

Four shot dead in Mardan  
F.P. Report

MARDAN: Four people were murdered in a gunfight triggered by a trivial dispute in Mardan. According to DSP Sheikh Maltoon, a verbal altercation led to the deadly duel, killing three people from group and another from the rival group in Kot Ismaelzai area. The police collected evidence from the crime scene and shifted the bodies to DHQ and MMC hospitals.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 160

Regd. No. 241

MUHARRAM 15 1447 -- FRIDAY, JULY 11 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

# Pakistan Army vows decisive action against Indian proxies

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Forum offered Fateha for the martyrs of recent terrorist attacks by Indian sponsored proxies. Taking stock of recent successes against terrorist proxies, Forum resolved that blood of our Shuhada will not go waste and the safety and security of people of Pakistan remain top most priority for the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Forum strongly asserted that it is imperative to take decisive and holistic actions at all levels against the Indian backed and sponsored proxies. Following its manifest defeat in direct aggression against Pakistan, post Pahalgal incident, India is now doubling down to further its nefarious agenda through its proxies of Fitna Al Khawarij and Fitna Al Hindustan.

The COAS shared details of Pakistan's proactive and successful diplomatic manoeuvre, including recent visits to Iran, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, KSA and UAE, where the COAS accompanied the honorable Prime Minister. Forum was also briefed on the historic and unique visit of the COAS to US, where meetings with top-tier leadership, afforded an opportunity to share, first hand, Pakistan's objective perspective on bilateral, regional and extra-regional developments.

The Forum conducted a holistic review of the prevailing internal and external security dynamics, with particular emphasis on the recent developments in Middle East and Iran and growing propensity for 'use of force' as a preferred policy tool, which warrants persistent development of self-reliant capabilities as well as national unity and



resolve. Taking note of Indian Army's baseless insinuations to offset its comprehensive defeat, COAS stated, "Invoking third parties in what is unmistakably a bilateral military confrontation reflects a disingenuous attempt at bloc politics aimed at falsely projecting India's self-assigned role as a net security provider to accrue benefits in a region that is visibly growing disillusioned with Indian hegemonic ambitions and Hindutva driven extremism".

The Forum was briefed on Pakistan's Army's ongoing drive with quick adaptation towards evolving threat spectrum and changing character of war. The COAS also appreciated the leadership of Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force for further strengthening tri-services synergy. In his concluding remarks, the Army Chief expressed full confidence in the operational readiness of Pakistan Army against complete threat spectrum.

## Militants strike multiple Balochistan areas

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Terrorists affiliated with Fitna al-Hindustan have launched attacks in Quetta, Kalat, Mastung, and Loralai, the Balochistan government's spokesperson confirmed on Thursday.

According to Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind, the security forces responded immediately and forcefully at all three affected locations. He assured the public that the forces remain fully alert to protect the lives, property, and assets of citizens amid the evolving threat.

In a separate incident, reports have emerged of passengers being abducted near Loralai, the spokesperson said. He said that a search operation has been launched to ensure the safe return of the abducted individuals.

Indian-backed terrorists groups have been active in Balochistan, especially after the defeat in the recent war against Pakistan. The army's top leadership, earlier today, also vowed to take decisive and holistic actions at all levels against the Indian backed and sponsored proxies.

## Six killed in Buner mishap

F.P. Report

BUNER: Almost six person killed and seven injured due a vehicle fell into ravine on way to Ambela from Amazai area of Mandanar tehsil due to over speed. The dead and injured include men, women and children.

The Nagray police and locals rushed to the spot and rescued the bodies and injured. The rescue 1122 team rushed and helped rescue operation and transported the bodies and injured to near by civil hospital Nawagai. Layer on the serious injured were transported to DHQ hospital Daggar.

The deceased include Sajida, wife of Muhammad Din, age 50 years, Samreen, daughter of Farida age 15 years, Alia, daughter of Farida age 22 years, Shazia, daughter of Farida age 23 years, Son of Farida age 2 years, Fawad, son of Rashid age 16 years. While the injured include Khushdil, son of Toor Sher age 46 years, Tufail Fazal Ahmed Age 8 years, Fazal Azim son of Farida Age 11 years, Obaid Ali son of Farida Age 13 years, Yasir son of Farida Age 4 years, Faiza daughter of Farida Age 30 years, Samaa daughter of Fazal Ahmed Age 30 years.

According to the initial investigation of the police, the causes of the accident are said to be high speed and seating more than the capacity. The police have expanded the scope of the investigation so that effective steps can be taken to prevent such accidents in the future by controlling overload and high speed in the cars used for taxis in the mountainous areas.

However, there is an atmosphere of mourning in the Amazi area on this tragic accident and everyone is saddened by the sudden accidental death of local mrn, women and children and the atmosphere of the entire Mandanar tehsil was mournful.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of PNSC.

# PM directs urgent restructuring of NTC's powers, responsibilities

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to carry out an urgent restructuring of National Tariff Commission's legal, administrative, and other institutional powers and responsibilities to enhance its effectiveness.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on the performance of the National Tariff Commission, instructed for third-party review of the NTC's recent performance and remodeling the organisation on modern lines to meet the requirements of the new tariff regime effectively, according to a PM Office press release.

He said that the NTC should be cognizant of all ground realities related to domestic business, imports, exports, and markets. The automated and efficient research capabilities of the NTC can play a key role in resolving issues faced by domestic businesses, he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the government was committed to addressing the NTC's training and resource deficiencies and aligning its operations with modern requirements. He directed the immediate activation of the NTC's Appellate Tribunal and also sought a briefing on the implementation of the given directives by next month. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Dr. Musadik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, and Ali Pervaz Malik, and relevant senior government officials.

**Shehbaz directs formation of committee to boost E-Commerce sector in Pakistan:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif underscored the strategic importance of e-commerce for Pakistan's export-driven economic vision and directed the formation of a dedicated committee

to devise a roadmap for the sector's growth.

The Prime Minister was speaking during a meeting with a six-member delegation of Alibaba International Digital Commerce Company, led by its President of International Markets, James Dong, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The delegation appreciated the growing presence of Pakistani entrepreneurs on Alibaba's global e-commerce platforms. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighted that over 300,000 locally manufactured Pakistani products are currently being sold on Alibaba's platforms, and emphasized the need to increase this number substantially. He instructed relevant authorities to take concrete steps to expand the presence of Pakistani businesses on international e-commerce platforms, which he termed as "a powerful tool to boost exports in the modern digital economy."

"E-commerce is no longer a choice but a necessity. It is a vital pillar in achieving the government's goal of an export-oriented economy," the Prime Minister stated. He called for proactive engagement with the private sector to enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access international markets through digital platforms. James Dong praised the contributions of Pakistani entrepreneurs in global trade and reiterated Alibaba's commitment to supporting Pakistan's e-commerce ecosystem. "Currently, more than 300,000 Pakistani products are listed on Alibaba's website, with textiles among one of the most in-demand category," he noted. He further emphasized that Pakistan holds immense untapped potential in the e-commerce sector and expressed Alibaba Group's strong interest in providing technical training to Pakistani entrepreneurs to help scale

up their participation on international platforms. The meeting was also attended by Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman FBR, and senior officials from relevant departments.

**Premier directs for comprehensive plan to elevate PNSC to int'l standards:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the relevant authorities to formulate a comprehensive plan to transform the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) into a shipping company of international standard.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the restructuring, reforms, and performance of the PNSC, said that Pakistan's shipping sector held vast potential for investment, according to a PM Office press release. He directed that a comprehensive plan be prepared to encourage private investment in the shipping sector.

He called for steps to increase the number of ships and promote the competitive use of PNSC vessels for cargo movement to and from Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz advised to acquire the services of shipping experts and consultants to elevate PNSC to an international standard shipping company.

He expressed the hope that the reforms in the PNSC would not only save valuable foreign exchange currently being paid to international companies for shipping services but also create more employment opportunities for local seafarers. The participants of the meeting were briefed on the PNSC's operations, the current number of vessels in the PNSC, the annual cargo movement in Pakistan, and the future expansion plans for the organisation. Federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, and Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, and relevant senior officials attended the meeting.

# ATC maintains arrest warrants of Gandapur

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday maintained the arrest warrants of Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur and also ordered to initiate the process to declare former minister Amir Mahmood Kayani as proclaimed offender.

The court of Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the case. It maintained the arrest warrants of Gandapur for his continuous non-appearance despite being summoned in the Faizabad protest case on the disqualification of the founder of PTL. During the hearing, Ilyas Siddiqui, Raja Zahoor, and others appeared in the court on behalf of the accused.

The court marked the attendance of present accused including Faisal Javed Khan, Wasiq Qayyum and others. Chief Minister KPK Ali Amin Gandapur did not appear in the court and his lawyer Raja Zahoor informed the court about the decision of the Peshawar

High Court, on which Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra said that the status of Ali Amin Ganda's warrant and proclaimed offender will remain the same. The Islamabad Police should implement the decision of the Peshawar High Court.

During the hearing, a petition for acquittal was filed by Faisal Javed Khan, on which Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra told the lawyer to give arguments on Faisal Javed's acquittal plea. I will take notice now and call the prosecutor as well.

Defence Lawyer said that the arguments to be given on this are the same as the plea. It was said that Faisal Javed has no role in the case, the CDR record regarding Faisal Javed was not presented. Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra said that I will decide on it after hearing the arguments of the prosecutor. The court started the process of declaring Amir Mahmood Kayani as a proclaimed offender due to his continuous non-appearance and inquired about the situation regarding

the evidence in this case. On which Ilyas Siddiqui Advocate said that first the process of declaring as a proclaimed offender is completed and only then will the proceedings proceed.

The Judge said that you are not Aamir Kayani's lawyer, it is a separate process. Ilyas Siddiqui Advocate said that I am not speaking on behalf of Aamir Kayani but regarding my accused. The court inquired that you should tell me what is the next date to be fixed for the case. On this occasion, Faisal Javed Khan requested the court to give a long date stating that we have to come from far away.

The Judge said that I will give a date of September, you give an assurance, your lawyer will allow the evidence to be recorded on next date. Advocate Ilyas Siddiqui said, "I cannot give any assurance in this regard. The court adjourned the hearing of the case until July 21. A case has been registered against PTI workers in Police Station I-9.

# Pakistan, Kashmir are inseparable: ISPR DG

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, recipient of Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), visited the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Muzaffarabad and held a special interaction with the students, said ISPR.

The Kashmiri students warmly welcomed the

ISPR director general in their traditional manner. A special Q&A session was also organised with the students and faculty of the university.

During the session, the students reaffirmed their commitment to the Kashmir cause, stating, "Kashmir is the lifeline of Pakistan, and we will reclaim it at all costs. Pakistan and Kashmir are inseparable, and the day is not far when Kashmir will

be ours." The students also paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for its firm response to Indian aggression, expressing their deep appreciation and support.

Yesterday, in an interview with a foreign media outlet, Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry strongly asserted Pakistan's stance on Indian state-sponsored terrorism, the threat of extremist group "Khawarij," and the country's nuclear capabilities.

# ANP leader among two killed

F.P. Report

KHAR: Unknown assailants opened fire near the Khar Tehsil headquarters in Bajaur, killing Maulana Khan Zeb, a senior leader of the Awami National Party (ANP), along with another individual.

The attack also left three of his companions injured, according to District Police Officer (DPO) Waqas Rafiq. Maulana Khan Zeb was reportedly campaigning for a peace march scheduled for July 13 when the deadly incident occurred. In a post on X, ANP President Senator Aimal Wali Khan expressed grief over the attack. In the post, he uploaded a picture with the slain politician, writing: "Devastated".

ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Mian Iftikhar Hussain condemned the assassination attack on Maulana Zaib, announcing that the party would observe three days of mourning. He further stated that leader's killing was a clear proof that terrorists are once again given free hand in the region while state institutions watch in complete silence. Maulana's funeral prayer would be held today at 11am in Nawagai, according to the district president of ANP.

Kp CM, Ali Amin Gandapur, took immediate notice of the incident and ordered a detailed report while directing law enforcement to launch an urgent

operation to apprehend those responsible.

Expressing deep sorrow, Gandapur extended condolences to the families of the deceased, praying for the souls of the departed and strength for the bereaved. He assured the public that those involved in the attack will not escape justice. The incident raised concerns about the safety of peace advocates in conflict-prone regions, especially ahead of significant public demonstrations aimed at promoting harmony.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the firing incident near Shandai Mor in Bajaur, which resulted in the martyrdom of Awami National Party (ANP) leader Maulana Khan Zaib and one other individual. In a statement, Naqvi expressed deep sorrow over the tragic deaths and offered heartfelt condolences to ANP Chairman Aimal Wali Khan and the bereaved family of Maulana Khan Zaib. "We stand with Aimal Wali Khan and the grieving family in this hour of sorrow," he said.

The interior minister also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack and labeled the incident as a cowardly act. He asserted that "those who target innocent people are nothing less than beasts and deserve no mercy." Naqvi reaffirmed the government's commitment to bringing the perpetrators to justice and ensuring peace in the



region.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi also strongly condemned the tragic firing incident in the merged district Bajaur that claimed the lives of Awami National Party (ANP) stalwart Maulana Khan Zeb and another individual. The Governor expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. "We stand in solidarity with the grieving families during this painful time," Governor Kundi said. He offered prayers for the departed souls, seeking forgiveness for the deceased and patience for the families to bear this immense loss.

# Pakistan, China explore broadening media collaboration

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar met with Cao Shumin, Deputy Head of the CPC Publicity Department and Minister of National Radio and Television Administration of China (NRTA) China, to explore broadening cooperation through joint productions, combating disinformation, launching training initiatives, and fostering cultural exchange.

Both leaders characterized the media partnership as a testament to mutual trust and a deep-rooted friendship. Speaking on the occasion, Attaullah Tarar stated that Pakistan has much to learn from China's experience in media and communication.

He praised China's expertise in digital media, public service broadcasting, and cultural content promotion as truly commendable. Pakistan and China have agreed to expand cooperation and joint broadcasting projects between their state media organizations. This initiative aims to more effectively counter fake news and disinformation. Both leaders also endorsed a unified stance against fake news, along with plans for technical training and institutional collaboration.

The meeting further featured discussions on a proposed agreement between China Central Television (CCTV) and Pakistan Television (PTV) to promote information

exchange and strengthen media cooperation. Discussions during the meeting also touched on facilitating exchange visits of digital influencers from Pakistan and China to strengthen cultural ties and mutual engagement. Attaullah Tarar stated that under the agreement, both institutions will enhance cooperation in news coverage, documentary production, training resources, and technical support.

Attaullah Tarar noted that during the recent tensions between Pakistan and India, youth from China and Pakistan demonstrated strong solidarity, a sentiment that gained widespread attention across social media platforms. Attaullah Tarar remarked

that in today's digital age, the exchange of influencers and social media representatives from both countries can bring renewed vitality to bilateral relations.

He affirmed Pakistan's commitment to turning mutual media cooperation into concrete actions. Tarar emphasized that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) serves as a cornerstone for a promising future between the two nations. Attaullah Tarar said that Pakistan Television, Radio Pakistan, and the national news agency APP are instrumental in highlighting China's development, the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC, cultural ties, and mutual cooperation to the people of both Pakistan and China. He

noted that Pakistan Television (PTV) is fostering intellectual and cultural ties between the two nations by broadcasting Chinese programs, documentaries, and news reports in Urdu. Likewise, APP's China News Service has made notable strides in delivering Pakistan's narrative to Chinese readers effectively. Federal Minister for Information stated that media organizations in both countries are playing a key role in fostering closer ties between the people of China and Pakistan, promoting social understanding, and enhancing mutual harmony.

He added that further opportunities for collaboration in media and culture exist and can be pursued through active institutional frameworks. Ms

Cao Shumin highlighted China's recognition of Pakistan as a trusted partner, noting that media organizations from both nations can deepen their collaboration by sharing experiences. She further emphasized that greater cooperation in media and technology will be mutually advantageous.

Discussions during the meeting also focused on shaping a joint narrative around civilizational exchange and innovation between Pakistan and China. Both sides agreed that media, culture, and public relations hold the potential to deepen the bilateral relationship, with future efforts to be advanced through a coordinated strategy.









PESHAWAR Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, being presenting shield by Chief Traffic Officer Haroon Rashid Khan.

## Kundi flays deadly attack on ANP stalwart

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday strongly condemned the tragic firing incident in the merged district Bajaur that claimed the lives of Awami National Party (ANP) stalwart Maulana Khan Zeb and another individual.

The Governor expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

"We stand in solidarity with the grieving families during this painful time," Governor Kundi said.

He offered prayers for the departed souls, seeking forgiveness for the deceased and patience for the families to bear this immense loss.

"I share my deepest condolences with the ANP leadership, party workers, and the mourning families affected by this heartbreaking incident," he added.

## Railway workers participates in ILO seminar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The General Secretary of Railway Workers Union Open Line (Sitara Nishan), Peshawar Division, Riaz Kashmiri, and President Rahim Taj Shinwari participated in a significant seminar organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Railway Workers Union. The seminar, focused on "Health and Safety," was held at Hyderabad.

The event was attended by ILO Country Director Gerte Tüstal, Senior Program Manager Saghir Bukhari, and prominent union leaders from across the country.

During the seminar, ILO representatives provided valuable insights into the use of safety gear during duty, the importance of safe working environments, and awareness of international labor standards.

In his address, Mr. Riaz Kashmiri highlighted the alarming shortage of safety equipment available to railway employees and criticized the lack of concrete measures by the Railway Department to ensure the safety and well-being of its workers.

He stressed the importance of conducting such seminars regularly to educate employees about their fundamental rights and workplace safety practices.

Mr. Kashmiri also appreciated the efforts of the ILO leadership in organizing the seminar and thanked them for providing a platform to raise the concerns of railway workers. ILO officials assured the participants that these issues would be communicated to the higher authorities in the Railway administration for necessary action.

## KP launches free OPD services through ‘Jwandoon Card’ initiative

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In what is being termed a milestone in public healthcare, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Wednesday launched the "Jwandoon OPD Card" to provide free outpatient department (OPD) services to deserving citizens for the first time in the province's history.

The initiative was formally inaugurated by provincial Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali during a ceremony held at the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Takht Bhai, district Mardan. The event was attended by key officials, including Dr Riaz Tanoli, CEO of the Sehat Sahulat Program, Dr Shoaib, DHO Mardan, Dr Akhunzada Imran Johar, MS THQ, and Dr Nabi Jan, President of the Insaaf Doctors Forum.

Speaking at the occasion, Health Advisor described the program as a major step towards accessible healthcare, saying the Jwandoon Card was "not just a service but a promise of dignity" for the common citizen.

"For the first time, outpatient consultations, diagnostic services, and essential medicines will be provided free of cost under a government-supported scheme," he said.

Until now, the government's flagship Sehat Card Plus covered only inpatient treatments. The new Jwandoon Card extends coverage to outpatient services, which account for the majority of public health needs.

Giving details advisor health told that the programme is being rolled out initially in Mardan, Kohat, Malakand, and Chitral, in collaboration with the German development agency KfW. In Mardan alone, more than 50,000 low-income families are expected to benefit, with over 60 public and private health facilities being enlisted to provide services.

The health advisor noted that the initiative aligns with the government's commitment to strengthening public service delivery in underserved areas.

According to Advisor, the provincial government has allocated Rs. 2 billion for the programme. He further stated that while the Punjab government has discontinued its health card scheme, the KP government has increased the budget for Sehat Card Plus from Rs 35 billion to Rs 41 billion.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, he said, had made a promise to provide free healthcare to the people — a commitment that is now being realized.

Citizens can check their eligibility for the Jwandoon OPD Card by sending their CNIC number to 9930 via SMS. Those found eligible will be able to avail free treatment at the nearest registered healthcare facility.

Ihtisham Ali reiterated that the programme reflects the broader vision of PTI founder Imran Khan, whose politics, he said, "focuses not on the elite, but on the welfare of ordinary people."



## Govt launches IT-Based Climate Action Monitoring System

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has introduced IT-based Monitoring Mechanism for its Climate Action Plan and Management System (CAPMS), housed within the Department of Climate Change, Environment, Forests, and Wildlife. Developed with technical assistance from the Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) programme, the system is designed to monitor progress, strengthen interdepartmental coordination, and generate clear, actionable reports to support informed decision-making. The IT-based mechanism has been formally inaugurated at a ceremony held at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, presided over the event, which was attended by senior officials from the Environment Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other key stakeholders. The innovative digital mechanism is designed to track progress, enhance interdepartmental coordination, and produce concise, actionable reports to support evidence-based decision-making.

## Orphaned children participate in ISPR summer camp

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A large number of children from the Hindu, Sikh, and Christian communities of Peshawar, along with children from the Zamung Kor Model Institute for children Peshawar established for the care of children deprived of parental support, has actively participated in the ISPR Summer Camp 2025.

The children enthusiastically took part in various events and practical demonstrations of the Sports Gala and Para Training School.

The children described the summer camp not only as practically beneficial but also regarded it as the first step toward joining the Pakistan Army, says a statement.

They expressed gratitude to the DG ISPR and the Pakistan Army for organizing the summer camp.

"I am proud to be part of Pakistan's minority community" said Anmol, a student of hindu community.

She felt proud to be represented by the white in Pakistan's green and white flag.

"We are leaving with many memories from the summer camp. Defending Pakistan is our foremost duty" said Diya Vikram, another student of hindu community.

Aneez Aneel, another student of hindu community said that it is a matter of pride to be part of the summer camp and Pakistan's minority community. My identity is Pakistan."

"We request the DG ISPR to hold events like the summer camp twice a year," said Anmol.

Musa Jameel, student of christian community said that military and civil speakers made us realize that we exist because Pakistan exists.

"Visiting the Sports Gala and Para Training School was a memorable experience," said Manpreet Kaur, student of sikh community.

## Saif visits Traffic Police HQ; hailed dept for securing three ISO certificates

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, paid an official visit to the City Traffic Police Headquarters in Peshawar where the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Mr Haroon Rashid Khan gave a comprehensive briefing on the structure, operations, and reform agenda of the City Traffic Police.

The CTO highlighted the evolution of the department from a conventional enforcement body into a technologically advanced, service-oriented institution aligned with international best practices. Special emphasis was placed on public facilitation, institutional innovation, and efforts to address the growing complexity of traffic in a city that now accommodates over one million vehicles and receives an additional half a million vehicles daily.

Among the department's most noteworthy achievements is the successful roll-out of the E-Ticketing System, operational since 2019 and now fully functional across the province. The system has enhanced transparency, efficiency, and accountability in enforcement. This digitization has significantly reduced manual processes, minimized corruption loopholes, and strengthened real-time traffic data collection.

In line with the government's digitization and public service agenda, the Computerized Driving License System has also been overhauled. Now fully centralized, the system offers real-time license verification, electronic sign testing, province-wide license renewal, and issuance of international licenses. The department has also introduced on-the-spot card delivery, replacing the previous 7-day waiting period. Notably, Mobile Licensing Units have expanded outreach, offering services at universities, military offices, churches, gurdwaras, rural areas, and public institutions—making the process inclusive and convenient.

Barrister Dr. Saif was also informed regarding the establishment of three new Driving Training Schools under the "Learn With Us to Drive the Right Way" initiative launched in August 2024. These schools, equipped with centralized software for admissions and fee processing, aim to produce safer, better-trained drivers. The upcoming introduction of simulators further reflects the department's commitment to modern training standards.

The petitioner's lawyer argued that the Deputy Commissioner's actions were in violation of the government's notification, which only allows officials to use Twitter and Facebook.

Justice Sahibzada Asadullah questioned the Additional Advocate General about the matter, who informed the court that they had submitted their response.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The petitioner's lawyer argued that the Deputy Commissioner's actions were in violation of the government's notification, which only allows officials to use Twitter and Facebook.

Justice Sahibzada Asadullah questioned the Additional Advocate General about the matter, who informed the court that they had submitted their response.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

## KP Doctors' Council delegation meets Speaker KP Assembly

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Doctors' Council (KPDC), led by its President Dr. Abdul Majeed, met with the Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, at the Assembly Secretariat in Peshawar. The meeting was requested by the doctors' delegation to discuss pressing issues in the healthcare sector and to seek the Speaker's support in resolving them.

The delegation included senior representatives of key medical bodies: Prof. Dr. Musa Kaleem (President, Teaching Staff), Dr. Fazal Manan (General Secretary, KPDC), Dr. Javed Nawab (President, Islamic Doctors Forum), Dr. Hussain Haroon (President, Pakistan Medical Association), and Dr. Daniyal (Spokesperson KPDC and representative of the Islamic Medical Association). Member of the Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi, Sajjad Ullah were also present, alongside officials from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department.

During the meeting, the delegation shared detailed concerns related to the challenges faced by medical professionals, the ongoing protests, and structural issues within the public health system.

Speaker Babar Saleem Khan Swati, responding to the delegation's outreach, assumed the role of a facilitator between the medical professionals and the relevant government departments. He emphasized the need for constructive dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders to ensure effective resolution of healthcare issues and systemic improvement.

He held direct discussions with Health Department officials during the meeting, underscoring the importance of prompt and sincere action to address the valid concerns raised by the medical community. While appreciating the department's ongoing efforts, the Speaker also highlighted the need for targeted reforms in areas where improvements are necessary.

The meeting reaffirmed that the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains committed to strengthening the healthcare system and delivering quality medical services to the public. The Speaker expressed his intent to convey the delegation's concerns to the relevant authorities and, where necessary, raise the matter in the Provincial Assembly.

The KPDC delegation expressed gratitude to the Speaker for his time and constructive engagement, voicing confidence in his support for resolving their concerns through appropriate governmental channels.

ment to modern training standards.

Barrister Dr Saif commended the department's achievement in securing three ISO certifications—ISO 27001:2022 for Information Security Management, and ISO 9001:2015 for both Driving School Operations and Office Administration. These international standards affirm the department's commitment to quality, security, and continuous improvement.

The CTO Haroon Rashid Khan also briefed Barrister Dr. Saif on several new initiatives recently introduced to address evolving urban mobility needs, including the establishment of two new traffic police stations aimed at enhancing decentralized enforcement, improving resource allocation, and ensuring quicker response times. He also highlighted the launch of a new driving license branch in Hayatabad, designed to ease congestion at existing centers and provide more accessible services to local residents. Additionally, the deployment of modern Traffic Facilitation Booths was showcased, offering on-the-spot services such as learner license processing, challan payments, and real-time traffic updates, along with essential amenities for on-duty personnel including air conditioning and

water dispensers. Further, the launch of E-Licenses with QR code-enabled verification now provides citizens with a secure, paperless, and easily portable alternative to traditional licenses. To enhance operational efficiency, 42 patrol vehicles have been equipped with real-time GPS trackers, allowing better field oversight. The department has also activated specialized response squads—including Mobile Emergency Units, Drone Surveillance Teams, Mobile Workshops, and Ambulances—ensuring a 10-minute response time to incidents. Moreover, a newly developed Traffic Count Software enables real-time traffic density analytics, significantly improving planning, monitoring, and enforcement capabilities.

On the educational front, the City Traffic Police has led a robust awareness campaign across the city. Educational institutions, hospitals, and military units have hosted road safety sessions, while FM Radio 88.6, podcasts, and YouTube channels are being actively used to amplify the message. Over 5,000 pamphlets and 2,000 traffic education booklets have been distributed, and large display banners are being installed at key BRT stations to reinforce civic

## Historic online teacher assessment conducted by ESEF across KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation (ESEF) successfully conducted its first-ever province-wide online teacher assessment, marking a major milestone in efforts to enhance teachers' professional capabilities. The initiative was led by the newly established Quality Assurance and Assessment Cell at the ESEF Head Office.

A total of 5,511 teachers from 26 districts participated in the assessment, which was conducted simultaneously at 42 designated centers across the province. The assessment evaluated teachers' skills in four key areas: Quantitative Reasoning, Content Competency, Pedagogical Skills, and Classroom Management.

According to an ESEF spokesperson, "This is not merely a test, but a decisive step toward modernizing the education system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By accurately assessing the current competencies of our teachers, we aim to design more effective training programs for the future."

For the first time in ESEF's history, the assessment was conducted entirely online. To ensure transparency, each teacher was provided a unique ID and password. The test began simultaneously at all centers, and results were made available immediately online after submission. An instructional video

was shared in advance to help teachers understand the procedure. During the test, a team of technical experts was available online to provide immediate assistance in case of any technical or procedural issues.

To ensure the assessment was conducted smoothly and transparently, a comprehensive monitoring system was established. In addition to ESEF's Monitoring Section, staff from the Head Office were deployed to various districts. District ESEF staff performed invigilation duties, while the District Education Offices assisted in arranging assessment venues. Security throughout the process was ensured by the District Administration.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

Teachers were divided into two groups per district to manage the process efficiently. A Live Assessment Room was established at the ESEF Head Office, where all District Program Officers (DPOs) were present online to oversee the proceedings in real-time. This assessment is expected to help ESEF understand the professional development needs of teachers and design targeted training programs accordingly. It is anticipated that the outcomes will lead to improved teaching standards and overall progress in the province's education system.

ESEF's transparent, digital, and merit-based initiative is being regarded as a significant step forward in educational reform in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The counsel Danyal Asad Chamkani Advocate argued that other retired employees had received their commutation funds, and the petitioners should also be entitled to the same benefit.

The Cantonment Board's representative appeared in court and stated that the petitioners were entitled to the commutation funds and that the board would release the funds within three months.

The court directed the Cantonment Board to release the commutation funds to the petitioners within three months and disposed of the petition.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.

The court observed that the Women University's response to the allegations was not clear and directed the Vice Chancellor of Swabi to appear in court. PHC ordered the Vice Chancellor of Women University Swabi and the Deputy Commissioner of Swabi to appear in court.





## In brief

Infrastructure damaged  
F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Torrential monsoon rains have lashed various parts of District Shangla, bringing a welcome end to the prolonged dry spell, but also causing widespread disruption to daily life. Heavy downpours were recorded during the night between July 8 and 9, significantly affecting infrastructure and public services. According to local sources, the rains triggered flash floods in streams and seasonal nullahs, leading to a surge in water levels. The powerful water flow has severely impacted the local hydropower generation systems, causing the shutdown of several community-based power stations. As a result, many areas have plunged into darkness, further increasing the hardships of local residents. The intense rainfall has also led to multiple incidents of landslides on major roads and link roads across the district. Authorities from the National Highway Authority (NHA), Provincial Highway Authority (PHA), and District Roads Authority are urged to take preemptive and immediate measures to ensure road accessibility and public safety. While the showers have somewhat benefited local agriculture, reports suggest that some crops have suffered damage due to excessive water. Tourists visiting Shangla are advised to exercise extreme caution during the rainy season and avoid travel without checking for weather and road condition updates from official sources.

Crackdown continue  
F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Divisional Director Pest Warning Division Faisalabad Muhammad Zulfikar Ali Ghauri said that continuous action is being taken against the manufacturers and sellers of fake pesticides. Zulfikar Ali Ghauri further said that I, along with my team, have taken action against a factory manufacturing fake pesticide in Faisalabad and on the spot we seized fake pesticide worth about Rs 12.5 million and Two person were arrested and legal action under process. He said that Inshallah, such operations will continue. Our teams are working in the field on a daily basis. Those who make and sell fake Pesticides do not deserve any concessions because these people destroy and ruin their crops by selling such fake Pesticides to farmers. In the End, Zulfikar Ali Ghauri said that, "I send a message to all farmers to avoid using such fake Pesticide so that your crops are spared further damage."

Community policing directed  
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Regional Police Officer held a Khuli Kachehri (open court) at Police Station Saddar Gojra, aiming to address public grievances and ensure swift delivery of justice during his visit to Toba Tek Singh, on Saturday. Senior police officials, including the DPO, were present at the event. RPO Zeeshan Asghar listened to the complaints of citizens and issued on-the-spot directives for their resolution. He reaffirmed the police department's commitment to improving public service delivery and ensuring the immediate redressal of complaints. He also conducted a formal inspection of the Special Initiative Police Station at Saddar Gojra, reviewing cleanliness, infrastructure, the front desk, lockups, and the condition of detainees.

## Two martyrs laid to rest in Kohat

## F.P. Report

KOHAT: Two brave sons of the security forces hailing from Kohat district, Muhammad Rashid and Muhammad Naseem, who attained the great status of martyrdom by sacrificing their lives for the country and the nation, were laid to rest with full official honors in front of thousands of tears in the village Surgul, a suburb of Kohat, on Thursday.

The funeral prayers of the martyrs, beside others, were also attended by the Chairman Public Safety Commission Daud Shah Afridi MPA, Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali, high-ups of the Pakistan Army and security forces and government officials, as well as relatives, local dignitaries and the general public in large number.

It may be recalled that these soldiers were martyred on July 4 in Lakki Marwat district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After the funeral, Daud Shah Afridi MPA and Commissioner Kohat laid floral wreaths on the graves of the martyrs. They while expressing their deep grief and sorrow, paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of the martyrs. They said that their sacrifices for the country and the nation will not go in vain and will definitely bear fruit.

They while expressing sympathies with the bereaved families of the martyrs, prayed for their elevation and granting courage to bear this irreparable loss with patience and fortitude.

**Commissioner inspects pre-monsoon arrangements:** Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah made a surprise visit to Tehsil Gumbat of Kohat in view of the possible flood situation after the recent rains, where he inspected rain drains, natural waterways, causeways and other obstacles. TMO Gumbat Muhammad Amin and Regional Officer

Information Irshad Afridi were also with him on this occasion.

During the visit, he also reviewed the arrangements and preparations made in view of the possible heavy rains, floods and overflowing of rivers and streams and directed all concerned departments and institutions to be on high alert to deal with any emergency situation.

Commissioner Kohat inspected waterways and causeways at Dartappi Point near Gambat Bazar and Mohalla Awan, Nai Abadi near bridge. He expressed his deep anger over the poor performance of the TMO Gumbat and the SDO Irrigation concerned and directed them to clear the waterways of all types of encroachments and bushes within 2 days otherwise stern action will be taken. He further directed, instead of file work, they should come up with practical work on the ground.

Later, the Commissioner also paid a surprise visit to the Joint Check Post Khushalgarh where he checked the attendance register. He expressed his anger over the lack of any regular duty rota and directed to ensure duty rota at the Joint Check Post. He also recommended strict departmental action against the absent officials of the concerned departments including Excise, Minerals, Forests, Agriculture, Food and Wildlife. However, the police personnel and customs personnel were present on duty. He directed them to discharge their duties efficiently. Havaladar Shaikat Hayat of the Customs Department who was on duty gave him a detailed briefing.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Kohat, while describing the presence of children and youth on the banks of the Indus River from Punjab side at Khushalgarh during the ongoing monsoon season as dangerous, stressed the Attock district administration to take immediate necessary action in this regard so that no untoward incident occurs.

## Basic medicines shortage reported at DHQ hospital

## F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A shortage of basic medicines, including those for common ailments such as fever, has been reported at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Hafizabad, leaving patients in distress and forcing them to purchase essential drugs from private pharmacies.

Patients traveling from remote areas of the district were dismayed to find even routine medications unavailable at the government hospital. The situation escalated into a public protest, led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) district leader, Advocate Muhammad Saeed Anjum. Protesters voiced their frustration over the lack of facilities at the hospital, which they say contradicts the promises made by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Speaking to the media, the affected patients expressed their disillusionment with the provincial government's healthcare initiatives. "The Chief Minister has pledged to provide free medicines at patients' doorsteps, yet here at DHQ Hospital Hafizabad, even basic treatments are out of stock," said one protester.

They further complained that doctors routinely write prescriptions and instruct patients to buy the medicines from outside, placing a financial burden on low-income families. "It is not

only causing severe difficulties for the poor, but it is also undermining the credibility and purpose of this public hospital," added another patient.

Citizens demanded immediate action to restore medicine supplies at DHQ Hospital and called on the Punjab government to hold responsible officials accountable for failing to implement the Chief Minister's healthcare vision.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Hafizabad was convened at the District Complex to review pre-flood preparedness ahead of the ongoing monsoon season.

The session was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq and attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Tanveer Yaseen, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Hamdullah, Assistant Commissioner Hafizabad Sulman Akbar, Assistant Commissioner Pindi Bhattian Jawad Hussain, District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Engineer Adnan Nawaz, Chief Executive Officer (Education), and other key officials from relevant departments.

During the meeting, District Emergency Officer Engineer Adnan Nawaz briefed participants on the flood contingency plan, stating that Rescue 1122 has established multiple flood relief camps at vul-

nerable locations including Qadirabad, Vanike Tarar, Khanpur, Jalalpur Bhattian, Tahli Goraya, and Pindi Bhattian.

These camps are fully equipped with essential life-saving gear such as motorboats, life jackets, life rings, and other rescue equipment to safeguard human lives and livestock in the event of flooding from the River Chenab.

Officials were also informed that heavy machinery from the District Council and Municipal Committees has been made operational to manage flood-related emergencies, with special attention to urban drainage systems and flood-prone areas. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq emphasized the importance of proactive and coordinated efforts by all departments.

He directed the Health and Livestock Departments to ensure the availability of medicines and veterinary supplies at all flood relief camps. Furthermore, he instructed the Irrigation Department and Local Government officials to expedite repair work on the protective embankments along the River Chenab and to complete the desilting of drains and the sewerage system without delay. The Deputy Commissioner also urged all departments to remain on high alert and maintain effective communication to respond swiftly in case.

## Three mega infrastructure projects approved

## F.P. Report

SAHIWAL: A major initiative of the Punjab government to provide better travel facilities to the people, 3 new mega projects for the construction of roads and bridges will be started in Sahiwal district in the current financial year, the construction of the projects will provide great relief to thousands of passengers.

According to the details, the Punjab government has included three mega projects in the annual development program of the new financial year to improve the means of transportation in Sahiwal district, the most important of which is the reconstruction of the Old GT Road passing through Sahiwal city and making it one-way.

The current dilapidated condition of this road is causing serious problems for the transport coming and going to the city. The initial cost estimate for this major project is two

billion rupees, in which the two-way road from Lahore Bypass (McDonald Chowk) to Arifwala Bridge will be carpeted, while the road from Arifwala Bridge to Multan Bypass Chowk will be made one-way and carpeted.

The second major project included in the budget by the Punjab government is to make the Sahiwal-Samundari road one-way, which will facilitate the movement of passengers from Sahiwal, Pakpattan and Bahawalnagar districts to Faisalabad and Islamabad.

The budget for the new fiscal year also includes the construction of an overhead bridge at the Gambar Railway Gate, which will save the people of dozens of villages on the Gambar-Noorshah Road from waiting for hours every day for the railway gate to open. The estimated cost of this major project is more than two and a half billion rupees.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Sahiwal Shahid Mahmood visited the under-construction Model Agriculture Mall and reviewed the ongoing work on the project in detail. He directed the concerned authorities to complete the construction work without delay so that farmers can benefit from this project soon.

He said that no compromise will be made on the construction quality and the project will be completed according to high standards. He said that the Punjab government is taking practical steps for the welfare of farmers and the construction of Agri Mall is a continuation of these efforts. He added that with the completion of the Model Agriculture Mall, farmers will be able to get quality agricultural medicines, fertilizers and seeds under one roof, which will be helpful in increasing agricultural production and resolving the problems of farmers.

Monsoon plantation drive kicks off  
F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The monsoon tree plantation drive was kicked off in Bannu on Wednesday with the strong resolve and objective to make the southern district clean and green and increase the area of forest in the region.

District Education Officer Dr Abdul Malik inaugurated the drive by planting fruit saplings on the premises of his office. ESED officers and employees of the district education office were present on the occasion. They also took part in the plantation activity and sowed seedlings as part of the provincial government's initiative to overcome hazards of environmental pollution and climate change issues.

Dr Malik underlined the need for increasing timberlands and said that growing trees was a valuable gift for the future generations. He said that his office would ensure that all teachers, students and schools' bosses take enthusiastic part in the drive and plant maximum number of saplings in the schools and in their respective areas. He asked the teachers and students to protect plants so that they could become healthy trees in future.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Allah Nawaz Khan also launched the plantation campaign under the district administration's green Bannu initiative on the special instructions of the provincial government.

He along with District Youth Officer Muhammad Zahid Khattak and a group of volunteers planted dozens of saplings on the premises of Government High School No. 3 and Government Centennial Model High School No. 4, in Bannu city.

Talking to journalists on the occasion, Mr Nawaz declared the woodlands the protectors of the earth and called upon citizens to grow more and more trees to increase forest cover and control land degradation and erosion, expansion of deserts, environmental pollution, global warming and climate change related issues.

He said that the district administration was committed to provide a clean, green and healthy and pollution-free environment to local residents. Later the assistant commissioner led an awareness walk to sensitize people about the importance and usefulness of forests and tree plantation.

Two persons commit suicide  
F.P. Report

LARKANA: Two people, including a youth, committed suicide in different areas of Larkana district due to different reasons. According to details, the previous day, Sadaqat Ali Kandhra, a resident of Kandhra Mohalla in Badah city, committed suicide by drinking battery water due to domestic problems.

His death was also confirmed by the doctors. A mournful atmosphere was created when the body of the young man reached his home. On the other hand, Saddam Shah, a resident of Agani village under the area of Mahota police station in Larkana district, got angry with his family over a trivial matter and jumped into the Dadu canal near the village and committed suicide.

Speaking to the media on this occasion, the brother of the deceased, Fayyaz Shah, said that Saddam was a drug addict and took such a step when his family did not give him money.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Larkana Sharjeel Noor Channa has said that the Sindh government is making efforts day and night to provide the best health facilities and development projects to the people so that the people can benefit from these basic facilities and improve their quality of life.

He expressed these views during his visit to the Rural Health Center established in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto, Government Dispensary Tayyab, Tiger Goth and Taluka Ratodero yesterday. On this occasion, he also visited the patients present in the hospital and took information from them for treatment etc.

## Health top priority of KP govt: Ihtisham



## Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Health Advisor Ihtesham Khan, has said that the founding leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, always prioritized health and education in his vision for Pakistan.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the "Zhwandoon Card" program at THQ Hospital Takht Bhai, the advisor stated that Mardan has been selected as the pilot district for the initiative, which provides free medical treatment and medicines to the underprivileged in OPD. He added that four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Mardan, Kohat, Malakand and Chitral have been selected in the first phase, and the program will gradually expand throughout the province.

He emphasized that strict action will be taken against staff showing negligence in the delivery of

healthcare services, reaffirming a zero-tolerance policy. The Health Advisor also announced that the satellite units of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology will be extended to Mardan and D.I. Khan, enabling access to advanced cardiac surgery facilities. Additionally, a Cath Lab has been established at Mardan Medical Complex to provide modern cardiac care. Dr. Masooma Zaidi from KfW, a German development bank supporting the project, and DHO Mardan Dr. Shoaib also spoke. Other notable attendees included MS DHQ Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal, MS THQ Takht Bhai Dr. Imran Johar, Riaz Tanoli, and various health officials.

Ehtesham Khan said that the government is now working towards the digitalization of the healthcare system, and thanked KfW Bank for its financial and technical support in launching the Zhwandoon Card project. He expressed

hope that KfW would continue to support Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's healthcare initiatives.

He highlighted that the provincial government allocated Rs. 34 billion for the health card last year, which has been increased to Rs. 41 billion this year, reflecting progress and commitment to improving healthcare services. He also praised the Chief Minister for approving all proposed projects in the Annual Development Program (ADP) without any cuts.

The advisor informed that liver and kidney transplants were now covered under the health card program, which marks a major leap in public healthcare. Criticizing the former caretaker government, he alleged that the efforts made during PTI tenure for improvement of health services were undone by the caretakers, and accused interim ministers of misusing public funds.

## Dir admn vows to resolve power issues

## Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir, Muhammad Arif Khan, has said that power-related issues in the district, including unannounced load-shedding, low voltage, and billing issues, will be resolved in coordination with the concerned departments. However, he urged the public to cooperate with the authorities by paying their outstanding dues, which amount to millions of rupees. He stated that the increasing volume of unpaid bills is a major reason behind the persistent power outages in the region.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting at the DC Office conference hall. The meeting was attended by representatives of PTI MNAs and MPAs from Lower Dir, all chairmen of tehsil councils from Khall, Balambat, and Adenzai, local elders from Khall, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bashir Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Gohar Ali, Assistant Commissioners Zaid Safi and Zeeshan Najeeb, Superintendent Engineer (Operations) Swat, Executive Engineer PESCO Construction Swat, and the respective SDOs.

Various electricity-related issues were discussed in the meeting, including excessive load-shedding, low voltage, delayed and inaccurate billing, insufficient staff, outdated transmission lines, electricity theft, technical faults, and lack of timely repair of transformers. The deputy commissioner directed PESCO officials to ensure early repair of damaged transformers, deploy local technical staff, and address consumers' complaints regarding meter readings on a priority basis.

In order to resolve power issues at the constituency level, the DC announced a schedule of public forums (Khuli Kutcheri) to be held across Lower Dir. The first session for PK-14 will be held on July 15 at 11:00 AM at the TMA Office in Khall. The second forum for PK-16 will take place on July 17 at 11:00 AM in the Jirga Hall of the Additional Deputy Commissioner's office in Balambat. The third session for PK-17 is scheduled for July 22 at 11:00 AM at the TMA Office in Samarbagh. The fourth forum for PK-18 will be held on July 24 at 11:00 AM at the TMA Office in Lal Qila Maidan, while the fifth and final session will be held on July 29 at 11:00 AM at the Fishing

Hut in Chakdara. The deputy commissioner said these public gatherings aim to directly engage the community, listen to their complaints, and find immediate solutions in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Meanwhile, on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir, Muhammad Arif Khan, the district administration has launched a strict anti-encroachment operation along the banks of the Panjkora River to remove illegal constructions.

The ongoing operation, being carried out under the supervision of Additional Assistant Commissioner-I Abdul Aziz, targeted unauthorized structures along the river near Zawal Baba, Timergara. The action followed a detailed survey and demarcation conducted by the Irrigation Department. Teams from Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA), the Irrigation Department, police, and Dir Levies participated in the operation.

Speaking on the occasion, Additional Assistant Commissioner Abdul Aziz stated that the anti-encroachment drive would continue without discrimination until all illegal structures along the Panjkora River are completely removed.

## Protest against closure of Angoor Adda crossing held

## F.P. Report

WANA: A massive protest rally rocked Rustam Bazaar in Wana, the district headquarters of South Waziristan Lower, as hundreds of traders took to the streets demanding the immediate reopening of the Pak-Afghan Angoor Adda border gate — a key trade and transit route considered vital to the region's economy.

The demonstration began from the eastern end of Rustam Bazaar and moved through the market before culminating in a large public gathering, where a truck-mounted stage had been set up for speeches. Traders carried placards and banners inscribed with slogans such as "Closure of Angoor Adda Gate is Unacceptable" and "Angoor Adda is the Backbone of Our Economy".

The protest quickly turned into a significant political event, drawing participation from representatives of all major political

parties in Waziristan. Among those who addressed the rally were Haji Boz Gul, Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Asadullah, PPP District President Amanullah, ANP leader Taj Muhammad, Baitullah of NDM, Kashif of PML-N, JUI-F General Secretary Rafiuddin, Councillor Ittehad President Qamar Abbas, Drug Unit President Rehmatullah, Malik Ghanam Shah, Maulana Zeenatullah, President of Chamber of Commerce & Industry Saifur Rehman, and senior trader leader Malik Sardar Ali.

Member of the National Assembly from South Waziristan, Zubair Khan Wazir, also joined the protest and assured the business community of his full support. He pledged to raise the issue at every relevant forum and facilitate dialogue with concerned authorities.

In their speeches, leaders condemned the extended closure of the Angoor Adda border gate, calling it a direct blow to regional trade

and livelihoods. They warned that the shutdown was exacerbating unemployment and instability, particularly among youth, and accused the state of failing in its constitutional obligation to provide economic opportunities.

"The government is not only neglecting its duty to create jobs," said one speaker, "but is also shutting down existing avenues of livelihood by sealing trade routes." The speakers issued a strong ultimatum to both civilian authorities and military leadership: Reopen the Angoor Adda gate by July 18, or face a decisive sit-in protest by the trader community. They emphasized that the upcoming sit-in would be final and indefinite if demands were not met.

In a show of political unity, the speakers also declared full support for the July 11 sit-in announced by the United Political Peace Pasoon alliance, affirming their collective struggle for peace, economic rights, and justice in the region.





# S Korea’s disgraced ex-president Yoon detained

SEOUL (AFP): South Korea's disgraced ex-president Yoon Suk Yeol was detained for a second time over his declaration of martial law and held in a solitary cell as investigators widened their insurrection probe. Yoon plunged South Korea into a political crisis when he sought to subvert civilian rule on December 3 last year, sending armed soldiers to parliament in a bid to prevent lawmakers voting down his declaration of martial law.

He became South Korea's first sitting president to be taken into custody when he was detained in a dawn raid in January, after he spent weeks resisting arrest, using his presidential security detail to head off investigators. But he was released on procedural grounds in March, even as his trial on insurrection charges continued. After Yoon's impeachment was confirmed by the court in April, he again refused multiple summons from investigators, prompting them to seek his detention once more to ensure cooperation. The latest arrest warrant was issued over concerns that Yoon would "destroy evidence" in the case, Nam Se-jin, a senior judge at Seoul's Central District Court said.

Yoon is being held in a solitary cell which has only a fan and no air-conditioning, as a heat wave grips South Korea. According to the official schedule, he was offered a regulation

breakfast including steamed potatoes and milk. Investigators said that Yoon's status as former president will be "duly considered" but otherwise he will be "treated like any other suspect". "Investigations during the detention period will focus on the warrant's stated charges," prosecutor Park Ji-young told reporters.

Yoon's criminal trial also continued with a hearing, although he did not attend for the first time. The former president, 64, attended a hearing over the new warrant that lasted about seven hours, during which he rejected all charges, before being taken to a holding centre near Seoul where he awaited the court's decision on whether to detain him again. During his warrant hearing, the former president said he is now "fighting alone", local media reported.

"The special counsel is now going after even my defence lawyers," said Yoon during his hearing. "One by one my lawyers are stepping away, and I may soon have to fight this alone." Once the warrant was issued, Yoon was placed in a solitary cell at the facility, where he can be held for up to 20 days as prosecutors prepare to formally indict him including on additional charges. "Once Yoon is indicted, he could remain detained for up to six months following indictment," Yun Bok-nam, president of Lawyers for a

Democratic Society, told AFP.

"Theoretically, immediate release is possible, but in this case, the special counsel has argued that the risk of evidence destruction remains high, and that the charges are already substantially supported." During the hearing, Yoon's legal team criticised the detention request as unreasonable, stressing that Yoon has been ousted and "no longer holds any authority". Earlier this month, the special counsel questioned Yoon about his resistance during a failed arrest attempt in January, as well as accusations that he authorised drone flights to Pyongyang to help justify declaring martial law.

The former president also faces charges of falsifying official documents related to the martial law bid. Yoon has defended his martial law decision as necessary to "root out" pro-North Korean and "anti-state" forces. But the Constitutional Court, when ousting Yoon from office on April 4 in a unanimous decision, said his acts were a "betrayal of people's trust" and "denial of the principles of democracy". South Korea's current president, Lee Jae Myung, who won the June snap election, approved legislation launching sweeping special investigations into Yoon's push for martial law and various criminal accusations tied to his administration and wife.

## Search for missing cockfighters begins at lake

MANILA (AFP): Search teams arrived at a lake south of the Philippine capital Manila to look for dozens of cockfighters allegedly murdered by rogue police, the Department of Justice said. Fifteen police officers are under investigation over a spate of mysterious disappearances in 2022 in the country's huge cockfighting industry.

The case erupted back into the public consciousness last month with the televised appearance of a witness claiming to know where bodies had been submerged in Lake Taal, located about two hours south of the capital. Justice Secretary Crispin Remulla has since said he has "multiple witnesses" who can identify the location of the missing in the lake, which spans more than 230 square kilometres (89 square miles). "The purpose of (mission) is to ... identify the area covered by the search, see initial water conditions and to measure the depth of covered area," the justice department said in a statement.

The Philippine Coast Guard will participate in the preliminary assessment alongside police. National Police Chief Nicolas Torre this week said authorities needed to act swiftly. "The typhoon season is coming in," he told journalists. "We are moving fast to at least try to locate the bodies. We know that it is very, very challenging." Remulla said he had requested technical assistance from Japan including help with mapping the lake bed, parts of which are as deep as 172 metres (564 feet). The Japanese embassy in Manila told AFP it had received the request without providing further details.

But Torre believes the Philippines had the necessary equipment on hand to begin the search. "We have a very, very robust shipping industry here and in other parts of the Philippines, so we can do it." Filipinos from all walks of life wager millions of dollars on matches every week between roosters who fight to the death with razor-sharp metal spurs tied to their legs. The sport, banned in many other countries, survived coronavirus pandemic restrictions by going online, drawing many more gamblers who use their mobile phones to place wagers. Former president Rodrigo Duterte banned the livestreaming of cockfights shortly before leaving office in 2022, but it has continued due to lax enforcement.

## Hippo Birthday: Thailand’s Moo Deng marks one year old

BANGKOK (AFP): Thailand's pygmy hippo Moo Deng marked her first birthday, leaving behind the animal infancy which boosted her to worldwide internet fame for her cute antics. Crowds have been invited to a four-day festival at Khao Kheow Open Zoo where Moo Deng -- meaning "Bouncy Pork" in Thai -- frolicked to stardom and amassed five million social media fans.

The first day of the extravaganza falls on a Thai public holiday and the agenda includes a lecture on "Moo Deng's cheekiness" while a skincare beautician has paid \$3,000 to sponsor her fruit-festooned cake. Her handlers are also scheduled to auction off her belongings -- but it is unclear what possessions Moo Deng has accumulated in her short life at the Chonburi province zoo a two-hour drive from Bangkok. There were hopes her stardom would spotlight the plight of the endangered pygmy hippo, native to West Africa with only around 2,500 left alive according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

But Piperea's own group, the ECR, is split. Its largest faction, the party of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, said it would back the EU chief. The two largest groups in parliament, the centre-right EPP and the centre-left Socialists and Democrats, have also flatly rejected the challenge, which needs two-thirds of votes cast, representing a majority of all lawmakers to pass.



GAZA: Medical personnel working in an operating room at Nasser Hospital.

# 100 premature babies in Gaza at risk as hospitals run out of fuel

GAZA: Two of Gaza's largest hospitals have issued desperate pleas for help, warning that fuel shortages caused by Israel's siege could soon turn the medical centres into "silent graveyards".

The warnings from al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza City and Nasser Hospital in southern Khan Younis came, as Israeli forces continued to bombard the Palestinian enclave, killing at least 74 people.

Muhammad Abu Salmiyah, the director of al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest facility, told reporters that the lives of more than 100 premature babies and some 350 dialysis patients were at risk. "Oxygen stations will stop working. A hospital without oxygen is no longer a hospital. The lab and blood banks will shut down, and the blood units in the refrigerators will spoil," Salmiyah said.

"The hospital will cease to be a place of healing and will become a graveyard for those inside," he said. Abu Salmiyah went on to accuse Israel of "trickle-feeding" fuel to Gaza's hospitals, and said that al-Shifa's dialysis department had already been shut down to conserve power for the intensive care unit and operating rooms, which cannot be without electricity for even a few minutes. In Khan Younis, the Nasser Medical Complex said it, too, has entered "the crucial and final hours" due to the fuel shortages. "With the fuel counter nearing zero, doctors have entered the battle to save lives in

a race against time, death, and darkness," the hospital said in a statement. "Medical teams fight to the last breath. They have only their conscience and hope in those who hear the call - save Nasser Medical Complex before it turns into a silent graveyard for patients who could have been saved." Mohammed Sakr, a spokesman for the hospital, told the Reuters news agency that the facility needs 4,500 litres (1,189 gallons) of fuel per day to function, but it now has only 3,000 litres (790 gallons) - enough to last 24 hours.

Sakr said doctors are performing surgeries without electricity or air conditioning, and the sweat from staff is dripping into patients' wounds, risking infection. A video from Nasser Hospital, posted on social media, shows doctors sweating profusely as they perform a surgery. "Everything is turned off here. The air conditioning is turned off. No fans," a doctor says in the video as he demonstrates conditions in the ward. "All the staff are exhausted, they are complaining [about the] high temperature."

Israel's relentless bombardment has decimated Gaza's healthcare system in the 21 months since it launched its assault on the Palestinian enclave in the wake of the Hamas-led attacks of October 7, 2023. Since then, there have been more than 600 recorded attacks on health facilities in Gaza, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). As of May this

year, only 19 of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain partially operational, with 94 percent of all hospitals damaged or destroyed. Israeli forces have also killed more than 1,500 health workers in Gaza, and detained 185, according to official figures. The WHO, meanwhile, has described Gaza's health sector as being "on its knees", with shortages of fuel, medical supplies and frequent arrivals of mass casualties from Israeli attacks.

Marwan al-Hams, the director of field hospitals in Gaza, told Al Jazeera that "hundreds" of people could die in the territory if fuel supplies are not brought in urgently. This includes "dozens" of premature babies who could die within the next two days, he said. Dialysis and intensive care patients would also lose their lives, he said, adding that the injuries of the wounded were worsening amid deteriorating conditions, while diseases like meningitis were spreading. UNICEF spokesperson James Elder, who recently returned from Gaza, said, "You can have the best hospital staff on the planet", but if they are denied medicine and fuel, operating a health facility "becomes an impossibility". Israel's war on Gaza has killed at least 57,575 people and wounded 136,879, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. An estimated 1,139 people were killed in Israel during the October 7, 2023 attacks, and more than 200 were taken captive. — Aljazeera

# Huawei probe blunder sparks EU parliament rules change

BRUSSELS (AFP): When European lawmaker Giuseppina Princi learnt she was sought by Belgian authorities over a graft investigation linked to Chinese tech giant Huawei in May, she was "dumbfounded". It soon turned out she had nothing to do with it -- in a mix-up that has undermined confidence in the probe and pushed the European Parliament to review its rules to better shield lawmakers from unfounded accusations. "To this day I cannot understand how they could have made such a blatant mistake," Princi told AFP of Belgian prosecutors. The Brussels prosecutor office did not reply to a request for comment.

Princi, 52, a member of late Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, was targeted by a request to lift her parliamentary immunity in mid-May, along with four other lawmakers. Prosecutors alleged she attended a Brussels dinner with Huawei representatives seeking to curry favour among parliamentarians in June last year. But on the

day in question the Italian politician was yet to be formally appointed to the 27-nation bloc's assembly following European elections that month. She secured a seat only after another lawmaker renounced his.

Also, she was not in Belgium but in her native southern Calabria region, attending her daughter's Alice-in-Wonderland-themed end-of-year school play. Describing herself as "stubborn and pig-headed", Princi lawyered up, compiled an "almost 100-page long" dossier including geo-tagged photos of her daughter in a princess dress, and sent it to prosecutors. Yet, her bid to get exonerated before things became public failed. On May 21 EU parliament president Roberta Metsola named Princi among lawmakers targeted by authorities before a plenary sitting. That was a step required by parliamentary procedure before the case could be passed to the committee on legal affairs, which is tasked to assess immunity waivers. But the rules have since been revised, for, in

an embarrassing about-face, prosecutors withdrew the request targeting Princi a day after she was publicly named.

"I will not accept the targeting and tarnishing of MEPs without a solid basis," Metsola told a press conference in late June, announcing the changes. Her office said that going forward parliament will require requests to lift a lawmaker's immunity to include "essential elements" such as a clear description of the facts and the crime the accused is alleged to have committed. "If the requests do not meet the minimum elements, the requesting authority will be asked to complement it" before any announcement is made, Metsola's office said. Although brief, Princi said her involvement in the affair caused her a fair amount of stress during a few "days of hell" -- and dirty looks from colleagues. The fiasco has fuelled a debate on whether Belgian authorities are best placed to investigate EU corruption. Daniel Freund, a transparency campaigner

turned lawmaker for Europe's Greens, is among those who would like the European Public Prosecutor's Office, which already probes the misuse of EU funds, to be tasked with such cases.

"I guess the Belgian taxpayer doesn't have a particular interest to dedicate a lot of resources to making sure that EU institutions are clean. But since EU institutions are located in Belgium, it somehow falls into their remit," he told AFP. An earlier scandal over alleged bribery involving Qatar and Morocco, which erupted in 2022 when police raids in Brussels uncovered 1.5 million euros in cash at the homes of several lawmakers, is still weighed down in legal challenges with no trial in sight. Were that to collapse, it "would seriously put into question the role of the Belgian judiciary," Freund said, adding "some question marks" also hung over the Huawei probe. The Huawei scandal burst into the public in March when police staged raids in Belgium and Portugal.

# EU chief von der Leyen faces no confidence vote

BRUSSELS (AFP): EU chief Ursula von der Leyen faces a confidence vote that has little chance of succeeding but has exposed frictions between her backers and complaints about her leadership style. European lawmakers will vote on the rare challenge pushed by a far-right faction against the European Commission president at around midday (1000 GMT) in Strasbourg.

Addressing parliament this week, von der Leyen dismissed the no-confidence motion as a conspiracy theory-laden attempt to divide Europe, dismissing its supporters as "anti-vaxxers" and Russian President Vladimir "Putin apologists". She urged lawmakers to renew confidence in her commission arguing it was critical for Europe to show unity in the face of an array of challenges, from US trade talks to Russia's war in Ukraine. The no-confidence motion was initiated by Romanian far-right lawmaker Gheorghe Piperea. He accuses von der Leyen of a lack of

transparency over text messages she sent to the head of the Pfizer pharmaceutical giant when negotiating Covid vaccines. The commission's failure to release the messages -- the focus of multiple court cases -- has given weight to critics who accuse its boss of centralised and opaque decision-making. That is also a growing refrain from the commission chief's traditional allies on the left and centre, who have used the vote to air their grievances. A major complaint is that von der Leyen's centre-right camp has increasingly teamed up with the far-right to further its agenda -- most notably to roll back environmental rules. Centrist leader Valerie Hayer told parliament this week that von der Leyen's commission was "too centralised and sclerotic" before warning that "nothing can be taken for granted". "Pfizergate" aside, Romania's Piperea accuses the commission of interfering in his country's recent presidential election, in

which pro-European Nicusor Dan narrowly beat EU critic and nationalist George Simion. That vote came after Romania's constitutional court scrapped an initial ballot over allegations of Russian interference and massive social media promotion of the far-right frontrunner, who was barred from standing again. Piperea's challenge is unlikely to succeed. It has support from some groups on the left and part of the far right -- including the party of Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban. "Time to go," Orban tweeted alongside a photo of von der Leyen.

But Piperea's own group, the ECR, is split. Its largest faction, the party of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, said it would back the EU chief. The two largest groups in parliament, the centre-right EPP and the centre-left Socialists and Democrats, have also flatly rejected the challenge, which needs two-thirds of votes cast, representing a majority of all lawmakers to pass.



The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

## ‘Rebalancing’ doesn’t benefit Sino-EU ties

**I**N a major speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, on Tuesday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen accused China of distorting trade and limiting access for European companies to the Chinese market as she called for a "genine rebalancing" between the two sides.

The aim is to have fewer "market distortions", less "overcapacity" exported from China, and fair, reciprocal access for European businesses in China, she said.

The criticism is unjustified and reveals the EU's false perception of China, as a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson later pointed out. The remarks were even more inappropriate given they were made just two weeks prior to a China-EU summit scheduled to be held later this month to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two sides. The lack of sensitivity does not fit well with the consensus the two sides have reached on doing their utmost to find ways to strengthen their cooperation.

China values its relationship with the EU, believing the mutually beneficial partnership not only holds strategic significance for both sides, but also carries far-reaching implications for global peace, stability and prosperity. China views the 27-nation bloc as a key partner for economic and trade cooperation. The two sides are each other's second-largest trading partners, with nearly \$100 million worth of goods flowing between them every hour.

This makes it all the more important that the EU bear in mind the whole picture of China-EU economic and trade cooperation when talking about any differences that exist between them in the process of their ever-deepening interactions.

Over the past five decades, the China-EU economic partnership has evolved from an extremely modest start to become one of the world's most consequential relations. The volume of trade between the two sides, which stood at \$2.4 billion in 1975, had surged to \$785.8 billion in 2024, with "today's daily bilateral trade size being as large as that of a whole year" 50 years ago, as Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning observed.

Given the high level of economic interdependence and interconnectivity between the two sides, it is natural for trade frictions to break out from time to time.

Yet the only way to properly manage such differences is through dialogue and consultation, rather than seeking "de-risking" or "decoupling" as the EU is doing, which belies the economic reality that exists between the two sides and risks jeopardizing their practical cooperation.

What the EU needs to do now is not finger-pointing at China for the alleged "market distortion activities", but some self-reflection that may help enhance mutual understanding and drive bilateral trade forward in a mutually beneficial and sustainable way.

Brussels accuses Beijing of resorting to subsidies to dominate the global market for green-tech products such as electric vehicles and wind turbines, ignoring the fact that China's rapid development in these sectors is fueled by its technological innovations, complete supply chains and fierce market competition and that the country's subsidy policies are fully compliant with World Trade Organization rules.

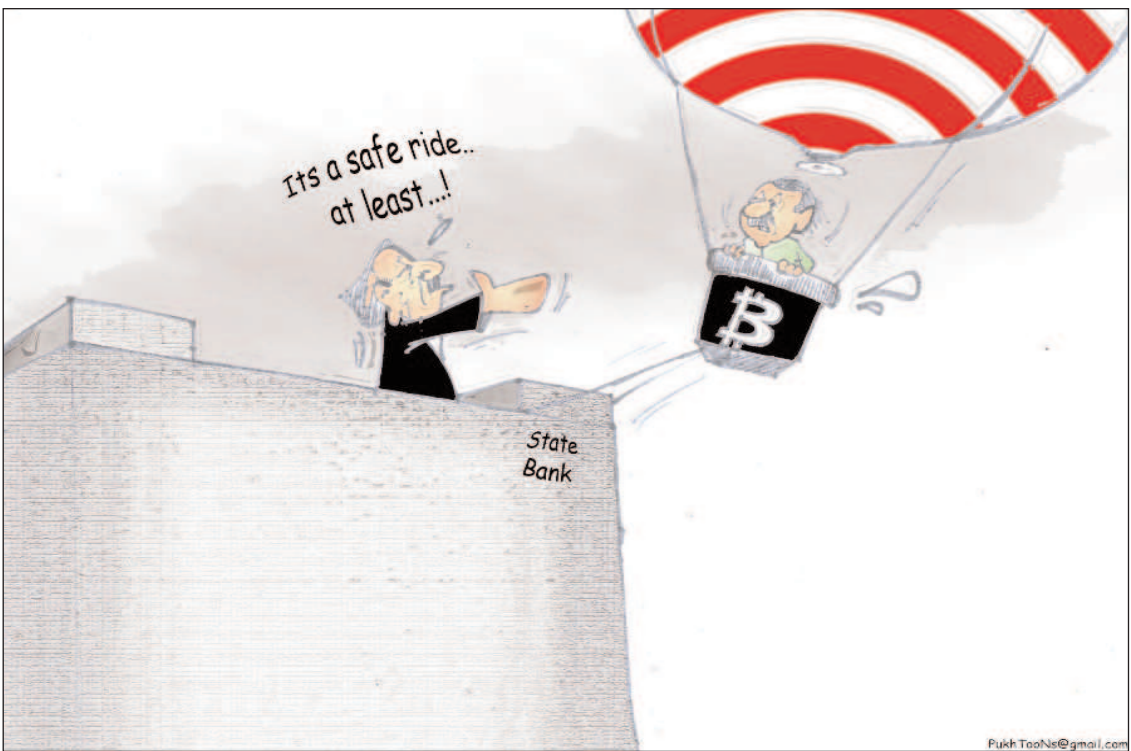
Given that China and the EU share common ground in upholding multilateralism and free trade, and there exists no clash of fundamental interests or geopolitical conflicts between them, there is no reason for the two sides not to expand mutual openness, consolidate existing collaboration mechanisms, and foster new growth momentum in cooperation.

Rather than posing systemic risks to Europe, China's high-quality development and high-level opening-up will bring new opportunities for European businesses and enrich the content of China-EU cooperation. The consensus between China and the EU far outweighs the differences. This paves the way for a healthy, stable and sustainable China-EU relationship, which is in the fundamental interests of both sides and meets the common expectations of the international community.

What China and the EU need most is consolidation and expanding of their cooperation, not "rebalancing".

### Important Notice

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



## Caveman mentality of Israel’s ‘might is right’

Ross Anderson

**Y**OU might think there was little to connect the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, the Glastonbury music festival and conflicting opinions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but I beg to differ. Permit me to elucidate.

In his "allegory of the cave," Plato invites us to consider the effects of education and of its absence. Prisoners in the cave are chained by their necks and ankles, unable to turn around, facing a rear wall. Behind them is another inner wall, the height of a person, and beyond that a fire. People walk in front of the inner wall holding up objects that the fire projects on to the rear wall as flickering shadows. To the prisoners, who can see nothing else, the perception of these shadows is their only reality.

I thought of the prisoners in the cave during the furor that erupted in the UK after a performance at Glastonbury by the little-known rap duo Bob Vylan (I know, I know, is nothing sacred?). During their show, the pair led the audience in a chant of "Death, death, to the IDF." The response at the festival was muted: no one much cared. But Glastonbury is the BBC's biggest single livestream event in the calendar and, outside in the wider country, the reaction bordered on hysterical.

There were immediate shrieks of "disgraceful antisemitism," the row dominated the media for more than a week and continues to rumble on, politicians of varying persuasions issued angry condemnations from the floor of the House of Commons, and Somerset police launched an investigation into a possible hate crime and incitement to violence: although, to be fair, in Somerset they have little else to do.

It was all quite inexplicable. For a start, surely for violence to be incited there must be some remote possi-

bility of it being carried out. Video footage of the concert shows no evidence of festival revelers packing their tents and going off in search of an Israeli soldier upon whom to inflict grievous bodily harm. Why would they? They had paid the best part of £400 (\$545) for a ticket and they hadn't even seen Olivia Rodrigo yet.

Moreover, if anyone at the festival had indeed formulated such a plan, there would have been certain practical difficulties in the manner of its execution: not least, finding an Israeli soldier to attack in the wilds of rural southwest England. It's not as if you could pop into Tesco in Yeovil and find an off-duty squaddie working a shift in the bakery section.

No, if you want to find an Israeli soldier, there are only two places to look. One is Gaza, where they have been busy killing at least 60,000 Palestinians, mostly defenseless women and children. And the other is the West Bank, where their main job is providing protection for gangs of psychopathic Israeli settlers while they murder yet more innocent Palestinians. Such vile conduct is already sufficient "incitement to violence" against the Israeli army, without the need for more in England.

Some of the outrage directed against the hapless rap duo was confected and performative, but some of it was undoubtedly genuine, reflecting a widely held view in the British establishment that may be summarized as: "Israel, right or wrong, regardless of the facts and however appalling its behavior." This view is also prevalent in the US, but at least there it is understandable.

Many Americans have an instinctive sympathy for a people trying to expand their national borders by stealing land to which they have no right and killing

those who already live there, because that is pretty much how most of the US was created in the 19th century. "Manifest destiny," the pompous and arrogant phrase they deployed to justify that homicidal land grab, was first used by the polemicist and propagandist John O'Sullivan in a series of newspaper articles in 1845, in which he advocated US annexation of Texas and Oregon, regardless of the wishes of the people who lived there, "for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." And because America's right to the land was ordained by God: an argument with which many Palestinians will be depressingly familiar.

In the UK, there is no such historical perspective. "Might is right" was certainly a British foreign policy staple in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, but Britain lost its might when it lost its empire. Since then, it has displayed a national tendency to support the plucky underdog, but that does not explain the blinkered, kneejerk backing for everything Israel does, however indefensible. Perhaps it is rooted in 1948 and the myth of indefatigable young Israelis carving a new country from unforbearing desert. But Israel is no longer the plucky underdog, if it ever was; rather, it has become the bully of the Middle East, intimidating its neighbors and bombing those who fail to succumb.

Despite all this, it may be that there is a hint of change in the British air. I do not care to criticize my fellow journalists. It's a tough old business and I am of the old school, in which dog does not eat dog. Permit me, however, to make a brief exception. The UK media campaign of vituperation directed at Bob Vylan, and at the BBC for failing to censor them, was led by The Times — a

once-great British newspaper institution now sadly reduced to a tawdry competition for readers with the right-wing populist Daily Mail.

For The Times, this was a win-win: an opportunity to offer unqualified support for the Israeli army's right to commit mass murder, while indulging in its favorite pastime of bashing the BBC. The newspaper is owned by the media magate Rupert Murdoch, a former employer of mine and a man for whose backing of journalism in general and newspapers in particular I have the utmost respect, but who has never been an enthusiastic fan of publicly funded broadcasting.

The Times published an excoriating leading article in which it berated, in equal measure, Bob Vylan for their irresponsibility, the Glastonbury audience for its apparent complicity and the BBC for "gross failure of management." But here's the thing. The Times remains a successful newspaper and, as such, it employs senior editors with the ability to gauge what its readers want to read: any newspaper that fails to do that will swiftly be out of business.

I therefore expected its editorial to draw the support of its audience. Instead, both online and in the letters section in print, reader after reader piled in to tell the newspaper it had missed the point — which was neither a rap duo's disobliging comments about Israel, nor the BBC broadcasting them, but rather the genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinian people. On this issue at least, The Times is out of touch with its readers, and many British politicians are out of touch with the people who elected them. As Plato predicted, the "prisoners of perception" have emerged from their cave, blinking in the sunlight, and are recognizing reality when they see it.

## Remembering the 7/7 attacks

**T**HE UK on Monday marked the 20th anniversary of the July 7, 2005, attacks that left 52 people dead (56 including the attackers) and 784 injured.

They were the victims of an attack planned by a group of four young British men who traveled into Central London carrying large backpacks containing homemade bombs. Three of them boarded trains on the London Underground network and detonated their devices, killing and maiming dozens. As the authorities were still trying to establish what had happened, another device was detonated on a bus. The carnage created by these devastating explosions was horrific. It is right that people remember those killed and injured in these tragic events — they were innocent bystanders who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But on the day this article was written, nearly 100 people were killed in Gaza. They had nowhere to escape, with their homes mostly razed to the ground over the past two years.

Tens of thousands have died since the war started, but it is unlikely their names will be remembered as well as those killed in London that fateful morning as millions traveled to work.

London is a multicultural city filled with people of every nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion. If the

7/7 attacks were aimed at hurting Britain, they were misguided. If the killers, who claimed they were Muslims, were doing it in the name of their religion, then what about the Muslims they killed?

If it were out of hatred of the British, then what about the people who were born in other parts of the world who were there or who lost loved ones?

And if it were an attack on British society, what about those people impacted who opposed the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or stood firmly opposed to the politics that governed the country, but did so peacefully?

The attackers did claim to be Muslims, but they certainly did not carry out an act of love or peace — the two driving factors of the faith that the vast majority of Muslims follow and practice.

Over the last three decades, the world has been impacted by many acts of violence largely claimed to be in the name of religion, although there have been fewer than many people seem to think. We live in an era of uncertainty and increased fear of perceived threats.

A YouGov poll published ahead of the 7/7 anniversary found that the level of concern about the threat of terrorism in the UK has been growing. "Where in mid-2023 only 14 percent of Britons felt

the threat had increased 'a lot' over the preceding five years, that figure has steadily increased ... and has now doubled to 29 percent as of June," the report explained.

Again, if the 7/7 attackers believed they were killing in the name of their claimed faith, then spare a thought for the Muslims left behind, many of whom have at some point been pressured to denounce every attack or be accused of supporting the killers. The truth is that all the 7/7 attackers and the few others like them have achieved is a marked increase in Islamophobia.

So, not only do Muslims in the UK have anxieties related to the fear of future terror attacks, but they also have daily concerns about attacks against them because of their faith. Far more people suffer from that than have been attacked by extremists.

The YouGov poll found that 47 percent of Britons consider Islamist extremists to be a "big threat." But while the police and intelligence services in the UK now see right-wing extremists as being on a par, only 25 percent of those polled share that view. Ironically, active threats from Islamist extremists in the UK may be "high, but stable," but those from right-wing extremists are "rapidly increasing."

Islamophobia is a real

## Swat tragedy Drowning humanity and emerging govt priorities

Ghulam Hussain Ghazi

**T**HE Swat tragedy was nothing short of an apocalypse. A large family from Daska, Punjab, had come to the valley to enjoy the delights of travel and tourism, but only a few returned, most in coffins. On the morning of Friday, June 27, 2025, the waves of the Swat River turned from gentle currents into a raging flood, bringing a message of death. The sudden flash flood wreaked havoc on the visiting family from Sialkot Division, claiming 14 lives out of the 18 members of their tourist caravan. It was one of the most heartbreaking incidents in the history of Swat tourism, which plunged not only the local community but the entire nation into mourning and left Swat deserted. Tourists packed their bags and left the valley. Within just three days, the tourism department suffered a loss worth millions, the hotel industry collapsed and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism economy was dealt a severe blow.

However, the tragedy also revealed many facets, some dark, some bright. The most positive aspect was the prompt response of the local community and ruling party workers. Their loud outcry showed that their leadership had instilled in them a sense of humanitarianism and a moral compass that proved effective in real-time. On the other hand, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa broke away from its past patterns of delay and indifference and instead gave an immediate, effective and humane response, one that is still ongoing. It also became clear as daylight that the KP government respects public pressure, while the Punjab government not only prevents people from raising their voices against injustice but also treats them like terrorists for dissent, and considers them nothing more than mere insects, treats them as disposable, using them merely as fuel for its political agenda.

Responding to public pressure, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah initiated high-level action. The announcement of financial compensation, two million rupees per victim, was not mere lip service; as of this writing, the compensation has been fully disbursed. Five senior officials at the district level were suspended initially, with more added later. An inquiry commission was established, and all relevant departments were instructed to submit immediate reports, not as a formality to be buried in files, but as foundational documents for FIRs and a more comprehensive investigation.

So far, several senior officials, including the Director General of Rescue 1122 KP, have appeared before the commission. No exemptions, no political interference and no compromises. This is the true face of a people-centric government, one that sees public pressure not as a threat but as a duty and a source of strength.

Conversely, the general apathy of the state and the negative role of the federal and Punjab governments cannot be ignored. Their response was the most disappointing. The victims were their own citizens, yet neither offered any expression of sympathy, financial assistance, nor participation in the rescue operations. To make matters worse, two federal and Punjab ministers immediately held a press conference, mocking the tragedy with smiling faces. They shamelessly criticized the KP government and tried to score political points by referencing a decades-old rescue involving Aleema Khan. For context, Aleema Khan was rescued in July 2019 during a flood in Chitral along with 69 other people. The helicopters at the time didn't rescue her alone, they evacuated patients, students and local residents, and on her request, relief supplies and medicines were also delivered to Chitral. But these unfortunate ministers, instead of telling the full truth, chose political banter and half-truths. In all honesty, this cold-heartedness and apathy by the federal government, supposedly the "mother of the nation", raise serious questions. It clearly shows that the public is not their priority. If this attitude continues, the people's bond with the state will weaken

even further.

Now let's draw a comparison and observe a glaring contrast. Around the same time as the Swat tragedy, the Sahiwal tragedy unfolded, a vivid example of Punjab's chronic administrative failure. On social media, many rightly compared the two incidents. In Sahiwal, due to the absence of oxygen cylinders and gross negligence, 20 newborns died in a government hospital within days. The Swat tragedy was a natural disaster, but the Sahiwal incident was purely the result of human incompetence. The claims of a "healthcare revolution" by Maryam Nawaz were laid bare and the federal media's silence also raised many questions.

Undoubtedly, the Swat tragedy claimed many lives and broke countless hearts but it also sparked a new debate: What is the real duty of a government? The KP governments, with its timely and effective actions, set a new precedent, even its critics had to acknowledge this. The Chief Secretary's deployment of drones, provision of life jackets and rescue kits, and the swift administrative response demonstrated that if intentions are pure and leadership is honest, even the greatest disasters can be managed. Even on the day of Ashura, the Chief Secretary also gave the people the good news that the MI-17 helicopter has been converted into an Air Ambulance. In other words, the provincial govt is now fully prepared and equipped to deal with any disaster within a fraction of the time. The result is clear. There's a stark difference between a government elected by the people and one rejected by them. Opportunistic regimes are obsessed with point scoring, while people-oriented governments win hearts through action. The Swat tragedy made this distinction even clearer.

Thanks to these timely steps, there's hope that future natural disasters will be met with organized and immediate strategies to prevent the loss of human lives. However, these untimely flash floods have also brought the issue of climate change to the forefront, and Swat has now been declared as one of the most high-risk zones for flood devastation. Whether or not the federal government is concerned about this, the provincial government has entrusted the Department of Environment and PDMA (Provincial Disaster Management Authority) with the task of tackling the challenges of climate change.

However, an immediate observation has already emerged: when the Swat administration began removing illegal encroachments and demolishing hotels along riverbanks, the federal government became an obstacle. A federal minister took direct action and threatened the administration when the wall of his own riverside hotel was being demolished, thereby attempting to undermine the provincial government's operations. Not only did he intervene himself, but he also guided other hotel owners to obtain stay orders from the courts, effectively stalling the anti-encroachment campaign along the rivers. A similar resistance was also reported in Dera Ismail Khan, where workers of the ruling federal party opposed the removal of encroachments along the banks of the Indus River.

However, full credit goes to the Chief Minister, who stood firm in his resolve and gave strict instructions to continue the anti-encroachment drive without leniency. He even formed a panel comprising ministers and bureaucrats to oversee the campaign. In the latest development, the Peshawar High Court has declared the Swat tragedy a result of gross negligence. The court has ordered the inquiry commission to complete its investigation within seven days and to take disciplinary action against the negligent officials within the following two weeks. Moreover, it has directed that all encroachments along the Swat River and all other rivers be removed immediately. This strong judicial action is being seen as a milestone in holding officials accountable and ensuring the protection of precious lives in the future. It also serves as an endorsement of the Chief Minister's initiatives.



# Trump is threatening tariffs on a Beijing-backed group. What’s got him so worried?

**A**S US President Donald Trump wages a trade war across the globe, a new target has come into his line of fire: the BRICS group of emerging major economies.

Trump in recent days has threatened members of the China- and Russia-backed club with 10% tariffs on goods imported to the US – in addition to heightened tariffs already looming for some of them.

“Any country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS” will face those duties with “no exceptions,” Trump wrote on social media Sunday, as leaders from the group met for an annual summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Days later, he went further, suggesting he wants to break up the group. “If they’re a member of BRICS, they are going to have to pay a 10% tariff, just for that one thing – and they won’t be a member long,” Trump said during a cabinet meeting.

Trump’s focus on BRICS comes at a time when the club appears to be ascendant. Eponymous members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have since last year expanded their club to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates – and more countries are waiting in the wings for entry. It’s not clear if Saudi Arabia has accepted an invitation to join.

It also turns up the international spotlight on the group, which roughly serves as the Global South’s answer to the US-led Group of Seven (G7) advanced economies, but is often dismissed by experts as comprising nations too politically and ideologically disparate to be effective.

That raises the question of just what Trump is so concerned about as he eyes BRICS warily from Washington.

Does BRICS want to ‘degenerate’ the dollar?

In his railings against the group, Trump has homed in on one area he sees as a specific threat: currency.

“BRICS was set up to hurt us, BRICS was set up to degenerate our dollar and take our dollar, take it off as the standard,” Trump said during the cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

It’s not the first time he’s said something like this. In November, as president-elect, Trump

threatened he would put “100% tariffs” on BRICS countries unless they committed to never create a “a new BRICS Currency, nor back any other Currency to replace the mighty U.S. Dollar.” He reiterated the threat against “seemingly hostile” BRICS countries earlier this year.

The lofty goal of a “BRICS currency” was suggested by Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2023, but the proposition, – so complex it may be practically impossible – has not been a focus of the body.

BRICS countries are, however, interested in expanding trade in their national currencies, rather than relying on the US dollar – an aim that,

Trump’s focus on BRICS comes at a time when the club appears to be ascendant. Eponymous members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South

Africa have since last year expanded their club to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates – and more countries are waiting in the wings for entry. It’s not clear if Saudi Arabia has accepted an invitation to join. It also turns up the international spotlight on the group, which roughly serves as the Global South’s answer to the US-led Group of Seven (G7) advanced economies, but is often dismissed by experts as comprising nations too politically and ideologically disparate to be effective. That raises the question of just what Trump is so concerned about as he eyes BRICS warily from Washington. Does BRICS want to ‘degenerate’ the dollar? In his railings against the group, Trump has homed in on one area he sees as a specific threat: currency. “BRICS was set up to hurt us, BRICS was set up to degenerate our dollar and take our dollar, take it off as the standard,” Trump said during the cabinet meeting on Tuesday. It’s not the first time he’s said something like this. In November, as president-elect, Trump threatened he would put “100% tariffs” on BRICS countries unless they committed to never create a “a new BRICS Currency, nor back any other Currency to replace the mighty U.S. Dollar.” He reiterated the threat against “seemingly hostile” BRICS countries earlier this year. The lofty goal of a “BRICS currency” was suggested by Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2023, but the proposition, – so complex it may be practically impossible – has not been a focus of the body. BRICS countries are, however, interested in expanding trade in their national currencies, rather than relying on the US dollar – an aim that, if successful, could reduce the dollar dependence of a significant chunk of the global economy. By some estimates, BRICS members account for more than a third of global GDP based on purchasing power parity. Currently, the size of the US economy and the stability of the dollar have made the greenback the lifeblood of global finance – and a significant factor in American global power. In a joint declaration released during their summit Sunday, the group of BRICS leaders backed ongoing discussions of a “cross-border payments initiative” between member countries. Analysts say that such a system, if developed, could potentially become an alternative to the SWIFT inter-bank network, using BRICS countries’ currencies or their digital equivalents. Bypassing SWIFT and a dollar-denominated trade system has obvious benefits for certain BRICS countries, such as Russia and Iran, as it could allow them to circumvent heavy Western sanctions. But other countries also see a benefit in not relying on the US dollar for trade.

By some estimates, BRICS members account for more than a third of global GDP based on purchasing power parity. Currently, the size of the US economy and the stability of the dollar have made the greenback the lifeblood of global finance – and a significant factor in American global power. In a joint declaration released during their summit Sunday, the group of BRICS leaders backed ongoing discussions of a “cross-border payments initiative” between member countries. Analysts say that such a system, if developed, could potentially become an alternative to the SWIFT inter-bank network, using BRICS countries’ currencies or their digital equivalents. Bypassing SWIFT and a dollar-denominated trade system has obvious benefits for certain BRICS countries, such as Russia and Iran, as it could allow them to circumvent heavy Western sanctions. But other countries also see a benefit in not relying on the US dollar for trade.

if successful, could reduce the dollar dependence of a significant chunk of the global economy.

By some estimates, BRICS members account for more than a third of global GDP based on purchasing power parity. Currently, the size of the US economy and the stability of the dollar have made the greenback the lifeblood of global finance – and a significant factor in American global power.

In a joint declaration released during their summit Sunday, the

Simone McCarthy

group of BRICS leaders backed ongoing discussions of a “cross-border payments initiative” between member countries.

Analysts say that such a system, if developed, could potentially become an alternative to the SWIFT inter-bank network, using BRICS countries’ currencies or their digital equivalents.

Bypassing SWIFT and a dollar-denominated trade system has obvious benefits for certain BRICS countries, such as Russia and Iran, as it could allow them to circumvent heavy Western sanctions. But other countries also see a benefit in not relying on the US dollar for trade.

peting interests within BRICS on how to get

it done, not to mention technical challenges. Brazil’s Lula on Monday alluded to that when he repeated his view that global trade needs alternatives to the US dollar, but added that this would be something that “happens gradually” and “carefully.”

Is BRICS set up to counter the US?

The economic coalition of founding members Brazil, Russia, India and China was launched in 2009 in the wake of the US financial crisis that damaged America’s financial reputation and gave new confidence to emerging markets about their place in the global economy.

The group, which

Not everyone is on board. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned other members at a BRICS summit last year to “be careful to ensure that this organization does not acquire the image of one that is trying to replace global institutions.”

Meanwhile, this year’s gathering was missing top leaders of several countries, among them China, UAE and Egypt, suggesting the body is not at the top of their immediate agendas.

That said, Trump’s global tariff war has been a rallying point for BRICS. During their summit in Rio, the leaders released a joint declaration voicing “serious concerns” about the “rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures” – an apparent jibe at the Trump administration’s trade policy.

Members have also found common ground on points counter to the US outside the realm of economics, even as they’ve voiced them carefully.

Their latest declaration referenced a 12-day conflict between Israel and member state Iran by condemning recent military strikes on Iran and expressing “serious concern” over “deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure” and “peaceful” nuclear facilities. It did not, however, name Israel on that point, after Israel carried out days of strikes against Iran last month. It also didn’t name the United States, which bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities as part of the same onslaught.

ing, observers say.

But BRICS countries are also united by a simple view: that the global balance of power skews too much toward the US and its European allies to the exclusion of emerging economies – and that the system should be reformed. To that end, the body set up its own development bank in 2015, and backs Brazil and India’s aspirations to play a greater role in the UN Security Council.

Members of the group have denied this makes BRICS “anti-Western.” But as Russia and China in the past decade have faced more friction with the West amid China’s growing assertiveness on the global stage and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, observers say both have pushed to shape the group into a more pointed tool to counter US power.

Not everyone is on board. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned other members at a BRICS summit last year to “be careful to ensure that this organization does not acquire the image of one that is trying to replace global institutions.”

Meanwhile, this year’s gathering was missing top leaders of several countries, among them China, UAE and Egypt, suggesting the body is not at the top of their immediate agendas.

That said, Trump’s global tariff war has been a rallying point for BRICS. During their summit in Rio, the leaders released a joint declaration voicing “serious concerns” about the “rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures” – an apparent jibe at the Trump administration’s trade policy.

Members have also found common ground on points counter to the US outside the realm of economics, even as they’ve voiced them carefully.

Their latest declaration referenced a 12-day conflict between Israel and member state Iran by condemning recent military strikes on Iran and expressing “serious concern” over “deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure” and “peaceful” nuclear facilities.

It did not, however, name Israel on that point, after Israel carried out days of strikes against Iran last month. It also didn’t name the United States, which bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities as part of the same onslaught.

# Trump didn’t start the war on the poor – but he’s taking it to new extremes

**“A budget is a moral document,” as numerous human rights activists have said over the decades. If that is true, then the so-called “One Big, Beautiful Bill” represents a grotesque example of the immorality of US leadership in 2025.**

It is a budget that slashes Medicare and Medicaid by \$930bn over the next decade and could leave as many as 17 million without healthcare insurance. The cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – a food aid scheme for Americans living in deep poverty – will render about 1 million vulnerable people ineligible for the basic human right of not starving. The US social welfare system – one that President Franklin D Roosevelt and Congress introduced with the Social Security Act of 1935 and President Lyndon B Johnson extended with Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 – is on its way to an emergency room.

This is one of the steepest rollbacks of social welfare programmes in the US since their inception in 1935. Many will attribute it to Project 2025. But the disdain for social welfare in the US has always been present – because the US cannot be the US without millions of Americans who must work on the cheap, so that a select few can hoard wealth and power, and mega-corporations can hoard resources.

That the US has had a mediocre and begrudging social welfare system for the past 90 years is nothing short of a miracle. While much of the Western world and other major empires either established or modernised their social welfare systems in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the US persisted with limited government intervention for citizens. Only radicals within the US labour movement typically advocated a national social welfare policy. Until the Great Depression of the 1930s, only individual states – not the federal government – provided limited economic relief to unemployed people or their families.

US Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins played a critical role in persuading Roosevelt to pursue what would become the Social Security Act of 1935. Once enacted, this provided the elderly, the unemployed, disabled workers, and single mothers with federal assistance for the first time. But both of the bill’s champions were aware that there would be opposition to the federal government assuming responsibility for providing benefits to Americans, even with unemployment at 25 percent.

Donald Earl Collins

Leading business tycoons such as Ford Motor Company founder Henry Ford expressed their disdain for federal social welfare. “No government can guarantee security. It can only tax production, distribution, and service and gradually crush the poor to pay taxes,” Ford said. Alf Landon, a millionaire oilman who served as Republican governor of Kansas and ran against Roosevelt in 1936, also opposed the Social Security Act, on the grounds that the tax burden would further impoverish workers. “I am not exaggerating the folly of this legislation. The saving it forces on our workers is a cruel hoax,” Landon stated in a 1936 speech, also fearing that the federal government would eventually dip into Social Security funds to pay for other projects.

Even when Congress enacted the Social Security Act in August 1935, the compromises made served to racialise, feminise, and further limit social welfare provision. The bill excluded agricultural workers like sharecroppers (two-thirds white and one-third African American, who were over-represented in this work), domestic workers (in which Black women were over-represented), nonprofit and government workers, and some waiters and waitresses from welfare benefits. It took amendments in the 1950s to rectify some of the racial, gender, and class discrimination embedded in the original legislation.

Johnson’s War on Poverty in 1964-65 prompted resistance and helped catalyse a new conservative movement. Johnson sought to add Medicare and Medicaid to the Social Security regime, provide food assistance via programmes such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and SNAP (originally Food Stamps), and expand Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Republican and future US President George HW Bush ran unsuccessfully for Senate in Texas in 1964 against a pro-Medicare Democrat, calling Johnson’s plan “socialised medicine” – a Cold War-era slur equating it with communism. Racial segregationist Strom Thurmond remarked of social welfare programmes, in general – and Johnson’s Medicare and Medicaid plans, specifically – “You had [the poor] back in the days of Jesus Christ, you have got some now, and you will have some in the future,” a pitiful excuse for refusing to reduce poverty or extend federal assistance.

The entire conservative pushback against what Republicans termed “enti-

tlements” grew from the expansion of the welfare state under Johnson. So much so that when Ronald Reagan became president in 1981, “his administration slashed Medicaid expenditures by more than 18 percent and cut the overall Department of Health and Human Services budget by 25 percent”. Those and other austerity measures in the 1980s resulted in one million fewer children eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches, 600,000 fewer people on Medicaid, and one million fewer accessing SNAP – according to one study.

I can speak to the effect of such cuts directly. As a teenage recipient of AFDC and SNAP during the Reagan years – the second eldest of six children (four under the age of five in 1984) in the New York City area – I can say that the \$16,000 in annual state and federal assistance between 1983 and 1987 felt like a cruel joke. It barely covered housing, offered minimal healthcare via underfunded public clinics, and still left us without food for a week every month. If this is what they call “entitlements”, then I was clearly entitled to almost nothing.

In the past 30 years, leaders who opposed the federal social welfare apparatus have celebrated their victories with disturbing heartlessness.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole declared gleefully in 1995 that he “was there, fighting the fight, voting against Medicare... because we knew it wouldn’t work in 1965”. During his 2008 presidential campaign, the late Republican senator John McCain proposed \$1.3 trillion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, along with a huge “overhaul” of Social Security to balance the federal budget. Fiscal conservative Grover Norquist infamously said he wanted to “get it [social-welfare programmes] down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub”. US Speaker Mike Johnson claimed last week that Trump’s budget would usher in “a new golden age”.

Budget priorities that ultimately harm those in poverty, restrict access to healthcare, and force people to work for food aid or medical care are nothing short of monstrous.

Ninety years – and 44 years of tax breaks later – the greed and callousness of conservatives and the far right have precipitated yet another round of tax cuts favouring the uber wealthy and mega-corporations. It is only a matter of time before those whose grandparents once benefitted from Social Security and New Deal-era welfare will seek to gut what remains of America’s Swiss-cheese safety net.

# Israel is killing doctors so Gaza can never heal from genocide

**A**FTER her parents, sister and husband were killed in a bombing, Lubnah prayed they would be the last victims of the war. Her father, Dr Marwan al-Sultan, was one of Gaza’s most respected medics, director of the Indonesian Hospital, and one of only two surviving cardiologists in the Strip.

On July 2, an Israeli bomb killed him, alongside his wife Dhikra, their daughter Lamees, his sister Amneh, and his son-in-law Mohammed, Lubnah’s husband.

The family had been sheltering in an apartment, in an area designated by Israel as “safe”, having evacuated their home in Jabalia in compliance with orders from the Israeli occupation forces (IOF). The so-called “Chalet area” of western Gaza City was once a place where families spent time at the beach, enjoying themselves, despite the daily trials of Israeli occupation.

The bomb targeted directly the room Dr Marwan was sitting in; no other part of the building was destroyed. Lubnah survived because she had gone downstairs to prepare food. Her

brothers, Omar, Ahmad and Nimr also survived because they were outside the home.

The day before his

The bomb targeted directly the room Dr Marwan was sitting in; no she had gone downstairs to prepare food. Her brothers, Omar, Ahmad and Nimr also survived because they were outside the home. The day before his death, upon hearing the news of a possible ceasefire, Dr Marwan shared a hopeful vision with his son, Omar. “The first thing we’ll do [once a ceasefire is reached] is go back home. With everyone’s effort, in a month or two, we can make it as before. Then we’ll rebuild the hospital,” he said. Omar felt inspired by his father. Dr Marwan’s dreams were not answered. The genocide continued taking victims. On July 4, another doctor was murdered: Dr Musa Hamdan Khafaja –

Lubnah’s prayers were not answered. The genocide continued taking victims. On July 4, another doctor was murdered: Dr Musa Hamdan Khafaja – a consultant in obstetrics and gynecology in Nasser Hospital. The attack was eerily similar. Dr Musa had also followed the orders of the IOF, fled his home in Khan Younis, and sought refuge in al-Mawasi, another “safe zone”. There, he pitched a tent to shelter his family. That tent became their grave. His wife and three young children – daughters Shaza and Judi, and son Adel, all died. The only survivor was his son Amr. Both men had dedicated their careers to saving the lives of others, staying with their patients through bombings and sieges on their hospitals. Dr Marwan was the 70th healthcare worker killed in the previous 50 days; Dr Musa became the 71st. Their deaths bring the total number of medical personnel killed since October 2023 to at least 1,580, according to the Government Media Office in Gaza. Every two days since the war began, Israel has killed five medical personnel, that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers, per week. Among those murdered since the genocide began are Gaza’s most distinguished medical minds. They include Dr Omar Farwana, former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza; Dr Rafat Lubbad, director of Hamad Hospital for Artificial Limbs; Dr Soma Baroud, prominent obstetrician-gynaecologist; Dr Ahmed al-Maqadma, a prominent reconstructive surgeon; Dr Sayeed Joudeh, the last orthopaedic surgeon in northern Gaza; Dr Adnan al-Bursh, head of orthopaedic surgery in al-Shifa Hospital; and Dr Iyad al-Rantisi, head of a women’s hospital in Beit Lahiya.

death, upon hearing the news of a possible ceasefire, Dr Marwan shared a hopeful vision with his son, Omar.

“The first thing we’ll do [once a ceasefire is reached] is go back home. With everyone’s effort, in a month or two, we can make it as before. Then we’ll rebuild the hospital,” he said. Omar felt inspired by his father.

Dr Marwan’s dreams were buried with him.

His daughter Lubnah’s prayers were not

answered. The genocide continued taking victims.

On July 4, another doctor was murdered: Dr Musa Hamdan Khafaja –

Amr.

Both men had dedicated their careers to saving the lives of others, staying with their patients through bombings and sieges on their hospitals.

Dr Marwan was the 70th healthcare worker killed in the previous 50 days; Dr Musa became the 71st. Their deaths bring the total number of medical personnel killed since October 2023 to at least 1,580, according to the Government Media Office in Gaza. Every two days since the war began, Israel has killed five medical personnel, that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers, per week. Among those murdered since the genocide began are Gaza’s most distinguished medical minds. They include Dr Omar Farwana, former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza; Dr Rafat Lubbad, director of Hamad Hospital for Artificial Limbs; Dr Soma Baroud, prominent obstetrician-gynaecologist; Dr Ahmed al-Maqadma, a prominent reconstructive surgeon; Dr Sayeed Joudeh, the last orthopaedic surgeon in northern Gaza; Dr Adnan al-Bursh, head of orthopaedic surgery in al-Shifa Hospital; and Dr Iyad al-Rantisi, head of a women’s hospital in Beit Lahiya.

Ahmad Ibsais

that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers,

no other part of the building was destroyed. Lubnah survived because they were outside the home. The day before his death, upon hearing the news of a possible ceasefire, Dr Marwan shared a hopeful vision with his son, Omar. “The first thing we’ll do [once a ceasefire is reached] is go back home. With everyone’s effort, in a month or two, we can make it as before. Then we’ll rebuild the hospital,” he said. Omar felt inspired by his father. Dr Marwan’s dreams were not answered. The genocide continued taking victims. On July 4, another doctor was murdered: Dr Musa Hamdan Khafaja –

Amr.

Both men had dedicated their careers to saving the lives of others, staying with their patients through bombings and sieges on their hospitals.

Dr Marwan was the 70th healthcare worker killed in the previous 50 days; Dr Musa became the 71st. Their deaths bring the total number of medical personnel killed since October 2023 to at least 1,580, according to the Government Media Office in Gaza. Every two days since the war began, Israel has killed five medical personnel, that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers, per week. Among those murdered since the genocide began are Gaza’s most distinguished medical minds. They include Dr Omar Farwana, former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza; Dr Rafat Lubbad, director of Hamad Hospital for Artificial Limbs; Dr Soma Baroud, prominent obstetrician-gynaecologist; Dr Ahmed al-Maqadma, a prominent reconstructive surgeon;

Ahmad Ibsais

that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers,

no other part of the building was destroyed. Lubnah survived because they were outside the home. The day before his death, upon hearing the news of a possible ceasefire, Dr Marwan shared a hopeful vision with his son, Omar. “The first thing we’ll do [once a ceasefire is reached] is go back home. With everyone’s effort, in a month or two, we can make it as before. Then we’ll rebuild the hospital,” he said. Omar felt inspired by his father. Dr Marwan’s dreams were not answered. The genocide continued taking victims. On July 4, another doctor was murdered: Dr Musa Hamdan Khafaja –

Amr.

Both men had dedicated their careers to saving the lives of others, staying with their patients through bombings and sieges on their hospitals.

Dr Marwan was the 70th healthcare worker killed in the previous 50 days; Dr Musa became the 71st. Their deaths bring the total number of medical personnel killed since October 2023 to at least 1,580, according to the Government Media Office in Gaza. Every two days since the war began, Israel has killed five medical personnel, that is 16 doctors, nurses, ambulance technicians or other healthcare workers, per week. Among those murdered since the genocide began are Gaza’s most distinguished medical minds. They include Dr Omar Farwana, former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza; Dr Rafat Lubbad, director of Hamad Hospital for Artificial Limbs; Dr Soma Baroud, prominent obstetrician-gynaecologist; Dr Ahmed al-Maqadma, a prominent reconstructive surgeon;

Dr Sayeed Joudeh, the last orthopaedic surgeon in northern Gaza; Dr Adnan al-Bursh, head of orthopaedic surgery in

World Health

Organization has documented 734 such attacks since the war began. Hospitals have been turned into graveyards.

This is not collateral damage; this is medicine – the deliberate destruction of Gaza’s capacity to live. Each murdered doctor represents the loss of years of training, commitment and the potential to save lives. Each bombed hospital is the dismantling of Gaza’s capacity to heal itself, to survive, to endure. These

– protected under international humanitarian law – continues to be a primary target. The

World Health

Organization has documented 734 such attacks since the war began. Hospitals have been turned into graveyards.

This is not collateral damage; this is medicine – the deliberate destruction of Gaza’s capacity to live. Each murdered doctor represents the loss of years of training, commitment and the potential to save lives. Each bombed hospital is the dismantling of Gaza’s capacity to heal itself, to survive, to endure. These

are not just lives lost; they are futures destroyed.

This is the reality in Gaza right now. It has little to do with Israel’s declared military objectives of eliminating the Islamic resistance movement – Hamas – or securing the return of the captives taken on October 7, 2023.

Rather, it is what I termed al-Ibadah – the Destruction. Al-Ibadah is the comprehensive annihilation of a people’s social, cultural, intellectual and biological continuity – a process of total erasure. And exterminating medical workers is a key element of it.

Before he was killed, alongside her father, Lubnah’s husband, Mohammed – a journalist for Palestine Magazine – endured one and a half years’ imprisonment in Israel.

Upon his release, he confided to Lubnah that death would have been preferable to the horrors he had witnessed behind bars. His confession shook her deeply.

Today, Lubnah’s prayer is heartbreakingly simple: “Enough. Enough, stop this war.” But so far, like her other prayers, this one is also going unanswered.

— Aljazeera





# Delegation of Senate Standing Committee visit DPP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security & Research, under the chairmanship of Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, visited the Department of Plant Protection (DPP) Head Office in Karachi to review key interventions taken for improving sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) compliance and reducing Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) violations in agricultural exports, particularly rice. The visit comes as recent reforms, spurred by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, have already led to a marked decline in export interceptions and noticeable improvements in compliance standards.

The committee was briefed in detail by senior DPP officials, including Mr. Tahir Abbas (Director General DPP), Dr. Muhammad Ishfaq (Deputy Director Quarantine), and Muhammad Basit (Director Quarantine), on the measures taken to align Pakistan's export framework with international food safety and plant protection standards.

The committee noted the significant strides made in

improving compliance, especially in light of the Prime Minister's decisive directives issued in December 2024, which called for legal action against negligent officers and the immediate establishment of pesticide residue testing laboratories.

These directives have shown concrete results. In 2023, Pakistan faced 61 interceptions of rice consignments by the European Union due to MRL exceedances and aflatoxins. The number rose to 106 in 2024, with 73 linked directly to pesticide residues. However, following the reforms triggered by the Prime Minister's orders, 2024 has seen a notable decline, with only 30 interceptions recorded so far - just 13 related to MRLs and 15 to aflatoxins.

This decline is attributed to intensified monitoring, awareness campaigns for exporters, and closer coordination between DPP, provincial departments, and industry stakeholders. Notably, pesticides such as Acetamiprid, Chlorpyrifos, Imidacloprid, and Thiamethoxam were identified as primary contributors to MRL breaches.

The committee also discussed progress in the

maize sector. Maize is Pakistan's third major food grain, with 10.634 million tons produced annually across 1.72 million hectares. In 2023-24, exports peaked at 1.837 million metric tons but sharply declined in 2024-25 to just over 786,000 metric tons.

While high domestic prices contributed to this drop, phytosanitary interceptions by Vietnam due to infestation by *Trogoderma granarium* (khapra beetle) also played a role. Following Vietnam's third warning and 72 reported interceptions, DPP imposed a temporary two-week export ban and suspended responsible fumigators. Corrective actions such as the registration of 63 compliant storage godowns, traceability protocols, and pest-specific fumigation SOPs were implemented. Additional efforts included stakeholder meetings, strict inspection regimes, and strict control over the use of jute bags - a major source of infestation.

The committee turned its attention to mango exports, with special emphasis on high-end markets such as Japan, Korea, and the US, which have strict protocols

including Hot Water Treatment (HWT) and Vapor heat treatment, among others. While the DPP has developed SOPs and installed CCTV surveillance systems for monitoring HWT facilities, the Chairman raised concerns over operational irregularities. He cited credible complaints from exporters regarding malfunctioning cameras, non-operational HWT equipment, and allegations of corruption - including unauthorized facilitation of certain plants and officials allegedly accepting payment per kilogram to bypass treatment procedures.

One major exporter reportedly experienced a drop in mango exports from 40,000 kilograms to just 7,000 this season, attributing the decline to inconsistent enforcement and preferential treatment by DPP inspectors.

The committee emphasized the importance of appointing a technically qualified and permanent Director General at DPP to build on the momentum of recent improvements. Recognizing that the role requires specialized expertise - ideally a PhD or postgraduate qualification in entomology or



KARACHI: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on NFS&R Syed Masroor Ahsan chairing a meeting at Department of Plant Protection.

plant protection - the Chairman noted that filling this position with a dedicated professional would further enhance operational efficiency and strategic oversight.

The committee reiterated support for the early establishment of the National Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health Regulatory Authority (NAFSA), the release of funds for new laboratories, and amend-

ment of fumigation rules in light of current export requirements. Capacity-building workshops, farmer outreach programs, and enhanced provincial coordination were also reviewed positively.

The Chairman concluded by acknowledging the encouraging results achieved so far under the Prime Minister's reform roadmap and called for continued political will and

institutional commitment. He emphasized that while the number of export rejections has declined, sustained oversight, transparency, and scientific leadership are key to ensuring that Pakistan's agricultural exports regain trust and competitiveness in global markets.

The meeting was also attended by Senator Rahat Jamali, Mr. Dost Muhammad Khan, and Mr.

Abdul Wasay.

However, the committee noted with disappointment the absence of officials from the Ministry of National Food Security & Research and instructed that a letter be written to the Chairman Senate, requesting appropriate action against absent ministry officials, reiterating the need for full cooperation from the Ministry in matters of national importance.

## Al Baraka Bank first sports good product webinar held



F.P. Report

SIALKOT: Al Baraka Bank (Pakistan) Limited held first of its kind webinar in Sialkot, bringing together over 70 sports goods and sportswear exporters from Sialkot and importers from 12 countries across the globe through online video link. This was the first Product based webinar, showcasing Sialkot Sports goods and sportswear segment.

The webinar was presided over by Mr. Muhammad Atif Hanif, CEO - Al Baraka Bank (Pakistan) Limited. Chairman Sports Association & CEO of M/s Forward Sports (Pvt.) Ltd Mr. Khawaja Masood Akhtar joined as Chief Guest. Office-bearers of the Sialkot Chamber

of Commerce and Industry including Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi (SVP) along with prominent business figures.

Online importers who attended the webinar included businesses from Türkiye, Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, South Africa, Tunisia and Algeria; to name a few.

On this occasion, Mr. Muhammad Atif Hanif, CEO - Al Baraka Bank (Pakistan) Limited, stated that webinars had previously been conducted between exporters of Pakistan and importers from South Africa, Egypt, Bahrain and Türkiye under Al Baraka Group Trade Finance Collaboration initiative, which provided country wise B2B connectivity opportunities. However, this

webinar is a new landmark where exporters of Sports goods and Sportswear from Sialkot are connected with 12 other countries simultaneously. He further shared that a comprehensive Trade Finance Portal has also been developed, which contains complete details of selected exporters and importers of all Al Baraka Group subsidiaries to strengthen B2B connectivity.

Chairman Sports Association Khawaja Masood termed the webinar a positive development, noting that this platform would open new avenues of international trade for Sialkot based customers and would help them in connecting with new export markets internationally, where Al Baraka Group has its global presence.

## HF in collaboration with UNODC, NACTA hosts National Pitch Fest

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark celebration of youth innovation and social impact, Hashoo Foundation (HF), in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), and with the financial support from the European Union (EU), hosted a dynamic Pitch Fest showcasing youth-led social enterprises developed under the Partnerships for Change initiative.

Held within the broader framework of the EU-funded Countering and Preventing Terrorism in Pakistan (CPTP) project, this high-profile event brought to the national stage young changemakers trained at the Social Lab-a dedicated social impact incubator designed to foster social cohesion, peace-building, and youth-driven innovation in Swat. Swat is one of the regions adversely affected by terrorism and UNODC with its local partner HF is now enabling the vulnerable youth from this region to develop businesses, that utilize local resources, to bolster micro-economy via various social enterprises.

The Pitch Fest provided a national platform for thirty exceptional "Agents of Change" to present their community-focused social enterprises to an audience of investors, policymakers, and innovation leaders. Addressing critical local challenges such as biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, food innovation and preservation, access to clean water, and sustainable livelihoods, these youth-led initiatives demonstrated extraordinary potential for building resilient, self-reliant communities.

## PM's Cricket Talent Hunt Program launched at NED University Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a major stride toward youth empowerment through sports, the Prime Minister's Cricket Talent Hunt Program was officially launched today at NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi. The event was graced by Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, and warmly welcomed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tufail, Vice Chancellor of NED University.

Addressing a packed audience of students, sports officials, and dignitaries, Rana Mashood reaffirmed the government's dedication to uplifting Pakistan's youth across diverse sectors - including science, technology, arts, culture, and sports.

"Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, we are creating opportunities for youth on the basis of merit. The Prime Minister himself is personally overseeing the Talent Hunt Programme," he stated.

Rana Mashood highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships in nurturing young talent, especially the collaboration with Lahore Qalandars for the Youth Player

Development Program.

"We are grateful to Rana Atif, CEO of Lahore Qalandars, and his dedicated team for their unwavering support. With their help, we're preparing our youth to excel on national and international platforms," he said.

He shared remarkable statistics from the trials, noting that over 17,000 youth participated in Quetta alone, reflecting the untapped sports potential in Balochistan. He also paid tribute to Karachi's rich cricketing history, referencing legendary figures like Hanif Mohammad, Sadiq Mohammad, and Javed Miandad.

To date, more than 20,000 players have registered in the Talent Hunt Program, with selections being made solely on merit.

"This is a national movement to uplift youth, in line with the Prime Minister's vision of inclusive progress," he added.

As part of his visit, Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan also visited the Bio-Mechanical Lab of NED University, where he was briefed by university officials about the lab's facilities and ongoing work.

The event was further elevated by the presence of

Pakistan's international cricket stars, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Fakhar Zaman, who actively participated in evaluating and encouraging the young cricketers. Their interaction served as a powerful inspiration for aspiring players hoping to follow in their footsteps.

Other notable attendees included Rana Atif (CEO, Lahore Qalandars), Bashir Memon (President, PML-N Sindh), Nihal Hashmi (Ex-Senator), Raja Ansari, Fahad Shafiq (PMYP Sindh Coordinator), and Javed, Director from the Higher Education Commission.

In a major announcement, Rana Mashood also unveiled plans for the first-ever National Youth Games, scheduled for August 2025 under the umbrella of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. He commended the Sindh Government for its collaboration in making the Karachi Talent Hunt a resounding success.

The launch event at NED University marks a pivotal milestone in the national drive to empower youth through inclusive, merit-based sports initiatives - with strong backing from both government leadership and iconic figures from Pakistan's cricketing world.



KARACHI: Chairman PM's Youth Programme Rana Mashood addressing Cricket Talent Hunt Program lunching ceremony at NED University Karachi.

## NAB recovers Rs455 billion in cash

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has recovered Rs. 455 billion in cash from corrupt individuals. NAB's internal accountability system is proactive as acting on complaints from citizens, NAB has arrested several serving officers involved in misuse of authority. Tax evasion has become a widespread practice, and it must be discouraged strictly.

Masood Ahmed, Additional Director of Investigation NAB Sindh, expressed these views yesterday at the meeting of Hamdard Shura Karachi, held at Hamdard Corporate Head Office. The session was chaired by Shura Speaker Gen (r) Mooinuddin Haider. The topic of the meeting was "The Need for

an Accountability Process." Ms. Sadia Rashid (Hilal-e-Imtiaz), President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, also attended the session.

Masood Ahmed said that during the fiscal year 2023-24, NAB took major action and retrieved 2.29 million acres of land from the Sindh Forest Department that was under illegal occupation. The land is worth over Rs. 2 trillion. The occupying groups had severely damaged the forests on this land.

He added that NAB also recovered Rs. 12 billion from several fraudulent housing schemes and returned the amount to the affected victims. Since its establishment, NAB has recovered land and other assets worth billions of rupees, which are categorized as indirect recoveries.

In addition, NAB has taken legal action against hundreds of individuals involved in bribery and fraud.

He further said that in 2022, NAB laws were amended to clearly define the institution's jurisdiction. Under the new rules, NAB can take legal action only in cases of corruption involving over Rs. 500 million. Additionally, the NAB Ordinance does not apply to individuals living abroad. In cases of suspicious money transfers in bank accounts, only the transactions made after the inquiry begins can be included in the investigation. Moreover, to prove bribery, there must be evidence showing the transfer of money from one bank account to the accused's account.

"Plea bargain is a legal

term. It does not mean giving the accused relief from punishment, but offering partial exemption from charges if the accused admits guilt before the trial begins. Under the NAB Ordinance, plea bargain is allowed in cases of financial corruption and misuse of authority to save the court's time and resources, and to ensure swift and effective resolution. However, even after accepting a plea bargain, the accused can be declared ineligible for public office. The illegally earned money is confiscated, heavy fines are imposed, and the person's reputation in society suffers serious damage."

"FATF had serious concerns regarding money laundering. To comply with international regulations, the government has now made it mandatory for

banks to set up an automatic alert system. This system must detect any large transaction that does not match the account's usual activity and report it to the Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU)."

"Under this mechanism, the FMU examines such transactions and informs the relevant authorities if needed," he concluded.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Speaker Shura Col (r) Mukhtar Ahmed Butt, Professor Dr. Tanveer Khalid, Cdre (r) Sadeed Anwar Malik, Engineer Parvez Sadiq, Shehla Ahmed, Huma Baig, Musarrat Akram, Professor Dr. Khalida Ghous, Professor Dr. Amir Tauseen, Engineer Ibn-ul-Hassan, Professor Dr. Amjad Jafri, and other distinguished members.

## British Pakistani honoured at UK Parliament for creating thousands of jobs and building a \$1b company in Pakistan



F.P. Report

LONDON: The British Pakistani entrepreneur Shafiq Akbar was honoured at the UK Parliament in recognition of his remarkable contributions to

Pakistan's economy - including the creation of thousands of jobs, transformation of the real estate sector, and empowerment of the overseas Pakistani community.

The special ceremony at

Westminster was led by Lord Shafiq Mohammed, Baron Mohammed of Tinsley, who presented Akbar with an achievement award for:

1. Creating thousands of jobs in Pakistan

2. Driving the digital transformation of Pakistan's real estate industry

3. Leading large-scale developments, including Islamabad's new downtown and four Marriott Hotels

4. Building a \$1 billion company with the ambition to position Pakistan as a global PropTech leader

A humble journey with global impact

Shafiq Akbar's recogni-

tion serves not only as a personal milestone but also as a celebration of the vital contributions made by the UK's Pakistani diaspora. His journey - from Pakistan to the UK and back - is a testament to the power of global experience applied to local impact.

Lord Shafiq praised Akbar's leadership:

"Shafiq Akbar exemplifies what can be achieved when ambition is rooted in purpose. His contributions reflect the best of what the UK and Pakistan can accomplish together."

Born and raised in Pakistan, Akbar pursued higher education in the UK, graduating from Queen Mary University and com-

pleting a MPhil degree at Cambridge University. He built a successful career in financial advisory and real estate investment before returning to Pakistan after 15 years abroad.

Building for the future of Pakistan

Upon returning home, Akbar founded several ventures - including IMARAT Group, Graana.com, Agency21, and his AI-led PropTech startup PropMax.ai - with a mission to modernize Pakistan's real estate sector through innovation, transparency, and sustainable development.

With over 1.6 million Pakistanis living in the UK, Akbar's story resonates strongly across the diaspora

- many of whom remain deeply committed to Pakistan's future.

A message to the diaspora

In his acceptance speech, Shafiq Akbar reflected on the meaning behind the honour:

"This award represents more than individual recognition - it's a tribute to the power of connection. Between the UK and Pakistan. Between diaspora identity and service to home. And between vision and real-world results."

He urged fellow overseas Pakistanis to contribute their expertise back to the country:

"We all want to see meaningful progress in Pakistan - and overseas Pakistanis have the experi-

ence and global perspective to help lead that change. I believe Pakistan is destined to grow. With smart policy, tech-driven solutions, and its untapped potential, we can tackle major challenges and build sustainable industries. I invite the global Pakistani community to join this mission - we're ready to support those committed to making a real difference."

The Chairman Youth Parliament of Pakistan, Abrar-ul-Haq, and Minister for Climate Change, Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, joined the ceremony virtually and commended Shafiq Akbar's outstanding efforts in youth empowerment and diaspora leadership.

### Lost & Found

I have lost original documents of my 2 plots situated at DHA Peshawar (1) File No. OLO/E/RES/4012 Phase-1/G/750 and (2) File No. OLO/E/RES/4333 Plot No. Ph-1/F/256. If anyone finds please return it to. Jihad Wali S/o Lawar Ganai R/o Maira Post Office University Town Acheni Bala Tehsil & District Peshawar

امریکی ایروپوٹس قاتل بنی  
مشری ہوشیارباش  
کسی جانی برکت ملی نالہ ذبیحہ جانی ٹیرر بل ٹان سنکر  
مکان نمبر 1124/4 خط جدید آبادی نمبر 2 نمبر چوک ایک  
پلاٹ بلک نمبر 227 سکٹر NIL رقبہ کمال ٹیرر الا واقعہ بنی  
ٹان شب بنی کمال ملک ہے اس کو کوئی طرف سے ملک  
کے کاغذات و ملکیت جانی کے جانے ہیں سب اس میں  
مدیر الا پلاٹ امکان انگریز انتقال از اسٹرکچر درخواست  
دی ہے۔ لہذا ام ایوان کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ اگر ان کو  
اس انتقال / راسٹر پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اندر معیار چہرہ  
(15) ہم کے اور این اعتراض مشنری کے دفتر میں پیش  
کریں بصورت دیگر گذرہ والا پلاٹ امکان انگریز کا  
انتقال از اسٹر کیا جائیگا۔ اسٹیمپ ہولنگ / آفیسر امرین  
ایروپوٹس قاتل بنی ٹان بنی نمبر 0928-633031





CINCINNATI, OHIO: Dane Myers #54 of the Miami Marlins couldn't come up with this ball off the bat of Matt McLain of the Cincinnati Reds that went for a single in the second inning at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## First anti-doping awareness seminar held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation and anti-doping experts emphasized that raising awareness against the use of banned substances is essential to ensure a clean, transparent, and healthy sporting environment. Doping not only poses a serious threat to an athlete's health and career but also undermines the integrity of sports. Experts stressed the importance of natural training, adherence to ethical standards, and consistent monitoring as key priorities. Addressing the first Anti-Doping Awareness Seminar here Thursday, Deputy Director General

and Anti-Doping Coordinator Shahid Islam stated that the use of prohibited substances as defined by global regulations constitutes "doping," often beginning in fitness gyms. He warned that such practices can be devastating for both the health and careers of athletes, and urged sports federations to keep their athletes informed about WADA's list of banned substances. Sohail Anwar, Secretary General of the Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation, said it is a shared responsibility to protect the younger generation from harmful substances like steroids. He emphasized that without promoting a doping test

culture, the future of sports cannot be secured. Nasrullah Rana, Director of National Federations, warned that the trend of double dosing in bodybuilding can be fatal. He called upon athletes, coaches, and federations to take full responsibility and strictly adhere to anti-doping rules. Sports Psychologist Qurat-ul-Ain noted that WADA's 11 anti-doping rules are actively enforced and violators face severe consequences. She added that obtaining an "Anti-Doping Education and Learning" certificate has now become mandatory for participation in international competitions. Maahim Aiman, Junior

Liaison Officer, explained that doping control and sample collection can take place not only during competitions but also at any time or location—such as gyms, hotels, or athletes' residences. Nutritionist Dr. Nabeel Ahmad stated that modern doping methods, including those driven by artificial intelligence, are emerging as new global threats. He described doping as a betrayal—not only of the athlete's own body but of the rights of deserving and hardworking competitors. At the end of the seminar, certificates were distributed among participants from across the country.

## Root, Pope unbeaten at tea as England go slow and steady at Lord's

L O N D O N (ESPNCricinfo): Joe Root and Ollie Pope batted through an uncharacteristically sedate second session at Lord's, as India plugged away without rewards in the London sun and lost Rishabh Pant to a finger injury. England's third-wicket stand had reached an unbroken 108 runs by tea, with Root and Pope adding 70 since the lunch interval. The stump microphones picked up Mohammed Siraj telling Root that he wanted to see some "Bazball" but England eschewed their usual attacking intent with the bat. India's seamers went wide outside off stump, hanging in and waiting for a mistake that never came as Pope and Root left the ball alone and played with huge restraint. Root became the first man to get to 3000 Test runs against India shortly before going past fifty for the 103rd time in Tests, equalling Jacques Kallis and Ricky Ponting's tallies, with only Sachin Tendulkar

(119) ahead of him. He handed the strike to Pope during Jasprit Bumrah's five-over spell after lunch, facing only two balls, and put away occasional bad balls from Nitish Kumar Reddy. It was Reddy who prised the game open for India in the morning session, removing both England openers in his first over after Ben Stokes had chosen to bat first. But Reddy and the rest of the Indian attack struggled with the softer ball. Shubman Gill eventually convinced the umpires to change it after 43 overs, but the replacement did not appear to move significantly more. Pant's injury was a concern for India. He hurt his index finger while attempting to gather a rare ball down the leg side from Bumrah, and received treatment on the field before trying to continue. But after five balls, he left the field and continued to receive medical attention in the dressing room, as substitute fielder Dhruv Jurel

deputised behind the stumps. **Pant suffers blow to finger, Jurel called up as substitute keeper** India had to call on substitute wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel after Rishabh Pant was hit on the left hand in the second session of the first day of Lord's Test when collecting a ball down the leg side. It resulted in a long break in play during which he received attention and treatment, but Pant couldn't carry on beyond the end of the ongoing over, the 34th of England's innings. Since 2017, the regulations of the game allow for a wicketkeeper to be substituted during the match, but the substitute is not allowed to bat. Since his debut, Pant has been India's second-highest run-getter in Test cricket. He scored two hundreds in the first Test at Headingley, becoming the first wicketkeeper to do so after Andy Flower. In the 34th over at Lord's, Bumrah ended up slipping a ball down the leg

side. Pant went for it, but was hit on the index finger. Even after taking treatment, he looked in excruciating pain as he put his gloves back on. Jurel, who debuted in Pant's absence in 2023-24, averaged 63.33 with the bat in his first series in 2023-24. Once Pant was back in the side, Jurel played one Test in Australia as a batter alone, aggregating 12 runs across two innings. The series was level 1-1 after England won in Leeds and India in Birmingham. Choosing to bat first, only for the second time at home in the Bazball era, England were 93 for 2 when Pant got injured. Joe Root and Ollie Pope were the batters in the middle. Not only was the decision to toss a departure, their scoring rate and intent was also the lowest in the Bazball era. There will be a long break between the third and the fourth Tests. An update on Pant's status and availability during the rest of the Test was awaited.

## Bencic hatching plan 'while falling asleep' to beat Swiatek

LONDON (BBC): Belinda Bencic knew what she would be thinking about before she went to sleep on Wednesday night. The Swiss player uses the time before she drifts off to visualise her game-plan for her next match and her next opponent. That next match is the small matter of a first Wimbledon semi-final, and against five-time major winner Iga Swiatek. "She is a big challenge and I'm really excited to play her. We've had some close matches. I will come up with a plan," the 28-year-old former Olympic champion said. Explaining her method of preparation, she said: "I'm not so much of a writer. For me it's more like imagining some plays. "It's important for me to do it before I go to sleep. While I'm falling asleep, I go through it unconsciously. "It's something that happens naturally and then

I'm able to kind of memorise it a little bit." Bencic was not worried about her sleep being broken by her 14-month-old daughter, Bella, who is with her in London. "I don't adjust anything, I'm just being a mum at home. When she cries in the night, I'll wake up," said Bencic, who is seeking to become the first mother to win a Wimbledon singles title in 45 years. "It's not something that's going to affect me for my [match]." Earlier during Wimbledon, she explained: "I see myself as a mum first, and then tennis player. My priorities are clearly with my family." It has been nearly six years since Bencic last reached the final four of a Grand Slam, ultimately losing in straight sets to Bianca Andreescu in the 2019 US Open semi-

finals. Having been on maternity leave from September 2023 to October 2024, she said she has been "surprised" by how quickly the positive results have come. Bencic started the year ranked 489th in the world and is now projected to break back into the world's top 20 after Wimbledon. Success this year has also included winning the Abu Dhabi WTA 500 title in February. She said motherhood has had a positive impact on her approach to being a professional player, making her "more relaxed" and ensuring she has less time to think about tennis. Bencic was joined by Bella in the outdoor gym at Aorangi Park on Wednesday morning. Bella played with medicine balls while her mother prepared for her 7-6 (7-3) 7-6 (7-2) victory over Russian teenager Mirra

Andreeva. She has also been watched by her daughter from a balcony above court 18, which she said was "kind of unreal". "Sometimes you realise, 'Wow, I'm playing Wimbledon. I have my family here, my daughter is actually watching me'," she said. "She will not remember anything - she doesn't realise yet - but still it's a very nice feeling." Bella is too young to be on Centre Court so Bencic's husband - who is also her fitness coach - will once again be absent from the box when she takes on Swiatek. But Bencic would not want it any other way. "No, she definitely gets the priority," she added. "I'm really happy when he looks after her. "It means the world to me to be in the semi-final. It's definitely unreal, but it doesn't end here."

## Monstrous PSG 'leading a new era' - but problems for Real Madrid

NEW YORK (BBC): Paris St-Germain look like a team building a dynasty after Luis Enrique's side dismantled yet another European giant - this time Real Madrid 4-0 - to reach the Club World Cup final. The French side bashed Inter Milan 5-0 five and a half weeks ago in the Champions League final - and they are showing few signs of letting up. While critics have dismissed the Club World Cup as almost like a friendly tournament, that is not how it has been played. It is being taken as seriously as any competition by the players. PSG had a blip against Brazilian side Botafogo, but have beaten both Atletico and Real Madrid 4-0 in the United States tournament, plus German champions Bayern Munich 2-0 despite ending the game with nine men. Teams just cannot cope with their pace, passing and pressing - and they continue to tear apart any team in their way. They led 3-0 within 24 minutes, thanks to a Fabian Ruiz double and Ousmane Dembele strike, before Goncalo Ramos netted with three minutes left. Next up are Chelsea in Sunday's final in New Jersey. "Luis Enrique has created a monster," said Dazn pundit Andros Townsend. And former Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale added: "They look like a team who are going to be around for a long time. "They are very young, relentless and want to embarrass teams." In the space of a year, PSG have become a team many neutrals actively wished to lose in the Champions League - to the best team in the world to

watch. Fittingly, two of the figureheads of the 'old PSG' - who were more about egos than a team - were both on the wrong side of 4-0 hammerings in the US. It was Lionel Messi's Inter Miami in the last 16 and Kylian Mbappe's Real Madrid in Wednesday's one-sided last-four tie. Since Mbappe, PSG's all-time top scorer, left last summer for Madrid when his contract expired, Enrique has built a new-look frontline. Dembele, Desire Doue and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia are electric. Sometimes Bradley Barcola is in there to cause mayhem too. Their midfield three - Portugal duo Joao Neves and Vitinha, and two-goal Spaniard Ruiz - control games. Ex-Chelsea midfielder John Obi Mikel said on Dazn at half-time: "When the three in the middle dictate the play like that, no-one can stop them. It has been a masterclass." Former Newcastle striker Callum Wilson added: "Some of that football from PSG was like watching FIFA. Incredible." And that is without mentioning non-stop up-and-down attacking full-backs Achraf Hakimi and Nuno Mendes, who are also a big part of how PSG play. And having won the French Cup, Ligue 1 and Champions League, they are now just one game away from a fourth major trophy of 2025. Throw in the lesser Trophée des Champions and it could be a clean sweep of five. Chelsea will have their work cut out to stop them on Sunday. Dating back to the Coupe de France final, PSG have won their last five knockout round

matches by a combined score of 18-0. Luis Enrique must now be considered one of the elite managers in world football, having won Trebles with Barcelona and PSG. "He has set the standard," said Welshman Bale. "They are leading a new era." "They have set a very high bar and everyone in football will be trying to copy them and trying to stop them." The only concern for PSG could be fatigue. Sunday will be their 65th match since the start of the 2024-25 campaign. Exactly a month after that game they face Tottenham in the Uefa Super Cup to start 2025-26. **'Unbelievable numbers' as Dembele delights again** Dembele has certainly stepped out of Mbappe's shadow this season. The 28-year-old Frenchman has scored 35 goals and created 16 assists in 52 games in 2024-25, including this competition. Until now, Dembele's best goalscoring season was 14 for Barcelona. The speedster is now the favourite to win the Ballon d'Or - something that would have seemed impossible a year or two ago. "It's the first match in this tournament that we can use [start] Ousmane and I think he has been our best player this season," said Luis Enrique. "He deserves to win everything because he gives his all to the club and has done all season." Former England forward Wilson, 33, added: "Unbelievable numbers from Dembele. "If he wins the Club World Cup after winning the Treble, surely he has to

win the Ballon d'Or?" And it is not just those numbers that impress. "It all starts from the work-rate of Dembele - he forces players into mistakes," said Townsend at half-time, while summarising PSG's impressive performance. **Alonso will 'take lessons' from defeat** Unlike Luis Enrique, Xabi Alonso is still getting to know his Real Madrid team. The Spaniard took over at the end of the La Liga season when Carlo Ancelotti left for Brazil - and still has plenty of work to do on the evidence of this game. Alonso has been experimenting with formations, trying four and five-man backlines. England right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold missed this encounter through injury, so midfielder Federico Valverde played in that position instead. And it did not help that some of their attacking players did not work hard enough. "Vinicius Jr and Mbappe just haven't been tracking back down the sides and that is a big problem in this formation," said Townsend. "[Left-back] Fran Garcia is not happy, he has had absolutely no help down that left-hand side." Alonso admitted: "They have been building for two years and we are just starting so we will take time. We will have to learn from today, but the feeling at the moment is not the best. "We need a proper break. This is not the beginning of next year, this is just the end of this season. After just three weeks here I think we can take positives. We will take lessons from today."

## Messi scores twice to break MLS scoring record in Miami win

MIAMI (BBC): Lionel Messi became the first player to score multiple goals in four straight MLS games as he helped Inter Miami beat New England Revolution 2-1. The Argentina forward scored twice in the first half - his fourth consecutive double - to take his tally to 14 in 15 MLS games this season. Messi started his scoring streak in May, starring in a 4-2 win over Montreal and a 5-1 victory over Columbus, before

competing at the Club World Cup. The 38-year-old scored once in four games as Miami were beaten by PSG in the Club World Cup last 16, before returning to the MLS with a 4-1 victory against Montreal last week. "I always say Leo is a special player. For me, the best player that has played this sport in history," said Miami head coach Javier Mascherano. "So, it's unbelievable because he continues

doing things that maybe many, many years ago, we cannot see at this moment. But at the end, he's a special player, we are lucky to have him." Messi put his side 1-0 up in the 27th minute with a left-footed strike inside the area before doubling the score 11 minutes later, curling home following a long through ball from Sergio Busquets. Carles Gil got one back in the 79th minute for Revolution but Miami

held on to climb to fifth in the Eastern Conference. Messi's scoring streak is the latest of a number of MLS records broken by the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner. He holds the league record for most assists in a single game (five) and most goal contributions in a single game (six), which were both recorded during a 6-2 win against New York Red Bulls last May. His 58 goal contributions is also a record for Miami.

## Women's youth tennis training camp kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): In collaboration with Serena Hotels and the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), the Pakistan Women's Tennis Association (PWTA) has launched a 10-day Free Women's Youth Tennis Training Camp here at the PTF Tennis Complex. A total of 26 young girls from Islamabad and Rawalpindi are participating in the camp, which aims to promote and develop women's tennis in Pakistan. The training sessions are being led by some of the country's top coaches, including Mahboob Khan, Sara Mansoor, Assistant Coaches Waqar Ahmad and Husnain Mehmood, said a press release. The opening ceremony was graced by Ms. Zaira Ahmad Zaka, Secretary General-PWTA, Ms. Sarah Ibrahim Khan, Treasurer-PWTA, officials from Serena Hotels, PTF representatives, and a large number of parents. President-PTF, Aisam-

ul-Haq Qureshi, expressed his sincere gratitude to the Serena Hotels management, particularly Aziz Bolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, for their continued support through the Serena Hotels Sports Diplomacy Initiative for the growth and development of tennis in Pakistan. He said that such initiatives are vital for identifying young talent and play a significant role in the growth and future of women's tennis in Pakistan. Ms. Asma Khawar

Khawaja, President-PWTA, also thanked the Serena Hotels management for supporting this remarkable initiative. She added that, in collaboration with Serena Hotels, PWTA aims to expand this program to other cities across Pakistan in the near future. Col. (R) Ziauddin Tufail, Secretary General PTF, also thanked Serena Hotels for their ongoing commitment and valuable contributions to the development of tennis in the country.



LONDON: US player Amanda Anisimova serves to Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka during their women's singles semi-final tennis match on the eleventh day of the 2025 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, southwest London.





## In brief

### 14 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 14 outlaws, including nine individuals involved in various criminal activities and five proclaimed offenders and absconders, during multiple operations carried out across the federal capital on Thursday. A police spokesman told APP that the teams from Golra, Sumbal, Tarnol, Sangjani, Humak, Nilore, and Bhara Kahu police stations conducted raids and apprehended nine accused. The police recovered 2,170 grams of hashish, 175 grams of ice, and six pistols along with ammunition from their possession. He said cases have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are underway. He said, during a special campaign launched to apprehend proclaimed offenders and absconders, police teams also arrested five more criminals. He said the operations were conducted under the special direction of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, as part of the ongoing crackdown against crime and anti-social elements to ensure peace and security in the capital. He said the Islamabad Police is fully committed to safeguarding the lives and property of citizens, and no one will be allowed to disrupt public order.

### 438,078 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 438,078 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 495,116 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1523.06 feet which was 121.06 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 326,300 cusecs and 300,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1182.60 feet, which was 132.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 38,738 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 355,013, 348,486, 214,291 and 85,205 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 56,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 46,155 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Writer remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 19th death anniversary of renowned poet, writer, and literary figure Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi observed on Thursday with respect and admiration across the country. He was born on November 20, 1916, in Anga village of Khushab, Qasmi was a prominent voice in Urdu literature. He wrote over 50 books, including poetry collections, short stories, literary criticism, and essays. His notable works include Jalal-o-Jamal, Shola-i-Gul, Kish-i-Wafa, and short story anthologies like Chopaal, Sannata, and Kapaas Ka Phool. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi's writing often focused on humanism, social justice, and rural life. He is regarded as one of the most influential Urdu short story writers, known for his deep insight and emotional expression. He was also an active member of the Progressive Writers' Movement and edited several literary journals, including his long-running publication Funoon.

# Growing population may harm country,s uplift: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Thursday declared the dual threat of unchecked population growth and widespread child stunting as a national emergency, warning that these challenges severely undermine Pakistan's future economic competitiveness, governance capacity, and human development prospects.

Speaking at a function held to mark World Population Day, the Minister said that Pakistan faces an alarming situation where 40 percent of its population suffers from stunting — a condition that not only affects physical growth but also impairs cognitive development, limiting individuals' ability to learn and compete in a global economy.

"Stunting is not just a health issue. It's a reflection of failures in clean water access, sanitation, nutrition, education, and healthcare. The fact that we have sustained a 40% stunting rate over the past 40 years while our peer countries have progressed is a national failure," he said. Iqbal stressed that addressing stunting requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral

approach involving the entire government and society.

He pointed out the rapid population growth as an equally pressing concern, asking whether Pakistan was prepared to raise an ever-expanding population without the ability to provide quality education, health services, or employment. He called on provinces to take responsibility by launching population planning programs and aligning resource distribution with demographic realities.

Highlighting long-term solutions, Iqbal emphasized that the most effective strategy for population control is educating girls, citing global evidence of a direct link between female education and smaller, healthier families. He also called for a significant increase in women's participation in the workforce, which currently stands at only 23 percent, compared to over 50 percent in most developed countries.

Turning to governance, the Minister reflected on the aftermath of the 18th Constitutional Amendment. He said that while power was devolved to provinces, the expected improvements in service delivery never materialized because provinces failed to further

devolve authority to district and local levels. "Lahore cannot govern all of Punjab, nor can Karachi manage all of Sindh. Without real devolution, effective governance is impossible," he remarked.

He also criticized the high turnover of officials in key social sectors, calling for fixed tenures to ensure continuity and long-term planning. "Without stability in administration, we cannot expect results, no matter how many resources we allocate," he added.

He urged all stakeholders including government, media, and civil society to come together around a national consensus. "This is not merely a numbers issue. It is about the future quality of life of our next generations. If we continue to grow our population by 2.5 percent while our GDP grows by 5 percent, we cancel out half our progress. Now is the time to act," he added.

He reaffirmed that population management and human development remains top priorities in the federal government's five-year framework and expressed optimism that with provincial cooperation, tangible results can be achieved.

## ITA launches vehicle emissions campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA), in collaboration with the Punjab Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has launched a city-wide campaign to inspect and test vehicle emissions.

The initiative aims to reduce carbon monoxide levels from vehicle smoke and ensure cleaner air across the capital.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the campaign formally began with the inspection of ITA Chairman Irfan Memon's vehicle. After passing the test, a clearance sticker was issued and placed on the official car, setting the tone for the rest of the drive.

According to officials, the campaign includes joint inspections by the Islamabad administration and EPA Punjab. Advanced emission testing equipment is being used to measure carbon monoxide levels in vehicle smoke, with a limit set at six percent.

EPA Punjab's Emission Testing System Head Sajid Bashir provided a detailed briefing during the launch. He said that each vehicle passing the test will receive a scannable clearance stick-

er. These stickers can be verified digitally to ensure compliance.

Chairman Irfan Memon confirmed that the inspection drive will cover all vehicles operated by the Islamabad district administration. A full round of testing for official government vehicles parked at the Pak Secretariat is scheduled for tomorrow.

Under the guidelines set by the transport authority, any vehicle emitting carbon monoxide levels up to six percent will receive a clearance sticker. Vehicles exceeding this limit will be issued a warning. Irfan Memon emphasized that repeat violations will lead to action, including possible fines or restrictions.

In the next phase of the campaign, the focus will shift to private vehicles. Inspections will be carried out at various bus terminals and traffic checkpoints across the city. This move is aimed at monitoring the emission levels of public and private transport used by residents.

The authorities aim to promote responsible vehicle maintenance and reduce harmful emissions from transport sources. The joint effort also seeks to improve

air quality by ensuring vehicles meet environmental standards.

The EPA team stated that all testing is being conducted using modern technology to ensure accurate readings. They also highlighted that the use of scannable stickers adds a layer of accountability and monitoring to the system.

Officials reiterated that the initiative is not just limited to official vehicles. In the coming days, public transport and private cars will also be checked to ensure compliance with the set carbon monoxide standards. The campaign will continue in phases, and motorists are encouraged to maintain their vehicles in good condition to avoid warnings or penalties. The transport authority warned that failure to act on emission warnings will result in enforcement action without further notice.

Through this campaign, the Islamabad administration is seeking to address the growing issue of vehicular pollution and its impact on public health. With the use of digital monitoring and strict thresholds, the city is moving towards a more accountable and cleaner transport system.

## ICT Police's 24th annual summer camp concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 24th annual Summer Camp of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police concluded on Thursday with a vibrant and well-attended closing ceremony held at the Police Lines Headquarters.

A police spokesman told APP that senior officers, children and their parents attended the event, which marked the culmination of a month-long initiative aimed at engaging youth through constructive activities.

He said the summer camp was organized as part of community policing efforts, providing children aged 4 to 12 with training in horseback riding, swim-

ming, archery, taekwondo, martial arts, football, golf, basic first aid, and self-defense exercises.

He said fun activities such as magic shows and arts sessions were also arranged to make the experience enjoyable and enriching for the children.

He said the initiative was designed to equip children with positive and constructive skills during the summer break.

He said the ICT Police have been successfully organizing summer camps since 2002, and this year marked the 24th edition of the program, reflecting their continued commitment to community

engagement and youth development.

He said such activities would continue in the future to promote community policing and public trust, as emphasized by the Deputy Inspector General of Headquarters, Muhammad Jawad Tariq.

He said parents of the participating children praised the efforts of Islamabad Police for organizing the camp and providing valuable training in a safe and disciplined environment.

At the end of the ceremony, appreciation certificates were distributed among the children who participated in the camp.

## Both motorcycle riders must wear helmets: ITP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has made it mandatory for both the rider and pillion passenger, regardless of gender, to wear helmets while riding motorcycles in the federal capital.

An official told APP on Thursday that the initiative has been launched under the special direction of IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, with Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan

Haider leading its implementation.

CTO Zeeshan said that a two-week comprehensive awareness campaign has been launched prior to the enforcement drive. "The campaign includes public seminars, social media outreach, radio broadcasts, and distribution of educational materials to inform citizens about the life-saving benefits of helmet use," he stated.

He warned that after the awareness phase, strict

legal action will be taken against violators. "If either the rider or the pillion passenger is found without a helmet, traffic police will impose fines under relevant traffic laws. In case the passenger fails to comply, the rider will be held responsible," he explained.

Emphasizing the importance of helmets, the CTO noted that their use can reduce the risk of head injuries by up to 50 percent during accidents.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui distributing prizes among position holders during launching ceremony of Annual Pakistan Non-Formal Education Statistical Report 2023-24.

### Iranian envoy calls on Aleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and discussed strengthening the existing bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest.

The minister congratulated Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Iran's significant success in the war against Israel and called it a source of pride for every Pakistani. He said that the people of Pakistan and Iran are bound by deep-rooted religious and fraternal ties which will continue to grow stronger over time, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The participants of meeting also offered "Fateha" for the martyrs who lost their precious lives in the war against Israel.

Ambassador Moghaddam expressed heartfelt gratitude for Pakistan's steadfast support, praising the unity shown by the Pakistani government, public, and media. He framed Iran's military and ideological resilience as a divine blessing, stating that the nation had stood firm against the "Zionist mindset and aggression." This victory among the greatest blessings of Almighty Allah, he said.

Both leaders agreed that the war has clearly defined allies and enemies, exposed the true picture of countries like India and Israel to the world. They expressed gratitude to Allah Almighty for the triumph and reaffirmed their reliance on His Mercy for the future.

### 3 members of two criminal gangs busted

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Thursday arrested three members of two notorious criminal gangs involved in multiple incidents of robbery and street crime across the twin cities and recovered stolen valuables including laptops, mobile phones, and motorbikes used in criminal activities.

A public relations officer told APP that a special team from Koral police station carried out the operation following a series of complaints regarding increasing incidents of street crimes and armed robberies. The arrested suspects were identified as Rajab Ali, Farhan, and Nasir Ali.

He said that the arrested individuals belonged to two separate gangs operating in different sectors of Islamabad and Rawalpindi and were involved in snatching, theft, and burglaries. During the operation, police recovered stolen mobile phones, a laptop, cash, and three motorbikes allegedly used in various criminal activities.

He said cases have been registered against the arrested suspects and further investigation is underway to apprehend their remaining accomplices and recover more stolen items.

He said that SSP Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan, has issued strict directives to all zonal officers to launch an aggressive crackdown against criminal gangs involved in heinous crimes and take all necessary measures to safeguard the lives and property of citizens.

## Agreement signed for reviving local cotton sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, led a landmark agreement between the Ministry of National Food Security & Research, the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), and the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) to resolve the long-standing cotton cess issue and set a clear direction for the revival of Pakistan's cotton economy.

The signing ceremony was held at the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

The ceremony marks a pivotal step in the government's broader efforts to restore cotton's central role in the national textile value chain, said a press release issued here Thursday.

Under the leadership of Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, this agreement is a

demonstration of the Ministry's commitment to institutional reform, public-private collaboration, and long-term agricultural sustainability.

Speaking at the event, the minister declared the resolution of the cotton cess issue a historic breakthrough and reaffirmed that cotton remains the backbone of Pakistan's textile exports and rural livelihood.

He underscored the need for a strategic revival of the cotton crop through modern research, seed reform, improved inputs, and strengthened regulatory institutions.

Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasized that, under his stewardship, the Ministry has taken decisive measures to support cotton research, facilitate seed import processes, and build stakeholder consensus.

He stated that the government is focused on

making the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC) a progressive, research-driven institution that can spearhead innovation and productivity in cotton cultivation.

The minister further highlighted his plans for continued engagement with the textile industry and growers, including a forthcoming visit to APTMA House in Lahore to advance dialogue and policy alignment.

Concluding his address, Rana Tanveer Hussain stated that the revival of Pakistan's cotton sector is not just a matter of agricultural policy but a national economic imperative.

He assured that under his leadership, the Ministry will pursue comprehensive reforms to reestablish Pakistan's place as a leading global cotton producer and exporter.

## Action in Jinnah Super: 11 drivers handed over to police for traffic violations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration took action against traffic rule violations in a busy commercial area and several motorists were stopped during a surprise inspection and handed over to traffic police for legal proceedings.

According to the spokesman of ICT administration, Assistant Commissioner City, Maheen Hassan, carried out an inspection in Jinnah Super Market as part of a campaign to monitor traffic violations. The drive focused on one-way rule violations, use of unofficial number plates, and failure to present vehicle documents.

During the operation, officials found multiple cases of rule-breaking. A total of 11 drivers were stopped for either driving against the designated one-way traffic, using number plates that did not match official standards, or being unable to provide valid documents for their vehicles.

The drivers were handed over to the Islamabad Traffic Police on the spot for further legal action. The inspection aimed to maintain order in the commercial hub, where traffic congestion and violations often cause public inconvenience.

According to officials, the inspection was conducted without prior notice to ensure an accurate assessment of the situation. The administration emphasized the importance of traffic discipline, especially in areas with high footfall and business activity.

The Assistant Commissioner said that such inspections will continue regularly in commercial zones to ensure compliance with traffic rules. She added that cooperation with the traffic police is crucial to streamline urban mobility and enforce regulations.

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has already launched several enforcement campaigns this year

targeting both illegal parking and traffic law violations.

These actions are part of a broader plan to improve traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and overall public convenience.

Citizens are being urged to follow road safety rules, display approved number plates, and carry complete vehicle documents at all times. Officials say that ignoring these rules not only results in fines and legal consequences but also puts other road users at risk.

The administration has called on drivers and shopkeepers in the area to cooperate during inspections and report any persistent violations. Public feedback, officials say, plays a role in determining which areas require stronger monitoring.

The crackdown is part of the city's broader initiative to enforce laws and create safer roads in Islamabad's commercial and residential sectors.

## Woman burned by husband in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): A woman who was allegedly set on fire by her husband and father-in-law in the jurisdiction of Kirpa Police Station has succumbed to her injuries, prompting Islamabad Police to convert the case into a murder investigation under Section 302 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

An official told APP on Thursday that the victim, 28-year-old Sania Bibi, was shifted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in critical condition on the night of June 8 after suffering severe burns in an apparent act of domestic violence.

Despite receiving intensive medical treatment, she passed away a few days later due to the extent of her injuries.

It may be recalled that this scribe had earlier reported on the case in June, when the FIR was first registered and the victim was undergoing treatment at PIMS.

The official said the case, which was initially registered under Sections 324, 336-B, and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), has now been upgraded to include Section 302 following the victim's death.

He said the police acted swiftly upon receiving information about the incident. Three suspects, including the victim's husband Adil Mahmood, father-in-law Mustasib Hussain, and another family member, were arrested. Substantial forensic evidence was collected from

the crime scene, and statements were recorded to build a strong case.

He said the deceased had reportedly entered into a court marriage with Adil Mahmood, and had been facing domestic abuse for some time. On the night of the incident, the suspects allegedly poured cooking oil on her during a domestic altercation and set her on fire.

He said FIR was registered on June and the investigation team ensured timely medical care, immediate arrests, and thorough documentation of the incident.

He said Islamabad Police are committed to ensuring that justice is served and that those responsible for this heinous act are brought to justice through due legal process.



### 18 Afghan die during Hajj

KABUL (Pajhwok): 18 Afghan pilgrims died during this year's Hajj ritual, says the MoHRA. Around 30,000 Afghan pilgrims performed this year's Hajj pilgrimage, with their transportation facilitated by Ariana Afghan and Kam Air airlines. The post-haj flight operation was completed on Thursday. Acting Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs Maulvi Noor Mohammad Saqib chaired a meeting here to review the operations, noting all Afghan pilgrims had returned home.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 15, 1447 — Friday, July 11, 2025

### Two workers killed

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Two laborers have been killed after a wall collapsed in Jalalabad City. The police headquarters said the incident occurred in the 4th municipal district of the city on Wednesday. The wall collapsed while the workers were carrying out their duties, resulting in their deaths. According to police, one of the victims was a resident of Sawkai district in Kunar province, and the other was from Khogyani district in Nangarhar province.

## Dam tunnel construction nears completion in Farah

FARAH (TOLOnews): The construction of diversion tunnels for the Bakhshabad Dam in Farah has reached 85% completion and is now entering its final phase.

According to the Ministry of Energy and Water, the dam, located in Bala Buluk district on the Farah Rud River, is one of the key water resource management projects in western Afghanistan.

The Bakhshabad Dam has the capacity to irrigate 68,000 hectares of farmland and generate 27 megawatts of electricity.

Matiullah Abid, spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water, saying: "The Bakhshabad Dam project in Farah is one of the ministry's major ini-

tiatives. Phase one of the project is 85% complete. It is a significant regional water management project, capable of irrigating 68,000 hectares and producing 27 megawatts of power."

Experts highlight the positive impacts of investment in dam infrastructure, emphasizing that beyond its economic value, the Bakhshabad Dam plays a vital role in food security and water management in the region.

Abdul Zahoor Mudabar, an economic analyst, told TOLOnews: "Since Farah is one of Afghanistan's hottest provinces and much of its land remains untouched, any level of investment in dam con-

struction here benefits our economy and helps mechanize agriculture and manage water resources."

Another expert, Mohammad Asif Stanekzai, said: "One of the major benefits is that it helps us control our water, which can then be used in the agricultural sector. Hydro-power production can support Afghanistan across two or three sectors."

According to the Ministry of Energy and Water, upon completion, the Bakhshabad Dam will not only help control seasonal flooding and meet local energy needs but also play a key role in improving livelihoods and increasing agricultural yields in Farah province.

## Hanafi meets Herat's Governor

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, recently met with Sheikh Noor Ahmad Islamjar, the Governor of Herat Province, to discuss the effective management of refugees amid increasing migrant deportations from Iran.

In a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office, Governor Islamjar reported on the proactive measures taken by the Islamic Emirate's officials in Herat. He noted that local Mujahideen, alongside government officials, are dedicated to enhancing social welfare and tackling challenges faced by the community.

The governor highlighted a significant rise in the number of migrants returning through the Islam Qala border, emphasizing ongoing efforts to ensure that these returnees receive essential services for a smooth transition to their home provinces.

Sheikh Noor Ahmad expressed appreciation for the support of local residents in assisting migrants, pledging to leverage all available resources to secure their welfare.

Deputy Prime Minister Hanafi commended the dedication of Herat's officials and the local community in addressing the needs of returning migrants. He affirmed that, despite the rapid deportations from Iran, the collaboration between the Islamic Emirate and the people of Herat has led to successful management of the situation.

He extended his appreciation for the hard work and commitment of both local authorities and the citizens of Herat in supporting the refugee population.

## WHO warns of rising diseases

KABUL (Khaama Press): WHO warns of rising infectious diseases among deported Afghan migrants, citing poor sanitary conditions and urgent need for expanded medical support.

The WHO has issued a warning about the growing spread of infectious diseases and poor sanitary conditions among Afghan migrants deported from neighboring countries. WHO reports a surge in respiratory infections, diarrhea, skin conditions like scabies, and suspected COVID-19 cases among returnees.

On-the-ground assessments at key border points—particularly Islam Qala in Herat Province—show that upper respiratory infections are the most common ailments, followed closely by diarrhea and dehydration, especially among children and the elderly. Suspected cases of scabies and COVID-19 have also been reported.

In response, WHO has launched emergency health screenings and mass vaccination campaigns in collaboration with local health authorities at Islam Qala and Spin Boldak border crossings. These initiatives aim to prevent further outbreaks and provide critical care to vulnerable populations.

Over 8,700 children received oral polio vaccines, and more than 8,300 individuals received injectable polio vaccines at the Islam Qala crossing alone.

efforts are underway to combat child labor nationwide.

Samiullah Ebrahimi, spokesperson for the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, said: "To prevent children from engaging in hard labor, designated teams from the ministry monitor areas and instruct employers not to involve children in heavy labor."

Poverty, deprivation, and lack of job opportunities are among the reasons forcing children in the country into hard labor or begging.

## Zahid vows to increase tariffs on imported goods

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Deputy Minister for Industry and Commerce has assured traders that tariffs would be increased on imported goods whose domestic production could meet 20 percent or more of the country's market needs.

In a statement, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce wrote deputy minister Ahmadullah Zahid met with officials of board members, national traders, investors, and industrialists of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, Industries, and Mines.

At this meeting, participants expressed their concerns, suggestions and demands regarding distribution of industrial land, the lack of essential services, the need for preferential tariffs on raw materials, fresh fruits trade agreement with Pakistan and existing barriers to trade.

In response to these concerns, Zahid said the distribution of land for industrial parks would be transparent, fair, and based on the law approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

According to him, tariffs would be increased on imported goods whose domestic production could



meet 20 percent or more of market needs.

Tariff-related documents would henceforth be processed through an electronic system in a transparent, accurate and rapid manner and the ministry was trying to expand this process to other areas as well, he added.

Zahid assured investors and national traders about preferential tariffs with Pakistan.

The Deputy Minister asked investors to take advantage of existing economic opportunities and take constructive steps for the country's economic growth.

## Japan provides \$5m to support polio eradication in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Japan has provided \$5 million through UNICEF to support polio eradication efforts and strengthen immunization programs across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

Afghan cultural tours The Government of Japan, in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has pledged US\$5 million to UNICEF to support polio eradication and

strengthen routine immunization across Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

This 12-month initiative will aim to reach over 13 million children with life-saving polio vaccines and routine immunizations.

UNICEF stated on Thursday, 10 July 2025, that the grant reaffirms Japan's long-standing commitment to Afghanistan's health sector.

It will help sustain progress toward the global

goal of polio eradication, particularly in underserved, conflict-affected, and hard-to-reach areas.

Afghanistan remains one of only two countries in the world where wild poliovirus transmission has not been stopped.

Although under-five and maternal mortality rates have decreased in recent years, access to basic health services remains limited, and millions of children are still at

risk of deadly, preventable diseases.

A resurgence of polio in 2023 highlighted significant immunity gaps, especially among children in previously unreachable locations and among mobile or cross-border populations.

Despite prior progress—such as improved cold chain infrastructure and expanded vaccination coverage—urgent action is needed to close these gaps.

## Gypsums mine digging kicks off in Ghazni province

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): The digging of a gypsum mine was launched with an investment of 50 million afghanis during a ceremony in southern Ghazni province on Wednesday.

Head of Mine Maulvi Hazrat Yousof Sohaib told Pajhwok Afghan News the mine was an important economic project that could strengthen the atmosphere of trust between the government and the nation, increase economic growth, income, and reduce unemployment.

He said the contracting company would invest 50 million afghanis in the mine, which is located in Gawda Morda area of Nawar district.

He urged other Afghan

traders to invest in mines of the province so that Afghanistan could become an economically strong country in the region.

According to him, illegal and arbitrary mining has been prevented and urged the residents to cooperate with the government for legal mining.

This mine would provide job opportunities for dozens of people, Sohaib explained.

Sultan Ali, a resident of Nawar district, told Pajhwok the mine, the contract of which has been awarded a private company, would provide job opportunities for a large number of people and, on the other hand, increase government revenue.



"If mines are extracted properly and legally, Afghanistan would become an economically strong country in the region and many people would be employed."

Contracts for some other

mines have also been awarded in the Nawar, Malistan, Jaghori, Muqor, and Qarabagh districts of the province, including quarries of travertine, granite, marble, gypsum, limestone, and other stones.

## Treat returnees with compassion: Security forces

KABUL (Pajhwok): A meeting of the Security and Settlement Commission has emphasized reaching out to returning Afghan refugees with 'compassion and complete sincerity' and providing them with comprehensive security and necessary facilities.

On its X page, the commission wrote Mullah Rahmatullah Najeeb, the commission's deputy chairman and deputy minister for administration at the Ministry of Interior, chaired the regular meeting of the Central Commission for Security and Settlement Affairs.

The meeting discussed security forces' services for Afghans returning from neighboring countries.

The participants emphasized that returnees should be treated with complete sincerity, compassion and responsibility based on Islamic brotherhood and national commitment.

The meeting directed security agencies to provide comprehensive security and necessary facilities to returning Afghans.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) says 949,000 Afghans returned to the country between January and June this year.

## Returning home harder for Afghans born in migration

KABUL (TOLOnews): The forced return of Afghan migrants from neighboring countries has always faced serious challenges. However, the difficulties are even greater for families who were born and raised in migration.

These families have left behind everything they built in life and returned to Afghanistan with completely empty hands.

Sakina and her children are one example. For the first time, this mother and her children are breathing the air of their homeland. Sakina was born in Iran and has returned to Afghanistan for the first time in 38 years.

Sakina told TOLOnews: "I was born in Iran. I came from Iran, but we don't have any place, no house or land in our homeland. We arrived here this morning, have no food, and are sitting in this dirty place."

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that from April 10 of this year until now, 836,713 people have returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan. The most common illnesses among them include respiratory infections, acute diarrhea, and suspected cases of COVID-19.

The WHO stated:



"WHO has remained fully engaged in delivering essential health services at POEs and reception centers.

During the reporting period, the team provided support for surveillance, routine and polio immunization, outpatient consultations, and trauma care. The most commonly reported health conditions among returnees included respiratory tract infections (RTIs), acute watery diarrhea (AWD), suspected COVID-19, and scabies."

On another front, Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, said in a press briefing that these Afghan migrants are being returned to a country already facing a "crisis."

Mr. Dujarric told reporters: "I mean I think

our our colleagues at UNHCR have been very vocal in pointing out the very real human challenges, right? the fact that we've had some refugees deported back to a country that can barely absorb them where they may not have the resources to survive and where the rights of many including women and girls continue to be violated."

Amanullah, another deportee from Iran, told TOLOnews: "We went to Iran voluntarily and faced days like this. Iran pressured us and told us to leave."

According to statistics provided by the World Health Organization, it is estimated that this year up to 1.6 million people may return from Pakistan and up to 2 million from Iran.

## Afghan envoy pushes for IEA recognition



KABUL (Ariana News): The Afghan Embassy in Kazakhstan has confirmed that Mohammad-ur-Rahman, the acting ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in Astana, has held talks with Yerkin Tokumov, Kazakhstan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and seek formal diplomatic recognition.

According to a statement issued by the embassy, the two officials discussed ways to enhance political, economic, and cultural cooperation between the two countries. The Islamic Emirate's envoy expressed

optimism that Kazakhstan may follow Russia's recent move to recognize the current Afghan government, and reiterated Kabul's interest in developing broader regional ties.

During the meeting, Mohammad-ur-Rahman briefed the Kazakh official on the Islamic Emirate's foreign policy priorities, current investment opportunities, and domestic issues, including the situation of Afghan refugees, the impact of recent floods, and employment-related challenges.

He also welcomed Russia's decision to recognize the Islamic Emirate and encouraged Kazakhstan to

take similar steps.

In response, Tokumov affirmed Kazakhstan's continued interest in expanding bilateral engagement, stating that Astana remains committed to cooperating with Afghanistan in political, economic, and cultural fields.

The Islamic Emirate has been actively seeking diplomatic legitimacy and deeper regional ties since returning to power in August 2021.

While most countries have maintained informal or limited engagement, recent developments—including Russia's announcement of official recognition—have added momentum to the IEA-led government's push for broader international acceptance.

Kazakhstan has maintained relatively warm relations with Kabul under the current administration, sustaining humanitarian aid deliveries, economic collaboration, and dialogue through regional platforms, although it has not formally recognized the Islamic Emirate.

## Unemployment surges in Takhar province — workers demand urgent action



TAKHAR (TOLOnews): A number of workers in Takhar province say that the lack of job opportunities in recent months has led to serious economic challenges for them.

They are calling on the caretaker government to create employment opportunities.

Hasibullah, a resident who comes to the center of Taluqan city every morning in search of work, says most days he finds no job. He adds that even the limited aid distributed to those in need has not reached him.

Hasibullah told TOLOnews: "Government aid doesn't reach us. There's hardly any work or labor. Life just goes by day to day."

Other daily wage workers in Takhar also report worsening economic conditions and growing concern over their future.

Abdullah, another daily laborer, said: "We've come here to find work. From six in the morning until now, nearly eleven o'clock, we've waited, but there's no work."

Samiullah, another worker, said: "Sometimes, once every four or five

days, we might find a job. And even then, they don't hire me because of my age. Life is hard, the children need food. We don't have farmland; we rely solely on daily labor to survive."

However, Takhar's Department of Labor and Social Affairs says it is working to reduce unemployment through various programs.

Mohammad Asif Rahimi, head of the department's social affairs section, said: "With the support of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, we're launching vocational training programs soon. We'll accept students in plumbing, metalwork, tailoring, and mobile phone repair. These activities can help reduce unemployment."

Meanwhile, some economic analysts argue that vocational programs alone aren't enough. They say the caretaker government must also launch large-scale infrastructure projects to effectively tackle unemployment across the country.

## Rising child labor in Afghanistan amid poverty, lack of opportunities

KABUL (TOLOnews): With the spread of poverty and lack of job opportunities, the number of child laborers in the country has increased. Many of these children bear the burden of supporting their families instead of receiving education and playing.

Although their childhood has been traded for the smell of garbage and plastic, sometimes they sit together in the shade and laugh despite life's bitterness.

Nasim, a 14-year-old who is the sole breadwinner of her family, says her

father is addicted. "My father is addicted and we have no other guardian. Only my mother and younger brother are with me. We've enrolled my brother in school. I come and work. My heart breaks, but when I return home at night, I bring bread with me," He stated.

Haroon, another child, was detained for eleven days to prevent him from begging on the streets.

"They don't give us money. They said if we don't come to the city, they'll give us money, but

they haven't given us anything yet," said Haroon.

"My father is addicted. My mother sent me from Jalalabad to work. Before me, my brother had also come to work and send money home. Now he has returned to Nangarhar, and I have come to work. I ask the government to provide us with jobs and facilitate education," said Sahel, another working child.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs does not provide statistics on the number of working children in the country but says



# KP unveils action plan to fully immunize every child

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has officially launched a province-wide Immunization Action Plan (IAP), aiming to achieve 90 percent Full Immunization Coverage (FIC) for children by 2027 against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally inaugurated the initiative during phygital event held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Peshawar here on Thursday. The launch ceremony was attended by Advisor to the CM on Finance Muzammil Aslam, Advisor to the CM on Health Ihtisham Ali, Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Additional Chief Secretary (P&D) Ikram Ullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Abid Majeed, and Secretary Health Shahid Ullah Khan.

Senior officials from the health department and representatives from international partner organizations supporting the province's health sector also participated in the event. All Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, District Health Officers, Medical Superintendent of Hospitals attended the event virtually.

Addressing the ceremony, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is working with renewed commitment to eradicate the poliovirus from the province. Alongside polio eradication efforts, special attention is also being given to protecting children from other diseases, and for this purpose, an action plan has been developed to strengthen the immunization program, he said. The Chief Minister clarified that this is not just an action plan, but a clear reflection of the provincial government's commitment to eliminating polio.

He stated that the real task lies in

the on-ground implementation of the action plan, and directed the relevant departments, institutions, and district administrations to ensure its full and effective execution. Ali Amin Gandapur remarked that although achieving the targets of the action plan is challenging, but it is not impossible. "With better teamwork, determination, and hard work, these targets can be accomplished", he added.

He further stated that Rs. 8 billion have been allocated in the current fiscal year's budget for the immunization program. "We are also deeply grateful to our development partners for their generous support and continued collaboration in this shared mission to safeguard the wellbeing of our children," he added and affirmed that together, "we will rid the province of polio and other deadly diseases." Speaking on the rationale behind the IAP, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahab Ali Shah highlighted that the province currently has the lowest immunization coverage in the country, with the southern districts posing particular challenges to vaccination efforts.

The Chief Secretary described the target as ambitious yet attainable, citing the enhanced institutional capacity and resources now in place. He emphasized a focused and coordinated approach to ensure that every child - whether living in urban areas or remote rural communities - is reached through the plan.

During a detailed presentation at the event it was informed that currently, 55 percent of children in the province are fully immunized, leaving a large number at risk. The new IAP seeks to close this gap by vaccinating approximately 1.42 million children under the age of two every year.

The list of diseases on target include Diphtheria, Tetanus, Mumps, Hepatitis B, Pertussis, Rotavirus, Rubella, Polio, Meningitis,



Pneumonia, Typhoid and Measles. The IAP outlines an eight-point strategy to ensure no child is left behind, with special focus on underserved and hard-to-reach areas.

A central element of the strategy involves comprehensive outreach to all mapped communities, including those in security-compromised or geographically remote locations. Operational capacity has been enhanced through a significant increase in dedicated transportation budgets expanding from Rs. 80 million to Rs. 448 million over three years, enabling field teams to reach distant and rural communities with consistency.

Moreover, the plan focuses on upgrading over 1,800 fixed immunization sites across the province - including Basic Health Units, Rural Health Centres, and hospitals. These facilities are being equipped with trained staff, complete stocks of essential vaccines, working cold chain equipment, and a 15-day buffer supply of syringes to prevent disruption in service delivery. In urban and semi-urban districts that show low coverage rates, targeted immunization drives will be launched.

The first such campaign is scheduled to begin in Peshawar, with an aim to identify, digitize, and vaccinate every missed child in the area. To

ensure results and accountability, the action plan incorporates strong governance mechanisms. Monthly and quarterly performance monitoring will be based on reliable data indicators, such as vaccinator performance, geographic outreach, and site functionality. Furthermore, third-party coverage assessments will be conducted every six months to validate government data and identify underserved populations. In parallel, a province-wide survey is being carried out to understand behavioral barriers that prevent families from seeking immunization services.

The findings will inform future communication strategies tailored to address disparities across gender, geography, and socioeconomic status. This comprehensive approach - driven by digital data, community engagement, and field-level monitoring - represents a turning point in the province's public health efforts. With political commitment at the top and mechanisms in place for delivery at the grassroots, the government is now focused on translating its promises into measurable impact. The IAP is a critical part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Good Governance Roadmap - one that aims to strengthen institutions, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure equitable access to essential services.

## KP Public-Private Partnership Committee meeting held

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The eighth meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Committee was held here on Thursday with the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in chair. The committee granted in-principle approval of the transaction structures for three major projects under the PPP framework. These projects include the Ghanool Integrated Tourism Zone, Daraban Special Economic Zone, and PDA Commercial Complex. The meeting was attended by provincial cabinet members Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate, Arshad Ayub Khan, and Muzammil Aslam, along with Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Ikramullah Khan, relevant administrative secretaries, and other members of the committee. During the briefing, it was informed that the Ghanool Integrated Tourism Zone will be established under the Design, Build, Operate, and Transfer (DBOT) model of the Public-Private Partnership framework. The initial lease period of the tourism zone will be 50 years, with the option for an extension of another 50 years. Moreover, a revenue-sharing mechanism will be developed to distribute the income generated from the Ghanool Integrated Tourism Zone between the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the private partner. The establishment of the tourism zone is expected to promote tourism in the region and contribute to the socio-economic development of the area. It will also create new employment opportunities for the youth of the province and ensure environmental protection. It was further briefed that the tourism zone will be equipped with all necessary infrastructure and tourist facilities. Regarding the Daraban Special Economic Zone, the committee was informed that it spans a total area of 1,000 acres, out of which 722 acres will be designated for industrial use and 14.26 acres for commercial purposes.

## Rain floods Lahore, kills five across Punjab

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Severe rainstorms accompanied by strong winds have wreaked havoc across Punjab during the past 24 hours, resulting in the deaths of three people and injuries to at least 22 others.

In Sheikhupura's Mirza Virkan area, the collapse of a roof claimed the lives of two children — 2-year-old Arham and 5-year-old Haram — while two others sustained injuries. In Vehari, incidents of structural collapse due to the heavy rainfall were reported in several areas including 23WB, Muslim Town Stop, 19WB, and 57WB. Four individuals were injured in these accidents. Additionally, one person was injured in Chak No. 59WB when solar panels fell during the storm.

In Bhakkar's Mankera area, a wall collapsed on Link Road near Hyderabad City, injuring one person. Similarly, in Dera Ghazi Khan's PEG City area, three people were wounded when a roof caved in. In Attock, six members of a family were trapped inside their house due to heavy rain and urban flooding near Babu Chowk, Chungi No. 07. Rescue teams reached the site promptly, provided medical aid, and moved all individuals to a safe location.

Multiple rain-related incidents were also reported in Lahore. In Harbanspura, a motorcyclist was injured due to a slippery road. Another person was injured near the New Ravi Bridge. Similar motorbike slip incidents in Ali Raza Abad and Wahdat Colony left two more individuals injured. In the Kashmiri Gate area, a child died due to electrocution after coming into contact with an electric pole. In another incident on Aashiana Road, a person was injured when a roof collapsed.

In a separate incident, the roof of a house collapsed in the Taxali area, resulting in the death of one person and injuries to three others. In Nishtar Colony, another roof collapse also claimed one life and left three injured. Authorities have urged citi-

zens to stay indoors during extreme weather, avoid low-lying areas, and take necessary precautions as rain and thunderstorms are expected to continue over the coming days.

According to data from the Water and Sanitation Agency's (Was) Monsoon Control Room, Lahore received an average of 58.8mm of rain, with some areas like Nishtar Town recording the highest 84mm, followed by Lakshmi Chowk (78mm) and Paniwala Talab (74mm).

The first spell of rain lashed the city from 2:45am to 5:40am, with a second, more intense downpour hitting between 10:45am and 12:11pm. The heavy showers exposed the weaknesses in Lahore's drainage system, with key areas such as Jail Road (63mm), Qurtaba Chowk (68mm) and Wasa Head Office in Gulberg (69mm) experiencing severe water accumulation. The rainwater mixed with sewage, creating a public health crisis as residents struggled to navigate flooded streets.

Despite claims from the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) about deploying cleaning teams and clearing over 6,000 waste containers, citizens reported minimal improvements on the ground. "The main roads are still submerged, and no one from the administration is here to help," said Asif Mahmood, a shopkeeper at Lakshmi Chowk.

Monsoon rains also affected several other districts across Punjab in the last 24 hours. Khanewal recorded 51mm, Rawalpindi 42mm, Sahiwal 44mm, Murree 41mm, Okara 30mm, Mandi Bahauddin 27mm, Mangla 24mm, and Toba Tek Singh 13mm. Other regions like Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Gujrat, Kasur, Bahawalnagar, Sargodha, Multan and Jhang also experienced downpours. In Lahore, the rain continues with intervals, with lightning and strong wind, making the weather pleasant, and giving relief to people from mugginess.

## Terrorism to be crushed, says Saif

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, has stated that Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has taken serious and concrete steps to eliminate terrorism in the merged districts. He emphasized that all stakeholders, including political parties, were expected to treat this critical issue with the seriousness it deserves.

In this regard, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will soon convene an All Parties Conference (APC) to establish peace and order in the merged districts. Invitations will be extended to all political parties to participate in the conference. Additionally, the Chief Minister has summoned a key meeting of elected members of the National and Provincial Assemblies from the merged districts to discuss the way forward.

Dr. Saif added that people from all walks of life and the public of the merged districts will also be involved in this inclusive process. He further emphasized that Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur was fully committed to restoring peace and stability in the merged districts.

"Terrorism can only be eradicated through collective responsibility and joint efforts," Dr. Saif said. He highlighted that the provincial government under the leadership of Chief Minister Gandapur is taking practical and effective steps toward ending terrorism and putting the merged districts on the path of development.

## Pakistan, Russia vow closer ties

MOSCOW (APP): A high-powered delegation led by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi, as well as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, who is also the focal person for the Pakistan Steel Mills project, called on Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk in Moscow on Thursday.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations in all areas of mutual interest, including political, trade and economic cooperation, as well as energy, connectivity, industrial and agricultural cooperation.

SAPM Fatemi underlined that Pakistan attached high importance to its relations with the Russian Federation, adding that strengthening relations with the latter was one of Pakistan's foreign policy priorities.

## Iran threats in UK 'significantly increased': Intelligence watchdog

LONDON (AFP): A United Kingdom parliamentary committee on Thursday blamed Iran for at least 15 attempts to kill or kidnap British-based individuals since 2022, saying the threat from Iran had "significantly increased".

London's response has been too focused on "crisis management", said parliament's intelligence and security committee, with concerns over Iran's nuclear programme dominating their attention too much. Tehran swiftly issued a "categorical rejection of the unfounded, politically motivated and hostile allegations".

The committee's claims were "baseless, irresponsible, and reflective of a broader pattern of distortion intended to malign Iran's legitimate regional and national interests", said its London embassy. The report comes after growing alarm in Britain at alleged Iranian targeting of dissidents, media organisations and journalists in the UK, including accusations of physical attacks.

Iran in March became the first country to be placed on an enhanced tier of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, which aims to boost Britain's national security against covert foreign influences. It requires all persons working inside the country for Iran, its intelligence services or the Revolutionary Guard to register on a new list or face jail. "Iran poses a wide-ranging, persistent and unpredictable threat to the UK, UK nationals, and UK interests," Kevan Jones, chairman of the watchdog committee, said in the report's conclusions.

"Iran has a high appetite for risk when conducting offensive activity and its intelligence services are ferociously well-resourced with significant areas of asymmetric strength," Jones said it bolstered this through proxy groups, "including criminal networks, militant and terrorist organisations, and private cyber

## Tehran tells IAEA to end 'double standards' before N-talks can resume

TEHRAN: Iran's president has warned the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to abandon its "double standards" if it hopes to restore cooperation over the country's nuclear programme, amid an acute mistrust following Israel and the United States' attacks on Iranian nuclear sites last month, and the UN nuclear watchdog's refusal to condemn the strikes.

Speaking to European Council President Antonio Costa by phone on Thursday, President Masoud Pezeshkian said, "The continuation of Iran's cooperation with the agency depends on the latter correcting its double standards regarding the nuclear file," according to Iranian state media. Pezeshkian also declared that "any repeated aggression against Iran will be met with a more decisive and regrettable response." Relations between Tehran and the IAEA have sharply deteriorated since mid-June, when Israel launched air attacks on Iran, hitting military and nuclear sites as well as numerous civilian areas. The attacks were then followed by US air raids using bunker-buster bombs. Iran retaliated by launching missiles and drones at Israel, triggering a 12-day conflict. An Iranian missile attack on a US base in Qatar was the final act before a fragile ceasefire was declared by US President Donald Trump. Last week, Pezeshkian signed a law suspending Iran's cooperation with the IAEA. The agency confirmed that its last remaining inspectors had now left the country, returning to the IAEA headquarters in Vienna. The agency said its staff had remained in Tehran throughout the conflict, and reiterated its intention to resume its monitoring work "as soon as possible". — Aljazeera

actors" to allow for deniability. His committee's report said that while Iran's UK activity "appears to be less strategic and on a smaller scale than Russia and China", it "should not be underestimated".

The physical threat posed had "significantly increased" in pace and volume, and was "focused acutely on dissidents and other opponents of the regime" as well as Jewish and Israeli interests in the UK, it said. "The Iranian Intelligence Services have shown that they are willing and able — often through third-party agents — to attempt assassination within the UK and kidnap from the UK," the report said. "There have been at least 15 attempts at murder or kidnap against British nationals or UK-based individuals since the beginning of 2022."

Similarly, security minister Dan

Jarvis said in March that Britain's M15 domestic intelligence service had tallied 20 Iran-backed plots "presenting potentially lethal threats to British citizens and UK residents". The watchdog committee took evidence for two years from August 2021 for its report, a period which saw Tehran implicated in a plot to kill two London-based Iran International television anchors. In March last year, one of the Persian-language outlet's journalists was stabbed outside his London home. Two Romanian men have been charged in relation to the attack and face extradition to the UK to stand trial. The counter-terrorism unit of London's Metropolitan Police led the investigation. Iran's charge d'affaires in the UK has said that the Tehran authorities "deny any link" to the incident.

## Judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship order

WASHINGTON: A federal judge in New Hampshire has blocked United States President Donald Trump's executive order restricting birthright citizenship as part of a class-action lawsuit.

Thursday's ruling is the first to test the limits of a recent Supreme Court decision limiting the use of nationwide injunctions. It is expected to face an immediate appeal from the Trump administration. Birthright citizenship is a right protected under the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution. That amendment establishes that "all persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States".

For decades, that amendment has been understood to grant citizenship to anyone born in the US, regardless of their parentage. But Trump has argued that undocumented parents are not "subject to the jurisdiction" of the US and therefore their US-born children cannot be considered citizens.

On the first day of his second term, Trump signed an executive order that would restrict birthright cit-

izenship based on the immigration status of a newborn's parents — but critics have warned that decision could render babies stateless. That concern has prompted a slew of legal challenges, including the one that came before US District Judge Joseph Laplante on Thursday.

In his federal courtroom in Concord, New Hampshire, Laplante announced that a class-action lawsuit representing all children affected by Trump's order could proceed. Then he proceeded to award a preliminary injunction on behalf of the plaintiffs, suspending Trump's order restricting birthright citizenship. He added that his decision was "not a close call". "That's irreparable harm, citizenship alone," he said. "It is the greatest privilege that exists in the world." Laplante, however, did place a stay on his injunction, allowing the Trump administration seven days to appeal it.

Thursday's case is one of several seeking to overturn Trump's executive order. It was brought on behalf of a pregnant woman, two parents and their children born during Trump's second

## US, Russia envoys discuss Ukraine, Syria & Iran

KUALA LUMPUR: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio have held rare face-to-face talks on the sidelines of an ASEAN meeting in Malaysia, discussing the war in Ukraine, as well as developments in Iran and Syria.

"A substantive and frank exchange of views took place on the settlement of the situation around Ukraine, the situation around Iran and Syria, as well as a number of other international issues," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the meeting on Thursday in Kuala Lumpur. Both sides reportedly expressed interest in easing tensions and resuming dialogue in areas beyond the battlefield.

Lavrov and Rubio "confirmed their mutual desire to find peaceful solutions to conflicts, restore Russian-American economic and humanitarian cooperation, and facilitate unimpeded contacts between the societies of the two countries", the ministry added. The Russian side described the meeting as constructive, saying dialogue between Moscow and Washington would continue. — Aljazeera