

Dar talks to Turkiye FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Sunday received a telephone call from Foreign Minister of Turkiye Hakan Fidan and exchanged views on developments in the region. The two leaders expressed deep concern and anguish over the deteriorating regional situation due to Israel's unjustified attacks on Iran.

Zeb thanks PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State, Mubarak Zeb Khan expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for his support following the rocket attack on his residence. The minister of state said, "Thank you, Prime Minister, for standing with us in these difficult times." He strongly urged authorities to ensure a thorough investigation into the incident, emphasizing the need to swiftly identify and bring the perpetrators to justice.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 136

Regd. No. 241

ZIL HAJJ 19 1446 -- MONDAY, JUNE 16 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Israel and Iran bombard each other

Trump says he can ‘easily’ end conflict

JERUSALEM/DUBAI (Reuters): Israel and Iran launched fresh attacks on each other overnight into Sunday, killing scores and raising fears of a wider conflict, as U.S. President Donald Trump said it could be ended easily while warning Tehran not to strike any U.S. targets.

Israeli rescue teams combed through rubble of residential buildings destroyed by Iranian missiles, using sniffer dogs and heavy excavators to look for survivors after at least 10 people, including children, were killed, raising the two-day toll to 13.

Sirens rang out across Israel after 4 p.m. on Sunday in the first such daylight alert, and fresh explosions could be heard in Tel Aviv.

In Iran, images from the capital showed the night sky lit up by a huge blaze at a fuel depot after Israel began strikes against Iran's oil and gas sector - raising the stakes for the global economy and the functioning of the Iranian state.

Iran has not given a full death toll but said 78 people were killed on Friday and scores more have died since, including in a single attack that killed 60 on Saturday, half of them children, in a 14-storey apartment block flattened in Tehran.

Israel launched "Operation Rising Lion" with a surprise attack on Friday morning that wiped out the top echelon of Iran's military command and damaged its nuclear sites, and says the campaign will continue to escalate in coming days. Iran has vowed to "open the gates of hell" in retaliation.

The Israeli military warned Iranians living near weapons facilities to evacuate.

"Iran will pay a heavy price for the murder of civilians, women and children," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu said from a balcony overlooking blown-out apartments in the town of Bat Yam where six people were killed.

Trump vetoed Israeli plan to kill Iran’s supreme leader: US officials

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Donald Trump vetoed an Israeli plan in recent days to kill Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, two U.S. officials told Reuters on Sunday.

"Have the Iranians killed an American yet? No. Until they do we're not even talking about going after the political leadership," said one of the sources, a senior U.S. administration official.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said top U.S. officials have been in constant communications with Israeli officials in the days since Israel launched a massive attack on Iran in a bid to halt its nuclear program.

They said the Israelis reported that they had an opportunity to kill the top Iranian leader, but Trump waved them off of the plan.

The officials would not say whether Trump himself delivered the message. But Trump has been in frequent communications with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

When asked about Reuters report, Netanyahu, in an interview on Sunday with Fox News Channel's "Special Report With Bret Baier," said: "There's so many false reports of conversations that never happened, and I'm not going to get into that."

"But I can tell you, I think that we do what we need to do, we'll do what we need to do. And I think the United States knows what is good for the United States," Netanyahu said.

Trump has been holding out hope for a resumption of U.S.-Iranian negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program. Talks that had been scheduled for Sunday in Oman were canceled as a result of the strikes.

Trump told Reuters on Friday that "we knew everything" about the Israeli strikes.

An official said Israel still had a long list of targets in Iran and declined to say how long the offensive would continue.

Those attacked on Saturday evening included two "dual-use" fuel sites that supported military and nuclear operations, he said.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran's responses will grow "more decisive and severe" if Israel's hostile actions continue.

Israeli skies have been streaked with barrages of Iranian missiles and Israeli

interceptor rockets. Some 22 of Iran's 270 ballistic missiles fired over the past two nights breached Israel's anti-missile shield,

"However, we can easily get a deal done between Iran and Israel, and end this bloody conflict."

Early on Sunday Trump said the sides will have peace "soon", adding many unspecified meetings were taking place.

Trump has repeatedly said Iran could end the war by agreeing to tough restrictions on its nuclear programme, which Iran says is for peaceful purposes but Western countries say could be used to make a bomb.

The latest round of nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States, due to be held on Sunday, was scrapped after Tehran said it would not negotiate while under Israeli attack.

Oil prices already shot up by 9% on Friday before Israel had struck any Iranian oil and gas targets. Financial markets are holding their breath to see whether prices surge further when trading resumes on Monday after the weekend, with potentially punishing consequences for the global economy, or settle down on hopes that Gulf exports will escape relatively unscathed.

Since Saturday, Israel has hit the oil depot in Tehran and facilities at Iran's huge South Fars gas field, the world's largest, which produces gas for domestic consumption.

But so far Israel has spared targets associated with Iran's oil exports, while Tehran has yet to follow through on hinted threats to hinder shipping from the Gulf. Traders say oil buyers have loaded up on long-term contracts for protection in case of supply disruption, but uncertainty could drive wild price swings.

Iran said the situation at the burning Shahran oil depot in the capital was under control. It told citizens to seek shelter in mosques, schools and subways.

Iranian authorities say.

With worries growing of a regional conflagration and oil prices having shot up, Trump has lauded Israel's offensive while denying Iranian allegations that the U.S. has taken part in it. He warned Tehran not to widen its retaliation to include U.S. targets.

"If we are attacked in any way, shape or form by Iran, the full strength and might of the U.S. Armed Forces will come down on you at levels never seen before," he said in a message on Truth Social.

He added that India is involved in acts of terrorism within Pakistan. "We have never said that we would go to war because of terrorism, but blocking our water is a different matter entirely," he added.

It has been clarified that the composition of the Parliamentary committee will be based on the proportional representation of each party currently present in the National Assembly, ensuring the formation of the committee is completely constitutional and fair.

The spokesperson further stated that the parliamentary committee can only be constituted when names of members are received from both the government and the opposition. If there is delay or non-cooperation from either side, the formation of the committee will not be possible.

The spokesperson also stated that Opposition Leader Omar Ayub Khan had demanded in his letter the immediate formation of a parliamentary committee for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commission members. The full text of the Speaker's reply has also been issued to media.

Fazl urges govt to facilitate traders

KARACHI (INP): Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the business community plays a vital role in the country's development and progress, and the state should ensure their protection, facilitation, and respect.

During his visit to the residence of Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh in Karachi, Fazlur Rehman met prominent industrialists including Sultan Chawla, Javed Bilwani, Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Khalid Tawab, Arif Habib, and others.

Addressing key figures from Karachi's business and industrial sectors, he stated that Karachi is the economic hub of Pakistan and that traders are the backbone of the economy. He emphasized that the trader community is crucial to national development and must be given due protection and dignity by the state.

The JUI chief noted that his party has always maintained a strong and principled relationship with the business community. He added that Islam prioritises peace and a prosperous economy in both national and communal life, and peace means safeguarding human rights.

The event was also attended by Allama Rashid Soomro, Engineer Zia ur Rehman, Maulana Nasir Mahmood Soomro, and Sami-ul-Haq Swati. Maulana Fazlur Rehman's important meetings in Karachi are ongoing, and he is scheduled to address the JUI Sindh Digital Media Convention tomorrow.



BAT YAM, ISRAEL: Rescue personnel work at an impact site following a missile attack from Iran, in Bat Yam, Israel, on Sunday. — Reuters photo

International Day of Family Remittances

PM pays tribute to overseas Pakistanis

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has paid glowing tribute to overseas Pakistanis on the occasion of the International Day of Family Remittances, acknowledging their vital role in supporting Pakistan's economy and uplifting millions of families through their hard-earned contributions.

In his official message, the Prime Minister said Pakistan joins the international community in observing this day, which honors the sacrifices and efforts of migrant workers

around the world. He highlighted that remittances from over 9 million Pakistanis living abroad - primarily in the Gulf, Europe, and North America - have long served as a cornerstone of the national economy.

"The financial contributions of our diaspora are not only a heartfelt expression of love and responsibility towards their families," he noted, "but also a powerful pillar supporting Pakistan's economic resilience."

PM Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that the Government of Pakistan is committed to enhancing foreign direct investment

and expanding exports to achieve long-term economic stability. In this journey, he said, remittances have played a key role in strengthening the country's foreign exchange reserves.

In a remarkable show of support, overseas Pakistanis have sent a record \$34.9 billion in remittances during the current fiscal year - reflecting a 28.8% increase from the previous year. In May 2025 alone, remittances reached \$3.7 billion, marking a 13.7% increase compared to May 2024.

"These historic figures are a testament not only to the hard work and loyalty

of our diaspora," the Prime Minister stated, "but also to their growing confidence in the government's economic policies. This trust reinforces our resolve to redouble efforts for economic revival and sustainable growth."

The Prime Minister concluded his message by urging all stakeholders - including the government, development partners, and the Pakistani diaspora - to renew their collective commitment toward overcoming economic challenges and building a future defined by investment, prosperity, and national progress.

450 Pakistani devotees safely evacuated from Iran, says Dar

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday that in view of the Iran-Israel military confrontation, the government was taking all possible steps to ensure the safe return of Pakistanis from the neighbouring country, and 450 Pakistani devotees, who had gone to Iran to pay their respects at the shrines of religious personalities, had been evacuated from Iran by yesterday.

In his message on X, formerly Twitter, he said that steps were also being taken for the safe evacuation of Pakistani students from the country. "As many as 154 students will be evacuated in the first phase," he informed.

Dar further said that

Pakistan's embassy in Tehran was in touch with the Pakistani devotees, who had been left stranded in Iraq due to the disruption of flight operations following the escalation of tensions in the region. "We are making efforts for their safe accommodation as well as likely evacuation," the deputy PM said, and added, "The Crisis Management Unit (CMU) is functional in the Foreign Ministry round the clock."

Pakistan asks citizens to avoid traveling to Iran amid regional tensions

The Government of Pakistan has asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Iran for a limited period in light of recent Israeli attacks.

In its advisory issued for Pakistani citizens, the government of Pakistan said it

is closely monitoring the situation and remains fully committed to the protection of its citizens.

In line with the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, necessary measures have already been initiated for the safe return of Pakistani nationals currently present in Iran.

On the other hand, diplomatic sources claimed that thousands of Pakistani religious tourists and pilgrims were stranded in Iran and Iraq.

A Pakistani traveller said the only available emergency number of Pakistani embassy in Tehran was closed.

Whereas, the sources said the Pakistani ambassador to Iran was in Pakistan on leaves.

Moreover, the traveller said nobody was receiving

the call on Pakistani embassy's emergency numbers in Iraq as well.

Tensions between Iran and Israel are running high as both the nations are carrying out deadly strikes on each other.

It all started when Israel attacked Iran military installations, nuclear sites and civilians on Friday.

Israeli authorities have confirmed that at least ten people were killed, over 200 injured, and 35 remain missing following a large-scale Iranian retaliation strike on Israeli cities, including Tel Aviv and Haifa.

The strikes, which Iran says were in retaliation for earlier Israeli actions, targeted both military and strategic locations, causing significant damage and chaos.

Bilawal warns if India blocks water flow

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Sunday that Pakistan does not want war, but if India blocks water, no other option will remain.

In an interview with a German broadcaster, Bhutto-Zardari said India

must reverse its decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty. He warned that any attempt to block Pakistan's water supply would be a violation of the United Nations Charter.

He emphasised, "We do not want war, but if India blocks our water, there will be no alternative left."

Bhutto-Zardari said that cutting off water poses an

existential threat to Pakistan. "Water is our life-line and under no circumstances can we relinquish our right to it," he said.

He added that India is involved in acts of terrorism within Pakistan. "We have never said that we would go to war because of terrorism, but blocking our water is a different matter entirely," he added.

ECP appointments Parliamentary procedures followed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Secretariat has clarified that the appointment process for the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) members is being conducted in accordance with constitutional and parliamentary procedures.

A National Assembly spokesman, responding to media reports, stated that Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has sent a letter addressing the recent correspondence from Opposition Leader Omar Ayub.

According to the spokesperson of the National Assembly, the constitutional and legal procedures for the formation of the parliamentary committee are being followed in letter and spirit. It was clarified that the first step in this process is mutual consultation between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

The spokesperson further stated that the speaker also referred to the letter dated 16 May 2025, sent by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the Opposition Leader, in which the Prime Minister written for initiation of consultations regarding the nomination. The Speaker National Assembly also written that if the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition fail to reach an agreement on the names of the Chief Election Commissioner or members, then the matter will be referred to the Speaker under Article 213(2A) of the Constitution, so that the process for forming the parliamentary committee can be carried forward.

The spokesperson added that the Prime Minister will formally write to the Speaker to seek nominations for committee members from all parliamentary leaders. After this, the Speaker will issue letters to all parliamentary leaders and request them to submit names.

It has been clarified that the composition of the Parliamentary committee will be based on the proportional representation of each party currently present in the National Assembly, ensuring the formation of the committee is completely constitutional and fair.

The spokesperson further stated that the parliamentary committee can only be constituted when names of members are received from both the government and the opposition. If there is delay or non-cooperation from either side, the formation of the committee will not be possible.

The spokesperson also stated that Opposition Leader Omar Ayub Khan had demanded in his letter the immediate formation of a parliamentary committee for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commission members. The full text of the Speaker's reply has also been issued to media.

Israel kills 59 Palestinians in Gaza, many while trying to get aid

GAZA (Aljazeera): Israeli forces have killed 59 Palestinians across Gaza, at least 17 of whom were trying to get food at aid sites operated by the controversial United States and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), according to the Ministry of Health, the latest deaths in areas that critics have slammed as "human slaughterhouses".

Medics at al-Awda Hospital in central Gaza on Sunday told Al Jazeera that at least three people were killed and dozens wounded by Israeli fire as they tried to approach a GHF site near the so-called Netzarim Corridor, desperately seeking meagre food parcels for their hungry families.

At least another 10 other aid seekers were reported killed and more than 50 injured in southern Gaza. Many of the dead and wounded were taken to the Red Cross Hospital in Rafah, according to medics.

"People have told us that the Israeli military did not warn the hungry crowds

before opening fire on them, leading to devastating civilian casualties," reported Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza.

Ahmed al-Masri, who left one of the aid points empty-handed, described the shootings as "a trap".

Multiple Israeli air raids also hammered southern Gaza on Sunday, killing at least 12 Palestinians there. Seven others were killed when an Israeli strike targeted a group of people in Beit Lahiya town in the north of the enclave, medics said.

At least eight people were killed by an Israeli strike on the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Palestinian agency Wafa reported that the attack on the residential building also wounded several people.

Alarming levels of hunger, and the spectre of famine, have driven people to the few food distribution points in Gaza despite the severe peril involved. But Israeli forces have responded with sniper fire

and bombings. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in near-daily mass shootings, with the GHF accused of weaponising aid.

On Saturday, at least 79 Palestinians were killed, many of them while seeking aid. Medics at al-Awda and Al-Aqsa Hospitals in central Gaza said at least 15 people were killed as they tried to approach the GHF aid distribution site near Netzarim Corridor.

There has been no comment from the Israeli military regarding Sunday's attacks.

The GHF began distributing aid in Gaza at the end of May after Israel partially lifted a three-month total blockade of food, medicines and other essential items.

Abu Azzoum said Palestinians are starting to see GHF distribution hubs as "execution sites", considering the repeated attacks there.

The GHF said its aid sites were closed on Saturday. But witnesses said thousands of people

had gathered near the sites anyway, desperate for food as Israel's punishing blockade and military campaign have driven the territory to the brink of famine.

Earlier this month, operations at the group's aid distribution hubs were also temporarily halted following several incidents of deadly violence, in which Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinian aid seekers.

The Gaza Ministry of Health said in a statement on Saturday that at least 274 people have so far been killed, and more than 2,000 wounded, near aid distribution sites since the GHF began operations in Gaza.

The Israeli military has admitted to shooting at aid seekers, but claimed it opened fire only when "suspects" deviated from a stipulated route to the GHF distribution site.

Hamas has accused Israel of "employing hunger as a weapon of war and turning aid distribution sites into traps of mass deaths of innocent civilians".

Muslim world united against Israeli aggression



LAHORE (APP): Pakistan has urged greater unity within the Muslim Ummah in response to growing threats and unrest in the region, particularly stemming from Israel's actions in the Middle East.

Addressing a condolence reference held at the Lahore Press Club (LPC) on Sunday in memory of the late religious scholar Maulana Muhammad Khan Laghari, he added that the event was being held at a time when tensions in the region, especially following Israeli strikes targeting Iran, had heightened concern across the Muslim world. He said certain powers believed they could divide Muslims along sectarian lines to advance their own agendas, but those designs had failed due to timely realization by the leadership of the Islamic world. "Today, we see the entire Muslim world standing with Iran and Palestine against Israel's excesses," said Ashrafi. "The notion that the Ummah would be fragmented in the face of such provocations has proven wrong."

Ashrafi said that when Israel attacked Iran, they hoped to ignite a sectarian divide. But the Muslim leadership, especially that of Saudi Arabia, responded with clarity and soli-

darity. "This united front is our biggest strength."

He pointed out that Pakistan had been subjected to provocations even before Iran, including hybrid tactics aimed at testing its defence. "Our enemies sought to provoke Pakistan to see how far it would go. But by the grace of Allah, our nation and armed forces responded with strength and wisdom," he added.

Ashrafi warned against internal discord, citing examples from Iraq, Libya, and Syria, where internal divisions between the people and their institutions led to collapse. "It is not just external enemies we must guard against."

Betrayal from within has historically caused the most damage," he cautioned. "Anyone trying to create a rift between the people of Pakistan and its armed forces is acting against the nation. Unity is the backbone of our security." He praised the role of Pakistan's armed forces in safeguarding national sovereignty and said their actions had sent a powerful message to hostile actors. "When India and Israel jointly

posed a threat, Pakistan's military responded decisively. Our strength has earned the respect of the entire Muslim world," he said. He also appreciated the diplomatic efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in building a strong international stance against Israeli actions.

Ashrafi explained that the recent escalation was not only military but was also meant to derail a UN conference scheduled between April 17-20, where several countries were preparing to recognize Palestine as an independent state. "The strikes on Iran were part of a broader plan to stop growing diplomatic support for a free Palestinian state," he explained. "Israel is already losing ground internationally. The pain and destruction they caused in Gaza, Yemen, and Lebanon is now echoing back into their own homes," he said. "We called for peace, but they chose conflict. Now they face the consequences." Sending a message of solidarity to Iran, he said, "You

are not alone.

The entire Ummah stands with you. Just as Pakistan faced its own challenges and prevailed, so too will Iran with unity and resolve." Ashrafi said that if Maulana Laghari were alive today, he would be leading calls for unity across sects and regions in response to the current crisis.

He reflected on his 42-year-long association with Maulana, calling him a guiding figure in both national and religious matters. "Whenever the country or the Muslim world faced a challenge, Maulana Laghari stepped forward with leadership and wisdom," he noted and added that forums like the Mutahidda Ulema Board, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, and other unity-building platforms were strengthened by Laghari's active role and inclusive approach.

As the holy month of Muharram approaches, Hafiz Ashrafi announced that the Pakistan Ulema Council will organize nationwide gatherings of scholars from all sects to promote the spirit of unity and reaffirm the ethical code of Paigham-e-Pakistan.

Punjab budget today

LAHORE (APP): Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman will present the Punjab budget on June 16.

Before that, the budget will be approved by the Punjab cabinet in a special meeting, Punjab Assembly Secretariat sources said on Sunday. Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman will submit the budget that will reflect the development vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. No new taxes will be imposed in the budget.

Collection of already imposed taxes will be ensured, they said, adding effective use of provincial assets will be a priority to increase resources. Education, health, and social security projects will be prioritized. The rights of women, children, disabled people, and workers will be protected.

Likewise, technical and financial assistance will be provided to small and medium-sized businesses and the Kissan Card will be made more effective. The budget will be based on the principles of economic development, transparency, and social security, they added.

CM announces free higher education

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched a landmark initiative offering free higher education to the children of industrial and mine workers at COMSATS University. Under the program, the Punjab government will bear all educational expenses, marking a historic step towards uplifting the working class through education.

The CM talking about the initiative said, "Children of workers will be admitted to seven campuses of COMSATS University, and the Punjab government will pay their fees." She added that workers are the crown of the nation, and her government is determined to provide

them with every essential facility, especially in the fields of education and healthcare. "The doors of higher education are now open for every worker's child in Punjab. No child will be deprived of education due to financial hardship," she affirmed, adding that these measures reflect a commitment to social justice that has no precedent in the province's history.

CM Maryam Nawaz added that children of registered workers, including those of deceased and disabled workers, would be eligible for this opportunity across all major campuses of COMSATS University, Islamabad, Lahore, Abbottabad, Wah, Attock, Sahiwal, and Vehari. She noted that the

initiative is a testament to her government's inclusive vision and dedication to improving the lives of laborers through meaningful, long-term support.

Relevant authorities briefed the Chief Minister that the Worker Welfare Fund has opened the application process and that deadlines vary by campus, ranging from early July to mid-August. Applicants are required to apply online through the university's official website and must also submit relevant documents at the admission office. These include copies of the worker's CNIC, registered worker certificate, the student's CNIC or B-Form, and proof of social security or old age benefit enrollment.

High security during Christian worship services

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Police remained on high alert during Christian worship and prayer services held in churches in the city and other districts of the province. Ahead of the services, IG Punjab had issued special instructions to Regional and District Police Officers (RPOs and DPOs) to ensure comprehensive security arrangements at all churches. He directed supervisory officers to personally inspect security deployments at religious sites and other key locations.

Additional police personnel and snipers were deployed at sensitive churches, while Dolphin Squad, PRU, and Elite Force teams conducted continuous patrolling in surrounding areas. On-duty officers were instructed to maintain strict vigilance and keep a close eye on any suspicious activity. Search and sweep operations were carried out around churches, Christian communities, and other sensitive zones as part of pre-emptive security measures.

Father's Day celebrated across Sindh

KARACHI (PPI): Like other parts of the world, Father's Day was celebrated across Sindh on Sunday, marking a special occasion dedicated to honoring fathers and the significant roles they play in shaping lives and societies.

Ceremonies in this connection were held in major cities of the province, in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur to pay respects to all fathers across the world. This annual event, held every third Sunday of June, serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring affection and respect children hold for their paternal figures.

Celebrations varied widely, from simple family gatherings and heartfelt gifts to elaborate social media tributes. Each act of recognition reflects the unique cultural interpretations of fatherhood, yet the underlying message of love and respect remains consistent worldwide.

Sindh Governor's Message

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori today emphasized the irreplaceable role of fathers in nurturing stable families and by extension, stable societies. In a message on Father's Day, he articulated that a father's love is an invaluable treasure in a child's development. Governor Tesori highlighted the foundational impact of paternal guidance in building healthier family dynamics and ensuring societal cohesion.

"A father's affection is the most valuable asset in the life of a child," he remarked, underscoring the depth of paternal influence on both personal and community levels. According to Governor Tesori, recognizing and respecting the contributions of parents goes beyond moral duty; it is essential for the continuity of societal values and virtues. He pointed out the necessity of instilling the importance of such values

in the younger generation, ensuring they appreciate and uphold the sacrifices and teachings of their elders.

The governor's message, disseminated from the Sindh Governor House, serves as a reminder of the broader implications of paternal care and the collective responsibility to honor and learn from it. His call to action seeks to foster a greater appreciation for parental roles, thus reinforcing the fabric of family and society at large.

CM Murad's Message

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called for paying attention to the often-unseen sacrifices and dedication of fathers, describing them as the "sheltering trees" of families. In his message on the occasion of Father's Day, he highlighted the crucial, yet frequently unrecognized, role fathers play in the upbringing and success of their children. Shah pointed out that Father's Day should be more than just a date on the calendar; it is a vital opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the continuous support and care fathers provide. He emphasized that the achievements of children are often the result of a father's silent and steadfast support.

In his speech, the Chief Minister remarked on the foundational role fathers have in the emotional and developmental growth of their children. He stressed that nurturing children with strong values and integrity is one of the most significant contributions parents can make to society.

Furthermore, Shah spoke on the importance of respecting and caring for elders, noting that such values are central to the cultural and moral fabric of society. He wrapped up his message by paying a heartfelt tribute to all parents, reminding the public that the blessings of parents pave the way to enduring success.

PDP describes Israeli attack as Assault on Ummah

KARACHI (PPI): Altaf Shakoor, the Chairman of the Pasban Democratic Party (PDP), on Sunday strongly criticized the recent Israeli attack on Iran, labeling it as an assault on the entire Muslim Ummah and a severe violation of international norms.

In a statement, Shakoor emphasized that this aggression reflects a broader bias against Muslims, notably supported by the United States. He expressed that such actions not only disrupt peace but set a dangerous precedent where similar attacks could become justified under the guise of combating adversaries. He highlighted the broader implications of accepting such aggression, suggesting that it could lead to

further global instability.

The PDP Chairman also voiced strong support for the Palestinian and Iranian people, urging the Muslim nations to stand united in these trying times. He called upon the international community to ensure humanitarian aid reaches the people of Gaza and criticized countries maintaining diplomatic ties with Israel, urging them to reconsider their alliances as a demonstration of solidarity with the Muslim Ummah.

Shakoor further asserted that internal betrayal within Muslim countries needs to be addressed, and stressed the importance of advancing in science and technology.

He advocated for educational reforms, including the establishment of

universities in every town to foster expertise in critical fields such as science, technology, finance, and economics.

Highlighting the role of global powers, Shakoor urged China and Russia to intervene and help prevent the escalation of conflicts, which he fears could lead to a new world war. He also condemned the perceived double standards of Western nations in their foreign policies and called for an end to the support extended to Israel by the United States.

This statement from the PDP Chairman comes at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East, underscoring the complex geopolitical dynamics and the urgent need for diplomatic and humanitarian interventions.

Six mega transport projects on the cards

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has included 6 mega projects for the transport sector in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26.

According Planning and Development (P&D) department sources, it has been decided to allocate Rs310 billion for the projects of the transport department. Over Rs80 billion will be allocated for the world-class Yellow Line train project in Lahore, which will be 24 kilometers long from Thokar Niaz Baig to Harbanspura.

Likewise, Rs.60 billion has been allocated for 600 electric buses and 33 bus depots in other districts of Punjab, they said. It has also been decided to build a Transport Command and Control Center for modern traffic monitoring, for which Rs5.6 billion has been allocated, and this building will be completed in two years.

The budget also includes a plan to start a metro bus service in Faisalabad at a cost of Rs120 billion, which will be completed by December 2026, while Rs30 billion has been allocated for the metro bus service in Gujranwala.

Billions of rupees to be allocated for public welfare projects

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has allocated billions of rupees for public welfare projects in the budget for the financial year 2025-26.

According to P&D sources, preparations have been completed to allocate billions of rupees for several projects of public welfare, social security, training, digital facilities and recreational facilities for women. On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, several revolutionary projects have been included in the upcoming budget.

According to sources, it has been decided to launch the "Maryam Nawaz Social Security Ration Card" in the budget, for which an initial allocation of Rs50 million has been proposed. This program will prove to be a milestone in reducing poverty and providing basic facilities to needy families.

The Chief Minister has also announced the launch of a new autonomous program, under which an e-training and skill development program will be launched.

It has been proposed to allocate Rs42.9 million for this project so that the youth can be well skilled.

Under the promotion of digital facilities, it is proposed to allocate Rs135.2 million for the "CM Free Wi-Fi Program", which will make free access to the internet possible in urban and rural areas. Special attention has also been given in the budget for women's health and recreation, ladies parks named after Maryam Nawaz will be established in different cities.

It is proposed to allocate Rs38.2 million for the "Maryam Nawaz Sharif Ladies Park" in Pasur City, Rs30 million for the establishment of a ladies park in Sahiwal, and Rs10 million for the "Maryam Nawaz Family Park" in Tehsil Dinga of Gujrat district.

In addition, it is proposed to allocate a huge amount of Rs12.81 billion for the establishment of convenience markets in 100 tehsils of Punjab under the Chief Minister's flagship program, where the public will be able to get quality goods at affordable prices.

5,180 water filtration plants to be outsourced

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has decided that 5,180 water filtration plants across the province would be outsourced and their samples will be checked through laboratory tests. CEO Punjab Saaf Paani Authority, Syed Zahid Aziz, told APP that initially 1800 filtration plants would be outsourced to ensure the provision of water to the people according to the vision of the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

He said the water filtration plants' samples would be checked through lab tests as experts say that contaminated water is a major contributor to disease, with some studies indicating that it is responsible for around 60 percent of diseases. He said in developing countries, specifically, waterborne diseases like diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, hepatitis, and typhoid are often linked to the consumption of unsafe water. He said according to the vision of the Madam Chief Minister, "Every drop of water is precious.



KARACHI: A little girl, accompanied by her father, selects old books at a roadside stall near Regal Chowk. —APP Photo

Wahab inaugurates modern meat market

KARACHI (PPI) Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Sunday inaugurated the city's first modern Meat Market at the historic Empress Market.

During the ceremony, Mayor Wahab highlighted the broader battle against corrupt practices and the commitment to preserving Karachi's heritage while enhancing its commercial spaces. The new market features 29 hygienic stalls aimed at providing a dignified environment for meat traders. This development is part of a larger effort to revive Empress Market, including the addition of a parking facility with space for 400 cars and 150 motorcycles to alleviate local traffic issues.

Mayor Wahab expressed pride in the progress made under his administration, contrasting it with previous leadership that, according

to him, lacked initiative despite having the same resources. He emphasized that the difference made was due to honest and proactive governance.

The Mayor also addressed the ongoing challenges with illegal parking, exacerbated by the so-called parking mafias obtaining stay orders from the courts. In response, the administration has taken a firm stance against illegal parking and announced a ban on plastic bags to combat environmental degradation, with enforcement starting immediately.

Further, Mayor Wahab voiced frustrations over federal funding, citing insufficient allocations for crucial projects like the K-IV water supply project which received only a fraction of the requested funds. He questioned why Karachi, a major contribu-

tor to the national economy, was not receiving support comparable to other cities.

Infrastructure improvements were also a key focus of his address. He outlined several initiatives, including the construction of an expressway to ease traffic from Port Qasim and ongoing works on major city thoroughfares and bridges to improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

Mayor Wahab reaffirmed his commitment to enhancing Karachi's living standards, invoking a vision of a city that honors its heritage and meets the modern needs of its citizens. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi, and other council members, all showing unified support for the city's path forward.

IGP takes notice of triple murder in Bhakkar

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar took strict notice of a tragic incident in which three individuals, including a woman, were killed in a firing incident in Mills Town, Bhakkar.

The IGP sought a report from the Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha. Dr Usman Anwar directed the District Police Officer (DPO) Bhakkar to ensure the arrest of the suspects.

He emphasized that all available resources must be mobilized to bring the culprits to justice and that the provision of justice to the bereaved families must be treated as a top priority.

According to DPO Bhakkar, special teams have already been constituted to track down and arrest the perpetrators.



IND PESHAWAR: Special Advisor to CM for Health, Ihtisham Khan being briefed during his visit to Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services.

Provincial Budget APTA shows concern of neglect of demands

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The All Primary Teachers Association (APTA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has expressed deep disappointment with the recently announced provincial budget, citing continued neglect of teachers' long-standing demands, particularly regarding upgradation, regularization, and allowances.

Speaking to our correspondent, APTA's Provincial President, Azizullah Khan, said that nearly 15,000 teachers have been waiting since September 2022 for the approval of the Regularization Act. Despite the act being prepared months ago, it has yet to be presented before the provincial cabinet.

"The issue of forced promotions remains unresolved, and the position code problem in merged districts has been pending with the Finance Department for months," he added.

Criticizing the government's disparity in treatment, Azizullah pointed out that while the federal government has announced a 30% Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) based on current basic salaries, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has only granted a 15% DRA, calculated on scale-wise basic pay.

"How can there be two different laws in one country? Is this justice?" he questioned.

"If we don't protest, what other option do we have? We are being pushed to the wall and forced to act. A large-scale protest is once again on the horizon."

Azizullah accused the government of stalling tactics.

"We believe the government is just passing time. But let me make it clear - we will not back down even an inch from our demands."

He recalled an incident from November 2024, when a senior official from the Education Department publicly announced acceptance of the teachers' demands during a rally. However, a week later, the same official denied the speech-despite it being on record-calling it "just a political statement."

"Since then," he continued, "a campaign of harassment has begun against primary teachers through DEOs using the Promotion Forgo Option."

He explained that the Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) had sent a summary for upgradation to the Chief Minister. The Secretary Establishment and Secretary Finance both approved it, and it was sent back to the Establishment Department to prepare a comprehensive working paper for final approval.

"This process began almost three months before the provincial budget," Azizullah said.

"We were hopeful it would be completed in time for the budget, but even now the working paper has not been finalized."

In addition, another summary-prepared under the Promotion Forgo Option and signed by the Minister for Education-was also sent to the Chief Minister but remains stuck in the Establishment Department.

Azizullah further highlighted that the Regularization Act for 15,000 teachers from various cadres has been ready for the past six to seven months, yet it has not been presented to the cabinet for approval.

"These delaying tactics are pushing us toward protest once again," he warned.

"If this situation continues, we will be left with no choice but to return to the streets. And let me be very clear: if there's a lockdown strike, it will be a complete shutdown across the province."

He emphasized that during any future negotiations, only written notifications and official implementation will be accepted as proof of the government's commitment.

Before launching a province-wide protest, APTA has urged the government to fulfill its promises and immediately issue the notifications for already-announced demands.

Aftab commends allocation for Law Dept in budget

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Law, Advocate Aftab Alam, has commended the allocation for Law department in the provincial budget for the fiscal year 2025-26.

He stated that this budget reflects the government's commitment to improving access to justice and strengthening the legal framework in the province. According to details, a total of Rs. 6,460,661 million has been allocated for the Law and Justice sector.

This allocation covers 42 projects, out of which 32 are ongoing and 10 are new.

The Minister informed that Rs. 5,866,329 million has been allocated for ongoing projects, while Rs. 594,332 million has been set aside for new projects. This funding aims to facilitate easier access to justice, modernize the judicial system, and enhance the capacity of legal institutions.

He further stated that 20 projects are near completion, including 18 ongoing and 2 new projects. According to the budget documents, several key projects have been proposed for the fiscal year 2025-26.

These include the construction of judicial complexes, establishment of district-based resource centers, and initiatives related to the Office of the Ombudsperson to address discrimination and workplace harassment.

Among the ongoing projects, an initiative to expand the jurisdiction of the Ombudsperson Secretariat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for protecting women against harassment is also included.

Other initiatives include the construction and renovation of judicial complexes and residences in various districts, enhancement of the High Court's capacity, and overall improvement of the legal infrastructure.

Major ongoing projects under the Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP) include the construction of 7 district judicial complexes and 25 tehsil-level judicial complexes.

Among the new projects are the operationalization of reconciliation councils across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provision of residential facilities for the judiciary and court staff in three districts.

Additionally, Rs. 100,000 million has been allocated for the Integrated Legal and Human Rights Support Program (ILHRSP).

Under the Accelerated Implementation Program, a new project has also been included for the establishment of resource centers at the district level in the newly merged districts, with an allocation of Rs. 10,500 million.

Minister for Law Aftab Alam Advocate affirmed that these projects will not only enable timely justice delivery but will also play a vital role in modernizing judicial infrastructure and increasing the efficiency of legal departments.

He assured that the allocated funds will be used transparently and effectively to ensure the best possible outcomes in justice delivery for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Muqam strongly reacts to CM Gandapur's 'Irresponsible' Statement

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, has strongly rejected the recent statement made by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, calling it "irresponsible and provocative."

In a statement issued on Saturday, Engineer Amir Muqam said that the

Chief Minister's remarks were not only a blatant misuse of his official position but also tantamount to inciting innocent workers towards unrest. He stated, "Instead of steering the province towards stability and development, the Chief Minister is once again promoting chaos and violence - and, as usual, will flee, leaving the workers behind."

Engineer Amir Muqam questioned how a Chief Minister could openly call on workers to take up arms against the state.

"This is clearly an attempt to spread fear and disturb the law and order situation in the country," he said, adding that the statement is an insult to the office of the Chief Minister.

He remarked that such statements reveal the true intentions of those elements who want to destabilize the country, particularly at a time when the federal government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, is working day and night to revive the

economy and restore public confidence.

He added, "These people are panicking because the PML-N government has once again put the country on the path of economic progress. Their anti-state agendas will never succeed."

Engineer Amir Muqam, President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urged the public and all political leaders to reject the politics of hatred and division and to stand united for peace, development, and national stability.

Technology wins battles, humanity loses lives

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

SINCE the dawn of civilization, mankind has been entangled in the bitter pursuits of war-often to expand territory, subdue enemies, or liberate the oppressed. In those early times, victory depended largely upon the physical strength of warriors and the sharpness of their blades. Swords, spears, and bows defined the battlefield. Armies mounted on horses and elephants clashed with brute force, and the outcome of battle often hinged upon the courage and stamina of individual soldiers. But with the invention of gunpowder in China during the 9th century and its eventual militarization in Europe by the 14th century, the face of warfare began to change.

Gunpowder introduced cannons and firearms into battle, replacing the bow with the musket and reshaping military formations forever. The Napoleonic Wars witnessed the coordination of artillery, infantry, and cavalry in unprecedented ways. In the 20th century, particularly during the World Wars, warfare advanced dramatically. The world saw the emergence of tanks, submarines, fighter aircraft, and eventually, the most devastating invention of all-nuclear weapons.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 demonstrated the terrifying potential of scientific advancement when used destructively. Nearly 200,000 lives were lost, and generations thereafter suffered the consequences. The nature of war had been irreversibly transformed. No longer were wars won by sheer manpower; now, technological superiority could obliterate entire cities in seconds.

The Cold War that followed ushered in an arms race driven by technological competition rather than open conflict. Satellites, nuclear submarines, long-range ballistic missiles, and surveillance drones became tools of both deterrence and espionage. The Gulf War of 1991 marked the first televised precision bombing campaign, with the U.S.-led coalition employing satellite-guided missiles and stealth aircraft to a scale the world had never seen before.

In the 21st century, warfare has reached a level where invisibility, speed, precision, and information supremacy determine the victor. The battleground is no longer just land, air, and sea-but also cyber space and outer space. Drones, artificial intelligence, hypersonic missiles, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons are rewriting the rules of engagement. A drone weighing less than a human can eliminate a high-value target from thousands of miles away with pinpoint accuracy and zero risk to the operator.

This technological shift was exemplified in Pakistan's response to Indian aggression on May 7, 2025. In a matter of minutes, Pakistan deployed advanced air defense systems and targeted Indian installations with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and precision-guided munitions, rendering India's conventional military preparations ineffective. The brief engagement underscored how modern warfare now depends on speed, accuracy, and electronic warfare rather than large troop movements. It was not only a demonstration of national resolve but also a textbook case of asymmetric advantage powered by technology.

Just two days ago, Israel executed a similarly calculated strike against Iranian positions using a combination of cyber-attacks and advanced air-launched munitions. Reports indicate that Israeli fighter jets penetrated Iranian airspace undetected using stealth technology, while cyber units simultaneously disabled communication and radar infrastructure. The operation, though brief, marked another chapter in the evolution of modern conflict, emphasizing the dominance of information warfare, surveillance capabilities, and precision targeting over brute military force.

From these recent episodes, one thing becomes evident: the classical ideals of valor and physical might have given way to remote-controlled engagement, algorithmic warfare, and sensor-based targeting. The soldier on the ground, though still essential, is now just one component of a much broader and more complex war machine operated by engineers, data scientists, and intelligence analysts.

Yet amid all this evolution, one immutable truth remains-war is destruction. Whether waged with swords or satellites, it results in death, displacement, and devastation. Civilized societies, which aspire to peace, progress, and prosperity, can ill afford its cost. Economies are wrecked, generations are scarred, and social fabrics are torn apart. While technological superiority may ensure military success, it can never heal the wounds of war.

The great paradox of our time lies in the dual-use nature of technological advancement; what can launch a satellite to explore the universe can also guide a missile to destroy a city. The challenge for humanity is not just to win wars more efficiently, but to prevent them altogether. As history has shown, no nation ever emerged unscathed from war, no matter how advanced its arsenal.

In this age of drone strikes and cyber offensives, global powers must recognize that sustainable peace cannot be maintained by force alone. Diplomatic resolve, mutual respect, and international cooperation must accompany scientific advancement. Otherwise, we risk turning our greatest inventions into instruments of our greatest regrets.

The past has given us lessons in blood, and the present offers a mirror to reflect on what we might become. If we fail to heed the warnings of history, then the future, no matter how technologically brilliant, will be shadowed by the same darkness that has plagued humanity since the age of the sword.

Significant funds allocated for forests and wildlife projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has allocated a significant amount in the budget for the financial year 2025-26 to prioritize crucial sectors such as forests, wildlife, and climate change. A total of 62 new and ongoing projects in these sectors have been earmarked, with 33 projects in progress and 29 new projects set to be launched. Approximately 4.4 billion rupees have been allocated for these projects—3.79 billion rupees for ongoing and 445 million rupees

for new projects.

In the forestry sector, one billion rupees have been allocated for 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Program, upscaling of the Green Pakistan Program, and the revival of forest resources. In the wildlife sector 371.5 million rupees have been allocated for the establishment of a mini zoo in Kanju Township, Swat, and 405.5 million rupees for a zoo in Peshawar Division.

The climate change sector has been allocated 454 million rupees for various important projects, while approximately 94 million rupees

have been allocated for three ongoing and two new projects.

The provincial government's focus on these sectors not only aims at environmental conservation but also provides the public with a clean and recreational environment.

Under the supervision of the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Forests and Environment, Pir Musavir Khan, the completion of these projects will fulfill the dream of former Chairman Imran Khan for a green and prosperous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KP budget is people-friendly: Syed Qasim

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Social Welfare, Zakat, Ushr, and Special Education, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, has termed the provincial budget for 2025-26 as people-friendly and surplus, stating that the provision of facilities to the public has been given top priority.

He said that it is a balanced budget in which comprehensive measures have been proposed for the improvement and development of all sectors. He expressed these views in a statement issued here today.

He further said that the budget allocated for the departments of Zakat, Ushr, Social Welfare, and Special Education has increased by 135%, bringing the allocation

tion to Rs. 19.11 billion.

The government has also outlined major projects for special children. Under a key project, centers for children affected by autism will be established at the divisional level at a cost of Rs. 1.2 billion. Similarly, five new campuses of the "Zamung Kor" institution are being set up for the care and upbringing of orphaned and underprivileged children, with Rs. 600 million

allocated for this initiative.

In addition, the budget also includes a plan to establish shelter homes in North Waziristan and Bajaur to provide temporary housing facilities to homeless persons.

The minister stated that all these initiatives reflect the government's commitment to the welfare of the people and the rehabilitation of underprivileged segments of society.



Over 2,500 students appear in talent scholarship test

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Model Degree Colleges (PMDCs) Sunday conducted second phase of Goodwill and CUSIT Talent Scholarship Test held at PMDC campuses in Dalazak Road, Hayatabad, and Mardan.

More than 2,500 students appeared in second phase of the test. In total, over 4,000 students from both government and private schools took part in two phases of scholarship test held on June 1 and June 15, 2025.

A limited number of needs cum merit-based scholarships are offered to students of Government schools. Students securing minimum 80% (960) and above marks in their SSC annual examination, hav-

ing passed in preceding session were eligible to appear in test.

The Scholarship initia-

tive aims to identify and support academically gifted students by providing access to quality edu-

cation and opportunities for personal and intellectual growth at Peshawar Model Degree Colleges.





In brief

Religious harmony urged F.P. Report

KOHAT: Implementing the orders of the Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Irfanuddin, the Assistant Commissioner Lower Orakzai Syed Ehsan Ali has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", held an important meeting with the local elders in view of the upcoming Muharram-ul-Haram. Law and order, inter-faith harmony and security arrangements were discussed in detail in the meeting and certain decisions were taken. The Elders of the area apprised the administration of the public sentiments and concerns while the concerned institutions assured all out cooperation and effective measures in this respect. The Assistant Commissioner on this occasion said that our religion Islam teaches us peace, brotherhood, tolerance, forbearance, non-violence and inter-faith harmony, therefore it is the duty of all of us to follow these golden principles of Islam and make the region a cradle of peace and maintain the sanctity of Muharram-ul-Haram in its true spirit.

Gambling Apps trap youth

MULTAN (APP): A silent digital trap is catching thousands of young people, students and unemployed labourers across south Punjab as gambling Apps cleverly disguised as harmless mobile games and looting people. These Apps are spreading fast through social media, offering the false hope of "easy money from home." But behind the colorful graphics and catchy slogans lies a deep financial and mental danger. These Apps promote various games. At first glance, they seem like simple fun. But as soon as a user signs up, they are welcomed with free bonuses, sometimes Rs 500 or more just to play. In the beginning, they win small amounts. Encouraged by early success, many users start putting in their own money, hoping to earn even more. That's when the real loss begins, said IT experts while talking to APP. "I thought I could earn some side income by playing a game online. But within two weeks, I had lost Rs 15,000," shared a college student on condition of anonymity. His story is not unique. From students to unemployed adults, these apps are pulling people in with big promises and pushing them towards debt, anxiety, and depression. Once hooked, many users begin spending more time and money than they can afford. The excitement turns into obsession. "The app kept sending me notifications repeatedly. In many cases, these apps operate from outside country and avoid legal consequences by changing names frequently. IT experts stated that there was weak digital monitoring system. Although, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and FIA Cybercrime Wing have banned several such apps in the past, but new versions continue to surface. Making matters worse, many social influencer promote these apps in exchange for money. They call them "income games" or "earning tricks," tricking their followers into trying them. Most viewers don't know that these promotions are often paid advertisements. Similarly, Psychologists are also found issuing warning of a growing mental health crisis linked to these apps. Many people become addicted, and their focus, sleep, studies, and relationships suffer badly.

Governor KP hails Pakistan Army

Reaffirms support for Kashmir cause

DHIRKOT, AZAD KASHMIR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, lauded the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people along the Line of Control (LoC) during the recent hostilities between Pakistan and India, saying that despite limited resources, Pakistan's armed forces defeated India through sheer determination and faith.

He expressed these views while addressing a reception held in his honor by Raja Mubashir Ejaz, Divisional General Secretary of PPP Poonch Dhirkot here on Sunday.

Governor Kundi emphasized that Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire during the conflict on the condition of initiating talks on Kashmir, highlighting that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was being actively advocating Pakistan and Kashmir's case on international platforms, following the legacy of his grandfather and martyred mother. "Insha'Allah, Pakistan will win the case for Kashmir soon," he said.

The reception was attended by prominent Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders, including Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz, AJK Minister for Local Government Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, and other senior party officials.

Calling PPP a true political family, Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Faryal Talpur for appointing a party worker as Governor.

"Previously, I served as Deputy Speaker and Minister of State with the party's confidence, and now I aim to fulfill my responsibilities with integrity," he said.

He criticized the current federal budget, claiming it ignored the rights of the public, government employees, and farmers.

"We are allies of the federal government, not part of it, and we believe in constructive criticism. We will raise our voice in Parliament against injustices in the budget," he added.

Governor Kundi also condemned the past performance of PTI in KP, accusing it of surrendering the province back to terrorists and engaging in massive corruption.

"From Kohistan's Rs. 50 billion scandal to solar project funds for mosques being misused, and corruption in sugar, wheat, and health sectors they have looted across the board," he remarked.

Regarding the upcoming elections in Azad Kashmir, Governor Kundi said that PPP has a strong chance to form the government.

"The party has a proven track record of public service in the region. With unity and determination, we can once again bring a PPP-led era of prosperity to Kashmir. Soon, a 'Jiyala' will be the Prime Minister here as well," he asserted.

Earlier, upon his arrival in Dhirkot, Governor Kundi was warmly welcomed by PPP supporters with chants of "Jiy Bhutto" and was showered with rose petals.



KOHAT: Assistant Commissioner Lower Orakzai Syed Ehsan Ali chairing meeting to discuss the peace during Moharram.

Students present innovative technology projects Allah Dad Chandio

LARKANA: Projects prepared on innovative technology by the final year students of the Department of Computer Science of Government Boys Degree College Larkana were presented. On this occasion, the principal of the college Professor Abdul Waheed Chandio has appreciated the performance of the students, teachers and staff.

According to the details, the research project defense ceremony was held in a grand manner by the final year students of BS (CS) in the Department of Computer Science of Government Boys Degree College Larkana, which was presided over by the principal of the college, Professor Abdul Wahid Chandio.

On this occasion, commendable projects prepared by the students according to modern scientific and technical requirements were presented, including a chat bot based on machine learning and artificial intelligence, a centralized attendance system based on QR code, a surveillance system for monitoring, a job-seeking platform for online employment, an online pharmacy, an ordering web app (EasyBuy), and a mobile app for Midtown Mall.

The principal of the college, Professor In his presidential address, Abdul Wahid Chandio expressed pride in the successful conduct of the project and said that the projects presented by the students are a reflection of their hard work, dedication, and technical skills.

He especially praised the excellent guidance and continuous efforts of Professor Harish Kumar Jeswani, saying that the quality of the students under his leadership is at par with international technical standards.

PPP leader flays Israeli PM's remarks against Pakistan

Hafiz Muhammad Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) district leader and former Bar President, Advocate Muhammad Arshad Mehind, has issued a strong condemnation of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's alleged provocative statement claiming, "After Iran, it's Pakistan's turn."

Calling it a malicious conspiracy against regional peace and an attempt to disrupt global stability, Mehind urged the United Nations and the international community to take immediate notice of Israel's hostile stance. He warned that if the international community failed to act, the consequences could be catastrophic for the entire world.

He emphasized that Pakistan is not just a defensive force but a responsible nuclear state, committed to peace but fully alert and prepared for any threat. "Israel must come to its senses," he cautioned, "any attempt to challenge Pakistan will lead to Israel's complete destruction."

Mehind further stated that Pakistan's nuclear capability is among the most advanced in the world, and any aggression towards its sovereignty would meet a crushing response. "If any enemy dares to look at Pakistan with hostile intent, they will be erased from the face of the earth," he warned.

Recalling the country's nuclear legacy, he credited Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto for laying the foundation of Pakistan's nuclear program, quoting his historic words: "We will eat grass, but we will build the atomic bomb." He also acknowledged Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for taking

the vision further by advancing Pakistan's missile technology, thus fortifying national defense.

HAFIZABAD: Barrister Muhammad Ali Bhoon, son of renowned legal expert and former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Muhammad Ahsan Bhoon, has officially become a member of the Hafizabad District Bar Association. His inclusion is being warmly welcomed in legal circles, with hopes expressed that he will contribute positively to the Bar and the district's legal framework, owing to his academic excellence, legal acumen, and professional background.

Barrister Bhoon received his early and higher secondary education from the prestigious Aitchison College, Lahore. He later pursued higher education in the United Kingdom, where he obtained his graduation, Bachelor of Laws (LLB), and Master of Laws (LLM) degrees from internationally acclaimed institutions. After completing his legal studies and qualifying as a barrister, he returned to Pakistan with the resolve to serve the country's legal and judicial system.

Senior members of the Hafizabad Bar, including former presidents Muhammad Arshad Mehind Advocate, Madam Khalida Shahid Advocate, Abid Fayyaz Tarar Advocate, as well as Moazzam Hayat Bhoon Advocate, Sarfraz Arshad Ayaz Cheema Advocate, Moazzam Ali Bhatti Advocate, Furkan Mehind Advocate, Rai Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Qasim Tarar Advocate, and Usman Ali Bhoon Advocate, have all welcomed Barrister Bhoon's membership.

Nowshera Medical College MTI earns ISO Certification

F.P. Report

NOWSHERA: In a significant achievement, Nowshera Medical College MTI has been awarded International Standards Organization (ISO) certification, recognizing its outstanding performance in a relatively short span of time.

The college administration, under the dynamic leadership of Chief Executive Officer and Dean, Professor Dr. Anwar Khan Wazir, worked tirelessly to meet the rigorous standards required for ISO certification. His strategic initiatives and developmental reforms have played a key role in

this success.

This milestone places Nowshera Medical College MTI among the few public sector medical colleges in the province to have achieved ISO certification - a testament to its commitment to quality education and healthcare services.

Despite facing a shortage of staff and limited resources, the college continues to provide excellent educational and healthcare facilities to the people of Nowshera and neighboring districts.

A delegation from the ISO certification body recently visited the college to conduct a comprehensive

evaluation. Accompanied by the college administration, the team toured various departments of the hospital and conducted detailed inspections. Following their assessment, the ISO team expressed satisfaction with the operational standards and appreciated the efforts of the management and staff.

Mr. Muhammad Akbar Khan, the head of the ISO delegation, officially handed over the ISO certificate to Professor Dr. Anwar Khan Wazir, Dean of Nowshera Medical College, and Professor Shah Nawaz Khan, Vice Dean, during a formal ceremony.

DD Agri Karak reviews gardens, crops

F.P. Report

KARAK: Implementing the directions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Agriculture Major@? Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal, the District Director Agriculture Extension Karak Dr. Jan Muhammad made a detailed visit to

Warana Ahmed Abad area of Tehsil Takht-e-Nasrati of District Karak where he beside meeting with the local farmers and landowners, also visited their fields and gardens and briefed them about the methods of gardening, disease prevention and watering.

He also guided the

farmers and landowners about regional crops and gave useful advice on achieving maximum yield production.

The District Director also visited the gardens planted under the Climate Resilience Project and reviewed the progress on them. He noted the latest progress on it.

Making journey safer for GB tourists during Monsoon

GILGIT (APP): Travelling through mesmerizing terrains of Gilgit-Baltistan is always amusing and heart touching as Nature has showered countless bounties on this region, making it a home to snow covered mountains, tall pines, flora and fauna and diverse wildlife.

Travelling on its zigzagging roads through the green forests and tall peaks, enjoying its weather and landscape, lakes, glaciers, plains and rocks is something leaving pleasant imprints in visitors minds.

But when the first rain touches the dry land of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), besides beauty, it also brings danger with it. No matter it gives life to valleys, makes rivers flow and covers the mountainsides in green. But at the same time, it can cause landslides, flash floods and road blockages.

Every year more tourists come to see GB's natural beauty and if you also the one planning to travel during the rainy months of July and August, it's important to stay alert and prepare well. Because, when the ground gets wet, mountain

slopes become weak and rocks can fall onto roads. The Karakoram Highway (KKH), which connects Pakistan with China, often gets blocked in areas like Chilas, Raikot Bridge (on the way to Fairy Meadows), and between Sost and Gulmit.

Although the government takes measures for the safety of travellers, yet GB being surrounded by three mountain ranges; Karakoram, Himalayas and Hindu Kush often faces natural risks like landslides and floods during monsoon.

Heavy rain and glacial melting during summer can also flood the rivers like Indus, Gilgit and Hunza. Roads to valleys like Astore, Skardu or Kaghan may also get damaged or blocked. In many places phone and internet services stop working after landslides, making it hard to contact anyone in case of emergency.

Keeping in view these challenges, the GB government takes measures for tourists' safety but it needs well woven teamwork between the government, local communities and the travelers themselves.



"GB is an attractive tourist destination. Last year we received 1.5 million tourists," said Iqbal Husain, Director GB Tourism Department. "We welcome them in all seasons. But, monsoon becomes tricky as we have to take extra measures during this season."

He acknowledged hard work of authorities to ensure safety of tourists during rainy season as he mentioned to sharing advice through social

media, tour companies, and guesthouses. "Visitors are told to check weather forecasts, inform local police if they're going to far-off places and always follow local guides."

He said some important projects are being carried out to improve safety like rerouting parts of the KKH and building new tunnels in different areas.

According to the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), since 2022,

more than 80 large landslides blocked the KKH, over 60,000 people in GB were affected by floods and roads and bridges were damaged.

Every year, National Highway Authority (NHA) spends a major chunk of GB budget on roads repair and clear landslides especially in July and August.

But on the other hand, rain makes GB more beautiful, waterfalls flood with water, air gets fresher and local tourism experts say it

a great time to visit. But, the same time they ask tourists to be cautious.

"Tourists should check weather alerts and keep their travel plans flexible. If one road is closed, they can try other safe routes or wait," said Fatima Begum, a tour operator from Hunza since last 15 years. "They should also carry medicine, snacks, water and to be patient."

"We also ensure that visitors have local SIM cards and emergency contact numbers," she said and appreciated locals for often clearing roads and assist tourists.

"But travelers must also respect the power of nature and avoid taking unnecessary risks."

Ahmed Raza from Lahore who visited Skardu and Shigar in July 2023, revealing his story of vehicle struck near the Shigar Bridge said, local people were helpful but the most was their guide who had packed snacks and water. "Therefore, besides other arrangements, you also need an experienced guide who is well aware what to do when someone is trapped."

As keeping people safe during monsoon is not just

about fixing problems after they happen. It needs regular planning and action, therefore more weather stations and faster warning systems are being set up to pass alerts on time. Roads and bridges are made stronger and tunnels like Atabad and Shounter are helping a lot.

Local people are getting training in first aid and emergency response by groups like Focus Pakistan and Aga Khan Agency for Habitat. Tourists are provided safety advice at airports, hotels and by travel companies. Some tour companies now offer insurance that covers delays. Emergency teams like Rescue 1122 are getting better equipment and different government departments are working together more closely.

The rainy season in GB is a time to enjoy, but with care.

When the government departments remain busy in improving roads and warning systems and stay ready to help quickly and tour companies and hotels inform guests about emergencies, the travellers must also keep themselves well informed about alerts for their safer journey.



Trump administration weighs adding 36 countries to travel ban, memo says

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. President Donald Trump's administration is considering significantly expanding its travel restrictions by potentially banning citizens of 36 additional countries from entering the United States, according to an internal State Department cable seen by Reuters.

Earlier this month, the Republican president signed a proclamation that banned the entry of citizens from 12 countries, saying the move was needed to protect the United States against "foreign terrorists" and other national security threats.

The directive was part of an immigration crackdown Trump launched this year at the start of his second term, which has included the deportation to El Salvador of hundreds of Venezuelans suspected of being gang members, as well as efforts to deny enrollments of some foreign students from U.S. universities and deport others.

In an internal diplomatic cable signed by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the State Department outlined a dozen concerns about the countries in question and sought corrective action.

"The Department has identified 36 countries of concern that might be recommended for full or partial suspension of entry if they do not meet established benchmarks and requirements within 60 days," the cable sent out over the weekend said.

The cable was first reported by the Washington Post.

Among the concerns the State Department raised was the lack of a competent or cooperative government by some of the countries mentioned to produce reliable identity documents, the cable said. Another was "questionable security" of that country's passport.

Some countries, the cable said, were not cooperative in facilitating the

removal of its nationals from the United States who were ordered to be removed. Some countries were overstaying the U.S. visas their citizens were being granted.

Other reasons for concern were the nationals of the country were involved in acts of terrorism in the United States, or antisemitic and anti-American activity.

The cable noted that not all of these concerns pertained to every country listed. The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The countries that could face a full or a partial ban if they do not address these concerns within the next 60 days are: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Ethiopia, Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tonga, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

That would be a significant expansion of the ban that came into effect earlier this month. The countries affected were Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

The entry of people from seven other countries - Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Turkmenistan and Venezuela - has also been partially restricted.

During his first in office, Trump announced a ban on travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations, a policy that went through several iterations before it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018.



BRIDLINGTON, ENGLAND : Competitors make their way to the pit area during the Race the Waves motoring event held on the beach at Bridlington on Sunday in Bridlington, England.

Gunman who shot two lawmakers still at large

MINNEAPOLIS (Reuters): A massive man-hunt entered a second day on Sunday in Minnesota for the gunman who killed a Democratic state lawmaker while posing as a police officer, a crime that Governor Tim Walz characterized as a "politically motivated assassination."

The suspect, whom police identified as Vance Luther Boelter, 57, fled on foot when officers confronted him at the Brooklyn Park home of former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, who were both killed.

The gunman earlier had shot and wounded another Democratic lawmaker, state Senator John Hoffman, and his wife Yvette at their home a few miles away, authorities said. Minnesota U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, said on Sunday morning that authorities believe the suspect is still in the Midwest, adding that an alert had been put out in neighboring South Dakota.

"Clearly, this is politically motivated," she said, noting that the state's entire congressional delegation - Republicans and Democrats - issued a shared statement condemning the shootings.

The suspect left behind a vehicle outside Hortman's house in suburban Minneapolis that resembled a police SUV, including flashing lights, and contained a "manifesto" and a target list of other politicians and institutions, officials said.

Authorities had not publicly identified a specific motive as of Saturday evening.

Boelter has links to evangelical ministries and claimed to be a security expert with experience in the Gaza Strip and Africa, according to online postings and public records reviewed by Reuters.

"There clearly was some through line with abortion, because of the groups that were on the list and other things that I've heard were in this manifesto. So that was one of his motivations," Klobuchar said.

Boelter had been appointed in 2016 by Walz predecessor to a state advisory board, where he served alongside Hoffman, according to state records. Authorities said they were not certain yet whether the two had any meaningful interactions.

"There's certainly some overlap with some public meetings, I will say, with Senator Hoffman and the individual," Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Superintendent Drew Evans told reporters on Saturday. "But we don't know the nature of the relationship or if they actually knew each other."

ABC News, citing law enforcement officials, reported the list of targets featured dozens of Minnesota Democrats, including Walz, who was also the Democratic vice presidential candidate last year.

The killing was the latest in a series of high-profile episodes of political violence, including the attack on former Democratic U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband in 2022, the attempted assassination of Donald Trump during last year's presidential campaign and an arson attack at Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro's house in April.

Republican and Democratic politicians across the country reacted with shock and horror and issued calls to tone down increasingly heated political rhetoric.

Klobuchar said she had seen both Hortman and Hoffman at a political dinner on Friday, just hours before they were shot. "We started out together in politics, moms with young kids, and somehow she was able to balance getting to know every door, knock on every house in her district, while raising two children - Girl Scout leader, she taught Sunday school," she said of Hortman, 55.

Klobuchar said both Hoffmans were "hanging in there" after undergoing surgery for multiple gunshot wounds.

The attacks started around 2 a.m. (0700 GMT) on Saturday, when authorities said the gunman shot the Hoffmans in their home in Champlin before driving several miles to Hortman's home in Brooklyn Park.

Police went to the Hortman house proactively

at the request of a sergeant who responded to the Hoffman attack and was concerned other politicians might be at risk. The gunman immediately fired upon the two officers when they arrived, and when they returned fire, he ran.

The FBI released photos, opens new tab of the suspect wearing a rubber mask and a police-like uniform.

David Carlson, 59, told Reuters he has shared a house in Minneapolis with Boelter for more than a year and last saw him on Friday night. He said he received a disturbing text from Boelter at about 6 a.m. on Saturday.

"He said that he might be dead soon," said Carlson, who called police.

Police said they found flyers with "No Kings" printed on them in the gunman's car in reference to the thousands of nationwide "No Kings" protests on Saturday against the Trump administration, but that there were no known direct links between him and the movement.

"Such horrific violence will not be tolerated in the United States of America," Trump said in a statement.

Trump has faced criticism from some opponents for using inflammatory rhetoric at times when talking about his political rivals. In one of his first moves in office earlier this year, Trump pardoned nearly everyone criminally charged with participating in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

G7 leaders gather in Canada for a summit overshadowed by Israel-Iran crisis and trade wars

BANFF, Alberta (AP): Leaders of some of the world's biggest economic powers arrive in the Canadian Rockies on Sunday for a Group of Seven summit, overshadowed by an escalating conflict between Israel and Iran and U.S. President Donald Trump's unresolved trade war with allies and rivals alike.

Israel's strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation, which appeared to catch many world leaders unawares, is the latest sign of a more volatile world as Trump seeks to withdraw the U.S. from its role as world policeman.

Speaking on a flight to Canada to attend the summit, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he had discussed efforts to de-escalate the crisis with Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as other world leaders.

Britain is sending fighter jets and other military reinforcements to the Middle East.

"We do have longstanding concerns about the nuclear program Iran has. We do recognize Israel's right to self-defense, but I'm absolutely clear that this needs to de-escalate. There is a huge risk of escalation for the region and more widely," Starmer said, adding he expected "intense discussions" would continue at the summit.

As summit host, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has decided to abandon the annual practice of issuing a joint statement, or communique, at the end of the meeting.

With other leaders wanting to talk to Trump in an effort to talk him out of imposing tariffs, the summit risks being a series of bilateral conversations

rather than a show of unity. Trump is the summit wild card. Looming over the meeting are his inflammatory threats to make Canada the 51st state and take over Greenland.

French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Greenland on Sunday for a highly symbolic stop on his way to Canada, meeting the Arctic territory's leader and Denmark's prime minister aboard a Danish helicopter carrier.

Macron's office said the trip to Greenland is a reminder that Paris supports principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders as enshrined in the U.N. charter.

Macron, who is one of the very few leaders to have known Trump during his first term, was the first European leader to visit the White House after Trump took office, emerging unscathed from the Oval Office encounter.

But despite the two leaders' sporadic bromance, Macron's approach to Trump has failed to bear major results, with France caught up in the president's planned tariffs on the European Union.

Nor did it bring any U.S. security guarantees for Ukraine despite Macron's efforts, together with Starmer, to build a coalition of nations that could deploy forces after any ceasefire with Russia, with the hope it would convince the Trump administration to provide backup.

Trump is scheduled to arrive late Sunday in Kananaskis, Alberta. Bilateral meetings between other leaders are possible Sunday, but the summit program does not get underway until Monday.

Peter Boehm, Canada's sherpa of the 2018 G7 summit in Quebec and veteran

of six G7 summits, expects the heads of state to pivot discussion to devote more time to the war.

"Leaders can accommodate a discussion, perhaps even a statement," Boehm said.

"The foreign policy agenda has become much larger with this."

Leaders who are not part of the G7 but have been invited to the summit by Carney include the heads of state of India, Ukraine, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Australia, Mexico and the UAE. Avoiding tariffs will continue to be top of mind.

"Leaders, and there are some new ones coming, will want to meet Donald Trump," Boehm said. "Trump doesn't like the big round table as much he likes the one-on-one."

Bilateral meetings with the American president can be fraught as Trump has used them to try to intimidate the leaders of Ukraine and South Africa.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien told a panel this week that if Trump does act out, leaders should ignore him and remain calm like Carney did in his recent Oval Office meeting.

"He tends to be a bully," Chrétien said. "If Trump has decided to make a show to be in the news, he will do something crazy. Let him do it and keep talking normally."

Starmer had a warm Oval Office meeting with the president in February, wooing Trump with an invitation for a state visit from King Charles III. Trump has praised the British prime minister, despite their political differences.

Last month Britain and the U.S. announced they had struck a trade deal that will slash American tariffs

on U.K. autos, steel and aluminum. It has yet to take effect, however, though British officials say they are not concerned the Trump administration might go back on its word.

Starmer's attempts to woo Trump have left him in an awkward position with Canada, the U.K.'s former colony, close ally and fellow Commonwealth member. Starmer has also drawn criticism — especially from Canadians — for failing to address Trump's stated desire to make Canada the 51st state.

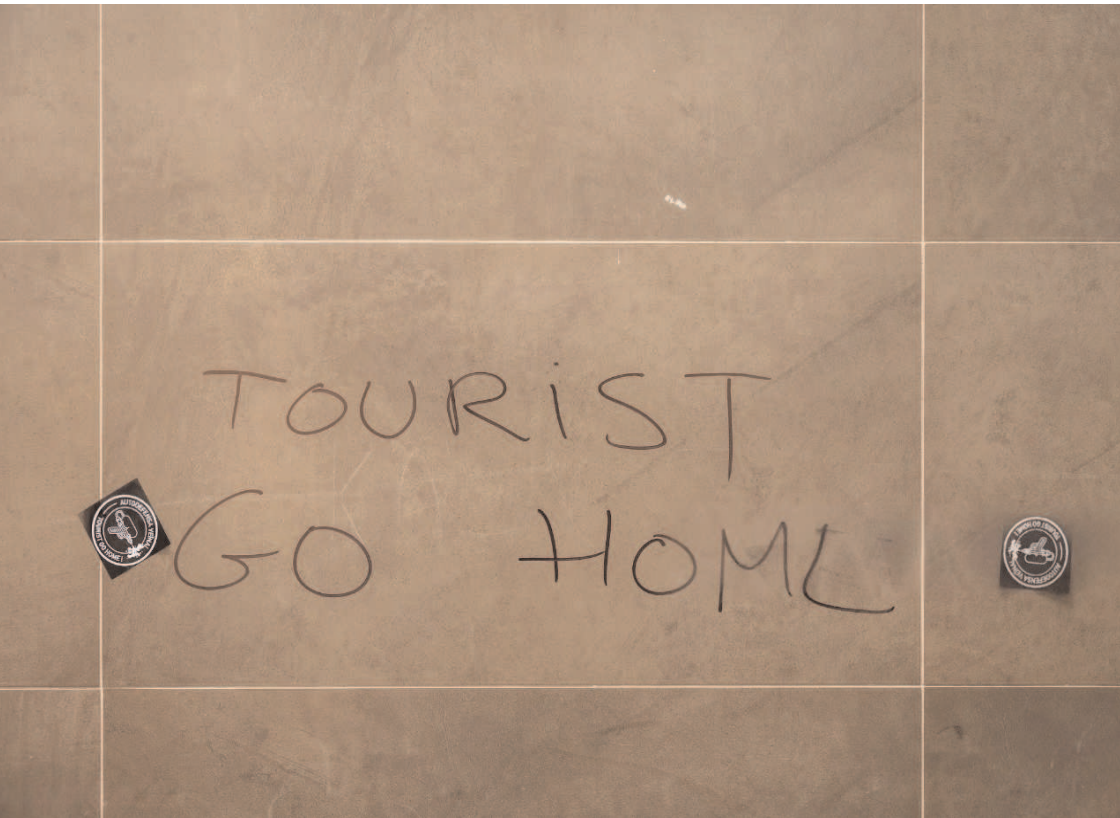
Asked if he has told Trump to stop the 51st state threats, Starmer told The Associated Press: "I'm not going to get into the precise conversations I've had, but let me be absolutely clear: Canada is an independent, sovereign country and a much-valued member of the Commonwealth."

The war in Ukraine will be on the agenda. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is due to attend the summit and is expected to meet with Trump, a reunion coming just months after their bruising Oval Office encounter which laid bare the risks of having a meeting with the U.S. president.

Starmer met with Carney in Ottawa before the summit for talks focused on security and trade, in the first visit to Canada by a British prime minister for eight years.

German officials were keen to counter the suggestion that the summit would be a "six against one" event, noting that the G7 countries have plenty of differences of emphasis among themselves on various issues.

"The only problem you cannot forecast is what the president of the United States will do depending on the mood, the need to be in the news," said Chrétien.



BARCELONA: Graffiti reading "Tourist Go Home" on a wall during a protest called by the Neighborhoods Assembly for Tourist Degrowth (ABDT), in Barcelona, Spain, on Sunday.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): Not one suspect imprisoned in Haiti has faced trial after being charged in the killing of President Jovenel Moïse, who was gunned down at his home in the nation's capital nearly four years ago.

Gang violence, death threats and a crumbling judicial system have stalled an ongoing investigation defined by outbursts and tense exchanges between suspects and judges.

"You failed in your mission. And you are not ashamed to declare yourself innocent," Judge Claude Jean said in a booming voice as he stood and faced a Haitian policeman responsible for protecting the president, who was shot 12 times in Port-au-Prince on July 7, 2021.

Jean is one of six Haitian judges investigating whether there is enough evidence to warrant a trial for the 20 suspects held in the troubled Caribbean country. Authorities said some of the suspects envisioned a coup, not an assassination, leading to lucrative contracts under a new administration.

The suspects include 17 former soldiers from Colombia and three Haitian officials: an ex-mayor, a former policeman and a former Haiti Ministry of Justice employee who worked on an anti-corruption unit. Missing are several key Haitian suspects who escaped last year after a powerful gang federation raided Haiti's two biggest prisons, including Dimitri Hérard, ex-head of security at Haiti's National Palace.

Three other suspects, all Colombians, were killed hours after Moïse was slain, while a key suspect in the case, Haitian Superior Court Judge Windelle Coq Thélot, died in January while still a fugitive.

The investigation was repeatedly halted by the resignation of judges who feared for their lives. Defense attorneys then appealed after the court

ruled there was sufficient evidence for trial. Jean and five other judges are now tasked with restarting the inquiry. But determining complicity among 51 suspects is only one of numerous challenges.

Last year, powerful gangs seized control of the downtown Port-au-Prince courthouse where the judges were interrogating suspects. The hearings were suspended until the government rented a home in Pacot, a neighborhood once considered safe enough for the French embassy. But gangs controlling 85% of Haiti's capital recently attacked and forced the government to move again.

The hearings restarted in May, this time in a private home in Pétion-Ville, a community trying to defend itself from gangs seeking full control of Port-au-Prince.

As a fan swirled lazily in the background, Judge Phemond Damicy grilled Ronald Guerrier in late May.

One of several police officers tasked with protecting the president, Guerrier insisted he never entered Moïse's home and couldn't fight the intruders because he was dazed by a stun grenade.

"The attackers were dressed all in black. They wore balaclavas and blinded us with their flashlights. I couldn't identify anyone," Guerrier testified, adding they used a megaphone to claim they were U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents. "The attackers operated as if they were entering their own home. It seemed they knew the place perfectly."

Damicy asked if they shot at drones that Guerrier said were buzzing above the president's home.

"The attackers covered the entire area with their fire," Guerrier replied. "There was nothing we could do."

Damicy grew exasperated. "Under no circumstances should an enemy cross you with impunity to commit his

crime," he said. "In your place, I would fire on the enemy. I would even die, if necessary."

Inside the investigation's heavily guarded, stone-and-concrete headquarters in a leafy residential community, raised voices have dominated tense interrogations.

One judge stood and thundered a question about a gun: "On the day of the death of President Jovenel Moïse, were you in possession of a Galil?"

In another outburst in March, a judge repeatedly pressed Joseph Badio, the former Ministry of Justice official who spent two years on the run, about his call to former Prime Minister Ariel Henry after the assassination. At the time, Henry had only been nominated as prime minister by Moïse.

"You can say whatever you want with your mouth," Badio told the judge, who ordered him to sit as he rose while speaking. "There is no prohibition for me to communicate with anyone I want."

The tension has carried over into interrogations of the Colombian suspects, who maintain they were hired by a Miami-based security firm to provide security for power and water treatment plants and diplomatic officials, as well as train Haitian police and soldiers.

The Colombians have denied involvement, while their attorney, Nathalie Delisca, said there has been no presumption of innocence during the interrogations.

"The treatment inflicted on the detainees was inhumane," she said, alleging mistreatment by authorities after their arrest.

The former soldiers said they were beaten, threatened with death, forced to sign documents in a language they don't understand and barred from communicating with their lawyers and families for long stretches.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

Email: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

The Middle East cannot afford an unending cycle of violence

Israel's extensive strikes on nuclear and military sites across Iran early this morning - the largest such attack since the 1980s - are an unnerving escalation in a region already living at the edge of widespread conflict.

The Israeli military described the strikes as "pre-emptive", but they are more likely to ignite a dangerous chain of events than they are to prevent one. The high-profile Iranian victims are thought to include two nuclear scientists and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander-in-Chief Maj Gen Hossein Salami, as well as chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces Maj Gen Mohammad Bagheri. Initial Iranian retaliation was already in play within hours of attacks and where this cycle of violence and destruction will end is increasingly unclear.

A combination of several factors has marched the Middle East to this point. Tehran's reckless nuclear programme, which the UN nuclear watchdog yesterday said was in breach of its non-proliferation obligations, has been a cause of global concern. However, an Israel military attack leads to further instability, though in past weeks this appeared increasingly inevitable, especially given the country has been on a near-permanent war footing since the start of its invasion of Gaza. Add to this combustible mix Washington's inability - or unwillingness - to restrain its Israeli allies, and the stage is set for the kind of conflagration seen earlier.

De-escalation is needed, and it is needed right now because further direct conflict between Israel and Iran could spiral into something more than another close call to all-out war. Already, we have seen Israeli drones and warplanes hit targets in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and now Iran. Tehran has suggested that it could widen the scale of this confrontation, with Iranian Defence Minister Gen Aziz Nasirzadeh saying that "if a conflict is imposed on [Iran] ... all US bases are within reach and we will boldly target them in host countries".

Bombing runs and sabre rattling do nothing to guarantee any country's security. On the contrary, they undermine civilian efforts to defuse regional tensions. Israel's dangerous power play against Iran casts a shadow over Oman-mediated talks between the US and Iran that are still - for now - scheduled to continue on Sunday. Although both sides have traded barbs about the talks' progress, questions about both parties' seriousness now appear more pointed, not only in light of Israel's operation and Iran's admonishment by the IAEA but in the fact that the US has been preparing to evacuate non-essential staff from Middle East.

If there is a lack of seriousness about diplomatic engagement, then it is the people of the Middle East who will suffer most. In Iran, many residential areas were struck in Israel's operation, damaging people's homes and livelihoods, and leaving civilians to pick up the pieces. In Israel, the civilian population will be bracing for Iranian retaliation.

The people of the Middle East have had enough of war and destruction - something that both sides have contributed to. Relying on the Iranian government's instinct for self-preservation is not a strategy for regional peace and security, nor is allowing unilateral action from a bellicose Israel, whose embattled coalition government is grappling with internal political divisions.

This is the moment for de-escalation and to let regionally-supported mediation do its work. The alternative is further escalation that leads to the possibility of a conflict that no-one can control.

Important Notice

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



In Europe, the ground is being prepared for another genocide

Esad Širbegovi?

On April 15, Austrian Nobel laureate Peter Handke was supposed to appear on Austria's national broadcaster ORF to talk about his new writings. Instead, he proceeded to once again deny that the Srebrenica genocide happened, calling it Brudermord - biblical fratricide and framing it as a spiritual tragedy rather than a crime against humanity.

ORF stood by its decision to interview Handke when it faced criticism. It claimed that it had done nothing wrong since the interviewer acknowledged the genocide in a question.

That a European broadcaster would choose to platform genocide denial at this time is hardly surprising.

Europe faces a crisis not only of memory but of dangerous continuity. From the Holocaust to Srebrenica to Gaza, denial of state violence against marginalised groups seeks to erase past atrocities, normalise present ones, and pave the way for future ones.

Fratricide as 'the worst crime'

The Bosnian genocide was the first genocide broadcast on television. In 1995, distressing images from Srebrenica filled living rooms worldwide, exposing the failure of international protection. Despite a lengthy process of prosecuting war crimes through the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and court decisions implicating the complicity of European peacekeepers in the massacres, denial of the Bosnian genocide continues to be well tolerated in Europe.

While Handke is by far not the only prominent public figure who engages in it, his rhetoric makes clear how this crime has come to be weaponised in minimising German and Austrian guilt for the Holocaust.

Handke portrays the Bosnian genocide as a tragic civil war between "brothers" - Brudermord. He romanticises war criminals as victims and embeds genocide denial in a fascist narrative of redemption through ethnic violence.

According to him, fratricide is "much worse" than genocide - ie, those who kill their "brothers" must be deemed worse criminals than the Nazis who killed "the other". By framing atrocities this way, Handke effectively minimises the responsibility of Germans and Austrians for the Holocaust.

In this twisted narrative, the descendants of the Nazis can claim moral superiority, insisting they did not commit the "worst crime of all" - Brudermord. The chilling implication is that Jews were never truly "brothers" to Europeans like Handke.

Serb nationalists may see Handke as an ally in genocide denial, but he doesn't defend them - he uses them. Through them, white Europe cleans its hands of its bloody crimes - from Auschwitz to Algeria, from Congo to Rwanda. Handke's theological language is an alchemy of European conscience, shifting guilt onto the Muslims, the Jews, and the "Balkan savages".

Transplanting anti-Semitism

Handke's logic parallels and reinforces the broader campaign to shift the blame for anti-Semitism - and even the Holocaust - onto Arabs and Muslims. In Germany, this trend has been fully embraced by the state and various public institutions, which - against all evidence - have begun to claim that the immigrant Muslim community in the country is responsible for rising anti-Semitic sentiment.

In 2024, the German parliament, the Bundestag, passed a resolution stating that "the alarming extent of anti-Semitism" is "driven by immigration from North African and Middle Eastern countries".

German media continues to fabricate a "Muslim Nazi past", with one article claiming:

"Unlike Germany, the Middle East

Germany's political establishment is now constructing a revisionist moral alibi: one in which Nazis are reimagined as reluctant, remorseful perpetrators, while Palestinians and their Muslim and Arab allies are vilified as more evil than the Nazis themselves.

For many years, this used to be a fringe idea adopted by far-right parties like the Alternative for Germany (AfD). But now, the AfD's core ideas, not just on Germany's Nazi past, but also on immigration and Islam, have been widely adopted by the political centre. This shift reflects a longstanding strategy of displacing guilt. Historian Ernst Nolte, celebrated by the conservative Konrad Adenauer Foundation with a major award in 2000, argued the Holocaust was a reaction to Soviet "barbarism", relativising Nazi crimes by equating Auschwitz with the Gulag. Nolte argued that Hitler had "rational" reasons for targeting the Jews and rejected the "collective guilt" attributed to Germany since 1945. Today, AfD leader Alice Weidel echoes this stance, dismissing Germany's remembrance culture as a "guilt cult".

has never come to terms with its Nazi past." Meanwhile, state-funded NGOs have branded the Palestinian keffiyeh a Nazi symbol and echoed the discredited Israeli claim that the grand mufti of Palestine "inspired" the Final Solution.

Germany's political establishment is now constructing a revisionist moral alibi: one in which Nazis are reimagined as reluctant, remorseful perpetrators, while Palestinians and their Muslim and Arab allies are vilified as more evil than the Nazis themselves.

For many years, this used to be a fringe idea adopted by far-right parties like the Alternative for Germany (AfD). But now, the AfD's core ideas, not just on Germany's Nazi past, but also on immigration and Islam, have been widely adopted by the political centre.

This shift reflects a longstanding strategy of displacing guilt. Historian Ernst Nolte, celebrated by the conservative Konrad Adenauer Foundation with a major award in 2000, argued the Holocaust was a

reaction to Soviet "barbarism", relativising Nazi crimes by equating Auschwitz with the Gulag.

Nolte argued that Hitler had "rational" reasons for targeting the Jews and rejected the "collective guilt" attributed to Germany since 1945. Today, AfD leader Alice Weidel echoes this stance, dismissing Germany's remembrance culture as a "guilt cult".

Where Nolte blamed the Soviets, today's political establishment blames Muslims. The goal is the same: to erase German responsibility from history.

From denial to enabling

Genocide denial is not a passive act of forgetting but an active, harmful process that perpetuates violence. Genocide scholar Gregory Stanton recognises denial as the final stage of geno-

in Bosnia is now applied to Gaza. It follows a familiar pattern: blame "both sides", portray victims as aggressors, and assign responsibility to a few individuals - thus hiding systematic violence. This blueprint is perhaps most clearly echoed in the claim that it is only Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his two far-right ministers who are responsible for the "violence" happening in Gaza, thus separating policy from structure and evading deeper accountability.

In the narrative denying the Bosnian genocide, responsibility is also reduced to a few "bad apples" within the Serb state apparatus - as if genocide were a spontaneous aberration rather than a meticulously planned, state-executed crime requiring widespread coordination and intent.

Preparing for a future genocide in Europe

Europe today faces a profound crisis as far-right nationalism surges and a vanishing middle class struggles amid growing social and economic precarity. In many Western countries, the middle class is shrinking while what the right calls "surplus population" - disproportionately composed of Muslims - is increasingly marginalised and scapegoated.

In a time like this, recasting a past genocide against an othered population as a misunderstanding contributes to creating the environment for the next genocide to come. And there are already clear indications that segments of the political class are pushing for removing this "surplus population" under various guises.

The Nazi euphemism "Umsiedlung nach Osten" (resettlement to the East) was a grotesque excuse to deport Jews to gas chambers. Today, European actors like Austrian far-right activist Martin Sellner openly advocate for "remigration", a sinister echo of this deadly logic aimed at uprooting Muslim communities.

European political elites may not have embraced this term yet, but they are busy putting into practice various policies that have the same ultimate goal - limit or decrease the Muslim presence in Europe. They have been building a legal regime for exclusion through the 2024 EU Migration Pact, plans to offshore asylum seekers to Albania or other countries, and a big injection of cash into Frontex, the EU's border agency accused of - among other things - illegal pushbacks.

These are not neutral measures but ideological tools of racialised removal, cloaked in liberal rhetoric. And they will only get more violent with time.

This is not alarmism. It's a pattern. The erosion of rights always begins with those deemed to be "the other".

If genocide denial is not urgently addressed, if the Gaza genocide is not recognised and immediate action taken to stop it, Europe risks coming full circle. With genocide denial by United Nations experts and genocide scholars, and continuing to provide Israel with weapons and diplomatic cover.

The playbook developed

Israel may have just pushed Iran across the nuclear line

Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Mohammad Eslami

Historians may well mark June 13, 2025, as the day the world crossed a line it may not easily step back from. In a move that shocked the international community and sent global markets reeling, Israel launched a wide-scale military operation against Iran in the early hours of the morning, striking targets across at least 12 provinces, including the capital, Tehran, and the northwestern hub of Tabriz. Among the targets were suspected nuclear facilities, air defence systems, and the homes and offices of senior military personnel. Iranian state media confirmed the deaths of several top commanders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The Israeli government officially confirmed responsibility for the attacks, naming the campaign Operation Raising Lion. Iranian officials described it as the most direct act of war in the countries' decades-long shadow conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears to be pursuing two objectives. First, Israeli officials fear that Iran is nearing the technical capability to build a nuclear weapon - something Netanyahu has repeatedly promised to prevent, by force if necessary. Second, Israel hopes a dramatic escalation will pressure Tehran into accepting a new nuclear agreement more favourable to United States and Israeli interests, including the removal of its enriched uranium stockpiles. Just as Netanyahu has failed to destroy Hamas through military force, both goals may ultimately serve only to perpetuate a broader regional war.

While the prospect of all-out war between Iran and Israel has long loomed, Friday's events feel dangerously different. The scale, audacity and implications of the attack - and the near-certain Iranian response - raise the spectre of a regional conflict spilling far beyond its traditional bounds.

Since the 2011 Arab Spring, a Saudi-Iranian cold war has played out across the region as each country has sought to expand its influence. That rivalry was paused through Chinese mediation in March 2023. But since October 2023, a war of attrition between Israel and Iran has unfolded through both conventional and asymmetrical means - a conflict that now threatens to define the trajectory of the Middle East for years to come. Whether this confrontation escalates further now hinges largely on one man: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. If Iran's supreme leader comes to view the survival of the Islamic Republic as fundamentally threatened, Tehran's response could expand far beyond Israeli territory.

In recent months, Israeli leaders had issued repeated warnings that a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities was imminent. Intelligence assessments in Tel Aviv claimed Iran was only weeks away from acquiring the necessary components to build a nuclear weapon. Although this claim was disputed by other members of the international community, it nonetheless shaped Israel's decision to act militarily.

At the same time, indirect negotiations between Iran and the US had been under way, focused on limiting Iran's uranium enrichment and reducing tensions through a revised nuclear agreement. US President Donald Trump publicly supported these diplomatic efforts, describing them as preferable to what he called a potentially bloody war. However, the talks faltered when Iran refused to halt enrichment on its own soil.

The US administration, while officially opposing military escalation, reportedly gave tacit approval for a limited Israeli strike. Washington is said to have believed that such a strike could shift the balance in negotiations and send a message that Iran was not negotiating from a position of strength - similar to how Trump has framed

Ukraine's position in relation to Russia. Although US officials maintain they had advance knowledge of the attacks but did not participate operationally, both the aircraft and the bunker-busting bombs used were supplied by the US, the latter during Trump's first term.

Initial reports from Iranian sources confirm that the strikes inflicted significant damage on centrifuge halls and enrichment pipelines at its Natanz facility. However, Iranian officials insist the nuclear programme remains intact. Iran's nuclear infrastructure includes multiple deeply buried sites - some more than 500 metres (550 yards) underground and spread across distances exceeding 1,000km (620 miles). As a result, the total destruction of the programme by air strikes alone in this initial phase appears unlikely.

Iranian officials have long warned that any direct military aggression on their territory by Israel would cross a red line, and they have promised severe retaliation. Now, with blood spilled on its soil and key targets destroyed, Khamenei faces enormous internal and external pressure to respond. The elimination of multiple high-ranking military officials in a single night has further intensified the demand for a multifaceted response.

Iran's reply so far has taken the form of another wave of drone attacks, similar to those launched in April and October - most of which were intercepted by Israeli and Jordanian defences.

If Iran does not engage with the US at the upcoming talks in Oman on Sunday regarding a possible nuclear deal, the failure of diplomacy could mark the start of a sustained campaign. The Iranian government has stated that it does not view the Israeli operation as an isolated incident, but rather as the beginning of a longer conflict. Referring to it as a "war of attrition" - a term also used to describe Iran's drawn-out war with Iraq in the 1980s - officials have indicated the confrontation is likely to unfold over weeks or even months.

While retaliatory missile and drone strikes on Israeli targets are likely to continue, many now anticipate that Iran could also target US military bases in the Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and even Jordan. Such an escalation would likely draw US forces directly into the conflict, implicate critical regional infrastructure and disrupt global oil supplies, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz. That, in turn, could trigger a steep rise in energy prices and send global markets spiralling - dragging in the interests of nearly every major power.

Even if an immediate, proportionate military response proves difficult, Iran is expected to act across several domains, including cyberattacks, proxy warfare and political manoeuvring. Among the political options reportedly under consideration is a full withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Iran has long used the NPT framework to assert that its nuclear programme is peaceful. Exiting the treaty would signal a significant policy shift. Additionally, there is growing speculation within Iran's political circles that the religious decree issued by Khamenei banning the development and use of nuclear weapons may be reconsidered. If that prohibition is lifted, Iran could pursue a nuclear deterrent openly for the first time.

Whether Israel's strikes succeeded in delaying Iran's nuclear ambitions - or instead provoked Tehran to accelerate them - remains uncertain. What is clear is that the confrontation has entered a new phase. Should Iran exit the NPT and begin advancing its nuclear programme without the constraints of international agreements, some may argue that Israel's campaign - intended to stop a bomb - may instead end up accelerating its creation.

The enemy of my enemy could be my enemy as well

Yossi Mekelberg

Not every proverb that sounds plausible is necessarily universally true, and “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” which is thought to originate from an Indian Sanskrit treatise, the Arthashastra, dating back to around the 4th century B.C., is no exception.

On more than one occasion in history, the enemy of one’s enemy has proved, in fact, to be one’s enemy as well.

I was reminded of this proverb when I learned that Israeli authorities have been arming a Palestinian militia in Gaza - as if there was not already enough weaponry there to cause horrific bloodshed - as part of their efforts to “eliminate” Hamas.

For more than a year we have repeatedly heard from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel was “a step away from victory” in this effort. This has proved to be more a case of wishful thinking than reality.

Netanyahu has now publicly acknowledged that Israel is arming what it calls a “clan” that operates in the Rafah area and is led by Yasser Abu Shabab who, according to the European Council on Foreign Affairs, is a gang leader who is widely accused of looting aid trucks, has been jailed by Hamas for drug smuggling, and “has alleged ties” with Daesh.

Not your ordinary guy who you would want to mix with, then. His group consists of anything from 100 to 250 armed men, and is somewhere between a militia and a criminal gang - most probably both.

To find an ally in times of conflict is to gain an asset, and to divide and rule is

another war tactic known since the dawn of history. But if allies are not selected carefully, the long-term unintended consequences can be worse than the immediate supposed benefits.

The Soviet Union was hardly a friend of the West after the Second World War, but the US decision to arm the mujahideen when the Russians invaded Afghanistan came back to haunt Washington, for example.

Similarly, Israel’s support of Hamas in its early days, as a counter to Fatah, and continuing to do so until the disastrous consequences of this manifested themselves on Oct. 7, 2023, was an act of sheer self-harm. Why they would now repeat that mistake with a similar folly is incomprehensible.

Netanyahu did not hide his true intentions when asked about arming Abu Shabab’s group. He said: “We have mobilized clans in Gaza that oppose Hamas. What’s wrong with that?” The answer to his question is: Where do we start?

Netanyahu’s interpretation of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” reveals ignorance and an extreme lack of judgment, possibly signs of desperation, and the air of a colonialist approach. He is confusing the concept of a clan with what is simply a band of criminals, wrongly equating the latter with legitimate local leaders who represent the best interests of their people - alliances that have been a method of maintaining control that occupying forces have employed for centuries.

But forging an alliance

with legitimate local leaders is very different from being in cahoots with those who for months have been accused by Palestinians and international humanitarian organizations of looting aid lorries and profiting from the misery of their own people.

In their inability to achieve the unrealistic goal of eliminating Hamas, Israeli authorities are instead coming up with ideas that are detached from reality. In this case they are looking for allies that appear uninterested in helping to fulfill the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and instead are more interested in enriching themselves, and possibly gaining political power.

It is obvious why Israel opposes Hamas remaining in control of Gaza. But the organization has said - though the claim has yet to be tested - it is prepared to hand over governance of the territory to any Palestinian organization that is agreed upon nationally and regionally. However, it insists it will not disband, and so a formula is required to ensure the organization does not pose a threat to Israeli security or Palestinian unity.

Netanyahu also rejects postwar Palestinian Authority governance of Gaza, having declared this year that “the day after the war in Gaza, neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority will be there.”

This approach raises the suspicion that by supporting armed militias, Israel is deliberately becoming an agent of chaos whose goal is not necessarily to defeat Hamas but to prolong the war indefinitely, thus help-

ing to ensure Netanyahu’s government remains in power, at least until next year’s general election.

In recent weeks, we have seen demonstrations of spontaneous popular opposition to Hamas, despite a brutal crackdown on such dissent by the organization, with hundreds of demonstrators calling for it to be ousted and the war to end.

Considering the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza - recently described during an interview with the BBC by International Committee of the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric as “worse than hell on Earth” - it is only to be expected that ordinary Gazans, who for nearly two years have been enduring such a hellish situation, would vent their anger against both Israel and Hamas.

But the engagement by Israel with clans and militias, and even gangs, has nothing to do with trying to alleviate the suffering of the 2.3 million people of Gaza; it is all about creating a force to counter Hamas, and to undermine the Palestinian Authority and also the Palestine Liberation Organization’s position as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

While some clans in Gaza were approached last year with the aim of creating an opposition to Hamas, the Abu Shabab gang is not regarded as a clan but calls itself, according to media reports, an “antiterror service,” with no clear aims or indication of who it serves. If this is truly the case, Israel is creating a monster that will take a long time to con-

tain once it is let loose, as we have seen with similar situations in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. And it will pose a threat, first and foremost, to Israel itself.

When countries embark on risky experiments of this kind with nonstate actors, they toy with the idea that they will always be able to control and even disarm them when they have outlived their usefulness.

History shows us that in many cases, such groups develop their own sets of interests and revenue streams, not to mention coalitions with like-minded armed groups, sometimes even those they were initially supposed to contain. Meanwhile the country that initially sponsored them tends to lose control of them.

Worse still for Israel, since Abu Shabab is depicted on social media in Gaza as “the Israeli agent” - in other words a traitor, which in the middle of a bitter war is as good as putting a bounty on his head - he has an incentive either to eventually join forces with Hamas, or simply turn on Israel using the weapons it put in his hands.

This might be the right time for the Netanyahu government to recognize that there are better ways to undermine extremism and fundamentalism than encouraging civil war. In this case, they begin with ending the killing of innocent civilians, allowing humanitarian aid to reach those that so desperately need it, and then recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It would be well worth checking this alternative path in place of the one Israel is on.

Governments could also support workshops, community programs and mental health counseling to counter rising incidents of cyberbullying, anxiety, depression and social isolation. At the same time, parents and teachers must be empowered through awareness programs, such as utilizing parental control tools on popular apps.

Creating safe digital spaces, particularly for vulnerable groups, calls for strong data protection measures and bold anti-cyberbullying policies. Age-appropriate regulations that protect children online are key and considering capping the time they spend on social media could be worthwhile. Additionally, it is imperative to counter the ever-growing risks of harmful content and misinformation that circulate on digital platforms, such as misleading health information.

Connectivity and universal access should remain a priority, particularly with digital economic empowerment being a high priority for MENA governments. This entails investing in strong telecommunications infrastructures and deploying upskilling programs to pave the way for workforces to adopt future-ready jobs. In the workplace, digital nomad visas and flexible work policies should be promoted, with legal protections supporting the right to disconnect from work. The MENA region has the opportunity to carve out a path toward a healthier, more mindful digital society.

Climate challenge as a development opportunity

Navroz K. Dubash

When climate change is framed as a global problem requiring collective regulation of greenhouse gas emissions, developing country governments see little reason to prioritize the issue over others. After all, the rich, industrialized countries that contributed disproportionately to the problem are themselves backing away from decarbonization and climate finance commitments, while low-income countries bear the brunt of the costs of climate change. Decision-makers in developing countries understandably conclude it may be more rational to hunker down and focus on climate resilience rather than emissions reductions.

But this is not the only way to frame the problem. While climate change undoubtedly poses a global collective action problem, in practice, climate outcomes are shaped by myriad decisions concerning development objectives such as industrial development, urbanization, job creation and local pollution management. Because late developers often have not entirely locked into energy systems, transport infrastructure, urbanization plans and energy consumption patterns, they have greater flexibility to steer investment and consumption choices toward lower-carbon and climate-resilient options.

In other words, the climate challenge can be framed as a choice among alternative development pathways. In many cases, development choices are also climate choices and, in a world where being a low-carbon economy confers a competitive edge, the absence of structural lock-in could be turned into an advantage.

Pursuing a climate-as-development approach is not easy or foolproof: it requires considerable state capacity, strategy-setting capabilities and full mobilization of the necessary technologies and finance. Importantly, it does not negate concerns about climate equity. Developing countries may opt to pursue the climate-as-development opportunity, but rich countries that disproportionately caused the problem remain on the hook to support this transition. Yet, this perspective offers an alternative to the zero-sum framing of climate policy and a basis for nationally specific visions.

An important starting point is that elites internalize and support low-carbon development as a potential opportunity, with climate resilience as a necessary component. Climate objectives cannot trump development goals but, equally, development innocent of climate considerations is no longer viable. To be politically feasible, any strategy must be rooted in the national context. Low-carbon development pathways are not easily replicable and need to be tailored to geography, local capacities and other variables. And, as with any long-term structural change, a durable, widely shared national narrative is needed (South Korea’s “green growth” in the 2010s is a useful example).

Shifting from narrative and vision to policy and implementation requires high levels of state capacity. Technical capabilities, along with the ability to identify climate-as-development opportunities and sources of climate vulnera-

bility, are necessary, but by no means sufficient. In addition, as sociologist Peter Evans’ analysis of East Asian industrial policy reminds us, the state must be simultaneously “embedded” to engage and support private sector players and maintain sufficient “autonomy” to avoid capture.

In practice, this means building institutions that can set the strategy, coordinate across sectors and at different scales, and provide trusted platforms to mediate conflict, ideally enshrined in law. All too often, climate policymaking is entrusted to relatively weak or siloed environmental ministries that cannot organize or enforce an all-of-government approach.

Moreover, because broad structural changes can introduce distributional concerns and leave some communities behind, deliberative bodies - such as South Africa’s Presidential Climate Commission - can help to entrench low-carbon options by mediating social frictions and maintaining broad-based political buy-in.

In addition, as sociologist Peter Evans’ analysis of East Asian industrial policy reminds us, the state must be simultaneously “embedded” to engage and support private sector players and maintain sufficient “autonomy” to avoid capture. In practice, this means building institutions that can set the strategy, coordinate across sectors and at different scales, and provide trusted platforms to mediate conflict, ideally enshrined in law. All too often, climate policymaking is entrusted to relatively weak or siloed environmental ministries that cannot organize or enforce an all-of-government approach. Moreover, because broad structural changes can introduce distributional concerns and leave some communities behind, deliberative bodies - such as South Africa’s Presidential Climate Commission - can help to entrench low-carbon options by mediating social frictions and maintaining broad-based political buy-in.

Another major challenge for developing and emerging economies facing high capital costs is mobilizing adequate finance for capital-intensive low-carbon development. There are no easy answers here.

According to BloombergNEF, global investment in the low-carbon energy transition in 2024 was only about a third of the annual amount required through 2030 and there were wide disparities in spending.

Developing countries have experienced few tangible gains from multilateral initiatives to scale up climate finance and reform the international financial architecture. Holding advanced economies to their financing commitments should remain a priority; but developing countries also need to mobilize more domestic finance and develop credible investment programs to attract global capital.

Recent efforts to create “country platforms” - government-led coordination mechanisms that articulate a vision and identify financing pathways to achieve it - suggest one way forward. In preparing to host this year’s COP30

UN climate change conference, Brazil is seeking to lead the way with a comprehensive multisectoral development program to mobilize investment.

Independent research suggests that Brazil has all the ingredients for a successful green industrial transformation: a strong resource base, a legacy of advanced manufacturing and a large market. Such models are worth exploring elsewhere, provided that they reflect a national vision, not donor-driven objectives.

One common criticism of nationally led, multi-objective development strategies is that the urgency of the climate crisis demands more direct action focused on emissions reduction, rather than on the indirect pathways suggested here. But this view ignores political reality. If climate action is seen to be at odds with other development objectives, it will lose. The only option is to devise strategies that can realize both sets of goals. The most effective climate

policy over the long term might be one that shapes structural choices regarding urbanization and industrialization, rather than one that focuses narrowly on regulating emissions. With the scope for global cooperation receding in today’s fraught geopolitical environment, these arguments should not be interpreted as a call for atomization. On the contrary, developing national visions for low-carbon, resilient economies would benefit from mutual learning and enhanced coordination rooted in attention to local contexts. Moreover, deploying low-carbon technologies will require investment in stable value chains, which depends on political and economic predictability. Developing countries, in particular, will have to be strategic and nimble in finding a niche for themselves. And the provision of finance at the necessary scale will still depend on a threshold degree of global cooperation. But there is only one foundation that can support all these elements: a domestically developed vision of a low-carbon, competitive and resilient economy.

MENA’s digital transformation must not ignore well-being

Sara Al-Mulla

To the casual observer, the digital transformation sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa region appears dazzling, changing the way people learn, work and connect. With some of the highest internet and smartphone penetration rates globally, the region’s transformation is powered by ambitious national visions, youthful populations and robust telecommunications infrastructures. But amid this momentum, the notion of digital well-being is becoming vital to ensure progress does not come at the expense of quality of life.

The National University of Singapore has crystallized the concept of “digital well-being” as the cultivation of a healthy, balanced and meaningful relationship with technology. This means being aware of both the benefits and the risks of online activities, understanding how digital engagement affects mental, emotional and social health, and learning how to manage the factors - such as screen time, online engagement and content exposure - that influence our overall digital experience.

Used wisely and responsibly, digital tools can help societies advance in many realms, such as expanding access to knowledge, boosting workplace productivity, promoting creative self-expression and engaging with communities of interest.

As governments and policymakers grapple with the implications of a hyperconnected world, initiatives

like the Global Digital Wellbeing Index - launched by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture - offer vital insights into how digital technologies affect people’s well-being worldwide.

This index, the first global benchmark of its kind, draws on 35,000 interviews across 35 countries and 12 pillars, including social cohesion, physical and mental health, the ability to disconnect, information quality, entertainment and culture, and access to services and goods. It aims to capture how equipped countries are to reap digital opportunities while shielding their citizens from risks.

While digital technologies have brought undeniable convenience, connectivity and productivity to modern life, their impacts on physical and mental well-being are hard to ignore. Last year, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development published a report titled “The Impact of Digital Technologies on Well-Being,” in which it highlighted the growing links between digital tools and well-being. For instance, the report emphasized the growing mental health risks associated with frequent digital technology use, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness and stress. Physically, the extended use of digital technologies has been linked to obesity, poor posture, poor sleep quality, neck and eye strain, and

other musculoskeletal issues - primarily due to sedentary behavior and excessive screen time.

And yet, digital transformation could be a game-changer for the MENA region, unlocking enormous economic and social gains. According to a report published by the World Bank, if digital transformation is leveraged in a competitive manner, the region has the potential to increase gross domestic product per capita by more than 40 percent. Employment in manufacturing could also rise by 7 percent, while tourist arrivals may see a 70 percent jump. Even more promising, digitalization could alleviate long-term unemployment, bringing it to near-zero, while doubling women’s participation in the workforce to more than 40 percent.

Many countries are already leading the way. Launched in 2021, the UAE’s National Policy for Digital Wellbeing was introduced with the aim of fostering safe, purposeful and positive digital communities. Another example is Saudi Arabia’s signature Sync initiative, which was launched as part of the country’s growing focus on digital well-being. This awareness and preventive program focuses on encouraging healthier tech habits in order to curb the rising toll of screen overuse on society.

France offers a compelling case study, as it issued a law in 2017 enshrining the “right to dis-

connect,” meaning employees are not obliged to answer work-related calls or emails outside their working hours. Meanwhile, Singapore and the UK have embedded digital mental health frameworks into school curricula. And Australia made global headlines last year by becoming the first country to pass a law banning children under 16 from accessing social media platforms.

To enhance digital well-being in the MENA region, several potential policy and legislative interventions warrant greater attention. Governments should develop evidence-based digital well-being frameworks based on key components that collectively contribute to well-being. Engaging academia would be advantageous in order to examine the impacts of digital technologies on mental and physical health in the region, paving the way for tailored policies, legislation and health services.

Education is a logical starting point and schools can embed well-being principles into curricula to empower students to upskill and use digital technologies mindfully, thereby minimizing the detrimental effects on their physical and mental health. For instance, Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Health tackles this issue on its official website, offering screen time recommendations for children up to 18 years old, in line with guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Luke Coffey

which has complied with nearly every US request since Trump returned to office. This lopsided approach is unsustainable. If the administration is truly committed to peace, then some of the burden must also be placed on Moscow.

Perhaps the most damaging dynamic at play is the internal division within the president’s own party. The Republican coalition is fractured when it comes to America’s role in the world, and those divisions are spilling into the administration’s foreign policy.

One faction, small but principled, consists of Reagan-style conservatives who believe in strong American leadership abroad. They argue that support for Ukraine advances US national security by weakening one of America’s top adversaries.

Nearly 150 days after returning to the Oval Office, US President Donald Trump is no closer to brokering a lasting peace between Ukraine and Russia than he was on Day 1.

This was a signature issue of his campaign. He regularly criticized President Joe Biden’s handling of the conflict and claimed that had he been in office, the war would never have started.

Although foreign policy did not dominate the 2024 election, Trump consistently argued that only he could bring the two sides to the negotiating table and deliver results where others had failed.

Upon taking office, however, he quickly discovered that the reality was more complicated. After initially promising he could achieve peace in 24 hours, almost five months later any reference to a timeline has quiet-

ly disappeared.

The problem of finding a path to peace stems from several overlapping challenges. Firstly, the Trump administration is trying to address too many major foreign policy issues at once. This scattershot approach has diluted focus and prevented a sustained effort on any single objective.

In addition to the pursuit of peace in Ukraine, Trump is also renegotiating major trade agreements. The deteriorating US-China relationship, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, consumes a significant share of attention. Meanwhile, the revived nuclear talks with Iran and the Israeli attack on Iran have emerged as another top-tier priority, often bumping other diplomatic efforts - such as Ukraine - down the list.

Another major hurdle is the lack of internal coordination within the US gov-

ernment. Disjointed messaging and inconsistent policy execution have plagued the administration’s approach. The Department of Defense and intelligence agencies have paused or scaled back various forms of assistance to Ukraine at different points over the past few months. Congressional pressure, especially from those Republicans who remain committed to aiding Ukraine, has helped keep support flowing but uncertainty looms.

Most estimates suggest existing funding will run out by late summer. Yet the administration has offered no clear plan for what happens next. Moscow knows this and is stalling to buy time.

More troubling is the apparent reluctance to exert serious pressure on Russia. In recent months, most of the diplomatic pressure has been directed at Ukraine,

greatest long-term challenge, in Asia.

Finally, there is a fringe, but increasingly vocal, group within the party who believe that Russia should be considered a potential US partner. They argue that Washington should seek detente with Moscow as a way of counterbalancing China. Not only is this dangerously naive, it also ignores Russia’s record of aggression and subversion against the West.

This internal infighting is not only undermining US policy toward Ukraine, it is also creating uncertainty among other traditional American allies. These partners, who have long relied on steady and predictable US leadership, are increasingly unsure of Washington’s commitment. The lack of consensus within the White House is weakening America’s global credibility and making it

But they are increasingly isolated within a broader conservative movement that is shifting toward skepticism, and in some cases outright hostility, toward international engagement.

A second, and more vocal, faction is the isolationist wing. These conservatives view America’s involvement in Ukraine as a costly distraction and argue that US interests are not at stake. They want a reduced global footprint and see aid to Ukraine as a waste of taxpayer money.

Then there are the so-called “prioritizers,” who argue that all US resources - strategic, diplomatic and military - should be redirected toward confronting China. They believe that maintaining global commitments in Europe or the Middle East undermines America’s ability to face its

Has the Russia-Ukraine conflict taken a back seat?



Federation Chambers, business leaders felicitate Tashkent-Islamabad flight

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) leadership and Chamber of Commerce's on Sunday felicitated the commencing of direct flight between the Capital cities of Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

The direct air link between Tashkent and Islamabad would prove to be a milestone in forging bilateral business and economic integration with Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, Senior Vice President of FPCCI ZAKI AIJAZ told APP here.

The FPCCI leader said the direct flights between Tashkent and Islamabad would increase the possibilities of economic cooperation between the two regional countries and two flights in a week from Tashkent, the industrial hub of Uzbekistan, to Islamabad, would help enhance economic activities between both sides.

He said Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev, deserved appreciation for playing an important role in the launch of a direct air

link between the two brotherly countries.

Karachi Chamber of Commerce (KCCI) President, Muhammad Jawed Bilwani said with the start of direct flights between Tashkent and Islamabad the economic relations between the two countries would increase in the coming future.

Bilwani said the business community of Karachi considered that the step would have a huge impact on economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and Central Asian states.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, Mian Abuzar Sha said Uzbekistan is a significant Central Asian States in Central Asia and the direct flights between Islamabad and Tashkent would strengthen business relations between the two countries and all the credit in that regard to Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev.

The President LCCEI said that this is the second direct flight between the two countries, after the biweekly direct flights started between Tashkent and

Lahore in this year, which is significant for regional connectivity.

In addition to the new Islamabad route, Uzbekistan Airways currently operates biweekly direct flights to Lahore on Wednesdays and Fridays is a milestone in the history of both nations.

President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rehan Naseem Bharara said besides trade relations, the direct flight link would also help in enhancing tourism and cultural ties between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

President FCCI said his chamber hailed the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad for commencing direct flights between both of the capital cities and also including its national airline Uzbekistan Airways.

President of Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ayub Mariani termed the commencing of Tashkent and Islamabad direct flights an important development for promoting regional economic integration.

President QCCI said such direct flights should be started between major

cities of the two countries, including Quetta which had a historical connection with Central Asian states.

President of Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fazl Muqem Khan said the PCCI hailed the direct air link between Tashkent as "our businessmen are economically connected with Central Asia".

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Nasir Quraishi said Uzbekistan, the stronger economy in Central Asia and the direct air flight connection would help boost trade relations between the two countries.

President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Usman Shaukat said they attached high value to relations with the Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan and the steps like direct air links between the two countries would promote trade, he added.

The Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry president, Rana Muhammad Sadique Khan also appreciated the direct air flight between both nations from Tashkent to Islamabad.



HYDERABAD: Labourers packing mangoes before transporting to fruit markets.

Minister inaugurates Farmer Facilitation Center in Multan

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Minister for Agriculture & Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani inaugurated a new Farmer Facilitation Center at Nag Shah Chowk in Multan, aiming to provide one-window support to cotton farmers.

The minister also chaired a high-level meeting on cotton cultivation and reviewed construction progress at the upcoming Model Agriculture Mall. He stated that cotton has been sown on 3.3 million acres this season, and for the first time in the country's history, early sowing on 850,000 acres has been

successfully achieved.

The review meeting was held at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Agricultural University and attended by senior agriculture officials, irrigation department representatives, and farmer organization members.

Later, the minister inspected the under-construction Model Agriculture Mall where Secretary Agriculture Ifitikhar Ali Sahoo and Green Pakistan Initiative representatives briefed him on the project. The mall is expected to be completed by June 30 and become operational by August 15.

Kirmani said four Model Agriculture Malls are being developed in Multan, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, and Sargodha with a budget of Rs. 1.25 billion. Ten more will be built in the next phase.

While inaugurating the Farmer Facilitation Center, the minister highlighted that 43 such centers are being established in cotton-producing tehsils to ensure easy access to quality pesticides and spray equipment at subsidized rates. He instructed that price lists be clearly displayed and purchase records maintained to ensure transparency and farmer convenience.

HCSTSI office bearers lauds budgets

HYDERABAD (APP): The office-bearers of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI), including President Muhammad Saleem Memon, Senior Vice President Ahmed Idrees Chohan and Vice President Shan Sehgal, jointly expressed their views on the federal and Sindh provincial budgets 2025–26, stating that although both governments have emphasized developmental objectives, digital reforms, and increased social sector allocations, there is a glaring lack of practical relief and structural support for small traders, manufacturers, and the broader business community.

President HCSTSI Saleem Memon said that initiatives like the SME Policy 2024–27, digital reforms in the FBR, the introduction of an automated refund system, and faceless audits are commendable steps. However, without timely and effective implementation, these initiatives may remain merely on paper.

He indicated that the imposition of new taxes on Cash on Delivery (COD), Digital Services and Digital Presence could severely impact small and emerging online businesses that are still in their nascent stages.

Commenting on Sindh budget, President Memon welcomed increased allocations in education, health, and infrastructure development, as well as the abolition of several local levies, including professional tax, entertainment duty, and drainage cess, which may provide some financial breathing space to the public.

However, he regretted the absence of direct financial packages, subsidy schemes, or ease-of-doing-

business initiatives for SMEs, markets, and industrial zones within the provincial budget.

Senior Vice President Idrees Chohan urged government to introduce a separate tax category for SMEs with lower rates, simplified return systems, easy installment options, and dedicated subsidy programs.

He further stressed the need for stakeholder consultation before introducing any tax reforms or digital implementation measures, to ensure alignment with ground realities.

Furthermore, the Chamber stressed the need for increasing the federal allocation from Rs 15 billion as announced to execute Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) project which is a strategic infrastructure project with a total estimated cost of over Rs 400 billion.

Qureshi also underscored the need to simplify regulations, streamline business licensing procedures, and reduce bureaucratic hurdles to improve the overall investment climate. Highlighting the pivotal role of youth and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), he called for targeted support in areas such as skills development, technology adoption, and access to global markets to unlock Pakistan's full economic potential.

He congratulated Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP, and his team for launching Freedom Gate Dialogues, expressing hope that the podcast will raise awareness on critical economic and development issues and promote informed public discourse.

He also underscored the need for mutual trust and comprehensive frameworks to address transnational threats such as terrorism and smuggling, which have long hindered regional progress.

‘Enhanced Pak-Afghan relations to boost trade’

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Ifitikhar Ali Malik on Sunday welcomed the government's decision to elevate diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, terming it a strategic move that will significantly enhance bilateral economic cooperation and bolster regional counterterrorism efforts.

Talking to the media here, he described the development as "highly significant" against the backdrop of rapidly evolving regional geopolitics. He emphasized that fostering closer ties with Afghanistan is essential for promoting lasting peace, trade integration, and regional stability.

"A stable Afghanistan is in the best interest of the entire region, including Pakistan," he stated. "This strategic engagement will not only accelerate bilateral trade but also unlock new avenues for regional connectivity and economic development."

He highlighted Afghanistan's role as a critical land bridge between Central and South Asia, noting that productive collaboration could substantially boost cross-border trade and infrastructure development.

Calling for joint ventures, free trade agreements, and enhanced people-to-people exchanges, he expressed confidence

that improved bilateral relations would attract investment and generate employment opportunities on both sides of the border.

He urged policymakers and regional stakeholders to maintain momentum through constructive dialogue and pragmatic measures that prioritize shared economic interests. "Peace and prosperity are intertwined, and only through cooperation can we achieve both," he added.

He also underscored the need for mutual trust and comprehensive frameworks to address transnational threats such as terrorism and smuggling, which have long hindered regional progress.

PFC for introducing incentives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC), Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Sunday urged for a comprehensive package of attractive incentives in the federal budget to boost the exports of Pakistan's high-quality furniture products in international markets.

Chairing the board of directors meeting, he said Pakistan has immense

potential to become a leading exporter of hand-crafted and modern furniture, but it requires strong policy support and facilitation from the government, says a press release. He urged for reduced duties on raw materials, easier access to financing, and the establishment of modern design and training centers to uplift the industry.

He emphasized that the furniture sector can significantly contribute to employment generation and economic growth if given proper facilitation. He also called for increased participation in global furniture exhibitions and trade fairs to enhance the visibility of Pakistani craftsmanship. He expressed hope that the budget will reflect a pro-export approach, enabling the sector to grow and compete internationally.

He also called for increased participation in global furniture exhibitions and trade fairs to enhance the visibility of Pakistani craftsmanship. He expressed hope that the budget will reflect a pro-export approach, enabling the sector to grow and compete internationally.

In resource-tight times, budget offers a promising boost for future

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum on Sunday said that in a time of tight fiscal space and under the watchful eye of the International Monetary Fund, the government's Budget 2025–26 has emerged as a promising and balanced effort—marked not only by financial prudence but by strategic priorities that reflect national resilience.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, while addressing a post budget sitting organized by the All Pakistan Business Forum, observed that this budget, laid out under immense global and domestic pressure, still manages to address core economic challenges while showing appreciation for the pillars that hold Pakistan together—from entrepreneurs to armed forces.

Maaz Mahmood said that the country is witnessing a rare sense of alignment across institutions. At the heart of this unity stands Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose recent promotion is not just a ceremonial honour but a reflection of his unshaken leadership across defence and economic fronts.

His strategic vision and disciplined coordination have helped Pakistan defuse military tensions with India and maintain internal stability during turbulent times. It is due to this leadership that the state has found room to act—even within tight IMF restrictions—toward building confidence in both national security and economic recovery.

The increase in defence budget is not just a line item, but a necessity in the current regional context. With the Indian posture growing increasingly hostile and hybrid threats on the rise, the government has rightly prioritised military preparedness, raising defence allocations by over 20 percent. The message is clear: Pakistan's sovereignty and deterrence remain non-negotiable. Yet what makes this budget more meaningful is that despite these rightful defence allocations, the government has not neglected the country's economic engines—particularly the small and medium enterprises.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the SME sector, long advocated for by the All Pakistan Business Forum

(APBF) and its President Syed Maaz Mahmood, has been given room to breathe. In a climate of high interest rates and reduced lending, the government's decision to facilitate soft financing through the State Bank's refinancing schemes, reduce import duties on industrial inputs, and offer targeted tax relief reflects a sincere effort to honour APBF's long-standing demands.

Ibrahim Qureshi said that it's a rare budget that manages to respect fiscal restraint while offering growth incentives to job creators.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the efforts of the civilian economic team also deserve acknowledgment. Under the guidance of the finance ministry and with consistent support from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the budget maintains key social protections and avoids blanket tax hikes. Instead of across-the-board austerity, the government has opted for smarter, focused incentives—especially for the export sector and SMEs.

This is no doubt a result of coordinated thinking, with institutions like the SBP and commerce ministry

working closely in tune with economic realities.

At the same time, Field Marshal Asim Munir's role in stabilising internal dynamics and supporting economic reforms quietly but firmly remains a factor. The armed forces have extended cooperation not only in defence but also in national development—be it infrastructure security, agri-initiatives, or curbing smuggling. This civil-military harmony is translating into a more grounded, functional policy environment.

While the budget may not check every box for every sector, in the broader picture it sends the right signals. It assures international lenders of Pakistan's commitment to reform while giving local businesses a reason to stay invested. More importantly, it reflects a maturing governance culture that recognises the need to support those who defend the country and those who build it.

In challenging circumstances, this is a responsible, forward-looking, and nationally aligned budget. It speaks of stability, cautious optimism, and shared responsibility—and for that, it should be welcomed.

FRIA urges budget revision to address industrial challenges

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Chairman of the Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) Lahore, Shahbaz Aslam, has expressed serious concern over the Federal Budget 2025–26, stating that the proposed fiscal plan does not adequately support Pakistan's struggling industrial and economic landscape. While acknowledging a few positive elements such as the push for digitalisation and documentation of the economy, he maintained that the overall framework lacks direction, depth, and tangible relief for the productive sectors of the country.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Shahbaz Aslam remarked that the budget does not offer the kind of structural support urgently

needed to revive the industrial base, which has been battling high input costs, energy shortages, and shrinking export volumes. He pointed out that the government's focus appears skewed toward revenue generation rather than economic growth. By placing the burden on already-taxed and compliant sectors, the budget fails to encourage investment or expand the tax base through meaningful reform.

He warned that the absence of practical incentives for manufacturers and exporters may further weaken Pakistan's competitive edge in global markets. With rising energy tariffs and limited access to affordable credit, industries are under severe pressure, and this budget does little to address those constraints.

Moreover, he noted that while digital reforms and automation in tax procedures are steps in the right direction, they will remain ineffective without parallel measures to reduce the cost of doing business.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the manufacturing sector, especially small and medium-scale industries, had hoped for targeted relief, simplified tax structures, and policy continuity to ensure stability and predictability. However, the budget offers no roadmap to support industrial expansion or job creation.

He added that unrealistic revenue targets and vague plans for broadening the tax net risk putting further strain on the formal economy, instead of encouraging informal sectors to transition into the documented economy.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

Shahbaz Aslam concluded by stressing that a sustainable and growth-oriented fiscal policy must prioritize industrial revival, export facilitation, and a fair taxation regime. Without these, economic recovery will remain out of reach, and the business community's confidence will continue to erode.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the manufacturing sector, especially small and medium-scale industries, had hoped for targeted relief, simplified tax structures, and policy continuity to ensure stability and predictability. However, the budget offers no roadmap to support industrial expansion or job creation.

He added that unrealistic revenue targets and vague plans for broadening the tax net risk putting further strain on the formal economy, instead of encouraging informal sectors to transition into the documented economy.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the manufacturing sector, especially small and medium-scale industries, had hoped for targeted relief, simplified tax structures, and policy continuity to ensure stability and predictability. However, the budget offers no roadmap to support industrial expansion or job creation.

He added that unrealistic revenue targets and vague plans for broadening the tax net risk putting further strain on the formal economy, instead of encouraging informal sectors to transition into the documented economy.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the manufacturing sector, especially small and medium-scale industries, had hoped for targeted relief, simplified tax structures, and policy continuity to ensure stability and predictability. However, the budget offers no roadmap to support industrial expansion or job creation.

He added that unrealistic revenue targets and vague plans for broadening the tax net risk putting further strain on the formal economy, instead of encouraging informal sectors to transition into the documented economy.

He urged the government to reconsider and revise key components of the budget in consultation with genuine representatives of trade and industry. The voices of industrial stakeholders must be heard in the policymaking process, especially at a time when economic growth remains sluggish and inflation continues to erode purchasing power.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the manufacturing sector, especially small and medium-scale industries, had hoped for targeted relief, simplified tax structures, and policy continuity to ensure stability and predictability. However, the budget offers no roadmap to support industrial expansion or job creation.

He added that unrealistic revenue targets and vague plans for broadening the tax net risk putting further strain on the formal economy, instead of encouraging informal sectors to transition into the documented economy.

FPCCI Food Committee welcome launching of train service to Moscow

ISLAMABAD (APP): Co-nvener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran Sunday welcoming the decision to launch a train service from Pakistan to Moscow.

He termed the initiative a landmark move that would open new vistas for

trade promotion, not only with Russia but also with Central Asian states, European countries, and even parts of Africa.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Mian Zahid Iqbal former VP FPCCI, he emphasized that this rail link could significantly reduce transportation costs and delivery

times, making Pakistani goods more competitive in international markets, said a press release.

He highlighted its potential to boost exports of food products especially snacks and other industrial goods, paving the way for economic diversification and regional integration.

"This train service is

more than a logistical achievement—it's a strategic advancement in trade diplomacy," Imran said.

He praised the government's vision in fostering economic ties through improved connectivity and urged the business community to explore new market opportunities this route will provide.



In brief

Johnson slams Hazlewood

SYDNEY (Agencies): Former Australia fast bowler Mitchell Johnson has criticised Josh Hazlewood for his decision to return to the IPL 2025 just before the WTC final. A day earlier, South Africa sealed a five-wicket victory over Australia in the World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's, their first ICC title in 27 years. Following the defeat in the ultimate Test, Mitchell Johnson raised doubts over the effectiveness of the Australian bowling lineup, including Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, and Nathan Lyon. "Our successful 'big four' bowling attack of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, and Nathan Lyon can't be taken for granted as a lock going forward either," he wrote in a column for an Australian publication. The former Australian fast bowler was specifically critical of Jos Hazlewood's decision to return to the delayed IPL 2025. "We have seen concerns about Hazlewood's fitness in recent years, and his decision to prioritise returning to the delayed Indian Premier League over his national team preparations raised eyebrows. Lyon didn't look his best on day three either," Mitchell Johnson stated. It is worth noting here that the IPL 2025 was suspended for a week during the border tensions between India and Pakistan. More than a week later, the tournament resumed as the BCCI rescheduled the final from May 25 to June 3. At the time, Mitchell Johnson advised Australian players to skip the IPL 2025, while also calling for the end of the edition altogether. "If I had to make a call whether to head back to India and finish the tournament, it would be an easy decision. It's a no from me. Lives and safety are the most important thing, not pay cheques. It's a personal decision. No one should be coerced or feel pressured into going back," the former Australia fast bowler wrote in his column. However, Josh Hazlewood, who was a part of RCB, returned to India for the play-offs and the final, with the WTC final starting on June 11.

Gattuso named manager

MILAN (Agencies): Italy have appointed former midfielder Gennaro Gattuso as their manager. The AC Milan legend replaces Luciano Spalletti, who announced his own sacking at a news conference last week. Gattuso, 47, made 73 appearances for Italy and was a member of their 2006 World Cup-winning squad, and will now lead his country into the same tournament 20 years later. Italy won Euro 2020 but failed to qualify for last summer's tournament, and have also not made it to the past two World Cups. A 3-0 World Cup qualifying defeat by Norway on 6 June sealed Spalletti's fate. The Italian football federation (FIGC) confirmed Gattuso will be presented to the media on Thursday. "Gattuso is a symbol of Italian football," FIGC President Gabriele Gravina said. "The blue jersey is like a second skin for him. His motivations, his professionalism and his experience will be fundamental to best face the upcoming commitments of the national team." Gattuso's background A glamorous playing career saw Gattuso represent Rangers and AC Milan, among others.



GALLE: Najmul Hossain Shanto shares a lighter moment with spin-bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed.

Cummins flags Australia shake-up after WTC defeat

SYDNEY (AFP): Australia could shake up their batting after crashing to South Africa in the World Test Championship final, with captain Pat Cummins saying a "reset" was needed ahead of three Tests in the West Indies and a home Ashes series.

The five-wicket defeat at Lord's on Saturday, after posting a 74-run first-innings lead, has renewed focus on Australia's top order which has struggled since opener David Warner retired 17 months ago.

The elevation of out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne as Usman Khawaja's fifth opening partner since Warner bowed out did not work, while the experiment of Cameron Green at three flopped. The 38-year-old Khawaja is also under the microscope, scoring nought and six as his lean spell against pace continued.

Green made four in the first innings and lasted only two balls before departing for a duck in the second as the new-look top three managed a total of 49 runs in the match.

Australia's batting woes were laid bare, particularly in the second innings, when only a plucky unbeaten

fifty from fast-bowler Mitchell Starc and 43 from wicketkeeper Alex Carey gave the Proteas a tough chase. "There's probably quite a few people in the line-up that wish they could have done a little bit more," Cummins told reporters.

"The top three was an obvious one in this game," Fresh start

With the 2027 WTC cycle kicking off when Australia travel to the West Indies for a three-Test series beginning in Barbados on June 25, the skipper admitted "it does feel like a little bit of a fresh start". "We've got a couple of weeks before the first Test in the Windies, so we'll sit down and have a bit of a think after we digest this game," he said.

"But for me, I think a new WTC cycle in some ways does feel like a bit of a reset. "It's probably more for the selectors and for me to sit down and map it ahead." Compounding Australia's woes, veteran Steve Smith, who hit a majestic first innings 66, is doubtful for the first West Indies Test after dislocating his finger.

If he is ruled out, gungho teenager Sam Konstas,

who played two Tests against India last summer before being dropped, could slot back in alongside Khawaja.

That would allow Labuschagne to drop back to three, should he survive the axe after averaging just 25.63 in Tests during the 2024/25 season. There is also the option of Josh Inglis, who was in the WTC squad, as an opener.

Australian media made it clear that change was needed, with The Australian newspaper calling the defeat a "wake-up call" with the five-Test Ashes series against England beginning in November. "Father Time is undefeated and selectors must now be decisive over key calls for the future," it said.

Cummins acknowledged all cards were on the table with only five months to go until the first Ashes Test in Perth beginning on November 20. "Coming to this match, you've got guys like Sam Konstas and Scotty Boland and Josh Inglis, all those guys were right on the fringes," he said. "So I think again, after this Test match, everyone gets thrown back into the conversation."

Pakistan squash team heads to Asian C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani squash contingent, including World Champion (U23) Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal, Pakistan's Shining Star, is set to depart for Malaysia today to participate in two prestigious squash championships.

They will participate in 23rd Asian Individual Championships from June 18 to 22 and 2nd Asian Squash Doubles Championships from June 23 to 27. Led by Team Manager Air Commodore (R) Amirzawaz, our contingent includes Air Commodore (R) Amir Nawaz (Team Manager), Fahim Gul (Head Coach), Nasir Iqbal (Player), Pakistan's Shining Star and squash sensation known for his exceptional skills on the court, Noor Zaman (Player), World Champion (U23).

ICC introduces new rule

DUBAI (Agencies): The International Cricket Council (ICC) has introduced a series of rule changes that will apply to all three formats of men's international cricket — Tests, One Day Internationals (ODIs), and Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is). The new rules include modifications to the use of balls in ODIs and updated concussion substitute protocols.

Under the current ICC rule, a new ball is used from each end for 25 overs. Going forward, both balls will be used up to the 34th over. From the 35th over onwards, teams must choose one of the two balls to continue with until the end of the innings.

For matches reduced to 25 overs or fewer, only one ball will be used throughout. According to the ICC, the new law will help bowlers, especially by enabling reverse swing in the death overs, which has become rare under the existing rule due to consistently newer balls.

Concussion substitutes As per the new policy, captains must now submit a list of five designated concussion substitutes before the toss. The list must include; one batter, one all-rounder, one wicketkeeper, one fast bowler, and one spinner. Previously, teams could name concussion substitutes during a match without prior declaration.

The new ICC regulations will take effect from June 17 for Test matches, July 2 for ODIs, and July 10 for T20 Internationals.

"Bunny hops illegal" In a separate rule update, the ICC, in collaboration with the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), has decided to prohibit the controversial 'bunny-hop' style of boundary catches, according to reports. Catches in which a fielder jumps from beyond the boundary without first touching the ground inside the field of play — and redirects the ball while airborne — will now be ruled illegal.

For a catch to be considered valid, the fielder must have made initial contact with the ball while grounded inside the field of play.

However, fielders who initially touch the ball inside the field, step outside to momentum, and then return to complete the catch, will still be permitted under the law.

Qualifier who became champion: Maria wins Queen's title

LONDON (Agencies): Tatjana Maria completed an incredible run from qualifying to the title as she beat Amanda Anisimova to become the first women's champion at Queen's for 52 years.

The 37-year-old German confounded the American world number 15 in a 6-3 6-4 victory. It capped an astonishing week for the mother-of-two, who dropped just one set across seven matches in nine days.

She has beaten four top-15 players over the past five days, including reigning Australian Open champion Madison Keys.

Such is Maria's longevity that she made her professional debut just a few days before the 23-year-old Anisimova was born.

Maria threw her arms into the air in disbelief as a wide Anisimova forehand confirmed her victory before the two shared a warm hug at the net.

She then darted over to celebrate with Charles, her husband and coach, and her two children — although youngest daughter Cecilia appeared to have slept through the match in her pushchair. After writing "Queen of Queen's" on the camera lens, Maria told BBC Sport: "When we arrived here my little girl said 'wow, that's a nice trophy' and I said 'OK, let's go for it'."

"In the end I've won it - it's



incredible. Everything is possible if you believe in it. "You go your way, doesn't matter what it is, but you have to keep going. It's amazing."

This was the first women's tour event at Queen's since 1973 and attracted many of the world's top players as they prepare for Wimbledon, making Maria's charge to the trophy a particularly remarkable achievement.

Maria, who turns 38 in two months, is the oldest WTA Tour champion since Serena Williams won the Auckland title in 2020.

She has said she wants to continue until she has played doubles with eldest daughter Charlotte, who often hits with her on the practice court at tournaments. A surprise Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2022, Maria has a game made for a grass court — but even she could not have thought her week would pan out like this.

She arrived in west London on a nine-match losing streak. She leaves as the champion, having moved from 86th to inside

the world's top 50 in the live rankings. Her slice-heavy style of play, accurate serving and ability to disguise her drop shots have infuriated opponent after opponent, particularly big hitters Anisimova, Keys and Elena Rybakina. Maria went an early break up in the first set, drawing errors out of the American, before a thumping backhand winner from Anisimova put it back on terms.

However, Maria kept Anisimova on the move, visibly frustrating her, and a netted forehand gave Maria the break back, before she served out the set with ease. The numbers told the story, with Anisimova committing 10 unforced errors to Maria's three in the opener, and the momentum stayed with the German as she broke at the first chance in the second set.

A mammoth fourth game saw seven deuces and Maria saving two break points for 3-1, before a brilliant scamper to a drop shot in the next allowed her to go a double break up.

Anisimova, who won the WTA 1,000 title in Qatar earlier this year, went for broke, pummeling her shots to rescue a break and keep in touch. But Maria, backed by the packed crowd, kept her nerve to serve out to 30 and secure her place in Queen's history.

Thompson in six-way tie for LPGA lead in Michigan



WASHINGTON (AFP): US veteran Lexi Thompson birdied two of the last three holes to card a four-under-par 68 and join a six-way tie for the lead at the Meijer LPGA Classic on Saturday.

On a day when multiple players threatened but failed to break free atop the crowded leaderboard at Blythefield Country Club, Thompson was tied on 11-under 205 with Spain's Carlota Ciganda, South Korean Choi Hye-jin, Denmark's Nanna Koerstz Madsen, Sweden's Madelene Sagstrom and Sofia Garcia of Paraguay.

The leaders were two strokes clear of Australian Karis Davidson, who fired a one-under 71 for 207, with another four players tied on 208.

For Thompson, it's another crack at a title she missed out on in a playoff last year, and a chance to

add to her tally of 11 LPGA titles for the first time since 2019.

"Feel good about it," said Thompson, who is making just her sixth start of the season as she plays a limited schedule. "Hopefully I won't need my short game as much tomorrow. That's the goal. I didn't hit it my best today, but I tried to stay in the moment, stay positive and make the saves when I needed them."

Thompson started the day one adrift and after a bogey at the third reeled off three straight birdies at four, five and six. She responded to a bogey at the ninth with birdies at 10 and 11 and after a bogey at 14, birdied 16 and 18.

Choi, who was one of four players sharing the overnight lead, had three birdies without a bogey in her three-under 69 and had a chance to take the solo

lead but missed a six-foot birdie putt at 18.

Ciganda, also among the first-round leaders, made her fourth birdie of the day at 18 to cap her 69 and keep her name in the leading bunch.

Sagstrom, winner of the LPGA Match Play earlier this season, thrust herself into contention when she picked up five shots in the space of three holes with eagles at the fourth and sixth sandwiched around a birdie at the fifth.

She had three birdies and three bogeys the rest of the way in a five-under 67.

Garcia had the solo lead at 13 under after an eagle and four birdies in her first 10 holes. But she fell back with three straight bogeys at 13, 14 and 15 before salvaging a share of the lead with a birdie at the last.

Koerstz Madsen, who won her lone LPGA title in Thailand in 2022, was 13-under with a two-shot lead after six birdies through 16 holes. But she closed with back-to-back bogeys and said nerves were a contributing factor.

"I know some of the swing got really fast at the end, so it's good that I can go and work on that and know what Swing thought I have to think about when that happens for tomorrow," she said.

Gary Kirsten reveals why he quit as coach

LAHORE (Web Desk): Former South African cricketer and renowned coach Gary Kirsten has broken his silence on the reasons behind his early exit as Pakistan's white-ball head coach, citing a lack of authority, internal politics, and exclusion from team selection processes.

In a candid interview on the Wisden Cricket Patreon Podcast, Kirsten revealed that his role was "undermined" from the start, as he was not included in key decision-making forums, particularly team selection, which made it difficult for him to leave a meaningful imprint.

"It was a tumultuous few months," Kirsten said. "Once I was taken off selection and asked to take a team I didn't help shape, it became very difficult to have any sort of positive influence as a coach."

Kirsten was appointed as Pakistan's white-ball coach in April 2024, alongside Jason Gillespie, who took charge of the red-ball side. However, both tenures were short-lived.

Cut from the process The breaking point came

when the PCB announced squads for the Australia and Zimbabwe tours without consulting either Kirsten or Gillespie. Shortly afterward, both resigned from their respective roles. Gillespie stepped down ahead of the Test series against South Africa, citing his own frustration after high-performance coach Tim Nielsen was also dismissed.

"It left a sour taste," Gillespie remarked in a separate interview earlier this year. Kirsten echoed similar sentiments but maintained that his decision wasn't based on personal ego, rather on professional integrity and structure.

"Cricket teams need to be run by cricket people," he said. "When there's outside noise that is very influential, it's difficult for team leaders to pursue the path needed for progress."

Open to a return — under the right conditions

Despite the ordeal, Kirsten did not shut the door on returning to Pakistan cricket, but only under the right circumstances. "If I got invited back to Pakistan tomorrow, I would go, but

only for the players and under the right circumstances," he said. "I'm too old to be dealing with other agendas. I just want to coach a cricket team and work with the players."

Kirsten praised the Pakistan players for their professionalism and resilience, noting the intense pressure they endure. "More than any other team in the world, they feel the pressure of performance. When they lose, it's hectic for them, and they really feel that."

Leadership transition

Following Kirsten's resignation, former pacer Aaqib Javed served as interim coach. In a recent shake-up, the PCB appointed New Zealand's Mike Hesson as head coach of the white-ball squads. As of now, the red-ball coaching role remains vacant.

Kirsten concluded his interview by reaffirming his core philosophy as a coach. "When there's no interference, and when it's a talented group, success usually follows. But if that basic coaching environment is disrupted, even the best plans fall apart."



In brief

Fire erupts in oil tanker

RAWALPINDI (APP): A fire broke out in an oil tanker on Kahuta Road near Kak Pul on Sunday. Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesman, fire tenders, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles are at the site and working to extinguish the fire. So far, no injuries or casualties have been reported. Firefighters are making every effort to control the blaze quickly to prevent any harm to nearby people or property. As a safety measure, traffic has been diverted to other routes to ensure smooth rescue work. Rescue 1122 appealed to the public to stay away from the area so that emergency operations could not be halted.

'Murree Summer Fest'

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Arts Council here on Sunday launched the 'Murree Summer Fest' at Jinnah Road under the patronage of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The festival features performances by renowned artists including singer Ali Zafar, classical musician Zain Zohaib, vocalist Umer Abbas, singer Sonu and comedian Jani. The festival, being organized under the special directives from Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azmaa Bukhari, is hosted and preceded by Ayesha Jehanzeb and poet Ali Zaryon. "The cultural initiative aims to provide quality entertainment while promoting our regional arts," said a spokesperson Punjab Arts Council. He further said that the festival is expected to enhance Murree's tourism appeal and cultural vibrancy. Visitors can enjoy the festival activities throughout the day at the main Jinnah Road venue.

Two held for street crimes

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two members gang involved in street crimes and recovered 03 stolen motorcycles, Rs 25,300, mobile phones from their possession during crackdown here Sunday. According to police spokesman, police have also recovered weapons used in the crime. Rata Amral police have registered separate cases against both of them and further investigation has been started. SP Rawal Muhammad Haseeb Raja commended police team for their swift action and stated that the detainees will be challaned in court with solid evidence. Strict action will be taken against those who attack the lives and property of citizens, he added.

Adulterated milk discarded

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) took strict action against adulterated and substandard milk on Motorway during early hours on Sunday morning. According to the spokesperson, a total of 3,200 liters of milk mixed with water was destroyed on the spot after it failed to meet quality standards. The operation was carried out at key points including Thalial and Chakri interchanges, where 20 milk trucks carrying nearly 100,000 liters of milk were checked. Total fines of Rs. 205,000 were imposed on those found supplying low-quality milk. The spokesperson said that milk trucks are checked daily to ensure public safety. Citizens are appealed to report any complaints related to food quality by calling the helpline 1223, he added.



ISLAMABAD: A father helps his children climb a rope swing, sharing joyful moments on Father's Day. —APP Photo

Over 11,000 Pakistani Hujjaj return home

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has confirmed that the post-Hajj flight operation is continuing successfully despite global air traffic disruptions.

Ministry Spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt on Sunday said as of Saturday, June 14, a total of 11,418 Pakistani pilgrims had returned home from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He said on Sunday alone,

4,995 more pilgrims are expected to arrive via 20 flights scheduled to land across five major cities. "Today, six flights each will land in Islamabad and Lahore, four in Karachi, three in Multan, and one in Quetta," the spokesperson stated.

Providing further details, he said Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will operate eight of these flights, followed by Saudi Airlines with five, AirBlue with four, AirSial with two,

and Serene Air with one.

Despite the international challenges in air traffic, the return operation is proceeding efficiently, he noted, urging pilgrims to maintain discipline to ensure a smooth repatriation process.

Pilgrims were also advised to strictly adhere to baggage weight limits as mentioned on their airline tickets and to reach Saudi airports at least 6 to 8 hours before their flight due to high passenger volumes.

Crackdown begins in ICT against smoke-emitting vehicles

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Transport Authority has started a city-wide crackdown on vehicles that emit smoke. According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, under the new enforcement plan, daily inspections are being carried out, and action is being taken on the spot against violators.

According to ICT administration officials, the transport authority inspected 50 vehicles on the first day of the operation. Out of these, four were shifted to the police station for causing significant pollution, while 25 drivers were issued warnings for violating emission standards.

Chairman of the Islamabad Transport Authority, Irfan Nawaz Memon, stated that the campaign will continue on a daily basis. He said that there will be no leniency toward vehicles contributing to air pollution. A zero-tolerance policy will be followed, and those found guilty will face strict action, including heavy fines and possible impoundment of their vehicles. Chairman Memon also urged residents of Islamabad to report vehicles emitting smoke. "Public cooperation is important to make this campaign successful," he said. "If citizens spot a smoke-emitting vehicle, they should report it to the relevant authorities so that immediate action can be taken."

He added that such vehicles not only damage the environment but also pose health risks to the general public. He reiterated that any driver operating a smoke-emitting vehicle will be fined, and in serious cases, the vehicle will be taken off the road.

The chairman emphasized that environmental protection is a shared responsibility, and the role of the public is crucial in identifying violators. The Islamabad Transport Authority will continue monitoring across major roads and intersections in the capital.

Governor KP emphasizes role of digital media

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized the undeniable role of social media across Pakistan, particularly in shaping public opinion in sensitive regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He stressed the need for political forces to become more active in the digital arena to positively influence the mindset of the youth.

He expressed these views while addressing a central meeting of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) digital team held in Islamabad. The meeting focused on the party's digital strategy, upcoming social media campaigns, and strengthening public engagement through online platforms.

The session saw active participation from PPP's Central Secretary for Information Nadeem Afzal Chan, Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam

Memon, MNA Qasim Gillani, Senator Nadeem Bhutto, and digital media heads from various divisions.

Additionally, PPP's overseas digital activists from the UK, Canada, Germany, UAE, Saudi Arabia, the US, and other countries joined the meeting via Zoom.

Governor Kundi said that digital media has become a powerful tool in influencing public discourse, particularly in a province like KP.

"Unfortunately, certain elements are spreading lies and fake news to mislead our youth. It is our responsibility to counter disinformation with truth and promote narratives based on national unity," he said.

The meeting underscored the PPP's commitment to strengthening its digital presence and countering misinformation with fact-based, progressive messaging.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples Party leader Senator Talha Mahmood called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House Islamabad.

The two discussed the country's political landscape, deteriorating law and order in KP, record-breaking corruption by the provincial government, and welfare projects by the Talha Mahmood Foundation in Chitral and other areas.

Senator Mahmood criticized rampant corruption and nepotism, saying government funds are being discovered in personal accounts of public representatives. Both leaders agreed on the urgent need to rid the province of incompetent rulers.

They also consulted on matters related to the upcoming Senate elections. Governor Kundi appreciated the foundation's welfare efforts and encouraged expanding its outreach.

Funds okayed for development projects

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman District Coordination Committee, Engineer Qamar ul Islam Raja MNA, announced the approval of major development funds worth billions of rupees by the Punjab Government in its annual development plan for various projects across Rawalpindi district, including NA-53 constituency.

The Budget 2025-26 will be presented on Monday (16th June) in the Punjab Assembly. Talking exclusively to APP here on Sunday, Raja Qamar ul Islam confirmed that the long-pending amount of Rs.9.0 billion has also been fixed for the Rawalpindi Ring Road project, which will be immediately released to accelerate regional development.

He informed that approvals include Rs. 21.0 crore for Jorian Hospital and Rs. 11.0 crore for Pothohar Town Rawat Hospital to complete pending work. For infrastructure development, Rs. 2.3 bil-

lion was approved for dualization of Gorakhpur-Khasala Khurad Road and Rs. 1.7 billion for Tulsah Morr Adiala Road Underpass to reduce travel time between Adiala Road and Chontra areas.

"We are implementing a network of development projects across NA-53 to provide better facilities to residents", he said while highlighting the mega road network initiatives. "The approval of Rs. 3.5 billion for Khawaja Corporation Flyover and underpass will significantly improve connectivity", he added.

Qamar highlighted that allocation of Rs. 1.8 billion to revive the Mujahid Dam project following Mohota Dam's completion has also been approved and added in the development plan, with efforts underway to secure additional funds for its completion by fiscal year 2025-26. Rs. 15.0 crore approved for feasibility studies to utilize Swaan River water for Rawat and Chontra areas.

Road infrastructure projects include Rs. 2.0 crore for Choorra Sharif to Malukal Road, Rs.15.0 crore for Dhok Budhal to Sukho Road linking Rawat directly with Chakwal Road. To expedite water supply schemes, Rs.1.0 crore has been allocated for designing supply systems from Dhoke Chuh Dam, avoiding construction delays. Other water initiatives include Rs. 6.0 crore for Mohri Ghazan, Lakhana and Dhamaal supply schemes, Rs. 7.0 crore for Dhoke Budhal water scheme restoration and drainage, Rs. 2.8 crore for Malukal water scheme rehabilitation Rs. 1.5 crore for drainage in Jorian and UC Dhamaal.

"Water supply remains our top priority," said Qamar-ul-Islam, confirming that ongoing work on streets, education, health, electricity and gas utilities would maintain current momentum, with several projects nearing completion in coming months.

Metro Bus struggles to balance cheaper fares

ISLAMABAD (APP): The recent rollback of the Metro Bus fare from Rs. 100 to Rs. 50, following public outcry and the prime minister's intervention, has offered immediate relief to thousands of commuters in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

But behind the applause lies a more complex challenge: how to sustain quality public transport while keeping it affordable for the masses.

Initially, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) defended the 100% fare hike as a necessary response to rising fuel and maintenance costs. The aim was to maintain the Metro's standards, cleanliness, punctuality, air conditioning, and consistent service, which many consider superior to other public transport options.

However, the sudden doubling of fares triggered backlash from students, daily-wage earners, and elderly citizens who rely on the Metro for their essential travel.

"I spend Rs. 3,000 a month just commuting to work," said Ghulam Abbas, a construction worker Talking to APP. "That's a major hit to my grocery budget." Similarly, school-girl Asma shared with this scribe how she considered skipping lunch to manage travel costs. With stories like these surfacing widely, the fare hike quickly turned into a flashpoint.

The government ultimately reversed the decision on June 5, reinstating the original Rs. 50 fare. Commuters welcomed the move, and for many, it reaffirmed faith in responsive governance. But this solution, while popular,

raises an important question: can the Metro sustain quality service on its current fare model?

Metro drivers, too, expressed concerns, not just about wages, which remained unchanged, but about increasing frustration from both management and passengers. "The fare change came overnight," said driver Zahid Khan. "We didn't get more pay, and now we're blamed when people are angry about delays or crowded buses."

From a sustainability standpoint, experts argue that rather than doubling fares in one go, a phased or incremental approach would have been more practical and politically acceptable. "Even a Rs. 10-20 quarterly increase, spread over time, would be easier for people to absorb and for the authority to justify," noted a senior urban transport planner.

While affordability is vital, especially during times of inflation, so is the long-term health of the transit system. A sharp rollback without any adjustment plan may risk underfunding maintenance, delaying upgrades, or cutting services in the future. Already, questions are being raised about whether buses will continue to be as clean, on time, and safe if funding gaps widen.

Senior citizens like Rukhsana Bibi, who travel regularly for medical needs, suggested middle-ground solutions. "Maybe there could be concession passes for students, pensioners, and laborers, while others could pay slightly more," she suggested. Such targeted subsidies could help balance the financial

model without punishing the most vulnerable riders.

A ride-hailing Yangolike situation, where service quality rapidly deteriorated despite initial affordability, serves as a cautionary tale for public transport authorities. Maintaining the balance between accessibility and sustainability requires careful planning, not abrupt swings based on public sentiment alone.

Raziq Ali, who travels daily from Jinnah Garden to Islamabad G-7, and Hasnain Raza, a frequent commuter from Gulberg Greens, both agree that the Metro Bus is an affordable and comfortable option. However, they warned that a sudden 100% fare increase would push many to switch to bikes, which are cheaper but come with safety risks and are uncomfortable in bad weather.

"For now, the Metro remains a lifeline. But to ensure it stays that way, authorities may need to rethink fare strategy, not just with short-term relief in mind, but long-term resilience," remarked Hasnain Raza.

A gradual, balanced fare increase, aligned with inflation, fuel costs, and service improvements, can ensure the Metro's long-term sustainability without burdening commuters.

This would help maintain vehicle conditions, service quality, and fair employee pay. Keeping fares reasonable will preserve public transport as a reliable alternative to private vehicles, reducing traffic and fuel demand. Transparent, strategic fare management with public input is essential for a resilient Metro service.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was observed on Sunday to focus on the abuse of older adults in long-term care facilities.

The Day aims to highlight the necessity of protecting and supporting older individuals during emergencies, such as natural disasters, pandemics, and conflicts.

The theme of the day this year is "Addressing Abuse of Older Adults in

Long Term Care Facilities: Through Data and Action".

The Day was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution, December 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) to commemorate in June. It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations.

Elder abuse can be defined as "a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person".

It is a global social issue which affects the Health and Human Rights of millions of older persons around the world and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community.

SSP Shoaib vows zero tolerance for crime

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad, Muhammad Shoaib Khan, chaired an important meeting regarding crime prevention and directed a strict crackdown on hardened criminals, members of active gangs, and proclaimed offenders.

An official told APP that SSP Shoaib instructed officers to closely monitor habitual offenders, enhance the effectiveness of police

patrolling, and ensure the arrest of suspects and recovery of stolen items in cases of robbery, theft, and motorcycle and car lifting. He emphasized that all available resources should be utilized to curb criminal activities and that the arrest of individuals involved in serious crimes must be prioritized.

SSP Shoaib also stressed that arrested individuals must be challaned with solid evidence to ensure strict legal action and successful

convictions. He directed officers to take indiscriminate action against land grabbers, drug peddlers, and those possessing illegal weapons. He urged unwavering efforts in the arrest of absconders and the completion of investigations based purely on merit. SSP Shoaib further stated that effective handling of public complaints at the police station level must be ensured and that officers should prioritize resolving citizens' issues.

Parents to be alert about their children's use of social media

ISLAMABAD (APP): Digital IT expert and entrepreneur Kanwal Cheema warned parents to be alert about their children's irresponsible use of social media and be aware of online harassment issues. There are available digital safety measures on their devices to apply in this fast-paced technological age.

Talking to a private news channel, she advised them to keep a strict watch on their activity on media platforms. She said, being a Social media influencer herself, she uses many tips and methods available on devices, which parents should adopt to save their children online from getting along with the wrong people.

She specifically addresses issues like the time of their children's presence on social media and how to sensibly use social media. What to watch on social media? Who is watching you on these platforms? and who is stopping you? How to check bullying or stalking? Who is threatening you? How to launch complaints? How much information should one share on social media? What should be kept in mind while using social media?

She said parents should know when to bring out their children as digitally responsible citizens, adding that they should be in alert mode 24/7. She said there are many ways to adopt social media carefully to avoid incidents like the Sana Yousuf Tik Tokker's murder

case that happened recently, and it's alarming for all of us.

Keeping in mind such dangerous incidents, parents should advise their kids not to share or expose their location or any related information about their family with their friends, as there are such creepy people who follow you from any part of the world, she said. Cyberspace is not a playground for watching pornography, cyber bullying or online crimes, so efforts should be made to check strictly on their kids, she added.

She informed that there have been introduced many apps and softwares that allow users to control their privacy they share with others and who can watch them. She advised them about the safe use of Google Family Links, Microsoft Family Safety and many other safe links by the educational institutions to interact with their children.

She said the netizens should create only one account at a time, and this way, online crime cases, harassment online issues can be checked, as on one account, the user is your friend, and on the other account with a changed ID, he can be your foe. She said in order to avoid online misuse of social media, the privacy settings should be strong and timely be set to avoid harassment. She said parents should also be in conversation with their children often.

She said the parents should deter-

mine how much a kid should spend time or screen time on social media so that he/she should not be cut off from routine life, as it's good for their mental health. She said parents should impart necessary education to their children about online safety, but kids are so fast in using technology that they are even ahead of their parents even the parents have to learn technology use from their kids.

She said there are available apps and notification alerts on all social media platforms that parents can use to keep watch on the sensible use of social media by their children, adding that they can be aware of the content they download, as there are permission options in all apps.

She informed that on all social media platforms, there is also an option of allowing or disallowing a person or an age limit to download an app or not, adding that one can lock their devices for their children.

She also enhanced the viewers' knowledge that there are available apps that guide parents about the right use of an app by their children, i.e Common Sense Media, where they can know whether the app available online is appropriate for their kids to watch or use. She concluded that the National Cyber Emergency Response Team (NCERT) had already issued an advisory regarding Digital Media safety for parents.

Three children in Kunar

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): Three children have died and a fourth is in a coma after eating a poisoned watermelon in the Chawkay district of eastern Kunar province, an official said on Sunday. Police spokesman Farid Dehqan said that the incident occurred on Saturday in the Babro Debli area, where four children ate watermelon from a field and were subsequently poisoned. He added that the children were taken to the hospital, but three of them died, while the fourth remains in a coma.

The Frontier Post

Zil Hajj 19, 1446 — Monday, June 16, 2025

4 workers killed in Samangan

AIBAK (Pajhwok): Four miners have died following the collapse of a coal mine in the Dara-i-Suf Bala district of northern Samangan province of Afghanistan, a police official said on Sunday. Hashmatullah Rahmani, spokesman for the Samangan Police, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident occurred three days ago in the village of Lailawa Qobi. Following the collapse, four miners were trapped beneath the rubble.

Afghan migrants urged to avoid military sites in Iran

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Afghan Embassy in Tehran has urged Afghan citizens to stay away from sensitive military sites in Iran, warning that these areas are heavily guarded and any suspicious behavior could lead to arrest. In a statement titled "Warning and Advice!" reported by Tabnak news agency, the embassy emphasized that Afghan nationals must not approach such sites under any circumstances. The embassy also advised Afghans in Iran to avoid discussing sensitive political or religious topics in public and to steer clear of political gatherings, party meetings, or activities that might be seen as politi-

cally charged. It warned against expressing opinions or sharing political content on social media. Additionally, the embassy recommended avoiding conversations about attacks or political stances in public places like subways, markets, taxis, or queues, as such discussions may draw unwanted attention from authorities and result in legal consequences. Afghan citizens were also urged not to participate in protests or demonstrations, which could lead to confrontations with law enforcement or involvement in politically sensitive situations. The embassy noted that Iranian authorities may issue new residency guide-

lines depending on the security climate, and it is important for Afghan residents to follow these directives to ensure their safety and avoid legal consequences. The statement concluded: "Adhering to local laws helps Afghan migrants avoid potential conflicts and ensures their personal safety and security." This comes just two days after Israel launched airstrikes on several nuclear and military facilities and other areas in Iran. These attacks resulted in the deaths of several military officials, nuclear experts, and civilians. In response, Iran fired missiles toward Israel. The conflict between the two countries is ongoing.

Afghan migrants in Iran fear for safety

TEHRAN (Amu TV): As military confrontations between Israel and Iran escalate, Afghan migrants living in Iran are voicing growing concern over their safety and uncertain futures. "If there is a war between Iran and Israel, our safety will be in danger," said one migrant, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We don't know what will happen; our future will become more unclear." Alongside migrant anxieties, the Taliban have strongly condemned Israel's recent strikes on Iran. In a statement, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid described the attacks-

which reportedly killed Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists-as "a clear violation of the fundamental principles of international law, particularly national sovereignty and territorial integrity." Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai also voiced support for Iran in a post on X, calling Iran "a good neighbor with shared historical and cultural ties to Afghanistan" whose people have consistently supported Afghans. Former Peace Council Chief Abdullah Abdullah stated that the strikes constituted "a blatant violation of all international norms and human rights, and a clear expression of the expan-

sionist and terrorist policies of the Zionist regime." Political and economic analysts warn that intensifying regional conflict could have far-reaching consequences for Afghanistan. "Increased military tensions between Iran and Israel could seriously disrupt Afghan trade routes through Iran and create new challenges for imports and exports," said one economist. For Afghanistan's migrant community in Iran-already vulnerable to restrictive immigration policies and limited legal protections-the prospect of war adds yet another layer of insecurity to an already precarious existence.

Work starts on hospital for malnourished children



FARAH CITY (Pajhwok): Construction work has been initiated on a 10-bed hospital dedicated to the treatment of malnourished children at a cost of 13 million afghanis in Parchaman district of western Farah province. Funded by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the sin-

gle-storey building would have six rooms, a hall, a solar power system and a clean drinking water well, the Department of Information and Culture said in a statement. Meanwhile, residents of the district voiced satisfaction over construction of the hospital, saying it would help reduce the number of malnutrition cases

among children. Parchaman is a remote and mountainous district located 300 kilometres from the centre of Farah province. The local population faces significant challenges not only in healthcare, but also in education, agriculture, telecommunications, electricity, and road infrastructure.

Floods wipe out 5 villages in Andarab, locals say

KABUL (Amu TV): Flash floods destroyed five entire villages in the Andarab Valley after a large reservoir wall collapsed early Saturday, local residents said, leaving no trace of homes and sweeping away farmland, bridges, and livestock. According to residents, the deluge began around 7 a.m. when the wall of a major water reservoir above the Taghank gorge in Pul-e-Hisar district gave way, unleashing water that surged through the valley. The villages of Shurabak, Upper and Lower Mad Naj Khil, Qishlaq-e-Kalan Taghank, and Darband-e-Tirgaran were completely washed away. "There's nothing left," one resident said, describing the devastation that also destroyed six footbridges, four vehicle bridges, five mosques, and hundreds of hectares of farmland. Nearby villages like Seyedabad, Dahyak, and Nowbahar were also severely damaged. Residents said the initial landslide-like surge gave people time to escape, preventing loss of life. Taliban officials conducted two helicopter rescue missions and distributed limited food aid, but humanitarian groups have yet to fully respond. The Red Crescent is currently conducting assessments but has not delivered assistance.

One-third population lacks access to water

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations has raised alarm over the ongoing water crisis in Afghanistan, revealing that nearly one-third of the country's population does not have access to safe drinking water. According to UN data, more than 10 million people in Afghanistan continue to rely on unsafe and unprotected water sources. Despite some progress in recent years, the crisis remains a major burden-particularly for rural communities, with women and children bearing the brunt of its impact. In response to this pressing challenge, the United Nations has reaffirmed its commitment to rehabilitating and restoring water supply infrastructure damaged by years of conflict and drought; expanding and improving health and sanitation services to reach more than 5 million Afghans by 2026; and strengthening the capacity of local communities to sustainably manage water resources. The UN emphasizes that ensuring equitable access to clean water is not only vital for public health, but also essential for community resilience and long-term development in Afghanistan.

Retirees in Kabul protest again: 'Pay our pensions'

KABUL (TOLOnews): A group of retirees once again gathered in front of the Pension Fund Directorate in Kabul to protest the non-payment of their retirement benefits. They are demanding that the IE authorities pay their long-overdue pension entitlements. Abdullah, one of the retirees, attended the protest with his young child. He said he is responsible for supporting ten family members. Criticizing the authorities, he noted that while the government forcefully collects electricity and water bills from citizens, it fails to pay retirees their pensions. Abdullah said: "I was served a court notice regarding an unpaid water bill and given a warning. If you don't give me my money, how am I supposed to pay for electricity and water? My children are in school, they need food-and this is our situation. During Eid, we had no bread, and nothing else. We got through it with difficulty." The worsening economic situation and hardship have forced these retirees to line up weekly under the scorching Kabul heat to demand their rights. They say they have no other source of income, and their only hope is to receive



their pensions to cover basic living expenses. Abdul Wasi, another retiree, said: "These retirees are all sick, poor, and suffering. They can't afford medical care or rent. Where should they go? What should they do? Should they turn to? All we ask is for our pensions to be paid-urgently." Many of the retirees say they served their country and people for three to four decades, and now deserve to receive their pensions, which were deducted from their salaries during their years of service. Another retiree, Abdul Khalil, said: "Not just me, these retirees are all struggling. Many don't even have money to pay for a bus ride to get here. One comes from Khairkhana, another from Kote Sangi, another from Darul Aman, none of them can afford even 10 afghani for transport. For the past four years, we've come here daily, heartbroken, frustrated, and in tears, only to go back home empty-handed." Ahmad Zia, also a retiree, said: "We retirees have served Afghanistan-we didn't serve anywhere else.

We are only asking for our salaries and legal rights." Following the order of the leader of the Islamic Emirate to establish a special court to review the pension issue, there has been no new information from the caretaker government regarding pension payments. Meanwhile, retirees continue to stress that they do not need a court, they insist receiving their pensions is a legal right, and that both the authorities and the international community should take steps to ensure their payments are made.

Delays in public services draw widespread complaints

KABUL (Amu TV): Sources reported that routine visits to public offices in Afghanistan have become prolonged ordeals for many citizens, as inefficiencies, staff shortages and unofficial fees contribute to long delays and mounting public frustration. At the national civil registration office in Sarai Shamali neighborhood in the north of Kabul, people seeking basic documentation say they face repeated postponements. Sources say hundreds of applicants arrive daily-many of them elderly or in poor health-only to wait hours or return

day after day without results. An employee at the Taliban-administered National Examinations Board told Amu that a combination of unqualified hires, persistent power outages and unreliable internet has slowed operations. Despite repeated complaints to the board's head, Abdul Baqi Haqqani, the source said no action has been taken. In some ministries, including the Ministry of Higher Education, staff are often absent or lack relevant qualifications, further compounding delays in

processing student records and academic credentials, according to sources and applicants. Traders and visitors also report the imposition of informal fees-payments often requested under various pretexts-which they say have become widespread in recent months as the Taliban administration grapples with financial shortfalls. The inefficiencies extend beyond Kabul. In other provincial capitals, public offices face similar challenges. Some officials arrive late, conduct personal business during work

hours, or redirect applicants from one office to another without resolving their issues, sources said. "This dysfunction is more than just bureaucracy," said one Kabul-based analyst. "If public offices cannot deliver basic services with consistency and fairness, trust in institutions erodes-and corruption flourishes." Delays in public services have always been an issue facing the people, even under previous governments. Citizens say lack of an institutionalized system has created such problems, which needs concrete solutions.

UN urges global action to combat malnutrition in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): The World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, UNFPA, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) have issued a joint call for urgent, coordinated global action to address a worsening malnutrition crisis in Afghanistan, particularly among children and women. The statement warns that Afghanistan is among the 15 countries with the highest rates of "child wasting." Over 3.5 million children under five are acutely malnourished, including 1.4 million suffering from life-

threatening conditions. Additionally, four in every ten women are undernourished. This crisis is driven by severe food insecurity caused by economic instability and environmental disasters like drought. Around 9.8 million people face acute food shortages, and 2.1 million young children live in child food poverty, lacking access to a diverse and nutritious diet. The statement quotes Kwabena Asante-Ntiomah, UNFPA Representative in Afghanistan, as saying: "Good maternal nutrition is crucial for maternal health and the survival of newborns in Afghanistan, where many women start pregnancy undernourished. Poor maternal nutrition not only increases the risk of maternal mortality but also contributes to low birthweight, stunted growth, and poor developmental outcomes for children." The UN emphasized the need for global support across food, health, water, education, and social services to both prevent and treat malnutrition. UNICEF's Representative, Tajudeen Oyewale, called the crisis a "test of global commitment," emp-

hasizing that "millions of children are suffering from life-threatening malnutrition due to poor services and food poverty. Investing in nutrition today is an investment in peace, resilience, and the future of Afghanistan." Previously, the World Food Programme predicted that by 2025, 3.5 million children in Afghanistan would suffer from malnutrition. The agency also reported that 1.2 million pregnant and breastfeeding women in the country are currently affected by malnutrition and urgently need nutritional treatment and support.

Israel-Iran tension could disrupt Afghan economy

KABUL (Amu TV): Analysts are cautioning that escalating tension between Israel and Iran may have serious political and economic ramifications for Afghanistan. Afghanistan imports more than 20 percent of its consumer goods from Iran, Ahmad Quraishi, an economic affairs analyst, said. In the qualifying year, bilateral trade surpassed \$3.1 billion. "Our economy is deeply woven with Iran's in energy, trade and goods," he explained. "Heightened regional tensions-akin to the Ukraine war-will raise fuel costs, drive inflation, weaken Afghanistan's currency and strain infrastructure and Afghan migrant communities." Security experts also point to broader regional instability. "This conflict will inflict a harsh blow on Iran and reshape political alignments across the region," political analyst Nasrullah Stanekzai remarked. He warned that "new configurations could emerge in neighboring countries," potentially destabilizing the Afghan government's ability to maintain internal cohesion. The geography underscores the risk. Afghanistan shares over 900 kilometres of border with Iran-linking Herat, Farah and Nimroz provinces to Iran's Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchestan regions. Military disruption could close critical land routes and impair the flow of food, oil, medicine and electricity heavily reliant on cross-border exports. The impact may extend to the millions of Afghan migrants in Iran. The Iranian Ministry of Interior reports that 6.1 million Afghan migrants-about 40 percent of whom have since returned home-remain in Iran. Given their economic dependence and irregular status, any expansion of conflict could endanger their safety and income, prompting further instability in Afghanistan.

Farmers for ban on potato imports during harvest season

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Potato growers in western Herat province are concerned about the increasing import of potatoes from Iran and Pakistan during the harvest season. They are calling for a halt to the import of similar agricultural products into the country. These farmers say that every year, simultaneously with the start of the potato harvest season and other domestic agricultural products, the import of similar foreign products also increases, leading to a sharp drop in the prices of their locally produced goods. Said Naeem, a farmer in Herat who has been cultivating potatoes and vegetables for over twenty years, says that the unchecked import of potatoes, tomatoes, and onions from neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, has made it impossible for them to even cover the basic costs of farming. He explains that during

the potato harvest season in Herat, potatoes are imported from Iran and Pakistan, and as a result, farmers fail to break even. He emphasized that the Afghan government collects usher and zakat (Islamic agricultural taxes) from farmers, and therefore, it should support them by increasing customs tariffs on similar imported agricultural products. Abdul Rauf, another farmer, said: "If the government stops the import of Pakistani and Iranian potatoes, the market for domestic products will be significantly better." In addition to the issue of imports, he identified the lack of proper cold storage facilities, insufficient resources, the unavailability and high cost of quality fertilizers and improved seeds as reasons for the poor market conditions for their agricultural products. He said that this year he planted potatoes on two jeribs (approximately 0.4

hectares) of land and hopes to earn about 100,000 afghanis from the harvest, which, according to him, will begin in about ten days. According to Abdul Rauf, he spent 50,000 afghanis to cultivate potatoes on two jeribs of land and expects to harvest between 10 to 20 tons of potatoes per jerib. Abdul Aziz, another farmer, also stressed the need to stop the import of agricultural products and called for the creation of better market opportunities for their produce. He said that if government officials support farmers, they can achieve productive and profitable harvests. Meanwhile, Mahmood, a landowner from the Guzara district, also believes that timely support for farmers can play a vital and valuable role in the growth of agriculture and in recognizing the hard work of the farmers. He said that in addition



to preventing the import of similar products as soon as possible, the government must also adopt supportive measures for farmers. At the same time, officials from Herat's Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock confirmed the concerns about increased imports and stated that they are trying to support farmers. Bashir Ahmad Ahmadi, head of agricultural extension at the directorate,

without referring to any specific policy regarding halting imports of similar products or raising customs tariffs, said that this year the cultivation of potatoes has increased compared to previous years, and the department is working to support farmers by distributing chemical fertilizers and improved quality seeds. He said that this year, over 1,300 hectares of agricultural land in the districts

of Injil, Guzara, and other areas have been planted with potatoes. Ahmadi estimates that potato production in the province may reach more than 23,000 tons this year. This comes as farmers, in addition to dealing with water shortages and consecutive droughts, also face major challenges such as limited access to fertilizers, improved seeds, and a lack of markets to sell their agricultural products.



LAHORE: Activists of Ittehad-e-Ummat holding rally against Israeli attack on Iran.

KP govt committed to public service: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has responded to a statement by Federal Minister Atta Tarar, saying that before criticizing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Atta Tarar should compare the education and health sectors of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He will be left with nothing but embarrassment. The Information Advisor stated that education and health are among the top priorities of the government, and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is paying special attention to these sectors in line with the vision of Imran Khan.

He further stated that under the Sehat Card Plus program, free medical services have been provided to 4.4 million citizens of the province.

The provincial government has also included

expensive and life-saving treatments like kidney, liver, bone marrow, and cochlear transplants in the Sehat Card program.

The budget for the Sehat Card Plus has been increased from Rs. 28 billion to Rs. 35 billion, which is 25% higher than the previous year. Similarly, Rs. 6 billion have been allocated under the health facility program for the merged districts.

For the improvement of basic health centers, Rs. 1.2 billion have been allocated for over 2,500 rural and urban health centers.

As part of the budget, newborn care centers will be established in five districts, and satellite centers of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology will be set up in Mardan and Bannu. Furthermore, the health budget has been increased by 19%, from Rs. 232 billion last year to Rs. 272 billion this year.

Barrister Dr. Saif also stated that the education

budget has been increased by 11%, from Rs. 327 billion to Rs. 363 billion. In the previous year alone, 16,000 teachers were recruited, and this year, Rs. 5 billion have been allocated for the enrollment of out-of-school children.

Barrister Dr. Saif added that the budget for the province's universities has been increased from Rs. 3 billion to Rs. 10 billion. Special funds have been allocated to improve basic facilities in schools, which will benefit 5.9 million students in 32,500 government schools by providing teaching materials, classroom repairs, and promoting extracurricular activities.

Barrister Dr. Saif concluded by stating that the federal government and provincial government of Punjab are unable to compete with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in any sector, which is why their ministers are merely engaged in empty rhetoric and pointless criticism.

Helicopter crash in northern India kills 7

MUMBAI (Reuters): All seven people on a helicopter in northern India were killed early on Sunday when it crashed while ferrying passengers on a popular Hindu pilgrimage route in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, officials said.

The helicopter was headed to Guptkashi from the shrine of Kedarnath, said the state's director-general of information, Bansidhar Tripathi.

"Very sad news has been received about a helicopter crash in Rudrapur district," the state's chief minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami, posted on X, adding that the State Disaster Response Force, local administration and other rescue teams were engaged in relief and rescue operations.

The authorities will also examine helicopter pilots and operators, and "only those pilots who have long experience of flying helicopters in high Himalayan regions will be allowed," he said.

Finance Minister chairs meeting on economic innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bold demonstration of Pakistan's commitment to digital assets and economic innovation, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a high-level meeting.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Crypto and Blockchain Bilal Bin Saqib and Michael Saylor, Executive Chairman of Strategy (formerly MicroStrategy) - the world's largest corporate holder of Bitcoin, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance on Sunday.

The discussion focused on how Bitcoin can serve as a tool for sovereign reserves, monetary resilience, and driving Pakistan's long-term digital economic transformation.

Addressing the meeting, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said that Pakistan aspires to lead the Global South

in the development and adoption of digital assets, setting a benchmark for innovation, regulation, and inclusive growth in the digital economy.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for Crypto and Blockchain Bilal Bin Saqib said that Pakistan has taken a historic step forward for strengthening the digital economy.

"Michael Saylor's insights and leadership have shaped how the world views Bitcoin as a sovereign-grade asset."

In 5 years Mr Saylor transformed a mid-sized software firm into a \$100+ billion company, purely through strategic vision, bold conviction, and disciplined execution.

If private individuals can build that in the U.S., why can't Pakistan, as a nation, do the same? We have the talent, the story, and the energy", he added.

Meanwhile during the meeting, Saylor praised Pakistan's efforts to take a

forward-looking, innovation-friendly stance in the global digital economy and welcomed the opportunity to advise and support ongoing developments.

"Pakistan has many brilliant people. It also has commitment and clarity needed by businesses globally," he added.

"Bitcoin is the strongest asset for long-term national resilience, he said adding that emerging markets like Pakistan have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leapfrog into the future of finance".

This strategic dialogue marks another milestone in Pakistan's effort to build a robust digital assets policy framework, attract global institutional interest, and position itself as a Web3 and Bitcoin-ready emerging market.

Michael Saylor - whose Bitcoin thesis has shaped conversations at the White House, Capitol Hill, and leading US think tanks - has emerged as

one of the most influential voices in global monetary strategy.

His advocacy echoes the Trump-era vision of economic sovereignty, decentralization of financial power, and investment in long-term national strength through hard digital assets.

Saylor's success story is unmatched. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential voices in Bitcoin's institutional adoption.

Under his leadership, strategy transformed from a traditional enterprise software firm into the largest corporate holder of Bitcoin in the world.

Since initiating its Bitcoin strategy in 2020, the company has acquired approximately 582,000 BTC, valued at over \$62 billion as of June 2025.

This aggressive accumulation strategy has driven strategy's market capitalization from \$1.2 billion to over \$105 billion, making it one of the top-performing tech stocks of the decade.

Tens of thousands protest in Netherlands against Israel

THE HAGUE (Reuters): Tens of thousands of protesters, including families with children, gathered in the Netherlands on Sunday to oppose Israel's siege of Gaza and the Dutch government's policy on the war.

The second major rally in a month drew an estimated 150,000 people to The Hague, according to organisers. Participants dressed in red to create a "red line" against ongoing Israel attacks and alleged war crimes against Palestinians.

Demonstrators sang, held speeches and

marched past the International Court of Justice, which is hearing a case brought by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide. Last year the court ordered Israel to halt a military assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah and allow access for humanitarian aid.

Israel rejects allegations of war crimes and genocide, and says its campaign is in self defence, targeting Palestinian militant group Hamas.

The war in Gaza began 20 months ago after Hamas-led militants raid-

ed Israel and took 251 hostages and killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, on October 7, 2023.

Israel's military campaign since has killed nearly 55,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to health authorities in Gaza, and flattened much of the densely populated strip, which is home to more than two million people. Most of the population is displaced, and malnutrition is widespread.

In May, now caretaker Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Caspar

Veldkamp asked the European Union to reconsider cooperation agreements with Israel. Demonstrators on Sunday called for the caretaker government to speak out against what they said were ongoing violations of international law by Israel.

The Dutch government, which collapsed on June 3, has so far refrained from outright criticism of Israel. Anti-Muslim populist Geert Wilders, whose far right party led the last government, has repeatedly voiced unwavering support for Israel.



THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS: Approximately 150,000 people march against the ongoing war in Gaza on June 15, 2025 in The Hague, Netherlands. Human rights campaigners and Pro-Palestinian demonstrators have rallied in The Hague wearing red clothing, drawing a symbolic "red-line" to demand action from the Dutch government over Israel's military campaign in Gaza.

Russia hands over 1,200 war dead bodies to Ukraine

MOSCOW / KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine has received the bodies of another 1,200 Ukrainian soldiers killed in the war with Russia, as part of agreements to exchange both prisoners of war and the dead, Ukrainian officials said on Sunday.

In several exchanges so far this month, Ukraine has repatriated more than 4,800 bodies, Ukrainian officials said. This marks one of the largest returns of war dead since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russian state news agencies TASS and RIA both reported the handover, saying Moscow had not received a single Russian corpse in return.

"As part of the agreements in Istanbul, the repatriation of the bodies of the deceased continues. Today,

the Russian side handed over another 1,200 bodies to Ukraine," said Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov.

"Ahead is an important and responsible stage of identification. This is a complex and delicate work that will give each family the opportunity to receive answers," said Umerov, who headed the Ukrainian delegation at talks in Istanbul.

It is the fourth in a series of handovers of soldiers' remains to take place in the past week, in accordance with an agreement reached between Russia and Ukraine at talks in Istanbul earlier this month.

Kyiv and Moscow agreed to each hand over as many as 6,000 bodies and to exchange sick and heavily wounded prisoners of war and those aged under 25.

Russia has so far reportedly only receiving a total of 27 Russian servicemen in return.

Ukraine and Russia have conducted three exchanges of POWs so far, but have not disclosed exact numbers.

Ukraine drone attack on Russia's Tatarstan region leaves at least 1 dead, 13 injured

AP adds: One person was killed and 13 others wounded Sunday in a Ukrainian drone attack in Russia's Tatarstan region, local authorities said.

Regional Gov. Rustam Minnikhanov said the drone was destroyed, but falling debris ignited a fire and struck a vehicle manufacturing plant in the Yelabuga district, some 750 miles (1,200 kilometers) from the frontline. Russia's defense ministry said it shot

down six Ukrainian drones overnight.

Russia launched 183 drones and decoys, along with 11 missiles, at Ukraine overnight, according to the Ukrainian air force, which said its air defenses destroyed 111 drones and eight missiles, while another 48 drones were jammed.

Officials in the Poltava region said the overnight attack damaged energy and agricultural infrastructure, but there were no casualties.

Continuing a renewed battlefield push along eastern and northeastern parts of the more than 600-mile front line, the Russian Defense Ministry claimed Sunday that its troops captured another village in the Donetsk region, Malynivka.

The Ukrainian military had no immediate comment on the Russian claim.



وفاقی حکومت کی جانب سے حالیہ بجٹ میں ملاکنڈ ڈویژن (پانٹا) کو تاجرتظیموں، سیاسی جماعتوں، وکلاء اور سول سوسائٹی کے پرزور مطالبے اور رد عمل کے پیش نظر کسٹم ایکٹ اور انکم ٹیکس سے مستثنیٰ قرار دینا ایک احسن اقدام ہے۔ ہم وزیراعظم شہباز شریف، مشیر وزیراعظم رانا ثناء اللہ کا شکریہ ادا کرتے ہیں اور اس ضمن میں وفاقی وزیر سیریفان اور امور کشمیر و گلگت بلتستان انجینئر امیر مقام کی کاوشوں کو سراہتے ہیں۔

تاہم حکومت کی جانب سے خام مال پر 10 فیصد سیلز ٹیکس کے نفاذ سے صنعت کاروں، تاجر تنظیموں اور عوام میں شدید تشویش پائی جاتی ہے کیونکہ یہ اقدام اس خطے کی جداگانہ آئینی حیثیت کے خاتمے کی پہلی کڑی ثابت ہو سکتی ہے۔ جسے ہم کسی بھی صورت قبول نہیں کریں گے! آئین پاکستان کے تحت ملاکنڈ ڈویژن (پانٹا) کو خصوصی حیثیت حاصل ہے۔ مگر افسوس کہ سر تاج عزیز کمیشن میں اس خطے کا ذکر نہ ہونے کے باوجود بھی مقامی نمائندوں کی نااہلی کے باعث اس خطے کی جداگانہ حیثیت خطرے میں پڑ چکی ہے۔

ہم انجینئر امیر مقام کی وساطت سے وزیراعظم شہباز شریف سے پرزور مطالبہ کرتے ہیں کہ انکم ٹیکس اور کسٹم ایکٹ کی طرح سیلز ٹیکس کا فیصلہ بھی واپس لیکر عوامی خدشات کو دور کیا جائے۔ ملاکنڈ ڈویژن (پانٹا) کو ٹیکس مینٹ میں لانے کی کوشش کی گئی تو ایک بار پھر ڈویژنل سطح پر احتجاجی تحریک چلائی جائے گی اور اس ضمن میں کسی بھی قربانی سے دریغ نہیں کیا جائے گا۔

عبدالرحیم (صدر ملاکنڈ ڈویژن ٹریڈرز فیڈریشن) وارا کین کا مینہ

