

2 terrorists killed in attack
F.P. Report

BANNU: A terrorist attack on a Frontier Corps (FC) check post in Bannu was successfully thwarted and two militants were killed in the crossfire. According to initial police report, the incident occurred in Dara Ghundairi area of Bannu, where terrorists opened fire on the FC check post. The FC personnel responded swiftly and effectively, killing two attackers while others managed to flee.



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

Pakistan seeks peace in region: COAS



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), interacted with participants of 15th National Workshop Balochistan at GHQ on Monday. Since 2016, the Workshop brings together a large number of male and female parliamentarians, bureaucrats, members of civil society, youth, academia and media representatives, with maximum representation from Balochistan. The Workshop, encompassing interactions, seminars, group discussions and visits to different parts of the country. It is aimed at enabling future leadership of Balochistan in understanding vital national / provincial issues and mounting cohesive response.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) highlighted Government's persistent focus on improving the socioeconomic profile of Balochistan, and stated that the scale and scope of ongoing and planned initiatives should serve to dispel the blatant disinformation in this regard. Many development projects have already started bearing fruit benefiting the people of Balochistan. Appreciating the role of the civil society members in raising awareness among the

people of Balochistan, specially the youth, COAS emphasized their role in enabling the progress leading to prosperity.

COAS underscored that foreign sponsored terrorism remains the gravest threat to Balochistan's security and development. He warned that the nefarious designs of hostile elements, who seek to incite violence, spread fear, and destabilize the province, will not be allowed to succeed.

Reaffirming Pakistan's resolve, the COAS stated that terrorism knows no religion, sect, or ethnicity, and must be confronted with unwavering national unity. Terrorist groups that perpetrate terror in name of Baloch identity to advance their petty insidious agenda, are a blemish on Baloch honour and patriotism. COAS emphasised that Pakistan seeks peace in the region and beyond, however, if Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity is violated, Pakistan will respond with full force to preserve its national prestige and wellbeing of its people. Pakistan's Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies will continue to fight menace of terrorism with the complete support of the people of Pakistan. The Workshop concluded after an engaging and candid Q&A session.

SBP slashes policy rate by 100bps to 11pc

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Monday cut the policy rate by 100 basis points (bps), bringing it down to 11 percent. In a statement, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) announced that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the interest rate, citing the lower-than-anticipated April inflation — largely the result of falling prices in perishable foods and energy.

April recorded a modest inflation rate of just 0.3%, mainly due to the high comparison base from the previous year. This decline was driven by reduced prices of essential food items like wheat, onions, potatoes, and some pulses, along with lower electricity and fuel costs.

Since these goods hold considerable weight in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), even slight changes in their prices can significantly impact overall inflation. The MPC reviewed the overall financial and fiscal situation, major economic indicators, data of different sectors, and major developments taken place since the announcement of the previous monetary policy.

The MPC, in its previous meeting on March 10, 2025, adopted a cautious approach

and kept the policy rate unchanged at 12 percent, taking inflation expectations and the position of the external account into consideration. The committee had noted the improvement in economic indicators, including current account balance, inflation, external inflows, monetary management, and foreign reserves, but it was cautious about inching up of inflation in subsequent months as well as uncertainties in the global economic policy environment.

Considering the developments and evolving risks, the MPC had also stressed the need for continuing fiscal consolidation to ensure price stability, which is essential for sustainable economic growth. The committee, which met on Monday to review the monetary policy, added that the recent drop in core inflation also played a role. "Core inflation also declined in April, primarily reflecting favourable base-effect amidst moderate demand conditions," it noted.

Overall, the MPC assessed that the inflation outlook has improved further relative to the previous assessment. At the same time, the Committee viewed that the heightened global uncertainty surrounding trade tariffs and geopolitical developments could pose

challenges for the economy. In this backdrop, the MPC emphasised the importance of maintaining a measured monetary policy stance.

While reaching the decision, the Committee noted the following key developments since its last meeting. First, provisional real GDP growth for Q2-FY25 was reported at 1.7% year-on-year, whereas Q1 growth was revised up to 1.3% from 0.9%. Second, the current account recorded a sizable surplus of \$1.2 billion in March, mainly due to record-high workers' remittances. This surplus and SBP's foreign exchange reserves purchases partially cushioned the impact of large ongoing debt repayments on the central bank's reserves.

Third, recent surveys suggest further improvement in both consumer and business sentiments. Fourth, the shortfall in tax collection has continued to widen. Lastly, global uncertainty, particularly around tariffs, has led the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to sharply downgrade its 2025 and 2026 growth projections for both advanced and emerging economies. The tariff uncertainty has also triggered heightened financial market volatility and a sharp decline in global oil prices.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday stressed that India's weaponization of the Indus Waters Treaty was unacceptable and a red-line for the people of Pakistan.

During a meeting with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyed Abbas Araghchi who called on him, the prime minister shared Pakistan's serious concerns over the prevailing tensions in South Asia as a result of India's provocative behavior since Pahalgam incident. He categorically rejected any attempts to link Pakistan to the incident, without sharing any evidence and said Pakistan had offered that an international transparent, neutral and credible investigation be conducted to ascertain the facts behind the Pahalgam incident.

While stating that Pakistan had acted with maturity and responsibility, the Prime Minister said "India had, on the other hand, created a media frenzy to divert the world's attention away from Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which remained the root cause of instability in South Asia," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release. The Iranian foreign minister is on an official visit to Islamabad.

At the outset, the prime minister expressed his sincere condolences to the Iranian side over the tragic explosion in Bandar Abbas that had led to the loss of precious lives and injured hundreds of people. He prayed for those who had lost their loved ones, as well as for the early recovery of the injured.

During this warm and cordial meeting, the prime minister conveyed his respectful regards to Supreme Leader Ayatullah Ali Khamenei and warm wishes for President Masoud Pezeshkian. He underscored that Pakistan attached great importance to its historic,

deep-rooted fraternal ties with Iran. While fondly recalling his earlier meetings and recent telephone call with President Pezeshkian, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif expressed satisfaction at the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Iran bilateral engagement and emphasized the need to enhance cooperation in trade, energy, border management, and regional connectivity. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to work closely with Iran for peace, stability, and development in the region.

Foreign Minister Araghchi conveyed warm greetings from the Iranian leadership to the prime minister and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to strengthening its relations with Pakistan and also playing its part in bringing peace and stability in South Asia. He also reiterated President Pezeshkian's invitation to the prime minister to undertake an official visit to Tehran during current year.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif while rejecting India's attempts to link Pakistan to the Pahalgam incident without providing any evidence, reiterated his offer for a transparent, credible and neutral international investigation into the incident and invited the UK to join it.

The prime minister received UK High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, at the Prime Minister House, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister shared Pakistan's perspective on the prevailing situation in South Asia, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident.

He noted that with the support of friendly countries, including the UK, his Government's foremost priority remained advancing economic growth and development of the country, and that Pakistan would never take any action that could imperil regional peace and security. The prime minister urged the UK, which enjoyed good rela-

Pakistan successfully tests Fatah missile

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan on Monday conducted a successful training launch of a Fatah Series surface-to-surface missile with a range of 120 kilometers as part of ongoing "Ex-INDUS".

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 accuracy, said a new release by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here. The training launch was witnessed by senior officers of Pakistan Army, as well as officers, scientists and engineers from Pakistan's strategic organizations.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the Chief of Army Staff extended their congratulations to the participating troops, scientists, and engineers. They expressed complete confidence in the operational preparedness and technical proficiency of Pakistan Army to thwart any aggression against the territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday lauded the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Army Chief, and the scientists and engineers who took part in the successful training launch of the surface-to-surface Fatah missile.

"The successful training launch clearly demonstrates that Pakistan's defense is in strong hands," the prime minister said, according to a PM Office press release. He also expressed satisfaction over the professional capabilities of the Pakistan Army and their full preparedness for national defense.

Pakistan has conducted a successful training launch of a Fatah Series surface-to-surface missile with a range of 120 kilometres as part of ongoing exercise, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The guidance system makes this rocket a precision weapon enhancing its lethality and efficacy, while the trajectory mode and terminal guidance technology enables it to evade the enemy's anti-ballistic missile systems.

India's fabricated claims under scrutiny, says Tarar

F.P. Report

PIR CHINASI, AZAD KASHMIR: In a strong rebuttal to India's baseless allegations, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar exposed the hollowness of New Delhi's claims about so-called terrorist camps in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Speaking from the very locations India accused of harboring militants, Tarar dismissed the assertions as a desperate attempt to deflect from internal failures, asserting that international media and observers have outright rejected the propaganda. As evidence and facts on the ground dismantle India's narrative, Islamabad reiterates its stance: false flag operations and fabricated maps cannot whitewash the truth or cover up India's own actions in the region.

"There were so many contradictions and anomalies in their claims. They were unable to prove themselves. We are here proactively on one of the spots

where India alleged there were terrorist camps ", he told international and local media representatives at Bela Noor Shah, near Pir Chinasi in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He said India had always tried to defame Pakistan through false propaganda but every Indian attempt to defame Pakistan has failed. He said that media team could itself see that there were no terrorist camps at the beautiful Kashmiri location.

He told the international and local media representatives that India's blaming Pakistan for internal issues was nothing new. Tarar remarked that in 2019 after Pulwama attack, India tried to blame Pakistan and Indian airforce dropped payload in Balakot area damaging some trees. He said this time India has issued a map alleging that at Bela Noor Shah, near Pir Chinasi terrorists were being given training. He informed the media representatives that this place was 26 kilometres away from LoC and tourists were coming here regularly.

Moreover a government school and a private school were also located at Bela Noor Shah which were manifestation that Indian allegations of terrorist camps were baseless.

Rejecting Indian allegations of alleged terrorist camps in Azad Kashmir, he reminded that Pakistan was a frontline state against terrorism. He said no country has sacrificed 90,000 lives in the war on terrorism till date. He said Pakistan had irrefutable proofs of Indian involvement in terrorist activities in Pakistan. He said Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav was involved in terrorist activities who was under Pakistan custody.

Tarar said that terrorists attack on Jafar Express was one of the most serious incidents in the world. He said instead of criticising, Indian media was celebrating the Jafar Express incident. Indian media obtained footage of the Jafar Express incident from terrorists and broadcast it even before Pakistan's news channels.

NA flay India's decision on Indus Waters Treaty

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Monday unanimously condemned India's unlawful and unilateral decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it a blatant violation that amounts to an act of war.

Speaking on the floor of the House, members also strongly rejected all baseless and frivolous attempts to link Pakistan with the April 22, 2025 Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal criticized India for blaming Pakistan immediately after the Pahalgam incident, calling it unfortunate and irresponsible.

He also slammed the Indian media for spreading war hysteria and fueling tensions between the two countries. The minister praised the government and armed forces of Pakistan for their strong and appropriate response to India's baseless allegations.

He said the entire nation stands united behind the armed forces in the face of Indian propaganda. He said that Pakistan desires peace, but this should not be mistaken as a sign of weakness.

Syed Mustafa Kamal accused India of being directly involved in acts of terrorism in Pakistan and urged the government to expose India's actions at international forums. He further said that India is behind terrorist activities in Balochistan and referred to it as the "mother of evil" for its role in destabilizing the region. Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser

Ahmed Sheikh said that despite limited budget allocations for defence, Pakistan is fully capable of countering any Indian aggression.

He emphasized that Pakistan does not desire war, but if war is imposed, the enemy will flee the battlefield. Pakistan will approach international institutions against India's water-related aggression, he added. Qaiser Sheikh urged lawmakers to lead rallies in their constituencies to show support for Pakistan's armed forces.

Leader of the Opposition, Omar Ayub Khan, said the entire nation stands united against any Indian aggression. He strongly rejected any Pakistani involvement in the Pahalgam incident, calling the allegations baseless and reiterating Pakistan's principled stance of condemnation.

Saif flays Modi's action
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has called on the federal government to stop making noise against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and instead demand a clear stance from their party president, Nawaz Sharif, regarding Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Premier receives telephone call from UN SG

ISLAMABAD (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif this evening to discuss the prevailing security situation in South Asia. This was the second telephone conversation between the two leaders within a week. The Prime Minister appreciated the UN Secretary General's continued engagement and outreach efforts and welcomed his call for de-escalation as well as the need to avoid any confrontation. While reiterating his offer of an independent transparent, neutral and credible investigation, the Prime Minister expressed his concern that India was yet to provide any evidence, nevertheless it continued to resort to provocative rhetoric and war mongering. He reiterated Pakistan's determination to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Prime Minister expressed his serious concern at Indian attempts to politicize international financial institutions in an attempt to harm Pakistan's economic interests. The Secretary General briefed the Prime Minister on his outreach efforts for peace and stability in the region, and expressed his commitment to remain engaged with all interlocutors on the issue.

tions with both Pakistan and India, to play its part in de-escalating the situation. The British high commissioner thanked the prime minister for sharing Pakistan's position and said that the UK would work closely with Pakistan and India for maintaining regional peace and security. The Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also reiterated that the entire nation stood united with the Armed Forces of Pakistan against any aggression from India, emphasizing that they were always ready to confront the enemy.

He was talking to a delegation of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari which met him here at the PM House. The delegation included Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Naveed Qamar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla.

PM Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that while Pakistan desired peace and stability in the region, it possessed the capability to deliver a

strong and effective response in defense of its sovereignty. Described India's provocative behavior following the Pahalgam incident as deeply regrettable, the prime minister noted that Pakistan not only expressed concern over the Pahalgam incident but also called for an impartial and independent investigation.

He firmly rejected India's baseless attempts to link Pakistan to the incident without any evidence. The prime minister criticized India's unilateral and illegal suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it an act of "water aggression," which was unacceptable as water represented a red-line for the people of Pakistan.

He further stated that Pakistan was actively pursuing diplomatic efforts to expose Indian aggression, and that he had met with ambassadors from several countries to present Pakistan's perspective. PM Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan will also raise this issue at the United Nations Security Council in order to expose India's

(Continued on Back Page)

SC reserves verdict on military trials of civilians

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday reserved its verdict on a crucial intra-court appeal challenging its earlier decision that barred the trial of civilians in military courts. A short order is expected later this week.

The seven-member constitutional bench, led by Justice Aminuddin Khan, concluded hearings on a set of 57 intra-court appeals filed by the federal and provincial governments, as well as the Shuhada Forum Balochistan. The appeals contest the top court's October 23, 2023, verdict which had declared the military trial of civilians unconstitutional. Last year, the apex court had conditionally permitted military courts to issue verdicts in cases involving 85 suspects linked to the May 9, 2023, riots-pending the outcome of this final ruling.

In his arguments on Monday, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan argued that the May 9 attacks on military installations—39 in total—were premeditated and coordinated. He emphasized the gravity of the situation, noting Pakistan's strategic vulnerabilities. "Even if these acts were reactions, they cannot be condoned," he asserted, highlighting that 23 incidents occurred in Punjab, 8 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one in Sindh.

He revealed that disciplinary action had been taken against several military officers for failing to prevent the violence. Three senior officers- including a Lieutenant General- were forcibly retired without benefits, while 14 others were barred from future promotions. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail inquired whether criminal proceedings were initiated against any officers. The AGP responded that while no crimes were established, departmental action was taken for negligence. Justice Mandokhail noted that the Army Act requires criminal penalties to accompany departmental action, prompting debate over whether restraint was penalized rather than negligence.

CM discusses public welfare initiatives with PA Speaker, MPs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with Speaker Punjab Assembly (PA) Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, here on Monday.

Members of the Provincial Assembly Sardar Muhammad Asim Sher Maken and Khurram Khan Virk were also present during the meeting.

The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, the prevailing political situation, public welfare initiatives, national and provincial affairs, the upcoming budget, and ongoing development projects across Punjab.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan for his efficient conduct of assembly proceedings. In turn, the Speaker congratulated the Chief Minister on the successful launch of the ‘Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar’ housing initiative, under which a record number of homes have been constructed. He also praised her for introducing ‘Honhaar’ scholarships and the laptop scheme for deserving students across the province.

MPA Sardar Muhammad Asim Sher Maken commended the Chief Minister’s vision behind launching the Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha, describing it as a milestone in public healthcare. He lauded her for initiating a historic number of development projects in a short span of time.

MPA Khurram Khan Virk remarked that Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s leadership has rekindled the legacy of PML-N leaders Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif

Governor Punjab calls on President Zardari

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad on Monday.

The meeting discussed political scenario in the country with special emphasis on Punjab, said a hand-out issued by the governor’s media team.

The Governor Punjab extended heartfelt congratulations to the President on his recovery.

He informed the President about the consultative meeting of the coordination committees of the PPP and the PML-N.

President Asif Ali Zardari appreciated the initiative of the Governor Punjab to open the doors of Governor’s House Lahore for the public and party workers.

Sindh Govt imposes complete ban on plastic bags

KARACHI (PPI): The Sindh government has announced a complete ban on plastic shopping bags in the province, taking a revolutionary step towards eliminating environmental pollution. According to a notification issued by the Department of Environment, non-degradable, oxo-degradable, black, and recycled plastic bags will be banned starting from June 15.

A statement issued by the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Coastal Development stated that the purpose of this ban is to ensure environmental protection. Following the partial ban in 2019, this complete prohibition has been implemented under an amendment to the Sindh Prohibition of Non-Degradable Plastic Products Rules 2014.

The Secretary of Environment clarified that only eco-friendly bags will be permitted. Agha Shahnawaz stated that plastic bags are the root cause of environmental destruction and zero tolerance will be adopted in this regard.

He warned that the implementation of this announcement will be ensured and strict action will be taken against violators. The Sindh government has appealed for public cooperation, declaring environmental protection a national responsibility.

Sharjeel briefs President Zardari on Sindh projects

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon called on President Asif Ali Zardari at the President’s House Islamabad. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon gave a detailed briefing to President Asif Ali Zardari on several development projects in Sindh, specifically ongoing transport projects.

President Asif Ali Zardari ordered that all transport projects in Sindh be undertaken through modern technology. President Asif Ali Zardari instructed to increase the numbers of Pink Taxi and Pink Scooty to provide special facilities to women.

President Asif Ali Zardari also said that women empowerment is our top priority, and these projects not only offer vital facilities but are also an important landmark in generating new job opportunities for women.



JI's demand for fair water distribution in Sindh

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat-e-Islami Sindh’s leader, Kashif Saeed Sheikh, emphasized the fair distribution of agricultural water in Sindh.

He stated that the water shortage in Sindh is causing difficulties for settlers and farmers. The collusion

of influential people controlling the current canals is affecting the rights of ordinary farmers.

Kashif Saeed Sheikh mentioned that in several districts, including Badin, Thatta, and Umerkot, even drinking water is not available to the

people. Due to public resistance, the plans for new canals on the Indus River have been temporarily suspended. The Sindhu Darya Bachao (Save Indus River) movement will continue, and a gathering is scheduled for May 18 at Jinnah Bagh in Karachi.

MQM delegation calls on Governor

KARACHI (PPI): A delegation of MQM Pakistan, led by Chairman Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and comprising members of the provincial assembly, met with Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House.

During the meeting, the assembly members discussed the public issues of their constituencies and presented various suggestions. The assembly members informed the governor in detail about the issues in their respective constituencies. The Governor of Sindh assured them of removing obstacles in resolving these problems. It was also agreed during the meeting to consider the suggestions presented by the assembly members. The governor assured effective implementation of these suggestions.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkiye, Irfan Neziroglu called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

India’s security system failed in Pahalgam: PA Speaker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan on Monday expressed serious concerns over India’s war threats, its violations of the Indus Waters Treaty and the threats posed to peace and stability in the region.

Addressing a press conference here, he termed the Pahalgam incident as a major failure of India’s security system and putting blame on Pakistan was extremely irresponsible act.

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said that Pakistan was the country

most affected by terrorism and had sacrificed over 80,000 lives and achieved numerous victories in this war over the past two decades. He said, “Pakistan Army is one of the most professional forces in the world and is prepared for all forms of warfare.”

He emphasized that the Indus Waters Treaty was not a unilateral agreement and India had no authority to revoke it. The speaker paid tribute to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and the Pakistani media for

demonstrating maturity and representing the national stance in an exemplary manner during this critical time.

He also criticized the Indian media for deliberately fueling war hysteria and hatred to cover up their political failures. People of Pakistan were standing firmly with their armed forces and saluted every soldier guarding the borders, he added. Criticizing the opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, he added that its refusal to attend a key briefing on national security was a short-sighted decision.

National Assembly SC supports PPAF initiatives: Ghulam Ali

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee (SC) on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety MNA Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur on Monday said that they would support the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) to wipe out poverty and improve lives of the marginalized communities in the country.

He said that the poor people should be provided with quality education, health and job opportunities to ease their lives and better future. While speaking to the PPAF’s partners organizations in Sindh during an experience sharing meeting organized by PPAF at a local hotel, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur said that PPAF’s transformative role in empowering marginalized communities through community-led development model was commendable.

He was of the view that PPAF’s inclusive and participatory approach was significant to alleviate poverty in the country.

Talpur said that the partners were doing good work but nations were not built by NGOs they merely might fill in the gap. He said that PPAF worked hard in the sectoral development. Secretary of Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Navid Ahmad Shaikh speaking on the occasion said that the government was major partner in the whole process of providing relief to the people.

He said that the government was committed to improving lives of the marginalized section of the society under various public friendly initiatives. Shaikh said that PPAF was formed by the government and we need to identify and make adjustments within it to develop trust of donors. He also highlighted government’s role and support to uplift the marginalized communities under sustainable projects.

Earlier, welcoming the participants of the meeting, Chairperson of PPAF’s Board of Directors Mohammad Tahseen reaffirmed PPAF’s commitment to reaching out to underserved and hard-to-access areas of the country. He emphasized that PPAF’s autonomy was its strength.

CEO of PPAF Nadir Gul Barech highlighted organization’s transformative role in addressing poverty. He informed that the Standing Committee that since its inception PPAF had mobilized over \$1 billion to support multi-sectoral poverty reduction programs in collaboration with 163 partner organizations in 150 districts of the country. He said that PPAF’s was working in 27 districts through 47 partners in Sindh. It had disbursed 279,300 interest-free loans, training to 135,400 individuals and reached out to approximately 3.05 million people through water and infrastructure projects.

OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ANTI-TERRORISM COURT, KOHAT DIVISION, KOHAT.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

The Chairman procurement committee Anti-Terrorism Court, Kohat invites sealed bids from reputed authorized dealers, firms/companies for the purchase of following items under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public procurement of goods, works and services rules 2014 amended till date.

| Sr.No | Items Description | Bid evaluation procedure | Specifications |
|-------|-------------------|--|---|
| 1. | I.T Equipments | Single stage two envelopes Rule 6(2) (b) of KPPRA Rules, 2014 amended till date. | Details/particulars of required documents are available in bid/solicitation documents which can be obtained from Superintendent office during office hours before closing date. |
| 2. | Plant & Machinery | | |

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The sealed bid/ tender documents should reach to the office of the Judge, Anti-Terrorism Court, Kohat through registered post or personally by the bidders on or before 22.05.2025, 10:00AM which will be opened in presence of bidders on same day at 11:00AM or their representative, however it will be noted that supply order will be subject to the availability of fund. The envelopes shall be marked in bold letters as technical proposal and financial proposal.
- Tender must be accompanied with bid security 5% in the shape of CDR only in the name of Judge, Anti-Terrorism Court, Kohat.
- The successful bidders must deposit 10% performance guarantee of the total amount under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of goods, work and services rules 2014 amended till date.
- Incomplete, ambiguous and conditional or below specification bid shall not be entertained.
- The firm/ vendor should be registered with sale tax and income tax department and FBR, having valid NTN, Valid document of the above must be attached with bidding documents.
- The successful bidders will be strictly bound to supply the items according to specification within fifteen days after the issuance of supply order. Failure in supply within stipulated period or below specification shall entail in cancellation of bid or forfeiture of the earnest money/ call deposit return (CDR) and in case of cancellation of supply order, new supply order will be issued to next lowest bidder.
- Quantity can be increased/decreased according to the available budget. The subject purchase will be made subject to availability of funds.
- The bidder must submit an affidavit that they are not blacklisted with any Government or Semi Government organization.
- The firm should include GST and all other applicable while submitting rates.
- The firm will be bound to replace the items damage during supply. Moreover, approved rated will be valid for thirty days from date of bidding and will not be changed.
- The competent authority reserved the right to reject all or any of the bid or may also cancel tender at all, at any stage subject to any reason being communication to bidder upon proper under Rule 47(1) of KPPRA Rules, 2014.
- The sample of items so supplied will be provided to the office of undersigned before pre-bid meeting or opening of tender for technical evaluation.
- A pre bid meeting will be held on 19.05.2025 (Monday) at 12:30PM in the office of the undersigned convened by the procurement committee. All the prospective bidders are encouraged to attend for any clarification regarding specifications or on sight requirements of the equipment.

JUDGE, ANTI-TERRORISM COURT, KOHAT DIVISION, KOHAT
Chairman Purchase Committee
Phone No. 0922-920099

SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE (ADMN), KOHAT

TENDER NOTICE

Tender are invited from well reputed/registered Firms/companies for supply of following items for official use on Civil Courts:

| S. No. | Item Descriptions | Bid Evaluation Procedure | Specifications |
|--------|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Furniture | Single Stage, two envelopes | Detailed particulars of required items are available in Bid/solicitation documents which can be obtained from the office of Senior Civil Judge (Admn), Kohat during office hours before closing date |
| 2 | I.T Equipment's | | |
| 3 | Hardware | | |
| 4 | Plant & Machinery | Single stage single envelope | |
| 5 | Stationary | | |

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

All the goods must be offered with standard warranty.Firm shall give warranty in writing on an affidavit highlighted in the bidding documents as per the "warranty offered by the concerned manufactured and after sale services for the equipment's".

- The offered rates should be inclusive of all applicable taxes. Tender Quoted rates will applicable till 30 June 2025.
- The bidder will be eligible for evaluation that are registered with relevant tax authority for STRN, GST, I. Tax Dept/ FBR reputable, Registration Certificates must be attached with the bidding documents otherwise bid will not be entertained.
- All the taxes applicable will be deducted from the suppliers as per relevant rule.
- Bid Security @ 2 % of offered rate addressed to the Senior civil Judge (Admin), Kohat is required to be attached with each item of the tender, Bidding documents & separate bids shall be offered for each item, without call deposit tender shall not be entertained.
- The successful bidder must deposit 8% performance guarantee of the total amount under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services Rules, 2014.
- The bidder must submit an affidavit that they are not black listed with any Govt/ Semi Govt organization and that the supplied item will be genuine.
- The bidder must provide certificate with clear indications that no information has been concealed, in case distortion of facts are detected it would be sufficient cause to disqualify the bid & will lead toward blacklisting of the perspective bidder.
- The successful bidder will be strictly bound to supply the items according to specifications within 15 days after issuance of supply order. Failure in the supply within stipulated period or below specification shall entail in cancellation of that bid & forfeiture of the Earnest Money/ Call Deposit Return (CDR) and in case of cancellation of Supply Order, new supply order will be issued to next lowest bidder.
- Incomplete application/bid will not be entertained. The committee reserves the right to reject or discontinue the tender proceedings as well as to reject any or all the applications with the reasons. Grounds of rejection to be communicated to the bidders upon requests as per rule 47(1) of KPPRA Rule, 2014.
- Last date of bidding documents received to this office will be on 20th May, 2025 till 10:00 AM. The Tenders will be opened on the same last day at 11:00 AM. In presence of the bidders or the representative of the bidder.
- Bidders are required to submit their inputs or reservations, if any, regarding the bidding documents including specifications, services, and evaluation criteria in written form to the purchaser's office prior to the pre-bid meeting scheduled to be held in the office of the Senior Civil Judge (Admin) on 12th May 2025 at 11:00 AM.
- Quality shall be as per provided specification & Detail or better than that.
- Quantity can be increased or decreased according to available budget. The Subject purchase will be subject to availability of fund.
- Vendor will be responsible to provide defect free and brand-new items. In case of inferior quality, the performance guarantee may be forfeited.
- The sample of stationary items can be seen from this office during office hours till closing date.
- The sample of items so supplied will be provided to the office of the undersigned before opening of tender for technical evaluation.

Chairman Procurement Committee,
Kohat Contact # 0922-9260238

Government appoints VCs in 18 public universities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant education-focused initiative, the Higher Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued appointment letters for Vice Chancellors in 18 public sector universities across the province.

Sharing his thoughts on the development, Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Archives, and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi, stated that the government is prioritizing reforms in the higher education sector in line with the party's vision. He emphasized that since assuming office, concrete steps have been taken to address the financial and administrative challenges facing universities, and the

positive results of these efforts are now visible.

As per the official notification, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal has been appointed as Vice Chancellor of Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan, Prof. Dr. Tahir Irfan Khan at Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalili at Khushal Khan Khattak University in Karak. Similarly, Prof. Dr. Aurangzeb Khan has been appointed at the University of Lakki Marwat, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali at Hazara University Mansehra, and Prof. Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan at the University of Science and Technology Mardan.

Further appointments include Prof. Dr. Wadood

Jan at the University of Agriculture Swat, Prof. Dr. Sardar Jan at the University of Shangla, Prof. Dr. Shakeebullah at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Swat, and Prof. Dr. Johar Ali at the University of Peshawar. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sadiq has been appointed at the University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Jamil Ahmad at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, and Prof. Dr. Zahoorul Haq at Bacha Khan University Charsadda.

Other appointees include Prof. Dr. Saeed Badshah at Shuhada-e-APS University of Technology Nowshera, Prof. Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas (Retired) at Kohat University of Science and Technology, Prof. Dr.

Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan (Retired) at the University of Science and Technology Bannu, Prof. Dr. Ghazala Yasmeen at Women University Swabi, and Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali at the University of Agriculture Dera Ismail Khan.

According to the notification, each Vice Chancellor has been appointed for a four-year term, with performance evaluation tied to the first two years of service.

Minister Meena Khan Afridi expressed his confidence that the newly appointed Vice Chancellors will dedicate their efforts to the welfare of students and faculty, and work diligently to enhance academic quality and institutional governance.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, presiding over a high-level weekly review meeting to assess the ongoing development initiatives across the province.

CS reviews progress on development initiatives across KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, presided over a high-level weekly review meeting to assess the ongoing development initiatives across the province. The meeting was attended by administrative secretaries and senior officials from relevant departments.

A key focus of the meeting was the comprehensive master planning of various tourist destinations across the province, aimed at promoting sustainable tourism, preserving natural and cultural heritage, and boosting economic activity. The master planning exercise currently underway includes strategic locations across the merged districts and settled areas.

In Upper Kurram, master planning covers Gavi

Pass-Teri Mengal, Khewas, Baghe-e-Laila, Maikay, and Chapri Tourist Point. Orakzai features Godar Resort, Nanawar Caves, Yakho Kandow, and Samana, while Gabbar Chena in Bajaur and Tirah Valley in Khyber are also part of the plan. In South and North Waziristan, Shawal, Speshtheen Ladha, and Razmak are being prioritized for tourism development.

In Hazara Division, Galiyat under GDA, along with Kaghan, Naran, and Chatrar Plain, are being integrated into tourism development strategies. In Swat, key locations include Madiyan, Behrain, Miandam, Malam Jabba, Kalam, Mahodhand, Gabin Jaba, and Marghuzar. Kumrat in Dir and Garam Chashma and Gol National Park in Chitral are also part of the tourism roadmap.

Master planning of historical and cultural sites are also

underway. These include Takht Bahi and Siri Behlol in Mardan; Barikot and Ghalagay in Swat; Chakdara in Dir; Kailash Valley in Chitral; and Rehman Dheri, Bilot, Sheikh Badin, and Paniala in Dera Ismail Khan.

The Chief Secretary was briefed on infrastructure connectivity projects, notably the road link from Indus Highway (N-55) to the Hakla-D.I. Khan Motorway. This 42.3-kilometre road—planned under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model—will connect Bannu to Kallur and significantly enhance trade and mobility by linking directly to the Hakla-Yarik Motorway (M-14).

Additionally, the financial structuring for the Daraban Economic Zone is in progress. As a declared Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Dera Ismail Khan, Daraban is envisioned to

become a hub for industrial development and investment, providing employment and economic uplift to the region.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed progress on critical initiatives including the Thandiani Tourism Project, Ganoor and Mankiyal Integrated Tourism Zones, Swat Motorway Phase-II, and the Peshawar-D.I. Khan Motorway.

Institutional strengthening also featured prominently in the meeting. Efforts to enhance the capacity of the Performance Management and Reforms Unit (PMRU) are ongoing, with a focus on improved governance and delivery mechanisms. Notably, 215 tenders and 74 procurement plans have been successfully uploaded on the E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS), enhancing transparency and efficiency in public procurement.

Swati seeks urgent report on multi-billion suspicious transactions in Kohistan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Emergency Meeting of KP Public Accounts Committee — Revelation of Multi-Billion Rupee Suspicious Transactions from District Kohistan's Government Account; Speaker Babar Saleem Swati Orders Immediate Suspension of Involved Officials and Demands Report within Three Days.

An emergency meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Accounts Committee was held at Rehman Baba Hall of the KP Assembly, chaired by Speaker and Committee Chairman Babar Saleem Swati. The meeting focused on suspected financial irregularities involving Rs. 36 billion in transactions from a government account in District Kohistan.

Terming it the most serious financial scandal in the province's history, Speaker Babar Saleem Swati expressed strong displeasure with the concerned departments — the Finance Department, Communication and Works (C&W), and the Office of the Accountant General.

He directed them to submit a detailed inquiry report within three days. He further warned that if the internal inquiry proved

unsatisfactory, an independent third-party audit would be commissioned and criminal proceedings would be initiated.

Accountant General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nasruddin, informed the committee that between 2016 and 2024, Rs. 181 billion were deposited into and Rs. 206 billion withdrawn from the said account, resulting in an unexplained shortfall of Rs. 24 billion. He explained that these accounts are nominally under the Finance Department but are practically overseen by district accounts officers under the AG's Office.

Director NAB KP, Mr. Shafiqat Mehmood, apprised the meeting that NAB has already initiated an inquiry into the matter, and all relevant documents, bank records, and official files have been requisitioned.

He assured the committee that it would be kept informed as the investigation progresses.

MPAs Sajjadullah, Arbab Usman, and Ahmad Karim Kundi expressed serious concerns during the meeting, stating that the lack of transparency in the allocation and utilization of development funds undermines public trust.

Advisor to the Finance

Department, Muzzammil Aslam, informed the committee that between 2019 and 2024, Rs. 594 billion were released for development projects, including Rs. 125 billion for road infrastructure. He clarified that the account in question was directly managed by the C&W Department, and the Finance Department had no direct oversight over it.

Speaker Babar Saleem Swati, addressing the meeting, stated: "These institutions, through complex mechanisms, deceive the nation and siphon off billions of rupees—only for politicians to be blamed in the end. This must end now. All those responsible will be brought to justice."

He added that the Public Accounts Committee, under constitutional and legal provisions, will ensure transparent accountability and no institution or individual will be given immunity.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to financial transparency, zero tolerance for corruption, and the establishment of a robust institutional accountability mechanism.

The Speaker reconvened the Public Accounts Committee meeting for next Wednesday to review progress.



Nasir Khan appointed as Social Media In-Charge of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

Raheen Badshah

In a sharp escalation of already strained Pakistan-India relations, the Indian government has unilaterally suspended the landmark Indus Waters Treaty, prompting Pakistan to withdraw from the Simla Agreement in response. The diplomatic rupture follows the tragic attack on Indian tourists in Pahalgam on April 22, an incident for which India swiftly and without evidence blamed Pakistan-based elements—an accusation Islamabad has firmly rejected.

India's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty—a 1960 accord brokered by the World Bank that governs water-sharing from the Indus River system—is being widely viewed in Islamabad as an act

of "water terrorism" and a grave violation of international law.

"Unilateral suspension of a treaty that affects the lives and livelihoods of millions is not just irresponsible—it is illegal," said Pakistan's Foreign Minister in a press briefing on Friday. The Ministry of Water Resources has warned that upstream water blockage or diversion could severely disrupt Pakistan's irrigation-based economy, particularly in Punjab and Sindh.

International legal experts have expressed concern that India's action undermines the sanctity of global water-sharing treaties and sets a dangerous precedent.

In direct response to India's aggression, Pakistan has withdrawn from the Simla Agreement, a bilateral

accord signed in 1972 that has long been the framework for dialogue between the two countries. Pakistani officials argue that India has repeatedly violated the spirit of the agreement—especially in its unilateral moves in Jammu and Kashmir—and that continued adherence offers no diplomatic benefit.

"We cannot continue to honor a framework that India itself has rendered obsolete through military occupation, demographic engineering in Kashmir, and refusal to engage in meaningful dialogue," said Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN during an emergency session.

Pakistan has now shifted its strategy toward multilateral engagement, urging the United Nations, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),

and friendly nations like China and Turkey to play a role in defusing tensions and facilitating an impartial investigation into the Kashmir attack.

Islamabad has also formally requested the World Bank to intervene over India's violation of the Indus Waters Treaty and sought urgent mediation to prevent an environmental and humanitarian crisis.

The collapse of these critical treaties has triggered fears of wider conflict. Border skirmishes along the Line of Control have already intensified, and both countries have closed their airspace to each other. With India testing long-range artillery and Pakistan responding with missile drills, the military posturing has heightened anxiety among the civilian population on both

sides of the border.

Defense analysts warn that the absence of treaties removes crucial safety valves, leaving both nations more vulnerable to escalation and miscalculation.

Despite growing tensions, Pakistan has reiterated its commitment to peace based on justice and equality. Islamabad maintains that dialogue-facilitated by neutral parties—remains the only sustainable path forward.

However, that dialogue cannot occur under unilateral coercion or when Pakistan's sovereignty and survival are threatened.

"This is not just about treaties—it's about trust, dignity, and regional peace," said the Foreign Office spokesperson. "Pakistan stands ready to talk, but not to surrender."



Hanif Khan

MOST alarmingly, the crisis of good governance in Pakistan has negatively impacted the country in multiple ways.

The crisis of good governance has given birth to political instability in Pakistan. Political instability increased in Pakistan due to widespread corruption which resulted in the rise of populist and polarised politics. Moreover, weak rule of law is the another key indicator of bad governance which leads to protests, lawlessness and harsh responses from state or non-state actors which lead to political instability. Furthermore, the elite capture and the existing inequality among classes also agitate the sentiments of people across the country which leads to ethnic or regional conflicts; as a result, political instability increases. "Dr. Ishrat Hussain argues in his book, "Governing the Ungovernable" that Pakistan has experienced political instability due to prolonged crisis of good governance." Hence, it is observed that the crisis of good governance in Pakistan has triggered political instability and it further provided mushrooming growth for economic instability.

Economic crisis is another visible outcome of the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. Pragmatic and result-oriented policies are the key indicators of good governance which results in economic growth. However, in Pakistan, the economic

development could not be achieved due to bad governance. Bad governance leads to inconsistency of policies which disrupts economic growth of Pakistan. The weak rule of law leads to mismanagement of different companies; resultantly, the economic crisis multiplies. Additionally, poverty ratio increases with bad governance and economic meltdown further worsened. It has been noticed that the crisis of good governance paves way for depreciation of currency and foreign loans, which ultimately exacerbate the existing economic crisis in Pakistan. The former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan stated in 2021 that the primary of Pakistan is not the lack of resources but its governance, which results in economic crisis. It is derived from the above discussion that the crisis of good governance has given birth to the economic crisis of Pakistan. The existing economic crisis provides launching pad for increased poverty rate and inequality.

The crisis of good governance in Pakistan has increased poverty and inequality at an alarming pace. Decisions and policy formulation as a result of bad governance directly impact the economy of Pakistan negatively, which encourages poverty and social inequality. It has been argued by different scholars that corruption and misallocation of resource are the outcome of bad governance,

which ultimately increase poverty level and social inequality in Pakistan. According to the World Bank Report on Governance and Poverty in Pakistan (2023) "Bad inefficient allocation of resources is a significant barrier to poverty alleviation in Pakistan". Hence, it is analysed that the crisis of good governance has increased poverty and inequality in Pakistan through corrupt practices and misallocation of resources. Brain drain is another direct impact of poverty which is the ultimate result of bad governance in Pakistan.

Brain drain is one of another dire consequences of the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. Due to bad governance, poverty and unemployment have been increased drastically in Pakistan which resulted in increased brain drain. Furthermore, due to bad governance, the government failed miserably to provide job opportunities to the educated and skilled youth of the country. Consequently, most of the frustrated youth fled the country in order to win bread and butter for the families. In 2024, approximately 727,000 people went abroad for employment which discloses the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. From the discussion above, it is observed that brain drain in Pakistan increased significantly due to the crisis of good governance in Pakistan.

Moreover, people in Pakistan lost faith and trust

in democracy due to the existing crisis of good governance. The masses do not believe in democratic process as public trust erodes in political and state institutions, rule of law weakens and a perception that democracy failed to deliver justice and social equality is created. Consequently, people search for other choices instead of democracy. According to Dr. Ishrat Hussain, "When democracy fails to deliver, people start looking for alternatives." Additionally, bad governance leads to weaker institutions, discontinuity of policies and poor public services which ultimately, results in trust deficit between people and governance institutions.

Furthermore, law and order situation worsened due to the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. The law and order situation in Pakistan has significantly deteriorated due to bad governance. Scholars opine that massive political interference in key institutions like police and judiciary leads to deteriorating law and order situation in Pakistan. It has been observed that due to political interference, criminals are at large which destabilizes the law and order situation of the country. Likewise, terrorism and extremism increased considerably due to the crisis of good governance in Pakistan as poor governance has failed to dismantle terrorist's networks. The recent resurgence of militants in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan is a testimony to the fact that the crisis of good governance has fuelled terrorism and extremism in the country. However, despite the certain challenges to good governance in Pakistan, there are some suggested pragmatic measures due to which good governance in Pakistan can be revived.

All the stakeholders should strive hard for achieving political instability in order to reap the real benefits of good governance in Pakistan. Political leaders of different parties should close their heads and work for political stability as without political stability, the dream of good governance cannot be materialized. It is observed that countries with stable political setup enjoy good governance and vice versa. Political stability is crucial for the improvement of key indicators of good governance like strengthened institutions, policy continuation, building trust of people in democratic process, etc. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan once said, "Good governance requires political stability. Without it, democracy becomes fragile and reforms are stalled." Political stability leads to strengthened institutions which leads to good governance both in short and long run. The revival of good governance in Pakistan immediately strengthening of institutions. Strong institutions ensure elimination of cor-

ruption, ensure rules of law, transparency and accountability and local governance. Maleeha Lodhi argues in her book, "Pakistan: Beyond the Crisis State" that weak institutions are the root cause of bad governance in Pakistan. According to her, Pakistan can achieve good governance in its true sense by investing in institutions. Hence, it is recommended that Pakistan should take practical steps towards strengthening its key institution in order to revive good governance in Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistan should also prioritize local governance in order to improve governance in Pakistan. Local governance devolve powers and local people involves in decision making, hence, paves way for good governance. Local governance is crucial for good governance as it ensures better service delivery, devolution and decentralization of power, strengthening democracy at grassroots level and reduce bureaucratic hurdles. The UNDP Pakistan Report 2022 states that countries with effective local governance mechanisms show higher levels of citizen satisfaction service delivery and accountability.

Ensuring rule of law is one of the most effective remedies for the ill health of governance in Pakistan, countries with effective rule of law enjoy good governance by minimizing corruption, ensuring meritocracy and transparency, strong

institutions, ensuring human rights, etc. In order to cultivate the seed of good governance, Pakistan should take steps for rule of law as the world justice Project 2023 report suggests that Pakistan ranked 129 out of 140 countries in rule of law, which requires a strengthened legal systems to achieve better governance. Hence, it is recommended that the government must ensure rule of law for the government must ensure rule of law for the revival of good governance in Pakistan.

Lastly, the government must embrace technology and ensure its better utilization in different departments for ensuring good governance in Pakistan. E-Governance is a concept in which technology is used in different state institutions for better service delivery. The government must introduce technology in governance in order to achieve fast accountability, efficiency, transparency and citizen participation in decision making. Moreover, security is one of the most important pillars of good governance and the security can also be increased by installing CCTV cameras in key areas. Hence, it is analyzed that the government must introduce technology to different key departments in order to revive good governance in Pakistan. To conclude with, Pakistan failed miserably to enjoy the real fruits of good governance due to various factors which has adversely impacted the country.

However, Pakistan can handle the crisis of good governance by taking certain measures. The main factors responsible behind the crisis of good governance includes delayed constitutions making, military interventions, weak institutions and poor enforcement. Moreover, rampant corruption and low literacy ratio and lack of awareness further exacerbated the crisis of good governance in Pakistan. The crisis of good governance has negatively affected the country. Political instability, economic meltdown and higher poverty and inequality are the visible outcomes of bad governance in Pakistan. Additionally, the crisis of good governance has also resulted in brain drain, lack of trust in democratic process and institutions and worsened law and order situation. However, there are several options with Pakistan which can help in the revival of good governance in Pakistan. The government should ensure political stability, strengthening of institutions, local governance, rule of law and technology in order to benefit from the fruits of good governance. There is no denying the fact that still, there are certain bottlenecks in the way to good governance in Pakistan, but it is hoped that soon good governance will be revived in Pakistan as "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise".

The author is an Mphil scholar in Agricultural Sciences and currently, he serves at the Directorate of Prosecution, Government of KP

The Crisis of Good Governance in Pakistan - II



In brief

WSSCM approves audit F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Board of Directors of the Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) has approved audit manual after nine years. In the meeting new revenue streams and expansion of the company to Sheikh Maltoon Town has also been approved. The BoD 74th meeting held under the chairmanship of Chairman BoD Engineer Adil Nawaz while members Javed Hussain, Mubina Raziuddin, CEO Shahid Khan, Regional Municipal Officer Zeeshan Arif, and Additional Assistant Commissioner Tanvir Shahzad attended the meeting while Section Officer Local Government Azam Khan and Budget Officer Finance Department Qazi Zia Ur Rahman participated in the meeting through Zoom. In the meeting it was decided to launch a social media campaign for the company's slogan. The BoD also approved the minutes of the previous meeting and focused on strengthening internal controls, improving public service delivery, and ensuring financial sustainability. Speaking on the occasion Chairman Engineer Adil Nawaz paid tribute to the members of the Audit Committee on the making of Audit Manual and stated that it is praiseworthy to make manual during the short period of time. The chairman also announced the implementation of accountability system, granting the CEO full authority to ensure performance based policy within the company. The CEO was directed to expedite measures to enhance revenue, which would directly impact the quality and reach of services provided to citizens.

Chairman DDAC meets KP Minister F.P. Report

KARAK: Chairman District Development Advisory Committee Karak expressed deep sorrow and grief over the losses of life and properties due to the Sunday torrential rains in Village Council Palosa Sar of Karak district. He expressed his heartfelt sympathies with the affected families and assured them of all possible cooperation from the provincial government. Beside other losses in the recent heavy rains, 2 youth were also swept away and martyred in the flood. He prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and granting them high place in Jannat-ul-Firdos. MPA Khurshed Khattak directed the concerned quarters to provide relief to the affected and intensify relief activities in the affected areas. Chairman DDAC said that the entire nation is with the affected people in this difficult time and shares their pain and suffering equally.

Protests against Indian allegations F.P. Report

LARKANA: The political and social organizations, Pakistan Sunni Tehreek and Muslim League (N) advocate Babu sarfraz Jatoti Group, took out separate protest rallies in Larkana city against the fabricated allegations of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday. According to the details, Pakistan Sunni Tehreek Larkana took out a protest rally from Ghanti Phatak to Jinnah Bagh Chowk against the allegations and propaganda made by the Modi government in the Pahalgam incident, the protesters also raised slogans while holding placards and banners.

Educationional advancement key for national progress

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHRAN: A renowned politician and social worker Jahangir Khan Tareen has said that aligning the education system with modern requirements is the need of the hour. He stated that no nation can compete with developed countries without equipping its people with modern education. "Providing advanced education to future generations is my life's mission," he remarked during his visit today to review the construction progress of Amna Girls College.

During the briefing, CEO of the Tareen Education Foundation, Akbar Khan, informed Mr. Jahangir Tareen that the Amna Girls College project will cost Rs. 700 mil-



lion and is expected to be completed by August. Jahangir Khan Tareen instructed the team to ensure that construction is completed within the designated timeline.

He also visited the Government Amna Girls School, operating under the

Tareen Education Foundation, and inspected the classrooms, science lab, and computer lab. It is worth noting that Jahangir Khan Tareen has personally allocated Rs. 2.7 billion for the Amna Girls College and Ticer University Lodhran projects.

Prof D. Zafar assumes charge as VC KUST

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The renowned physicist and academician, Professor Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas, has officially assumed the position of Vice Chancellor at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). A formal notification in this regard was issued by the government, on Monday.

Prior to this appointment, Dr. Zafar Ilyas served as Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Chairman of the Department of Physics, and Professor at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. He brings with him extensive experience in

teaching, research, and academic administration, and has played a pivotal role in promoting higher education in Pakistan.

Dr. Zafar Ilyas was warmly welcomed by Registrar Rauf Khan; Deans Dr. Ejaz Ahmed, Dr. Muhammad Jamil, and Dr. Dilawar Khan; Director Quality Enhancement Cell Dr. Zeeshan Bangash; Director ORIC Nader Sarfraz; Director Academics Dr. Zeeshan Bangash; Public relations officer Rashid Ishaq, Controller of Examinations Bahadur Khan; Director Sports Wajid Khan; and other faculty and staff



members. They expressed confidence that under his leadership, the university will continue to progress and achieve new milestones.

Religious seminary's land dispute resolved

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A 28-year-old dispute over a religious seminary in the Maidan area of Lower Dir has been amicably resolved through sustained efforts by local elders and a jirga at Lal Qila here the other day. The conflict, which had persisted since 1996 between the local chapter of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and the now-defunct Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), centered on the ownership and control of a religious institution.

The resolution was achieved after six months of negotiations facilitated by a jirga comprising community elders. Both parties during the jirga, agreed to construct a central mosque on the disputed site, which will remain free from political affiliations and influence. Haji Muhammad

Wahid has been appointed as the supervisor for the mosque's construction, with full authority to oversee the project.

The dispute originated in 1996 when Jamaat-e-Islami claimed ownership of the land, asserting that it had entrusted the property to the late Maulana Sufi Muhammad, founder of TNSM. Conversely, TNSM chief, the Late Maulana Sufi Muhammad maintained that the land belonged to him and that he was authorized to use it as the organization's central office. The disagreement led to prolonged tensions between the two groups.

Sources privy to the development said that representatives from both sides convened in Kumbhar, Maidan, where they formally signed the agreement. The meeting was attended by former MPA

Haji Saeed Gul and Hafizullah Khaksar representing Jamaat-e-Islami, and Ziaullah, son of the late Sufi Muhammad, along with Mufti Abdullah representing TNSM. Following the agreement, participants offered collective Zuhr prayers at the site, symbolizing unity and reconciliation.

They said the local community expressed profound satisfaction over the peaceful resolution of the long-standing dispute. Residents have lauded the efforts of the jirga and community elders in facilitating a solution that promotes harmony and religious unity in the region. Construction of the central mosque is set to commence in the coming days, marking a new chapter of cooperation and mutual respect between the previously opposing factions.

Teachers foundational stone of nation: Altaf

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The Central President of Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan, Professor Dr. Altaf Hussain Langrial, visited Nowshera for a one-day visit. Upon arrival, he was warmly welcomed by the district officials and workers of Tanzeem-e-Asatza, who showered him with flowers and garlands.

A welcome program was held at Government High School Nowshera Cantt No. 1, where Professor Dr. Altaf Hussain Langrial addressed the gathering. Professor Dr. Altaf Hussain Langrial stated that the pri-

mary objective of Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan is to seek the pleasure of Allah and to work towards the betterment of the education system.

He emphasized that Tanzeem-e-Asatza is working tirelessly to promote an Islamic education system in the country and to protect the rights and interests of teachers. He criticized the class-based education system, stating that it is weakening the education system and posing a threat to national security.

The central leader highlighted that Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan is a well-

organized and structured organization that supports good initiatives and opposes bad ones. During the program, shields were distributed to recognize outstanding performance and contributions.

Dr. Muhammad Nasir, Provincial President of Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan, also addressed the gathering, along with other leaders. The event showcased the strong organizational structure and commitment of Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan towards promoting education and protecting teachers' rights.

Deadline for transporters to hold visa, passport F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Proper travelling documents (visa and passport) have been made obligatory for transporters to travel for carrying cargo on both sides of the border, Immigration official Torkham informed.

Earlier, in August 2024 Temporary Admission Document (TAD) policy had been imposed through which the transporters were asked to register their trucks and crew members in their respective country and the drivers were exempted for visa and passport.

Through banners, displayed in various points in Torkham on Monday read that 31 May 2025 has been set as the deadline for the drivers of vehicles carrying bilateral trade commodities to get proper visa and passport. After expiring the time limit no driver will be permitted to cross in or out the Torkham border, it warned.

An official in Torkham while confirming the visa, passport conditions for drivers said that although Torkham was an international crossing, the transport community was free for years of holding proper traveling documents. The government decided to implement the visa, passport on the drivers to halt illegal penetration in the country, he added.

The newly restricted visa policy worried the transporters and they said that the time consuming process of the visa would not only multiply their miseries but would also suffer transporting of export and import. They asked to set up a special desk at both sides of the border where they could easily and speedily obtain a visa.

Police fails to arrest culprits F.P. Report

SUJAWAL: The police have so far failed to find any clue pertaining to a theft case in which the burglars took away solar panels and inverters after breaking open the door where a solar panel was installed to bring respite to students in sweltering heat.

According to details provided by the district education department, unknown thieves barged into the school late Saturday night and stole solar panels, department and the headmaster of the school came to know about the incident on the very next day and registered a case against unknown suspects at Sujawal police station.

Headmaster of the school Tufail Temro said that he had multiple times asked concerned authorities to strengthen the security of the school but no satisfactory measures had been taken, adding that those who were bound to provide protection to the educational institutions had been taking this issue seriously. The school he said had an enrollment of over two hundred students coming there for education from the far flung areas of the district.

An official of district education department Aslam Parvez condemned the incident and warned that such incidents would create a sense of insecurity and insurgency among students, their parents and public at large. He demanded higher authorities to intervene and bring permanent resolution to this chronic issue of Sujawal district. A teacher Rasheed Memon said that the police authorities had assured them of bringing the culprits to book and beefing up the security of the high school at night.

‘Buner Gul Dh Namair’ festival inaugurated



F.P. Report

BUNER: The three-day "Buner Gul Dh Namair" Festival" has officially started on Sunday Night at College Ground Sawari and will continue till Tuesday evening. The festivities formally inaugurated by PTI Central Chairman MNA Buner Barrister Gohar Kgan along with Minister Sports and Youth Syed Fakhar Jihan Bacha and Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum.

Similarly, the women's festival will continue till Tuesday evening at Girls Degree College Hashim Sar Daggar, where equal opportunities for entertainment and shopping have been provided for women and children. With the joint efforts of the Buner administration and the provincial sports directorate.

The opening ceremony of the colorful events was attended by Tehreek-e-Insaf Central Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jahan Bacha, Secretary Sports, Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum, all administrative officers, area elders, sports enthusiasts, journalists, players and youth in large numbers.

In the three-day festival, along with traditional, general games, local games "Kabaddi" and "Mokha" and cultural "Dol Sarna" and culturle dance remained the

center of attention of everyone and were thoroughly enjoyed. The participants enjoyed the fireworks and various tricks performed on the stage in the opening ceremony and everyone applauded heartily.

Three-day festival swings have been set up for children's entertainment and stalls of various items have also been set up. A Meena Bazaar has also been set up in the festival where everything necessary is available. The inaugural ceremony was addressed by Barrister Gohar Khan, Provincial Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan Bacha, Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum.

The speakers said that the organization of this festival will send a message of peace to the whole world that Pakistan is a peaceful country and Buner is a peaceful district where there are many opportunities for sightseeing and tourism and the hospitable Buneri welcome tourists. The speakers said that this festival will bring out a good image of Buner which will go to the whole world and will promote tourism and local sports and culture.

Barrister Gohar Khan said that despite differences with the central government, in the current tense situation with India, the PTI will stand with the country and the nation like a leaden wall and together we will give a full and decisive response to every aggression of India.

Karak district will get its due share: Minister

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Agriculture Major Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal has said that Karak district is all of us and for its rapid development, we all have to work above all kinds of affiliations and differences and move forward with mutual consultation. He further said that Karak district has the same right over the resources of the province as any other district does, so we will continue to give Karak its share in the provincial resources.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held with the Karak Tehsil Cabinet under the leadership of Tehsil Mayor Azmat Khattak and Tehsil President Asim Khattak. Altaf Qadir, founder and senior PTI leader of District Karak, was also present on the occasion.

The Agriculture Minister briefed the meeting in detail about the ongoing projects and his future plans of action in Karak

district, especially in the tehsil.

Sajjad Barakwal said, in the past, less attention was paid to Karak and no proper resources were provided. However, now, on the

his full confidence in the leadership of Tehsil Mayor Azmat Khattak and assured him to go ahead with mutual consultation and complete the ongoing projects in the area.



instructions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, special attention is being paid to the areas that were neglected and deprived of its resources in the past and InshaAllah, everything will be brought to Karak that is in the interest of its people. He expressed his determination to work together regarding the development and public interest of the district.

The Minister expressed

Expressing his views on this occasion, the Agriculture Minister said that no district or area will be abused in the Agriculture Sector and everyone will get its due share and rights. He said that he is making every effort that not even an inch of Karak district remains untouched by the agriculture or forests. He said that a training center will also be established soon in Ghundi Shahbaz Khan.

Paigham e Pakistan a voice for national cohesion

F.P. Report

Toba Tek Singh: Under the auspices of the District Administration Toba Tek Singh, a seminar titled "Paigham-e-Pakistan" was held today at the District Council Hall. The event aimed to promote peace, tolerance, interfaith harmony and to reinforce the national narrative of Paigham-e-Pakistan.

The participants strongly condemned Indian aggression and expressed firm national unity in defense of the homeland. The seminar was presided over by Special Assistant to the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, Maulana Maqbool Ahmad. Distinguished guests included Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu, SP Investigation Fazal Abbas, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Assistant Commissioners and Members of the Provincial Assembly including Chaudhry Haris Javid and Mian Farrukh.

A large number of religious scholars, members of the Peace Committee, civil society representatives, the Christian bishop, business community, teachers, media personnel and students were in attendance. Renowned

poet Atif Al-Fahani presented a heartfelt poem titled "Aman Ho Mere Watan Mein Aman Ho" (Let There Be Peace in My Homeland), evoking patriotic sentiments.

In his keynote address, Maulana Maqbool Ahmad emphasized that Paigham-e-Pakistan is a unified national declaration endorsed by over 1,800 leading religious scholars at the Presidency in Islamabad. The decree unequivocally declares terrorism, suicide attacks, rebellion against the state and sectarian violence as unlawful under Islamic teachings. He described the narrative as an intellectual fortress for promoting peace, tolerance, and sectarian as well as interfaith harmony.

He further stated that at a time when India is attempting to weaken Pakistan through aggression, propaganda and border violations the entire nation stands united under the guidance of Paigham-e-Pakistan, supporting its armed forces, institutions and leadership. He added that under the leadership of Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir the armed forces are fully vigilant in defending the motherland, while Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has coura-

geously represented Pakistan's stance on international platforms. He reiterated that Pakistan's religious, political, military leadership, and its people are on one page a unity that serves as the strongest weapon against hostile forces. DC Muhammad Naeem Sindhu remarked that Paigham-e-Pakistan is an ideological and national narrative that ensures the survival of the state, supremacy of the Constitution and societal harmony. He stressed the need for national unity to confront internal and external challenges facing the country.

"From armed forces to scholars, traders, students and minorities the entire nation is united — no enemy can succeed against this solidarity," he added. He further stated that the strong resonance of this message in a peaceful and conscientious district like Toba Tek Singh is testament to the nation's real strength: the unity, intellectual harmony, and awareness of its people. SP Investigation Fazal Abbas highlighted that the police force not only ensures law and order but also plays a vital role in promoting positive thinking and legal awareness among the youth.



GAZA: Palestinians carrying the bodies of people killed in Israeli attacks, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Putin says he hopes there will be no need to use nuclear weapons

MOSCOW (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that the need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine had not arisen and that he hopes it will not. In comments aired in a film by Russian state television about his quarter of a century in power, Putin said Russia has the strength and the means to bring the conflict in Ukraine to a "logical conclusion." Responding to a question about Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Putin said: "There has been no need to use those (nuclear) weapons ... and I hope they will not be required."

"We have enough strength and means to bring what was started in 2022 to a logical conclusion with the outcome Russia requires," he said. Putin signed a revamped version of Russia's nuclear doctrine in November 2024, spelling out the circumstances that allow him to use Moscow's atomic arsenal, the world's largest. That version lowered the bar, giving him that option in response to even a conventional attack backed by a nuclear power.

In the film, Putin also said Russia did not launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine - what he called a "special military operation" - in 2014, when it illegally annexed Crimea, because it was "practically unrealistic."

"The country was not ready for such a frontal confrontation with the entire collective West," he said. He claimed also that Russia "sincerely sought to solve the problem of Donbas by peaceful means." Putin said that rec-

onciliation with Ukraine was "inevitable."

Russia and Ukraine, however, remain at odds over competing ceasefire proposals. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a ceasefire is possible "even from today" if Moscow is serious about ending the war.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Czech President Petr Pavel, Zelenskyy noted that Russia has ignored a US proposal for a full ceasefire for 54 days and thanked the Czech Republic for backing Ukraine's call for a 30-day ceasefire. "Putin is very eager to show off his tanks at the (Victory Day) parade," Zelenskyy said, "but he should think about ending his war."

Zelenskyy again expressed deep skepticism over Russia's proposal of a 72-hour ceasefire in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II, saying Moscow continues to launch hundreds of assaults despite publicly signaling interest in a partial truce. "Even during Easter, despite promises - including to the United States - Russia carried out more than a hundred assaults," Zelenskyy said, referring to Russian attacks during the 30-hour Easter ceasefire unilaterally declared by Putin.

Zelenskyy has repeatedly called for a more substantial 30-day pause in hostilities, as the US had initially proposed. The Kremlin said the Victory Day truce was on humanitarian grounds and will run from the

start of May 8 and last through the end of May 10 to mark Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 - Russia's biggest secular holiday.

Zelenskyy thanked Pavel for his country's military support and said Ukraine hopes to receive 1.8 million artillery shells in 2025 as part of a Czech-led initiative to supply military aid to Kyiv. The initiative, launched in 2024 and supported by NATO allies, supplied Ukraine with 1.5 million artillery rounds last year. Zelenskyy also said he had discussed with Pavel "the next steps in the development of our aviation coalition," namely the creation of an F-16 training school. He said that such a base could not be opened in Ukraine because of Russian attacks. A Russian drone attack overnight on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, wounded 11 people, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said. Two children were among the wounded. The attack woke up Valentyna Fesiuk, an 83-year-old resident of Kyiv's Obolon district. "I was just sleeping when the house shook," said Valentyna Fesiuk, an 83-year-old resident of Kyiv's Obolon district. "It was at 12:30. An apartment on the 12th floor caught fire," she told The Associated Press. Another resident, Viacheslav Khotab, saw his car burning. "I was covered with broken glass," he said. "I couldn't do anything." The 54-year-old was frustrated with stalled peace negotiations: "They can't agree on anything, and we are the ones who suffer the consequences."

Small plane crash survivors recall 36-hour ordeal

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP): It was after their tiny plane crashed into the Bolivian jungle earlier this week that their ordeal really began. After smashing into the ground, the aircraft flipped over into a lagoon infested with anacondas and alligators, plunging the pilot and four passengers - including a 6-year-old boy - into a harrowing 36 hours spent clinging to the plane's wreckage before being rescued in the northeast of this Andean nation.

The doctor who treated the five survivors told The Associated Press all were conscious and in stable condition, with only the young boy's 37-year-old aunt still hospitalized for an infected gash to her head. The rest were discharged and recovering from dehydration, minor chemical burns, infected cuts, bruises and insect bites all over their bodies.

"We couldn't believe it, that they weren't attacked and left for dead," Dr. Luis Soruco, director of the hospital where the survivors were

delivered in Bolivia's tropical Beni province, said by phone after sending the pilot and two of the women home with a strong course of antibiotics. The pilot, 27-year-old Pablo Andrés Velarde, emerged to tell the story that has transfixed many Bolivians - a rare piece of uplifting news for a nation badly in need of it after years of a spiraling economic and political crisis.

"The mosquitoes wouldn't let us sleep," Velarde told reporters from his hospital cot in the provincial capital of Trinidad, where Dr. Soruco said he was in surprisingly good health and spirits. "The alligators and snakes watched us all night, but they didn't come close." Shocked that the caimans (pronounced KAY-men), a species of the alligator family native to Central and South America, didn't lunge at them, Velarde speculated it was the stench of jet fuel spilling from the wreckage that had kept the predatory reptiles at bay, although there's no scientific proof that's an effective alligator

repellent.

Velarde said that the five of them survived by eating ground cassava flour that one of the women had brought as a snack. They had nothing to drink - the lagoon water was filled with gasoline. The small plane had set off from the Bolivian village of Baures, bound for the bigger town of Trinidad farther south, where Patricia Coria Guary had a medical check-up scheduled for her 6-year-old nephew at the pediatric hospital. Dr. Soruco said. Two other women, neighbors from Baures ages 32 and 54, joined them.

Such flights are a common form of transportation in this remote Amazonian region carved with rivers. Heavy rains wash away unpaved roads this time of year. But just 27 minutes - almost halfway - into the flight, the plane's lone engine cut out. Velarde said he reported their imminent crash over a portable radio to a colleague. He recalled in interviews with local media that he scanned the vast emerald green canopy below

him and aimed for a clearing near a lagoon.

"There was no ranch or road along the route," he said. "It was just swamp." Instead of skidding across the shore as planned, the plane smashed into the ground and flipped upside down - injuring everyone on board and leaving Conia Guary with an especially deep cut to her forehead - before splashing into the water. As the plane flooded, the five of them managed to clamber on top of the fuselage, where they stayed for two terrifying nights surrounded by caimans and anacondas and attacked by swarms of mosquitoes and other insects. They waved shirts and sheets to no avail and screamed each time they heard the thud of propellers or revving of a boat engine. At the sound of approaching motorboats, "we started shining our cell phone flashlights and shouting," Velarde said. A group of fishermen noticed, and helped them into their canoe. They called the authorities and delivered them to an army helicopter some hours later.

Zelensky says does 'not believe' Russian truce pledge

KYIV (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that he did "not believe" Russia would adhere to a three-day truce to coincide with Moscow's Victory Day celebrations on May 9. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a three-day truce during commemorations for the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, saying it would test Kyiv's readiness for a long-term ceasefire.

"This is not the first challenge, nor are these the first promises made by Russia to cease fire," Zelenskyy said at a news conference with Czech President Petr Pavel. "We understand who we are dealing with, we do not believe them," said Zelenskyy, who arrived in Prague for a two-day visit accompanied by his wife. "Today and all these days they are talking about wanting some kind of partial ceasefire, but you should know, for example, that the number of assaults today is the highest in recent months," Zelenskyy said. Citing a military report, he said that Russia had carried out more than 200 attacks. "So there is no faith (in them)," Zelenskyy said. In a statement issued, Zelenskyy summarised his meeting with Pavel.

Discussions were underway for a Ukrainian-Czech pilot training school for American F-16 jets, which could not be established in Ukraine "due to current security concerns", he added. Zelenskyy also said there would be a meeting with "Czech defence companies", with details to be announced later. Pavel, a former NATO general, said that "Putin can end the war with a single decision, but he has not shown any willingness so far". The Czech Republic, a member of the European Union and NATO, has provided Ukraine with substantial humanitarian and military support since Russia's invasion began in February 2022. It has received more than half a million war refugees and supplied the Ukrainian army with equipment including tanks, armoured vehicles and helicopters.

Prague also steers a European drive to supply artillery ammunition to Ukraine, financed largely by NATO allies. "The Czech artillery initiative is working brilliantly," said Zelenskyy. The initiative is designed to make up in part for the EU's inability to meet its promise to supply one million shells to Ukraine. Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala and the speakers of both parliament chambers said they would meet Zelenskyy in Prague.

Putin, 72, says the succession is always on his mind

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin, the longest serving Kremlin chief since Josef Stalin, said in remarks aired that he was always thinking about the succession, and suggested that there could be an contest between several candidates.

Putin, a former KGB lieutenant colonel who was handed the presidency on the last day of 1999 Boris Yeltsin, served as president from 1999 to 2008, then as prime minister until 2012, and then again as president from 2012 to the present.

"I always think about it," Putin, 72, said when asked if he thought about the succession in a film by state television about Putin's quarter of a century as Russia's paramount leader entitled "Russia, Kremlin, Putin, 25 years".

Unlike Rustamov, Igor Babych, 32, had volunteered to go to war. He had worked with adults and children diagnosed with cerebral palsy, helping them with physical therapy until April 2023. In total 201 Russian soldiers died on that day, according to our data. A few hours after the strike on the training ground, then-Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu met Vladimir Putin to bring him news of military success from the front line.

GOP congressman shelled with questions about Trump

SOMERS, N.Y. (AP): Voters in US Rep. Mike Lawler's suburban New York swing district unloaded a barrage of criticism on the Republican during a raucous town hall, peppering him with questions around President Donald Trump's aggressive agenda before devolving into a chaotic chorus of boos as attendees were removed by law enforcement.

The town hall in Somers, a leafy section of Lawler's Hudson Valley district, began to teeter off the rails soon after it began. The first crack emerged when Lawler, in his opening remarks, told the packed out prep school auditorium "This is what democracy looks like."

A little while later, the congressman's mention of federal health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. drew loud jeers. "So you want, for instance, petroleum-based dyes to continue?" Lawler asked in response.

Republicans, in some instances, have made themselves scarce in their home districts following President Donald Trump's first few months in office, as party leadership expresses wariness of viral blow-back against Republicans in

vulnerable seats. Lawler, a moderate who last year won a second term and has openly expressed interest in running for governor, has instead sought to put himself in front of voters, holding a previous town hall late last month and has plans for more in the coming weeks.

Lawler's staff required people to RSVP and set up a series of ground rules, including that attendees live in the district, not record at the event, refrain from shouting or standing, and "be respectful of one another, of staff, and of the Congressman," a sign at the door read. At one point, as Lawler was responding to a question about tariffs, security and law enforcement began to surround a woman in the upper stretch of the auditorium. The crowd chanted "let her stay, let her stay" before law enforcement picked her up and carried her out. It was unclear what exactly led to her removal. "Shame! Shame! Shame!", the audience yelled. Lawler tried to get back on track: "Folks, tariffs are way more complicated than you want to make them."

"Folks, enough!", Lawler said above the din. Soon after, another person

was removed. Then another. In the audience, Jeanette Spoor, a 74-year-old retiree, said she wanted to ask Lawler about the future of Social Security and Medicaid but wasn't called on during the nearly two hour event. "You're not helping your constituents if you're making it hard for them to get help," she said in an interview.

She added, "I have no hopes for this guy." Another attendee, Kristi Thompson, 52, said she was bothered by what she said were Lawler's long-winded answers that didn't address the substance of the crowd's questions. "He claims to be available to constituents but he isn't," she said. The crowd walked out during the final question of the night, which was about protests against Israel. Lawler began to answer, but cut himself off as the room emptied out. "I appreciate everybody coming out tonight and taking the time to ask your questions and hear my answers, whether you liked them or not, or agreed with them or not, or whether you really actually wanted to listen to them or not, but I very much appreciate you participating," he said as attendees exited.

Protesters want Morocco to sever ties with Israel

TANGIER (AP): More than a year of protests over Morocco's decision to normalize ties with Israel has emboldened activists and widened a gap between the decisions of the government and the sentiments of the governed. The fury has spilled into the country's strategic ports.

Amid shipping cranes and stacked containers, 34-year-old agricultural engineer Ismail Lghazaoui marched recently through a sea of Palestinian flags and joined protesters carrying signs that read "Reject the ship," in reference to a vessel transporting fighter jet components from Houston, Texas. Activists are urging Moroccan port officials to try to block ships carrying military cargo to Israel, much like Spain did last year. Protests often target Danish shipping company Maersk, which helps transport components used to make Lockheed Martin's F-35 as part of the US Defense Department's Security Cooperative Participant Program that facilitates weapons sales to allies including Israel.

A similar boycott campaign landed Lghazaoui in prison last year, but that didn't deter him from turning out again for resurgent protests last month, after his release. Lghazaoui is one of more than a dozen activists pursued by Moroccan authorities for criticizing the government's

ties with Israel. During a rally in November in Casablanca where Lghazaoui spoke, plainclothes officers beat him and others to prevent them from advancing toward the US Consulate, he said. He later posted about Maersk on social media and was arrested and charged with incitement. Originally sentenced to a year, he served two months in prison and two on parole after the term was reduced.

"They try to silence people," Lghazaoui told The Associated Press. "They were using me to dissuade people or to push people away from what they were doing." Morocco is one of four countries that normalized ties with Israel in 2020. That year, Donald Trump brokered the Abraham Accords, which offered incentives for Arab states to establish diplomatic relations with Israel even as its peace talks with Palestinians remained stalled. The deal delivered something Moroccan diplomats had chased for years: US support for Morocco's claims over the disputed Western Sahara. But its cost - growing public resentment toward normalization - has ballooned throughout the Israel-Hamas war.

"I've rarely seen such a chasm between public opinion and the monarchy. What the power elites are doing goes completely against what the Moroccan

people want," said Aboubakr Jamaï, dean of the Madrid Center at the American College of the Mediterranean. Tens of thousands have taken to the streets of Morocco since the war began. While largely made up of families, students, Islamists, leftists and union members, the protests have also drawn more radical voices. Some have burned Israeli flags or chanted against royal adviser André Azoulay, a Jewish Moroccan. Clad in riot gear, security forces have stood by and watched as protesters denounce "normalization" and Morocco's expanding trade and military ties with Israel.

But authorities have shown that their tolerance for dissent only goes so far. Morocco's constitution generally allows for freedom of expression, although it is illegal to criticize the monarchy or King Mohammed VI and those who do can face prosecution. Throughout the war, activists who have implicated the monarchy on social media or protested businesses targeted by boycotts due to their operations in Israel have received prison sentences. The constraints mirror Egypt and Jordan, which like Morocco have publicly sympathized with the Palestinians, maintained ties with Israel and imprisoned activists who direct their ire toward the government.

Former Vice President Pence defends Constitution

BOSTON (AP): Former Vice President Mike Pence repeatedly invoked the Constitution and said it is what "binds us all together" after receiving the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. Pence received the award for his refusal to go along with President Donald Trump's efforts to remain in office after losing the 2020 election. The award recognizes Pence "for putting his life and career on the line to ensure the constitutional transfer of presidential power on Jan. 6, 2021," the JFK Library Foundation said.

"To forge a future together, we have to find common ground," Pence said. "I hope in some small way my presence here tonight is a reminder that whatever differences we may have as Americans, the Constitution is the common ground on which we stand. It's what binds us across time and generations. It's what makes us one people." His comments came hours after an interview with Trump aired in which he was asked whether US citizens and noncitizens both deserve due process as laid out in the Fifth

Amendment of the Constitution. Trump was noncommittal.

"I don't know. I'm not, I'm not a lawyer. I don't know," Trump said when pressed in an interview with NBC's Kristen Welker. It was taped at his Mar-a-Lago property in Florida and aired. Pence never mentioned Trump during his 10-minute speech but made several references to the Trump administration. Referencing what he called "these divided times, in these anxious days," he acknowledged that he probably had differences with the Democrats in the room but also with his own Republican Party "on spending, tariffs and my belief that America is the leader of the free world and must stand with Ukraine until the Russian invasion is repelled and a just and lasting peace is secured."

Trump pressured Pence to reject election results from swing states where the Republican president falsely claimed the vote was marred by fraud. Pence refused, saying he lacked such authority. When a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, some chanted that

they wanted to "hang Mike Pence." Pence was whisked away by Secret Service agents, narrowly avoiding a confrontation with the rioters. "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify," Trump wrote at the time on X, formerly Twitter, as rioters moved through the Capitol and Pence was in hiding with his family, aides and security detail inside the building. Pence rejected the Secret Service's advice that he leave the Capitol, staying to continue the ceremonial election certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential victory once rioters were cleared.

In describing his role, Pence told the audience that "by God's grace I did my duty that day to support the peaceful transfer of power under the Constitution of the United States of America." Jan. 6 was a tragic day but it became a triumph of freedom.

27 lives per kilometre: How Russia took record losses in Ukraine in 2024

LONDON (BBC): Last year was the deadliest for Russian forces since the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine: at least 45,287 people were killed. This is almost three times more than in the first year of the invasion and significantly exceeds the losses of 2023, when the longest and deadliest battle of the war was taking place in Bakhmut. At the start of the war, losses happened in waves during battles for key locations, but 2024 saw a month-on-month increase in the death toll as the front line slowly edged forward, enabling us to establish that Russia lost at least 27 lives for every kilometre of Ukrainian territory captured.

The BBC Russian Service, in collaboration

with independent media outlet Mediazona and a team of volunteers, has processed open source data from Russian cemeteries, military memorials and obituaries. So far, we have identified the names of 106,745 Russian soldiers killed during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The true number is clearly much higher. Military experts estimate our number may cover between 45% and 65% of deaths, which would mean 164,223 to 237,211 people. 20 February 2024 was the deadliest day for Russian forces in 2024.

Among the casualties were Aldar Bairov, Igor Babych and Okhunjon Rustamov, who were with the 36th Motorised Rifle Brigade when four

Ukrainian long-range HIMARS missiles hit a training ground near the city of Volnovakha in occupied Donetsk. They had been ordered to line up for a medal ceremony. Sixty-five servicemen were killed, including their commander Col Musaev. Dozens more were wounded. Bairov, 22 and from Buryatia in eastern Siberia, had studied to be a food sanitation specialist but was drafted for mandatory military service and then signed a contract to become a professional soldier. In February 2022 he went to fight in Ukraine and was part of the battle for Borodyanka during his brigade's advance towards Kyiv in March 2022. The town was almost completely destroyed. Ukrainian

sources say Russian soldiers were involved in the execution of civilians. Okhunjon Rustamov, 31 and from Chita in Siberia, had worked as a welder after serving a mandatory term in special forces. He was mobilised during a partial draft in October 2022.

Unlike Rustamov, Igor Babych, 32, had volunteered to go to war. He had worked with adults and children diagnosed with cerebral palsy, helping them with physical therapy until April 2023. In total 201 Russian soldiers died on that day, according to our data. A few hours after the strike on the training ground, then-Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu met Vladimir Putin to bring him news of military success from the front line.

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Labour's win in Australia a rejection of Trump agenda

THE Labour Party has been re-elected in the Australian parliamentary election. The preliminary results showed that it won 77 of the 150 seats, while the opposition Liberals managed to get 34. Labour leader and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in his victory speech, "In this time of global uncertainty, Australians have chosen optimism and determination. Australians have chosen to face global challenges the Australian way looking after each other while building for the future."

As in the Canadian election, the Australian Liberals, with their conservative credentials, hoped to make it back to power after they lost office in the 2022 election. They were in power for nine years. Liberal leader Peter Dutton had conceded defeat and congratulated Albanese. He is also the first opposition leader to lose his own seat in the federal election. Liberal leader and Senator James Paterson referred to the 'Trump factor' in the Australian election. He said, "It was devastating in Canada for the conservatives...I think it has been a factor here, but how big a factor will be determined in a few hours' time."

The agenda on which Albanese and the Labour won the election is opposite that of Trump. Albanese has promised to extend Medicare, help home-buyers with a subsidy, and he acknowledged the Aborigines, the people who lived in Australia for thousands of years before British colonialism started in the late 18th century. Albanese said, "...and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we stand."

The Aborigines have been demanding that they should be recognised as the First Nations in the Constitutions, and they be given representation in parliament. There was a referendum on the issue last October and it did not get the required majority. The political leaders are quite sensitive to the demand. Albanese' assertion is a show of deep sympathy and support for the rights and demands of the Aborigines people in the country.

Albanese and the Labour Party rode back to power on the welfare plank, which the conservatives all over the world have been pooh-poohing in many countries of Europe and in the United States through Trump's presidential victory last November.

But the election results in Canada and Australia have shown that the welfare state politics are not dead, and people welcome state support on health, education, and in Australia, help in buying a home. Social security has become a scorned term in the wake of Trump's success, but it is clear that this is not so everywhere.

There are poor people and the not-so-rich who need the helping hand of the state, and free markets cannot be trusted to deliver to the majority of people their basic needs.

The return of Labour to power in Australia also means that Australia will broadly remain the ally of the United States in the Asia-Pacific through the security alliance of Australia, United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS), and also through the QUAD, comprising the United States, India, Japan and Australia, which is considered to be an anti-China grouping. But individually, all the four countries are dealing with China on their own, and they have their own equation with Beijing.

Albanese recognises the importance of China for his country, and he has been pragmatic enough to push for better trade relations with China. Australia benefits hugely from exports of beef and wine to China.

Unlike the United Kingdom, which has been toeing a soft line towards President Trump's tariff policies, Albanese has been clear that the 10 per cent tariff on Australian exports to the US is not the gesture of a friend. So, when it comes to defending the interests of Australia, Albanese will steer an independent line like his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney.

Important Notice

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Weaponizing water: India's dangerous gamble with peace

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

HOW wisely it has been said that if you are blessed with a good neighbor, life becomes easy and peaceful. This golden principle is equally true for individuals and for nations. Countries that enjoy cordial and friendly relations with their neighbors tend to progress steadily, ensuring prosperity for their citizens and stability for their governments. On the contrary, when neighbors are hostile or uncooperative, both peace and development remain elusive. Sadly, Pakistan has not been fortunate in this regard. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has had to endure a turbulent and confrontational relationship with its eastern neighbor, India, a country that has never truly accepted the reality of Pakistan's existence.

From 1948 onwards, hostile winds have continued to blow from across the border. India's attitude has remained aggressive, manipulative, and disruptive, undermining any chance for lasting peace in the region. Despite Pakistan's repeated gestures for peace and regional cooperation, India has always chosen to respond with antagonism.

Their efforts to destabilize Pakistan have ranged from military confrontations to hybrid warfare, propaganda campaigns, and even economic sabotage. But each time, by the grace of Allah and through the resilience of our people and armed forces, Pakistan has managed to thwart these designs effectively.

Recently, India has once again attempted to stage a poorly-directed

drama aimed at maligning Pakistan. While Indian cinema enjoys global recognition, the fictional narratives they create about Pakistan fall flat on the international stage. These narratives, full of distortion and prejudice, are consumed domestically for political mileage but fail to convince the global community, which increasingly sees through the smokescreen of Indian propaganda. The infamous Balakot incident and the capture of Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman is one such example where India's aggressive posturing was met with a firm, yet mature, response from Pakistan. His swift return, in line with international humanitarian standards, portrayed Pakistan as the more responsible and peaceful actor in the region.

Now, India has turned its attention towards a more dangerous and long-term threat; the suspension or manipulation of the Indus Waters Treaty. Signed in 1960 under the mediation of the World Bank, this treaty is a cornerstone of peace and water security in South Asia.

It is not merely a bilateral agreement but a model of conflict resolution that has endured despite three wars between the two countries. The World Bank played a pivotal role not only in brokering the treaty but also in establishing a legal and institutional framework to manage disputes. Under the treaty, India received rights to the eastern rivers-Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej-while Pakistan was allotted the western rivers-Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab-forming the

lifeblood of Pakistan's agricultural economy.

The importance of the World Bank lies in its role as a guarantor and neutral third party that ensures both sides adhere to the agreed framework. It also facilitates dispute resolution through mechanisms like neutral expert appointments and arbitration panels. The treaty has survived more than six decades precisely because of this robust structure.

However, India's recent unilateral actions and threats to block or reduce the flow of water from the western rivers not only breach the treaty but challenge the authority and credibility of the World Bank's mediation. Such behavior amounts to water terrorism and an environmental aggression that could set a dangerous precedent for international water politics.

This act amounts to water terrorism, an alarming and dangerous escalation that can destabilize the region. Pakistan's economy is largely agrarian, with agriculture contributing around 23% to the GDP and employing nearly 38% of the labor force. More than 90% of our agricultural activity depends directly on river water.

If this lifeline is choked or blocked, the consequences for Pakistan's food security, employment, and economic stability will be devastating. A country whose backbone is agriculture cannot afford to have its water supplies weaponized by a hostile neighbor. This is not merely a bilateral issue; it is a human rights concern and an environmental hazard, with implications for peace and regional stability.

Pakistan must remain alert and resolute. It is imperative that we utilize every available diplomatic channel to raise this issue, particularly highlighting India's violations before the World Bank, the United Nations, and other international platforms. The World Bank must also act impartially and proactively to prevent further deterioration. Silence or inaction at this stage would erode global trust in such treaties and embolden aggressive powers to weaponize natural resources.

It must be made clear that any attempt to undermine the Indus Waters Treaty is not just an attack on Pakistan-it is a direct challenge to international law and the moral architecture of dispute resolution between nations. Water is not a weapon.

It is a shared resource, a necessity of life, and a sacred trust. If this lifeline is used as a tool of coercion, then Pakistan will be compelled to respond in a language that India understands, not out of aggression, but out of necessity.

We have no desire for confrontation. Pakistan has always been a proponent of regional peace, dialogue, and economic cooperation. But peace cannot come at the cost of dignity or survival. India must understand that bullying will not bring respect, nor will aggression yield stability. The path to lasting peace in South Asia lies in cooperation, not coercion; in treaties honored, not violated.

Let the Indus Waters Treaty remain a beacon of hope for peaceful coexistence. But if one party insists on extinguishing that light, the consequences will flow far beyond the riverbanks.

The roots of Indian jingoism: A nation untouched by war's horrors

Syed Saqib Hussain

IN the age of high-pitched television debates, social media hashtags, and digital nationalism, one cannot ignore the disturbing rise of jingoism across the eastern border. The loud cries for war and the glorification of military confrontation have become a recurrent theme in India's public discourse. But beneath the surface of this orchestrated war hysteria lies a fundamental truth-India, as a nation, has never truly experienced war.

For over a century and more, the Indian subcontinent remained insulated from the devastating impact of global conflicts. During World War I, while the rest of the world bled in trenches and on battlefields, the subcontinent remained largely peaceful. Indian soldiers, with a significant portion of Muslims hailing from regions that today constitute Pakistan, fought and died on foreign soil, yet the war never arrived at their doorstep.

The same held true in World War II, the most

catastrophic conflict in human history. While Europe, East Asia, and the Pacific burned, Indian cities remained untouched, its people distanced from the brutalities that gripped the world.

Even post-Partition, India's encounters with war have been remarkably limited and brief. The wars of 1965 and 1971, and the Kargil conflict of 1999, while significant in their own right, were largely restricted to border zones. The civilian populations in the heartlands of India never faced the trauma of aerial bombardments, mass displacement, or the destruction of cities-realities that define the lived experience of nations truly engulfed in war.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has borne the consequences of conflict more intimately. From the Afghan jihad to the war on terror, the spectre of violence has hovered over its cities and towns. Suicide bombings, drone strikes, military operations, and the long,

exhausting counterinsurgency campaigns have left indelible scars on the collective national memory. Pakistan knows war not as a slogan or a spectacle, but as a lived reality.

It is precisely this absence of direct wartime suffering that fuels the war-mongering tendencies among large sections of the Indian population. For them, war is not destruction-it is theatre. It is fireworks, nationalist music, hashtags, and flag-waving.

It is a chest-thumping performance devoid of real consequences. Their understanding of conflict has been shaped not by experience, but by Bollywood scripts and sanitised media portrayals.

In such a vacuum of experience, jingoism thrives. Leaders, media outlets, and even entertainers feed the frenzy, knowing well that no real price will be paid by their core urban audiences.

The soldiers who die so far away from the glowing newsrooms and

Twitter feeds. The miseries of war-orphans, widows, amputees, and refugees-are abstract ideas, not tangible human tragedies.

This phenomenon must not be dismissed lightly. A nation unacquainted with the consequences of war is often the quickest to advocate for it. When the cost is not visible, the demand becomes louder. This is not just a psychological blind spot-it is a dangerous posture in a region already burdened with nuclear weapons, border tensions, and unresolved disputes.

As responsible regional stakeholders, it is imperative to call out this glorification of conflict. War is not a video game. It is not a television event to boost ratings. It is the most brutal of human failures. And those who chant for it without understanding its cost are not patriots-they are sleepwalkers in a world full of fire.

Pakistan, with its bruises and resilience, knows better. And that bitter wisdom must continue to inform our restraint and our resolve for peace.

How do you keep going in Gaza when everything tells you to stop?

Eman Abu Zayed

BEFORE the war, my life was simple. Like many young women in Gaza, I carried within me a mixture of ambition and anxiety. My dream was to graduate from the Islamic University with honours and become a writer. My fear was that the constant attacks and instability in Gaza would somehow impede my pursuit of education and a writing career.

However, I never imagined that everything I knew - my home, my university, my friends, my daily routine and my health - could vanish, leaving me struggling to keep going.

When the war began, we thought it was just another short round of fighting - one of the many escalations we had grown used to in Gaza. But something about this time felt different. The explosions were closer, louder, and lasting longer. We soon realised that this nightmare was not going to end; it was only going to get worse.

On December 27, 2023, we received our first "evacuation order". There was no time to think. We had just begun gathering a few belongings when the sound of bombing grew louder. The upper floors of the building we lived in were being targeted.

We fled the building in a hurry, carrying only a small bag. My father was pushing my grandmother in her wheelchair, while I held my younger brother's hand and ran into the street, not knowing where we were going.

The neighbourhood looked like a scene from the horrors of the Day of Judgement: people were running, screaming, crying, and carrying what remained of their lives.

Night fell, and we found temporary shelter at a relative's house. Sixteen of us slept in one room, without privacy or comfort.

In the morning, we made the difficult decision to take refuge in one of the displacement camps declared a "humanitarian zone". We owned almost nothing. The weather was bitterly cold, water was scarce, and we had only a few blankets. We washed, cleaned, and cooked using primitive methods. We lit fires and prepared food as if we had gone back to the Stone Age.

Amid all of this, we received the news: our home had been bombed.

I refused to believe what I had heard. I sat and cried, unable to comprehend the tragedy. My father's goldsmith workshop was on the ground floor of the building, so when it was destroyed, we did not just lose walls and a roof - we lost everything.

The days passed slowly and heavily, wrapped in longing and misery. I lost contact with most of my friends, and I no longer heard the voices that used to fill my days with warmth. I would check in on my closest friend, Rama, whenever I had a brief chance to connect to the internet. She lived in northern Gaza. On January 15, 2024, my friend Rawan sent me a message. It did not reach me immediately. It took days because of the communications blackout.

The words were simple, they shattered me from the inside: "Rama was martyred."

Rama Waleed Sham'ah, my closest friend at university. I could not believe it. I read the message over and over again, searching for a different ending, a denial. But the truth was silent, harsh, and merciless. I didn't get to say goodbye, I didn't hear her last words, I didn't hold her hand, or tell her "I love you" one last time. I felt as though I was breathing without a soul.

While I was still processing that grief, I received even more devastating news: on February 16, 2024, my father's entire extended family - all his cousins, their wives, and their children - were killed. I saw my father break in a way I had never seen before. His grief was so deep that words could not describe it.

Then, death knocked on our door.

On June 8, 2024, we had just moved from our tent to a rented apartment, trying

to start our lives over, when the Israeli army surrounded the area. I was the first to see the tank slowly moving up the street. I panicked and ran towards my father, shouting. But I didn't reach him. In that moment, a missile struck the building we were in. All I saw was thick smoke and dust filling the air.

I didn't know if I was alive or not. I tried to say the shahada, and by the grace of God, I managed to do so. Then I started screaming, calling for my father. I heard his voice faintly from a distance, telling me not to go out because the drone was still bombing.

I took a few steps, then lost consciousness. All I remember is that they carried me down the building and covered me with a blanket. I was bleeding. I would regain consciousness for a few seconds, then lose it again.

The ambulance could not reach our street because the tank was at the entrance. My mother, my sister, and I bled for two hours until some young men from the area managed to find a way to get us out. They carried me in a blanket to the ambulance. The paramedics started bandaging my wounds right there in the middle of the street, in front of everyone.

All the way, I heard their whispers, saying that I was between life and death. I heard them, but I could not speak.

When I reached the hospital, they told me that I had sustained injuries to my head, hands, legs, and back. The pain was unbearable, and my mother's absence added to my fear. I was rushed in for an emergency surgery.

I survived. After leaving the hospital, I had to go back for dressing changes. Each visit was a painful experience. I would choke every time I saw the blood. My father, who accompanied me every time, would try to ease these visits, telling me, "You will be rewarded, my dear, and we will get through all of this."

I fell into a deep depression, suffering from both physical and emotional pain. I felt as though I was drowning in an endless spiral of sorrow, fear, and exhaustion. I no longer knew how to breathe, how to continue, or even why.

We had no roof to shelter under. Finding food was a struggle. The painful memories of loved ones who had passed haunted me. The fear that my family and I could lose our lives at any moment made me feel utterly helpless. I felt everything was screaming that I could not go on.

Yet, in the darkness of despair, I continued to live, day after day. I was in pain, but I lived.

I went back to reading - whatever books I could find. Then, when my university announced it would resume lectures online, I signed up.

My hand was still broken, wrapped in a cast, and I could barely use it. My mother helped me, holding the pen at times and writing down what I dictated. My professors understood my situation and supported me as much as they could, but the challenges were many. I struggled to access electricity and the internet to charge my phone and download lectures. Sometimes, I would lose exams due to power outages or poor network, and I would have to postpone them.

Still, I kept going. My physical condition gradually started to improve.

Today, we are still living in a tent. We struggle to secure the most basic needs, such as clean water and food. We are experiencing famine, just like everyone else in Gaza.

When I look at the scars of war etched into my body and memory, I realise that I am no longer the same person. I have found within myself a strength I never knew existed.

I have found a path through the rubble, meaning in the pain, and a reason to write, to witness, and to resist despite the loss. I have made the decision to stay alive, to love, to dream, to speak.

Because, quite simply, I deserve to live, just like every human being on earth.

Trump is acting like it’s his choice whether he obeys the Constitution

AMERICANS are learning what it's like to live with a president who sees no constraints on his actions and who apparently fears paying no price for them.

In a blitz of recent policy moves, legal challenges, comments and interviews, Donald Trump is showing that he's shedding the last limitations of custom and the public's long understanding of how a president should behave.

In an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker" that aired in full Sunday, Trump said for instance, "I don't know" when asked whether he needs to uphold the Constitution, three months after swearing an oath to do so.

As always, Trump's attacks and expansive policy initiatives seemed aimed at shattering normality and wrong-footing enemies, while creating fear and the impression of unstoppable momentum among his critics.

Trump is also honoring supporters delighted by his assault on what they see as disdainful and liberal-dominated political, legal, educational, media and military establishments. Top aides argue that his extreme actions are justified by his election victory and works — for instance, in his stemming of southern border crossings.

But Trump's behavior also points to darker potential outcomes of a second presidency fueled by his belief that he has near-uncheckable power after a second electoral triumph that followed his defiance of personal legal woes and two assassina-tion attempts.

The administration is repeatedly defying federal courts — in one case even the Supreme Court, over the fate of an undocumented migrant whose return it ordered the administration to "facilitate." Trump is meanwhile wielding vast executive power against institutions that he wants to silence, including law firms and universities.

And his sense of personal omnipotence sometimes seems to be leading the country toward authoritarianism. He said on NBC he wasn't "looking at" running for a third term in 2028 — as if it's a personal choice whether he obeys the Constitution on which US democracy depends.

Trump's talent for trolling also reflects his hubris and pursuit of ultimate power.

A composite image he shared on Truth Social of

himself in papal vestments was surely meant to infuriate critics his acolytes could then mock as lacking a sense of humor — a familiar MAGA strategy. But the image, an offensive one to Roman Catholics, who view the pope as the guardian of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, is a knowing nod to Trump's claims of infallibility. It was also shared on the White House's X account — thereby becoming one of the most extraordinary official documents ever issued by the United States government.

And Trump's plan for a

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The administration is repeatedly defying federal courts — in one case even the Supreme Court, over the fate of an undocumented migrant whose return it ordered the administration to "facilitate." Trump is meanwhile wielding vast executive power against institutions that he wants to silence, including law firms and universities. And his sense of personal omnipotence sometimes seems to be leading the country toward authoritarianism. He said on NBC he wasn't "looking at" running for a third term in 2028 — as if it's a personal choice whether he obeys the Constitution on which US democracy depends. Trump's talent for trolling also reflects his hubris and pursuit of ultimate power. A composite image he shared on Truth Social of himself in papal vestments was surely meant to infuriate critics his acolytes could then mock as lacking a sense of humor — a familiar MAGA strategy. But the image, an offensive one to Roman Catholics, who view the pope as the guardian of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, is a knowing nod to Trump's claims of infallibility. It was also shared on the White House's X account — thereby becoming one of the most extraordinary official documents ever issued by the United States government. And Trump's plan for a major military parade to celebrate the Army's 250th birthday in June may be another sign he's adopting dictator kitsch.
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The event is likely to draw scrutiny beyond the cost of moving tons of expensive troop formations and aircraft at a time when the administration is gutting the federal government to save money. Trump has wanted such a spectacle since attending a Bastille Day on France's national day in his first term. But this parade is expected to take place on the commander in chief's birthday in June.

Monarchs have military pageants for their birthdays, but modern US presidents have tended to shun such displays of personal adulation that blur the notion that troops in a republic serve the people and not an omnipotent ruler.

The US has also felt no need to boast of its power at the kind of propaganda jamborees preferred by the leaders of the former Soviet Union and North Korea. But Trump said on NBC, "We have the greatest missiles in the world. We have the greatest submarines in the world. We have the greatest army tanks in the world." He added, "We have the greatest weapons in the world. And we're going to celebrate it."

This was characteristic

Stephen Collinson

of a growing administration trope — to imply that those who are queasy at such displays of presidential power are unpatriotic, hostile to the military or humorless. This allows it to dismiss any concerns over Trump's incessant grasping for every symbol of sovereignty.

But Trump's power grabs may also be blunting his political instincts.

While his tariff policies are intended to bring jobs and manufacturing back home and to lift up working Americans, he's

gles of ordinary families. He keeps insisting he's brought grocery prices down after the cost of living was a huge issue in the 2024 election. But every American shopper who goes to the supermarket themselves knows that's not true.

And Trump insisted in an interview with Time that "I've made 200 deals" with nations seeking to avoid tariffs. Despite constant promises of imminent trade pacts that will transform the US economy, the administration still hasn't announced any.

The question of the

appearing increasingly oblivious to their impact on regular people. This disconnect, shared by other billionaires in his Cabinet, could have risky implications for his own political fortunes and for Republicans in midterm elections, not to mention the economy more broadly.

For instance, a couple of days after warning American children might have to settle for fewer, more expensive dolls because of his trade war with China, Trump implied in the NBC interview that the economy would be "OK" even if it slipped into a recession. He also dismissed the impact of looming supply chain shortages on the population. "They don't need to have 250 pencils. They can have five," Trump said.

The implications of the China trade war go beyond pencils and dolls. Unless there is an imminent breakthrough, US consumers will lose access to many affordable and plentiful goods, such as sports equipment, shoes and clothing.

That will put enormous pressure on family budgets. Small businesses based on importing such products may meanwhile go bust.

It's not the first time Trump has seemed removed from the strug-

gling the president's grip on reality is an important one and takes on extra weight given Trump's previous attacks on former President Joe Biden over his age and cognition.

Such concerns will not be alleviated by a bizarre answer in his NBC interview. "We lost 5 to 6 billion dollars a day with Biden. Five to 6 billion," he told Kristen Welker, then went on to explain his 145% tariff on China: "We've essentially cut off trade relationships by putting that much of a tariff on. And that's OK. We've gone cold turkey. That means that we're not losing." In other words, Trump has narrowed the trade deficit with China by halting trade altogether, a cataclysmic option that could deeply scar the US economy.

The president gets away with such displays of rule by which because he learned from his first term and appointed new officials who won't challenge him. In a televised pageant of sycophancy last week, his Cabinet members showed they understand their role is to laud him. And congressional Republicans gave up their power to check him.

"I don't want to lessen President Trump's leverage by undermining him whatsoever," Wisconsin Republican Sen. Ron Johnson told CNN's Jake

Tapper on "State of the Union" on Sunday. "President Trump has a negotiating strategy, a negotiating style. I think he's throwing the entire world out of balance."

Democratic Sen. Mark Warner told Tapper that while Republicans were willing to buy into the "trust Trump" mantra in public, they were becoming increasingly concerned in private. Regarding the president's attempts to hollow out the intelligence community, for instance, the Virginia senator said, "I had one member say, 'Mark, you're sounding like our conscience.' I don't want to be your conscience."

Warner added, "I do think we're getting close to them stepping up. ... But the problem is going to be, how much structural damage is going to be done before my Republican friends find their voice and voice publicly what they're already saying privately?"

Presidents have even more power over foreign policy than they do at home.

And Trump plans to use it.

Asked whether he'd use force to fulfill his expansionist designs on Greenland, Trump told NBC, "I don't rule it out. I don't say I'm going to do it, but I don't rule out anything. No, not there. We need Greenland very badly."

The Arctic landmass is an autonomous territory within the kingdom of Denmark. So, a US invasion would not simply be illegal. It would mean the forcible annexation of land under the jurisdiction of a NATO member by the country that was once the alliance's bulwark.

Canadians, who just voted in an election shaped by Trump's demands that they join the US as the 51st state, will no doubt be relieved to know they need not fear a US blitzkrieg. "I don't see it with Canada. I just don't see it. I have to be honest with you," Trump told Welker.

As with many of Trump's wildest aspirations, his supporters argue that critics take him out of context and ignore the negotiating genius that lies behind his extreme positions.

It was newsworthy that Trump ruled out the use of force against Canada. That alone shows how his second term has inverted what had been long-standing international, legal and constitutional norms.

— CNN

Fear and intimidation at Newark airport

Hebh Jamal

I am no stranger to political repression and censorship. I have lived in Germany for five years now, and as a Palestinian journalist involved in pro-Palestinian advocacy, I have experienced repeated harassment at the hands of the German authorities.

My husband, a German citizen, and I, an American citizen, have grown accustomed to being held for hours at a time, subjected to invasive interrogations about our travels, and having our belongings thoroughly searched without clear justification. But we were shocked to find out that these tactics, designed to intimidate and deter, have now been taken up by the United States to target Palestinians amid the ongoing genocide.

I always knew that citizenship offered only limited protection, especially when dissent is involved. But deep down, I still believed that freedom of speech, the right to speak without fear, meant something in my country of birth.

I was wrong. The harassment we endured on March 24 upon arriving in the US shattered that illusion. Our Palestinian identity, our political work, our family ties — all of it makes us permanent targets, not just in Germany, but now in the US, too.

Prior to departure, while we were at our gate in Frankfurt airport, four agents approached me and identified themselves as officers from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). They said they were specifically looking for my husband, who had just stepped aside to buy water and juice for our sons.

"We just want to make sure your ESTA visa is in order," one of them said.

They took his passport, flipping through it and photographing every single page while one of them stayed on the phone, relaying information. They asked about our visit to Gaza in 2022, after seeing the Rafah border stamp. "Where did you go in Gaza?" one agent asked. "Khan Younis," my husband replied.

"Where does your family live now?"

"All over," he said. "They're living in tents across the Strip, you know, because of the war."

"What did you do while you were there?"

"Visited family," he answered.

It was clear we were targeted. I did not see any other passengers undergoing a similar check. This meant that either DHS was actively

researching passengers before their departure to the US, or — even more troubling — the German authorities were communicating directly with DHS to flag the background and political activity of "suspect" travellers.

Upon arrival at Newark airport in New Jersey, my husband and I were separated and individually interrogated, each of us still holding a sleeping child. The men questioning us did not identify themselves; I believe they were DHS agents, not border police.

They first asked me about the purpose of my trip and my travel to Gaza. They wanted to know who I had met in Gaza, why I had met them, and whether anyone I encountered was affiliated with Hamas. At one point, an officer deliberately became ambiguous and instead of referencing Hamas, asked if "anyone from [my] family was a part of the government in Gaza".

At one point, they asked whether I experienced violence from Israeli soldiers, to which I responded: "Israeli soldiers weren't in Gaza in 2022."

"Did anyone in your family experience violence during this war?"

"Yes," I responded. "Fifty were killed."

"Were any of them Hamas supporters?" was the response I received.

As if political affiliation could justify the incineration of a family. As if children, elders, mothers, reduced to numbers, must first be interrogated for their loyalties before their deaths can be acknowledged.

They knew I was a journalist, so they demanded to know the last article I had written and where it was published. I told them that it was a piece for Mondoweiss about the abduction of Mahmoud Khalil, in which I also warned about the dangers of the Trump administration's policies. This seemed to heighten their scrutiny. They demanded my email address, my social media accounts, and jotted down my phone number without explanation. Then they took our phones. When I asked what would happen if I refused, they made it clear I had no choice. If I did not comply, my phone would still be taken from me, and if my husband did not comply, he would be deported.

When they finally returned our electronics, they issued a chilling warning to my husband: "You have been here seven times without an issue. Stay away from

political activity, and everything will be fine."

Subsequently, I was advised by legal counsel not to attend any demonstrations, not even by myself, during our stay. Our movements, our words, and even our silences were under watch, and anything could be used against us.

What happened to us was not random; it was intentional. It was meant to scare and intimidate us. Whether it is in Germany, in the US, or elsewhere, the goal of these tactics is the same: to make us feel small, isolated, criminalised, and afraid. They want us to doubt the worth of every word we write, to question every protest we join, to swallow every truth before it reaches our lips. They want us to forget the people we have lost.

Fifty members of our family were murdered in the US-backed genocide in Gaza. Fifty souls, each with their own dreams, laughter, and love, extinguished under the roar of bombs and the silence of the world. Our family's story is no different from thousands of others — stories that vanish from headlines but live forever in the hearts of the survivors.

They expect us to carry this unbearable weight quietly, to bow our heads and continue living as if our world were not ripped apart. But we do not bow.

And that is why they fear us; they fear a people who refuse to disappear. Palestinians who dare to speak, to organise, to simply bear witness are marked as dangerous.

I was warned that speaking about our experience at the airport would make the next encounter even harsher, even more punishing. But we must remember: there is nothing this state can do to us that can compare to what is being done to the people of Gaza. Our passports are only paper. Our phones are only metal and glass. These are things they can confiscate, things they can break. But they cannot take away our voices, our memories, and our commitment to justice.

On our way out, the officers asked my husband one last question: "What do you think of Hamas? Are they good?"

He responded: "My concern is fighting a genocide that has taken the lives and freedom of my family and my people. Anything else, I am not interested in answering."

That should be all of our concern. Nothing should distract us from the urgent, undeniable truth: a people are being slaughtered, and our responsibility is to stand with them.

— Aljazeera

How developing countries can navigate the US-China trade war

Dr. Turki Faisal Al-Rasheed

driven by US tariffs and countermeasures.

The impact of the trade conflict varies significantly across different

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The International Monetary Fund has issued a cautious economic outlook for regions like the Middle East and North Africa, indicating that US-China trade tensions will have significant repercussions. The IMF's growth projections for MENA have been revised downward, with an expected growth rate of 2.6 percent this year and 3.4 percent in 2026. These adjustments reflect anticipated declines in the global economy driven by US tariffs and countermeasures. The impact of the trade conflict varies significantly across different economies and sectors. Oil-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq may experience modest growth, while oil-importing nations like Egypt and Morocco might see stronger economic performance. This divergence underscores the need for tailored strategies that acknowledge the unique circumstances of each country. To navigate the challenges posed by the US-China trade conflict, developing countries can adopt several strategic approaches. Firstly, diversifying trade partners. Expanding relationships beyond the US and China can enhance resilience against economic shocks. Engaging with emerging markets and established economies can
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economies and sectors. Oil-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq may experience modest growth, while oil-importing nations like Egypt and Morocco might see stronger economic performance. This divergence underscores the need for tailored strategies that

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Firstly, diversifying trade partners. Expanding relationships beyond the US and China can enhance resilience against econom-

ic shocks. Engaging with emerging markets and established economies can

and investment, empowering countries to better navigate external pressures. Secondly, strengthening regional alliances. Forming regional trade agreements can enhance trade prospects and provide collective bargaining power. Initiatives such as

the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership can solidify intraregional trade

edge technology foster resilience, allowing countries to better absorb external shocks. Fourthly, policy and regulatory reforms. Creating favorable business environments through regulatory reforms can attract foreign investment. Streamlining processes, safeguarding property rights and enhancing transparency encourage businesses to invest in developing countries, mitigating the adverse effects of the trade conflict.

Finally, leveraging international support. Engaging with international organizations like the World Bank and IMF can provide opportunities for technical assistance, capacity building and access to new markets. Such partnerships bolster the ability of developing countries to adapt to changing trade dynamics.

A pertinent example of regional solidarity is Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's call for Southeast Asian nations to unite in the face of US tariffs. His advocacy for a collective stance highlights the strength of regional alliances in countering external pressures and maintaining economic stability. By fostering collaboration among neighboring countries, developing nations can create a unified front that enhances their

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negotiating power on the global stage.

In conclusion, the US-China trade conflict presents a complex array of challenges and possibilities for developing countries. While the risks associated with reliance on these superpowers are substantial, strategies such as diversification, regional cooperation and investment in infrastructure can create pathways toward sustainable economic growth.

The ability of these nations to navigate the intricacies of global trade dynamics will ultimately determine their economic trajectories in an increasingly interconnected world. By fostering a collaborative environment and remaining adaptable to change, developing countries can pursue greater stability and prosperity amid global trade uncertainties. In navigating this complex landscape, it is crucial for developing nations to adopt a balanced approach that not only addresses immediate challenges but also capitalizes on emerging opportunities. By implementing the strategies outlined above, these nations can better position themselves to mitigate negative impacts and enhance their economic resilience in the face of ongoing global shifts.

— Arab News



Moqeen calls for peaceful solution of Pak-India conflict to resume trade

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeen Khan urged a sort of peaceful resolution to ongoing Pak-India conflict and to immediately resume trade between two neighbouring countries.

Fazal Moqeen Khan, while talking during a meeting with a delegation of businessmen, representing diverse sectors at the chamber house on Monday emphasized trade should be kept separate from politics that would not only unhurt the economy but also prevent the business community of the both countries from huge financial losses.

The chamber president said the Wagah border has been closed for last the several days owing to ongoing tension between Pakistan and India which has created severe shortages of raw material for industries in the country and forcing manufacturers to shut their industrial units/operation, resultantly traders are great trouble and issue job loss is highly looming in the country.

Pharmaceutical is the one the most affected sector in this ongoing Pak-India conflict, the SCCI chief noted.

He stated 30 percent of raw material imports for the pharma industry from India and halting of supply, has

created an immense shortage of medicines in the country.

Fazal Moqeen while quoting to various reports expressed high worry that if the issue would be prolonged that may create a serious crisis in the health sector.

The chamber president said according to the owners of the pharma industry, stock of some medicines such as Brufen, flagyl, ORS and Ventolin and others completely vanished.

SCCI chief stressed emergency measures to secure pharmaceutical supplies in response to the suspension of trade ties with India.

He urged the govern-

ment to exempt the pharmaceutical sector from the ban, as there are many life-saving products whose raw materials come exclusively from India."

Therefore, he requested Islamabad and Delhi to resolve the issue through negotiation and resume bilateral trade immediately, because smooth and uninterrupted trade between both countries is crucial for economic growth, peace, prosperity and progress.

It is noted to mention here that in response to India's decision to suspend the Indus Water Treaty following the Pahalgam attack, Islamabad suspended all trade with New Delhi among other moves.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meeting with Ambassador of Japan to discuss strengthening trade ties and addressing tariff concerns.

Wahaj Ali, Ahmed & 'Kabli Pulao' shine at LUX Style Awards

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 23rd LUX Style Awards celebrated Pakistan's top talent across fashion, film, music, and television.

Ahmed Jehanzeb's Tera Mera Hai Pyar emerged as the most streamed song and earned him Singer of the Year, while Wahaj Ali won big in both film (Teri Meri Kahan-jiyaan) and TV (Tere Bin).

Drama serial Kabli Pulao dominated Critic's Choice in television with multiple wins, including Best Play, Director (Kashif Nisar), and Actors (Ehtshamuddin & Sabeena Farooq).

In film, Gunjal was crowned Best Film by both viewers and critics.

Fashion icons like Jaweria Ali and Hussain Rehbar were also among the winners.

The awards were announced digitally by Sarmad Khoosat via LUX's official social platforms.

Ifthikhar Ali calls for peace over conflict

ISLAMABAD (APP): Founder Chairman Pak-US Business Council Ifthikhar Ali Malik on Monday underscored the imperative of prioritizing peace over conflict and emphasized the urgent need for reconciliation in today's volatile world.

Malik's message pivots on redefining strength not through dominance but through reconciliation, said a news release.

"Let us not be architects of ashes, for war writes epitaphs in the ruins of nations. True strength lies in the ink of conciliation, the parchment of dialogues, and the signatures of shared humanity. Only then do we plant a forest of peace for generations yet unborn," he said.

His words come at a critical time when global conflicts, regional tensions, and internal strife continue to threaten the stability and prosperity of nations.

Stressing that war only brings destruction and endless cycles of suffering, he urged Indian leaders to seek solutions through mutual respect, dialogue, and diplomacy.

Malik highlighted how history has repeatedly shown the catastrophic consequences of warfare, not only destroying infrastructures but also tearing apart the social and moral fabrics of societies.

"Victory in war is hollow when it leaves only graves behind," Malik noted.

Instead, he advocated for dialogue as the ultimate expression of strength — a tool that binds humanity together beyond borders, ideologies, and differences. Through his epoch-making message, Ifthikhar Ali reminded the Indians that real progress and security lie not in military might but in our collective ability to resolve conflicts amicably.

The "ink of conciliation" and "parchment of dialogues" symbolize diplomacy and collaborative problem-solving, while "signatures of shared humanity" stress wisdom and tolerance amid diversity.

By advocating for a "forest of peace," he envisions a legacy of stability for future generations.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, losses 11.70 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, shedding 11.70 points, a negative change of 0.01 percent, closing at 114,102.24 points as compared to 114,113.94 points on last trading day.

A total of 399,538,878 shares were traded during the day as compared to 372,363,708 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19,852 billion against Rs 23,285 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 452 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 240 of them recorded gains and 155 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 57 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Power

Cement as with 41,339,300 shares at Rs 14.91 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 23,846,954 shares at Rs 1.29 per share and Maple Leaf with 23,586,230 shares at Rs 71.60 per share.

PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 480.30 per share closing at Rs 5,283.86 whereas runner-up was Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 288.09 rise in its share price to close at Rs 7,190.36.

Atlas Honda Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 25.19 per share price, closing at Rs 1,150.36, whereas the runner-up Bata Pakistan Limited with Rs 15.29 decline in its per share price to Rs 1,564.71.

Gold prices increase Rs.7,800 to 350,000 per tola: The price of 24 karat

per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs.7,800 on Monday and was sold at Rs.350,000 against its sale at Rs.342,200 on the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.6,687 to Rs.300,068 from Rs 293,381 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat increased by Rs.6,130 to Rs.275,072 from Rs.268,942.

The rates of per tola silver increased by Rs.43 to Rs.3,425 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.37 to Rs.2,936.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$76 to \$3,316 from \$3,240 whereas that of silver went up by \$0.43 to \$32.43, the Association reported.

Tax Laws amendments:

Business community expressed displeasure

RAWALPINDI (APP): The business community has expressed serious concern over the promulgation of the Tax Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, terming it a direct violation of business autonomy and a blow to investor confidence.

In a statement, RCCI President Usman Shaukat voiced strong opposition to the sweeping powers granted to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) under the new Ordinance.

"We categorically reject the arbitrary and coercive provisions introduced through this Ordinance," said Shaukat adding "allowing tax officers to be stationed at markets and business premises is an outright infringement on business

freedom and will lead to increased harassment under the guise of documentation and compliance."

It is noteworthy that the Ordinance gives authority to the FBR to recover tax liabilities by directly withdrawing funds from a taxpayer's bank account if their appeal is rejected by the High Court or dismissed by the Supreme Court. This overrides the previously established procedure under Sections 137(2) and 138(1) of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, which required the issuance of separate notices before any recovery action could be taken.

"These coercive measures implemented even after a High Court ruling, pose a grave threat to the right of appeal, especially when enforced before the Supreme Court has given its verdict," Shaukat added.

According to the statement issued here on Monday, the RCCI also highlighted legal ambiguities within the Ordinance, particularly the lack of clarity on whether the FBR will promptly refund any recovered amounts if the case is eventually decided in the taxpayer's favor.

Moreover, the Chamber condemned the provision allowing tax officers to be physically deployed at business premises to monitor daily operations, calling it excessive, invasive, and harmful to business confidence.

MG Pakistan upgrades HS PHEV



F.P. Report

LAHORE: MG Pakistan has announced a major upgrade to its popular plug-in hybrid SUV, the MG HS PHEV, by introducing a 7KW fast charger as a standard replacement for the existing portable charger.

The move reflects the brand's commitment to delivering smarter, more efficient urban mobility.

Since its launch in Pakistan in October 2024 and the beginning of production in January 2025, the MG HS PHEV - True Hybrid Electric has seen an encouraging response, with over 500 units delivered.

Customers have appreciated the vehicle's design, performance, and eco-friendly drive, but some expressed concerns about the overnight charging time

of up to 8.5 hours with the standard portable charger.

Acting upon user suggestions, MG has now introduced 7KW fast charger, which will cut the charging time nearly in half, offering greater convenience to drivers with daily commutes and urban routines.

"We are committed to transforming the Pakistan Automotive landscape by offering the latest technology and services," said General Manager Marketing Div - Syed Asif Ahmed. "By upgrading to a faster charging solution, we're not just addressing customer concerns—we're enhancing the overall ownership experience and reinforcing our leadership in the new energy vehicle segment."

While the portable charger was originally provided free of cost with MG HS

PHEV, the new 7KW charger-valued at PKR 235,000—will now replace it without any additional cost to the customers.

The portable version will now be available for sales as accessories.

The MG HS PHEV continues to stand out as a premium hybrid SUV offering pure EV range of +50 km, advanced safety features, tech innovation, and low running costs, making it an ideal solution for Pakistan's urban drivers looking to make a smarter switch to hybrid mobility.

MG Pakistan is a leading name in electric and hybrid mobility solutions, committed to innovation, safety, and sustainability. With a rapidly expanding lineup of smart vehicles, MG is shaping the future of transportation in Pakistan.

SIUT pays tributes to Dr. Haroon



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Glowing tributes were paid to Dr Haroon Ahmed, the country's eminent psychiatrist and physician, at a memorial reference organized by the SIUT (Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation) here on the week-

end. Dr Haroon passed away last month after protracted illness. Dr Haroon was also the founding trustee of the SIUT.

The memorial reference was largely attended by people from all walks of life, which included members of the medical profession, politicians, members

of parliament, and human rights activists.

Prominent among them were Senator Raza Rabbani former Chairman of the Senate, renowned journalist Husain Naqi, leading columnist Ghazi Salah-uddin, Dr Syed Ali Wasif of Pakistan Psychiatric Society, Prof Anwar Naqi

of SIUT, Founder President and well-known surgeon Dr Adib Rizvi. Ms Anis Haroon the wife of the late psychiatrist also spoke.

While paying rich tributes to Dr Haroon, speakers encompassed the various aspects of his personality and described him as an exceptional human being who, apart from being a compassionate physician, was also a person who all his life strived for the well-being and betterment of the people, particularly those who are marginalized and deprived.

Speakers said Dr Haroon was a torchbearer in the struggle of students in the initial years of Pakistan by raising his voice for better education and basic rights of the students.

Discussing various phases of his life, they said as a physician he was soft-spoken and compassionate, who healed his patients by going deep into the miseries of his patients.

Call to improve economic ties

MULTAN (APP): Ben Warrington, Head of the UK's Department for Business and Trade, said on Monday that economic relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom have improved and in the new era of technology both countries must further strengthen the relationship.

Addressed members of the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(MCCI), he highlighted outstanding opportunities in the fields of technology and economy.

He said that there is a vast range of new possibilities in the technology sector, which can open new doors for investment and development at the global level.

Warrington said, "Technology is not just limited to software or hardware; its impact is growing

across every sector of life. We have development opportunities that can benefit not only businesspeople but also technology experts."

He mentioned that the government and business entities agree that technology will play a vital role in ensuring economic stability and better distribution of resources in the region. "Various businesses and partners have expressed

their commitment to invest in new technology projects to strengthen their operations," he added.

Warrington also emphasized the significant development in the financial services sector, noting that British banks and financial institutions, after evaluating Pakistan's economy, have indicated the likelihood of exploring more business opportunities in the region.

Warrington stated that in order to fully capitalize on the opportunities available in the UK, it is essential to adopt a new perspective and consider modern methods of development, so that the UK can become a key global economic hub.

Earlier, Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Senior Vice President Khawaja Mohsin said that South Punjab offered great potential for exports, adding, "We should explore joint ventures for meaningful purposes."

Former presidents Khawaja M. Hussain, Khawaja M. Usman, ex-VP Asim Saeed, Jehanzaib Dharala and others also spoke.

Services exports increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of services during the first nine months of the current fiscal year increased by 9.69 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year.

During July-March 2024-25, exports of services were recorded at \$6.235 billion as against the exports of \$5.684 billion during the same period of last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

During the period under review, the services imports

into the country grew by 8.74 percent and it was registered at \$8,552 billion as compared to the import of \$7,865 billion in the same period last year.

On a year-on-year basis, the services exports from the country grew by 4.89 percent in March 2025 as compared to the exports of the same month of last year.

In March 2025, services valued at \$743.32 million were exported as compared to exports of \$708.66 million in the same month of last year.

The imports of services into the country also surged by 6.89 percent during the period under review as it was recorded at \$790.14 million against \$907.57.

On month on month basis, the services exports also increased by 4.14 percent in March 2025 as compared to the export of \$713.77 million in February 2025.

However, the services imports decreased by 0.31 percent in March 2025 as compared to the import of \$973.12 million in February 2025.



In brief

Zhao nears historic crucial win

SHEFFIELD (Agencies): Zhao Xintong is just one frame away from becoming the first player from China to win the World Championship after extending his lead to 17-8 over Mark Williams in the final. The 28-year-old, who is aiming to become the first amateur to triumph at the Crucible, led 11-6 overnight and was able to take three of the first four frames available on Monday to go 14-7 ahead at the mid-session interval. And when he compiled a break of 52 to win the next, Zhao looked on course to win his second successive match with a session to spare and would record the biggest winning margin in a world final since Stephen Hendry defeated Jimmy White 18-5 in 1993. Three-time winner Williams averted that possibility, briefly rallying to ensure the contest would at least extend to Monday evening with a break of 66 to get back to 15-8. However, the Welshman, 50, who is the oldest ever finalist in Sheffield, was unable to make any further inroads. His Chinese opponent, who was just three years-old when Williams won his first world crown in 2000, capitalised on a missed red to the left middle with a 66 break and cleared up again after Williams failed to drop in a red to the right corner to move on to the brink of a historic victory. Zhao, who won the UK Championship in 2021 but then served a 20-month ban for his involvement in a match-fixing scandal which rocked the sport, is hoping to join Terry Griffiths and Shaun Murphy as the only qualifiers to capture snooker's biggest prize since the tournament's 1977 move to Sheffield. He would also earn the £500,000 top prize and climb to 11th in the world rankings when he returns to the main professional tour next season. The best-of-35 final continues on Monday at 19:00 BST and will be shown live on BBC Two.

Kerley admits altercation

MIAMI (AFP): Former world 100m champion Fred Kerley has denied he was arrested as claimed for battery but because he exercised his right to remain silent until his lawyer was present after a "physical altercation". Kerley, who won 100m gold at the 2022 World Championships and took bronze in the event at the Paris Olympics, said in a statement the arrest was down to a "misunderstanding". He missed the Grand Slam track meet in Miami after he was detained last Thursday by police in Broward County, Florida. Arrest records showed Kerley, who turns 30 on Wednesday, had been arrested on a charge of touch or strike battery and remained in jail as of early Friday. Reports said the American had been arrested following an incident at the official hotel for the Grand Slam Track event, the second stop on Michael Johnson's new circuit. "While there was a physical altercation, my arrest was not due to any criminal act," Kerley wrote on Instagram. "Rather, it resulted from my decision to exercise right remain silent until legal counsel was present. "I chose not to speak to law enforcement without my attorney, and for that reason alone I was booked." Kerley, who also won a 100m silver medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, apologised to his fans and Grand Slam, adding the "experience had "caught (him) off guard".

Zalmi keep playoff hopes alive after crushing Sultans

MULTAN: Peshawar Zalmi needed to win of their next two games to set up what is likely a virtual quarterfinal with Lahore Qalandars. Fortunately for them, their task was about as straightforward as it gets. Beating Multan Sultans has not taken much of an effort for most sides this season, and they didn't need to overexert. Ahmed Daniyal led a bowling effort which saw six bowlers among the wickets as the Sultans folded for 108, before Saim Ayub saw them cruise to victory with 7 overs to go.

The Sultans had little to play for, but were playing in front of a home crowd as they chose to bat first. But Zalmi started sharply, and Sultans couldn't break free early on in the Powerplay. Yasir Khan tried to lap Saim Ayub's first ball, and never had the pace to clear fine leg, while an equally stuttering start from Mohammad Rizwan ended when Ahmed Daniyal caught him brilliantly at square leg.

The tone of the game never really shifted. This wasn't a contest of ups and downs, or even mild changes in momentum, so much as a steady, inexorable descent for Multan. Tayyab Tahir and Shai Hope put up a 26-run partnership, though the asking rate rarely threatened to exceed six, and it would only be followed by a somewhat predictable collapse. Tahir hooked one to Mitchell Owen at square leg for Daniyal's first wicket before Ashton Turned was bowled round his legs by Maaz Sadaqat. Four wickets fell for six runs as the Sultans slumped to 66 for six, and it was only the odd slog from Shai Hope - and latterly Mohammad Hasnain - that helped the Sultans stumble past 100. There was little jeopardy in the chase, even if Owen holed out in the first over. Saim Ayub made sure of that when a pair of back-to-back sixes off Ubai kic-

started an over that conceded 22. There was brief consolation for Shahid Aziz after the Powerplay when he got one to tail in that cleaned up the Zalmi captain Babar Azam for another disappointing innings, and a slower ball which drew Ayub into holing out one run shy of a half-century, but they were a footnote in a humbling defeat. Max Bryant, who has been involved only in a limited capacity this season, helped himself to a six and a four off Faisal Akram, before capitalising on Sultans dependably poor fielding when a chance was shelled at slip. The game would fittingly finish with a flourish from Bryant, the hapless Ubaid Shah tonked for three boundaries on the trot to seal a win that drives the Sultans further into the dirt. Zalmi's hopes of remaining the only team never to miss out on a playoff spot remains alive. —Cricinfo

Alexander-Arnold confirms Liverpool exit for Real Madrid

LONDON (Agencies): Trent Alexander-Arnold has announced he is leaving Liverpool when his contract expires at the end of the season, paving the way for a free transfer to Real Madrid. The 26-year-old confirmed the decision on his social media channels on Monday. He informed the Liverpool head coach, Arne Slot, that he would not be signing a contract extension at the end of March but kept the news private to avoid distracting from the club's successful pursuit of the Premier League title. He is believed to have verbally agreed a five-year contract with Real Madrid that reports in Spain claim will be worth around £7.5m a year after tax. Confirmation of Alexander-Arnold's exit as a free agent is a major setback for Liverpool, although the club believes it did everything within its power to convince the homegrown defender to stay. He was offered a new contract at Anfield that would have made him the best paid full-back in the Premier League and one of the highest paid full-backs in the world. Ultimately, however, the player's desire for a fresh challenge usurped the financial and sporting package on offer at Liverpool. Upheaval at the top of the club - from sporting directors leaving to having to find a successor to Jürgen Klopp last year - meant talks over a new deal for Alexander-Arnold did not commence formally until Slot was appointed in May 2024. Richard Hughes made the first approach to Alexander-Arnold's representatives before officially starting as Liverpool's new sporting director on 1 June last year. Negotiations remained cordial throughout,

but it became clear in March that the England international was set on a move to Spain and Liverpool would not be able to retain him as well as Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk, both of whom recently signed new two-year contracts. "After 20 years at Liverpool Football Club, now is the time for me to confirm that I will be leaving at the end of the season," said Alexander-Arnold. "This is easily the hardest decision I've ever made in my life. I know many of you have wondered why or been frustrated that I haven't spoken about this yet, but it was always my intention to keep my full focus on the team's best interests, which was securing No 20. "This club has been my whole life - my whole world - for 20 years. From the academy right through until now, the support and love I have felt from everyone inside and outside of the club will stay with me forever. I will forever be in debt to you all. But, I have never known anything else and this decision is about experiencing a new challenge, taking myself out of my comfort zone and pushing myself both professionally and personally. "I've given my all every single day I've been at this club, and I hope you feel like I've given back to you during my time here. From the bottom of my heart, I thank everybody - my coaches, my managers, my teammates, the staff and our incredible supporters - for the last 20 years. I've been blessed enough to live out my dreams here and I will never, ever take for granted the special moments I've been fortunate enough to have lived through with you all. My love for this club will never die."

Fatima Sana shortlisted for ICC April Player of the Month

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The International Cricket Council (ICC) Monday announced the shortlist of contenders in line to win the ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month awards for April. The ICC Women's Player of the Month nominees comprise three leading all-rounders who played starring roles in last month's hotly contested ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 Qualifier in Pakistan. Fatima Sana was in inspired form during April, leading Pakistan to claim a World Cup spot with a string of memorable performances during an unbeaten week on home soil. Kathryn Bryce also enjoyed a stellar month as a leading Scotland, and ended as the competition's leading run-scorer. Hayley Matthews of the West Indies completes the shortlist, and will be aiming to win her fourth Player of the Month accolade with runs and wickets flowing during the month. The ICC Men's Player of the Month shortlist features standout performers in the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe Test series and an emerging New Zealand pacer. Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz made leading contributions at both ends of the crease in Bangladesh's tied Test series against Zimbabwe, earning his first nomination for ICC Men's Player of the Month. Likewise on the opposing side, Zimbabwe's Blessing Muzarabani enjoyed significant success with the ball in hand to earn his side a share of the spoils. New Zealand's Ben Sears becomes the third and final name on the shortlist after blistering spells in his side's 3-0 ODI sweep over Pakistan. An independent ICC Voting Academy and fans around the world will now be invited to cast their votes to decide the winners, which will be announced next week. Fans are now able to vote for their favourite performers at icc-cricket.com/awards. ICC Women's Player of the Month Nominees for April: Kathryn Bryce (SCO) Scotland's talisman once again demonstrated outstanding form in an ICC qualifying event despite falling short of sealing a spot at this year's ICC Women's Cricket World Cup. Leading from the front, the 27-year-old skipper blasted 293 runs over her five games at an average of 73.25 which included notable knocks of 91 against hosts Pakistan, 60 against Thailand and a glittering 131 not out against Ireland. Beyond her batting prowess, Bryce also contributed with the ball, taking six wickets during the competition and was ultimately named the Player of the Series. Hayley Matthews (WI) A shining light for the West Indies in an otherwise disappointing campaign, Matthews began her Qualifier with a mesmerizing all-round display against Scotland in Lahore, taking four for 56 and striking an unbeaten 114 albeit in defeat. Her tournament-leading 13 wickets at 15.84

included spells of four for 24 against Ireland and two wickets apiece against Pakistan and Bangladesh, before the dramatic final match against Thailand, where Matthews' explosive 70 in 29 balls saw the islanders fall agonizingly short of snatching a World Cup spot on account of net run rate. Fatima Sana (PAK) The Pakistan captain enjoyed a fruitful Qualifier as leading wicket-taker for her side with 12 wickets in her five outings at an average of 12.25. After a modest start to her competition, Fatima came to life with four for 23 against Scotland and three wickets each against West Indies and Thailand. With the addition of 103 runs in the lower order, the 23-year-old made progress up the ODI Bowling and All-Rounder Rankings, and seeks to win her first Women's Player of the Month crown, and first for Pakistan since Sidra Ameen won in November 2022. ICC Men's Player of the Month Nominees for April: Mehidy Hasan Miraz (BAN) Nominated for the first time for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award and aiming to be the first Bangladesh player to win since Shakib al Hasan in March 2023, Mehidy enjoyed a prolific April with bat and ball, ending the two-Test encounter as the Player of the Series. Following his ten wickets in the opening defeat in Sylhet (five for 52 and five for 50), the spinner then

hit 104 in Chattogram - his second Test century - before another five wicket-haul ensured the honours were shared. Blessing Muzarabani (ZIM) The pacer became just the second Zimbabwean to reach 700 rating points in the ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings in April, reaching the landmark with a Player of the Match performance in the first Test victory over Bangladesh - Zimbabwe's first away Test win since 2021. After taking three wickets in the first innings and with a healthy lead of 82 heading into the second, Muzarabani conspired to rip through Bangladesh's top and middle order to claim six for 72 and set up a thrilling three-wicket victory in Sylhet. Ben Sears (NZ) Having made his ODI debut for New Zealand in February, Sears has already shown plenty of promise, and caps a fine spell in the format with his maiden nomination for Men's Player of the Month. Drafted in for the second of three matches against Pakistan, Sears starred alongside Jacob Duffy and Will O'Rourke to unleash a fearsome spell of fast bowling in Hamilton and take his first ODI five-wicket haul (five for 59). He then went back-to-back in Mount Maunganui, returning figures of five for 34 to claim the Player of the Series in a commanding 43-run victory and ensure the 3-0 sweep.



MULTAN: Muhammad Amir Barki was bowled by Maaz Sadaqat.

Basit reacts to Gavaskar's suggestion

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan cricketer Basit Ali has hit back at Sunil Gavaskar for suggesting the Men in Green be removed from the upcoming Asia Cup 2025. The former Indian cricketer stirred controversy after suggesting that the political tensions between Pakistan and India might impact the national side's participation in the upcoming continental tournament. "BCCI's stance has always followed the Indian government's direction. If the situation hasn't changed, I don't see Pakistan taking part in the Asia Cup [2025]," Sunil Gavaskar said during a recent interview with an Indian media outlet. The former Indian cricketer went on to indicate the potential dissolution of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) amid the tension between the governments of both countries. "It's possible that the Asian Cricket Council could be dissolved. Instead, we might see a tri-series or a four-nation event. What happens next will depend on how things unfold in the coming months," he said. Now, Basit Ali expressed dismay over the comments made by the former Indian cricketer about Pakistan's participation in the Asia Cup 2025. "I would not have reacted if somebody else had said this. It is distressing to hear such things from a player of his stature,"

Bangladesh to make all-format tour of Sri Lanka in June-July

DHAKA (Agencies): The Bangladesh men's team will tour Sri Lanka for two Tests, three ODIs, and two T20Is, in June and July. The Tests will be both teams' first fixtures in the 2025-27 World Test Championship cycle, and will be played in Galle and the SSC (Colombo). Two of the ODIs will be played in Khetarama (Colombo), and one in Pallekele, before the T20 series goes on something of a tour, starting in Pallekele and moving to Dambulla before coming back to Khetarama for the final match of the tour. All these fixtures had been agreed upon - exactly as they are scheduled to be played - in the men's Future Tours Programme. All

ODIs are day-night matches. This is Sri Lanka's only home series of 2025 featuring all three formats, at least as currently scheduled. After these Tests they have no more on the calendar until mid-2026 - a potential 12-month gap between matches. For Bangladesh, who also have only two-Test series scheduled in the coming WTC cycle, this is one of two Test series scheduled for the rest of 2025, the other being a non-WTC series against Ireland. The T20I leg of the tour, meanwhile, will likely be of particular importance; Sri Lanka is due to co-host the men's T20 World Cup alongside India in the first quarter of 2026. Though no

venues for that tournament have yet been announced, Khetarama and Pallekele are almost certain to host matches, with Dambulla also likely to be in the mix. The first Test starts on June 17. The last T20I is set for July 16. Bangladesh Tour of Sri Lanka 2025 - Schedule Tests 1st Test: June 17 - 21, Galle 2nd Test: June 25 - 29, SSC ODIs 1st ODI: July 2, Khetarama 2nd ODI: July 5, Khetarama 3rd ODI: July 8, Pallekele T20Is 1st T20I: July 10, Pallekele 2nd T20I: July 13, Dambulla 3rd T20I: July 16, Khetarama.

Curry helps Warriors claim decider against Rockets



HOUSTON (Agencies): Stephen Curry said the Golden State Warriors had to "dig deep" to beat the Houston Rockets 103-89 in the deciding game of their Western Conference first-round play-off series. The Warriors led the best-of-seven series 3-1 before the Rockets pulled level at 3-3 going into the final game in Houston. Curry scored 14 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter while team-mate Buddy Hield sank nine three-pointers in his game-high haul of 33 as the pair helped the Warriors set up a Western Conference semi-final against the Minnesota Timberwolves. "A lot of resilience and

everybody stepping up," said Curry when asked what was needed to secure the win. "Everybody's been talking about our team the last two games in terms of our execution, our energy, all that. "We blocked it all out and just understood we had 48 minutes to dig deep. Everybody contributed. Buddy Hield was unbelievable." Jimmy Butler, who joined the Warriors in a trade from Miami Heat in February, contributed 20 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. "For us to build chemistry on the fly and build trust on the fly and perform like we did in a game seven, it means the world,"

added Curry. "So, mission accomplished - step one." The Rockets were second in the Western Conference regular season compared to the Warriors' seventh-place finish. Houston's defeat in the decider meant they failed to become the 14th team to come from 3-1 behind to win a NBA play-off series. Meanwhile, the Indiana Pacers won 121-112 at the Cleveland Cavaliers to take a 1-0 lead in their Eastern Conference semi-final play-off series. Andrew Nembhard top scored for the Pacers with 23 points while team-mate Tyrese Haliburton added 22. The Cavaliers, who finished top of the Eastern Conference, were beaten for the first time in this season's play-offs following their 4-0 first-round play-off series victory against Miami. "We're definitely the heavy underdog, but we're trying to control what we can," said Haliburton. "It gives us a lot of momentum for sure, but this is the best team in our conference. They don't lose much."

Rabada back in IPL after serving drug ban



NEW DELHI (AFP): South Africa pace bowler Kagiso Rabada has returned to India for selection in his IPL team Gujarat Titans after serving a ban for recreational drug use, the franchise said Monday. Rabada, 29, left the Indian Premier League to return home last month after a positive drug test resulted in him serving a provisional suspension. "Kagiso Rabada has accepted responsibility and

regrets his mistake," Gujarat said in a statement. "South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport (SAIDS) has completed the investigation. Rabada has honoured his provisional suspension and has also completed a program. He is now fully available for selection in the remaining matches of the IPL." The statement did not specify the length of the suspension. Rabada, who played just

two matches for Gujarat in this season of the T20 tournament, was "deeply sorry" for his actions. "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 said. Gujarat are placed fourth in the 10-team table with four league matches left for the 2022 champions, who won the IPL in their debut season. Top four teams at the end of the league phase will move into the play-offs. Rabada is South Africa's leading fast bowler. He has taken 327 wickets in 70 Tests and is expected to play a key role for South Africa in the World Test Championship final against Australia starting at Lord's in London on June 11.



In brief

Painting exhibition ends

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Council of the Arts (PUCAR), Rawalpindi, successfully concluded a painting exhibition with a graceful closing ceremony. The event, themed around the distinguished culture of books, attracted art lovers, students, and dignitaries from across the region, celebrating the deep connection between visual art and literature. Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, being chief guest commended Muhammad Qasim, for his outstanding contributions, which remained the focus during the exhibition. She said that the exhibition served as a remarkable tribute to the literary and intellectual heritage of society. Dr. Najiba further highlighted the significance of promoting book culture through visual art. "It is a creative way to revive book reading habits, particularly among the youth", she said. She further stressed the importance of such initiatives in promoting knowledge. Sajjad Hussain, Director Arts Council also lauded Muhammad Qasim's inspiring artworks. The event was attended by prominent figures from the arts and literary community, including senior artist Muhammad Azeem Iqbal, renowned poet Farkhanda Shamim, Younis Roomi, Shami Chaudia, and Shafique ur Rehman.

Two cops booked for corruption

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani has taken serious notice of a corruption charges against two police officials and ordered strict legal and departmental action. A case has been registered at Pirwadhai Police Station against Head Constable Rizwan and Constable Mehran after a citizen alleged that the officers extorted money from him. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani confirmed that departmental proceedings have also initiated against the officials involved. "Those found guilty will face severe punishment," he said, adding that any abuse of authority or corruption will not be tolerated. CPO Hamdani reiterated that Rawalpindi Police operates under a policy of merit and self-accountability. "We are ensuring that all such complaints are addressed transparently. Citizens are encouraged to report any misconduct by calling 15 or through the District Complaint Cell," he added. The police department has assured the public that no one was above the law.

CTP devise traffic plan for PSL matches

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police has issued a detailed traffic plan for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) cricket matches at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The plan, in place from May 7 to May 13, aims to maintain traffic flow. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Benish Fatima said that more than 365 traffic police officers and traffic wardens will be on duty during the matches to manage traffic flow and provide assistance to the people. The team were included 1 senior officer of traffic, 8 DSPs, 50 inspectors, and over 300 wardens and assistants. To ensure smooth movement of cricket teams and fans, several road closures and alternative routes have been designated. During the matches, Murree Road will be completely closed from Faizabad to Double Road turn during the arrival and departure of cricket teams.

Gilani stresses collective responsibility to preserve cultural heritage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday underscored the vital importance of preserving cultural heritage, calling it essential for educating future generations, promoting civilizational understanding, and strengthening social values. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugural ceremony of CultuRise, a newly launched organization focused on the protection, education, and advocacy of cultural heritage across Pakistan. "It is encouraging to see CultuRise emerge as a modern and revolutionary initiative. Its efforts reflect the collective commitment required to preserve and promote our cultural legacy," Gilani said.

Highlighting the significance of international cooperation, he welcomed the presence of UNESCO representatives and members of the diplomatic community at the event. "Whether it's Spain's Alhambra, Hungary's Buda Castle, or Pakistan's Mohenjo-Daro and Lahore Fort, these sites are not just national treasures — they are shared human heritage," he remarked.

The Senate Chairman stressed that the responsibility of cultural preservation lies with governments, parliaments, institutions, and individuals alike. "We must all play our role in ensuring that this great heritage is passed on to future generations."

Describing Pakistan's cultural richness as a "bouquet of civilizations, lan-

guages, and traditions," Gilani traced the nation's legacy from the ancient civilizations of Gandhara, Indus Valley, and Mehrgarh to the architectural marvels of the Mughal era. He praised the craftsmanship, music, literature, and architectural styles of different regions, calling them "manifestations of national identity and resilience."

However, he cautioned that urban development, neglect, and the pressures of modern life pose serious threats to the country's cultural foundations. "Preserving our heritage is not just about remembering the past — it is a national duty we owe to our future," he said.

Reaffirming the Senate's commitment, Gilani vowed to support initiatives that

protect Pakistan's tangible and intangible heritage.

He called for investment in education, public awareness, and capacity building to ensure that cultural treasures are preserved and celebrated. "Our heritage connects us with the world through the universal language of art and culture. It can be a powerful tool to promote peace, harmony, and a positive image of Pakistan," he added.

On the launch of CultuRise, Gilani urged the audience to become ambassadors of cultural preservation. "Let us unite to protect the stories, traditions, and masterpieces that define us. In doing so, we will honor our ancestors and inspire pride in the generations to come."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi's important meeting with UAE Ambassador H.E. Hamad Obaid Alzaab.

Pakistan has suffered most from terrorism: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday said that Pakistan has suffered the most from terrorism, sacrificing over 90,000 lives, and once again offered an independent investigation into the Pahalgalam incident.

Chairing the National Assembly session, the Speaker informed the House that the Pahalgalam incident was discussed in the House Business Advisory

Committee meeting. He said members strongly condemned the attack and voiced serious concerns over Indian threats of a water blockade and military aggression following the incident.

He said that Pakistan's position on the matter has always been clear and consistent, adding that the true facts behind the Pahalgalam incident are well known to all.

Ayaz Sadiq also thanked members of the Senate for passing a unanimous resolu-

tion on the issue, calling it a reflection of national unity.

"Pakistan has been on the frontlines in the fight against terrorism and understands the pain of such tragedies better than any other country," he said.

"No nation has paid a higher price in this war than Pakistan. We have repeatedly called for an independent investigation into the Pahalgalam incident, and the entire nation is united on this issue."

Hanif Abbasi meets UAE Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi met with Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Alzaab on Monday.

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration between Pakistan Railways and UAE in the freight sector, said a news release.

During the meeting, the UAE envoy expressed interest in a long-term agreement between Karachi Gateway Terminal,

a subsidiary of AD Ports Group, and Pakistan Railways for the development and operation of dedicated freight train services.

This proposed partnership aimed at providing a significant boost to Pakistan's freight transportation capacity.

The UAE's cooperation will help increase Pakistan Railways' market share in the freight sector, enhance its multimodal transport capabilities and contribute to the modernization of its freight services.

Both the parties agreed to move forward with negotiations to finalize the framework for this collaboration.

This partnership will pave the way for improved connectivity and operational efficiency, enabling Pakistan Railways to better serve the national and regional logistics market.

The proposal reflects the UAE's commitment to investing in Pakistan's infrastructure, further enhancing the economic ties between the two nations.

SSP Shoaib orders crackdown on criminals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan chaired a meeting with officers of City and Saddar Zones and directed them to intensify action against criminal gangs and ensure the arrest of absconding suspects involved in property-related and vehicle theft cases.

An official told APP on Monday that the directives were issued during the meeting attended by SHO's of both zones. The session reviewed the overall law and order situation and progress on pending investigations.

SSP Shoaib said officers were instructed to compile detailed data of suspects involved in property crimes, particularly those recently released from custody, and to ensure their close surveillance. If any released suspects are found involved in fresh criminal activities, they must be apprehended without delay.

SSP Shoaib said police officials must ensure that all under-investigation cases are resolved on merit and that challans are submitted to the concerned courts promptly. He emphasized that the arrest of wanted suspects in vehicle and motorcycle theft cases must be prioritized.

SSP said maximum efforts should be made to apprehend proclaimed offenders and tighten the grip around organized criminal groups. "Protection of citizens' lives and property is our foremost responsibility, and any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated," SSP Shoaib added.

ANF arrests 7 smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting seven operations across the country, recovered as many as 215.14 kg of drugs worth more than Rs 300 million and arrested seven suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday.

He informed that 10 grams of weed, 616 grams of suspicious substances and 15 grams of intoxicating pills were recovered from two different parcels sent from the USA and London to Gujranwala and Peshawar at a Courier office in Rawalpindi.

As many as 7 kgs of Ice were recovered from the passenger luggage going to Bahrain from Peshawar Airport. In another operation, 6 kg and 500 grams of hashish were recovered from the possession of five Peshawar-based bus passengers at the Hyderabad bus terminal.

Similarly, 5 kgs of Weed were recovered from an abandoned trolley bag at Karachi Airport. As many as 156 kgs of heroin hidden for smuggling were recovered near Mastung District, Balochistan.

As much as 40 kilograms of ice were recovered from the possession of a suspect vehicle near Kuchlak Bypass, Quetta. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and an investigation has been initiated.

Azerbaijan envoy calls on Minister for Defence Production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Federal Minister for Defence Production, Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj on Monday.

The Minister welcomed the envoy and said that Pakistan greatly valued its friendly relations with Azerbaijan, said a press release.

The Minister appreciated existing cooperation

between the two countries and also mentioned that defence ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan have much more potential to grow further.

While referring to Pakistan's formidable defence industrial potential and skilled manpower, the Minister offered assurance of cooperation/collaborations in all mutually agreed/beneficial fields of defence

including provision of consultancy services, technical expertise and training facilities to Azerbaijan.

Khazar Farhadov thanked the Government of Pakistan for its cooperation in development of defence industry of Azerbaijan and appreciated efforts of Ministry of Defence Production in enhancing ties between the two countries.



RAWALPINDI: H.E. Mr. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan called on Federal Minister for Defence Production, Muhammad Raza Hayat Harraj.

Anti-encroachment drive restores order in Cantt Areas

RAWALPINDI (APP): Traders and residents of Rawalpindi's Cantonment areas have expressed satisfaction over the recent anti-encroachment operations conducted by the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), which have restored order and accessibility in key commercial and residential zones.

The drive targeted illegally occupied footpaths, roads, and public spaces in Sadar, Tench Bhatta, People's Colony, Misryal Road, Choohr Chowk, and other adjacent areas, bringing relief to long-suffering locals.

For years, illegal stalls, extended ramps and unauthorized constructions had choked the areas, causing severe traffic congestion and inconvenience for pedestrians. However, the RCB's phased campaign has cleared a major mess.

Amir Saeed, a computer accessory dealer in Sadar said, "The encroachments

had turned the market into a mess. Customers avoided coming here due to the lack of footpath space. Now, the area looks cleaner, and business is improving."

Ikram Sheikh, an overseas education consultant expressed the symmetry. "The encroachments were a nuisance, especially for students and parents visiting our offices. The RCB's action was long overdue, and we fully support it," he said.

Raja Babar, a resident of the Cantt area highlighted how the encroachments had made life difficult. "Walking on footpaths was impossible because they were occupied by vendors and shop extensions. I am able to take my family to Sadar comfortably after a long time, he added.

Amjad Zeb, a private college owner near Dhoke Syedan area also appreciated saying that order in the Cantt areas has been restored, the safety bene-

fits. "Students and staff can now commute without fear of being hit by vehicles forced onto narrow roads", he said.

Though some displaced vendors initially protested, the situation has become smooth. However, traders demanded the availability of the parking plaza. They highlighted that people are unable to visit the market due to the paucity of the space.

The business owners of the Bank Road, the first ever pedestrian zone have called for urgent redressal of the parking issues. RCB has allocated three parking spaces named Potohar 1, 2 and 3 have been dedicated for visitors parking, yet the demand is high.

However, due to the under construction underpass project at the main Mall Road, traffic diversion in the Cantt areas has some impact for which City Traffic Police is intensely engaged to overcome.

IRSA declares 21 % water shortage for Kharif season

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority Advisory Committee (IAC) on Monday declared an overall water shortage of 21 percent for the remaining early Kharif season in case supplies in River Chenab remains normal while 7 percent water shortage for late Kharif.

However, the situation would be monitored on a daily basis and if the decrease continues in "River Chenab", the shortages would be revisited accordingly.

The Committee which met with IRSA chairman Sahibzada Muhammad Shabir approved the Anticipated Water Availability Criteria

for balance period of Kharif from May to September 2025.

IAC reviewed the water situation for the remaining months of "Early Kharif" (May – Jun 10) & Late Kharif (Jun 11 – Sep) season. It was noted with concern unanimously that sudden decrease in river Chenab inflows at Marala due to short supply by India would result in more shortages in Early Kharif Season.

Keeping in view the crisis created by Indian short supplies in Chenab River, it was also decided that conjunctive use of reservoirs would be done pragmatically to ensure intended supplies to the provinces. The participants

showed determination to handle this crisis with unanimity and national spirit — setting the internal reservations aside.

The meeting was attended, in part, by all IRSA Members, Chief Engineering Advisor, MoWR; Secretaries PIDs of Punjab and Sindh; Senior Officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Balochistan Irrigation Deptt., General Managers of WAPDA; Senior representatives of Tarbela and Mangla Dams, Senior Representatives of Provincial Agriculture Departments and Director (Opr) / Secretary IRSA, along with senior technical personnel of IRSA.

Poliovirus detected in Sewage samples

ISLAMABAD (APP): As part of ongoing efforts to eradicate poliovirus, the National Institute of Health (NIH) has confirmed presence of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in environmental samples collected from multiple districts.

Between April 7 and April 17, as many 38 sewage samples were collected from 31 districts and tested at the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication.

The lab reported WPV1 detection in samples from 18 districts, including Loralai, Quetta, Zhob, Islamabad, Abbottabad, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Peshawar, Tank, North Waziristan, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Badin, Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Kashmore, Karachi, and Sukkur.

Meanwhile, samples from 10 districts including Noshki, Sibi, Charsadda, Lower Dir, Mansehra, Swat, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, and Rajanpur tested negative for poliovirus.

The detection of poliovirus in these environmental samples underscores the continued need for high-quality vaccination campaigns. The Polio Eradication Programme recently concluded its second nationwide vaccination drive of the year, held from April 21 to 27.

The campaign successfully reached 45.4 million children under the age of five, with the dedication of frontline workers, government agencies, and the cooperation of parents across the country.

Despite a notable decline

in polio cases since September 2024, officials emphasize the importance of sustained efforts. The next nationwide campaign is scheduled from May 26 to June 1, with a target of vaccinating another 45.4 million children.

"Repeated vaccination is essential to protect children from lifelong paralysis," stated a spokesperson for the Polio Programme. "Every child must be vaccinated during every campaign. Leaving even one child unvaccinated puts entire communities at risk."

The programme continues to urge parents and communities to ensure no child is missed, reinforcing the message that protecting children from polio is a shared national responsibility.

Over 100 Afghans freed

KABUL (Pajhwok): Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation says 104 more Afghan citizens have returned to their homeland after being freed from prisons in Pakistan. The ministry, citing border officials in Kandahar’s Spin Boldak town, wrote on X the 104 Afghans, who spent one to 15 days in jails, had been arrested in various parts of Pakistan. After receiving humanitarian assistance, the returnees were transported to their respective native areas, the ministry added.

25m litres of gasoline imported

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghanistan imported approximately 24.9 million litres of gasoline from Kyrgyzstan in January and February, valued at \$11.5 million. Akipress reported, citing the National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan, the gasoline was supplied at a rate of 40 soms per litre. Afghanistan remains the primary consumer of Kyrgyz motor gasoline, accounting for around 92% of the Central Asian nation’s total fuel exports.

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

Construction work of road commenced

KABUL (TOLONews): Kabul Municipality has announced the commencement of the second phase of construction and development of the Darulaman–Pul-e-Gulbagh road. According to Nematullah Barakzai, a representative of the Kabul Municipality, the project will cost around 140 million Afghani and is expected to be completed within the next one and a half years. Barakzai told TOLONews: “The first phase of the road, which is approximately 3,176 meters long and 33 meters wide, was launched last year. However, due to negligence by the contracted company, the agreement was canceled and a new contractor has now started the work. The second phase, around 2,400

meters long, is also currently underway.” The Darulaman–Pul-e-Gulbagh road is a key route that connects western Kabul to the southern part of the city. Starting from Darulaman and extending to the Kabul–Logar highway, the road is divided into four sections and is considered one of the vital infrastructure projects in the capital. The first section, which began last year, had been halted reportedly due to the contractor’s shortcomings, but now both the first and second phases have been reassigned to a new company. Several residents of Kabul living along this route have expressed satisfaction with the restart of the project but urged the

authorities to monitor the construction daily to ensure timely and high-quality completion. Abdul Rashid, a resident of Deh Bori, stated: “We are very happy that work on this road in our area has begun. However, we are also concerned that it might be stopped again, as it was once started and then paused.” Mohammad Wazir, another resident of the area, added: “Our request to the Islamic Emirate and Kabul Municipality is to ensure the project is completed on time. It was previously delayed for some time.” According to Kabul Municipality officials, the third and fourth phases of the Darulaman–Pul-e-Gulbagh road project are currently in the procurement stage.

Flash floods devastate Badakhshan

BADAKHSHAN (BNA): Severe flooding in the Yavang district of Badakhshan has led to destruction, impacting dozens of homes and hundreds of acres of farmland. Spokesman for police commander, reported that the floods have heavily affected villages of Fargham, Goharcheh, Hazrat Sayed, Kalfzar, and Yarghask, including the district’s center. According to preliminary statistics, the floods have destroyed 170 residential houses, a health center, and a 150-kilowatt power station. Additionally, around 2,000 jeribs of farmland, orchards, several wells, and roads have been severely damaged. The disaster has also resulted in the loss of approximately 300 livestock, further exacerbating the plight of local residents.

450m afs water supply project in Jawzjan executed

SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): Construction work has been completed on a water supply project at a cost 450 million afghanis in northern Jawzjan province, enabling 7,500 families to gain access to safe drinking water, an official announced on Monday. Emirati Entities Director Maulvi Ahmad Jan Bilal told the inaugural ceremony the project included the drilling of two deep wells, installation of 140 kilometres of household transmission and distribution pipelines, construction of three underground dams with a combined capacity of 600 cubic metres and one elevated dam with a capacity of 250 cubic metres. Additionally, four 100-kilovolt transformers were installed and a perimeter wall built in the Qara Kent area of Shiberghan, the provincial capital. He noted the project provided 7,500 households



with access to clean drinking water. Chief Executive of the Water Supply Authority Maulvi Ghulam Rahman Kazimi remarked: “We remain committed to delivering clean water to all residents of Shiberghan. The execution of such projects

demonstrates the government’s firm determination to enhance the welfare and health of its people.” Meanwhile, Governor Qari Gul Haidar Shafaq underlined the caretaker government’s continued efforts to implement key infrastructure projects

aimed at meeting basic needs of citizens across the country. Residents of the provincial capital voiced satisfaction with the project’s completion and urged the implementation of more public welfare schemes across the province.

Job creation key to curb illegal migration: Herat youth

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): With illegal migration on the rise among jobless Afghan youth, a food factory in western Herat shows how local employment can be a powerful tool in reversing this dangerous trend. Workers at a food production factory in Herat believe that creating domestic job opportunities can help curb this troubling trend. They are urging the government and investors to address the crisis of youth migration by promoting job creation through local investment. The workers emphasize the importance of supporting young people by providing them with suitable employment opportunities within the country. A protein-based food production factory in Herat province, which produces more than ten tons of sausages and cold cuts daily, has created jobs for over 100 local residents — a development warmly welcomed by the youth. Shakib Ahmad, a young employee at the factory, says that although he was unable to continue his education, he is now satisfied

and grateful to have found work and a steady income in Herat. He said that economic challenges and job scarcity have not only deprived many young people of educational opportunities but have also forced a significant number into risky, illegal migration. Ahmad urges government officials and investors to create employment opportunities within the country to prevent the illegal migration of young Afghans, who he describes as the active workforce of the nation. Ghulam Farooq, another factory worker who spent over two years illegally in Iran, cites lack of employment as the primary reason for his migration. Now back in Afghanistan, he is able to support his ten-member family through his job at the factory. He also urges entrepreneurs and investors to expand domestic manufacturing facilities to generate more job opportunities for the country’s youth and broader population. Meanwhile, officials at the food factory say they are working to expand

operations in order to employ more people, particularly young individuals. Mohammad Yousuf Rasheedi, the owner of the sausage and cold cut factory, says the facility currently produces 12 varieties of products and meets the demand for such foods in Herat and the broader western region of Afghanistan. He believes that with government support, the factory could meet the entire domestic demand for sausages and cold cuts across the country. Established in 2011 with an investment of over \$2 million, the factory now employs more than 100 workers in various departments — an initiative that has helped prevent illegal migration among local youth. Rasheedi stresses the need to restrict the import of foreign products that are already being produced locally. He urges government authorities to raise customs tariffs on such imports to protect and promote domestic industries. In response, officials from the Herat Department of Commerce and Industry

say they are taking steps to support local investors and manufacturers by increasing tariffs on imported goods that compete with domestic products. Mohammad Basheer Seerat, the department head, acknowledged the challenges surrounding youth employment and the influx of low-quality imports. However, he confirmed that government officials have implemented measures to protect local industries, including raising tariffs and limiting imports of similar goods. Seerat added that more than 5,000 people are currently employed directly in factories within Herat’s industrial park, and that this number is expected to grow with the opening of new production facilities. The Herat Industrial Park is considered one of the largest industrial and manufacturing hubs in Afghanistan. According to the Department of Industry and Commerce, more than 1,000 factories producing a variety of goods are currently operating in the park.

30 modern raisin farms being built in Ghazni

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): The Afghanistan National Reconstruction Coordination (ANRCC) has launched the construction of 30 modern raisin farms in southern Ghazni province. Maulvi Mohammad Ismail Shakib, Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in Ghazni, told Pajhwok Afghan News that 30 raisin farms, worth a total of \$200,000, are being constructed in Ghazni City, Deh Yak, and Andar districts. The project is fully funded by the ANRCC. Each farm will measure 11 meters in length, five meters in width, and four meters in height. These structures are designed to dry between 27 and 35 tons of grapes at a time, significantly improving production capacity. Shakib said that the project is expected to be completed within three months and will then be handed over to local gardeners. Ghazni is among Afghanistan’s leading producers of grapes and raisins, and the establishment of these facilities is expected to greatly enhance the quality and market readiness of local produce. “The goal is to produce raisins that meet international standards,” Shakib said, “helping farmers increase their income and move toward self-sufficiency.” Local farmers praised the initiative, saying that these modern drying facilities will reduce waste and produce higher-quality raisins compared to traditional methods. A gardener in Hassanabad noted that the project is also likely to positively impact the market price of fresh grapes. He called on the government and charitable organizations to continue supporting similar agricultural development projects. Ghazni’s grapes and raisins are renowned for their rich taste and vibrant color, attracting strong demand in both domestic and international markets.

Afghanistan exported carpets worth \$15 million

KABUL (TOLONews): Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, announced that Afghanistan exported carpets worth nearly \$15 million during the solar year 1403. According to the ministry, Pakistan, Australia, Iran, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Germany, and several other countries were the primary destinations for Afghan carpet exports last year. Jawad further elaborated: “Afghanistan exported 3,632 metric tons of carpets in 1403, with a total value of approximately \$15.2 million. These exports were destined for countries including Pakistan, Australia, Iran, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, India, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and others.” Meanwhile, a number of

carpet vendors in Kabul have emphasized the importance of this industry and are calling for more national and international exhibitions to showcase their products. Mohammad Haroon, a carpet seller in Kabul, told TOLONews: “Only a small number of Afghans participate in international exhibitions. The opportunity to participate is very limited. We ask the government to provide broader access for carpet traders and artisans to attend international trade fairs.” Shafiq, another carpet seller, added: “We are happy to see the growth of our local carpet industry. Our second request to the government is to reduce the taxes imposed on us.” On another front, the Union of Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters of Afghanistan has also highlighted the growing interest of international markets in

Afghan handwoven carpets and is urging the government to facilitate carpet transportation. Mohibullah Kohi, a board member of the union, told TOLONews: “We are unable to deliver our carpets from here to the US, Germany, or Turkey in less than 20 days, while others can do so in just two days. For example, when a customer asks us to deliver goods within 15 days, we cannot do it even in 20. This is one of our biggest challenges.” Carpet weaving remains a key traditional industry in Afghanistan, particularly in northern provinces such as Jawzjan, Balkh, Faryab, and Sar-e-Pul, where many citizens are engaged in this craft. According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, over 1.2 million people in Afghanistan are employed in the carpet manufacturing and export sector.

Poultry farms increase in Afghanistan, says Afghan Minister



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock reported a remarkable rise in poultry farms across Afghanistan, with more than 100,000 people directly and 360,000 others indirectly employed in the poultry industry. Sadr Azam Usmani, deputy minister of agriculture, stated during a meeting in

Kabul that the Islamic Emirate is working to make Afghanistan self-sufficient in various agricultural and livestock sectors. He added: This sector has created job opportunities for over one hundred thousand people.” Currently, the number of poultry farms in the country has reached approximately 14,000.

In the same meeting, Noorulhaq Anwar, director of administrative affairs, emphasized the importance of expanding Afghanistan’s economy and investment opportunities. He said that the leader of the Islamic Emirate has ordered all government institutions to eliminate obstacles for investors and traders. He stated: “Instructions have been issued to all Islamic Emirate offices and departments that no one is allowed to create any barriers for investors and investment.” Najibullah Hayat Haqqani, acting minister of communications and information technology, also speaking at the gathering, said: “The government must lay the groundwork in the economic sector so that the private sector can operate freely and achieve its goals.”

The Afghanistan National Poultry Farms Union reported that the sector has attracted a total investment of \$1.5 billion, making it the largest investment in any Afghan sector. Torayali Hemat, deputy of the union, stated: “Not only has this sector met Afghanistan’s domestic demand, but it also has the capacity to export to international markets. The total investment in this sector has reached \$1.5 billion the largest in Afghanistan’s sectors.” According to the union, there are currently 13,850 small and large poultry farms across the country, of which 12,500 are active. These active farms have a combined production capacity of 1.2 to 1.4 million kilograms of chicken meat per day.

Likewise, Malik Khyal Mohammad, a resident of Shah-Gulyan area, said around 40 poles were installed in his locality, with wiring and other technical work already completed, but the power has yet to be connected. “All work is finished — the government just needs to start distributing meters,” he said. Abdullah, a resident of Garuch area, said they were merely waiting for electricity to be connected and meters distributed, as the installation network had already been finalised. Meanwhile, Breshina Sherkat officials in the province acknowledged the delay in implementing the electricity network in Badpak, but expressed hope that the remaining work would be completed during the current year and electricity connected to

the district. Maulvi Omar Gul Naib, director of the power department, told Pajhwok that in 2019, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) launched a project in Badpak worth 100 million afghanis. As part of the scheme, 22 transformers were installed and 60 kilometres of cable stretched. He explained that the only remaining work lied in the Ozbin area of Surobi district in Kabul province, which falls under the authority of Kabul’s power department. Naib said if Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) completed the work in the Ozbin area, they would be ready to begin distributing electricity in Badpak. However, he did not specify why the project in Ozbin had been stalled.

quences of climate change,” he explained. “More than 50 percent of water sources have dried up.” While exact data is not available, assessments show rainfall in the 2024–2025 hydrological year has declined by 40–50 percent compared to last year. This decline, coupled with shifting precipitation patterns, has slashed crop yields and devastated the agricultural economy. **Disaster Management: Local and International Efforts** Ali Anwar Faheem, head of coordination and public relations at Daikundi’s Disaster Management Department, confirmed that rainfall had dropped to an unprecedented low this year. “In cooperation with the

International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Disaster Management Authority, we’ve conducted assessments in most parts of the province,” he said. “Our findings confirm that Daikundi is among the provinces most affected by climate change.” Faheem added that these findings have been shared with national and international organizations to attract support for intervention projects. The department, within its limited capacity, is focusing on preventive measures and providing emergency aid. He also noted that long-term disaster risk reduction projects are underway, with the support of national and international organizations.

Climate change threatens livelihoods in Daikundi

NEILI (Pajhwok): Climate change has inflicted a devastating impact on central Daikundi, a mountainous province in central Afghanistan. Once fertile and productive, its lands are now dry and cracked, and its farmers—who once relied on predictable weather and steady rainfall—look to the sky in vain. Their hopes for a successful harvest diminish with each passing day. In a province where agriculture is the primary livelihood, erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, and unseasonal temperature shifts have created severe challenges. Fruit trees, once a symbol of sustenance and economic stability, have with-

ered. Crops have been lost to unexpected frosts and scorching heat, leaving farmers grappling with uncertainty and hardship. **Farmers: Watching livelihoods fade** Mohammad Akbar Haiderif, a local farmer, expressed his despair to Pajhwok Afghan News. “In the past, water was abundant. We didn’t even need irrigation schedules—we watered our crops whenever necessary. Winters brought heavy snow, and spring rains followed. But now, there’s no sign of snow or rain. This year, neither season delivered the precipitation we need.” He gestures to the dry, crumbling soil beneath him. “Our only hope this year was our fruit trees. But

almonds and other fruits were destroyed by untimely cold. The land that once fed us now weighs us down.” Haiderif explained that farming has always been central to the people of Daikundi, who rely on God—and the fruit of their labor—to survive. But declining rainfall and erratic weather have placed their livelihoods in peril, and meeting even basic family expenses has become a challenge. He called on the government to take action and implement sustainable strategies to combat climate change. Another farmer, Shayar, shared his concerns with a heavy heart. “We used to have many springs and water sources, but now

they’ve all dried up. No matter how hard we work, we can’t find enough water to irrigate our crops. In the past, a farmer could easily harvest 500 seers of wheat. Now, with this drought, we can barely get 50.” According to Shayar, poverty is rising rapidly, and if the situation does not improve, mass migration from Daikundi may be inevitable. **Experts: Climate change now a crisis** Environmental expert Arif Muzhda describes the situation as a “disaster.” “Reduced rainfall and dried-up springs have severely impacted agriculture and livestock,” he said. “In the past, most wells and springs had sufficient water. Today, many have

gone completely dry.” He emphasized the broader implications of these changes: economic instability, declining health standards, and potential displacement. “Climate change affects the entire ecosystem. Droughts, irregular rainfall, and temperature extremes increase the risk of pests and crop diseases. People are under immense economic stress.” Muzhda stressed that while Afghanistan has contributed little to the global causes of climate change, it is among the countries suffering the most severe consequences. He warned that some parts of Daikundi could become uninhabitable within the next decade if current trends continue.

Districts such as Miramor, Shahristan, Neili, Pato, Bandar, and Khedir are at high risk of running out of drinking water. He urged authorities to implement adaptation strategies—such as planting drought-resistant crops, green arid zones, and improving soil resilience—to help the province withstand worsening conditions. **Officials acknowledge the crisis** Mohammad Ebrahim Sharifi, head of Daikundi’s Environmental Protection Department, noted that the province is particularly vulnerable due to its central, landlocked geography. “Untimely rain, drought, temperature fluctuations, floods, avalanches, and pests—all these are conse-

quences of climate change,” he explained. “More than 50 percent of water sources have dried up.” While exact data is not available, assessments show rainfall in the 2024–2025 hydrological year has declined by 40–50 percent compared to last year. This decline, coupled with shifting precipitation patterns, has slashed crop yields and devastated the agricultural economy. **Disaster Management: Local and International Efforts** Ali Anwar Faheem, head of coordination and public relations at Daikundi’s Disaster Management Department, confirmed that rainfall had dropped to an unprecedented low this year. “In cooperation with the

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ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

KP govt committed to use IT, says Gandapur

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has taken a significant step toward digital transformation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the KP Information Technology Board and the provincial police department for automation/digitization of various public services. The MoU, signed at a ceremony held at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar, aims to digitize a wide range of public services under the police department.

Under the new digitalization initiative, key police-related services such as police certificates, registration of foreign nationals, tenant and domestic worker registration, real-time traffic information, lost and found reporting, and recruitment updates will be automated. Additionally, internal administrative functions—including legal case management, financial management, procurement, training systems, and biometric attendance—will also be digitized.

The program also involves the expansion of various public-facing police services, including the Hotel Eye app, Rabta app, Find My Cell app, e-ticketing, welfare services app, SOS alerts, and Interpol coordination tools. The signing ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, who served as chief guest. Other dignitaries included Provincial Cabinet Members Meena Khan Afridi and Shafqat Ayaz, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hameed, Secretary ST&IT Amjad Ali Khan, and senior officials from the IT Board and police department.

During the ceremony, the Chief Minister also inaugurated two new Citizen Facilitation Centers in Dera Ismail Khan and Swat. These centers will provide access to 26 different public services under one roof, including domicile certificates, birth and death certificates, arms licenses, land transfers, building plan



approvals, water connections, and vehicle registrations. The initiative aims to eliminate the need for citizens to visit multiple government offices for basic services.

Speaking at the event, CM Gandapur emphasized the growing importance of digitalization, noting that his administration had launched comprehensive digitization across all government departments immediately after taking office. He said that these efforts are being guided by the KP Digital Roadmap 2030, which focuses on both public service delivery and internal administrative efficiency. The Chief Minister highlighted that the province has already begun offering most government services online and that digitalization has significantly contributed to improved transparency and resource management.

"Digitalization is helping us save time and money while making services more accessible to the public," he said. Gandapur revealed that thanks to enhanced monitoring and automation, the provincial government has generated an additional Rs. 250 billion in revenue. He reiterated the government's commitment to using IT as a key tool for public service reform,

in line with the vision of PTI founder Imran Khan.

He further noted that KP is the first province in Pakistan to digitize police services, a move that will greatly enhance the department's efficiency. The government is also investing heavily in modernizing and equipping the police force, especially as the province continues to be on the frontlines in the fight against terrorism.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government had launched Safe City project, initially targeting southern and other high-risk districts, with plans to expand it province-wide. "This is a vital step for public safety," he said, adding that the government is committed to improving capacity across all sectors. Concluding his remarks, CM Gandapur praised the efforts of all departments involved in accelerating digital transformation and expressed confidence in making KP a truly digital province through collaborative teamwork. Addressing the event Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Technology, Inspector General Police, Zulfiqar Hameed, Secretary ST&IT Amjad Ali Khan elaborated various aspects of the initiatives.

8 terrorists eliminated in KP IBOs

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Eight terrorists were killed during multiple intelligence based operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. An IBO was conducted by the Security Forces in general area Mir Ali, North Waziristan District. During the conduct of operation, troops effectively engaged the terrorists location and resultantly, three of them were eliminated.

In another IBO, conducted in South Waziristan District, two terrorists were successfully neutralized by the security forces. However, during intense fire exchange, Naik Mujahid Khan (age: 40 years, resident of District Kohat) was martyred. Two more engagements took place between own troops and terrorists in Khyber and Bannu Districts, resulting in killing of three khwarij.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area against the security forces as well as target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Khariji found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

PHC dispose off writ

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court's five-member larger bench disposed of a petition regarding the recovery of five individuals who went missing from Hayatabad, while directing the relevant authorities not to harass them.

The court emphasized that the country operates under the law and that all actions by relevant authorities must be in accordance with the law. The court stressed the importance of protecting the fundamental rights of citizens and directed the authorities to refrain from harassing anyone.

The IG Police informed the court that an investigation is underway, and further information is being gathered from social media. The court questioned the performance of the police, highlighting that the people of the province have been affected for 40 years.

Missing woman: The court expressed concern over the disappearance of a woman from Oman, Sofia, and the police's inability to trace her. The five individuals were taken into custody on allegations of being involved in the disappearance of the woman from Oman.

The police recovered the woman's passport, laptop, two mobile phones, and other belongings from the accused's house. An FIR was registered against the accused on May 2. The court reiterated that the authorities must protect the rights of citizens and act in accordance with the law.

Romania's PM resigns

BUCHAREST: Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu has resigned, a day after a far-right opposition leader won the first round of the presidential election rerun and his own candidate crashed out of the race.

Ciolacu said on Monday that his centre-left Social Democratic Party (PSD) would withdraw from the pro-Western coalition – effectively ending it – while cabinet ministers will stay on in an interim capacity until a new majority emerges after the presidential run-off. Hard-right eurosceptic George Simion decisively swept the ballot on Sunday, with some 41 percent of votes, and will face Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan, an independent centrist, in a May 18 run-off. Coalition candidate Crin Antonescu came third.

"Rather than let the future president replace me, I decided to resign myself," Ciolacu said. Although Ciolacu's left-ist PSD won the most seats in a December 1 parliamentary election, Simion's Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) and two other far-right groupings, one with overt pro-Russian sympathies, won more than a third of the seats to become a clear political force. — Aljazeera

Zardari, Iranian FM discuss ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Iran, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr today to discuss matters of bilateral and mutual interest, regional security situation, particularly the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalgam incident.

Welcoming the Iranian Foreign Minister, the President emphasised that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed historic and brotherly relations. He stressed the importance of both countries working together to promote peace and prosperity in the region. The Iranian Foreign Minister said that he was undertaking the visit on the instructions of the Supreme Leader, Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, and the President of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian. He expressed understanding of Pakistan's position on the current situation and called for restraint by both sides to de-escalate the tensions.

The Foreign Minister stated that Iran attached importance to its relations with Pakistan and was desirous of further strengthening bilateral ties for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. He also highlighted the need to further expand the bilateral trade between the two countries to its fullest potential. He also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and assured of working in coordination with Pakistan on all regional matters. The President thanked the Iranian Foreign Minister for undertaking the visit to Pakistan at a critical juncture. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, while expressing concern over India's aggressive posture, which he said was endangering regional peace and stability.

ity. The President also underscored the need to boost bilateral trade with Iran for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

The two sides also discussed the situation in Gaza and strongly condemned the ongoing atrocities and human rights violations by Israeli forces in Gaza and the West Bank. The Foreign Minister also conveyed the best wishes of the Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for President Asif Ali Zardari.

Meanwhile, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, met with President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr to discuss bilateral relations with particular reference to regional developments particularly addressing the heightened tensions between Pakistan and India following the Pahalgam incident.

President Zardari voiced his concerns over the recent rhetoric from the Indian Government, which he believes poses a threat to the peace and stability of the region. He underscored the need for responsible dialogue to prevent further escalation. In response, Ambassador Jiang highlighted the steadfast nature of the China-Pakistan relationship, describing it as a bond of "ironclad brothers" that has consistently provided mutual support during challenging periods. He expressed gratitude for Pakistan's perspective and reiterated China's unwavering commitment to supporting Pakistan in its quest for peace and stability in South Asia. President Zardari expressed his deep appreciation for China's unwavering support, acknowledging the critical role the Chinese Government has played in standing by Pakistan through difficult times.

US seeks to weaken global development finance efforts

NEW YORK (Reuters): The United States is seeking to weaken a global deal aimed at helping developing countries struggling with the impacts of climate change and other issues, an internal United Nations document seen by Reuters showed.

The Trump administration opposes draft reforms of the world's financial system intended to help developing countries, including around taxation, credit ratings and fossil fuel subsidies. It also wants mentions of "climate", "gender equality" and "sustainability" stripped out. The previously unreported document sheds light on how the Trump administration is seeking to imprint an "America First" agenda, including opposition to efforts to slow climate change and promote diversity, on the institutions at the heart of fixing global systemic crises.

The once-a-decade, 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in Seville, Spain, in June aims to influence the strategic direction of the world's development finance institutions. Countries agreed at FFD3, for example, to broaden tax cooperation efforts so that developing countries could help set the rules, and as of last May, more than 140 countries were involved. "This conference is about bringing the world's leaders together and setting the underlying rules and priorities for financing development goals over the next decade," Tom Mitchell, executive director of the International Institute for Environment and Development, told Reuters.

Compiled by the permanent representatives to the UN of Mexico, Nepal, Norway, and Zambia, with help from the UN secretari-

at, the April 11 negotiating draft is annotated with the positions of the 193 nations involved in the discussions. With ongoing changes at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in the fight against climate change already facing pushback from US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, the document showed it was seeking to water down further reform efforts.

Among specific points in the text that refer to the systemic reform, the document shows the US wants to remove a reference to a "package of reforms" for sustainable development. It wants to replace a line promising to "commit to reform the international financial architecture" with a pledge to "recognise the need to enhance its resilience and effectiveness in responding to present and future challenges and crises".

US, Israel bomb Yemen

SANAA (AFP): Yemen's Houthis said the United States and Israel struck the port of Hodeida on Monday, hours after a reported US air raid on Sanaa and a day after the Iran-backed rebels targeted Israel's main airport.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah television said that "US-Israeli aggression targets with six strikes the port of Hodeida" on Yemen's western coast, also reporting "US-Israeli aggression on the Bajil district" in the same province. An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed to AFP that Israeli warplanes struck Yemen. Earlier the Houthis' Saba news agency said US strikes hit the capital Sanaa and the airport road, wounding 16 people according to the rebels' health ministry.

Al-Masirah reported another three strikes in Sanaa and seven in the northern governorate of Al-Jawf. The reports on Houthi media come after Israel said a missile fired from Yemen on Sunday struck inside the perimeter of Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv for the first time. The Houthis claimed responsibility, saying they fired a "hypersonic ballistic missile" at Ben Gurion, Israel's main international gateway. The Houthis said they "will work to impose a comprehensive air blockade on the Israeli enemy by repeatedly targeting airports, most notably... Ben Gurion Airport."

The missile gouged a wide crater in the ground near an airport parking lot, injuring six people and forcing airlines to suspend flights. The Houthis, who control swathes of Yemen including Sanaa, have launched missiles and drones targeting Israel and Red Sea shipping throughout the Gaza war, saying they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians.

Israel plans to capture all of Gaza under new plan

TEL AVIV (AP): Israel approved plans on Monday to capture the entire Gaza Strip and remain in the territory for an unspecified amount of time, two Israeli officials said, in a move that if implemented would vastly expand Israel's operations in the Palestinian territory and likely bring fierce international opposition.

Israeli Cabinet ministers approved the plan in an early morning vote, hours after the Israeli military chief said the army was calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers. The new plan, which the officials said was meant to help Israel achieve its war aims of defeating Hamas and freeing hostages held in Gaza, also would push hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to southern Gaza, what would likely exacerbate an already dire humanitarian crisis.

Since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas

collapsed in mid-March, Israel has unleashed fierce strikes on the territory that have killed hundreds. It has captured swathes of territory and now controls roughly 50 percent of Gaza. Before the truce ended, Israel halted all humanitarian aid into Gaza, including food, fuel and water, setting off what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in nearly 19 months of war.

The ban on aid has prompted widespread hunger and shortages have set off looting. The Israeli officials said the plan included the "capturing of the strip and the holding of territories." The plan would also seek to prevent the militant Hamas group from distributing humanitarian aid, which Israel says strengthens the group's rule in Gaza. It also accuses Hamas of keeping the aid for itself to bolster its capabilities. The plan also included powerful strikes

against Hamas targets, the officials said.

The officials said Israel was in touch with several countries about President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and relocate its population, under what Israel has termed "voluntary emigration" yet which has sparked condemnations from Israel's allies in Europe and the Arab world. One of the officials said the plan would be implemented gradually. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing military plans.

For weeks, Israel has been trying to ratchet up pressure on Hamas and prompt it to show more flexibility in ceasefire negotiations. But international mediators trying to bring the sides toward a new deal have struggled to do so. Israel's measures do not appear to have moved Hamas away from its negotiating positions.

Trump eyes Erdogan's help to end Ukraine war

WASHINGTON (AFP): US President Donald Trump said Monday he wanted to work with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine, after the two leaders spoke by telephone.

Trump added on his Truth Social network that Erdogan had also invited him to visit Turkey and that the Turkish leader would be meeting him in Washington. "I look forward to working with President Erdogan on getting the ridiculous, but deadly, War between Russia and Ukraine ended — NOW!" Trump posted. Trump, who promised to end the Ukraine war within 24 hours of starting his second term in January, has been pushing Kyiv and Moscow to reach a

ceasefire deal.

NATO member Turkey has sought to maintain good relations with both of its Black Sea neighbors since the Russian invasion and has twice hosted talks aimed at ending the war. The two leaders also discussed "all things Syria, Gaza and more" in what Trump called a "very good and productive telephone conversation" with Erdogan.

Trump said he and Erdogan had an "excellent" relationship during his first term as US president from 2017 to 2021. The Turkish president's office said Erdogan had told Trump that US efforts to ease sanctions on Syria would "contribute" to stabilizing the war-torn country. Washington has said any normalization or

lifting of sanctions following the December ouster of Bashar Assad will depend on verifiable progress by Syria's new authorities on priorities including actions against "terror."

Erdogan also thanked Trump for his "approach to ending wars," with the statement mentioning Ukraine, Gaza and negotiations on Iran. He raised the issue of the war-battered Gaza Strip, telling Trump that humanitarian aid should "be delivered to Gaza without interruption." Israel halted all aid to the 2.4 million Palestinians in Gaza in March and its security cabinet has approved the expansion of military operations in Gaza including the "conquest" of the Palestinian territory.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady and MNA Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari met with members of Parliament during National Assembly session.

India's weaponization

(Continued from Page 1)

true face and its nefarious designs to the world.

PPP delegation, expressing unity on national defense, said that all political parties, including the Pakistan People's Party, stood united for the defense and security of Pakistan. They reaffirmed their full support for Pakistan's brave Armed Forces. The delegation also appreciated the federal government's diplomatic efforts to highlight India's war-mongering intentions internationally. As regards, preparation for the upcoming federal budget, the prime minister said that the government had initiated consultations with its largest coalition partner in this regard.

He emphasized that the government prioritized consultation in all matters. The PPP delegation presented their proposals regarding the federal budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026. This meeting marked the first round of discus-

sions, and the government's designated committee will continue consultations with the PPP. The PPP delegation expressed full confidence in the government's reforms in the energy sector.

The meeting also discussed transfer of electricity distribution companies to provincial governments. It was decided that within two months, the distribution companies will be handed over to the provinces. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahsan Iqbal, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Rana Mubashir Iqbal, Advisor to Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah, Dr. Tauqir Shah, Minister of State Abdul Rehman Kanju, and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Talha Burki were also present in the meeting.

Shehbaz directs accelerated action against tax

evasion: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed authorities concerned to accelerate actions against tax evasion, under-invoicing, and other irregularities across all sectors amid strict legal action against those involved in the sale and purchase of illegally manufactured cigarettes and other non-duty-paid goods.

The directives were issued by the prime minister after a high-level meeting chaired by him to review matters regarding the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), with a strong emphasis on removing obstacles in tax collection and reforming the taxation system, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. The prime minister said that proposed amendments in various clauses of the Income Tax Ordinance and Federal Excise Act were designed to eliminate hurdles in tax recovery, without affecting the rights of regular taxpayers and compliant businesses.