

**Officials recovered**

PESHAWAR (APP): Two customs officials abducted four months ago in South Waziristan have been successfully recovered, local police informed on Sunday. Customs Superintendent Nisar Abbasi and Inspector Khushhaal Khan were reportedly kidnapped near Sholam while traveling from Angoor Adda to Wana. Their abduction had caused widespread concern among colleagues and families.



GAZA: Thick smoke and flames erupt from an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, Sunday.

## Pakistan raises alarm over risks to Asia-Pacific stability

**E.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee chairman on Sunday raised alarmed over risks to Asia-Pacific stability in the absence of regional crisis management frameworks, amid prevailing tensions between Pakistan and India.

Pakistan and India last month engaged in a worst standoff between them in decades that saw the neighbors attack each other with jets, missiles, drones and artillery, killing around 70 people on both sides before the United States brokered a ceasefire on May 10.

The conflict, triggered by an attack on tourists in

Indian-administered Kashmir's Pahalgal town that New Delhi blamed on Pakistan, alarmed the world powers and raised fears that it could spiral into a full-blown war and bring the archfoes' nuclear arsenals into play.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue security meeting in Singapore, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee chairman, said the recent India-Pakistan conflict underscored how crisis management frameworks remained "hostage to countries' belligerence."

"The recent standoff amply underlines significance of maintaining open channels of communications to avert crises as and

when they erupt. Post-Pahalgal [attack], the threshold of an escalatory war has come dangerously low, implying greater risk on both sides, just not in the disputed territory, but all of India and all of Pakistan," he said.

"In future, given the Indian policies and politics' extremist mindset, absence of a crisis management mechanism may not give enough time to the global powers to intervene and effect cessation of hostilities."

Bitter rivals India and Pakistan have fought three wars, including two over the disputed region of Kashmir, since gaining independence from British rule in 1947.

Before the conflict, both

nations unleashed a raft of punitive measures against each other, with India suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty that ensures water for 80 percent of Pakistani farms and Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines. India has said the treaty would remain in abeyance.

Gen Mirza said New Delhi's move to suspend the treaty is in "total defiance of the international laws, since it is an existential threat for the people of Pakistan."

"If there is any effort to stop, divert or delay Pakistan's share of water, as clearly spelt out by our National Security Committee, it could be considered as an act of war," he added.

## Trump, Xi likely to speak soon on minerals trade dispute, aides say



WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping will speak soon to iron out trade issues including a dispute over critical minerals, Treasury Secretary

Scott Bessent said on Sunday.

Trump on Friday accused China of violating an agreement with the U.S. to mutually roll back tariffs and trade restrictions for critical minerals.

"What China is doing is they are holding back products that are essential for the industrial supply chains of India, of Europe. And that is not what a reliable partner does," Bessent said in an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation."

"I am confident that when President Trump and Party Chairman Xi have a call, that this will be ironed out. But the fact that they are withholding some of the products that they agreed to release during our agreement - maybe it's a glitch in the Chinese system, maybe it's intentional. We'll see after the President speaks with the party chairman."

Trump said on Friday he was sure that he would

speak to Xi. China said in April that the two leaders had not had a conversation recently.

Asked if a talk with Xi was on Trump's schedule, Bessent said, "I believe we'll see something very soon."

White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said no specific date for the conversation has been set, but there have been discussions that the leaders will talk about last month's Geneva agreement on some tariff disputes.

"President Trump, we expect, is going to have a wonderful conversation about the trade negotiations this week with President Xi. That's our expectation," Hassett said.

## Aurangzeb welcomes findings of IPSOS survey

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Sunday welcomed the findings of the IPSOS Consumer Confidence Survey for the second quarter of 2025, calling it a strong affirmation of the improving economic outlook and public sentiment across Pakistan.

The survey reveals a significant surge in consumer confidence, with 42 percent of Pakistanis now believing the country is heading in the right direction, the highest level recorded in six years, said a news release.

Perceptions of the economy being strong have also reached their most favorable levels since August 2019.

Notably, optimism has overtaken pessimism for the first time since consumer confidence tracking began, marking a key psychological shift among the

population.

The minister noted that this encouraging data reflected the success of the government's disciplined and targeted macroeconomic strategy implemented over the last 14 months. The stabilization of key economic indicators, including the containment of inflation, strengthening of the exchange rate, rebuilding of foreign exchange reserves, and improved fiscal discipline have created a foundation for renewed public trust and economic recovery, he added.

He highlighted that consumer confidence in making major purchases and investments has doubled compared to the same period last year, indicating that households are beginning to feel more secure in their financial prospects.

Similarly, confidence in job security is now at its highest since 2019, a sign that labor market condi-

tions are gradually stabilizing in response to pro-growth policies and reforms, the federal minister said.

The minister further pointed out that this upswing in confidence spans across urban and rural areas, and is particularly evident among youth and women-demonstrating the broad-based nature of the economic turnaround.

He linked this optimism to sustained government efforts to create an enabling environment for private sector growth, boost exports, enhance social

protection, and encourage financial inclusion.

Aurangzeb reaffirmed that the government remains committed to maintaining macroeconomic stability, accelerating structural reforms, and ensuring that economic growth translates into real and inclusive progress for all citizens.

The findings of the IPSOS survey, he said, are a timely validation of Pakistan's economic direction and a clear signal that the country is on a steady path toward recovery and resilience.



# The Frontier Post

**Two killed in explosion**

PESHAWAR (APP): An explosion inside a house in Darra Adam Khel on Sunday resulted in the death of two people. Police said the incident took place in Zor Akhor area of the Akhoral tribe, near a tube well. A powerful blast inside the house completely destroyed the structure and claimed the lives of two people. Authorities investigating the nature and cause of the explosion said further details will be shared later.

## PM, Field Marshall address Grand Triball Jirga

# Shehbaz discusses Indian-backed terrosim in Balochistan

Indian sponsored proxy war is no longer hidden: COAS

**E.P. Report**

QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir NI (M), the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), jointly addressed a Grand Jirga of tribal elders at the Zehri Auditorium in Quetta.

The Jirga was organized to interact with the tribal leadership and discuss the evolving security situation in Balochistan, with particular focus on the ongoing proxy war fueled by India.

The PM highlighted that Indian-sponsored proxies operating in Balochistan have intensified their efforts to undermine peace, destabilize the province, and disrupt development initiatives led by the Government of Pakistan and the Armed Forces.

The Prime Minister underscored that terrorists



groups like Fitna Al-Hindustan seek support of the locals which must be denied to them. Praising the leadership and constructive role of the elders, the PM reiterated the persistent need for engaging at the grassroots level and ensuring that terrorists find no

social space. This was crucial for the success of counter terrorism efforts and for the long-term peace and stability.

Prime Minister said that the enemies of peace will find no space to operate within Pakistan. Our message to them is clear: the

Government, Armed Forces, LEAs and Administrative apparatus, with complete support of the Pakistan, will take the Nation's fight against terrorism to its logical conclusion, defeating terrorism in a decisive manner."

*Continued on Back Page*

## PM meets President in Lahore

**E.P. Report**

LAHORE: Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met President Asif Ali Zardari at Governor's House Lahore on Sunday to discuss the prevailing political and security situation of the country.

During the meeting, the leadership held wide-ranging discussions on national affairs, including the country's political climate and security challenges.

The participants also reviewed the outcomes of the prime minister's recent visits to friendly nations and their significance for Pakistan's foreign relations.

The discussion also touched upon coordination and cooperation among political allies, emphasising the importance of unity in the current political landscape.

President Zardari, highlighting the importance of public welfare, urged the government to take practical and impactful steps in the upcoming budget to provide relief to the common man.

"The government must take measures in the upcoming budget to provide relief to the common man," President Zardari stressed.

He further emphasised the need for unity among coalition partners, stating: "Political allies need to move forward together in the national interest."

The meeting was also attended by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla.

## UAP Railway Line Project

# Dar, Muttaqi vow to work together on project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi on Sunday emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Line Project for regional connectivity.

They agreed to work

closely for an early finalization of the framework agreement, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation with the FM Amir Khan Muttaqi who welcomed the decision of Pakistan to upgrade its diplomatic relations to the ambassador level and informed that

Afghanistan has decided to reciprocate the same.

He termed it a very positive development in bilateral relations.

Both leaders also reviewed implementation of decisions taken during DPM/FM's visit to Kabul on 19 April 2025 and vowed to continue working together to establish mutual trust between the two brotherly nations.

## 31 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire

RAFAH (AP) : At least 31 people were killed and scores wounded Sunday as they were on their way to receive food in the Gaza Strip, according to a Red Cross field hospital and multiple witnesses. The witnesses said Israeli forces fired on crowds around a kilometer from an aid site run by an Israeli-backed foundation.

The military did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The foundation said in a statement that it delivered aid "without incident" early Sunday and has denied previous accounts of chaos and gunfire around its sites, which are in Israeli military zones where independent access is limited.

Officials at the field hospital said at least 21 people were killed and another 175 people were wounded, without saying who opened fire on them. An Associated Press reporter saw dozens of people being treated at the hospital.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation "s distribution of aid has been marred by chaos, and multiple witnesses have said Israeli troops fired on crowds near the delivery sites. Before Sunday, at least six people had been killed and more than 50 wounded according to local health officials.

The foundation says the private security contractors guarding its sites have not fired on the crowds, while the Israeli military has acknowledged firing warning shots on previous occasions.

The foundation said in a statement that it distributed 16 truckloads of aid early Sunday "without incident," and dismissed what it referred to as "false reporting about deaths, mass injuries and

chaos."

Thousands of people headed toward the distribution site hours before dawn, congregating at the Flag Roundabout, about a kilometer (1,000 yards) away, as they waited for the site to open, according to witnesses. They said Israeli forces ordered people to disperse and come back later - before opening fire.

"There was fire from all directions, from naval warships, from tanks and drones," said Amr Abu Teiba, who was in the crowd.

He said he saw at least 10 bodies with gunshot wounds and several other wounded people, including women. People used carts to ferry the dead and wounded to the field hospital. "The scene was horrible," he said.

Ibrahim Abu Saoud, another eyewitness, provided a nearly identical account. He said the military fired around 300 meters (yards) away.

Abu Saoud said he saw many people with gunshot wounds, including a young man who he said had died at the scene. "We weren't able to help him," he said.

Mohammed Abu Teaima, 33, said he saw Israeli forces open fire and kill his cousin and another woman as they were heading toward the distribution site.

He said his cousin was shot in his chest and died at the scene. Many others were wounded, including his brother-in-law, he said. "They opened heavy fire directly toward us," he said as he was waiting outside the Red Cross field hospital for word on his wounded relative.

Israel and the United States say the new system is aimed at preventing Hamas from siphon-

ing off assistance. Israel has not provided any evidence of systematic diversion, and the UN denies it has occurred.

UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to work with the new system, saying it violates humanitarian principles because it allows Israel to control who receives aid and forces people to relocate to distribution sites, risking yet more mass displacement in the territory.

The UN system has struggled to bring in aid after Israel slightly eased its total blockade of the territory last month. Those groups say Israeli restrictions, the breakdown of law and order, and widespread looting make it extremely difficult to deliver aid to Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians.

Experts have warned that the territory is at risk of famine if more aid is not brought in.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. They are still holding 58 hostages, around a third of them believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's military campaign has killed over 54,000 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were civilians or combatants.

The offensive has destroyed vast areas of the territory, displaced around 90 percent of its population and left people almost completely reliant on international aid.





LAHORE: People visiting Manawa Cattle Market for buying sacrificial animals ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. —INP Photo

## Introductory meeting of newly appointed SDOs held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important introductory meeting was held in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Muhammad Sohail Afridi, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Communication and Works. Newly appointed Sub-Divisional Officers (SDOs) of the Communication and Works Department participated in the session.

Addressing the meeting, Muhammad Sohail Afridi welcomed the new officers and congratulated them on their appointments.

He expressed hope that their inclusion would enhance departmental performance and ensure efficiency and timely public service delivery.

He urged the officers to fulfill their professional responsibilities with honesty, sincerity, and dedication. He emphasized that institutional development, transparency, and improved service delivery should be top priority. He also assured full support in case of any professional challenges or needs.

During the meeting, each SDO introduced themselves and expressed commitment to fulfilling their duties. Muhammad Sohail Afridi further stated that the Communication and Works Department serves as backbone of the province's development, and promoting transparency, integrity, and hard work in this sector is the need of the hour.

## Body recovered from BRB Canal

LAHORE (APP): A male body was recovered from the Bambawali-Ravi-Bedian (BRB) Canal near the Basin village, on Sunday.

According to Rescue 1122 officials, emergency rescue vehicles promptly arrived at the scene following the report. A team of Rescue 1122 divers fished out the body from the canal. Authorities have confirmed that the deceased yet not been identified. The body was subsequently handed over to police for an investigation.

# Punjab minister lauds minorities' role in nation-building

LAHORE (APP): A seminar titled "The Role of Minorities in Creation and Continuity of Pakistan" was held at Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore, as part of the Jashn-e-Urdu celebrations, here on Sunday.

Punjab Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora attended as the chief guest. The seminar aimed to recognize and honour the vital contributions of religious minorities to Pakistan's unity, development, and progress, both historically and in the present day.

In his address, Ramesh Singh Arora described religious minorities as the vibrant colors that complete the bouquet of the nation's identity and harmony. He reaffirmed the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, emphasizing that all citizens are equal regardless of faith. He praised the Punjab government, led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, for transforming this vision into reality through inclusive and

groundbreaking reforms.

Paying tribute to the sacrifices made by minorities during the Pakistan Movement, he also highlighted their ongoing contributions in education, political participation, social harmony, and national development.

The minister outlined several key initiatives being undertaken by the Punjab government for minority communities, including the construction, renovation, and expansion of religious sites, scholarships for deserving minority students, legislative reforms to protect minority rights, and cultural and training programs to promote interfaith harmony.

On the occasion, Mufti Ashiq Hussain underscored the importance of interfaith unity, stating that Islam teaches respect for all communities and that Pakistan's progress depends on embracing diversity with open hearts.

Christian community leader Macdonald Chandi applauded the

provincial government's outreach efforts, while Dr. Majeed Able called for greater recognition of minorities' roles in the Pakistan Movement.

Bhagat Lal, representing the Hindu community, expressed appreciation for the protection of temples, culture, and rights under new provincial initiatives, calling it a welcome change. Social reformer Professor Dr. Kalyan Singh highlighted visible efforts toward equality in healthcare and education, and expressed hope for continued support. The seminar was warmly received by academic and literary circles, who collectively emphasized the need to revise national narratives to fairly reflect minorities' contributions.

Speakers called for greater inclusion of minority voices in education, policymaking, and national media.

The event ended with a shared commitment from all stakeholders to promote mutual respect, cultural integration, and the vision of a prosperous and inclusive Pakistan.

## Bid to smuggle kite flying material foiled

LAHORE (APP): Police said on Sunday an attempt to smuggle kite-flying materials had been foiled and two accused arrested during a raid in the Hanjrawal area.

According to a police spokesperson, SHO Hanjrawal Adeel Anjum, along with his team, conducted the operation which led to the arrest of two individuals identified as Zaman and Shehzad.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Iqbal Town Dr Muhammad Umar said the suspects were allegedly involved in selling kites and chemically treated metallic string — commonly referred to as manjha or killer string — through online platforms. He further stated that the accused were also found to be engaged in kite-flying activities during the night in the vicinity. One of the suspects, Shehzad, was reportedly a repeat offender with a prior record of involvement in kite-flying violations, the SP added.

Police recovered hundreds of kites and 19 spools of dangerous string from the suspects' possession. Cases have been registered against both under the Punjab Prohibition of Kite Flying (Amendment) Act.

SP Umar lauded the efforts of SHO Anjum and his team, stating that operations against those involved in the illegal kite trade would continue without discrimination.

## SP reviews security arrangements at major churches

LAHORE (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Iqbal Town, Dr. Muhammad Umar, inspected the security arrangements at major churches in the area, including the Assemblies of God Church, here on Sunday.

SP Dr Umar reviewed the security protocol at both entry and exit points, ensuring that all standard operating procedures (SoPs) were being followed. He also interacted with the security personnel deployed at the churches, encouraging them and instructing them to remain alert while performing their duties.

The SP met with church administrators and local station house officers (SHOs), who briefed him on the overall security measures in place.

"Strict checking is being carried out for all individuals attending services to ensure a safe environment," said SP Umar. "Parking areas have been designated at a reasonable distance from the church premises for added safety."

He further directed officials to maintain vigilance for any suspicious individuals or unattended items, urging immediate reporting of any unusual activity to senior officers.

"Effective patrolling is underway in and around the churches and other key locations," he added. "All churches are being provided with foolproof security to ensure the safety of worshippers." The police emphasised their commitment to maintaining peace and ensuring that religious gatherings proceed without any incident.

## LWMC finalizes plan for best cleanliness on Eid

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) has finalized all preparations for a comprehensive sanitation operation during Eid-ul-Azha.

According to LWMC sources here on Sunday as part of this initiative, LWMC was distributing over 1.5 million eco-friendly waste bags free of cost throughout the city to assist citizens in the responsible disposal of sacrificial animal waste. To ensure accessibility, 300 dedicated Eid camps have been established across Lahore. Furthermore, 104 temporary waste collection points and four dedicated dumping sites located at Lakhodair, Saggian, Tibba and Sundar have been activated to facilitate the swift and efficient collection and disposal of offals.

# MPAs discuss uplift projects with CM Maryam

LAHORE (PPI): Members of the Provincial Assembly, Muhammad Ahmad Khan Leghari and Naeem Akhtar Khan Bhabha, called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The meeting involved detailed discussions on ongoing welfare projects, resolving public issues, and developmental matters of the constituencies.

According to X information on Sunday, the assembly members praised the ongoing developmental and welfare projects in the province. Maryam stated that her

mission is to make Punjab a model province and to serve the public. She emphasized that the education and financial independence of the youth are among her top priorities.

Naeem Akhtar Khan Bhabha thanked the Chief Minister for initiating the construction and expansion of the Multan-Vehari Road. The Chief Minister, upon his request, ordered the commencement of classes at Vehari Girls College.

The Chief Minister directed Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat to start

classes at Vehari Girls College after the holidays. Orders were also issued for a water scheme project in Kot Addu at the request of Muhammad Ahmad Leghari.

The assembly members remarked that Maryam Nawaz has won the hearts of the people through transparent governance and revolutionary measures in a short period.

The Kisan Card, Minority Card, Ration Card, Himat Card, and Education Card were hailed as excellent initiatives for equitable participation in development.

# Mujeeb Toru appointed as Focal Person to Chairman PMYP



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Office has officially nominated Mr. Mujeeb Alam Toru as the Focal Person to the Chairman, Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), for Liaison with Chambers, Associations, and Trade Bodies of Pakistan and Overseas.

The nomination has been made on an honorary basis, reflecting the government's confidence in Mr. Toru's capabilities

and commitment to national development.

The announcement, issued under the authority of Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of PMYP, entrusts Mr. Toru with the vital responsibility of enhancing engagement between Pakistan's youth program and international trade organizations. His primary mandate includes facilitating strategic linkages with Chambers of Commerce and trade asso-

ciations in China, Turkey, and the CIS countries. Mr. Toru will act as a critical bridge to promote cooperation and business opportunities between overseas chambers and the Pakistani business community.

His role is expected to contribute significantly to the vision of PMYP by enabling meaningful international collaborations and expanding opportunities for young entrepreneurs and professionals.

Mr. Mujeeb Alam Toru expressed his gratitude, stating that I am deeply honored by the trust placed in me by the Prime Minister's Office and Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan.

I see this role not just as a designation but as a national responsibility to build global partnerships that empower our youth and strengthen Pakistan's economic future. I look forward to working closely with local and international trade bodies to bring meaningful opportunities for our young generation."

The appointment underlines the government's commitment to strengthening international trade relationships and fostering global partnerships that benefit Pakistan's youth and economic landscape.

# 43,000 cops deployed across Punjab for Eid

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Police has finalized comprehensive security arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha across the province.

According to spokesperson, on the special instructions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, an elaborate security plan has been devised to ensure the safety of mosques, Imambargahs, Eid prayer congregations, and the general public during the religious festivities.

As part of the province-wide deployment, more than 43,000 police officers and personnel will be on duty to secure 28,074 mosques and 890 open prayer sites.

Additionally, 445 Quick Response Force (QRF) teams will support security operations, while 11,912 metal detectors, 225 walk-through gates, and 10,466 CCTV cameras will be used to monitor prayer sites and surrounding areas.

In Lahore alone, over 8,000 police personnel

will safeguard more than 5,000 Eid congregations.

IGP Dr. Usman Anwar has instructed all police units to remain on high alert, particularly in light of the current regional and border security context.

He directed that extra security personnel be deployed in public parks and recreational areas during Eid holidays to ensure the safety of families and visitors. Strict action will be taken against aerial firing, one-wheeling, kite flying, and any form of disorderly conduct.

The IGP emphasized that all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government regarding the collection of sacrificial animal hides must be fully enforced. Monitoring of individuals affiliated with banned outfits and those listed in the Fourth Schedule must be intensified to prevent any unlawful activities.

Security sweeps and thorough clearance operations will be carried out at all mosques,

Imambargahs, and Eid prayer venues before congregations begin.

For enhanced vigilance, snipers will be stationed on rooftops of high-risk mosques and Imambargahs, while plainclothes commandos will be deployed among the worshippers during major gatherings.

To ensure smooth traffic flow, DIG Traffic has been assigned to personally oversee the province-wide traffic management plan. Police units have been tasked with implementing preventive measures to curb street crimes and highway robberies. Additional deployments will also be made at key locations to manage holiday traffic efficiently.

Furthermore, all necessary resources are being mobilized to facilitate and safeguard tourists, especially in Murree and other popular destinations. Vehicle entry and exit protocols in Murree, as outlined in the official SOPs, will be strictly enforced.

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Deputy Manager Operations	DOFC (Rtd) ADOFC (Rtd) Subedar Major (Rtd)	Less than 65 years	PSH (1) ISL (1) LHR (1) KHI (1)	Minimum FA/FC. Higher education will be given preference.

- Original document to be produced at the time of interview.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview.
- Application along with attested copy of PPO, CNIC, (03) Photographs and CV to be submitted on or before 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2025 till 4:00 PM at the office of the HR Manager, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor FC Plaza Psh.
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# Minority youth are a source of national pride, says Barrister Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A vibrant concluding ceremony of the Minority Youth Talent Hunt Program was held in Peshawar under the auspices of the provincial Auqaf, Haji, Religious & Minority Affairs department. Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif graced the event as chief guest.

Over 600 youth from the minority of the province (both male and female) participated in the two-day event. The who competed in ten categories including Urdu and Pashto singing, essay writing, declamation contests, painting, art, and rap performances. At the closing ceremony, winners were awarded cash prizes. Participants also offered prayers for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan and

performed patriotic songs.

In his address, Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized that the labels of “majority” and “minority” create divisions in society, whereas the truth is that we are all, first and foremost, human beings and Pakistanis. “Our true identity should be based on character, ethics, and humanity — not on religion, race, or language,” he stated.

Quoting teachings from Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Sikhism, Barrister Dr. Saif said all religions promote universal values of humanity, justice, love, and morality. He urged youth to seek education not merely for jobs or degrees, but for awareness, consciousness, and service to humanity. “Wealth and employment are for humans, not the other way around,” he remarked.

He stressed that granting equal rights to minorities is not only a constitu-

tional obligation but also a divine command and a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). “Our government is fully committed to empowering minority youth and helping them turn their dreams into reality,” he added.

Among the top winners, Sajid Iqbal from Kalash secured first position in Urdu essay writing, while Surinder Singh from Buner came second. Awards were also presented to outstanding performers in English essay writing, painting, thematic art, declamation contests, and singing competitions. In Pashto singing, Kiran Zulfiqar and Ashbam Tanveer, both from Peshawar, stood out. Junaid Kalash received a special award in the rap category, while young vocalist Isaac Javed, also known as “Chhota Ustad,” and Mahak Javed each received cash prizes of PKR 20,000.

A distinguished panel of judges — including celebrated singer Sitara Younus, renowned actor Syed Rehman Shino, academic professors, and national assembly officials — evaluated the competitions.

On this occasion, Dr. Saif announced that dedicated slots will be allocated on Pakhtunkhwa Radio Stations of the provincial Information and Public Relations Department to showcase the talents of minority youth. “We want these young voices to go beyond local stages and resonate across the country,” he said.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Deputy Secretary of the Minority Affairs Department, Mr. Habib Khan Afridi, presented a commemorative shield to the chief guest, while renowned photographer and painter Uncle Tony gifted him original paintings.



PESHAWAR: Winners of the Swimming competition of the ongoing Media Sports Festival organized by Khyber Union of Journalists and Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa posing for the photographers at the end of the swimming competitions.

## Media Sports Festival swimming competitions conclude

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The swimming competitions of the three-day Media Sports Festival 2025 organized by the Khyber Union of Journalists and the Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have successfully concluded.

The thrilling and excit-

ing events were held at the Adil Khan Swimming Pool in Qayyum Stadium Peshawar.

Shakeel Siddiqui clinched the trophy while Khurram Jaleel secured second position. In the senior category Zia-ul-Haq emerged victorious and won the trophy.

In the throwball event KHUJ Green was

crowned champion after defeating SWA White in the final match.

The final stages of the badminton competition are currently underway.

It is worth mentioning that the Media Sports Festival 2025, organized by the Khyber Union of Journalists and the Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

features seven different games. These include tug of war, badminton, swimming, throwball, futsal, musical chairs and archery for women.

A large number of journalists from Peshawar enthusiastically participated in the festival showcasing great interest in the various competitions.

## Shandur Polo Festival set for June 20 Advisor Tourism directs immediate finalization of preparations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Following the announcement by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa setting June 20 as the date for Pakistan's mega polo event — Shandur Polo Festival 2025 — Advisor for Tourism, Culture, Archaeology, and Museums, Zahid Chanzeb, has directed that all preparations for the festival be finalized immediately. The festival will be held from June 20 to June 22, 2025, in

Upper Chitral. Zahid Chanzeb emphasized ensuring the successful organization of the event and instructed DG Culture and Tourism Authority to ensure all possible facilities for the tourists attending the festival. He also stressed the importance of launching a promotional campaign to raise awareness among both domestic and international tourists about the event.

Expressing his views on

the festival, the advisor stated that the Shandur Polo Festival is a reflection of the vibrant culture and traditions of the region. Teams from Lower and Upper Chitral will compete with teams from Gilgit-Baltistan, presenting a spectacular display of sportsmanship and brotherhood.

DG Culture and Tourism Authority reaffirmed their commitment to make best possible arrangements in collaboration with the

Pakistan Army, district administrations of Lower and Upper Chitral, police, and Chitral Scouts.

The Shandur Polo Festival, renowned for being held at the world's highest polo ground, attracts thousands of tourists every year, and an increase in the number of visitors is expected this year. The provincial government is determined to further promote the festival and boost tourism in the province.

## Fundamental responsibilities for better future for children Workshop for rising awareness among parents held



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Iqra Rozatul-Quran School, a private educational institution in Peshawar, organized a training workshop for par-

ents aimed at raising awareness about their fundamental responsibilities crucial for securing a better future for their children.

A large number of par-

shop, along with the administration of Iqra Rozatul-Quran School.

Parents expressed that this is the first institution not only focused on children's education and

upbringing but also actively provides awareness and training for parents through various workshops. The school administration emphasized that holding such workshops is one of the key objectives of the institution.

Their goal is to help build a responsible society where every individual is aware of their duties.

They further stated that they are determined to continue this mission with firm commitment and, God willing, they aim to contribute to creating a responsible society and providing excellent training to the builders of tomorrow.

## Punjab livestock dealers target KP as sacrificial animal trade gains momentum

PESHAWAR (APP): As Eidul Azha approaches, the trade of sacrificial animals has gained momentum in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), with a steady influx of livestock from Punjab driven by traders seeking higher profit margins.

Major cattle markets including Lala Qala, Pabbi, Risalpur, Ring Road, Taru, Charsadda Road, and Amargarh are now teeming with animals primarily transported from Punjab by inter-provincial dealers aiming to capitalize on the season's rising demand.

“I brought five truckloads of animals from Punjab, and all were sold out even before Eid,” said Mosa Khan, a cattle trader at the Pabbi market. “Now, my brother is back in Punjab arranging for five more trucks based on the overwhelming demand.”

Another trader, Dilfer Shah, shared a similar experience and said, “since last Saturday, I’ve sold 20 buffaloes, 50 goats, and 15 oxen brought from Sahiwal,” he said, optimistic that sales will peak in the final days before Eid.

While traders are seeing brisk business, the risks remain high. Heatstroke and diseases such as lumpy skin can lead to significant losses, forcing dealers to raise prices to mitigate



potential setbacks.

In the sweltering heat of Peshawar's Lala Qala market, 45-year-old property dealer Nasir Khan searched for an affordable sacrificial animal.

After hours of bargaining on Sunday, he left empty-handed. “I came from WAPDA Town hoping to buy a buffalo within our budget. Prices are far higher than last year,” he lamented. “I’ll return closer to Eid, hoping for last-minute price drops and maybe join a collective qurbani with neighbors.”

Traders from Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan have flooded KP's markets, yet many visitors especially salaried class are simply price-checking and leaving in frustration.

An APP market survey

conducted on Sunday found that inflation, high transportation costs, and soaring fodder prices are discouraging many middle-income and salaried buyers, particularly pensioners.

Adding to the challenge is the intense summer heat, which has driven some potential buyers online. Digital platforms offering sacrificial animals with home delivery have gained traction, drawing customers away from traditional markets.

Dr. Aftab Ahmad, Director of Livestock and Dairy Development KP, acknowledged the shifting trend toward online purchasing. However, he raised concerns over health risks.

“Lumpy skin disease

and heatstroke are one of concerns this season,” he said, adding there was no chance of the disease spread or outbreak.

“We’ve deployed DVM veterinarians across key markets and set up checkpoints for health inspections and fumigation.”

He also noted that nearly 70% of the animals sold in KP during Eid come from Punjab. The situation is exacerbated by poor infrastructure—lack of shade, clean drinking water, and sanitation facilities—which continues to affect both buyers and traders.

Recent torrential rains have further disrupted the supply of local livestock to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Stakeholders have pointed to unchecked smuggling

of animals, especially across the Afghanistan border, as another factor behind surging prices.

“Livestock being transported and sold in Afghanistan for higher profits has tightened domestic supply,” Haseeb Khan, a resident in Peshawar observed.

Many called for a regional agreement involving Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India to regulate cross-border livestock movement and stabilize local markets.

Despite these challenges, millions of Pakistanis are preparing to perform qurbani, an important religious ritual of sacrifice during Eidul Azha.

Last year alone, over six million animals were sacrificed nationwide, generating an estimated Rs531 billion, according to the Pakistan Tanners Association.

This year, however, buyers like Nasir Khan remain hopeful—waiting for either a miracle or a significant price drop in the final hours before Eid.

Civic activists and consumers alike are urging authorities to improve facilities at cattle markets by ensuring clean water, proper shelter, and regulated pricing to support the public in fulfilling their religious obligations.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial government has dismissed the impression of alleged irregularities and financial corruption of its flagship project of providing free solar systems to 130,000 poor and middle-class families. Reports by some newspapers and electronic media outlets are baseless and misleading propaganda. Some vested interests associated with the solarization business have started spreading false propaganda against the project.

In this context, the Energy and Power department, KP has clarified that the mega project of solar scheme has been launched through the department's subsidiary, the Pakhtunkhwa Energy

Development Organization (PEDO).

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur has inaugurated the first phase of the project through online e-bidding in which deserving families have been selected.

No payment has been made under this project yet and no tender has been allotted to any contractor whereas the estimated rates of the project have been prepared in accordance with the Market Rate System (MRS) 2024 and the approved market rate analysis of the Finance Department.

The project was initiated after the approval of the Technical Committee comprising representatives of the Finance Department, P&D Department, Energy

Department and PEDO after regular consultations regarding design, estimation and PC-1 in its meetings.

The advance procurement process for the project has been initiated under Section 22 of the KPPRA Act, which allows approval subject to availability of funds.

In this regard, Energy department further clarified that the notion of only one model of all-in-one solution in China is also wrong. Several companies in China are working on all-in-one solution. In fact, there are companies in Pakistan that are working on this model, which is enhancing the quality of work and technical process to be timely and effective.

Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) has already been signed between Bank of Khyber (BoK) and PEDO for the timely completion of the project. The non-ADP summary for this scheme has been approved by the cabinet and the Planning and Development Department sent the cost of the project and other matters to the Chief Minister after formal approval.

The provincial government, in its determination to provide immediate relief to the public during the summer season, has directed the concerned department to expedite the process of advance purchase along with the approval of the PDWP, so that the public can get the facility of solar energy as soon as possible.

## Two-day ACT Program organised by PCP and MiracleFeet ends

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) in collaboration with MiracleFeet, successfully organized a two-day Advanced Clubfoot

Treatment (ACT) training course aimed at treating children born with congenital foot deformities (clubfoot). The training was held at the Seminar Hall of the Center's main campus, College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (CPMR).

The objective of this specialized training program was to provide advanced know how in the Ponseti method, which is globally recognized as the most effective and low-cost treatment for clubfoot. This non-surgical technique gradually corrects foot deformities through specific casting and bracing methods. Active parental involvement and consistent follow-up are vital components of the treatment process.

The 2-day session was attended by orthopedic surgeons, physiotherapists and clubfoot clinic specialists from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as from Islamabad and

Muzaffarabad. Training was conducted by Paraplegic Center experts Dr. Fahad Jamil, Dr. Ijaz Ahmad and Dr. Khukla Imtiaz, under the overall supervision of Director Rehabilitation and Program Coordinator Dr. Amir Zaib. The trainers provided hands-on training and emphasized effective patient communication, parental counseling and modern follow-up protocols.

Addressing the closing ceremony, Chief Executive of Paraplegic Center Peshawar, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, stated that the Center is committed to eradicating the painful yet treatable condition of clubfoot. “Our mission is to ensure that not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but throughout the country, no child is left without timely and quality treatment,” he said. Dr. Ilyas announced that, in addition to existing active clinics, the program is

being expanded to other provinces and cities, with new clubfoot clinics being established in Gilgit and Bannu to provide accessible treatment for children in remote areas.

He reiterated that reaching all affected children and their families, offering guidance and ensuring complete treatment remains the Center's top priority. Program Coordinator Dr. Aamir Zaib highlighted that the initiative not only enhanced the expertise of healthcare professionals but also strengthened inter-provincial collaboration, laying the foundation for a unified and effective treatment network. Thanks to the joint efforts of Paraplegic Center Peshawar and MiracleFeet, comprehensive, free and quality treatment for clubfoot is becoming a reality, envisioning a future where every child can stand on their own feet, unhindered by physical limitations, he concluded.



PESHAWAR: Matric students from across the province appear in Goodwill and CUSIT Tatent Scholarship Test organized by Peshawar Model Degree College.





## In brief

### Surrendering weapons F.P. Report

**K O H A T :** Implementation of the historic Kohat Peace Agreement is in progress to establish lasting peace in the tribal district of Kurram. Under the agreement, almost all the bunkers have been demolished. In the next phase, the collection of heavy weapons is underway. In light of the Jirgas held with the parties in Kurram District, the deadline for surrendering heavy weapons was set as May 31, 2025; however, the deadline has been extended till June 10. As per the notification issued by the Deputy Commissioner Kurram, the general public and warring parties have been directed to surrender their heavy weapons by June 10, 2025. In case of recovery of weapons after the deadline, the weapons will be confiscated by the government and action will be taken under the Arms Act. The public has been advised to voluntarily comply with the orders.

### Completion of projects urged F.P. Report

**K A L A M :** Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Energy Engr. Tariq Sadozai visited site of 88 MW Gabral Kalam and 157 MW Madyan Hydropower Projects. The projects are being completed with financial assistance from the World Bank. Engr. Sadozai reviewed various phases of the project and stressed timely completion of the projects. Project Director and Chief Engineer of PMO gave a comprehensive briefing to the Special Assistant. The latter issued instructions regarding the layout and design of the projects and emphasized expediting the civil works before the onset of the upcoming snowfall season. Later, Engr Tariq Sadozai inspected the under-construction colony of Gabral Kalam and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing work.

### Underage driving banned

**LODHRAN (APP):** Deputy Commissioner Dr Lubna Nazir, under section 144, has imposed a ban on underage drivers and driving motorcycle without license and helmets. According to official sources, the DC said that legal action would be taken against the parents of underage drivers over violation. She said the ban was immediately implemented in revenue limits across the district under section 144. The order further includes a complete ban on operating Phatta rickshaws (locally modified passenger rickshaws). The ban would remain in effect for 30 days within the district's jurisdiction.

### Proclaimed offender held

**DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP):** In a significant breakthrough, the Dera police have arrested two suspects including a proclaimed offender during a targeted operation conducted against criminal elements in the limits of Gomal University police station. According to police spokesman, a team of Gomal University police station led by SHO Asghar Khan Wazir, acting on the directives of SDPO Parao Circle Sardar Alamgir Khan, conducted a successful patrol-based operation. During the operation, Ashfaq Hussain son of Khadim Hussain, a resident of Noon area and wanted in cases of murder and attempted murder, was apprehended.

# CM KP lauded for including Karak Safe City Project

F.P. Report

**K A R A K :** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture Maj (ret'd) Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal and Chairman DDAC Karak Khurshid Khattak MPA have expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister on behalf of the people of Karak for including the Karak Safe City Project in the ADP of the upcoming fiscal year.

The project will be completed at an estimated cost of over Rs.1 Billion which

will have a positive impact on the environment of Karak City and will also enhance the law and order situation. This project will include all the main areas of Karak City, Tangori Chowk, KDA, the newly constructed bypass and the college.

The minister said that the people of Karak are very grateful to Imran Khan and the Chief Minister for this important project.

The minister also disclosed that the Chief Minister has also issued orders to Health and

Finance Departments to complete all the necessary requirements including the approval of SNEs of BHU Mandawa and BHU Shahidan in the upcoming budget.

Similarly, on the special directions of the Chairman DDAC Khurshid Khattak MPA and MNA Shahid Khattak, the solarization of Sabirabad and Makhbada water supply schemes has been completed which will ensure the supply of drinking water to the areas, which was a long-standing demand of the residents.

## Actions against faculty members in SMIU FAPUASA calls for impartial inquiry

**HYDERABAD (APP):** The Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations (FAPUASA) has strongly condemned the victimization of faculty members at Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), Karachi.

In a statement issued here on Sunday Central Information Secretary Dr Muhammad Jadoon Khan said FAPUASA demanded an impartial inquiry to be conducted by an independent committee, with at least one representative nominated by the association.

He informed that following the May 29 visit of a committee of FAPUASA to SMIU, the committee's findings were formally presented and discussed in an

online meeting of the FAPUASA Executive Council on Sunday afternoon.

According to him, the Council unanimously resolved to request the Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah and Governor Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori to intervene in the matter to ensure a transparent and impartial investigation.

He said during the meeting it was revealed that one faculty member had been terminated on the very day of the committee's visit. "This abrupt action raised serious questions regarding the due process and whether disciplinary protocols were being properly followed," Khan underlined.

He told that the Executive Council expressed grave concern over the procedural irregularities and whether the punishment administered was proportionate to the charges if substantiated as per the university's own regulations.

He apprised that the council also urged the Vice Chancellor of SMIU to immediately suspend any punitive actions against faculty members until the findings of the independent inquiry are made public.

He reiterated that FAPUASA stood firmly with the academic community and remained committed to protecting the rights, dignity, and professional integrity of university faculty across Pakistan.

## Poor quality electricity wiring poses risks to lives

**MULTAN (APP):** With the arrival of summer, the combination of rising electricity usage and poorly maintained wiring systems is turning deadly in South Punjab.

Worn-out insulation, dangerously placed high-tension lines, and a culture of carelessness have made electric shocks a silent but consistent killer, especially for daily wage workers and underage laborers.

In many towns and villages, electricity wires dangle overhead, often tied loosely to rooftops or trees, sometimes passing dangerously close to homes,

shops, and construction sites.

Many of these installations date back years, with little to no maintenance. As temperatures rise, the tape covering joints in electric cables softens or falls off, exposing bare wires that remain unnoticed until tragedy strikes.

The situation is worsened by cheaper and unregulated wiring materials. Builders and homeowners often ignore standard safety procedures and prioritize cost-cutting over life-saving precautions.

"We keep telling people to use proper insulation

and avoid metal structures near lines, but they don't listen," says Pervez Chaudhry, an experienced electrician from Vehari. "In summer, wires expand and sag."

If a rooftop is just a few feet away, the danger is always present.

A small mistake becomes fatal."

Pervez Chaudhry adds that even in new constructions, proper grounding and circuit protection are often skipped.

"People think it's unnecessary expense. But one bad connection can take a life."

## Exploring new destinations to diversify tourism portfolio

**SWAT (APP):** Amidst growing tourist congestion at popular destinations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) like Swat, Kalam, Malam Jabba, Naran and Kaghan, the provincial government is now spotlighting lesser-known but equally breathtaking sites to diversify its tourism portfolio.

With tourists' sites like Nathiagali and Thandiyani in Abbottabad reaching saturation during peak summer, the KP Culture and Tourism Authority pivoted toward unlocking the potential destinations from serene Chitral valleys to the beauty of Gabin Jabba, Shahi Bagh in Swat and Kumrat in Dir Upper.

These beautiful areas, once accessible only to seasoned trekkers and mountaineers of tour groups, are now being developed with eco-friendly infrastructure and modern amenities by increasing the flow of foreign and domestic tourists to northern KP.

In 2024 alone, KP welcomed over 10 million domestic tourists, driven by interest in the province's natural beauty, lakes, waterfalls and historical landmarks like Gandhara civilization sites, Saiful Malook lake and Trich Mir, the highest peak in the Hindu Kush range in Chitral.

Building on this momentum, the government is expanding its tourism landscape with new projects in northern KP designed to absorb the increasing visitor volume especially during summer.

According to Omair Khattak, General Manager

(GM) Investment at KP Tourism Authority, four Integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) including Ghanool (Mansehra), Mankiyal (Swat), Madaklash (Chitral), and Thandiyani (Abbottabad) are planned with World Bank's support.

"Ghanool and Mankiyal are being prioritized as pilot projects, with budgets of Rs5.5 billion and Rs2.9 billion respectively," he said. "These ITZs, modeled after international benchmarks in Malaysia and Indonesia, will boost tourism and are expected to reduce tourist load on established hill stations in KP."

He informed that these ITZ are expected to generate up to 200,000 direct and indirect job opportunities and attract \$2.8 billion in investment.

New facilities have been developed at emerging sites including Larum Top and Shahin Bin Shahi in Lower Dir, Broghal and Sorlaspur in Upper Chitral, and Shangla, Samana (Haripur), and Sulatham (Swat). Road upgrades and visitor centers are being established to improve accessibility and visitor experience.

Camping pods have also been introduced at scenic locations like Gabeen Jabba, Jazz Banda and Sharan to provide the visiting families, a budget-friendly accommodation. With daily rates between Rs3,500 to Rs5,000 – significantly lower than hotel rates in Naran or Galiyat—these pods offer two to four beds, a washroom, a kitchenette and security provided by tourism police. Ten such pods are set

to become operational at various sites including Jargo, Sulatanr (Swat), Broghal Valley and Kalam, as more are in the pipeline.

Plans are underway for three new ski resorts in Kaghan, Chitral, and Swat, alongside the much-anticipated Battakundi-Lalazar chairlift and Dir-Chitral cable car project.

Waterfalls like Sajkot, Noori and Jarogo are being upgraded, while trekking routes and eco-resorts in remote valleys such as Broghal, Kumrat and Sheikh Badin are also on way to execution.

Dr. Muhammad Naem, former Chair of Economics, the University of Peshawar, emphasized the economic significance of developing new destinations that not only spreads tourism footprint but revitalizes rural economies and controls price hikes in established areas.

Habib Arif, Director General, KP Tourism and Culture Authority said the government's Host Tourism Project (HTP) empowers locals by offering interest-free loans of up to Rs3 million through the Bank of Khyber.

"Residents can renovate or build rooms for tourist accommodation in areas like upper Kalam, Kumrat and Chitral. Special incentives are being extended to women and educated youth to encourage inclusive participation," he said.

"The goal is not just promotion of tourism but rural development," said Zahid Chan Zab, KP's tourism advisor. "Through homes-



**KALAM:** Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Energy Engr. Tariq Sadozai being briefed about 88 MW Gabral Kalam and 157 MW Madyan Hydropower Projects.

### Larkana Press Club: Latif panel wins elections Allah Dad Chandio

**LARKANA :** Yesterday, in the context of the annual elections of Larkana Press Club for the year 2025-26, the scrutiny of the nomination forms submitted by the candidates participating in the elections was carried out under the supervision of Election Commissioner Senior Advocate Aqeel Bhutto, after which a notification of the uncontested victory of all the candidates of the Latif Panel participating in the Larkana Press Club elections was issued.

According to this, President Senior Journalist Naveed Lark, Vice President Senior Journalist Ghulam Murtaza Kalhoro, General Secretary Abdul Qadir Jagirani, Joint Secretary Salamat Abro and Treasurer Mansoor Abbas Abro won uncontested victory on the posts of Working Committee. Senior Journalists Badar Sheikh, Mashooq Odhano, Muhammad Ashiq Pathan, Younis Detho, and Saeed Memon won uncontested victory.

On this occasion, the newly elected President of Larkana Press Club, Naveed Lark, while talking to the media, said that this is the fourth media house of the Press Club where I congratulate my friends for getting elected uncontested. While the members of the Press Club We will try to fulfill the trust given, Vice President Ghulam Murtaza Kalhoro said that he participated in the Press Club elections in line with democratic traditions.

## Boat Accident Near Khushal Garh, Kohat Rescue operation continues in Indus River

F.P. Report

**KOHAT:** The rescue operation to locate the missing individuals from the recent boat accident in the Indus River near the Khushal Garh area of Kohat district is ongoing under the supervision of the District Administration, Kohat.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law, Aftab Alam Advocate, along with Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and PTI leader Ishtiaq Qureshi, remained present at the site for the fourth consecutive day to oversee the ongoing

efforts. The minister has been closely monitoring the situation since day one of the incident.

During his visit, the District Administration and Rescue officials briefed the minister about the operation carried out jointly by four teams from Rescue 1122, a unit of the Pakistan Army's SSG, and a team of professional divers from Tarbela Dam.

Despite continued efforts of four days from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., the operation has not yet yielded positive results. Rescue officials and

family members of the missing persons have requested the provision of two additional boats, stating that the current number is inadequate for effective rescue operations. Authorities have assured that the operation will continue until all missing individuals are recovered.

Minister Aftab Alam assured the public and the victims' families of all possible support to ensure the success of the rescue mission. He expressed hope for a breakthrough, stating that the operation will lead to positive outcomes.

## Crackdown against expired food conducted

F.P. Report

**ABBOTTABAD :** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (KPFS&HA) has carried out a major operation in Haripur's renowned tourist spot, Makhnial, yesterday. During inspections of several well-known hotels, the Authority uncovered serious violations of food safety regulations.

As per details, the Haripur Food Safety Team conducted detailed inspections and discovered expired samosa rolls at one hotel. Heavy fines were imposed after the hotel was found using newspaper for

food wrapping and employing staff without mandatory medical certificates.

In a separate inspection, another major hotel was found storing expired bread, buns, meat, juices, and syrups. The kitchen was infested with insects, prompting the Food Safety Team to immediately seal the premises due to severe hygiene violations.

The spokesperson stated that the primary objective of these operations is to ensure food quality at tourist destinations and to provide safe and healthy food to the public. He emphasized that violations of food safety principles

will not be tolerated and that further inspections are underway.

DG KPFS&HA Wasif Saeed appreciated the performance of the inspection team and reiterated that constant monitoring of hotels at tourist sites is being carried out to guarantee the provision of safe and quality food to both tourists and locals.

KP Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru stated that the provision of safe and quality food to tourists and local communities remains a top priority of the government. He added that all available resources are being utilized to achieve this goal.

## Annual speech competition held in Charsadda

F.P. Report

**CHARSADDA:** An annual speech competition was organized at Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda for students from Grade One to Grade Ten. During the event, students delivered well-reasoned and passionate speeches on a variety of national, Islamic, social, and educational topics.

A large number of students, teachers, Principal Nusrat Nazir, and School Director Khawaja Shiraz Nasir attended the ceremony.

On this occasion, students who secured top positions were awarded shields and other prizes. While addressing the event, School Director Khawaja Shiraz Nasir and Principal Nusrat Nazir stated that the purpose of organizing speech competitions is to promote self-expression, confidence, and leadership qualities among students.

They emphasized that Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda not only focuses on students' education but also gives special attention to their character



development.

Co-curricular activities are regularly organized alongside academic ones to help instill confidence, discipline, and tolerance in students so that they can become responsible citizens and successful individuals in practical life.

They further stated that the students of Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda are demonstrating their intelligence and capabilities not only in academics but also on platforms like speech competitions.

Such activities play a vital role in refining students' personalities. They praised the confidence and preparation shown by the students during their speeches, calling it commendable.

Additionally, they mentioned that Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda had organized national-level speech competitions and successfully hosted Quran recitation contests for both private and public schools of District Charsadda. Events like these not only provide students opportunities to showcase and refine their talents but also cultivate a spirit of study, curiosity, and research, as well as encourage a healthy competitive environment.

They concluded by highlighting that students from Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda earned the distinction of securing first position across the district in a Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) quiz competition held last month.

## GCWUS Scholar wins 3rd prize at Int'l Seerah Conference

**SIALKOT (APP):** Govt College Women University Sialkot (GCWUS) has brought pride to the academic community as Ms Afshan Naz, a PhD scholar from the Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies at GCWUS secured 3rd Prize at the prestigious 3-Day International Seerah Conference organized by Alhamd Islamic University.

According to GCWUS spokesperson, the conference, held across Karachi, Quetta, and Islamabad, featured participation from distinguished scholars, researchers, and intellectuals from across Pakistan. In a highly competitive environment Ms Afshan Naz's outstanding performance earned her a cash award of Rs 150,000 along with a certificate of excellence. The university administration extended heartfelt congratulations to Ms Afshan Naz and her faculty mentors for this outstanding academic milestone. Her achievement not only underscores her dedication and scholarship but also highlights GCWUS's growing reputation in Islamic and Arabic studies on the national stage.





# Bangladesh top court restores largest Islamist party



DHAKA (AFP): Bangladesh on Sunday restored the registration of the largest Islamist party, allowing it to take part in elections, more than a decade after it was removed under the now-overthrown government.

The Supreme Court overturned a cancellation of Jamaat-e-Islami's registration, allowing it to be formally listed as a political

party with the Election Commission. "The Election Commission is directed to deal with the registration of that party in accordance with law," commission lawyer Towhidul Islam said.

Jamaat-e-Islami party lawyer, Shishir Monir, said the Supreme Court's decision would allow a "democratic, inclusive and multi-

party system" in the Muslim-majority country of 170 million people. "We hope that Bangladeshis, regardless of their ethnicity or religious identity, will vote for Jamaat, and that the parliament will be vibrant with constructive debates," Monir told journalists.

After Sheikh Hasina was ousted as prime minister in August, the party appealed

for a review of the 2013 high court order banning it. Sunday's decision comes after the Supreme Court on May 27 overturned a conviction against a key leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, A.T.M. Azharul Islam.

Islam had been sentenced to death in 2014 for rape, murder and genocide during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence from Pakistan.

Jamaat-e-Islami supported Islamabad during the war, a role that still sparks anger among many Bangladeshis today.

They were rivals of Hasina's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami League, who would become Bangladesh's founding figure.

Hasina banned Jamaat-e-Islami during her tenure and cracked down on its leaders.

In May, Bangladesh's interim government banned the Awami League, pending the outcome of a trial over its crackdown on mass protests that prompted her ouster last year.



ISTANBUL, TURKEY: People chant slogans and carry signs during a protest to express support for Palestinians in Gaza outside the Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque on Sunday in Istanbul.

# Poland holds tight vote with EU role at stake

WARSAW (AFP): Voters in Poland began casting ballots on Sunday in a tight presidential election with major implications for the country's role in Europe, and for abortion and LGBTQ rights.

Warsaw's pro-EU mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, 53, an ally of the centrist government, was facing off against nationalist historian Karol Nawrocki, 42.

Opinion polls suggest the race was too tight to call. Polls close at 9:00 pm (1900 GMT) in country, a member of the EU and NATO that borders Ukraine and has been a key supporter of its neighbour in the war against Russia.

An exit poll was expected as soon as ballots close and election officials predicted that the final result will be known on Monday.

"I'm voting for Trzaskowski. He's educated, speaks many languages, is intelligent, just all round great," said Agnieszka Lewinska, a 56-year-old cleaner in the town of Halinow just outside the capital.

Warsaw pensioner Lila

Chojcka, 60, said she cast her ballot for Nawrocki. "Catholic values are important to me. I know he shares them," she told AFP, calling the candidate "hope for Poland".

A victory for Trzaskowski would be a major boost for the progressive agenda of the government led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a former European Council president.

It could mean significant social changes such as the introduction of civil partnerships for same-sex couples and an easing of a near-total ban on abortion.

Presidents in Poland, a fast-growing economy of 38 million people, have the power to veto legislation and are also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

A victory for Nawrocki would embolden the populist Law and Justice (PiS) party, which ruled Poland between 2015 and 2023, and could lead to fresh parliamentary elections.

Many Nawrocki supporters want stricter curbs on immigration and advocate for conservative values and more sover-

eignty for the country within the European Union. "We should not give in to European pressure," 40-year-old Agnieszka Prokopiuk, a homemaker, said ahead of the vote.

"We need to make our own way... and not succumb to trends from the West," she told AFP in the city of Biala Podlaska in eastern Poland near the Belarus border.

Ukraine Anna Materska-Sosnowska, a politics expert, called the election "a real clash of civilisations" because of the wide policy differences between the candidates.

Many Trzaskowski voters support greater integration within the EU and an acceleration of social reforms.

Malgorzata Wojciechowska, a tour guide and teacher in her fifties, said Polish women "unfortunately do not have the same rights as our European friends".

"I hope that Rafal Trzaskowski will relaunch the debate on abortion so that we can finally live in a free country where we can have our

own opinion," she told AFP.

The election is also being watched closely in Ukraine, which is seeking to bolster international support in its negotiations with Russia as Moscow's invasion grinds on.

Nawrocki, an admirer of US President Donald Trump, opposes NATO membership for Kyiv and has called for curbs on benefits for the estimated one million Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

He used his last campaign hours on Friday to leave flowers at a monument to Poles killed by Ukrainian nationalists during World War II.

"It was a genocide against the Polish people," he said.

The election's final result is expected to hinge on whether Trzaskowski can mobilise enough supporters and whether far-right voters will cast their ballots for Nawrocki.

Far-right candidates secured more than 21 percent of the vote in the election's first round, which Trzaskowski won by a razor-thin margin of 31 percent against 30 percent for Nawrocki.

# Ukraine destroyed more than 40 military aircraft in a drone attack

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): A Ukrainian drone attack has destroyed more than 40 Russian planes deep in Russia's territory, a Ukrainian security official told The Associated Press on Sunday, while Russia pounded Ukraine with missiles and drones a day before the two sides meet for a new round of direct talks in Istanbul.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose operational details, said the attack took over 1 1/2-year to execute and was personally supervised by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The operation saw drones transported in containers carried by trucks deep into Russian territory, he said. The drones reportedly hit 41 planes stationed at several airfields on Sunday afternoon, including A-50, Tu-95 and Tu-22M aircraft, the official said. Moscow has previously used Tupolev Tu-95 and Tu-22 long-range bombers to launch missiles at Ukraine, while A-50s are used to coordinate targets

and detect air defenses and guided missiles.

Russia's Defense Ministry in a statement confirmed the attacks, which spanned five airfields. The FPV drones damaged aircraft and sparked fires on air bases in the Irkutsk region, more than 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) from Ukraine, as well as Russia's northern Murmansk, it said. Strikes were repelled in the Amur region in Russia's Far East and in the western regions of Ivanovo and Ryazan, the ministry said.

The attack came the same day as Zelenskyy said Ukraine will send a delegation to Istanbul for a new round of direct peace talks with Russia on Monday.

In a statement on Telegram, Zelenskyy said that Defense Minister Rustem Umerov will lead the Ukrainian delegation. "We are doing everything to protect our independence, our state and our people," Zelenskyy said.

Ukrainian officials had previously called on the Kremlin to provide a promised memorandum setting

out its position on ending the war before the meeting takes place. Moscow had said it would share its memorandum during the talks.

Russia on Sunday launched the biggest number of drones — 472 — on Ukraine since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's air force said.

Russian forces also launched seven missiles alongside the barrage of the drones, said Yuriy Ignat, head of communications for the air force. Earlier Sunday, Ukraine's army said at least 12 Ukrainian service members were killed and more than 60 were injured in a Russian missile strike on an army training unit.

The strike occurred at 12:50 p.m., the statement said, emphasizing that no formations or mass gatherings of personnel were being held at the time.

Ukrainian army commander Mykhailo Drapaty later Sunday submitted his resignation following the attack.

He was a respected commander whose leadership

saw Ukraine regain land on the eastern front for the first time since Kyiv's 2022 counteroffensive.

The training unit was located to the rear of the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) active front line, where Russian reconnaissance and strike drones are able to strike. Ukraine's forces lack troops and take extra precautions to avoid mass gatherings as the skies across the front line are saturated with Russian drones looking for targets.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that it had taken control of the village of Oleksiivka in Ukraine's northern Sumy region. Ukrainian authorities in Sumy ordered mandatory evacuations in 11 more settlements Saturday as Russian forces make steady gains in the area.

Speaking Saturday, Ukraine's top army chief, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said that Russian forces were focusing their main offensive efforts on Pokrovsk, Toretsk and Lyman in the Donetsk region, as well as the Sumy border area.

# S. Korea presidential candidates rally ahead of June 3 vote

SEOUL (AFP): South Korea's leading candidates held major campaign events Sunday, two days out from a snap presidential election triggered by its former leader's removal after his disastrous declaration of martial law.

The June 3 election is set to cap months of political turmoil sparked by Yoon Suk Yeol's brief suspension of civilian rule in December, for which he was impeached and removed from office.

All major polls have put liberal Lee Jae-myung well ahead in the presidential race, with the latest Gallup survey showing 49 percent

of respondents viewed him as the best candidate.

Kim Moon-soo, of the conservative People Power Party (PPP) — Yoon's former party — trailed Lee on 35 percent.

The 60-year-old Lee began his rally in his hometown of Andong, 240 kilometres (149 miles) southeast of Seoul, telling his supporters he would seek to weaken the concentration of development in the capital region and boost non-Seoul areas.

"We should not simply seek a regional equal development strategy but rather provide more incentives for non-Seoul regions

to support them more," said Lee, wearing a bulletproof vest.

Lee has been campaigning with additional security measures, including bulletproof shields set up on the podium.

He was stabbed in the neck in January 2024 in Busan by a man pretending to be a supporter, who later confessed that his intention was to kill Lee to prevent him from becoming president.

Lee is set to campaign in Busan later Sunday.

Kim Moon-soo was scheduled to campaign in the greater Seoul area, and kicked off a rally on

Sunday in nearby Suwon by commenting on rival Lee's security measures.

"Look, I'm not wearing a bullet proof vest, right? But Lee is now even using bulletproof shields, feeling the vest isn't enough," he said.

"With such bulletproof measures, Lee is poised to impose his own dictatorship and we must stop it," Kim added.

Nearly 35 percent of voters have already cast their ballots — taking advantage of two days of early voting earlier last week, according to the National Election Commission.

# Nearly 200 migrants in small boats rescued in Channel

LILLE (AFP): Nearly 200 migrants trying to cross the Channel from France to Britain in small boats were rescued between late Friday and late Saturday, French coastal authorities said.

A total 184 people were picked up in four different rescue operations, the maritime prefecture for France's Channel and northern region said in a statement on Sunday.

In one instance, the motor died on a boat carrying 61 people. In another, nine people on a boat called for assistance.

According to an AFP tally of official figures, 15 people have died so far this year trying to cross the Channel, one of the busiest areas in the world for shipping.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in May announced tougher new policies to tackle high levels of

regular and irregular migration, in an attempt to stem a growing loss of support to the hard right.

They include looking at the creation of centers in other countries to take in migrants whose asylum applications have been turned down.

The EU has also unveiled plans to make it easier to send asylum seekers to certain countries outside the bloc, in the latest overhaul aimed at reducing irregular migration.

# UK to restore 'war-fighting readiness' with new defence review

LONDON (AFP): UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday he will "restore Britain's war-fighting readiness" as his government warned of "growing" Russian aggression ahead of a major defence strategy review.

"We will restore Britain's war-fighting readiness as the central purpose of our armed forces," Starmer wrote in The Sun daily, including by ramping up weapons production capacity.

His government's Strategic Defence Review, due to be published Monday, will assess threats facing the UK, amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine and pressure from US President Donald Trump for NATO allies to bolster their own defences.

Starmer wrote that it will serve as "a blueprint for strength and security for decades to come".

Defence Secretary John Healey warned of "growing Russian aggression", including through "daily" cyberattacks on the UK's "defence system".

"We're in a world that is changing now... and it is a world of growing threats," Healey told the BBC on Sunday.

"It's growing Russian aggression. It's those daily cyberattacks, it's new nuclear risks, and it's increasing tension in other parts of the world as well."

The defence review will recommend "creating an

'always on' munitions production capacity in the UK" allowing the scaling up of weapons production if needed, according to the Ministry of Defence.

The document also urges the government to create conditions in industry to boost munition stockpiles.

In February, Starmer committed to hiking defence spending to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2027, up from its current 2.3 percent, and to further raise it to three percent by around 2029.

His Labour administration has said it would cut UK overseas aid to help fund the spending.

New technologies

On Saturday the government announced £1.5 bil-

lion (\$2 billion) for building "at least six munitions and energetics factories" as well as procuring 7,000 domestically built long-range weapons.

This investment — which will see £6 billion spent on munitions under the current parliament — would create and support 1,800 jobs.

"We are strengthening the UK's industrial base to better deter our adversaries and make the UK secure at home and strong abroad," Healey said.

The Ministry of Defence also pledged £1 billion for the creation of a "cyber command" to help on the battlefield.

The defence shake-up "means bringing together every capability we have,

from drones, to artillery, to human instinct and intelligence, into one formidable, integrated fighting machine," Starmer said.

The review, led by former NATO secretary general George Robertson, warns that Britain is entering "a new era of threat" as drones and artificial intelligence transform modern warfare, The Guardian newspaper reported Saturday.

The document will describe the "immediate and pressing" danger posed by Russia, as well as focusing on China, Iran and North Korea.

Robertson has described the four countries as a "deadly quartet" which were "increasingly working together".



PRIZREN, KOSOVO: Competitors throw basketball during the 21st edition of BunarFest on June 1, 2025 in Prizren, Kosovo. The center piece of BunarFest is a race down the Lumbardh River in large tractor-tire tubes.





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## Heat is the new silent killer across world

**THREE international organisations - Climate Central, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and World Weather Attribution - have released a report about the rising temperature in 2024 which could be traced to the effect of climate change.**

The report said that 4 billion people in the world experienced 30 days more of extreme heat. And there were 67 extreme heat events. And they said that this was a direct result of the unabated use of fossil fuels and the carbon dioxide they released into the atmosphere.

They analyzed weather data from May 1, 2024 to May 21, 2025. They found that the temperature crossed the 1.5 degrees Celsius barrier over the pre-industrial era, and over the last five years the average temperature was more than 1.3 degrees Celsius. The report noted, "Although floods and cyclones dominate headlines, heat is arguably the deadliest extreme event."

Frederick Otto, associate professor of climate science at Imperial College, London, and one of the authors of the report said that heat was the silent killer. Deaths due to heat are mislabelled and underreported. He pointed out, "People don't fall dead on the street in a heat wave...people either die in hospitals or in poorly insulated homes and therefore are not just seen...With every barrel of oil burned, every tonne of carbon dioxide released, and every fraction of a degree of warming, heat waves will affect more people."

The report showed that the Caribbean region was the most affected by the extreme events, accounting for 187 days last year. Without climate change the number would have been 45 days. It is the lower income communities and the vulnerable sections like the older people and those with medical conditions who remain most vulnerable to extreme heat.

There was extreme heat in South Sudan in February, in Central Asia in March. And in the Mediterranean last July. At least 21 people died when the temperature touched 118 degrees Fahrenheit (48 degrees Celsius). Says Roop Singh, head, urban and attribution of Red Cross Red Crescent, in a World Weather Attribution statement, "We need to quickly scale our responses to heat through better early warning systems, heat action plans, and long-term planning for heat in urban areas to meet the rising challenge."

He said that people are noticing that it is getting hotter but they do not see the connection with climate change.

Many climate change researchers have warned against rising sea levels, melting glaciers and erratic rain patterns, but there was not much emphasis on rising heat and its immediate impact on people.

The 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial or pre-1850 levels, a figure which was mentioned in the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 as the ceiling beyond which world temperatures should not go up, has remained an abstract figure.

But the extreme heat events are proving to be dangerous and fatalistic. Extreme heat is now to be treated as a natural disaster even as governments treat excess rains, tropical cyclones and storms as such and provide relief through the national disaster relief programmes.

The plain fact is extreme heat is a natural disaster and it is a consequence of climate change. The linkage of climate change to greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide, is pretty evident. The evidence is falling into a pattern. What is needed is determined response to the disaster that climate change brings.

The response has to be an intelligent one based on hard data, and innovative solutions have to be found to mitigate the effects of extreme heat. Extreme heat cannot any more be dismissed as a weather vagary. It is a serious distortion of the weather pattern that we have known for thousands of years. The pattern is breaking down, and it brings in its wake disaster. Every measure has to be taken to prevent the disaster.

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## Why Trump and Bukele are destroying Kilmar Abrego Garcia's life

Belén Fernández

In March, the United States government deported to El Salvador 29-year-old Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran national who had lived and worked in the US for almost half his life. Little did he know that he would soon be the face of US President Donald Trump's sinisterly exuberant mass deportation campaign.

Married to US citizen Jennifer Vasquez Sura, Abrego Garcia was detained while driving in Maryland with the couple's five-year-old autistic son, who got to witness his father's capture by the US forces of law and order and has apparently been severely traumatised as a result. In a subsequent court affidavit, Vasquez Sura said her son, who cannot speak, had been "very distressed" by the "sudden disappearance of his father", crying more than usual and "finding Kilmar's work shirts and smelling them, to smell Kilmar's familiar scent".

Of course, tearing families apart and traumatising children has long been par for the bipartisan course in everyone's favourite "land of the free", although Trump has certainly made more of a sensational spectacle out of it than his Democratic predecessors, Joe Biden and Barack Obama. Anyway, there is nothing like sowing a bunch of fear and psychological trauma in the name of national security, right?

Abrego Garcia was deported to El Salvador along with more than 200 other people, who shared the honour of serving as demonised guinea pigs in the Trump administration's current experiments in sadistic counterimmigration policy. The deportees were swiftly interned in the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT), the notorious mega-prison built by Nayib Bukele, El Salvador's self-described "coolest dictator in the world". The facility houses thousands of people arrested under the nationwide "state of emergency", which was declared in 2022 and shows no sign of abating.

Under the pretence of fighting a war on gangs, Bukele has imprisoned more than 85,000 Salvadorans – over 1 percent of the country's population – in an array of jails that often function as black-holes in terms of indefinitely disappearing human beings as well as any notion of human and legal rights. And now that incoming US funds and deportees have boosted El Salvador's international carceral clout along with Bukele's tough-guy image, there is even less of a rush to end the "emergency".

Meanwhile, the case of Abrego Garcia in particular has provided both Trump and Bukele with an extended opportunity to showcase their mutual passion for sociopathy and disdain for the law.

As it so happens, Abrego Garcia's deportation to El Salvador occurred in direct violation of a 2019 ruling by a US immigration judge, according to which he could not be deported to his native country on account of the dangers that such a move would pose to his life.

Indeed, Abrego Garcia

fled to the US as a teenager, precisely out of fear for his life following gang threats to his family. And although the US government was quickly forced to acknowledge that his deportation in March had occurred "because of an administrative error", the Trump-Bukele team remains determined not to rectify it.

After all, this would set a dangerous precedent in suggesting that the possibility of recourse to justice

to support the claim".

But a lack of evidence has never stopped folks who are not concerned with facts and reality in the first place. Trump officials have continued to insist on Abrego Garcia's affiliation with MS-13, while the president himself has unabashedly invoked a doctored photograph of tattoos on the man's knuckles. The administration has also relied heavily on the fact that, in 2019, the police

Abrego Garcia and countless other individuals.

In April, the US Supreme Court ordered the Trump administration to "facilitate" Abrego Garcia's return to the US. In addition to thus far failing to comply with that order, the administration has gone to ludicrous lengths to defy a separate order from US District Judge Paula Xinis that it provide details about what exactly it is doing to secure Abrego Garcia's release.

Apparently irked by Judge Xinis's pushiness, Trump administration officials then went with the good old "state secrets" excuse, which would enable the withholding of information regarding Abrego Garcia's case in order to safeguard "national security" and the "safety of the American people", as DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin put it.

Bukele, for his part, has handled the Abrego Garcia situation with a petulant and vengeful machismo befitting the world's "coolest dictator", taking to X to ridicule the wrongfully abducted and imprisoned man. During an April visit to his partner in crime in the Oval Office in Washington, Bukele made clear to reporters that he would not be lifting a finger on Abrego Garcia's behalf: "How can I smuggle a terrorist into the United States?"

Speaking of terrorism, it is worth recalling that, long before the current "state of emergency" in El Salvador, the US had an outsized hand in supporting right-wing state terror in the country, where the civil war of 1979-92 killed more than 75,000 people.

The majority of wartime atrocities were committed by the US-backed Salvadoran military and allied death squads, and countless Salvadorans fled north to the US, where MS-13 and other gangs formed as a means of communal self-defence. Following the war's end, the US undertook the mass deportation of gang members to a freshly devastated nation, paving the way for continued violence, migration, and deportation and culminating, of course, in the world's coolest dictatorship.

As they say, nothing fuels the consolidation of power and visceration of rights like a solid "terrorist" enemy – and at the present moment, Abrego Garcia holds the dubious distinction of serving as that enemy for not one but two sociopathic heads of state. At the end of the day, though, Abrego Garcia is no Osama bin Laden; he is just a random guy whose calculated torment is meant as a warning to anyone who might be feeling too confident in the rule of law.

Trump has already proposed sending US citizens to El Salvador for incarceration, as well – and to hell with any semblance of legality. To that end, the president has proposed that Bukele build more prisons, a project that presumably will not require much arm-twisting.

Now, as the US government goes about annihilating the rights of foreign nationals and legal citizens alike, it is safe to assume that no one is safe.

## Enlightened Americans should stay and fight, not leave

Andrew Mitrovia

For all his faults and hubris, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy possesses one unmistakable quality: courage.

That became apparent during a memorable moment more than three years ago when Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine.

A foreboding, endless column of Russian tanks and other armoured vehicles had breached the border in a pincer pattern.

In the halting face of such an intimidating display of overwhelming force, defeat seemed close by.

Kyiv looked bound to fall. Zelenskyy and company would be arrested or killed as a lethal exclamation point while Russian President Vladimir Putin installed a puppet regime to bow and obey.

The comedian turned unlikely wartime leader did not flinch. He stood his ground – on the sacred soil of Ukraine.

To reassure fretful Ukrainians, Zelenskyy posted a short video on social media featuring himself surrounded by several solemn-looking officials and cabinet ministers. "The president is here," he said. "We are all here ... defend[ing] our independence."

I was reminded of that remarkable scene while I read accounts over the past few months from a disparate group of Americans, including artists and academics, departing their beloved homeland in the distressing wake of President Donald Trump's jarring return to the Oval Office.

Before I continue, I am obliged to make two instructive points.

First, by invoking Zelenskyy's vow to remain in Ukraine despite the ominous risks, I do not mean to imply that enlightened Americans opting to forgo living and working in the United States, lack courage.

Far from it. Each of us has confronted or will confront in due course a defining dilemma: to stay or to go.

Answering the prickly question can stir doubt and anxiety. Making a choice, regardless of the direction, is a bold act. It takes resolve to exchange the familiar for the unknown.

Second, I have avoided the word "flee" to describe why some Americans choose to emigrate due to Trump's egregious modus operandi. "Flee" evokes impulsive panic or self-preservation, rather than thoughtful, deliberate decision-making.

Still, Zelenskyy offers a compelling example of why it is necessary to stay instead of escaping to Canada or Europe when a bully threatens the values and principles that you hold dear – fairness, truth, empathy, tolerance, justice, diversity, and intelligence.

So, enlightened Americans, I urge you to insist like Zelenskyy: We are all here.

Your presence in America to fight for its promise is a duty and responsibility.

Together, you can fashion a formidable, immovable buttress against the wretched aspects of Trumpism – its assault on facts, erosion of democratic norms, embrace of authoritarianism, and corrosive pursuit of division and fear.

This contest cannot be won remotely – far from the epicentre of the urgent battle. It has to be fought face-to-face with an uncompromising adversary and hand-in-hand with other enlightened Americans, thin on the privileges and resources that have enabled your exit.

Trumpism thrives when opposition retreats. Absence creates space for extremism to entrench itself even more deeply and widely into America's already frayed and discordant fabric. Withdrawal only comforts the Trumpists determined to quash dissent and erase resistance through edicts, threats, and coercion.

Leaving can also be seen as an admission of defeat – a concession that

an angry, ruptured country is beyond redemption or salvation.

Dynamic governance is not self-sustaining; it requires citizens to keep up the struggle, particularly when it is trying. By forsaking the arena, some enlightened Americans forfeit their ability to shape the present and the future.

In contrast, standing with and by enlightened Americans remaining behind, confirms that America belongs to all its people, not just the cartoonish characters shouting the loudest or demanding the most attention.

Trump welcomes the idea of disheartened Americans building new lives in new places because he is president. It is, I suspect, a point of pride since it suggests his vindictive agenda is working.

For Trump, the exodus of "liberal elites" or "out-of-touch" entertainers is proof that the old establishment, never subscribers to his jejune notion of America's "greatness", is being replaced by "authentic" patriots.

This response is, of course, symptomatic of Trump's broader political strategy – drawing a Berlin Wall-like line between "real" Americans – his supporters – and everyone else.

By celebrating the phenomenon of Americans parting in protest, he promotes the insidious attitude that protest is not an essential ingredient of a mature, confident nation, but a form of disloyalty.

Trump is not interested in unity or persuasion. As such, he frames his presidency as a litmus test of fidelity. If you don't worship him, you're encouraged to join the dispondent diaspora – and, in his jaundiced view, good riddance.

Despite their arguments and reservations about resettling to avoid the depressing capitulation of major law firms, universities, and corporate media, Americans face an uncomfortable truth: walking out won't help drive change.

Scholars and intellectuals with the mettle and means to challenge obstinate power should rejoin the fight where it counts: in classrooms, on airwaves, in town halls.

Declarations from abroad, however poignant, are not substitutes for showing up, time and again, in person to remind America that kindness, resiliency, and decency matter.

Trumpism thrives on spectacle, and few understand the potency of spectacle better than celebrities.

Many bidding America adieu did so defiantly, wielding a righteous pulpit from foreign shores. Even so, symbolism without substance is hollow.

Returning means tackling – head-on – the mess, the contradictions, the tarnished ideals of a battered nation still worth the imagination and effort.

Public figures ought to leverage their popular platforms not just to condemn, but to galvanise, to convey resistance not as elitist scorn but as shared obligation. That would impress more than a pointed opinion column in the New York Times or a thread of disparaging tweets ever could.

Zelenskyy knows that hard work is always done on the ground. This is where returnees can make a tangible difference – not as saviours parachuting in, but instead as allies to like-minded collaborators who do that hard work without notice or applause.

Trumpism may be ascendant, but it is not invincible. What it fears most is solidarity that bridges class, race, and background – solidarity that declares that America is not Donald Trump's to disfigure or define.

The bruised and disillusioned exiles can reclaim their rightful place in that grave fray – if they come home.



# Israel stands condemned, but why has it taken so long?

Since the EU’s recent decision to initiate a review of Israel’s compliance with its obligations under international law in the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and after the UK suspended trade talks with Israel and the leaders of Canada, France, and the UK issued a joint statement condemning the expansion of Israel’s military operations in Gaza, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in Israeli military operations.

In one incident, nine siblings of the same family were killed, and the war is still raging. So, forgive me if I find it difficult to get too excited about these latest diplomatic maneuvers to stop the senseless bloodshed, especially as this approach is still toothless, with no work on any time frame for introducing tangible measures.

It is also the case that the argument “better late than never” hardly holds water. Yes, if those baby-steps are the start of a concerted international effort to bring the war to an end, they will become immensely valuable, but there is much doubt about how effective they will be — and if they are not, what those countries intend to do.

There is also the painful and lingering question: What has taken them so long? After all, every single day of delay in stopping the war has resulted in the deaths of many dozens of people, sometimes up to 100 a day, most of them noncombatants. In late May, nine of the 10 children of Dr. Alaa Al-Najjar and her husband Dr. Hamid were killed in an Israeli airstrike while she was on duty in the Nasser medical hospital. Only Hamid and one of their children survived, although both were badly injured.

How could anyone remain indifferent in the

face of such a tragedy, and one that could have been avoided, had the terms of the ceasefire agreed in January been adhered to? This is just one case of an entire family or a large part of them being wiped out in this war. If this heartbreaking tragedy does not move the world sufficiently to ensure that the Israeli government stops this war, what will?

All the alarm bells regarding how Israel would conduct the war in Gaza were ringing from the first week of the conflict.

***The unsubstantiated claim that every person in Gaza was complicit in the massacre should have been a warning sign. Moreover, between a government that failed to defend its people with horrendous consequences and would not admit to that failure, and senior Cabinet ministers who harbor messianic fantasies of expelling the Palestinians from Gaza, annexing the Strip and rebuilding settlements there, the likelihood of a proportionate response was always close to nil. Hence, it should not have taken the EU, UK, and Canada 19 long and blood-soaked months to figure this out.***

Without taking anything away from the genuine anger at what Hamas inflicted on Oct. 7, the wish for revenge, and not only against those who carried out the attack, but against the entire population of Gaza, was instantly apparent. The unsubstantiated claim that every person in Gaza was complicit in the massacre should have been a warning sign.

Moreover, between a government that failed to defend its people with horrendous consequences and would not admit to that failure, and senior Cabinet ministers who harbor messianic fantasies of expelling the Palestinians from Gaza,

Yossi Mekelberg

annexing the Strip and rebuilding settlements there, the likelihood of a proportionate response was always close to nil. Hence, it should not have taken the EU, UK, and Canada 19 long and blood-soaked months to figure this out.

Part of the explanation for the lack of will on the part of those who have suddenly found their voice in the past week or two and described what some Israeli ministers are suggesting will be the next stage in the war in Gaza as “extremist,” “dangerous” and “mon-

strous” is that their working assumption has been that only Washington can make a difference, and that at best they could only play a supporting role.

This has been more a case of relinquishing responsibility and avoiding friction, with Israel particularly, in the hope that either the US would use its influence to end the war, or the conflict would just run its course.

This has proved to be misguided. In the immediate aftermath of Oct. 7, most of the world, and with good reason, showed its support for Israel’s collective pain and trauma. However, at the same time

Notwithstanding Europe’s declared commitment to ensure human rights, Brussels also underestimates the enormous economic, diplomatic, and social power it has over Israel, not to harm its security, but to do the exact opposite: to save the country from itself when it is being governed by a reckless government.

Moreover, at least some European powers should feel a moral and historical obligation for being the root cause of this conflict and for letting it fester for so long.

It is nothing short of shocking that only in the past two weeks have there

been some signs of concerted effort in Europe, out of despair at being unable to talk any sense into the Israeli government, or to stop the war and allow adequate humanitarian aid to enter the enclave. The EU’s top diplomat Kaja Kallas explained the reason for its review of the association agreement that gives Israel many economic and scientific advantages as being the “catastrophic” situation in Gaza, with Israel “potentially” in breach of its commitments to human rights in the agreement.

In the UK Parliament, David Lammy, the foreign secretary, said that the suspension of trade talks was a response to both the prevention of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza, and Israel’s intention, as stated by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, to “cleanse” the enclave, with resident Palestinians “being relocated to third countries.” And, out of character, Germany, which traditionally refrains from criticizing Israel, has felt that it can no longer stand on the sidelines, with its new Chancellor Friedrich Merz declaring that to cause such suffering to the civilian population “can no longer be justified as a fight against Hamas terrorism.”

Declarations and statements aside, reviewing agreements and suspending talks are not going to change Israel’s course of action. At this juncture in the war, as it once more deploys massive forces on the border and inside Gaza, and with the government’s ill intentions out in the open, Europe, the UK, and Canada will have to go beyond “suspending” and “reviewing.” If they do, it might also serve as a wake-up call for more Israelis to take to the streets and stop this murderous madness by its government.

# Global threat report reveals Trump’s strategic priorities

Luke Coffey

The US Defense Intelligence Agency recently released its annual threat assessment report. While these official government documents are often bland and filled with bureaucratic language, this year’s publication stands out — both for its substance and what it reveals about how the new administration views today’s geopolitical challenges. This is the first threat assessment of President Donald Trump’s second term, and it offers an early insight into the administration’s strategic priorities.

A few things jump out right away. This year’s threat assessment is longer than last year’s, and offers a more detailed and nuanced analysis across multiple sections. But two major changes in this year’s report, when compared with the final assessment produced under the Biden administration, are particularly striking.

The most notable difference is the inclusion of a dedicated section on US homeland defense and border security — placed not as an afterthought but as the first item in the report. This marks a sharp departure from last year’s assessment, which focused almost exclusively on global threats and challenges. The placement and tone of the new homeland security section clearly bear Trump’s personal stamp. One of his most effective political narratives has been that US policymakers focus too much on problems abroad, while neglecting the security of Americans at home. This report reflects that view.

The homeland security section places particular emphasis on the national security implications of illegal immigration, transnational organized crime, and the influx of deadly narcotics by drug cartels into small American communities. These are not just political talking points; they represent real and growing threats to the safety and well-being of Americans. But the political savvy of the framing should not be overlooked. While the average American may not be deeply familiar with issues such as Taiwan’s security or freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, they are certainly familiar with the devastating impact of fentanyl or cartel violence. Including homeland security at the top of the Defense Intelligence Agency’s global threat assessment makes the report more relevant to the American public and highlights Trump’s emphasis on border security as a matter of national defense.

The second striking difference is the prominent section, entitled “Growing Cooperation Among US Competitors and Adversaries,” which comes immediately after the homeland security section. For the first time, a US threat assessment explicitly links and highlights the emerging coordination among America’s adversaries and competitors. The report states: “Building on activities over the past two years, leaders in Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang will strengthen their nations’ ties in their drive to undermine the influence of the US and its allies.”

This is an important — and overdue — acknowledgment of a multipolar and interconnected world. For years, much of the US foreign policy establishment has resisted the concept of multipolarity, preferring to see the world in

unipolar or bipolar terms. This resistance is rooted in Cold War-era thinking, when power was viewed through a US-versus-Soviet lens. But a new generation of American strategists understands that multiple centers of power exist — and are increasingly coordinating with one another to challenge US interests around the globe.

Recognizing the reality of this multipolar environment does not mean conceding that all powers are equal. It simply acknowledges the complexity of today’s geopolitical landscape. The inclusion of this section in the threat assessment is a necessary step toward grappling with the way these regimes are learning from each other,

In the coming months, the Department of Defense is expected to publish a new National Defense Strategy, which should provide additional clarity on how the US plans to counter the threats identified in the Defense Intelligence Agency assessment. Likewise, the National Security Council is likely to release a similar document outlining a more comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to these

***To illustrate the shift, if you took a diplomat from 1980 and one from 1880 and brought them both to 2025, it might be the latter — accustomed to a world of competing empires and power centers — who would better recognize the dynamics at play today. Recognizing these trends is one thing, acting on them another. Within the new administration, there are competing schools of thought on how to respond. Some believe China is the primary threat and argue that all instruments of US power should be directed toward countering Beijing. Others, often aligned with more isolationist instincts, believe the US should focus exclusively on homeland security and reduce its global footprint. Then there are more traditional Republican voices who argue that the US must be able to address multiple threats simultaneously and maintain its global leadership role. Though the administration is still filling out its national security team, the contents of the Defense Intelligence Agency report suggest that the latter group is gaining the upper hand, at least for now.***

cooperating diplomatically, militarily, and economically, and exploiting US vulnerabilities.

To illustrate the shift, if you took a diplomat from 1980 and one from 1880 and brought them both to 2025, it might be the latter — accustomed to a world of competing empires and power centers — who would better recognize the dynamics at play today.

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Though the administration is still filling out its national security team, the contents of the Defense

challenges. Importantly, all these strategies must be backed by resources. The White House will need to work with Congress to ensure that the budget aligns with these stated priorities. It is one thing to acknowledge that America’s adversaries are coordinating their efforts, but quite another to craft a strategy — and appropriate the funds — to counter them effectively.

Some in the Biden administration may have understood that this emerging coordination by America’s competitors posed a threat, but were reluctant to spotlight it publicly for fear of being forced to act. The Trump administration, by contrast, has put these challenges front and center. But in doing so, it has also raised the stakes. Having declared that homeland defense is national security — and that America’s adversaries are working together — the administration will now be judged on how it responds.

The coming months will be critical, not only for America’s national security and that of its allies, but also for the future of America’s role in the world.

# Protecting our oceans is everyone’s business

Patrick Maisonnave

We must act now. We must make sure that multi-lateral action is equal to the challenges of protecting the oceans.

Ten years after COP21 and the Paris Agreement, which established a binding global framework to limit climate change, the third UN Ocean Conference is a historic opportunity. The

***Together, we can make the third UN Ocean Conference a turning point for our peoples, for future generations and for our planet. France will be delighted to welcome Saudi Arabia, along with more than 100 countries, to tackle those challenges together. Saudi Arabia has more than 2,600 km of coastline and is located at the crossroads of three continents. In the framework of Vision 2030, the sea is an incomparable resource for diversifying the economy: connectivity, transport and logistics, tourism, fisheries, and many more. The sustainable use of this resource is strategic.***

“Nice Ocean Agreements” will form a genuine international compact for conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, fully in line with the sustainable development goals adopted by the UN in 2015.

To this end, the talks in Nice need to be very hands-on and action-focused, aiming for better governance, more financing, and greater knowledge of the seas.

When it comes to governance, the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National

Jurisdiction, or the BBNJ Agreement, is essential. The high seas, which represent more than 60 percent of the oceans, are currently the only space not governed by international law. The lack of oversight and common rules is causing a real social and environmental disaster, with massive hydrocarbon and plastic

pollution, illegal and unregulated fishing techniques, and the taking of protected mammals. To end this legal vacuum, we need the BBNJ Agreement to be ratified by 60 countries so as to come into force. The protection of the oceans also requires public and private financing, and support for a sustainable blue economy. To continue enjoying the incredible economic opportunities offered by the oceans, we need to make sure marine resources can regenerate. In Nice, several commitments will be announced for global

trade, shipping, tourism, and investment.

Lastly, how can we protect what we know not — or know insufficiently? We need to enhance our knowledge of the oceans and share it more widely. Today, we are capable of mapping the surface of the moon or of Mars, but the depths of the oceans —

which cover 70 percent of Earth’s surface — remain unknown. Together, we need to put science, innovation, and education in order to better understand the oceans and raise public awareness. In the context of ever faster climate change and overexploitation of marine resources, the oceans are not just one more issue: They are everyone’s business. We must not forget our shared responsibility in the context of challenges to multilateralism. The oceans join us all together and are central to our future.

From June 9-13, France will host the third United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development (UNOC, or United Nations Ocean Conference). For this vitally important event, some 100 heads of state and government will converge, as well as tens of thousands of researchers, scientists, activists, and citizens from around the world. On this occasion, France’s aim will be clear: protecting the oceans through tangible action.

The oceans belong to all of us. They feed and protect our peoples. They inspire dreams and enable travel. They offer sustainable energy, the means to trade, resources, and infinite scientific knowledge.

One in three people rely on the oceans for their livelihood, yet the oceans are in danger. They remain little known, with neither global governance nor the financing needed for their preservation. The numbers are worrying: More than 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year, according to a study in Science.

More than one third of fish stocks suffer overfishing, while ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and the destruction of marine ecosystems increases, as direct consequences of climate change.

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The Saudis have shown their determination to implement policies in line with Sustainable

Development Goal 14: Establishing regulatory agencies to protect biodiversity; enforcing regulations on fisheries; increasing the number of protected areas in line with the Kunming-Montreal Protocol; and supporting scientific data collection and research.

We must take action together to make the third UN Ocean Conference a turning point, and allow the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. Saudi Arabia is a major stakeholder and a strategic partner when it comes to preserving the oceans, seas, and marine resources, and ensuring that they are used in a sustainable way. Its commitment will be decisive.





# Aurangzeb terms Q2 2025 IPSOS survey a strong affirmation of improving economic outlook, public sentiment across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Sunday welcomed the findings of the IPSOS Consumer Confidence Survey for the second quarter of 2025, calling it a strong affirmation of the improving economic outlook and public sentiment across Pakistan.

The survey reveals a significant surge in consumer confidence, with 42 percent of Pakistanis now believing the country is heading in the right direction, the highest level recorded in six years, said a news release.

Perceptions of the economy being strong have also reached their most favorable levels since August 2019.

Notably, optimism has overtaken pessimism for the first time since consumer confidence tracking began, marking a key psychological shift among the population.

The minister noted that this encouraging data reflected the success of the government's disciplined and targeted macroeconomic strategy implemented over the last 14 months.

The stabilization of key economic indicators, including the containment of inflation, strengthening of the exchange rate, rebuilding of foreign exchange reserves, and improved fiscal discipline has created a foundation for renewed public trust and economic recovery, he added.

He highlighted that consumer confidence in making major purchases and investments has doubled compared to the same period last year, indicating that households are beginning to feel more secure in their financial prospects.

Similarly, confidence in job security is now at its highest since 2019, a sign that labor market conditions are gradually stabilizing in response to pro-growth policies and reforms, the federal minister said.

The minister further pointed out that this upswing in confidence spans across urban and rural areas, and is particularly evident among youth and women—demonstrating the broad-based nature of the economic turnaround.

He linked this optimism to sustained government efforts to create an enabling environment for private sector growth, boost exports, enhance social protection, and encourage financial inclusion.

Aurangzeb reaffirmed that the government remains committed to maintaining macroeconomic stability, accelerating structural reforms, and ensuring that economic growth translates into real and inclusive progress for all citizens.

The findings of the IPSOS survey, he said, are a timely validation of Pakistan's economic direction and a clear signal that the country is on a steady path toward recovery and resilience.

## PRGMEA, PHMA warn tariff barriers threaten exports

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Seeking an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ahead of the federal budget, Pakistan's apparel sector — a vital contributor of around \$9 billion in export revenue — has warned that the country's value-added textile industry faces serious setbacks due to continued tariff barriers and restrictive policies that are choking supply chains.

In a joint statement issued by the Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) and the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA), apparel exporters stressed that global buyers now demand certified, high-performance materials that are simply not available in Pakistan. Yet, import of such essential raw materials remains hindered by duties and outdated regulations.

PRGMEA Regional Chairman Dr. Ayyazuddin and PHMA Zonal Chairman Abdul Hameed jointly demanded a direct and an immediate meeting with the prime minister ahead of the budget, warning that without urgent intervention, Pakistan could lose out on the global shift in sourcing patterns that has opened fresh opportunities for new exporters.

Dr. Ayyazuddin emphasized that Pakistan still

relies heavily on cotton-based exports — primarily denim and fleece — while nearly 80% of global apparel trade has moved toward synthetic and functional textiles. “We cannot expand or diversify if we don't have access to the right raw materials,” the statement said. “We are being penalized for importing items that aren't even produced locally.”

Abdul Hameed pointed out that man-made fibers, technical yarns, performance fabrics, and critical trims — many categorized under HS Chapters 54, 55, and 96 — are subject to duties despite not being manufactured in the country. “Keeping tariffs on non-available raw materials is equivalent to taxing exports before they even happen,” he said.

Former PRGMEA chairman Ijaz Khokhar and Sajid Saleem Minhas backing the joint demand highlighted that SMEs are particularly vulnerable due to rigid policies and lack of flexibility in global compliance. “We've sent a detailed letter to the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and commerce ministry outlining how certain recent policy changes, like the shortening of the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) input period from 60 to just 9 months, are unrealistic for the apparel sector,” he said.

PRGMEA ex-chairmen Ijaz Khokhar added that the

letter, addressed to the PM as well as the Commerce Minister Jam Kamal, strongly criticizes the abrupt shift in EFS timelines. He argued that value-added exporters often operate under just-in-time and never-out-of-stock business models, requiring longer input cycles to fulfill diverse orders. He said that the current restrictions, it warns, will disrupt operations and increase compliance burdens for exporters.

Sajid Saleem Minhas added that the local spinning industry has not evolved to meet the requirements of today's global fashion market. Since we don't produce the materials our buyers demand, we should at least allow their duty-free import. Otherwise, we are locking ourselves out of high-growth product categories, he said.

The PRGMEA and PHMA members also called for restoration of the Final Tax Regime (FTR) for exporters, stating that the shift to the Normal Tax Regime has led to complex audits and disrupted business continuity. We need simplicity and certainty, not additional paperwork and scrutiny,” the statement noted.

Ijaz Khokhar also raised another concern which is the lack of government push on trade diplomacy, particularly with the United States, where Pakistani textiles face an average import

tariff of 29%, compared to lower rates for competitors like Bangladesh and Vietnam. The letter suggests Pakistan negotiate preferential terms or targeted tariff relief with the US, especially for eco-friendly and sustainable products that align with global ESG compliance.

He said that refund delays were also highlighted as a chronic problem. Exporters are facing severe liquidity shortages due to delayed disbursement of DLT, DDT, sales tax, and withholding tax refunds. The industry has requested an automated and time-bound mechanism for refund processing to ease working capital constraints.

Additionally, both associations emphasized the need for a strong national marketing campaign for “Made in Pakistan” garments. They urged the Ministry of Commerce to initiate global trade outreach through embassies, digital platforms, and targeted B2B events to increase visibility and improve brand image.

He said that this sector has the potential to double its exports in five years and added that we need the government to first remove these structural roadblocks.

Sajid Minhas said that the Pakistan's value-added textile sector is one of the largest employers and a key contributor to national exports.

## APBF pushes for robust SME sector in budget

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has called on the federal government to place small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) at the heart of the upcoming Federal Budget 2025-26, warning that without immediate and meaningful support, the backbone of Pakistan's economy could face serious setbacks.

In a policy meeting held in Lahore to finalize recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year, APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood emphasized that the government must take tangible steps to revive and protect the SME sector, which represents over 90% of Pakistan's 5.2 million business enterprises, contributes nearly 40% to the GDP, and employs more than 78% of the non-agricultural labor force.

“Time for lip service is over. The SME sector must survive without real support in the form of tax relief, access to financing, and a business-friendly regulatory environment,” said Syed Maaz Mahmood. “We expect the federal government to design Budget 2025-26 with a strong focus on job creation through industrialization, ease of doing business, and SME revival.”

The APBF recommended a visible reduction in indirect taxes, including lowering sales tax to single digits and cutting the corporate tax rate to foster formalization and growth. It also urged the Ministry of Finance to promote regionally competitive energy tariffs, speed up sales tax refunds, and provide interest-free or low-interest credit schemes without collateral, particularly for youth-led startups and newly registered SMEs.

APBF leaders stressed that the high cost of doing business, combined with inflation, energy shortages, and a tight monetary policy, has pushed many small businesses to the brink. The forum proposed a temporary five-year tax holiday for newly registered SMEs and exemption from audits during this period to encourage formal registration and investment.

Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi highlighted that while Pakistan requires 1.5 to 2 million new jobs annually, the current economic structure lacks the capacity to deliver without SME empowerment. “The SME sector was the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic and has yet to fully recover. Government financing to SMEs still accounts for less than 7% of total private sector lending, and SME borrowers remain below 250,000 nationwide. This must change,” he said.



MULTAN: Vendors displaying sacrificial animals to attract customers at cattle market.

## Business community proposals must shape budget 2025-26: PIAF

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has called on the federal government to ensure that the upcoming Federal Budget 2025-26 reflects the ground realities of trade and industry by incorporating the proposals submitted by the business community.

In a press statement issued after a comprehensive consultative session with key stakeholders from various industrial sectors, PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol emphasized that ignoring the input of genuine taxpayers and industry stakeholders would result in yet another missed opportunity to revive economic activity, generate employment, and stabilize the national economy.

PIAF senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary said that chambers of commerce, trade associations, and industrial forums across the country have submitted well-researched, data-backed budget proposals focused on tax reforms, SME development, energy cost rationalization, and investment facilitation. “The government must not treat these suggestions as ceremonial,” Nasrullah Mughal stressed.

“These proposals come directly from the people who are running businesses, creating jobs, and contributing to the national exchequer. If these voices are ignored, policymaking will remain disconnected from ground realities.” Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary pointed out that the current economic challenges—low growth, high inflation, weak exports, and stagnant investment—can only be overcome through a collaborative approach between the government and the private sector. “The budget must not be seen merely as a fiscal document—it should serve as a roadmap for industrial growth and economic revival,” he said.

Faheem Saigol urged the Ministry of Finance to align the budget with the needs of the productive sectors instead of relying on indirect taxation and import-based revenue. “If we want sustainable growth, we need to shift from taxing consumption to facilitating production. Supporting industry means supporting employment, innovation, and exports,” he emphasized.

The PIAF Chairman reiterated that high utility costs, policy uncertainty, and heavy taxation have severely hampered the business environment, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which make up more than 90% of total businesses in Pakistan and employ over 80% of the non-agricultural workforce.

“We have proposed a reduction in sales tax and customs duties on essential industrial inputs, alongside reforms aimed at simplifying tax compliance for documented businesses. SMEs should be encouraged, not burdened,” he added.

Saigol highlighted that the lack of affordable financing remains a major hurdle for the SME sector. “We have recommended that the government introduce collateral-free loan schemes, reduce markup rates, and offer risk-sharing mechanisms to banks to improve access to credit,” he said.

In addition, he called for uninterrupted power and gas supply at regionally competitive tariffs to support export-oriented and value-added industries. “Energy pricing and reliability are critical issues. Unless our industries receive energy at costs similar to our regional competitors, we cannot hope to compete globally,” he maintained.

The PIAF chief also emphasized the need for predictability and consistency in government policies. He said that frequent changes in tax laws, import rules, and regulatory frameworks have created confusion and discouraged long-term investment. “Rebuilding investor confidence will require not just incentives, but clear, stable, and transparent policies that are made in consultation with the business community,” he noted.

He warned that if genuine demands are ignored again, more businesses may either shift to the informal economy or downsize their operations, both of which would shrink the tax base and increase unemployment. “We are already seeing signs of stagnation in many sectors. The government must act before this trend becomes irreversible.”

PIAF plans to continue lobbying for the implementation of its proposals and will remain actively engaged with the Ministry of Finance, the FBR, and other relevant departments. “We will not remain silent spectators. We are ready to support the government in designing policies that make sense for both fiscal management and economic growth,” Saigol said.

He concluded by stating that Pakistan's business community has always played a key role in supporting the national economy, even in difficult times, and now expects the government to reciprocate with policies that are supportive, inclusive, and forward-looking.

## PM&DC conducts National Registration Examination 2025

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC) has successfully conducted the National Registration Examination (NRE-I) 2025 across major examination centers in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar.

The National Registration Examination NRE-I was held today, on June 1, 2025, in compliance with Section 18 of the PM&DC Act 2022.

The NRE is a mandatory licensing exam designed to evaluate the competency of foreign-qualified MBBS and BDS graduates of Pakistani nationality who seek full registration as General Practitioners in Pakistan.

A total of 5,036 graduates nationwide were registered for the NRE-I exam, in which 4,995 were MBBS graduates and 41 were BDS registered graduates. In Karachi 390 MBBS, 1 BDS graduates appeared. In Islamabad 1,583 MBBS, 19 BDS, in Peshawar 442 MBBS, 3 BDS and in Lahore 2,538 MBBS, 15



BDS graduates appeared simultaneously.

The theory examination began at 9:30 AM and lasted 03 hours and 30 minutes. The NRE Examination consists of two parts NRE I and NRE II. The Candidates must pass both components separately with a minimum score of 60%.

President PM&DC, Prof. Rizwan Taj, in a statement, said that the examination has been conducted under the supervision of the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS)

in a transparent and disciplined manner.

Prof. Taj also advised aspiring medical students to only enroll in recognized international institutions listed by the PM&DC and they must provide quality education so that when these graduates come back to Pakistan can pass the licensing exam and can get absorbed in the national health system and serve their country.

He also added that all parents and students must check the recognised list of

international medical and dental colleges, as no graduate from an unrecognised institution will be registered with PM&DC.

He further stated that the PM&DC is committed to ensure excellence in medical and dental education while pursuing uniform minimum standards.

He added that the NRE II examination schedule will also be communicated on the PM&DC official website as soon as the NRE I exam result is announced.

## BMP comprehensive proposals target sustainable growth, investment

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has put forward a comprehensive set of proposals aimed at revitalizing Pakistan's economy by addressing key challenges faced by the industrial and trade sectors. These recommendations, developed after extensive consultations with stakeholders nationwide, focus on structural reforms, investment promotion, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and policy stability to ensure sustained economic growth.

Addressing a media briefing here at PIAF office on Sunday, BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar stressed that the country is facing serious economic headwinds which require immediate and sustained government intervention. “Our economy is grappling with inflationary pressures, high interest rates, energy shortages, and regulatory bottlenecks. To overcome these hurdles, the upcoming fiscal plan must prioritize industrial growth and export-led development,” he said.

One of the foremost demands from the BMP is the overhaul of the taxation system. The panel advocates for reducing the general sales tax (GST) rate and simplifying tax procedures to enhance compliance and ease the financial burden on businesses and consumers. “Pakistan's over-reliance on indirect taxation increases costs throughout the supply chain, which ultimately affects consumers and stifles industrial expansion,” Nisar remarked. He further

pointed out the need to broaden the tax net by bringing informal businesses into the formal economy, thus enhancing revenue without additional strain on existing taxpayers.

The panel also emphasizes rationalizing customs duties, especially on raw materials and capital goods essential for manufacturing. Lowering tariffs will reduce input costs, encourage local production, and increase competitiveness in regional and global markets. “If we want to see a thriving manufacturing base, affordable access to inputs is crucial,” he added.

Energy pricing remains a critical concern for businesses. The BMP calls for aligning electricity and gas tariffs with regional benchmarks to improve Pakistan's industrial competitiveness. High energy costs have eroded profit

margins and deterred investments in manufacturing and export-oriented sectors. “Without a competitive energy policy, Pakistan risks losing its edge to neighboring countries that offer cheaper power and gas,” Nisar warned.

Small and medium enterprises, which constitute the backbone of Pakistan's economy, have been disproportionately affected by economic challenges. BMP's proposals include introducing specialized credit facilities with low markup rates, collateral-free loans, and a tax holiday for at least five years for newly established SMEs. Such measures would promote entrepreneurship, generate employment, and foster innovation. “SMEs are not only job creators but also drivers of economic diversification. Supporting them must

be a national priority,” Nisar said.

To further improve the business environment, the BMP suggests creating a one-window operation that integrates multiple regulatory approvals into a single streamlined process. This would cut red tape, reduce bureaucratic delays, and accelerate project implementation. “Ease of doing business is fundamental to attracting both local and foreign investors,” explained Nisar.

Addressing the trade deficit, the panel recommends policies to promote import substitution by incentivizing domestic manufacturing of products currently imported. Reducing dependency on imports will improve the country's balance of payments and stimulate local industries. In parallel, export sectors should receive enhanced

support through easier access to finance, better logistics infrastructure, and export facilitation programs.

Agriculture, which employs a significant portion of the population, is another key sector identified by the BMP. The panel advocates for modernization of farming practices, better water management, and improved access to markets to increase productivity and food security. These steps are expected to reduce reliance on food imports and stabilize rural incomes, thereby strengthening overall economic resilience.

Mian Anjum Nisar also highlighted the importance of political stability and policy consistency. “Investor confidence is fragile, and uncertainty caused by frequent policy reversals undermines economic progress. The government

must commit to transparent, long-term strategies that provide certainty to businesses,” he said.

He further urged the government to ensure that the fiscal and monetary policies remain aligned, helping create an environment conducive to growth and investment. “Coordination between the State Bank and Ministry of Finance is essential to prevent conflicting policies that can confuse markets and investors,” Nisar added.

The BMP chairman called for greater collaboration between the government and private sector. “We stand ready to work with policymakers to refine and implement reforms that can transform Pakistan's economic trajectory. Ignoring the voice of the business community risks repeating past mistakes,” Nisar warned.

### Court Notice

In the court of sidra jalal civil judge-III, Matta swat case #8/12(2) institution 17/10/2023. Next Hearing date 12/06/2025. Baz Gul VS Sher. Notice to defendant.(37/1) Bakht wisal widow.(27/2) Latif-ur Rehman (27/3) Saeed- ur-Rehman (27/4) Ibrahim (27/5) saeed ullah sons Hazrat Rehman (27/6) Hameeda Bibi (27/7) Nasreen Bibi (27/8) Zainab Bibi daughter Hazrat Rehman r/o Barkot tehsil matta district Swat. In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 12/06/2025. ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of the court.





In brief

National Jr Squash C'ship enters semis

PESHAWAR (PPI): Jansher Khan All Pakistan National Junior Squash Championship has intensified as the competition reaches the semifinals stage in Peshawar. In the Under 11 category, Anas Rafay from PAF will face off against his teammate Arbaz Zeb, while Abdurehman Riaz, also from PAF, is set to challenge Muhammed Saim from Sindh. The Under 17 category promises equally riveting matches, with M Ali Khan and Mustafa Irfan, both representing PAF, battling for a spot in the finals. Abdullah Zaman and Haris Zahid, also from PAF, will compete against each other in the second semifinal. The Pakistan Squash Federation encourages fans to support these young athletes as they vie for a place in the championship finals. The Pakistan Squash Federation encourages fans to support these young athletes as they vie for a place in the championship finals. The Pakistan Squash Federation encourages fans to support these young athletes as they vie for a place in the championship finals.

England's Overton out

E D G B A S T O N (Reuters): England all-rounder Jamie Overton will miss the rest of the home series against West Indies after breaking his right little finger, on his bowling arm, during the first One-Day International at Edgbaston, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Saturday. The 31-year-old, who suffered the injury on Thursday when he tried to take a catch while bowling, left the field for treatment but returned to finish the game with his finger heavily wrapped. He took three wickets as England won by 238 runs. "He will now undergo a period of rehabilitation under the supervision of the England medical team. No replacement will be added to the ODI squad," the ECB said in a statement. Matthew Potts will replace Overton in the England team when they face West Indies in the second of their three ODIs on Sunday, with three Twenty20 matches also scheduled from Friday.

Kunlavut seals crown in style

SINGAPORE (AFP): Kunlavut Vitidsarn celebrated becoming the first man from Thailand to top the badminton world rankings by winning the Singapore Open in style on Sunday. The 24-year-old demolished China's unseeded Lu Guangzu 21-6, 21-10 in just 37 minutes with his range of powerful smashes and deceptive drop shots. Paris Olympics silver medalist Kunlavut will replace another Chinese player, Shi Yuqi, as world number one in a landmark for Thai badminton. It was his fourth title this season. "There will be pressure to be the best player in the world, but it's going to be a good pressure as that will give me the added motivation of doing my best to win all the tournaments I take part in," said Kunlavut, who lost the Paris final to Viktor Axelsen. Denmark's two-time Olympic champion Axelsen, the former number one, is currently working his way back to fitness following surgery for a back problem. In an all-Chinese women's final at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, the fifth seed Chen Yufei outplayed second-seeded Wang Zhiyi 21-11, 21-11. Chen was runner-up to world number one An Se-young last year.



MUNICH: Marquinhos of Paris Saint-Germain lifts the trophy after winning the UEFA Champions League Final 2025 against FC Internazionale Milano.

## PSG crush Inter with record 5-0 win Champions League final

MUNICH (Agencies): Désiré Doué scored twice to inspire Paris Saint-Germain to their first European Cup triumph with an emphatic 5-0 win over Inter Milan in a totally one-sided Champions League final on Saturday. After losing the final to Bayern Munich in 2020, Luis Enrique's PSG side, who teetered on the brink of elimination in the league phase this season, finally claimed the trophy their big-spending Qatari owners have craved. PSG put on a masterclass which the more experienced Inter side had no answer to, scoring twice in the opening 20 minutes through former Inter

defender Achraf Hakimi and Doué. The 19-year-old Doué was on target again in the 63rd minute, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored 10 minutes later and substitute Senny Mayulu netted three minutes from time to seal the biggest winning margin in a Champions League final. Before kickoff the Italian fans sang "There's Only Inter", the club's anthem, but on the pitch their side went missing and PSG ran riot to secure a richly deserved win. PSG bossed the game from the start, maintaining possession with their slick passing, every player constantly searching for an opening, which they found

in the 12th minute when Vitinha played a pass into Doué in the box. Inter defenders appealed for offside but Federico Dimarco played the PSG man inside and the youngster kept his cool to roll the ball across goal and hand Hakimi the simplest of tap-ins. The second came eight minutes later from a quick PSG counter which found Ousmane Dembélé on the left wing. Dembele drove forward before floating the ball to the far side and Doué had time to control the ball on his chest and his shot took a deflection off Dimarco to beat the wrong-footed Yann Sommer. PSG killed off the game with a third goal when

Vitinha slid the ball through to Doué in the area and the 19-year-old coolly slipped the ball past Sommer. Inter were shell-shocked but things only got worse. Dembele's defence-splitting pass from his own half sent Kvaratskhelia haring away before beating Sommer at his near post, a goal which brought the PSG bench, including Luis Enrique, onto the pitch as they knew this game was all over. PSG still had time for a fifth as Mayulu fired past Sommer from close range after a pass from substitute Bradley Barcola and the final whistle was greeted with huge roars from the French fans who had been singing loudly all game.

## ‘Proud’ Piastrì extends c’ship lead with Spanish GP win

BARCELONA (AFP): Oscar Piastrì drove with exemplary calm and control in a torrid race on Sunday to beat rival and team-mate Lando Norris as McLaren claimed a first Spanish Grand Prix victory since 2005 with a resounding 1-2 triumph. The 24-year-old Australian came home 2.4 seconds clear of Norris to extend his lead in the drivers' championship to 10 points with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finishing third after a dramatic finale. Four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull went for a three-stop strategy that resulted in him losing third place in the final laps before being handed a 10-second penalty for crashing into Mercedes' George Russell who finished fourth. It was Piastrì's fifth win of the season and the seventh win of his career – and his eighth consecutive podium finish for McLaren, a feat that had only been achieved before by three-time champion Ayrton Senna and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton. Nico Hulkenberg was fifth, from 15th on the grid, for Sauber ahead of Hamilton in a Ferrari, Racing Bulls' rookie Isack Hadjar and Pierre Gasly of Alpine. Two-time champion and local hero Fernando Alonso finished ninth for Aston Martin with



Verstappen classified 10th after his bruising late incidents which prompted 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg to suggest he deserved to be black-flagged and disqualified. "Great weekend" "It was a bit of a surprise to see Max try a three-stop and it really worked for him," said Piastrì. "But it's been a great weekend overall. The overall pace was really good and we could turn it on when we needed to – and I am just very proud of the work we've done this weekend. "It's a nice way to bounce back from Monaco. It's been a superb weekend." Monaco winner Norris started second but ceded his position to Verstappen on the first lap before battling back to follow his teammate home. "Oscar drove a very

good race today," said Norris. "I didn't quite have the pace to match him. We gave it our best shot. It's a long race and anything could have happened at the end of the race. "We both got pretty sideways with the safety car restart. It was a good, fun race and for us as a team to finish one-two is even better." Leclerc said he was encouraged to attack Verstappen when he realised he had been given hards for the late re-start that followed a Safety Car intervention, while he was on softs. "When the engineers told me that Max was going on a hard tyre for the last stint, I was very optimistic because I knew how bad the hard was," he said. "That's when I knew I needed to have a good restart. Luckily, there was an opportunity.

## Root's sparkling 166 steers England to series win

CARDIFF (Agencies): Joe Root became England's leading run-scorer in one-day internationals as his sparkling unbeaten 166 secured a three-wicket win over West Indies in Cardiff. Root, who is also his country's highest run-scorer in Tests, finished with 166 from 139 balls as England reached their target of 309 with seven balls remaining to take the three-match series with a game to spare. He surpassed World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan's tally of 6,957 runs on the way to his highest ODI score, leading England's recovery from 93-4 which included ducks for Jamie Smith, Ben Duckett and Jos Buttler. Root combined with Harry Brook for a third-wicket stand of 85, before a masterful partnership of 143 with Will Jacks

put England within touching distance of victory. A fierce spell from Alzarri Joseph, who finished with 4-31, accounted for Jacks for 49 and Brydon Carse for two to keep West Indies interested, but Root and Adil Rashid calmly ticked off the remaining 21 runs, sealed in style by a classical Root drive down the ground. Earlier, West Indies' 308 was set up by Keacy Carty's 103, bookended by half-centuries from Brandon King and Shai Hope - and with plenty of assistance from England's sloppy fielding. Carty and King added 141 for the second wicket but the former was put down on by Duckett on one and Saqib Mahmood on 41, while Duckett also dropped King on 11 and somehow squandered a run out

opportunity when both batters were stranded in the middle of the pitch in the 21st over. The innings fell away from 205-2 when Carty fell three balls after reaching his century, with Rashid taking 4-63 and Mahmood's three late wickets mopping up the tail. The visitors were left to rue wasting 14 balls of their innings as the last five wickets fell for 50 runs, the lower order offering Hope little support as he was last to depart for 78 from 66 balls. The third and final ODI takes place at The Oval on Tuesday. Carty punishes sloppy England England seamers Carse and Mahmood were lively in their opening burst - the former had opener Jewel Andrew caught at cover with some unexpected

### PCB chairman hails Arshad for making nation proud

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has extended heartfelt congratulations to Arshad Nadeem after he clinched gold in the javelin final at the Asian Athletics Championship in Gumi, South Korea. Arshad Nadeem, while competing internationally for the first time since last year's Paris Olympics, has once again made the nation proud. He clinched the gold medal at the Asian Athletics Championship with a stunning throw of 86.40 meters in the men's javelin throw final. In a statement brimming with national pride, Naqvi lauded Arshad's achievement, calling it a moment of honour for the entire nation. "Well done, Arshad Nadeem, well done! We are proud of you," said Naqvi. He also congratulated Arshad's coach and family, acknowledging the role they played behind the scenes. "Arshad is a true son of the soil, and once again, he has made every Pakistani hold their head high with pride," Mohsin Naqvi added.

The Olympic champion started off with throws of 75.64m and 76.80m in his first two attempts, gradually building momentum before hitting his peak in the final round. Meanwhile, the PCB Chairman highlighted the immense joy his victory has brought to the people of Pakistan. "This victory is a result of sheer hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment," said Naqvi. He went on to say that the entire nation is overjoyed by this historic feat and proud of Arshad, one of Pakistan's most gifted athletes.

bounce in the second over – only for three dropped catches to follow. Carty continued his rich run of form with a third ODI ton in his past four matches, punishing England's numerous errors. The first was a difficult chance which popped out of Duckett's hand as he dived full stretch at second slip, but the next was a sitter, the batter sweeping straight to Mahmood at short fine leg off Jacob Bethell. Duckett should also have taken his chance off King, fielding in the same position as the ball burst through his hands after a flashing drive.

# Haris hits ton as Pakistan seal clean sweep over Bangladesh

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Mohammad Haris dazzled with an unbeaten 107 as Pakistan completed a clean sweep over Bangladesh in the three-match T20I series, thrilling a packed crowd at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday. Pakistan secured a comprehensive 3-0 series victory by defeating Bangladesh in the final T20I. The Green Shirts chased down the target of 197 runs with ease, winning by seven wickets in the 18th over. Opting to bowl first after winning the toss, Pakistan restricted the visitors to 196 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs. Parvez

Hossain Emon top-scored for Bangladesh with 66 runs, while Tanzid Hasan contributed 42. Towhid Hridoy and captain Litton Das added 25 and 22 respectively. Among the bowlers, Hasan Ali and Abbas Afridi took two wickets each for Pakistan, while Shadab Khan and Faheem Ashraf claimed one apiece. In response, Pakistan's innings was anchored by a scintillating knock from Mohammad Haris, who remained not out on 107 – his maiden T20I century. His innings was instrumental in guiding Pakistan to victory. Saim Ayub chipped in with 45 runs and Hasan

Nawaz added 26, playing valuable supporting roles. This was the Pakistan's first T20I series whitewash against any opposition since 2021. PLAYING XI Pakistan: Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Mohammad Haris (wk), Salman Agha (c), Hasan Nawaz, Shadab Khan, Khushdil Shah, Faheem Ashraf, Abbas Afridi, Hasan Ali, Abrar Ahmed Bangladesh: Tanzid Hasan, Parvez Hossain Emon, Litton Das (c), Towhid Hridoy, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Jaker Ali, Shamim Hossain, Rishad Hossain, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Hasan Mahmud, Khaled Ahmed.



LAHORE: Mohammad Haris' fifty led Pakistan's chase.

## Sabalenka powers into Roland Garros q-finals

PARIS (AFP): World number one Aryna Sabalenka reached her 10th consecutive Grand Slam quarter-final on Sunday with a straight-sets win over Amanda Anisimova in the French Open fourth round. The Belarusian battled through a tight opening set against the American 16th seed and then needed eight match points to clinch a 7-5, 6-3 victory on Court Suzanne Lenglen. Sabalenka, who was the pre-tournament favourite, will face Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen in the last eight after the Chinese star edged past Liudmila Samsonova. Zheng beat Sabalenka for the first time in their seven meetings in the Italian Open quarter-finals in the build-up to Roland Garros. Anisimova holds a 5-3 winning record over Sabalenka but has now lost their last two matches. The 23-year-old, a French Open semi-finalist in 2019, won her maiden WTA 1000 title in Doha earlier this season. She pushed Sabalenka in the first set, breaking the top seed when she was serving to clinch the opener. But two missed break points in the 11th game proved costly as Sabalenka went on to secure a one-set lead. The three-time Grand Slam champion quickly built a 3-0 advantage in the second set. Anisimova showed real grit to save six

match points in a marathon hold of serve to cut the deficit to 5-3, but Sabalenka finally finished it off on her own serve at the eighth time of asking with a thumping backhand winner. Swiatek survives scare to reach French Open quarter-finals: Triple-defending Roland Garros champion Iga Swiatek battled into the quarter-finals of the French Open on Sunday, overcoming a bruising first set loss to eventually defeat former Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina. The four-time holder of the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen displayed great resilience to win 1-6, 6-3, 7-5 in two hours and 29 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier. Swiatek will next face Elina Svitolina for a spot in the semi-final, after the Ukrainian earlier saved three match points to eliminate last year's runner-up Jasmine Paolini. After winning Roland Garros last year to complete a remarkable treble of clay-court victories in Madrid, Rome and Paris, the Pole's turbulent 2025 looked set to hit a new nadir as she found herself a set and a break down against the 12th-seeded Kazakh. Following early exits at the Madrid and Italian Opens this season, Swiatek appeared to be headed for a similarly disappointing result at the tournament she

has dominated since her first title in 2020. "Well it was tough you know, first set I felt like I was playing against Jannik Sinner," said Swiatek. "I needed to do something to get back in the game, but with her playing like that I didn't feel like I had much hope." Rybakina hardly put a foot wrong in the first set as she raced into a 5-0 lead, with fifth seed Swiatek finally getting on the scoreboard after a lengthy service game before the world number 11 served out. But the 24-year-old showed her fighting spirit to level up the second set after being broken in the first game by Rybakina. She racked up double-faults on crucial points in the fifth game, but managed to secure a vital hold, which turned the tide of the match. The five-time major winner then broke to love in the very next game, before forcing a decider. Swiatek seized the advantage in the seventh game of the third set, but another untimely double-fault by the Pole in the next game restored parity. At 5-5, Swiatek made her move as she broke Rybakina to 15, before holding for a gritty win. Swiatek now holds a 5-4 head-to-head record over Rybakina, after claiming her first victory against the 25-year-old on the red dirt.



PARIS: Elina Svitolina of Ukraine during Roland Garros 2025 day 8 at Roland Garros.





## In brief

### ICT Police nab five criminals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Sunday conducted a search and combing operation in the jurisdiction of Kirpa Police Station, screening 60 individuals and arresting five suspects during the action. An official told APP that the operation was part of the ongoing crackdown to curb crime and apprehend criminal elements in the federal capital. He said that Islamabad Police teams conducted a grand search operation in different areas of Kirpa during which 27 houses, shops, and hotels were thoroughly searched, while 60 individuals and 30 vehicles were checked. He said two suspicious individuals were also shifted to the police station for verification. He said five accused were arrested during the operation, and police recovered a stolen motorbike, a weapon, and ammunition from their possession. He said that such operations are being carried out under the special direction of DIG Islamabad Muhammad Jawad Tariq to tighten the noose around anti-social elements and enhance security across the city.

### Three bike lifters nabbed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Koral police team busted a notorious motorcycle-lifting gang by nabbing three wanted members and seizing six stolen motorcycles from their possession. An official told APP on Sunday that the Koral police team apprehended the accused with the help of technical and human intelligence. The arrested individuals were identified as Hamid, Bilawal Rasheed, and Nadeem Ali, who were involved in numerous bike-lifting incidents. He said that six stolen motorcycles were recovered from the possession of the accused. He said that cases were already registered against the suspects, while further investigation was underway. DIG Operations Muhammad Jawad Tariq directed all officers to intensify the crackdown against criminal elements and take every possible measure to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property.

### 14 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A coordinated operation by Islamabad Police led to the arrest of 14 individuals, including five on the run, seizing a significant cache of drugs and weapons, police said Sunday. Teams from various police stations, including Kohisar, Margalla, and Shalimar, apprehended nine suspects linked to criminal activities, confiscating 632 grams of heroin, 520 grams of hashish, 210 grams of ice, 30 bottles of liquor, four pistols, and three rifles. Authorities have registered cases against those detained, with investigations underway. In a concurrent campaign targeting proclaimed offenders and absconders, police teams successfully captured five fugitives. Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi emphasized the force's commitment to maintaining peace in Islamabad, highlighting ongoing efforts to combat crime. The police reassured residents that safeguarding lives and property remains their primary mission. Residents are encouraged to report suspicious activities to local police stations or through the "Pucar-15" emergency helpline to aid in crime prevention through community collaboration.



ISLAMABAD: A worker feeds sacrificial animals at the cattle market near Expressway ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. —APP Photo

## Ajmer Sharif symbolizes interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday said that the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmer Sharif stands as a powerful symbol of interfaith harmony, peace, and love values that are urgently needed in today's divided world.

He was speaking at a prestigious ceremony held at the Islamabad Club to mark the nomination of Dr Afshan Malik (Shehr Bano) as the official representative (Khalifa) of Dargah Ajmer Sharif in Pakistan.

The event brought together prominent figures from political, social, business, journalistic, and diplomatic circles. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, was the chief guest at the ceremony. Congratulating Dr

Afshan Malik on her nomination, he lauded her commitment to Sufi values and service to the community.

In his address, Governor Kundi highlighted the universal appeal of Ajmer Sharif, saying, "The shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti is among the most revered spiritual sites in South Asia, attracting not only Muslims but Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians alike. It stands as a symbol of interfaith harmony, peace, and love."

Referring to rising communal tensions in India, he said, "At a time when interfaith harmony is under serious threat in India, spiritual sanctuaries like Ajmer Sharif stand as bastions of truth, tolerance, and resistance." Speaking at the event, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Alisher

Qodirov, emphasized the influence of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz and other Sufi saints across South and Central Asia.

"The teachings of these saints have spread the true message of Islam humanity, peace, and equality not just in the subcontinent but also in Central Asia. Ajmer Sharif remains a spiritual center for devotees from around the world," he said, extending heartfelt congratulations to Dr Afshan Malik. In her speech, Dr Afshan Malik expressed her deep gratitude and commitment to spreading the teachings of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.

"My goal is to promote the values of humanity, brotherhood, and tolerance. Sufi shrines have always been centers of love, serv-

ice, and unity," she said. She added that the teachings of Khwaja Sahib are a guiding light for all of humanity, transcending religious and sectarian boundaries.

Hafiz Muhammad Shabbir, Chairman of the Pak-Kuwait Business Forum and host of the event, called Dr Afshan Malik's appointment a matter of pride for Pakistan. "This milestone will play a key role in amplifying the message of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti," he remarked.

Former Minister and PML-Q leader Dr Amjad, FPCCI's Karim Azeer Malik, and Shaista Hameed of the Insaniyat Foundation also addressed the gathering and praised Dr. Afshan Malik's contributions to social and spiritual causes.

## No mercy for nursing mafia, zero tolerance for corruption: Mustafa

ISLAMABAD, Jun 01 (APP): Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal Sunday declared war on the nursing mafia, pledging to introduce tough new laws to root out corruption and ensure transparency.

In a fresh conversation with a local news channel, he explained that the nursing mafia is aggressively operating on fake degrees, and it's high time we take strict action against them.

He added that the government needs to crack

down on these corrupt practices and ensure that only qualified professionals are allowed to practice.

Syed Mustafa Kamal highlighted the exorbitant demand for nursing seats, with institutions charging up to Rs 2.5 million for foreign nursing opportunities and Rs 900,000 in Pakistan.

He emphasized the urgent need for a transparent and merit-based system to ensure fairness and accountability in the nursing sector. The Federal

Health Minister said that the present government will soon revamp nursing education, vows transparent admissions and strict merit-based policies.

"Kamal also guarantees quality medicines, part of a broader initiative to enhance healthcare services. Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal also assured efforts to ensure the availability of quality medicines, emphasizing the government's commitment to improving the health sector.

## DIG Tariq orders enhanced security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq chaired a high-level meeting to review crime prevention strategies and security preparations ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. The meeting was attended by SSP

Muhammad Shoaib Khan, zonal SPs, and SDPOs.

A public relations officer told APP on Sunday that during the meeting, SSP Operations briefed the DIG Tariq about ongoing security measures and crime control strategies in the city.

DIG Tariq emphasized the need for comprehensive security arrangements, especially in commercial centers and on Chand Raat. He directed all officers to intensify patrolling and ensure strict checking at all entry and exit points of the city.

DIG Tariq said security of important buildings and places of worship must remain effective, and patrolling—both on foot and through vehicles—should be made more purposeful and visible.

DIG said all officers must improve mutual coordina-

tion, share intelligence, and take firm legal action against the display of weapons under any circumstances.

DIG Tariq said special patrolling units including Dolphin and Ababeel squads should remain active across all areas, particularly during Eid days.

DIG said protecting the lives and property of citizens is the top priority, and all officers must maintain proper check and balance on their subordinates while ensuring the welfare of the force during the Eid holidays.



ISLAMABAD: A worker arranging flower plants at local nursery near H-9 in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## PHP continue action against criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) Rawalpindi Region under the supervision of SSP Muhammad Bin Ashraf, has taken major steps in the last month to improve law and order and to ensure road safety.

A total of 558 First Information Reports (FIRs) were registered during the month. Police also recovered 01 pistol, 01 rifle with 22 bullets, a stolen vehicle, 08 motorcycles, 10 liters of liquor, and 1.2 kilograms of drugs.

In action against criminals, 33 proclaimed offenders and 36 court fugitives were arrested. Among them, four A-category

criminals involved in heinous crimes were also apprehended.

On the roads, police issued 30,803 E-challans for traffic violations. 184 drivers were booked for using substandard gas cylinders in their vehicles, and 353 drivers faced cases for reckless driving. As part of security checks, the patrolling police verified the identity of 276,697 people and checked 78,956 vehicles through their mobile app system.

Meanwhile, 298 passengers in distress were helped during travel, including 23 emergency cases that required first aid or immediate assistance.

In addition, seven missing children were safely reunited with their families.

Efforts were made to promote road safety. 62 citizens received driving training, and 583 were issued driving licenses.

Meanwhile, 419 underage drivers and 3,684 motorcycles without proper documentation or helmets were impounded. To raise awareness, the police held road safety workshops at various patrol pumps.

Because of the hot weather, stalls with cold water and drinks were set up for travelers. People belong to various walks of life appreciated this kind gesture.

## Polio vaccination drive receives strong response

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) has reported a highly successful response to nationwide polio eradication campaign, which entered its final day on Sunday.

According to NEOC, with full momentum and public cooperation over the past six days, 97% of the targeted children across the country have been administered the polio vaccine.

The NEOC highlighted significant progress across all provinces and regions as

Punjab and Sindh each achieved 97% coverage, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reached 98%, and Balochistan matched the national average with 97%.

Meanwhile, Azad Jammu and Kashmir reported a 98% coverage rate, and both Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad surpassed their targets with 100% of the intended children vaccinated — an achievement attributed to outreach efforts and strong community participation.

The synchronized polio

campaign is also underway in neighboring Afghanistan, as both countries continue coordinated efforts to eradicate the virus from the region.

The NEOC renewed its appeal to parents and caregivers to ensure all children under the age of five receive the oral polio vaccine, along with completing their routine immunization schedules. "Protecting children from polio and other preventable diseases is a collective responsibility," the NEOC emphasized in its statement.

## DG directs the timely recovery of housing societies' dues

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Kinza Murtaza, has directed the concerned to intensify follow-up efforts to ensure timely and effective recovery related to housing schemes and buildings.

According to the RDA spokesman, the DG reiterated that the recovery of outstanding dues remains a top priority for the authority.

Kinza emphasised the need for coordinated efforts among departments and instructed staff to maintain strict compliance with recovery procedures.

She also underscored the importance of transparency, efficiency, and accountability in all related matters, adding that the financial stability of RDA directly impacts serving the citizens of Rawalpindi effectively.

Therefore, recovery must be pursued proactively, without any delays or negligence, she added.

The RDA remains committed to upholding its responsibilities and ensuring sustainable urban development through proper resource management and enforcement of regulations.

## Police celebrates Global Parents Day

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad Police organized a special ceremony at the Capital Police College to honor Global Parents Day, following directives from Inspector General of Police, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi.

A significant gathering of police officers and their parents attended the event, sharing insights on the crucial role of parents and the importance of their upbringing.

Director of Special

Initiatives Shams-ul-Haq Durrani and SP Capital Police College Najeeb Shah delivered addresses, emphasizing the sacrifices of parents and their role in character building. They acknowledged June 1 as a day to pay tribute to the love and compassion of parents, underscoring the idea that parents are a child's first school.

Both officers urged participants to pledge support for parents in educational

and developmental stages, fostering excellence in children's knowledge and confidence. They encouraged respecting parents, spending quality time with them, and valuing their prayers as essential assets, thereby strengthening the educational system and family values.

The event highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong bond with parents, recognizing their trust and guidance as foundational to a child's future.

## Overpricing forces buyers to return home empty-handed

RAWALPINDI (APP): As only five days are left for the Eid-ul-Azha, the buyers herding cattle markets in Rawalpindi are left with little option but to return home without buying sacrificial animals.

Residents, who arrived at the Bhatta Chowk sale point along with their overjoyed children, told this agency on Sunday that the animal sellers were demanding overpriced rates that were beyond their buying power.

Saed Khan, a buyer at the market, said last year he purchased a small goat of 20 kilograms against Rs 55,000, but now the same animal was being sold at up to Rs 100,000, which indicated that the rate of sacrificial animals had gone up by 100 per cent.

Humyion Shahzad, another buyer, at Adiala Road market said the rates of goats, sheep, buffalos and cows were overstated, forcing the people to go home empty-handed.

He said buffalos and cows of 100

kilograms, which were available at no more than Rs 150,000 last year, were being sold up to Rs 300,000 this year.

Humyion called upon the district administration to take steps to save the public from the fleecing of sellers. When contacted, the President of the Jamiat Ul Quresh Pakistan, Khurshheed Ahmed Qureshi, said the major cause of the surge in prices of animals was due to a demand and supply gap.

He informed this agency that animal production had witnessed a steep decline during the previous years as the departments concerned had failed to adopt a comprehensive policy to boost the production of halal meat, resulting in a Rs 500 per kg increase in mutton prices and Rs 450 per kg in beef prices during the last one year.

Giving details about online shopping of sacrificial animals, Qureshi, who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Livestock and Dairy Development Directorate, said that

the online shopping of sacrificial animals had reached up to 70 per cent after the Covid-19 pandemic era, adding that people were preferring online platforms. He said the use of online platforms to purchase sacrificial animals could also be another reason for small crowds at the cattle markets, adding that online companies offer a goat of 14 kg at Rs 55,000 and 14 kg of share in cows or buffaloes at Rs 30,000 to 35,000. Abu Bakr, a calf seller from Zahir Pir, said, the increase in transportation charges, cost of animal breeding and bribes collected by the police and officials of various departments led to the increase in animal prices.

Naveed Sheikh, a vendor, said, this time prices were higher than last year because of high rates of feed, vaccination, and transportation. According to a market survey, vendors are leaving a narrow negotiating margin for the buyers.

## CTP Rawalpindi starts working closely

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has been organizing special road safety workshops at the Traffic Headquarters in Race Course for the last several months which are now yielding positive results.

The training sessions were held for drivers of heavy vehicles, public transport, tractor trolleys, and even motorcyclists.

More Than 2,500 Drivers had received Public Service Training. The drivers received detailed awareness about traffic accidents.

According to CTP Rawalpindi, there has been a visible decrease in fatal road accidents within city limits. Last month, 3 fatal accidents were reported in

urban areas and 5 in rural parts of the district.

Whereas, 3 accidents happened because of negligence by heavy vehicle drivers and 3 were caused by over-speeding motorcyclists and an accident was reported due to a technical fault in the vehicle.

Meanwhile, another accident was happened due to a dangerous U-turn taken by a driver, who now faces legal action.

Unfortunately, 10 people were lost their lives in these incidents. To prevent such tragedies in the future, CTP Rawalpindi has started working closely with Rescue 1122.

Together, they are identifying accident-prone areas also known as "accident

hotspots" and planning joint safety measures like special police duty, installing speed cameras, and other precautions.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima emphasized that road safety is everyone's responsibility.

She said that the traffic police, following the vision of the Chief Minister, are taking serious action including registering FIRs against those who violate traffic laws.

She urged the public to follow traffic laws, drive with patience, and coordinate with traffic police. "Only through awareness and cooperation we can make our roads safer and prevent more accidents," she added.



MoE supports Helmand

HELMAND (BNA): The Ministry of Education in Afghanistan has provided essential materials and equipment to local education authorities. Alhaj Hafiz Mawlawi Abdul Raziq Hakimi, the resources and administrative director of the Helmand Education Department, announced the donation of 12 motorcycles, 1,200 tables and chairs, and 36,000 textbooks aimed at supporting students in grades seven to twelve.

Killer arrested in Herat

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): A man has been arrested for allegedly killing his father, mother and wife in Herat. In a statement, the 207 Al-Farooq Military Corps said the suspect, Sayed Rahman, a resident of Adraskan district, was detained in connection with the triple murder. Rahman had killed his parents and wife some time ago and was recently detained by intelligence personnel from the 4th Battalion of the 10th Border Brigade under the 207 Al-Farooq Corps.

DAB Governor meets China envoy



KABUL (BNA): Noor Ahmad Agha, the governor of Da Afghanistan Bank, and Zhao Xing, the China Ambassador to Kabul, discussed the expansion of financial and banking cooperation between their two countries. During the meeting, DAB Governor mentioned the Bank's efforts in establishing strong ties with prestigious international financial institutions. He emphasized the bank's commitment to enhancing technical cooperation in the financial sector and facilitating business operations for local entrepreneurs.

Technical glitch disrupts Ministry's email system — delaying student services

KABUL (Amu TV): Official email systems used by public universities under the Taliban-run Ministry of Higher Education have been nonfunctional for the past two weeks, disrupting administrative processes and delaying essential services for students, multiple sources told Amu on Sunday. The ongoing outage has affected universities across the country, including Kabul University, one of Afghanistan's largest institutions. Students and faculty say the issue has halted critical procedures such as correcting student records, issuing certificates, and coordinating with the Taliban-run National Examination Authority in Kabul. The email disruption has left university administrators unable to verify requests, process documents, or coordinate with other offices, sources said. Students who arrive daily at administrative offices face prolonged delays, with little clarity on when the issue will be resolved. At the Taliban-run National Examination Authority, which handles credential verification and exam records, visitors reported slow operations even before the email problem began. "It takes several days to process even a simple request," said one student. "Now with email down, it's become almost impossible."

Jalali calls for enhanced transparency



KABUL (BNA): In a meeting, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, the Minister of Public Health, emphasized the need for effective and transparent health services during discussions with Dr. Tajuddin Oyela, the head of UNICEF in Afghanistan. Minister Jalali highlighted that organizations failing to provide effective services should not be involved in the health sector. He underscored the importance of timely medicine delivery to health centers and called for serious actions against facilities that do not receive medications promptly. The two leaders addressed various critical topics, including: The effectiveness of health service delivery by implementing organizations. The quality and timely distribution of medications to hospitals and health centers. Joint monitoring initiatives to evaluate health services. Capacity building for health workers. The establishment of new health centers. Dr. Oyela reaffirmed UNICEF's commitment to collaborating with the Ministry of Public Health, particularly in joint monitoring efforts to enhance service quality. He announced the formation of a joint committee tasked with identifying the needs of hospitals and health centers, ensuring that essential medications and supplies are delivered on time.

Taliban minister calls for fight against 'propaganda'

KABUL (Amu TV): As Taliban continue to detain journalists, civil society activists and clerics critical of their rule, the Taliban's minister for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice has called for what he described as a campaign against "propaganda." Khalid Hanafi spoke to a session in Kabul where filming was banned. In an audio message released by the Taliban from the event, Hanafi told subordinates that "the era of battlefield fighting is over — now the battle is one of propaganda and the pen." His comments come amid mounting reports of intimidation, arrest and punishment of those who speak out against the Taliban. A source familiar with the matter told Amu TV that at least 15 media workers and three religious scholars remain in Taliban custody, detained for their public remarks or published content. Two additional sources from journalist advocacy organizations confirmed that some of those held have been sentenced to two to three years in prison by Taliban-run courts. A former detainee who recently secured release, and who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons, described being beaten in front of family members and subjected to abuse in custody. "They stormed my house, blindfolded me with black plastic in front of my children," the man said. "They beat me so badly I passed out. In prison, the torture continued."

Over 5m Afghans returned

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has announced that since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, more than 5.097 million Afghans have returned to the country from neighboring states. Abdul Mutalib Haqqani, the spokesperson for the ministry, added that in the past two months of the current calendar year, 268,000 Afghans have returned from Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that over the past two months, more than 500,000 Afghans have been deported from Iran and Pakistan. The UNHCR added that due to the decline in international aid, Afghanistan is facing a crisis, and the return of migrants must be conducted in a dignified, voluntary, and safe manner.

At least 450 Afghans released

KABUL (Amu TV): At least 450 Afghan nationals were released from prisons in Pakistan over the past week and have returned to Afghanistan, according to data compiled by Amu from the Taliban-run Ministry of Refugees statements. The figures show that 487 Afghans were freed between May 24 and May 31, and repatriated via the Spin Boldak border crossing. While Taliban have not provided detailed reasons for their detentions, most Afghan nationals in Pakistan are typically arrested for lacking legal residency documents. The newly released individuals had been detained in various parts of Pakistan. Among them, 34 were released and returned to Afghanistan on Saturday alone. The ministry's weekly reports focus on returnees arriving through a single border crossing and do not reflect the total number of Afghans released from Pakistani detention facilities nationwide. Earlier this month, Amu reported that 1,284 Afghan nationals had been released over a 15-day period. Many had spent between a few days to more than ten days in Pakistani jails. The Norwegian Refugee Council recently estimated that more than one million Afghans have returned to the country since Pakistan began its mass deportation campaign in September 2023. The group warns that returnees are arriving in a country already struggling with widespread poverty, an economic crisis and deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The report also projects that an additional 600,000 Afghans may be expelled from Pakistan and return to Afghanistan in 2025.

Ghazni stars win T20 series

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): The Ghazni Stars have clinched the three-match T20 series title against the Paktika Samsor team in southern Ghazni province, an official said on Sunday. Provincial Cricket Director Abdul Wadud Paktiawal told Pajhwok Afghan News that the series was organized as part of the provincial cricket department's annual plan. He said the Ghazni Stars won the first two matches consecutively, while the third match was called off due to bad weather. "The series concluded 2-0 in favor of the Ghazni Stars, who were declared the champions," he added. Paktiawal added that the tournament aimed not only to promote cricket but also to strengthen unity, coordination, and brotherhood among the youth of Ghazni and Paktika provinces. Meanwhile, players expressed satisfaction with the event's organization. They emphasized that such tournaments not only enhance teamwork but also foster positive inter-provincial cricket relations and healthy competition.

Industrial exhibition in Kabul: Taliban leaders' portraits draw attention and questions

KABUL (Amu TV): A Taliban-organized industrial exhibition in Kabul closed Sunday with a highly publicized display of portraits featuring senior Taliban leaders, including their interior minister Siraj Haqqani and their founder Mullah Omar, a move that drew scrutiny for its contradiction with the Taliban's own prohibitions on visual depictions of living beings. Held as part of "Industry Week," the event also featured images of Taliban Defense Minister Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid. Their portraits were exhibited alongside historical Afghan leaders such as King Amanullah Khan and former President Mohammad Daoud. Notably absent, however, were any images of former presidents Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani. The final day of the event was reportedly marked by tightened security measures. According to attendees, Taliban members at the venue allowed entry only to individuals with official press credentials and were actively monitoring the hall for journalists affiliated with Afghan media outlets based abroad. One particular image of Sirajuddin Haqqani — labeled with the religious honorific "Khalifa" and set against a striking red background — attracted significant attention on social media, further fueling debate over the Taliban's stance on visual representation. The display stood in stark contrast to Taliban policies currently enforced in at least 13 provinces, where the Taliban have banned the publication and broadcast of images of living beings, including human figures, under its interpretation of Islamic injunctions. The prominent use of leader portraits at a state-sponsored event has therefore raised questions about the consistency — and motives — behind the policy. Media watchdogs and press freedom advocates have warned that such restrictions pose growing challenges for journalists and are part of broader efforts by the Taliban to limit freedom of expression and control public discourse. The Afghanistan Journalists Center has previously cautioned that the bans on imagery, combined with increased surveillance and intimidation of reporters, severely hamper the public's access to independent information. Despite those concerns, the exhibition and its closing display appeared to signal the Taliban's intent to further embed their leadership's image into the country's evolving national narrative.

General Director of ANDMA meets IFRC representative



KABUL (BNA): Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, General Director of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), met with Ahmad Suleiman, Representative of the International Federation of the Red Cross, IFRC to discuss expanding cooperation in delivering humanitarian services. According to a statement released from Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority today, during the meeting, Mullah Turabi referred to his recent visit to Torkham and the establishment of a camp for forcibly returned migrants. He stated, during the week we spent in Torkham, through significant efforts, we were able to establish a standard camp with improved basic facilities so that our compatriots could live there temporarily with peace of mind. The general director of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority outlined the organization's future plans, highlighting extensive efforts to improve the quality of humanitarian services for vulnerable groups. He emphasized the department's existing capacities and experience and declared full readiness for close and effective cooperation with international organizations — especially the International Federation of the Red Cross. Mullah Turabi mentioned two upcoming initiatives, equipping the authority with rescue drones to provide swift and effective aid during crises. Launching a project to organize male and female volunteers in Kabul's districts, which he said could serve as an effective model for other organizations involved in volunteer work. Ahmad Suleiman, Acting Head of the International Federation of the Red Cross, pointed to the effectiveness of previous meetings and noted that all discussed topics had been shared with partner organizations and practical actions were underway. He stated that these matters had been presented to the federation's headquarters in Denmark, and efforts to secure funding were ongoing. Suleiman also mentioned an upcoming joint meeting between the National Disaster Management Authority, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Red Cross Federation to assess the needs of affected individuals and determine necessary funding. He added that Switzerland has allocated \$1 million to support Afghan migrants. Both sides emphasized the importance of maintaining coordination and enhancing joint cooperation to more effectively respond to humanitarian needs.

Ghazni Hospital struggles with overcrowding, staff shortages

GHAZNI (TOLONews): Ghazni Civil Hospital is facing serious challenges due to the lack of proper infrastructure and a shortage of medical personnel. According to officials, the hospital currently does not have the capacity to admit patients. Alam Khan Amiri, Director of Ghazni Civil Hospital, said: "The medical structure we had decades ago has not been expanded. Patients from not only the districts of Ghazni but also neighboring provinces come to this hospital; however, due to the high patient load, the necessary facilities are not available. Moreover, the hospital building is very old and currently does not have the capacity to accommodate the number of patients in need." Sher Agha Hashimi, a doctor at the hospital, said: "This situation is very painful both for us and for the patients; they come here with great hope, but we do not have enough space to admit them, and the number of our medical staff is insufficient. The overcrowding has significantly increased." Meanwhile, some patients say that due to the rising number of patients, medical services at the hospital are moving very slowly. In addition to patients from Ghazni, many patients from neighboring provinces also seek treatment at this hospital. Mohammad Aziz, a resident of Daikundi, who traveled 15 hours to bring his patient to Ghazni Civil Hospital, said: "We want all necessary facilities to be provided here according to current needs. Due to the overcrowding, we waited for three days; if the facilities were available, our patient could have been operated on the first day."

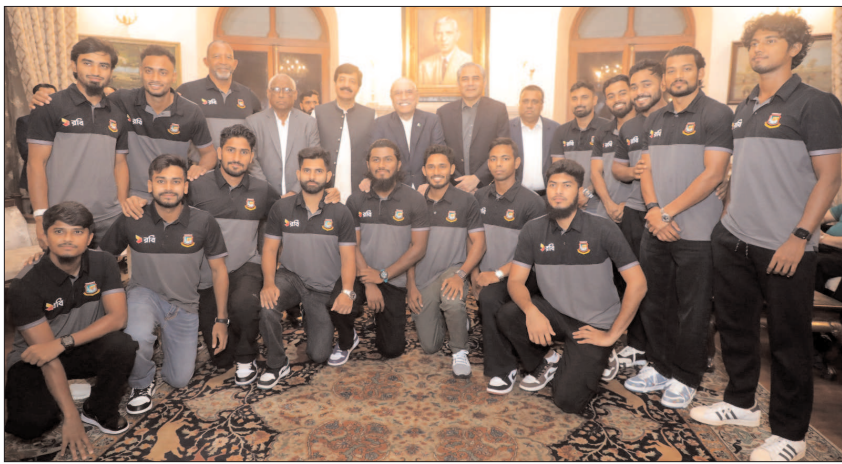
Retired employees hold protest for release of their pensions



KABUL (TOLONews): A group of retirees once again gathered in front of the Pension Fund to protest the non-payment of their salaries. They are demanding the payment of their pensions by the Islamic Emirate. Gol Mullah Bakhtiar, one of the retirees, said: "These brothers who have gathered here have not come just once, twice, three times, or ten times — they have come hundreds of times. For four years, each of them has borrowed money from their wives, children, and shopkeepers, paid transportation costs, and spent five or six thousand Afghani each time, only to achieve nothing." Another retiree, Mirowais, said: "Our request to the Amir al-Mu'minin is to ensure the enforcement of the decree he issued regarding retired staff so that the rights of these oppressed and impoverished people are fulfilled." Abdul Jaleel, a middle-aged retiree who spent part of his life working in government institutions, is now seeking to receive his pension. Abdul Jaleel said: "We are only asking for the payment of our pensions. We urge the Director General of Retirees to take the necessary measures to pay our pensions for the past four years and now into the fifth year, through any possible means." Despite nearly four years of gathering in front of various institutions — especially the Ministry of Finance, the courts, UNAMA, and the Pension Fund — the caretaker government has yet to announce a specific timeline for the payment of retirees' salaries.



# President for forging stronger bilateral relations with Bangladesh



LAHORE (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan intends to forge strong bilateral relations with Bangladesh in all areas including commerce, trade, sports, culture and people-to-people ties.

Speaking at a reception hosted to Bangladesh and Pakistan Men's cricket teams at the Governor's House here on Sunday, he said the Pakistan government is trying to work together to build a stronger relationship, adding that it cannot happen overnight but we need to keep investing in people and come up with solutions to take our relations to new heights.

The Bangladesh cricket team is in Pakistan to play a three-match T20I series and is due to play the third and last T20I on Sunday night. Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Hussain,

BCB cricket Operations Head Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Advisor to Chairman PCB Amir Mir, has given you strength financially and in the form of manpower," he added.

President Zardari said Bangladesh was destined to progress and prosper vis a vis exports business and Pakistan will contribute as much as it can. Reminiscing on the shared history and pangs of separation as brothers when the two brothers parted ways in 1971, President Zardari said the younger generation was not aware of the pain we had gone through as the older generation, adding that we had broken each other's hearts in the past and there was a need to mend the hearts today, emphasizing the need for reconciliation and mutual understanding-a message that resonated deeply in his address.

Recognizing transformative power of cricket as a

story in the world both financially as well as in human resource capital and everybody knows. "Allah has given you strength financially and in the form of manpower," he added.

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Recognizing transformative power of cricket as a

sport which helps in uniting people throughout the world, he said "I am happy to host you all in Pakistan, in Lahore. And I hope that there will be many such trips".

President Zardari also expressed the desire to visit Bangladesh, adding that he had not been to Dhaka for a long time. He fondly recalled his student days at the Pitaro Cadet College and the lasting friendships he made during those days, adding that he was in close contact with Bangladeshi college friends even today.

President Zardari reassured the Bangladesh envoy to Pakistan of his full support in furthering the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries.

The President hailed the Bangladesh tigers for their immense talent and wished them a great future. He also lavished on the young Pakistan team and expressed the hope it will do well on the international front. "The world is young, you are young and it's your time. We've seen our time, this is your time. All of you are going to see the future and I bless you and I hope that you'll have an eventful good future," President Zardari maintained.

President Asid Zardari also had group photos with both the teams while he gave away mementos to the officials of the visiting Bangladesh team.

President Asif Ali Zardari was also presented a memento by Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing meeting regarding upcoming Annual Development Programme.

## KP to provide furniture to schools with 100pc enrollment

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major move to strength public sector schools in the province, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has decided that cent percent students enrolled in government schools will be provided with furniture under the ongoing educational emergency. The Chief Minister has directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the provision of furniture to every government school is completed during the next fiscal year adding that no students in public sector should sit on floor owing to non-availability of furniture.

He further stated that all required funds for the provision of school furniture will be made available on a priority basis. Highlighting the government's commitment to improving basic facilities, the Chief Minister emphasized that

access to proper furniture, functional washrooms, and clean drinking water in government schools is a top priority and that there will be no compromise on these essentials. The Chief Minister has also instructed that a special program be launched to improve the quality of education in government schools further directing that modern training be provided to teachers and that such training be made mandatory for all newly recruited educators.

He was chairing a meeting here on Sunday to finalize the Annual Development Programme of the upcoming financial year.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, Mr. Muzammil Aslam, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Additional Chief Secretary for Planning and Development Ikramullah Khan, and administrative secretaries of relevant

departments.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on development proposals submitted by various departments, including Planning, Communications, Local Government, Education, Health, Irrigation, and Water Supply. Each proposed project was individually reviewed and finalized for inclusion in the upcoming development program.

Speaking to the participants, the Chief Minister said the new ADP will be a visionary document, laying the foundation for the province's development agenda over the next four years. The plan will incorporate input from elected public representatives and prioritize projects based on the actual needs of communities across different regions.

He added that the ADP would include solid and practical projects serving broad public interests, with

the majority of next year's development funds allocated to completing ongoing projects. Projects with over 80% progress will be completed within the next year, while approximately 50% of other ongoing projects are also expected to reach completion in the same period.

The Chief Minister stressed that the new ADP will be realistic and aligned with the genuine needs of the public. "We will not pursue superficial progress while leaving essential needs behind," he said. "We will ensure the wise and effective use of taxpayers' money."

Declaring that "every constituency in the province is my constituency," the Chief Minister pledged there would be no discrimination in the allocation of development projects. He assured that special attention would be given to uplifting underdeveloped regions.

## To strengthen defence of ports, harbours Pakistan Navy conducts two days exercise

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy successfully conducted a comprehensive two-day exercise focusing on countering sub-conventional and asymmetric threats across all major ports and harbours of Pakistan.

The exercises were aimed at validating and refining Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) to ensure robust defence of critical maritime infrastructure against evolving asymmetric threats. The exercise involved coordinated operations by PN Fleet units, Pak

Marines, SSG (Navy) and Naval Aviation assets.

The exercises scenarios were designed to simulate a range of sub-conventional threats including sabotage, infiltration and unconventional attacks, enabling participating units to enhance inter-agency coordination, situational awareness and rapid response capabilities.

During the course of exercise Commander Coast Rear Admiral Faisal Amin visited various operational setups at ports and harbours and witnessed live action simulations carried out by

participating units. COM-COAST appreciated high level of preparedness and professional conduct demonstrated during the exercises. He emphasized the importance of maritime installations, and added that secure functioning of ports and harbours is directly linked to national economic stability and growth.

Pakistan Navy remains committed to maintain high state of readiness to respond to all forms of threats and continues to strengthen its capacity to defend the maritime frontiers against emerging challenges.



## Hasina charged with 'systematic attack' as trial opens

DHAKA (Aljazeera): Fugitive former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina orchestrated a "systematic attack" on protests against her government, Bangladesh prosecutors have said at the opening of her trial over last year's deadly crackdown.

"Upon scrutinising the evidence, we reached the conclusion that it was a coordinated, widespread and systematic attack," Mohammad Tajul Islam, chief prosecutor at Bangladesh's domestic International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), told the court in his opening speech on Sunday.

"The accused unleashed all law enforcement agencies and her armed party members to crush the uprising," Islam said as he charged the 77-year-old former leader and two other officials of "abatement, incitement, complicity, facilitation, conspiracy, and failure to prevent mass murder" during the student-led mass uprising.

The United Nations says nearly 1,400 Bangladeshis were killed between July and August 2024 when Hasina's government launched a brutal campaign to silence the protesters. Bangladesh has charged her with crimes against humanity over the killings.

Hasina - who remains in self-imposed exile in neighbouring India, her old ally - has rejected the charges as politically motivated.

She fled by helicopter to New Delhi in August last year after the nationwide protests ended her "autocratic" 15-year rule marked by allegations of repeated human rights violations, including attacks, imprisonment, and even targeted killings of opposition figures, dissenters, and critics.

She has since defied an arrest warrant and extradition order to return to Dhaka.

The ICT is also prosecuting former senior figures connected to the ousted government of Hasina and her now-banned Awami League party, including former Interior Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun.

Their prosecution has been a key demand of several political parties now jostling for power. The interim government has promised to hold elections before June 2026.

## Chairman Senate holds Meeting with President of Turkmenistan

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Yousuf Raza Gilani, was received today by the Honorable President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov during his official visit to the country.

The meeting reflected the mutual desire of both nations to further strengthen the historic bonds of friendship and deepen bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors.

Chairman Senate expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by the Government and people of Turkmenistan.

During the meeting, he conveyed the sincere greetings and best wishes of the President of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, and Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, to the leadership and people of Turkmenistan.

He also extended personal regards to the National Leader of the Turkmen people, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, describing him as a cherished friend of Pakistan.

The two sides discussed a wide range of issues related to bilateral relations, including enhanced cooperation in political, diplomatic, trade and economic, energy, transport, education, and humanitarian

sectors.

Chairman Senate highlighted the positive momentum in Pakistan-Turkmenistan relations and reaffirmed Pakistan's continued support for initiatives aimed at regional peace and development.

Chairman Senate also appreciated Turkmenistan's principled policy of neutrality, which he termed as a key pillar of peace and stability in the region. In this context, he welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's resolution declaring 2025 as the "Year of Peace and Trust" at Turkmenistan's initiative, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality. The President of Turkmenistan, while acknowledging the deep-rooted relations between the two brotherly nations, expressed confidence that the visit of Chairman Senate would give new

impetus to parliamentary and intergovernmental cooperation.

He also invited Chairman Senate and members of the Senate of Pakistan to participate in the upcoming events planned as part of the "Year of Peace and Trust" celebrations in 2025. Both dignitaries emphasized the importance of strengthening parliamentary diplomacy.

They acknowledged the vital role of the Pakistan-Turkmenistan Parliamentary Friendship Group in fostering legislative exchange and experience-sharing. Chairman Senate reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing parliamentary dialogue as a means of promoting regional connectivity and mutual understanding.

In a media interaction following the meeting, Chairman Senate stated:

"Our meeting with the Honorable President of Turkmenistan was very fruitful. We discussed the importance of deepening our bilateral ties and reviewed progress on several existing and planned projects. I also conveyed the greetings and best wishes of Pakistan's leadership and reiterated our appreciation for Turkmenistan's consistent efforts in promoting regional peace through its neutrality policy."

I am grateful for the warmth and hospitality shown to me and my delegation." The visit of Chairman Senate is a testament to the enduring friendship and growing collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Turkmenistan. Both sides reiterated their shared vision for peace, prosperity, and the well-being of their people.



## Shehbaz discusses Indian-backed terrosim in Balochistan

### Continued from Front Page

Highlighting series of monumental developmental packages for prosperity in Balochistan, the PM emphasized the need for ensuring trickle down effect of government initiatives to the populace.

The PM He praised the people of Balochistan for their historic role in safeguarding national unity and urged them to remain vigilant against foreign-backed subversion and sabotage orchestrated and sponsored by India.

While interacting with tribal elders Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir said, "This Indian sponsored proxy war is no longer hidden, it is an open malicious act of terrorism waged on our people, our progress,

and our peace.

We have concrete proof of India's hand behind terrorist networks operating in Balochistan. These nefarious attempts of the enemy will fail.

The Pakistan Army, with the unwavering support of the nation and the brave Baloch people, will confront and crush every enemy, foreign or domestic, that dares to challenge our sovereignty."

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir emphasized that the Pakistan Army remains fully alert and prepared to respond decisively to any threat.

He reiterated that peace in Balochistan is non-negotiable and that the future of Pakistan is directly linked to a stable, pros-

perous Balochistan.

PM and Field Marshal also lauded the bravery and resilience of security forces & LAEs operating in Balochistan. Prime Minister assured full cooperation and support to the families of Shuhada and assured them that terrorists, their abettors and facilitators will not be spared".

The Jirga concluded with a unanimous pledge from tribal elders to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government of Pakistan and Armed Forces, reaffirming their commitment to the security, stability, and development of Balochistan.

Earlier, Prime Minister of Pakistan also visited Command & Staff College

Quetta and addressed Student Officers and Faculty of Command and Staff College. Prime Minister address reflects the government's deep commitment to strengthening Pakistan's defence institutions amidst evolving regional and internal security dynamics.

During his interaction, the Prime Minister highlighted the critical importance of professional excellence, operational readiness, and strategic foresight in the face of emerging and hybrid threats, especially in sensitive regions like Balochistan, where Indian sponsored terrorist proxies target our people and aim to disrupt our progress and prosperity.

## Russia, Ukraine step up the war on eve of peace talks

MOSCOW / KYIV (Reuters): On the eve of peace talks, Ukraine and Russia sharply ramped up the war with one of the biggest drone battles of their conflict, a Russian highway bridge blown up over a passenger train and an ambitious attack on nuclear-capable bombers deep in Siberia.

After days of uncertainty over whether or not Ukraine would even attend, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Defence Minister Rustem Umerov would sit down with Russian officials at the second round of direct peace talks in Istanbul on Monday.

The first round of the talks more than a week ago yielded the biggest prisoner exchange of the war - but no sense of any consensus on how to halt the fighting.

Amid talk of peace, though, there was much war.

At least seven people were killed and 69 injured when a highway bridge in Russia's Bryansk region, neighbouring Ukraine, was blown up over a passenger train heading to Moscow with 388 people on board. No one has yet claimed

responsibility.

Ukraine attacked Russian nuclear-capable long-range bombers at a military base deep in Siberia on Sunday, a Ukrainian intelligence official said, the first such attack so far from the front lines more than 4,300 km (2,670 miles) away.

The official said the operation involved hiding explosive-laden drones inside the roofs of wooden sheds and loading them onto trucks that were driven to the perimeter of the air bases.

A total of 41 Russian warplanes were hit, the official said.

Ukraine did not tell the Trump administration about the attack in advance, Axios reporter Barak Ravid said on X, citing an unnamed Ukrainian official.

Russia's Defence Ministry acknowledged on the Telegram messaging app that Ukraine had launched drone strikes against Russian military airfields across five regions on Sunday.

It said the attacks repelled the assaults in all but two regions — Murmansk in the far north

and Irkutsk in Siberia - where "the launch of FPV drones from an area in close proximity to airfields resulted in several aircraft catching fire".

The fires were extinguished without casualties. Some individuals involved in the attacks had been detained, the ministry said.

Russia launched 472 drones at Ukraine overnight, Ukraine's air force said, the highest nightly total of the war so far. Russia had also launched seven missiles, the air force said.

Russia said it had advanced deeper into the Sumy region of Ukraine, and open source pro-Ukrainian maps showed Russia took 450 square km of Ukrainian land in May, its fastest monthly advance in at least six months.

U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded Russia and Ukraine make peace and he has threatened to walk away if they do not - potentially pushing responsibility for supporting Ukraine onto the shoulders of European powers - which have far less cash and much smaller stocks of weapons than the United States.