

PESHAWAR (APP): A joint resolution was presented in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly after the budget, concerning Palestine and Iran, which bears the signatures of both government and opposition members. According to the text of the resolution, this morning Israel, in violation of international laws, attacked Iran and committed a war crime.



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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has strongly condemned the blatant Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. "The Israeli military strikes are a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, and amount to total disregard of the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law", he said.

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# Israel strikes Iran for second night, Trump says not too late for deal

JERUSALEM/DUBAI/WASHINGTON, June 13 (Reuters) - Israel launched renewed attacks on Iran as evening fell on Friday, after its biggest ever attack against its longstanding foe blasted Iran's huge underground nuclear site and wiped out its entire top echelon of military commanders.

Iran said that in retaliation "the gates of hell will open", while Israel said the strikes were only the start of "Operation Rising Lion". U.S. President Donald Trump said it was not too late for Tehran to halt the bombing campaign by reaching a deal on its nuclear programme.

As evening fell on Friday, Iranian media reported explosions on the northern and

southern outskirts of Tehran and at Fordow, near the holy city of Qom, a second major nuclear site which had been spared in the first wave of attacks. Israel's military said it was striking Iranian missile and drone launching sites.

Air defences were activated across Tehran and explosions could be heard in Isfahan.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Israeli campaign was aimed at defeating an existential threat from Iran, invoking the failure to halt the Holocaust in World War Two.

Israel's operation "will continue for as many days as it takes to remove this threat," he said in a TV address. "Generations from

now, history will record our generation stood its ground, acted in time and secured our common future."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Israel had "unleashed its wicked and bloody" hand, and would suffer "a bitter fate". In a phone interview with Reuters, Trump said it was not clear if Iran's nuclear programme had survived. He said nuclear talks between Tehran and the United States, scheduled for Sunday, were still on the agenda though he was not sure if they would take place.

"I tried to save Iran humiliation and death," Trump said.

Earlier, Trump posted on Truth Social: "Iran must

make a deal, before there is nothing left."

Israel's National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said military action by itself would not destroy Iran's nuclear programme, but could "create the conditions for a long-term deal, led by the United States" to get rid of it.

Two regional sources said at least 20 Iranian military commanders were killed, a stunning decapitation reminiscent of Israeli attacks that swiftly wiped out the leadership of Lebanon's once-feared Hezbollah militia last year. Iran also said six of its top nuclear scientists had been killed.

Among the generals killed on Friday were the armed

forces chief of staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri,

and the Revolutionary Guards chief, Hossein Salami. Major General Mohammad Pakpour, swiftly promoted to replace Salami as Guards commander, vowed retaliation in a letter to the Supreme Leader read out on state television: "The gates of hell will open to the child-killing regime."

Iranians described an atmosphere of fear and anger, with some people rushing to change money and others seeking a way out of the country to safety.

"People on my street rushed out of their homes in panic, we were all terrified," said Marziyeh, 39, who was awakened by a huge blast in

Natanz, a city that houses an underground nuclear facility.

While some Iranians quietly hoped the attack would lead to changes in Iran's hardline clerical leadership, others vowed to rally behind the authorities.

"I will fight and die for our right to a nuclear programme. Israel and its ally America cannot take it away from us with these attacks," said Ali, a member of the pro-government Basij militia in Qom.

Iranian media showed images of destroyed apartment blocks, and said nearly 80 civilians were killed in attacks that targeted nuclear scientists in their beds and wounded more than 300 people.

Iran's ability to retaliate

with weapons fired by its regional proxies has been degraded over the past year, with the downfall of its ally Bashar al-Assad in Syria and the decimation of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

Air raid sirens sounded in Jerusalem on Friday evening, and Israel said it had detected the launch of a missile from Yemen, whose Houthi militia are one of the last remaining Iranian-aligned groups still capable of firing at Israel.

Israel said that Iran had launched around 100 drones towards Israeli territory on Friday, but Iran denied this and there were no reports of drones reaching Israeli targets.

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TEHRAN: A building stands damaged in the aftermath of Israeli strikes, in Tehran, Iran, on Friday.

## Israel attack on Iran ‘deeply alarming,’ risks regional instability: PM Orders all help for Pakistani pilgrims in Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemning Israel's attack on Iran, said that this "highly irresponsible" act was "deeply alarming" and risked further instability in an already volatile region.

"I condemn, in the strongest possible terms, today's unprovoked attack on Iran by Israel...This grave and highly irresponsible act is deeply alarming and risks further destabilising an already volatile region," he wrote on X.

He also conveyed his deepest sympathies to the Iranian people on the loss of lives in this attack.

The prime minister also urged the international community and the United Nations to take

urgent steps to prevent any further escalation that could imperil regional and global peace.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also condemned the strikes calling it a brazen violation of Iran's sovereignty.

Dar, in a statement on his X timeline, said that this abhorrent action had shaken the foundations of international law as well as the conscience of humanity.

The Foreign Office also condemned the "unjustified and illegitimate" aggression by Israel against Iran, reaffirming that it stood in resolute solidarity with the government and the people of Iran.

"The Israeli military strikes violate the sover-

eignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and clearly contravene the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. Iran has the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter," Foreign Office spokesperson added.

**PM orders all help for Pakistani pilgrims in Iran**

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed all relevant authorities to provide every possible assistance for the safe return and protection of Pakistani pilgrims currently in Iran.

In the light of the Prime Minister's directives, a Crisis Management Cell has been established at the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs to monitor the situation and coordinate efforts. The Pakistani Embassy in Iran has also been instructed to remain vigilant and actively assist the pilgrims.

The prime minister emphasised that immediate and effective measures must be taken to ensure the safety of all Pakistani nationals in Iran. He further instructed that all available resources be utilised to facilitate their safe and prompt return to Pakistan.

He directed that until the regional situation normalises, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Pakistani diplomatic mission in Iran will remain on high alert, ensuring continued support and communication with the pilgrims.

## Israel's attack on Iran shakes foundations of int'l law: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday strongly condemned the "unjustified" Israeli attacks on Iran, calling it a brazen violation of Iran's sovereignty.

The deputy prime minister, in a statement on his X timeline, said that this abhorrent action had shaken the foundations of international law as well as the conscience of humanity.

Besides, the Israeli strikes also gravely undermined regional stability and international security, he added.

The deputy prime minister reiterated that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Government and the people of Iran.

Earlier, the Foreign Office spokesperson also said that the Israeli military strikes violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran and clearly contravene the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law.

**Ahsan strongly condemns Israel's attack on Iran**

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal has condemned Israel's aggression against Iran and demanded that the international community take notice of this act of aggression.

Speaking to journalists at the media center outside the Parliament House on Friday, he said that Israel's aggression against Iran was condemned in the both houses of Parliament today, "I also condemn it".

He strongly condemned Israel's aggression against Iran and said that this aggression of Israel is a serious threat to regional and global peace. The international community should take notice of its act of aggression.

He said that during the budget session speech of the Finance Minister, the opposition has damaged the microfinance system of opposition benches.

## KP unveils budget of Rs2,119b for fiscal year 2025-26

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has unveiled a provincial budget of Rs2,119 billion for fiscal year 2025-26.

The finance minister, while presenting the budget for the financial year 2025-26, announced that the provincial government paid off a total of Rs49 billion in outstanding loans during the current fiscal year, including Rs18 billion in mark-up.

The salaries of government employees have increased by 10 percent

while pension increased by 7 percent.

The minister revealed that the previous KP government had recorded a fiscal surplus of Rs100 billion. However, the federal government deducted Rs42 billion under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award and the centre also did not pay the total amount - Rs40 billion - for the current expenditures of merged districts.

Aftab Alam highlighted that the federal govern-

ment slashed billions of rupees from development expenditures. Due to a shortfall of Rs1 trillion in the federal government's tax collection targets, KP received Rs90 billion less than expected.

The minister stated that the annual development budget has been set at over Rs517 billion, including more than Rs177 billion in foreign grants and loans. The proposed development budget includes 1,349 ongoing and 810 new projects. Aftab Alam empha-

sized that 16pc of the annual development program (ADP) has been allocated for road construction, with Rs53.64 billion earmarked for 583 new and existing road schemes.

For health, Rs27 billion has been allocated for 182 ongoing and new projects, while over Rs13 billion has been set aside for 96 primary and secondary education projects. Additionally, Rs6.27 billion has been allocated for 63 higher education schemes.

## Alliance between MQM, PTI now exposed, says Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that the alliance between the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has now been clearly exposed. He remarked that the same parties which once contested against each other for seats are now seen standing side by side on the assembly floor. According to Sharjeel Inam Memon, while this alliance may send a new political message, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) remains unfazed by it.

While speaking to the media at the Sindh Assembly Media Corner, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the politics of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement is evident to all. This party has consistently avoided local government elections because it no longer enjoys public support. He stated that the people of Sindh have always given their mandate to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the PPP has eradicated hooliganism, bodies in sacks, extortion, and the politics of fear from Karachi.



He said that the behavior exhibited by the MQM in the assembly today stems from a sense of deprivation. The drama staged under the pretext of an attack on Iran has also been exposed. He added that the Sindh Chief Minister began his speech by strongly condemning the cowardly attack on Iran, yet the opposition chose to indulge in negative politics even on such a sensitive occasion.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further said that while positive politics is the right of everyone, those who consistently engage in negative and disruptive politics should take note: the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has never bowed to pressure in the past, does not do so today, and will not yield in the future. He added that if the MQM truly cared about the people of Karachi, it would have raised its voice against the

and the rest of Sindh. He added that if those holding fake mandates truly had public support, they would not have chosen to run away from the local government elections.

Speaking about the budget, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government has presented a people-friendly budget. Salaries for employees from grade 1 to 16 have been increased by 12 percent, while those for employees above grade 17 have been raised by 10 percent.

Sindh Minister for Energy and Planning & Development, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, also spoke on the occasion and said that the protest held today was intended to target the Chief Minister of Sindh. However, the way the Chief Minister has implemented the vision of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari has effectively neutralized the opposition's politics. Nasir Hussain Shah stated that this budget is highly commendable, and a detailed briefing on it will be provided to journalists tomorrow. He added that members of the Sindh Assembly currently receive the lowest honorarium in the country, and efforts are underway to bring it in line with other provinces.

## Bilawal urges world to push India for dialogue



ISLAMABAD (APP): The head of the Pakistan parliamentary delegation and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on the international community Friday to engage with India and emphasize that military confrontation is not a solution to the Kashmir dispute or terrorism, stressing that dialogue is the only way forward.

Speaking to the European think tanks and

international media representatives in Brussels, Bilawal warned that India's aggressive posture, including threats to revoke the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), could escalate tensions to dangerous levels.

"We are here to present Pakistan's stance on recent tensions with India and expose New Delhi's anti-Pakistan agenda," he said.

He emphasized that the Jammu and Kashmir dis-

pute must be resolved in line with United Nations Security Council resolutions. Bilawal criticized India's "new abnormal" policy of blaming Pakistan for any terrorist attack in India or Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir without evidence, leading to immediate threats of war.

He recalled that Pakistan had proposed an impartial international investigation into the recent Pahalgam incident, but India rejected the offer.

He condemned India's suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, calling it a violation of international law and a "war crime" that threatens water access for 240 million Pakistanis. "If India weaponizes water, we may have no choice but to retaliate, risking a full-blown water war," he warned.

Bilawal reiterated that Pakistan had shown restraint, offered dialogue, and adhered to international law, urging the same standards be

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# Haleem flays Sindh govt over corruption, constitutional violations

KARACHI/LARKANA (PPI): PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh on Friday unleashed a fierce critique of the Sindh government, accusing it of systemic corruption, constitutional violations, and deliberate weakening of the judiciary.

Addressing the legal fraternity at Larkana Bar Association, Haleem alleged that the 26th Constitutional Amendment was forcibly pushed through by intimidating opposition members to undermine judicial independence. He claimed it was designed to bring the judiciary under the influence of what he termed "fraudulent politicians."

He warned that plans were underway to introduce a 27th Amendment to unlawfully extend the tenure of the current assemblies by five years, calling it an unconstitutional attempt to prolong power through manipulation.

The PTI leader also denounced the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), branding it a repressive instrument to silence dissent and suppress free speech. He appealed to lawyers to

uphold their legacy of constitutional defense and resist these actions.

"Over Rs 26 trillion in budget allocations have been received by Sindh during PPP's tenures, yet the province remains gripped by poverty, inflation, and collapsed infrastructure," he said. He cited financial irregularities exceeding Rs 10,000 billion in Sindh, noting that essential services like education and healthcare have collapsed. "The literacy rate is stuck at 57.54%, and over 7.8 million children are not enrolled in school," he highlighted.

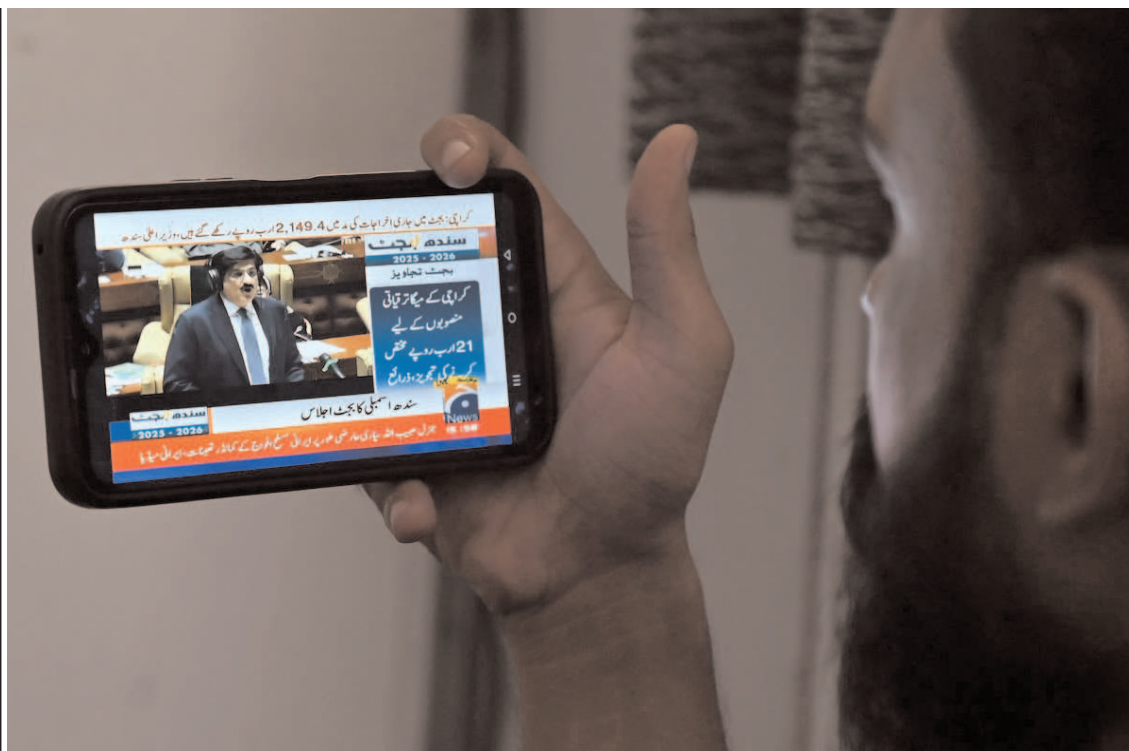
In the health sector, Haleem decried the absence of basic medical facilities, alleging that government jobs are being auctioned off instead of being granted on merit. He further accused the PPP of looting Sindh's natural resources, revealing that over 2.8 million acres of forest land have been illegally occupied.

He warned that deforestation has triggered alarming temperature increases and environmental decline, while citizens continue to lack access

to clean water. "The K-IV water project has been under construction for 16 years, yet it remains unfinished," he noted. Addressing the escalating crime rate, Haleem claimed that dacoits have established de facto control in parts of interior Sindh, with child abductions rising sharply. He blamed the police for their failure to act, accusing them of passive complicity.

Highlighting Karachi's suffering, he pointed to crippling load-shedding, soaring crime, and joblessness. "The cost of daily essentials is surging, and the streets are unsafe," he added.

Ridiculing the federal allocation of Rs15 billion for the Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway, the PTI Sindh chief termed it a farce. "Projects here are either perpetually delayed or marred by cost inflations of up to four times due to rampant graft," he said. Haleem called on the legal community to resist injustice. "This is no longer about politics; it's about survival. The people of Sindh are being denied their rights. The silence must end," he declared.



KARACHI: A citizen watches the live broadcast of the Sindh Budget 2025-26 on his mobile screen, presented by Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah during the Sindh Assembly budget session. —APP Photo

## Pakistan's strong response to India improved Pakistan's global image: Tariq Fazal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Friday praised Pakistan's strong and timely response to India on May 10, saying it improved the country's international image further and boosted the confidence of overseas Pakistanis.

Speaking in the National Assembly during the debate on the 2025-26 budget, Dr. Fazal said that Pakistan's desire for peace should not be seen as weakness. He warned that if India takes any aggressive step again, Pakistan will respond even more forcefully. "Ceasefire does not mean the threat is over—we are always ready," he added.

He strongly criticized Indian politicians and media for spreading false propaganda about Pakistan, especially in light of recent tensions. "Let it be clear—this is not a peace deal, only a ceasefire. If India repeats its mistake, we are fully prepared," he said.

Dr. Tariq Fazal urged the nation to remain united, describing Pakistan's strength as a solid wall in difficult times. "We must speak with one voice and stand together to defend our country," he said, adding that the people and armed forces are committed to protecting Pakistan's honor. He credited Allah Almighty for guiding the country and acknowledged the role of political leaders, the military, and citizens in raising Pakistan's reputation globally. He shared how overseas Pakistanis had told him they once felt hesitant while showing their passports, but that has changed after May 10. "Now, our passport is seen with respect at immigration," he said.

Dr. Tariq Fazal stressed that respect must be earned through actions, not just words. He criticized Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for promoting extremist ideology and said that Pakistan has always called for peace but will never

allow aggression to go unanswered. Talking about the internal situation, Dr. Tariq Fazal said Pakistan is going through a sensitive phase, and unity is more important than ever. He criticized the opposition for focusing on minor issues instead of serious economic and security matters.

He accused opposition parties of playing politics instead of helping the country in difficult times, especially regarding security challenges involving the Taliban and tensions with India. "They crossed the line between fair criticism and harming national interest," he said. He called for harmony among institutions and urged everyone to present a united front. "This is the time to show the world we are united," he added.

Dr. Tariq Fazal expressed

disappointment that while the international community praised Pakistan's diplomatic response, some voices inside the country were still critical. He urged Parliament to act responsibly and protect national unity during times of regional stress. "The world is watching—we must not doubt our own people," he said. He praised the success of Pakistan's anti-terror operations, saying India's recent aggression was an attempt to sabotage Pakistan's action in eliminating terrorist networks.

The Minister said the campaign against terrorism would continue until the last terrorist is eliminated. "This is a long-term mission, not a one-time effort," he stressed. On the economy, he highlighted the positive role of overseas Pakistanis. He credited Prime Minister for encouraging legal

remittances and cracking down on black money. "In March 2025 alone, we received over \$4 billion, and total remittances reached nearly \$34.9 billion," he said, calling it proof of overseas Pakistanis' trust in Pakistan's leadership.

He also appreciated the government's efforts to improve peace, security, and the investment environment. The Minister highlighted the Overseas Investment Conference and other steps taken to build trust with investors. "We are committed to rebuilding the economy through transparency and strong governance," he said.

Defending the recent salary adjustments for MNAs, he said there had been no increase for 15-16 years, unlike regular annual raises for government employees.

## LHC orders priority issuance of fitness stickers for vehicles

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed the Environment Department to issue fitness stickers on a priority basis for heavy transport vehicles, large vehicles and rickshaws.

The court also ordered a detailed survey to assess the performance of water treatment plants installed in industrial units, emphasizing the need for practical and effective monitoring to curb pollution.

Justice Shahid Karim issued the orders while hearing a set of petitions filed by citizen Haroon Farooq and others. Representatives from various government departments, including the Environment Department, appeared before the court.

During the proceed-

ings, a member of the Judicial Water and Environmental Commission informed the court that the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) had not relocated birds from Tolinton Market despite earlier court directives. At this, expressing displeasure, the court criticized the authority for non-compliance.

The Punjab government's counsel informed the court that the budget had allocated funds for the installation of 200,000 water meters. The court instructed that an official progress report, in the form of a government letter, be submitted at the next hearing. The court also raised concerns over the non-provision of

health allowances to traffic wardens. Highlighting the severity of climate change, the court observed that the temperature has increased by two degrees Celsius, and the region is simultaneously facing heatwaves and environmental threats. "We must take serious and urgent measures," it added.

The court further expressed disappointment over the public's attitude towards water conservation and remarked, "People are wasting water and have no appreciation for its value. Ask the people of Sindh what water means to them."

The court directed all concerned departments to submit compliance reports and adjourned the hearing until June 17.

## PU awards 10 PhD degrees

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University (PU) has awarded 10 PhD degrees to scholars after approval of their theses in various disciplines.

According to a PU spokesperson, Ramsha Asif, daughter of Asif Abdullah, was awarded a PhD degree in the subject of International Relations; Muhammad Zaher, son of Nabiullah, in the subject of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics; Hamayoun Shah Nawaz, son of Haji Muhammad Hanif, in the subject of Special Education; Sakina Rehman, daughter of Abdul Rehman, in the subject of Molecular Biology; Iqra Tariq, daughter of Rana Tariq Mahmood, in the subject of Information Management; Muhammad Gulraiz, son of Muhammad Bashir, in the subject of Commerce; Minahal Arshad, daughter of Muhammad Arshad, in the subject of Mathematics; Abida Bano, daughter of Javed Hayat, in the subject of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics; Urooj Ashraf, daughter of Muhammad Ashraf, in the subject of Botany; and Usman Ali, son of Inayatullah, was awarded degree in the subject of Islamic Studies.

## 14 dead, 1,745 injured in road accidents

LAHORE (APP): Fourteen people were killed and 1,745 others injured in 1,457 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours, according to a report, issued by the Punjab Emergency Service (PES), commonly known as Rescue-1122, here on Friday.

As many as 736 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 1,009 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.



KARACHI: A view of accumulated garbage at Shesha Gali creating problems for peoples. —INP Photo

## Punjab tightens Muharram security, launches e-portal

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Home Department has issued comprehensive security directives for the peaceful and safe observance of Muharram across the province, including the establishment of a centralised e-portal for monitoring religious processions and gatherings.

According to a spokesperson for the Home Department, all deputy commissioners (DCs) have been instructed to upload detailed information regarding processions, gatherings (majalis), speech restrictions, and inter-district movement limitations within five days. The department has directed the DCs in all districts to prepare emergency response plans and finalise them through their respective District Intelligence Committees.

Updated lists of provocative or banned speakers are to be compiled and submitted to the Home department. Inspector General of Police, Punjab, has been

asked to submit recommendations for the deployment of Army and Rangers personnel at sensitive locations. Suggestions were also sought about the temporary suspension of mobile phone services in high-risk areas to prevent any misuse of communication channels during the religious observances, added spokesperson.

Special monitoring teams will be formed to prevent the illegal use of loudspeakers, and strict action will be taken against violators under the Sound System Regulation Act, 2015. Law enforcement agencies and district administrations have been tasked with identifying all sensitive locations and ensuring foolproof security arrangements.

To promote religious harmony, the Auqaf Department has been directed to hold meetings of the Interfaith Harmony Committees at the divisional level.

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## Notice Inviting Tenders

### "Supply, Delivery and Installation of Interactive Flat Panel to TransPeshawar"

IFB No: TPC/IT/OCB/G/2024-25/002

Date: June 14, 2025

- TransPeshawar (The Urban Mobility Company) is a Company set up under Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, and is responsible for project implementation, management and maintenance of urban rapid transit projects assigned by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority.
- TransPeshawar (The Urban Mobility Company) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders registered with FBR for NTN and STRN reflected on the Active Tax Payer List (ATL) of FBR for "Supply, Delivery and Installation of Interactive Flat Panel to TransPeshawar". Details of goods is provided in Bid Solicitation Document.
- A complete set of Bid Solicitation Document may be downloaded by interested bidders from website of TransPeshawar (<http://transpeshawar.pk>) from publishing of advertisement in the newspaper till last day for submission of bids.
- Procurements will be carried out as per Act and Rules of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA). Competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with the Single Stage: One Envelope bidding procedure.
- Bids must be delivered to the undersigned on or before **June 30, 2025 at 11:30 AM (PST)**.
- Bids will be opened on the same day **June 30, 2025, at 11:45 AM (PST)** in the presence of bidders who choose to attend.
- The advertisement is also available both on the websites of TransPeshawar (<http://transpeshawar.pk>) and KPPRA (<http://kppra.gov.pk>). TransPeshawar reserves the right to cancel any or all bids by assigning cogent reason.

Chief Executive Officer

TransPeshawar (The Urban Mobility Company)

TransPeshawar Head Office, first (1<sup>st</sup>) Floor, Near Main BRT Depot, Chamkani, Peshawar - Ph: +92 91 2621393

## ٹینڈر نوٹس

زیربحثی کامائی سال 2025-26 کے لئے سلسلہ پلٹری فیز اور گوشت مرغی و جانوری خریداری کیلئے تفصیل ٹینڈر فارم میں درج ہوگی، حکومت خیبر پختونخوا کے پریجریز اینڈ پروڈکٹس ڈیپارٹمنٹ سے رجسٹرڈ فرمز/ٹینڈرڈار/پلائیئرز سے مجوزہ فارم پر سربراہ ٹینڈر مطلوب ہیں۔ جو کہ مورخہ 30-6-2025 کو دن 11:30 بجے تک کثردیہ وائلڈ لائف ہزارہ مرگل واقع خطا چوہا چک، ایبٹ آباد پہنچ جانے چاہیے جو کہ اس کی دن بوقت 12:00 بجے دیر تک کثردیہ وائلڈ لائف ہزارہ مرگل ایبٹ آباد کے دفتر میں پرچیز کئی، ٹینڈر دہندگان یا ان کے مجاز نمائندگان کے روبرو کھولے جائیں گے۔

**شرائط :-**

- ٹینڈر فارم زیربحثی (DFO Wildlife A, Abad) کے دفتر سے مورخہ 30-06-2025 تک دفتری اوقات کار میں مبلغ 300/- روپے قابل واپسی حاصل کئے جاسکتے ہیں۔
- تمام اشیا کی مقدار اور تفصیل ٹینڈر فارم میں درج ہوگی۔
- کال ڈیپازٹ مبلغ 100,000 روپے ڈی ایف او وائلڈ لائف ایبٹ آباد کے نام ٹینڈر فارم کے ساتھ تسلیم کرنا ہوگا۔
- مندرجہ بالا خوراک مابانہ کے حساب سے دی جائے گی۔
- ملکی اور ملکی برہاء کے خریش بڈریج چیک ہوگی۔ بجٹ کی عدم دستیابی کی صورت میں مل میں تاخیر ہو سکتی ہے۔
- فیز غیر معیاری ہونے کی صورت میں فراہم کنندہ کو اپنے اخراجات پر واپس کرنا ہوگا اور اس ضمن میں کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔
- مابانہ خوراک ضرورت کے مطابق کامیاب ٹینڈر دہندہ کو ورک آرڈر دیا جائے گا۔
- مستحقہ خوراک کامیاب آ باڈیو پزل آفس اور مل مل پاک میں پہنچا یا بڈم کثردیہ ہوگا۔
- مشروط، بائمل یا تاخیر سے پہنچنے والے ٹینڈر قابل قبول نہ ہو سکتے۔
- ٹینڈر دہندہ کیلئے NIC کی کاپی، آگٹیکس سٹریٹیکس ریسٹریکشن کی کاپی اور رابطہ فون نمبری تفصیل ٹینڈر کے ساتھ ضلک کرنا لازمی ہوگا۔
- کامیاب بولی دہندہ کیساتھ سہائی کیلئے علیحدہ معاہدہ کیا جائے گا۔
- زیربحثی فیز کے نمونے کبھی بھی وقت لیبارٹری بھیج سکتے ہیں اور پڑے ٹیسٹ بڈم ٹینڈر ہوگا۔
- فیز کی لیبارٹری رپورٹ غیر تلی بخش اور غیر معیاری قرار دینے کی صورت میں غیر مستحق کیا جائے گا اور ٹینڈر دہندگان 50000 ہزار روپے تک جرمانہ بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔
- غیر معیاری خوراک سے جانوروں اور پرندوں کے نقصان کا ازار بھی ٹینڈر دہندگان کے ذمہ ہوگا جو حکومت کے مقرر روپے کے مطابق ٹینڈر دہندگان سے وصول کیا جائیگا۔
- تمام ٹیکسز مجوزہ قوانین کے مطابق کاٹے جائیں گے۔
- ٹینڈر کھولنے کی میٹنگ کثردیہ وائلڈ لائف ہزارہ کے دفتر مذکورہ اوقات اور تاریخ میں ہوگی۔
- ٹینڈر کی قبولیت کا فیصلہ تمام اشیا کی مجموعی تجزیہ لاء پر ہوگا۔
- مارکیٹ Analysis ٹینڈر فارم کے ساتھ جمع کرنا ہوگا۔
- 10% مارکیٹ ریٹ سے کم ریٹ دینے پر ایک اضافی کال ڈیپازٹ مبلغ 100,000/- جمع کرانی ہوگی یا ٹینڈر فارم کیساتھ منسحب کرانی ہوگی۔

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**ڈویژنل فاسٹ آفیسر**

ایبٹ آباد وائلڈ لائف ڈویژن کا کول روڈ ایبٹ آباد 0992-921323





PESHAWAR: Captain (Retd) Usman Gul, DG National Institute of Public Administration awards course completion certificates to the graduating officers of 43rd Mid Career Management Course.

## Public servants must focus on service delivery: DG NIPA

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Public servants must focus on service delivery. Professional excellence is key to national development. These views were expressed by Captain (Retd.) Usman Gul, Director General NIPA/PARD/PPSA, during the graduation ceremony of the 43rd Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) held at NIPA Peshawar.

He added that in-service training courses at NIPA, such as the Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC), empower public servants to serve the people in the best way. The Director General also appreciated the outstanding contributions of Dr. Ijaz Munir, Rector NSPP, who, during his tenure, provided exemplary leadership and effectively led NSPP. DG Usman Gul acknowledged Dr. Munir's continuous support for NIPA Peshawar, noting his generous and gracious contributions to the institution.

Addressing the graduating officers, DG Usman Gul urged them to "do good to the people," stating that this is the true litmus test of public service delivery and the effectiveness of public servants. He extended heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Muqem ul Islam, Chief Instructor of MCMC, as well as the faculty, IT team, administration, and support staff, for their dedicated efforts in making the course a success.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Dr. Muqem ul Islam, Chief Instructor MCMC, presented the course report to the Director General. He informed the audience that 29 officers participated in the 43rd MCMC, including four female officers, with representation from the Federal Government, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK).

The event was attended by the Chief Instructors of the three training institutes, faculty members, administrative staff, and the graduating officers of the 43rd MCMC.

## Training Workshop on E-PADS Software and KPPRA rules held

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA), in collaboration with the World Bank-funded KP-SPEED project, has launched a three-day training workshop at the University of Malakand.

The workshop aims to raise awareness about the newly introduced Electronic Procurement System (E-PADS) software and the KPPRA Act and Rules among officers from Malakand and Lower Dir districts.

Participants include officials from key departments such as Communication and Works (C&W), Irrigation, Local Government, Health, Higher Education, Public Health Engineering (PHED), Livestock, Elementary and Secondary Education, Food, Fisheries, Sports, and representatives from the University of Malakand.

The purpose of the workshop is to provide comprehensive training on the KPPRA rules and regulations, introduce the E-PADS software, and ensure its effective implementation across public sector institutions.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Dr. Amanullah, Director of the training, briefed participants on the objectives of the workshop. He emphasized that the training will equip officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement transparent and efficient procurement practices through the use of the new software.

He further stated that the adoption of E-PADS will significantly improve transparency in public procurement and enhance institutional efficiency across government departments.

Dr. Amanullah also mentioned that KPPRA is committed to undertaking further initiatives aimed at strengthening procurement systems in the province.

Participants expressed appreciation for the training initiative, highlighting that the new software will simplify procurement procedures and ensure greater transparency in public sector purchasing. They thanked KPPRA for organizing the workshop and recommended that such capacity-building programs be held regularly.

The workshop will continue for the next two days.



PESHAWAR: Members of All Universities Employees Federation protesting in favour of their demands.

# Dams, drones, and data: How modernization is changing nature of India-Pakistan conflict

**Salwa Imdad Khokhar**

**T**HE India-Pakistan conflict, rooted in the turbulent partition of 1947, has evolved far beyond conventional battlefield confrontations. Today, modernization in the form of dams, drones, and data surveillance is reshaping the dynamics of this historic rivalry.

From Rivers to Rivalries: The Water War Dimension

Since the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, facilitated by the World Bank, India and Pakistan have navigated complex waters over shared river systems. The treaty granted Pakistan rights over the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab, while India retained control over the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej rivers.

However, modern water challenges, coupled with dam constructions and climate change, have made water a strategic weapon. Both nations remain wary of each other's infrastructure projects on these vital rivers.

India, under the treaty, can pursue "run-of-the-river" projects but cannot construct dams that alter the flow to Pakistan - a source of recurring mistrust. Some Indian voices now view water as leverage, leading to tensions each time a new project is announced.

Drones, Cyber Fronts, and the New Battlefield

The traditional tank battles of 1965 and the high-altitude skirmishes of Kargil in 1999 have given way to hybrid warfare. Today's confrontations involve precision drone strikes, cyber warfare, and electronic disruptions. Drones - both surveillance and combat-ready - play a critical role, drawing lessons from recent conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war.

Pakistan and India have both accelerated investments in these technologies. India fields over 2,200 military aircraft, while Pakistan deploys 1,399. Both nations now focus on network-centric warfare, where real-time data links air, sea, and land forces for split-second decision-making.

**Data, Intelligence, and Operation Sindoor**

India recently launched Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam attack, allegedly orchestrated by Pakistan-based elements. However, despite India's acknowledged technological edge in surveillance, satellite tracking, and electronic intelligence, no conclusive evidence has been made public linking Pakistan to the assault.

This raises legitimate questions: if Pakistan is responsible, why haven't the perpetrators been identified and presented? Could alternative scenarios - including a possible false flag operation - be at play? Modern intelligence tools, from facial recognition to AI-enhanced geospatial mapping, should, in theory, enable swift identification of

## KPCTA-sponsored bikers rally leaves for scenic Thandiani

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: A bike rally jointly organised by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and the Peshawar Bikers Club on Friday departed from Peshawar for the tourist destination Thandiani in Abbottabad district.

Around 30 motorcyclists are participating in the rally, which will travel from Peshawar via Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Haripur, Havelian and Abbottabad before reaching Thandiani. Bikers from Peshawar, Swabi, and other regions are taking part in the event.

Speaking before the departure of the rally, KPCTA Events Manager Muhammad Ali Syed said that the authority was arranging a variety of activities to promote tourism in the province.

He said that these included adventure, cultural, environmental, and other tourism-related events aimed at not only boosting tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's scenic places but also strengthening the local economy.

The official said that bike tourism was an affordable form of tourism that allowed youth to participate easily, enabling them to explore more destinations at a lesser cost besides promoting local culture, tourism, and traditions as young bikers engaged with local communities. "The KPCTA promotes tourism through various initiatives and projects," he added.

Peshawar Bikers Club president Sajid Ali Khan said that the club's main goal was to promote tourism in the province. He said that this time, they would also take part in tree-plantation and cleanliness campaigns in a bid to send a positive message to tourists visiting these natural attractions.

The activities, he added, were aimed at encouraging tourists to help preserve the beauty of these scenic destinations in collaboration with the government and local communities.

He also said that promoting adventure tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including camping at various tourist spots was the aim of his club.

Thandiani is a hill station in the scenic Galiyat area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa located in the northeast of Abbottabad district in the foothills of the Himalayas and the international and domestic tourists visit it round-the-year.



## Four members of PIC visits KP Information Commission

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: A four member delegation of the Punjab Information Commission (PIC) visits KP Information Commission to share exchange of knowledge, and experience through exclusive briefings on the working of both the Commissions followed by visit of different sections of the KPIC.

The Deputy Director Communication of the KPIC, Sayed Saadat Jahan, gave a detailed presentation on the working and achievements of the KPIC. He said that commission was also facing a number of challenges including the shortage of human resource. He, however, added that the KPIC is also a role model in many instances. Mr. Jahan dilated upon the importance of media & communications and briefed the delegation on how to interact with media and improve visibility in mass media and social media besides designing media campaign through strategic communication planning.

Information Commissioners, KP, Mr. Arshad Ahmed and Muhammad Irshad, gave an overview of the KPIC, PIOs training mechanism on RTI Law and status of appointments of both the PIOs and KPIC staff. Both the Commissioners added that that such visits should be paid from time to time so as to learn from each other's experiences. Both the Commissioners briefed the delegation on the statistical data of RTI Request/complaints besides status of RTI Act implementation in KP and challenges being faced by the Commission. The visit ended with a vote of thanks from to the Commission by the delegation.



## PML-N KP rejects provincial budget

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Additional Information Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Arbab Khizr Hayat, has stated that the provincial budget presented today by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has been outrightly rejected by PML-N. Arbab Khizr Hayat criticized the budget, saying that despite claims of presenting a "people-friendly" budget, the government has introduced a surplus budget exceeding Rs. 150 billion - a move he termed as nothing but injustice to the province.

He declared that PML-N does not accept this budget, labeling it a deceptive play of words presented by "thieves and looters" that has pushed the province further towards economic collapse. He further stated that while the provincial government claimed to have a development budget exceeding Rs. 500 billion, in reality, it lacks the capacity to manage even Rs. 150 billion effectively.

Arbab Khizr Hayat blamed the Chief Minister for the economic downfall of the province, stating that the entire provincial government is equally complicit in this economic destruction.

### Modernization Demands Maturity

Dams, drones, and data offer new tools, but they also demand new wisdom. Just as Japan and the U.S. turned post-war enmity into alliance, so too could India and Pakistan transform their rivalry. Nationalist fervor and unsubstantiated accusations only perpetuate the cycle. Real statesmanship is needed - leaders who can leverage modernization not for destruction, but for dialogue and development.

If the spirit of Kartarpur can be expanded, and if evidence in crises like Pahalgam is presented transparently, perhaps modernization will finally usher in peace rather than prolong conflict.

India. It was opened by Pakistan in 2019 to allow Sikh pilgrims from India to visit one of their holiest sites - Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan - without needing a traditional visa. The corridor allows Indian Sikhs to visit the site using just a special permit, no visa required. Despite the strained relationship between India and Pakistan, Pakistan took the initiative to open the corridor.

It was praised internationally as a gesture of goodwill and peace. The corridor helped reduce mistrust and brought people of both nations closer on a human level.

It served as a bridge between communities divided by politics.

**Kartarpur Corridor - A Symbol of Peace and Hope**

The Kartarpur Corridor is a special border crossing between Pakistan and





## In brief

### Karak Chamber of Commerce & Industries F.P. Report

KARAK: It was agreed in the meeting to establish a fully functional “Karak Chamber of Commerce and Industries” to promote business activities in Karak district. The meeting, chaired by Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major (retd) Sajjad Barakwal, was attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Industries Abdul Karim Tor Dher, Director General SMEDA and Member National Assembly Dawar Kandi. Speaking at the meeting, Agriculture Minister Major (retd) Sajjad Barakwal and Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries Abdul Karim Tordhler said that steps will be taken to establish a Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Karak, through which an active platform will be available for the promotion of business activities in the district. Meanwhile, Aqibullah, a local singer from Karak, was shot dead by unknown persons. This tragic incident of shooting took place, however, the reason for the shooting is not yet known. According to the police, the accused managed to escape from the spot after the incident. Aqibullah's body has been shifted to a nearby hospital for post-mortem, while the police have started an investigation.

### Crackdown launched F.P. Report

MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety Authority launched major operations in various areas of Mardan, including Bakhsali, Sawalder, and Jamal Garhi, targeting food outlets for violating food safety regulations and providing substandard food to the public. According to Assistant Director of the Food Safety Authority Mardan, Rujia Nawaz, the operations focused primarily on bakeries and other food businesses found guilty of using non-food grade colors, selling banned and substandard beverages, maintaining poor hygiene conditions, and failing to present medical certificates for their workers. Fines were imposed on multiple businesses, while several others received improvement notices with strict instructions to comply with food safety standards. Rujia Nawaz emphasized that the purpose of the crackdown is to ensure food quality and protect public health by providing safe and hygienic food items. She further stated that continuous monitoring of food establishments is being carried out across the region to maintain high food safety standards for the people of Mardan.

### Committee meeting held F.P. Report

KOHAT: A meeting of the District Monitoring Implementation Committee was held with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali, in the at his office which besides others, was also attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (G) Hamid Iqbal, authorities concerned of the Kohat Police and the concerned departments. The meeting was briefed in detail on the Revised National Action Plan, law and order situation and other measures. Deputy Commissioner Kohat, on this occasion directed the authorities concerned to utilize all available resources to implement the Revised National Action Plan and maintain the law and order situation in the entire district.

# Wind-driven wildfire reduces pine, olive trees to ashes



## F.P. Report

ZHOB: A wind-driven wildfire has swept through the remote Shin Ghar region of northern Balochistan, reducing hundreds of pine nut and olive trees to ashes and threatening the livelihoods of local communities who depend on these forests for survival.

Now in its third day, the blaze continues to rage across the hilly Mraghbal Tora Morgah Sapar area of the Sherani district, with its cause still unknown. Local villagers equipped with little more than sticks and tree branches are struggling to contain the flames in the absence of professional firefighting support.

“This forest is our lifeline. The chilgoza harvest sustains hundreds of families and is worth millions in local markets. Without support, we're helpless,” says Eid Muhammad Umarzai, a young resident battling the blaze between Sherani and

Hariphal tribal lands. This marks the second major forest fire in recent years, following the 2022 inferno in the Koh-e-Sulaiman range, which destroyed nearly a million pine trees, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations estimates.

Local political and tribal leaders have issued a joint appeal, warning of irreversible ecological loss and condemning decades of state neglect. “For over 70 years, no legislation has been passed to protect our forests,” laments Aimal Sarwan, an activist of the Pashtoonkhwa National Awami Party, criticizing official inaction as the flames continue to spread. On the other hand, the government officials claim firefighting efforts were underway, and the fire has been brought under control to some extent.

Meanwhile, Dr Muhammad Nawaz Kibzai,

the area's elected representative in the Provincial Assembly, affirms that he remained in close coordination with the relevant authorities in an effort to contain the wildfire and mitigate further destruction. In a powerful display of grassroots solidarity, young volunteers from the Ashar Movement – a local organization committed to the conservation of forests and wildlife in Northern Balochistan also joined hands with local residents, bravely assisting in firefighting efforts on the ground.

Urgent appeals have been made to the Chief Minister Balochistan, Governor, and both provincial and national disaster agencies to intervene before the region's last green canopy vanishes. Without immediate action, locals fear not just environmental devastation but the collapse of an entire way of life.

# Laws without action: Ongoing struggle for implementation

## Nazia Naz

**INTERNATIONAL Human Rights defender. Over the years, Pakistan has introduced several laws aimed at protecting the rights of women, children, minorities, and vulnerable communities. Many policy frameworks and development projects are in place to address issues like child marriage, gender-based violence, education, and police accountability. However, the harsh reality remains that the implementation of these laws is almost nonexistent, especially at the grassroots level.**

Working as a government research officer and having additional responsibilities of handling complaints and witness protection, I have personally observed the large gap between what is written on paper and what happens in real life. I frequently visit police stations across Sindh to follow up on sensitive cases involving women and children. However, what I find in the field is both discouraging and alarming.

Police officials, particularly SHOs, often refuse to cooperate. In most stations,

FIRs are delayed or not registered at all, especially if the complainant is a woman or if a female government officer like me brings forward the case. Many SHOs do not take women seriously. They are quick to dismiss complaints or ask the victims to “compromise.” Even when I present myself as an official representative of the Human Rights Department, I am met with resistance, disrespect, or simply ignored.

This bias is not just institutional it is cultural. Female officers are still seen as outsiders in a male-dominated system. Despite our legal authority, our voices are suppressed, our complaints are downplayed, and our efforts are often wasted because there is no serious will to act. I find myself working day and night, writing reports, attending meetings, and responding to urgent calls, but without timely police cooperation, most interventions lose their value.

The most painful part is that vulnerable people suffer while the system protects the powerful. Women and girls who are victims of child marriage, rape, domestic violence, or

forced conversions are often silenced before they even reach the police station. And when they do manage to speak, their voices are lost in bureaucracy and bias.

There are many projects running under different banners—SDGs, protection policies, public awareness drives—but the ground reality does not change unless the police take action. No law can protect people if the law enforcers do not act.

We, as women officers, are working harder than ever, but we are not being heard. We deserve respect, safety, and support. The government must look beyond reports and statistics. It must address the real problem: the refusal of duty at the grassroots level, especially by those in uniform.

In conclusion, I raise my voice not just for myself, but for all those women who are working to implement laws in difficult conditions—without resources, without recognition, and often without protection. It is time to stop hiding behind policies and start standing up for justice where it is most needed.

# APC rejects proposed Mines & Mineral bill

## F.P. Report

WANA: Political leaders from across the spectrum unanimously reject the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Bill 2025, calling it a direct attack on provincial autonomy and constitutional rights.

The All Parties Conference (APC) was chaired by Ayaz Wazir, district president of the Awami National Party (ANP), and included participation from representatives of all major political parties and local stakeholders.

In a joint declaration, the conference termed the proposed bill as a blatant violation of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, which guarantees provinces control over their natural resources. Leaders accused the federal government of attempting to usurp these rights under the guise of national interest.

“The bill represents federal overreach and undermines the spirit of provincial autonomy,” speakers said, adding that it paves the way for centralized control of KP's mineral wealth. The APC also strongly

opposed the involvement of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Federal Minerals Wing, warning against any move to grant them authority over local mineral resources. Participants emphasized that such control would be unacceptable and unconstitutional.

One of the most strongly worded parts of the resolution focused on the military's commercial ventures. The APC criticized the military's role in the country's business sector, calling it outside the boundaries of its constitutional mandate. “The military should return to its constitutional role and immediately cease all commercial activities,” the statement read.

In a major political development, the conference announced a province-wide public movement against the bill. Organizers warned that if the legislation is imposed unilaterally, a mass protest campaign would be launched across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Participants also appealed to civil society, legal professionals, writers, and students to join what they described as a “consti-

tutional and democratic struggle” for the protection of provincial and tribal rights.

## Residents demand arrest of alleged murderers Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The family of a father-son duo who were brutally murdered in Akbarpura two months ago is protesting the non-arrest of the accused killer. The accused, Shah Saud, is allegedly roaming freely in the area and threatening the family with dire consequences.

The family alleges that the Akbarpura police have not arrested the accused despite two months passing since the murder. They accuse the police of accepting bribes from the accused. The family claims that the accused is threatening them, particularly the minor son of the deceased, Muhammad Yusuf. The family demands the immediate arrest of the accused, Shah Saud. They also seek protection for themselves and their children.

## Police held two alleged car-lifters F.P. Report

BANNU/LAKKI MARWAT: The Lakki Marwat and Bannu police have arrested two vehicle thieves in separate actions and recovered solemn motorcars from them on Friday.

Lakki DPO Muhammad Jawad Ishaq told Dawn that three armed suspects including Farman, Sajjad and Haroon had snatched a motorcar from Muhammad Nadeem, a resident of Haramatala in the Serai Gambila area at gunpoint on June 10.

He said that the police were tasked with arresting the car snatchers when the owner reported the incident to the Serai Gambila police station. “A police party led by DSP Jamal Shah recovered the motorcar parked along a rural road near Wanda Shahmadu by snatchers fearing arrest by police”, he claimed, saying that the police were raiding suspected hideouts in the area to capture the car snatchers.

In Bannu, the cantonment police have recovered a stolen official motorcar and arrested the thief during a raid. A police official said that the motorcar was stolen from the deputy commissioner's office compound on Wednesday, prompting local police authorities to trace the car thief and ensure his arrest. “After registering a case on the complaint of district monitoring officer Syed Waqar Hussain, a team led by SP Investigation Sajid Mumtaz began efforts to find a clue about the car thief”, he maintained. He said that police tightened checking on urban and rural roads which led to the recovery of the stolen motorcar on the Baran dam road. The official said that the cops also arrested the vehicle thief identified as Nafees Ahmad who was the driver of the DMO's official car and shifted him to the police station.

## 2 notorious dacoits surrender F.P. Report

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Rahim Yar Khan Police achieved a major breakthrough in its ongoing operations against criminal elements in the Kacha area, as two notorious dacoits laid down arms and surrendered before police authorities.

According to the spokesperson for Punjab Police, the surrendered outlaws include Shabbir Lathani and Rustam Lathani. The government of Punjab had earlier fixed a bounty of Rs. 2.5 million on Shabbir Lathani, who was wanted in multiple serious crimes. The spokesperson further added that Rustam Lathani has a criminal record involving 41 registered cases, including heinous offenses such as kidnapping for ransom and armed robbery.

District Police Officer (DPO) Rahim Yar Khan, Irfan Ali Samo, said the surrender of these hardened criminals marks a significant development in the police operation targeting criminal gangs operating in the riverine (Kacha) region.

## Suspect held F.P. Report

LODHRAN: Police have arrested a suspect for displaying weapons on social media. According to spokesperson for police, the suspect named Kamran Qureshi had made the picture of the pistol and uploaded it on social media.

City police registered the case against the accused and launched interrogation into the incident. District police officer (DPO) Ali Bin Tariq said that displaying weapons on social media was a crime and strict action would be taken against violators.

## F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Deputy Commissioner Tribal District Kurram Ashfaq Khan has paid a detailed visit to Parachinar city for the improvement and repair of the traditional procession routes during Muharram-ul-Haram. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Upper Kurram, XEN C&W and TMO Upper Kurram were also with him.

# Another spell of forest fires erupt in Lower Dir



## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Wildfires have erupted in several mountainous regions of Lower Dir during the last two days, prompting an extensive firefighting operation by Rescue 1122 and the Forest Department.

Blazes were reported in Maidan Doba, Barkhani, Sarai Payeen Talash, and Tormang Razagram mountainous areas. According to Rescue 1122, teams successfully contained the fires in Maidan Doba and Tormang Razagram, while efforts continued in the hills of Barkhani and Sarai Talash. In Razagram, flames reached dangerously close to residential areas. However, due to accessible

water sources nearby, firefighters managed to control the situation promptly and protect nearby homes.

In more remote locations, where water access is limited due to steep terrain, responders are relying on traditional firefighting methods, including manual suppression and the creation of fire lines to halt the spread. District Emergency Officer Sanaullah is overseeing operations on the ground. Despite strong winds, high temperatures, and intense flames, Rescue 1122 personnel, along with forest officials, are actively engaged in extinguishing the fires across various affected sites.

Meanwhile, another fire broke out in the Katkala-Manjauro mountain range.

Rescue teams responded swiftly and battled the blaze for over seven hours.

They eventually brought the fire under control, which had spread across more than one kilometre of rugged terrain. Firefighters also created a containment line in Katkala, successfully preventing the blaze from advancing further.

Talking to this reporter, divisional forest officer Shabir Jan urged local residents to remain vigilant and report any new fire incidents immediately. He said the incidents were closely investigated and the culprits would be brought to justice. The official said that such incidents were intolerable as forests were national asset.

# Neglect, stigma drive TB crisis among rural women

## F.P. Report

QUETTA: In a crumbling mud-stone house nestled in the northern Balochistan's village surrounded by barren mountains, 31-year-old Bakhtawar, a mother of five, is quietly battling a deadly disease that thrives in silence - tuberculosis.

Unaware of the early warning sign symptoms, Bakhtawar ignored her persistent cough in mid winter this year as a seasonal cold. But with each passing month, her health declined sharply. Fever, night sweats, fatigue, and alarming weight loss became part of her daily routine. Cultural norms in a patriarchal society that discourage women from seeking medical care alone, compounded by a lack of nearby health facility resulted in her delayed diagnosis.

By March 2025, the disease had debilitated her so severely and left no other option but to visit a clinic in Zhob where a sputum test and chest X-ray confirmed the diagnosis as pulmonary tuberculosis. A daily-wage laborer, Bakhtawar's husband is now running from pillar to post to afford her treatment, while the burden of stigma weighs heavily on the extended family.

Bakhtawar's story is not unique. Across Balochistan – the country's most impoverished and under-served province, thousands of patients, majority of them women are suffering in silence as TB makes a

disturbing comeback. Health officials warn the disease is resurging with deadly force, disproportionately affecting rural women who face both medical neglect and social marginalization. The World Health Organization and Health Department Balochistan data shows that TB cases in the province surged in recent years. Balochistan shares borders with Afghanistan and Iran.

“People usually do not take the disease as serious and think it's just a persistent coughing,” says Dr. Akhtar Muhammad Mandokhel, who remained at Balochistan TB Control Programme for several years. “But without early diagnosis and treatment, the disease results in a slow death sentence,” he warns. Despite being both preventable and curable, tuberculosis continues to thrive in the shadows due to widespread misinformation, inaccessibility to health facilities, and the absence of public awareness campaigns. The official laments.

“Many in Balochistan don't even know how the disease is fatal, let alone how it spreads,” says Rafiq Bhatti, a technician at the TB diagnostic lab in Zhob's DHQ Teaching Hospital. Although free treatment is available through the government-run TB Control program, yet adherence remains a challenge. It is noticed that the standard six-month regimen often goes incom-

plete, leading to the emergence of drug-resistant TB strains making it harder, costlier, and even deadlier to treat.

“This is no longer just a medical issue,” says Bhatti. “It's a crisis of poverty, failure, and systemic neglect,” Bhatti criticizes. The WHO's Global TB Report paints a grim national picture as Pakistan ranks fifth globally for overall TB burden and fourth for multidrug-resistant TB. It is estimated that nearly 30,000 people are living with TB in Balochistan alone, a number that continues to rise.

In response, the Balochistan TB Control Programme, backed by the Global Fund, has launched diagnostic and treatment services across the province, including in Afghan refugee villages in different parts of Balochistan including the provincial capital Quetta, Pishin, Chaghi, Loralai, and Killa Saifullah districts. Despite these efforts, health officials warn that these interventions are dwarfed by the scale of the epidemic. Health experts in Balochistan are calling for an urgent, multipronged response, a state-of-the-art diagnostic infrastructure, mass awareness campaigns, and the dismantling of social barriers that prevent women from seeking care. Until then, women like Bakhtawar will continue to suffer from a curable disease.

# KP budget a deception with people: Zahid Durrani

## F.P. Report

BANNU: Former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and senior leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Zahid Akram Khan Durrani, has categorically rejected the recently presented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa budget, terming it a “serious deception with the people” and devoid of any relief, development vision, or understanding of public grievances.

Speaking to the media, Durrani stated that the budget fails to accommodate any segment of society. “It offers no support to the common man who is

crushed under the weight of inflation, nor does it include any comprehensive policy for government employees, students, farmers, or other key economic groups,” he said.

He accused the PTI-led government of systematical destroying provincial institutions under the guise of reforms. “This budget is nothing more than a collection of corrupt practices, looting, and hollow claims,” Durrani remarked, adding that ground realities have been completely ignored, exacerbating the hardships faced by the people.

Referring to past promises of “change,” he said, “That so-called change has

only brought unemployment, inflation, and mismanagement. Vital sectors such as health, education, local governance, and infrastructure are in a state of continued decline.”

Durrani criticized the absence of mega projects and employment-generation plans in the budget, labeling it as directionless and anti-people. He vowed that the JUI would challenge this budget at every forum and launch a province-wide public awareness campaign against the government. He demanded an immediate revision of the budget with priority given to public relief and welfare.

## Muharram procession routes inspected

## F.P. Report

He, while inspecting the procession routes, directed the XEN C&W to complete the asphaltting of these routes well in time and start the asphaltting work within 3 days accordingly so that the mourners do not face any difficulty during the procession. Similarly, the TMO Upper Kurram was directed to ensure complete cleaning of all the passages, streets, alleys and drainage system and ensure the proper lighting system on all the passages.

Moreover, the DC entrusted the responsibility of effective supervision and timely completion of all these works to Assistant Commissioner Upper Kurram. DC Kurram said that the district administration is committed to providing all possible facilities and a peaceful environment to the citizens during the Muharram-ul-Haram and all relevant departments have been directed to discharge their responsibilities in an efficient manner.





## Trump can cancel national monuments that protect landscapes

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP): Lawyers for President Donald Trump's administration say he has the authority to abolish national monuments meant to protect historical and archaeological sites across broad landscapes, including two in California created by his predecessor at the request of Native American tribes.

A Justice Department legal opinion released disavowed a 1938 determination that monuments created by previous presidents under the Antiquities Act can't be revoked. The department said presidents can cancel monument designations if protections aren't warranted. The finding comes as the Interior Department under Trump weighs changes to monuments across the nation as part of the administration's push to expand US energy production.

Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Natural Resources Committee, said that at Trump's order, "his Justice Department is attempting to clear a path to erase national monuments." Trump in his first term reduced the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah, calling them a "massive land grab." He also lifted fishing restrictions within a sprawling marine monument off the New England Coast.

Former President Joe Biden reversed the moves and restored the monuments. The two monuments singled out in the newly released Justice Department opinion were designated by Biden in his final days in office: Chuckwalla National Monument, in Southern California near Joshua Tree National Park, and S  t  tla Highlands

National Monument, in Northern California. The Democrat's declarations for the monuments barred oil and natural gas drilling and mining on the 624,000-acre (2,400-square-kilometer) Chuckwalla site, and the roughly 225,000 acres (800 square kilometers) S  t  tla Highlands site near the California-Oregon border. Chuckwalla has natural wonders including the Painted Canyon of Mecca Hills and Alligator Rock, and is home to rare species of plants and animals like the desert bighorn sheep and the Chuckwalla lizard. The S  t  tla Highlands include the ancestral homelands of the Pit River Tribe and Modoc Peoples. All but three presidents have used the 1906 Antiquities Act to protect unique landscapes and cultural resources. About half the national parks in the US were first designated as monuments.

But critics of monument designations under Biden and Obama say the protective boundaries were stretched too far, hindering mining for critical minerals. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Lanora Pettit wrote in the Trump administration opinion that Biden's protections of Chuckwalla and the S  t  tla Highlands were part of the Democrat's attempts to create for himself an environmental legacy that includes more places to hike, bike, camp or hunt. "Such activities are entirely expected in a park, but they are wholly unrelated to (if not outright incompatible with) the protection of scientific or historical monuments," Pettit wrote. Trump in April lifted commercial fishing prohibitions within an expansive marine monument in the Pacific Ocean

created under former President Barack Obama.

Environmental groups said Justice Department opinion doesn't give him the authority to shrink monuments at will. "Americans overwhelmingly support our public lands and oppose seeing them dismantled or destroyed," said Axie Navas with The Wilderness Society. Biden established 10 new monuments, among them the site of a 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois, and another on a sacred Native American site near the Grand Canyon. Since 1912, presidents have issued more than a dozen proclamations that diminished monuments, according to a National Park Service database. Dwight Eisenhower was most active in undoing the proclamations of his predecessors as he diminished six monuments, including Arches in Utah, Great Sand Dunes in Colorado and Glacier Bay in Alaska, which have all since become national parks.

Trump's moves to shrink the Utah monuments in his first term were challenged by environmental groups that said protections for the sites safeguard water supplies and wildlife while preserving cultural sites. The reductions were reversed by Biden before the case was resolved, and it remains pending. President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act after lobbying by educators and scientists who wanted to protect sites from artifact looting and haphazard collecting by individuals. It was the first law in the US to establish legal protections for cultural and natural resources of historic or scientific interest on federal lands.

## Israel recovers bodies of two hostages from Gaza

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the bodies of two hostages had been recovered from Gaza by the military and the domestic intelligence agency, the Shin Bet. Netanyahu said in a statement that the body of hostage Yair Yaakov had been retrieved, along with that of another hostage whose identity has not been cleared for publication.

The Israeli military said militants from the Palestinian group Islamic Jihad abducted and killed Yaakov during the October 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel.

## NK appears to have stopped loudspeakers blasting noise

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea appears to have stopped loudspeakers near the border targeting South Korea, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The JCS said that North Korean loudspeaker broadcasts were not heard, and the South Korean military was monitoring Pyongyang's activities.

Seoul suspended its own loudspeaker broadcasts near the border targeting North Korea, after having resumed propaganda and K-pop blasts last year during a time of growing tension with its neighbour. South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, who took office this month vowing to resume dialogue with the North, ordered the move to ease tension, a presidential spokesperson said. Those living near the heavily fortified border have opposed the loudspeaker broadcasts, which they blame for severe noise nuisance.

## Russians flock to see Bolshevik leader's tomb

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russians are flocking to catch what some fear could be a final glimpse of the embalmed body of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin before his plot on Moscow's Red Square, long a place of pilgrimage for communists, closes for repairs until 2027. The mausoleum, which houses a waxy-looking Lenin replete in a three-piece suit inside what is purportedly a bullet-proof, blast-proof glass case, is due to be structurally overhauled after an inspection uncovered problems.

Once a popular attraction for Western tourists and still a favourite for Russians visiting the capital from the regions, the red and black granite structure is expected to close in the coming weeks, with repair work set to last until June 2027. Officials say that the body of Lenin, who died in 1924 after helping to establish the world's first socialist state, is not going anywhere and that the central hall where he lies in state will not be touched.

But news of the temporary closure has seen long lines form to get into the mausoleum, with some visitors fearing it could be their last chance to see Lenin. "From a historical point of view, I want to witness his being in a mausoleum because I think Lenin will be buried at some point, maybe in the future or near future," said Tatyana Tolstik, a historian from Ulyanovsk, the city on the Volga where Lenin was born.

A young woman called Snezhana, who did not give her surname, said she wanted to "dive into the past" because she was also unsure how long it would be possible to visit the mausoleum. The Communist Party, which ruled the country from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, is fiercely opposed to the removal of Lenin's body, and Gennady Zyuganov, the party's veteran leader, said President Vladimir Putin has assured him it will not happen on his watch. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied plans to permanently close the mausoleum. Standing in line, Olga Pavlova, from the town of Mimya, said today's generation of Russians had a lot to thank Lenin for.



BOGOTA: Members of trade unions, student organisations, social groups and community organisations participating in a march in support of the referendum and social reforms proposed by the government of Colombia's President Gustavo Petro.

## Filipino families flee Northern Irish home after violence

BALLYMENA (Reuters): Michael Sancio, a resident of the Northern Irish town of Ballymena, said he was woken at midnight by masked men banging loudly on windows. Sancio, his wife and daughter, and a couple who share their house - all originally from the Philippines - grabbed their passports and a few belongings and fled their home, sleeping at a friend's house.

They said they plan to stay further outside the town because they feel unsafe at home. Hundreds of masked rioters attacked police and set homes and cars on fire in the town of 30,000 people for a second successive. Police are investigating the damaging of property as racially-motivated "hate crimes". "Last night I woke up at 12 midnight because I heard some people outside, and I saw in the window, I saw the other guys wearing a black jacket and black pants, and also they're wearing a mask," Sancio, 27, told Reuters.

"They started banging the window of our neighbours so I panicked because I have a daughter inside that house." The rioters smashed the windows of the couple's car that was parked outside the house and set it and a bin on fire, said Sancio, who works at a local bus manufacturer.

The violence erupted after two 14-year-old boys were arrested and appeared in court, accused of a serious sexual assault on a teenage girl in Ballymena, a town with a relatively large migrant population located 28 miles (45 km) from Belfast. The

charges were read via a Romanian interpreter to the boys, the BBC reported, adding that the lawyer told the court that they denied the charges. Anti-migrant violence is rare in Northern Ireland, which for decades has been more familiar with sectarian violence between resident Catholics and Protestants, including in Ballymena.

While a 1998 peace deal largely ended the three decades of bloodshed between Protestants who want to remain under British rule and Catholics favouring a united Ireland, there are still sporadic clashes. Sancio said the masked men told them that they were not targeting Filipino people. Around Ballymena, Filipino residents put stickers of British and Filipino flags on their doors, with messages saying "Filipino lives here" to show they were not Romanian.

Union Jack flags regularly fly in the largely pro-British town. Democratic Unionist Party councillor Lawrie Philpott told Reuters that some people who usually don't fly flags had hung Union Jacks outside their homes this week to show they are local. Around 6% of people in Northern Ireland were born abroad, according to government statistics. The foreign-born population in Ballymena is higher, in line with the UK average of 16%, and includes a relatively large Filipino community. Northern Ireland has been broadly welcoming to migrants but that has been tested recently. Violent disorder erupted in Belfast last August as part

of anti-immigration protests that swept across several UK cities following the murder of three young girls in northwest England.

In the Republic of Ireland, rioting broke out in Dublin in late 2023 during anti-immigrant protests that were triggered by a stabbing attack that left a child seriously injured. Sian Mulholland, a local lawmaker from the Alliance Party, said she was fielding calls from migrant families who in some cases had barricaded themselves into their homes until 0230. "I had been engaging with this community beforehand because the houses they are living in are not fit for purpose. They're (living in) squalor," she told Reuters.

Sancio's wife, Mariel Lei Odi, was working a night shift. When she returned home, she was worried about the safety of their two-year-old daughter, she said. "When I (came home to) my husband and I, we were fielding calls from migrant families who in some cases had barricaded themselves into their homes until 0230. "I had been engaging with this community beforehand because the houses they are living in are not fit for purpose. They're (living in) squalor," she told Reuters.

## Brazil court majority favors tougher social media rules

BRASILIA (AFP): Brazil's Supreme Court reached a majority in favor of toughening social media regulation, in a groundbreaking case for Latin America on the spread of fake news and hate speech.

The South American country's highest court is seeking to determine to what extent companies like X, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook are responsible for removing illegal content, and how they can be sanctioned if they do not. The judges' final ruling will create a precedent that will affect tens of millions of social media users in Brazil.

At issue is a clause in the country's so-called Civil Framework for the Internet -- a law in effect since 2014 that says platforms are only responsible for harm caused by a post if they ignore a judge's order to remove it. Six of the court's 11 judges had ruled in favor of higher accountability, meaning sites should monitor content and remove

problematic posts on their own initiative, without judicial intervention. One judge has voted against tougher regulation, and four have yet to express an opinion.

"We must, as a court, move in the direction of freedom with responsibility and regulated freedom, which is the only true freedom," Judge Flavio Dino said during session, broadcast online. Not doing so would be like "trying to open an airline without regulation in the name of the right of free movement," he added. Google, for its part, said in a statement that changing the rules "will not contribute to ending the circulation of unwanted content on the internet." Alexandre de Moraes, one of the court's judges, has repeatedly clashed with X owner Elon Musk and various right-wing personalities over social media posts.

The review is taking place in parallel with the Supreme Court trial of far-

right former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is alleged to have collaborated on a coup plot to remain in power after his 2022 election defeat. Prosecutors say Bolsonaro's followers used social media to lie about the reliability of the electoral system and plot the downfall of successor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Last year, Moraes blocked X for 40 days for failing to comply with a series of court orders against online disinformation.

He had previously ordered X to suspend the accounts of several Bolsonaro supporters. Musk and other critics say Moraes is stifling free speech, and US President Donald Trump's administration is weighing sanctions against the judge, whom Bolsonaro accuses of judicial "persecution." Lula, who emerged the victor in the tightly-fought 2022 election against Bolsonaro, is advocating for "accelerating regulation" of online platforms.

## Bolivia policemen killed in clashes with Morales backers

SUCRE (AFP): Clashes between followers of Bolivian ex-president Evo Morales and police clearing roadblocks left two officers dead and several wounded, the government said. Supporters of Morales, who led the Andean country from 2006 to 2019, began blocking key roads on June 2 over electoral authorities' refusal to allow him to run for a fourth term in August 17 elections.

The protests have since snowballed into a wider revolt over President Luis Arce's handling of a deep economic crisis, marked by severe shortages of hard currency and fuel. Two officers were killed in Llalagua, a mining town in Bolivia's southwest, and several injured -- one seriously, according to Minister of Government Roberto Rios.

The policemen "were vilely murdered by gunshots," he wrote on Facebook. At least 15 civilians and two police officers were injured in a violent

confrontation in the same town the previous day. More officers were injured at other roadblocks on the road connecting La Paz with Cochabamba, Morales' political stronghold. Health Minister Maria Rene Castro said two police officers were injured in the locality of Parotani, one by "an explosive object."

Protest leader David Veizaga, an ally of Morales, claimed the military and police were under orders to use their firearms. "Let the government of Luis Arce order the withdrawal of police and military units so as not to stain their hands with blood," he told Bolivian media. The national roads authority counted 21 roadblocks across the country, down from 29 the day before. Morales, 65, has been barred by the Constitutional Court from seeking re-election but nevertheless attempted, in vain, to register as a candidate last month. The government accuses him of trying to sabotage the election by

calling for blockades to sow chaos. The protesters' goal "is to encircle La Paz to force it into submission through hunger," President Arce said as he announced a joint police and military operation to clear a major highway, with more to follow. The attorney general said Morales was under investigation for "terrorism" for allegedly inciting the protests.

Bolivia's first Indigenous president has been holed up in his central stronghold in the Cochabamba department since October to avoid arrest on charges of trafficking a minor. The charges relate to Morales's alleged sexual relationship with a 15-year-old with whom he is accused of fathering a child while in office. He denies the charges. Morales, Bolivia's first Indigenous president and one of Latin America's longest-serving leaders, resigned under a cloud in 2019 after seeking to extend his 13-year grip on power.

## 'Terrifying': Migrants fret over LA raids, but still look for work

LOS ANGELES (AFP): When immigration officers leapt out of unmarked vans and ran towards undocumented men waiting by a Home Depot in Los Angeles, the day laborers scattered, terrified at the prospect of arrest and deportation. "People were hiding under wood, in the trash, wherever they could find a little hole," said Oscar Mendia, a Guatemalan who estimated 25 people were arrested. "It was like something out of a movie."

The raid was part of an anti-immigration crackdown ordered by President Donald Trump that has seen factories and work sites targeted, sparking days of angry protests in America's second biggest city. "It all started here," Mendia said, pointing to the parking lot where around 20 workers had gathered. Mendia, who has lived undocumented in the United States for 26 years, had never been involved in a raid before, not even during Trump's first term. "It's one thing to see it on television," he said, "But it's another to experience it firsthand."

Stories of migrants being held in crowded cells, unable to speak to family or lawyers before being rapidly deported are frightening, said another man, aged 40, who did not provide a name. But they are not enough to keep these workers away from the parking lot, where they gather in the hope of snagging off-the-books work in construction, farming or manual labor. "It's difficult, but we have to work, we have families to support," said the man, who sends most of his money to Honduras to provide for his six children. Mendia, who also used remittances to educate and raise his three children in Guatemala, says men like him have less to fear in this anti-immigration climate.

But for the new generation, the situation "is terrifying," he said. "They come with hope, they come

dreaming of a future." Beside him, a 21-year-old nods nervously. The young man was saved from raid because he had already been picked up for a construction project by the time the armed federal agents arrived.

He almost didn't come back, but ultimately realized he had no choice. "We need to do it," he told AFP. The men's stories are echoed in parking lots, car washes and on construction sites all over Los Angeles and throughout the United States. They fled countries devastated by economic and political crises, or by violence, in search of work to support their families. After difficult and dangerous journeys, they work for low salaries, doing the kind of back-breaking jobs many Americans have long since abandoned -- and often pay taxes.

Undocumented migrants contributed nearly \$90 billion to the public purse in 2023, according to an

analysis by the American Immigration Council. Trump returned to power this year after campaigning on a pledge to conduct the biggest deportation operation in US history. The ramped-up raids this week appear to be part of a push to make do on that promise, and come after White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller reportedly ordered ICE (Immigration Customs and Enforcement) bosses to make at least 3,000 arrests every day. In Los Angeles, a city with large foreign-born and Latino populations, the idea of these masked men swooping has horrified people, many of whom personally know undocumented people. "Why is Donald Trump doing this?" asked a Mexican man who arrived in the United States nearly three decades ago. The man, who asked not to be identified, said it was unfair to go after hard-working people who are just trying to make a living.

## Mexico's security chief says drug cartels are recruiting former Colombian soldiers

MEXICO CITY (AP): Close underworld ties have long existed between organized crime groups in Mexico and Colombia. For many years, Colombian drug traffickers produced cocaine and heroin and moved it themselves by boat or plane to the United States. Later, as US authorities cracked down on trafficking in the Caribbean, Mexican cartels' power grew as they moved Colombian drugs over land and via small plane to the US border and smuggled them across. Decades of internal conflict in Colombia have produced tens of thousands of former soldiers, paramilitaries and guerrillas with weapons training and combat experience. Colombians have been

hired guns in the 2021 assassination of Haiti President Jovenel Moise and in the ongoing war in Ukraine. In recent weeks, Mexican immigration authorities rejected 69 Colombians trying to enter Mexico, some of whom in interviews said "they had been coopted by some criminal group." Garc  a Harfuch said that both the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels were recruiting Colombians.

Colombia's ambassador to Mexico, Fernando Garc  a, said last week that he feared the arrests would negatively impact ongoing negotiations with Mexico to reduce the number of Colombians prevented from entering the country

at Mexican airports. In March, the Colombian government had said that talks with Mexico were progressing with mechanisms for Mexico and Colombia to verify information about those seeking to enter Mexico.

In October 2023, Mexican authorities arrested eight Colombians also in Michoacan state, who allegedly were helping to make explosives dropped by cartel drones. Former soldiers from other countries have worked with Mexican cartels too. More than a decade ago, the fearsome Zetas, whose leaders came from Mexico's military, recruited former members of Guatemala's special forces Kaibiles in their ranks.



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Why Ukraine peace talks are failing

THIS month's peace talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul have once again failed to bring the war any closer to a ceasefire. The only outcome - a limited agreement on prisoner exchanges - underscores a troubling truth: the current negotiation framework is not working. Meanwhile, military escalation on both sides shows no signs of slowing. In such an atmosphere, diplomacy becomes increasingly difficult. A ceasefire feels out of reach, and uneasy comparisons with the Korean Peninsula's frozen armistice are beginning to surface - a scenario that would only entrench division, fuel resentment, and leave key territorial issues unresolved.

That is why we must fundamentally rethink how these talks are structured and led. Yes, a full, unconditional 30-day ceasefire - as Ukraine proposed in Istanbul - is the bare minimum needed to create space for diplomacy. Talks must be convened without preconditions, offering all parties a seat at the table on neutral ground. There is no shortage of thoughtful policy proposals in Western circles outlining feasible paths to peace. We support calls for stronger international engagement, particularly from the United Nations, the United States and the European Union. What is needed now is urgent, coordinated global action - before tit-for-tat escalations spiral even further out of control.

But there is a deeper flaw in the way current negotiations are being facilitated - often by foreign ministers approaching the conflict as a technical problem to be solved: add a concession here, subtract a demand there. Each side calculates whether the outcome adds up in its favour. That arithmetic approach cannot work - not in a conflict defined by trauma, identity, loss and justice. What continues to be absent from these discussions is any real conversation about justice, accountability and healing. There can be no sustainable peace without a process of transitional justice. As scholars and practitioners have long noted, a frozen conflict without accountability only prolongs suffering and sets the stage for future violence. Likewise, there is too little attention paid to societal trauma - the emotional and psychological toll of war on civilians, soldiers and entire communities. It all hinges on who convenes this process, and how. The United States is uniquely positioned to lead, perhaps more effectively than a divided European Union. But recent statements from the Trump camp - seen by many in Ukraine as indifferent or incendiary - have only inflamed tensions. They do more harm than good. What is needed now is serious, strategic engagement - led by the US, in concert with the EU and UN - that meets this moment with the gravity it demands. This is not a maths problem. It is a matter of justice, healing and human survival. It is time we approached it that way. Aljazeera

Valuing diverse career paths for all graduates

AS students around the country put on their caps and gowns and prepare to graduate high school, they are no doubt thinking about their future. For many graduates, going to college makes sense as they work towards a career that requires a higher degree, such as medicine or accounting. But for other graduates they may choose a different path, such as a trade school, going directly into the workforce, or bravely volunteering to serve our nation in the Armed Forces. All are equally important.

A college degree is a necessary requirement in some job sectors, but it should be viewed as a pathway to the workforce instead of a piece of paper to hang on the wall. In South Jersey, we have some of the best colleges and universities in the country that help students build meaningful careers. But for over 50 years the narrative for our students has been that you have to go to college to make it in America. It's time to change the conversation and prepare our students for the demands of the workforce. Parents, guidance counselors, college professors, teachers, community leaders and elected officials should celebrate all our graduates and the career paths they choose.

Growing up, I enjoyed taking things apart and putting them back together to understand how they work. I loved to work with my hands, so while my siblings decided to attend traditional four-year colleges, I chose the other four-year school: a Registered Apprenticeship Program with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). It allowed me to earn while I learned and set me on a path to go from the construction site to Congress. Some of the most in-demand jobs don't require a four-year college degree. Airplane mechanics, construction trades, chefs, flight attendants, bus drivers, health care aides, and servicemembers, are only a few of the high-demand jobs that leave you with little to no debt and set you up for a successful career.

A recent National Defense Industrial Association survey found that 63 percent of private sector respondents said it was somewhat difficult or very difficult to find skilled trade workers. We have to make career and technical education more accessible and celebrated, and South Jersey serves as a model for states nationwide. Our Camden County and Gloucester County Technical Schools offer job training and certification programs that make our students career ready. Many times, these students are already employed in their field by the time they graduate high school. Rowan College of South Jersey and Camden County College offer career certification and pre-apprenticeship programs in health care, welding, auto-mechanics and other trades. We also need to make a point to celebrate and honor students who decide to join our military. That's why I started the Congressional School to Service Program to celebrate high school seniors who choose to serve in the US military after graduation with a certificate of commendation and red, white, and blue cords to wear at their graduation ceremonies. Bottom line is, at home, in our schools, and in our communities, we need to improve our perception of post-high school career, educational and training opportunities. Collectively, we can encourage our students to explore every career path. Investing in access to apprenticeship programs and career-ready training is necessary to meet the demands of the future and to ensure our students have good jobs and a career they can be proud of. It takes a wide range of jobs to keep our country running. Whether it's the doctors and nurses who keep us healthy, the servicemembers who keep us safe, or the construction workers who build our homes, each plays a pivotal role in moving our country forward. They should all be valued equally, and in Congress, I will continue to champion opportunities that meet the needs of our students and celebrate their choices. It's what they deserve.

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What could have caused Air India plane to crash in 30 seconds?

WHAT exactly happened to Flight AI171 between Ahmedabad and London Gatwick on Thursday afternoon will only be revealed by a detailed investigation, but the moments after take-off can be the most challenging in aviation.

Indian investigators will be joined by experts from the US and UK in the coming days, as authorities attempt to establish what caused the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner to crash shortly after take-off just 1.5km (0.9 miles) from the runway at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.

It marks the first time a 787-8 Dreamliner has suffered a fatal crash since it entered commercial service in 2011. Thursday's disaster killed 241 people onboard and more on the ground. The BBC has spoken to aviation experts as well as pilots based in India - some of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity - who regularly fly 787-8s out of India's international airports to find out what factors might have caused the plane to slam into residential buildings in the heart of Ahmedabad just moments into its flight.

The 787-8 Dreamliner was flown by Captain Sumeet Sabharwal and his co-pilot Clive Kundar. The two were highly experienced, with more than 9,000 combined flying hours. Mr Sabharwal having earned over 22-years expertise as a commercial airline pilot. The plane was carrying 242 people as it taxied along the runway at Ahmedabad International Airport on Thursday afternoon. The jet took off at 13:39 local time (08:09 GMT), operator Air India said.

India's Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah said the plane was carrying 100 tonnes of fuel - practically a full load - as it climbed out of Ahmedabad. Almost immediately after take-off the cockpit gave a mayday call, India's aviation regulator said. No response was given by the aircraft after that. It's unclear what prompted the mayday call, but the flight's sole survivor has told Indian media that he heard a loud bang as the plane struggled to gain altitude.

Footage authenticated by BBC Verify then showed the plane flying low over what appears to be a residential neighbourhood.

The final transmitted data showed the plane reached a height of 625ft (190m). It proceeds to descend and becomes obscured by trees and buildings, before a large explosion appears on the horizon. "There would have been no time for him to react if he lost both engines," one pilot said. CCTV footage viewed by BBC Verify showed that the plane was airborne for 30 seconds.

The plane crashed in a residential area, with

But videos that have emerged show the plane struggling to lift off the ground, seemingly amid a lack of thrust or power. One cause that has been speculated on by some experts is the possibility of an extremely rare double engine failure. Questions have been raised as to whether the plane had its Ram Air Turbine (RAT) deployed, an emergency back-up turbine which kicks in when main engines fail to generate power for essential systems.

images showing housing blocks heavily damaged in a densely built area which included hospitals and official buildings. It is almost impossible to definitively establish what caused the disaster based on videos of the plane's brief flight. In the coming days a complex investigation involving the plane's black box - which records flight data - and an examination of debris will commence. But videos that have emerged show the plane struggling to lift off the ground, seemingly amid a lack of thrust or power.

One cause that has been speculated on by some experts is the possibility of an extremely rare double engine failure. Questions have been raised as to whether the plane had its Ram Air Turbine (RAT) deployed, an emergency back-up turbine which kicks in when main engines fail to generate power for essential systems. Double engine failures are almost unheard of, with the most notable example being the 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson", when a US Airways Airbus A320 lost both engines to a bird strike

moments after take-off from New York's LaGuardia Airport, but glided to safety. One senior pilot told the BBC that dual engine failure could also result from fuel contamination or clogging. Aircraft engines rely on a precise fuel metering system - if that system gets blocked, it can lead to fuel starvation and engine shutdown.

Marco Chan, an ex-pilot, told BBC Verify that there isn't any evidence to suggest a double engine failure based on the available

information. However, a senior pilot said that a bird hit is rarely catastrophic "unless it affects both engines". Three experts who spoke to BBC Verify suggested that the disaster may have occurred as the aircraft's flaps were not extended during take-off - though other pilots and analysts have challenged this.

Flaps play a vital role during take-off, helping an aircraft generate maximum lift at lower speeds. If they're not properly extended, a fully loaded jet - carrying passengers, heavy fuel for a long-haul flight, and battling hot conditions - will struggle to lift off. In Ahmedabad, where temperatures neared 40°C (104°F) on Thursday, the thinner air would have demanded higher flap settings and greater engine thrust, one pilot told the BBC. In such conditions, even a small configuration error can have catastrophic consequences. CCTV footage which emerged late on Thursday afternoon showed the plane taking off from Ahmedabad, struggling to achieve altitude, and then slowly descending before crashing.

But a take-off roll with retracted flaps would trigger warnings from the 787's Configuration Warning System, alerting the flight crew to an unsafe configuration, according to one pilot the BBC spoke to. Ex-pilot Mr Chan told BBC Verify that the footage that has emerged so far is too distorted to establish for sure whether the flaps were extended, but said that such an error would be "highly unusual". "The flaps are set by pilots themselves, before take off, and there are several checklists and procedures to verify the setting," Mr Chan said. "That would point to potential human error if flaps aren't set correctly."

Another possibility raised by some experts in India is a bird strike. They occur when a plane collides with a bird and can be extremely dangerous for aircraft. In serious cases, engines can lose power if they suck in a bird, as happened in South Korea's Jeju Air disaster which killed 179 people last year. Experts and pilots familiar with Ahmedabad airport have told the BBC that it is "notorious for birds".

"They are always around," says Mr Ranganathan, echoing what at least three Indian pilots who have flown in and out of the airport told the BBC . Gujarat state, where Ahmedabad is located, reported 462 bird strike incidents over five years, with most occurring at

Ahmedabad airport, according to Civil Aviation Ministry data tabled in Parliament in December 2023. A Times of India report in September 2023 cited Airport Authority data noting 38 bird strikes in 2022-23 in Ahmedabad, a 35% rise over previous 12 months.

In the 2009 case, a flock of seagulls was ingested at 2,700ft - more than four times higher than the Air India flight. In this case the Indian pilots had neither the altitude nor the time to manoeuvre. However, a senior pilot said that a bird hit is rarely catastrophic "unless it affects both engines". Three experts who spoke to BBC Verify suggested that the disaster may have occurred as the aircraft's flaps were not extended during take-off - though other pilots and analysts have challenged this.

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BBC

Europe's long-overdue reckoning with Israel's Gaza genocide

Imran Khalid

IT'S taken a genocide and the stench of collective complicity for Europe to begin stirring from its torpor. But it has stirred - albeit reluctantly, haltingly, and with a hand still trembling on the lever of historical guilt. Nearly 20 months into Israel's unrelenting assault on Gaza, Europe's once-unwavering consensus around "support for Israel's right to defend itself" has begun to fray. What's unfolding is more than a geopolitical realignment; it's a moral awakening laced with belated introspection. European leaders, long smug in their self-perception as guardians of human rights, are now being haunted by the gory residue of their selective silence.

For decades, Europe acted as a passive patron to Israel's colonial project, offering muted criticism even as Palestinian land steadily shrank under illegal settlements, checkpoints, and airstrikes. But the images out of Gaza - hospitals pulverized, infants buried beneath rubble, emaciated civilians clawing for crumbs - have punctured the armor of European detachment. The once-invincible justification of Oct. 7, 2023 now rings hollow in the face of more than 54,000 Palestinian deaths, the vast majority of them civilians.

European capitals are witnessing not only mass protests but also a profound fracture in the prevailing narrative. From Berlin to Dublin, Madrid to Paris, anti-Israel demonstrations have swelled, capturing the sentiments of ordinary citizens who refuse to accept that a civilian massacre can be waved off as "collateral damage."

This isn't a sudden surge of anti-Israel sentiment - it's the long-overdue reckoning with decades of deliberate amnesia. European states were never neutral players. Britain's imperial legacy effectively granted Palestine to the Zionist movement. Other European nations stood idle, nursing post-Holocaust guilt but blind to the fresh catastrophe taking root. The Holocaust endures as a profound and haunting wound on Europe's conscience. But invoking it to shield Israel from accountability is not only intellectually dishonest - it's morally repugnant.

Now, some European countries are inching toward a new position. Spain, Ireland, and Norway (though not a formal EU member) have recognized Palestine as a state. The UK and France are hovering on the brink. Yet even this symbolic shift comes cloaked in timidity. Israel has responded with predictable bombast: threatening annexation of more West Bank territory should Britain or France dare to recognize Palestinian statehood. Israeli far-right Cabinet ministers openly boast of their expansionist ambitions. The line between rhetoric and reality disappeared long ago. What persists is Europe's collective unwillingness to act.

There is a smoldering irony in all this. The European Union - established as a monument to the principles of peace and cooperation - now finds itself unable to confront a member of its privileged trading club for waging war on a captive population. Yet slowly, cracks are appearing. The EU has begun reviewing its association agreement with Israel - a pact that has long granted

Tel Aviv generous economic privileges, including tariff exemptions, access to funding, and partnerships in research and development initiatives.

Behind the veil of diplomatic language, this agreement has effectively bankrolled Israel's occupation - granting trade privileges while ignoring war crimes. Article 2 of the agreement speaks solemnly of human rights. But Europe never enforced it. Now, with famine looming and international courts issuing arrest warrants for Israeli officials, the logic of inaction is becoming indefensible.

The reality is simple: if Europe genuinely believes in a rules-based international order, it must impose tangible consequences. Three steps are imperative. First, recognize Palestinian statehood - not as a diplomatic flourish but as a political imperative. Second, enforce sanctions on Israel, including an arms embargo and targeted trade restrictions. And third, support international investigations into war crimes and genocide in Gaza.

Of course, these measures will provoke a furious backlash from Israel and its defenders. Accusations of antisemitism will fly thick and fast - as they always do. But these tired reflexes are losing potency. Jewish voices across the globe, including those in Israel, have condemned the Gaza campaign. The conflation of Israel's actions with Jewish identity is increasingly rejected even by those it supposedly represents.

The truth is, Israel is no longer afraid of losing its moral standing. It has already forfeited that currency. The indiscriminate killing of journalists, medics, and aid workers - all with impunity - speaks volumes. Israel's leaders understand the world sees them clearly now. They simply do not care. What they might care about, however, is economic pain. The EU is Israel's largest trading partner, accounting for nearly a third of its total trade. Israeli goods flood European markets under favorable conditions. European capital flows into Israeli firms, particularly in the tech and defense sectors. This is not an incidental relationship - it is a lifeline. Sever that lifeline, and the calculus in Tel Aviv begins to change.

None of this will be easy. The EU is a fractured entity. A unified policy toward Israel is difficult when fewer than half its member states even recognize Palestinian statehood. But history won't remember how hard it was - only whether Europe finally mustered the courage to align its values with its actions. Decades ago, the Venice Declaration acknowledged Palestinian rights.

Since then, the EU has outsourced the peace process to Washington, bankrolled the Palestinian Authority, and lamented Israeli excesses from the sidelines. That era must end. If the United States is retreating from international law, Europe must advance. If America offers Israel impunity, Europe must offer accountability. This is the moment for the EU to reclaim its role not as a mere economic bloc, but as a force for justice. In Gaza, the bombs are still falling. But in Europe, a political awakening is taking shape. If sustained, it could signal the beginning of the end for Israeli exceptionalism - and the start of a new chapter in global solidarity with Palestine.

The Guardian

It is politicians - not regulators

IT'S almost two months now since the UK Supreme court ruling on what makes a woman in the eyes of the law, which was hailed as a turning point in the battle over transgender rights. Not long enough for wounds to heal, in other words, but long enough surely to hope for a bit more clarity about what this means for everyday life: which toilets trans people can use, what this means for your local women's running club or gym, how employers can handle sensitive situations at work without outing or humiliating trans staff in front of colleagues and customers. But instead, the waters are getting muddier with every passing week.

On Wednesday, Kishwer Falkner, now in the final five months of her term as chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) watchdog, was grilled by the women and equalities select committee about the detailed

code of practice she is due to submit to ministers next month, translating the ruling into everyday life. Since years of turning this issue into a political football haven't helped anyone, in an ideal world MPs could now leave it all in the hands of a trusted neutral arbiter, and resist the urge to meddle. Unfortunately, by the end of the hearing it was clear meddling may be urgently required.

Within hours of the original supreme court ruling in April that "woman" means "biological woman" for the purpose of the Equality Act, and to the surprise of some lawyers, Lady Falkner had effectively pronounced inclusiveness dead. The EHRC issued interim guidance saying that trans people should stop using the toilets, changing rooms or NHS wards of their preferred gender - though for trans men who look male enough to be potentially frightening to women in female spaces,

that's not straightforward - and only play on the grassroots sports teams of their birth sex.

Suppose you wanted to start a women's walking group, the Labour MP Rachel Taylor asked her, but you actively wanted to include trans women. Is that allowed? No, was the eventual answer: of course you can let your trans friend join, but then you'd be a mixed not single-sex group, and would have to also accept any man asking to join or risk getting sued. What the biological women in this group actually want - where they'd draw their own boundaries, or what feels right to them - is irrelevant on this reading, a position that may yet end up being tested in the courts.

How any of this might be enforced in real life, meanwhile, seems vague at best. Asked how this imaginary walking group should check that every new member was

Gaby Hinsliff

definitely biologically female, Falkner suggested they might make a judgment on sight, but that nobody was going to be walking around with badges on policing it. Similarly on toilets, EHRC chief executive John Kirkpatrick told the committee that employers would need to provide facilities securing women's privacy and dignity, but that what that meant would vary locally and could be worked out "on the basis of trust and openness and honesty". With a large dollop of goodwill and forbearance on all sides, you can see how that might wash - except on this issue, there's vanishingly little of either to be found.

The most awkward question, meanwhile, is whether a battle-scarred veteran of the culture wars such as Falkner is now sufficiently trusted to write the peace settlement. Originally appointed by Liz Truss to shake up an organi-

sation seen by the Tories as too close to Stonewall, Falkner survived both attempted mutiny inside her organisation and vicious personal abuse from outside, as she dragged it into line with what would later end up being the supreme court's settled position: that trans women are not, in law, quite the same as biological women. She wouldn't be human if she didn't feel vindicated, and she was visibly emotional when the gender-critical MP Rosie Duffield (who has been through something similar) reminded her about the placards reading "the only good Terf [trans-exclusionary radical feminist] is a dead Terf" or when protesters in 2022 dumped 60 bottles of urine on her office doorstep.

But the legacy of those brutal years is that, fairly or unfairly, many trans people no longer trust the EHRC to defend their rights (as it's mandated to do for all protected groups). Falkner

brushed off the committee's questions about that, saying she didn't see why people "should become so fearful" when they haven't lost any rights (technically speaking, the court merely defined what the limits of those rights were). Yet where people do and don't feel welcome in society is determined by social norms as well as rights, and the former have swung from one extreme to the other in recent years; you don't have to disagree with the supreme court's ruling to see how that could be wildly disorienting.

Though Falkner suggested it would be "wise for space to be given to the regulator" to handle this - in other words, that parliament should back off - some Labour MPs are rapidly reaching the opposite view. A law that doesn't work in real-life scenarios is a law that doesn't work, full stop. On this evidence, parliament should prepare to roll up its sleeves.



# Notes from Nasser Hospital: Gaza, April 2025

Dr. Birsen Gaskell

**A** piercing alarm wailing through the corridors of the hospital for the third time this evening. I swiftly climb down the stairs to the emergency room four floors down. A crushing dread fills my chest, as the wailing of the alarm signals a mass casualty is expected. I push through the crowd piling up in the ER: "Tafadal ... tafadal (please go ahead)." A child drops a torn bag spilling pieces of bony flesh. A man shrieks, the meat is a small shredded arm, ashen fingers hanging loosely attached.

The child struggles to put the shredded arm back into the bag, he looks around for help. He sweeps the amputated arm aside, away from the passing crowd. His gaze falls on me just a moment. I quiver at the calm of his face. I search for tears, anger, fear, something recognizable in his eyes but the void there like a black hole sucks me in. Child, when did you stop being a child? He will later keep peering through the ajar ER door to see if the relative or friend whose torn off arm was shoved into a bag is still alive.

The resuscitation room is quickly filled with the smoke of burned flesh. Five bodies and some missing body parts are thrown onto the stretchers. The rest are taken to the next room, a plain room with another five stretchers. I scan the room, all the bodies seem limp, unconscious. I start with one by feeling for a pulse; a teenager, burned extensively with shrapnel wounds all over her chest and face. Her long curly hair seem to be still burning slowly. No pulse. I move to the next. A toddler again with shrapnel wounds all over his bony little body. His arms and feet burned. He has an open skull, eye sockets blackened. He has a feeble pulse but he won't make it. I move to the next one. Another burned child with a missing arm and crushed pelvis. A doctor is putting a chest drain on each side of his little chest. Chest drains are an easy call in the ER, the majority of patients have them as most blast injuries blow the chest cavity up with air sweeping from outside crushing the lungs down. The only way to get the lungs up again is putting tubes through the chest to deflate the air around the lungs. Sterility is no concern, chest drains are put in in a flash. I let the team carry on.

The next one is another child. I see shrapnel entries on his face, blast injuries on his bare feet. He's unconscious but has a pulse. "Lazim oksijen (oxygen needed)," I shout. My voice is swallowed in the cacophony of the ER. I grab a nurse by the elbow, demanding oxygen. He goes out to fetch an oxygen cylinder but comes back empty handed. I scan the child with ultrasound. He has blood in his abdomen and around his lungs. A local doctor is with me now. Most doctors speak excellent English. I give my findings, we agree to send him to computer tomography (CT) to check for brain injury. We can't treat patients with head injuries in this hospital. The only neurosurgical team is based in the European Gaza Hospital in southern Khan Yunis. Without adequate airway support, the child soon is ushered

to the CT.

The fifth casualty is also a child. He is already intubated by the team but still bleeding from his crushed, half-amputated arm. The cloth wrapped round his arm as a tourniquet is soaked in blood. He has penetrating crushing injuries in his genitals and pelvis, his leg twisted. He is covered with so much blood, it's difficult to inspect his injuries. With such severe injuries he's unlikely to survive but there's talk of moving him to an operating theater in order to stop his bleeding. I agree. We scoop him to a theater with no monitoring. His relatives grab the stretcher outside, carrying him swiftly. I rush to the stairs to alert the team in the theater. Before I reach the first landing, a shuddering blast fills my ears, shaking the windows and doors. The waves of the blast push me against the wall like a gale. I halt. That was close! But I quickly realize not close enough for me to stop. After a week here I'm used to hearing explosions, blasts, bombs in the background, some strong enough to shake the entire hospital building. I soon find out the airstrike was just outside the main hospital gate. A tent with a Press sign was hit, setting off fire that soon will engulf the other tents around it. I now expect another wave of casualties. "Some have to be treated on the floor as the ER is pretty full now," I think, then my thoughts shift to the child in the theater. I continue climbing the stairs. After a two-hour battle amputating his arm, exploring his abdomen and pelvis, and fixing his broken leg temporarily that painted the whole theater with blood, he makes it to the intensive care unit only to die the next day with organ failures. The mortality rate in the ICU is very high as well as in other parts of the hospital. Far too many patients with far too few resources, hardly any antibiotics or other meds, premature discharges to welcome new admissions, the hospital is often the last stop for the injured.

It is now 2 am. I feel a migraine kicking in, think I must drink some water but the taps aren't safe to drink from. I must go to our accommodation room for a drink but I head towards the ER instead. The crowd outside the resuscitation room is bigger now. The cacophony is louder. It's chaos in the ER, with some patients lying on the floor. I smell the familiar burned flesh. There's ongoing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on a child whose body is covered with soot mixed with blood. The CPR is short lived, he's dead. I watch his lifeless face, his eyes half open. I secretly feel relieved for him knowing he will no longer wake up to the sounds of explosions as he has been for the past nearly 600 days, no longer spending the day hungry and thirsty, no longer having to be displaced yet again from his makeshift tent or ruins of his city, no longer feel freezing cold overnight or scorching hot during summer days, no longer will miss his old school, his friends, his family, some of whom died or are thought to be dead. I stroke his dirty bare feet, think: "Now you're safe little man, no one can hurt

you." Just then another crushing airstrike booms all around us! The lights go off.

The fourth floor of the main hospital building where the ICU unit is located in the middle is the designated assembly point for our team in case of a direct airstrike. I manage to climb the stairs to the assembly point with my cellphone flashlight. By the time I reach the assembly point the generator kicks in, the lights are back on. I don't see anyone else from the team other than the usual traffic that never stops in and out of the ICU. I rush to the accommodation area, and we're all fine. The strike was just outside the walls of the hospital's east side. We watch the massive smoke clouds billowing up right across the balcony of the accommodation. Dr. Osama instructs the team to stay in the accommodation for the time being, away from the balcony and windows. Ambulance sirens remain loud for hours to come. I lie down with a blooming migraine but can't sleep as we spend the rest of the night with low-flying supersonic jets hovering the air above. Drones humming loudly as usual in between the sounds of jets. The bombardment of Gaza never stops.

I hear Rachael say: "Hold on." Someone knocks on the door impatiently. "It's for you," says Rachael, seeing me raised in bed. What time is it? "Still very early" she says. I'm needed in theaters urgently. Anesthetic nurses are overwhelmed with no anesthetist around. My migraine is here to stay. I gobble up some painkillers and leave. Inside the theater room there's so much blood on the floor, it swashes and ripples around every time I walk over. It's a young girl with her chest cavity open. I see her heart fibrillating. "Lazim kalb compression (heart compression needed)," She doesn't make it. The most efficient workers here are the cleaners. After returning from the bathroom, I see the operating room already clean and ready for the next case.

"Ahmad, where is Dr. Fayeze?" I ask the anesthetic nurse. "In his office, he's not well." I find him having tea on a broken office chair. He offers me tea. I know that there's no point in saying no as the hospitality of Palestinians always wins out. He turns on the mini plastic kettle behind him and pulls out some loose tea from the drawer of his table. "Feeling okay?" I ask. He doesn't hear me as the kettle makes a buzz and vibrates violently. "You know what I really really miss, Doctor Birsen?" He leaves me in suspense, brewing the tea in the kettle. "I miss drinking tea with sugar. Really miss tea with sugar so much. I don't find sugar in the market anymore." I nod. "You feeling okay?" "Better now ... When we have a bad night I always get chest pain." I say: "Ohh ... shall we check you over?" He responds "It's not new, doctor, I'm diabetic, hypertensive. Every time I hear a big explosion I get chest pain. I worry not about myself, but about my boys. They can't survive without me." He turns his face as his voice cracks. He wipes his eyes. Dr. Fayeze has six boys. Touch

between the genders is not customary here. But I put my hand on his shoulder for few seconds as he weeps quietly.

"They haven't been out for the last 18 months. We don't let them out to play, they're always inside." Their home took a hit by an airstrike on the neighboring house that knocked down part of their house down too. They survived with minor injuries. Since then they've been displaced five times. Now they live with other relatives in a damaged building with no windows. He was in Nasser Hospital when the neighborhood was invaded by ground troops. When the staff and patients were led outside, he came very close to being abducted at a checkpoint. He told me: "I saw a toddler left alone screaming. I couldn't leave him. I picked him and carried him with me. He kept screaming all the way to the checkpoint, IDF (Israeli army) soldiers who were pointing guns at us got annoyed by this. They let me through when most of the staff got held off and taken away. This small child saved my life." I say: "You rest, Dr. Fayeze, I'll take over today."

It's going to be a long day. I desperately need my morning coffee. Our housekeeper Jamal makes coffee for me with the little coffee mocha I brought with me. I give half to him. We sip our coffee as we look out over the balcony. Several smoke clouds hang over the Rafah area. The air is very thick with the pollution of constant explosions. We watch the kids collecting garbage in the desolate ground of the hospital building. The skeletons of ambulances, furniture, and hospital equipment and what's left of them is scattered around. Some buried partially. Following the ground invasion almost a year ago, the Israeli army damaged and burned down the properties of the hospital. Children rummage around the hospital grounds every morning collecting anything they can find useful for burning fire. Every morning, when they should have been in school, they roam around the ruins of city to collect what's left of it.

Jamal points to the hospital ground, says: "We found many shuhada (martyrs) in the ground." He is talking about the mass graveyards that were dug out after the Israeli army withdrew from the area. The same evening on the same balcony, Jamal speaks in Arabic as my Jordanian colleague translates with a trembling voice. In December 2023, Jamal got trapped in Northern Gaza under a complete siege, constant bombardment, and a strict curfew lasting a month. His neighborhood was reduced to ruins with decaying dead bodies scattered around. He saw his brother and his family home hit by a rocket and later made many attempts to save and retrieve their bodies. But with quadcopters hovering around, he couldn't make it out. A week later from his windows he sees dogs eating human flesh, one of which he knows is his brother's lifeless body. Jamal rubs his fists between his legs, says "Alhamdulillah" (praise be to God), and leaves us in silence.

AA

# An opportunity for Türkiye

Karl P. Sauvant

**‘TÜRKIYE will continue to offer a favorable investment environment for international investors with a never-ending reform process.' President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, according to the country's 2024-2028 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy. The strategy concretizes Ankara's 12th Development Plan, with the section on Business and Investment Environment stipulating that the "main objective is to make the economy more competitive ... to increase investment, production, employment and exports by making more use of qualified FDI.'**

Given the important role that foreign direct investment can play in development, increasing flows of such investment to Türkiye is indeed an important objective. And the country has room to do so. According to UNCTAD (the UN Conference on Trade and Development), Türkiye received, on average, \$11 billion in foreign direct investment in 2021-2023, while the UAE received double that amount during the same period, some \$22 billion. Türkiye now can have an additional tool to advance its FDI Strategy: the new Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement negotiated at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The text of this agreement was submitted to the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi in February 2024, and it is ready for integration into the WTO's rulebook. It is sponsored by 126 WTO members, with 90 of them being developing countries. Supporting this initiative would not only align with Türkiye's strategic FDI interests, but also enhance its domestic business environment, especially for small and medium-size enterprises that lack the resources to navigate bureaucratic red tape.

The agreement is also useful to Türkiye because it helps attract not only more investment, but also more sustainable and impactful foreign direct investment -- what Türkiye's FDI Strategy calls "qualified FDI" -- to further the country's sustainable economic growth and development. Attracting foreign direct investment, however, is a major challenge in the highly competitive world foreign direct investment market. This increases the importance of investment facilitation as the main tool that countries can use to distinguish themselves, particularly as investors increasingly prioritize efficiency, transparency (such as single digital information portals) and predictability in administrative procedures.

Clearly, governments can improve their investment climate on their own, unilaterally, as Türkiye is doing. But anchoring investment facilitation reforms in international commitments -- as contained in the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement -- helps countries overcome domestic resistance to such reforms. As a commitment device aligned with global benchmarks, moreover, supporting the agreement sends a positive signal to international investors that a country is serious about investment-environment reforms and attracting foreign direct investment. And the technical assistance and capacity-building to be provided for the implementation of the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement (and the needs assessment associated with it) is an important resource that Türkiye could benefit from, to improve its likelihood of success in the highly competitive world foreign direct-investment market. Significantly, the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement explicitly excludes market-access matters, the protection of investment and investor-state dispute settlement.

Also, parties to the agreement retain full autonomy over their investment policy frameworks. For instance, they may choose to subject foreign direct investment in specific sectors to authorization requirements, to keep certain sectors closed to such investment or to

provide incentives. The WTO agreement does not itself influence some of the key economic factors that determine where international investors decide to invest, like the quality of infrastructure. But it does help improve the two other determinants that largely shape locational decisions, namely the quality and predictability of the regulatory framework affecting foreign direct investment and investment promotion.

More specifically, the agreement focuses on transparency, predictability, and the streamlining of administrative procedures related to the implementation of a country's foreign direct investment policy, all of which are important for investors. For example, the agreement encourages the publication of laws and regulations pertaining to foreign direct investment and providing investors the opportunity to comment on proposed new foreign direct investment measures; establishing a single online information portal; charging reasonable authorization fees; and using information and communication technology/e-government. It also promotes the implementation of supplier-development programs to strengthen the capabilities of local suppliers, especially small and medium-size enterprises, to meet the sourcing demands of investors; the establishment of supplier databases; and the uptake by companies of responsible business conduct practices. Many of these measures are also helpful for domestic firms.

Furthermore, Türkiye could benefit from the agreement's special and differential treatment provisions, including especially technical assistance and capacity-building support from such international organizations as the International Trade Centre, the World Bank, UNCTAD, and the World Economic Forum. This would be of interest to Türkiye as it seeks to implement a number of measures announced in its FDI Strategy, such as simplifying bureaucratic processes, increasing the embeddedness of foreign affiliates, and strengthening the country's digital infrastructure to attract quality foreign direct investment projects. Türkiye can also determine the pace at which it implements individual provisions. As a result, Türkiye improves its global competitiveness and its ability to attract more sustainable and impactful foreign direct investment.

There is an additional consideration that Türkiye's policymakers should consider, namely outward foreign direct investment. The country's firms are already significant outward investors. They are poised to become even more so in the future, as part of the maturation of the country's economy and to increase the international competitiveness of its firms. The importance of this aspect of foreign direct investment is recognized in Türkiye's Development Plan which states that "Türkiye's capacity to guide and facilitate outward FDI will be improved." Türkiye's firms increasingly invest abroad, to gain better access to international markets and resources, to maintain and strengthen their competitiveness so that they can create new jobs and sustain existing ones at home.

Türkiye's outward investors are therefore interested that the investment environment in host countries is transparent and predictable, and that excessive red tape does not hinder the establishment of their foreign affiliates -- precisely what the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement is all about. And there is certainly room for the country's firms to invest more abroad: according to UNCTAD, Türkiye's outward foreign direct investment stagnated around \$5 billion during 2021-2023, compared to \$23 billion for the UAE. It is therefore good to see that Türkiye's government -- as those of many other countries -- supports its own national firms in their quest to increase their international competitiveness. Is the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement

perfect? Naturally, it could be stronger in some respects, and Türkiye's negotiators have made this point during the negotiations. For example, the agreement could have included a definition of "investment" beyond making it clear -- both, in its "objectives" and "scope" articles -- that the agreement is about facilitating "foreign direct investment" (which is also in line with the 2017 Joint Ministerial Statement that led to the eventual investment facilitation negotiations); however, other agreements of this kind have done well without an explicit definition of "investment," for example, the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States. Or the provision on movement of businesspersons could have gone beyond transparency, but both developed and developing countries did not agree to having a more expanded provision on this matter. After all, multilateral negotiations are an exercise in the art of the possible, and the perfect should not become the enemy of the good.

Türkiye, moreover, has other avenues to pursue its objectives in these two areas. In particular, in its ongoing free trade agreements negotiations with Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and MERCOSUR, it can seek to address these issues. And it can negotiate bilateral specialized investment facilitation agreements that go beyond what can be achieved at the multilateral level, as has been done by the EU, which -- on the basis of the WTO Agreement -- has negotiated the EU-Angola Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (and is negotiating other such agreements with further countries). Blocking the agreement's incorporation into the WTO's rulebook -- as Türkiye does now, given the WTO's consensus requirement -- has substantial downsides: the country would not benefit from the support that the agreement provides to anchor Türkiye's domestic facilitation reforms, including its technical assistance and capacity-building resources it is expected to trigger. Moreover, blocking an agreement that is ready for integration into the WTO's rulebook as desired by 126 WTO members (three-quarters of the organization's membership), risks forfeiting the goodwill of numerous countries, including those with which Türkiye has long-standing strategic and economic ties and that are its partners in such organizations as the Türkiye-led Organization of Turkic States.

Not joining (while refraining from blocking the agreement's incorporation into the WTO's rulebook) still leaves Türkiye missing out on some of the agreement's tangible benefits -- though it would at least avoid antagonizing the majority of WTO members that favor its incorporation in the WTO's rule-book. Türkiye's outward investors would benefit from the agreement's supporters improving their investment environment. Why would Türkiye block an agreement if it would benefit from it at least to some extent even if it would not join it?

Joining the agreement, finally, would allow Türkiye to reap all the agreement's benefits, without incurring any costs. It would allow it to obtain special treatment, including especially technical assistance support for improving its investment climate, and it would send a strong signal to international investors that it is serious about facilitating foreign direct investment inflows -- which would help the country "increase investment, production, employment and exports by making more use of qualified FDI." What better opportunity for Türkiye to advance its own foreign direct investment objectives? As President Erdogan noted, improving the investment environment is "a never-ending process." The new WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement provides Türkiye with an additional tool to advance this process. Türkiye should seize this opportunity and join the agreement.

# The Democrats' resistance to Trump is a hollow performance

Donald Earl Collins

**FROM March 31 to April 1, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker delivered a record-breaking 25-hour filibuster on the Senate floor of the United States Capitol. In his marathon speech, Booker repeatedly chastised President Donald Trump for his discriminatory politics and policies and for his attempts to circumvent the US Constitution.**

Booker also criticised both the Democratic and Republican parties for failing to do more to oppose Trump. "Do better than me. Do better than we in this body. We are flawed and failed people," he said unironically, adding, "My voice is inadequate. My efforts today are inadequate to stop what they're trying to do." Two days later, he proved himself right. Booker voted against two resolutions that would have limited US arms sales to Israel - just as Israeli forces once again intensified their genocidal campaign in Gaza. In doing so, he aligned himself with one of Trump's most extreme and violent foreign policy positions - and exposed the hollowness of the Democratic resistance. After all, you cannot claim to be fighting Trumpism at home while helping it advance abroad.

That contradiction sits at the heart of the Democrats' paralysis. In the five months since Trump began his second term as president, meaningful opposition from the party has been almost nonexistent. The so-called resistance to his authoritarianism has been weaker than the sun over the Arctic in the dead of winter.

The reason is simple: On many of the most consequential issues - Israel, immigration, policing - the Democrats are not resisting Trumpism. They are participating in it. A centre-right party that shares core positions with its far-right opponent cannot mount real opposition. It can only pretend to.

It doesn't help that the Democratic Party is, in many respects, as beholden to wealthy, right-wing donors as the Republicans. What the party

lacks in vision, it also lacks in leadership. As the old saying goes: If you want to understand a politician's priorities, follow the money. Or, in the words of Upton Sinclair in his 1941 novel Between Two Worlds: "Find out who's putting up the money for a political party, and then you know what it will do."

Take Booker's votes against restricting arms to Israel. Since his first Senate run in 2013, he has received nearly \$1m from pro-Israel political action committees (PACs) and individual donors. A 2019 report from The Intercept described how Booker regularly communicated with the leaders of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) "like teenagers". With such a cosy relationship, his votes for genocide may be immoral, but they are not surprising.

Then there is Hakeem Jeffries, the most powerful Democrat in the House of Representatives. In April, he and Booker held a two-person, all-day sit-in on the Capitol steps to protest proposed deep cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and food and jobs assistance programmes. "As Democrats, we're going to continue to stand on the side of the American people, and we will not rest until we bury this reckless Republican budget in the ground," Jeffries declared.

Three weeks later, Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" passed the House 215-214. Although the Senate may revise it, Jeffries's grandstanding had already proven hollow.

Jeffries has shown far more resolve against antigonocide protesters. In April 2024 when pro-Palestinian student protests intensified and police raided encampments at Columbia University, he defended the use of New York police to arrest protesters and dismantle the camps. "The antisemitic rhetoric and intimidation deployed by some students and outside protestors on college campuses in New York City and beyond is completely unacceptable

and deeply disturbing," Jeffries said in a news statement.

There was no credible evidence to support his claim. He issued no similar statement in defence of Palestinians nor did he condemn Islamophobia or Zionist attacks on protesters. But he did raise more than \$1.15m from AIPAC and other pro-Israel donors during his 2024 re-election campaign.

Like Booker and Jeffries, other leading Democrats have chosen to posture against the marginalised rather than confront unjust policies. On January 30, Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut posted on X: "In the first week, Trump removed 7,300 people. On average, Biden was removing 15,000 a week. Under Biden 72 percent of ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] arrests were criminals. Under Trump it's dropped to around 50 percent. Trump is removing less people and less criminals." Whether he intended it or not, Murphy in effect endorsed a mass deportation regime that disproportionately targets migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. Murphy is a leader who equivocates. Just two months earlier, he had written that "mass deportation is a (terrible) response to Americans' real sense they are helpless in the face of global forces." Yet by May, he was boasting about supporting the "toughest bipartisan border security bill in a generation" as part of "choosing this country over Donald Trump's campaign". Murphy may be less beholden to corporate donors than others, but his role in leading the opposition is no less compromised. Even on issues on which Democrats have expressed rhetorical opposition - such as cuts to welfare and education - grandstanding has taken the place of real action.

Despite Jeffries's occasional calls for a Democratic strategy to organise resistance, many in the party have





LAHORE: People buying solar penals from a shop as increase in load shedding is reported with the rise in the temperature.

## Chaudhry calls for balance between industrial growth, ecological preservation

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has emphasized the need to balance industrial growth with ecological preservation at ports, underscoring a strategic vision that aligns economic development with environmental sustainability.

In a statement on Friday, he called on the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) to intensify efforts to protect the environment across all industrial zones under its jurisdiction, stressing the importance of responsible industrial growth alongside ecological preservation.

The Minister directed PQA management to ensure that all industrial units have installed sewage treatment plants. He warned that failure to comply should result in penalties under environmental laws for pollu-

tion and improper waste discharge to curb industrial pollution and safeguard marine and coastal ecosystems.

Praising PQA's engagement of independent third-party for environmental monitoring, the Minister urged the port to maintain impartial, data-driven assessments of industrial compliance. This approach will improve transparency and strengthen regulatory enforcement.

Highlighting PQA's commitment to the global Green Port Initiative, Maritime Minister noted that the authority has successfully planted over 25,000 trees within port areas, significantly contributing to carbon sequestration and ecosystem restoration.

"These efforts underscore PQA's unwavering dedication to environmental responsibility and a sustainable, greener future for maritime

sector," the Minister stated adding it aligns with broader government policies to modernize maritime infrastructure and enforce stricter environmental regulations, including waste management and afforestation projects.

The Ministry continues to collaborate with port authorities, industry stakeholders, and environmental agencies to ensure the ports contribute positively to climate resilience and marine conservation, he added.

The Federal Minister's directives reflect a strategic vision to balance industrial development with ecological stewardship, safeguarding coastline and marine biodiversity for future generations. The Port Qasim Authority's proactive environmental measures set a benchmark for sustainable port operations in the region.

## SCCI role in imposing taxes on tribal areas disappointing

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce has played a disappointing and disgraceful role by silently supporting and facilitating the imposition of taxes on the tribal and semi-tribal regions (former FATA and PATA). This is a highly regrettable, unrepresentative, and anti-public move. It appears that this institution has ceased to represent the business community and is now merely serving the agenda of the government.

In a joint statement, President of the Peshawar Traders Chamber Gulam Bilal Javid, Senior Vice President Gulam Hussain Chand, Vice President Abdul Haseeb Chughtai, Spokesperson Basit Khan, and other office bearers

strongly condemned the Sarhad Chamber's role, stating that the imposition of taxes in areas that were constitutionally exempt is a clear violation of national commitments and an outright injustice.

They emphasized that the people of FATA and PATA, already suffering from terrorism, poverty, and underdevelopment, are now being burdened with a 10% sales tax, which amounts to economic strangulation. Shockingly, institutions like the Sarhad Chamber - which should be the voice of the business community - remained silent on this oppression and even covertly supported it.

President Gulam Bilal Javid made it clear that if the government does not reconsider its decision to impose taxes on FATA,

PATA, and Malakand Division, the business community across the province will be compelled to launch strong protests. He added that when the tribal areas were merged, the promises made to the people were of development, education, employment, and healthcare - not taxes, exploitation, and injustice.

The Peshawar Traders Chamber outright rejects this cruel and unconstitutional tax and demands that the federal government immediately withdraw this decision. We stand firmly with our tribal brothers and will pursue every constitutional and democratic path to protect their rights.

The unity of the tribal people is our strength - and we will never bow to oppression.

## PPL sings PCA to develop Offshore Block 5

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) is pleased to announce the signing and execution of a Production Concession Agreement (PCA), for the development of Offshore Block 5, Abu Dhabi.

The PCA has been signed between the Supreme Council for Financial and Economic Affairs (SCFEA), on behalf of the Government of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Pakistan International Oil Limited (PIOL).

## Governor Kundi lauds FPCCI's role in economic growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday praised the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) for its pivotal role in driving the country's economic development and representing the voice of the business community at national and international levels.

Speaking at a high-profile event in Islamabad, the Governor acknowledged FPCCI as a vital institution that serves as the backbone of Pakistan's economy, fostering public-private partnerships and providing critical input on policy matters, including the national budget.

The Governor paid tribute to Dr Afshan Malik at a formal ceremony organized by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), recognizing her contributions to both national and international platforms.

Speaking as chief guest, Governor Kundi lauded Dr Afshan Malik's leadership

as Convener of FPCCI's Diplomatic Standard Committee, crediting her with elevating Pakistan's presence in global business and diplomatic circles.

He said her rare spiritual honour of being appointed Khalifa at the revered shrines of Ajmer Sharif and Baghdad, calling it not only a personal achievement but a matter of national pride.

"Dr Afshan Malik is a symbol of vision, harmony, and leadership. Her achievements serve as a guiding light for all Pakistanis, especially women," the Governor said. "Institutions like FPCCI are the backbone of our economy, and leaders like her are instrumental in steering Pakistan towards progress."

Kundi assured the business community of continued support from the federal government and Governor House Peshawar, urging them to actively contribute budget proposals.

"The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) welcomes all

constructive suggestions from the business sector," he added.

The ceremony drew a large audience from the business fraternity, including FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, philanthropist Zamurd Khan, social activist Hubba Chaudhry, Dr Amjad, and several FPCCI office-bearers. Attendees praised Dr Malik's role in promoting economic diplomacy and spiritual leadership, marking her as a unique figure bridging commerce and culture.

The event concluded with a renewed call for public-private collaboration to strengthen Pakistan's economic landscape.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the National Peace Force Committee for Interfaith Harmony, Mazhar Sakhawat Wattoo, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor's House in Islamabad.

Also present at the meeting was Syed Sibte Hassan, in-charge of the Pakistan Peoples Party

(PPP) Central Secretariat.

During the meeting, the current law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other relevant issues were discussed in detail.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the critical importance of promoting interfaith and sectarian harmony for the establishment of lasting peace in the province.

He highlighted that since assuming office as Governor, practical steps have been taken to promote interfaith and sectarian harmony, with the Governor House Peshawar being actively used as a platform for such initiatives.

Kundi reiterated that the PPP regards religious and sectarian harmony as a cornerstone for national progress and development.

Mazhar Sakhawat Wattoo lauded the efforts of Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in promoting peace and interfaith harmony and commended his proactive role in fostering unity across religious and sectarian lines.

## SECP invites public comments on proposed amendments to VPS Rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued a Consultation Paper proposing amendments to the Voluntary Pension System (VPS) Rules, 2005, aimed at enhancing access and efficiency in Pakistan's pension framework.

The key proposal is to allow Employer Pension Funds (EPFs) to serve multiple employers under a common fund structure, says a press release issued

by the SECP on Friday.

This change would enable pension fund managers to pool contributions from various employers, improving cost-efficiency through economies of scale and allowing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to offer retirement benefits without setting up separate funds.

Beyond previous amendments in VPS Rules, 2005 in February 2024, certain structural limitations continued to

restrict the scalability and broader market adoption.

The structure restricted each fund to a specific employer, limiting scalability and creating cost inefficiencies, particularly for smaller employers.

Subsequently, the SECP initiated an impact analysis to assess the efficacy of the VPS Rules in addressing the evolving dynamics of retirement savings.

Various areas of improvement have been resultantly identified to

provide operational efficiency, broader pension coverage and to reduce entry barriers for employer participation.

The proposed draft amendments aim to align the regulatory framework more closely with international best practices, eliminate interpretational ambiguities, and foster a stronger culture of retirement savings in Pakistan.

The consultation paper is open for public comments for 15 days from the date of publication.

## Duty on solar panels rejected, protest planned against tax implementation

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Akbar Khan, Coordinator of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has strongly opposed the proposed imposition of an 18% duty on solar panels and the withdrawal of tax exemptions for the merged districts, particularly the Malakand Division, in the federal budget.

In a statement issued from the FPCCI Regional Office in Peshawar, Khan

stated that these measures will not be accepted under any circumstances and will be challenged through all legal means.

He warned that making solar panels more expensive would adversely affect not only ordinary citizens but also the industrial sector.

He criticized the federal government's decision, calling it anti-people and anti-business. "With the help of solar panels, the country had only just begun to overcome the energy crisis. Citizens invested in

solar energy and supported the government's efforts. Now, however, the government is trying to turn it into a source of revenue, which will discourage future investments in solar systems and ultimately cause harm," he added.

Akbar Khan further said the entire business community rejects the proposal to end tax exemptions for the merged districts. "Instead of supporting already struggling industries, the federal government appears intent on dismantling them completely. If these taxes are

imposed, industries in the region will shut down."

Highlighting the sacrifices of the region, he said the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially Malakand, were on the front lines in the fight against terrorism and have suffered deeply. "Now, their sacrifices are being mocked," he remarked.

He concluded by stating that the FPCCI and the business community cannot support such decisions and will initiate a full-scale legal campaign to oppose them.

## Kitchen items' prices decrease by 0.11pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), decreased by 0.11 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 12, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 309.51 points as compared to 309.85 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed a decrease of 1.41 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 0.15 per cent and went up to 299.44 points from last week's 298.99 points while consumption group of Rs 17,732 to 22,888 also increased by 0.04.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, came down to 0.03 percent, 0.10 percent and 0.18 percent

respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 15 (29.41%) items increased, 09 (17.65%) items decreased and 27 (52.94%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included Chicken (11.32%), Garlic (5.69%), Pulse Mash (1.14%), Pulse Masoor (0.43%), Pulse Gram (0.21%), Cooking Oil 5 litre & Vegetable Ghee 2.5kg (0.20%) each, Wheat Flour (0.05%) and LPG (0.02%).

The commodities which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included Tomatoes (19.73%), Potatoes (9.11%), Onions (3.23%), Bananas (2.25%), Powdered Milk (0.73%), Eggs (0.67%), Gur (0.52%), Curd & Rice Basmati Broken (0.25%)

each, Vegetable Ghee 1kg (0.20%), Sugar (0.18%) and Pulse Moong (0.15%).

Year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included Onions (61.86%), Electricity Charges for Q1 (41.63%), Garlic (30.99%), Tomatoes (22.87%), Pulse Mash (19.18%), Tea Lipton (17.93%), Potatoes (16.49%), Wheat Flour (14.10%), Chicken (8.04%), Pulse Masoor (6.13%), Diesel (5.68%) and Petrol (5.41%).

The commodities which recorded a decrease in their average prices on year-on-year basis included Ladies Sandal (55.62%), Eggs (31.41%), Pulse Moong (30.53%), Powdered Milk (24.73%), Sugar (23.76%), Bananas (16.18%), Beef (15.75%), Vegetable Ghee 2.5Kg (13.33%), Vegetable Ghee 1Kg (12.71%), Firewood (10.81%), Lawn (10.45%) and Cooked Daal (9.90%).



## Israel-Iran conflict, wall street declines



WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes fell on Friday after Israel's deadly strike on Iranian nuclear facilities inflamed tensions in the oil-rich Middle East and battered risk sentiment across global markets.

Israel has warned that the widescale strikes were the start of a prolonged operation to prevent Tehran from building an atomic weapon. Iran has promised a harsh response.

Oil prices surged nearly 7% on fears the conflict could disrupt crude supply from the Middle East. U.S. energy stocks rose in tandem, with Exxon (XOM.N), opens new tab up 1.7%.

Airline stocks dropped as fuel costs could surge if supply bottlenecks materialize. Delta Air Lines (DAL.N), opens new tab was down 3.7%, United Airlines (UAL.O), opens new tab dropped 4.4%, and American Airlines (AAL.O), opens new tab declined 4.7%.

Defense stocks climbed, with Lockheed Martin (LMT.N), opens new tab, RTX Corporation (RTX.N), opens new tab, Northrop Grumman (NOC.N), opens new tab gaining between 2.2% and 3.2%.

"We have major domestic policy uncertainty and now on top of that, you

have geopolitical unrest, which not only is impacting oil markets, but the broader risk premium," said Eric Teal, chief investment officer at Comerica Wealth Management.

Washington said it had no part in the operation, but President Donald Trump suggested Iran had brought the attack on itself by resisting U.S. demands to restrict its nuclear program.

Trump also urged Iran to make a deal, saying "the next already planned attacks" will be "even more brutal".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he would speak to Trump later in the day.

At 10:13 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJ.I), opens new tab fell 659.45 points, or 1.52%, to 42,313.10, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab lost 60.38 points, or 1.00%, to 5,984.88 and the Nasdaq Composite

U.S.-listed shares of gold miners rose tracking a rise in bullion prices. Newmont (NEM.N), opens new tab gained 2.2%, while AngloGold Ashanti (AU.N), opens new tab rose 2.1%.

The S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab remains 2.6% below its record high reached earlier this year, following stellar monthly gains in May driven by upbeat corporate earnings and a softening in Trump's trade stance.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq (IXIC), opens new tab is about 3.8% off its record closing high reached in December last year.

A tame consumer price report, softer-than-expected producer price data and largely unchanged initial jobless claims earlier this week helped calm investor jitters around tariff-driven price pressures. However, Federal Reserve policymakers are widely expected to keep rates unchanged at their meeting next week.

A University of Michigan survey showed consumer sentiment increased to 60.5 for June from the previous month, according to a preliminary estimate.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 3,88-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and by a 4.4-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

### COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Jawad Bin Dawood Civil Judge II, Alaga Qazi Buner at Daggar:Suit No 225/1.Institution. 2022. Date of hearing. 18/6/2025 . Case Title: Mst Amriya VS Fazal Raziq. Notice to no. 6/2. Abdul Zabor. 6/3. Umerzeb. 6/4. Umer taj sons of Qadargul. 6/5/1. Sirtaj. 6/5/2. Abdulzabor. 6/5/3.Umertaj. 6/5/4.Umerzaren sons of Parosha. 6/5/5.Mst Sardaro w/o Bakhtzada. 6/5/6. Tajmena w/o Rehmatay resident of Hisar Buner. 6/5/7. Mst Sirajmena w/o Ramen resident of Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 18/6/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

### COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Naseem Ullah Judge Family Court/Civil Judge Lachi District Kohat. Suit No.10/1 Date of hearing.26-06-2025. Titled:- Muhammad Farid Vs Ghulam Farid, Notice against- Ghulam Farid Son of Khalifa Khan R/o Bori Shakardara Tehsil Lachi District Kohat Presently R/o (now in Abroad America USA) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 26-06-2025 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 26-06-2025 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on 26-05-2025 (Court of JFC/C.J Lachi Kohat)





## In brief

## RID senior tournament starts on Saturday

LAHORE (APP): The Regional Inter-District (RID) Senior Cricket Tournament 2025-26 is set to commence on Saturday, 14 June in six regions across the country including Abbottabad, Bahawalpur, FATA, Lahore, Multan and Sialkot Regions. The tournament will kick off in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Larkana Regions from 15 June, while Faisalabad, Islamabad and Peshawar Regions will host matches from 16 June. The Inter-district senior tournament matches in Quetta Region will begin from 19 June, while fixtures in Hyderabad and Rawalpindi Regions will commence from 20 June. Dera Murad Jamali will host matches from 21 June, while matches in Karachi Region will begin from 27 June. A total of 110 teams will play three-day matches across the 16 regions in the country. The players were selected based on their performances in the recently concluded Challenge League (two-day) and President's Trophy Grade-II, while some were retained after featuring in last year's events. The forthcoming red-ball tournament will serve as a talent feeder for the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy.

## Zverev to play Shelton

MUNICH (AFP): Top seed Alexander Zverev advanced to the semi-finals on home grass at the Stuttgart Open on Friday to set up a meeting with American Ben Shelton for a place in the final. The second semifinal in the Wimbledon warm-up tournament features American Taylor Fritz and Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime. Zverev hit 31 winners to 20 unforced errors to get past 31st-ranked American Brandon Nakashima 7-5, 6-4 for the fourth time in as many meetings. The world number three was pushed hard in the first set, but seized his first break opportunity for 6-5, and closed it out on his serve. A break in the fifth game put Zverev 3-2 ahead in the second and he wrapped up the tie after an hour and a half, largely thanks to a very efficient serve. To reach his third final in 2025, after winning in Munich and losing at the Australian Open, Zverev will have to overcome Shelton, who lost only four points on his serve -- out of 44 played -- to sweep past Czech Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4. Fritz, the world number seven, beat Hungarian Marton Fucsovics 6-3, 6-4 with a break in each set enough to see him through as he bids for a first ATP final of the season. Three of Fritz's eight titles are on grass and he will next face Auger-Aliassime who ended the impressive run of 17-year-old German Justin Engel 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

## Smith dislocates finger in WTC final

LONDON (Agencies): Australia batter Steve Smith was taken to hospital for an X-ray on a compound dislocation of the little finger on his right hand, sustained on day three of the World Test Championship final. The 36-year-old suffered the injury when he dropped a catch off the bowling of left-arm quick Mitchell Starc while fielding in the slips during the afternoon session at Lord's. Starc, bowling round the wicket, squared up South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma and he edged the ball towards Smith, who was stood a little closer and wearing a helmet because some deliveries have not carried. Smith got his hands to the ball but shelled the catch and then immediately left the field in noticeable discomfort.

## Markram helps South Africa close in on World Test Championship win

LONDON (Agencies): Aiden Markram made a brilliant unbeaten century to put South Africa within tantalising distance of a historic victory over Australia in the World Test Championship final.

Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood had shared a stand of 59 for Australia's last wicket in the morning session of day three which appeared to give them the upper hand. Starc top-scored for Australia with a gritty unbeaten half-century as they were eventually dismissed for 207 on the stroke of lunch.

However, any frustration South Africa may have felt gave way to a sense of what might be possible in more appreciable conditions for batting after they were set a target of 282 for victory. A Lord's pitch which had seen 28 wickets fall during two days of cricket chaos suddenly looked a wildly different beast on a sun-kissed afternoon in St John's Wood, with Markram playing a stellar hand.

The 30-year-old has not played a competitive game of red-ball cricket since January but he battled with finesse during a classical Test-match innings which now looks set to define this seesaw match. Markram shared an unbroken 143-run partnership with South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma, who was hampered by a hamstring injury but tenaciously stayed at the crease to play his part with an unbeaten 65.

The pair will resume on day four with 69 runs required to wrap up the win. A win which would more pertinently ensure South Africa end their long wait for a victory in a major men's



Temba Bavuma jumps for joy as Aiden Markram brings up his hundred.

final, putting an end to their tag as international cricket's chokers.

That is unless Australia's bowlers can summon something quite remarkable with the ball on Saturday and provide an unexpected twist.

Markram puts Proteas on brink of history

The scale of the challenge facing South Africa when they began their innings was not quite the summit of Everest, but it certainly felt a fair way above base camp. At the start of their innings, WinViz gave South Africa a 38%

chance of pulling off the joint second-highest successful chase for a Test match at Lord's.

England chased down the same target against New Zealand - for the loss of three wickets - in 2004 while West Indies managed a nine-wicket victory against England in 1984 in pursuit of 342. In the 148-year history of Test cricket - in excess of 2,000 matches - there have also been just 26 occasions when the team batting last has scored the highest total of the match as South Africa require here.

Having been rolled for 138 in the first innings, and up against an Australian bowling attack with more than 1,500 Test wickets between them, it felt like big ask. The burden of history and data did not seem to weigh too heavily on the shoulders of Markram and Bavuma, though, as bat truly dominated ball for the first time in this contest.

South Africa lost Ryan Rickleton - who chased an away swinger from Starc and edged into the gloves of Alex Carey - but it did not stymie the Proteas'

## Babar Azam joins Sydney Sixers for BBL 15



LAHORE (APP): Stylish, consistent batter Babar Azam has been signed by the Australian Big Bash League (BBL) franchise Sydney Sixers to debut in the 15th edition of world's top-three leagues.

It is significant to note that the Sydney Sixers have signed Babar Azam ahead of the BBL 15 Draft set for June 19 (Thursday) taking advantage of the League rules under which each club has the right to sign one international recruit ahead of the league.

The BBL, launched in 2011, is a professional Twenty20 cricket competition in Australia that features eight city-based teams. The league is held every year in Australian summer. Babar Azam will be available to the Sydney Sixers for the full season and he has already secured an NOC from the PCB in this regard.

"The Sydney Sixers are thrilled to announce the signing of Pakistan superstar Babar Azam for the upcoming KFC BBL15 season, marking one of the biggest acquisitions in the league's history," the club

announced on its web-site Friday. The Sixers family, recognizing Babar's class, wrote: Widely regarded as one of the premier batters of the modern era, Azam is set to bring his trademark class, consistency, and match-winning ability to the Sixers this summer. With over 10,000 international runs across all formats, the elegant right-hander has firmly established himself as one of the most prolific and dependable performers in world cricket.

A proven record-breaker in the game, he remains the fastest player in history to reach 5000 ODI runs - achieving the milestone in just 97 innings. With franchise experience across the Pakistan Super League, Caribbean Premier League, and English domestic competitions, Azam brings a wealth of T20 experience and over 11,000 runs in the format to date.

A central figure in the Pakistan national side over the last decade, Azam led his country across the three formats between 2019 and 2024, notably guiding the side to the semi-final of the ICC World Cup in 2021 and

the final of the same tournament the following year.

Renowned for his composure and reliability at the crease, Azam has consistently ranked among the world's top batters in the ODI and T20I formats in recent years, named the ICC ODI Cricketer of the Year for consecutive seasons in 2021 and 2022, and crowned the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year in 2022.

Sixers General Manager Rachael Haynes, in her statement, said the club was thrilled to secure a player of Babar's quality. "We are absolutely delighted to welcome Babar to the Sixers this summer," she said.

"Babar's resume speaks for itself. The skill, professionalism, and experience that he brings is of enormous value to our playing group and the news is obviously incredibly exciting for our fans," the Sixers GM said, adding Babar Azam is a world-class player and a proven leader. He's not only a huge addition to our club, but to the league as a whole. In a video message, the star batter Babar Azam talking about the opportunity to join the Sixers said, "I'm very proud to be joining the Sydney Sixers for the upcoming season."

"It's an exciting opportunity to play in one of the world's best T20 leagues and to be a part of such a successful and respected franchise. 'I'm looking forward to contributing to the team's success, building a strong connection with the fans, and sharing this experience with my friends, family and supporters at home in Pakistan."



## Raducanu outclassed by Zheng at Queen's

LONDON (Agencies): Britain's Emma Raducanu was outclassed by world number five Zheng Qinwen in the quarter-finals at Queen's. She showed flashes of her quality but ultimately fell 6-2 6-4 to the Olympic champion in front of a packed crowd.

Raducanu took a medical timeout after the first set, having struggled with back spasms over the past few months. She started the better in the second set and led 3-0 but could not keep Zheng at bay as the Chinese rediscovered her big-hitting form.

Raducanu was given a true physical test by Zheng, but it was another defeat that showed the gap between the British number one and the world's very best. Zheng will face either third seed Emma Navarro or Amanda Anisimova for place in the final.

Qualifier Tatjana Maria earlier stunned former Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina to set up a semi-final meeting with Australian Open champion Madison Keys. Maria, 37, beat Rybakina 6-4 7-6 (7-4), while Keys fought back to see off Russia's Diana Shnaider 2-6 6-3 6-4.

## Liverpool bank on 'world-class' Wirtz after record deal

LIVERPOOL (AFP): The golden boy of German football is set to become the new prince of the Premier League as Florian Wirtz prepares to join Liverpool from Bayer Leverkusen for a club-record fee.

Fresh from winning a 20th English top-flight title, Arne Slot's Reds have broken the bank to land a rising star already labelled as one of the world's best by former Reds midfielder and Wirtz's former coach Xabi Alonso.

British media reported on Friday that the Premier League champions had agreed a club-record deal worth up to £116 million (\$157 million) to secure the services of the attacking midfielder. Liverpool can now agree personal terms with a player coveted by a number of top European clubs.

Wirtz's abundant potential as a teenager sparked a row between his hometown club Cologne and Leverkusen five years ago when Leverkusen, who are backed by pharmaceutical giants Bayer, swooped to sign him at 17.

Cologne argued that a gentleman's agreement not to poach youth team players had been violated, but Leverkusen said Wirtz was a first-team signing and within months he had made his Bundesliga debut.

His rise was interrupted by a cruciate knee ligament injury in March 2022 that forced him to miss the next 10 months. By the time he returned, Alonso had been installed as Leverkusen boss and together they would spearhead the club's greatest



days. Leverkusen ended Bayern Munich's grip on the Bundesliga in stunning fashion, romping to the title and the German Cup without losing a single match in the 2023/24 season.

Wirtz netted his first career hat-trick on the day the title was sealed against Werder Bremen, on his way to being crowned Bundesliga player of the year. "Flo is one of the top players in the world, he's world class," said Alonso, who compared his protege to Lionel Messi in terms of his understanding of the game.

"Why is Messi so good? Because he knows how and when to play simple passes. Messi says: 'You're in a better position? Here, there you have the ball,'" said Alonso, a hero of Liverpool's 2005 Champions League triumph. "It's not always about making the most brilliant move, but the best and smartest. Florian can do that. That's why he's so good."

"The full package" Both star player and coach committed to staying with the Leverkusen project for another 12 months, but defeat in the Europa League final to Atalanta to

round off the 2023/24 campaign was a sign of things to come. Bayern restored their grip on the German game last season but could not convince Wirtz to follow the lead of many others in joining from their Bundesliga rivals.

Instead, he made it clear his preference was a move to the Premier League champions and the chance to add his name to Liverpool's cast of legends.

"A huge talent, huge future in front of him, so Liverpool is the place for him," said the club's former captain Steven Gerrard. Despite 57 goals and 65 assists in 197 games for Leverkusen, Wirtz will begin life at Anfield in the shadow of Mohamed Salah.

But the Reds are banking on Wirtz's creativity to help maintain the 32-year-old's prolific goalscoring numbers and ease the burden of carrying the Liverpool attack. The club's previous record signing, £85 million recruit Darwin Nunez, has failed to deliver and could be sold to help recoup some of their major outlay on new faces.

## Pogacar leads Dauphine after dominating stage six climbs



PARIS (Agencies): Tadej Pogacar took the overall leader's yellow jersey at the Criterium du Dauphine with a dominant victory on stage six.

The reigning Tour de France and road world champion put in a trademark powerful surge up

the climbs in the French Alps to win the stage by one minute one second from his nearest rival in the race, and the sport overall, in Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard of Visma-Lease a Bike.

Slovenian Pogacar, of UAE Team Emirates-

XRG, now leads the general classification by 43 seconds from Vingegaard.

Pogacar, 26, launched one of his famous attacks - in which he seems to effortlessly power away from rivals while still seated - with seven kilometres remaining of a

126.7km stage to Combloux which contained several climbs of varying inclines.

"We went full gas on the first category climb - the team was super strong, all incredible today," Pogacar told TNT Sports.

He explained there was an added reason for wanting to finish quickly - and it involved his fiancée Urska Zigart, who is racing in Switzerland.

"It was a hot day and hard day and I wanted to hurry to see the finish of Urska on the Tour de Suisse," said Pogacar. "I was just in time, so all good."

"It was a good feeling when I attacked with all-out effort. I knew I had to pace myself after the attack, but the feeling was there, and the legs were turning. But we need to hold our horses for the Tour."

Belgium's Remco

Evenepoel - considered by many as the world's third best rider - lost the yellow jersey after failing to keep pace with Pogacar and Vingegaard, eventually shipping one minute 50 seconds to Pogacar on the day and now sitting fourth in the GC, one minute 22 seconds down.

The Dauphine, which takes place across the region of the same name in south-east France, is the traditional warm-up for the Tour de France.

Only four times in the past 10 editions has the overall winner gone on to be victorious in the Tour.

Saturday's stage could feature even more explosive action, with three hugely steep hors category climbs in the French Alps to Valmeinier.

Stage six results

1. Tadej Pogacar (Slo/UAE Team Emirates-

XRG) 21hrs 35mins 8secs

2. Jonas Vingegaard (Den/Visma-Lease a Bike) +1min 1secs

3. Florian Lipowitz (Ger/Red Bull-Bora-hansgrohe) +1min 22secs

4. Matteo Jorgenson (USA/Visma-Lease a Bike) +1min 30secs

5. Remco Evenepoel (Bel/Soudal-Quick Step) +1min 50secs

6. Alex Baudin (Fra/EF Education-EasyPost) +1min 56secs

7. Tobias Halland Johannessen (Nor/Uno-X Mobility) +2mins 3secs

8. Louis Barre (Fra/Intermarche-Wanty) +2mins 4secs

9. Ben Tulett (GB/Visma-Lease a Bike) Same time

10. Paul Seixas (Fra/Decathlon-AG2R La Mondiale)

General classification after stage six

1. Tadej Pogacar (Slo/UAE Team Emirates-XRG) 21hrs 35mins 8secs

2. Jonas Vingegaard (Den/Visma-Lease a Bike) +43secs

3. Florian Lipowitz (Ger/Red Bull-Bora-hansgrohe) +54secs

4. Remco Evenepoel (Bel/Soudal-Quick Step) +1min 22secs

5. Matteo Jorgenson (USA/Visma-Lease a Bike) +1min 41secs

6. Eddie Dunbar (Irl/Jayco-AIUla) +2mins 28secs

7. Louis Barre (Fra/Intermarche-Wanty) +2mins 39secs

8. Paul Seixas (Fra/Decathlon-AG2R La Mondiale) +2mins 49secs

9. Tobias Halland Johannessen (Nor/Uno-X Mobility) +3mins 21secs

10. Ben Tulett (GB/Visma-Lease a Bike) +3mins 26secs.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 259,166 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 259,166 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 290,358 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1445.45 feet which was 43.45 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 167,800 cusecs and 150,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1165.25 feet, which was 115.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 36,259 cusecs and 22,167 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 185,257, 133,709, 95,446 and 40,180 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 28,621 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Woman among 7 arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday continued an effective crackdown against drug suppliers and arrested seven accused, including a woman, with more than 11.5 kilograms of drugs. According to the police spokesman, the Pirwadhai Police nabbed two accused including a woman and recovered 1.1 kg ice and 1.78 kg charas from them. Similarly, the Waris Khan Police held three accused recovering 5.73 kg charas from them, while the Naseerabad Police also recovered 1.52 kg of the contraband item from an accused. The Chaklala Police also arrested an accused with 1.4 kg charas.

### Man nabbed for stabbing citizen

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Bani Police on Thursday took immediate action and nabbed a man who injured a citizen with a knife. The victim reported to the Bani Police Station that the said person injured him with stabbing a knife while he was passing through a street. The police registered a case on the victim's request and arrested the accused.

### Govt provides wheelchairs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Department distributed assistive devices and wheelchairs among persons with disabilities during the second phase of its aid program, held at a local hotel here on Thursday. According to the details, a total of 169 persons with disabilities received mobility aids across Rawalpindi district. The distribution included 154 adult wheelchairs, 8 pediatric wheelchairs, 2 rollators, 2 arm crutches and 3 white canes. Parliamentarians including Tahira Aurangzeb, Qamar ul Islam, Malik Ibrar, Riffat Abbasi and other political and social figures attended the ceremony, along with a large number of persons with disabilities and their family members. Speaking at the event, MNA Qamar ul Islam said that under CM Maryam Nawaz's leadership, Punjab is progressing rapidly. We're fortunate to have leadership that cares for every member of society and works to improve their lives. Tahira Aurangzeb highlighted that the initiative aims to enhance mobility and make life easier for persons with physical disabilities. "These individuals possess remarkable capabilities and intelligence. Our priority is to improve their quality of life and integrate them as active members of society", she said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi condemns Israeli aggression against Iran. —APP Photo

## Ayaz Sadiq condemns Israeli attack on Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday strongly condemned Israel's attack on Iran, terming it a blatant violation of international law. In a statement issued here, he said "Israel's aggression is an attack on Iran's sovereignty. The United Nations must take immediate notice of this unprovoked assault."

He emphasized that Iran has the full right to self-defense under Article 51 of

the United Nations Charter and expressed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the Iranian people.

"The Parliament and people of Pakistan stand in full solidarity with the people of Iran," he added.

Calling the Israeli actions a grave threat to regional peace and security, the Speaker urged the international community to recognize the violation of international law and take appropriate measures.

"The Israeli strikes are a

serious threat to regional peace and stability," he added. "The international community must take notice of these violations."

Ayaz Sadiq stressed the need to halt Israeli provocations in the interest of regional stability and international peace. "Israeli attacks are a clear breach of international law and the UN Charter," the Speaker said, urging a collective global effort to uphold peace and prevent further escalation in the region.

## Shibli Faraz urges action on key economic issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Syed Shibli Faraz, opened budget debate on Friday with a stark focus on current economic challenges, calling for urgent measures by the government in several vital areas.

Shibli Faraz highlighted the circular debt in the power sector, noting that it continues to burden the country's economy. He called for implementing structural reforms besides

ensuring regular tariff adjustments in order to avert financial shortfalls and improve utility services.

The opposition leader said that, "more funds should have also been allocated for dam construction in the Budget." He emphasized the role of new reservoirs in enhancing water security, boosting agricultural output, and supporting long-term economic growth, particularly in water-stressed regions.

On tax reforms, Shibli Faraz voiced for a balanced approach that safeguards taxpayers' rights.

To combat these challenges, Shibli Faraz recommended the government's prioritized job creation, particularly for youth and rural populations. He called for adopting targeted public-private partnership initiatives and vocational training programs to spur employment and promote inclusive growth.

## Govt presents poor friendly budget: PMLN leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): PMLN leader MNA Shaista Pervez Malik said that the federal government has presented poor friendly budget without any new tax on general public.

Talking to media persons outside of the Parliament House here Friday, she said that it was the too priority agenda of the incumbent regime to provide maximum relief to the low income class.

Shaista reiterated that the government has increased

the salaries of government employees with the current ratio of inflation.

The incumbent regime is making all possible steps to make the national economy strong and reduce the pressure of inflation. It is the responsibility of all Muslim states to give the shut up call to Israel and put pressure on international community to play role to stop this. Iran and Israel war, she said.

PMLN MNA Qasim Noon expressed that Israel did a major mistake to

attack on Iran. He said that some elements wanted to disturb the peaceful environment and development of this region.

Commenting on the current budget, he added that the government had presented the budget with the consensus of the allies. He said that top brass of PMLN was committed to give the relief to masses. Inflation is an international issue and under developing countries facing many challenges in this regard, he added.

## Tribunal backs CCP in fake kidney drug case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has upheld a significant decision by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), confirming that a pharmaceutical company misled hospitals by falsely marketing a life-saving product for kidney patients.

The Tribunal dismissed the appeal of 3N LIFEMED Pharmaceuticals and endorsed the Commission's finding of deceptive marketing—though it reduced the monetary penalty from Rs20 million to Rs2 million, said a press release issued by the Commission on Friday.

The CCP had received a formal complaint from M/s Renacon Pharma Limited, which accused 3N LIFEMED of using fake quality certifications to market Haemodialysis Concentrate, a crucial product used in the treatment of kidney failure. The CCP's investigation revealed that 3N LIFEMED had falsely claimed its product was cer-

tified with Conformité Européenne (CE) and Quality Management System (QMS) marks, obtained from a non-accredited firm based in Islamabad. These certifications, although voluntary under Pakistani laws, are widely seen as benchmarks of quality and are often required in public procurement tenders.

The misleading claims were found to have misled hospitals and patients, creating a false impression of superior safety and efficacy in a sensitive market segment. Haemodialysis Concentrate is classified as a medical device by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and is used to create dialysis fluid, which must closely match the patient's natural blood chemistry to prevent complications.

During the CAT proceedings, 3N LIFEMED's counsel argued that the company ceased using the disputed markings after receiving a show-cause notice from CCP and insist-

ed that the product was DRAP-approved. They also attempted to shift blame to SIMS-AGS, the Islamabad-based company that issued the certifications, whose international accreditation was revoked in 2020.

However, CCP's counsel countered that 3N LIFEMED, as a pharmaceutical company, should have known that such certifications cannot simply be purchased but must be earned through rigorous inspections. The Tribunal agreed with CCP's position, observing that while such certifications may not be legally mandatory, they influence procurement decisions and public trust—and misusing them constitutes deception.

In light of 3N LIFEMED's financial capacity, the Tribunal reduced the penalty to Rs2 million but imposed a strict compliance deadline: failure to pay within ten days will attract an additional fine of Rs100,000 per day.

## Pervaiz Ashraf urges collective action amid challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Friday lauded all political parties for setting aside their differences and standing together in support of the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force during the recent Indian aggression.

Speaking during the National Assembly's general debate on the 2025-26 federal budget, he said, "I salute the people of Pakistan," adding that the unity displayed across party lines sent a powerful message to India and the world. "Our response echoed through international corridors and showed that Pakistan stands united in times of adversity."

He praised the nation for rising like "a wall of lead" alongside its armed forces

and credited the military for delivering a strong and effective response. He also paid tribute to the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and honored the sacrifices of the country's martyrs.

Commenting on the budget process, Ashraf acknowledged its complexity and emphasized that it is the government's responsibility to meet the country's challenges and provide relief to all segments of society.

"No government wants to present a budget that upset the people. We must ultimately return to the court of the people," he remarked. He commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government for making difficult but necessary decisions that, he said, few others would have dared to take.

He said that the financial

pressures inherited by the current government and pointed to international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and FATF, which placed strict conditions on financial assistance. "We were under immense pressure. Without meeting those conditions, loans would not have been possible, and default was a real risk," he explained.

Ashraf also underlined the PPP's contributions as a coalition partner, saying the party had offered meaningful suggestions aimed at easing the burden on the poor.

Highlighting Pakistan's diplomatic efforts after Indian aggression, he said, "Once the military had responded, we had to fight a second battle—the battle of perception."

He praised PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto

Zardari and his team for their efforts on international forums to represent Pakistan's case effectively. "Their tireless work will be remembered as a proud moment in our diplomatic history," he stated.

He also acknowledged the role of PTI and other political parties in standing with the armed forces and presenting a unified national front. He highlighted that Pakistan's challenges—both economic and geopolitical—can only be addressed through unity, vision, and collective will.

He urged all political parties to move away from blame games and instead engage in practical politics focused on the welfare of the people. "We must work together to resolve all issues through joint efforts," he said.

## 78% of Pakistanis consider themselves healthy: new survey

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A significant portion of Pakistanis are embracing a healthier lifestyle, according to a recent study conducted by Gallup Pakistan in collaboration with the Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WIN).

The survey results, part of the Annual Worldviews Survey, reveal that a majority of the population perceives themselves as healthy despite a notable decline in those rating themselves as "very healthy" compared to previous years.

The study, which surveyed 1,000 nationally representative Pakistanis, highlights a cautious recalibration of dietary habits in response to economic pressures and heightened health awareness. Key findings from the report indicate that 78% of Pakistanis consider themselves healthy or very healthy, although this reflects a drop from 33% to 16% in those who see themselves as very healthy since 2018.

Dietary trends show a significant reduction in the consumption of packaged foods, sweets, and fast food, with 52%, 49%, and 53% of respondents respectively reporting decreased consumption this year. Conversely, there is an increased intake of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, with 44% and 33% of Pakistanis enhancing their consumption of these healthier options.

Despite these positive trends, the study also points to challenges such as the lower uptake of vitamin supplements and organic foods compared to global averages. Only 27% of respondents reported regular vitamin intake, still below the global average of 34%. Furthermore, organic food consumption has seen a significant decline, with 41% of participants reporting reduced consumption.

Demographic insights from the survey suggest that healthier dietary behaviors are more prevalent among the youth, the highly educated, and

full-time workers. In contrast, women, retirees, and economically vulnerable groups are more likely to reduce consumption of certain food categories, primarily due to affordability issues rather than preference.

This detailed examination of health perceptions and nutritional trends provides a foundation for targeted health campaigns and policies aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles across Pakistan. Amnah Imtiaz, Director of Research Operations at Gallup Pakistan, emphasized the impact of economic and cultural forces on dietary choices and highlighted the importance of tailored public awareness campaigns and policies to address nutritional challenges.

The findings underscore the growing awareness of health and nutrition in Pakistan, yet also highlight significant gaps in access, affordability, and consistency, particularly for vulnerable and less-educated populations.

## Awan criticizes Federal Budget, calls for relief measures for poor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party's Senator Shahadat Awan on Friday strongly criticized the Federal Budget for 2024-25, saying it lacks effective relief for the poor, farmers, and working-class segments of society, and failed to address the country's pressing economic challenges.

Participating in Budget debate in the Senate, he said the Rs 17,573 billion budget might temporarily stabilize the economy but would ultimately prove inadequate in providing long-term solutions to the country's socio-economic issues. He said that out of the total outlay, Rs 827 billion would go towards debt servicing alone, questioning how such a budget could be considered development-oriented or welfare-based.

He said the World Bank has reported that 44.7 percent of Pakistan's population—around 107 million people—live below the poverty line. He regretted that no concrete roadmap had been introduced in the budget to tackle this rising poverty.

He said the minimum wage of Rs37,000 was insufficient in the face of soaring inflation, adding that the Pakistan People's

Party (PPP) had consistently demanded this amount be raised to Rs 50,000. He urged the federal government to ensure this wage is enforced both in the public and private sectors.

He said the salaries of government employees should have been raised by at least 50 percent to reflect the rising cost of living, but the increase remained inadequate. He also emphasized the need to improve pension schemes under the EOBI system, particularly for those outside the regular civil service.

He said the agriculture sector was once a source of pride for Pakistan, but now it is in crisis. This year alone, agricultural output has declined by 13.5 percent, with a 30.7 percent drop in cotton production and a 9 percent fall in wheat. He claimed the farming community had suffered a loss of Rs2,200 billion between May 2024 and May 2025.

He said that while imported cotton has been made tax-free, seeds for local production are still subject to 18 percent GST, calling such policies unjust and counterproductive. He demanded more subsidies for seeds and fertilizers to

revive the sector.

He said approximately 40,000 jobs have been eliminated in the new budget, while new departments and agencies have been formed, increasing the burden on taxpayers without structural reforms.

He said changes to pension rules were unfair, particularly the new condition of a 10-year limit for family pensions after a spouse's death. He also criticized the withdrawal of the 25 percent tax rebate for teachers and researchers and called for its reinstatement. He said the imposition of an 18 percent sales tax on e-commerce and solar panels would hurt innovation and the environment. He opposed the imposition of Rs2.5/kWh electricity levy, saying it would further burden households.

He said despite promises made after the 2022 Murree tragedy that claimed 23 lives, no meaningful development plan had been presented to improve facilities in the area.

He said that Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, had been neglected, with only Rs3.8 billion allocated out of the Rs202 billion it needs. He emphasized the city's severe water crisis and called for increased

allocations.

He said that motorways should be built from underdeveloped areas outward, but the government had focused funding on Hyderabad-Sukkur projects, neglecting rural development. He said the allocation for Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway development had been reduced to just Rs125 million, and the budget for technology development cut by Rs1.85 billion, which he called a setback for national progress.

He said a clause under Section 378 of the Finance Bill empowers FBR officers to arrest directors of companies without due process if discrepancies are suspected. He warned this could discourage investment and force businesses to leave Pakistan.

He concluded by urging the government to adopt a people-friendly budget that ensures no child is out of school, no farmer is deprived of fair compensation, and no citizen is disillusioned. He appreciated the role of the Pakistan Armed Forces during recent border incidents and supported increasing their budget, noting the nation was ready to make sacrifices for defense and sovereignty.



ISLAMABAD: CDA worker busy in watering plants while sitting on the water tanker on green belts at Club road. —APP Photo









PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur speaking during budget session at KP Assembly.

## Center undermining constitution: Dr. Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that the malicious intent of the illegitimate, mandate-stolen federal government is no longer hidden from anyone. He emphasized that consultation with Chairman Imran Khan on important matters such as the provincial budget is imperative, as the people have voted for his ideology, vision, and leadership. He further said that preventing the leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from meeting their leader, Imran Khan, is not only a blatant

example of bad faith but also a disgrace to the public mandate and a clear violation of judicial orders. Hindering an elected Chief Minister from consulting with his party leader reflects the narrow-mindedness and authoritarian attitude of the federal government. Barrister Dr. Saif added that the illegitimate federal government is punishing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for its genuine public mandate. This discriminatory behavior is undermining national unity and stands in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Constitution and democracy. Imran Khan is the leader whom the people have

elected as a symbol of hope for their future. To exclude him from consultation is a direct insult to public opinion and democratic values. He demanded that the leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa be immediately allowed to meet with Chairman Imran Khan so that the people's mandate may be duly respected. He warned that the fake government's hostility towards Imran Khan is inflicting irreparable damage to national cohesion, the consequences of which could be severe. Barrister Dr. Saif concluded by urging the federal government to refrain from resorting to such petty and undemocratic tactics.

## Bilawal urges world to push India for dialogue

Continue from Front Page

applied in South Asia as in Europe. "If the world ignores this crisis, it could become a nuclear flashpoint," he cautioned. On the Pahalgam attack, Bilawal stated that India had failed to provide evidence linking Pakistan to the incident. "To this day, India hasn't revealed the identities of the attackers or how they crossed the heavily militarized border," he said, accusing India of violating Pakistan's sovereignty with its recent airstrikes. Bilawal urged Europe and the global community to intervene before tensions spiral out of control, warning that inaction could lead to another war between the nuclear-armed neighbors. Taking part in the briefing, Pakistan Climate Change Minister Dr Musadik Malik said India jeopardizing international water agreements by threatening to revoke the IWT. India's unilaterally cancellation of IWT, set a dangerous precedent, undermining all water treaties worldwide, Malik said. He warned that if India blocks Pakistan's water share, no nation could trust future water-sharing agreements. The minister criticized India's approach, stating, "India is not just mocking Pakistan but the entire world. No country will be able to rely on water treaties if this violation goes unchecked." Malik urged the international community to take immediate notice of India's actions, warning that disregarding the IWT could lead to broader instability in trans-boundary water management. Meanwhile, Senator Sherry Rehman calling the Indus "the lifeline of Pakistan," emphasized that it is the only major river basin sustaining the country's agriculture and supplying water to nearly all population centers. She noted that Pakistan shares this essential water source with India, a larger upper riparian state, under the framework of the Indus Waters Treaty—an agreement that has endured for decades but now faces rising strain due to escalating water-related challenges. "Pakistan is already facing severe water stress in many regions," Rehman said, warning that some provinces are grappling with acute scarcity that directly impacts crop production and livelihoods. She pointed to India's unilateral water diversions and illegal upstream infrastructure as serious concerns, stating that such actions significantly reduce the river's downstream flow. "This not only jeopardizes irrigation but also disrupts the river's natural flow into the sea," she added. "When that flow is blocked, it leads to waterlogging and ultimately renders fertile land infertile land we can no longer sow." Rehman underscored the growing risk of water becoming a regional flashpoint, cautioning against politicizing the issue.

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh unveiled the province's Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the upcoming fiscal year, highlighting a total outlay of Rs520 billion for provincial development, alongside Rs55 billion for district-level ADP. Rs366.72 billion in Foreign Project Assistance, and Rs76.28 billion under the Federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Detailing the scope of the ADP, the chief minister said the development plan emphasizes flood rehabilitation, particularly for damaged schools and infrastructure, with a broader goal of enhancing access to education, healthcare upgrades, and improved

public services. The programme also prioritizes climate-resilient agriculture, restoration of irrigation systems, provision of clean drinking water and sanitation, road connectivity, and urban infrastructure development. Key urban initiatives include mass transit systems and Safe City projects in Karachi, renewable and green energy projects, and efforts toward poverty alleviation through community infrastructure, nutrition support, and low-cost housing. According to the chief minister, the ADP consists of 3,642 development schemes, with Rs400.5 billion allocated-82.6% earmarked for 3,161 ongoing projects and 17.4% for 481 new initiatives. An additional Rs119.5 billion has

been allocated for special development programmes. Sector-wise allocations include Rs102.8 billion for education, Rs45.4 billion for health, Rs84 billion for irrigation, Rs132 billion for local government, Rs143 billion for works and services, Rs36.3 billion for energy projects including Thar Coal and renewables, Rs22.5 billion for agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and Rs59.7 billion for transport and mass transit. The chief minister emphasised that 80% of the total ADP has been allocated for the completion of ongoing projects, with 20% set aside for new schemes. "Special priority has been given to flood rehabilitation, green energy, Karachi-focused projects, and achieving sustainable

development goals such as clean water and sanitation," he said. Reflecting on the outgoing fiscal year, he noted that 1,460 development schemes were completed-marking a record in recent years. Over 400,000 houses were constructed for flood-affected populations, with more currently under development. Total development expenditure reached Rs468 billion, with a 73% utilisation rate of released funds. The chief minister stated that the comprehensive ADP reflects Sindh's commitment to sustainable growth, infrastructure improvement, and social welfare, aiming to drive economic development and uplift the quality of life across the province.

## PM stresses need for awareness on regular blood donations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paying tribute to "voluntary heroes" for selflessly donating blood, stressed the need for increased public awareness about the critical need of regular blood donations for patients. "There is a need for increased public awareness about the critical need of regular blood donations for patients undergoing surgeries, childbirth and for those suffering from serious ailments like cancer and anemia," the prime minister said in his message to the nation on World Blood Donor Day annually commemorated on June 14. He said the Day was

commemorated to pay a global tribute to voluntary heroes who selflessly donate blood to join a noble cause of giving a second chance to live to millions of human beings, besides underscoring the urgency to ensure continued blood donations. He said that the theme for World Blood Donor Day 2025 "Give blood, Give hope: together we save lives" aptly emphasized on the need for regular blood donations to kindle hope of life in patients. "We extend our gratitude and deep appreciation to the blood donors: the silent saviors. Blood donation, besides being an act of compassion for humani-

ty is a necessity for the health care system of any country," the prime minister remarked. He said that according to WHO, Pakistan was faced with a shortage of safe blood supply due to limited blood donations. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Government of Pakistan was fully sensitized to the situation and through National Blood Transfusion Program (NBTP), Blood donation awareness campaigns were aiming to address this challenge. However, he said that there was a need for robust collective efforts to meet this mounting challenge. In Pakistan only 10% of

the blood donors are voluntary donors and the rest of blood donations come from the relatives and friends of the patients, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz urged every healthy and compassionate citizen, especially youth to realize their civic duty and serve the humanitarian cause by donating blood. He appreciated the number of private blood donor associations which were doing their part in this greater cause of making sufficient blood donation available for the patients in need. "Together we make safer, protected and healthier Pakistan," he added.

## Air India black box recovered after crash that killed 241 onboard

AHMEDABAD, India (AP): The flight data recorder from the crashed Air India flight was recovered Friday in what likely will lead to clues about the cause of the accident that killed 241 people on the plane and a number of others on the ground. The London-bound Boeing 787 struck a medical college hostel when the plane came down shortly after takeoff on Thursday in a residential area of the northwestern city of Ahmedabad. The plane's digital flight data recorder, or black box, was recovered from a rooftop near the crash site and India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau said that it had begun its work with "full force." The black box recovery marks an important step forward in the investigation, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said in a social

media post. The device will reveal information about the engine and control settings, in addition to what the voice recorder will show about the cockpit conversations, Paul Fromme, a mechanical engineer with the U.K.-based Institution of Mechanical Engineers said in a statement. "This should show quickly if there was a loss of engine power or lift after takeoff and allow a preliminary determination of the likely cause for the crash," said Fromme, who heads the professional association's Aerospace Division. Separately, the country's civil aviation regulator ordered Air India to conduct additional inspections of its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 Dreamliners equipped with General Electric's GENx engines. That includes checks of the fuel parameters, cabin air compressor, engine

control system, hydraulic system and takeoff parameters, the order said. Investigators on Friday continued searching the site of one of India's worst aviation disasters and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the lone surviving passenger a day after the crash. Aviation safety consultant Jeff Guzzetti, a former crash investigator for both the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration, said investigators should be able to answer some important questions about what caused the crash as soon as next week as long as the flight data recorder is in good shape. Investigators likely are looking at whether wing flaps were set correctly, whether the engine lost power, whether alarms were going off inside the cockpit and whether the plane's crew correctly inputted information

about the hot temperature outside and the weight of the fuel and passengers, Guzzetti said. Mistakes in the data could result in the wing flaps being set incorrectly, he said. "I'm not saying that this accident's going to be solved immediately, but I think some basic factual questions will be able to be answered in quick order," Guzzetti said. At least five people were were killed on the ground and about 50 injured, but many more victims victims were expected to be found in the search of the crash site. DNA testing was being conducted to identify bodies that were mostly charred beyond recognition. The plane hit a building hosting a medical college hostel and burst into flames, killing several students, in the city that is the capital of Gujarat, Modi's home state.

## Ukraine repatriates more bodies of fallen soldiers

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Ukraine has repatriated more bodies of fallen soldiers in line with an agreement reached during peace talks in Istanbul between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, Ukrainian officials said Friday. Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said in a statement that Russia returned 1,200 bodies, and "according to the Russian side, the bodies belong to Ukrainian citizens, in particular military personnel." The repatriation of the bodies was carried out with the help of Ukraine's Armed Forces, the country's Security Service, the Interior Ministry and other government agencies. Forensic experts will now work to identify the remains, the statement said. The repatriation of the bodies marks one of the

largest returns of remains since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago. Earlier this week, Russia returned 1,212 bodies of Ukrainian soldiers and received 27 bodies of its own killed troops. The agreement to exchange prisoners of war and the bodies of fallen soldiers was the only tangible outcome of the talks in Istanbul that took place June 2. Russia and Ukraine conducted a POW swap on Thursday that included severely wounded and gravely ill captives, although the sides did not report the numbers. In addition to agreeing to exchange POWs and bodies of fallen soldiers, the two sides traded memorandums at the talks that set out conditions for a ceasefire. However, the inclusion of

clauses that both sides see as nonstarters make any quick deal unlikely. Despite discussions of a potential truce in the war, Moscow's forces in recent days have launched waves of drones and missiles at Ukraine, with a record bombardment of almost 500 drones on Monday and a wave of 315 drones and seven missiles overnight on Tuesday. Ukraine's air force said Friday that Russia fired 55 Shahed and decoy drones and four ballistic missiles at Ukraine overnight. The air force said air defenses neutralized 43 drones. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the attack. Russia's Defense Ministry said Friday that its air defenses downed 125 Ukrainian drones over several Russian regions and the annexed Crimea late Thursday and early Friday.

## Russia says it tests new laser defences

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia said on Friday it had conducted large-scale tests of new laser-based systems to defend against drones. A government statement described the new technology as "promising" and said it had been tested against various types of drone in different weather conditions. It said the anti-drone lasers would become part of a "universal air defence system" that President Vladimir Putin said this week Russia needed to

build. "The test results will be used to refine existing models and create systems capable of providing reliable protection against modern air attack weapons. Conducting tests allows us to move on to serial production and upscaling," the statement said. An accompanying video showed charred debris from a destroyed drone. Both sides have deployed drones on a huge scale in the Russia-Ukraine war, using

them to spot and hit targets not only on the battlefield but way beyond the front lines. Ukrainian drones have frequently struck sites deep inside Russia such as oil depots, refineries and airfields, highlighting the need for Moscow to boost its defences. Earlier this month, Ukrainian drones smuggled close to air bases in trucks inflicted serious damage to Russia's long-range bomber fleet.

## Israel strikes Iran for second night

Continued from Front Page

The United Nations Security Council was due to meet on Friday at Tehran's request. Iran said in a letter to the Council that it would respond decisively and proportionally to Israel's "unlawful" and "cowardly" acts. The price of crude leapt on fears of wider retaliatory attacks across a major oil-producing region, although there were no reports that oil production or storage was damaged. OPEC said the escalation did not justify any immediate changes to oil supply. An Israeli security

source said Mossad commandos had been operating deep inside the Islamic Republic before the attack, and the Israeli spy agency and military had mounted a series of covert operations against Iran's strategic missile array. Israel also established an attack-drone base near Tehran, the source added. The military said it had bombarded Iran's air defences, destroying "dozens of radars and surface-to-air missile launchers". Israeli officials said it may be some time before the extent of damage to the underground nuclear

site at Natanz is clear, where Iran has refined uranium to levels Western countries have long said are suitable for a bomb rather than civilian use. Iran has long insisted its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes only. The U.N. nuclear watchdog concluded this week that it was in violation of its obligations under the global non-proliferation treaty. Tehran had been engaged in talks with the Trump administration on a deal to curb its nuclear programme to replace one that Trump abandoned in 2018. Tehran had rejected the last U.S. offer.

LOS ANGELES (Reuters): U.S. Marines were deployed to Los Angeles on Friday, the military said, a rare domestic use of its forces as protests over President Donald Trump's immigration raids spread nationwide. On Thursday, a court ruled in favor of Trump's bid to retain the National Guard in L.A. in reaction to the growing backlash against his immigration policy since his return to power in January. About 200 Marines will be protecting a federal building in Los Angeles, Army Major General Scott Sherman, said on Friday. The administration has authorized a total of 700 Marines to be deployed in the city. Neither the Marines nor the National Guard troops in the city had temporarily detained anyone, he added. "I would like to emphasize that the soldiers will not participate in law enforcement activities," he said during a briefing. It is uncommon for active duty troops to be used domestically during civil disturbances. The last time the military was used for direct police action under the Insurrection Act was in 1992, when the California

governor at the time asked then President George H.W. Bush to help respond to Los Angeles riots over the acquittal of police officers who beat Black motorist Rodney King. A court ruled on Thursday that Trump can keep his deployment of National Guard troops in Los Angeles. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision temporarily paused a lower court ruling that blocked the mobilization, although it does not mean that the court will ultimately agree to side with him. "We saved L.A. Thank you for the Decision!!!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. Cities across the U.S. were bracing for demonstrations on Saturday, when those also opposed to a weekend military parade in Washington, opens new tab are expected to take to the streets. "They've defied our courts, deported Americans, disappeared people off the streets, attacked our civil rights, and slashed our services," the group No Kings, which is behind the day of action, wrote on its website. In Los Angeles, troops have stood guard at a federal detention center in the

city's downtown where many of the protests have taken place in a show of solidarity for immigrants detained inside. The Guard had accompanied Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on operations to detain immigrants. City officials in Los Angeles and state officials in California have opposed the ramping up of federal immigration enforcement since it began last Friday. "Peace begins with ICE leaving Los Angeles," Mayor Karen Bass, who has imposed a nighttime curfew over one square mile (2.5 square km) of downtown Los Angeles, said on Thursday. Protests so far have been mostly peaceful, punctuated by incidents of violence, and restricted to a few city blocks. Demonstrations have also taken place in other U.S. cities this week including New York and Chicago, and there have been some disturbances. Four men escaped from a privately run immigration detention center in Newark, New Jersey, on Thursday amid unrest from inmates over conditions inside the facility, the New York Times reported, citing a law enforcement offi-

cial and a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security.Spokespeople for DHS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement did not respond to inquiries about the incident at the center or the escapes. Video posted to social media by the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, an advocacy group, showed protesters outside the facility attempting to block law enforcement vehicles from entering. Trump is carrying out a campaign promise to deport immigrants, employing forceful tactics consistent with the norm-breaking political style that got him elected twice. Democrats including California Governor Gavin Newsom have said the use of military force was unnecessary and an example of Trump's authoritarianism. Americans are divided over Trump's decision to activate the military. A Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Thursday showed 48% of respondents agreed with a statement that the president should "deploy the military to bring order to the streets" when protests turned violent, while 41% disagreed.