

**Quake jolts Balochistan**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A 4.4 magnitude earthquake jolts Pishin city and its surrounding areas in Balochistan on Tuesday. The earthquake occurred at a shallow depth of 12 kilometers, with its epicenter located 12 kilometers southeast of Pishin, a private news channel reported. The sudden tremors caused fear and prompted people to rush out of their homes and buildings.

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**UAE DPMs phones Dar**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday received a call from the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. During the telephonic conversation, the two leaders discussed the evolving regional situation in the wake of Israel's military strikes against Iran.

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TEHRAN: Iranian rescuers work at the site of an air strike on a residential area; while, mourners carrying the flag-draped coffins of three people killed in Israeli strikes on Asadabad.



TEL AVIV: Smoke billows from a building hit by an Iranian strike in Herzliya, Israel; while, a police officer looking at a burned-out bus following a missile attack.



# Israel, Trump tells Iran to ‘surrender’

— says won’t kill Khamenei for now

## Pakistan begins withdrawal of embassy staff from Iran

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: In light of the escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, Pakistan has begun withdrawing non-essential staff from its embassies in the region, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed on Tuesday.

According to sources, the process of evacuating non-essential diplomatic personnel and their families has been initiated as a precautionary measure. However, Pakistan’s embassy in Tehran and its consulate offices will continue to operate normally. The officials emphasized that the decision was made with full coordination and understanding with Iranian authorities to ensure safety without disrupting essential diplomatic functions. “This is a standard safety protocol in view of the evolving regional situation. Our core diplomatic staff will remain in place to continue critical operations,” the official added.

TEL AVIV/DUBAI (Reuters): US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that “we now have complete and total control of the skies over Iran” despite the US forces having not announced direct engagement in the Israel-Iran war.

“Iran had good sky trackers and other defensive equipment, and plenty of it, but it doesn’t compare to American made, conceived, and manufactured ‘stuff.’ Nobody does it better than the good ol’ USA,” Trump wrote in a social media post. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the US knew exactly where Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was “hiding”, that he was an easy target but would not be killed, at least for now.

“We know exactly where the “Supreme Leader” is hiding. He is an easy target, but is safe there - We are not going to take him out (kill!), at least not for now,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social. Just a few hours ago, Iran launched a new wave of attacks targeting Israel on Tuesday, state TV reported, as fighting between the longtime foes raged for a fifth straight day.

“The tenth wave of Operation Honest Promise 3 against the occupied territories (Israel) has begun,” state TV said, with the Tasnim news agency reporting that the new barrage consisted of “drone and missile attacks” by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. “President Donald J. Trump has never wavered in his

stance that Iran cannot be allowed to have a nuclear weapon — a pledge he has made repeatedly, both in office and on the campaign trail,” the White House said in a statement posted online on Tuesday that highlighted the times the Republican president has made such comments.

An official White House X account shared a thread with past clips of Trump repeating similar statements on Iran’s nuclear capabilities. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons and has pointed to its right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including enrichment, as a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

US President Donald Trump said he wanted a “real end” to the nuclear problem with Iran and indicated he may send senior American officials to meet with the Islamic Republic as the Israel-Iran air war raged for a fifth straight day. He made the comments during his midnight departure from Canada, where he attended the Group of Seven nations summit on Monday, according to comments posted by a CBS News reporter on social media platform X.

Trump predicted that Israel would not be slowing its attacks on Iran. “You’re going to find out over the next two days. You’re going to find out. Nobody’s slowed up so far,” the CBS journalist quoted Trump as saying on Air Force One. He said “I may”, on the prospect of sending US Middle East Envoy Steve Witkoff or

## US may join war against Iran: Vance

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump may decide to join the war on Iran to halt its nuclear weapons programme, according to his vice-president. Trump arrived at the White House at 5:30am after cutting short his trip to the G7 summit in Canada as the conflict in the Middle East intensified.

He is due to meet security chiefs in the situation room on Tuesday as he plots his next move. JD Vance said Mr Trump would only use the US armed forces in pursuit of American goals. “He may decide he needs to take further action to end Iranian enrichment. That decision ultimately belongs to the president,” he argued on X. — Agencies

Vice President JD Vance to meet with Iran.

Washington has said Trump was still aiming for a nuclear deal with Iran, even as the military confrontation unfolds. “Simply stated, Iran can not have a nuclear weapon. I said it over and over again! Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran!” Trump said on Monday. Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said on Tuesday that a “more powerful” new wave of missiles was recently launched towards Israel, the state news agency reported.

(Continued on Back Page)

## US spies said Iran wasn’t building a nuclear weapon

WASHINGTON (AP): Tulsi Gabbard left no doubt when she testified to Congress about Iran’s nuclear program earlier this year. The country was not building a nuclear weapon, the national intelligence director told lawmakers, and its supreme leader had not reauthorized the dormant program even though it had enriched uranium to higher levels. But President Donald Trump dismissed the assessment of US spy agencies during an overnight flight back to Washington as he cut short his trip to the Group of Seven summit to focus on the escalating conflict between Israel and Iran. “I don’t care what she said,” Trump told reporters. In his view, Iran was “very close” to having a nuclear bomb.

Trump’s statement aligned him with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has described a nuclear-armed Iran as an imminent threat, rather than with his own top intelligence adviser. Trump was expected to meet with national security officials in the Situation Room on Tuesday as he plans next steps. Gabbard brushed off the inconsistency, blaming the media for misconstruing her earlier testimony and asserting that “President Trump was saying the same thing that I said.” “We are on the same page,” she told CNN. Asked for comment, Gabbard’s office referred to those remarks. In her March testimony to lawmakers, Gabbard said the intelligence community “continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons program he suspended in 2003.” She also said the US was closely monitoring Iran’s nuclear program, noting that the country’s “enriched uranium stockpile is at its highest levels and is unprecedented for a state without nuclear weapons.”

## Xi ‘deeply worried’ by conflict

BEIJING (AFP): Chinese President Xi Jinping said Tuesday he was “deeply worried” by Israel’s military action against Iran, as China also accused US leader Donald Trump of “pouring oil” on the mounting conflict. Following decades of enmity and a prolonged shadow war, Israel launched a surprise aerial campaign last week against targets across Iran, saying it aimed to prevent its arch-foe from acquiring atomic weapons — an ambition Tehran denies. The sudden flare-up in hostilities has sparked fears of a wider conflict, with Trump urging Iran back to the negotiating table after Israel’s attacks derailed ongoing nuclear talks.

Trump also issued an extraordinary warning on his Truth Social platform: “Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran!” Asked about Trump’s remarks, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said: “Fanning the flames, pouring oil, making threats and mounting pressure will not help to promote the de-escalation of the situation, but will only intensify and widen the conflict.” “The Chinese side calls on all relevant parties, especially countries with special influence on Israel, to shoulder their responsibilities, take immediate measures to de-escalate tensions, and prevent the conflict from expanding and spreading.” China’s President Xi Jinping called for de-escalation of the conflict “as soon as possible” during a meeting with Uzbekistan’s President in Kazakhstan on Tuesday, state media reported. “Israel launching military action against Iran has caused a sudden escalation in tension in the Middle East, China is deeply worried about this,” Xi said, according to Xinhua.

## PM for linking Rekodiq with railway network

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif called on Tuesday directed the relevant authorities to link the Rekodiq with the Pakistan railway line network by 2028 to meet the requirements of future transportation and cargo services.

Chairing a meeting regarding Pakistan Railways upgradation and linking Rekodiq with Railways network, the prime minister directed to form an inter-ministerial committee to look after the financing matters for the up-gradation and development of Pakistan Railways.

The committee will present recommendations with regard to financing required for development of Pakistan Railways and its extension to Rekodiq.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the up-gradation of ML-1 and ML-3 railway and the overall development of Pakistan Railways to meet the requirements of future transportation and cargo services. The prime minister noted that Pakistan Railways served as a backbone for the country’s economy and communication.

Pakistan Railways is a cheap, fast and environment friendly source of transportation,” the prime minister said adding that the mines and mineral sector of Balochistan will develop and new employment opportunities for the people of the area will also be created after linking railways with Rekodiq.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad

Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi and high government officials.

**Shehbaz discusses constituencies’ issues with MNAs in separate meetings:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday discussed issues of relevant constituencies during separate meetings with Members of the National Assembly Sardar Shamsher Ali Mazari, Abdul Qadir Khosa and Ifkhar Nazir.

During the meeting, the overall and political situation of the country was discussed, a Prime Minister’s Office news release said.

Federal Minister for Public Affairs Unit Rana Mubashir Iqbal and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Talha Burki were also present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and State and Frontier Regions, Engineer Ameer Muqam called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to discuss matters pertaining to the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and State and Frontier Regions.

Both the dignitaries discussed the overall and political situation of the country, a Prime Minister’s Office news release said. Federal Minister for Public Affairs Unit Rana Mubashir Iqbal and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Talha Burki were also present in the meeting.

## Overseas Pakistanis role vital in country’s uplift: Field Marshal

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), is on an official visit to United States. During the visit, COAS interacted with the Overseas Pakistani community in Washington DC. The COAS received a warm reception and welcome from the overseas Pakistanis, who gathered in large numbers to meet with the Chief of Army Staff.

The diaspora warmly appreciated the outstanding performance of the Armed Forces during Operation Bunyanum Marsoos / Marka-e-Haq, showcasing their bravery and professionalism.

During the interaction, the COAS expressed his deep appreciation for the vital and most significant role being played by overseas Pakistanis for being ambassadors of Pakistan. He acknowledged their contributions to the Pakistan’s economy, and global reputation by contributing actively through remittances, investments and higher achievements in other domains.

The overseas Pakistanis shared their experiences and suggestions with the Army Chief. He emphasized the importance of engagement with the overseas Pakistanis, highlighting the need for continued collaboration and cooperation to address common challenges and promote cooperation.

The interaction concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, as the COAS and the overseas Pakistanis pledged to work together towards a more secure, prosperous, and resilient Pakistan.

## Israel kills 70 Palestinians in Gaza at aid sites

GAZA: Israeli troops have killed at least 70 Palestinians and wounded hundreds as they sought aid in Gaza on Tuesday, firing at them with tank shells, machine guns and drones. Those casualties are among the 89 Palestinians killed in attacks across the besieged enclave since dawn.

Israeli soldiers fired at the desperate crowds of aid seekers on Tuesday morning as they gathered along the main eastern road in the southern city of Khan Younis. It was the latest in a sustained wave of carnage since the Israel and United States-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) launched operations to distribute food in the territory three weeks ago.

The death toll is expected to rise as many of the injured are in a critical condition, according to medics at Nasser Hospital, where the casualties are being treated. Gaza Civil Defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal added that more than 200 people were injured, although reports concerning the number of casualties varied.

“Israeli drones fired at the citizens. Some minutes later, Israeli tanks fired several shells at the citizens, which led to a large number of martyrs and wounded,” the spokesman said, noting that the crowd had assembled in the hope of receiving flour. Al Jazeera’s Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Gaza City, said Israeli tanks, heavy machine guns, and drone strikes were “raining down” on crowds, according to eyewitnesses.

The death toll of more than 70 people made Tuesday the deadliest day around the GHF sites so far. Previously, that grim record was set on Monday, when 38 people were killed, mostly in the Rafah area south of Khan

Younis. Reports indicated more than 300 people have been killed and more than 2,000 wounded while trying to collect aid from the GHF since it launched operations in Gaza on May 26. Survivors described horrific scenes.

“Dozens of civilians, including children, were killed, and no one could help or save lives,” survivor Saeed Abu Liba, 38, told Al Jazeera. Yousef Nofal, who called the event a “massacre”, said he saw many people lying motionless and bleeding on the ground. The soldiers continued to fire on people as they fled, he said. “I survived by a miracle,” said Mohammed Abu Qeshta, who mentioned both heavy gunfire and tank shelling.

Al Jazeera’s correspondent Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, quoted medical sources at Nasser Hospital as saying many victims were “unidentifiable” because they had been “shredded to pieces” in the attack. The GHF began distributing a trickle of food aid in Gaza at the end of May after Israel partially lifted a nearly three-month total blockade on food, medicines and other essential items, leading to fears of famine for the population of 2.3 million. No other aid has been allowed in by Israel, which in effect has kept the punishing blockade in place.

The United Nations and major humanitarian groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF, citing concerns that it prioritises Israeli military objectives over humanitarian needs and bypasses organisations with decades of experience in providing food and medicine at hundreds of locations to the entire population of Gaza. — Aljazeera

## ‘Kashmir is lifeline of Pakistan’

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif has praised the role of Pakistani youth, especially students, in the success of Operation “Bunyan-un-Marsoos”, saying that they helped crush India’s strategic illusions once and for all.

The ISPR DG made these remarks during his visit to Jinnah University for Women in Karachi, where he received a warm welcome from the administration and students.

Addressing a charged crowd of young women, he highlighted the bravery, unity, and sacrifices that marked the operation, as well as the public’s key contribution in standing shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces. General Ahmed Sharif said, “There is no doubt that Kashmir is the lifeline of Pakistan. The people of Balochistan are deeply connected to the country through ties of religion, culture, and tradition.”

## PM, President discuss budget

Zardari visits Air Headquarters

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday. The meeting discussed the prevailing political and economic situation in the country. Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning and Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and Senator Saleem Manviwalla were also present during the meeting.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister briefed the President on his recent official visit to the United Arab Emirates and also shared key features of the federal budget. President Asif Ali Zardari emphasized that the federal budget should prioritize the welfare and uplift of the common man, particularly workers and low-income groups. He underscored that the salaried class, pensioners, labourers, and underprivileged segments of society are facing serious challenges, and effective measures must be taken to alleviate their burden.

The President highlighted the need for employment generation and social protection initiatives to support the poor and vulnerable sections of the population.

The President, Asif Ali Zardari,

also called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force during his visit to Air Headquarters Islamabad. The visit was aimed at boosting the morale of PAF following its resounding success in defending the aerial frontiers of Pakistan and delivering a decisive response to recent aggression from India.

Upon his arrival, a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to the President. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared insight into various ongoing modernisation projects of Pakistan Air Force’s operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare. In the recent stand-off against India, he attributed PAF’s success to the matchless training, smart inductions, seamless operational readiness and a homegrown kill chain sharpened by the mastery of modern warfare.

The Air Chief highlighted that for the first time in its history, Pakistan Air Force conducted Full Spectrum Operations during the recent conflict, employing multi-domain warfare capabilities. This included the integration of Space, Cyber and Electronic Warfare, alongside the strategic application of niche and disruptive technologies, which collectively generat-

ed decisive effects that significantly contributed to Pakistan’s victory over India.

The President expressed his profound appreciation for the exemplary professionalism, unwavering commitment and indomitable spirit demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan Air Force. He acknowledged the pivotal and decisive role played by PAF in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan during the recent conflict, which culminated in a historic and resolute victory. He also lauded the leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, recognizing his role in modernizing PAF and swiftly integrating advanced technologies that have significantly enhanced operational readiness of Pakistan Air Force and have recalibrated the region’s deterrence landscape.

The President highlighted that the bold and visionary leadership of Pakistan Armed Forces had enabled Pakistan to deliver a firm and timely response to Indian aggression, ensuring the Air Force remains at the forefront of technological and strategic advancement. He also expressed his satisfaction over PAF’s combat readiness and reiterated an all-out support from the Government of Pakistan to Pakistan Air Force in its pursuit of excellence.





ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr Asif Ali Zardari, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force Air Headquarters Islamabad.

## BISP establishes Control Room

LAHORE (APP): Central Zonal Office of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Punjab, has set up a Control Room and Complaint Cell in Lahore in compliance with the orders of Nasir Khalili, the Director General BISP Punjab, for effective communication with beneficiaries across all districts of the province and ensure prompt redressal of their grievances.

In a major step to strengthen service delivery and enhance beneficiary facilitation, the Control Room will be functional during tranche disbursement hours as a platform for receiving complaints and resolving issues in a timely and transparent manner, says an official release issued here Tuesday.

This development reaffirms BISP's commitment to accountability, accessibility, and efficient support for its beneficiaries. Beneficiaries can contact the Control Room through the landline numbers 042-99260412 and 042-35415143. These lines are dedicated to assisting beneficiaries in resolving their concerns effectively and ensuring a smooth disbursement process.

## 8 killed, 1,374 injured in RTCs

LAHORE (APP): The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1,178 road traffic crashes (RTCs) across all 37 districts of Punjab during the past 24 hours, resulting in eight deaths and injuries to 1,374 individuals. According to a spokesperson for Rescue 1122, among the injured, 614 people with serious injuries were shifted to various hospitals, while 760 victims with minor wounds were provided on-site medical assistance by Rescue Medical Teams, helping to reduce the burden on emergency rooms and hospital services.

## Two 53 MW hydropower projects to be completed this year

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is working rapidly on ongoing energy projects with its own resources, several of which have entered the final stages of completion, which will prove helpful in stabilizing the province's economy and developing the industrial sector in the future.

In addition to this, 2 projects having 53-megawatt capacity will be completed this year, from which the province is expected to earn an annual income of more than Rs 2.4 billion from the electricity generated.

Similarly, the 84 MW Gorkin Matiltan Hydropower Project in Swat district will also be completed and power generation will start next year. Along with the hydropower projects,

practical work will also be started soon on the project to provide free solar systems to millions of poor families to provide immediate relief to the people.

A very important institution like PEDO will be made into a developed institution in the province with the support of experts under teamwork and the highest annual revenue generating institution of billions of rupees.

These views were expressed by Special Assistant to CM KP on energy Engr. Tariq Sadozai and Secretary Energy and Power Muhammad Zubair Khan while presiding over a review meeting held at PEDO house to review the progress of ongoing energy projects.

Meanwhile, giving a briefing, Chief Executive PEDO Irfanullah Khan said that work is currently underway on several energy

projects including hydro, solar power and transmission lines under the supervision of this office.

CEO further added that the province has successfully completed eight hydroelectric projects, generating with a total capacity of 172 MW electricity, generating an annual revenue of more than Rs. 5 billion for the province.

Meanwhile, work is underway on 12 projects, including 300 MW Balakot Mansehra, 157 MW Madin Swat, 88 MW Gabral Kalam, 84 MW Mittaltan Swat, 69 MW Lawi Chitral, 40.8 MW Kotodir, 11.8 MW Karora Shangla, 10.5 MW Chapri Charkhel Kurram and 6.9 MW Mujahideen Power Project Torghar, which will generate a total of 778 MW of electricity and the province will have an annual revenue of more than 45 billion rupees.

## Surplus budget achieved through austerity: Muzzammil

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the KP Chief Minister on finance and interprovincial coordination Muzzammil Aslam, while responding to questions during the provincial assembly's budget session, stated that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, by incorporating financial discipline, transparency, and austerity into its budget strategy, not only successfully completed the Annual Development Program (ADP) worth Rs. 120 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25 but also incurred development expenditures exceeding Rs. 150 billion — a significant milestone.

He said that the current government, prioritizing public welfare, introduced financial reforms, curtailed expenditures, increased revenues, and succeeded in presenting a surplus budget — a first in the province's

history. He further stated that the government has secured Rs. 150 billion in a debt fund to gradually pay off the province's debts.

The finance advisor emphasized the need for the federal government to fulfill the province's financial rights, stating that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has forcefully and effectively advocated for the protection of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's constitutional and financial rights in relation to the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. As a result of these efforts, positive outcomes are emerging, and the federal government is now preparing to announce the 11th NFC Award.

Drawing attention to the challenges in the education sector, he stated that although the out-of-school children situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is better than in other

provinces, 30% of children in the province are still out of school — a concerning reality. In light of this, the government is declaring an "education emergency" to ensure that every child has access to education.

Muzzammil Aslam also shared that the Chief Minister led 250 hours of consultation meetings during the budget preparation process, resulting in a comprehensive, balanced, and realistic Annual Development Program that reflects the public's needs and the province's developmental priorities.

The finance advisor concluded that the current government's budget strategy is based on the principles of public interest, financial stability, and self-reliance, aiming not only to address current challenges but also to lay the foundation for sustainable development in the future.

## Police foil Khawarij terror plot

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police successfully thwarted a terrorist plot by Khawarij militants during a high-stakes joint operation in Dera Ghazi Khan.

According to police spokesperson, the operation was conducted in collaboration with the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and Rangers based on credible intelligence inputs regarding the presence of militants in the border area of Kot Mubarak, which connects Punjab with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As law enforcement teams reached the identified location, terrorists launched an attack using rocket launchers and heavy firearms. In response, the police, CTD, and Rangers launched a swift and effective counterattack, forcing the militants to retreat. Preliminary reports suggest that several terrorists sustained injuries.

A comprehensive search and sweep operation is currently underway in the area, led by SDPO Taunsa, SHO Wohwa, and teams from CTD and Rangers. The operation aims to ensure complete clearance and prevent any regrouping of militant elements.

District Police Officer (DPO) Dera Ghazi Khan Syed Ali said that Punjab Police remain a steadfast barrier against terrorism. He praised the bravery and professionalism displayed by the personnel of Punjab Police, CTD, and Rangers, reaffirming the commitment to continue decisive action against terrorists across all fronts.

## DIGs transfer, postings ordered

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Government has ordered transfer and postings of Deputy Inspectors General with immediate effect and until further orders.

According to notification issued by Services, General Administration and Coordination Department, Usman Ghani Siddiqui, DIG Eat Zone was transferred and posted as DIG Rapid Response Force vice Capt (R) Ghulam Azfar Mahesar transferred.

Ghulam Azfar Mahesar, presently posted as DIG RRF, has been transferred and posted as DIG CTD Sindh, Karachi. Farukh Ali, an officer of Police Service of Pakistan (BS-19) presently posted as PSO to Home Minister, has been transferred and posted as DIG East Zone (BS-20) on his own pay and scale vice Usman Ghani Siddiqui transferred.

Sheeraz Nazir, an officer of Police Service of Pakistan (BS-19) presently posted as PSO to CM Sindh, has been transferred as posted as DIG Special Branch Sindh, Karachi (BS-20) on his own pay and scale with immediate effect, relieving Zulfiqar Ali Mahar of the additional charge.

## 32 talented PEF students begin training

LAHORE (APP): Thirty-two academically gifted students supported by the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) have commenced a 40-day intensive training program at Cadet College Hasanabdal. The initiative is designed to prepare them for the college's competitive entrance examination scheduled for October 2025.

These students were selected based on their exceptional performance in a written test conducted under the 8th National Outreach Program (NOP), which identifies high-potential students from underserved backgrounds.

According to a PEF spokesperson, all arrangements for the students' education and well-being during the training period are being fully sponsored by the foundation. The support includes free academic instruction, hostel accommodation, meals, uniforms, books, and access to sports and co-curricular activities.

This special training reflects PEF's unwavering commitment to providing equitable access to quality education for talented students from disadvantaged areas. By enabling them to compete for admission to prestigious institutions like Cadet College Hasanabdal, the foundation is paving the way for a more inclusive and brighter future for Pakistan.

## Italian Navy Ship arrives in Karachi

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Italian Navy Ship ITS ANTONIO MARCEGLIA arrived at Karachi Port for a three-day goodwill visit, marking a significant milestone in the long-standing maritime cooperation between Italian Navy and Pakistan Navy.

An impressive reception ceremony was held upon arrival of the ship, where the Commanding Officer and crew of the visiting ship were warmly received

by officials of Pakistan Navy. Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, along with officials from the Italian Consulate were also present on the occasion.

During the port call, the ship's crew will participate in a range of professional engagements including cross-ship visits, discussions on maritime security and joint training sessions.

These engagements are designed to foster deeper mutual understanding, enhance bilateral naval cooperation and advance

operational interoperability between the two navies.

The visit will culminate in Sea Phase, featuring various warfare-related exercises, designed to enhance tactical coordination and maritime security operations of both navies.

The visit of Italian Navy Ship ITS ANTONIO MARCEGLIA reinforces growing maritime partnership between both countries. It also reflects shared resolve of both navies to work together for regional stability.



KARACHI: Commanding Officer Italian Navy Ship ITS ANTONIO MARCEGLIA being welcomed on arrival at Karachi Port.

## KP allocates Rs. 10 million for new industrial projects

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In the Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has included three new development projects for the Directorate of Industries, a subsidiary wing of the Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department.

It is pertinent to mention that a total of 40 developmental projects are included for the Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department in the budget, wherein, 22 new and 18 ongoing schemes are included.

The total allocated funding for these projects stands at Rs. 2,853.865 million, with Rs. 395.009 million earmarked for new projects and Rs. 2,458.865 million for ongoing ones.

Under the Annual Development Programme, in the three new schemes included for the Directorate of Industries, one project is of "Revamping and Modernization of the Government Printing Press". The total estimated cost of this project is Rs. 15 million, with Rs. 4 million allocated for it in the FY 2025-26 budget.

The second project is related to the "Conversion

of Conventional Brick Kiln to Modern Greener Technology." This project carries an estimated cost of Rs. 50 million, with an allocation of Rs. 3 million in the annual budget 2025-26.

The third project is of "Establishment of Research and Statistical Cell at DIC and Statistical Surveys Across KP." This initiative is estimated to cost Rs. 30 million and Rs. 3 million has been allocated for the fiscal year 2025-26.

The cumulative estimated cost of these three projects is Rs. 95 million, with a total of Rs. 10 million allocated for the upcoming fiscal year.

## Transplant Unit named after Shaheed Jawad Khan

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ihtisham Ali, Advisor to the Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Health, today attended a special ceremony at the Institute of Kidney Diseases (IKD) to pay a rich tribute to the late Jawad Khan, a young boy who saved five lives through organ donation.

On this occasion, the Transplant Unit at IKD was officially named after Shaheed Jawad Khan. The ceremony also honored the parents of the late Jawad Khan, a 9th-grade student. Advisor Ihtisham Ali embraced Jawad's father, expressing his gratitude, and present-

ed him with an honorary shield on behalf of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also awarded commendation certificates to the organ transplant team.

Speaking at the event, Ihtisham Ali stated, "This is the first time in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that someone so young has donated their organs. The late Jawad Khan, hailing from Rustam, not only saved five lives by donating his organs but also set a commendable example for our society."

He further added, "We are in dire need of individuals like Jawad who, even as they depart, leave behind something for

humanity. The late Jawad has become immortal by donating his organs. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Health Department will always remember this immense favor from Jawad and his parents."

The Advisor to CM KP on Health expressed hope that the legacy of organ donation initiated by the late Jawad would continue. He remarked, "The late Jawad has given the public an opportunity to also donate their organs for the survival of humanity. I salute the teams of MTI HMC and MTRA who accomplished this remarkable feat in such a short time."

## Inauguration of NUML Information & Facilitation Centre (NIFC)

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI(M) (Retd), Rector, National University of Modern Languages, formally inaugurated the newly established NUML Information & Facilitation Centre (NIFC) today at the university's main campus.

The state-of-the-art facility is designed to provide a centralised support system for students and prospective applicants. The centre houses multiple dedicated counters to address queries related to admissions, scholarships, transportation, examinations, hostel affairs, finance, and other key student services.

The inauguration ceremony began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Rector, followed by a dua. He was accompanied by



DG NUML, Brig Shahzad Munir and other senior university officials, who visited various service counters at the centre.

On the occasion, the Rector emphasised the

importance of providing timely and efficient services to students and aspiring applicants. He urged the staff to fulfil their responsibilities diligently and ensure a supportive environment

for all stakeholders.

The NUML Information & Facilitation Centre is a major step forward in enhancing student experience and operational efficiency at the university.

## 26 truckloads of encroachment goods seized

LAHORE (APP): The district administration launched a large-scale anti-encroachment operation across the city. During the grand operation, a total of 26 truckloads of encroachment goods were confiscated, while extensive action was taken against illegal encroachments in key commercial and residential areas, including Gulberg, Allama Iqbal Town, Township, Anarkali, Ichhra Bazaar, and Moon Market.

Unauthorized structures, roadside stalls, and illegally constructed platforms were removed as part of the campaign. The drive is being led by Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza. Similar operations were carried out along GT Road, in Baghbanpura, Hafeez Center, Shah Alam Market, Haji Camp, and Samanabad, where teams successfully dismantled

illegal extensions and cleared public pathways.

Municipal Officer (Regulations) Kashif Jaleel, who supervised the operation, reported that several major areas of the city had been cleared of encroachments, significantly improving public access and road conditions. He noted that Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza is personally monitoring the anti-encroachment efforts to ensure strict implementation. He added that the Lahore Metropolitan Corporation and the district administration were working in close coordination to maintain momentum and achieve long-term results.

Deputy Commissioner Musa Raza said that restoring the city's natural beauty and ensuring unobstructed roads and pedestrian access were top priorities.

## PHA intensifies efforts to enhance Lahore beauty

LAHORE (APP): The Parks and Horticulture Authority Lahore has intensified its efforts to enhance the city's parks and recreational spaces, ensuring better facilities and a cleaner and greener environment for the public.

Acting on special instructions from Director General PHA Muhammad Umer Sher, comprehensive measures are being taken to upgrade infrastructure, improve cleanliness and beautify various parks across the city. In this regard, Director Administration Saulat Hayat Wattoo conducted detailed visits to several parks, including Ghousia Park in Nishtar Colony, Usama Block Park, Bilal Park, Saroba Park, Ammar Block Park, Yasir Block Park and the LDA Park in Venice Housing Scheme. During the inspections,



# CJP chairs meeting to review master plan for Kacheri Compound



**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi chaired a high-level meeting at the Supreme Court Branch Registry, Peshawar. The meeting was convened to review and finalize the Master Plan for the proposed construction of the Kacheri Compound in Peshawar, on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Justice Ishtiaq

Ibrahim, Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice S. M Attique Shah, Acting Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court; Justice Ijaz Anwar, Senior Puisne Judge, PHC; Muhammad Saleem Khan, Registrar, Supreme Court of Pakistan; senior officers of the Peshawar High Court; and senior officers from the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this important consultative session, various aspects of the proposed

Kacheri Compound were discussed in detail, including architectural planning, utility provisions, accessibility, and integration of environmental-friendly features. The Chief Justice of Pakistan emphasized that the project must be developed along modern and sustainable lines, with special consideration for the requirements and inputs of all key stakeholders, including the Bar, the Bench, and the Executive. He further stressed the importance of making the compound user friendly and inclusive for all segments of society. In this regard, he directed that the design should incorporate dedicated spaces for greenery, ensure environmental health through plantation, and include a designated park area for children. Additionally, facilities must be provided to ensure ease and accessibility for litigants, particularly the elderly and differently-abled persons. Reiterating the judiciary's commitment to institutional cooperation, Chief Justice of Pakistan assured that the Supreme Court of Pakistan will continue to play its due role in facilitating the process wherever required. He underlined that the judiciary remains fully supportive of constructive initiatives aimed at strengthening the justice delivery system and enhancing public access to legal services.



PESHAWAR: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah

## Australian High Commissioner meets KP Governor

Discuss peace, education, climate, sports cooperation

PESHAWAR (APP): Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, here at the Governor House on Tuesday. The two dignitaries held a detailed discussion on a wide range of issues including the law and order situation, the socio-economic conditions of merged districts, environmental challenges, and the promotion of sports particularly women's participation. Governor Kundi briefed the High Commissioner on the province's longstanding struggle with terrorism, saying that while security forces and police are performing their duties commendably, the provincial government's lack of seriousness on maintaining peace remains concerning. Highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's natural resource wealth, the



Governor emphasized that pending issues between the province and federal government can be resolved through strategic planning and dialogue. He also requested the High Commissioner to support the increase of scholarships for the province's talented youth in Australian institutions, especially in modern and technology-driven education sectors. "Education is the funda-

including the newly merged areas. Discussing climate concerns, the Governor pointed out that due to a large number of glaciers, KP is one of the most vulnerable provinces to environmental changes, which have caused significant damage through floods in recent years. High Commissioner Neil Hawkins appreciated the Governor's vision regarding modern education and technology. He reaffirmed Australia's commitment to expanding cooperation in education, offering merit-based scholarships, and promoting sports, especially women's participation. He also lauded the sacrifices made by the people, police, and security forces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the fight against terrorism. The meeting reflected mutual intent to strengthen bilateral cooperation across key development sectors in the province.

## Malakand Division ignored in budget: JI leader

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Former senior provincial minister and Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North chief, Inayatullah Khan, Tuesday sharply criticized both federal and provincial budgets, claiming that the people of Malakand Division have been completely ignored in the government's fiscal planning for 2025-26. Speaking at a press conference at the Peshawar Press Club alongside Shah Raz Khan, President, Tehreek-e-Huqooq Malakand and former finance minister, former member provincial and national assembly Sahibzada Tariqullah, ex-district nazim Sahibzada Fasihullah, and Tehsil Chairman Rafeeullah Khan, Inayatullah condemned the

lack of financial relief for the region. "The government's priorities have no space for the people of Malakand. There isn't even a hint of relief," he said, alleging that the provincial government violated a previous agreement by reimposing taxes on Malakand residents. "We will not let this injustice stand. An All Parties Conference will be held on June 25 to determine the next course of action." He further lambasted the imposition of 18% sales tax on solar panels, calling it "a punishment for self-reliance." According to Inayatullah, the tax penalizes households seeking affordable alternatives to rising electricity costs. "The government is essentially forcing people to buy expensive power," he said. Criticizing both Islamabad and Peshawar, he noted that the federal budget offered tax relief to industrialists and elites while increasing pressure on salaried classes. He also questioned the credibility of provincial claims of fiscal strength, branding the so-called "budget surplus" a "deficit in disguise." Inayatullah highlighted the contradiction in the provincial government's budget document, which states it will raise Rs. 129 billion through local means. "Will this amount be extracted through illegal taxation in Malakand?" he asked, warning of public backlash. He pointed out that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has already collected Rs. 200 million in taxes from Malakand, and called it a breach of promises made to the region.

## KP District Attorneys and Law Officers Association sworn in

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: A formal oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected cabinet of the District Attorneys and Law Officers Welfare Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was held at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar. The event was graced by the provincial Minister for Law, Aftab Alam Advocate, who administered the oath to the newly inducted office-bearers.

The ceremony was attended by the Secretary of the Law and Human Rights Department, the Director General of Law and Human Rights, other senior officials of the department, and office-bearers of the KP Law Officers Association, including President Tariq Khan tureen. On the occasion, Minister Aftab Alam extended his heartfelt congratulations to the new cabinet and underscored their crucial role in strengthening the judicial system. In his address, he described District Attorneys and Law Officers as the "backbone of the judicial system," highlighting their responsibilities in prosecuting public cases, offering legal counsel, and ensuring effective representation of the state. He emphasized that District Attorneys play a pivotal role in codes of civil procedure by overseeing case investigations, pursuing court proceedings, handling appeals, and negotiating plea bargains.

## Doctors express concern over ETEA's 'inconsistent' test format

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Doctors Association (PDA) has expressed deep concern over what it terms "gross irregularities" in the recent recruitment examination conducted by the Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA) for the post of Medical Officer. The exam was held on June 14 and 15, 2025, across various centers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dr. Qazi Shahbaz Mohyuddin, Senior Vice President of the PDA, told reporters that the examination lacked uniformity, transparency, and fairness, as candidates on each day were subjected to different formats of the same test. "On June 14, the paper included only multiple-choice questions (MCQs) worth 75 marks. However, on June 15, a 15-mark analytical section was suddenly introduced alongside the 75-mark MCQs," he said,

questioning the rationale behind administering two different formats for the same post. According to the PDA, this abrupt change placed candidates appearing on June 15 at a disadvantage, especially as the analytical portion was not mentioned in any official syllabus or preparation guideline. Several candidates reportedly received the new format with only minutes to prepare before the exam commenced. Doctors' representatives further stated that such practices not only compromise the credibility of the recruitment process but also risk demoralizing young medical professionals. "When selection criteria are altered mid-process, it shakes the candidates' confidence in the system," said Dr. Shahbaz. The Association pointed out additional issues, including ambiguous questions, poor paper quality,

and inadequate exam management. Some candidates reported confusion during paper distribution and time constraints while attempting analytical questions. Calling the process "academically unreliable and procedurally unjustified," the PDA has made the following demands: A full inquiry into the conduct of the Medical Officer test by an independent authority. Immediate cancellation of both exam days due to lack of standardization.

A single, uniform test for all applicants, based on a clear and published syllabus. The PDA warned that failure to address these concerns would prompt further action, including a press conference and possible legal recourse. "We seek fairness, not favoritism. The future of our medical workforce depends on how seriously these matters are taken," said Dr. Shahbaz. The ETEA has not yet issued an official response to the allegations.



## KMU organizes meeting on Exam reforms

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, convened a significant online meeting to deliberate on examination reforms in medical and dental colleges. The primary aim of the meeting was to enhance skill-based assessments and incorporate feedback from faculty and students into the examination system. The meeting was attended by representatives from various medical colleges, examination controllers, and directors of Medical Education. Professor Dr. Usman

Mahboob director KMU-Institute of Health Profession Education & Research emphasized the importance of transparency, reliability, objectivity, and data sharing in the examination process, referencing past challenges that had impacted institutional rankings. Participants explored various models for standardizing OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) exams, with a model based on student shuffling across three zones deemed the most feasible. Practical matters such as student accommodation, exam center management, and examiner allocation were also discussed. The meeting addressed modern solutions including standardization of OSCE stations, development of online software for internal assessment marks, and the use of video and AI technologies. Proposals were made to establish dedicated examination committees, a central curriculum committee, and IT teams to implement the new examination system within the next six months. Training of examiners and implementation of quality control measures were also highlighted as key components.

# Digitization and the economic future of Pakistan

**Muhammad Awais Sheikh**

**I**N a time and age when countries are scurrying towards Digitization as the support of economic strength, Pakistan is at a juncture of being left behind. The debate on economic resurgence tends to alternate between structural adjustments, borrowing foreign money and austerity measures- yet the only missing ingredient in such argument is technology driven change. When undertaken in a comprehensive, inclusive way, Digitization will provide Pakistan with a potent force not only to reinvigorate its economy but also to democratise opportunity class and geography. Digital evolution: The state of play In the last ten years, Pakistan has increased its digital presence. There are more than 140 million internet subscribers and mobile connectivity has crossed the 85 per cent mark, connectivity has enhanced especially in urban centres. In FY2023, Pakistan IT exports crossed over \$2.6 billion and the nation has

entered the top five positions in the world in terms of freelance services. E-commerce passed \$6bn in a year and digital payment transactions using the State Bank of Pakistan Raast system passed Rs19 trillion. However, along with these achievements, the tempo of digitalization in key spheres of activity is rather slow and unequal: agriculture, industry, education, health. Broadband internet coverage outside major cities is spotty, and implementation of digital policy is affected by bureaucratic slowdown and political short-sightedness. Failed opportunities in strategic industries Modern technology has been beyond the reach of Agriculture where almost 40pc of the labour force of Pakistan is engaged. As the neighbouring country India tests AI-powered soil analysis and drone-based irrigation systems, Pakistan still uses the old tactics and middlemen-centred supply chains. In certain areas, losses due to post-harvest inefficiency remain at above 25pc of produce. The Digitization of Agri-value

chains have a potential not only to reduce losses but also to increase farmer incomes and food security. High cost, skills Shortage and policy uncertainty are impeding digital adoption in industry, especially amongst SMEs. Most small manufacturers are informally operating, and even though the government is talking about 'smart industry zones', the fact is that these manufacturers have no access to tools or training to digitise production and logistics. Instead, the services sector has now turned out to be a bright spot. The private sector is dominating the development of freelancing, fintech, e-commerce, and digital education, which are gaining momentum rapidly. Not only is the younger population digitally educated, with more than 60pc of them being below 30 years old, they are also entrepreneurs. Through proper investment, this population group can drive Pakistan into a knowledge economy. Policy initiatives: promise and performance The Digital Pakistan pro-

gram of the PTI era had made some foundation in preparing the connectivity and e-governance. In 2020, the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) was initiated to establish innovation centers and make the places attractive to investment. The immediate payment system (Raast) created by the State Bank has currently become one of the most effective digital payment channels in the region. Such efforts have however been undermined by political uncertainty and lack of follow through between different administrations. The STZs are yet to be developed. Poor cybersecurity infrastructure. And as much as Raast has provided a fast way of doing payment processing, it is yet to be widely used in the rural and informal economies because of a lack of digital literacy and trust. Most importantly, Digitization has not been approached as a national priority that cuts across. Instead, it is fragmented between ministries with some duplication of mandates and little coordination. Obstacles to develop-

ments There are three fundamental obstacles that still hurt digital transformation. To begin with, infrastructure gaps are enormous. In rural Pakistan, reliable internet is available to less than 40pc of the areas. The fibre-optic deployment is minimal and the regulatory framework is not favourable to encourage privately-owned telecom to invest in unserved or underserved markets. Second, the level of digital literacy is alarming. Most of the workers in Pakistan do not even possess the basic ICT skills and digital education is not instilled in the curricula of most government schools. Discussions of AI and blockchain seem premature in such a world. Third, cybersecurity is an afterthought. In the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index of 2023, Pakistan was placed at position 79 among 79 countries. Cyberattacks on government systems are common, with data protection and digital rights laws being weak or not well enforced. A digital new national compact

Pakistan does not need piecemeal reform but a new national digital compact: one which is not subject to the political cycle but which enshrines Digitization in each policy of the sector. The way ahead needs to be prioritised around five things: 1. Rural Connectivity: The digital divide between urban and rural Pakistan still exists and until it is bridged; digital growth will be an urban elite creature. Usage of Universal Service Fund should be revived and tracked towards last mile fibre deployment. 2. Mass Digital Literacy: Community tech centres (particularly in underserved locations) should be created through public-private partnerships. Digital education should be a subject-subject since the school level. 3. Cybersecurity Frameworks: The government should develop a National Cybersecurity Authority, which will have an independent oversight and guard over the critical infrastructure and citizen data. 4. SME Digitization Grants: Similarly to the industries involved in export, SMEs

ought to get financial and technical assistance to digitise their businesses- particularly, manufacturing and logistics. 5. Whole-of-Government Strategy: The Prime Minister Office should spearhead an inter-ministerial digital transformation task force and ensure co-ordination among IT, education, finance, agriculture and commerce. The economic crisis in Pakistan cannot be solved by mere bail out or reshaping of its debts. A 30-year economic vision that is based on productivity, innovation, and inclusion is what is required. Digitization is none of these silver bullets, but an empowerer of all three. In an era of growing unemployment among young people and of dwindling fiscal room, investment in digital infrastructure and skills is among the few possible avenues to economic growth and social mobility. However, to achieve this, the state needs to play not only the role of a regulator, but the role of a facilitator, and, what is more important, the role of a believer in the power of technological change.





## In brief

### Buner's land suitable for pulses cultivation

#### F.P. Report

**BUNER:** The Agriculture Department, Extension Buner, has initiated experiments on pulse crops and established plots for various legumes in different areas of the district. A one-day seminar was organized at the district headquarters Daggar to educate farmers about pulse crop production and cultivation methods. Project Director PSDP Pulses Dr. Muhammad Mansoor was chief guest while Senior Research Officer Dr. Fayyaz, Soil Scientist Dr. Sonia Samreen, National Program Pulses, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa representative Dr. Abdul Qayyum and Deputy Director Agriculture Saeed-ul-Haq addressed the participants. Additional Deputy Commissioner Wasim Akhtar was also present. The speakers throw light on pulse crop production, cultivation methods and benefits. Pakistan requires 50,000 tons of pulse crops; achieving self-sufficiency would save significant foreign exchange, the speakers stressed. The speakers added that Buner's soil is suitable for pulse crops; farmers can achieve good yields with modern methods and departmental guidance. The department has successfully experimented with off-season vegetables, tunnel farming, vertical agriculture, and intercropping before initiating pulse crop experiments. The district administration has assured full cooperation with the Agriculture Department. The seminar aimed to promote pulse crop cultivation among farmers, highlighting its potential benefits for both farmers and the national economy.

### Residents get relief

#### F.P. Report

**BANNU:** A significant development in the power sector has brought relief to the residents of Bannu City and surrounding areas as the long-awaited City-6 feeder was formally inaugurated. The newly installed feeder, built at a cost of millions of rupees, is expected to resolve persistent issues of tripping and low voltage that plagued the region for the past seven years. The inauguration ceremony was jointly led by Mayor of Bannu, Irfan Durrani, and prominent political and social figure Malik Rahat. The event witnessed the participation of City Chairman Abid Khan, Syed Adnan Hashmi, local elders, community notables, WAPDA officials, and a large number of citizens. Speakers at the ceremony paid glowing tribute to the efforts of former Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani and ex-Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani, whose continuous efforts were instrumental in bringing the project to completion. The City-6 feeder is expected to benefit several key areas including Bannu City, Hanjal, Sokri, Faiz Talab, Abbas Mandan, Bannu Mill Area, Fatima Khel, Jaman Road, and nearby localities. Meanwhile, in line with the vision of the Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, and Regional Police Officer Bannu, Sajjad Khan, special initiatives are being taken for the welfare of police personnel. In this regard, the District Police Officer (DPO) of Bannu, Saleem Abbas Kalachi, distributed cheques amounting to more than 365,000 rupees—approved from the Police Welfare Fund—among concerned police personnel and their family members.

## JI threatens protest over power outages

### F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) warned of strong public protests in Timergara over persistent unannounced and prolonged power outages. In a statement issued here the other day, JI Lower Dir secretary information, Malik Sher Bahadar Khan said that residents of Timergara, especially those living in New Timergara, were suffering immensely due to hours-long unscheduled load shedding.

He alleged that the Pesco staff intentionally disconnected the power supply at night and restored it at their

discretion, calling the practice unjust and abusive. He demanded the immediate replacement of what he called the "irresponsible" SDO Pesco and his staff with honest and duty-bound officers. The JI warned that if the crisis continues, citizens and traders would be forced to take to the streets, with full responsibility falling on the authorities concerned.

**Shortage of teaching staff:** Parents in Manogay raised alarms over the critical shortage of teaching staff at the Government Higher Secondary School. With over 330 students enrolled, the school is oper-

ating without two Secondary School Teachers (General), two Certified Teachers (CT), and a Physical Education Teacher (PET).

Parents said the shortage is affecting students' academic progress and overburdening current staff. They criticized the provincial government's "educational emergency" claims and warned they would transfer their children to private institutions if the vacancies are not filled immediately. They appealed to the education department to ensure urgent appointments to save the academic year from further disruption.

## KKKUK hosts cancer awareness seminar



### F.P. Report

**KARAK:** Khushal Khan Khattak University, in a collaborative effort between the Department of Physics and the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), today successfully hosted a one-day seminar titled "Know, Act, and Survive Against Cancer." The impactful event, held in collaboration with the District Youth Affairs Karak, aimed to educate and empower the community on crucial aspects of cancer awareness, prevention, and early detection.

The seminar featured

insightful presentations from distinguished resource persons. Dr. Asad Ejaz, Director of the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) Islamabad, shared his expertise, shedding light on critical aspects of cancer and its prevention. He was joined by Mr. Kalim Ullah, Principal Scientist at BINOR Bannu, who provided valuable information and practical advice to the attendees.

The seminar commenced with a warm welcome speech delivered by Dr. Abdul Hakim Shah, Head of the Department of Physics, who emphasized the importance of such initiatives in fostering

a health-conscious society. The event concluded with insightful remarks from the Chief Guest, Vice Chancellor Prof. Tahir Khalili, who commended the organizers for their dedication to a vital cause and highlighted the university's commitment to community welfare.

In recognition of their invaluable contributions, shields and certificates were distributed among the organizers and the esteemed resource persons. The seminar served as a crucial platform for knowledge dissemination and reinforced the collective responsibility in the fight against cancer.

## HEC review panel conducts evaluation at KUST

### Sahibzada Afridi

**KOHAT:** A two-day visit by a high-level review panel, appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, was recently conducted at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). The purpose of the visit was to carry out a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of the university's MS/MPhil and PhD programs and to support their alignment with national and international academic standards.

The panel was warmly received by the university's Registrar, Deans of all faculties, Director of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) Dr. Muhammad Zeeshan Bangash, Protocol Officer Muhammad Asim, and Public Relations Officer Rashid Ishaq. The visit commenced with an introductory meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas. This was followed by an in-depth presentation in the Senate Hall by Dr. Zeeshan Bangash, highlighting the

academic and research structure of postgraduate programs. The session was attended by Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseeruddin, Director Academics Dr. Muhammad Zeeshan, and Controller of Examinations Mr. Bahadur Khan.

During the visit, the panel conducted a thorough review of various academic and research departments. Their activities included scrutiny of official documentation, interactive sessions with faculty members, research supervisors, postgraduate scholars, Deans, and Heads of Departments. The panel also toured key teaching and research facilities, including science and social science laboratories, central and departmental libraries, smart classrooms, and digital resource centres.

The primary objective of the visit was not only to evaluate the academic and research standards in place but also to take into consideration the feedback from faculty and students. The final session of the visit

was held in the Senate Hall, where the panel compiled its preliminary observations and drafted an initial report based on its findings.

The visit concluded with an exit meeting with the Vice Chancellor, followed by a group photograph. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syed Zafar Ilyas appreciated the HEC's initiative, describing the review as a vital step towards enhancing the quality of higher education and research across the country. He particularly acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Zeeshan Bangash and the entire QEC team for their strategic planning, efficient coordination, and warm hospitality.

The review panel was led by Prof. Dr. Dilawar Khan and comprised distinguished academics, Deans, and senior researchers from various universities. The panel expressed satisfaction with the academic environment at KUST and provided highly encouraging feedback regarding its postgraduate programs and institutional performance.

## Martyred journalist remembered

### F.P. Report

**LANDI KOTAL:** Shaheed local journalist, Khalil Jibran was remembered on Tuesday evening in the District Press Club, Landi Kotal where a program was held in connection with his 1st death anniversary.

Khalil Jibran, a local media person, was born an orphan as his father had died before his birth. After getting a bachelor degree in library science, he started work as a social worker and founded Khyber Social Welfare Home, a non-government organization to serve the local tribesmen.

He also joined journalism to underscore miseries of his co-tribal and till his death he worked as reporter with a private TV channel. On 18 June, 2024 he was shot and killed by unknown armed persons in Mazreena area of tehsil Landi Kotal when he was returning from a dinner program, organized by his friend.

Speakers included Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid, Malik Masel Khan, Malik Sohaib Ahmed Tajuddin, President Jamrud Press Club Sajid Ali Koki Khel, senior journalists Khyalmat Shah Afridi, Khadem Afridi, local political leaders Murad Hussain Afridi, Fazal Rehman Afridi, Abdurraziz Shinhari, Jabbar Afridi, President Torkham CLEARING Agents Association Mujib Shinwari, Aftab Shinwari and others paid rich tribute to the slain media person and thoroughly highlighted various aspects of his life.

They said that he always raised voice for the voiceless and never compromised on his journalistic ethics. Besides journalism, Khalil Jibran was a literary person and constantly organized Pashto Mushairay (poetry reciting sessions) at the hall, constructed adjacent to his house to encourage new poets in the area, they remarked.

## Tank DHQ hospital to be made a model

### F.P. Report

**TANK:** Medical Superintendent of DHQ Tank Dr. Israr-ul-Haq has said that practical steps were being taken to transform the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital into a model institution, with an aim of delivering health-care facilities to the citizens at their doorstep.

Talking to the media, Dr. Israr stressed that ensuring accountability is essential for improving the system. "We cannot set the system right without a proper reward and punishment mechanism," he said, adding that several tough decisions would be needed to steer the hospital in the right direction. He urged the hospital staff to improve their conduct, warning that negligence would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

"There will be no leniency for those who show carelessness," he asserted. Dr. Israr further announced that the cardiology unit is also being established in Tank Hospital to provide specialized care to local residents.

## Desktops distributed among students



### Saqib Mushtaq

**LODHRAN:** A ceremony for Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz's "Main Digital" program was held in Lodhran. Provincial Minister for Communication, Works, and Law, Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharth, attended as the chief guest. Chairman of Chief Minister's Task Force for Skill Development, Adnan Afzal Chatha, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Lubna Nazir, and DPO Ali bin Tariq participated.

Provincial Minister Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharth stated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is empowering the daughters of the province, and Lodhran holds a unique place in Punjab's history compared to other districts. He highlighted that Lodhran is no longer underdeveloped as it once was thanks to the 40 million grant provided by the Chief Minister.

He paid tribute to the girls who passed the exam and qualified for desktops and emphasized that the Chief Minister rejected all recommendations and upheld merit. "When our daughters are capable, future generations will be talented," he said.

Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bharth said that Lodhran is the fifth district in Punjab where this program has been launched under PSDF, following its launch in four other districts. Each girl is given a desktop worth 250,000 rupees, including a UPS facility as part of the system.

He further shared that only 13% of women in Pakistan are part of the workforce, and 67% of women do not go beyond primary education. The country's population consists of 64% youth, with 34% of the population using the internet. Pakistan ranks fourth globally in terms of freelancer users.

Under this program, women will receive six months of training, the first six weeks of which will focus on learning to speak, read, and write English. They will also be introduced to computer technology and its applications.

The Provincial Minister remarked that it is an honor for the daughters of Punjab that their Chief Minister is a courageous woman who grants awards based on merit and capability. Mastery of the English language is essential for success in the international market, and soon the daughters of Lodhran will make their parents proud in Punjab, Pakistan, and across the world.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Lubna Nazir expressed her happiness that the Chief Minister is empowering the daughters of Lodhran by fulfilling their dreams through the distribution of desktops to 124 girls.

## Hari committee protests against auctioning public lands

### F.P. Report

**LARKANA:** Sindh Hari Committee held a protest rally in Larkana against the auctioning of Sindh lands, forced canal construction on the Indus River, corruption, inflation and corruption.

The protesters held placards and banners and raised strong slogans against the misbehavior of the federal government. Speaking to the media on the occasion, Sindh Hari Committee Central President Samar Jatoti said that during the 17 years of the PPP government, the PPP has given the people nothing but hunger, poverty, unemployment, unrest, inflation and corruption, while the PPP has played a prominent role in betraying Sindh for the sake of power because Sindh's lands are being auctioned through corporate farming, while the poor and needy farmers of the region have the right to these lands.

He further said that Sindh's agriculture has been completely destroyed while there is no package for the development of agriculture in this budget. The people of Sindh are already trapped in the trap of inflation, and mountains of oppression have been raised against the people by making oil more expensive. He said that if illegally constructed canals are constructed, the lush lands of Sindh will become

barren, which will put the existence of Sindh in danger. He said that the kidnapped girl Priya Kumari is still in the custody of the residents, whose parents are very worried, which has raised a question mark on the performance of the Sindh government. For this, the people of Sindh will not remain silent and together we will never allow the PPP to auction Sindh lands through corporate farming and to dig illegal canals across the Indus River, while the struggle will continue until the last drop of blood.

**Jamaat-e-Ahl-e-Sunnah organizes Youm-e-Shahadat-e-Usman (RA):** Jamaat-e-Ahl-e-Sunnah Qasimi organized Youm-e-Shahadat-e-Usman Ghani (RA) conference in Larkana at the spacious grounds of Eidgah Qasimi.

Addressing the event, Professor Manzoor Ahmed Mishri, a famous Sindh SHRIINE mashori, said that a generous person is close to Allah, and what can we say about the companion Hazrat Syedna Usman Ghani, who played an eternal role in generosity? His generosity has always been talked about, so much so that in the present era, the income from his garden and other properties in Madinah is a manifestation of great generosity in the affairs of Madinah. He further said that the com-

panions of our last Prophet are of great dignity and status, and their obedience is counted among the guided ones.

On this occasion, a large number of lovers of the Prophet, including Allama Maulana Qari Ghulam Rabbani Qassimi, Hafiz Munir Ahmed, attended the event.

## DIG reviews security situation

### F.P. Report

**KALAYA:** Deputy Inspector General Police (DIG) Kohat Abbas Majeed Khan Marwat visited Orakzai and reviewed the security situation following recent incidents in the area.

During the visit, the DIG inspected the police posts that had come under attack in recent days and met with the deployed personnel. In recognition of their bravery and swift response in repelling the attacks, cash rewards were distributed among the officers who demonstrated exceptional courage. The DIG also held meetings with local elders to engage the community in ongoing efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region.

## Dynamics and prospects of Pakistan-India future relations

### Hafsa Rauf

**‘TO what extent can a colonial history be blamed for what is happening now?’ asked Al Jazeera’s anchorperson, Sami Zeiden, during a panel discussion on recent Pakistan-India hostilities. The question holds particular relevance as South Asia grapples with the recurring tremors of cross-border tensions, often rooted in shared colonial legacies, yet propelled today by complex political, strategic, and media-driven dynamics.**

While history—especially the unresolved Kashmir dispute—remains a critical undercurrent in Indo-Pak relations, it is no longer the sole determinant. The region's fragile peace has increasingly been shaped by modern political gambles, media sensationalism, digital warfare, and shifting global alliances. The most recent escalation exposed not only the enduring volatility of the bilateral relationship but also the rapid militarisation of public narratives and the fragility of diplomatic norms.

The Kashmir issue continues to be the epicentre of Indo-Pak

tensions, having triggered three major wars between the two nations. The abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian government, which revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, further aggravated bilateral ties and widened the trust deficit. However, attributing present hostilities solely to colonial legacies ignores the growing influence of contemporary political forces and media ecosystems in perpetuating conflict.

Statements emerging from both Islamabad and New Delhi, amidst the din of war, briefly signalled a return to sanity. Yet, this fleeting calm was overshadowed by ultra-nationalist rhetoric. Political analysts referred to these rhetorical strategies as classic cases of the “rally ‘round the flag’ phenomenon—short-term patriotic mobilisations that often culminate in long-term political losses. For India, this resulted in a visible dent in Prime Minister Modi's domestic standing, while for Pakistan, military successes brought fleeting public euphoria that is unlikely to translate into lasting strategic gain.

In parallel with ground and air operations, another battle unfolded—this one in cyberspace and television studios. Dubbed by analysts as the “War for TRPs” and the “Fog War,” this new battlefield was dominated by armchair warriors and misinformation campaigns. Indian and Pakistani media outlets, influencers, and YouTubers fueled nationalist fervour through AI-generated visuals, recycled footage from unrelated conflicts, and unverified claims. From the alleged capture of General Asim Munir to fabricated Indian naval victories in Karachi, disinformation reigned supreme.

The London-based Centre for the Study of Organised Hate (CSOH) categorised this electronic warfare as part of a broader trend in global hybrid warfare, where misinformation becomes a weapon of choice. According to The Guardian, platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook became hotbeds for emotionally manipulative narratives and hate speech that pushed both countries dangerously close to war.

Unlike previous confrontations, the recent escalation saw advanced weaponry and cyber

capabilities take centre stage. Pakistan's deployment of Turkish TB-2 Bayraktar and Chinese CH-4 reconnaissance drones to document human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir marked a strategic shift in information warfare. Pakistani JF-17 Block III fighters, fitted with KLJ-7A AESA radars, reportedly outperformed India's Rafale jets in beyond-visual-range engagements. Meanwhile, Pakistan's cyber defences—successfully neutralised Indian hacking attempts on vital infrastructure.

On the other side, India's Russian-supplied S-400 air defence systems recorded a 63% failure rate when overwhelmed by drone swarms. These tactical shortcomings, coupled with global diplomatic fatigue over regional brinkmanship, left India diplomatically isolated. Russia postponed its S-500 missile delivery, citing supply chain concerns, while Gulf allies such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE leaned toward mediation rather than support. The U.S., too, reportedly preferred strategic restraint over involvement, as leaked memos from the State

Department indicated concern over “losing the corridor to China” and acknowledged that “Pakistan holds the keys.”

The potential for a Pakistan-China-Turkey-Azerbaijan security axis is being increasingly discussed among South Asian scholars, particularly following joint military exercises and emerging defence pacts. Retired General Nadeem Raza captured the moment aptly: “The myth of Western quality advantage is dead. Our systems prevailed because they're built for real wars.”

Perhaps the most sobering aspect of the recent conflict was the shadow of nuclear escalation. With both countries armed with nuclear weapons, every provocation risked catastrophe. CNN reported that U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance warned of the grave consequences of such a path, stating, “Our hope and expectation is that this is not going to spiral into a broader regional war or, God forbid, a nuclear conflict.”

Studies from the Taylor & Francis Group estimate that a nuclear exchange in South Asia could result in the deaths of 50 to 125 million people, with irre-

versible climate and economic consequences. The world narrowly escaped that abyss. But the question remains: how long can deterrence hold in the face of sensationalist politics and weaponised information?

Today, a ceasefire holds, albeit tenuous. Diplomatic ties remain frayed, as seen in the tit-for-tat revocation of the Indus Waters Treaty and the Simla Agreement. Gallup data shows Pakistan's government enjoying a rare surge in public approval, with ratings between 80–90 percent, while India faces domestic political disillusionment and a credibility gap among its allies.

Yet, history offers a lesson in caution. As historian Ayesha Jalal remarked: “I don't expect any solution to the conflict, but I do expect mechanisms being put in place so that India and Pakistan don't come to blows so far so quickly in such dire consequences.” It is imperative for both nations to invest not in arms races or propaganda, but in confidence-building measures and robust diplomatic channels. The peace of South Asia—and perhaps that of the wider world—depends on it.





# Europeans urge Iran to resume nuclear talks, avert escalation

KANANASKIS, Alberta (Reuters): European foreign ministers told their Iranian counterpart in a call to return to nuclear negotiations with the US and refrain from escalating conflict with Israel, to which Iran's foreign minister said Tehran's priority was to confront Israel for now, according to a French diplomatic source.

Israel launched what it called Operation Rising Lion against Iran's nuclear facilities, just two days before US and Iranian negotiators were due to resume talks to forge a new deal on Iran's nuclear programme. Israel called it a preemptive strike designed to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Iran has denied plans to develop such weapons and retaliated by launching counterstrikes on Israel.

France, Britain and Germany, known as the E3, are party to the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, which aimed to curb Iran's nuclear programme in return for sanctions lifting. Last week they put forward a resolution that was approved by the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, a UN watchdog, which declared Iran in breach of its nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

"The ministers urged Iran to return to the negoti-

ating table as quickly as possible, without preconditions," the source said, calling on Iran to avoid any headlong rush against Western interests. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was quoted by state media saying that he had recalled Iran's seriousness in diplomacy and emphasised that, "Iran has never left the negotiating table, but that (Tehran's) focus at this stage is, of course, to effectively... confront aggression." France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot spoke to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio ahead of the E3's call with Araqchi, the diplomatic source said. The source said the E3 had separately passed messages to Israel urging it to not strike Iranian authorities, infrastructure or civilian populations.

The European powers, who were not part of Iran's nuclear negotiations with the United States, had grown increasingly frustrated by the US strategy in the talks. An initial written proposal from the Trump administration at the end of May was deemed very tough and offered little in return for Iran. As part of last week's IAEA resolution, European officials had said they could refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council later in the summer to add pressure on Iran if there was no progress in the

nuclear talks. That would be separate to them reimposing UN sanctions, known as the snapback mechanism, before October 18 when the 2015 accord expires. The Europeans are the only ones who can launch the snapback mechanism, with diplomats saying the three countries had looked to set a final deadline of end of August to launch it.

It was unclear what their policy would now be. French President Emmanuel Macron said that given Europe's knowledge of the nuclear dossier, it should be a key protagonist if nuclear talks resume. Asked about the call, which also included the EU's foreign policy chief, a source familiar with US thinking said Washington was not overly concerned since the US clearly had the biggest role to play in de-escalating the Israel-Iran conflict. "At the end of the day, there's only going to be one country in the driver's seat of ending the war, and that's going to be the United States, obviously in partnership with Israel," the source said. "If the world jumps in and it becomes more of a collaborative effort, as long as it's not undermining the foreign policy strategy of the United States or its ally Israel, I'm sure there will be no concerns," the source said.

# Iranians seek temporary refuge in neighboring Turkey

GURBULAK BORDER CROSSING, Turkey (AP): After crossing into Turkey from Iran, Shirin Talebi was anxiously waiting for her children and grandchildren to arrive from Tehran at the same border point. The family are planning to stay for a month or two in Turkey, seeking temporary refuge from the escalating Israel-Iran conflict.

Observers in Turkey say the arrivals have increased since Israel launched strikes targeting Iran's nuclear program and military officials. However, Turkish officials dismiss social media reports of a large-scale influx of refugees. Turkey, which shares a 569-kilometer (348-mile) -long border with Iran, has expressed deep concern over the escalating Iran-Israel exchanges. There are fears in Turkey that a prolonged conflict could threaten Turkey's own security, cause energy disruptions and lead to refugee flows.

"I'm here because of safety. They are bombing. My children have small children of their own," said Talebi, speaking at the Gurbulak-Bazargan crossing after arriving from the Iranian city of Urmia. "Hopefully, it is over in one or two months so we can return to our country," she

said. Iran has retaliated to Israel's barrages by firing waves of ballistic missiles at Israel and the conflict is now in its fourth day.

In telephone calls with US President Donald Trump and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has offered to act as a "facilitator" toward ending the conflict and resuming US-Iran nuclear negotiations, which were called off. In a televised address following a Cabinet meeting, Erdogan warned Israel that it was putting its own future at risk with its military actions. Iran's nuclear program should be dealt with through negotiations, he said. "We have argued from the very beginning" for negotiations, Erdogan said. "Today, we are at the same point." He also slammed the West and Israeli actions in Gaza where Israeli troops are fighting against the Palestinian militant Hamas group since the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel. "Israel, which attacks Iran with the unlimited support from the West, destroys Gaza, and bullies every country in the region, is not aware of what it is doing," Erdogan said. "Perhaps it will realize its mistake in the future, but

we are afraid that by then it will be too late."

Turkey has not provided any official figures for arrivals from Iran, with the the Turkish presidential communications office saying authorities say "there is no unusual movement, congestion or irregular crossing." Turkey allows Iranians to enter the country without a visa for tourism purposes and stay for up to 90 days. At Gurbulak, one of the busiest crossings between Turkey and Iran, bus driver Ferit Aktas had just brought a group of Iranians from Istanbul and was waiting to pick up others. He said 10 days ago, three to five Iranians would arrive for shopping or tourism. Now "there are at least 30 Iranians in my vehicle per day," he said. "They say, 'We are not safe there and we are forced to come.' Most of them want to go to Europe, they want to go to Europe through Turkey."

Mejrid Dehimi, also from Urmia, arrived for a week-long break, not to escape the conflict, he said and expressed support for Iranian leaders. "We are not afraid of death," he said. "We will stand against Israel until our last breath and for as long as our lives allow."

# World's most-visited museum shuts down

PARIS (AP): The Louvre, the world's most-visited museum and a global symbol of art, beauty and endurance, has withstood war, terror, and pandemic - but, it was brought to a halt by its own striking staff, who say the institution is crumbling under the weight of mass tourism.

It was an almost unthinkable sight: the home to works by Leonardo da Vinci and millennia of civilization's greatest treasures - paralyzed by the very people tasked with welcoming the world to its galleries. Thousands of stranded and confused visitors, tickets in hand, were corralled into unmoving lines by I.M. Pei's glass pyramid.

"It's the Mona Lisa moan out here," said Kevin Ward, 62, from Milwaukee. "Thousands of people waiting, no communication, no explanation. I guess even she needs a day off." The Louvre has become a symbol of tourism pushed to its limits. As hotspots from Venice to the Acropolis race to curb crowds, the world's most iconic museum, visited by millions, is hitting a breaking point of its own. Just a day earlier, coordinated anti-

tourism protests swept across southern Europe. Thousands rallied in Mallorca, Venice, Lisbon and beyond, denouncing an economic model they say displaces locals and erodes city life. In Barcelona, activists sprayed tourists with water pistols - a theatrical bid to "cool down" runaway tourism. The Louvre's spontaneous strike erupted during a routine internal meeting, as gallery attendants, ticket agents and security personnel refused to take up their posts in protest over unmanageable crowds, chronic understaffing and what one union called "untenable" working conditions.

It's rare for the Louvre to close its doors. It has happened during war, during the pandemic, and in a handful of strikes - including spontaneous walkouts over overcrowding in 2019 and safety fears in 2013. But seldom has it happened so suddenly, without warning, and in full view of the crowds. What's more, the disruption comes just months after President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a sweeping decade-long plan to rescue the Louvre from precisely the problems now boiling over - water leaks,

dangerous temperature swings, outdated infrastructure, and foot traffic far beyond what the museum can handle. But for workers on the ground, that promised future feels distant. "We can't wait six years for help," said Sarah Sefian, a front-of-house gallery attendant and visitor services agent. "Our teams are under pressure now. It's not just about the art - it's about the people protecting it."

At the center of it all is the Mona Lisa - a 16th-century portrait that draws modern-day crowds more akin to a celebrity meet-and-greet than an art experience. Roughly 20,000 people a day squeeze into the Salle des États, the museum's largest room, just to snap a selfie with Leonardo da Vinci's enigmatic woman behind protective glass. The scene is often noisy, jostling, and so dense that many barely glance at the masterpieces flanking her - works by Titian and Veronese that go largely ignored. "You don't see a painting," said Ji-Hyun Park, 28, who flew from Seoul to Paris. "You see phones. You see elbows. You feel heat. And then, you're pushed out."

# Ukraine says more bodies received from Russia

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine received another 1,245 bodies of its soldiers killed in the war with Russia in the final stage of the repatriation of remains agreed at talks in Istanbul, Ukrainian officials said. "Today marks the final stage of the repatriation of fallen soldiers," Defence Minister Rustem Umerov said. "Since last week, when the implementation of the Istanbul agreements began, we have managed to bring back over 6,000 bodies."

This marks one of the largest returns of war dead since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago. The handover of the soldiers' remains is part of the agreements reached between Russia and Ukraine during their second round of talks in Istanbul at the start of the month. Kremlin aide Vladimir Medinsky, the head of Russia's delegation at the peace talks, said that Moscow had handed back the bodies of 6,060 Ukrainian servicemen. He said that Russia has received the remains of 78 of its own soldiers in return. Ukrainian officials said that they had received 6,057 bodies. They were no immediate explanation available on the discrepancy in numbers.

The Russian Defence ministry said that Moscow was ready to hand over another 2,239 bodies to Ukraine. Both Ukraine and Russia said that the process of exchanging prisoners of war was still ongoing. "We are not stopping. Ahead lies the next stage: we continue the fight to bring back our prisoners of war," Ukrainian Defence Minister Umerov said in a social media post on Facebook. The agreements on exchanging POWs were the only concrete result during the talks between Kyiv and Moscow in Istanbul. Both sides remain far apart in their vision on how to end the war, and they also failed to agree on a ceasefire.

# US moves to protect all species of pangolin

NEW YORK (AFP): The United States moved to extend federal protections to all species of pangolins - a step that would tighten trade restrictions and highlight the urgent conservation plight of the world's only scaly mammals. Found in the forests, woodlands, and savannas of Africa and Asia, pangolins are small, nocturnal creatures known for their distinctive appearance, slow and peaceful demeanor, and habit of curling into a ball when threatened.

Often likened to a walking pinecone, they use long, sticky tongues to feast on ants and termites, give birth to a single pup each year -- and are the most heavily trafficked mammals on Earth. Their keratin scales are coveted in traditional medicine, and their meat is also considered a delicacy in some regions. Despite steep population declines driven by poaching, habitat loss, and inbreeding, only one species - Temminck's pangolin of Africa -- is currently protected under the US Endangered Species Act. Proposal by the US Fish and Wildlife Service would extend that status to all eight known species. In a statement, the agency said it intends to list the four Asian species -- Chinese, Indian, Sunda, and Philippine -- as well as the three other African species: white-bellied, black-bellied, and giant pangolins.

"I'm delighted the United States is doing its part to save these adorably odd creatures," said Sarah Uhlemann, international program director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Pangolins are on the razor's edge of extinction, and we need to completely shut down any US market for their scales. There's no good reason for anybody to ingest any part of a pangolin." Pangolins are currently protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which prohibits international trade for commercial purposes and allows it only under exceptional circumstances.



ISTANBUL: Iranians arrive to cross into Iran at Gurbulak Bazargan border post, in Gurbulak, Turkey.

# UN refugee agency says will shed 3,500 jobs due to funding cuts

NEW YORK (AFP): The UN refugee agency said it will cut 3,500 staff jobs -- slashing nearly a third of its workforce costs -- due to a funding shortfall, and reduce the scale of its help worldwide. UNHCR carried out a review of its activities, expenditure, staffing and structures following a plunge in humanitarian funding.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been among a host of UN and private aid agencies badly hit by funding cuts by the United States. The United States -- which was by far UNHCR's biggest donor -- has slashed its foreign aid under a radical spending review ordered by US President Donald Trump. Other countries have also cut humanitarian spending. Washington previously made up more than 40 percent of UNHCR contributions received -- \$2 billion per year, the agency's chief Filippo Grandi told the UN Security Council in April.

"In light of difficult financial realities, UNHCR is compelled to reduce

the overall scale of its operations," Grandi said in statement. He added that UNHCR would focus "on activities that have the greatest impact for refugees" while streamlining its Geneva headquarters and regional offices. The agency said it had had to close or downsize offices worldwide and implement a nearly 50-percent cut in senior positions in Geneva and at the regional HQs. "In total, approximately 3,500 staff positions will be discontinued," the statement said.

Additionally, hundreds of temporary workers have had to leave the organisation due to the funding shortfall. "Overall, UNHCR estimates a global reduction in staffing costs of around 30 percent," the agency said. It said that programmes ranging from financial aid to vulnerable families, health, education, and water and sanitation had already been affected by cuts. UNHCR said it was working with other organisations and refugee-hosting countries to try to mitigate the impact on refugees. UNHCR estimates that it will end 2025 with avail-

able funding at about the same level as a decade ago -- despite the number of people forced to flee their homes having nearly doubled over the same period to more than 122 million. "Even as we face painful cuts and lose so many dedicated colleagues, our commitment to refugees remains unshakeable," said Grandi.

"Although resources are scarcer and our capacity to deliver is reduced, we will continue to work hard to respond to emergencies, protect the rights of refugees, and pursue solutions -- including returning home, as nearly two million Syrians have done since December." Syria's civil war erupted in 2011, and ruler Bashar al-Assad was overthrown in December 2024. Sudan is now the world's largest forced displacement situation, with its 14.3 million refugees and internally displaced people overtaking Syria (13.5 million), followed by Afghanistan (10.3 million) and Ukraine (8.8 million). At the end of 2024, one in 67 people worldwide were forcibly displaced, UNHCR said.

# Canadian Indigenous leader says he was 'filled with rage'

KANANASKIS, Alberta (AP): A Canadian Indigenous leader who greeted world heads of state arriving for the Group of Seven summit says he was "filled with rage" and considered leaving before Donald Trump arrived - saying the US president has "caused much pain and suffering in the world."

Instead, Steven Crowchild prayed, consulted with his peoples' leaders and ultimately opted to stay on the tarmac for a long conversation with Trump that he hopes will call more attention to promoting peace, protecting clean water and other issues key to Canada's First Nation peoples. "It was really intense, to say the least," Crowchild told The Associated Press, recalling his lengthy encounter with

Trump on Sunday night in Calgary for the G7 in nearby Kananaskis. "When I woke up on Father's Day, I didn't anticipate I would be seeing world leaders, and one certain individual that has caused much pain and suffering in the world."

In Canada, First Nations refers to one of three major legally recognized groups of aboriginal people. Crowchild, of the Tsuut'ina First Nation, is a Tsuut'ina Isgiya and a current elected member of the Tsuut'ina Nation Xakujaa-yina and Chief and Council. Crowchild said he spoke in his people's traditional language, wore feathered headgear that made him feel strong and showed Trump treaty medals that he told the president were older than Canada itself. Trump wore a white "Make

America Great Again" cap and appeared to be listening at length - though both sides declined to comment on exactly what was said. "When it came to that one individual, I almost didn't stay. I was filled with rage," Crowchild said. "I was going to go home because I didn't want to bring any negativity to my people. However, I did consult with close people and advisers and, based on feedback, I stayed, considering that visibility is key and diplomacy is important."

Aware that "no Indigenous representation was there at the time," Crowchild said he "prayed for my creator" and "really thought of those suffering around the world" in choosing to speak to Trump. "Instead of war, I

choose peace," he said. Crowchild said that, in addition to Trump, he greeted other arriving world leaders and "tried to remind each one of them to try to be a good leader and protect our water for future generations." "I spoke for my elders," Crowchild said, noting that he spoke of promoting peace and "protecting water for future generations" and tried to "say as much as I could, as wisely as I could, while representing with honor and dignity. Whether he listened or not, time will tell." He said that, ultimately, the US president is "just another person." "Some would say he's a horrible person, and we all know many reasons," Crowchild said. "I stood taller than him as proud Tsuut'ina Isgiya."

# Sanchez names party leadership to limit damage from graft probe

MADRID (Reuters): Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez named four people to take over the leadership of his Socialist party as he sought to contain the damage from a corruption inquiry that threatens the survival of his fragile minority government.

Sanchez named the team to replace Santos Cerdan, who stepped down after a Supreme Court judge called him to testify over accusations in a police report that he discussed taking payments in exchange for awarding public works contracts. Cerdan, who was no. 3 in the party's hierarchy, coordinating between dif-

ferent regions as its organizational secretary, has said he will testify to prove his innocence.

"We are not perfect, but we are uncompromising when it comes to corruption," Sanchez said in a press conference in Madrid. The new team will remain in place until July 5, when the Socialists will hold a party congress where a permanent replacement for Cerdan will be named, Sanchez said. Last week, Sanchez resisted calls for a snap election after the allegations emerged, instead promising an overhaul of the party and an external audit of its accounts. However, even

some allies have raised concerns that those measures were insufficient to restore public trust for a party that came to power in 2018 after a no-confidence vote ejected then-Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy of the People's Party when it was embroiled in the biggest corruption probe in Spain's democratic history. A number of senior Socialist figures have called for an extraordinary party congress, while a former regional leader suggested Sanchez should call a snap election.

Sanchez will kick off a series of meetings with coalition partners and infor-

mal allies, starting with Labour Minister Yolanda Diaz, of the junior coalition partner Sumar, who said that Sanchez's pleas for forgiveness over the probe were not enough and called for a "reset" of the government. However, with Sumar's support in the opinion polls having slipped, she is unlikely to pull the plug on the coalition and risk an election. That position is similar to that of other allies who support the government and would fear that any confidence motion or fresh election might usher in the far-right Vox party as coalition partners to the conservative PP.

# Russia says it struck oil refinery that supplies Ukrainian army with fuel

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian forces carried out an overnight strike on the Kremenchuk oil refinery that supplies fuel to Ukrainian forces in the Donbas region, Russia's defence ministry said. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy denounced the attack on the central Poltava region as a vile strike against Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

"Unfortunately, there was damage to the energy infrastructure," Zelenskiy said in

his evening address to the nation. "This is Russia's (effort to) spit on everything that the international community is trying to do to stop this war." He said it occurred "after the Americans asked us not to strike at Russian energy facilities." The Russian defence ministry's statement said that missiles had been fired at the refinery in Ukraine's Poltava region from both sea and air and that strike drones were also used in what it said had been a successful attack. Russia

has claimed Ukraine's eastern Donbas region as its own and controls most of its two regions, Donetsk and Luhansk. Ukraine is fighting to stop Russia from taking control of the rest of Donbas and has said it plans to retake territory it has lost, through a combination of force and diplomacy. The Russian Defence Ministry said separately that its forces had taken control of the village of Malynivka in the Donetsk region, known in Russia as Ulyanovka.

It also said its forces had advanced deep into enemy defences in Ukraine's Sumy region and inflicted heavy losses on Ukrainian units there. Sumy is not one of the regions Russia has formally claimed as its own, but it has spoken of creating a buffer zone there. Zelenskiy said that Ukrainian forces had recaptured Andriivka village in northeastern Sumy as part of a drive to expel Russian forces from the area. He said Russia has amassed 53,000 troops in the vicinity.



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# US pushes Vietnam to decouple from Chinese tech

**T**HE United States is pushing Vietnam in tariff talks to reduce the use of Chinese tech in devices that are assembled in the country before being exported to America, three people briefed on the matter said. Vietnam is home to large manufacturing operations of tech firms such as Apple and Samsung, which often rely on components made in China.

Meta and Google also have contractors in Vietnam that produce goods such as virtual reality headsets and smartphones. The Southeast Asian nation has been organising meetings with local businesses to boost the supply of Vietnamese parts, with firms showing willingness to cooperate but also warning they would need time and technology to do so, according to one person with knowledge of the discussions.

The Trump administration has threatened Vietnam with crippling tariffs of 46% which could significantly limit access for Vietnam-made goods to their main market and upend the Communist-run country's export-oriented growth model. Vietnam has been asked "to reduce its dependency on Chinese high-tech," said one person familiar with the discussions. "That is part of the restructuring of supply chains and would in turn reduce US dependency on Chinese components," the person added.

The ultimate objective is to speed up US decoupling from Chinese high-tech while increasing Vietnam's industrial capacity, a second person said, citing virtual reality devices as an example of Vietnam-assembled products that are too dependent on Chinese technology, observed Reuters. All sources declined to be identified as the discussions were confidential. Reuters was not able to learn if the US has proposed numerical targets such as caps on Chinese content for "Made in Vietnam" goods or different tariff rates based on the amount of Chinese content.

Apple, Samsung, Meta and Google did not reply to Reuters requests for comment. As the US-imposed deadline of July 8 nears before the tariffs take effect, the timing and scope of a possible deal remain unclear.

All sources stressed that while the US has made broader requests for Vietnam to reduce its reliance on China, tackling the issue of Chinese high-tech content in exports was a key priority.

Last year, China exported around \$44 billion of tech such as electronics components, computers and phones to Vietnam, about 30% of its total exports to the country. Vietnam shipped \$33 billion of tech goods to the United States or 28% of the U.S.-bound exports. Both flows are on the rise this year, according to Vietnam's customs data. Vietnam's trade ministry did not reply to Reuters requests for comment. Separate sources have previously said that US demands were seen as "tough" and "difficult" by Vietnamese negotiators.

The U.S. also wants Vietnam to crack down on the practice of shipping Chinese goods to America with misleading "Made in Vietnam" labels that draw lower duties - which Vietnam is also trying to heed.

The ministry said on Sunday that a third round of talks last week in Washington ended with progress, but critical issues remain unresolved. Vietnam's ruling Communist Party chief To Lam intends to meet US President Donald Trump in the United States, possibly in late June, officials with knowledge of the matter said. No date has been announced for the trip.

The White House and Vietnam's foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment on the possible visit, reported Reuters. Local firms attending meetings organised by the trade ministry in recent weeks expressed a general willingness to adapt, but many warned that instant changes "would destroy business", according to one of the sources.

Vietnam has been slowly developing an industrial ecosystem with local suppliers but it has a long way to go before it can match China's advanced supply chains and cheaper pricing, industry executives say.

"Vietnam is about 15-20 years behind China in somewhat fully replicating its supply chain scale and sophistication, but it's catching up fast, especially in key sectors like textiles and electronics," said Carlo Chiancone, a Vietnam-based supply chain expert.

Abrupt changes to existing practices may hurt Vietnam's delicate relationship with China, which is both a major investor in its Southeast Asian neighbour and a source of security concerns, reported Reuters.

## Important Notice

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# With Trump's military on Los Angeles streets, Tom Cotton's got his wish

Andrew Mitrovica

**R**EPUBLICAN Senator Tom Cotton ought to be a happy MAGA-camper these days. The rebar-right American lawmaker took a controversial turn as a writer in 2020, publishing a provocative opinion piece in The New York Times that caused quite the stir.

Cotton's column came to mind because it seems that US President Donald Trump may not only have read the missive, but snipped it out of the newspaper for safekeeping and future inspiration.

At the time, America was roiled by demonstrations in the raw residue of the murder of 46-year-old George Floyd – and the killing of other Black men and women – by police officers.

Most of the rallies across a seething country were peaceful. But, in some places, the combustible mixture of grief, anger and frustration, coupled with columns of charging police wielding batons, stun guns, and tear gas, erupted into running battles. There were also reports of isolated looting.

It was in this already incendiary context that Cotton lobbed his slightly more than 800-word grenade into the flammable mix – courtesy of America's so-called "paper of record".

Cotton trotted out the usual hyperbolic clichés, claiming that several American cities were confronting "an orgy of violence," had been "plunged ... into anarchy," or "descended into lawlessness" by "bands" of "nihilistic criminals [and] cadres of left-wing radicals like antifa". Grim, apocalyptic-sounding stuff.

Cotton's solution to the "orgy of violence" was, of course, to invite even more violence.

"One thing above all else will restore order to our streets: an overwhelming show of force to disperse, detain and ultimate-

ly deter lawbreakers," Cotton wrote.

Citing precedent, history and the commander-in-chief's duty, Cotton argued that it was time for the president to send in the troops – the Marines, if necessary, as backup for the cops.

Cotton's pernicious prescription to "restore order" in the face of a burgeoning Black Lives Matter movement triggered a revolt at the Times and a sharp rebuke more broadly. After first defending the decision to post Cotton's commentary, the Times did a careening volte face, insisting, belatedly, that it had not met the paper's editorial "standards".

James Bennet, the Times's opinion editor, resigned.

Trump watched the kerfuffle unfold, tweeting his support for the "great senator" from Arkansas and his "excellent Op-Ed".

Five years later, it is clear that Trump has adopted Cotton's "excellent Op-Ed" as his blunt blueprint to tame California and potentially other states where enlightened Americans are gathering to resist his brutish immigration raids and designs to use the military to suppress dissent.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has accused a "deranged" president of orchestrating a "military dragnet" across Los Angeles, America's second-largest city.

Beyond his rhetorical broadsides, Newsom has asked a federal judge to stop the Trump administration from using the National Guard and Marines to bolster immigration raids – arguing it would only fuel tensions.

Legality aside, Trump sent in the troops knowing that generations of Americans have long agreed with Senator Cotton – the use of "overwhelming force" to "keep the peace" is a patriotic act

to protect the republic from an ever-changing cast of "agitators" – citizen or not.

Newsom's claim that Trump's gambit amounts to "the deranged fantasy of a dictatorial president" misses the blatant point.

The stubborn construction that Trump's edicts and conduct are the work of a "mad" president, realising his "dictatorial fantasies", absolves millions of like-minded Americans who approve of what their industrious leader is doing in Los Angeles and throughout the United States.

It is politically convenient and expedient for an ambitious politician considering running for president in 2028 to point an accusatory finger at one culprit, instead of a complicit nation.

Recent polls show that a good majority of Americans – largely Republicans – are cheering on Trump's draconian deportation orders since the alleged aim is, as Senator Cotton once wrote, "to maintain public order and safety".

I suspect that, despite the predictable "outrage" given full and ample vent across a variety of cable news networks, which air their derivative pantomimes day and night, Trump's popularity on immigration will perk up.

It appears that a lot of Americans have preferred a performative "tough guy" who enjoys putting on a good show of official power or exercising his First Amendment rights, despite the lethal consequences, over voices encouraging caution and restraint.

For evidence of this demonstrated fact, here is video of an appearance last April by Kyle Rittenhouse on the campus of Kent State University.

On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard opened fire, unprovoked,

on Kent State students, killing four and wounding nine others during an anti-Vietnam War protest. That same National Guard is patrolling the restive streets of Los Angeles.

Rittenhouse was invited to speak not despite the university's grim history, but because of it.

His presence there was a deliberate provocation – an attempt to recast the memory of state-sanctioned violence not as a cautionary tale, but rather as a moment to be reinterpreted through the lens of righteous force and personal valour.

Rittenhouse is known – exclusively – for shooting three men, killing two of them, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in August 2020. A jury acquitted him of all charges, accepting his claim of self-defence.

The three men were part of a large crowd condemning police brutality – and all three were shot by a teenager who appointed himself, like Trump and Cotton, as guardian of the streets.

So, it is not surprising that Rittenhouse was embraced as a "hero" by an enthusiastic, overflowing audience in a lecture hall.

This is the country Trump and Cotton understand well: where "law and order" is preserved by theatrics and armed muscle, not fairness and temperance.

The applause for Rittenhouse and the polls girding Trump are not outliers – they are proof that the appetite for raw authority is deep and durable.

Trump has not hijacked America – he mirrors it.

Cotton's column, Rittenhouse's celebrity, the martial display – none of it is an aberration. It reflects an attitude that celebrates domination and obedience, endorsing aggression so long as it is draped in self-preservation or framed as "defence".

And far too many Americans are just fine with that.

# History says the genocide in Gaza will be recognised – eventually

Somdeep Sen

**O**VER the past 20 months, I have often asked myself: how long does it take to recognise crimes against humanity?

In Gaza, one would think the genocidal intent of the Israeli military campaign and the scale of the tragedy are self-evident. And yet, the genocide continues. Why?

It turns out the world has a dismal record when it comes to recognising – and acting against – crimes against humanity while they are being committed.

Take, for instance, the case of colonial-era genocides.

Between 1904 and 1908, German colonists massacred 65,000 Herero and 10,000 Nama people in Namibia in what is often considered the first genocide of the 20th century. This campaign of extermination was Germany's response to a tribal uprising against the colonial seizure of Indigenous lands.

The atrocities of this period were described as "one long nightmare of suffering, bloodshed, tears, humiliation and death". Oral testimonies from survivors were recorded and published in a British government document known as the Blue Book in 1918. At the time, it was "a rare documentation of African voices describing the encounter of African communities with a colonial power".

But in 1926, all copies of the Blue Book were destroyed in an effort to ensure that the African perspective on the genocide would "no longer be found and preserved in a written form".

Germany formally recognised the massacre as a genocide and issued an apology only in 2021.

A similar pattern unfolded during the Maji Maji uprising in present-day Tanzania in 1905, which was triggered by German attempts to force the Indigenous population to grow cotton. Germany's scorched earth response killed an estimated 300,000 people. Rebels were publicly hanged, and some of their skulls and bones were sent to Germany for use in pseudoscientific experiments intended to "prove" European racial superiority.

An apology for these atrocities came only in 2023 when German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke at the Maji Maji memorial in Songea, southern Tanzania.

Even in the years leading up to the Holocaust, little was done to protect Jewish people fleeing persecution.

Following the Nazi rise to power in 1933, Jews in Germany were subjected to a growing number of laws stripping them of their rights, along with organised pogroms. Well before the outbreak of the second world war, many German Jews had already begun to flee.

Yet while many host countries were well aware of the rise of antisemitism under Adolf Hitler's regime, they maintained highly restrictive immigration policies.

In the United Kingdom, a rising tide of anti-Semitism shaped government policies. Authorities enforced strict immigration controls and declined to dedicate significant resources to provide shelter or humanitarian aid for Jewish refugees.

The United States similarly maintained restrictive quotas and systematically denied visa applications from German Jews, citing what contemporaneous officials described as an "anti-alien climate" in Congress and "popular opposition to the prospect of a flood of Jewish newcomers".

Today, apartheid in South Africa evokes near-universal condemnation. But this was not always the case.

The UK's relationship with apartheid South Africa is revealing. Historians have shown that successive Labour and Conservative governments between 1960 and 1994 – prioritising colonial ties in Southern Africa and economic interests – repeatedly refused to impose economic sanctions on the apartheid regime.

History casts an equally harsh light on President Ronald Reagan and Henry Kissinger.

Reagan's policies of "constructive engagement" and opposition to sanctions were driven by the desire to undermine the African National Congress (ANC), which his administration viewed as aligned with communism. After receiving the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, Archbishop Desmond Tutu described Reagan's approach as "immoral, evil and totally un-Christian".

Kissinger, as US secretary of state under President Gerald Ford, gave prestige and legitimacy to the apartheid regime with a visit to South Africa in 1976 – just three months after the Soweto massacre, when security forces gunned down unarmed students protesting against the forced use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Reportedly, neither apartheid nor the massacre were discussed during his visit.

In 1994, more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in Rwanda over 100 days. Sexual violence was systematically used as a weapon of war, with an estimated 250,000 women raped. Hutu militias reportedly released AIDS patients from hospitals to form "rape squads" to infect Tutsi women.

Despite warnings from human rights groups, United Nations staff, and diplomats that genocide was imminent, the world did nothing. UN peacekeepers withdrew. France and Belgium sent troops – not to protect Rwandans, but to evacuate their own nationals. US officials even avoided using the word "genocide".

It was only in 1998 that US President Bill Clinton issued a formal apology during a visit to Kigali: "We did not act quickly enough after the killing began ... We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide."

Given this history, it is hard to feel hopeful about the situation in Gaza. But as with other crimes against humanity, a day of reckoning may come.

What Israel has carried out in Gaza is a genocide in real time – one that is being livestreamed, documented, and archived in unprecedented detail.

Sniper fire killing Palestinian children. The assassination of poets. The bombing of hospitals and schools.

The destruction of universities. The targeted killing of journalists. Each act has been captured and catalogued.

Israeli politicians have made public statements indicating that the campaign's goal is ethnic cleansing. Videos show Israeli soldiers looting Palestinian homes and boasting of the destruction.

Human rights groups have meticulously documented these crimes. And a growing number of governments are taking action, from diplomatic rebukes to the imposition of sanctions.

There is a saying in Hindi and Urdu: Der aaye, durust aaye. It is often translated as, "Better late than never." But as a colleague explained, the phrase originates from Persian, and a more accurate translation would be: "That which comes late is just and righteous."

Justice for Palestine may come late. But when it does, let it be correct. And let it be righteous.

# Violence will not bring lasting peace in Middle East

Li Yang

**I**RANIAN Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Saturday stressed that the continuation of indirect negotiations between his country and the United States amid Israel's "continued brutality" is unjustifiable.

He made the remarks in a phone call with the European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas while describing Israel's hostile actions as a result of the US' support.

The Iranian side's latest stance on its nuclear talks with the US after Israel's attacks is understandable and legitimate, as Israel's offensives constitute a violation of Iran's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

As Israel's actions seriously violate the principles of the UN Charter and the basic norms governing international relations, China supports Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty, defending its legitimate rights and interests, and ensuring the safety of its people, as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Araghchi in their telephone talk on Saturday.

Israel's attacks

since Friday may have ruined the hard-earned progress that has been made in the talks between Iran and the US, which, as Araghchi said on Wednesday, are on the verge of reaching an agreement.

"It is clear that an agreement that can ensure the continued peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program is within reach – and could be achieved rapidly," the Iranian top diplomat said.

It is now unclear if and when the sixth round of indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the US will take place. Since April, Iran and the US have held five rounds of Oman-mediated indirect talks on Teheran's nuclear program and the removal of US sanctions.

Commenting on Iran's decision about taking part in the sixth round of the talks with the US, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said, "Under the present circumstances, our main focus is on confronting the enemy's aggression."

At a meeting of

the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna on Friday, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi stressed that nuclear facilities must never be attacked, regardless of the context or circumstances, as "Such attacks have serious implications for nuclear safety, security, and safeguards, as well as regional and international peace and security".

In Kallas' talks with the Iranian foreign minister, the EU top diplomat expressed deep regret and concern over the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, and voiced the EU's readiness to support diplomatic efforts at the UN Security Council and other international bodies to help reduce tensions and restore peace and security in the region. Like any other responsible party, China is seriously concerned about the prospects of the diplomatic negotiations on Iran's nuclear issue after Israel's attacks, and it has urged all parties to avoid actions that may worsen the situation and to support the establishment of a nuclear-

weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

China will continue to support political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iran nuclear issue, firmly safeguard the international nuclear nonproliferation mechanism, and uphold peace and stability in the Middle East.

But as Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Israeli counterpart, Gideon Sa'ar, in their telephone talk on Saturday, the immediate priority is to avoid any escalation of the conflict.

Despite its military and technological prowess, Israel should realize after so many years of conflict that violence will not bring it peace, but only turn the situation from bad to worse, as military means cannot deliver lasting peace.

Despite the tensions, plenty of signs show that there is still room for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. China has urged both Israel and Iran to resolve their differences through dialogue and seek peaceful coexistence. It is willing to play a constructive role in supporting these efforts.



# Trump is facing heat from all sides, but his fateful Iran decision is one only he can make

**P**RESIDENT Donald Trump is under opposing pressure from inside Israel and his own MAGA base as he ponders the most fateful national security decision of either of his presidencies — whether to attempt a killer blow against Iran’s nuclear program.

Israel is sending clear signals, including through former senior officials, that it hopes the US will ultimately join the conflict and use its unique military edge to destroy the Iranian nuclear complex at Fordow, which is buried deep underground.

“We believe that the United States of America and the president of the United States have an obligation to make sure that the region is going to a positive way and that the world is free from Iran that possesses (a) nuclear weapon,” former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told CNN’s Bianna Golodryga in an interview.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, used an ABC News interview Monday to pour cold water on a diplomatic channel with Iran that Trump seems desperate to revive, saying it had been used to “string the US along.”

A sense that an entwined political and national security crisis is building was exacerbated by Trump’s decision to suddenly leave the G7 summit in western Canada on Monday night.

“I have to be back early for obvious reasons,” Trump said. “They understand. This is big stuff.”

He flies home to Washington as it reverberates with blunt warnings from some of the most influential opinion shapers in MAGA media. Personalities like Steve Bannon and Tucker Carlson say that a decision to strike Iran would represent a repudiation of his 10-year-old political movement and “America First” principles. “I don’t want the US enmeshed in another Middle East war that doesn’t serve our interests,” Carlson said on Bannon’s “War Room” show on Monday.

Synergy between right and left populist movements in America is also on display. Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, who ran as a Democrat primary candidate in the 2016 and 2020 elections, said the US “must not get dragged into another of Netanyahu’s wars.”

Loud voices opposed to deeper US involvement underscore the painful legacy of the Iraq and Afghan wars, which created political forces that nurtured Trump’s populist uprising. But the

neoconservative interventionist wing of the GOP has not disappeared. Hawks like Sen. Lindsey Graham are trying to convince Trump that Israel’s blitz against Iranian air defenses and a confluence of forces that have weakened the regime offer the US a chance to definitively end the nuclear aspirations of its 45-year foe and to transform the Middle East.

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Stephen Collinson

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The raging debate in the MAGA movement that is splitting conservative media is a sign that Trump’s own support base is on the line, and that a legacy he promised would not be marked by foreign interventionism is also at stake.

Trump often creates shock and disorients opponents by igniting confrontations that he later defuses or postpones. This is his preferred approach to trade wars. But there would be no going back from a US military strike with bunker-busting bombs at

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Golodryga. Gallant warned that Trump had the future of the world in his hands.

“This could be a disaster for the world,” he said, referring to the possibility of an Iranian bomb. “And I believe that the determination of the American president that has been shown recently will pave the way to America to enter into this very important operation,” Gallant said. “The president of the United States (has) the option to change the Middle East and influence the world.”

Another former Israeli defense minister, Benny Gantz, also noted unique

Bannon went on: “This has to be thought through. This Pearl Harbor-type attack on the mullahs is fine for Israel. But is it right for the United States?” He concluded that the real war that the US faces is against undocumented migrants on its own soil.

A fundamental question underpins this internal MAGA debate: If “America First” is not about avoiding the kind of Middle East quagmires that that ruined President George W. Bush’s Republican presidency, does it really mean anything?

Trump’s political success was forged in the US heartland, in the kind of towns that sent their young to fight and die in the post-9/11 wars. Those conflicts started with shock-and-awe initial success like the one Israel is celebrating with its elimination of top Iranian military leaders and nuclear scientists. But they degenerated into bloody slogs that still haunt American politics. No one is openly talking of a betrayal yet. But just a month ago, in Saudi Arabia, Trump restated his opposition to interventionism and nation-building in the Middle East.

On the left, there was already antipathy toward Netanyahu because of the terrible toll on Palestinian civilians of his war on Hamas. But Sanders also seemed to be vying for Trump’s attention, warning in a statement, “The attack was specifically designed to sabotage American diplomatic efforts: Israel assassinated the man overseeing Iran’s nuclear negotiating team, despite the fact that further talks with the United States were scheduled for Sunday.”

An allergy to such foreign entanglements is not just endemic to Trump’s political project: His two predecessors, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, felt much the same way.

But now it’s fallen to Trump to make a decision that every modern president dreaded.

— CNN

major new US escapade in the Middle East would deviate from the core principles of Trumpism, which involved avoiding “forever wars,” expelling undocumented migrants, securing the border and confronting China to bring back US manufacturing jobs. He said on “War Room” that Israel had to make sovereign decisions for itself, as any nation should. “But when you start making decision that are predicated on the assumption that America is going to come in, not just for defense but for offense ... No, we have to make decisions that put America first.”

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# Netanyahu diverts global attention from Gaza war

Michael Jansen

**I**SRAELI Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu chose Friday 13th as his lucky day, the day he would at long last launch his attack on Iran. As he has not been compelled to ceasefire in his Gaza war or held accountable for Israel’s repression in the occupied West Bank, Netanyahu clearly believes there are no restraints on Israel. It can do whatever it wants. He prepared 30 years for this attack by falsely playing up Iran as an existential threat to Israel and arguing that military force was the sole means for countering this danger. He ignored the fact that the Western powers have armed Israel, including with nuclear weapons, to counter any attack from any or all regional antagonists.

Netanyahu got lucky. His bombs have fallen on Iran’s nuclear facilities and his drones and agents have slain Iran’s senior military commanders and nuclear scientists. Most of the ballistic missiles fired by Iran at Israel have been intercepted over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

For Netanyahu, the ratio of death and injuries has been acceptable. By striking Iran, Netanyahu has preserved his fragile coalition which last week could have collapsed due to Ultra-Orthodox anger over the failure by parliament to exempt Jewish religious students from military service. Thanks to his low approval rating, he could not expect to emerge victorious from a new election and could face jail time over court cases for corruption.

He also benefits from national unity forged by a new war at a time the Israeli public has become sharply divided over the Gaza war. Most Israelis are angry over his refusal to ceasefire and secure the return of Israeli hostages before Hamas is eliminated. Having failed to secure Hamas’ end in 20 months, the Israeli army is unlikely to achieve it anytime soon. Reserve military officers and soldiers have refused to join their units while the war front has been in Gaza. Resisting attacks by Iran could force them to respond positively to a call-up.

Netanyahu also diverted global attention from his war on Gaza which has killed more than 55,000 Palestinians, devastated the strip, and elicited International Criminal Court warrants for his arrest for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Timing was in Netanyahu’s favour as Iran’s “Axis of Resistance” has been reduced by Israeli attack to the vulnerable Houthis in Yemen. Hamas has been fought to a standstill in Gaza where 2.3

million Palestinians are being starved of food and medicine by Israel’s blockade. Hizbollah has been corralled in Lebanon and Iraq’s pro-Iranian militias have done nothing against Israel or US forces deployed in that country or elsewhere in the region.

Netanyahu has also finished off US-Iranian negotiations on reviving the 2015 agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear programme in exchange for lifting sanctions. This was torpedoed by Donald Trump in 2018 under pressure from Netanyahu

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secret sites buried deep within mountains where they could be inaccessible to the IAEA and Israeli bombs, including US-supplied 900 kg bunker-busters.

Netanyahu may have also alienated mercurial Trump, Israel’s chief international supporter. In the run-up to Netanyahu’s attack, Trump — who claims to be a peacemaker — said, “I’d love to avoid a conflict. ” He declared the US and Iran were “fairly close” to reaching agreement in ongoing talks. He stated, “As long as I think there is an agreement I don’t want [Israel] going in because i think that

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# GCC takes a stand on the Iran-Israel war

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**A**S the Israel-Iran war entered its fourth day on Monday, with the fighting intensifying and reaching dangerous levels that could disrupt life beyond the two warring parties, the Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers met to coordinate their policy. The six GCC member states, plus the bloc as a whole, had already put out similar statements calling for a ceasefire and condemning Israel for starting the war on Friday.

At Monday’s meeting, the six GCC ministers went beyond those initial statements to address some of the risks involved and suggested ways to handle them other than war. While the GCC and Iran have at times strongly disagreed on important issues, the organization and its member states have opted for diplomacy to settle those disputes. Oman, one of the GCC member states, has actively mediated between Iran and the US on the nuclear issue. Saudi Arabia and Iran reached an agreement two years ago, with the help of China, to resume diplomatic relations after

many years of disruption. Other member states have been in regular touch with Iran on its regional policies, over which the two sides have diverged greatly. All six foreign ministers met with their Iranian counterpart last October to work on this diplomatic approach. It is still a work in progress.

A paramount concern for the ministers was how Israel’s unilateral action has undermined respect for international law, including the UN Charter, in the region, which was already at a low point after 20 months of Israel’s unlawful war of extermination against Palestinians in Gaza. The ministers therefore condemned attacks on Iran as a “clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.” They called for an “immediate ceasefire” and a quick return to the diplomatic track, to “spare the region and its people the dangers of war” and to “safeguard regional security and stability.”

The approach was balanced, calling on “all parties to exert joint efforts” to de-escalate, “exercise maximum restraint” and choose diplomacy to

resolve their conflict.

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On Monday, the ministers reviewed ongoing security coordination between member states under the GCC Joint Military Command and the ministries of defense, interior and other agencies dealing with these matters.

The GCC Ministerial Council also stressed the need to safeguard maritime security, including the security and safety of waterways in the region. They called for “confronting activities that threaten the security and stability of the region and the world, including targeting commercial vessels, threatening shipping lanes, international trade, and oil facilities.”

It is clear that, unless the war is stopped, it will soon pose a serious threat not only to the region but it could spread way beyond. This week’s news indicates that the US, for example, could get more deeply involved. Other powers also appear to be moving in that direction. The GCC ministers therefore called on the UN Security Council and world powers to “assume their responsibilities toward bringing an immediate end to this war and preventing escalation.” In

particular, it called for the resumption of nuclear talks between the US and Iran.

What is quite clear is that there is a serious deficit in the region in upholding international law and deferring to the UN Charter, which clearly calls for settling disputes through political means and refraining from the use of force. Norms that many thought were well established in the relations between nations have been torn asunder, including the principles of good neighborliness, respect for the sovereignty and equality of states, their territorial integrity and noninterference in their internal affairs.

This lawlessness has been a mark of this region in recent years. If the regional order breaks down completely here, other parts of the world could follow. No matter how worthy the cause, disregard for international law and the rules-based order, centered on the UN and anchored in international law, can only lead to chaos and disasters like those we are witnessing in the Middle East today.

— Arab News





## Structural reforms for competitive economy: Finance Minister reaffirms commitment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's resolve to ensure structural reforms to achieve long-term economic growth and stability.

Addressing the "National workshop on transitioning to define contribution pension schemes", which was organized by the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the minister said that the government was committed to reform the areas of taxation, energy and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

He emphasized that a major reformative initiative introduced this year pertains to the country's tariff structure, aiming to transform Pakistan into a more competitive economy. This includes gradually dismantling the wall of protection that has long hindered industrial growth.

The minister noted that these steps would help domestic industries advance and enable the export sector to become more robust and globally competitive.

The government has also taken several measures to address public finance issues, particularly to reduce debt servicing, not just through the expected decline in the policy rate, but also through broader

fiscal measures, he remarked.

He also emphasized the importance of liability management in creating fiscal space. "Whatever we do in terms of liability management will help us secure funding for additional sectors that require focused investment as we move forward. This will be critical in creating the fiscal headroom necessary for sustained development," the minister added.

Senator Aurangzeb underscored the importance of pension reform as a key component of the government's broader fiscal strategy and recalled that the government had taken a significant step in this direction last year.

"As of July 1, 2024, we announced that all new entrants to the federal government and civil service will move to a defined contribution scheme," he said, adding, that this was a necessary move before even beginning to address the legacy issue of unfunded liabilities.

The minister stressed the need to stop the fiscal bleeding and said that this year's budget the pension bill alone has crossed one trillion rupees.

He said that pension reform was not only a matter of fiscal responsibility but also essential for ensuring long-term macroeco-

omic sustainability and ensuring predictability in government finances and managing costs effectively.

He further highlighted that the shift from a defined benefit to a defined contribution pension model also has significant implications at the individual level. "This transition isn't just a fiscal adjustment, it's about empowering employees to take ownership of their retirement savings," he added.

Finance Minister said that government in Federal Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-26, has proposed a 7% increase in pensions, which he said, was aligned with prevailing inflation trends to protect their purchasing power. The government has recommended a progressive taxation measure, "From an equity standpoint, we have proposed a 5% tax on annual pension income exceeding Rs10 million, which has been submitted to Parliament for approval.

The minister said these steps reflect a balanced approach, providing relief to pensioners while also ensuring that high-income recipients contribute fairly to national resources. He stressed the need to learn from the experiences and expertise of the provincial governments to adopt uniform strategy.

Commenting on the pre-

vailing geopolitical tensions and regional developments, Finance Minister said that a detailed meeting was held with all relevant stakeholders a day earlier to assess the situation.

"We need to ensure that we maintain adequate strategic reserves, have a clear understanding of pricing trends across asset classes, and remain fully prepared for any eventuality," he stated.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to proactive risk management in the face of external uncertainties to safeguard economic and financial stability.

Regarding the ongoing discussions on tariffs with US, the minister said that it was progressing positively, reflecting growing alignment between Pakistan and the United States. He said that ongoing negotiations on tariffs a very constructive and encouraging discussion was held with the US Secretary of Commerce.

He said that the both the countries were moving in the right direction to ensure that Pakistan is well-positioned competitively with regard to US tariffs and the broader strategic partnership between both the countries continue to strengthen, opening avenues for deeper economic cooperation and mutual growth.



HYDERABAD: A vendor displays fresh mangoes to attract passersby at local fruit market.

## PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 254.32 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 254.32 points, a negative change of 0.21 percent, closing at 121,971.04 points as compared to 122,225.36 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,152,012,654 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,224,178,443 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 27,983 billion against Rs 25,750 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 473 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 193 of them recorded gains and 244 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 36 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 239,756,205 shares at Rs 1.61 per share, Pervaz Ahmed Co. with 97,496,465 shares at Rs 3.88 per share and Sui South Gas with 49,860,990 shares at Rs 44.82 per share.

Macter International Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 42.47 per share closing at Rs467.18 whereas runner-up was S.S Oil Mills Limited with Rs39.02 rise in its share price to close at Rs794.89.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 1,700.02 per share price, closing at Rs 15,300.17, whereas the runner-up Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 158.06 decline in its per share price to Rs 1,457.04.

**Rupee sheds 24 paise against US Dollar**

The Rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 24 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.41 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.17. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283.25 and Rs 285.45 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs0.37 to close at Rs 327.48 against the last day's closing of Rs 327.85, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

## SCCI voiced over policy rate status quo

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry voiced concerns over the decision of State Bank of Pakistan to maintain policy rate status quo, stating that it continues to impose a heavy premium compared to core inflation.

It called upon the State Bank of Pakistan to reconsider the 11 percent interest rate policy amid growth concerns, essentially projecting an inflationary downward trend, shown by statistics of economic indicators.

The SCCI said that to turbocharge economic growth, the SBP should have reduced the interest rate at single digit to zero-rate in one go.

In a joint statement issued here on Tuesday, SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan, senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, along with members of the chamber executive committee said it is unfor-

tunate that the interest rate was not cut.

They stressed that bringing down the policy rate to single digit is essential to stimulate economic growth and investment, especially as inflation is on a downward trend, as claimed by the government and reflected in its economic figures.

SCCI senior office bearers described the SBP's decision as an overly cautious and counterproductive stance given easing inflation and worsening industrial competitiveness. Moqem emphasised that such high interest rates have rendered Pakistan's industrial sector uncompetitive in the regional and global markets.

The SCCI chief pointed out that the steady decline in inflation and signs of economic improvement should have been considered by the SBP.

"The business community has consistently demanded that the interest rate be brought down to single dig-

its, but the MPC does not seem to take our demands seriously," he said.

Therefore, Moqem stressed the need for the key interest rate to be reduced to single digits.

SCCI senior office bearers highlighted that this would help Pakistani exporters compete in regional and international markets by lowering the cost of capital.

Additionally, they called for the government to honor its commitments to rationalize electricity tariffs for industries and address gas supply shortages.

Fazal Moqem Khan urged the SBP to support the government's efforts to promote industries and contribute to the realisation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision.

He added that industrial growth is crucial for the country's development and that easy access to loans on favourable terms could set Pakistan on a path to progress.

## SEPA intensifies enforcement on plastic bag ban

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is now in full swing with its province-wide campaign to enforce a complete ban on all types of plastic shopping bags. This marks the second day of intensive market-by-market visits by SEPA teams across all districts where the agency has offices, issuing stern warnings to shopkeepers and business owners to comply with the directive.

In Karachi, SEPA teams are actively engaged across various districts. Operations were carried out in the business hubs of Korangi No 6, while other teams focused on 10 No and Rabbi markets in Orangi Town within the West District.

Concurrently, SEPA officials dedicated their efforts to raising awareness in the Babar Market Landhi of Malir District and remained busy in the bustling commer-

cial areas of Empress Market Saddar in the South District and Gole Market Nazimabad in the Central District. Furthermore, teams extended their reach to the business localities of Kemari and East districts, ensuring widespread coverage.

Across the entire province, SEPA teams have visited numerous business areas, delivering written warnings to shopkeepers. These warnings explicitly instruct them to immediately cease the sale of plastic bags and transition to environmentally friendly alternatives. It's crucial to remember that the Sindh government imposed a comprehensive ban on all plastic bags, including non-biodegradable and oxo-degradable types, two months ago. A grace period was provided until June 15, 2025, for shopkeepers to deplete or destroy their existing stock and adopt eco-friendly options, a

deadline that has now passed.

This ongoing campaign is being conducted under the direct orders of Sindh's highest environment officials. Waqar Hussain Phulpoto, the Director General of SEPA, has unequivocally stated that any establishments found selling banned plastic bags despite the warnings will face substantial fines.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Senior Civil Judge(1)/Guardian Judge, Dir Lower at Timergara

Succession Certificate No: 48/5 of 2024/ under the Succession Act, 1925 Part-X, Date of institution. 09-09-2024, Date of decision. 28-10-2024, Izat Khan etc. VS Public at large. To: (1) Izat Khan (2) Ubain Ullah (3) Muhammad Tahir sons of Amir Bullah Khan (late), nephews of Amir Dad Khan (late) (4) Jannatul Mawa daughter of Amir Bullah Khan (late), niece of Air Dad Khan (late), resident of Stanadar Tehsil Balambat District Dir Lower... Petitioners, Whereas , you have applied for issuance of Succession Certificate with respect to debts for deceased Amir Dad Khan described here as under: Name of Debtor: Landed house at Bakhshi bridge Charsadda Peshawar . Name, relation of legal heir(s) of deceased as under: (1) Izat Khan (Nephew) Share 2/7, 28.57% (2) Ubaidullah (Nephew) Share 2/7, 28.57%, (3) Muhammad Tahir (Nephew) Share 2/7, 28.57% (4) Mst. Jannatul Mawa (Niece) Share 1/7, 14.28%.. The certificate is accordingly issued to all the legal heirs of Amir Dad Khan (deceased) adn empowers all of them or anyone of the legal heir to act all, to collect those debts/ amounts alongwith interest or dividends, If any, from the concerned quarter/ Department, If any other legal heir(s) is found in future, the petitioners will be responsible. It clarified that this certificate does not require any further verification. Given under my hand and seal of the court, on this 29th day of October, 2024.

## DMCC signs strategic MoU with AQUA-INDEX

DUBAI (APP): DMCC, the leading international business district that drives the flow of global trade through Dubai, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with AQUA-INDEX, a global pioneer in water commodities trading.

This landmark collaboration supports AQUA-INDEX's initiative to launch the world's first digital asset token backed directly by freshwater resources, revolutionising how water is traded, valued, and managed globally.

The token – the first of its kind globally – is backed by verified, drinking-quality water stored in global reservoirs and will enable investors, hedgers, traders and the general public to trade, hold and take delivery of fresh water as a commodity. By combining financial innovation with water mar-

ket expertise, the partnership offers a practical mechanism for unlocking new liquidity and transparency in global water supply chains.

Under the partnership, AQUA-INDEX will benefit from DMCC's extensive global network, world-class services, advanced infrastructure, and leading commodity marketplace, facilitating the effective trading and investment in water assets. AQUA-INDEX will enhance the availability and exchange of knowledge around global water usage and pricing and provide access to essential trading and hedging products for DMCC and its member companies. DMCC will not directly own or manage the token itself.

Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DMCC, said, "Nearly half

the global population experiences water scarcity for at least part of the year, yet water remains the only critical resource without a mature, regulated market. We are proud to partner with AQUA-INDEX to drive a transparent, neutral, and legally coherent structure and marketplace for water to secure the future of a resource that has long been undervalued.

This is the next clear milestone in the formation of DMCC Water Centre, where we will not only bring the conversation of water to the forefront, but also attract the sector's leading companies to create a global centre in Dubai for water innovation, security, sustainable best practice, knowledge and education, while ensuring that the world's most transported commodity has the ability to reach water dis-

tressed areas."

Yaacov Shirazi, Chairman and Founder of AQUA INDEX, said, "Pricing water by the value of its usage, standardisation of water by its mineral content and quality, and turning water to a new asset class for a financial trading, is a gamechanger in the world economy. It will establish new levels of water management which prevents scarcity, contamination, and lack of access."

The announcement forms part of DMCC's ongoing efforts to establish the DMCC Water Centre, a dedicated ecosystem for the global water industry that positions Dubai as a central, neutral hub for water trading and innovation. The Water Centre brings together WaterTech innovators, logistics providers and commodity traders under one platform.

### Strategic marketing partnership:

## Rahat Marketing and Daisy Greens sign MOU



**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: In a significant development for the real estate sector, Daisy Greens, Lahore's premier luxury farmhouse society, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Rahat Marketing, a

leading real estate marketing firm. The signing ceremony was held in Lahore today, marking the beginning of a strategic partnership focused on the marketing and sales of Daisy Greens farmhouses.

Senior representatives from both organizations

attended the ceremony and expressed confidence in the success of this collaboration.

Located just 3 minutes from Ferozepur Road and directly opposite DHA Phase 10, Daisy Greens offers prime accessibility. It is also only a 15-minute drive from DHA Phase 6

via Bedian Road. Daisy Greens is designed to offer a wholesome lifestyle away from the urban chaos, blending natural serenity with modern amenities.

Speaking at the ceremony, a representative from Rahat Marketing stated: "We are proud to partner with a visionary project like Daisy Greens. With its exceptional location and modern lifestyle offerings, this project is set to redefine farmhouse living in Lahore."

A representative from Daisy Greens also expressed optimism: "This partnership will create new opportunities for both organizations and allow us to reach a wider audience looking for luxurious yet affordable living options."

The dollar rose against a basket of currencies. US Treasury yields fell.

Receipts at auto and parts dealerships tumbled 3.5% after decreasing 0.6% in April. Sales at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers dropped 2.7%.

Receipts at service stations fell 2.0%, while those at electronics and appliance stores slipped 0.6%.

## Workshop held on advanced retinoblastoma treatment



**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Society of Paediatric Oncology (PSPO), in collaboration with Shaukat Khanum Hospital, Lahore, organised a one-day workshop titled "Current Standardized & Advanced Treatment in Retinoblastoma" to enhance multidisciplinary care for improved patient outcomes in children suffering from advanced eye cancer. The event brought together professionals from leading public and private healthcare institutions, including Aga Khan University

Hospital, Indus Hospital, LRB, Children's Hospital, AFIRI, CMH, UCHS, Mayo hospital, LGH, PINS and NICH Karachi.

The workshop covered critical topics such as genetic counselling, intraocular staging, treatment response assessment, focal therapies (laser and cryotherapy), intravitreal and intra-arterial chemotherapy, and the development of a standardised intra-arterial chemotherapy protocol tailored to Pakistan's needs.

Dr. Haleema Saeed from Shaukat Khanum Hospital presented the National

Guidelines for standardised retinoblastoma care in Pakistan.

Dr. Palwasha Rehman, part of the organising team, emphasised, "Retinoblastoma is a curable disease, and we are committed to collaborating to provide the best care for our children." Speakers stressed the importance of educating parents to seek urgent medical attention to improve outcomes.

The workshop underscored the need for localised solutions and collective efforts to advance retinoblastoma treatment in Pakistan.





In brief

Pak squash contingent to feature in back to back C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani squash contingent, including World Champion (U23) Noor Zaman and Pakistan's shining star Nasir Iqbal will feature in two back to back Squash Championships in Malaysia. According to details, the Pakistan squash team has is in Malaysia to participate in 23rd Asian Individual Championships (June 18 to 22) and 2nd Asian Squash D o u b l e s Championships (June 23 to 27). Led by Team Manager Air Commodore (R) Amir Nawaz, the contingent includes Air Commodore (R) Amir Nawaz (Team Manager), Fahim Gul (Head Coach), players Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal. The Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) has wished best wishes and good luck to the contingent as they represent Pakistan on the international stage.

Pakistan outplay Tajikistan in Billie Jean King Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan women's tennis team downed Tajikistan by 2-1 in the Billie Jean King Cup Group-3 Asia/Oceania - Zone-A event at Colombo, Sri Lanka. According to details, unfortunately Amana Ali was unable to play in the third set due to injury. However, Pakistan will face Turkmenistan in their next game on Wednesday (June 18).

Noor, Nasir start their Individual C'ships campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Talented Pakistani players, Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal, kicked off their campaign at the 23rd Asian Individual Championships in Sarawak, Malaysia, with impressive wins. Noor Zaman dominated Aaron-Jon Widjaja Liang of Singapore, while Nasir Iqbal outclassed Jaemin Yoo of Korea, said a press release. Both matches were won quite easily, showcasing the skill and determination of our players! Nasir Iqbal beat Jaemin Yoo (Korea) by 3-0 (11-5, 11-2, 11-4) while Noor Zaman defeated Aaron-Jon Widjaja Liang (Singapore) by 3-1 (11-7, 6-11, 11-6, 11-3). Both the players will face their Round 3 matches on Wednesday.

Shandur Polo Festival to be held from June 20

ASTORE (APP): The annual Shandur Polo Festival would be organized from June 20 to 22 in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan governments and Fortier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North), the official sources said on Tuesday. The Shandur Polo Festival is an annual three-day event held at Shandur Top, known as the "Roof of the World," in the Hindu Kush mountains of Pakistan, specifically between Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. The festival, typically featured traditional, freestyle polo matches between teams from Gilgit and Chitral, they said, adding beyond the polo, the festival also included cultural performances, music, and paragliding. A great number of local and foreign tourists is expected to attend the festival.

Pakistan outplays Philippines in AVC Nations Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan National Senior Men's Volleyball Team continued their strong showing in the AVC Nations Cup 2025 with a commanding victory over the Philippines by 3-1 in an exciting group stage match at Bahrain.

The Green-shirts began the match with high energy and dominance, taking the first two sets comfortably with scores of 25-18 and 25-12, thanks to clinical execution and tight defensive play.

However, the Philippines bounced back in the third set, taking advantage of a few errors and winning it 25-18. Undeterred, Pakistan responded strongly in the

fourth set, sealing the match with a hard-fought 25-22 win, demonstrating their resilience and teamwork.

Key performers among the standout players were Murad Khan, whose consistent attacking and sharp finishing were crucial in crucial moments. Afaq Khan, who controlled the tempo and provided strong blocking at the net. Musawer Khan, who impressed with his defensive efforts and effective serves.

These players played a pivotal role in maintaining Pakistan's momentum throughout the match and helped secure this important win. Pakistan is placed in

Pool C alongside Chinese Taipei and the Philippines.

With this victory, Pakistan is in a strong position to advance in the tournament. Their next and final group match will be against Chinese Taipei on June 19.

The Pakistan Volleyball Federation in a statement on the team's performance said, "The team has shown great discipline and strength. This win reflects the hard work of our players, coaches, and support staff. We are hopeful for another strong performance against Chinese Taipei and urge all volleyball fans in Pakistan to support our national heroes."

De Villiers calls for WTC change despite SA victory

CAPE TOWN (Agencies): South Africa's World Test Championship triumph "stirred the emotions" of the country, but there is "still work to be done" on the format, says Proteas legend AB de Villiers.

Temba Bavuma's side beat Australia by five wickets in the Lord's final last week to end the country's 27-year wait for a men's global title. The victory comes after a number of near misses in International Cricket Council (ICC) tournaments that earned the Proteas their unwanted "chokers" tag, but De Villiers hopes that can now become a thing of the past.

"We've had some very disappointing and sad ends to a lot of campaigns, especially the World Cups, but now it's time to start believing that we can do this more often," he told BBC World Service's Stumped podcast. Building on their Test success may be tricky, though, as South Africa play only four Tests in the next 16 months - two in Zimbabwe in the next month, that are not part of the World Test Championship, and two in India in November.

Any sort of victorious homecoming for the red-ball side will have to wait even longer with the Proteas' next home Tests not scheduled until October 2026, when they face Australia in a three-match series.

"[This moment] won't be lost," De Villiers said. "It was too big and too special for all South Africans - it was a Test match no one will ever forget. But yes, to a certain extent, something needs to be done."

"I saw the schedule that came out for the next cycle of the WTC and there is an improvement, but I still feel there's work that needs to be done there to just to get it as consistent as possible and as fair as possible for all for all Test-playing nations." The 2025-27 WTC cycle began on Tuesday and, as it stands, the number of Tests each team plays over the two years varies significantly.

South Africa played 12 matches to qualify for the recent final, the joint-fewest of the nine sides and 10 fewer than England, who played the most, with percentage of points earned used to determine the standings. There is also a

discrepancy in who each nation plays, with some highlighting a favourable schedule for the Proteas in 2023-25 qualifying that meant they played just two home Tests against India and did not face Australia or England at all.

By contrast, in the new cycle they have the two aforementioned Tests in India and host both Australia and England for three Tests apiece in 2026 and early 2027. "You want to get to that final feeling like you've played against all these nations," De Villiers added.

"Maybe a four-year cycle would be nice. We've done that in the past with one-day internationals, so why not in Test cricket?"

"It would make sense and it would give the organisers just so much more time to get a really fair, well-balanced system out there. It's a long time until our next Test match, but there's no doubt it won't be forgotten. I've absolutely no doubt the Proteas have sort of stirred the emotions of the South African cricketing fans and they will patiently wait for that next encounter."

PSB issues legal notice to PBFF

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has issued a legal notice to a person named Tariq Pervaz for the unauthorized use of the title "Pakistan." According to the PSB spokesperson, the legal notice states that an unaffiliated entity, presenting itself as the "Pakistan Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation (PBFF)," is misusing the name "Pakistan" in its operations, promotional activities, social media, and other materials, despite not being affiliated with or recognized by PSB.

The notice highlights that this act constitutes a serious violation of the PSB Constitution and national laws, and misleads athletes, sponsors, institutions, and the general public. Such conduct

creates confusion regarding the official status of the organization and undermines the integrity of the national sports governance structure, potentially resulting in reputational and legal complications.

The notice further clarifies that the Pakistan Sports Board is the sole competent authority to register and recognize national sports federations in the country. No organization can claim to represent Pakistan in any sport without PSB's prior approval or formal recognition.

PSB has directed the concerned entity to immediately stop using the word "Pakistan" in its name and all related materials, and to remove all publications, signboards, websites, and social media content that give an impression of affiliation with PSB or the Government of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the organization has been strictly instructed not to make any future claims of being a national federation or representing Pakistan in any capacity.

The notice requires the submission of a written explanation and confirmation of compliance within seven (07) days from the date of receipt. Failure to comply will compel the Pakistan Sports Board to initiate appropriate legal and administrative action, which may include approaching relevant courts, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for regulatory intervention. PSB has emphasized the urgency and seriousness of the matter.

Alcaraz wins testing Queen's opener, Draper cruises

LONDON (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz came through a testing first-round match against Australia's Adam Walton at Queen's on Tuesday as the top seed returned to action for the first time since his dramatic French Open triumph.

The Spaniard, back on grass for the first time since winning his second Wimbledon title last year, beat his 86th-ranked opponent 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on a sweaty day in west London.

Alcaraz, who overcame Jannik Sinner in a five-set thriller at Roland Garros just nine days ago, broke in the seventh game and went on to clinch the first set against lucky loser Walton, who replaced Alejandro Davidovich Fokina after the Spaniard withdrew due to illness.

The 2023 Queen's champion appeared to have

found his rhythm only for Walton to rally impressively, carving out two set points on his opponent's serve in the 10th game.

But the Australian failed to convert either of them and Alcaraz levelled, coming out on top in the subsequent tie-break.

Alcaraz scribbled "Grass season, here we go!" on the court-side camera lens, thanking fans for their vocal support and saying he felt "loved" in London.

"First match on grass is never easy to get used to the competition again, to get used to the grass again," he said. "So, I just want to say thank you for helping me a little bit." The world number two said he had taken time away from tennis after his gruelling French Open triumph to "reset" his mind and rest.

"I'm just really happy

with the performance that I had today," he said. "First match, I feel great. Obviously, a lot of things to improve, a lot of things that I have to put into work just to feel a little bit more comfortable on the grass. But in general, I'm just happy to get through."

Earlier, British second seed Jack Draper dispatched American Jensen Brooksby 6-3, 6-1 to reach the second round.

The left-hander, who has previously beaten Sinner and Alcaraz at Queen's, won 93 percent of first-serve points and did not face a break point in a dominant display.

Draper is chasing his second title on grass after winning in Stuttgart last year and will next face Alexei Popyrin after the Australian beat compatriot Aleksandar Vukic.



GALLE: Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur Rahim centuries deflated Sri Lanka.

Record stand puts Bangladesh in command in first Sri Lanka Test

GALLE (AFP): A record-breaking fourth-wicket partnership between captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur Rahim put Bangladesh in control at 292-3 on day one of the first Test against Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

After a wobbly start at Galle, the pair stitched together 247 runs — the highest fourth-wicket stand for Bangladesh in Tests against Sri Lanka — steering the tourists to a commanding position at stumps. Having elected to bat first, Bangladesh were reeling at 45-3 when the duo came together.

What followed was a gritty rescue act — a partnership built on sound temperament, clever shot selection and an unflinching resolve as they dug their team out of early trouble.

Mushfiqur, the most capped Test player in Bangladesh history with 97 appearances, silenced his critics with a timely ton. The veteran, under the pump after a lean patch spanning 13 innings without a half-century, rolled back the years with a knock of poise and purpose. The 38-year-old has fond memories of Galle, having struck a monumental double hundred there in 2013, and once again turned tormentor-in-chief for the Sri Lankan bowlers.

He did enjoy a slice of luck — a tough chance spilled by debutant Tharindu Rathnayake on 25 — but made it count, navigating a nervy passage in the 90s, before scampering a quick single to notch up his 12th

Test hundred. Playing his third match in Galle, Rahim said he had "always done well" at the ground and it was "very pleasing to get another hundred here". "We know that Galle always spins but for some reason when we have played here, we have been lucky to bat when conditions were good," he said after the day's play.

"This wicket will deteriorate that's for sure," Rahim added. "That is why it is important to post a big first innings total (and) once we do that we can put the opposition under pressure". His partner, Shanto, positive from the outset, kept the scoreboard ticking with deft footwork and a keen eye for the loose ball.

He brought up his sixth Test century — and second against Sri Lanka — with a cheeky paddle sweep off Prabath Jayasuriya, marking his first test since November 2023.

"Keep our discipline"

Sri Lanka made early inroads with right-arm quick Asitha Fernando drawing first blood, removing opener Anamul Haque for a duck. Off-spinner Rathnayake, handed his Test cap on the back of a prolific domestic season, struck twice in quick succession.

But once the Shanto-Mushfiqur duo got their eye in, it was one-way traffic. "There was a bit of moisture on the wicket early on and we were able to create opportunities but once the wicket dried up it was a very good wicket to bat and the pitch became a

bit slow as well," Rathnayake said after play. "This is not the usual Galle wicket that we get, I feel, it is quite hard and I think it will be good for batting even heading into day four."

"We need to regroup tomorrow and the ball is quite new and we can make a few breakthroughs in the morning... we need to remain patient and keep our discipline and see what happens."

Sri Lanka also handed a debut to opening batter Lahiru Udara, another domestic heavyweight, while the hosts paused before the start of play to congratulate retiring stalwart Angelo Mathews. The 38-year-old Mathews, playing his 119th and final Test, will hang up his boots with over 8,000 runs, behind only Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene in Sri Lanka's all-time charts.

Mathews speaking before the start, said he was "extremely proud to have a wonderful journey, thankful for whoever was part of it". "Feeling quite special. Realising that I have played over 100 Tests", he added.

"Playing for the country was my dream, it has come true." The match is the first in the new two-year World Test Championship cycle. The second Test begins in Colombo on June 25.

Brief scores: Bangladesh: 292-3 (Najmul Hossain Shanto 136 not out, Mushfiqur Rahim 105 not out) Toss: Bangladesh

Irfan breaks Norway's Guinness World Record



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani martial artist Irfan Mehsood has broken Norway's Sever Dyson's Guinness World Record of 27 push-ups in one minute by doing 39 push-ups with his fingers while holding a weight of 100 pounds.

Irfan is the first Pakistani to set 156 Guinness World Records and has set the most world records in the push-ups category, with 70 records set at the world level.

I have set 41 Guinness World Records while holding a weight of 100 pounds and has set the most world records with 100 pounds, 80 pounds, 60 pounds and 40 pounds so far, he told APP.

Irfan, received the Presidential Award for Excellence in 2023, can perform push-ups, squats, jumping jacks, step-ups, knee strikes, elbow strikes, side jumps, high World records have been set for Jumps, Star Champs, etc.

I have so far broken world records in 20 countries including the United States, Britain, India, China, Norway, Germany, France, Finland, Philippines, Spain, Italy, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, he said.

It may be mentioned that 20 of Irfan's students have also set Guinness World Records.

Ronaldo loan move to Al-Hilal 'counter-intuitive'

RIYADH (Agencies): The chief executive of Saudi Pro League club Al-Hilal says that a loan move for Cristiano Ronaldo before the Club World Cup would have been "completely counter-intuitive" because he played for their "biggest opponent" Al-Nassr.

Al-Hilal were linked with a possible deal for the 40-year-old Portugal forward after Fifa introduced an additional transfer window earlier this month because of the revamped tournament.

Both rival Riyadh clubs are controlled by the country's Public Investment Fund (PIF), and Ronaldo is out of contract at Al-Nassr at the end of June.

But when asked if they came close to a move for the forward, Esteve Calzada told BBC Sport: "We normally don't comment on players' situations, particularly because our name is always put out there, when a player or an agent wants to negotiate a better deal with his club, or is trying to move out."

"It's been a very weird transfer window, it's a very short period of time."

"You don't want to take a decision thinking about this tournament that then you have to carry on with for the next two or three years."

"As much as I respect Ronaldo as a huge player, as we all recognise he is, it's certainly completely counter-intuitive that you bring the biggest player of your biggest opponent to play with you. "Even more when it's only for three to four weeks. "We've been trying to see if we can reinforce the team. But some players were with a mindset of 'holidays already', some players were sometimes just asking for too much money, and we're aware that our team is extremely competitive."

"We'll go into the traditional transfer window after the tournament still with the biggest ambitions to see if we can reinforce the team

even more."

Fernandes, Nunez, Osimhen - Al-Hilal can 'pitch to any player'

Calzada was speaking in Miami, where Al-Hilal play Ronaldo's former club Real Madrid in their opening Club World Cup fixture on Wednesday (20:00 BST).

Al-Hilal recently appointed Simone Inzaghi as their head coach but did not make any major signings before the tournament in the United States.

Earlier this month, Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes claimed he rejected a huge offer from Al-Hilal because he still wants to play "at the highest possible level".

"I cannot confirm nor deny that we've been interested in him," added Calzada. "He's a big player, it fits the profile of player that we think would be good for Al-Hilal, just like many others. We're not refraining from contacting players because we feel they would say no to us."

"The names we are linked with demonstrate the ambition of the club. We believe that we are in a position to pitch [to] any players nowadays." In recent months, Al-Hilal have also reportedly considered moves for Liverpool forward Darwin Nunez and Napoli striker Victor Osimhen.

While refusing to comment on those specific cases, Calzada did say: "We are targeting the biggest players. "We are very ambitious, but we need to see hunger from the player himself and the transaction needs to work out both ways. "The only thing we've been trying to remind players and agents is that yes, we are from Saudi, but we don't print notes here!"

"My role as CEO is to make sure we run the club efficiently, so that we can have the biggest budget possible to have big players, but not at any cost."

"That's why sometimes we basically walk away from

negotiations, because we still want players extremely keen on coming, and not only looking for the money."

'No regret' over Neymar The likes of Ruben Neves, Aleksandar Mitrovic and Joao Cancelo helped Al-Hilal win the 2023-24 Saudi Pro League, but record signing Neymar left the club in January after just seven appearances following an injury-hit spell in Riyadh.

When asked if the club regretted signing the Brazilian, Calzada - who previously worked at both Barcelona and Manchester City - said: "I would say no regret at all. "It's just sad that he got badly injured. It's always been unfair to criticise Neymar for being injured, when most of the injuries came from tackles from opponents."

"A collateral positive effect of it is that it helped us to make the club more popular globally. It helped us to gain social media followers when he arrived, alongside other big names."

"Now we have over 42 million followers on social media. The good news for us is that some of those followers, we won them because of the arrival of Neymar, and when he left, they stayed. "So in that respect, it's some sort of legacy that can stay with us."

Inzaghi 'expected to help us win again'

Al-Hilal finished the Saudi Pro League season eight points behind new champions Al-Ittihad, and sacked Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus last month after his team were knocked out of the Asian Champions League Elite semi-finals.

Inzaghi was appointed just days after his former club Inter Milan lost the Champions League final against PSG. "It might look like it's something that came quickly, but it's the result of hard work particularly from our chairman who was always very clear he would be our number one option," said Calzada.





## In brief

### Aquaculture management course begins on Thursday

RAWALPINDI (APP): A three-day course on 'aquaculture management' for fish farmers will begin at the Fisheries Training Sub-Center Rawal Town Islamabad on Thursday. The training course under the supervision of Assistant Director Fisheries Training Sub-Center Mussrat Nazir will continue June 21, a DPR news release said on Tuesday. During the course, the farmers will be provided guidance on modern aquaculture, fish farming, cage culture, and biofloc and shrimp farming. Thanks to this course, those who want to do fish farming in a new way will be able to get training and adopt the modern fish farming sector. No fees would be charged from those participating in the course, it added.

### Man sentenced to death in murder case

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court on Tuesday sentenced a man to death for killing his sister-in-law. According to police spokesman, Muhammad Amir had murdered his sister-in-law with a knife during a domestic dispute in August 2024 and a case was registered at Taxila Police Station. The court also imposed fine of Rs 500,000 to the convict. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani praised SSP Investigation and legal teams for collecting evidence to get the culprit convicted in the case.

### IRSA releases 246,596 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 246,596 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 276,014 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1451.78 feet which was 49.78 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 168,500 cusecs and 152,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1167.75 feet, which was 117.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 27,918 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 187,685, 139,094, 90,219 and 36,190 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 22,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 26,629 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Police arrest wanted criminal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a wanted criminal involved in killing his friend over minor dispute. The incident took place in October 2024, and the suspect had been on the run since then. According to police, the accused visited the victim's house pretending it was a friendly visit but he opened fire and gunned down his friend. After committing the murder, the suspect fled and went into hiding. Saddar Barooni Police used all available resources to trace and arrest the accused. He is also involved in several other criminal cases, including murder, fraud, property damage, and aerial firing. SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar commended police team and stated that the suspect will be presented in court with strong evidence. He added that the accused will be punished according to law.

# Muqam lauds pro-people budget, urges political unity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam Tuesday praised the government for presenting a pro-people and balanced federal budget, despite facing serious economic challenges.

Speaking during the National Assembly's budget debate, he emphasized the need for political maturity, unity and a rejection of divisive rhetoric.

Muqam commended the government's targeted relief measures, particularly for employees and welcomed the increased allocation for defense, calling it essential to maintaining a strong and capable military. "Our armed forces have effectively responded to recent Indian aggression, demonstrating their readiness and resolve," he said.

Highlighting the unity within the coalition government, the minister acknowledged the efforts of the economic team for incorporating parliamentary feedback and steering

the country away from financial instability.

He also lauded PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his effective diplomatic engagements during recent visits to Western nations, praising his efforts in representing Pakistan on the global stage. Muqam called for resolving internal disagreements through dialogue rather than airing them in the media or the National Assembly.

He expressed concern over repeated calls from PTI for protests and armed marches toward Islamabad, saying, "Such threats undermine Pakistan's democratic image and global standing. Responsible leadership does not glorify violence." Dispelling the impression in the lower house by some members that only 550 million has been allocated for KP, the minister said that several development projects have been included in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), especially for the merged tribal districts of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"From Chitral to D.I. Khan, development initiatives are underway," he said, while calling for a fair and needs-based distribution of resources under the National Finance Commission (NFC) award.

Responding to misinformation about a 10% sales tax in the former FATA and PATA regions, Muqam clarified that the levy only applies to imported raw materials. He reiterated his firm opposition to imposing taxes on the Malakand Division. "I had previously convinced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw the tax. Today, thanks to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Rana Sanaullah, the exemption remains in place until 2025," he added.

The minister warned against allowing any individual's political ambitions to dictate the future of provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Pakistan's stability and progress can only be ensured through collective effort and national unity," he added.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Spain, Jose Antonio de Ory, called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, at MoFA.

## Meeting reviews security arrangements for Muharram

RAWALPINDI (APP): Superintendent of Police Rawal Muhammad Haseeb Raja on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the security arrangements for Muharram.

Besides sub-divisional police officers, station house officers and detective foot constables of the Rawal Circle, guardians of Imambargahs and processions participated in the meeting. During the meeting, SP Haseeb Raja observed that people would be allowed to attend gatherings or join processions only after passing through

a walk-through gate and full body search.

The implementation of the code of conduct and standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab Home Department regarding Muharram would be ensured at all costs, he added. All the Muharram gatherings/processions, he said, should start and end at their scheduled time, while streets and roads would be sealed on the route of the processions.

The participants of the meeting assured full cooperation to the administration, assuring that all

resources would be utilized to maintain peace and order during Muharram.

Meanwhile, SP Potohar Talha Wali visited the routes of processions brought out in the R A Bazaar area during Muharram.

During the visit, he directed the police to ensure implementation of SOPs in letter and spirit. No one should be allowed to join a procession without passing through a walk-through gate and full body search. Similarly, he added, there should not be any deviation from the scheduled timings of the processions.

## DMA cancels parking contract over mismanagement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) has terminated its contract with AJCL, the firm responsible for digitizing Islamabad's parking system, after uncovering financial irregularities, contractual violations, and systemic negligence.

Officials from the DMA told APP on Tuesday that AJCL failed to implement promised digital payment solutions, instead conducting unrecorded cash trans-

actions that led to revenue losses. The company also neglected security measures, resulting in thefts and public complaints.

Despite repeated warnings, AJCL did not address these issues, prompting the DMA to revoke the contract and file a police report (FIR) at Kohsar Police Station. Since taking direct control of parking operations, the DMA reports a significant increase in revenue, attributing the

improvement to transparent management.

AJCL has challenged the termination in court, but the administration vows to defend its decision, emphasizing its commitment to fair and efficient public services. "DMA will not tolerate negligence or malpractice that harms citizens' trust," the spokesperson said. "We are determined to ensure accountability and better services for Islamabad's residents."



ISLAMABAD: A person filling pots with water from water filtration plant. —APP Photo



ISLAMABAD: Women activists of Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen hold a protest in support of Iran outside the Press Club. —APP Photo

## Bangladesh HC calls on DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan Tuesday called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed matters of mutual interests.

During the meeting, the deputy PM underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to its brotherly relations with Bangladesh. Appreciating the positive trajectory of bilateral ties, he emphasized the need to further expand cooperation—especially in trade, tourism, & people-to-people exchanges, according to a press statement issued by the foreign office spokesperson.

## Abbottabad Public School alumni visits Parliament House

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Abbottabad Public School Alumni Association on Tuesday visited Parliament House and commended the nonpartisan leadership of Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and the efficient conduct of the Assembly's proceedings. The delegation also observed the National Assembly proceedings during their visit. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq welcomed the delegation, praising Abbottabad Public School as a leading educational institution and recognizing the significant contributions of its alumni across various national sectors.

During the meeting, the members of delegation were briefed about legislative process and structure of the parliamentary system, underscoring the significance of standing committees in ensuring detailed deliberations on national matters.

The Speaker highlighted the establishment of parliamentary forums such as the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Child Rights Caucus, Young Parliamentarians Forum, and the SDGs Secretariat within the National Assembly.

## Uzbek ambassador calls on Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday said that the Parliament is committed to enhancing inter-parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

During meeting with Ambassador of Uzbekistan Alisher Tukhtaev who called on him in Parliament House, he said that Pakistan greatly values its brotherly and cordial ties with Uzbekistan.

He stressed that the strengthening of Friendship Groups and the expansion of parliamentary engagement would further strengthen bilateral ties.

The ambassador appreciated the role of Pakistan's political leadership in ensuring regional stability.

He praised the recent successful visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to Uzbekistan. The envoy also lauded Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's leadership, calling him a seasoned and capable statesman not just for Pakistan but the entire region.

Alisher Tukhtaev extended an invitation to Ayaz

Sadiq to lead a parliamentary delegation to Uzbekistan on an official visit.

He also said that enhancing bilateral trade, economic cooperation, and business-to-business linkages would strengthen these ties. The ambassador also suggested for enhanced parliamentary exchanges focused on gender equality and legislative priorities.

He also said that Uzbekistan offers a favorable environment and ample opportunities for Pakistani entrepreneurs.

## PPP suggestions presented to Govt on budget: Nafisa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party leader Syeda Nafisa Shah has said that we have presented our positive response and suggestions on the budget to the government, we have also presented our position in the Standing Committee on Finance, the government will take our suggestions positively keeping in mind the public interest, the MQM should support the PPP on the issue of canal water because their interest is related to Sindh.

Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, Syeda Nafisa Shah said that there should be a tax on smoking, we have raised this issue in the Standing

Committee on Finance, as far as the issue of tax evasion of Rs 300 billion on illegally smuggled cigarettes is concerned, we have also presented our strong position in the Standing Committee.

Syeda Nafisa Shah said that there are strong lobbies on both sides regarding tobacco, whether it is the formal sector or the informal sector, we will consider whatever decision is taken in the Standing Committee so that the government also benefits from it and the implementation of taxes to prevent smoking is also made effective.

He said that the state has taken steps to prevent ter-

rorism from Karachi and has largely controlled it. He said that the interests of MQM are related to Sindh and Sindh should support the PPP's stance regarding canal water. We do not have to support PTI but support the interests of the people.

We have presented all the positive suggestions for the budget at the relevant forum and the government will definitely remove our concerns keeping in mind the public interest. He said that the FBR should not be made on the lines of NAB with regard to taxpayers but should facilitate the business community so that the tax net increases and businesses flourish.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui being received as chief guest in the inaugural ceremony of Summer FIESTA Courses.

## Tarar for institutional solution to challenges faced by media

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that media was fourth pillar of the state and the government intended an institutional solution to the challenges faced by the media.

During a meeting with a delegation of Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), he said the government was taking effective steps for protection, welfare and professional facilities of journalists. The meeting discussed Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), elimination of newspapers not published regularly, payments to print media, Journalists Protection Commission and other important issues.

The minister said that PECA law provided protection to credible journalists. Tarar said he believed in consultation and further improvement, suggestions about rules would be welcomed. "We are ready to consult with journalist organizations on PECA law. Misunderstandings between journalists and the relevant ministry regarding PACA will be removed", Attaullah Tarar remarked.

He informed the delegation that a committee has been established to eliminate newspapers not published regularly. He assured that payments would be made to print media this year in the form of dues and said Journalists Protection Commission would start working soon. The minister said that the main purpose of the PECA was to bring so-called and fake journalists, hiding in the guise of journalism under the ambit of the law.

The Federal Information Minister appreciated the role of the media in the national interest during recent Pak-India stand-off. The media demonstrated a mature perspective in protecting national security and the state's position, he added. The Pakistani media played an effective role in disseminating accurate information and dispelling rumors, Attaullah Tarar said.

The message of national solidarity from the media in difficult circumstances was highly commendable, he added. He said that freedom of the press was the crucial hallmark of a democratic system in the world. The CPNE delegation appreciated

the role of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Public Relations Department of the Pakistan Army (ISPR) in providing timely and certified information. The CPNE delegation acknowledged that Ministry of Information has ensured timely and authentic provision of information and kept the flow of information effective and coherent, which was commendable.

The CPNE delegation made suggestions regarding the protection of journalists, access to information and improvement of the professional environment of journalism. The Federal Minister for Information assured to seriously consider the suggestions of the CPNE delegation. "We will provide all possible cooperation to resolve the problems of journalists," Attaullah Tarar assured.

He said the government will form a joint working group with media representatives and resolve the problems on priority basis. Prime Minister's Media Coordinator Badar Shahbaz Warraich and Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan were also present in the meeting.



**STFA helps 1.3m Afghans**  
KABUL (Pajhwok): The United Nations Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (UN-STFA) says it received nearly 37 million US dollars in aid and helped more than 1.3 million people in 2024. In a statement, UN-STFA said it received \$36.9 million in assistance in 2024, a 23 percent increase compared to 2023 funding. More than 1.3 million people were directly assisted in 2024, 48.3 percent of whom were women and girls, the statement added.

**2 killed in traffic accident**  
JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Two individuals have been killed in a traffic accident in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, police said on Tuesday. According to a statement from the Nangarhar province police headquarters, the accident occurred on Monday between a truck and a rickshaw in the Sheikh Mesri Wurkhi Camp area of Sorkhrud district in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. It said two people lost their lives in the accident.

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

## Kabul residents call for end to Israeli attacks

KABUL (TOLONews): Amid the intensification of Israeli attacks on Iran, a number of Kabul residents have expressed concern over the continuation of the crisis and stressed the importance of unity among Islamic countries.

As tensions between Iran and Israel enter their fourth day, Kabul residents say the ongoing military conflict between the two nations will only lead to further humanitarian disaster.

They believe Islamic countries should take concrete and unified steps to halt the war and preserve regional peace.

Mohammad Almas Mohmand, a resident of

Kabul, said: “When war is imposed upon you, it is necessary to defend yourself. This is not just Iran’s war, it is a war of the Islamic Ummah. Therefore, Islamic countries must unite and put an end to their internal disputes.”

Mati, another Kabul resident, said: “Iran is our neighboring country, and naturally, its conflict will affect Afghanistan as well. The war has become a source of concern for Afghans, because we have refugees in Iran, as well as trade relations. So the situation is impactful for us.”

Other citizens also pointed to the shared border between Afghanistan and

Iran, warning that continued hostilities could have negative consequences for Afghanistan, and called on Israel to stop its attacks.

Mahboob-ul-Haq told TOLONews: “I call on Israel to halt further attacks and to end its assaults on the people of Palestine and Iran.”

Abdul Baes, another Kabul resident, said: “We do not support war because innocent people are being killed. We want both sides to reach an understanding and bring an end to the conflict.”

Social media users have also reacted strongly, condemning Israel’s attacks on Iran and voicing support for Iran in various posts.

## Security forces seize weapons in operation

KUNAR (BNA): The personnel of the 1st Border Brigade of the 201st Khalid bin Walid Corps confiscated a cache of weapons and ammunition in Kunar province of Afghanistan.

According to a statement from the Ministry of National Defense, the operation was carried out based on intelligence reports. The intelligence and reconnaissance unit of the 1st Border Brigade, named after Abdullah bin Abbas (RA), executed the mission in targeted areas of Kunar.

During the operation, security forces successfully seized a total of 11 different types of weapons, which included: 7 Kalashnikov rifles, 2 hand grenades, 6,024 rounds of pistol ammunition, 4,000 Kalashnikov shells, Several other military items.

The operation underscores the ongoing efforts of security forces to combat illegal arms and enhance security in the region.

## Global community urged to stand with Afghans

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Humanitarian organizations in Afghanistan have asked the international community to take urgent and coordinated action to prevent the country’s worsening crisis from spiraling further out of control.

In a statement, UN-OCHA said: “People in Afghanistan are facing a deep and ongoing crisis shaped by repeated climate shocks, cross-border displacement, underdevelopment and – in recent months – declining international support”.

“UN agencies and international and national NGOs operating in Afghanistan call on the international community to stand in solidarity with the Afghan people and take collective action to prevent a fragile situation from deteriorating further”: it explained.

OCHA added that only 18 percent of Afghanistan’s Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan has been funded by mid-2025, which has affected the delivery of aid to millions of people in need, especially women, girls, internally displaced persons, and returnees.

Previously, OCHA said that 5.8 million Afghans will need emergency assistance and shelter in 2025.

## Climate events affect 5m Afghans

KABUL (Pajhwok): The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports nearly five million people in Afghanistan were affected by climate-related events during the first quarter of 2025.

IOM released the findings from the second round of the Afghanistan Climate Vulnerability Assessment (ACVA), based on data gathered from 62,658 villages across all 34 provinces of the country.

Close to five million people—approximately 10 percent of the country’s population—were impacted by environmental hazards in the first three months of 2025. 79% of internal displacements, affecting around 175,000 individuals, were caused by climate-related incidents. IOM said these events forced nearly 396,000 people to leave their homes, with over 171,000 recorded as having migrated elsewhere.

The report also noted that 44 percent of communities had limited access to safe drinking water, while 39 percent lacked access to health services. Food insecurity emerged as the biggest challenge during this period, with 47 percent of respondents identifying it as their primary concern.

The organisation added that the absence of essential water infrastructure in more than 80% of areas had significantly increased vulnerability to climate-related disasters.

## Hanafi-led delegation leaves for China

KABUL (Pajhwok): Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi has departed for China at the head of a high-level delegation to attend the 9th China–South Asia Expo.

According to a statement from the Presidential Palace, Hanafi left Kabul for China on Tuesday.

The visit comes at the official invitation of the Chinese government. The delegation also includes Minister of Commerce and Industry Nooruddin Azizi and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammad Naem Wardak.

During the visit, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Maulvi Abdul Salam



Hanafi will deliver a forum, and will hold officials on strengthening speech at the expo and meetings with Chinese bilateral ties.

## Concerns grow for Afghan refugees in Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Afghan refugees living in Iran have expressed concern over the continuation of Israeli attacks on Iran.

According to them, the ongoing tensions have brought various challenges, including economic, psychological, and mental stress.

Enayat Alokzai, an Afghan refugee residing in Iran, told TOLONews: “Israeli attacks on Iran have caused anxiety among Afghan refugees and have negatively impacted their economic and mental well-being.”

Rahimullah Safi, another Afghan refugee in Iran, said: “Afghans have been affected by this situation, and job opportunities for

our fellow citizens have significantly diminished.”

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation on Monday called on Afghan refugees in Iran to stay away from sensitive military sites, political gatherings, and partisan activities.

A spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate also stated that the Afghan government is in contact with Iranian officials to ensure the safety of Afghan refugees and to address their concerns.

Saleem Paigir, a political analyst, told TOLONews: “Afghan refugees should not interfere in Iran’s internal or foreign politics. In addition, the Ministry of Refugees is obligated to take urgent steps to ensure

the dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees who are either residing in or stranded in Iran.”

Juma Khan Poya, a migrant rights activist, said: “Refugees are worried that they might be harmed or neglected by the host government. Therefore, it is the Islamic Emirate’s responsibility to address the concerns of Afghan refugees in Iran through its embassy.”

In recent months, Afghan refugees in Iran and neighboring countries have faced increasing challenges, including forced deportations and mistreatment by police. Now, the latest tensions between Israel and Iran have further intensified the hardships faced by these refugees.

## Afghan Minister seeks Norwegian support



KABUL (BNA): In a recent meeting, Nooruddin Azizi, Minister of Industry and Commerce, urged Per Albert Ilsaas, the Chargé d’affaires of Norway in Islamabad, to assist in attracting foreign investment to Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce reported that both officials underscored the importance of continuous communication and dialogue between

Afghanistan and Norway. They discussed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s commitment to an open economic policy, emphasizing support for the private sector and small to medium enterprises.

Key topics included enhancing Afghanistan’s exports to European countries and expanding trade relations with neighboring Pakistan and India. Minister Azizi highlighted

the government’s comprehensive plans aimed at sustainable economic growth, job creation, and reducing migration.

Additionally, the Minister called on Ilsaas to explore Afghanistan’s mining potential and to facilitate foreign investment in this critical sector. The meeting reflects a mutual interest in strengthening economic ties and fostering development in Afghanistan.

## Foreign trade remains stable amid tensions

KABUL (BNA): In an official statement, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has confirmed that the country’s foreign trade is continuing seamlessly, despite recent regional tensions and conflicts.

Authorities from customs offices and provincial officials report that trade relations with neighboring countries are robust, with import, transit, and domestic supply processes operating normally.

The ministry refuted claims made by certain

media outlets regarding trade disruptions, stating that these reports lack official support and are primarily based on rumors and unreliable sources.

To ensure a stable supply of raw materials and food items, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has diversified its import routes from Central Asia and activated alternative capacities. Officials emphasized that there are no concerns about shortages of food and necessary goods in the market.

Additionally, the customs

administration has implemented measures to reduce financial and institutional costs, limit damage, and curb corruption. Strategies are in place to counter any artificial market tensions.

Citizens are encouraged to disregard unfounded rumors and to rely on official sources for accurate information. The ministry reassured the public that the country’s economic framework is stable and that foreign trade operations are proceeding without interruption.

## UNICEF to launch ambitious food program in Afghanistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): UNICEF will launch a large-scale program called “First Food for Afghanistan” to address the ongoing food crisis in the country.

Half of children in Afghanistan are malnour-

ished, and UNICEF is launching a major multi-sectoral program called “First Food for Afghanistan” to prevent this food crisis, UNICEF wrote in a statement.

“90% of young children

in Afghanistan are living in food poverty—and half in severe food poverty—UNICEF, with support from the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, is launching First Foods Afghanistan”.

## Afghan foreign trade steady amid regional unrest: MoCI

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has reassured the public that Afghanistan’s foreign trade remains stable and uninterrupted, despite ongoing regional tensions.

In a statement on Tuesday, the MoCI said that data gathered from customs offices, relevant institutions, and public reports indicate strong trade relations with neighboring and regional countries.

The flow of imports, transit operations and the supply of goods to domes-

tic markets remains normal.

The statement noted: “No abnormal fluctuations have been observed in the prices of essential goods across the country. Prices remain aligned with established benchmarks. Reports published by some media that contradict this reality lack official backing and are based on personal and unreliable analysis.”

The Ministry added that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, recognizing the importance of a stable supply of raw materials and essential commodities, has

activated import routes through Central Asia and Middle Eastern countries and has engaged alternative supply capacities. It also emphasized that there are no current concerns regarding the availability of wheat, flour, and other essential items in local markets.

According to the MoCI, Afghanistan’s customs operations are under strict and strategic management. Leveraging available capacities, the customs offices are actively working to regulate exports, facilitate trade, ensure foreign

currency inflow, and meet domestic demands.

In coordination with the Ministry of Finance, the MoCI has also implemented a comprehensive and preventative market oversight plan aimed at curbing hoarding and maintaining price stability. This statement follows earlier remarks from the Ministry of Finance, which confirmed that Afghanistan’s borders and customs points with Iran remain open and that trade and customs operations are proceeding smoothly and without disruption.

## Amu Darya oilfield contract terminated

KABUL (BNA): The country’s Ministry of Mines and Petroleum officially terminated its 25-year oil exploration and extraction contract with the Chinese company CAPEC, known locally as Afchin, concerning the Amu Darya oil basin.

The ministry’s spokesperson, Homayoun Afghan, announced on social media platform X that the decision followed multiple and persistent violations of the contract’s terms by Afchin.

“The agreement for the exploration and extraction of the Amu Darya oil basin, which had been signed between the ministry and

Afchin, was terminated following the company’s continued breaches of its commitments,” Afghan wrote.

To investigate the violations, joint committees comprising officials from relevant ministries and government agencies were formed. Their findings confirmed that Afchin had repeatedly failed to meet its obligations, justifying legal termination.

The termination was officially enacted based on Proposal No. 5188, dated March 3, 2025 (1/12/1446 Solar Hijri), by the Office of the Deputy for Economic Affairs, and

Decree No. 6856, issued by the Prime Minister’s Office on March 7, 2025 (5/12/1446 Solar Hijri).

The Ministry has now invited experienced international consultancy firms to formally express their interest (EoI) in conducting a legal assessment of the contract and associated documents, a technical evaluation of the oil basin, and a financial settlement process with Afchin.

These steps aim to ensure transparency and lay the groundwork for renewed investment opportunities in Afghanistan’s energy sector.

## 100 tons of aid from EU arrives in Kabul

KABUL (Pajhwok): Donated by the European Union, a plane carrying 100 tons of humanitarian aid arrived in Kabul on Tuesday morning.

The European Union Delegation to Afghanistan wrote on its Facebook page that 100 tons of essential humanitarian aid arrived in Kabul this morning on a plane.

The organization did not say what items were included in the aid.

The union said since 2021 it brought 2,150 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan by air.

## We must never let Taliban repression become an excuse to walk away: Lahbib

BRUSSELS (Amu TV): Speaking at the Senior Officials Meeting on Afghanistan, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib emphasized the EU’s continued commitment to the Afghan people, warning against allowing the Taliban’s repression to deter international support.

“In this darkness, our support is a ray of hope,” Lahbib told officials gathered in Brussels. “We must never let Taliban repression become an excuse to walk away. On the contrary, it is exactly why we must stay and keep delivering.”

She called for a coordinated, multilateral approach to Afghanistan, stressing the importance of inclusive governance and engagement with the Taliban.

“The only way to achieve that is with a united, multilateral approach, working towards inclusive governance and through engagement with the Taliban,” she said.

“The European Union is present in Afghanistan. We are committed to supporting the Afghan people in their hopes for a stable, secure, and inclusive society, where every citizen, no matter their gender, religion or ethnicity, enjoys equal rights and opportunities,” she added.

Lahbib reiterated that political and humanitarian diplomacy must go hand in hand. “We need diplomatic engagement with the

Taliban de facto authorities, especially when they are systematically erasing the rights of half of their population,” she said. “We continue to call on the Taliban to reverse any ban that strips women and girls of their basic rights. At the same time, this engagement is vital to delivering aid and securing access to those who need it most.”

She said all EU aid to Afghanistan follows one guiding principle: “by women, for women.” That, she added, means “every euro of our support will be designed, delivered, and monitored with Afghan women and with a special focus on women and girls as beneficiaries.”

Turning to the issue of forced displacement, Lahbib said the EU is “deeply alarmed” by the mass expulsions of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran. “The speed and scale of these expulsions raise serious humanitarian and human rights concerns. Forced returns can have devastating consequences for those affected and risk further destabilising Afghanistan and the region.”

She added, “We must use the political channels to keep insisting on any returns to be safe, voluntary, and dignified. This includes stepping up our support for those forced to leave everything behind.”

Lahbib stressed the broader strategic importance of stability in Afghanistan. “European security and stability are



closely linked to the security and stability of Afghanistan,” she said.

She reaffirmed that the EU’s aid would continue to prioritize women and girls. “All EU aid will continue to follow one guiding principle: by women, for women,” she said. “That means every euro of our support will be designed, delivered, and monitored with Afghan women and with a special focus on women and girls as beneficiaries.”

On regional displacement, she repeated her concerns: “The speed and scale of these expulsions raise serious humanitarian and human rights concerns... We must use the political channels to keep insisting on any returns to be safe, voluntary, and dignified.”

She also outlined the EU’s funding commitments. “This year, the EU will provide 161?million

in humanitarian aid,” she said, “an additional 100?million in development assistance... a total 261?million package... a true nexus approach in action.”

Lahbib said the EU’s approach includes support not only for survival, but for self-sufficiency and growth. “We need long-term, sustainable solutions,” she said. “The best support we can offer is opportunity and empowerment, creating jobs and building social and climate resilience because stronger societies lead to greater stability.”

The two-day summit in Brussels has drawn officials from the European Union, the United States, United Nations agencies, and regional stakeholders to coordinate responses to Afghanistan’s ongoing humanitarian, political, and human rights crises.



# Balochistan govt unveils Rs1028b surplus budget

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Tuesday unveiled its surplus, relief-oriented and pro-people budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26, with a total outlay of Rs 1028 billion with a surplus of Rs 42 billion.

Presenting the budget before the provincial assembly, Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Noshervani said the total volume of Rs 642 billion is allocated for non-development expenditures and proposed allocating Rs 249.5 billion for Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for fiscal year 2025-26.

Shoaib Noshervani said the total estimated expenditures for the next financial year 2025-26 is Rs 986 billion while the volume of current operating expenditure has been dropped from Rs 43 billion to Rs 33 billion. He said that the government has enhanced the provincial income and set a target to generate Rs 226 billion revenue in upcoming fiscal year.

He said a development grants of Rs 66.5 billion of Federal funded projects, and Rs 38 billion as Foreign Projects Assistance (FPA) has been estimated despite the provincial development programme in the financial year 2025-26. He said under the development budget, Rs 249.5 billion would be spent on about 3633 ongoing schemes and 2550 new development projects

where Rs 18 billion had been earmarked for the installation of safe city projects in eight cities in the upcoming financial year 2025-26.

The finance minister said that the allocation of Rs 4.5 billion has been proposed in terms of capital expenditure for the purchase of necessary equipment and machinery which is Rs 6 billion less than from previous year and allocated Rs 113 billion as grants for departments.

In his budget speech, Minister Shoaib Noshervani stated that the provincial government had successfully spent the entire development budget for the current fiscal year. He said education, health, climate change, law and order were among the priorities of the provincial government.

The minister also announced the creation of 4188 contract-base and 1958 regular jobs for the fiscal year 2025-26 to provide employment to the youth of the province. To improve the economic condition of the employees, the finance minister said that the government has increased 10 percent of the salaries of employees from grade 1 to 22.

Meanwhile, the provincial government announced a 7 percent increase in pensions for retired employees. The minister emphasized that the budget was developed after thorough consultation with all political parties and is focused on public welfare, development



priorities, and financial sustainability.

Shoaib Noshervani said that the budget is based on the province's actual needs, economic capacity, and ground realities, aiming to ensure balanced development across both urban and rural areas. The development budget of Rs 55.19 billion allocated for the Communication and Works Department which is increased of 19 percent from the current year for the construction of roads and upgradation of existing infrastructure.

The government has allocated Rs. 42.78 billion development budget for irrigation sector to boost agriculture and manage water resources, major investments are being made in dams, canals, and water storage systems. Noshervani said that Rs. 24.84 billion allocated for development of education sector- secondary and higher education, to upgrade educational infrastructure, hire teachers, and introduce modern facilities.

## Federal budget anti-poor, pro-elite: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr Saif, has accused the federal government of "dropping a petrol bomb" on the public ahead of the new fiscal year.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Dr Saif said the federal budget had imposed an additional 2.5 per cent tax on petroleum products, warning that prices would soar once the new financial year begins in July. "With every rise in fuel prices, the cost of essential food items also shoots up," he added.

Calling the national budget "anti-poor and pro-elite," the adviser claimed that the Punjab budget followed the same pattern, "completely ignoring" the agricultural sector and offering no relief to farmers. He said that flawed federal policies had already cost Punjab's cultivators an estimated Rs 2,200 billion, while only "commission-driven" projects received priority.

He said that, unlike Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab had "failed to muster the courage" to provide free healthcare. "If Punjab faces difficulty in extending health facilities, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands ready to assist," he added. Dr Saif warned that the taxes and levies on petroleum products, along with surcharges on electricity, would unleash "a new wave of inflation" in the coming fiscal year. "The poor will be crushed in the mill of rising prices while the wealthy will continue to indulge," he added, alleging that the budget was framed to protect elite interests and offered "nothing" for low-income citizens.

He said, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had presented a tax-free, welfare-oriented budget in line with former prime minister Imran Khan's vision, prioritising social-sector schemes under the leadership of the chief minister.

## Imran postpone protests

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday decided to postpone his planned protest movement for two weeks due to the tense regional situation.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail after meeting the PTI founder, Noreen Khanum said that the postponement was made in light of global developments. "We are now waiting for statements from the Prime Minister, the President, and the Field Marshal regarding Pakistan's policy," she added.

According to Noreen, although the PTI founder had not met anyone for the past week, he was fully informed about global events. "He said international conditions will affect Pakistan, and now is the time for all Pakistanis to unite," she stated. She further quoted Imran Khan as saying that the current budget represents an elitist culture, and the poor are suffering severely. "The burden of taxes will fall on the salaried class once again, and poverty will continue to rise as conditions deteriorate," he said.

Noreen Khanum also highlighted that 3.3 million educated individuals have left Pakistan in the last three years, each taking approximately \$30,000 with them. "This indicates a massive outflow of foreign exchange from the country," she said. She added that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa budget would be passed only after thorough consultation.

Imran Khan reportedly stated that Ali Amin Gandapur, Taimur Jhagra, Muzzammil Aslam and Shibli Faraz would visit him for consultations before the KP budget is finalized. During the same media interaction, Uzma Khan said that the PTI founder urged national unity and stressed the need for solidarity in these challenging times. "Ali Amin has not distanced himself from the protest. Anyone protesting for the PTI founder globally has our support."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

# KP's revenue currently stands at Rs125b: CM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has said that the province's own revenue currently stands at Rs 125 billion. Incumbent provincial government, through excellent financial discipline and effective monitoring, has not only prevented the wastage of existing resources within the system but also established a Debt Management Fund aimed at reducing the province's liabilities. "An investment of Rs 150 billion was made into this fund during the current fiscal year, and an additional Rs 150 billion will be contributed in the upcoming financial year, generating substantial profit for the province," he added.

The Chief Minister made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) led by its newly elected President Mr. Kazim Khan, who called on him in Islamabad.

Speaking about the province's Annual Development Programme (ADP), the Chief Minister highlighted that the program previously had a through forward liability of over 13 years, which has now been reduced to four years. "Due to a lack of proper planning over the past 15 years, delays in project completions had caused an additional cost burden of Rs 450 billion. However, this government focused on completing ongoing projects instead of initiating new ones during the current fiscal year and completed 541 development projects within one year", he remarked.

Ali Amin Gandapur added that a balanced and comprehensive budget has been presented for the next fiscal

## Gandapur condemns PECA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has strongly criticized the federal government's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), calling it an attack on freedom of the press, and stated that his government has outrightly rejected the legislation, as any law that curtails the right to freedom of expression cannot be accepted. The Chief Minister made these remarks during a call on meeting with a delegation of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) led by its newly elected President Kazim Khan. The meeting discussed key issues related to the newspaper industry, national political developments, and the performance of the provincial government.

CM Gandapur reiterated that the KP government fully upholds press freedom and is committed to safeguarding it. He assured that no cases will be registered under PECA in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, nor will any action under the law be tolerated in the province. "Criticism and questioning are fundamental roles of the media, and we welcome criticism and will use it as an opportunity improvement," he remarked. He also criticized a recent draft law introduced by the Punjab government under the title "Public Awareness and Dissemination of Information", claiming that it was originally drafted during the caretaker administration. "Punjab should clarify whether a caretaker government is still in place there," Gandapur said, questioning the democratic legitimacy of the bill. Referring to Islamic principles, the Chief Minister said, "In Islam, even the Caliph could be questioned, and if the Caliph of the time could be held accountable, then so can anyone." He argued that the proposed Punjab bill violates Islamic values and contradicts the fundamental right to freedom of expression. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Central Secretary Information Sheikh Waqas Akram, and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub were also present during the meeting. The CPNE delegation included Mian Hassan Ahmed, Ghulam Nabi Chandio, Ayaz Khan, Ijaz-ul-Haq, Tanveer Shaukat, Zia Tanoli, Adnan Zafar, Tahir Farooq, Masood Khan, Shahid Hameed, Mumtaz Bangash, Fazal Haq, Yahya Khan, Rafi Niazi, and Mumtaz Sadiq.

year, adding that the new development program will serve as a foundation for the province's development over the next three years, and all included projects will be completed within this timeframe. Similarly he said that a sum of Rs 195 billion has been allocated for the Provincial Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year, with a target to increase it to Rs 250 billion. In the current fiscal year, Rs 120 bil-

lion was allocated and fully released, while an additional Rs 35 billion was provided under the ADP Plus initiative, he said.

The CPNE delegation congratulated the Chief Minister for presenting a surplus budget. Discussions during the meeting also included challenges faced by local newspapers, payment of outstanding advertisement dues, and the performance of the current provincial government.

# PHC upheld NAB decision in Kohistan scandal

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has dismissed the plea of a National Bank employee implicated in the Kohistan corruption scandal, seeking protection from arrest, on Tuesday.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Abdul Fayyaz directed the relevant bank cashier to appear with records on the next hearing and issued a notice to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) seeking their response.

The petitioner's counsel alleged that NAB is attempting to arrest Gul Rehman in connection with the Kohistan corruption scandal and is also trying to evict him from his residence. The counsel claimed that NAB coerced the petitioner into making a voluntary return of allegedly illicit assets.

The Special Prosecutor NAB argued that the petition is not maintainable in the high court and that the petitioner should approach the relevant accountability court. NAB informed the court that the petitioner, a

former cashier at National Bank in Kohistan, had allegedly amassed assets worth millions in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. NAB has frozen these assets and sealed the property where the petitioner resides. The court directed the petitioner to appear with relevant records on the next hearing and sought NAB's response to the petition.

**Constitution guarantees dignity & freedom to every citizen: PHC observe:** Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Sahibzada Asadullah remarked that the Constitution and law guarantee freedom and protection of the interests of every citizen, and there is no need for further discussion on this matter. However, it is up to the institutions to determine the extent to which they adhere to these principles, as the Constitution ensures the protection of all and courts must follow it.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Abdul Fayyaz heard the petition filed by Member of the National Assembly Shahryar Afridi. Justice Sahibzada

Asadullah stated that the Constitution guarantees the dignity and freedom of all citizens, and there is no room for further interpretation. The adherence to these principles depends on the institutions. The counsel, Moazzam Butt, alleged that petitioner was being constantly harassed and that the High Court should provide a comprehensive judgment on the circumstances under which a citizen can be arrested.

The counsel offered to provide an affidavit stating that the petitioner would appear whenever summoned, provided they are informed of the charges against them and given two to three days' notice. The Assistant Attorney General informed the court that there were nine FIRs registered against Shahryar Afridi and one inquiry was being conducted by the FIA.

The Assistant Advocate General stated that the provincial government had no case registered against the petitioner. PHC disposed of the case, directing the petitioner to approach the relevant forum within two weeks for the 2022 case.

## Pak-US move forward on reciprocal tariff talks

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As part of ongoing Pakistan-US discussions on reciprocal tariffs, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick to review and advance the negotiations.

Both sides agreed to continue their negotiations through constructive engagement to finalize the trade deal at the earliest, according to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance on Tuesday. The discussions centered on meaningful engagement in trade, investment, and the strengthening of economic ties that are mutually beneficial. It was agreed that further technical-level, detailed discussions would be held in the coming days, based on a coordinated roadmap. Both sides expressed confidence in advancing these negotiations toward a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, addressing the "National workshop on transitioning to define contribution pension schemes", which was organized by the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb also reaffirmed the government's resolve to ensure structural reforms to achieve long-term economic growth and stability. He said that the government was committed to reform the areas of taxation, energy and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

He emphasized that a major reformative initiative introduced this year pertains to the country's tariff structure, aiming to transform Pakistan into a more competitive economy. This includes gradually dismantling the wall of protection that has long hindered industrial growth.

# ‘Reserved seats can’t be distributed arbitrarily’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday adjourned the hearing in the review petitions against the verdict on reserved seats until Wednesday, June 18, after Advocate Faisal Siddiqi, counsel for the Sunni Itehad Council (SIC), concluded his arguments.

The hearing was conducted by an eleven-member Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. Continuing his arguments, Advocate Siddiqi emphasized the constitutional and public importance of the case. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail asked Siddiqi what led him to believe that the court's powers had been curtailed, to which he replied that he never made such a claim.

Justice Hashim Kakar noted that Articles 187 and 175 of the Constitution must be read together. Siddiqi argued that the 26th Constitutional Amendment was not intended for clarification purposes. However, Justice Amin-ud-Din disagreed, stating that neither the amendment nor Article 184(3) was directly relevant to the current case. Siddiqi countered, claiming that the entire case hinges on these constitutional provisions.

Justice Mandokhail reminded the counsel that the court would deal with the matter under the original language of Article 187 and warned that if arguments were not concluded by the end of the day, the court would deem them completed.

Justice Amin-ud-Din noted that no one denied joining SIC and that PTI was effectively under SIC's control. He added, "You want us to ignore all the facts and grant you relief." Justice Mandokhail cited a land dispute case from Balochistan where the court ruled in the government's favor, highlighting the principle that those declaring themselves independent cannot have their autonomy arbitrarily revoked.

Siddiqi pointed out that the ECP had not issued notifications for SIC's reserved seats. Justice Mandokhail asked if those seats had been left vacant, to which the ECP replied that notifications were withheld for disputed seats.

Justice Rizvi asked whether the instructions in the majority judgment had been followed. Siddiqi responded that all members had submitted their credentials and party affiliation, and the real question was why the ECP failed to implement the court's

order. He criticized the ECP for both non-compliance and filing a review petition.

Justice Mazhar observed that while 39 members were notified as PTI candidates, the reserved seats were withheld. He questioned whether the reserved seats were allocated proportionately. The ECP's Director General (Law) said that seat allocation follows a specific formula, and reserved seats cannot be distributed arbitrarily. Justice Mandokhail acknowledged that all involved were state institutions.

"Today I'm sitting here, tomorrow someone else will," he said. "If something violates the Constitution or the law, does that mean it must still be followed?" Siddiqi replied that unless something is struck down, it must be observed. Justice Mandokhail responded, "Then the ECP has done the same."

He added, "That doesn't mean you can come here and attack the Supreme Court while I'm presiding." Following this, Advocate Faisal Siddiqi concluded his arguments. The Supreme Court adjourned further proceedings in the reserved seats review case until Wednesday, June 18.

# IHC Judges transfer case; proceedings to continue today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Advocate Hamid Khan and Faisal Siddiqi on Tuesday concluded their arguments before the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding transfer and seniority case of the judges in Islamabad High Court. The Court adjourned the hearing for tomorrow (Wednesday June 18) and Advocate Idrees Ashraf, representing founder of PTI, will begin his rebuttal arguments.

The proceedings were conducted by the five-member Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar. Advocate Hamid Khan argued that the power to advise on judicial transfers lies with the Cabinet. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar pointed toward Article 48, noting that the term "Prime Minister" is also mentioned there, and questioned whether the Mustafa Impex ruling renders that term ineffective.

Justice Salahuddin Panhwar observed that the IHC Chief Justice's decision didn't highlight any illegality. However, Justice

Mazhar remarked that since the decision of the IHC Chief Justice has been challenged, the petitioning judges and their lawyers should have pointed out its legal flaws. Siddiqi cited the Attorney General's position, stating that if a transfer is temporary, sub-clause (2) applies, while permanent transfers fall under sub-clause (1). He emphasized that an appointment is not valid until the summary is signed, and described Article 194 as the key to this case.

Justice Mazhar questioned the implications of a fresh oath on a judge's previous service and whether it would affect their seniority. Siddiqi clarified that since the transfer is temporary, a fresh oath would not impact prior service. Once a judge returns, they would regain their original seniority. He reiterated that a judicial transfer is not a new appointment, nor can it be permanent. According to the presidential order, transfers can only be temporary. Justice Mazhar remarked that the IHC judges did not address the transfer process in their representation. Siddiqi explained that the

judges could only discuss seniority in the presence of the Chief Justice. He claimed that the Chief Justice of the IHC had fixed the seniority, which directly affected the judges involved.

When asked whether he would have filed a petition had the representation been accepted, Siddiqi responded affirmatively, stating they would still have challenged the transfer. Justice Mazhar pointed out that the affected parties are the judges themselves and that the bench had already clarified that the main case concerns these judges. In their representation, IHC judges labeled the transferred judges as "deputationists," a description which, he noted, could be seen as unfortunate.

Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing on the judges' seniority and transfer case until Wednesday. The court also decided to hear the Advocate General of Punjab on the same day. Senior lawyer Munir A. Malik stated they would respond separately to the Advocate General's arguments.