

Dar to attend JMC in UAE
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will lead Pakistan's delegation to the 12th Pakistan-UAE Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) being held in Abu Dhabi today (Tuesday). The JMC serves as the highest-level platform for bilateral cooperation between the two countries.



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In response to strikes

DOHA: Iran confirmed it launched missile attacks Monday on US military bases in Qatar and Iraq, retaliating for the American bombing of its nuclear sites and escalating tensions in the volatile region, state media said. Iran launched six missiles toward Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, as the sound of several explosions were heard over Doha.

The announcement was made on state television as martial music played. A caption on the screen called it "a mighty and successful response by the armed forces of Iran to America's aggression." Qatar said it "successfully intercepted" missiles targeting the US base, and added it reserved the right to respond directly and in accordance with international law following the strikes. It said it condemned the attack, calling it a "flagrant violation" of its sovereignty.

"We express the State of Qatar's strong condemnation of the attack on Al-Udeid Air Base by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, and consider it a flagrant violation of the State of Qatar's sovereignty and airspace, as well as of international law," foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said in a statement. The Gulf nation had announced earlier Monday it had closed its air space temporarily to ensure the safety of residents and visitors. Also on Monday, the US embassy in Qatar had advised Americans to shelter in place, out of what it said was "an abundance of caution."

"The White House and the Department of Defense are aware of, and closely monitoring, potential threats to Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar," a senior White House official said. The UAE is closely monitoring

the ongoing regional developments and is continuously assessing the situation, a government spokesperson said.

"This approach forms part of the UAE's integrated national framework for emergency and crisis management, which prioritizes public safety and the continuity of operations across all sectors," the spokesperson added. UAE airspace had also been closed, according to flight path data and air traffic control audio cited by FlightRadar. Bahrain said sirens sounded in Manama with citizens and residents were urged to remain calm and head to nearest safe place, according to the Interior Ministry. The interior ministry affirmed that these measures were part of Bahrain's proactive efforts to safeguard public safety and ensure efficient emergency response.

Bahrain also suspended air traffic temporarily on Monday. "The Civil Aviation Affairs of the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications announced the temporary suspension of air navigation in the skies of the Kingdom of Bahrain as a precautionary measure in light of recent regional developments," said a statement carried by the official Bahrain News Agency.

Kuwait Airways, in a post on X, said departure flights had been suspended due to the regional developments. Kuwait's civil aviation body issued a statement, saying: "The country's airspace has been temporarily closed as a precautionary measure, starting today and until further notice. The decision comes within the framework of maintaining the highest levels of safety and security in light of regional developments." — Arab News

Iran attacks US bases in ME

Smoke billows over Tehran skyline

TEHRAN: Israeli strikes on Iran have killed at least 950 people and wounded 3,450 others, a human rights group said Monday. The Washington-based group Human Rights Activists offered the figures, which covers the entirety of Iran. It said of those dead, it identified 380 civilians and 253 security force personnel being killed.

Human Rights Activists, which also provided detailed casualty figures during the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini, crosschecks local reports in the Islamic Republic against a network of sources it has developed in the country. Iran has not been offering regular death tolls during the conflict and has minimized casualties in the past. On Saturday, Iran's Health Ministry said some 400 Iranians had been killed and another 3,056 wounded in the Israeli strikes.

Qatar temporarily suspended air traffic around the country, its foreign ministry said Monday, after nearby Iran threatened retaliation for US strikes on its nuclear sites. "The competent authorities announce the temporary suspension of air traffic in the country's airspace, as part of a set of precautionary measures taken based



DOHA: Social media footage purportedly showing attack on Qatar air base.

on developments in the region," the foreign ministry said.

It comes as the US embassy in Qatar advised Americans there to "shelter in place" on Monday, with other Western embassies echoing the warning. A fact-finding mission mandated by the United Nations said on Monday that some of Israel's strikes on Iran may have broken international humanitarian law, citing the killing of civilians in an apartment block and three aid workers in the capital Tehran.

"Among those killed in Tehran were dozens of residents of an apartment complex and three humanitarian workers from the Iranian Red Cross, while damaged sites included a clinic for children with autism and a hospital in Kermanshah," the investigative body said in a statement to journalists. "This, and the reported lack of effective advance

warning by Israel, which may affect the population's ability to reach safety, raise serious concerns in relation to the principles of proportionality, distinction, and precaution under international humanitarian law."

However, NATO chief Mark Rutte told reporters on Monday US strikes on Iran over the weekend did not violate international law. He was speaking during a briefing ahead of a summit for the military alliance. Tehran threatened on Monday to inflict "serious" damage in retaliation for US strikes on the Islamic republic's nuclear facilities, as the Iran-Israel war entered its 11th day despite calls for de-escalation.

Aerial assaults meanwhile raged on, with air raid sirens sounding across Israel and AFP journalists reporting several blasts were heard over Jerusalem. The Israeli military said it had struck missile sites in western Iran as well as "six

Iranian regime airports" across the country, destroying fighter jets and helicopters.

President Donald Trump said US warplanes used "bunker buster" bombs to target sites in Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz, boasting the strikes had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear capabilities. Other officials said it was too soon to assess the true impact on Iran's nuclear program, which the military and some Western states consider an existential threat.

Iranian armed forces spokesman Ebrahim Zolfaghari said on state television that the US "hostile act," following more than a week of Israeli bombardments, would "pave the way for the extension of war in the region." "The fighters of Islam will inflict serious, unpredictable consequences on you with powerful and targeted (military) operations," he warned. — Arab News

Israel targets Iran Guards, Tehran prison

TEHRAN: Israel hit Revolutionary Guard sites and Evin prison in Tehran on the 11th day of the war Monday, in what it said were its most powerful strikes yet on the Iranian capital. Iran, in turn, fired missile barrages at Israel and vowed retaliation against the United States after American strikes on the Islamic republic's nuclear sites a day earlier.

Loud explosions rocked Tehran, where Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said the military hit sites with "unprecedented force," adding to speculation that it is seeking to topple Iran's clerical leadership. The targets included Evin prison, which Katz said "holds political prisoners and regime opponents," as well as command centers for the domestic Basij paramilitary and the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iranian media and the Israeli military said Israel also struck Fordo, a key nuclear enrichment facility buried deep in the mountains south of Tehran. The military said it had struck Fordo on Monday "in order to obstruct access routes" to the site, which Israel's ally the United States hit the previous day with massive bunker buster bombs.

President Donald Trump boasted that Sunday's US strikes on three key sites had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear capabilities, but other officials said it was too soon to assess the impact on Iran's atomic program, which Israel and some Western states consider an unacceptable threat. Sirens sounded across Israel on Monday and AFP journalists reported blasts over Jerusalem and people fleeing to shelters in Tel Aviv.

Iranian media said Israel's strikes hit a power supply system in Tehran, triggering temporary outages. In Israel, the national electricity company reported "damage near a strategic infrastructure facility" in the south that disrupted the power supply, without naming the location or specifying the cause. Israel's military censorship rules bar the publication of some details about damage in Israel.

Israel strikes on Iran have killed more than 400 people, Iran's health ministry has said. Iran's attacks on Israel have killed 24 people, according to official figures. After the US strikes, global markets reacted nervously, with oil prices jumping more than four percent early Monday but dipping later in the day. China urged both Iran and Israel to prevent the conflict from spilling over, warning of potential economic fallout.

Iranian armed forces chief Abdulrahim Mousavi said in a video statement published on state TV that Washington's bombing "will not go unanswered." "We will take firm action against the American mistake," he added. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called on China to help deter Iran from closing the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for one-fifth of the world's oil supply. — Arab News

NSC calls all parties to resolve Iran-Israel conflict through dialogue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Security Committee (NSC) in its meeting on Monday, called all relevant parties to resolve the Iran-Israel conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, in line with the UN Charter and underscored the need of adhering to international human rights and humanitarian laws.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chaired the meeting of the NSC to review the evolving regional situation following Israeli aggression against Iran, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The Committee strongly condemned Israel's acts of aggression and expressed regret that these military attacks coincided with a constructive negotiation process between Iran and the United States. These reckless actions have escalated tensions, threatening to ignite a wider conflict and diminishing the opportunities for dialogue and diplomacy. The NSC reaffirmed Iran's right to self-defense

as enshrined in the UN Charter. The Committee conveyed condolences to the Government and people of Iran on loss of innocent lives and prayed for the recovery of injured.

While reiterating Pakistan's stated position, the NSC expressed grave concern over the potential for further escalation after the attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan on June 22 which violated the resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), relevant international law, and the UN Charter. The NSC also reaffirmed Pakistan's close engagement with relevant parties and endorsed its readiness to further continue efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting regional peace and stability.

Shehbaz directs formation of 3 specialized committees to promote cashless economy: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the formation of three specialized committees: the Digital Payments Innovation and

Adoption Committee, the Digital Public Infrastructure Committee, and the Government Payments Committee to promote cashless economy across the country.

These special sub-committees will present recommendations to facilitate payments between citizens and businesses, raise awareness about digital systems, activate the Pakistan Digital Authority, formulate a national digital master plan, and streamline transactions between the government and the private sector. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was chairing a high-level meeting focused on promoting a cashless economy in Pakistan.

He emphasized the importance of making digital transactions more affordable and accessible for the public compared to cash, as a means to promote a cashless system. He also instructed that the RAAST digital payment system be established at the federal as well as across all provinces levels. "Establishing a digital transaction system is crucial for bringing

transparency to the economy," the prime minister said adding that cashless systems are being prioritized in developed and successful economies around the world, and modern technology must be used to implement a robust digital payments infrastructure. The prime minister noted that funds circulating through the banking system can be used for investment in government development projects.

He also directed the transition of all transactions between the public and private sectors to a cashless model. During the briefing, the prime minister was updated on progress made toward implementing a nationwide cashless system. It was shared that currently, over 40 million users are benefiting from the RAAST system, and various initiatives are underway to increase this number.

All financial transactions of the federal government are now conducted through the RAAST system, and steps are being taken to expand it to the provincial level. The briefing also



highlighted that Fintech is a key component of this ecosystem. The Pakistan Digital Authority has been established and is actively working to transition the national economy toward a cashless model.

It was also informed in the meeting that the Digital Public Infrastructure Committee will function under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of IT, while the Cashless Pakistan Steering Committee has been established within the Prime Minister's Secretariat. As part of the Smart

Islamabad Pilot Project, the Ministry of IT is taking steps to make Islamabad Pakistan's first cashless city, the meeting was told.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the Chairman of FBR, and senior officials from relevant institutions.

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UNICEF delegation visits PG office

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from UNICEF visited the Office of the Prosecutor General Punjab on Monday and held a meeting with Prosecutor General Syed Farhad Ali Shah to discuss collaborative efforts for the protection of children's rights and access to justice.

The visiting delegation included Muhammad Arshad Ali Farooqi, Director Administration; Mike Hayes from UNICEF; along with Hafsa Umar and Rasheeda Qureshi. During the meeting, key issues related to the safeguarding of children's rights and mechanisms for timely justice were discussed in detail.

The UNICEF representatives commended the initiatives undertaken by the Office of the Prosecutor General Punjab for the protection of women and children's rights. They also supported efforts to highlight these initiatives at international forums and agreed to work together on capacity-building measures, including training prosecutors to international standards.

Speaking on the occasion, Prosecutor General Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah emphasized that ensuring the protection of children's rights and delivering justice is a core responsibility of the state. He reiterated that, in line with the directives of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, the Prosecution Department is playing an active and committed role in this regard.

One extortionist killed, two arrested

KARACHI (APP): A major breakthrough in fight against organized crime occurred late Sunday night when the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of the Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) engaged in a fierce gun battle with a six-member extortion gang, resulting in the death of one suspect and the arrest of two others. Their three accomplices managed to escape, and efforts are underway to apprehend them.

According to SSP SIU Shoaib Memon on Monday, the gang was extremely dangerous and notorious for criminal activity, with all members being on the police watch-list. The group was reportedly involved in extortion, armed attacks, and issuing threats to traders.

The deceased was identified as Fayyaz, while the arrested suspects include Waqas and Rameez. During the operation, two 9mm pistols, a motorcycle, and a mobile phone used to contact traders for extortion were recovered.

SSP Shoaib Memon stated that the suspects had demanded Rs. 500,000 in extortion from a trader, threatening to kill him upon non-payment. He revealed that the gang would infiltrate private security companies to surveil traders and later use this information to target them.

Police used technical intelligence to locate the suspects. When approached, the gang opened indiscriminate fire on the police party in an attempt to flee, triggering the encounter. One suspect was fatally shot while two others were overpowered and taken into custody.

Muslim world stands united with Iran against Israeli aggression: Ashrafi

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday said that the entire Muslim world stands in solidarity with Iran against Israeli aggression and Muslim unity and cohesion are the need of the hour.

He expressed these views at the Ittehad Bain-ul-Muslimeen Conference held in connection with Muharram at Town Hall. The conference was attended by Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Bilal Yasin, Commissioner Lahore Zaid Bin Maqsood, Capital City Police officer (CCPO) Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana, Regional Police Officer Sheikhupura Athar Ismail, Deputy

Commissioner Lahore Syed Musa Raza, DIG Operations Dr. Faisal Kamran, Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Athar Waheed, senior religious scholars, members of peace committees, and district officials from across Lahore Division.

Ashrafi said that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation which has always promoted interfaith harmony and brotherhood. Referring to recent hostilities, he said that India attempted to destabilise Pakistan but the unity of the nation alongside its armed forces foiled these conspiracies.

He said that Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and 57 other Islamic countries have strongly condemned Israeli attacks on Iran. "We firmly denounce American

and Israeli aggression against Iran," he said, adding that any attempt to divide the Muslim Ummah will not succeed.

Ashrafi pointed out that Israel's strike on Iran was a calculated move to sow division within the Islamic world, but due to divine intervention and collective resolve, the plan failed. He highlighted that Saudi Arabia was the first to condemn the aggression, and the entire Muslim world remains united in supporting Iran.

He added that the attack had endangered peace across the region. A month ago, India allegedly cooperated with Israel in an attempted assault on Pakistan, but divine support led Pakistan to emerge successful in that

confrontation.

He highlighting conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon and Syria, said that enemies of Islam weakened the defence structures of these nations by creating rifts between the military and civilians. He urged unity among Pakistanis, especially during Muharram, to uphold peace and religious tolerance.

Officials present at the conference reviewed security arrangements, processions' routes, lighting and other preparations for Muharram. Ulema were assured of full cooperation from the district administration and law enforcement.

Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin emphasised the critical role of reli-

gious scholars in promoting sectarian harmony and respect during Muharram. Commissioner Zaid Bin Maqsood underscored the importance of verifying information and avoiding rumors to prevent discord.

RPO Sheikhupura Athar Ismail said scholars must use the pulpit to reinforce messages of unity, and the sanctity of Muharram must be upheld at all costs.

CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana said the police and district administration are fully committed to maintaining peace during Muharram, ensuring strict compliance with sound regulations, procession timings, and designated routes.

India stands isolated after Pakistan's diplomatic response: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that today, the world regards Pakistan's green passport with respect. He stated that while Pakistan's brave armed forces were fighting the enemy on one front, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was simultaneously and vigorously representing Pakistan's stance on the global stage.

Addressing a public gathering on the occasion of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's arrival at Karachi Airport, Sindh Senior Minister and

Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had clearly and forcefully presented Pakistan's stance at every international forum, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and European countries. He conveyed that Pakistan is a peaceful nation and is at the forefront of the global fight against terrorism.

He added that India unjustly imposed war on Pakistan, even though Pakistan did not desire conflict. Pakistan repeat-

edly demanded concrete evidence from India on the Kashmir issue, but India failed to provide any, yet continued its aggression.

He said that Pakistan's army, air force, navy, federal and provincial governments, political parties, and the youth on social media all demonstrated unity and gave a befitting response to India. He added that today, India stands embarrassed on the global stage, and the determination with which Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has raised and defended the Kashmir issue is unmatched in recent history.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that we can proudly state that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made Pakistan a nuclear power, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto provided the country with missile technology, achievements that have made Pakistan's defense invincible and ensure that no enemy dares to cast an evil eye on the nation.

He said that the Pakistan Peoples Party is the only political party whose three generations have played a historic role in the service, sacrifice, and defense of the country, making its strength and resilience unmatched.

Punjab Ombudsman orders action against overpricing

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Ombudsman's Office has launched a vigorous crackdown against profiteering, violation of official price lists, and the sale of substandard food items across the province.

Responding swiftly to public complaints, the Ombudsman ordered inspections and immediate action in various districts to safeguard consumer rights and ensure fair market practices.

On the Ombudsman's directives, Price Control Magistrates and Punjab Food Authority officials carried out joint inspections in markets and food outlets, reviewing the quality and pricing of essential food

items including chicken, fish, meat, milk, eggs, cooking oil, beverages, and fried foods. Several instances of overpricing and the sale of unhygienic and unsafe items were uncovered during these operations.

As a result, fines exceeding Rs. 600,000 have been imposed on violators. In addition, numerous hotels and restaurants were penalized for poor hygiene, unsafe food handling, and unacceptable environmental conditions. The authorities took strict action against all outlets found breaching health and safety standards.

A spokesperson for the Punjab Ombudsman

Office said that these actions are part of a broader initiative to ensure the availability of safe, hygienic, and fairly priced food to the public. The Ombudsman has reiterated the commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against overpricing, adulteration, and negligence, directing that these inspections and enforcement drives continue without interruption.

These proactive measures have been widely praised by the public. Complainants expressed appreciation to the Ombudsman's Office for taking timely action and ensuring that consumer grievances were resolved efficiently.

Police arrest 35 suspects

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab police conducted 373 search and sweep operations across the province in the last 24 hours, resulting in the checking of 12,174 suspected individuals and the arrest of 35 suspects.

The police spokesperson said on Monday, during the operations, 23 search and sweep actions were conducted, leading to the questioning of 2,549 individuals and arrest of three suspects. Police also arrested 228 proclaimed offenders, 85 court absconders, and 56 habitual criminals involved in serious crimes.

A significant quantity of illegal weapons and ammunition was recovered from their possession. In police actions against criminals, four offenders were killed and six arrested, the spokesperson added.

Inspector General Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, reaffirmed the commitment to continue search, sweep, and combing operations to bring terrorists and anti-state elements to justice.

Students to tackle social issues in summer projects

LAHORE (PPI): University of the Punjab students will dedicate their summer vacations to addressing social challenges through an ambitious initiative launched by the Directorate of Students Affairs (DSA).

The university informed today that under the guidance of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali, undergraduates will engage in diverse projects across 65 sectors until August 28, 2025.

The program encourages pupils to contribute to community upliftment through various avenues. These include creating digital learning resources via YouTube channels, environmental conservation through tree plantation drives, and technological empowerment by instructing youngsters in artificial intelligence software.

Other endeavors involve conflict resolution within communities, fostering creativity through fine arts and videography instruction, providing support in healthcare facilities, enhancing water accessibility, establishing local book clubs, and mentoring youth.

DSA Director Dr Shahzeb Khan stated that participating students will receive mentorship and support. An exhibition showcasing the most impactful initiatives will culminate in an award ceremony presided over by VC Dr Muhammad Ali.

Undergraduates can choose to work independently or collaborate in small groups.

CM Punjab reviews progress on Lahore development projects

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid an early morning visit to various parts of Lahore city to personally inspect the progress of ongoing infrastructure and development projects.

During the visit, she reviewed construction work on the new overhead bridge at Walton Road and inspected the newly completed CBD 'Route 47', which has now been opened to general traffic. The state-of-the-art road spans 4.5 kilometers, is two-way, and features three lanes on each side, complete with modern infrastructure and facilities.

Connecting Kalma Chowk to Walton, 'Route 47' is named in honour of the freedom movement of

1947. It enables commuters to travel from Gulberg to Walton within minutes. A dedicated 2.5-kilometer cycling track and separate pedestrian walkways have been constructed, including along the Walton Railway Crossing Flyover to ensure safety and convenience for non-motorized users.

A remarkable feature of the Walton Flyover is the installation of 912 solar panels, with a capacity to generate one megawatt of electricity, contributing to energy sustainability. Additionally, an artificial lake capable of storing 5 million gallons of rainwater has been created alongside the road.

The lake includes fountains and aeration systems to enhance aesthetics and

promote environmental balance.

Various monuments have also been installed along the highway to reflect the symbolic identity of 'Route 47'. Speaking at the site, CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "'Route 47' is more than just a road, it represents a new era of smart and sustainable development in Punjab. It marks a significant step towards building a modern, efficient, and environmentally conscious infrastructure for our future generations."

The CM said the government is committed to accelerating infrastructure development while ensuring urban innovation, environmental responsibility, and public convenience across Punjab.

Minister prioritizes workers' rights at WWB meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan has said that the incumbent provincial government is making concrete efforts to ensure the provision of facilities and the well-being of workers.

He emphasized that the rights of the labour force will be safeguarded, and no one will be allowed to deprive or exploit workers rights.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting at his office of Workers' Welfare Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting was attended by WWB director Administration Saifullah Zafar, deputy director administration Shoaib and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, key issues were discussed, including the transparent and merit-based allocation of quarters within labour colonies, the eviction of illegal occupants, and the removal of encroachments.

The provincial labour minister said that the working class plays a pivotal role in the economic development and stability of the province.

"We cannot ignore the hard-working labourers," he said and added that the protection of workers' rights and the provision of necessary facilities are among the provincial government's top priorities.

He maintained that legal action will be taken against those who illegally residing in the labour colonies while vacated

quarters will be allotted to deserving workers through a fair and transparent process.

He further said that various measures have been implemented to increase department's revenue and improve overall performance. He pointed out that the recent auctioning of shops located within labour colonies at market rates has significantly boosted the department revenue.

He added that ongoing reforms within the department will soon yield positive and long-term results.

He issued directives to the concerned officers to further intensify efforts aimed at improving workers' welfare and strengthening the department's performance to better serve the working class.

SHRC holds policy dialogue on HBWA 2018 implementation

KARACHI (APP): A provincial policy dialogue was jointly organized by the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), and Bhitai Social Watch & Advocacy (BSWA) here on Monday at the National Institute of Labor Administration Training (NILAT).

The event brought together key stakeholders to review the progress and challenges in implementing the Sindh Home-Based Workers Act (HbWA) 2018.

SHRC Chairperson Iqbal Ahmed Detho presided over the dialogue, raising serious concerns over the lack of institutional mechanisms and budgetary allocations that have hindered the Act's implementation. He emphasized that while every legislation evolves over time, it requires inter-departmental coordination, periodic reforms, and resource commitment to be effective.

Detho appreciated FES's continued support in revitalizing NILAT and stressed the urgent need for the Labor Department to ensure NILAT's reintegration into the provincial budget.

Citing SHRC's collaboration with other institu-

tions, he highlighted the successful integration of gender and legal modules in the Tando Jam Local Government Training Institute as an example of institutional strengthening.

FES Program Advisor Abdullah Dayo underscored the urgency of ratifying ILO Convention 177 and called for the urgent establishment of additional registration desks at divisional levels to facilitate easier access for HBWs.

Kashif Siddiqui presented key findings from a recent regional consultation in Sukkur, pointing out the complex registration process, centralized submission systems, lack of clarity, and reported cases of harassment including gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Additional Secretary Law, Government of Sindh, Asadullah Bhatti, emphasized the need for legal literacy and institutional capacity building. He called for integrated implementation of laws and policies across departments.

Other speakers, including Bushra Arain (Union of LHWS), Kausar Nisa (HBW Federation, Sanghar), Maheen (HomeNet Pakistan), and Zahra Khan (Federation of

HBWs, Karachi), praised Sindh's progressive laws but expressed concern over their ineffective implementation.

Tessori receives grand welcome after Hajj pilgrimage

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tesori today returned from the Hajj pilgrimage at Karachi Airport. A large crowd, including members of the Sindh Provincial Assembly, senior leader of the Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan Dr. Farooq Sattar, and JDC's Zafar Abbas, greeted the governor with cheers, flowers, and garlands.

The well-wishers enthusiastically showered Tesori with blossoms and placed garlands around his neck to express their joy at his safe return. Many attendees also presented the governor with their own personal garlands.

Tesori then proceeded to the Governor House, accompanied by the jubilant procession. He took the time to personally greet individuals who had gathered to welcome him.



KARACHI: A group photo of the film's producer Karamat Ali with Hawk Advertising's media manager Faisal Irshad and other friends on the occasion of the premiere of the film "Hundan".



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairing weekly meeting on governance, development projects and public service delivery.

Meeting held to implement CFMIS

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Meeting Held Under the Chairmanship of Minister for Local Government Regarding the Implementation of a Computerized Financial Management Information System to Further Strengthen the Department

An important meeting was held on Monday in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development, Arshad Ayub Khan.

The meeting focused on making the local government system more efficient and effective, as well as promoting transparency within the department.

Discussions were held on launching a Computerized Financial Management Information System (CFMIS) with the support of the World Bank and institutionalizing the system for implementation at the TMA level across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Local Government Dr. Ambar Ali Khan, Secretary Local Council Board Waheed-ur-Rehman, and representatives from the World Bank.

During the briefing, World Bank representatives informed the participants that the implementation of the computerized FMIS would fully digitize budget formulation, payments, expenditures, revenue records, and financial reporting.

The system also automatically generates bills and is already functioning successfully in Punjab province.

On this occasion, Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan instructed that a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness and performance of the computerized FMIS be conducted, and if proven beneficial, it should be permanently established within the department's IT or MIS wing.

He further stated that to enhance transparency and improve the system, the adoption of this modern digital system must be seriously considered to make the local government system more effective, accountable, and modern.

Workshop on early detection of eye cancer held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A collaborative workshop aimed at raising awareness about early detection and standardising the treatment protocol for Retinoblastoma (a type of eye cancer) was held at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC), Peshawar.

The event was organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Society of Paediatric Oncology (PSPO).

The workshop was attended by leading paediatric oncologists and ophthalmologists from across the country, including representatives from Children's Hospital Lahore, Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar, Khyber Teaching Hospital, and Al-Shifa Eye Trust, Rawalpindi.

The session was inaugurated by Brig. Dr. Tariq Ghafoor, President of the PSPO, who provided an insightful overview of the society's journey and its efforts to improve paediatric oncology outcomes in Pakistan.

Dr. Palwasha Rehman, Workshop Director and Paediatric Oncologist at SKMCH&RC Peshawar, emphasised the importance of early diagnosis and prompt referral to improve survival rates and preserve vision in children affected by retinoblastoma.

Dr. Haleema Saeed, Paediatric Oncologist at SKMCH&RC Lahore, shared a comprehensive overview of the evolution of retinoblastoma management in Pakistan, highlighting the collaborative efforts of the Retinoblastoma Group in ensuring standardized care across treatment centres.

The event concluded with case-based discussions, consensus-building on referral pathways, and a call to strengthen partnerships among institutions for better outcomes in Retinoblastoma care nationwide.



Court extends DG health pre-arrest bail till June 30

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Asif Rashid, has extended the pre-arrest bail of former Director General of Health, Shaukat Ali, until June 30.

The court has directed the Anti-Corruption Department to present the case record.

The defense counsel, Babar Khan Yousafzai, denied the allegations and stated that his client had not taken any benefits and had not committed any illegal acts.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai Advocate claimed that the petitioner was being targeted for refusing to bypass merit in the supply of medicines to government hospitals, which led to an inquiry that found the companies had not made the supplies.

The court directed the Anti-Corruption Department to present the complete case record to facilitate.

The Senior Prosecutor of the Anti-Corruption Department assured the court that the record would be submitted on the next hearing.

The defense counsel requested the court to direct the Anti-Corruption Department to provide access to the case record, including the FIR and other evidence, to enable them to present their case effectively.

CS chairs weekly review meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, chaired a weekly review meeting to evaluate the progress of ongoing governance initiatives, attended by administrative secretaries and relevant officials from across the province. One of the major developments discussed was the notification of the Steering Committee for the Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway, aimed at expediting the strategic infrastructure project. The Chief Secretary directed departments to ensure smooth coordination to move the project forward. A detailed analysis of essential food commodity prices was also presented. The meeting was informed that recent directives from the Chief Secretary had resulted in improved price control measures. Deputy Commissioners across the province have been actively engaging with suppliers and stakeholders to stabilize the prices. The Chief Secretary instructed officials to maintain strict oversight of supply chains to prevent price hikes. The meeting also reviewed the province's development portfolio. The Chief Secretary emphasized prioritizing projects nearing completion in order to maximize public service delivery and ensure early benefits to the population. In a significant move to boost investment, it was revealed that a "pitch book" featuring 30 key investment projects would be launched later this week. This initiative is aimed at attracting domestic and foreign investors and promoting public-private partnerships in priority sectors. The Chief Secretary was briefed on the Peshawar Beautification Plan, which has officially commenced. The plan focuses on urban landscaping, design, and expansion of green spaces to improve the city's environment and aesthetics.

Khizer meets Iranian Consul General

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League-N's Additional Secretary Information, Arbab Khizr Hayat, met with Iranian Consul General Ali Banafshehkhah at the Iranian Consulate in Peshawar. During the meeting, the two discussed the current regional situation, with a particular focus on the Iran-Israel conflict.

The Iranian Consul General appreciated Pakistan's role and thanked the government of Pakistan for standing by Iran during these challenging times. He also expressed special gratitude to PML-N leader and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for strongly condemning the Israeli aggression against Iran.

Consul General Banafshehkhah added that Iran has given a strong and decisive response to Israeli hostilities and warned that any force that casts a hostile eye toward Islamic countries will be destroyed. He emphasized that, by the grace of God, the friendship between Iran and Pakistan will remain strong and enduring. He also recalled that during the Pakistan-India conflict, Iran played a vital diplomatic role and never left Pakistan alone.

On this occasion, Arbab Khizr Hayat reiterated that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has always strived to promote peace across the world.

PPP denounces use of force against govt employees

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Central Secretary General PPP Muhammad Humayun Khan has strongly condemned the tear gas shelling and violence against government employees at the Provincial Assembly Chowk on Monday.

In a statement issued here he stated that the Pakistan People's Party denounces the use of force and tear gas against government employees. "It was deeply distressing to witness the scene at the Provincial Assembly Chowk," he said. He said that those demanding a raise in their salaries should not be treated like enemies.

Humayun Khan added that the PTI-led provincial government is only capable of exploiting the public. "Why does it bother them to increase the salaries of government employees?" he questioned. He noted that despite difficult circumstances, the PPP has always increased salaries for government workers.

He emphasized that lower-grade employees have fallen below the poverty line, and economic exploitation of public servants will not lead the country to progress.

"We recognize the protesters' democratic right and will stand shoulder to shoulder with them," he declared.

"Do not target oppressed government employees with tear gas and batons—they are not enemies, but poor Pakistanis demanding their rights," the PPP leader.

He further said that the brutal action taken by the provincial government is utterly unacceptable.

Kundi urges collective effort for peace during Moharram

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday called for a collective effort to maintain peace during Moharram and stressed the importance of inter-sectarian harmony and unity.

He said this in a meeting with a delegation of the Imamia Jirga Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held at the Governor House.

The delegation was led by President Farzand Ali Bangash and included General Secretary Sardar Aqeel Hussain, Coordination Secretary Sardar Ibrahim Hussain, and other prominent figures of the Shia community. During the meeting, the delegation discussed preparations for Moharram and raised concerns about law and order, particularly in sensitive districts such as Parachinar and Dera Ismail Khan.

The Governor listened attentively to the delegation's concerns and assured them of his full cooperation in addressing the issues raised.

Governor Kundi emphasized that the province continues to face terrorism backed by hostile elements, particularly from India. He said that several districts, especially the merged district of Kurram and Dera Ismail Khan, are highly sensitive during the month of Moharram.

"All schools of thought must show mutual cooperation and coordination to ensure peace during this sacred month," he said, adding that the provincial administration is committed to ensuring security and well-managed arrangements throughout the province.

The delegation expressed gratitude for the Governor's attention and support towards their concerns and assured their cooperation in promoting peace and unity.

Meanwhile, Director General of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Khalid Inayatullah Khan, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to review progress on establishing NADRA service centers and a passport counter in remote areas of Dera Ismail Khan.

The meeting focused on the planned establishment of NADRA centers in Panyala and Kari Khesor, as well as a passport counter at the NADRA center in Paharpur.

It was agreed that these facilities will be formally inaugurated next month, following the observance of Ashura.

Governor Kundi welcomed the initiative, saying that the new centers would significantly ease access to NADRA and passport-related services for the rural population of DI Khan.

"This step will help eliminate the hardships faced by the local residents, especially those living in far-flung areas," he said.

The meeting also discussed the difficulties senior citizens and residents of remote regions face in obtaining national identity cards.

Governor Kundi urged the NADRA DG to take practical steps to simplify the process across the province and ensure that public grievances are addressed efficiently.

He emphasized the importance of expanding services to underserved communities and called for a people-friendly approach in resolving identification-related challenges.

Policy-level events yield far-reaching outcomes for agricultural: Barkwal

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal has stated that academic and policy-level events yield far-reaching outcomes for agricultural development.

He emphasized that Pakistan, particularly resource-limited and climate-vulnerable provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, faces significant agricultural challenges. Nevertheless, these decades also served as a period of collective learning.

Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal further stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is being developed as a Center of Excellence for agricultural advancement. Essential legislation is underway, and two modern Centers of Excellence are being established in Peshawar and Swat to engage the private sector.

Academically-backed research initiatives worthy of national appreciation are being implemented across the province. Agriculture related departments and personnel are a source of pride, demonstrating exceptional performance despite limited resources.

He revealed that KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur who himself is an agricultural expert—is spearheading 18 new agricultural projects in the province. Forty percent of the budget is allocated to cultivate the lands of southern districts. Similarly, microfinance loan schemes for small farmers are also operational.

Major Sajjad Barkwal identified climate change as a major challenge for agriculture, stressing the urgent need for advanced seed varieties, new research, and awareness among agricultural stakeholders. He emphasized that integrated and sustainable policy measures are indispensable to combat climatic impacts.

Commending the role of the Pakistan Media Development Foundation, he expressed hope that the institution will continue playing a pivotal role in shaping agricultural policy, research, and public awareness. He noted that collaboration among donors, media, and the private sector could prove transformative for sustainable agriculture.

Panel discussions were held during the conference addressing farmers' challenges. Additionally, stalls set up by various public and private organizations at the expo garnered keen interest from participants.

This International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture is being hailed as Pakistan's second major step toward sustainable farming. It was organized by the Pakistan Media Development Foundation with support from the KP Agriculture Department.

Special gratitude was extended to key contributors including Agri Fertilizers, GF, Syngenta, Bayer, National Bank of Pakistan, Bank of Khyber, Fatima Fertilizers, GPI Foundation, and notable sponsors for their support in successfully executing this global event.

Private educational institutions in KP criticized for exploiting families

PESHAWAR (APP): Despite ongoing summer vacations, private educational institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) continue to charge exorbitant fees, placing an unbearable financial burden on families already grappling with inflation and economic hardship.

This unchecked commercialization of education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has triggered growing concern among parents, educators, and policymakers, urging KP Govt to direct the private schools not to charge summer vacations' fees from students.

Over the past decade, KP has witnessed a dramatic rise in private schools and academies, especially in villages, tehsils, and district headquarters. While the proliferation of these institutions has filled gaps left by an under-resourced public sector, critics argued they are draining families dry under the pretext of providing "quality education."

"Education in KP has rapidly transformed into a business venture, with many private schools being established and run by wealthy families and local businessmen. These institutions lure parents with promises of international-standard curricula, English-medium instructions, and competitive exam preparation but almost failed in their claims," said Misal Khan, a retired Govt servant.

"I was forced to pay Rs 25000 per month of my grandchildren's private school's fee even in summer vacations while the PTI Govt paid a deaf ear to such an issue," he said.

For many families, he said the cost of these promises is too high. "It's become a nightmare," says Misal Khan. "We pay school fees, academy fees, transportation charges—every month—even during vacations. I survive on a fixed pension, and it's nearly impossible to sustain this commercial education system in KP."

Like Misal Khan, many parents across the province are left with no choice but to keep paying to secure a better future for their children, even if it means financial distress.

An increasing number of students are also enrolled in private tuition academies, which have emerged as parallel educational systems, often staffed by the same teachers employed in private schools. These academies charge per subject, further compounding the financial load on families.

Private school principal Sidra Sheraz of Tehsil Pabbi, Nowshera, defended the system, stating, "We do offer scholarships and transport to talented students besides ACs/Room Coolers."

She added that 65% of academy fees go to teachers, which attracts skilled educators. "We have professional teachers in every subject, which enhances quality. But yes, affordability remains a challenge and parents interested in the careers of their children have to pay more compared to Govt schools."

She claimed that payment of rent and salaries to staff were the main reasons for charging students during summer vacations.

Parents argue that private schools take advantage of the lack of rules and regulations. "Despite summer breaks, these schools continue to demand full monthly fees which was unjustified. Though authorities have directed institutions to seek government approval before raising fees, implementation on the ground remains inconsistent in KP," said Fayaz Khan, a resident of Wapda Town Peshawar while talking to APP.

He said parents have to pay extra money by hiring private tutors for preparation of professional medical and engineering colleges' tests during summer vacations keeping in view of the declining education standards in KP.

The lack of accountability and transparency in private schools has led to widespread frustration. Critics argue that while private institutions boast better infrastructure and teaching standards, they also exploit parents, especially in urban centers like Peshawar, where cost of living is high.

The irony is that while private schools flourish, KP remains home to a staggering number of out-of-school children (OSC). According to the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) 2021 Report, over 4.7 million children in KP between the ages of 5 and 16 are out of school. Among these, 2.9 million are girls, and a million children in the merged tribal districts have no access to formal education.

The dropout rate is alarmingly high in underdeveloped districts such as Upper Kohistan, Palas Kolai, Torghar, and Shangla. In some areas, OSC figures soar above 70%, highlighting the vast socio-economic divide.

Sahibzada Khan, President of PML-N Nowshera, lambasted the PTI-led provincial government for what he said were the tall hollow claims. "The numbers debunk PTI's promises of a uniform education policy as it failed to control private school fees or reform public education despite 12 years in Govt."

Former Director of Elementary Education KP, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim, emphasized that the root of the problem lies in poor public education standards. "If public schools had smaller class sizes, subject specialists, and proper facilities, students wouldn't need academies."

He called on the government to strictly implement Article 25-A of the Constitution, which mandates free and compulsory education for all children up to the matric level.

He also proposed digital reforms—launching school websites, newsletters, and online educational content—to modernize public education and encourage enrollment.

In response to growing criticism, KP's Education Department has declared a special education emergency in the 2025-26 budget. According to Shahab Khan, Senior Planning Officer, the government has increased the education budget to Rs. 363 billion in 2025-26, up 11% from last year.

He said Rs. 5 billion allocated for tackling the out-of-school crisis, Rs. 5.9 billion for upgrading infrastructure in 32,500 public schools and Investment in co-curricular activities, teacher training, and provision of basic facilities like clean drinking water and toilets.

"These initiatives show our commitment to transforming the education sector," said Shahab. "We are prioritizing reforms that address both access and quality."

The KP education sector stands at a crossroads. On one hand, private institutions continue to thrive, driven by demand for quality education; on the other, millions of children remain deprived of even basic schooling.

Without comprehensive regulatory frameworks, effective public education investment, and socio-economic reforms, the current system risks deepening inequality. As more families are squeezed by rising fees and commercial exploitation, the dream of accessible, quality education for all remains elusive.



In brief

Transgender's body found F.P. Report

SWABI: The body of a transgender, identified as Samiullah, also known as Bibi, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in a market on Jahangir Road in Swabi district on Monday morning. According to police, initial reports suggested that Samiullah may have committed suicide by hanging himself. The body was shifted to the hospital for further examination. Police have launched an investigation to determine whether this was indeed a case of suicide or murder.

DPO Nowshera assumes charge Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The newly posted district police officer Nowshera Ahmad Shah on Monday assumed charge of his office. Upon arrival at Nowshera police line, the DPO was presented salute by a smartly turned out contingent of the police. Ahmad Shah was awarded guard of honour. He laid flowers wreath on martyrs monument. Later, he was introduced to the staff.

Four killed in tribal clash F.P. Report

KHAIRPUR: Four people were killed in an exchange of fire between two groups of Jagirani tribe near Khairpur Pir Goth on Monday. As per the eye-witnesses' account, the exchange of fire between the groups was sudden, which spread fear and panic in the area. Three of the deceased were identified as Yasin Jagirani, Zubair Jagirani and Sanaullah Jagirani. Soon after hearing the news, a heavy contingent of the police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control besides shifting the bodies to a hospital. Police said that the clash was the consequence of an enmity between the two groups, while further investigation was underway.

Surprise inspections F.P. Report

DI KHAN: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KP FS&HFA) conducted a comprehensive inspection operation across various food outlets in Dera Ismail Khan, targeting hotels, grocery stores, retail shops, and mega marts. During the operation, several businesses were found in violation of food safety and hygiene regulations. As a result, improvement notices were issued to ensure compliance with health standards and to safeguard public well-being. An official of the KP FS&HFA stated: "Our top priority is to ensure the availability of safe and high-quality food for the citizens. Strict action will continue against those who violate hygiene protocols or sell substandard products." The authority reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining food safety standards and warned all food-related businesses to adhere to the prescribed guidelines or face legal action.

Workshop held F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) proudly hosted a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop, aimed at "Advancing Inclusive and Resilient Youth Communities through Preventing Violent Extremism." The workshop was organized by the Paigham-e-Pakistan Ckenter for Peace.

KKKUK conducts fire drill demonstration

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKUK) Karak today successfully conducted a comprehensive fire drill demonstration aimed at significantly raising fire safety awareness and improving emergency response preparedness among its entire university community. The initiative, a collaborative effort with the District Youth Affairs Karak and Civil Defense Karak, saw active participation from all employees, including supporting staff, and a large number of students.

The drill commenced with an insightful and detailed presentation on fire safety awareness delivered by In-charge Civil Defense, Adil Wazir. He elaborated on crucial aspects of fire prevention, the proper use of fire extinguishing equipment, and essential evacuation procedures during a fire emergency. His expertise provided valuable theoretical knowledge to all participants, laying a strong foundation for the practical demonstration that fol-



lowed. Under the supervision of Director Administration, Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan, the practical demonstration showcased various techniques for extinguishing different types of fires and executing safe and orderly evacuations. Participants were given hands-on experience and observed real-time scenarios, reinforcing the theoretical concepts discussed earlier. The drill emphasized the importance of quick thinking, coordinated action, and adherence to established safety protocols.

"The safety and well-being of our students and staff are paramount," stated Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan, Director Administration at KKKUK. "This collaborative fire drill demonstration

is a crucial step in ensuring that our entire university community is well-equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively in the event of a fire. We are immensely grateful to the District Youth Affairs Karak and Civil Defense Karak for their invaluable partnership and expertise in making this training a resounding success."

The successful execution of this fire drill underscores Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak's commitment to fostering a safe and secure learning and working environment. The university plans to conduct such drills regularly to maintain a high level of preparedness and reinforce fire safety protocols among its community.

Ties between people of all religious vital: DC

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali has said that the role of Kohat's media in every matter has always been remained very positive and exemplary. This is the reason why there is an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood in the entire district and the relationship between people of all religions here is worthy of imitation for the entire country.

He added that the media plays the role of eyes and ears for the society and I am happy that the local media here had always played an important role in promoting peace and brotherhood as well as highlight-

ing public problems and its redressal.

He expressed these views in a meeting held with the representatives of Kohat Press Club and Social Media in his office on Monday regarding the peaceful holding of upcoming Muharram-ul-Haram.

Deputy Commissioner on this occasion, commended the useful suggestions presented by the media people and said that it would definitely be made part of the SOPs.

DC Kohat said that it is the responsibility of all of us to take care of the sanctity of Muharram-ul-Haram and we should make the philosophy of Hazrat Hussain (RA) a part of our lives. He emphasized that the misuse of media should

be avoided and those who use the media for their personal gains or nefarious purposes should be identified so that timely action can be taken against such elements and the ideal peace here can be maintained. He said that all the sects have assured their full cooperation to the district administration and police and said that no party will bring people from outside and provocation will completely be avoided.

On this occasion, the media persons assured that as per tradition, full cooperation will be extended to the district administration and the security forces and play their due role in maintaining an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood.

Seminar arranged

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Human Friends Organisation (HFO), in collaboration with United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the Department of Human Rights and Minorities Affairs, hosted the Advocacy Session on "Inclusion, Non-Discrimination, and Economic Reintegration of Religious Minorities in the Workplace" on Sunday at Faisalabad.

The event was also attended by Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WFCI) and other local businessmen as key stakeholders to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Sajid Christopher, Executive Director of HFO and Sobia

Batool Shah highlighted employment challenges and economic reintegration needs of religious minorities.

Interactive discussions featured insights from FCCI and WFCI representatives on inclusive hiring practices, aligning with Pakistan's labour and human rights commitments. Employers signed a pledge to implement diversity policies, focusing on fair hiring, pay equity, and tailored career development for minorities, with the event concluding with certificate distribution and closing remarks.

Muhammad Ali from FCCI reaffirmed the chamber's commitment to promoting a workplace where every individual is treated with respect, regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity, and highlighted initiatives like mandatory diver-

sity training and support for home-based industries to empower women. A special priority was given to employing female candidates, supporting their economic rehabilitation.

Ms Christiana Peter, Senior Vice President of WFCI, expressed strong support for the initiative, stating, "The WFCI is committed to fostering women's entrepreneurship and supporting home-based industries, creating vital pathways for women from religious minorities to thrive in the economic mainstream. We are proud to collaborate with HFO and UNDP to champion these efforts and ensure equitable opportunities for all." Shafiq Hussain Shah, commended the effort, saying, "This session is a commendable step toward building an inclusive society."

Three young miners dead

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: In a tragic incident, three young coal miners lost their lives due to a mine collapse (roof caving) in Darra Adam Khel. The deceased include two real brothers, all belonging to the Kuzkana area of District Shangla.

The victims were identi-

fied as: Kamil, son of Sabar Khan, aged around 24, Muhammad Rashad, son of Sabar Khan, aged around 20 and Barkat, son of Afsar, aged around 21.

According to initial reports, the miners were trapped when a section of the mine suddenly caved in. Despite prompt efforts by fellow workers and locals,

all three succumbed to the accident on site. This heart-wrenching incident has once again highlighted the urgent need for enhanced safety measures in coal mines across the country. Families of the victims have called upon authorities to ensure strict enforcement of mining safety regulations to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Military leadership made nation proud, says GQM Chief

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Founder and central president of the Gujjar Qaumi Movement (GQM), Haji Zarin Khan Gujjar, has praised Pakistan's military leadership under Field Marshal Hafiz Asim Munir, saying it has brought global recognition and pride to the country.

Speaking to a group of local journalists at his hujra in Chakdara here the other day, Haji Zarin said the Gujjar clan has always stood shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army in the country's defense, from the time of independence till now.

He stated that whenever a military 'General' like Field Marshal Ayub Khan, General Zia ul Haq and General Musharraf assumed leadership as president of the country, the nation witnessed development and policies aimed at the welfare of the majority. In contrast, he alleged that democratic governments often targeted opposition parties and favored only their own workers, while looting the national treasury without accountability.

Haji Zarin cited the Pakistan Army's successful performance against India and the special invitation extended to Field Marshal Hafiz Asim Munir by U.S. President Donald Trump as evidence of the military's strong and capable leadership.

He pledged that, if needed, thousands of Gujjar youth would stand with the armed forces and national institutions to defend the country on every front. He also urged GQM workers to remain prepared for the defense, stability, and sovereignty of Pakistan.

Recovery of loans directed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division, Nisar Ahmad on Monday directed revenue officers to develop a comprehensive strategy, in consultation with Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) officials, for the recovery of outstanding agricultural loans.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting regarding recoveries of agriculture loans extended by the Agricultural Development Bank (ZTBL). The meeting was attended by Secretary to Commissioner Fazal Wahid, Assistant to Commissioner (Revenue) Muhammad Daud Khan, Regional and Branch Managers of the Agricultural Development Bank, and Tehsildars from Mardan and Swabi.

During the briefing, bank officials informed the commissioner that farmers in Mardan and Swabi owe a total of Rs. 39 million in agricultural loans, and administrative support is essential for recovery efforts. Commissioner Nisar Ahmad instructed revenue officials to issue notices under the Land Revenue Act to the concerned individuals and ensure prompt recovery of the dues. He stressed that legal requirements should be fulfilled and firm action taken to recover government dues.

Rs41m among 205 deserving persons distributed: The KP Department of Ushr and Zakat has distributed dowry fund cheques amounting to Rs.41 million among 205 deserving individuals in District Mardan.

Celebrating the real changemakers of Karachi

Marya Haleema

IN a vibrant and bustling metropolis like Karachi, there's no shortage of events - from corporate launches and media galas to art shows and literary fests. With multiple events happening every day and weekend, it becomes practically impossible to attend them all.

Over time, we learn to choose - to skip some and make time for those that truly resonate with purpose. And every once in a while, we come across a gathering that stands apart - not because of celebrity appearances or flashing lights, but because of the depth of its message and the sincerity of its intent.

Such was the case this weekend when I had the privilege of attending a deeply meaningful and heartening event, curated and hosted by none other than Karachi's respected figure and my dear friend, Rehmatullah Memon and Uzma Sabir. For the past ten years, Memon has been quietly and consistently organizing award ceremonies that recognize the real contributors to our society - the kind of individuals whose work changes lives but often goes unnoticed by mainstream media.

This year, despite suffering a serious health issue, Memon not only ensured that the event took place but personally oversaw every detail, upholding the high standard and inclusive spirit that have become the hallmark of his work.

One particularly commendable aspect of the evening was the strong presence and participation



of Karachi's business community.

Their support and collaboration reflected an encouraging shift - a realization that private sector leaders, too, must take an active role in uplifting and acknowledging social contributors. Their presence added weight to the proceedings and sent a powerful message: that collective progress is only possible when all segments of society stand together in recognition of those who serve silently.

Perhaps the most striking and urgent moment of the event came when environmentalist Masood Lohar took the stage. Known for his tireless efforts in establishing urban forests across the country, Lohar used his time not for personal praise but to raise awareness about an alarming environmental crisis.

"In the last two weeks alone, Karachi has experienced 52 earthquakes," he revealed, "yet we have no emergency response in place, no public discussion, and not even one functional wastewater treatment plant for a population of over 30 million." His words struck a chord with the audience - not just as a wake-up call, but as a reminder of the urgent need to integrate

environmental accountability into our urban planning.

This wasn't just an event - it was a movement of acknowledgment, a gathering of conscious citizens, and a celebration of values often lost in the noise of fame and fortune. Rehmatullah Memon's resilience and dedication have made this annual event a symbol of meaningful recognition, and this year's ceremony only reinforced its importance.

At a time when society is becoming increasingly fast-paced and individualistic, such efforts provide much-needed pause - an opportunity to reflect on who we value, what we celebrate, and where we are headed as a community. It reminded us all that real heroes don't always wear uniforms or appear on television - sometimes, they're the ones quietly planting trees, teaching children, helping others heal, and standing up for what's right, even when no one is watching. Karachi needs more of this - more heart, more unity, more appreciation of its everyday changemakers. And for that, we owe a heartfelt thanks to Rehmatullah Memon.

Two bridges inaugurated in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Chairman District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Abdul Kabir Khan Advocate, has inaugurated two bridges in Mandarn Tehsil, including the Makharnai Bridge and the Faizabad Kangan Bridge, constructed at a cost of Rs. 26.12 million and Rs. 26.475 million, respectively.

The inauguration ceremony of the Makharnai Bridge held at Muhammad Hayat Khan's residence and was attended by PTI leaders and workers, including Johar Ali Khan, Kamran Khan, and others.

DDAC Abdul Kabir

Khan Advocate stated that the construction of these bridges was a long-standing demand of the people of the area and that it will greatly benefit the local community.

The bridges will provide connectivity to the people of Makharnai and Faizabad, enabling them to access hospitals, schools, colleges, and government offices without any hindrance. The construction of these bridges is expected to boost economic activity in the area and improve the overall quality of life for the residents.

Abdul Kabir Khan Advocate announced that several development projects have been approved for

the constituency, including the upgrading of the Baba Ber to Mangal Thana Road. Other projects include the upgrading of the Civil Hospital Nawaagai and the construction of Rescue 1122 centers and a girls' degree college in Nagramai.

Abdul Kabir Khan Advocate expressed his commitment to delivering on the promises made to the people of the constituency and to working tirelessly to bring about positive change. He stated that the completion of these development projects will change the fate of the constituency and bring prosperity to the people.

Rice seminar organized

F.P. Report

TOB TEK SINGH: According to details, a Seminar regarding Rice crop production was organized by FFC at Mukhtar Palace Kamalia. Around 200 progressive rice growers throughout the district along with Agri Officials and Scientists.

The Chief Guest of the program was Dr. Amir Rasool, Director General Pest Warning and Quality Control Pesticides Lahore. On this Occasion, Dr. Muhammad Ijaz, Director Rice Research Institute of Kala Shah Kaku highlighted the farmers to increase the production of Rice crop. He further said that the spray on rice crop should be used only that which is made for rice crop. Apart from this, he

urged the farmers to destroy weeds and how to eliminate it.

He explained about different varieties for optimum rice production and which variety to use to increase production. Director Agriculture (Extension) Division Faisalabad Chaudhry Khalid said that farmers should buy fertilizers and sprays from our registered dealers and use Kissan Card. He narates that Punjab Government have many other projects in pipeline coming up which will benefit our farmers immensely.

The chief guest, Dr. Amir Rasool, Director General Pest Warning and Quality Control Pesticides, said that rice is being cultivated in large quantities in our country because rice is a crop that has never caused any loss to

farmers. He further said that most of the rice from our country is exported to other countries. He urged the farmers to cultivate as much rice as possible.

Liaquat Ali Head of (FAC) Sheikhupura Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited and Mr. Hassan Raza Deputy Manager Marketing (AS) Toba Tek Singh Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited urged the farmers that always use balanced fertilizer in their crops to boost the crop yield up to 50 percent. They said that FFC is providing free of cost soil analysis services to the farming community which enable them use balance fertilizer as per crop growth. For farmers new enhanced fertilizers has been launched which can increase further 10 to 15 percent crop yield.

Pakistan surpasses India on many fronts

Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam

IN less than a year, Pakistan has recorded significant achievements on the foreign policy and defense fronts, particularly in its rivalry with India. This performance not only caught India by surprise but also earned Pakistan recognition from the international community for its growing strategic relevance.

Shift in Bangladesh

In August 2024, violent demonstrations in Bangladesh forced the pro-Indian Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid to flee the country and seek refuge in India. Indian media and some defense analysts alleged that Pakistan was behind the unrest, although these claims remained unsubstantiated. Regardless, the fall of a pro-Indian government in Dhaka opened up new oppor-

tunities for Pakistan. Islamabad has since developed cordial relations with the new government led by Younas Khan, and bilateral ties have steadily strengthened over the past several months.

Afghanistan and regional dynamics

India has long sought to use Afghanistan as a pressure point against Pakistan. When tensions emerged between Pakistan and the Taliban-led Afghan government, India moved swiftly to engage Kabul. It was widely believed that India could drive a wedge between the two neighboring Muslim-majority countries. However, this strategy failed. During the four-day war between India and Pakistan in May 2025, the Afghan Taliban maintained neutrality, thereby undermining India's plans and reaffirming regional solidarity.

Strengthening ties with

Russia

Forging strategic relations with Russia has been another milestone in Pakistan's foreign policy. Historically, Russia has been an ally of India and a rival to Pakistan. However, recent years have seen growing enthusiasm on both sides, leading to improved bilateral ties. This new relationship is considered a significant diplomatic breakthrough for Pakistan.

The four-day war with India

The brief but intense conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025 exposed India's aggressive posture. The war was triggered by a terrorist attack on tourists in the Pahalgam region of Indian-administered Kashmir, which India blamed on Pakistan. Despite Islamabad's offer to cooperate in an investigation, New Delhi launched a military

offensive. This act of aggression placed India on weak moral ground and constituted a violation of the UN Charter.

Pakistan, citing Article 51 of the UN Charter, exercised its right to self-defense. Its forces successfully intercepted and shot down six Indian aircraft and targeted several key military installations. The conflict became a litmus test for both nations, ultimately demonstrating that Pakistan's defense capabilities remain robust and reliable.

Navigating the Iran-Israel conflict

The Iran-Israel war posed a diplomatic challenge for Pakistan. Nevertheless, Islamabad adopted a principled stance, condemning Israeli aggression and voicing unequivocal support for Iran. Pakistan's representative at the UN

Security Council delivered a powerful speech backing Iran, which was warmly received in Tehran. The Iranian parliament even chanted, "Thank you, Pakistan!" in appreciation.

Meanwhile, India's efforts to co-develop the Chabahar port with Iran - seen as a counter to CPEC - suffered a severe setback when several Indian engineers were arrested for allegedly spying for Israel. This development dealt a blow to India's regional ambitions, while Pakistan's diplomatic standing gained momentum.

Recalibrating relations with US

India takes pride in its close ties with the United States and serves as a key strategic partner in South Asia. Conversely, U.S.-Pakistan relations had been strained in recent years, especially during the Biden adminis-

tration. However, in the wake of shifting geopolitical dynamics - particularly in the Middle East - President Trump adopted a new approach.

In a major diplomatic shift, Trump extended an olive branch to Pakistan, playing a role in brokering the India-Pakistan ceasefire. He also invited Pakistan's Army Chief to a lunch at the White House, where he praised Pakistan's role in regional stability and announced plans for a new trade agreement.

Conclusion

These developments have caused concern within the Indian leadership. Their efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan, both regionally and internationally, have largely failed. Pakistan's recent foreign policy and defense maneuvers have enhanced its global standing and regional influence.



Massive Russian attack on Kyiv kills five

KYIV (AFP): Ukraine said that "another massive attack" on the capital Kyiv killed at least five people, a day after the country's top military commander vowed to intensify strikes on Russia. Diplomatic efforts to end the three-year war have stalled, with the last direct meeting between the two sides almost three weeks ago and no follow-up talks scheduled.

AFP journalists in Kyiv heard the buzzing of a drone flying over the city centre and explosions, as well as gunfire. "Another massive attack on the capital. Possibly, several waves of enemy drones," said a statement from Tymur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's military administration. Four people were killed in Shevchenkivsky district, where part of a residential high-rise building was destroyed, and another person was killed to the south in Bila Tserkva, said Interior Minister Igor Klymenko.

AFP journalists saw around 10 people sheltering in the basement of a residential building in the centre of the capital waiting for the attack to end, most of them scrolling their phones for news. The latest strikes came after Ukrainian com-

mander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky vowed to intensify strikes on Russia. "We will not just sit in defence because this brings nothing and eventually leads to the fact that we still retreat, lose people and territories," he told reporters, including AFP. Syrsky said Ukraine would continue its strikes on Russian military targets, which he said had proved "effective".

"Of course we will continue. We will increase the scale and depth," he said. Ukraine has launched retaliatory strikes on Russia throughout the war, targeting energy and military infrastructure sometimes hundreds of kilometres from the front line. Kyiv says the strikes are a fair response to deadly Russian attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and civilians. At least four people were killed in an overnight Russian strike on an apartment building in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, while a strike on a Ukrainian army training ground later in the day killed three others, officials said. In wide-ranging remarks, Syrsky conceded that Russia had some advantages in drone warfare, particularly in making fibre-optic drones that are

tethered and difficult to jam. "Here, unfortunately, they have an advantage in both the number and range of their use," he said.

He also claimed that Ukraine still held 90 square kilometres (35 square miles) of territory in Russia's Kursk region, where Kyiv launched an audacious cross-border incursion last August. "These are our pre-emptive actions in response to a possible enemy offensive," he said. Russia said in April that it had gained full control of the Kursk region and denies that Kyiv has a presence there. Russia occupies around a fifth of Ukraine and claims to have annexed four Ukrainian regions as its own since launching its invasion in 2022 -- in addition to Crimea, which it captured in 2014.

Kyiv has accused Moscow of deliberately sabotaging a peace deal to prolong its full-scale offensive on the country and to seize more territory. The Russian army said that it had captured the village of Petrivske in Ukraine's northeast Kharkiv region. Russian forces also sent at least 47 drones and fired three missiles towards Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said.

Hague NATO summit protest shifts focus to Iran

THE HAGUE (Reuters): An anti-NATO protest in The Hague shifted its focus to Iran after overnight US strikes hit key nuclear sites there. The peaceful demonstration took place days before The Hague hosts a NATO summit. The planned protest against NATO's military policies pivoted to condemnation of the US attacks on Iran, with participants voicing concern about rising tensions in the Middle East.

Thousands marched toward the Peace Palace, home to the International Court of Justice, a Reuters witness said. Organizers estimated the crowd at 5,000, while police said they do not track attendance numbers. Protesters carried banners calling for de-escalation, diplomacy, and for NATO to be disbanded, with some saying "No Iran War" and "Hands off Iran".

Iranian protester Nikita Shabbazi told Reuters it was "heartbreaking" to see what is going on in her home country. "I feel devastated. (The US attacks) can trigger a wider war. It has opened the paths for illegal attacks on nuclear installations everywhere in the world." Protesters also opposed a proposed 5% defence spending target pushed by US President Donald Trump and backed by NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who hopes to secure consensus at the summit, beginning. "There's no need for this provocation, this 5% of GDP spending on weapons, that will benefit the military-industrial complex. This has nothing to do with the needs of people," said British protester Pippa Bartolotti.



KYIV: A view of damages after massive Russia's strike which killed dozens of people in Ukraine.

Australia says it supports US strike, calls for return to diplomacy

SYDNEY (Reuters): Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said that Canberra supported the United States strike on Iran and called for de-escalation and a return to diplomacy. "The world has long agreed that Iran cannot be allowed to get a nuclear weapon and we support action to prevent that," Albanese told reporters in Canberra.

Albanese said "the information has been clear" that Iran had enriched uranium to 60% and "there is no other explanation for it to reach 60, other than engaging in a programme that wasn't about civilian nuclear power". The International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN nuclear watchdog that inspects Iran's nuclear facilities, reported on May 31 that Iran had enough uranium enriched to up

to 60%, if enriched further, for nine nuclear weapons.

"Had Iran complied with the very reasonable requests that were made, including by the IAEA, then circumstances would have been different," said Albanese, referring to limitations on enrichment. In a series of television and radio interviews, Foreign Minister Penny Wong said the strike was a unilateral action by its security ally the United States, and Australia was joining calls from Britain and other countries for Iran to return to the negotiating table.

"We support action that the US has taken to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon," Wong said in a television interview with Seven Sunrise. "We do not want to see escalation," she told reporters in Canberra. There

are around 2,900 Australians in Iran and 1,300 in Iran who are seeking to leave.

Australia closed its embassy in Tehran, after Wong spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Australia has suspended bus evacuations from Israel after the US strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, but is making preparations for potential evacuations if air space in Israel reopens, Wong said. Australia said it has sent two defence planes to the Middle East in non-combat roles to assist civilian evacuations.

New Zealand's Foreign Minister Winston Peters said he was examining the evidence surrounding Iran's nuclear enrichment programme, while Prime Minister Christopher Luxon called for a return to dialogue, Radio New Zealand reported.

Indian activists seek to save child brides

NEW DELHI (AFP): When wedding season comes in India, the phone of child rights activist Tatwashil Kamble never stops ringing with appeals to stop girls from being married off due to poverty. Kamble said he has helped stop thousands of illegal marriages in India, where nuptials before the age of 18 are banned.

"The elders of the village think: 'How dare we come to stop a marriage in their village!'" said Kamble, who has been campaigning for more than a decade in western Maharashtra state. Many families are motivated by poverty to marry off their daughters, so that the girls can start earning their own living. When activists have sought to stop marriages, "it has led to physical altercations", according to Kamble. Sometimes they are able to stop the nuptials from taking place, or, if they arrive too late, then the bride is taken to a shelter and supported in deciding on her own future. India accounts for one in three of the world's child brides, according to the UN children's agency, with at least 1.5 million girls getting married each year. Kamble said he is driven by the bitter memory of seeing a teenager die of blood loss during labour.

"That's when I thought: so many young girls are getting married and, even after their death, it's not

being called child marriage. They are saying 'the mother has died'" without acknowledging she was a girl. Kamble works in the Beed district of Maharashtra, an area dominated by sprawling sugarcane fields hit hard by years of drought. Workers said they have little choice but to marry their daughters off young -- arguing they do it to protect the girl, not harm her. "It is not like we don't like the idea of education," said Manisha Barde, a sugarcane cutter who was a child bride herself.

Kamble works in the Beed district of Maharashtra, an area dominated by sprawling sugarcane fields hit hard by years of drought. Workers said they have little choice but to marry their daughters off young -- arguing they do it to protect the girl, not harm her. "It is not like we don't like the idea of education," said Manisha Barde, a sugarcane cutter who was a child bride herself. "I have seen girls who have never seen a school," he said. Families worry for "the girl's safety", Tange said, and even those opposed to child marriage can end up organising a wedding. Tange said his team received 321 calls from across the district about child marriages that were taking place, or about to happen, in the first five months of this year.

During peak wedding season, which runs from October to March, Tange said he gets around 10 to 15 calls daily, which prompt his team and other activists to raid ceremonies. Tange has a dedicated network of activists and other informants who help in villages across the district, sending photographs of weddings. "There are some people who want to do the right thing," he said. Sometimes the bride calls directly. Other times, a guest rings and makes the authorities listen to the wedding music. "Disrupting a wedding... there is a lot of drama," said Tange.

"People get ready to beat up those who go to stop such marriages," Jyoti Thorat was 16 when her parents married her off to a 20-year-old man, ending her hopes of continuing school and joining the police. "My parents fixed it, and I wasn't happy," Thorat said, a decade later and a mother of two schoolboys. Her older sisters had also been married off before they turned 18, with her parents prioritising getting their only son educated. Thorat recalled with despair how work cutting cane beckoned soon after her wedding, a fate that awaits other girls. "They have to start working as sugarcane workers that same year," she said. "A machete is ready for them."

Japan calls for de-escalation of Iran conflict

TOKYO (Reuters): Japan called for de-escalation of the conflict in Iran and said US strikes demonstrated Washington's determination to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Japan also said it was "extremely regrettable" the situation between Israel and Iran had escalated into a cycle of retaliation, according to Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya.

"Japan continues to strongly hope that the path to dialogue will be reopened by efforts toward a resolution of Iran's nuclear issue through talks between the US and Iran," Iwaya said in a statement. US President Donald Trump said the US had "obliterated" Tehran's key nuclear sites, joining Israel in the biggest Western military action against the Islamic Republic since its 1979 revolution. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba earlier this month condemned Israel's military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities, saying deployment for military use "cannot be absolutely condemned." When asked about the US strike during a regular press conference, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said the situation was different from Israel's action against Iran on June 13.

Garcia ordered released pending trial on migrant smuggling charges

NEW YORK (Reuters): A US judge ordered Kilmar Abrego Garcia, the migrant returned to the US in early June after being wrongfully deported to his native El Salvador, released on bail pending his criminal trial on migrant smuggling charges.

But the decision by US Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes in Nashville, Tennessee does not necessarily mean Abrego, as he prefers to be known, will go home to his family. The judge had acknowledged at a June 13 court hearing that Abrego was likely to be placed in immigration detention even if he is released. Abrego, a Maryland resident whose

wife and young child are US citizens, was deported on March 15 to El Salvador, despite a 2019 immigration court ruling that he not be sent there because he could be persecuted by gangs. Officials called his removal an "administrative error," but for months said they could not bring him back.

Critics of President Donald Trump pointed to Abrego's case as evidence his administration was prioritizing increased deportations over due process, the bedrock principle that people in the US, whether citizens or not, can contest governmental actions against them in the courts. Trump, who has pledged to

crack down on illegal immigration, has said Abrego belongs to the MS-13 gang - an accusation that his lawyers deny. The Justice Department brought Abrego back to the US on June 6 after earlier securing an indictment charging him with working with at least five co-conspirators as part of a smuggling ring to bring immigrants to the United States illegally.

Prosecutors say Abrego, 29, picked up migrants from the US-Mexico border more than 100 times, and also transported firearms and drugs. Abrego has pleaded not guilty. His lawyers say the Trump administration brought the charges to cover up their

violations of Abrego's rights, and say the alleged co-conspirators cooperating with prosecutors should not be trusted because they are seeking relief from deportation and criminal charges of their own.

In her ruling, Holmes said the government failed to show that Abrego posed a danger to the community or was unlikely to appear in court, scheduling a hearing. In a separate civil case, Greenbelt, Maryland-based US District Judge Paula Xinis is investigating whether the Trump administration violated her order to facilitate Abrego's return from El Salvador. The US Supreme Court unanimously upheld that order.

Iran used drug traffickers to stoke trouble in France

PARIS (Reuters): France has evidence that Iran has used intermediaries in the past to hire drug traffickers to carry out activities in France on its behalf and could do so again, Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said.

France is on heightened alert following US strikes

on Iranian nuclear facilities overnight. "Iran uses proxies that are often linked to drug traffickers. They get a contract and don't even know that the contract is linked to the Iranian regime," Retailleau told LCI television. "But that's the modality used by Iran on (our) national territory."

Retailleau did not say what activities had been carried out in France and gave no specific evidence. Iran's embassy was not immediately available for comment. "It's very simple. These are contracts through intermediaries that don't link back to the

regime," Retailleau said. Highlighting the heightened security threat, Retailleau also referred to a foiled plot in July 2018 to blow up an opposition rally near Paris where several Iranians were arrested after a joint Franco-German-Belgian operation.

Tehran is in shock - and we have fled with heavy hearts

GILAN: The prospect of war seemed to creep nearer to reality with each passing day, but perhaps few of the millions who have been forced to abandon their homes across Iran in the past week - including myself - could have known this new reality would impose itself so harshly or abruptly.

The first explosions jolted people awake in Tehran shortly after 3am on June 13, when a large number of Israeli fighter jets and drones attacked dozens of areas across the country, and explosives-laden quadcopters and anti-fortification Spike guided missiles were launched by Israeli agents from inside Iran. Entire residential buildings were levelled in the capital, military sites and air defence batteries were targeted, and above-ground facilities supporting nuclear enrichment halls buried deep inside mountains in Isfahan province's Natanz were bombed. Dozens of civilians were killed, as were a large number of top military commanders and nuclear scientists.

Tehran was in shock the first morning after the attacks, as people struggled to process the terrifying news and evaluate their options while the authorities scrambled to mount a concerted response to the surprise hits. As the attacks came on - the last day of the weekend in Iran - most city streets were eerily quiet in the immediate aftermath, except for those where Israeli bombs had made an impact.

Soon, however, hours-long queues had formed at almost every single fuel station across the sprawling capital, which has a population of nearly 10 million people and holds more than 15 million during busy workdays, as millions also commute from neighbouring cities like Karaj. I went out to visit a few of the targeted sites in western Tehran: Multiple homes had been destroyed in the Patrice Lumumba neighbourhood, several floors of a 15-storey building providing accommodation for university professors had caved in at Saadat Abad and adjacent buildings were damaged, while the top two floors of another residential building had been completely wiped out in Marzadaran. All were successful targeted assassinations - including of several top nuclear scientists - and many civilians were also killed. Later that night, Iran's armed forces began launching hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel in retaliation. Nearly one week on, at least 16 rounds of Iranian strikes have been launched, with no immediate end in sight as Tehran says it will continue to hit back so long as Israel is attacking. Meanwhile, United States President Donald Trump teases triggering an all-out regional war by directly entering the war alongside Israel, which he and Washington's Western allies already support with cutting-edge munitions, a massive fleet of refuelling planes and intelligence efforts.

For the next few days, the Israeli

attacks were ringing out across Tehran and the country during the daytime, terrorising civilians who saw the smoke and heard the explosions get closer to their homes or places of work. Both at home and at Al Jazeera's Tehran bureau, I heard many explosive impacts, with some of the closer ones only about 2km (1.2 miles) away. Most of Tehran was shut down after the Israeli attacks ramped up, and the streets and petrol stations were more crowded than ever after Israel and Trump told people to evacuate immediately. The government said metro stations and mosques were opened as 24-hour shelters since it has built no dedicated shelters or come up with any clear security protocols, despite the ever-present threat of war.

After three days of evaluating the situation, my family and I decided to join the countless others who had already fled Tehran. After hurriedly packing some clothes and a few belongings in a suitcase, I drove from my own place to my girlfriend's house to pick her up at about 4pm. Her parents, who work in healthcare, needed to stay in Tehran that day but they have since left as well, after Israeli air strikes intensified in their neighbourhood. We then picked up my mother - along with our four cats who have been staying with her - from her home in western Tehran, close to a major road which exists the capital. Israeli bombs were falling on multiple areas across western Tehran

as we scurried to grab the cats and put them in their boxes.

The unmistakable sounds of the explosions, which leave a sickening, sinking sensation in your stomach no matter how many times you hear them, only added to the urgency - especially since the Israeli military had issued a new evacuation threat at about the same time and then bombed the state television headquarters. We left Tehran with heavy hearts, not knowing when we might return. The buildings were already mostly empty of residents. The feeling that we may not return to the same intact neighbourhoods was unavoidable, as was the terror we feel for those who wanted to leave but could not, whether because they are nursing a sick family member or because they simply lacked the means to do so. Iran's ailing economy has been dragged under the weight of years of local mismanagement and US sanctions.

The journey north, which usually takes about four hours, took close to 12. The highways were a sea of vehicles filled with families, pets and belongings. Roadside diners and service areas brimmed with people who had no idea when or how they might return. Many worriedly followed news of the latest air strikes. Close to our destination in the north of Iran, checkpoints set up by armed and masked security forces made the traffic even worse. They were stopping some vehicles, mostly pick-up trucks, since those are what have

been used by Israeli agents to smuggle explosive quadcopters and other weapons inside Iran.

I am writing this from a small but vibrant city in the province of Gilan in northern Iran. The northern provinces, also including Mazandaran and Golestan, are where most Iranians have opted to go. They are relatively close to Tehran, have far fewer places that could be potential targets for the Israeli army, and were already popular travel destinations with a large number of hotels that many have visited before. Many here have opened their homes to people displaced from other provinces, too. Six million people have entered Mazandaran alone since last week, according to Iran's deputy police chief, Qasem Rezaei.

The authorities are trying to reassure the population, especially Iranians who have fled to the northern provinces, that the government faces no problems in providing for their basic needs, especially food and fuel. But in the meantime, 90 million Iranians have been thrown into a state of uncertainty, frustration and anger while trying to maintain hope for a semblance of normal life when the country is not constantly under threat of military action or isolated from the international community.

For ordinary civilians, the situation is seriously compounded by the fact that they have been completely cut off from the internet for days, with internet observatory NetBlocks

confirming that 97 percent of the country's connectivity was down. Barring a handful of small daily updates gleaned from state media or local sources, Iranians have little idea about the extent of the Israeli military strikes across the country. The Iranian authorities began imposing internet restrictions from the first day of the Israeli strikes, but increased them as Israel expanded its offensive and a pro-Israeli hacking group also launched cyberattacks. Several of the country's top banks have been taken offline as a result of the cyberattacks, as well as Iran's top cryptocurrency exchange, Nobitex, which said its "hot wallet" had been compromised but promised it would return any lost money.

Iranian officials, who also took the country offline during the deadly nationwide protests in November 2019, claimed disconnecting the internet was necessary to fend off Israeli quadcopters and other projectiles, but gave no timeline as to when they would restore full connectivity. Iran already has one of the most closed-off and slowed-down internet connections in the world, as almost all major global messaging apps and other services, along with tens of thousands of websites, are blocked and only accessible through workarounds such as virtual private networks (VPNs). If you are reading this now, it means I managed to find a barely functioning connection to send this out. — Al Jazeera

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Strikes on Iran mark Trump's riskiest gamble

WITH his unprecedented decision to bomb Iran's nuclear sites, directly joining Israel's air attack on its regional arch foe, US President Donald Trump has done something he had long vowed to avoid — intervene militarily in a major foreign war, reported Reuters. The dramatic US strike, including the targeting of Iran's most heavily fortified nuclear installation deep underground, marks the biggest foreign policy gamble of Trump's two presidencies and one fraught with risks and unknowns.

Trump, who insisted on Saturday that Iran must now make peace or face further attacks, could provoke Tehran into retaliating by closing the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil artery, attacking U.S. military bases and allies in the Middle East, stepping up its missile barrage on Israel and activating proxy groups against American and Israeli interests worldwide, analysts said.

Such moves could escalate into a broader, more protracted conflict than Trump had envisioned, evoking echoes of the "forever wars" that America fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, which he had derided as "stupid" and promised never to be dragged into.

"The Iranians are seriously weakened and degraded in their military capabilities," said Aaron David Miller, a former Middle East negotiator for Democratic and Republican administrations. "But they have all sorts of asymmetric ways that they can respond... This is not going to end quick."

In the lead-up to the bombing that he announced late on Saturday, Trump had vacillated between threats of military action and appeals for renewed negotiation to persuade Iran to reach a deal to dismantle its nuclear program.

A senior White House official said that once Trump was convinced that Tehran had no interest in reaching a nuclear agreement, he decided the strikes were "the right thing to do."

Trump gave the go-ahead once he was assured of a "high probability of success," the official said - a determination reached after more than a week of Israeli air attacks on Iran's nuclear and military facilities paved the way for the US to deliver the potentially crowning blow.

Trump touted the "great success" of the strikes, which he said included the use of massive "bunker-buster bombs" on the main site at Fordow. But some experts suggested that while Iran's nuclear program may have been set back for many years, the threat may be far from over.

Iran denies seeking a nuclear weapon, saying its program is for purely peaceful purposes, said Reuters.

"In the long term, military action is likely to push Iran to determine nuclear weapons are necessary for deterrence and that Washington is not interested in diplomacy," the Arms Control Association, a non-partisan US-based organization that advocates for arms control legislation, said in a statement. "Military strikes alone cannot destroy Iran's extensive nuclear knowledge. The strikes will set Iran's program back, but at the cost of strengthening Tehran's resolve to reconstitute its sensitive nuclear activities," the group said.

Eric Lob, assistant professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University, said Iran's next move remains an open question and suggested that among its forms of retaliation could be to hit "soft targets" of the U.S. and Israel inside and outside the region.

But he also said there was a possibility that Iran could return to the negotiating table — "though they would be doing so in an even weaker position" — or seek a diplomatic off-ramp. In the immediate aftermath of the US strikes, however, Iran showed little appetite for concessions. Iran's Atomic Energy Organization said it would not allow development of its "national industry" to be stopped, and an Iranian state television commentator said every U.S. citizen or military member in the region would now be legitimate targets, reported Reuters.

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BBC's biased coverage of Israel's war on Gaza

Chris Doyle

ISRAEL'S war on Palestinians from the outset has been fought in the media, and even at a more aggressive level since October 2023. Israel has poured huge resources into its propaganda drive, to persuade particularly Western powers that its war and actions were justified. It has denied journalists access to Gaza, and killed over 185 Palestinian media workers in the enclave in this period.

Few media networks have been under more sustained Israeli assault than the BBC. Its global reach of 450 million people puts it in the front line of Israeli government efforts. It parades its reputation for impartiality, but as a new data-driven report published last week highlights, when it comes to Palestinians this is far from the case. Some argue the BBC has become complicit in Israel's war crimes. The Gaza coverage has been like walking on eggshells, the BBC refusing to call out what is going on. The abundant use of the passive voice where the party committing the crime is not identified is a notable feature.

The report from the Center for Media Monitoring, a Muslim Council of Britain project, examined the BBC's coverage of Israel's war on Gaza primarily between 7 Oct. 7, 2023 and Oct. 6, 2024. For this 12-month window, a total of 3,873 articles and 32,092 broadcast segments were analyzed using AI and human verification.

Some of the findings

are jaw dropping. BBC presenters shared the Israeli perspective 11 times more frequently than the Palestinian perspective (2,340 vs. 217), even when interviewing neutral third parties, such as humanitarian organizations. That is not even close. BBC article headlines referred to the Palestinian casualties just two times more than Israeli casualties, despite there having been 34 times more deaths in Gaza.

Statistics do not tell the whole story, as BBC editors are quick to point out, but this report highlights alarming patterns of coverage. The absence of proper context is stark. Previous Israeli wars and atrocities in Gaza get scant reference. That 70 percent of the population are 1948 refugees is not there. Even with the Israeli war on Iran, no mention is made of Israel's nuclear arsenal and its refusal to sign up to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The BBC's coverage of international legal issues is incredibly poor, and again favorable to Israel. The BBC rarely used occupation to describe the legal status of Gaza. Only recently did it finally get its international editor to pen a still timid piece on whether Israel had committed war crimes in Gaza.

Since the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the fact that he is wanted for war

crimes and crimes against humanity is rarely mentioned.

Worse, BBC presenters have actively shut down the widespread debate on whether Israel has been committing genocide in over 100 documented cases according to the report. This is extraordinary since the International Court of Justice determined that the situation in Gaza was so serious it had to order provisional measures against Israel to prevent genocide. That was in January 2024 and the situation is considerably worse now. Most human rights groups have determined Israel is committing genocide.

The widespread use of genocidal comments from Israeli leaders from the president down is also downplayed. This is extraordinary given that this constitutes a stated intent to annihilate Gaza, vital context when Israel obliterates civilian infrastructure, including the healthcare system.

Remarkably, according to the report, the BBC never once referred to the Hannibal Directive and the Dahiya doctrine. The former, which we now know was invoked on Oct. 7, allows Israeli forces to launch attacks even if they might endanger hostages' lives, while the latter, certainly deployed in Gaza and Lebanon, permits the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. These protocols highlight the mentality of the Israeli armed forces.

The report also demonstrated how the BBC's coverage of Russia's crimes in Ukraine was so different to Israeli crimes in Gaza. Israel's attempts to justify its actions were included in 75 percent of articles in that year, but only 17 when it came to Russian actions. Take the killing of journalists. The research found that 62 percent of journalists' deaths in Ukraine were reported, but only 6 percent of Palestinian journalists' killings by Israelis.

The BBC's handling of documentaries echoes the above failures. It already withdrew the documentary "Gaza: How To Survive a War Zone," which had rave reviews, even in the right-wing media. It then opted not to show a further documentary, "Gaza: Doctors Under Attack," on the way in which Israel has targeted the Gaza healthcare system.

Just as Western political leaders have given a green light to Israeli crimes and facilitated a climate of impunity that Israel still enjoys in its attacks on Iran, the BBC and other outlets help to create this permissive environment.

In fairness, the BBC has many excellent reporters who have succeeded at times in breaching the managerial and editorial firewall against criticism of Israel with compelling storytelling. But in the overall picture, as this report highlights, the BBC simply continues to give this extremist Israeli government an easy ride.

By bombing Iran, the US continues to make the world safe for war

Belén Fernández

It seems like just yesterday that United States President Donald Trump was pushing a "diplomatic resolution" to the Iranian nuclear issue.

Now, the US has joined Israel's illegal assault on Iran, striking three Iranian nuclear sites on Saturday in what Trump has boasted was a "very successful attack".

As CNN dramatically put it, "a midsummer night in June 2025 could come to be remembered as the moment the Middle East changed forever; when the fear of nuclear annihilation was lifted from Israel; when Iran's power was neutered and America's soared".

Of course, a "fear of nuclear annihilation" has nothing to do with Israel's current strikes on Iran, which have been dutifully portrayed in the US media as targeting military and nuclear facilities but have somehow managed to slaughter hundreds of civilians.

The victims include 23-year-old poet Parnia Abbasi, killed along with her family as they slept in their Tehran apartment building.

As is clear as day to anyone not in the business of defending Israeli depredations, the attacks on Iran are simply a war of convenience for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is killing all sorts of birds with one stone in his campaign against Iranian nuclear facilities.

In addition to distracting the world from Israel's ongoing genocide

in the Gaza Strip, where starving Palestinians continue to be massacred on a daily basis as they seek food and other aid, Netanyahu has also managed to divert attention from his own embroilment in numerous corruption charges at home.

Plus, the war on Iran is wildly popular among Israelis, which translates into big points for a prime minister who has faced significant domestic opposition.

Trump's initial insistence on diplomacy with Iran naturally got Netanyahu's panties into a giant bunch — but the situation has now been rectified by the midsummer night's bombing, which, according to the president, has "obliterated" Iran's nuclear sites.

To be sure, Iran has long occupied US crosshairs, with many an establishment figure salivating at the prospect of bombing the country to smithereens.

Some have salivated more openly than others, as in the case of John Bolton — a former US ambassador to the United Nations and briefly the national security adviser in the first Trump administration — who in 2015 took to the opinion pages of The New York Times with the following advice: "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran."

That the editors of the US newspaper of record did not bat an eye in publishing such a blatant call for the violation of international law is indicative

of the extent to which Iran has been thoroughly demonised in US society and media. Recall that in 2002, then-US President George W Bush appointed the nation to his infamous "axis of evil" along with Iraq and North Korea.

And yet, aside from being a persistent thorn in the side of US imperialism, Iran's behaviour has been rather less apparently, um, "evil" than certain other international actors — like the US itself. For instance, Iran is not the one currently funding a straight-up genocide to the tune of tens of billions of dollars.

Nor is Iran the one that has spent the past several decades bombing and otherwise antagonising folks in every corner of the world — from backing right-wing state terror in Latin America to conducting mass slaughter in Vietnam.

Furthermore, the sole clandestine nuclear weapons power in the Middle East is not Iran but Israel, which has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has never allowed UN safeguards on its facilities.

Those who applaud the strikes on Iran citing the "oppressive" nature of the Iranian government would, meanwhile, do well to revisit the US track record of fuelling oppression in the country. In 1953, the CIA orchestrated a coup d'etat against Iran's democratically elected leader, Mohammad Mossadegh,

which paved the way for the extended reign of the torture-happy shah.

Historian Ervand Abrahamian notes in his book A History of Modern Iran: "Arms dealers joked that the shah devoured their manuals in much the same way as other men read Playboy." Indeed, the shah's obsessive acquisition of US weaponry did much to enable his rule by terror, which was put to an end by the Iranian Revolution of 1979. And the Iranian nuclear programme that Trump has now bombed? It was started by that very same shah.

Now, arms dealers are presumably not too upset over the midsummer night's events and the general escalation of the crisis in the Middle East. For his part, Netanyahu has gone out of his way to thank Trump for his "bold decision" to go after Iran "with the awesome and righteous might of the United States".

In Netanyahu's words, Trump's action will "change history" — as though making the world safe for more war is anything new. And as the US media scramble to justify illegal attacks on a sovereign nation, the sinister hypocrisy of two heavily nuclear-armed nations undertaking to police nuclear "threats" cannot be overstated.

It is anyone's guess what Trump, who prides himself on spontaneous and manic behaviour, will do next. But rest assured that, whatever happens, the arms industry won't be going hungry any time soon.

US strike on Iran A grave violation of sovereignty and law

Rafi Ul Haq

ON June 22, 2025, the United States committed an extremely provocative and unlawful act by launching a large-scale military assault against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In what it called "Operation Midnight Hammer," the U.S. used stealth B-2 bombers and submarine-launched cruise missiles to strike several Iranian nuclear sites, including Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan. This military operation, executed without any warning, international consent, or credible evidence of an imminent threat, stands as a flagrant violation of Iran's sovereignty and international law. The attack must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

The United States has attempted to justify its actions by claiming that Iran was nearing the threshold of acquiring nuclear weapons, and thus the strike was a pre-emptive self-defense measure. However, this reasoning lacks both credibility and legal merit. According to publicly available intelligence and monitoring by international agencies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), no proof has been presented that Iran was on the verge of launching a nuclear attack or had violated its international commitments to the extent that would necessitate military intervention. The strike, therefore, cannot be accepted as a legitimate act of self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which permits force only in response to an actual and immediate armed attack.

Instead, the United States has once again acted as a self-appointed global policeman, imposing its will through unilateral military action without accountability. This is not the first time the U.S. has violated international norms in the Middle East. However, this latest attack represents an especially dangerous escalation that risks dragging the entire region into further chaos and conflict. The pattern of American foreign policy

environmental damage is high. In warfare, even targeted strikes must comply with the principles of international humanitarian law: necessity, proportionality, and distinction between combatants and civilians. It is highly doubtful that these principles were observed, and the world must demand independent investigations to assess the full impact of this reckless aggression.

The response from Iran has been one of defiance, promising strong retaliation and the right to defend its territory and people. This, too, is within its sovereign rights under international law. But what is more troubling is the wider regional and global impact. The attack has increased the risk of all-out war in the Middle East. U.S. bases in the Gulf and its troops stationed across the region may now face retaliation. The Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes, could become a flashpoint, threatening global economic stability. The situation could also galvanize anti-American sentiment and extremism, undoing years of efforts aimed at stabilizing the region.

Furthermore, this assault has effectively destroyed any progress made in diplomatic negotiations between Iran and the West, particularly regarding the nuclear file. There were ongoing efforts to revive the nuclear agreement that had been abandoned by the U.S. in 2018, and recent back-channel talks had shown promise. But with this strike, diplomacy has been replaced with destruction, and dialogue with domination.

This act must be condemned not only by Iran and its allies, but by all peace-loving nations and international institutions that believe in a rules-based global order. The silence of major powers or selective criticism will only embolden future violations and reduce the credibility of the international legal system. The United Nations must convene an emergency session to investigate this attack and

Iran, a sovereign nation, has every right under international law to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which guarantees this right, provided it does not divert its nuclear program towards weapons development. There has been no credible evidence presented that Iran has crossed that line. Yet, the United States, based on unverified intelligence and political narratives shaped by its regional allies, particularly Israel, launched an unprovoked and highly destructive assault. This attack is a clear breach of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It is a direct assault on Iran's autonomy and a blatant violation of its right to self-determination.

over the last two decades — marked by invasions, drone strikes, regime change efforts, and disregard for international institutions — has left a trail of destruction, destabilization, and deep resentment among the nations and peoples of the Muslim world.

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This attack is a clear breach of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It is a direct assault on Iran's autonomy and a blatant violation of its right to self-determination. Such actions threaten the very fabric of the international system that has, at least in theory, aimed to prevent aggressive wars and protect the sovereignty of all nations, large or small.

Moreover, the humanitarian consequences of such attacks are grave. The bombs dropped were of enormous destructive power, including so-called "bunker-buster" munitions that can cause massive explosions and secondary fallout. Although the U.S. claimed that the targets were carefully selected military facilities, the sheer scale of the operation suggests the risk of civilian casualties and

hold the United States accountable for its actions. The International Criminal Court (ICC), though limited by the U.S.'s refusal to accept its jurisdiction, must still issue a statement condemning the breach of international humanitarian and sovereign laws.

The people of the world must also raise their voices. Civil society, human rights organizations, academic institutions, and independent media must not let this event be normalized or forgotten. The use of military power as a tool of foreign policy must be challenged, especially when it disregards international consensus, legal protocols, and the sanctity of human life.

In last, the United States' attack on Iran is a deeply unlawful and immoral act that defies the principles of justice, peace, and mutual respect among nations. It is a stark reminder that might is still being used to suppress right, and that international laws are selectively applied by global powers. Iran has been wronged — not just militarily, but legally, morally, and politically. The global community must not remain silent in the face of such injustice. If this aggression is allowed to stand unchallenged, it will set a dangerous precedent that may open the doors to more unilateral wars, more violations of sovereignty, and more suffering for ordinary people in the name of power politics. The world must unite not around weapons, but around wisdom, diplomacy, and law. Only then can peace prevail over violence, and justice over aggression.

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There is a fine line between changing Iran and emboldening Israel’s extremists

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu initiated a war he knew Israel could not win on its own, wagering instead that he could get US President Donald Trump into finishing the job for him. So far, the gamble appears to have partially paid off: Mr Trump, despite his well-known aversion to entangling the US in another “forever war”, nonetheless authorised a strike that significantly degraded Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, effectively removing the prospect of nuclear weaponisation in the near and medium terms.

Tactically, it was a success for Israel. Strategically, however, the outcome remains far less certain.

The Islamic Republic’s core command-and-control architecture remains intact, at least for now. The political leadership, including supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, retains operational cohesion. Iran’s coercive institutions – the IRGC, the Ministry of Intelligence and the Basij paramilitary forces – continue to function with efficacy. Even former establishment insiders and political dissi-

dents, such as former parliamentary speaker Mehdi Karroubi, issued calls for national unity under enemy bombardment. No high-level defections have been reported.

The Iranian public did not rise against its rulers. Faced with existential threat, most Iranians retreated into survival mode. There are signs of a limited “rally-around-the-flag” effect, as nationalist sentiment temporarily bridges the divide between establishment and society. The outlawed Mojahedin-e-Khalq, which had supported Iraq’s war against Iran in the 1980s, remains marginal. Reza Pahlavi, the exiled crown prince who publicly endorsed Israeli air strikes, may find himself in a similar position as the number of civilian casualties rises.

Equally disheartening from the perspective of Israeli strategic planners is the absence of internal insurgency. The editorial pages of The Jerusalem Post called for support to Iran’s Baloch, Kurdish and Arab minorities, long marginalised and intermittently restive, but apart from minor incidents, no large-scale armed uprisings have materialised. Iran’s centralised security state, hardened by decades

Mohamad Ali Harisi

of internal unrest, appears firmly in control, even in the historically volatile border regions.

This leaves Israel trapped in an open-ended conflict. The air campaign continues, but with diminishing returns. Iran has so far demonstrated strategic patience, avoiding retaliation against US military assets. This restraint reflects a calculated decision to avoid full-scale American involvement. Mr Trump’s address to the nation following the strikes was consistent with his long-standing reluctance to engage in major overseas military commitments. Regime change in Tehran does not appear to be part of Washington’s current agenda.

This posture places Mr Netanyahu and Israel in an increasingly precarious position. Without a decisive knockout blow and lacking a regional coalition to share the burden, Israel risks strategic overextension. Worse still, Iran retains escalation options. There is the risk of Tehran, under continued bombardments from Israel, internationalising the conflict by targeting energy infrastructure in the region or blocking international

waterways.

It is possible that Israel, as the initiator of the war, finds itself diplomatically isolated by the resulting global outcry, while the regime it sought to dismantle claims victory through survival. The Iranian leadership, adept at constructing narratives of resistance, would present endurance as triumph, not through battlefield success but through continued existence. As with the war with Iraq from 1980 to 1988, the longer the war continues, the more it may consolidate the regime’s position.

This is the central miscalculation of Mr Netanyahu’s strategy. It was predicated on the flawed assumption that external pressure alone could produce regime change or mass revolt. It underestimated the establishment’s institutional resilience, overestimated the opposition’s capacity to mobilise and misread the limits of American political will.

It also conflated tactical success – the destruction of centrifuges – with strategic transformation. But Iran is not Gaza, and the IRGC is not Hamas. The Islamic Republic has a deeper state apparatus and a long record

of survival under duress.

If Israel’s objective was to delay Iran’s nuclear ambitions, it has done so, temporarily. But if the broader aim was to induce regime collapse or significant internal instability, current indicators point to failure. The greater risk now is that Israel becomes entangled in a protracted war of attrition against a regime that specialises in strategic endurance. The longer the conflict drags on without resolution, the more Mr Netanyahu’s gamble threatens to backfire, both diplomatically and domestically, as Israeli society confronts the toll of a campaign with no clear exit.

In the end, the Islamic Republic may emerge from this conflict damaged but intact. If Israel is eventually compelled, by international pressure or operational fatigue, to suspend its bombing campaign, Tehran will claim victory.

And in the political logic of authoritarian regimes, mere survival in the face of overwhelming external force is often enough to do so. Mr Netanyahu may succeed in delaying Iran’s nuclear programme, but at the price of strategic stalemate – and an emboldened adversary.

Netanyahu’s delusional pursuit of a ‘new Middle East’

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu persistently declares his ambition to “change the face of the Middle East.” Yet his repeated assertions seem to clash with the unfolding reality on the ground.

Netanyahu’s opportunistic relationship with language is now proving detrimental to his country. The Israeli leader undoubtedly grasps fundamental marketing principles, particularly the power of strong branding and consistent messaging. However, for any product to succeed over time, clever branding alone is insufficient; the product itself must live up to at least a minimum degree of expectation.

Netanyahu’s “product,” however, has proven utterly defective. Yet the 75-year-old Israeli prime minister stubbornly refuses to abandon his outdated marketing techniques.

But what, exactly, is Netanyahu selling?

Long before assuming Israel’s leadership, Netanyahu mastered the art of repetition — a technique often employed by politicians to inundate public discourse with specific slogans. Over time, these slogans are intended to become “common sense.”

As a member of the Knesset in 1992, Netanyahu delivered what appeared to be a bombshell: Iran was “within three to five years” from obtaining a nuclear bomb. In 1996, he urged the US Congress to act, declaring that “time is running out.”

While the US pivoted its attention toward Iraq, following the September 2001 attacks, Netanyahu evidently hoped to eliminate two regional foes in one stroke. Following the fall of the Iraqi government in 2003, Netanyahu channeled all his energy into a new discourse: Iran as an existential threat.

Between then and now, Iran has remained his primary focus, even as regional alliances began to form around a discourse of stabilization and renewed diplomatic ties.

However, the Obama administration, especially during its second term, was clearly uninterested in another regional war. As soon as Obama left office, Netanyahu reverted to his old marketing strategy.

It was during Trump’s first term that Netanyahu brought all his marketing techniques to the fore. He utilized what is known as comparative advertising, where his enemies’ “product” is denigrated with basic terms such as “barbarism,” “dark age,” and so forth, while his own is promoted as representing “civilization,” “enlightenment,” and “progress.”

He also invested heavily in the FUD (fear, uncertainty, doubt) marketing technique. This entailed spreading negative or misleading information about others, while promoting his own as a far superior alternative.

This brings us to “solution framing.” For

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

instance, the so-called “existential threats” faced by Israel can supposedly be resolved through the establishment of a “new Middle East.” For this new reality to materialize, the US, he argues, would have to take action to save not only Israel but also the “civilized world.”

It must be noted that Netanyahu’s “new Middle East” is not his original framing. This notion can be traced to a paper published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in March 2004. It followed the US war and invasion

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of Iraq, and was part of the intellectual euphoria among US and other Western intellectuals seeking to reshape the region in a way that suited US geopolitical needs. The Carnegie article sought to expand the definition of the Middle East beyond the traditional Middle East and North Africa, reaching as far as the Caucasus and Central Asia.

American politicians adopted this new concept, tailoring it to suit US interests at the time. It was US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who largely rebranded “greater” to “new,” thus coining the “new Middle East,” which she announced in June 2006.

Though Netanyahu embraced the term, he improvised it in recent years. Instead of speaking of it as a distant objective, the Israeli leader declared that he was actively in the process of making it a reality. “We are changing the face of the Middle East. We are changing the face of the world,” he triumphantly declared in June 2021.

Even following the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and the Israeli war and assault on Gaza that ensued, Netanyahu never ceased using the term.

bombs and rockets, and nothing else. In May, coinciding with a major Israeli bombing of Yemen, he declared that Israel’s “mission” exceeds that of “defeating Hamas,” extending to “changing the face of the Middle East.” And, finally, on June 16, he assigned the same language to the war with Iran, this time remaining committed to the new tweak of adding the word “face” to his new, envisaged Middle East.

Of course, old branding tactics aside, Netanyahu’s Middle East, much like the old US “greater Middle East,” remains a pipe dream aimed at dominating the resource-rich region, with Israel serving the role of regional hegemon. That said, the events of the past two years have demonstrated that, although the Middle East is indeed changing, this transformation is not happening because of Israel. Consequently, the outcome will most likely not be to its liking.

Therefore, Netanyahu may continue repeating, like a broken record, old colonial slogans, but genuine change will only happen because of the peoples of the region and their many capable political players.

How firms can survive in an era of turmoil

THE past two decades have ushered in an era where geopolitical uncertainty is no longer an occasional disruptor but a persistent and systemic condition shaping global business. Traditional risk models based on assumptions of relative stability and predictable disruptions are proving inadequate in a world marked by escalating conflicts, fracturing supply chains, and a geopolitical landscape in flux. The stakes are enormous: Companies spanning finance, industry, energy, and technology face a fundamental challenge not only in managing risk, but also in fundamentally rethinking how they understand and navigate uncertainty itself.

Historically, firms confronted geopolitical risk as a series of isolated shocks: wars, sanctions, or political upheavals that, while disruptive, were relatively bounded and transient. The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed this episodic framing, where firms relied on crisis management, insurance, and post-hoc operational fixes. Yet recent years have made clear that uncertainty has morphed into a more complex phenomenon — what academics might term “deep uncertainty” or “Knightian uncertainty,” where probabilities are unknowable and the future resists prediction.

The protracted conflicts in the Middle East, great power rivalries, and the weaponization of trade and technology have created an environment of continuous geopolitical tension. Supply chains are no longer linear and stable but web-like, interdependent, and vulnerable to cascading failures triggered by remote events. The pandemic’s disruption of global logistics compounded by the Russia-Ukraine war’s impact on energy markets highlight how multiple risk vectors

interact unpredictably. This multidimensional uncertainty forces firms to abandon conventional risk frameworks based on expected value calculations and instead adopt more dynamic, resilience-focused approaches.

In response, firms have institutionalized geopolitical risk analysis in ways unrecognizable even a decade ago. Once confined to academic circles or boutique consultancies, political risk analysis is now central to corporate strategy and governance. Major multinational firms have expanded in-house intelligence capabilities, building Palantir-like data environments that synthesize satellite imagery, open-source intelligence, shipping data, and insurance trends to triangulate risk exposure in near real-time. This integration of heterogeneous data sources enables earlier detection of emerging threats than traditional quarterly risk reports or government advisories. But data and technology alone do not suffice. Firms increasingly recruit former diplomats, military analysts, and intelligence officers to serve as geopolitical strategists, blending quantitative analytics with qualitative expertise.

This human dimension is critical to interpreting ambiguous signals, contextualizing political developments, and anticipating non-linear outcomes that purely algorithmic models might miss.

The 2020s could well be remembered as the decade when geopolitical strategists — combining analytical rigor with nuanced understanding of global affairs — became as indispensable as quants were to financial firms in the 2000s. Maersk’s experience during the 2017 NotPetya cyberattack exemplifies how geopolitical risk now demands systemic resilience.

The malware attack disrupted the company’s IT

Dr. John Sfakianakis

systems worldwide, halting container operations and exposing the fragility of integrated global logistics networks. Far from treating the event as an isolated cyber incident, Maersk restructured its operational model to emphasize redundancy, modularity, and rapid recovery capabilities — core principles of resilience in complex systems theory. This shift acknowledges that in a deeply interconnected environment, firms must prepare not only for probable risks, but also for unforeseeable systemic shocks.

JPMorgan Chase similarly offers insight into the evolution of financial risk management. The bank has woven geopolitical intelligence deeply into its credit risk assessments, investment strategies, and client advisory services. It uses scenario planning to model the geopolitical trajectories of rival powers and regulatory regimes, adjusting exposure dynamically rather than relying on static risk scores. JPMorgan’s approach signals a broader shift within finance — from risk avoidance to strategic risk optimization — where understanding geopolitical volatility becomes a source of competitive advantage.

Toyota’s response to the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and ensuing nuclear crisis highlights the operational dimension of geopolitical uncertainty in manufacturing. Recognizing the risks inherent in geographically concentrated supply chains, Toyota diversified its suppliers and reconfigured production buffers to absorb disruptions.

The company’s strategy underscores an important insight: resilience is as much about redesigning physical and logistical infrastructure as it is about forecasting events. By embedding redundancy and flexibility into supply networks,

firms reduce vulnerability to complex geopolitical shocks that defy precise prediction.

The energy sector offers another critical lens on geopolitical risk. The vulnerability of global oil markets to chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz illustrates how physical infrastructure and security concerns translate directly into economic risk. War-risk insurance premiums for tankers, port congestion, and maritime route disruptions have surged, signaling that market participants price risk differently from traditional financial benchmarks. The disconnect between futures markets and shipping realities suggests that risk models must integrate granular, geospatial data alongside macro-economic indicators to capture true exposure.

Technology firms face a distinct, but equally complex, set of geopolitical risks. Trade restrictions, export controls, and supply chain weaponization — exemplified by tensions between the US and China — have fractured innovation ecosystems. Firms such as Intel and Cisco navigate regulatory uncertainty and evolving security frameworks that impact sourcing, research collaboration, and market access. Managing these risks requires integrating geopolitical analysis on multiple levels — from bilateral relations to international governance — into product planning, supply chain management, and R&D investment decisions. What do these trends imply for firms confronting an era in which “nothing is certain”?

The first is the inadequacy of predictive risk models that rely on probabilistic forecasts or historical analogues. In a world of deep uncertainty, firms must embrace strategies that prioritize adaptability, modularity, and rapid response over precise prediction. This entails decentralizing decision-making, empowering local managers to react to fluid conditions, and embedding scenario-based planning that stresses plausible alternative futures rather than a single forecast.

Second, firms must cultivate intelligence ecosystems that combine real-time data analytics with expert judgment. The fusion of satellite tracking, open-source data, insurance analytics, and human expertise enables detection of early warning signals and triangulation of emerging risks. Such capabilities shorten the time lag between geopolitical events and operational adjustments, which can be critical in volatile environments.

Third, resilience must become a strategic asset, not a contingency plan. Organizations should invest proactively in supply chain redundancy, cybersecurity, diversified sourcing, and flexible production capacity. This shift — from viewing resilience as a cost center to a competitive advantage — will differentiate leaders in an uncertain world.

The contemporary geopolitical landscape is characterized not merely by increased risk, but also by a fundamental shift in the nature of uncertainty. Firms no longer operate in a world where stability is the default and disruptions are exceptions. Instead, persistent volatility and systemic interdependence demand that companies develop new cognitive and operational frameworks that accept uncertainty as a permanent condition.

In this environment, success depends less on predicting the future than on designing organizations capable of thriving amid unpredictability. Geopolitical uncertainty is not a “black swan” — it is the new baseline. The winners will be those who treat resilience and adaptive capacity not as defensive measures, but as central pillars of competitive strategy.

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This entails decentraliz-

Zhou Shuchun

affecting education-related disciplines.

If employability chal-

Paul Reitter and Chad Wellmon argue in Permanent Crisis: The

offers a dialectical perspective, while Jonathan Swift’s The Battle of the Books presents a more binary opposition: The bee sym-

Will 'crisis' of humanities obscure future of liberal arts?

THE satirical essay, The Battle of the Books, by Jonathan Swift, the author of Gulliver's Travels, has once again become a buzzword, just as it has periodically over the past 300 years, serving as shorthand for debates on the value of classical or humanities education.

This time, the backdrop is a near-global retreat of the humanities. Harvard College reportedly canceled 30 courses, many of them in the liberal arts, in 2024. The University of Kent in the United Kingdom, announced the phasing out of six disciplines, including art history, anthropology and philosophy. In China, a top-tier university reduced its traditional liberal arts enrollment from 30 percent to 20 percent.

As the rhetoric of “the uselessness of liberal arts” resurfaces, another leading Chinese university made the Harvard event part of a graduate school entrance

exam, requiring candidates to write about the concerns over the decline of the humanities. This gave liberal arts an opportunity to defend or counterattack, while also, in a strikingly memorable way, highlighting the awkward predicament facing the humanities.

The immediate cause of downsizing in liberal arts is dwindling enrollment. GenZ appears inclined to seek stable career returns, and at present, the humanities are struggling to provide such professional assurances. Global data show that liberal arts graduates have lower employment rates and starting salaries compared with their STEM counterparts. In the United States, the three majors with the highest unemployment rates are reportedly art history, liberal arts and fine arts, while underemployment rates for history, English, mass media and sociology hover around 50 percent.

As for why such a situation has arisen, one could

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As for why such a situation has arisen, one could blame a dual impact. On the one hand, there’s the blow of a poor economy. Historically, the humanities have cyclically faced crises in both Europe and the US. When a recession hits, humanities courses, since they have less tangible economic returns, are the first to be cut. On the other hand, information and telecommunications technology, which has structurally transformed industries and education, has had a more direct impact on the humanities. Jobs in advertising, publishing and other fields closely tied to traditional liberal arts are shrinking. And declining birth rates are directly affecting education-related disciplines. If employability challenges are an indisputable fact, the notion that “liberal arts are useless” is fundamentally unacceptable. In reality, the fields of STEM also face displacement pressure from new technologies, yet they rarely need to justify their existence. When certain STEM disciplines lose relevance, their

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When certain STEM disciplines lose relevance, their obsolescence is swift and uncontested.

The potential usefulness or intrinsic worth of the humanities is often framed as a question of justice. As

Disenchanting Age, the humanities have been in crisis throughout modern history because their position their value in opposition to the material metrics of industrial society.

Taoist philosopher Zhuangzi’s concept of “the usefulness of the useless” is frequently cited in defense of the humanities: A lush tree, deemed unfit for lumber, escapes the axe and grows into a towering giant. Zhuangzi’s parable in Free and Easy Wandering

bolizes classicists, drawing nourishment from flowers, while the spider represents the utilitarian mindset of moderns, confined to a narrow worldview.

Of course, such metaphors feel disconnected from contemporary reality, and the humanities cannot rely on narcissistic self-justification. The question is not whether the humanities have value, but how. Even those who trumpet “the uselessness of liberal arts” don’t truly believe the humanities will vanish.

As a Chinese saying goes, “Had Heaven not sent forth Confucius, eternity would have been without a dawn.” Globally, the Axial Age of rational reflection, marked by figures like Confucius and Aristotle, ushered in a new era of human civilization. The systematic knowledge humanity later developed in geometry, astronomy, politics and ethics can all be traced back to that axial origin.

The logic holds in today’s more materialistic world. A survey of more than 300 companies found that 93 percent of employers consider critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills more important than a candidate’s undergraduate major. As a renowned university president put it, “The knowledge we learn today will be obsolete in a decade. What matters most is learning how to learn.” The world might not need more programmers, but jobs involving human inter-

action will grow.

Nevertheless, reform in the humanities is imperative. A consensus has been formed on adjusting curriculums, merging overly niched disciplines, and fostering interdisciplinary integration to create a broader, more socially relevant macro-liberal arts or new humanities. At the same time, excessive quantification and empiricism in research and teaching should be avoided to realign with the humanities’ core mission.

The rise of STEM is not a bad thing, for it signals leaps in societal productivity. Similarly, the contraction of the humanities is not a death sentence but an opportunity for supply-side transformation.

In China, the push to build an independent knowledge system has further energized the humanities. As the Chinese university reforming its humanities program said, “In a mature society, liberal arts matter more.”

Port Qasim cuts exporter charges by 50% to boost trade, economic growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Port Qasim Authority (PQA) has announced a 50 percent reduction in port charges for exporters, aligning with the government's reform agenda to enhance trade and economic growth.

This development was highlighted during a strategic roadmap meeting of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, chaired by Federal Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Monday.

Addressing the meeting, Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry emphasized the government's commitment to creating opportunities for local businessmen and encouraging domestic trade through ports and fisheries,

said a press release here on Monday.

The government's reform agenda in the maritime sector, including the charge reduction at Port Qasim, signals a strong commitment to supporting the business community, enhancing trade facilitation, and promoting economic development across coastal regions, he added.

He announced plans to establish an Aquaculture Industrial Zone aimed at promoting business activities in the marine and aquaculture sectors.

The minister revealed that Pakistan's first-ever Marine and Aquaculture Policy will be introduced soon to provide a compre-

hensive framework for sustainable development in these areas.

The meeting also reported impressive achievements by the Marine Fisheries Department, which has met its export target of 410 million US dollars this year through fisheries and aquaculture exports.

Additionally, the ship recycling industry has generated revenue of 6 billion Pakistani rupees, reflecting the growing potential of maritime industries in the country.

Minister Chaudhry underscored the importance of green shipping initiatives, aligning with global trends to reduce

environmental impact and promote sustainable maritime practices.

He stressed that the government is focused on modernizing port infrastructure, streamlining customs operations, and fostering a business-friendly environment to enhance Pakistan's competitiveness in international trade.

The Ministry of Maritime Affairs is actively working on reforms to unlock the economic potential of vast coastline and maritime resources. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to transform the maritime sector, boost exports, and contribute significantly to the country's GDP, he noted.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan addressing an awareness seminar organized by SCCI in collaboration with TDA.

Cement exports increase by 21.60%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 21.60 percent during the eleven months of the fiscal year 2024-25, as against the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$287.946 million during July-May (2024-25) against the exports of US \$236.797 million during July-May (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the cement export also rose by 29.67 percent from 6,183,181 metric tons to 8,017,978 metric tons, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the cement exports witnessed an increase of 6.15 percent during the month of May 2025 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cement from the country during May 2025 were recorded at US \$34.236 million against the exports of US \$32.251 million in May 2024. On a month-on-month basis, cement exports also surged by 44.80 percent during May 2025 when compared to the exports of US \$23.644 million in April 2025, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall exports from the country increased by 5.15 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

Exports during July-May (2024-25) were recorded at \$29.564 billion against \$28.117 billion during July-May (2023-24), it added. On the other hand, imports into the country went up by 7.50 percent by growing from \$49.815 billion last year to \$53.550 billion during the first eleven months of the current year.

SCCI, TDAP hold awareness seminar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan on Monday organized an awareness seminar on Impacts of GSP Plus status and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) on export promotion.

Session was chaired by SCCI president Fazal Moqem Khan.

The chamber senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, members of executive committee of the chamber Saifullah Khan, Adnan Nasir, Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Rabia Basri, and other office bearers, along with exporters Dr Khushal Khan, Mazarul Haq, Atif Rashid Khawaja, Rashid Iqbal Siddiqui, Fazal Wahid, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq Muhammad Para-

cha, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan and traders were attended the session.

Fazal Moqem in his opening remarks stressed the need to reap full benefits from GSP plus status and Free Trade Agreements to enhance the country's exports.

He was of the view that immense potential was available in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that can improve the export.

He, however, mentioned that export process has adversely affected owing to imposition of two percent provincial infrastructure development cess (IDC) on export, resultantly export had completely shifted to other parts of the country.

SCCI President urged the provincial government of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to completely abolish the two percent cess to revive the export from the

province.

Senior officials of the TDAP apprised participants about significance of GSP Plus status and FTAs whereas the trainer through his a multimedia presentation elaborated session about key procedures, rules and regulations, bilateral trade pacts between various states and other major points that were essential for taking advantages for the GSP plus status and FTAs that had been signed by Pakistan with various countries.

Participants lauded the efforts of sarhad chamber and TDAP for arranging such an informative session and asked a number of questions which were responded by senior officials in an elaborative manner.

Members of the chamber proposed holding further such sensitization sessions on trade-related rules and regulations.

Rupee sheds 16 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Monday depreciated by 16 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs283.86 against the previous day's closing of Rs283.70.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs283.25 and Rs285.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs0.28 to close at Rs326.40 against the last day's closing of Rs326.68, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen came down by 03 paise and closed at Rs1.92, whereas a decrease of Rs0.86 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs381.44 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs382.30.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 and 06 paise to close at Rs77.29 and Rs75.65.

Uzbek Ambassador calls on SAPM Haroon — discusses bilateral economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev called on the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday and discussed avenues for strengthening economic and industrial ties between the two brotherly countries.

The Uzbek Ambassador conveyed his gratitude to the Pakistani leadership for its continued support and cooperation. He emphasized the need to deepen engagement in key sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, energy, and food processing, said a news release.

Haroon khtar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations with Uzbekistan, in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to boost investment

and industrial cooperation in the country.

He highlighted the Prime Minister's goal of increasing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan to \$2 billion, and noted that efforts in this regard were underway at all levels.

During the meeting, both sides stressed the importance of collaboration in public procurement and joint ventures in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

They also discussed prospects for industrial cooperation in e-commerce, with the Uzbek envoy inviting Pakistani digital companies to explore opportunities in Uzbekistan.

Further proposals included joint production of construction materials and partnership in the extraction and processing of ferrous and non-ferrous metals.

The Ambassador infor-

med that the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Business Forum is scheduled to be held on June 25 in Karachi, aiming to enhance B2B engagement between companies of both nations.

He also expressed a strong interest in hosting a "Made in Pakistan" Exhibition in Uzbekistan to showcase Pakistani products and strengthen trade connectivity.

Both sides underscored the importance of phytosanitary cooperation in boosting food and agricultural exports.

It was noted with appreciation that direct flights between Tashkent and Islamabad have already commenced from June 14.

The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to transform longstanding diplomatic ties into robust economic and industrial partnerships.

FCCI demands single digit policy rate

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has demanded single digit policy rate for boosting industrial growth.

In a statement here on Monday, FCCI President Mr. Rehan Naseem Bharara said that policy rate in double digit might dampen economic and industrial growth in the country. He said that chambers and trade associations have been demanding for a long time to cut down the policy rate to single digit to spur economic activities.

He said that they were thankful to the government that it had gradually brought down the policy rate from 23 to 11 % but still it was too high to give a quick start to industrial activities.

He said that it was particularly detrimental to the SME sector which has severe financial constraints and they could not do profitable businesses with a high markup rate.

Promoting Islamic Banking: MCB Islamic Bank recognized for excellence



F.P. Report

LAHORE: MCB Islamic Bank has been recognized as one of the best-performing banks in conducting activities related to the promotion of Islamic Banking and Finance for

the year 2024-2025.

The recognition was announced during the 5th ROC (Regional Oversight Committee) meeting held in Lahore.

The performance award was presented to the Bank by Mr. Tariq

Riaz, Chief Manager, State Bank of Pakistan BSC Lahore and Chairman ROC Lahore.

This recognition reflects the Bank's ongoing contribution to the advancement of Islamic banking in Pakistan.

Empowering women a must for economic uplift: PFC

LAHORE (APP): Women empowerment is of immense significance in the global economy, including Pakistan, as it has far-reaching implications on various aspects of economic growth, development, and sustainability.

The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq stated this while addressing a summer internship orientation programme 2025 organised under the aegis of Chenone Interiors here on Monday.

The CEO was of the view that ensuring empowered and equal opportunities to women, can lead to several positive outcomes which benefit not only women but also society and the overall economy.

He said gender equality and women's empowerment were strongly associated with increased economic growth and productivity. "If given access to economic opportunities, the women can contribute effectively to the labour force.

FPCCI Post-Budget Forum: PAA urges reversal of unjustified WHT hike

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A delegation from the Pakistan Advertisers Association (PAA) on Monday represented the advertising and marketing communications sector at the Post-Budget Consultative Meeting on Tax Anomalies convened by the

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).

At the forum, PAA voiced the industry's collective concern over the recent increase in Withholding Tax (WHT) on specified services, including advertising, from 4% to 6%-a move

they termed as economically punitive and unsustainable.

The delegation presented a detailed case outlining the severe impact of the hike, describing it as equivalent to a 17% super tax when viewed in relation to average net profit margins of just 15%.

Oil prices seesaw as investors await Iran response to US strikes

LONDON (AFP/APP): Oil prices wobbled and stock markets wavered Monday as traders awaited Tehran's response to US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities over the weekend.

European stocks mostly retreated while Asian equities were mixed, with markets keeping a close eye on whether Iran will block the crucial Strait of Hormuz, which carries one-fifth of global oil output.

When trading opened on Monday, international benchmark crude contract Brent and US equivalent WTI both jumped more than four percent to hit their highest price since January.

They later dipped briefly into the red before recovering to trade slightly higher in midday trading.

"Will Iran choose to

choke off the Strait of Hormuz or not? That is the big question," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB bank.

But, "looking at the oil price this morning it is clear that the oil market doesn't assign a very high probability of it happening," he added.

Iran is the world's ninth-biggest oil-producing country, exporting just under half of the 3.3 million barrels it produces per day.

Tensions remained elevated as Iran and Israel intensified attacks on each other on the war's 11th day.

"The markets are not yet reacting with any degree of panic to the US airstrike on Iran's nuclear facilities as they await to see how

Tehran responds," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

In Europe, Paris and Frankfurt stock markets both fell.

A closely watched survey showed Monday that eurozone business activity was almost stagnant again in June.

London's stock exchange was flat, with the rise in crude prices boosting shares in British energy majors BP and Shell.

But airlines, including EasyJet and British Airways-owner IAG, suffered losses on fears of rising energy costs and disruptions in travel to the Middle East.

In Asia, Tokyo was lower while Hong Kong and Shanghai gained.

"So far, satellite images reportedly suggest that oil

continues to flow through the Strait, which may explain the muted market reaction to the news," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank.

She added that there is optimism that Iran will avoid full-blown retaliation "to prevent its own oil facilities from becoming targets and to avoid a widening conflict that could hurt China -- its biggest oil customer."

But "if things get uglier" the price of US crude could even spike beyond \$100 per barrel, she said.

Brent was trading at almost \$78 per barrel on Monday while WTI was close to \$75.

The dollar rose against other currencies but analysts questioned to what extent this would hold out.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, MSC Flota-III, Siya Ram, Yashar and F-Charm carrying Container, Palm oil, LPG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile seven more

ships, MSC Mediterranean, Tanja, Bow Panther, Flora, DS Cougar, Al-Qassar and Zoitsa Sigala with Container, Palm oil, Corn, Chemicals, LNG and Coal are also arrive at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, MSC Flota-III, PVT Saturn, Twerk, Yashar and IVS Prestwick were expected to sail.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

IN THE COURT OF MR. LIAQAT ALI JUDGE BANKING COURT-1 PESHAWAR... Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar. Case No: 65/01 of 2025, Date of hearing 11-08-2025, Suit for the Recovery of Rs. 6836963/76, HBL Bank Road Mardan Branch VS Syed Saad Bacha. Notice Versus: Syed Saad Bacha S/o Ameer Shahid Ali Shah P.No. 723660 R/o Sawabi Road P.O Mardan, Dagai, Korooni Tehsil and District Mardan. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.6836963/76 Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today on 18-06-2025 under my signature and seal of the Court. Registrar, Banking Court, 1 Peshawar

نوٹس (مشتری ہوشیار باش)

پڑیہ نوٹس پڑا مشتری کیا جاتا ہے کہ جائیداد نمبر 39 برقیہ تعدادی (2176 مربع فٹ) سروے نمبر 300/11 واقع بیرون نیازی گیٹ، گوہٹ کیٹ کے لیزر ہولڈر بش جو کہ کیٹو غوث پورڈ کے ریپڈا میں نمبر 7، جمہور، ناصر خان، رادر، منہاس، سہماہ خیابان اور دم خان کے ناموں پر موجود ہے۔ یہ کردہ بلا مالکان میں سے نمبر 7، جمہور، ناصر خان، رادر، منہاس اور سہماہ خیابان کے مذکورہ بالا جائیداد میں سے اپنے حصص (برقیہ تعدادی 1088 مربع فٹ) کسی گھمائی اس دلہمہ ایاز اور ارشدین ولد مہدی کی پڑیہ رجسٹری شدہ دستاویز نمبر 01 جلد نمبر 414 بحورہ 31/12/2020 جگ نامہ رجسٹر شدہ دستاویز نمبر 718 جلد نمبر 01 جلد نمبر 462، بحورہ 06/04/2023 کو رخصت کردی۔

اب نمبر 7، جمہور ایاز اور ارشدین کے مذکورہ بالا جائیداد میں سے حصہ 1088 مربع فٹ کے لیزر ہولڈر بش، اپنے ناموں پر منتقل کرنے کے لئے ایک عہدہ درخواست بحورہ رجسٹری وچ نامہ پڑا میں گزاری ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص، انحصار یا ادارے کو مذکورہ بالا پراپٹی کے لیزر ہولڈر بش کی منتقلی پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اشتہار پڑا کی اشاعت کے پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض بحورہ رجسٹری وچ پیش کریں۔ بعد ازاں منتقلی کی کارروائی صدر جہ بالا درخواست گزار کے نام پر عمل میں لائی جائے گی۔ اور کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

المشتہر :- کینٹونمنٹ ایگزیکٹو آفیسر کوہاٹ



In brief

Pakistani duo secure wins

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 2nd seeded Pakistani team of Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal has secured a convincing win over Korea in their first match of the 2nd Asian Doubles Squash Championships 2025 at Sarawak, Malaysia. According to details, the 2nd Asian Doubles Squash Championships 2025 kicked off, featuring 15 doubles teams from across Asia. Pakistani team of Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal, competing in Pool B, made a good start in the tournament. Pakistan beat Korea by 11-4, 11-1 in the mega event. In their second pool match Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal continued their winning streak and earned a good victory over the Philippines by 11-7, 11-4. The Pakistan double team will face Chinese Taipei in their next match on Tuesday.

Archer eyes Test comeback

LONDON (Agencies): England fast bowler Jofra Archer has returned to first-class cricket to represent Sussex in their game against Durham in the County Championship. His return to first-class cricket has put him in line for a long-awaited return to red-ball cricket for England. The 30-year-old has been sidelined from first-class cricket for over four years due to a series of injuries, particularly to his right elbow and back. While Jofra Archer made a comeback to internationals cricket in the white-ball format, his appearance for Sussex in the Division One game is considered a major step towards his return to the England red-ball squad sometime this year. England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) selector Luke Wright has said that the pacer might be considered for the second Test against India if he could bowl and field through the four days for Sussex. It is worth noting here that Jofra Archer made his Test debut in the Ashes 2019 and caught the attention of the cricket fraternity with his sheer pace and brilliant line and length. The pacer bagged 22 wickets at 20.27 across four Tests and famously forced Australia's Steve Smith to retire hurt after being hit in the neck. The 30-year-old has been out of action since 2021 due to an issue with his right elbow. Jofra Archer has not played any red-ball cricket since a County Championship match for Sussex against Kent in May 2021. Earlier this month, England Test captain Ben Stokes revealed that the pacer had asked him about the possibility of him playing in the Test against Zimbabwe. However, he missed being part of the squad for reasons unknown.

Bangladesh unveil ODI squad

DHAKA (Agencies): Bangladesh have named a 16-man squad for their upcoming three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka, with Litton Das making a comeback despite recent struggles in the 50-over format. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the squad on Monday, with chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain confirming that Litton's recall was influenced by his leadership role in the T20 side, even though he managed just 35 runs in eight ODIs across recent tours of New Zealand and West Indies. "He's the T20 captain and needs time in the middle to rediscover his rhythm," Ashraf said. "ODIs will give him that chance." Also returning to the squad are Mohammad Naim, Shamim Hossain, Hasan Mahmud, and Tanvir Islam, who earned his first-ever ODI call-up after featuring in six T20Is.



LEEDS: Brydon Carse picked his third wicket of the innings when he sent back KL Rahul.

Women's blind cricket team to prepare for World Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) is gearing up for the inaugural Women's Blind Cricket World Cup, scheduled to take place in India and Nepal in November. To prepare for this prestigious event, a training camp for national women players will be held from July 3 to 13 in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir. Talking to APP, the PBCC Chairman Syed Sultan Shah, said a total of 36 women players from across the country have been invited to participate in the training camp. From these, 20 players will be selected, and a 16-member

team will be announced in October, he said.

The World Cup will feature teams from six countries, including Pakistan, India, Nepal, England, Australia, and the United States. Pakistan's matches will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal, with the possibility of semifinals and finals also being played in Nepal if the team advances.

Shah highlighted the team's recent tour to Australia, where they played a series that ended in a draw. Despite only two matches being played due to rain, the experience was valuable for the players. He expressed hope that the national women's

team will perform well in the World Cup and achieve success. Shah was also of the view that Pakistan has been actively promoting blind cricket globally, having started the sport in Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistani coaches have trained players in these countries, and Afghan players also participated in the World Cup held in Pakistan last year, he said. He said Pakistan's national blind cricket team is currently ranked number one in the world in one-day and T20 formats, demonstrating Pakistan's leadership in blind cricket worldwide.

Khuram Shahzad appointed as PSB Spokesman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board has announced the appointment of Khuram Shahzad, currently serving as Publication Officer, as the Spokesman of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) with immediate effect.

In addition to his existing responsibilities, Shahzad will manage all official communication with the media, issue press releases, handle public relations matters, and represent PSB in relevant forums, subject to the approval of the competent authority, said a letter received here.

All concerned wings and sections of PSB have been advised to provide full support and cooperation to Shahzad in the execution of his duties as Spokesman.

It may be mentioned that Khuram Shahzad, younger brother of senior journalist late Javed Shahzad, has extensive experience of more than two decades in the field of journalism and public relations.

He has been associated with the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) since 2007 and has also played an important role in the media teams of various federal ministers.

Pak trio qualifies for Asian Snooker C'ship pre quarterfinals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani trio of Awaiz Munir, Muhammad Asif and Muhammad Sajjad have qualified for the Pre quarterfinals of the Asian 6 Red & Team Snooker Championship 2025 at Colombo, Sri Lanka. According to details, Awaiz won all three

matches while Asif won two matches and lost one. Sajjad also won two matches while his one match is remaining.

On Monday, Asif beat Abdullah Al Raisi Ahmed A (Oman) 4-0 (40-1, 27-14, 27-24, 56(55)-04); Sajjad outplayed Badurdeen Mohamed

Musarra (Sri Lanka) 4-0 (41-9, 35-1, 58(58)-5, 25-21) and Awaiz defeated Pushpender Singh (India) 4-2 (1-51(37), 47(34)-0, 66(35,31)-0, 10-46, 34-21, 33-21); Irshath Mohamed Thaha (Sri Lanka) beat Asif (5-47, 18-32, 66(35,31)-0, 0-44(36), 42-18, 54(38)-4, 44(40)-0).

Pak women's team gearing up for AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The national women's football team training camp is in progress in Islamabad ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers.

The camp, being held under the supervision of head coach Adeel Rizki, will continue for a few more days, said a press release.

The national team is scheduled to leave for Indonesia on June 26. The team will travel via a private airline, taking the route from Karachi to Bangkok and arriving in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Pakistan is placed in Group E alongside Chinese Taipei, hosts Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan.

The team will play its opening match on June 29 against Chinese Taipei. The second match will be played on July 2 against host nation Indonesia, while the final group game will be held on July 5 against Kyrgyzstan. All the matches will be played at Sport Center Kelapa Dua Tangerang.

Pakistan celebrates World Olympic Day



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan marked World Olympic Day 2025 with a vibrant and spirited celebration at Rawal Lake, reflecting the nation's strong commitment to the Olympic values of unity, excellence, and friendship.

Under the umbrella of the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), the event was hosted by the Islamabad Olympic Association (IOA), said a press release.

The celebration was attended by prominent Olympians including Sadaf Siddiqui, Ahmad Ali, and Liaquat Ali; IOA Secretary General and Chairman of the Pakistan Rowing Federation Rizwan ul Haq Razi; Army Sports Directorate officials Major Irfan

Younis and Major Naveed; as well as national athletes, children, and guests from diverse walks of life.

To mark the occasion, a walk and a lively "fun run" were held, with enthusiastic participation from children. A specially designed Olympic-themed cake, featuring the iconic Olympic rings, was also cut to commemorate the day.

Celebrated globally on June 23 each year, Olympic Day honors the founding of the modern Olympic Games, first held in Paris in 1894. It serves as a worldwide reminder of the Olympic ideals and encourages the promotion of sports, physical fitness, and unity through inclusive community engagement.

Across Pakistan, thousands participated in a variety of activities organized to celebrate the day, including fun runs, cultural performances, exhibitions, music events, tree plantation drives, beach clean-up campaigns, and educational seminars.

The Pakistan Olympic Association continues to observe Olympic Day annually, reinforcing its commitment to the Olympic Movement and the promotion of healthy, active lifestyles and inclusivity through sport.

Thunder beat Pacers to clinch first NBA Finals crown



OKLAHOMA CITY (AFP/APP): The Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Indiana Pacers 103-91 on Sunday to clinch the franchise's first NBA Finals crown with a 4-3 series victory.

NBA Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 29 points to seal an emphatic win against a

Pacers side who lost talisman Tyrese Haliburton to a first-quarter injury.

The NBA championship was the first won by the Thunder since the franchise relocated to Oklahoma City in 2008. Their only other title came in 1979 when the team were the Seattle Supersonics. Indiana had taken the

best-of-seven series to a decider with a battling victory in game six last Thursday, when Haliburton fought through a calf strain to inspire a 108-91 win. That left the Pacers needing to reproduce a repeat of their game one win on the road at top seeds Oklahoma City to clinch their own maiden NBA title. But the scale of the task before the Pacers became even more daunting after Haliburton crumpled to the Paycom Center court in agony in the first quarter before limping out of the game.

The Pacers said Haliburton had suffered a "lower right leg injury", although ESPN cited the player's father as saying his son had suffered an Achilles injury. Although the Pacers battled bravely to lead 48-47 at half-time, the Thunder pulled away, outscoring Indiana 34-20 to open up a hefty 13-point lead heading into the final quarter. The Thunder were in no mood to let that advantage slip and they led by as many as 22 points in the fourth quarter before holding on to win.

Man City demolish Al Ain to reach Club WC last 16



ATLANTA (AFP/APP): Manchester City booked their place in the Club World Cup last 16 with an emphatic 6-0 rout of Al Ain in Atlanta on Sunday.

In a match dubbed the "Abu derby", with City owner and United Arab Emirates vice-president Sheikh Mansour's side facing off against that of his

elder sibling, Sheikh Mohamed, president of Al Ain and also the country, the Premier League side showed no brotherly love.

Ilkay Gundogan put City ahead before starlet Claudio Echeverri netted his first goal for the club with a free-kick and Erlend Haaland slotted in the third with a penalty. In the sec-

ond half Gundogan struck again, Oscar Bobb rolled in the fifth and Ryan Cherki grabbed his first City goal as they pulled level with Juventus on six points at the top of Group G. The result also confirmed Juve's place in the next round.

"Now we have to see whether we'll be first or second in the group," said

City coach Pep Guardiola. "We played a little bit better than the first game, especially in the second half." Guardiola said on the eve of the game his squad needed trimming and that was reflected in his decision to rotate his entire starting line-up from the opening win over Wydad Casablanca.

In came superstar striker Haaland, new arrival Rayan Ait-Nouri, and exciting prospect Echeverri, among others. Serbian coach Vladimir Ivic's Al Ain were crushed 5-0 by Juventus in their opening fixture and the 10-time Premier League champions offered another unforgiving challenge.

After a disjointed opening, City took the lead in the ninth minute in fortuitous fashion, with Gundogan's chip towards Haaland at the back post floating into the net of its own accord. Al Ain had a good chance to pull level

when the dawdling Nico Gonzalez had his pocket picked and the UAE side sprang forward, but Nassim Chadli's effort was superbly tipped wide by Stefan Ortega.

City's 19-year-old Argentine attacker Echeverri, on his first start for the club, doubled their lead after 27 minutes with a perfect free-kick that swerved around the outside of the wall and left goalkeeper Khalid Eisa rooted to the spot.

With the Mercedes-Benz Stadium mostly full apart from the top ring of seats, fans began sending a Mexican wave around the ground. It came to a standstill when Bernardo Silva's corner was headed against the post by Josko Gvardiol, before starting back up.

Haaland rolled a shot narrowly wide when he might have scored the third after a one-two with Silva sent him galloping through.

The Norwegian hitman eventually got his goal in first-half stoppage time after Manuel Akanji was hauled to the ground by Ramy Rabia and City were awarded a penalty following a VAR review.

Haaland sent Eisa the wrong way with a low spot-kick for his first goal of the tournament.

- Relentless - Haaland should have scored again after the hour mark but Eisa denied him with a good double save. Instead it was Gundogan who got his second, with a well-taken dinked finish.

The midfielder has recently been linked with a move to Galatasaray, but Guardiola said Saturday he is still counting on the 34-year-old in the United States. Substitute Oscar Bobb showed fleet footwork before rolling in the fifth at the near post before Cherki sealed the win.

Signed from Lyon ahead

of the tournament, the French attacking midfielder had a quiet debut against Wydad but powered home from the edge of the box late on in his second appearance.

City face Juventus in Orlando on Thursday in a shoot-out to decide who will finish top of the group and potentially avoid a last-16 clash against Spanish giants Real Madrid.

With one more goal they would have moved ahead of Juve on goals scored and had a slight advantage, but City ran out of time.

"Unfortunately we started the second half a bit slow, so there was not much time at the end to score the last goal to be ahead of Juve ahead of the last group-stage game," Gundogan told DAZN.

"That's maybe the slightly disappointing part of the night, but the result speaks for itself and it was fully deserved."



In brief

NHA vows zero tolerance for corruption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Member Central Zone National Highway Authority (NHA) Iftikhar Sajid on Monday said that steps have to be taken on a war footing to make the performance of institutions transparent and corruption-free. Addressing a high-level seminar titled "Corruption-Free Pakistan," he emphasized that rooting out corruption demands a collective commitment to honesty and accountability. He noted that sincere alignment with these values is essential to supporting the broader efforts of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in ensuring clean governance, said a press release. The event, drew a significant gathering of senior NHA officials, general managers, and representatives from NAB. Muhammad Imran, Director Coordination at NHA, chaired the session, while Muhammad Waseem Director Legal NHA, Imran Sohail Director NAB, Rabia Ikram Deputy Director NAB, Atiya Azmat Additional Director NAB and Muhammad Imran Director Coordination NHA were among the other speakers. Speakers underscored that in the present era, it is necessary to eradicate corruption so that government's URAAN Pakistan mission can be turned into a reality and added that NAB Pakistan and NHA can jointly create awareness among the public, especially employees, about the eradication of corruption. The speakers also highlighted the importance of embedding Islamic principles of integrity and justice in governance, believing that such values could help turn the long-standing dream of a corruption-free Pakistan into a shared national commitment. On this occasion, souvenirs and shields were exchanged in the service of NHA officers and NAB guest officers.

Two day remand awarded to ex-CEO Education

RAWALPINDI (APP): A district court on Monday approved two-day physical remand for former CEO Education Aman Ullah in a corruption case, and handed him over to the Anti-Corruption Department. According to the details, the Anti-Corruption team presented the accused before Senior Civil Judge Waqar Ahmad Siddhu, requesting a seven-day physical remand. The court, however, granted a two-day remand. Two days prior, the Anti-Corruption team raided the Rawalpindi Education Department office and arrested the former education chief. He faces allegations of embezzling Rs. 8.0 million in government funds allocated for new furniture and stationery. According to the Anti-Corruption Department spokesperson, the accused's front-man misappropriated the funds, though the purchased items were delivered to the office. The Anti-Corruption team has seized all relevant records from the CEO Education's office for further investigation.

Man shot dead in Sadiqabad

RAWALPINDI (APP): A person was killed by firing in the area of Sadiqabad Police Station reportedly over a monetary dispute on Monday. The police reached the spot after receiving information about the incident and started collecting evidence, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. According to initial investigations, the incident occurred over a monetary dispute as no evidence of robbery was found. The police, however, were conducting investigations from all angles, the spokesman said. The accused involved in the incident would be arrested and brought to justice, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chairing a meeting on strategic roadmap of the ministry. —APP Photo

Ulema unanimously adopt code of conduct to promote harmony during Muharram

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to ensure peace, sectarian harmony, and national unity during the sacred month of Muharram 1447 AH, a high-level consultative meeting of prominent religious scholars and spiritual leaders from Islamabad and Rawalpindi was held on Monday at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, who emphasized the vital role of religious scholars in maintaining peace during Muharram, as witnessed in previous years. Speaking to the participants, the minister said a comprehensive joint strategy has been formulated in consultation with Ulema and Mashaikh to promote sectarian tolerance, brotherhood, and inter-sect unity across the country.

He stressed the importance of conducting similar coordination meetings at provincial and district levels to strengthen this approach nationwide. "There is an urgent need for unity and consensus among scholars

from all schools of thought to safeguard the spirit of inter-sect harmony and address the evolving national and global challenges," the minister said.

Federal Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf announced a unified code of conduct, which includes the following key points: all religious schools of thought will make sincere efforts to foster love, tolerance, and mutual understanding; reverence will be maintained for the sacred personalities of all sects, avoiding any form of disrespect or derogatory remarks; scholars, preachers, and writers will adopt balance and restraint in their speeches and writings, refraining from any provocative content that may hurt others' sentiments; sectarian disputes will be resolved through consultation, understanding, and serious dialogue; no derogatory remarks will be made from public platforms against opposing sects; full respect will be shown to the Mothers of the Believers (RA), Companions of the Prophet (RA), Ahl al-Bayt (RA), saints, Tabiun, and all elders of the

Ummah, none will be subjected to criticism or insult; and any hateful or inflammatory material harming sectarian or interfaith harmony, especially on social media, should be reported through the following official platforms - FIA Cyber Crime, PTA Complaint Portal, Helpline: 0800-55055 and Police Helpline: 15; all religious scholars will remain united on national, religious, and public matters and Ulema and preachers are encouraged to highlight the sacrifices of the Kashmiri and Palestinian people in the context of Karbala and speak out against Israeli aggression and global injustices.

In addition, the federal government also appealed to provincial administrations to replicate such meetings at their respective levels to ensure an atmosphere of peace and harmony throughout the country during Muharram. The meeting concluded with a unanimous resolve to uphold the sanctity of Muharram and safeguard inter-sectarian unity through collective efforts and responsible discourse.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly worker is busy making a duplicate key at his roadside setup in Aabpara, the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Murree becomes a haven for heat-stricken visitors

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the mercury soars in the plains, Murree has transformed into a bustling hill station, attracting thousands of visitors seeking respite from the scorching heat.

The picturesque town, nestled in the heart of the Himalayas, is offering a cool and refreshing escape for those looking to beat the heat.

The scenic drive to Murree is a treat in itself, with lush green forests and rolling hills providing a stunning backdrop. As visitors reach the hill station, they are greeted by the crisp mountain air and breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape.

A visitor from Lahore, Samad said "I came to Murree to escape the heat and chaos of the city and the weather here is perfect, and the scenery is breathtaking. I am planning to spend a week here and enjoy every moment of it."

He said Murree is a perfect escape for nature lovers,

offering stunning views of lush green hills, dense forests, and mist-covered mountains adding that the scenic views and cool climate make Murree an ideal destination for families and couples.

Mall Road is a must-visit, with its vibrant atmosphere, shopping, and dining options while Patriata (New Murree) offers breathtaking views and thrilling experiences with chair lifts and cable cars, he stated.

Another visitor Samina Khan said, "I love coming to Murree because it's a great way to relax and unwind and the people here are friendly, and the food is delicious."

She said Murree is a perfect escape for nature lovers, offering stunning views of lush green hills, dense forests, and mist-covered mountains.

She commented that the scenic views and cool climate make Murree an ideal destination for families and couples.

"Don't miss trying local delicacies like Kashmiri tea, traditional barbecue, and hot soups", she stated. She shared that Kashmir Point and Pindi Point provide panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

Ahmed Khan, owner of a hotel in Murree, said, "We are expecting a large influx of visitors, and we are doing our best to provide them with a comfortable and memorable stay."

He shared that visitors are taking full advantage of Murree's attractions, from hiking and trekking to shopping and dining. The town's famous Mall Road is bustling with activity, with tourists browsing through shops and cafes, he added. He said that "Murree is a haven for those seeking respite from the heat, and we are doing our best to provide our guests with a memorable experience, and we are confident that they shall leave with unforgettable memories."

6 Kallar Syedan clash accused arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Six accused, three each from two sides, involved in a clash in the Kallar Syedan area have been arrested.

The Kallar Syedan Police took action against the accused after City Police Officer Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani had taken notice on surfacing of the video of the clash and ordered their immediate arrest, a police spokesman said on Monday. Five pistols were recovered from the accused, he added.

The six accused under arrest opened fire on one another during the clash. The Kallar Syedan Police registered a case of the incident. Superintendent of Police Saddar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar directed the Kallar Syedan Police to prepare a challan against the accused with solid evidence to get them convicted from the court.

Those who create panic and spread fear among the public, and break the law could not be let get off scot-free, he said.

Raja Pervaiz slams opposition for disrupting Bilawal's speech

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former National Assembly Speaker and senior PPP leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Monday criticized the opposition for disrupting Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech, saying such actions damage the dignity of Parliament and distract from important budget discussions.

Speaking during the debate on Senate recommendations for the federal budget, he said that budget sessions allow lawmakers to speak on a range of issues — including constituency matters and political views — without interruption. However, he added that problems arise when members use the floor for

personal attacks or target political opponents.

Raja Pervaiz praised Bilawal's speech, calling it "comprehensive, patriotic, and thoughtful."

He said it reflected the vision of a national leader who had represented Pakistan on the world stage, despite not holding a government post.

"The entire world saw how Bilawal Bhutto defended Pakistan internationally," he said. "If the opposition asks what benefit that brought, I say — ask the 250 million Pakistanis who take pride in how Bilawal represented them."

Criticizing the opposition further, he said, "Their issue isn't with Bilawal's

speech — they're frustrated because his achievements highlight their own shortcomings."

Meanwhile, senior PPP leader Syed Naveed Qamar clarified the process of including Senate recommendations in the federal budget. He explained that while the Senate debates the Finance Bill, it does not vote on it. Its input is advisory and is reviewed by relevant committees and departments.

He said the Operations Committee, along with other departments, examined the Senate's suggestions line by line. "We included as much as we could within the financial and legal limits," he said.

Report reveals 26.3 million out-of-school children in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) today presented a report titled "Parliamentary Engagement for National Strategy on Education Emergency" to National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Secretary General Tahir Hussain, addressing Pakistan's pressing issue of 26.3 million out-of-school children.

The report, shared on X (formerly Twitter), follows Prime Minister's declaration of a national education emergency. Led by MNA Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, the

PCCR delegation included MNAs Syed Ali Qasim Gillani, Asia Naz Tanoli, Danyal Chaudhry, Sofia Saeed, Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Syeda Shehla Raza, and Zahra Wadood Fatemi.

Culminating six months of provincial discussions, the document offers a strategic plan aligning with the Prime Minister's urgent call for collaborative action to tackle the educational crisis.

The study details legislative actions, pinpoints shortcomings, and charts a course for parliamentary involvement to reshape Pakistan's education sys-

tem. The PCCR briefed the Speaker and Secretary General on the report's core proposals, stressing the importance of legislative support and inter-provincial cooperation.

Both officials, along with attendees, commended the PCCR's dedication to children's welfare and their timely initiative on education reform.

The PCCR affirms its commitment to championing children's rights, with this report signifying a crucial move towards accessible, fair, and high-quality education for all.

ANF arrests 6 smugglers with over 26 kg of drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting nine operations across the country, recovered as many as 26.437 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 4.249 million and arrested six suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday.

He informed that 500 grams of opium were recovered from the possession of an accused near a University area, Islamabad.

In another operation, 330 grams of hashish and 13 grams of ice were recovered from the possession of an accused near Punjab Chowk, Mansehra.

The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. As many as 864 grams of heroin and clonazepam capsules were recovered from the luggage of a passenger going to Dubai at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

Similarly, 95 grams of ice-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to

Doha at Bacha Khan International Airport.

As many as 50 capsules weighing 360 grams of ice were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Dubai at Islamabad International Airport.

During another operation, 2.4 kgs of hashish were recovered from parcels sent to Faisalabad from a courier office located on Ring Road, Peshawar.

As many as 1.250 kgs of hashish were recovered from parcels sent to Karachi and Lahore, at the courier office located on Ring Road, Peshawar.

As much as 7.2 kgs of hashish were recovered from the bag of an accused near RCD Road, Hub.

During another operation, 8.4 kgs of hashish and 5 kgs of ice were recovered near Sangiani Toll Plaza, Islamabad. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.

IRSA releases 268,391 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 268,391 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 349,159 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1461.52 feet which was 59.52 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 212,400 cusecs and 153,500 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1170.95 feet, which was 120.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 38,035 cusecs and 16,167 cusecs, respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 191,862, 139,428, 86,236 and 35,045 cusecs, respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 30,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 36,358 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

No permit, no construction: ICT admin warns of strict action

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has warned residents and builders against starting any kind of construction — residential or commercial — without official approval.

In this regard, the Deputy Commissioner has made it clear: building without permission may lead to legal consequences, including jail time, said the spokesman of ICT administration here.

The district administration of Islamabad has issued a clear directive: no construction can take place in the federal capital without prior approval from the Capital Development Authority (CDA). Whether it's a small renovation or the construction of a multi-storey commercial building, proper permits are mandatory.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon said that the city administration will take legal action against anyone involved in unauthorized

construction activities. These actions will not only target property owners but also the labourers working on such sites.

"Both the person who owns the property and those carrying out the work will be held accountable," said the Deputy Commissioner, adding that relevant magistrates have been directed to enforce the law without delay.

The warning extends beyond construction sites. Businesses that sell construction material without verifying the builder's official permission will also face legal consequences. "Anyone selling building materials to those without proper approval will be considered a part of the violation," said Memon.

This move is part of the administration's efforts to control unregulated development in Islamabad. In many areas, buildings are constructed without proper layout approval, safety checks, or environmental assessment, putting residents at risk and disturb-

ing planned urban development.

Explaining the seriousness of the matter, officials drew comparisons to building without a foundation — not just risky for those living in it but also harmful for the surrounding area. Unauthorized buildings can affect drainage systems, block roads, and pose safety risks.

The Deputy Commissioner has urged residents to follow the proper legal process before starting any construction. "We request citizens not to become part of any construction activity unless the required permissions are obtained," he said.

CDA officials confirmed that the permission process includes structural checks, adherence to zoning laws, and compliance with environmental regulations. This process ensures that new buildings are safe and fit within Islamabad's master plan.

Residents and builders are advised to contact the CDA before beginning

construction projects. Details about the approval process and required documents are available on the CDA's official website and help desks.

In recent months, the city administration has intensified its efforts to regulate construction practices in Islamabad. Several illegal constructions have been sealed or demolished, and multiple FIRs have been registered.

Officials believe that this strict approach will encourage lawful building practices and help maintain Islamabad's urban infrastructure. The administration also plans to carry out regular inspections in housing societies, commercial areas, and developing sectors.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of public cooperation. "This is not just about following rules. It's about building a safer, more organized city. Every resident has a role to play in keeping Islamabad's future secure," he added.

Eight suspects arrested

KABUL (Pajhwok): Eight individuals have been arrested on the charge of illegally logging of forest trees in eastern Nangarhar province, police said on Monday. In a statement, the police headquarters said the arrested suspects caused environmental destruction and damaged natural resources and have been detained red-handed cutting down trees. It said law enforcement in the field of environmental crimes is one of the important responsibilities of the security forces.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil Hajj 27, 1446 — Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Seven fuel stations shutted

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): The municipality has closed seven fuel stations in the capital of Kandahar for selling low-quality fuel and arbitrarily increasing prices, an official said on Monday. Saifullah Asem, spokesman for Kandahar Municipality, told Pajhwok News that a joint committee, headed by the provincial governor and comprising representatives from various departments, conducted inspections and evaluations of fuel stations across the city.

Muttaqi urges Islamic world help lift curbs on Kabul



KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi says Muslim nations, in their current situation, have the opportunity to unite around their commonalities and deeply reflect on the chal-

lenges they face and the causes of their backwardness.

He made these remarks at the meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) foreign ministers in Istanbul city of Turkey, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said in a statement.

Muttaqi told the meeting that Afghanistan was ready to play a vital role in transit, trade and economic connectivity among Islamic countries.

He assured: “We are prepared to play a constructive role within the framework of the OIC’s strategic economic agenda in the areas of regional connectivity, energy, logistics and investment.”

He emphasised the caretaker Afghan government’s foreign policy was based on the principles of mutual respect and balanced engagement.

He said Afghanistan seeks to open a new chapter of positive, dignified

and reciprocal cooperation.

He added: “On behalf of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), I propose that the OIC should, in accordance with its responsibilities, focus on supporting the reconstruction and economic growth of its member states that have now entered a phase of stability.”

Muttaqi also noted that Afghanistan has made unprecedented progress in accordance with Islamic principles and Shariah, in the direction of unity, security, institutional strengthening, economic development and the restoration of foreign relations.

He said: “Afghanistan is no longer a country defined by conflict and regression. We are standing at the threshold of a new chapter in our history—a chapter which, after establishing security, sovereignty, and national unity, presents new opportunities for development, cooperation,

and regional connectivity in accordance with Islamic principles. We aim to define this opportunity through joint economic, cultural, and strategic projects with Islamic nations based on our shared Islamic beliefs.”

Addressing the issue of economic sanctions, he said: “Our country is facing illegitimate economic sanctions from some Western nations. I must point out that after two decades of war in Afghanistan, the United States has frozen the Afghan nation’s national assets, creating serious obstacles to the country’s natural economic growth. I once again call on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and its member states to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Afghanistan’s frozen central bank reserves.”

Muttaqi also urged participants at the meeting to use their full influence

to help lift the economic and political restrictions imposed on Afghanistan.

He strongly condemned the recent Israeli attacks on Iran, stating that the Islamic Emirate considers them a clear violation of the fundamental principles of international law.

According to him, the region has been severely affected by imposed wars and can no longer endure another crisis or conflict.

Continuing his remarks, Muttaqi reiterated that Muslim countries currently have the opportunity to unite around their Islamic commonalities.

He added: “Now is the time for the Islamic world to deeply contemplate the causes of its backwardness due to the existing challenges, so we can offer future generations a unified identity that takes pride in Islamic history and civilisation, rather than external ideologies.”

He also referred to the situation in

Gaza, stating: “Across Palestine in general, and in Gaza in particular, the Israeli occupying regime continues to perpetrate acts of genocide against the Palestinian people with increasing intensity.”

According to him, this situation is a historic test of the global order, human values, and legal mechanisms—one in which they have largely failed.

He further stated: “I call on the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to halt the atrocities committed by the Israeli regime against Palestine and Iran... Otherwise, the continuation of this situation will pose a direct threat to the security of all countries in the region and could have devastating consequences.”

The 51st session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 21st and 22nd June.

Business sector alarmed by impact of Israel–Iran conflict

KABUL (TOLONews): With rising tensions between Israel and Iran, concerns are mounting about the potential impact of the conflict on Afghanistan’s foreign trade.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment has warned that continued war in the region could pose serious challenges to the country’s trade relations.

Officials at the chamber said Pakistan must play a facilitating role in trade with Afghanistan during these sensitive times.

Khanjan Alokozai, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: “This is a very serious issue, especially during the fruit harvest season. We hope that our friendly neighbor Pakistan

can extend a helping hand in certain areas. The crisis in Iran has affected both us and Pakistan.”

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock has expressed concern over the possible closure of key ports such as Chabahar and Bandar Abbas—a development that could severely disrupt Afghanistan’s exports.

Traders have also called on the government to engage in dialogue with Central Asian and European countries to assess and open alternative trade routes.

Mirwais Hajizada, First Deputy of the Agriculture and Livestock Chamber, said: “Chabahar was one of the best ports and had grown significantly in recent years, but unfortunately, problems have emerged. I recommend

that the government make greater use of its recent visits to Russia and Kazakhstan to gain access to Russia’s Fortex markets for our exports.”

Trader Omid Haidari stated: “The closure of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar has negatively affected our exports, imports, and transit, and has increased our dependence on other countries. We request the establishment of alternative routes and markets for Afghan exports to boost agricultural exports compared to last year.”

Although the Ministry of Industry and Commerce says foreign trade is continuing normally despite regional unrest, economic experts urge precise planning to prevent domestic price increases.

Abdul Nasir Reshtia, an economic analyst, said: “Our trade volume exceeds three billion dollars, and in the short term, it’s very difficult for the private sector and the Afghan government to change trade routes. However, since the Islamic Emirate came to power, Afghanistan is no longer dependent on a single route; we are connected to multiple corridors and can import and export goods from other countries.”

Yesterday, the Deputy Minister of Economy also expressed concern over the escalation of the Israel–Iran conflict, noting that trade between Afghanistan and Iran was expected to reach \$10 billion, but current tensions may negatively affect regional trade for Afghanistan.

Residents complain increasing pollution

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A number of residents of southern Ghazni province have raised concerns over the noise pollution caused by loudspeakers used by street vendors and mobile sellers, saying the constant noise is affecting their well-being. Officials say efforts are underway to address the issue.

Dawood Agha, a resident of Ghazni city, told Pajhwok Afghan News that vendors on nearly every street use small loudspeakers to attract customers.

While the purpose is to boost sales, he said the repeated and high-volume announcements are taking a toll on people’s mental health.

“These loudspeakers blare all day long in the markets, and even near residential areas. Ice cream sellers and scrap metal collectors use them too,” he added.

Khalid, another resident, pointed out that in addition to the loudspeakers, the noise from cars and motorcycles is so intense that people struggle to hold normal conversations.

Noor Mohammad Sayedi, a social activist, said the rising noise pollution is not only impacting local residents and patients but also visitors from nearby provinces such as Paktika, Paktia, Maidan Wardak, and Zabul who come to Ghazni for business. He urged government officials to take serious measures to resolve the problem.

Maulvi Ahmadullah Erfan, the director of Environmental Protection in Ghazni, said a joint committee has been formed to tackle the issue, and hundreds of loudspeakers have already been confiscated.

He added that their teams are actively working in the streets and markets to collect loudspeakers and raise public awareness about the harmful effects of noise pollution.

Flights over Afghanistan surge fivefold

KABUL (Khaama Press): Following Israel’s attack on Iran, airlines have rerouted flights over Afghanistan, leading to a fivefold increase in daily air traffic across the country airspace.

Since Israel began its strikes on Iran, the number of flights using Afghanistan airspace has surged more than fivefold, reaching about 280 per day, according to data from FlightRadar24. Airlines have rerouted flights due to security risks over Iran, making Afghanistan airspace a preferred alternative despite ongoing safety concerns.

In the early years of Taliban rule, most airlines avoided Afghanistan airspace entirely, fearing instability and uncertain regulation in the region.

However, as the security situation stabilized after 2023, more commercial flights resumed their routes across Afghanistan, seeking shorter paths and less congestion. The Taliban, facing serious financial constraints, are benefiting from this increase. They charge a \$700 transit fee per flight, generating significant weekly income.

Currency auction process to be extended



KABUL (Pajhwok): The currency auction process would be extended to zones to focus more on currency distribution, transparency and efficiency in line with market needs, the Da Afghanistan Bank said on Monday.

In a statement, DAB said first deputy director Sediqullah Khalid met with representatives of money changer’s association.

Khalid said they had begun implementing the bidding plan in order to better control the market and conduct its affairs effectively, and added this plan was created to better organize and mechanize affairs.

The currency auction process would be expanded from the center to zones, to focus more on the distribution, transparency, and effi-

ciency of currency in accordance with market needs, he said.

The statement, without clear details, wrote participating money changers presented their problems and suggestions, and the leadership of Da Afghanistan Bank assured the money changers of their cooperation in resolving their problems.

Sharp rise in infectious diseases reported

KABUL (TOLONews): The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a significant increase in the number of infectious diseases in Afghanistan during the month of May compared to April.

According to the report, 200 people were infected with the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in May, and 16 of them died. During the same period, 586 people tested positive for COVID-19, though no fatalities were recorded.

Similarly, 5,136 people contracted malaria, 216 were infected with dengue fever, 15,759 with acute

diarrhea, 14,660 with measles, and 92,866 people suffered from pneumonia. Six deaths were attributed to diarrhea, 93 to measles, and 195 people lost their lives due to pneumonia.

Doctors believe that, among other factors, the closure of health centers due to the suspension of aid has contributed to the increase in disease cases.

Dr. Ikramuddin Nezami told TOLONews: “With the suspension of these aid programs, people in many remote districts no longer have access to healthcare services, and this issue has already had and will continue

ue to have a direct impact on the people.”

Another physician, Ahmad Shagib Zaheer, stated: “Other international organizations can assist in strengthening the economic and social conditions of our society, and they can also take steps to deliver global aid to different regions of the country.”

Earlier this year, the WHO already reported the closure of several health centers under its support. However, in its latest report, the organization stated that it still supports 131 primary health centers across 20 provinces.

3.5 million Afghans return home since 2023: UNHCR



KABUL (Pajhwok): On World Refugee Day, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says more than 3.5 million Afghans have returned to their homeland from Iran and Pakistan since 2023.

The agency emphasised that all returns must be voluntary, dignified, and in accordance with the rights of returnees.

World Refugee Day, observed annually on June 20, is designated by the UN to honour the courage and resilience of people who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict or disaster.

Speaking at a press con-

ference in Kabul on Monday, UNHCR head in Afghanistan Arafat Jamal said displacement and migration were not new phenomena for Afghans, as millions had been compelled to leave their homes due to decades of war and natural disasters.

He added that since 2023, more than 3.5 million Afghans had returned from Iran and Pakistan—most voluntarily—though some were deported under difficult and involuntary conditions, in certain cases without being permitted to collect their belongings.

“Our message is that returns must be voluntary and carried out with dignity

and respect,” said Jamal. “We must work with neighbouring countries to ensure these principles are upheld.”

He warned that unmanaged returns could lead to chaos, while well-coordinated repatriation could help pull Afghanistan out of economic crisis and push towards reconstruction.

Jamal stressed that returnees must be supported through investment and employment opportunities so that they can contribute to rebuilding the country.

He noted that the return of more than 3.5 million individuals posed significant challenges that must be addressed.

Referring to recent regional tensions—such as friction between Pakistan and India, and the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran—he added: “We have recently witnessed new regional disputes. Our message remains that these countries must respect the rights of returnees and treat them with dignity.”

The UNHCR official also said that contingency plans were being prepared in case the number of returnees increased further, outlining how the agency could help manage the situation.

“Our field teams at the Iranian border have reported a sharp rise in the number of returnees. Most of them speak of fear and coercion,” he noted.

Jamal said the UNHCR was working with the Islamic Emirate, local partners, and Afghan communities to ensure that returns are well-managed and beneficial to the country.

He called on the international community to continue its support for Afghanistan, noting that the region and the world are facing heightened tensions, and the country requires international backing more than ever.

Jamal described global support for Afghanistan as an “investment in stability.”

Child workers in Khost brick kilns face uncertain future

KHOST (Pajhwok): A number of child workers gather every morning before sunrise in the Gurbuz district of south-eastern Khost province to go to work in brick kilns.

Deprived of education and childhood games; these children with small hands, tired faces and despair in their eyes reveal stories of poverty and a weary life.

In the Alidayi area of Gurbuz district, Habib Gul works in a brick kiln all day long under the fire-emitting sun and goes back home exhausted in the evening.

Gul says his life has been so difficult that he could not attend school or provide his children with an education.

He told a Pajhwok Afghan News reporter he would have sent his children to school or seminary if he had the ability to do so. “My children will meet my fate,”

Habib Gul is not the only person facing such hardships of life, but there are thousands of families who are experiencing poverty and helplessness.

The brick kiln is the only hope for survival for many other children and their families, along with Habib Gul’s sons.

Similarly, a child worker, Shahzaman, told Pajhwok: “We have been working in this factory for four years. We just work. We have no education. We

are trapped in it. We want the government to send us to school and find us easy jobs.”

Another young boy named Zahidullah, who was busy filling brick molds and sweat dripping from his forehead due to the intense heat, said briefly that he had left school and was working here. He added: “I make bricks. I have never been to school.”

Local officials say not only in Khost city, but in various districts of the province, thousands of children are engaged in heavy work.

Mustaghfar Gurbaz, a spokesman for the Khost governor, told Pajhwok Afghan News that around

3,500 children were engaged in heavy work in various districts of the province and efforts were being made to provide these children with facilities in the areas of education and vocational training.

He added: “We have a kindergarten in Khost where dozens of children are being educated, and there is also a vocational training center under the framework of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs, from which hundreds of people have graduated and are undergoing training, so that they can earn a healthy living for their families and be saved from heavy work.”

Medical equipment to hospital donated



S H I B E R G H A N (Pajhwok): Five medical equipment worth more than 50,000 US dollars have been donated to the 200-bed hospital in northern Jawzjan province, an official said on Monday.

Financial and Administrative Director for Public Health Department by Shaikh Qudratullah said the equipment would meet the needs and strengthen health services in maternity ward,

emergency services and ultrasound departments.

He said the equipment included a patient monitor stand, delivery table, ultrasound (sinology) machine, sterilization machine (autoclave), and a black and white printer.

The assistance was donated to Public Health Department by Shaikh Sarwar bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, a sheikh from the United Arab Emirates

residing in Dubai, Qudratullah added.

According to him, about 50 percent of challenges caused by lack of medical equipment at this medical center have been resolved.

Recently, the process of equipping health centers has been strengthened and this aid is part of ongoing effort to improve health services for residents in the province.

Bilawal urges dialogue between Pakistan, India

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Bilawal urges renewed dialogue between Pakistan, India to curb regional instability Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday emphasized the urgent need for sustained dialogue between Pakistan and India, warning that the absence of communication only strengthens the threat of terrorism and regional instability.

Speaking in the National Assembly, Bilawal said peace between the two nuclear neighbors is impossible without cooperation, especially in counterterrorism efforts. "If India and Pakistan refuse to talk, and if there is no coordination on terrorism, then violence will only intensify in both countries," he warned. He accused India of weaponizing terrorism for political purposes. "India seeks to exploit terrorism as a political tool to harm Pakistan's international standing," he said, adding that during his diplomatic visits to the United Kingdom and European Union as Foreign Minister, it became evident that India had lobbied hard to reverse Pakistan's progress on the FATF front.

"At a time when Pakistan has successfully moved from the FATF grey list to the white list, India made every effort to drag us back to the grey list using false narratives and diplomatic pressure," he said. "But thanks to our Foreign Office, the prime minister, and his team, those efforts failed. Once again, Pakistan won — and India lost." Addressing the ceasefire and broader regional tensions, Bilawal said merely maintaining a ceasefire is insufficient. "Peace must go beyond silence of the guns. It must translate into long-term understanding between the youth of Pakistan and India," he stated.

He strongly criticized what he called Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dangerous doctrine of escalation. "Under Modi's new 'abnormal', any terrorist incident in India becomes an automatic pretext for launching hostilities against Pakistan," Bilawal warned. He questioned what would happen if Pakistan were to adopt the same policy. "We suffer from terrorist attacks ten times more than India, many of which are traced back to Indian funding or involvement. Should we then adopt a policy of automatic retaliation too? That would mean surrendering our future to the will of terrorists."

"That might be Modi's vision, but it is not ours. We will not let terrorists dictate regional peace," he declared. Bilawal asserted that Pakistan's position is not just in defense of its own people, but in defense of peace for all

South Asians. "This is not only our battle. By advocating peace, we are also standing for the rights and future of the Indian people, who are equally victims of Modi's war-centric politics," he said.

He said that while Modi may benefit politically from war, terrorism, and aggressive policies, the real benefit for the people of both nations lies only in lasting peace. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari warned India to uphold the Indus Waters Treaty or face firm retaliation. He stressed that the Sindh-Tass agreement is binding and any attempt to block Pakistan's water is illegal and could lead to war. He affirmed Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to deliver a decisive response, and if provoked, Pakistan will reclaim all six rivers for its people.

He said that Pakistan will not compromise on its share of water and will take necessary steps to ensure its people get their rightful share from all six rivers. "If India tries to exploit or delay the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan will respond resolutely to protect its rights," he said. The PPP Chairman also accused India of orchestrating a narrative to label Pakistan a terrorist state in order to justify aggression. "India wanted to degrade Pakistan internationally—whether in FATF, the UN, or other global forums—by branding us as a terrorist hub. Their aim was to replace the name Pakistan with 'Terroristan'," he said.

Bilawal emphasized Pakistan's diplomatic victories on global platforms, particularly at the United Nations. "Despite India's persistent efforts, we successfully presented Pakistan's stance on terrorism, while India's narrative failed," he said. "After our delegation returned from the UN, Pakistan was selected to chair committees overseeing counter-terrorism, including Taliban-related issues. This was a clear diplomatic win over India."

He also commended Pakistan's Foreign Office and diplomatic corps for their resilience and performance, stating, "India failed at every front—Pakistan won at every front." Highlighting economic pressures, Bilawal pointed out that attempts were made to block Pakistan's access to the IMF package, both externally and internally. "In the past, a political party tried to sabotage Pakistan's IMF program. They failed. Once again, similar efforts were made during this cycle, and they failed again."

"On every front—water, diplomacy, terrorism, economy—Pakistan has emerged victorious, and we will continue to protect our national interest with pride and determination," he added. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has

termed President Donald Trump's willingness to mediate on the Kashmir dispute a major diplomatic success for Pakistan and a setback for India's foreign policy narrative.

Bilawal highlighted that despite Indian objections, US officials—during interactions with both Pakistani and Indian counterparts—acknowledged that President Trump was ready to help resolve the Kashmir issue. "Even the US State Department confirmed in front of international media that President Trump was prepared to mediate between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. This alone is a clear diplomatic victory for Pakistan," he said. Bilawal thanked Almighty Allah for Pakistan's military, diplomatic, and narrative victories over India. He condemned Israel for violating Iran's sovereignty by targeting its military leaders and scientists, despite the absence of an active conflict, calling Israel an expansionist regime and urging an end to its aggression.

Referring to regional politics, he remarked that "a cheaper imitation of Benjamin Netanyahu exists in our region." He added that the world is witnessing how the actions of Israel in Gaza are being mirrored by Narendra Modi in Kashmir. He also strongly criticized the United States for attacking Iran's nuclear facilities, warning that such actions could have serious repercussions for neighboring countries, including Pakistan. He emphasized that the US attack did not have the support of the American people.

Criticizing former Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said that in 2019, when India revoked Kashmir's special status, Khan questioned whether Pakistan should go to war, and had called Kashmir an internal matter. The recent conflict has forced India to acknowledge Kashmir as a bilateral issue. Under the current government, Pakistan delivered a strong response by shooting down six Indian fighter jets. He stressed that the Kashmir dispute must be resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Bilawal highlighted that the statement made during a press interaction with a US State Department official signaled global recognition of Pakistan's stance and undermined India's opposition to third-party involvement in Kashmir. He also recalled the significant reception given to Pakistan's military leadership during their visit to Washington. "Syed Asim Munir, Field Marshal, was not only officially invited to the United States but was personally hosted for lunch at the White House by President Trump himself," Bilawal said.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing budget session of provincial assembly.

Warrants issued for absent PTI workers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court of Islamabad on Monday issued the arrest warrants for several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers who failed to appear in cases linked to the November 26 protest. The court has also adjourned the hearing until next month.

Hearing the case, Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra of the Anti-Terrorism Court issued the arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters repeatedly absent in cases related to the November 26 protest in Islamabad. During the hearing, those who appeared were marked present in court, while the judge issued warrants for the workers who failed to attend despite multiple summons. The hearing was then adjourned until July 7.

The cases against the PTI workers were registered at Margalla and Kohsar police stations. These FIRs include various charges connected to protest activities that took place in the federal capital on November 26. The court will continue proceedings against both present and absent accused in the next hearing.

Sana case: Accused sent to jail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad on Monday sent the main suspect in the murder case of TikToker Sana Yousaf to jail after the end of his police remand.

The court made the decision as the prosecution did not request further custody. Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Hafeez ordered that the accused, Umar Hayat, be sent to jail on judicial remand in the ongoing investigation of the murder of TikToker Sana Yousaf. The federal police produced Umar Hayat in court following the completion of his three-day physical remand.

During the hearing, the prosecution did not seek an extension of the remand, after which the court directed that the accused be shifted to jail. Umar Hayat's lawyers raised concerns over not being allowed to arrange a meeting between their client and his parents. They told the court that the case had gained widespread media attention, and the accused was being denied access to his family. In response, the judge remarked that since the suspect had now been sent on judicial remand, such meetings could take place in jail under standard procedures.

4 dies as boat capsized

F.P. Report

KALAM: Four people died when a boat capsized in River Swat at Kalam on Monday. Police said the tragic incident occurred at Shahi Bagh near Kalam in Swat district when the overloaded boat capsized.

The dead also include women and children. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed sorrow over the incident and extended his condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families. He prayed for the elevation of the deceased's ranks in the hereafter, and for patience and strength for their loved ones.

No arrest for Rs50m tax evasion sans warrants

Budget 2025–26 balanced: targets relief, fiscal balance, export-led growth: Aurangzeb

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Monday that the budget for fiscal year 2025–26 was a balanced plan focused on providing public relief, promoting industry, curbing government expenditures, enhancing revenues, and ensuring fair tax enforcement—all aimed at fostering sustainable growth and driving an export-led economy.

While concluding debate on the general discussion on Budget, the minister announced many tax and relief measures that were incorporated in the budget after suggestions by finance committees of both National Assembly and Senate. He said, the government was committed to economic stability amid regional uncertainty. Aurangzeb said the government announced a major relief for the salaried class, saying that the income tax rate for those earning upto Rs3.2 million were reduce as it was cut from proposed 2.5 percent to 1 percent for those earning between Rs0.6 million and Rs1.2 million annually.

He clarified that no tax will be imposed on pension commutation or gratuity, adding that only individuals receiving pensions above Rs10 million will be taxed, while those over 75 years of age are fully exempt. On the solar energy front, the minister clarified that the earlier proposed 18 percent sales tax on imported solar panel components has been reduced to 10 percent and will apply only to 46 percent of imported items, hence would result in only a 4.6% increase in the price of imported solar panels.

He also condemned opportunistic hoarding and artificial price hikes by some market players ahead of the new tax's enforcement, warning that strict legal action will be taken in coordination with provincial governments. "Such manipulation and hoarding are condemnable. The government will take strict action under the law against those who exploit public needs," he said.

The Minister said that, under Prime Minister's special directives, the powers of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to arrest individuals have been strictly regulated. In cases involving Rs50 million or more, the FBR cannot arrest anyone without a court warrant, and only under specific conditions—such as deliberate evasion

after three notices, an attempt to abscond, or formal referral for prosecution. Arrests must also be approved by a three-member FBR committee, and the accused must be presented before a special judge within 24 hours, ensuring protection against arbitrary detention and abuse of authority.

The Finance Bill had proposed restrictions on large asset purchases by undocumented individuals, however, following the PM's direction, these restrictions will not apply to residential houses up to Rs50 million, commercial plots or properties up to Rs100 million, and purchase of vehicles worth up to Rs7 million. Additionally, under the existing law, capital gains tax will not apply to property sold after six years of purchase, provided it was acquired before July 1, 2024.

However, it would be subjected to 4.5-6 percent withholding tax would on purchase, which he said was generally returned on filing returns. He said, the property in personal use for 15 or more years would not be subject to this withholding tax.

He said, keeping in the positive contribution of e-commerce in economy, the government has rationalized the tax, to help it flourish. He added that while export facilitation schemes in recent years allowed exporters to import raw materials without paying taxes and duties, the policy unintentionally distorted market prices of domestically produced cotton and yarn, adversely affecting local farmers. To address this, the government has proposed imposing sales tax on the import of raw cotton and yarn, to reduce the price gap between imported and local products and support the domestic agriculture sector.

The finance minister informed that new tax measures have been carefully designed to avoid burdening the common man. Instead, the focus is on high-income segments and wealthier businesses. He added that under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's special directive, export-oriented industries have been largely kept exempt from new taxes to preserve global competitiveness. In terms of income tax reforms, he proposed raising the tax rate on inter-corporate dividends derived from mutual funds and similar instruments from 25% to 29%, bringing it in line with other sources of income. Meanwhile, returns on investment in government securities by companies will now be taxed at 20%, up from existing rates.

Sindh CM defends budget

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday concluded the budget debate for fiscal year 2025–26 with a wide-ranging speech in the provincial assembly, defending his government's allocations, criticising the federal government's financial shortfalls, and unveiling a host of development initiatives.

The chief minister said that Sindh's development budget stands at approximately 30 per cent of the total budget—higher than Punjab's 23pc and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 25.3pc. He noted that Balochistan's development budget is higher, but that province is also governed by the PPP.

Shah criticised the federal government for revising Sindh's share from the promised Rs1.9 trillion to Rs1.796tr, causing a shortfall of Rs100 billion. He urged Islamabad to release at least Rs237bn immediately, noting that despite a 13pc increase in federal tax collection, Sindh's own revenue had grown by 16pc.

He emphasised the need for equitable taxation across urban and rural areas, citing Dadu and Karachi as examples. The chief minister also warned that flawed agricultural tax policies may compel wheat imports this year, and announced a target of Rs8bn from agricultural income tax, based on Rs1,052 per acre—much higher than Punjab's Rs372 and KP's Rs57.

Shah said the government aims to achieve 100pc

birth registration across the province. He highlighted increased funding for the welfare of people with disabilities and the expansion of autism centres. Cost centres have been established in the education sector to enhance financial oversight.

Nineteen Youth Development Centres are already operational across districts, he added. In the health sector, the Sindh Institute of Child Health now hosts what he claimed to be the largest child emergency network in the world, while a new Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation is under construction in Larkana.

He also announced the procurement of new ambulances and initiatives aimed at supporting fishermen. Financial support for universities and solid waste management has been increased.

On fiscal measures, the CM said government employees' salaries have been raised by 10–12pc and pensions by 8pc. The government has also abolished professional and entertainment taxes and reduced taxes on various categories of vehicles. The Annual Development Programme (ADP) for 2025–26 was set at Rs520bn. This includes a Rs55bn District ADP, Rs366.72bn in foreign project assistance, and Rs76.28bn from the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Responding to criticism over Karachi's budget allocations, the CM said out of a total of Rs1,400 billion, Rs 60 billion, representing 4.6%, has been allocated to

Karachi, while a total of Rs 254 billion has been earmarked for the city, with the possibility of further increases. However, projects such as Bh

However, he admitted that major infrastructure proposals, such as Bhutto Avenue and the M-9 Link Road, were not included in the budget. Mr Shah noted the financial constraints faced by Karachi and contrasted its lack of fiscal autonomy with other major cities, which retain a greater share of their locally generated revenues.

Addressing what he called a targeted campaign against him, the CM clarified that he manages 45 departments, not just 11 as claimed by some critics. He pointed out that the Punjab CM oversees 14 departments and the Balochistan CM oversees 20. The CM said he listens to 90pc of assembly speeches and encouraged lawmakers to propose fewer but more impactful development projects. He announced that Sindh was on track to complete 1,460 schemes this year, which would set a provincial record.

On the subject of minimum wage, he said Sindh's rate currently stands at Rs37,000, and he proposed raising it to Rs42,000—higher than Punjab and KP's proposals of Rs40,000. The CM also mentioned a Rs8bn allocation for judicial allowances. Comparing salaries, he noted that a judge earns over Rs2.2 million post-tax, while the speaker of the assembly earns only 10pc of that amount.

Pak extends airspace ban on India

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Airports Authority has announced a one-month extension of the airspace ban on India. Under the new directive, Indian passenger and military aircraft will remain prohibited from using Pakistani airspace until July 23, 2025.

A NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority headquarters at Jinnah International Airport Terminal 1, Karachi, confirmed that the restriction also applies to all aircraft registered in India or operated by Indian airlines, including those acquired on lease. A spokesperson for the Pakistan Airports Authority stated that the decision was taken in view of national security considerations and followed high-level government consultations.

It is worth noting that Pakistan has previously restricted Indian access to its airspace due to specific regional and political circumstances. The current extension is expected to impact India's air connectivity, especially on western routes.

President concern over ME situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Sunday expressed concern over the escalating tensions in the Middle East, which could spiral out of control with serious consequences for millions of innocent people.

The President urged all parties involved in the conflict to exercise maximum restraint and to choose the path of peace, dialogue and diplomacy to ensure enduring peace and stability in the region. President Asif Ali Zardari also called upon the international community to play its part in de-escalating the crisis in the interest of regional stability as well as the well-being of its people.

Nobel prize: Fazl asks govt to withdraw Trump's nomination

F.P. Report

MURREE: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has strongly condemned the government's recommendation of a Nobel Peace Prize for US President Donald Trump, calling it an insult to victims of US-led wars.

Addressing the JUI-F Punjab General Council meeting in Phagwari, Murree, Fazlur Rehman criticized both past and present establishments for disregarding religious seminars. "Neither past nor present establishments have accepted seminars. But we will not let anyone infringe on their independence," he asserted.

He questioned the government's decision to support Trump, stating, "Trump's hands are stained with the blood of Palestinians, Iraqis, and Afghans. By attacking Iran, he violated both national and international laws. If we don't stand with Iran, should we support Israel?"

The JUI-F leader announced full support for Iran and warned against attempts to disconnect religion from politics. "JUI-F is the largest public force in Pakistan; stopping us is like blocking the will of the people," he said. Maulana Fazl further criticized what he called "un-Islamic and unconstitutional legislation" being pushed in the

country, emphasizing, "We support friendship with the United States, not slavery. Any bilateral ties must respect Pakistan's sovereignty, public mandate, and economic independence."

He revealed that in the past three months, a US delegation had visited him three times, after which he attended one of their diplomatic events. "Modi's era is over; India must now reflect. In the last war, Pakistan was united while Modi stood isolated," Fazlur Rehman concluded by urging JUI-F workers to focus on national and international issues rather than just local concerns, and to carry the party's message to all segments of society with a spirit of public service.

China, BB, Pakistan to deepen cooperation

BEIJING (APP): Bangladesh and Pakistan are both good neighbors, good friends, and good partners of China, and important partners in high quality Belt and Road cooperation.

As significant members of the Global South and key countries in the region, all three countries face the mission of national revitalization and modernization, and all require a peaceful and stable environment, as stated recently by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong stated recently. The announcement followed the China-Pakistan-Bangladesh Trilateral Vice Foreign Minister/Foreign Secretary meeting held on June 19 in Kunming. The meeting was attended by Sun Weidong, Bangladeshi Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique and Pakistani Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific) Imran Ahmed Siddiqui. Pakistani Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch participated in the first phase of the meeting via video link, CEN reported.

The meeting was fruitful in four aspects, Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun stated on Monday at a daily news briefing. According to the Foreign Ministry, the three sides exchanged views exten-

sively on China-Pakistan-Bangladesh trilateral cooperation.

The three sides agreed to advance trilateral cooperation based on the principles of good-neighborliness, equality and mutual trust, openness and inclusiveness, common development, and win-win cooperation. China-Bangladesh-Pakistan trilateral cooperation focuses on promoting economic development and improving people's livelihoods.

The three sides agreed to explore and implement cooperation projects in such areas as industry, trade, maritime affairs, water resources, climate change, agriculture, human resources, think tanks, health, education, culture, and youth. The three sides will establish a working group to follow up and implement the understandings reached during the meeting.

The three sides emphasized that China-Bangladesh-Pakistan cooperation adheres to true multilateralism and open regionalism, not directed at any third party. The Chinese government is committed to building a community with a shared future with neighboring countries. Cooperation

among China, Pakistan and Bangladesh aligns with the common interests of the three peoples, and can contribute to regional peace, stability, development and prosperity, according to Sun Weidong.

15 tourists injured in Nathiagali

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: A tourist bus met with an accident near Bagnoter to the way back from Nathiagali to Abbottabad district, injuring 15 tourists. Police said the bus, carrying tourists returning from a trip to Nathiagali, met with an accident near Bagnoter in the Galiyat region, resulting in injuries to 15 individuals.

The tourists had traveled from Haripur to Nathiagali for sightseeing. On their way back, the vehicle encountered an accident near Bagnoter due to wrong overtaking. Rescue teams reached the scene promptly after receiving the information and shifted the injured to the hospital for medical treatment.