear power globally and producing advanced JF-17 Thunder jets. "From using thorns as pins in offices to building a modern telecommunications system with high mobile density, Pakistan has made remarkable strides," he said.

However, the minister cautioned that these achievements pale when compared to other nations. In 1960, Pakistan's manufacturing exports were comparable to those of South Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand, but today, Pakistan lags significantly with exports at 32 billion dollars, while South Korea's exceed 600 billion dollars.

Similarly, Pakistan's per capita income of 1,600 dollars is dwarfed by China's 16,000 dollars, despite starting at similar levels in 1980.

Iqbal posed a pressing question: why has Pakistan fallen behind countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, and India, which have surged ahead in exports and economic growth? He attributed this lag to a lack of a conducive environment for development, marked by conflict, instability, and short-term economic policies. "Successful nations prioritize peace, ensure stability, and maintain policy continuity for at least a decade," he explained, citing examples like Singapore, Malaysia, and China, where long-term leadership and consistent policies drove progress.

Pakistan, in contrast, has faced decades of instability, including involvement in external conflicts and internal challenges like terrorism and political uncertainty. "We fought others' wars,

from the Soviet conflict to the war on terror, bringing instability to our doorstep," Iqbal remarked. He stressed that economic policies need a minimum of 10 years to yield results, a continuity Pakistan has struggled to maintain.

Drawing from the government's "Uraan Pakistan" initiative, the minister outlined a roadmap to address these challenges. Central to this vision is transforming Pakistan into an export-led economy, with a target of increasing exports from 32 billion dollars to 100 billion dollars within 8 to 10 years. "If we achieve this, we can build momentum to reach the next 100 billion dollars in just 5 to 10 more years," he said, underscoring the need for sustainable growth aligned with foreign exchange reserves.

The minister highlighted the potential of e-commerce, which allows individuals to sell products globally from home, and called for incentives to revive Pakistan's "rusty export engine."

He also emphasized the importance of aligning growth with global technological shifts, such as the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions, encompassing artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and biotechnology.

Ahsan Iqbal detailed recent initiatives to position Pakistan in the technoeconomy, including the establishment of national centers for artificial intelligence, big data, cybersecurity, and quantum computing. These centers, connected to universities nationwide, are fostering startups and industry-oriented

research. "We are mapping university faculties to industry needs, ensuring research drives economic growth," he said.

The minister also addressed pressing social and environmental issues. He expressed concern over Pakistan's 11 per cent higher education enrollment ratio, compared to 30 per cent in India and 60 per cent in China, and the 25 million children out of school. "No country has developed without 90 per cent literacy," he warned, calling for universal primary education.

He highlighted the alarming 40 per cent child malnutrition rate, which impairs cognitive development, and innovation potential. He also flagged Pakistan's population growth rate, which has surged to nearly 5 per cent,

neutralizing economic gains. "If our economy grows at 5 per cent but population at 2.5 per cent, our real growth is only 2.5%," he explained.

On climate change, Iqbal stressed the need for smart agriculture and weather-resistant seeds to secure food supplies, alongside energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption to meet global carbon standards.

Reflecting on governance, the minister criticized the lack of devolution to local governments post the 18th Amendment, which transferred responsibilities to provinces. "Provinces have not empowered local governments, leading to weak decision-making in education and healthcare," he said, citing the Ministry of Planning's District

Education Index, which revealed deteriorating educational indicators.

Concluding his speech, the minister urged the youth to seize opportunities in digital skills, cloud computing, and quantum technologies. "Pakistan is not an ordinary country; it was founded on Allama Iqbal's vision of economic empowerment for Muslims," he said, encouraging young Pakistanis to stay and work hard to realize their dreams.

He called for a national consensus to address education, healthcare, population growth, exports, technology, climate change, and extremism. "If the nation unites and pushes together, Pakistan will soar to new heights," he affirmed.

Later he also participated in a group discussion.

## World experts to be engaged to modernise SME sector: Haroon

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan said on Saturday small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Pakistan's economy and a key driver of export growth.

In line with the prime minister's vision, international experts will be engaged to modernise the SME sector to meet global standards.

He made these remarks while addressing the media at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) offices here. Federal Secretary for Industries and Production Saif Anjum and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Socrates Aman Rana were also present.

Haroon highlighted

SMEDA's ongoing initiatives aimed at the economic empowerment of women, including subsidised loans, microfinancing, and modern technical training. He stated that women's economic inclusion is a top government priority. To that end, a comprehensive entrepreneurship policy has been drafted and will be implemented following cabinet approval. This policy, he said, will be a game changer for women's economic development.

He noted that SMEDA's Women Entrepreneurship Development Department is actively supporting women entrepreneurs across the country by providing guidance and necessary facilities. On industrial development, the special assistant said that existing industrial clusters across

the country will be identified and developed in an integrated manner. Additionally, the government is preparing a strategy to bring undocumented industrial units into the formal economy. The upcoming federal budget will also include concrete measures to boost SME growth.

To combat corruption, Haroon Akhtar Khan shared that a comprehensive policy is being prepared, focusing on institutional reforms and the engagement of expert consultants to ensure transparency.

Speaking about youth training, he said skill development programs are being run in collaboration with TEVTA and NUTIC, with additional projects under consideration to enhance the skilled workforce.

He also noted that industries facing high tariffs in the US might relocate to Pakistan, potentially spurring significant industrial growth and job creation.

Finally, he pointed out that 84% of Pakistan's labor force operates in the informal sector—an issue the government is addressing through the "Enterprise Facilitation Project," launched in partnership with the Ministry of Industries and Production and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Under the Prime Minister's SME Development Vision, safeguarding the rights of industrial and business workers and providing them with formal incentives remain key government priorities.



PESHAWAR: President SCCI Fazal Moqem Khan speaking during a training and consultative session regarding compliance of Regulations and Standards of International Business at Chamber's House.

## Chamber welcomes govt's efforts

SUKKUR (APP): Sukkur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI) President, Muhammad Khalid Kakazai, Senior Vice President Amit Kumar, and Vice President Muhammad Owais Rais Malik on Saturday have welcomed the government's efforts in reducing the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to 0.3% annually.

They have endorsed the proposals presented by the FPCCI and UBQ, calling for a reduction in interest rates from 12% to 8% and a further decrease in electricity rates to Rs 26 per kilowatt-hour. This, they believe, will promote SMEs and regional industries, ultimately boosting the country's economic growth.

The chamber leaders stated that reducing interest rates will increase investment, as investors will prefer to invest in businesses rather than keeping their capital in banks. This will lead to an increase in business activities.

They also urged the government to eliminate additional payments to IPPs, promote alternative energy sources, and take positive steps to support the business community, which is heavily burdened by electricity bills.

## SCCI calls for fully adherence to global compliance, regulations

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan called for full adherence with international compliance and regulations to enhance Pakistan's export across the world.

The SCCI chief called for promoting sustainable, responsible, and competitive economic growth.

Moqem Khan stated that compliance is not just a government mandate—it is a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors," he said.

It is essential to create a discrimination-free, ethically sound, and globally respected business ecosystem, he asserted.

Fazal Moqem Khan was speaking during a training and consultative session regarding compliance of Regulations and Standards of International Business organized by Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with National Compliance Centre (NCC), Ministry of Commerce here at the chamber house on

Saturday.

The session focused on aligning with international trade standards and fostering global partnerships, which attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, members of the executive committee Sabir Ahmad Bangash, Saifullah Khan, former president Malik Zahid, Rashid Iqbal Siddiqui, Ms Qurtul Ain, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan, representative of Smeda, traders, industrialists and exporters and importers.

The chamber president praised the Ministry of Commerce for the establishment of NCC, calling it a landmark initiative that institutionalizes a compliance culture in Pakistan.

He emphasized that in today's interconnected economy, international compliance is vital for gaining access to global markets, building trust, and ensuring long-term growth.

The SCCI chief appreciated the NCC for conducting such an informative session for the business community and expressed

hope that traders will learn many things regarding global compliance and regulations that would help to improve Pakistan's export across the world.

Earlier, in his multimedia presentation, Dr. Nabeel Amin, Head of Compliance at the National Compliance Centre, and Thematic Expert OSH Asmatullah Khan briefed comprehensively participants on the NCC's roadmap and emphasized the pivotal role of Chambers of Commerce, trade associations, industry stakeholders, and SMEs in fostering a compliance-oriented business environment.

Speakers highlighting NCC efforts to implement emerging compliance mechanisms, including the ESG framework, Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards, and the Digital Product Passport (DPP).

These initiatives aim to equip Pakistani exporters with the tools needed to meet international sustainability benchmarks.

## Rana discusses industrial policy, investment with FIRA team

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) Lahore, led by Sheikh Shahbaz Aslam, met Federal Minister for Public Affairs Rana Mubashar Iqbal, here on Saturday.

The meeting centered on key challenges and opportunities facing the industrial sector, including regulatory reforms, economic development, investment prospects, and avenues for public-private partnerships, with particular emphasis on initiatives linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

During the discussion, the delegation briefed the minister on existing policies and regulations

impacting the industry and engaged in detailed dialogue on the policy and regulatory framework, trade and exports, investment, infrastructure, and broader economic growth.

They also presented strategies for attracting foreign investment and identified potential areas for collaboration between the public and private sectors to accelerate industrial progress and economic development.

Federal Minister Rana Mubashar Iqbal assured the delegation of the government's firm commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment, in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He informed the delegation that a One-Window Facility is being established under the Board of Investment (BoI) to streamline services and provide greater ease of doing business for the industrial and commercial sectors.

The minister further informed the delegation about key policy initiatives, including the upcoming approval of a \$1 billion loan by the IMF Board on May 9, 2025, which is expected to boost investor confidence.

In addition, the Minister highlighted the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP), which offers financial support and loans

to young entrepreneurs across Pakistan. He also praised the Pakistan Army for its significant role in stabilizing the country's economy, particularly under the framework of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which is actively working to revitalize the industrial sector and attract foreign investment.

The federal minister also emphasized the importance of compliance with the government's announced minimum wage policy, urging all industrialists and businesses to ensure the payment of Rs. 37,000 in wages to laborers as mandated in the 2024-25 federal budget.

## Chinese delegation visits Sargodha chamber to explore trade opportunities

SARGODHA (APP): A Chinese business delegation visited the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday, marking a significant step forward in strengthening Pak-China economic relations.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by SCCI President Khawaja Yasir Qayyum and other senior representatives upon their arrival. In his welcome address, President Qayyum described the visit as a

milestone in the enduring friendship and economic partnership between Pakistan and China.

"We are delighted to host our Chinese counterparts at the Sargodha Chamber," he said. "Your visit is a testament to our shared commitment to expanding bilateral trade, exploring new investment avenues, and launching joint ventures that promote mutual prosperity." The discussions centered on fostering cooperation in key sectors,

including renewable energy, agriculture, agro-technology, the digital economy, industrial development, and technical education.

Highlighting Sargodha's economic potential, President Qayyum emphasized the region's rich natural resources, agricultural strength, and industrial capacity. "Sargodha offers significant investment opportunities, especially in citrus (kinnow) exports, stone and mineral development, construction, and vocational

training," he noted.

During the visit, a series of Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings were held between the Chinese delegates and local business representatives, facilitating direct engagement, mutual understanding, and the exploration of joint ventures.

President Qayyum encouraged SCCI members to make the most of the occasion by actively engaging with the delegation, sharing ideas, and building partnerships.

## HCSTSI urges HESCO to end power outages in Hyderabad industrial sectors

HYDERABAD (APP): Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI), President Muhammad Saleem Memon, has urged HESCO Chief to take corrective measures for the betterment of commercial and industrial sectors of Hyderabad.

He stated that the chamber has repeatedly requested HESCO Chief to put an end to the ongoing unannounced power outages in the SITE industrial area, but no serious action has been taken to date.

HCSTSI President highlighted that both scheduled and unscheduled power outages are occurring during peak business hours in SITE and other parts of the city.

Moreover, due to persistent power outages, civic institutions such as Hyderabad Development Authority, WASA and other government departments are unable to perform routine operations, paralyzing normal urban life.

# Foreign aid, an intricate web of support and dominance

### Kamran Khan

In international global system, the interdependent and complex web of governance, diplomacy and political economy, foreign aid: grants and loans serve as a tool for affluent countries to help, support and influence the LDCs (Least Developed Countries). These financial inflows from North to South not only supports the LDCs but also enables these countries to find a way out of the critical problems faced by these under developed nations. As these foreign aids support and uplift the LDCs yet the conditionalities, modalities and implications of these transfers reveal a complex web of altruism, strategic interests

and hegemonic influence.

The strategic imperative of the foreign assistance and grants aims for global sustainability and humanitarian assistance. In realist paradigm, the global race for geostrategic influence, hegemony and dominance can be obtained by these foreign assistance programs. These programs are also extended to fragile states to preempt transitional threats like terrorism and migrants inflow, for instance aid like U.S FMF (Foreign Military Financing) bolster the security and military capacities of the recipient states aligning those with the interest of the hegemon state.

Conversely, the liberal institutionalists argue that these aid and grants pro-

motes humanitarian goals, public goods and sustainable development as enshrined in the UN SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals. For less developed states, external funding helps these developing nations finance massive infrastructure projects, reduce long-term balance-of-payments deficits, and boost human development indices (HDI). In light of the "development trap" a vicious cycle of low savings, insufficient investment, and slow growth that prolongs underdevelopment this aid is especially crucial. Foreign aid fills this budgetary vacuum, enabling these governments to move beyond dependency and exercise more agency in interna-

tional fora such as the Group of 77 (G77) or the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The two main categories of foreign help are bilateral aid (direct assistance from one nation to another) and multilateral aid (via international organizations such as the World Bank or IMF). It consists of grants, which are non-repayable donations frequently used for infrastructure, education, or humanitarian relief; and loans, which can be either non-concessional (market-rate, from organizations like the IMF's Stand-By Arrangements) or concessional (low-interest, long-term, frequently from organizations like the World Bank's IDA).

Development aid focusses on long-term economic growth, humanitarian aid attends to urgent needs, military aid supports defense, and technical assistance offers knowledge and skills. Official development aid (ODA) totaled \$211 billion worldwide in 2022, of which 62% came from bilateral and 38% from multilateral sources. Approximately 25% came in the form of loans.

The Sword of Dependency with Two Edges Foreign aid can spur development, but it also runs the risk of strengthening dependency disorders. The core-periphery model of dependency theory criticizes how loans and grants force LDCs to remain sub-

servient to the global North by securing them in donor-driven policy agendas or extractive trading patterns. State interests may not align with conditionality clauses that call for market liberalization or governance reforms, which could lead to domestic backlash and regime instability. Furthermore, the resource curse and the "aid curse" are similar in that unearned income skews economic incentives, encourages corruption, and erodes state legitimacy.

Constructivist perspectives, on the other hand, emphasize how help changes national norms and identities. A state's social compact can be strengthened by effectively using funds for healthcare or edu-

cation, increasing its credibility both at home and abroad. As demonstrated by Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, strategic receivers, such as post-conflict governments, use aid to move from being marginalized to reintegrated actors.

A delicate dance of power and partnership is required to match donor interests with recipient needs in order for foreign grants and loans to be effective. Diversifying sources of aid (such as South-South collaboration with rising nations) helps developing nations avoid becoming overly dependent on more established donors. At the same time, wealthy nations need to refocus aid to put capacity-

building ahead of paternalism, a delicate balance between power and collaboration.

Foreign aid continues to be a key component of global fairness in the anarchic yet interdependent international order. Its various forms—grants, concessional loans, and commercial debt—provide specialized answers to the complex problems associated with underdevelopment. Their success, however, necessitates a change in norms: from instruments of dominance to instruments of togetherness. The development divide can only be narrowed by such a rethinking, creating a world in which prosperity and sovereignty are incompatible.





In brief

PTF select teams for regional qualifying event

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tennis Federation has announced the selection of national 12 and under boys and girls teams for the upcoming ATF Regional Qualifying Event of South Asia 2025. The event, initially scheduled to take place in Islamabad from May 26 to 30, at the PTF Tennis Complex, has been relocated to Sri Lanka on the same dates by the Asian Tennis Federation due to current tensions between Pakistan and India, said a press release issued here Saturday. The trials for team selection were conducted from April 25 to 27, in Islamabad, 3 boys and 5 girls were invited based on the national rankings. Muhammad Shayan Afridi and Rashid Ali Bachani were exempted from trials due to their recent international performances. Selected Teams- Boys Team: Muhammad Shayan Afridi, Rashid Ali Bachani, M. Ibraheem Hussain Gill; Girls Team: Khadija Khalil, Aimen Rehan, Shahnoor Umer. Team Captains- Boys Team Captain: Nameer Shamsi; Girls Team Captain: Ms. Noor Malik.

Norris wins Miami GP sprint race

MIAMI (AFP): Lando Norris won a chaotic sprint race at the Miami Grand Prix on Saturday, pipping championship leader and team-mate Oscar Piastri. Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton finished third while 18-year-old Italian Kimi Antonelli, who had started on pole for Mercedes, finished in tenth. Antonelli lost his lead at the first turn where Piastri forced him wide and when he returned to the track he was down in fourth. The race got underway after a 25-minute delay due to torrential rain. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed out during the formation lap hitting the wall after aqua-planing. During the race, Fernando Alonso crashed into the wall after he was clipped by Liam Lawson and Carlos Sainz also crashed. There was a contact incident in the pit-lane when Red Bull's Max Verstappen pulled out into Antonelli.

Ruling Court wins 2000 Guineas at Newmarket

NEW MARKET (Agencies): Ruling Court won the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket as he held off the fast-finishing Field Of Gold. The 9-2 shot, trained for owners Godolphin by Charlie Appleby, was the pick of jockey William Buick and proved the right choice. Stablemate Shadow Of Light led in the closing stages but eventually finished third with another Godolphin runner, Tornado Alert, in fourth. "This feels great. He was so smooth throughout - he's a special horse and his stamina shone through," said Buick of the victor. It was a third 2000 Guineas win in four years for Appleby, after victories for Corobus (2022) and Notable Speech (2024). Buick chose Ruling Court, an impressive six-length winner in Dubai in March, over last year's champion juvenile Shadow Of Light. "It was a hard choice for William, but he saw it right. He thought this horse would see out the mile trip and he outstayed them," said Appleby. Ruling Court is about 5-1 second favourite for next month's Derby at Epsom, behind The Lion In Winter - who won the Acomb Stakes at York last August when the Guineas winner was third.

Quetta Gladiators edge Islamabad United in PSL last-over thriller

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): In a last-over thriller of Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10, Quetta Gladiators edged Islamabad United by two wickets here at Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday. Quetta Gladiators chased down 158 with two wickets and one ball to spare. With Hasan Nawaz on strike, the equation had shrunk to 15 runs needed off the final over.

The set batter, having had consecutive chances on the first two deliveries, hit Muhammad Shahzad for a six. He missed the fourth delivery but stole two runs thanks to another dropped catch.

The right-handed batter took advantage of triple opportunities, hitting Shahzad for a six over deep backward square to give the Gladiators an incredible victory. Hasan Nawaz was adjudged player of the match for his innings of 64 off 41 laced with four sixes and two fours. Rilee Rossouw also contributed with 27 runs.

For Islamabad United, Naseem Shah and Salman Irshad took two wickets each, while Jason Holder, Muhammad Nawaz and Salman Ali Agha grabbed a wicket each.

After being asked to bat first, Islamabad United

posted 157-9 in their allotted overs, setting Quetta Gladiators a target of 158 runs to chase. For the defending champions, Muhammad Nawaz top-scored with a resilient 49 runs, hammering fives sixes and a four. Sahibzada Farhan contributed a brisk 39 off 24 balls while Kyle Mayers made 17-ball 22. Faheem Ashraf remained the standout bowler, claiming four wickets, while Kyle Jamieson picked up two. Khurram Shahzad, Abrar Ahmad, and Saud Shakeel took a wicket each.



LAHORE: Mohammad Nawaz hit five sixes in his 34-ball 49.

Maryam to represent Pakistan in U-17 Athletics C'ship

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A proud moment for Muzaffargarh, as Maryam Batool, the talented daughter of a hardworking female laborer from a local industrial unit has been selected to represent Pakistan in the upcoming Under-17 Junior Athletics Championship in Malaysia. Maryam rose to prominence through the Punjab Chief Minister(CM) Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Khelta Punjab" initiative, which gave her the opportunity to showcase her athletic skills. After shining in competitions across the province and at the national level, Maryam

has now earned her place on the international stage. Expressing her gratitude, Maryam said, "I thank Chief Minister(CM) Maryam Nawaz for launching the 'Khelta Punjab' program. It gave a girl from a remote riverine area the platform to prove her talent. Without it, I would have remained in the shadows." Her mother, who works in a factory to support the family, shared her pride and emotions while talking to the media. "I am a laborer from a riverine area, raising my children through hard work. Talent is no one's inheritance — my daughter proved her potential by

securing first position in provincial and national games." She appealed to CM Maryam Nawaz for further support and sponsorship for her daughter. "If given more opportunities, Maryam can make Pakistan proud on the global stage," she said. However, Maryam's mother also expressed disappointment at the lack of local recognition. "Despite my daughter bringing honor to the city and district, no encouragement or support has come from the district administration, especially the Deputy Commissioner or the Sports Department," she added.

National Women's T20 tournament to begin on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The five-team National Women's T20 Tournament 2024-25 will begin on May 7 at two venues in Karachi's National Bank Stadium and HPC Oval Ground. This year's edition will feature five teams Challengers, Conquerors, Invincibles, Stars, and Strikers. Competing in a double-league format, each team will play eight matches with a total of 22 matches slated to take place across 18 days, said a press release issued here Saturday.

The teams finishing second and third on the points table will face off in a

Qualifier on May 22, with the winner advancing to meet the top-ranked team in the final on May 24. The final will be played at the National Bank Stadium. A total of 80 cricketers will participate in the tournament, which carries a prize pool of over PKR three Million. The champions will receive PKR 1.5 million, while the runners-up will take home PKR one million.

The 19-member squads of each of the five teams will be trimmed to 16 at the end of the four-day pre-tournament camp, which begins on May 3 in Karachi. Among the players featuring, five national

players who were part of Pakistan's victorious squad at the recently-concluded ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2025 will lead their respective sides— Fatima Sana (Conquerors), Gull Feroza (Strikers), Muneeba Ali (Invincibles), Rameen Shamim (Challengers) and Sidra Amin (Stars). As part of the PCB's continued efforts to promote and expand the reach of women's cricket, both the Qualifier (May 22) and the Final (May 24) will be live-streamed on PCB's official YouTube channel. All matches in the tournament will begin at 3pm PKT.



THYON: France's Lenny Martinez (L) sprints against Italy's Lorenzo Fortunato (R) during the fourth stage of the Tour de Romandie.

Rabada suspended for recreational drug use

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies): The South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada has revealed he is serving a provisional suspension after testing positive for a recreational drug. Rabada, who sits second in the International Cricket Council Test bowling rankings, returned home after playing two matches with Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League last month. The Titans said at the time he had done so to tend to an "important personal matter" and the 29-year-old disclosed this was due to returning an adverse analytical finding for a recreational substance.

Rabada, who is due to lead South Africa's attack in the World Test Championship final at Lord's next month, expressed his regret at his actions and is already looking at drawing a line under the incident although it is unclear when he will be able to resume his career.

"I am deeply sorry to all those that I have let down," he said in a statement released by the South African Cricketers' Association, the country's players' union. "I will never take the privilege of playing cricket for granted. This privilege is much larger than me. It goes beyond my personal aspirations. I am serving a provisional suspension and I am looking forward to returning to the game I love playing.

"This moment will not define me. I will keep doing what I have always done, continuously working hard and playing with passion and devotion to my craft." Rabada underlined his status as South Africa's pace spearhead and one of the world's finest bowlers when he became the quickest to reach 300 Test wickets in terms of balls bowled in October last year. He briefly shot back up to the top of the ICC's Test bowling standings, having first gone to the summit in January 2018, but he has since been leapfrogged by India's Jasprit Bumrah.

Rabada has taken 327 wickets at an average of 22 from 70 Tests while he has amassed a further 168 dismissals in 108 ODIs and 71 wickets in 65 T20 internationals.

Martinez seizes Tour de Romandie lead with stage 4 win

THYON (AFP): French rider Lenny Martinez pulled on the Tour de Romandie leader's yellow jersey after winning Saturday's hilly fourth and penultimate stage. The 21-year-old crossed the line ahead of Portugal's Joao Almeida after a gruelling climb to the summit finish at Thyon 2000.

It was the eighth career win for the Bahraini Victorious rider and second on the World Tour after the Paris-Nice fifth stage. "Every year I just get better and better, and here I am wearing the yellow jersey," said Martinez.

"To be the leader of such

a stage race, and also to win a stage, is just incredible." Second in Friday's stage, Martinez conquered the first four climbs of the day, making the difference in the final 20km of the 128km mountainous stage from Sion. Martinez duelled with Almeida and Italian Lorenzo Fortunato over the final three kilometres before accelerating to the line. "I have good acceleration, I know Joao does too and in the end it was a bit of a cool day," said Martinez of the drop in temperature and wet roads after a week of sunshine. Overall, the Frenchman snatched the

yellow jersey from compatriot Alex Baudin, to build a two-second lead on Fortunato with Almeida a further second adrift, heading into Sunday's final 17km time trial in Geneva. "I don't think it suits me 100 percent, but I'll give it my all, you never know," said the race leader, who will then head to the mountains to prepare for the Criterium du Dauphiné and the Tour de France. Belgian Remco Evenepoel, dropped behind almost 9km from the finish line, but limited the damage and is still in ninth place, 1min 41sec behind Martinez.

O'Sullivan eyes Middle East move after semi-final blow

LONDON (Agencies): Ronnie O'Sullivan is preparing to start "a new life somewhere else", revealing he will soon be moving to the Middle East after crashing out of the World Snooker Championship with a heavy semi-final defeat.

O'Sullivan's bid for an eighth Crucible crown ended in a humiliating 17-7 loss to Zhao Xintong with a session to spare on Friday after the Chinese star won all eight frames in the morning before finishing the job in the evening.

Before his arrival in Sheffield, the 49-year-old had not played on the tour since he withdrew midway through his Championship League group in January, snapping his cue after losing four of his five matches. He then struggled with his new cue during the world championship, getting through three tips in all and changing his tip and ferrule after the first session of the semi. But although his run to the last four provides some cause for optimism, O'Sullivan admitted he does not know what the future holds, with a move from the UK to the Middle East on the horizon.

"I think I'm going to be moving out of the UK this year. A new life somewhere else," he said. "I'll still try to play snooker but I don't know what the future looks



like for me really. I'm moving away soon so I'll just see how it goes. There's a lot of more important things in life to worry about than a game of snooker.

"For me, it's a big part of my life but I've got to try to figure out what my future looks like, whether it's playing or not. I'll be moving away to the Middle East but we'll see how it goes. I might be back in six months, who knows. There are going to be a few changes in my life so we'll see how that goes."

His semi-final exit has certainly been keenly felt by snooker fans at the Crucible. They have reacted angrily to being refused refunds for what was meant to be the fourth session of the semi-final, meaning there will be no competitive action on Saturday afternoon.

An exhibition featuring Steve Davis and Dennis Taylor, 40 years on from the latter's victory in their famous final will take place instead. The World Snooker Tour said its box office terms and conditions meant

it was "unable to offer ticket refunds or exchanges", news which has not gone down well with spectators expecting to see seven-time champion O'Sullivan. Responding to the announcement on X, Andy Wilson wrote: "Like both Steve and Dennis but I paid £115 for my seat yesterday. Endlessly rolling out the old guys isn't an answer today. But WST do like to keep their money. Refunds can and should be made." Another response, from Luigi di Falco, read: "It's pretty much daylight robbery. Those semi-final tickets were so expensive to not offer refunds you should be ashamed." In a statement, the WST said: "We are putting together a fantastic exhibition this afternoon featuring all-time snooker legends. We realise that fans come from all over the world to enjoy the Crucible experience so our intention is to provide the best possible entertainment in these circumstances. This is the first time in over a decade that a semi-final has finished a session early so it is a very rare occurrence and unfortunately beyond our control." Zhao will face either Mark Williams or Judd Trump in the final, with Williams taking a 13-11 lead into the last session of their semi-final.

Villa boost top five bid, Southampton beaten at Leicester

LONDON (AFP): Unai Emery vowed Aston Villa will fight until the end for a place in the Champions League after boosting their bid with a 1-0 win against Fulham on Saturday. Emery's side are back in the hunt to finish in the Premier League's top five thanks to Youri Tielemans' 12th-minute header at Villa Park. Seventh-placed Villa extended their unbeaten run on home turf to 20 games in all competitions, lifting them level with sixth-placed Nottingham Forest and fifth-placed Chelsea on 60 points.

After bouncing back from their dismal FA Cup semi-final loss to Crystal Palace last weekend, Villa will hope their rivals falter over the weekend as the top five race heads for a dramatic climax. "If we weren't winning today,

forget it completely," Emery said. "Today, we got more or less to be close to Europe. Wow, fantastic, brilliant. The best gift we can achieve after it is the Europa League or Champions League." "Champions League, okay. We are not favourites to get it because there is Nottingham Forest in front of us, Manchester City, Chelsea and Newcastle." "But we will fight for it, Europe, and hopefully we can fight for the Champions League." Southampton wasted a chance to avoid a share of the lowest points total in Premier League history as Jamie Vardy's 199th Leicester goal inspired a 2-0 win at the King Power Stadium.

Simon Rusk's bottom of the table team are trying to avoid finishing with just

11 points -- which would match Derby's low mark set in 2007-08. But Southampton's hopes of getting a 12th point quickly faded against fellow relegated side Leicester. Ipswich fightback After announcing last week that he will leave the club at the end of the season, the 38-year-old Vardy bagged a farewell goal as he put second-bottom Leicester ahead in the 17th minute. The game was delayed for 11 minutes when referee David Webb was forced off with a head injury after colliding with Leicester's Jordan Ayew.

Vardy cheekily blew the referee's whistle while he was being treated. Leicester finally won for the first time since January as Ayew grabbed the second goal in the 44th minute. Southampton have

now lost 28 of their 35 league games and have three matches left to avoid sharing the low points record with Derby. Ipswich fightback After announcing last week that he will leave the club at the end of the season, the 38-year-old Vardy bagged a farewell goal as he put second-bottom Leicester ahead in the 17th minute. The game was delayed for 11 minutes when referee David Webb was forced off with a head injury after colliding with Leicester's Jordan Ayew.

Vardy cheekily blew the referee's whistle while he was being treated. Leicester finally won for the first time since January as Ayew grabbed the second goal in the 44th minute. Southampton have



Aston Villa's Youri Tielemans scores their first goal past Fulham's Bernd Leno during their Premier League match.

Saturday's late game as the Gunners warm up for their Champions League semi-final showdown with Paris

Saint-Germain. Mikel Arteta's side lost 1-0 in the first leg on Tuesday and head to

France for the second leg on Wednesday as they look to reach the final for the first time since 2006.





## In brief

### Court sentenced criminals in murder case

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court has sentenced two criminals in a case of murder and injury, collectively to life imprisonment, a fine of Rs. 1500,000.0. According to details, the court found two individuals convicted in a murder and injury case. The accused, Qamar Ali, was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500,000.0 for murder, while the other accused, Jaafar, received four years of imprisonment and Rs.100,000.0 surety for causing injury. The criminals had opened fire during a minor clash, resulting in the death of Mahmood Hussain and injuring another individual, Miskin. The case was registered in May 2023 at Rawat Police Station. Appreciating the SSP Investigation and the legal teams, CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani said that criminals involved in serious crimes cannot escape the grips of law.

### Police busted gang involved in robbery

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested six members gang involved in a major robbery at a Chinese call center, recovering stolen items worth Rs 8.5 million in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad. According to police spokesman, the gang members were identified as Abdul Wajid, Wasim, Bilal, Ali, Abdul Aziz, and Muhammad Mirza had broken into the call center a few days ago by smashing its windows. They stole 95 laptops and printers during the robbery. With the help of CCTV footage and intelligence reports, police were able to track down and arrest the gang members. All stolen items have been recovered. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani praised the efforts of SP Rawal Muhammad Haseeb Raja, SDPO New Town Circle, and the Sadiqabad police team. He said ensuring the safety of citizens and their property is the police's top priority, and all necessary steps are being taken to prevent such crimes.

### IRSA releases 190,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 190,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 236,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1435.66 feet which was 33.66 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 83,800 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1134.80 feet, which was 84.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 50,100 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 102,700, 48,100, 37,800 and 9,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 36,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 55,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 7 liquor suppliers nabbed during crackdown

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested seven liquor suppliers and recovered 40 liters of liquor from their possession during crackdown here Saturday. According to police spokesman, Bani police recovered have held four liquor suppliers, Imran, Hamza, Asif and Muhammad Asif and recovered 25 liquor from their possession.



RAWALPINDI: A view of banners install on Muree road street light pole in favour of Pak Army. —INP Photo

## Naqvi calls for urgent reforms at National Police Bureau

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the National Police Bureau (NPB) and called for an urgent action plan to modernize the institution in line with contemporary policing needs.

Chairing a high-level meeting on police reforms, the minister emphasized the strategic importance of the NPB in improving the national policing system.

During the visit, Naqvi noted that the bureau has not received adequate attention in the past and stressed that it must now be revitalized to play a central role in shaping policing policy, reforms, and coordination among law enforce-

ment agencies across the country.

"The National Police Bureau has a vital role in developing effective policing strategies nationwide. It must serve as a key institution for policy development, reform initiatives, and inter-agency collaboration," said the minister.

He directed that the NPB redefine its objectives and submit a comprehensive action plan on an emergency basis. To enhance research and analysis capabilities, Naqvi instructed the immediate procurement of advanced software that would allow in-depth analysis of crime trends across various regions of the country.

In addition, the interior minister emphasized improving the process for issuing police character certificates, directing that it be streamlined and expedited. He also called for strengthening international cooperation and recommended that more officers be sent abroad for training and postings to gain global exposure.

Inspector General Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Director General of the National Police Bureau, gave a detailed briefing on the bureau's current functions and challenges. He agreed that the NPB deserves more attention and development to fulfil its critical mandate effectively.

## Mian Riaz Pirzada visits E-Khidmat Markaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada inspected the E-Khidmat Markaz in Bahawalpur, where he was given a comprehensive briefing by the Manager, Syed Abdul Ahad Gardezi, about its operations and services, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Talking to media persons on the occasion, the federal minister said that E-Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur was epitome of PML-N Government's vision of facilitating masses. He added that transparent and swift working at E-Khidmat Markaz has impressed him. Minister said that Government of Punjab and Punjab Information Technology Board deserve commendation for establishing such a facility through which thousands of people were benefiting daily in Bahawalpur.

He further said that he would instruct Director General Passports to establish a passport desk at E-Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur to divide the flux of passport applicants at existing passport office Bahawalpur. Federal Minister also indicated that facilities related to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Higher Education Commission would be started at E-Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur. He appreciated Manager and his team for providing quality services to the people of Bahawalpur. Federal Minister Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada also planted a sapling in the lawn of E-Khidmat Markaz Bahawalpur.

## Over 20,000 challan tickets issued

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has intensified its campaign to improve road safety and enforce traffic laws across the city.

As part of the drive, over 20,000 motorcyclists were fined for not wearing helmets, according to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima. CTO said that there is also made significant progress in licensing facilities. A total of 23,903 citizens received fresh driving licenses, while 123,067 people were provided with other license-related facilities.

To promote awareness, the Education Wing of the City Traffic Police educated over 5,000 people last month. Awareness sessions were held in schools, colleges, universities, bus stands, and other public areas to spread knowledge about traffic rules and safe driving habits. CTO Beenish Fatima said that 2,955 challan tickets were issued to underage drivers and 10,810 challan tickets were issued to drivers for reckless driving.

Similarly, 3758 challan tickets were issued to tinted glasses vehicles. Beenish Fatima said that 5,829 challan tickets have been issued for disrupting traffic flow. CTO told that 2474 Public Service Vehicle (PSVs) were issued challan tickets. Without fitness certificate some 1,042 vehicles were also issued challan tickets. She added that 4020 challan tickets were issued on Lane/Line violations. She told that 19,246 challan tickets were issued to drivers without driving license and 24,485 challan tickets were issued to drivers who had fancy number plates.

## Indian terrorism being condemned globally: Mushaah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaah Hussein Mullick, on Saturday, said that India's attempts to blame Pakistan for a fake operation had failed as Indian terrorism was being condemned globally.

Addressing a news conference here, she, the wife of detained Hurriyet Leader Yasin Malik, said that the international community globally and Indian people inside condemned the Indian government as well.

She said the Indian government was perpetrating atrocities and bloodshed against the innocent Kashmiri people, who were continuing their struggle just for the right of self-determination.

"Kashmiris are paying a heavy price for India's false flag operation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir (IIOJK)," the chairperson added.

Mushaah Mullick stressed that every Kashmiri was facing oppression and barbarism, stating that the economy, tourism and agriculture of IIOJK were being destroyed ruthlessly by India.

She urged the international community to take notice of the gruesome human rights violations committed by India and demanded that RSS be banned immediately. India was involved in State terrorism and genocide of the oppressed Kashmiri people, she emphasised.

She said that Kashmiris were being arrested and martyred while the Indian government was not ready to make concessions to anyone, despite that Kashmiris were continuing their indigenous movement till a logical conclusion and

India had no courage to suppress the freedom struggle in that regard.

The chairperson expressed her commitment that at this time, we were fully supporting the Pakistan armed forces, who were ready to strongly respond to Indian aggression and misadventure in a befitting and decisive manner.

Mushaah Mullick said that China had announced to stand with Pakistan, and Bangladesh had already given a befitting and strapping reply to India.

She said that Kashmiris have the right to IIOJK's rivers, but not India, and they were breathing for Pakistan.

Responding to a question, she said there was a need to be careful while using social media and other social networking accounts.

## Minister directs NHA to accelerate development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan here on Saturday visited the Headquarters of National Highway Authority (NHA) where he inspected various departments and chaired a high-level meeting.

The minister issued directives to expedite the pace of development projects in the NHA's Western Sector including the Karachi-Quetta N-25 highway and accelerate the pace of work to complete it as early as possible, said a press release.

He emphasized the need to improve the existing procedures within the NHA to enhance efficiency and productivity. To this

end, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan assigned the task of reforming the system to the Secretary Communications and the Chairman NHA.

The meeting reviewed various institutional matters while the Federal Minister instructed that project presentations be prepared in more professional manner by National Highway Authority keeping it crystal clear and of high-quality.

Abdul Aleem Khan further directed the NHA to outsource its marketing and image-building functions to enhance public perception. He stressed that National Highways should reflect excellence and aesthetic appeal, pro-

viding a visibly improved experience for travelers. He also instructed that horticulture services be engaged by professional firms to enhance the beautification of areas surrounding of National Highways.

The minister urged upon citizens to cooperate with the NHA by contributing to cleanliness efforts.

The high-level meeting was attended by the Federal Secretary for Communications, Chairman NHA and other senior officers who briefed the Federal Minister on ongoing and proposed projects especially of West Sector while importance decisions were also approved in this session.



ISLAMABAD: A worker busy planting saplings at a local nursery near H-9 in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## Crime rate down by 20% in Islamabad: DIG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General of Islamabad Police Operations Muhammad Jawad Tariq credited effective digitalization, advanced monitoring, and enhanced patrol operations for the city's 20% crime rate reduction in 2025 and confidently expects Islamabad to become one of the safest cities as the trend continues.

In an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Islamabad highlighted the success of digitalization and patrol operations, stating that the 20% decline in crime rate reflects improved policing.

The DIG attributed the significant drop in crime incidents to effective strategies and enhanced law enforcement measures, expressing confidence that the trend would continue, making Islamabad one of the safest cities. According to the World Safety Index 2025 published by Numbeo, Islamabad has achieved a notable ranking among the top 100 safest cities globally, outpacing prominent capitals such as London, New York, and Paris, he added. Jawad

Tariq further explained that Islamabad elaborated on the city's comprehensive safety measures, highlighting the deployment of petroleum plans tailored for different areas.

Additionally, Dolphin squads and city watchers have been stationed in markets to maintain vigilance. Trail petroleum teams have also been assigned to monitor and protect hawkers, ensuring their safety, he added. The DIG also emphasized the role of digitalization in enhancing city safety, introducing virtual patrol officers to monitor the city's security landscape.

Advanced crime prediction models have been developed to anticipate and prevent gang-related crimes, contributing significantly to Islamabad's safe city initiatives. These multifaceted strategies have collectively contributed to the city's improved safety record, the DIG noted.

DIG Islamabad also commended the government's proactive steps in supporting law enforcement initiatives, acknowledging the crucial role of collaborative efforts in enhancing public safety and reducing crime rates in the city.

## ANF launches crackdown against smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has conducted a series of successful operations against drug smuggling across various cities in the country here Saturday. During four separate operations, a total of five suspects, including two women, were arrested.

These operations resulted in the recovery of over 41 kilograms of narcotics, with an estimated value of approximately Rs 15.4 million. The ANF apprehended three suspects, including two women riding a motorcycle in Lahore Wahga Area. The confiscated substances included 870 grams of hashish, 320 ice, and 47 grams of opium.

A separate operation led to the recovery of 2 kilograms of drugs from a suspect in Lahore Shahdara Kala Khatai Road.

At a courier office, ANF intercepted a parcel destined for Saudi Arabia from Lahore Kot Lakhpat seizing 28 kilograms of drugs. ANF recovered 10 kilograms of drugs from a suspect in Quetta (Baleli Road) near Railway Station. The cases have been registered against all arrested suspects under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are currently underway.

## Farhatullah expresses concern over Mines and Minerals Bill in KP

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PPP Human Rights Cell President ex Senator Farhatullah Babar has expressed grave concern over the Mines and Minerals Bill in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a blatant attempt by the federation to usurp, in violation of the Constitution, the provincial mineral resources.

This he said today while addressing a seminar on federalism under the auspices of Peshawar Literary Festival in Peshawar today.

He demanded answers to three questions. One, what mineral exploitation projects have already been undertaken by the federal government subsidiaries in the merged districts due to which these areas have been kept separate from the

rest of the province in the Bill until December 2030?

Two, what are the so called 'strategic minerals' over which the provincial government shall have little say to exploit?

Three, what is the rationale of a federal mineral body to impose unsolicited 'advice' to the provincial mineral department?

He said that Pakhtunkhwa province was being treated most unfairly as its share in the NFC was not revised upward after the merger of the tribal districts and the consequent increase in the province's population, a major determinant of the NFC Award.

He said that the integrity of the federation was not served by the setting up of extra constitutional bodies with the centre's dominance to oversee economic

development and other issues that fall exclusively within the domain of provinces under the 18th Amendments.

He said that federal parliamentary system was threatened by the continuing disregard for the Constitution and trichotomy of powers, blatantly manipulating the mandate of people and power transfer, the rise of the de-facto government sidelining the de-jure government, elite capture of state resources, populism, political polarization and fake news.

He also called upon the political parties to put their own house in order to confront these emerging challenges to the federal system in addition to raising of voice by the civil society against the strident militarization of state and society.

## Serving humanity key to compassionate society: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said serving humanity strengthens compassion and empathy in society and plays a vital role in building a better future for all.

He made these remarks while delivering the keynote address as the chief guest at the Rotary International District Conference 2025. Gilani praised the humanitarian contributions of Rotary International in Pakistan and around the world, said a news release.

Welcoming District Governor Rizwan Adhia, ambassadors, Rotary members and other distinguished guests, Gilani said, "It is a great honour for me to be here this evening. Today, we are not just celebrating an organization, we are honoring a century-long legacy of revolutionary service. We pay tribute to those who live by Rotary's enduring motto: 'Service Above Self.'"

He lauded the Rotary International's extensive humanitarian work, noting that from Pakistan's bustling cities to the remotest parts of Africa, Rotary has built a powerful network of compassion. "Rotary's greatest

success lies not only in its 1.5 million members, but in its tireless efforts to make the world a better place," he said.

Highlighting the organization's contribution to national development, Gilani said that Rotary's mission aligns with Pakistan's goals of sustainable development and inclusive growth. He especially praised its support in the fight against polio, calling it a near victory and urging continued efforts to make Pakistan polio-free. Gilani also highlighted the "Smart Villages" initiative, which is transforming lives through solar energy, clean water, and rural healthcare.

He applauded Rotary's youth leadership programs, which are shaping future innovators among Pakistan's large young population. He appreciated projects such as the partnership with Ziauddin Hospital to provide heart surgeries for underprivileged children.

The Chairman Senate said, "I belong to South Punjab and have seen firsthand the deep inequalities that still exist—the children without schools, mothers without healthcare, and farmers battling famine. These are not just numbers;

they are our people."

He recalled his tenure as Prime Minister, during which the uplift of underdeveloped regions and empowerment of marginalized communities, especially women, was a key priority. "I take pride in launching the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), a globally recognized initiative that has provided hope, financial assistance, and dignity to millions," he added.

Gilani expressed interest in potential collaboration between Rotary and BISP to further enhance community welfare and sustainable grassroots development. "Together, we can create a legacy that will benefit generations," he added.

He pledged full support for expanding Rotary's work—whether in eradicating polio, improving education, or advancing clean energy. "Through legislation and policymaking, we will back every initiative that ensures inclusive development, women's empowerment, digital innovation, and environmental sustainability," he said, adding that social development is a shared responsibility.



7 killed, 10 hurt in accident

KABUL (Pajhwok): At least seven people have been killed and 10 others injured in a traffic accident in central Maidan Wardak province. According to a statement from the provincial police headquarters, the incident occurred on Friday evening when two vehicles collided on the Kabul-Kandahar highway in the Sayedabad district. Among the deceased were three children and two women. The injured were transported to the district hospital for medical treatment.

Land declared state property

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has declared 175.5 acres of land in the Mullah Izzat Township in the Paghman district of Kabul a state property. The Special Court for trying land-grab cases in the Central Zone ruled the land in question belonged to the Islamic Emirate, MoJ said in a statement. It explained the Land-Grab Prevention Commission had previously reviewed the status of more than 223 acres of land in the same area.

Support for Afghan migrants discussed



KABUL (BNA): Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the head of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), convened a meeting with Susan Saad, the coordinator of the Temporary Shelter Cluster from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other international officials to address the urgent needs of deported migrants.

During the discussions, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi

highlighted the significant rise in deportations, leading to the establishment of 12 dedicated committees aimed at tackling migrant issues. He emphasized the ANDMA's role in providing assistance at the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders, where many migrants enter the country.

"To ensure that aid is effective, it must align with local needs and culture," Turabi stated, advocating for consultation in the dis-

tribution of assistance.

Susan Saad and her team underscored the importance of collaboration with aid agencies, noting that recent agreements have streamlined the delivery of essential services to migrants across various border points.

The temporary shelter cluster coordinators echoed Turabi's call for enhanced cooperation among partners to better support affected individuals and those in need.

Agri officials discuss tech sharing

NANGARHAR (BNA): Deputy ministers from the agriculture ministries of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan visited key agricultural and livestock facilities in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

According to the Nangarhar Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock's media office, the visiting delegation included Mullah Agha Jan, the financial and administrative deputy minister of the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, and Abdur- okirov Jamshid, deputy minister of agriculture from Uzbekistan.

The delegation toured multiple sites, including the Darunta hydroelectric dam, Habib Hassam's poultry farm, drip irrigation systems in local orchards, the National Fruit Complex, and the Shisham Bagh Research Center. During the visit, Nangarhar agriculture officials briefed the delegation on the operations and significance of these facilities.

Officials from both sides held talks focused on expanding cooperation in agriculture, sharing technical expertise, equipping laboratories, improving staff capacity, and strengthening public-private partnerships between the two nations.

The Uzbek side expressed readiness to enhance bilateral collaboration and emphasized the need for both countries to capitalize on mutual economic opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Floods ravage farmland and homes

BADAKHSHAN (BNA): Heavy rainfall triggered flash floods in Badakhshan's Jurm district, inflicting significant financial losses and damaging vital infrastructure, local officials said.

Mawlawi Mohammad Akram Akbari, the head of the Natural Disaster Management Authority in Badakhshan, told Bakhtar News Agency that the floods struck multiple villages in the district, causing widespread damage to residents' properties and agricultural land.

"Based on initial assessments, the flooding occurred in the villages of Kharandab, Sanglakh, Dahsanan, and Soch Payan," Akbari said.

He confirmed that the disaster destroyed hundreds of acres of farmland, fruit orchards, irrigation dams, two water canals, three residential houses, and a mosque.

Akbari added that comprehensive reports from remote villages and other parts of the province have yet to be received, leaving the full scope of damage uncertain.

Afghan media's role must be protected: Roza Otunbayeva

KABUL (Pajhwok): The United Nations emphasizes that journalists should be able to report freely and "without fear or discrimination" across the world, while the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) says it supports all media outlets that operate within the framework of Sharia.

May 3 marks World Press Freedom Day.

Habib Ghafra, spokesman for the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan, said in an audio message that the IEA, recognizing the importance of media, supports all media outlets that operate within the framework of Islamic Sharia.

He said that over the past few years, the Ministry of Information and Culture

had extensive cooperation with the media, citing as an example the issuance of licenses to 15 new media outlets last year alone.

He also added that the ministry supports all media that broadcast responsibly and urges all media outlets to operate in a responsible manner.

On this occasion, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that the freedom of the people is tied to the freedom of the press, and that journalists should be able to report "without fear or discrimination" throughout the world.

He added that journalism is increasingly under threat, and journalists face risks such as attacks, arrests, censorship, violence, and even death.

"World Press Freedom Day stands as a crucial reminder of the essential role journalists and media play in Afghanistan. They are the foundation of an informed and vibrant society, and their role must be protected," said Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan.

"A diverse and healthy media sector is indispensable in ensuring transparency, public trust, and good governance. But in Afghanistan we are seeing the steady erosion of a free and independent media," said Otunbayeva.

Afghanistan's media sector has been hit by a sharp decline in revenue linked to the country's economic crisis, which has

forced numerous outlets to close.

Afghanistan is also not immune to the challenges brought by the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the theme for 2025's World Press Freedom Day commemorations.

"AI presents significant risks: it can be misused to reproduce misinformation, spread disinformation, amplify hate speech, enable new forms of censorship and surveillance of journalists and citizens, creating a chilling effect on freedom of expression," said UNESCO Representative in Afghanistan, Patricia McPhillips.

"This means national and international cooperation is all the more essential," said McPhillips.

\$28m solar power plant being established in Balkh province

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): A 40-megawatt solar power generation plant is being established at a cost of 28 million US dollars in Dehdadi district of northern Balkh province, an official announced on Saturday. The plant is being established on 250 acres of land in Breshana Kot area of the district.

Speaking at the ceremony marking the beginning of the project, Director of Da Afghanistan Breshna Shirkat Abdul Bari Omar said that once completed, the project would resolve electricity issues for thousands of households as well as hundreds of industrial and production companies.

He said efforts were ongoing to utilise various energy sources in the country, including water, coal, wind and solar energy.

He added the project was funded by the Ghazanfar Group and implemented with technical support from



Zulrstan Company.

The head of the private company stated that 28 million US dollars would be spent on the project, which covers 250 acres of land and was expected to be completed within two years.

The 40-megawatt solar plant will provide electricity to 40,000 households

and meet the power needs of 1,200 industrial and manufacturing factories.

He also expressed readiness to make further investments in solar and hydroelectric energy if favourable conditions are provided in the country.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister of Industry and

Commerce Ahmadullah Zahid assured full support to investors and called on Afghan entrepreneurs living abroad to return and invest inside the country.

Last week, construction work was kicked off on a similar solar power network in eastern Nangarhar province.

Japan renews vow to support Afghan families

KABUL (Pajhwok): Japan's Ambassador in Kabul Takayoshi Kuromiya has reaffirmed his country's commitment to supporting Afghan families.

Kuromiya and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director Mutinta Chimuka visited a clinic in Kabul.

Hundreds of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and their children were receiving life-saving nutrition services at the clinic, WFP said.

A statement from the organisation said the visit highlighted Japan's strong and steadfast commitment to WFP's operations in Afghanistan, where nearly

one third of the population is in need of emergency food assistance.

"It was heartbreaking to see a number of Afghan mothers and children suffering from malnutrition, but it was also encouraging to see the work done by WFP and its partners to provide critical assistance to them and improve their nutrition and health," said Ambassador Takayoshi Kuromiya.

"The government of Japan remains committed to help Afghan families through the crisis."

WFP's Deputy Country Director Harald Mannhardt said: "Women and girls continue to bear the brunt

of the crisis in Afghanistan, which is currently witnessing the highest levels of child malnutrition in recent history."

She said: "Only thanks to the generosity of partners like the government of Japan, can World Food Programme (WFP) still support women and children across the country despite critical funding shortfalls."

Last year, WFP supported three million children and 1.8 million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers with malnutrition treatment or prevention services across the country.

The government of Japan has been a steadfast

supporter to WFP's mission in Afghanistan.

Since 2021, Japan has contributed US\$93 million towards WFP's emergency food assistance, nutrition and school meals programmes.

After the devastating earthquake that struck the west of the country in October 2023, Japan also provided US\$1 million for immediate emergency response for the affected population.

Earlier, World Food Programme had warned that Afghanistan remained at high risk of malnutrition and called for continued financial support to save the lives of Afghan children.

Prices of some food items, gold declined

KABUL (Pajhwok): The prices of cooking oil, flour, sugar and gold declined, but rates of other food items stayed stable during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said on Saturday.

Food items

Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders' Association, said the price of a 49-kilogram bag of Indian sugar went down from 2,550afis to 2,500afis.

Likewise, the price of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakh flour decreased from 1,350afis to 1,300afis and a 16-litre bottle of Malaysian cooking from 1,700afis to 1,650afis.

The price of a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice remained unchanged at 2,600afis, a kilogram of African black

tea at 400afis and the same amount of Indonesian green tea at 350afis.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dahna-i-Bagh market, put the retail price of a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour at 1,350afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afis and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar at 2,550afis.

A 16-litre bottle of cooking oil accounted for 1,700afis, one kilogram of black tea for 400afis and the same quantity of green tea for 450afis, he added.

Gold prices down

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold decreased from 6,100afis to 5,950afis and the same amount of the Russian variety fell from 5,000afis to

4,700afis.

Fuel prices

A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok one litre of petrol cost 61afis while liquefied gas sold for 50afis.

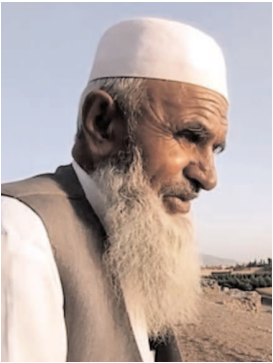
He put the price of one kilogram of diesel at 58afis.

Afghani vs dollar

Haji Mohammad Hussain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said the local currency strengthened during the week as one US dollar was traded at 70.70afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 245afis.

During the previous week, one US dollar accounted for 71.20afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 247afis. The spike in the afghani value is essentially linked to periodic dollar auctions by the central bank.

Teacher honored for opening school in war



PAKTIA (TOLOnews): A number of education workers and residents of Mirzaka district in Paktia province are praising the efforts of a teacher named Nouruddin Samim, who dedicated nearly three decades to strengthening education in the area.

Residents of Mirzaka say that others should also contribute to the development of education in their own communities.

Waheed Gul, a teacher, told TOLOnews about Nouruddin Samim's contributions: "We are very proud of him. No one has served like he has in the Andawam and Karkin areas

of Mirzaka district."

Abdul Rahim Khil, another resident of Mirzaka, said: "The girls' school in Mirzaka exists because of him. In our area, education was almost nonexistent. When he came, he made tireless efforts to improve education."

Dawood Khan, principal of Andawam High School, told TOLOnews: "Back then, access to books and notebooks wasn't easy. People were in poor economic condition, but he made use of the limited local resources."

Nouruddin Samim, 78, is a resident of the Karkin Valley in Mirzaka district, Paktia. He said he has spent much of his life serving education and nurturing the younger generation.

"In 1993 (1372 solar year), we began informally, and in 1994 (1373 solar year), we officially started the school. At first, in Karkin, we enrolled 240 male students in grades one, two, and three," he added.

Nearly three decades ago, in 1994, at a time

when Afghanistan was engulfed in civil war, Samim opened the doors to education in Mirzaka with minimal resources. He officially retired in 2018 (1397 solar year) and now lives with his family in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province.

There is growing public demand to rename Karkin High School in Mirzaka district in his honor. However, Samim's own wish is to be laid to rest in the school compound that he helped build.

KABUL (TOLOnews): Afghan migrants deported from neighbor country, after enduring years of hardship in exile, are now facing severe challenges in their own country, including lack of shelter and employment.

International organizations have warned that millions of dollars are needed to support these families.

Sardar Wali, who recently returned to Afghanistan

with his family, said he came back to escape harassment by the neighbor country government, but now has no place to live.

"We had lived in that country for fifty years. We didn't want to return because we had no land or shelter here," he told TOLOnews. "Now conditions there are no longer good. We're living in camps here, and we don't know

where we're going next."

Sardar Wali is just one among hundreds of thousands of returnees now facing uncertainty in their homeland. Other deported migrants have also called on the government and aid agencies to provide job opportunities and proper housing.

Anwar, another deportee, said: "There's loss on every side of this issue.

Deported Afghan migrants face crisis

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): In the central prison of western Herat province, a place often associated with "privations and imprisonment," dozens of inmates are not only learning skills through technical and vocational training programmes but are also earning an income from their work.

These prisoners say although their days and nights are spent in captivity, they are grateful for the opportunity to learn different vocations.

They explain their daily engagement in acquiring new skills had made the long days in prison feel

much shorter.

Ismatullah, who has been in prison for over two years, has received training in leather crafting and now produces items that are not confined to buyers inside the jail. He said, "Customers from outside the prison also place orders with me, and I deliver the designs they prefer."

Ismatullah spends his days in prison busy with this craft and hopes after his release, he will be able to earn an income through this skill for himself and his family.

According to him, he works daily from dawn to

dusk, and it takes one to two days to make a bag.

Payam Shah, another prisoner responsible for the sewing section, said many inmates were learning tailoring in this section.

He added he and trainees stitched seven to ten suits daily, with many of their customers being government employees and individuals released from jail.

In the prison's pastry-making section, Zubair and 11 other prisoners prepare 20 to 30 kilograms of pastries daily, which are sold inside the jail.

According to Zubair, one kilogram of pastry is sold

for 50 to 60 afghanis and the contracting company pays prisoners working in this section between 200 to 500 afghanis a week in wages.

Prison or skill development centre?

Officials say prisoners are currently engaged in skill development and work across 12 industrial sections of the prison. They are also working to establish more sections to provide additional educational and learning opportunities for inmates.

Khadim Noor Omar, the head of the industrial section at Herat prison, said over a hundred prisoners

were active in various sections, including carpet weaving, pastry making, beadwork, leather crafting, tailoring, boot making and other fields.

He added the number of participants in the vocations was expected to increase in the near future.

Omar believed skill acquisition opportunities helped prisoners find employment upon their release, thereby reducing the likelihood of them resorting to criminal activities due to.

Meanwhile, Sharafuddin Mukhlis, the general director of Herat prison, said all inmates were currently

engaged in attending training courses.

Prisoners attend educational classes in a variety of fields, ranging from religious studies to vocational skills. In this way, they stay positively engaged and continue learning.

Mukhlis added there were currently no unemployed prisoners at Herat jail, as all of them specific daily tasks and responsibilities to discharge.

According to information from prison authorities, more than 2,500 inmates, including women and children, are currently held in the Herat central jail.







ISLAMABAD: Minister of Irrigation Sindh, Jam Khan Shoro, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## UN chief condemns Israeli strikes on Syria

NEW YORK CITY: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday condemned repeated Israeli airstrikes on Syria as well as growing sectarian violence around Damascus and Suwayda. The condemnation came after more than 100 people were killed in clashes in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past week.

The violence has taken place in two predominantly Druze suburbs of the capital, Jaramana and Ashrafiyat Sahnaya, as well as in the southern Druze stronghold of Suwayda. Guterres "has been monitoring with alarm the reports of violence in the suburbs of Damascus and in the south of Syria, including reports of civilian casualties and assassination of local administration figures," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

The secretary-general condemned "all violence against civilians" and acts that "could risk inflaming sectarian tensions." Amid the sectarian clashes, Israel launched a series of airstrikes on Syrian targets, in what it described as an attempt to protect the country's Druze minority. Early on Friday, it bombed an area near the Presidential Palace in Damascus. Later

that day, it targeted the Damascus, Hama and Daraa countryside, killing one civilian in the former and injuring four people in Hama, Syrian state news agency SANA reported.

Israel acknowledged the strikes, which it claimed targeted "a military site, anti-aircraft cannons and surface-to-air missile infrastructure." It followed a warning by Tel Aviv earlier this week that it would attack sites controlled by Syria's new government if further sectarian clashes involving the Druze minority did not stop.

Guterres condemned Israel's violation of Syria's sovereignty and said it was "essential" that the attacks stop. He called on all parties to "cease all hostilities, exercise utmost restraint and avoid further escalation." Syria's interim authorities under the government of President Ahmad Al-Sharaa must "transparently and openly" investigate all violations of peace in a bid to uphold their commitment to "dialogue and cooperation within the framework of national unity," Guterres added.

On Friday, experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council on the Commission of Inquiry on Syria described the

surge in sectarian violence as "deeply troubling." The commission was established in 2011, and its three commissioners serve in an independent capacity. "The spread of discriminatory incitement and hate speech, including through social media, is fueling violence and risks threatening Syria's fragile social cohesion," the commission said on Friday. "While the situation remains fluid and an agreement has reportedly been reached between prominent leaders in Suwayda and the authorities in Damascus, the commission underscores that the interim government remains responsible for ensuring the protection of all civilians in areas under its control. Impunity for grave violations has in the past been a consistent driver of Syria's conflict and must not be allowed to persist."

The commission also highlighted the risk posed by Israeli airstrikes, as well as Tel Aviv's continued expansion of its occupation in the Golan Heights. Israel's attempts to "divide various Syrian communities risks further destabilizing Syria," it said. "Syria's recent history should serve as a reminder that external interventions have often led to increased violence, displacement and fragmentation." — Arab News

## Pakistan to facilitate visit for media to LoC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is facilitating a visit for Pakistani and international media to the Line of Control (LoC).

The purpose of this visit is to expose India's baseless and fabricated propaganda regarding so-called and imaginary "terrorist camps" in Pakistan, said a statement on Saturday. India has repeatedly made unfounded and baseless claims about alleged terrorist hideouts along the LoC. During this visit, media representatives will be taken to the exact locations falsely propagated by India as terrorist camps and will be presented with factual and on-ground realities that refute these malicious allegations.

"Pakistan reaffirms its steadfast commitment to peace and categorically rejects any form of terrorism or terrorist activities anywhere in the world," the statement said. The nation remains resolute in defending its sovereignty, and any aggression by India will be met with a swift and befitting response, the statement concluded.

Meanwhile, After blocking the social media accounts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Director General Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in India, now the social media account of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has also been blocked.

According to media, Attaullah Tarar had exposed India's state repression, human rights violations and efforts to suppress the voice of the Kashmiri people on the international media. In retaliation, India blocked his official social media account. The Narendra Modi-led Indian government took a wide range of measures against Pakistan after 26 people were killed and several others injured in an alleged attack in Pahalgam on April 22.

## Singapore's ruling party wins election

SINGAPORE: Singapore's long-governing People's Action Party (PAP) has retained its strong grip on power in the city-state's general election, extending its 66-year unbroken rule and staving off any gains by the opposition Workers Party (WP). The Election Department announced the PAP won 87 of 97 seats in parliament after vote counting ended on Saturday, with the WP maintaining its 10 seats.

Although a comfortable win for the PAP was anticipated, the real test lay in how much support it could retain, especially under the leadership of newly appointed Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. The party's performance in 2020, when it won just more than 60 percent of the vote, was among its weakest showings since independence in 1965 after seceding from Malaysia.

Wong, who took office last year, campaigned on promises of continuity and new leadership, hoping to shore up support amid growing public concern about surging living costs and housing shortages in one of the world's priciest locales. The WP, Singapore's most credible opposition force, contested 26 seats and is projected to keep the 10 it won in 2020, an unprecedented figure for any opposition party in the city-state. — Aljazeera

# Australia's Albanese claims election victory

SYDNEY (Reuters): Australia's Anthony Albanese claimed a historic second term as Prime Minister on Saturday, in a dramatic comeback against once-resurgent conservatives that was powered by voters' concerns about the influence of US President Donald Trump.

Peter Dutton, leader of the conservative Liberal party, conceded defeat and the loss of his own seat - echoing the fate of Canada's conservatives and their leader whose election loss days earlier was also attributed to a Trump backlash. Supporters at Labor's election party in Sydney cheered and hugged each other as Albanese claimed victory and said Labor would form a majority government.

"This is a win for the ages," Labor Treasurer Jim Chalmers told ABC. Albanese "has pulled off one of the great political victories since federation." The results coming in were "absolutely unbelievable", Labor supporter Melinda Adderley, 54, said through her tears at the election party.

Albanese would be the first Australian prime minister to win a consecutive term in two decades. The



Australian Electoral Commission website published early results showing Labor ahead of a coalition of the Liberal and National parties, 55.94%-44% on a two-party preferred basis. Dutton said he had phoned Albanese to congratulate him.

"We didn't do well enough during this campaign. That much is obvious tonight, and I accept full responsibility for that," Dutton said in a televised speech. He also said he had spoken to Labor's candidate in the seat of Dickson he had held for two decades, and congratulated her on her success. "We have been defined by our opponents in this election which is not the true story of who we are," Dutton said, pledging the conservative party would rebuild.

Cost-of-living pressures and concerns about US President Donald

Trump's volatile policies had been among the top issues on voters' minds, opinion polls had shown. "If you sling enough mud it will stick," said Liberal Senator for the Northern Territory Jacinta Price, whose comments that her party would "make Australia great again" had fuelled comparisons to Trump's own "Make America Great Again" slogan.

"You made it all about Trump," she said on ABC. Dutton had said he would appoint Price to a ministry of government efficiency, one of several echoes of Trump's policies. "Losing Peter Dutton is a huge loss," she added. Opposition Liberal Party spokesman, Senator James Paterson, defended the conservative campaign, which he said was negatively affected by "the Trump factor".

"It was devastating in Canada for the conservatives ... I think it has been a factor here, just how big a factor will be determined in a few hours' time," he told ABC. The Liberals had been leading in opinion polls as recently as February as voters blamed the government for cost of living pressures and high housing costs.

## Beaconhouse National University

BNU Pakistan's First Not-for-Profit Liberal Arts University

# FALL 2025

www.bnu.edu.pk

## APPLY NOW

EARLY ADMISSIONS

### MARIAM DAWOOD SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN (MDSVAD)

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts
- Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication Design
- Bachelor of Design in Textile, Fashion & Accessories Design

**Specialization:**

- Textile & Fibre
- Fashion
- Jewellery & Accessories

- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Interdisciplinary Expanded Design & Art

### SEETA MAJEED SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (SMSLASS)

- BS in Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
- Minor in Media Studies, Theatre, Film and TV

**Specialization:**

- History
- Literature
- Political Science
- BS in Political Science

### SCHOOL OF COMPUTER AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SCIT)

- BS Computer Science

**Specialization:**

- Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Data Science, Multimedia & Game Development
- BS Software Engineering

**Specialization:**

- Software Development, Software Design & Architecture, Software Quality & Project Management, Cloud Computing, DevOps, Mobile & Web Development, Artificial Intelligence & Data Science
- BS Artificial Intelligence

**Specialization:**

- Data Science, Natural Language Processing, Computer Vision, AI Engineering
- BS Management & Business Computing

**Specialization:**

- Computing, AI for Businesses, Fintech, Software, Project Management, UI/UX Design

### INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY (IP)

- BS in Applied Psychology

**Specialization:**

- Clinical Psychology
- Organizational and Industrial Psychology
- School Psychology
- MS Clinical and Counseling Psychology with

**Specialization:**

- Rehabilitation for Substance Abuse
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- School Psychology
- Family and Marital Counseling
- Adolescent Mental Health

### SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (SMS)

#### DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

- BBA (Hons.)

**Specializations:**

- Marketing
- Finance
- Entrepreneurship
- Business Analytics
- BS Business Intelligence and Analytics

#### DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

- BS Economics
- BS Economics and Finance
- BS Economics with Minor in Data Sciences and Business Analytics

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

(In collaboration with Hashoo School of Hospitality Management)

- BS Hospitality Management

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (SE)

- MPhil Linguistics and TESOL
- MPhil Educational Leadership and Management (Regular and Weekend Track)

**For more information on Admissions and Scholarships\*:**

UAN: 042-111-BNU-LHR (111-268-547)

admissions@bnu.edu.pk

Tarogil Road, 13 KM Off Thokar Niazbeg- Raiwind Road, Lahore, Pakistan

**\*Multiple Scholarships Available**

bnu\_lahore
 BNULahore
 Beaconhouse National University

## Zelensky says won't play Putin 'games' with short truce

KYIV (AFP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has dismissed a three-day truce ordered by Russian leader Vladimir Putin as theatrics, but said Kyiv was ready for a full ceasefire.

Moscow said the truce, set to coincide with its World War II commemorations on May 9, was aimed at testing Kyiv's "readiness" for long-term peace, accusing Zelensky of making a "direct threat" to events on the holiday. The Kremlin rejected an unconditional 30-day ceasefire proposed by Kyiv and Washington in March, and Putin has since offered little to end the three-year Russia invasion.

"This is more of a theatrical performance on his part. Because in two or three days, it is impossible to develop a plan for the next steps to end the war," Zelensky said. He was speaking Friday to a small group of journalists including AFP in remarks embargoed until Saturday. Some in Ukraine have criticized the truce as an attempt to prevent Kyiv from disrupting the World War II anniversary celebrations, with foreign leaders due in

Moscow to watch a military parade on Red Square and an address by Putin.

Zelensky said Ukraine would not be "playing games to create a pleasant atmosphere to allow for Putin's exit from isolation on 9 May." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters the ceasefire was aimed at testing "Kyiv's readiness to seek ways to achieve long-term sustainable peace." Russian shelling killed two people in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region on Saturday, while a drone strike on the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson left one other person dead, regional officials said.

Russian authorities meanwhile accused Ukraine of an overnight attack on the southern port city of Novorossiysk, damaging apartment buildings and injuring five people. Leaders of around 20 countries, including China's Xi Jinping, have accepted invitations to join the May 9 celebration, according to the Kremlin. Zelensky said some countries had approached Kyiv to warn they were traveling to Russia and had requested safety.

"Our position is very simple toward all countries that have traveled or are traveling to Russia on May 9 — we cannot take responsibility for what is happening on the territory of the Russian Federation," he said. "They are ensuring your safety," Zelensky said, adding that Russia "may take various steps on its part, such as arson, explosions, and so on and then blame us." Zelensky did not say what Ukraine would do during the truce, but Russia jumped on the comments, accusing Kyiv of making a "direct threat" to the commemorations.

"He is threatening the physical safety of veterans who will come to parades and celebrations on the holy day," foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Telegram. "His statement... is, of course, a direct threat." Russian officials have promised grand celebrations for the occasion, during which Putin will seek to rally support for his troops fighting in Ukraine. Russian troops have been making gruelling gains on several parts of the front, as both Moscow and Kyiv have stepped up their aerial attacks.

## Iran reasserts uranium enrichment rights

TEHRAN: Iran has defended its right to enrich uranium, doubling down on a long-held stance as the next round of nuclear negotiations with the United States in Oman were abruptly delayed. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi took to social media on Saturday to declare, "Iran has every right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle," referencing the country's membership in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

He added, "There are several NPT members which enrich uranium while wholly rejecting nuclear weapons," underlining Iran's argument that its nuclear activities are civilian in nature. "Maximalist positioning and incendiary rhetoric

achieve nothing except eroding the chances of success," added Araghchi, in reference to the US position that Iran must stop all enrichment activities.

In a Thursday interview with Fox News, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio urged Iran to halt its enrichment efforts, arguing, "the only countries in the world that enrich uranium are the ones that have nuclear weapons." However, countries like Germany, Japan and Brazil also conduct enrichment without possessing nuclear arsenals. The comments come after a fourth round of indirect talks between Washington and Tehran, originally scheduled for Saturday, was postponed. Oman, acting as a mediator,

cited "logistical reasons" for the delay. A new date remains unconfirmed, with one Iranian official telling the Reuters news agency it would depend on "the US approach".

The setback follows a new wave of US sanctions tied to Iran's oil sales and alleged continued support for Yemen's Houthis rebels. Tehran responded by accusing Washington of sending "contradictory messages" that undermined diplomacy. France added to the uncertainty earlier this week when Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot claimed Iran was "on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons" — a charge Tehran dismissed as "simply absurd". — Aljazeera