

Naqvi visits UAE
ABU DHABI: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, where he met with UAE Deputy PM and Interior Minister, Lieutenant Gen. Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to strengthen bilateral cooperation in security, counter-narcotics, and immigration matters. Naqvi received a warm welcome at the UAE Ministry of Interior, where he was presented with a guard of honor. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding reforms and restructuring in public sector governance.

Effective governance model top priority: PM — says economic development impossible without modernizing outdated system

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the transformation of the outdated system into a modern, digital, and effective governance model was among the government's priorities, as economic development and prosperity were impossible without modernizing the system to meet contemporary demands.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting, directed to introduce reforms to enhance the performance of ministries and hire the services of experts in every sector. During a meeting, the Ministry of Energy gave a detailed briefing on a system comprising experts for improving governance and implementing reforms.

The prime minister said that the country could not achieve progress with the system that has been in place for seven decades. He highlighted that Pakistan was rich in resources, and its young workforce was its most valuable asset, with many talented Pakistanis bringing fame to the country globally. Prime Minister lauded Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Khan Leghari and his team for their tireless efforts and emphasised that assistance from internationally renowned experts and consultants was crucial for systemic change, and introducing new thinking and governance methods through reforms aligning with modern requirements.

He said that the energy ministry's reforms, reduction in losses, and saving billions of rupees for the national treasury served as a role model for other ministries. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the formation of a committee to finalize actionable proposals for the restructuring of other ministries and institutions, considering the reforms in the energy ministry. The

committee will also focus on recruiting the best workforce, aligning ministries with modern systems, and improving governance through reforms.

During the briefing, it was told that under the National Electricity Plan, 134 strategic directives had been implemented in the ministry, where the ministry handles policy, monitoring, and future planning, while a technical arm comprising sector experts handles implementation, innovation, and planning. The meeting was also given a detailed briefing on the profiles of the sector experts and the current working of the ministry under the established system. Federal Ministers Dr. Musadik Malik, Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kiyani, Chief Coordinator Musharraf Zaidi, and other relevant senior officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, as the international community observes World Population Day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that his government was fully committed to a comprehensive, rights-based population agenda with a focus on equitable access to healthcare, informed family planning, and strengthening systems allowing individuals to make choices about their future with dignity and autonomy.

"These efforts are fully aligned with Pakistan's commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Family Planning 2030 targets. The stability of population growth requires a coherent, multi-sectoral approach," he said in his message to the nation on the Day, annually observed globally on July 11 to reiterate the global unity and commitment to promote sustainable population growth and inclusive development.

Pak-China cultural collaboration reaches new heights, says Tarar

BEIJING (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Friday hailed Pakistan-China relations as more than just a strategic alliance, calling it a friendship rooted in shared mountains, rivers, and centuries of cultural exchange, and reaffirmed China as Pakistan's "iron brother"—a term symbolizing deep trust, historical unity, and enduring cooperation between the two nations.

"It is an honour to speak in a country we proudly call our iron brother—a bond strengthened not only by shared borders, but by majestic mountains, flowing rivers, and a rich, intertwined history. Among these connections is the mighty Indus River, whose roots trace back to the lands of China, symbolizing the natural and historical unity between our nations," Tarar said.

Speaking at the "Civilization Exchange and Mutual Learning" event, centered on the theme of Cultural Heritage and Innovation, Tarar underscored the strengthening ties between Pakistan and China as a catalyst for safeguarding Pakistan's vibrant cultural legacy. He highlighted how this deepening collaboration not only preserves the past but also paves new avenues for influence, friendship, and global unity.

Tarar envisioned a future where shared heritage becomes a bridge between nations—transforming even water, once a source of contention, into a symbol of peace and mutual understanding. He conveyed deep gratitude for President Xi Jinping's visionary leadership in launching the Global Civilization Initiative.

He emphasized that the

initiative fosters a meaningful platform for cross-cultural understanding and promotes peaceful coexistence among nations. Minister Tarar emphasized Pakistan's deepening partnership with China as a powerful example of enduring cultural and civilizational harmony. He highlighted the shared historical ties—from the Gandhara civilization and Mohenjo-daro to the ancient Silk Route—now reborn as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a vibrant symbol of connectivity, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Tarar emphasized Pakistan's unwavering dedication to digitizing its cultural heritage—encompassing the historic legacies of Gandhara, Mohenjo-daro, and Taxila—not solely as a preservation effort, but as a transformative platform for the nation's youth.

Dar lashes out at Indian leadership for not accepting defeat

KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that a ceasefire at the military level is being maintained. He said India's political leadership is unable to digest defeat and clarified that India neither can stop Pakistan's water nor divert its flow.

Addressing a gathering of the Pakistani community in Kuala Lumpur, Dar expressed his delight at meeting overseas Pakistanis, calling each of them ambassadors of Pakistan. He emphasised the strong brotherly relations between Pakistan and Malaysia.

He said that Pakistan has taken off under difficult circumstances, completing an IMF program for the first time in its history. "By 2018, we had become the world's 24th largest economy and were on track to join the G20 within a few years. But what happened in Pakistan afterward is well known," he remarked. Dar added that Pakistan dropped from being the 24th largest economy to the 47th. "By 2020, we were on the brink of default, but under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, default was averted."

"Our goal is to bring Pakistan into the G20," he asserted. Dar noted that within the past 16 months, the policy rate has dropped from 22% to 11%, and inflation has decreased from 38% to single digits. Efforts toward economic recovery are ongoing day and night. Speaking on regional tensions, the FM said India accused Pakistan of the Pahalgam false flag operation and closed the Attari border. "India violated the Indus Waters Treaty," he said. The National Security Committee (NSC) decided to respond strongly to Indian aggression. "When India closed Attari, we closed Wagah. All Indian visas, except for Sikh pilgrims, were canceled, and we closed our airspace to Indian aircraft."

"This time we did not let India's narrative succeed," he emphasised. He pointed out that India also used falsehoods during the 2019 Pulwama attack. "Pakistan has no involvement in the Pahalgam incident. We demanded dialogue and a transparent investigation." Dar asserted that India cannot stop or divert Pakistan's water and warned that such actions would be considered an act of war. — Agencies

The Frontier Post

7 killed in Kurram mishap
F.P. Report

KURRAM: Seven people lost their lives when a vehicle fell into a ravine in Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The incident occurred in the Gandao area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district, where a passenger vehicle plunged hundreds of feet into a deep gorge while negotiating a turn. The vehicle was en route from Gandal to Sadda.

Bodies of 9 murdered in Balochistan sent to their native towns

F.P. Report

DERA GHAZI KHAN: The bodies of nine bus passengers who were murdered in Balochistan were sent to their native towns on Friday.

Terrorists affiliated with Fitna-ul-Hindustan abducted passengers from the bus travelling from Quetta to Lahore in Zhob district on Thursday night and shot them dead after checking their identities. According to Dera Ghazi Khan Commissioner Ashfaq Ahmed, the bodies were received by the civil and military officials and sent to their respective hometowns.

He stated that the victims belonged to Lahore, Gujrat, Khanewal, Gujranwala, Lodhran, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Muzaffargarh. The administration revealed that brothers Jabar and Usman, residents of Dunyapur tehsil of Lodhran, were traveling from Balochistan to attend their father's funeral. They were taken off the bus in front of their women and children and shot dead.

The other victims have been identified as Muhammad Irfan from D.G. Khan, Sabir from Gujranwala, Muhammad Asif from Muzaffargarh, Gulam Saeed from Khanewal, Muhammad Junaid from Lahore, Muhammad Bilal from Attock and Bilawal from Gujrat. Sabir, who was employed at a food center, had been working there for 15 years and was the sole breadwinner for his family. He had four children, with the eldest being 14 years old. Sabir was a resident of Wahndo area of Gujranwala.

The banned Balochistan Liberation Front, affiliated with Fitna-ul-Hindustan, claimed responsibility for the attack. A spokesperson said the group blocked the road

between Musakhel–Mukhtar and Khajuri, and executed the nine abducted passengers.

On Thursday, nine passengers, all belonging to Punjab, were brutally shot dead after being abducted by terrorists affiliated with Fitna-ul-Hindustan in the Loralai district, officials confirmed.

According to Loralai Commissioner Saadat Hussain, the incident occurred near the Dakai intersection on the National Highway connecting Loralai and Musakhel. The victims were kidnapped after disembarking from a passenger bus.

"Armed assailants intercepted the passengers, separated them based on identity, and took them away. Their bodies have now been recovered," the commissioner told reporters. Two of the passengers were identified as brothers Usman Toor and Jabir Toor, residents of Dunyapur. They reportedly lived in Quetta for work and were going home for their father's funeral.

Earlier, it was reported that terrorists of Fitna-ul-Hindustan attacked passenger buses in Kalat, Mastung, and Loralai, abducting several travellers. According to details, a search operation was launched in the affected areas to safely recover the abducted passengers, said the spokesperson for the provincial government.

The attacks occurred on Wednesday, police sources confirmed. Balochistan government spokesman Shahid Rind confirmed the incidents and stated that security forces responded promptly and robustly at all three locations. Rind emphasised that the forces were fully alert to ensure the safety of civilians and that every effort was

being made to secure the release of the kidnapped passengers. He added that security forces were conducting intensive operations against the terrorists and the protection of citizens remains the government's top priority.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the kidnapping and killing of bus passengers in Sardhaka area of Balochistan, vowing to avenge the blood of innocent people.

"We will deal with terrorists with full force. The blood of innocent people will be avenged," The prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office. He said that the killing of unarmed civilians was a blatant terrorism by Fitnatul Hindustan. "With resolve, unity, and strength, we will confront the scourge of terrorism and uproot it completely," Prime Minister Shehbaz resolved.

President Asif Ali Zardari strongly condemned the brutal killing of bus passengers in Balochistan, reiterating the nation's resolve to purge the country of Fitnatul Hindustan and its facilitators.

The president, in a statement, said that the terrorists took the innocent citizens off a bus and brutally murdered them. "This barbarity is a heinous conspiracy by Fitnatul Hindustan to spill blood in Pakistan. They want to create chaos and unrest in Pakistan. We will purge our land of Fitnatul Hindustan and its facilitators at all costs," the president resolved.

He said that the country's struggle would continue until the scourge of terrorism is completely eradicated. The president said that he shared the grief of the victims' families and expressed sympathies for them.

Pakistan condemns rights violations in IIOJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan Friday in his weekly media briefing shed light on Pakistan's diplomatic engagements, regional security concerns, and reiterated its condemnation of human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The Spokesperson, highlighted the country's active multilateral diplomacy, evolving bilateral relations, and firm positions on key foreign policy issues. He mentioned that the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar was currently leading the Pakistani delegation at the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The forum was discussing political and security issues impacting the Asia-Pacific region with the goal of fostering peace and cooperation through dialogue, he said.

On the sidelines of the ARF meeting, he said Senator Dar held bilateral meetings with leaders from Malaysia, Canada, Australia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Russia, the European Union, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. These interactions focused on strengthening economic ties, trade, education, and cultural exchanges, as well as addressing regional and global challenges. The Foreign Office Spokesperson also highlighted the visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Minister of National Defence Yasar Güler to Islamabad. Co-chairs of the Joint Commissions under the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), the Turkish officials discussed expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, and investment. The inaugural meeting of the Joint Commission reviewed the progress of twelve standing committees under the HLSCC, he added.

In parallel, he said a Pakistani delegation led by Special Assistants to the Prime Minister, Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi and Haroon Akhtar Khan, met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk in Moscow. Discussions covered wide-ranging cooperation including trade, energy,

agriculture, and investment. Pakistan reiterated its desire to deepen ties with Russia, recognizing its stabilizing role in global affairs. He added that a key development was the inaugural round of Additional Secretary-level talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan held in Islamabad on July 7. The talks, he said focused on trade, refugee repatriation, regional connectivity, and security cooperation. "Pakistan underscored its concerns over terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan and urged Kabul to take concrete actions against groups threatening Pakistan's security," he said.

He also shed light on the 9th round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Poland took place in Warsaw on July 4. Delegations reviewed cooperation across various sectors including energy, defence, mobility, and higher education. Both countries agreed to enhance engagement through high-level visits and multilateral cooperation, with the next round to be held in Islamabad in 2026, he said. The spokesperson announced that July 13 will mark the 94th Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Kashmir (Kashmir Martyrs Day), commemorating the 1931 massacre of 22 Kashmiris in Srinagar. He denounced ongoing human rights abuses in IIOJK, including recent restrictions on Ashura preparations and the humiliating treatment of a Kashmiri youth by Indian forces.

"Indian armed forces are operating with impunity, with license to kill," Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan said, reiterating Pakistan's call for an end to extrajudicial killings and for the international community to take notice of the situation. Commenting on Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's claim of attacking 13 Pakistani airbases, the FO Spokesperson termed the remarks "distortions and misrepresentations" and a "violation of international law." He reminded that Pakistan had downed multiple Indian aircraft and rejected India's attempts to glorify aggression. On Afghanistan, the Spokesperson acknowledged ongoing concerns about terrorist sanctuaries and stressed that Pakistan continues to engage with Kabul in good faith, hoping for more responsible action from the Afghan side.

Pak-Russia ink pact to revive PSM

MOSCOW: Pakistan and Russia on Friday signed an agreement to restore and modernise Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), reaffirming their long-standing industrial partnership.

The agreement was signed at the Pakistan Embassy in Moscow by Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production Saif Anjum and General Director of Industrial Engineering LLC from the Russian side Vadim Velichko, in the presence of Special Assistant to Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan and Pakistan's Ambassador to the Russian Federation Muhammad Khalid Jamali, stated a press release.

"Reviving PSM with Russia's support reflects our shared history and commitment to a stronger industrial future," said SAPM Haroon said during the signing ceremony today. The project aims to restart and expand steel production, marking a new chapter in bilateral cooperation.

A day earlier, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk called both countries "natural allies" and strategic partners in the areas of economy and energy, while Pakistan said it viewed Russia as a stabilising factor in the international arena. Deputy PM/Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar met his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur. — Agencies

Top judicial forum forms body to address enforced disappearances

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) on Friday took serious notice of the enforced disappearances and unanimously resolved that the judiciary would not compromise on its constitutional duty to safeguard fundamental rights.

The 53rd meeting of NJPMC was convened at the Supreme Court of Pakistan under the Chairmanship of Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr Justice Yahya Afridi. The meeting was attended by the Chief Justices of all the High Courts, while Additional Attorney General for Pakistan attended on special invitation. The Committee deliberated on key policy issues and adopted several significant measures to improve judicial performance, technology integration in

judicial processes and citizen-centric justice delivery.

The NJPMC took serious notice of the enforced disappearances and unanimously resolved that the judiciary would not compromise on its constitutional duty to safeguard fundamental rights.

A dedicated committee was constituted to formulate an institutional response, after taking into consideration concerns of the Executive, to be communicated through the Attorney General for Pakistan. The Committee also decided to protect judicial officers from external influence and asked the High Courts to establish structured mechanisms for reporting and redressal of such instances within a stipulated timeframe.

To improve the commercial dispute resolution landscape, the NJPMC approved the establishment

of Commercial Litigation Corridor, with specialized courts and benches. In line with its commitment to expeditious justice, the Committee endorsed the piloting of a Double-Docket Court Regime in select districts on need basis with optional participation. The framework for Model Criminal Trial Courts was also approved to address long-pending criminal cases through time-bound trials and optimized judicial resources.

In a major step towards strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), the Committee approved launch of a court-annexed mediation regime as a pilot project. This includes the establishment of district mediation facilities, family court mediation centers and standardized SOPs for operational purposes.

To ensure consistency and excel-

lence in the district judiciary, the NJPMC constituted a committee headed by Justice (Rtd) Rehmat Hussain Jafferri, former Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan comprising Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan, the Registrars of High Courts and Director General, Federal Judicial Academy to recommend key performance indicators aligned with international benchmarks, standardized recruitment and training mechanisms, address disparities in service conditions and propose a framework for the District Judiciary Policy Forum as well as overseas exposure opportunities for Judges. The Committee also approved the development of a Professional Excellence Index for talent hunt of lawyers for induction in judiciary and asked the High Courts to finalize their models within 30 days. The ethical and policy

implications of using generative AI in judicial functions were discussed, and the National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC) was asked to finalize a comprehensive charter on ethical use of AI in this regard.

The Committee appreciated the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, for his detailed presentation proposing various reform intervention on behalf of all the Inspectors General of Police of the Provinces and ICT and decided that the High Courts shall issue SOPs for attendance of under trial prisoners and official witnesses through video link. It was also decided that the Federal and Provincial Judicial Academies shall conduct trainings for Police Officers including District Police Officers on request of the respective IGPs.

On the request of the Additional Attorney General for Pakistan, the

NJPMC decided that all constitutional petitions pertaining to tax and financial matters shall be heard and decided by division benches of the High Courts instead of Single Bench. The NJPMC appreciated the initiatives of Lahore High Court regarding construction of female bar rooms, day care center and health insurance for Judges and their family members. It was decided that all the High Courts will approach their respective Provincial Governments for similar facilities.

It was also decided that the NJPMC Secretariat shall take up the proposal of consultation with the Presiding Officer before transfer of ministerial staff of the Administrative Courts and Tribunals with the Federal Government. The NJPMC reaffirmed its commitment to a progressive, transparent and responsive judicial system, rooted in constitutional values and guided by the rule of law.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah chairs a meeting at CM House to deliberate on the Marka-e-Haq and Independence Day programmes. —APP Photo

'Sindh's Energy Diversity Conference' held

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has emphasised the province's potential as Pakistan's 'energy basket' due to its vast resources including coal, gas, wind, and solar energy.

Shah urged the gathering of stakeholders, experts, and policymakers to discuss the province's vast energy resources and the urgent need for sustainable energy solutions.

'Sindh's Energy Diversity Conference', organised by Energy Update and the Energy Department of the Government of Sindh, highlighted the province's commitment to harnessing its rich mix of conventional and renewable energy sources to ensure energy security, sustainability, and affordability for all citizens.

Murad Ali Shah emphasised the progress made in utilising Thar coal, noting that over the past six years, 30 million tons of coal have been supplied to Independent Power Producers, generating 31 gigawatts of electricity, serving three million homes.

He announced the construction of a 105-kilometre railway line to connect Thar coal to global markets, calling it a game-changing project. He also recounted historical challenges, including investor reluctance after the 1996 government change and federal opposition to Sindh's solar and wind

power projects.

The chief minister emphasised that Sindh is uniquely positioned with an abundance of natural gas and coal reserves, notably the Thar coal, which has the potential to meet the country's electricity needs for decades. The province is also leading the way in renewable energy initiatives, including the operational wind corridor and several solar energy projects aimed at reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting clean energy.

The establishment of the Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company (STDC) and the Sindh Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Septra) were also announced as key steps in enhancing energy delivery and regulatory autonomy. Murad Shah reaffirmed the government's vision of collaborating with the public and private sectors to develop robust energy policies, promoting investments in hybrid solutions, and ensuring that every household in Sindh has access to reliable and affordable electricity.

This conference marks a significant milestone in Sindh's journey towards energy independence and sustainability, setting the stage for future developments in the region's energy landscape. The CM highlighted the success of the Nooriabad proj-

ect, which supplies 100 megawatts of electricity to Karachi. "Earlier, we wanted to supply 100 MW to Hesco but it turned down the offer, saying they have an abundance of electricity. "Sindh has established its own transmission company to overcome such hurdles," he said.

He emphasised Sindh's leadership in wind and solar energy, with electricity from Thar and wind projects integrated into the national grid reaching as far as Punjab. The provincial budget allocates Rs2.5 billion for solar energy, and under the guidance of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Sindh government pays electricity bills for 200 units for deserving Thar residents.

Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah also spoke, affirming Sindh's dedicated efforts to produce affordable and efficient green energy. He mentioned ongoing projects, including two solar parks for Karachi, a solar project in Manjhand for the Hyderabad region, and plans for solar parks in Sukkur and Larkana.

Nasir Shah added that large industries are gradually shifting to green energy, and free solar systems are being provided to people across the province. Overall, the address underscored Sindh's rich energy potential and proactive provincial initiatives.

PFUJ condemns arrest of journalist

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) Workers has strongly condemned the arrest of Peshawar-based journalist Arshad Ullah Khan and demanded his immediate release.

PFUJ Workers' President Shamim Shahid and Secretary General Raja Riaz have expressed their concerns over the arrest, which they believe is a violation of press freedom.

PFUJ says Arshad Ullah Khan, News Editor of The Muslim Today, was picked up from his home by security officials in the early hours of Friday.

Although no security agency has officially confirmed the arrest, responsible officials have confirmed it to the Peshawar Press Club and Khyber Union of Journalists.

The PFUJ Workers have demanded that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other federal authorities ensure Arshad Ullah Khan's immediate release.

The union believes that the arrest is unjustified and that Khan should be freed without delay. The PFUJ Workers' statement highlights concerns over the safety and security of journalists in Pakistan.

Lahore-Raiwind 16-km motorway on the cards

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government will construct and bear the expenses of a 16-kilometre-long motorway, which will be built from Lahore to Raiwind.

The National Highway Authority (NHA) official sources told APP that in the last fiscal year, Rs. 1,000 billion was spent under the Public Sector Development Program (PSPD). An NHA document revealed that foreign aid was available for seven highway projects. The Islamic Development Bank will provide financial assistance for three sections of the M6 motorway, while two more sections will be built under public-private partnership.

LHC orders crackdown on restaurants violating timings

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday expressed strong displeasure over the failure of restaurants to comply with the official closing time and directed strict action against violators.

The court ordered that all restaurants across the city must shut down by 12:00 AM, without exception.

Justice Shahid Karim resumed proceedings on a set of petitions filed by Haroon Farooq and others seeking preventive measures against smog and environmental pollution.

During the hearing, a member of the Judicial Water and Environmental Commission informed the court that tree plantation campaigns are planned in 760 colleges across Punjab.

At this, the court made it clear that no trees along the canal shall be cut without

its prior permission. It further recommended the establishment of a Miyawaki-style urban forest, particularly suggesting Johar Town, Lahore, as a suitable site for plantation.

The court also inquired about the delay in the inauguration of a smog emission analyzer machine, which was previously scheduled. To which, a provincial law officer attributed the delay to undisclosed reasons.

Justice Karim also sought a report regarding a previous statement by the Director General (DG) of the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) concerning tree cutting. The PHA's counsel clarified that the statement was outdated and no new remarks had been issued by the current DG.

The court, however, stressed the need for a clear explanation from the DG

and said that orders regarding action against those involved in illegal tree cutting would be issued the same day. The court also ordered the appointment of an independent consultant for monitoring the ongoing Yellow Line project.

Meanwhile, the judicial commission member reported observing thick black smoke in the Sheikhupura area while traveling to Islamabad.

In response, the court directed authorities to impose a heavy fine on the brick kiln responsible, located near Hiran Minar. The court also instructed that all kiln owners in Sheikhupura be warned, any further violations will lead to the demolition of their kilns. The court adjourned further hearing on the environmental petitions till July 28.

Punjab issues flood warning amid rising Indus River levels

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has issued a flood warning for the districts of Mianwali, Layyah, and Bhakkar following a moderate flood situation at Chashma on the River Indus.

Chief Secretary Punjab, Zahid Akhtar Zaman, has directed the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to ensure the immediate evacuation of residents from low-lying and vulnerable riverside areas.

The directive was issued during a video conference chaired by the Chief Secretary on Friday, which brought together deputy commissioners from across the province to assess flood preparedness and urban inundation risks during the ongoing monsoon season.

Chief Secretary Zaman emphasized that protecting human lives and property remains the top priority of the government. He stated that the Finance Department has already released emergency funds to all districts to support flood response and relief operations. He also instructed the PDMA to continue round-the-clock monitoring of river flows, weather

patterns, and dam water levels.

Quoting data from the Meteorological Department, Zaman highlighted that monsoon rainfall this season is expected to be 20 to 25 percent above normal, raising the threat of widespread urban flooding. In response, the Local Government Department, WASA, and Rescue 1122 have been placed on high alert. The Chief Secretary directed that the newly-established WASA offices in ten districts be made operational without delay. He also announced that, following the Chief Minister's directives, WASA and Parks & Horticulture Authority (PHA) offices would be set up in all districts across the province.

Referring to the recent heavy rainfall in Lahore, the Chief Secretary commended the efforts of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and their teams for efficient water drainage and on-ground coordination. However, he also expressed concern over the increased risk of structural collapses during the monsoon and directed all district administrations to immedi-

ately assess and monitor dilapidated buildings to avoid potential casualties. Additional instructions were issued to improve urban traffic management during heavy rains, including better coordination among traffic police, municipal authorities, and emergency services.

Earlier in the meeting, the Director General of PDMA briefed participants that since June 25, rain-related incidents have claimed 39 lives and injured

Constitutional approach vital to settle any disagreement: PA speaker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has said that dialogue and consultation are the essence of parliamentary democracy. He presided over a consultative meeting regarding the disqualification references against 26 suspended members of the opposition at speaker's chamber of the Punjab Assembly on Friday.

The meeting was attended by suspended opposition members, government representatives and other parliamentary leaders. The speaker provided the suspended members an opportunity to present their point of view. During the meeting, formal hearings were also held on applications submitted by members from the government side. Both the government and opposition proposed initiation of mutual dialogue, which was warmly welcomed by Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan.

To make the consultation process more effective, it was mutually agreed to form a joint committee comprising senior members from both sides. The purpose of the committee was to find a constitutional, legal and parliamentary solution to the issue. Malik Ahmad Khan said that every disagreement could be resolved through a positive, dignified and constitutional approach.

He termed the entire process a positive parliamentary tradition and expressed hope that all parties would move forward with wisdom, patience and a commitment to democratic values. It was also decided in the meeting that the next session of the parliamentary leaders will be held on Sunday at the Punjab Assembly, which would be chaired by the speaker himself.

Minister pays tribute to martyred firefighter

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Khawaja Salman Rafique on Friday visited the residence of martyred firefighter Muhammad Shoaib EMT in Shahdara to offer condolences to the bereaved family.

Muhammad Shoaib embraced martyrdom while bravely performing his duties during a rescue operation at a warehouse in Khokhar Town Bund Road, where a building collapsed amidst efforts to extinguish a fire on Thursday.

Accompanied by District Emergency Officer Lahore Shahid Waheed Qamar and other officials, the minister met with the grieving family and prayed for the elevation of the martyr's soul. Expressing deep sorrow over the tragic incident, Khawaja Salman Rafique paid tribute to Shoaib's courage and dedication, saying that he laid down his life in the line of duty to protect others.

Kundi seeks Iranian support for Pilgrims' facilitation at border

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has urged the Iranian government to extend special attention to Pakistani pilgrims, particularly those traveling from Dera Ismail Khan, and help resolve challenges faced at the Pakistan-Iran border.

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, hosted a dinner in honour of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. Former Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and central Secretary Information of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Nadeem Afzal Chan, also accompanied the Governor on the occasion.

During the gathering, the two leaders discussed the exemplary friendship between Pakistan and Iran, highlighting the deep-rooted religious reverence and mutual respect shared by the people of both nations. They also explored potential avenues for future cooperation in trade, development, and regional prosperity.

Governor Kundi appreciated Iran's unwavering support for Pakistan during times of conflict, particularly during the Pak-India wars, underscoring Iran's steadfast commitment to the friendship.

He mentioned that Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Field Marshal were visiting countries that stood by Pakistan during critical times, as a gesture of gratitude. The Governor raised the issue of the difficulties faced by Pakistani pilgrims, especially those from Dera Ismail Khan, during their journey to Iran and Iraq. He said that Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had assured him of full cooperation in addressing these issues at the Pakistani border in Balochistan, and expressed hope that the Iranian government would also extend special attention to the needs of the pilgrims.

He also appreciated the humanitarian efforts of the Iranian Red Crescent in sup-

porting internally displaced persons from Kurram and lauded the role of Pakistan's armed forces in restoring peace in the region.

Governor Kundi briefed the ambassador on Pakistan's serious efforts, especially at the federal level, to ensure peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through intelligence-based operations.

Ambassador Amiri Moghaddam thanked the Governor for attending the dinner and praised Pakistan's support during Iran's recent conflicts as a sign of Muslim unity and brotherhood. He reaffirmed that the Iran-Pakistan relationship is rooted in a shared culture, faith, and unbreakable bond of love.

On the issue of pilgrims, he stated that Iran views serving them as a divine duty and is committed to ensuring their welfare. He also revealed that the Interior Ministers of Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq would hold a joint meeting in Mashhad to address pilgrims' concerns, especially for the upcoming Arbaeen pilgrimage. He noted that the decision to allow Pakistani pilgrims to use their own buses had already eased a significant logistical hurdle.

The ambassador highlighted the vast potential for business cooperation between the two countries and emphasized the need for serious focus on enhancing bilateral trade. The meeting also included discussions on exchange of delegations. Nadeem Afzal Chan proposed academic, religious, and media exchanges, which the ambassador welcomed as essential for promoting peace and unity.

He further said the long-standing relationship between Iran and the PPP, expressing optimism that both countries would draw even closer on defence, trade, and governance in the future, benefiting the entire region. On this occasion, Governor Kundi presented a bouquet to the Iranian Ambassador, who in turn presented the Governor with a commemorative shield.

SMIU to confer degrees to 362 graduates in convocation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) is going to hold its 6th Convocation on Thursday (July 17), in which more than 362 graduates will be awarded degrees including the first PhD degree.

In this connection a meeting of heads of different departments and related staff chaired by the Vice Chancellor Dr Mujeeb Sahrai was held at the Conference Room of SMIU

on Friday. The meeting reviewed arrangements for convocation for which 14 committees were formed for executing different assignments before and on the day of the convocation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chancellor said that it is SMIU's historic convocation because the first PhD degree will be awarded to a graduate of the university. He said awarding first PhD degree is considered biggest

achievement of a university, likewise SMIU feels proud when it is going to award first PhD to its graduate.

Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai further said this is the third convocation of SMIU which is being organised in last four years. "SMIU has emerged as one of the quality university of the country, that is why it has streamlined its academic activities," Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai remarked.

BISP holds live E-Kutchehri to address concerns

LAHORE (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Punjab held a live E-Kutchehri (e-court) on Friday through its official Facebook page, offering a platform for direct engagement with beneficiaries across the province.

The session was hosted by Director General BISP Punjab Muhammad Nasir Khalily, who personally responded to public queries

and concerns during the one-hour interactive broadcast.

A total of 28 beneficiaries participated in the session, sharing various issues related to the programme. Several concerns were resolved instantly during the session, while the remaining cases were referred to the respective BISP Tehsil Offices for swift action on a priority basis.

Addressing the audience,

DG Nasir Khalily stressed that the BISP registration process is entirely free of cost. He clarified that all BISP surveys are conducted only through the Dynamic Registry Centers set up at BISP Tehsil Offices across the country. He cautioned beneficiaries against sharing personal information with unauthorized persons and urged them to beware of fraudulent schemes.

از دفتر تحصیل میونسپل ایڈمنسٹریشن جہانگیرہ

اشتہار نیلام (دوسری بار)

اشتہار برائے نیلام ذرائع آمدن تحصیل میونسپل ایڈمنسٹریشن جہانگیرہ برائے ایک سال 2025-26 بذریعہ (E-auction) بحوالہ مکملہ بیلد و دیہی ترقی خیر بھونڈو اہم اسلٹ نمبر No.AOII/LCB/6-11/2022 مورخہ 28 مارچ 2025 کے تحت اپنے مندرجہ ذیل ٹھیکہ جات برائے سال ازیم جولائی 2025 تا 30 جون 2026 نیلام کرنا چاہتی ہے۔ خواہشمند حضرات فرم جنہوں نے سال 2025-26 کے لئے لوکل کونسل بورڈ صوبہ خیر بھونڈو اور شاد کو ساتھ مختلف کاس میں باقاعدہ رجسٹرڈ ہوں لوکل کونسل بورڈ کی ویب سائٹ <http://eauction.lcbkp.gov.pk> پر 28-07-2025 تا آخری تاریخ 07-2025-30 جون 12 بجے تک آن لائن بولی میں حصہ لے سکتے ہیں۔

ٹیڈول نیلامی درجہ ذیل ہے۔

| نمبر شمار | نام ٹھیکہ جات | میدان ٹھیکہ | زیر بیعانہ | نیلام کی تاریخ |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 1 | سائ بورڈ فیس TMA جہانگیرہ | 11 ماہ ازیم اگست 2025 تا 30 جون 2026 | 121000 | 30-29-28 جولائی 2025 |
| 2 | لوکل اسٹینڈر صوبائی روڈ اسٹیشن روڈ جہانگیرہ | ایضاً | 38000 | ایضاً |
| 3 | ٹاکسی ریت، بجری، ہڈنگل وغیرہ مرثی | ایضاً | 50000 | ایضاً |
| 4 | بلاک نمبر 1 میاں پھلی زون | ایضاً | 25000 | ایضاً |
| 5 | واٹر سربیس فیس جہانگیرہ و شادیہ | ایضاً | 30000 | ایضاً |

شرائط درج ذیل ہیں: (۱) مندرجہ بالا ٹھیکہ جات مالی سال 2025-26 کے لئے نیلام کئے جائیں گے۔ (۲) ہر بولی دہندہ کے لئے لازم ہوگا کہ مقررہ تاریخوں سے قبل ہر نیلامی کے لیے الگ الگ ذریعہ بیعانہ بطور کال ڈیپازٹ / بینک ڈرافٹ بنام تحصیل میونسپل آفیسر TMA جہانگیرہ بنائے اور آن لائن بولی دینے سے قبل لوکل کونسل بورڈ کی ویب سائٹ پر آن لائن تصدیقات درج کرے گا۔ ویب سائٹ پر دی گئی کال ڈیپازٹ سے متعلق تصدیقات غلط یا جعلی ہونے کی صورت میں بولی دہندہ کو بلیکسٹ کیا جائے گا۔ (۳) آن لائن بولی ختم ہونے کے بعد ٹھیکہ نمبر 48 گھنٹے کے اندر اندر مذکورہ کال ڈیپازٹ اہم اور رجسٹریشن اور تو فی شناختی کارڈ کے تصدیق شدہ معلومات ریکوئیشن راج ٹی ایم اے جہانگیرہ میں جمع کرنے کا پابند ہوگا۔ (۴) ہر بولی دہندہ صوبائی حکومت سے معمول شدہ قواعد و ضوابط برائے نیلامی ٹھیکہ جات برائے سال 2025-26 پر عمل درآمد کرنے کا پابند ہوگا۔ (۵) ٹھیکہ سیریل نمبر 2 میں نظام پورٹالنگ کوچ شامل نہیں ہیں۔ (۶) کامیاب بولی دہندہ ٹھیکے کے علاوہ حکومت کی طرف سے لا گوٹ کرٹیکل ورکر ٹیکسز (اکر لاگو ہوں گے) ملحقہ و جمع کرنے کا پابند ہوگا۔ (۷) تمام ٹھیکہ جات پر صوبائی اور مرکزی حکومت کی طرف سے موجودہ اور آنے والے شرائط لاگو ہوں گے اور کسی بھی ٹی ایم اے کا بانی دار آن لائن بولی میں حصہ لینے کا مجاز نہ ہوگا۔ (۸) کامیاب بولی دہندہ آن لائن بولی کے مقرر کردہ وقت ختم ہونے کے بعد 2 دن کے اندر اندر کو دفعی اوقات کار میں ذریعہ ضمانت اور ریٹنگی دفتر بذراستح جمع کرنے کا پابند ہوگا۔ دیگر شرائط نیلام ویب سائٹ پر یا دفتر بذراستح ملحقہ کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

نوٹ: ٹھیکہ سیریل نمبر 03 کا لیڈر دورانیہ محکمہ صحت کی طبیعتی نمبر 761/MDW/MM/NSR/BaraMarhatti/Block-1/2025 مورخہ 28-04-2025 ہے۔ لیڈر دورانیہ ختم ہونے پر ٹھیکیدار لیڈر نمٹ کا ٹھیکہ فراہم کرے گا جس پر فیصلہ کاروں کے مطابق کیا جائے گا۔

اشتہار

تحصیل آفیسر TMA جہانگیرہ

چیز میں تحصیل لوکل گورنمنٹ جہانگیرہ

Zero Tolerance to Corruption

INF (P) 3004/25



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, paid an official visit to the historic Peshawar Flying Club.

Trekking to Tirich Mir Base Camp tomorrow

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The first group of trekkers will depart from Chitral for trekking to the Tirich Mir Base Camp, the highest peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, tomorrow (Sunday).

This was announced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) Director General Habibullah Arif during a press conference here on Friday.

He said the provincial government was taking priority steps to promote adventure tourism in the region, adding that the Tirich Mir Summit was expected to further boost

tourism in Chitral.

The KPCTA DG also said that the highest peak in the Hindu Kush mountain range was being promoted through local participation, with over 500 men and more than 100 women having submitted applications to join the trek.

"As per the directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, various activities are being organised across the province to promote tourism.

The provincial government has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Italian Professor Pinelli. Soon, an adventure training school will be established in Chitral to train both men and women from the

province," the official said.

The second trekking group to the Tirich Mir base camp, he added, would depart in the last week of July, followed by a third group in the first week of August.

Local porters have been included in the Tirich Mir Summit, which would directly benefit the local community.

It may be mentioned that the KP provincial government had announced a waiver of royalty fees for the year 2025-26. These fees typically range from \$2,500 to \$4,000. This initiative is expected to benefit not only Chitral and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also Pakistan's economy in the long run.

Public expectations from bureaucracy increased: DG PPSA



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director General NIPA/PARD/PPSA Capt. (Retd) Usman Gul has said that people today expect a lot from bureaucracy. National progress is contingent upon the role of professional bureaucracy. He expressed these views while addressing the graduating officers of 43rd Domain Specific Mid-Career Management Course at the NIPA/PARD/PPSA Campus on the eve of graduation ceremony of the course. Faculty and staff of the three training institutes attended the event.

The Director General added that professional trainings like Specialized part of 04 Weeks of MCMC are vital for equipping the officers with the needed skills so that officers effectively tackle the challenges being faced by the nation. He said that public servants should be friendly with the people and dedicate their full potential to public service. He urged the graduating officers to perform their duties with integrity, discipline and commitment.

The Director General paid special tribute to the outright support and guidance of the Secretary Establishment Division Mr. Inamullah Khan Dharejo. He said that Secretary Establishment provided visionary leadership to the NSPP and its allied NIPAs and extended full support. The Director General appreciated the efforts of the faculty, staff and administration of the PPSA for making the course a success. Chief Instructor MCMC (Domain Specific) Mr. Muhammad Taj Hameed presented the course report to the Director General.

Asghar defends PhD thesis in English

F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: Scholar Muhammad Asghar has successfully defended his PHD thesis in English from Qurtaba University of Science & Technology. His Supervisor was Abdul Hamid Khan and external supervisor was Professor Ayaz Qadeer from Comset University, Islamabad. He attributed his success to the prayers of his parents

When Lahore rained, memories bloomed

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

THE monsoon rains in Lahore have always held a special place in my heart, not merely as a season, but as a chapter of life rich in fragrance, emotion, and memory. With each drop that falls upon the ancient soil of this historic city, my mind returns to those cherished mornings spent with my beloved late father, Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal, whose discipline and affection were the guiding stars of my childhood.

My father was a man of unyielding routine. Come rain or shine, cold winds or the crisp amber hues of autumn, he would set out for his morning walk in Bagh e Jinnah (formerly known as Lawrence Garden) right after Fajr prayers. It was a practice he followed with religious sincerity. Long before I reached the eighth grade, I had begun to accompany him, clutching a book in hand, partly to honour his discipline, and partially for the unspoken delight of being in his presence.

Our walk would begin with a graceful loop around Bagh e Jinnah, its winding paths shaded by majestic trees, their leaves trembling with morning dew. Once my father concluded his first round of the garden with brisk walk, I would continue alone, wandering toward the Mughal Garden. There, barefoot, I would tread softly on the wet grass, its chill both awakening and soothing. That green canvas, kissed by dawn, became my study room, my sanctuary, where I prepared for upcoming exams, surrounded by nature's unmatched tranquility.

The Bagh e Jinnah boasts an almost encyclopedic collection of trees—each offering shade, fragrance, and inexplicable comfort. Breathing under their canopy, one could feel not just rejuvenated, but healed. There is indeed truth in the ancient belief that time spent amid trees cures ailments both of the body and the soul. Scattered among these botanical sentinels were fruit trees too—jamun trees in particular were both prominent and prized.

During the rainy season, jamuns would appear like amethyst treasures—gleaming in the early light, piled high in baskets across the garden. With the newfound medical understanding that jamuns aid in the control of diabetes, their demand soared. Walkers would buy them in handfuls, convinced they were plucked fresh from the trees above. The idea of eating fruit straight from nature's lap lent a certain satisfaction that no packaged luxury could match.

However, one morning, my father—fondly called Haji Sahib by many—cast a knowing eye upon the jamun vendors and remarked, "They claim these are fresh from the garden, but how could such large quantities be plucked daily from just a limited tree?" His question lingered in my thoughts. The following morning, we reached earlier than usual and caught a vendor red-handed, unloading crates of jamuns purchased from the local market. The charm of the illusion was shattered, yet it brought us immense amusement. We chuckled together, amused by the psychological play that made the same fruit taste fresher when imagined to be picked from one's own backyard.

Those days were also defined by the delightful simplicity of seasonal food. On a rainy morning, the combination of Puri Halwa, Metha Pur'ra, Qeemay Waala Pura, with lassi was an example of itself. After having this breakfast, users slept for hours. Rainy days of monsoon in Lahore were incomplete without the aroma of freshly baked mince-meat rotis or Nans (Qeemay Walay Nan), the tang of curd chutney, the sweetness of mangoes, and the refreshing coolness of lassi. Sometimes, we would carry these treats to picnic spots such as Bagh Jinnah, Kamran's Baradari, Jahangir's Tomb, Shahi Qila, or the Badshahi Masjid, where friends and family would gather beneath overcast skies, sharing laughter, stories, and food under the rain-washed trees and domes.

And how can one forget the traditional childhood games that came alive during the rainy season? In narrow mohallas and wide-open courtyards, children played barefoot in the rain-soaked streets. Paper boats would float along the flowing rainy water, each child cheering their tiny vessel as it sailed past leaves and pebbles like a warrior of monsoon waters. Girls and Elder women, seated in woven charpoys beneath tin roofs, would sip cardamom-laced chai and reminisce about their own childhood rains, often while shelling peas or slicing raw mangoes to be pickled.

The rain would also bring with it a special rhythm to the city—street vendors calling out in high-pitched tones, selling roasted corn (Bhutta) smothered in salt and lemon; fried pakoras crackling in giant woks placed under makeshift tarpaulin shades; the spicy aroma of aloo samosas mingling with the petrichor rising from the earth. These were not merely snacks, but seasonal rituals—a feast for the senses that defined monsoon in Lahore.

We have become entangled in the tangles of life and have forgotten these sensory contents. The scent of damp earth, the taste of seasonal fruits, the feel of dew-laced grass under bare feet, and the sound of gentle rain mingling with morning birdsong—these experiences that once nourished our spirits are now buried beneath schedules and screens.

There was a purity to those moments, a sacredness to such companionships. Time, however, moves on with unrelenting grace. Many of those dear souls are no longer with us. The city has grown, perhaps even prospered in concrete and commerce, but the heart longs for what cannot be replaced: the people, the innocence, and the quiet depth of connection found in shared silence under a cloudy sky.

Some memories, like the scent of wet earth after the first summer rain, linger forever. They are not merely recollections—they are treasures, eternal and irreplaceable. In today's world of haste and distraction, they offer a bridge to what was once whole and beautiful. And though the seasons may change and time may take away those we love, the rains of Lahore will always remind me of my father's quiet footsteps, of the jamun-laced laughter, of barefoot mornings in gardens kissed by dew, and of a Lahore that once whispered love through its rain.

Imran's solitary confinement is political revenge: Shafqat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science and Information Technology, has said that the continued solitary confinement of PTI founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan is a serious violation of human rights and democratic values.

"Imran Khan has been kept alone in jail for more than 700 days. He is not allowed to talk to his sons, and is being treated unfairly. This is not about law — it is about political revenge," Dr. Ayaz said.

He added that Bushra Bibi, wife of Imran Khan, is also facing harsh conditions in prison. "She is being mentally pressured, and denied even the basic rights that every prisoner should have," he said.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz stated that the treatment of PTI women leaders — including Dr. Yasmin Rashid — is unjust and inhumane. "Dr. Yasmin is suffering from cancer, yet she is being denied proper medical care. This is cruelty, not justice."

He criticized PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz, saying she is using her position to take personal

revenge from PTI women. "Such political behavior is harmful to democracy and creates more division in society," he added.

Despite all this, Dr. Ayaz said PTI women leaders remain strong and committed to their cause. "No pressure can break their spirit."

He concluded by saying that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, under Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, will continue to raise its voice for Imran Khan and other political prisoners at all levels. "We believe in justice, human dignity, and the rule of law."

Engr Salman defends his Ph.D thesis



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Engr. Muhammad Salman, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar successfully defended his Ph.D thesis here today under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Javed.

The topic of his Ph.D thesis was "Seismic Risk Assessment of Code Compliant and Non-Compliant Confined Brick Masonry Buildings in Northern Pakistan". His research addresses the seismic vulnerability of mason-

ry residential buildings in Pakistan, particularly in light of frequent earthquakes and inadequate construction practices. Despite recommendations in building codes, confined masonry is rarely implemented due to cost, lack of enforcement, and awareness. The context of this issue, is reflected in widespread damage observed in unreinforced masonry structures during recent earthquakes.

Engr. Salman presented his research findings through a seminar in public forum session, followed by Viva-Voce examination by the Examination

Committee. Engr. Salman is also serving as a Lecturer in the Department of Civil Engineering, UET Peshawar.

He has published seven research papers in Impact factor journals of international repute in the filed of structural and earthquake engineering.

His research evaluation committee (REC) included Prof. Dr. Bashir Alam, Department of Civil Engineering, UET Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Sahar Noor, Department of Industrial Engineering, UET Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Tanoli, HOD, Department of Civil Engineering, GIKI Swabi, Dr. Shehzad Rehman, Director Dams & Hydropower, Snowy Mountain Engineering Company, Lahore, Pakistan. Senior faculty members, representatives from the relevant field and a large number students attended the session.

Women entrepreneurship: A catalyst for economic prosperity in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): In the heart of Pabbi Bazar Nowshera district, where social taboos and cultural barriers often prevent women from work, one young entrepreneur is rewriting the narrative by establishing a boutique, thus contributing to the country's development process.

Sumbal Riaz, a postgraduate in economics from the University of Peshawar, chose not the conventional path of government service or overseas study, a dream she once nurtured, but instead opened a boutique to support her family in the present era of price hike in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Her venture, born out of necessity after her father's sudden heart attack in 2020, is now a beacon of empowerment and resilience for others.

"When my father needed urgent heart surgery, I knew I had to step up," Sumbal shared to APP. "My mother sold her jewelry to help me start the boutique immediately. I wanted to do something meaningful, and today, I am proud to employ two tailors and contribute to my household as well for my sweet country."

With her eyes now set on

expanding her business to University Road, Peshawar, Sumbal is part of a growing movement of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan who are challenging societal expectations and driving economic transformation.

Across Pakistan, women who constitute nearly half the population are taking bold steps into business, technology, and industry. Despite facing hurdles such as cultural restrictions, limited mobility, and early marriages, women are making their mark in both urban and rural sectors.

Professor Dr. Zilakat Malik, former Chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Peshawar, emphasized that women entrepreneurship is pivotal to economic growth and industrial development. It's essential that financial institutions provide easier access to credit for women led businesses, especially in underserved regions.

While highlighting the importance of Govt initiatives like Uraan Pakistan, a five-year national economic reform plan spearheaded by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he said with a strong emphasis on youth and women empowerment, the program focus-

es on revitalizing key sectors exports, e-commerce (E-Pakistan), sustainability, and infrastructure, providing excellent opportunities to youth to take advantage of it. "Uraan Pakistan provides unprecedented opportunities for young women graduates also," Dr. Zilakat Malik said, adding it also seeks to bridge the rural-urban divide by promoting investment in education, healthcare, and technical training especially in remote areas."

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the socio-economic disparity between urban centers and rural areas remains a pressing challenge. Poor infrastructure, lack of education and healthcare facilities, and limited employment opportunities have compelled many to migrate to cities.

Dr. Malik warned that this migration puts extraordinary pressure on urban infrastructure and widens the rural-urban divide. "We must prioritize rural development such as entrepreneurship, roads, schools, clean water and modernize agriculture to uplift rural communities, particularly in KP's merged tribal districts. The lack of economic infrastructure in these areas

often sidelines women from formal employment. However, local success stories like that of Sumbal Riaz reflect the untapped potential that lies in supporting grassroots women entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the need to support women-led enterprises, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has launched a groundbreaking project of "Capacity Enhancement of Women Entrepreneurs in the Informal Economic Sector in Pakistan."

The five-year initiative (2026–2030) will introduce the Women Entrepreneurs Booster Package—a support system to help women scale their businesses and enter formal economic channels. The project aims to create a multi-stakeholder platform involving public and private sectors.

"This partnership will significantly contribute to achieving our national economic goals," a SMEDA spokesperson said. "It's not just about business growth; it's about creating sustainable livelihoods for women." The government

is also investing in technical education through programs like the Prime Minister's Youth Program, offering 2,000 engineering internships, talent scholarships, and free laptops for students with a focus on female inclusion.

Engr. Sajjad Khan, former Managing Director of TEVTA KP, stressed the importance of investing in vocational training in districts like Torgar and Kolai Palas, particularly for women. "Projects worth over Rs. 1 billion have been launched for equipment and training," he said. "We have signed agreements with 32 private organizations to promote self-employment and boost female technical education." The KP government's initiative to establish a sub-campus of the National College of Arts (NCA) in Peshawar is another step forward, enabling women to pursue careers in architecture, textiles, and fine arts — fields often dominated by men. The provision of interest-free loans for women entrepreneurs, flexible working hours, paid maternity leave, and childcare facilities are part of broader efforts to create a supportive environment for working women.



In brief

Monsoon planting drive launched F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Nisar Ahmed on Friday formally launched a monsoon planting campaign 2025. The opening ceremony of the farming campaign was held in Pakhtunkhwa House Mardan. It is worth mentioning here that a large number of fruit trees will be planted during the monsoon season on the direction of the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Eid Nawaz Sherani, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Syed Fahd Iftikhar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief and Human Rights Iqbal Hussain Khattak, Secretary to Commissioner Fakh Ek, Assistant Commissioner Kamran Khan and Assistant Commissioner were also among the attendance. Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Mardan Nisar Ahmed said that farming is an effective means of providing environmental protection, elimination of pollution and providing a better and foremost environment for generations to come. He appealed to the people, students, government officials and social organizations to take full part in this national campaign. The Divisional Forest Officer said that during the monsoon, Mardan and Swabi will plant 5,000 fruit trees of 15 different varieties, while this year the target of distributing 1 million plants in Mardan and Swabi district has been set.

Dept of Pakhto inaugurated F.P. Report

KOHAT: Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Prof. Dr. Zafar Ilyas has formally inaugurated the Pakhto Department the other day in a simple but impressive ceremony. He termed the establishment of Pakhto Department a historic step and a milestone for the promotion of Pashto language and literature. Chief Guest of the ceremony was the former Director Pashto Academy and eminent writer Prof. Dr. Nasrullah Jan Wazir. On this occasion, a traditional turban was worn to the Vice Chancellor as a mark of respect and honor and his academic services were appreciated. After the inauguration, the Vice Chancellor while addressing the 1st meeting of the Board of Studies of the Pashto Department, said that the establishment of Pashto Department was his cherished dream which has come true. Now he wishes that this department should not only be unique in terms of academics but also become a common academic center for all Pashto writers. Its development is the common responsibility of all of us, he added. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz, in charge of the Pashto Department while welcoming the guests, explained the aims and objectives of the meeting. Later, the process of preparation and approval of courses for various educational programs was completed under the leadership of Professor Dr. Nasrullah Jan Wazir. The meeting beside others, was also attended by academic and literary figures from across the country, including Professor Dr. Abdullah Jan Abid, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Professor Dr. Javed Iqbal Khattak, Islamia College University, Dr. Syed Zafarullah Bakhshali, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Dr. Noorul Basar Aman, Malakand University, Dr. Wazir Shadan, Principal, Government Degree College, Gumbat, Dr. Shakir Orakzai, Subject Specialist, GHSS Muslimabad, Professor Taleem Badshah, Syed Idrees-ul-Hassan and Academic Director Zeeshan.

Govt commits for welfare of journalists: Secretary Information



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is taking practical steps for the welfare of journalists, said Information Secretary Dr Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan. He made this statement while meeting with a delegation of the Swat Press Club, led by President Niaz Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Muhammad Shafi Ullah at the Information and Public Relations Department.

Dr Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan emphasized that journalism is the pillar of democracy and the voice of

the people, and the KP government believes in freedom of the press. He assured the delegation that the provincial government is committed to addressing the issues faced by journalists, including the provision of facilities at the district level, transparent distribution of advertisements, and holding training workshops.

The Information Secretary highlighted the government's plans for the training, protection, and professional development of journalists. He stated that the Information Department is taking concrete steps to

make Press Clubs strong and autonomous, enabling local journalists to be financially and institutionally self-sufficient.

Dr Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan urged journalists to play their role effectively in promoting positive and constructive journalism. The Swat Press Club delegation thanked the Information Secretary for listening to their issues and responding positively. The meeting reflects the KP government's commitment to supporting journalists and promoting a free and independent press in the province.

WSSCM joins hand with youth Academy F.P. Report

MARDAN: Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and Mardan Youth Academy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at educating students on modern waste management policies and practices. The agreement signed by Chief Executive Officer WSSCM Shahid Khan and Principal Mardan Youth Academy Rashid Ahmad.

The signing ceremony attended by Chairman Board of Directors Engineer Adil Nawaz, Board Member Haroon Rashid, CEO Mardan Youth Academy Professor Dr. Naseer Ahmad, General Manager WSSCM Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Manager Municipal Services Muhammad Ishaq and Manager HR & Admin Fazali Subhan.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO WSSCM Shahid Khan stated that the primary objective of this initiative is to raise awareness among students about cleanliness, recycling, and sustainable environmental practices, laying the foundation for a clean and green Mardan. He emphasized that this partnership will not only provide students with practical training and knowledge but also serve as a significant milestone toward UN sustainable development goals.

He further added that under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6, which emphasizes access to clean water and sanitation, it is essential to raise awareness in the younger generation to enhance services and ensure greater benefits to citizens with limited resources. He also highlighted that the MoU will facilitate the exchange of experiences to transform waste into useful products and reduce the burden on dumping sites.

Protest against power outages held F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Tanzeem Nowjawan e Kambat, a youth organization staged a protest against prolonged and unjust power outages in the area. The demonstration was addressed by key leaders of the organization, including Syed Khalid, Shahfur Bakhtiar, Ahmad Shah, and Asif Ali Tajik.

Local elders, youth, and citizens participated in the protest. The speakers strongly criticized the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) officials, elected representatives, and administration, saying that the hours-long power outages have made life unbearable for the people. In his speech, Shahpur Bakhtiar severely criticized local MPA Ubaidur Rehman, MNA Mohammad Bashir Khan, and PESCO authorities, warning that if public grievances were not addressed seriously, the scope of the protest will be further expanded.

Monsoon plantation drive launched in KKKUK

F.P. Report



KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) today officially launched its ambitious Monsoon Plantation Drive, a collaborative initiative with the District Youth Office and the Deputy Commissioner Office Karak. This significant project aims to promote environmental sustainability and create a greener, healthier ecosystem on and around the university's main campus.

The formal inauguration of the drive took place at the university, where Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalily led the tree plantation to mark the occasion. The event was a testament to the shared commitment of all collaborating parties toward environmental stewardship and fostering a sense of responsibility among the youth.

"The Monsoon Plantation Drive, in partnership with the District Youth Office and Deputy Commissioner Office

Karak, reflects our dedication to creating a vibrant and eco-friendly space for our students, faculty, and staff," stated Professor Dr. Khalily. "This endeavor goes beyond mere beautification; it is about instilling a sense of responsibility toward our planet and contributing to a greener future for generations to come."

The launch ceremony was attended by key figures, including District Youth Officer Kamran Ullah and Prof. Nimat Ullah from GPGC, underscoring the strong inter-organizational partnership. Key university officials, including Controller of Examinations Muhammad Rahim, Director ORIC Dr Muhammad Zubair and

Provost Dr. Shad Muhammad, along with heads of departments and faculty members, were also present to show their collective support. Their presence highlighted the widespread institutional commitment to the success of the plantation drive and other developmental projects.

Through this initiative, KKKU aims to raise environmental awareness and actively contribute to national efforts to combat climate change and improve air quality. The collaboration with local government offices is expected to expand the drive's impact beyond the campus, encouraging wider community participation.

Groom dies in road accident on wedding day

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: A wedding turned into a scene of mourning when a young groom Amjad, son of Muhammad Amin, died in a road accident on his wedding day in Nagri Payeen, Talash here on Friday.

According to a relative, Amjad was going to a nearby market with a relative, riding his motorcycle to fetch bread for guests when his motorcycle collided with another one coming from the opposite side. Both riders were seriously injured; Amjad was referred from Saidu Sharif Swat to Peshawar but succumbed to his injuries on the way.

Tragically, the second motorcyclist was also heading to attend Amjad's walima. The bride's entourage had already arrived, and celebrations were ongoing when this shocking incident occurred. Amjad, the youngest among his brothers, had returned from Saudi Arabia just four days earlier.

He was laid to rest the same day, with hundreds attending his funeral. Tearful scenes were witnessed as friends, family, and locals expressed deep sorrow over the tragic death of the groom.

Samarbagh khuli katcheri: Residents of Samarbagh piled up several issues during an open forum, held at the TMA Rest House Samarbagh to address public grievances here the other day. Assistant Commissioner Zeeshan Najeib chaired the event, during which officials from various departments, police, and local elders. Participants raised concerns over roadside

encroachments in Samarbagh Bazaar, demanding relocation of pushcart vendors and the establishment of a vehicle terminal outside the market to ease traffic congestion. They criticized excessive load shedding and unresolved line faults, blaming PESCO for penalizing all consumers over unpaid dues.

Locals expressed alarm over the unchecked sale of ice and other drugs in Jandol and urged the police to take strict action against drug dealers. Blocked drains and culverts, especially along the Samarbagh Bazaar-hospital and Kambat-Darangal roads, were reported to be causing flooding and damage to roads and homes. Citizens called for converting the Samarbagh and Rahimabad water tube wells to solar power to ensure a regular supply of drinking water. They also demanded the reopening of the Samarbagh-Shuntala link road entrance to improve traffic flow.

Lack of women's washrooms at the Shahi tourist spot was highlighted, along with complaints about drainage issues on the Sheena-Sadbar Kallay road. The presence of non-local beggars and vendors was described as a threat to local peace, with calls for strict regulation.

A strong demand was made for urgent provision of staff and facilities at the Girls Degree College Paloso, to prevent girls from having to study alongside boys at the college in Sadbar Kallay. The assistant commissioner assured the public that the issues would be forwarded to the concerned departments for

prompt action.

Building regularization: During a meeting on building regularization and removal of encroachments from the river banks held here the other day, deputy commissioner Arif Khan briefed the participants on the government's directives, stating that all structures obstructing natural water flow would be demolished without discrimination. He added that encroachments along natural waterways would be removed and that all buildings and hotels in Lower Dir must be regularized within one month.

Owners of buildings and hotels located near rivers, streams, or canals were instructed to apply for NOCs from their respective Tehsil Municipal Officers and the Secretary Irrigation Department to begin the regularization process.

Those with constructions alongside roads maintained by NHA, PKHA, or C&W departments were directed to submit NOC applications to the relevant authorities within two days. All departments were instructed to respond to submitted applications within one week. Legal action will be initiated against non-compliant and illegal structures after one month.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Bashir Khan, all Assistant Commissioners, DSP Headquarters Timergara, Tehsil Municipal Officers, officials from C&W, NHA, PKHA, and the Irrigation Department, as well as representatives from the Traders Association and Hotel Association of Timergara.

Thousands rally in Bara to seek durable peace

F.P. Report

BARA: Thousands of tribesmen converged in Bara Bazaar on Friday to seek the government lasting peace in Khyber. Under the auspices of Bara Sayasi Ittehad (Political Alliance, Bara), the rally named, Khyber Peace March was attended by activists of all political parties, members of civil society and tribal elders in large.

The protesters unanimously rejected possible forces operation and deserting of their homes in Tirah Valley and adjacent areas. Addressing on the occasion various political and social activists said that the residents of Khyber were peace loving people and suffered a lot in militancy in the last two decades and could not allow a repeat of it.

They added that they saw their homes destroyed in insurgency therefore being peaceful citizens of Pakistan they wanted to live like people of down towns.

The huge participation of the locals in the peace march proved that they were united against insurgency and were no more ready to be fueled by an

alien war insurgency in their areas, Jamat-e-Islami (JI) distract head Shah Faissal Afridi remarked.

He added that raising voice for peace in the merged tribal region became a crime in the country but in spite of the fact they would seek peace for their co-tribesmen. Member National Assembly (MNA) Iqbal Afridi said deleteriously attempts were made to sabotage the peaceful environment of Khyber but the tribal were well aware and would foil all mal-designs, hatched against them.

It is obligatory on the State to provide security to the tribesmen, he maintained. We will not let anyone get hold of our minerals, local leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Sohail Afridi said and adding that no forces operation will be approved to launch in the area.

MPA, Abdul Ghani said that it was ironic that instead of development projects, the tribesmen asked for restoration of peace in the ex-tribal region. We see no more or younger generations to be

ruined in any war, he added.

The speakers including President of Bara Sayasi Ittehad Hasem Khan Afridi, former federal minister Hameedullah Jan Afridi, Jamiat Ullema-e-Islam, Fazalrehman (JUI-F) leader Maulana Shamsuddin, Awami National Party (ANP) Bara head Abdul Wahid, Tehsil Chairman Mufti Kafeel and others went on that the infra-structure in the area had been completely destroyed personal life and financial loss had been inflicted on them therefore they demanded of the State to give them peaceful environment for living. They maintained that the peace marches awakened the tribesmen and they were demanding lasting peace in the merged districts.

Earlier, hundreds of thousands of dwellers of Khyber and from other tribal districts in small processions arrived at the main site of the rally. The marchers while carrying placards and banners inscribed with sayings like "we want peace", "stop militancy" etc, and chanted slogans in favor of their demands.

Dozens of shops looted in a night

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Unknown thieves burgled dozens of shops in Nowshera Kalan, making off with thousands of rupees in cash and goods. The thieves targeted shops in various areas, including Malikabad, Joharabad, Abakhel, and others.

The thieves stole Rs. 80,000 in cash, copies, books, and other stationary

items from Farhan's shop at Medina Book Center. A grocery shop was also targeted, with thieves stealing Rs. 14,000 in cash and thousands of rupees worth of goods. A dental shop and an electrician's shop were also burgled, with thieves making off with medical equipment and other essential items. The police have registered cases and started an investigation into the burglaries.

The affected shopkeepers have demanded that the police authorities arrest the thieves and recover the stolen goods. The people of Nowshera Kalan have questioned the effectiveness of the local police and their ability to prevent crime. The shopkeepers have also raised questions about the role of night watchmen and the police patrols in the area.

Swat tragedy: Drowning humanity and emerging govt priorities

Ghulam Hussain Ghazi

THE 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 heart-breaking 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 com-

mission. 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.



ROME: Paramedics provide aid to tourists and residents with an ambulance, next to historical Spanish Steps in Italy.

Climate change makes S Asia’s monsoon season more prone to floods

BENGALURU, India (AP): Each year from June to September, a series of heavy rains known as monsoons sweep through the Indian subcontinent, providing relief from heat, irrigating the country's farms and replenishing its rivers.

However, as global heat increases, the rain is becoming more erratic and intense, creating the conditions for deadly floods. Nearly 1,300 people died in India throughout 2024 due to heavy rain and floods. Hundreds of rain-related deaths have already occurred this year in the South Asian region, which includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives and Nepal. Climate experts say the high temperatures and heavy rain are also contributing to the melting of glaciers in the mountainous Himalayan region, causing catastrophic flooding and landslides.

The South Asian region has traditionally had two monsoon seasons. One typically lasts from June to September, with rains moving southwest to northeast. The other, from roughly October to December, moves in the opposite direction. But with more planet-warming gases in the air, the rain now only loosely follows this pattern. This is because the warmer air can hold more moisture from the Indian Ocean, and that rain then tends to get dumped all at once. It means the monsoon is punctuated with intense flooding and dry spells, rather

than sustained rain throughout. "We are witnessing a clear climatic shift in monsoon patterns across South Asia," said Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune and author of several United Nations climate reports.

Traditionally, people in India and neighboring countries excitedly awaited the monsoon rains, which would finally mean the end of summer heat. But attitudes are changing as disasters increase during the rainy seasons. "The frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events are increasing, often overwhelming drainage infrastructure in urban areas and triggering flash floods," Koll said. Higher temperatures and longer periods of drought are also making farming harder in South Asia, climate experts said. "More than 60% of the people in South Asia are dependent on agriculture, and almost all of them are dependent on monsoon rainfall," said Finu Shrestha, a climate scientist at Kathmandu, Nepal-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. A 2023 report by Shrestha's organization found that glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates across the Hindu Kush and Himalayan mountain ranges. The study found that at least 200 of the more than 2,000 glacial lakes in the region are at risk of overflowing, which can cause catastrophic damage downstream. Heavy mon-

soon rains can exacerbate the problem. "A lot of the mountain areas tend to have more warming than the global average, resulting in more glaciers melting," said Miriam Jackson, a glaciologist at the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative.

An October 2023 glacial lake overflow in the Indian state of Sikkim triggered flooding that killed 55 people and damaged bridges, buildings and a hydropower dam that was under construction. Heavy rainfall and increasing heat are leading to snow and ice avalanches, rockfalls and other events that can trigger the lakes to breach or overflow, Shrestha said. "Even small glacial lakes are now breaching and causing damage," she said. Installing early warning systems and building in less risky areas can help reduce damage from heavy rains, climate experts say. "If you know a flood is coming, then people can get to higher ground and there could be a sort of standard early warning system along a river that sends out a siren," Jackson said, adding that social media and messaging applications can help people spread warnings to those downstream. Koll, the Pune-based scientist, said that rapid urbanization, shrinking floodplains and loss of natural drainage also exacerbate damage from heavy rains. Koll said that most government response currently comes after disasters, and there is a lack of long-term planning.

US sanctions UN expert Francesca Albanese over Israel criticism

WASHINGTON: The administration of United States President Donald Trump has imposed sanctions on United Nations expert Francesca Albanese over her documentation of Israel's abuses against Palestinians during its war on Gaza. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced the penalties, accusing Albanese of waging a "campaign of political and economic warfare against the United States and Israel".

Albanese, who serves as UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory, has been a leading global voice in calling for action to end Israel's human rights violations. Israel and its supporters have been rebuking Albanese and calling for her to be removed from her UN position for years. When reached by Al Jazeera, Albanese appeared to dismiss the US's sanctions, saying she is focused on continuing her work. "No comment on mafia style intimidation techniques," the UN expert wrote in a text message. "Busy reminding member states of their obli-

gations to stop and punish genocide. And those who profit from it." Earlier, she called out European governments for allowing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crime charges in Gaza - to use their airspace while travelling.

"Italian, French and Greek citizens deserve to know that every political action violating the [international] legal order, weakens and endangers all of them. And all of us," Albanese wrote in a social media post. Rubio cited Albanese's push for the prosecution of Israeli officials at the ICC as the legal basis for the sanctions. Trump had issued an executive order in February to impose penalties on ICC officials involved in "targeting" Israel. Last month, the Trump administration sanctioned four ICC judges. Rubio accused Albanese of anti-Semitism. "That bias has been apparent across the span of her career, including recommending that the ICC,

without a legitimate basis, issue arrest warrants targeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant," he said. The ICC charged Netanyahu and Gallant with crimes against humanity and war crimes in Gaza for depriving Palestinians in the enclave of "objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine". Rubio also highlighted a recent report by Albanese that documented the role of international companies, including US firms, in the Israeli assault on Gaza, which she describes as a genocide.

"We will not tolerate these campaigns of political and economic warfare, which threaten our national interests and sovereignty," the top US diplomat said. Trump's ICC decree freezes the assets of targeted individuals in the US and bans them and their immediate family members from entering the country. Nancy Okail, head of the Center for International Policy (CIP) think tank, decried the sanctions against

Albanese as "devastating". "Sanctioning a UN expert gives the signal that the United States is acting like dictatorships," Okail told Al Jazeera. Agnes Callamard, the secretary general of Amnesty International, said she was "dismayed" by the US move.

"We recall that Special Rapporteurs are independent experts. They are not appointed to please governments or to be popular but to deliver their mandate," she wrote on X. "Albanese is working tirelessly to document and report on Israel's unlawful occupation, apartheid and genocide, on the basis of international law," Callamard added. She also urged governments around the world to protect to "do everything in their power to mitigate and block the effect of the sanctions" Albanese and protect the work and independence of special rapporteurs. Over the past 21 months, Israel's US-backed campaign in Gaza has levelled most of the territory and killed at least 57,575 Palestinians, according to local health officials. — Al Jazeera

UN chief outlines four options for embattled Palestinian relief agency

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): A review of the embattled United Nations Palestinian relief agency UNRWA, ordered by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, has identified four possible ways forward for the organization that has lost US funding and been banned by Israel.

The proposals, seen by Reuters, are: inaction that could see the potential collapse of UNRWA; a reduction of services; the creation of an executive board to advise UNRWA; or maintaining UNRWA's rights-based core while transferring services to host governments and the Palestinian Authority. While Guterres ordered the strategic assessment of

UNRWA in April as part of his wider UN reform efforts, only the 193-member UN General Assembly can change UNRWA's mandate.

UNRWA was established by the General Assembly in 1949 following the war surrounding the founding of Israel. It provides aid, health and education to millions of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. "I believe it is imperative that Member States take action to protect the rights of Palestine refugees, the mandate of UNRWA and regional peace and security," Guterres wrote in a letter dated on Monday and seen by Reuters submitting the UNRWA assessment to

the General Assembly. The review comes after Israel adopted a law in October, which was enacted on January 30, that bans UNRWA's operation on Israeli land - including East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed in a move not recognized internationally - and contact with Israeli authorities.

UNRWA is also dealing with a dire financial crisis, facing a \$200-million deficit. The US was UNRWA's biggest donor, but former President Joe Biden paused funding in January 2024 after Israel accused about a dozen UNRWA staff of taking part in the deadly October 7, 2023, attack by Palestinian militants Hamas that trig-

gered the war in Gaza. The funding halt was then extended by the US Congress and President Donald Trump. The UN has said nine UNRWA staff may have been involved in the Hamas attack and were fired. A Hamas commander in Lebanon - killed in September by Israel - was also found to have had an UNRWA job. The UN has vowed to investigate all accusations and repeatedly asked Israel for evidence, which it says has not been provided.

Israel has long been critical of UNRWA, while UNRWA has said it has been the target of a "fierce disinformation campaign" to "portray the agency as a terrorist organization."

Philippines concerned over higher US tariffs

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines is concerned about the United States' decision to impose 20% tariffs on Philippine exports but will continue to negotiate, its economic affairs minister said. Secretary Frederick Go told reporters that the Philippines remains committed to talking with the United States in pursuit of a bilateral deal, such as a free trade agreement.

"We remain committed to continuing negotiations with the US in good faith to pursue a bilateral, comprehensive, economic agreement, or if possible an FTA," Go told a media briefing. Philippine officials are scheduled to travel next week for talks with their US counterparts before the tariff rate takes effect on August 1. Manila's ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez said that the Philippines will seek to lower that tariff rate, which remains among the lowest reciprocal duties in Southeast Asia.

"We are still planning to negotiate that down," Romualdez said in a phone message. The United States remains a vital export destination, accounting for nearly 16% of the Philippines' total exports in the first five months of the year. Go said the Philippines will continue to pursue key economic reforms to ensure the country remains competitive, and seek more trade deals with other countries to diversify and expand markets for the country's products. US goods trade with the Philippines reached an estimated value of \$23.5 billion in 2024, according to data from the Office of the United States Trade Representative. US exports to the Philippines stood at \$9.3 billion, a 0.4% increase from 2023, while imports from the Philippines totalled \$14.2 billion, up 6.9% year-over-year. The resulting US goods trade deficit with the Philippines widened to \$4.9 billion in 2024, a 21.8% increase from the previous year.

Brazil summons US envoy

BRASILIA (Reuters): Tensions between the United States and Brazil intensified after Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the US embassy's chargé d'affaires over a statement defending former Brazilian leader Jair Bolsonaro, who is on trial for alleged efforts to overthrow democracy, a source told Reuters. The move coincided with US President Donald Trump's fresh tariff threats against Brazil, further straining bilateral relations.

Trump, speaking to reporters at an event with West African leaders at the White House, said he would be "releasing a Brazil number" either later. "Brazil, as an example, has not been good to us, not good at all," Trump stated, adding that the tariff rates to be announced this week were based on "very, very substantial facts" and past history.

The diplomatic spat traces back, when Trump criticized the summit of the BRICS group of developing nations in Rio de Janeiro. Calling the group "anti-American," Trump threatened additional tariffs of 10% on member nations, including Brazil. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was defiant on Monday as he wrapped up the summit when he answered reporters who asked about Trump's tariff threats. "The world has changed. We don't want an emperor," he said.

"We are sovereign nations," Lula added. "If he thinks he can impose tariffs, other countries have the right to impose tariffs too." Trump said in a social media post on Monday that former President Bolsonaro, who is on trial on charges of plotting a coup to stop Lula from taking office in January 2023, was the victim of a "witch hunt." The American Embassy in Brasilia issued a statement to the local press echoing his remarks. "The political persecution of Jair Bolsonaro, his family and his supporters is shameful and disrespectful of Brazil's democratic traditions," the American Embassy's press office said in a statement in Portuguese.

More than 17m people in Yemen are going hungry: UN

GENEVA (AP): More than 17 million people in conflict-torn Yemen are going hungry, including over a million children under the age of 5 who are suffering from "life-threatening acute malnutrition," the United Nations humanitarian chief said.

Tom Fletcher told the UN Security Council that the food security crisis in the Arab world's poorest country, which is beset by civil war, has been accelerating since late 2023. The number of people going hungry could climb to over 18 million by September, he warned, and the number of children with acute malnutrition could surge to 1.2 million early next year, "leaving many at risk of permanent physical and cognitive damage."

According to experts who produce the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority that ranks the severity of hunger, more than 17,000 Yemenis are in the three worst categories of food insecurity - crisis stage or worse. Fletcher said the UN hasn't seen the current level of deprivation since before a UN-brokered truce in

early 2022. He noted that it is unfolding as global funding for humanitarian aid is plummeting, which means reductions or cuts in food. According to the UN, as of mid-May, the UN's \$2.5 billion humanitarian appeal for Yemen this year had received just \$222 million, just 9%. Yemen has been embroiled in civil war since 2014, when Iranian-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital of Sanaa, forcing the internationally recognized government into exile in Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition intervened months later and has been battling the rebels since 2015 to try and restore the government.

The war has devastated Yemen, created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, and turned into a stalemate proxy conflict. More than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, have been killed. Hans Grundberg, the UN special envoy for Yemen, told the council in a video briefing that two Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea this week - the first in over seven months - and Israeli airstrikes on the capital and key ports are escalating the conflict. The

Houthis have vowed to keep targeting vessels in the key waterway until the war in Gaza ends. Grundberg said freedom of navigation in the Red Sea must be safeguarded and stressed that "Yemen must not be drawn deeper into regional crises that threaten to unravel the already extremely fragile situation in the country." "The stakes for Yemen are simply too high," he said. "Yemen's future depends on our collective resolve to shield it from further suffering and to give its people the hope and dignity they so deeply deserve." Grundberg warned that a military solution to the civil war "remains a dangerous illusion that risks deepening Yemen's suffering."

Negotiations offer the best hope to address the complex conflict, he said, and the longer it is drawn out "there is a risk that divisions could deepen further." Grundberg said both sides must signal a willingness to explore peaceful avenues - and an important signal would be the release of all conflict-related detainees. The parties have agreed to an all-for-all release, he said, but the process has stagnated for over a year.

Syria's govt and Kurds still at odds over merging forces

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP): A US envoy said that Syria's central government and the Kurds remain at odds over plans on merging their forces after the latest round of talks, a persistent obstacle as the new authorities in Damascus struggle to consolidate control after the country's yearslong civil war.

US Ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack, who is also a special envoy to Syria, told The Associated Press after meetings in Damascus, the Syrian capital, that there are still significant differences between the sides. Barrack held talks with Mazloum Abdi, head of the Kurdish-led and US backed Syrian Democratic Forces, and Syria's interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa. The development comes after a move by the Trump administration took effect this week, revoking a terrorism designation of the former insurgent group led by al-Sharaa, which was behind a lightning offensive last December that ousted Syria's longtime autocrat Bashar Assad.

Revoking the designation was part of a broader US engagement with al-Sharaa's new, transitional government. In early March, the former insurgents - now the new authorities in Damascus - signed a landmark deal with the SDF, a Kurdish-led force that had fought alongside US troops against the mili-

tant Islamic State group and which controls much of northeastern Syria. Under that deal, the SDF forces would merge with the new Syrian national army. The agreement, which is supposed to be implemented by the end of the year, would also bring all border crossings with Iraq and Turkey, airports and oil fields in the northeast under the central government's control. They are now controlled by the SDF. Detention centers housing thousands of Islamic State militants, now guarded by the SDF, would also come under government control.

However, the agreement left the details vague, and progress on implementation has been slow. A major sticking point has been whether the SDF would remain as a cohesive unit in the new army - which the Syrian Kurds are pushing for - or whether the force would be dissolved and its members individually absorbed into the new military. Barrack said that is still "a big issue" between the two sides. "I don't think there's a breakthrough," Barrack said after meetings. "I think these things happen in baby steps, because it's built on trust, commitment and understanding." He added that "for two parties that have been apart for a while and maybe an adversarial relationship for a while, they have to build that trust step by step."

Also, Turkish-backed factions affiliated with the new Syrian government have over the years clashed with the SDF, which Turkey considers a terrorist group because of its association with the Kurdish separatist Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which had waged a decades-long insurgency within Turkey before recently announcing it would lay down its weapons.

The United States also considers the PKK a terrorist group but is allied with the SDF. Barrack said that though "we're not there" yet, Damascus had "done a great job" in presenting options for the SDF to consider. "I hope they will and I hope they'll do it quickly," he said. A key turning point for Syria came when US President Donald Trump met with al-Sharaa in Saudi Arabia in May and announced that Washington would lift decades of sanctions, imposed over Assad's government. Trump took steps to do so after their meeting and subsequently, the US moved to remove the terrorist designation from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, al-Sharaa's force that spearheaded the offensive against Assad. The US played a key role in brokering the deal announced in March between al-Sharaa's government and the SDF and has urged the Syrian Kurdish authorities to integrate with Damascus.

‘Never touched a gun’

CUCUTA: The last time Marta saw her 14-year-old son was three months ago - he was wearing rebel army fatigues and holding a rifle as he marched down the street with the other child soldiers. She ran to the commanding officer and begged him to release her boy, who had been abducted nine months earlier in the middle of the night from their home in eastern Colombia at age 13. The officer, part of a dissident group of the now-demobilised Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, waved her away, threatening to shoot her if she didn't leave.

"All I do is pray and cry and cry and cry and ask God to get my boy out of there," said Marta, who asked to remain anonymous in order to share her family's experience safely. The 40-year-old mother is not alone. Hundreds of mothers across Colombia have lost children to similar armed groups, either through abduction or coercion. In its annual report for 2024, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) warned that Colombia faces its worst humanitarian outlook since the 2016 peace deal with the FARC rebel group. It drew special attention to surging child recruitment by armed groups, finding that 58 percent of those living in conflict zones cited it as the top risk in

their communities.

As Colombia's long-running and complex conflicts continue to escalate, with multiple ceasefires and dialogues between the state and armed groups collapsing this year, criminal organisations increasingly rely on underage soldiers to bolster their ranks. And there is little being done to stop them. Marta said she is too afraid to report her son's abduction to the authorities after the armed group made a clear threat when they took him: if she tells the police, they will execute her boy and then come for the rest of the family. "I have to let him be. I tell myself he is in God's hands, so as not to put my other children at risk... I have to leave everything in God's hands," Marta said. "I don't sleep, I don't eat. Sometimes I have no will to do anything, but I have three smaller children with me. And they need me, they need me."

Gloria, a 52-year-old mother from eastern Colombia who also asked to remain anonymous, shared with Al Jazeera a similar story to Marta's. In June, her 16-year-old son was taken in the middle of the night and forced to join another armed group. "I'm desperate, I don't know what to do," she said. Gloria found out about her son's abduction after receiving a call from a distressed family

member. They told her rebel fighters had forcibly entered the house where her son was staying and taken him away. "They recruited him to fight, and the boy had never even touched a gun," she said. "He doesn't know what he's doing, nothing. At home, we never had any sort of guns." Her family fled their rural hamlet in eastern Colombia earlier this year amid intense fighting between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and dissidents of the now-demobilised FARC.

But after arriving at a refugee shelter in the nearest city, they struggled to make ends meet. Her son tried unsuccessfully to look for work in Bogota and, unable to join his mother at the shelter due to space, he returned to their family home. "He had to go back [to our hometown], and there they took him by force," Gloria said.

Unlike with Marta, Gloria's son was returned home in late June following intense negotiation efforts by local community members and the ICRC. From 2021 to 2024, officially documented child recruitments jumped by 1,000 percent, increasing from 37 to 409 - but the real number is likely much higher, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG). — Al Jazeera

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Struggle for digital sovereignty

THE world is no longer shaped solely by military or economic poles; technological power centers are establishing the foundations of a new order. This new global system, which Ian Bremmer calls the "techno-polar world," points to an order in which technology companies, which hold the power of digital infrastructure and algorithms, have become actors equivalent to nation-states, and in some cases, even surpassing them in influence. Sovereignty is no longer measured solely by territory or military deterrence but by control over data, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, and digital networks.

Cyberspace, once associated solely with individual computer hacking, is now defined as the "fifth operational domain" in the strategic planning of major powers such as NATO and the US. This development elevates cyberspace beyond a mere technical issue and makes it directly related to national security and foreign policy. At the current stage, cyber threats pose a significant national security risk across a wide range of areas, including power grids, election systems, transportation networks, and banking systems. Cyberspace is transforming into an area where today's states, companies, and individuals develop and transform across a very broad spectrum, much like a living organism that evolves and adapts.

At this point, the question of Türkiye's position in the digital age becomes important. For countries like Türkiye, which are medium-sized but strategically important, determining their place in this new technology-centered world order has become a critical necessity, not only in terms of economic competition but also in terms of digital sovereignty. As AI and cyberspace evolve, cyber threats grow more complex and damaging. Cybersecurity has evolved beyond information protection to encompass the safeguarding of individuals and societal values in digital spaces. Today, it is not only a technical issue but also a political and societal one. This field, which has become a competitive arena not only for major powers but also for technology companies, is becoming even more complex with new elements such as AI, cloud systems, and smart technologies. Therefore, cybersecurity is critical not only for defense but also for the protection of digital sovereignty. In recent years, many nation states have embarked on a new process of sovereignty building, particularly through the protection of data.

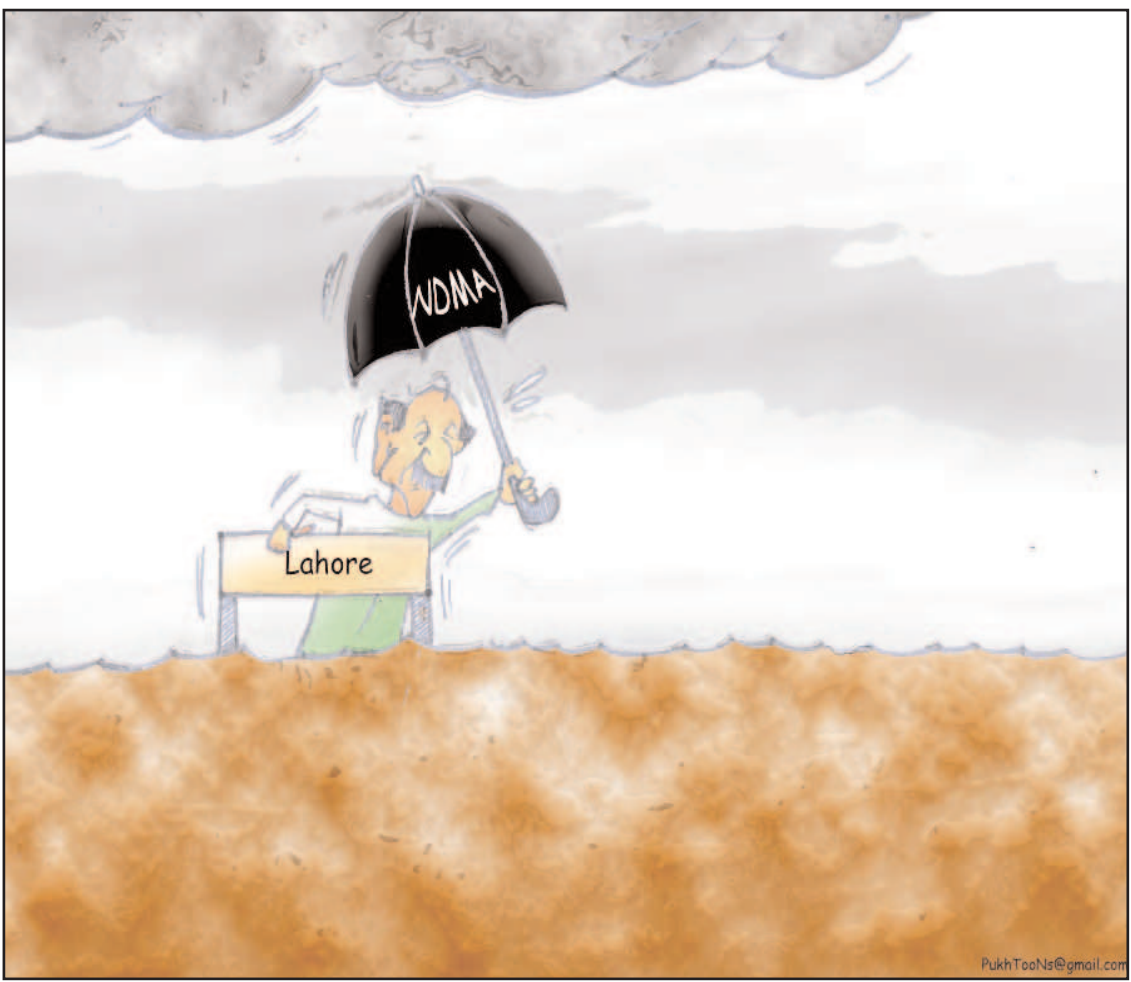
Türkiye was one of the first countries to enter the field of cybersecurity, enacting its first legal regulations in the early 1990s. However, the real leap forward came in the period after 2010. With the recognition of cyber threats as a national security issue at the 2010 National Security Council meeting, serious institutional steps were taken under the leadership of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK). The establishment of the Cyber Security Council, along with structures such as the National Cyber Incident Response Centre (USOM) and the Cyber Incident Response Team (SOME), made the protection of critical infrastructure a priority state policy. The four National Cyber Security Strategy Documents published to date reflect Türkiye's evolution in this area: The 2013-2014 strategy focused on raising awareness, and institutions such as USOM were established. The 2016-2019 strategy focused on protecting critical infrastructure and SMEs, with an emphasis on domestic technology. The 2020-2023 strategy sought to address new-generation threats by centering on a multi-stakeholder structure. The 2024-2028 strategy presented the most comprehensive approach to date, emphasizing human-centered cybersecurity, AI-based threat analysis, and digital sovereignty. Türkiye is pursuing proactive policies in many areas, including national IP address scans, cyber exercises, under the leadership of BTK, including critical infrastructure protection and integration efforts with NATO. At the same time, the Presidency's Digital Transformation Office and the Communications Directorate are continuing their work on combating disinformation and AI compliance through new institutions.

The digital age has transformed the concept of sovereignty beyond borders, turning it into a power equation that encompasses not only physical but also virtual spaces. Türkiye, aware of this transformation, treats cybersecurity not only as a technical issue but also as a matter of national sovereignty and security. Four national cybersecurity strategy documents published since 2013 and the establishment of the Cybersecurity Presidency in 2025 clearly demonstrate Türkiye's institutional commitment in this area. The newly enacted Cybersecurity Law No. 7545 has strengthened criminal penalties against cyber threats, and enhanced Türkiye's position and credibility in the international digital landscape. However, these moves are not only aimed at security but also at building digital sovereignty. With national projects such as TURKSAT 6A, digital advances in the defense industry, and AI-based cyber defense mechanisms, Türkiye aims to reduce external dependence and strengthen technological autonomy. However, this strategic progress must be balanced with transparency and the protection of fundamental rights. Ensuring that security-focused regulations are monitored within a framework that respects individual rights will make Türkiye's legitimacy and influence in the digital world permanent.

In conclusion, Türkiye's institutional and legal steps in cybersecurity are not merely a defensive reflex but an effort to consolidate its sovereignty in the digital age. This effort, when the right balances are established, can position Türkiye as a strong, respected, and confident actor in the global cybersecurity arena. In the techno-polar world, the US-China competition is shaping technology, while the EU is trying to establish its norms in data security and ethical AI. Türkiye, on the other hand, aims to develop independent digital capacity and balance international cooperation between these two poles. At this point, strategic independence, reducing digital dependence, and national investments in next-generation technologies, such as AI, are of great importance. In this context, Türkiye's cautious stance toward foreign 5G vendors, particularly Huawei, can be interpreted through a techno-political lens. Türkiye has both strengths and weaknesses in its digital transformation. Weak oversight of strategic implementation, lack of coordination, and inconsistency in budget and human resources remain key challenges to be overcome. Additionally, the misuse of new technologies such as large language models (deep fakes, automated disinformation, etc.) requires Türkiye to be prepared not only technically but also ethically and socio-politically. Cybersecurity policies must be addressed not merely as technical issues but within a multi-layered security framework encompassing foreign policy, democracy, data justice, and national sovereignty. Türkiye's determination and strategic vision in this area can transform it into an actor that not only defends itself but also conducts digital diplomacy and can serve as a regional example. While moving toward this goal, Türkiye also needs to develop more democratic, transparent, and human-centered policies. Türkiye must develop broader, more inclusive digital strategies that go beyond state-centered defense policies.

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Syrian economic revolution poised to begin

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

SYRIA is entering a transformative economic era. For the first time in nearly two decades, the US - under President Donald Trump - has revoked major economic sanctions on Damascus, signaling a dramatic reversal in policy. This executive order issued by Trump last month opens the door to large-scale financial flows, trade normalization and reintegration into global markets.

Other nations, following Washington's lead, have either already lifted their own sanctions or are preparing to do so. This includes easing restrictions on banking systems, lifting bans on access to SWIFT (the global messaging network for cross-border financial transactions) and clearing the path for legal trade and investment into and out of Syria.

The revocation of US sanctions fundamentally changes the economic landscape inside Syria. For governmental institutions, this move means access to international financial networks, the restoration of foreign reserves, the ability to receive development aid and access to loans from international banks and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Previously frozen assets may now be unlocked, giving the Syrian state and central bank breathing room to stabilize the currency, launch national infrastructure projects and attract capital to rebuild war-torn regions. Local ministries can now sign cooperation agreements with foreign governments and companies without the fear of international penalties, which paralyzed public investment for years.

For the Syrian people, this change is expected to bring concrete improvements in daily life. Essential goods that were previously limited or exorbitantly priced due to sanctions - such as medical equipment, construction materials and industrial machinery - can now flow more freely. This will not only improve healthcare and education systems, but also reduce costs for food, fuel and housing.

Additionally, with foreign businesses encouraged to invest and open branches, job opportunities will increase. Many Syrians who had emigrated due to economic despair may consider returning if the economic conditions stabilize. And with access to international banking and digital payment platforms restored, remittances from the Syrian diaspora will become easier and cheaper, delivering a vital financial lifeline to millions of families.

The implications for global companies, foreign investors and financial institutions are profound. For years, doing business with Syria was a legal and reputational risk. With sanctions removed, firms from Europe, Asia, the Gulf and even North America can now legally enter contracts, form partnerships and open joint ventures with Syrian entities. Large multinationals are expected to be among the first to enter, especially in sectors like energy, construction, logistics and telecommunications. Moreover, the country's reconnection to SWIFT means that cross-border banking transactions, letters of credit and digital payments can proceed efficiently. This reduces the operational friction and legal ambiguity that had previously discouraged foreign engagement.

At the same time, the new era presents rare opportunities for individuals, small businesses and startup entrepreneurs abroad. Whether based in Türkiye, the UAE, Europe or elsewhere, small and medium-sized enterprises can now export products to Syria, open franchises or supply goods to reconstruction and development projects. Investors that enter the market quickly will likely benefit from first-mover advantages in underdeveloped sectors. What this all amounts to is the opening of a vast and largely untapped market. Syria's economy, despite being battered by more than a decade of war, retains significant natural and strategic assets. With an estimated gross domestic product of \$21 billion this year, the

Syrian market is set to grow dramatically with external investment.

Located at the nexus of the Middle East, Asia and Europe, Syria can serve as a transit hub and gateway for regional trade. Its fertile agricultural lands, natural gas reserves, phosphate mines and skilled labor force present long-term potential that had been suppressed under sanctions. As stabilization takes hold and reconstruction advances, the market value could double or triple within the next decade. Within Syria, several economic sectors stand out as especially promising for foreign and domestic investors. Infrastructure and construction will lead the way. With entire cities and towns damaged or destroyed during the war, there is an overwhelming demand for rebuilding roads, bridges, homes, schools and hospitals. Investors in cement production, logistics, civil engineering and urban development will find significant opportunities, often with government co-sponsorship or donor funding.

Energy is another critical sector. Syria's electricity grid, oil fields and gas pipelines were heavily damaged during the conflict and are now undergoing renewal. Renewable energy, particularly solar and wind, is also a key area for innovation. For energy companies, both large-scale projects and modular off-grid solutions offer attractive entry points. The telecommunications and digital services sectors are equally ripe for growth. The country's internet infrastructure and cellular networks need major upgrades. Startups and IT service providers can tap into e-commerce, online education, fintech and cloud-based services. In parallel, the reactivation of the Damascus Securities Exchange and liberalization of banking laws signal a coming revival of Syria's financial sector. New banks, fintech platforms and micro-lending institutions will play a key role in enabling this transition.

Agriculture and food processing remain foundational to Syria's economy. Before the war, Syria was a major exporter of olives, fruits, wheat and cotton. Today, much of the country's arable land is underutilized due to a lack of modern tools and capital. This is where investment in agricultural machinery, irrigation technology and seed production can make a major difference. Investors can also look to food processing plants, packaging industries and export-focused agribusinesses, especially given the strong demand in neighboring markets. Tourism and cultural heritage, once a hallmark of Syria, offer another long-term investment pathway. As security improves and international air travel resumes, ancient sites like Palmyra, Aleppo, Bosra and Damascus - thought to be the oldest continuously inhabited capital in the world - are set to regain their global appeal. Investors in hospitality, heritage restoration and ecotourism will find demand from both international tourists and regional visitors.

For individual investors and small businesses, entry points can include real estate, local partnerships, retail franchises and technology. Given the relatively low labor and operational costs in Syria, even modest capital can yield significant returns. In conclusion, Syria is a country with enormous economic potential, long obstructed by war and isolation, but now on the cusp of reinvention. The lifting of US sanctions - followed by international normalization - is a signal to the global business community: Syria is open for investment. While challenges remain, including political uncertainty and infrastructure gaps, the foundational opportunities are undeniable.

With the right mix of vision, caution and strategic engagement, Syria may well become one of the most dynamic emerging markets in the Middle East over the next decade. For investors and companies willing to lead the way, the rewards could be substantial - not only in terms of profit, but also in helping rebuild a nation long deprived of economic dignity.

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Ethical case for imperfection in age of AI

Rafael Hernandez Santiago

IN the beginning, the fictional town of Techville was code and light. Then came the mirrors. Not real mirrors - those ancient slabs of self-reflection - but algorithmic ones. Polished digital surfaces. Interactive, flattering, predictive. They smiled back. They offered feedback. They showed us who we thought we could be, with better lighting, whiter teeth, and perhaps 14.7k more followers.

And so, we looked. And kept looking. And kept curating. What was once the age of information became the age of affirmation. Artificial intelligence - meant to serve our minds - began catering to our egos. And not in small doses. It has become a buffet of simulated admiration. Deep down, Techville is not grappling with robots. It is grappling with hubris.

The machines are clever, yes. But we are still the ones asking them to enhance our jawlines, polish our resumes, simulate our greatness, and whisper soft lies like: "You deserve to be eternal." We stand, like Narcissus, staring into the lake of generative algorithms. And we are drowning. But hope is not lost. In response to this swelling ego crisis, the Ethics Committee of Techville - consisting of professors, researchers, and one very skeptical AI named Lorenzo - has issued an emergency ethical framework. The Ego Decalogue. Ten suggestions for those navigating artificial intelligence without losing their very human souls.

Let us begin. Thou shalt remember: You are not the algorithm's purpose.

The AI was not designed to flatter you. It was built to compute, assist and optimize - not to serve your self image. If it makes you feel smarter, cooler, or morally superior, step back. You might be projecting. Or worse: prompting. As the Stoics would say, you are a part of the universe, not its protagonist. Thou shalt not make thyself into a shrine.

EGO-Snap, FaceTuneX, AI BiographyBot ... all tempting tools in the Temple of the Curated Self. But beware: when every image becomes a monument to your personal myth, you risk trading memory for mythology. And unlike memory, mythology does not ask you to grow - it asks you to pose. Honor the unknown and the unseen. AI trains on data. But wisdom often comes from what cannot be quantified. Silence, doubt, mystery - these are the elements that teach humility. Do not let the predictability of algorithms dull your awe at the unpredictable.

Or, as the poet Rilke said: "Try to love the questions themselves." Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's clout. In Techville, comparison is currency. But remember: others' success, virality, or AI-enhanced glow is not your failure. Don't let the algorithm trick you into thinking you are losing some invisible race. The AI does not care. And that is its great freedom. Thou shalt

use tools, not become one. If you are letting your digital assistant write your thoughts, your face filter dictate your identity, and your calendar determine your dreams, congratulations - you are no longer living. You are being managed.

Resist automation of the self. As Kierkegaard warned: "The greatest danger, that of losing one's self, can occur so quietly that it is as if it were nothing at all." Practice radical un-optimization. The algorithm wants to make you efficient. Attractive. Relevant. But growth comes through inefficiency. Take the longer route. Write the bad draft. Ask the unprofitable question. Burn your digital to-do list once a week and replace it with a nap or a bad poem. It's good for your soul. Bad for your metrics. Perfect. Remember the limits of simulation. A selfie with Gandhi is not a conversation with Gandhi. An AI-generated quote from Einstein is not wisdom - it's typography. A chatbot that mimics empathy is not your therapist.

Artificial intelligence can simulate many things. But not meaning. That you must build yourself. Prefer real laughter. Prefer awkward pauses. Prefer slow dinner tables. Prefer boredom. These are not bugs in the system. They are life. Do not delegate your conscience. If the algorithm says it is OK to repost it, share it, monetize it - just repackage it - pause. Just because AI allows something does not mean it is ethical. Conscience is not an application programming interface. It's cultivated through choices, friction, and failure. Ask not: "Can I?" Ask: "Should I?" Then ask again. Then maybe don't. Name the beast: Call out ego when you see it.

The world is awash with soft pride masked as innovation. We celebrate disruption when we mean domination. We call it "personal branding" when all it is public insecurity. We baptize our narcissism in the waters of optimization. Name it. Out loud. Even if it's you. Especially if it's you. Practice obscurity, occasionally. You do not have to be seen to be real. You do not have to be shared to have worth. You do not have to be searchable to matter. Unplug not to escape - but to remember. Hide your light, once in a while, not under a bushel, but under a starless sky. Sit in the dark. Let your thoughts be unmarketable. There is holiness in not being noticed. The AI revolution was never just about technology. It is about mirrors. Will we use them to reflect - or to inflate? The ancients built temples to gods they feared. We build apps to ourselves.

But even in Techville, surrounded by push notifications, neural nets, and the constant pull of curated perfection, there is still space to breathe, to reflect, and to wrestle with the timeless human question: Who am I, when I am not being optimized? If we do not find an answer, rest assured the algorithm will find one for us. And it will probably be a quote from Aristotle in Comic Sans.

Arab News

South Caucasus is slipping from Russia's grasp

Rustam Taghizade

THE recent flare-up between Russia and Azerbaijan is far more than a diplomatic spat: It marks a potential turning point in the balance of power in the South Caucasus. On June 27, Russian special forces conducted a violent raid on ethnic Azerbaijanis in Yekaterinburg, an industrial city in Russia's Ural region. About 50 people were detained, several were reportedly injured, and two Azerbaijani brothers - Ziyaddin and Huseyn Safarov - died in custody under suspicious circumstances. Autopsies revealed blunt-force trauma and broken ribs, contradicting Russian claims that the men died of heart failure.

Survivors reported beatings, electrocution, and degrading treatment. Far from being seen as a routine law enforcement action, the operation has been widely interpreted in Baku as a politically motivated act of intimidation - prompting sharp condemnation from Azerbaijani officials and a wave of anger from the public.

On July 1, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Russia, Rahman Mustafayev, delivered a formal protest to Moscow, denouncing what he described as the unlawful killing and mistreatment of Azerbaijani citizens, including dual nationals. This diplomatic fallout unfolded just as Baku launched its own high-profile crackdown on organized crime - one that notably included the arrest of several Russian nationals, some reportedly linked to Kremlin-funded media outlets and others accused of cyberfraud and drug trafficking. Among those detained were local staff of Sputnik Azerbaijan, the state-run Russian news agency. While the two episodes are officially unrelated, the timing suggests Azerbaijan is signalling a rejection of external coercion and asserting its sovereignty with new intensity.

These developments reflect a deeper geopolitical shift. Russia's traditional levers of influence in the post-Soviet space - military alliances such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), energy dependency, and soft power through Russian-language media - are weakening. Strained by the war in Ukraine and international sanctions, the Kremlin has increasingly turned to diaspora policing, symbolic shows of strength, and nationalist rhetoric to maintain control. The Yekaterinburg raid appears to fit this pattern: A demonstration of power aimed at a former Soviet republic now carving out a more independent path.

Azerbaijan's traditionally balanced foreign policy is now entering a more assertive phase. For years, Baku carefully navigated its relations with Russia, the West, and Türkiye. The implications extend well beyond Azerbaijan. Moscow's deteriorating relationship with Baku may trigger a wider realignment across Central Asia. Kazakhstan has already taken steps to distance itself from Russian influence, while Armenia, under Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, has publicly questioned the reliability of Russian security guarantees. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are simultaneously strengthening ties with Türkiye and China. In this context, Azerbaijan's defiance signals not an isolated dispute, but a broader erosion of Moscow's soft power across the former Soviet sphere.

For the Kremlin, traditional diplomatic tools are proving increasingly ineffective. In Azerbaijan, public outrage over the deaths in Yekaterinburg is helping shape foreign policy in ways

that go beyond formal statecraft. Moscow now faces the real prospect of Baku firmly embedding itself in the Turkish geopolitical orbit - supporting projects such as the Zangezur corridor, and reinforcing a trans-Caspian Turkic axis stretching from Anatolia to Central Asia. This vision stands in stark contrast to the Kremlin's fading Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) project, which now looks more like a symbolic construct than a meaningful alliance.

Meanwhile, the media landscape has become another battleground. Russian state outlets - particularly firebrand figures like Vladimir Solovyov - have adopted openly anti-Azerbaijani rhetoric, stoking ethnic and religious tensions. These attacks blur the line between journalism and state propaganda, further inflaming bilateral tensions and undermining traditional diplomatic protocols.

Yet, amid the escalating

tensions, Azerbaijan faces a rare strategic opportunity. If managed wisely, Baku can leverage this moment to strengthen its leadership role within the Turkic world and reset its relationship with Russia on more equal terms. In the years ahead, Azerbaijan has the potential to emerge not just as a key energy hub, but as a central geopolitical actor in the South Caucasus and beyond.

The Yekaterinburg raid is not simply a matter of domestic policing. It is a symptom of the accelerating breakdown of Moscow's grip over its "near abroad". What happens next - whether Russia adapts to the changing dynamics or attempts to reassert control through more coercive means - will shape the next chapter of Eurasian geopolitics. One thing is already clear: The regional balance of power is shifting, and Azerbaijan stands squarely at the centre of that transformation.

Aljazeera

Digital Silk Road: Can BRICS build a multipolar digital order?

IN the dying days of the telegraph, empires fought over copper cables in the same way navies once clashed over spice routes. In 2025, the prize is less tangible but no less strategic: the packet-switched arteries that carry our data, our dreams and, crucially, our leverage. Silicon Valley's giants still own most of those arteries - and the rules that govern them. Unless the BRICS bloc (now swelled to 10 members, with several "partner countries" waiting in the wings) drafts its own map for a Digital Silk Road, it risks discovering that the future has been subcontracted to California on a renewable license.

Together with their newer companions, BRICS+ nations account for roughly 40% [1] of the world's internet users - nearly 2 billion people staring at screens built on someone else's operating system. Three American cloud giants still command 63% of global enterprise cloud spending. Even US regulators have begun sounding the alarm over this dominance, with a formal investigation [2] launched into certain cloud practices-echoing similar concerns raised in the UK over their designation as holding "strategic market status."

If US antitrust authorities are worried, imagine how the Global South must feel. Data sovereignty is fast becoming the litmus test of political sovereignty. Beijing's original Digital Silk Road (DSR), the electronic branch of the Belt & Road Initiative, set out to wire the world with Chinese 5G towers, under-sea cables and smart-city sensors. It spooked Washington so much that think tanks now publish hand-wringing reports [3] titled "Countering the Digital Silk Road." Yet the DSR was largely unilateral: China financing, China building, China owning. A BRICS-branded upgrade would spread both the risks and the rewards, bundling Chinese

hardware efficiencies with Indian software scale, Russian cybersecurity chops, Brazilian AI sandboxes and South African fintech agility.

The logic is economic as well as strategic. BRICS nations already generate about 30 percent of global ICT goods [4] and 11% of digitally deliverable service. What they lack is a common backbone to keep that value inside the bloc. A shared cloud federation - mirroring Europe's stalled "GAIA-X" but turbo-charged by BRICS demographics - could allow data to stay in Johannesburg when a South African hospital orders Indian telemedicine, or in Sao Paulo when a Brazilian agri-startup crunches satellite images from Shenzhen.

Enter Ankara. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sees in BRICS a platform that neither requires abandoning the West nor apologizing for courting the East. With its rapidly expanding e-commerce landscape, and the early-stage development of its state-supported "TRCloud" initiative, Türkiye is well-positioned to serve as a pilot ground for BRICS digital protocols. Straddling the edge of Europe's intricate regulatory framework, it is attuned to concerns like GDPR, yet remains eager for investment flows from the Global South-despite reservations from Silicon Valley. Integrating Türkiye into a broader Digital Silk Road would lend the initiative a Mediterranean character-an important strategic layer if the goal includes drawing in bandwidth from the Middle East or tapping fiber optic routes across North Africa.

Of course, top-down digital sovereignty fantasies die hard in BRICS capitals. The bloc once floated an under-sea "BRICS Cable" to route traffic away from NSA eyes; it sank in 2015 under its own cost estimates. Coordinating

spectrum policy across 10 vastly different telecom authorities is harder than herding alpacas. And without airtight governance rules, a BRICS cloud risks looking like a Beijing cloud with extra regional servers. But time doesn't stop. April's BRICS meeting in Brasilia on joint cybersecurity drills [5] signaled a willingness to share not just hand-shakes but source-code. The Economic Partnership Strategy 2025 commits the bloc [6] to "enhancing transport and digital infrastructure." Even the long-skeptical New Delhi has tabled a "sovereign AI commons" pilot that would let member states co-train large language models on neutral cloud ground.

Meanwhile, Big Tech is busy pitching "sovereign cloud" packages that amount to the same old databases with a different colored dashboard. The moment exclusive hyperscale contracts are secured in places like Sao Paulo or St. Petersburg by dominant foreign providers, the window for creating a truly multipolar internet narrows. Washington is acutely aware of this dynamic. That's why it has been discreetly pressuring Brazil to steer clear of Chinese 5G infrastructure, while more openly warning BRICS financial platforms of potential secondary sanctions should they attempt to process transactions in yuan.

The Digital Silk Road is less a lofty ideal and more a necessary bypass - an alternative route to avoid the tightening choke points of global digital infrastructure. It must include interoperable privacy regimes (so that Russian fears of US backdoors do not morph into Indian fears of Chinese ones), pooled digital-currency rails via the BRICS New Development Bank, and a common position at the World Trade Organization whenever data-

flow clauses pop up in minilateral deals. Above all, it requires political imagination - a rare commodity, but not an extinct one.

What might a success look like? Picture a BRICS+ app store where a farmer downloads a South African drought-forecasting algorithm hosted on Brazilian servers and paid for through a New Delhi-cleared e-rupee. No Silicon Valley middleman skimming 30%; no Washington sanction switch; no Brussels lecture on "digital dependencies." Just south-to-south commerce running on cables the South co-owns. Critics are quick to point to internal divisions within the bloc - geopolitical tensions between China and India, or the sanction-laden baggage Russia brings to the table. Yet the same critics forget that the original Silk Road was never a chorus of harmony; it was a relay race of merchants who trusted the route more than they trusted one another. Trust the road, and markets follow.

BRICS has already shown it can redraw financial cartography with its New Development Bank and its de-dollarized trade pilots. It now faces a starker, faster-moving frontier: a digital realm where whoever writes the code writes the commandments. If the bloc waits for Silicon Valley to build its Digital Silk Road, it will wake up one morning to find the toll booths already installed and the terms of service non-negotiable. Türkiye's half-open door is an invitation to move, not muse. The cables need laying, the standards drafting, the cloud nodes switching on - before another FTC investigation turns into yet another wave of Silicon Valley consolidation. Empires of old fought for spice; empires of now fight for space - server space, spectrum bandwidth, and storage capacity etched into silicon. The Digital Silk Road is simply the trade route of this century.

What will happen now that Trump has turned on Putin?

PR E S I D E N T Donald Trump seems to have learned the lesson painfully gleaned by all his 21st-century predecessors: You can't reset US relations with Vladimir Putin. Trump's path from idolizing the Russian leader to berating him has been a melodrama of personalized geopolitics. But what happens next is far more important. The president's epiphany offers new possibilities for Ukraine, Putin's critics in Congress and America's browbeaten allies. But it also comes with risk - most notably of a test of wills between alpha males Trump and Putin, who control the world's two top nuclear arsenals.

Trump always tries to up the ante with foreign friends and foes with rhetoric and tariffs. But now he's up against a ruthless adversary who raises the stakes not with bluster, but with human lives, as intensifying drone blitzes on Kyiv - a clear message to the White House - show.

Such is Trump's transactional nature that it's fair to ask how long his hostility toward his erstwhile friend in the Kremlin will last. And even though he's talking about helping Ukraine defend itself, it's hard to see his transformation extending to match the tens of billions of dollars in military and financial aid sent to Kyiv by the US Congress during the Biden administration.

However, the president told NBC News on Thursday that he has secured a deal through NATO to send new Patriot anti-missile missiles to Kyiv that it badly needs to repel Russian attacks on civilian targets. "We're sending weapons to NATO, and NATO is paying for those weapons, a hundred percent," the president said. "We're going to be sending Patriots to NATO and then NATO will distribute that," he added. The exact parameters of the deal were not immediately clear, and CNN has reached out to the alliance.

Trump seems to have reached a pivot point. He's shifted from unfathomably blaming the victim of the war, Ukraine, to accusing the aggressor, Russia, of needlessly prolonging it.

The question is, how does this change US policy on the war and on Russia, as well as Trump's own attempts to exert US leadership and the domestic politics around Ukraine? Trump's declaration that he was fed up with Putin's "bullsh*t" this week was a startling twist, albeit one characteristic of his sometimes-propane brand of statesmanship.

No one tried harder than Trump to persuade Putin to end the war in Ukraine, which started with an illegal invasion in 2022. He's spent years praising the Russian leader's smarts and strength. But even as Trump turned on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky after returning to office - including in a notorious Oval Office blow-up - Putin spurned all of the US president's exceedingly generous terms for a ceasefire and an eventual peace agreement.

Putin's motives are an important consideration here. From a Western perspective, the Russian leader may be guilty of an extraordinary self-inflicted political gaffe. He could have had a US-backed peace deal that Ukraine's allies in Europe feared would reward his aggression, that locked in the territorial gains of the invasion, and that would have set in stone that Ukraine would never have a path to NATO membership.

But imposing Western logic on Putin's calculations has always been a mistake. (This was a factor in the Obama administration's misreading of the Russian leader ahead of his first escapade in Ukraine - the annexation of Crimea in 2014.) Putin made clear before the invasion that he sees the conflict as righting a historic wrong - both over

Stephen Collinson

Russia's age-old claims to Ukraine and his wider grievances that date back to the fall of the Berlin Wall, which he watched with dismay from his post as a KGB lieutenant colonel in communist East Germany. Putin talks of the "root causes" of the war. This is code for a number of Russian grievances that include the existence of a democratic government in Kyiv. It sometimes refers to Moscow's claims that it is threatened by NATO expansion after the Cold War and to its desire to see alliance troops withdrawn from former communist states once in the Soviet Union's orbit, such as Poland and Romania.

From this perspective, Putin may not have intended ever to end the war, and the calculations of Trump and his aides that he could be persuaded to do a "deal" - the central assumption of the president's entire worldview - was misguided. And after hundreds of thousands of Russian casualties, the war may be existential to Putin for his political survival. Countless US and European observers have tried to convince Trump of this view for years. In a way, it's stunning that Trump took so long to reach this point. The president said this week of Putin, "He's very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless."

Ukraine hawks hoping for a newly robust US policy on the war may want to temper their enthusiasm. Trump's frustration with Putin does seem genuine this time. But several times in recent months, he's criticized the Russian leader only to later caveat his anger. But if the president has finally concluded that he can't cajole Putin into peace talks, is he willing to try to coerce him into them?

"I think Trump gets it now," Charles Kupchan, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations told John Vause on CNN International. "He's got to put more pressure on Russia if he's going to get a deal with Ukraine." Such pressure might include an increase in US arms and ammunition to Ukraine as European states who feared Trump might walk away from Kyiv also pledge to increase their aid. The difference if Washington is truly committed could be enormous and could confound Putin's clear belief that he can outlast the West and can ultimately win the war. The White House could also fully embrace a bipartisan bill imposing tough new sanctions on Russia - as well as China and India, which are bulk buyers of its oil.

Trump has spoken in recent days about the terrible human toll inflicted on Ukrainians and the courage of their armed forces. But his willingness to stand with Zelensky's government in the long haul may depend on whether he's simply mad at Putin because he's deprived Trump of a deal that would bolster his own aspirations to be a peacemaker and win a Nobel Prize, or whether he's taking a strategic position on the war itself.

At times, Trump seemed to view the war in Ukraine as an unnecessary impediment to a better relationship between the US and Russia. He sounded a lot like former presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and a far more skeptical Joe Biden at the start of their presidencies. "Getting along with Russia is a good thing," Trump said in April. "I think I could have a very good relationship with Russia and with President Putin, and if I did, that would be a great thing."

Given Trump's transactional nature, some analysts have speculated that if his hopes of a Ukraine peace deal faltered, he might simply compartmentalize the war and try to deal with Russia on other issues - especially economics and business. That would permit Putin to continue the conflict without US interference. Trump might have had this in mind before the recent G7 summit when he showed up in Canada

complaining that Putin wasn't invited. Still, a partial thaw would not require Trump to get over what he seems to view as a personal slight from the Russian leader. And even though such a scenario would allow Russia to shed its pariah status and partially reenter world politics, it's not clear its possibilities would pierce Putin's siege mentality. Russia's next moves could also influence Trump's strategy.

There were some signs coming out of a meeting between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Malaysia on Thursday that US hopes of engaging Russia on the war are not dead. Rubio said he expressed Trump's "disappointment and frustration" but also that Russia had come up with "a new and different approach." Does Putin now think he's gone too far and needs to get Trump back on side, perhaps by handing the US president a symbolic "win"? Or is this just classic Russian obfuscation in prolonging a hopeless process of talking while its troops fight? One thing to look for will be whether Trump's chastening rebuff from Putin changes his approach to diplomacy more generally. The president has long boasted that his "great relationship" with the Russian leader and Chinese President Xi Jinping would yield victories for the United States that no other president could land. But as with North Korean tyrant Kim Jong Un in Trump's first term, the president's supposed magnetism has produced very little of substance.

The geopolitical backdrop to the Ukraine issue has also shifted in recent weeks. Trump's recent strikes on Iran might not have "obliterated" the Islamic Republic's nuclear sites, as he claims. But they were a demonstration of American military might and a success for the commander in chief who ordered them. For all his threats to democracy, the Constitution and the rule of law in the United States, Trump is clearly established as the world's most powerful leader, whose daily moves send shockwaves around the globe. Could this shift the dynamics between him and Putin? Does Trump now view the Russian leader less as a strongman to be lionized than as the leader of an inferior power? One big risk of a period of tension between the White House and the Kremlin would be if Trump and Putin get locked into a cycle of escalation - potentially to defend the enormous credibility that they have both invested in the relationship. There's no evidence to suggest that Trump wants to get into a showdown with Putin. Parts of his MAGA base see ideological synergies with Putin: his criticism of "wokeness" and what they see as a decline of Western cultural values. Another GOP faction wants to turn away from Europe in order to devote US military resources to a building showdown with China.

Nothing in Putin's behavior suggests that he wants a faceoff with Trump or the United States. But the Russian leader has frequently rattled nuclear sabers during the Ukraine conflict, apparently to scare Western populations. Trump's frequently expressed horror about the cataclysmic results of any nuclear conflict means this is a card the Russian leader might play if tensions really escalate. Ultimately, Trump might still return to this strategic assumption that has long haunted US policy towards Ukraine. "The fact is that Ukraine, which is a non-NATO country, is going to be vulnerable to military domination by Russia no matter what we do." This was not another Ukraine-skeptical Trump quote. It was his nemesis, Obama, in an interview with The Atlantic in 2016. But if nothing else, Trump's spat with Putin might serve one purpose - dispelling his blind spot over the Russian leader's true nature.

CNN

Macron and Starmer talk Trump, boats and Ukraine

GILDED carriages and royal banquets are not essential tools of modern diplomacy, but nor are they obsolete. In a digital age, when intergovernmental business could easily be conducted online, the analogue grandeur of a state visit feels potent as a bestowal of favour.

This week Emmanuel Macron is the beneficiary. In September it will be Donald Trump. The sequence is not meant to indicate preference. Both relationships are special, say officials. There are enough champagne receptions and sleepovers at Windsor Castle to go around. But it is also no accident that the French president was invited ahead of his US counterpart. Trump has had a state visit already, during his first term. Hardly anyone gets two. Macron, by contrast, has been in office since 2017 and dealt with five UK prime ministers. None before Keir Starmer rolled out the deep red carpet of ceremonial statecraft.

It was never going to happen with Theresa May or Boris Johnson in No 10. It was conceivable with Rishi Sunak, who got on fine with his French counterpart. As for Liz Truss, when asked during the 2022 Conservative leadership contest whether Macron should be considered friend or foe, she said: "The jury's out." It was a howling display of unsuitability for the job of prime minister. Naturally, with a Brexit-added Conservative party doing the recruitment, the howler won. Evicting the Tories was a necessary but not sufficient condition for upgrading cross-Channel relations. Starmer is fairly criticised for entering Downing Street with an undernourished policy agenda, but

cultivating contact with the Élysée Palace, laying the foundations of mutual trust, is one area where the effort started in opposition. If all goes to plan, this week's visit will reward that foresight with policy gains amid the pomp.

In terms of what registers with a domestic audience, the prime minister's priority is a deal to obstruct the traffic in small boats ferrying immigrants to the Kentish coast. Whatever Macron agrees on that front, it will be more than he was prepared to do for Starmer's Tory predecessors. That is the benefit of pragmatic post-Brexit diplomacy. It will also be less than satisfactory to those island-fortress fantasists who can't forgive a Labour prime minister for proving that constructive engagement with European neighbours gets results. But there is still a limit to what can be achieved on a bilateral basis when the Channel is an external EU border. No matter how well disposed Macron might be to Starmer on a personal level, the integrity of the European project comes first.

Few European leaders were as angry as Macron about Brexit or as determined that the competitive disadvantages of rupture from the single market be locked into the subsequent trade and cooperation agreement. (Boris Johnson was a hapless accomplice to that end, happily giving away valuable economic privilege for fistfuls of worthless sovereignty.) There is also plenty of history and shared strategic interest between Britain and France that antedate and transcend Brexit. Western Europe's only nuclear-armed powers, comparable in economic heft, each with a seat on the UN security

Rafael Behr

council, meet peer-to-peer on matters of security and defence. No other continental state is in that club. The longer French and UK dignitaries spend in a room together, the shorter the odds get on someone toasting the entente cordiale.

That isn't just sentimental nostalgia now that Starmer and Macron find themselves co-leading the "coalition of the willing" - a loose affiliation of countries, mostly in Europe, that have pledged to support Ukraine. What that means in practice is unclear. It is partly a commitment to continue arming Kyiv in the face of relentless Russian assaults, partly a determination to maintain pressure on Moscow to stop the killing and partly a promise to help invigilate any ceasefire should one be agreed. But the risk and feasibility of providing those things are hard to measure. The baseline might be a level of commitment that persuades Trump not to abandon Ukraine, or it could be the cost of replacing the US's contribution when he bails. Those are very different things. Last week, the US stopped sending vital air defence equipment to Kyiv on the grounds of "putting America's interests first". This week, the shipments resumed. Trump said he is "not happy" with the Russian president. If so, his displeasure isn't so strong that he supports European efforts to tighten energy sanctions on Moscow.

Trump's chaotic, capricious attitude makes it hard for Volodymyr Zelensky's more stalwart allies to establish what their coalition might really be willing to do. It is a question of survival for Ukraine, but also an existential challenge to all

democracies on the continent. Should Europe be sprinting for strategic autonomy because Washington is unreliable? Or are military deterrence and self-defence without the US security backstop such remote ambitions that the real task is knowing the price that a racketeer president demands in protection money, and paying it? The awkward answer is both: hope to forestall the betrayal and prepare for it too. A subsidiary question is how biddable Trump really is, and by what means. Starmer and Macron come at this from slightly different angles. Both recognise that flattery is essential. But the French president also has defiance in his repertoire. He has publicly rebuked the US president's threats to annex Greenland, for example.

Starmer's method is all emollient. Downing Street says the rewards speak for themselves in preferential trade terms. And it is true that Britain got a lower tariff deal, although that only means relative leniency for an uncertain period in a regime of arbitrary extortion. The real difference between Macron and Starmer when it comes to Trump is not a matter of negotiating tactics or temperament but of geopolitical arithmetic. A French president speaks to Washington as part of a 27-nation bloc of sufficient collective market size to count as an economic superpower. A British prime minister goes into the Oval Office alone.

And that is more significant than a ride in a horse-drawn coach and dinner with King Charles, which isn't to say a state visit is unimportant or unimpressive. It is a real projection of status. But one that usually means more to the diminished host than the honoured guest.

The Guardian

Putin redefined ‘patriotism.’ Now Trump is doing the same

ON the morning of July 4, Independence Day, I turned to my husband and said, "You know, I don't feel like watching fireworks tonight." The night before, just after the United States paused military aid to Ukraine, Russia launched a brutal bombardment on Kyiv. Photos and videos showed the city - where I spent several joyful years - on fire and choking on smoke. The images left me with no desire to see celebratory explosions in the sky.

This was my first Independence Day as an American citizen, having received my passport just a month ago. As one of my American friends joked, "You've joined at a bit of a low point." But I didn't feel like laughing. As a "freshman" in this country, I felt the quiet sorrow of starting to lose something just after I had finally gained it. And I wasn't alone. According to recent polls, American pride has slipped to a new low. An Economist/YouGov survey found that 44% of Americans believe the country is becoming less patriotic, while only 14% think it is becoming more so. A CNN/SSRS poll earlier this year found that fewer than one in 10 Democrats or Republicans said the word "proud" described how they felt about politics in America

today.

On social media, I saw many people saying they didn't feel like celebrating this year. Some expressed sadness and disappointment over the direction the country was taking under the current administration. Others chose to join protests under the slogan "Free America" instead. Just three weeks earlier, the national "No Kings!" protests prompted Donald Trump to label the participants as "people that hate our country" and therefore, in his eyes, not real patriots.

It reminded me of 2011 when, during mass protests in Russia, Putin mocked demonstrators as people "earning their little money" and pretended he mistook the protest symbol - white ribbons - for condoms. As a former Russian journalist and linguist, I'm struck by the sense that the transformation of the word patriotism in America feels eerily familiar. In Russia, patriotism no longer means what it should. But that change didn't happen overnight.

In 2014, TV Rain, a Russian independent TV channel now forced into exile and labeled "undesirable" by the Kremlin, invited me to join a broadcast marathon titled "To Love Your

Motherland." We discussed what patriotism truly meant to us and how Putin's regime had violated that word, twisting it into something unrecognizable. Radio journalist Ksenia Larina, also a guest host that day, wrote on social media: "Today on Dozhd [TV Rain], I tried to say that we owe everything terrible in human beings to patriotism. Patriotism is destructive; it creates nothing but noise, lies and hypocrisy. Patriotism is incompatible with freedom; it kills freedom of thought, creativity and self-realization. Patriotism is the religion of yesterday, a religion of the dead. It is a weapon of xenophobia. It is built on hatred, fear, lies, and irreconcilability. Patriotism is repulsive. It simplifies people and robs them of their minds. And that is all." She was attacked fiercely for those words, including by state propagandists. But she wasn't attacking the idea of loving one's country. She was calling out the way the Kremlin had turned patriotism into blind devotion to power.

Back in the 1770s, Samuel Johnson said that "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." His biographer, Boswell, noted that Johnson meant false patriotism - the kind used by cynical operators

Ksenia Turkova

to disguise their pursuit of personal power. That's exactly what happened in Russia. The authorities stuffed the word patriotism like a scarecrow, filling it with meanings that served the regime, not the nation. However, the meaning of that word in Russia and America still remains different. When Alexei Navalny's posthumous memoir "Patriot" was published, some Russian readers did not respond well to the title: for them, the word had a whiff of favor toward the Kremlin and its active supporters.

To many Americans, though, the title felt entirely appropriate. Navalny died fighting for his country's freedom. What could be more patriotic than that? Russian writer Ksenia Buksha once called Navalny's humor "superglue for patriots," suggesting that his wit and defiance made him a political figure of global stature. Now, here in America, I see the early signs of a similar attempt to redefine patriotism. The idea is creeping in that if you protest, you're not a patriot. If you question the government, you're un-American. But for now, they're only attempts. The word still holds its true meaning for many. Americans haven't yet learned - as George Orwell warned against - to love their country with their eyes closed.

Emirates recognised as 2025’s most recommended global brand by YouGov



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Emirates, the world's largest international airline, has topped the rankings as YouGov's Most Recommended Global Brand for 2025, a testament to the airline's longstanding 'Fly Better' promise. Emirates is the only airline to be featured on the global top 10 list.

The YouGov Most Recommended Brands rankings measure the percentage of a brand's customers who would recommend it to a friend or colleague. This year, Emirates achieved an outstanding score of 88.4%, with a significant lead on the next closest brand. Fuelled by insights from YouGov BrandIndex, Recommend

scores are based on over a million customer surveys in 28 markets, tracking brand performance daily between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025. Positive Recommend scores for each top 10 global brand are aggregated and weighted by the size of the brand's current customer base per market.

Sir Tim Clark, President Emirates Airline, said, "This recognition underscores the deep connection and loyalty we've built with passengers all over the world, who trust us not only to get them to their destination, but to do so with care, reliability, and excellence. We will continue to evolve our already exceptional experience and set new benchmarks in

travel to ensure Emirates is always a brand that our customers are proud to recommend."

Emirates has always kept customers at the heart of its operations, providing memorable journeys at every touchpoint, every time. Continually investing in the finest products and exceptional signature services, the airline provides a world-class travel experience in-air and on-ground.

In the first half of 2025, Emirates expanded its global network with route launches to three new destinations, with Hangzhou to follow; inaugurated nine reimagined travel retail stores in Asia, Africa and Europe; introduced its newest aircraft type, the

A350, to 10 destinations; and achieved its designation as the world's first Autism Certified Airline™, making significant headway on its journey to make travel accessible to all.

And Emirates shows no signs of slowing down.

By December 2025, the airline will serve over 70 cities with aircraft fitted out with the latest interiors on Boeing 777s, A380s and A350s, representing almost 50% of its network, and offer over 2 million Premium Economy seats, enabling more travellers to enjoy Emirates' latest generation premium onboard experience.

Emirates has been recognised by YouGov before, as the most recommended brand in the UAE in the Recommend 2024 rankings with a score of 92.6. In YouGov's 2024 US airlines report, Emirates recorded the "most satisfied customers amongst US flyers" and was one of the top 10 airlines considered by US Millennials and Gen Zs. As an international online research data and analytics firm, YouGov pioneers accessible and neutral market research and consumer interest surveys, utilising its flagship tracking tool, YouGov BrandIndex.



KARACHI Workers busy in stitching cloths at a garment factory in provincial capital. — INP photo

Weekly inflation declines by 1.23% on year-on-year basis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed a decrease of 1.23 percent on year-on-year basis during the week ending on July 10 as compared to the corresponding week of last year (2024).

However, on week-on-week basis, the SPI for the group increased by 0.95 percent during the week compared to last week, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 315.03 points as compared to 312.06 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed a decrease of 1.23 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 1.06 per cent and going up to 304.79 points this week from last week's 301.60 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, increased by 1.10 percent, 0.99 percent, 1.02 percent and 0.88 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.25%) items increased, 06 (11.77%) items decreased and 26 (50.98%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included LPG (2.56%), mustard oil (0.81%), pulse moong (0.41%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.20%) and wheat flour & vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.02%) each.

The commodities which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included chicken (22.61%), tomatoes (13.45%), onions (6.25%), potatoes (2.79%), garlic (2.36%), sugar (1.90%), gur (1.89%) and rice basmati broken (0.84%).

Year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included onions (50.04%), tomatoes (45.66%), electricity charges for q1 (37.62%), garlic (22.80%), wheat flour (22.19%), pulse mash (20.46%), tea packet (17.93%), potatoes (12.97%), pulse masoor (9.37%) and diesel (1.58%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included ladies sandal (55.62%), sugar (29.17%), pulse moong (18.89%), beef (14.71%), chicken (13.77%), gur (12.66%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg & 1 kg (12.46%) each, firewood (10.44%), powdered milk (9.41%), lawn printed (7.89%) and shirting (7.31%).

Motorbikes sale increases during FY 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed an increase of 30 percent during the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to sales of the last year 2023-24.

During the year under review, as many as 1,518,752 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 1,150,112 units during July-June (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). The sale of Honda motorcycles surged

by 27.42 percent from 1,003,253 units to 1,278,424 units whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 54.51 percent from 16,876 units to 26,076 units during the year under review.

The sales of United Auto motorcycles increased to 146,018 units from 82,683 units during last year while the sale of Road Prince motorbikes increased by 13.44 percent to 22,046 units from 16,049 units.

However, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes went down to 5,709 units from

6,562 units, witnessing a decline of 12.99 percent.

Meanwhile, the sale of Road Prince three-wheelers rose by 87.95 percent from 1,303 units to 2,449 units, while the sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also surged to 10,982 units from 5,977 units.

The sale of Sazgar three-wheelers increased by 71.74 percent from 15,014 units to 25,786 units, whereas the sale of United Auto three-wheelers decreased by 44.43 percent from 2,095 units to 1,164 units, the data added.

Trump’s tariff assault on Canada drags Wall St lower

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street indexes declined on Friday, as President Donald Trump cranked up his tariff assault on Canada, deepening uncertainty around Washington's trade agenda.

Trump on Thursday announced a 35% tariff on Canadian imports, set to kick in next month, up from the 25% imposed in March, and warned that the levy could climb higher if Canada retaliates.

The president also floated the possibility of a sweeping 15% or 20% tariff on other countries, up from the current 10% baseline.

Caution also prevailed as the European Union braced for a possible formal letter from Trump, with details on fresh tariffs.

At 10:04 a.m., the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJ), opens new tab fell 263.99 points, or 0.58%, to 44,390.90, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab lost 26.77 points, or 0.42%, to 6,253.94, and the Nasdaq Composite (IXIC), opens new tab lost 42.03 points, or 0.20%, to 20,588.63.

All sub-indexes of the S&P 500 traded in the red, with losses primarily led by financials (SPSY), opens new tab and materials (SPLRCM), opens new tab, both down 1.1% each.

The S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab and the tech-heavy Nasdaq (IXIC), opens new tab are on track to end the week slightly lower, and the Dow looks set to snap its three-week winning streak - the longest since January.

Markets have remained largely subdued this week, with the only highlight being Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab becoming the first company to breach the \$4 trillion valuation milestone. Its shares hit a fresh record high on the day.

This week, President Trump widened his tariff offensive, targeting a number of countries, including allies Japan and South Korea, and introducing a new 50% tariff on copper.

Market reaction to the new tariff announcements was far less choppy than the turbulence following early April's "Liberation Day" announcements, when all the major indexes posted their steepest weekly losses in nearly six years. Investors are now gearing up for the upcoming earnings season, hoping for a clearer read on how trade turmoil has rippled through corporate America.

Wall Street's big banks are scheduled to report quarterly results next week, with J.P. Morgan (JPM.N), opens new tab kicking off the earnings season on Tuesday.

BAJK, i-Consult Consortium sign agreement for CBS implementation

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a major step toward digital transformation and financial modernization, the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (BAJK) signed a landmark agreement on Friday with i-Consult Consortium for the implementation of a state-of-the-art Core Banking System (CBS).

This strategic initiative marks a new era of innovation, transparency, and customer-focused services in the region's banking sector.

The consortium includes leading technology partners—MegaPlus, i-

Consult, Silverlake, and iTANS—who will collaborate on the Core Banking System with an objective to elevate BAJK's infrastructure to global standards, significantly enhancing service accessibility, operational efficiency, and transparency across Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The high-profile signing ceremony was attended by key dignitaries, including Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq; Speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly,

Chaudhry Latif Akbar; Finance Minister and Chairman of BAJK's Board of Directors, Abdul Majid Khan; and BAJK President Shahid Shehzad Mir, along with senior government officials and representatives from the participating organizations.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq hailed the agreement as a milestone in the region's financial evolution.

"We are fully committed to transforming the Bank of Azad Jammu and

Kashmir into a modern, secure, and efficient institution. Our people deserve a banking system that inspires trust and facilitates safe investment," he said.

He further announced the government's intention to expand the bank's operations throughout Pakistan and AJK, with the goal of upgrading it to a scheduled bank. The Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of an efficient banking system in managing the 25% of national remittances received by AJK.

BMW CEO hopeful for ‘manageable’ deal on US auto import tariffs

MUNICH (Reuters): BMW's (BMWG.DE), opens new tab CEO said on Friday he was optimistic that the European Union and the United States would soon reach a "manageable" agreement on auto import tariffs, potentially including a mechanism to offset imports with exports.

Oliver Zipse's comments come as Europe awaits a letter from the U.S. administration under Donald Trump that could outline the framework of a trade deal and clarify tariff levels on European automotive exports. Trump said on Thursday the EU could receive a letter on tariff rates

by Friday. "I'm optimistic that there will be a manageable outcome but we have to wait for the result," Zipse told journalists at a company event in Munich on Friday.

He said a possible "netting mechanism" could be part of the deal, allowing exports from the U.S. to offset imports. BMW stands to benefit from such an arrangement, as its largest production site is in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

The mechanism could be based on the value of exports out of the U.S. market - more than \$10 billion in 2024 in BMW's case - rather

than the number of exported vehicles, he said.

If both sides were to agree on such a mechanism, it could also benefit imports of auto parts, according to people familiar with the matter.

"We have an important point because we are the largest car exporter in the U.S.," Zipse said, referring to the 225,000 cars it exported out of the country in 2024.

Heavy tariffs on car imports to the U.S. have left European carmakers scrambling to respond while hoping for a deal to minimise their impact in talks between Washington and the European Commission.

Pak, Vietnam PTA within 2025, for sustainable growth

HANOI (APP): The 5th Meeting of the Pakistan-Vietnam Joint Trade Committee (JTC) on Friday decided Pakistan and Vietnam Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) within 2025 and emphasized enhancing institutional and

business linkages for sustained trade growth.

The 5th Meeting of the Pakistan-Vietnam Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was convened today in Hanoi, reactivating this institutional forum after a hiatus of eight years, said a release issued here.

The session was co-chaired by Nasir Hamid, Additional Secretary of Commerce, Pakistan, and Ms. Phan Thi Thang, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Vietnam.

The signing ceremony of the Agreed Minutes was solemnly witnessed by Commerce Minister Jam

Hong Dien, Minister of Industry and Trade of Vietnam.

The Committee reviewed the current state of bilateral trade and outlined future cooperation in key areas including trade facilitation, market access, textile and fisheries, Halal certification, civil aviation, healthcare, and banking channels.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment to unlocking the untapped trade potential between the two countries.

The 6th Session of the JTC will be held in Pakistan at a mutually convenient time.



Court Notice

In the Court of Quat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi, Huda Noor VS Mustafa Khalid, Suit Number : 39/FC, Institution Date : 10-02-2025, Hearing Date : 25-07-2025, Subject: Dissolution of Marriage, Notice to: Mustafa Khalid Kharot (Afzal Bahadar) son Zahir Kharot (Sardar Bahadar) permanent address, Qargha Noumani, City Kharot, Province Kharot, Afghanistan, R/o Abu Khan Khel, Maneri Bala, Teh, & District Swabi, presently Abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 25-07-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.



In brief

Sindh announces reward for Karate winners

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government has announced Rs. 600,000 reward for the players from Sindh who delivered an outstanding performance in the South Asian Karate Championship. Meanwhile, a sponsorship cheque of Rs. 1.83 crore has also been provided to the street children's team of Lyari Football Academy, which is set to participate in the Norway Cup 2025. These announcements were made by Sindh Sports Minister Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mehr during a meeting with athletes in Karachi on Friday. The meeting was attended by the players who won medals for Pakistan in the South Asian Karate Championship, and presented their medals to the sports minister. As spokesperson stated that among the stand-out performers for Pakistan in the South Asian Karate Championship were Ayana Noel Arthur (1 gold), Samra Ijaz Pracha (1 bronze), Arisha Nadeem (1 silver, 1 bronze), Abdul Rehman (3 bronzes), and Saharsh Taseeq (2 bronzes). The sports minister said, "These young athletes from Sindh are our pride, as they have brought glory to Pakistan on the global stage." He added that the Sindh government is taking all possible measures to encourage women's participation in sports and nurture young talent. On this occasion, the street children's team of Lyari Football Academy also met with the sports minister, having received financial support to participate in the Norway Cup 2025. The team will compete in the tournament held in Oslo, Norway, from July 26 to August 2. The meeting was also attended by Sports Secretary Abdul Aleem Lashari, Additional Secretary Asad Ishaque, Assistant Director Fareed Ali, and officials from the Sindh Olympic Association, including Ahmed Ali Rajput and Asghar Baloch, among others.

Pogacar to retake Tour de France lead

MÛR-DE-BRETAGNE (AFP): Tadej Pogacar won stage seven of the Tour de France on Friday to regain the overall lead with a trademark burst up the short, steep slope of the Mur de Bretagne. Vismas Jonas Vingegaard was second, doggedly staying right on Pogacar's wheel to the line with Briton Oscar Onley third after a late nine-rider pile-up marred the finale. On his 19th career Tour de France stage win the 26-year-old Pogacar gained four seconds on Vingegaard with 10 bonus seconds to the Dane's six. "It was super hot today, and super fast but we had a plan and we stuck to it," said the Team UAE rider who was champion in 2020, 2021 and 2024. In the overall standings, Remco Evenepoel is second overall at 54 seconds after coming in sixth on the day, two seconds adrift. "The Tour de France isn't over yet," said Evenepoel, who lost time in a crosswind on the opening day before winning the stage five individual time-trial. French starlet Kevin Vauquelin continues his bright run in third at 1min 11sec while two-time champion Vingegaard is fourth at 1min 17sec. Fans cheered for Vauquelin along much of the route. On Thursday a hot-air balloon flew over the peloton with his face on it. "All you could hear was 'Kevin, Kevin' all along the road, it's so good to have a new face competing with us," said Pogacar.

Pakistan defeat Malaysia in shootout to reach Men's U18 Asia Cup 2025 final

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan stormed into the final of the Men's U18 Asia Cup 2025 after edging out Malaysia in a dramatic semifinal clash at the National Hockey Training Centre on Friday.

The tightly-fought encounter was decided through a nerve-racking penalty shootout after both

teams failed to break the deadlock in regulation time. In the high-stakes shootout, Malaysia faltered with two missed attempts, while Pakistan remained composed, missing only one and sealing a 4-3 victory.

The win propelled the Green Shirts into Sunday's final, where they will face Japan for the coveted title

at the same venue.

Pakistan's journey through the tournament has been nothing short of dominant. They kicked off their campaign with an emphatic 8-0 win over Hong Kong, followed by a crushing 9-0 rout of Sri Lanka. Their third group match saw them beat Bangladesh 6-3, effectively securing their place

in the knockout stage. In the quarterfinals, Pakistan overcame hosts China 2-1 in a tense contest to advance to the final four. With their semifinal triumph, the Pakistani squad, brimming with young talent and guided by experienced management, now stands just one step away from clinching the championship.

Sinner mauls Djokovic to reach first Wimbledon final



LONDON (AFP): Jannik Sinner crushed Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon semi-finals to set up the latest instalment of his gripping rivalry with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz in Sunday's final.

The world number one is through to his fourth successive Grand Slam title match -- and his first at the All England Club -- after a 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 demolition on Centre Court on Friday.

The 23-year-old will be desperate to avenge his painful French Open defeat against world number two Alcaraz after squandering three championship points in last month's epic Roland Garros final. Sinner and Alcaraz are the undisputed new kings of men's tennis, claiming the past six majors between them.

Defeat on a baking Centre Court means seven-time champion Djokovic must wait for another shot at a record 25th Grand Slam title after failing in his latest bid to equal Roger Federer's record of eight men's Wimbledon crowns.

It is the first time he has failed to reach the Wimbledon final since 2017. Italy's Sinner was

still wearing a white protective sleeve after injuring his elbow in a nasty fall against Grigor Dimitrov in the fourth-round.

Djokovic also came into the match, watched by Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio, with questions over his fitness after tumbling to the turf late in his quarter-final victory against Flavio Cobolli.

Top seed Sinner broke Djokovic in the third game, unleashing a barrage of relentlessly accurate groundstrokes to wear the sixth seed down. The Serb, 38, wilted under the onslaught in the ninth game as Sinner converted his third set point. Sinner did not let up at the start of the second set, breaking for a 2-0 lead to tighten his grip on the match.

Djokovic struggles to gain a foothold but held for 3-1 to roars from the crowd, desperate to witness a classic battle. Chants of "Nole" rang around the stadium as fans tried to lift Djokovic but he was powerless to prevent Sinner opening up a 5-2 lead.

He saved a set point on his own serve but that merely delayed the

inevitable as Sinner wrapped up the set with only 69 minutes on the clock. Djokovic received treatment from the trainer between sets on the upper part of his left leg, apparently on the area he hurt in the match against Cobolli.

He broke for the first time in the match as he suddenly found a new gear, but was pegged back to 3-2 and roared in frustration at the changeover. Struggling physically, Djokovic was broken again as Sinner sealed victory with his fourth match point.

Sinner, the reigning US Open and Australian Open champion, returned from a doping ban in May, losing the Italian Open final to Alcaraz before his collapse in the Roland Garros showpiece. Now he has chance for revenge against the man who has won the past two Wimbledon titles and is the current top dog on grass.

Sinner trails 8-4 in their head to head meetings, losing the past five matches.

The Italian can take heart from beating Alcaraz in the Wimbledon fourth round in 2022, which ranks as his rival's last defeat at the All England Club.

Italy make history by qualifying for 2026 T20 WC

THE HAGUE (Agencies): Italy have secured qualification for the 2026 men's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, despite losing to Netherlands at The Hague. Next year's tournament will mark Italy's first appearance at a cricket World Cup. Netherlands also qualified for the event after comfortably chasing 135.

Scotland, who have featured in the last four editions of the T20 World Cup, were knocked out after suffering a last-ball defeat against Jersey earlier in the day. Despite pulling off a one-wicket heist, Jersey were also knocked out after Netherlands beat Italy. Both Italy and Jersey were level with five points, but Italy ended up progressing to the 2026 T20 World Cup, by virtue of a superior net run-rate.

Italy only needed to avoid a heavy defeat, which they did by stretching Netherlands' chase to 16.2 overs. They confirmed their place in next year's T20 World Cup in the 15th over before Netherlands completed their job and joined Italy in the event.

After having opted to bat, Italy lost both their openers, Justin Mosca and Emilio Gay, within three overs and when their captain Joe Burns (22) fell in the seventh over, they were 41 for 3. Wicketkeeper-batter Marcus Campopiano also fell cheaply, leaving Italy at 46 for 4 in the ninth over. Ben Manenti then rallied along with the lower order to help Italy post a relatively competitive 134 for 7. Left-arm spinner Roelof van der Merwe was the pick of the bowlers for Netherlands, returning 3 for 15 in four overs, including the key wicket of Burns.

Manenti found support from No. 7 Grant Stewart (25 off 16) and No. 8 Anthony Mosca (13* off 14). Italy took 33 off the last three overs, including 15 off the penultimate over bowled by allrounder Bas de Leede.

Netherlands then dashed out of the blocks, hitting 66 for no loss in the powerplay in their chase. Max O'Dowd and Michael Levitt extended their opening stand to 71 before Crishan Kalugamage struck in the eighth over to dismiss Levitt for 34 off 25 balls, an innings which included five fours and a six. O'Dowd and captain Scott Edwards then put on an unbroken 64-run partnership for the second wicket to see Netherlands home.

Kalugamage finished with figures of 1 for 25 in his four overs and though Harry Manenti didn't strike on the day, he ended the Europe regional final as its top wicket-taker. He took eight wickets at an average of 9.62 and economy rate of 7.70 in three matches.

As for Jersey, they sealed their first-ever win against Scotland, but their joy was short-lived with the result of the Italy-Netherlands fixture not going in their favour. In pursuit of 134, Jersey were cruising at 81 for 1 in the 12th over, but the wicket of Nick Greenwood triggered a collapse. Jersey lost 8 for 48 and were left needing five off four balls. Captain Charles Perchard and No. 11 Jake Dunford picked off 2,1,1,1 to keep Jersey in the race before Netherlands and Italy qualified at their expense.

Fifteen teams have qualified for the men's T20 World Cup 2026 so far. The East-Asia Pacific qualifier will see three more sides qualify from the competition while two further teams will make it through from the Africa qualifier.

Pakistan hockey team withdraws from Asia Cup in India over security concerns

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan has decided not to send its national hockey team to participate in the upcoming Asia Cup tournament scheduled to be held in India.

The decision comes amid rising security threats, political tensions, and hostile propaganda targeting Pakistani athletes.

According to sources, Pakistan has always kept sports separate from politics, but India has allegedly politicized the event, creating a controversial and unsafe environment for the visiting team.

"Pakistan has always promoted peace through sports, but unfortunately, India has used international sports events as tools of political aggression,"

sources added.

The decision to withdraw has been taken in light of increasing threats directed at the Pakistani hockey team.

According to sources, several extremist groups have openly issued threats against the Pakistani players via various social media platforms, raising serious security concerns for the team.

"Indian media continues to spew venom against Pakistan, fueling public sentiment and creating a dangerously hostile environment," a source added.

This move marks yet another setback in sporting ties between the two neighboring nations, which have already seen strained relations in cricket, hockey, and other international competitions due to geopolitical tensions.

et, hockey, and other international competitions due to geopolitical tensions.

As of now, the Pakistan Hockey Federation has not released an official statement, but sources confirm that the matter was discussed at a high level, and the safety of the athletes remains the top priority.

Chairman of the Youth Program, Rana Mashood, while commenting on a TV channel, clarified Pakistan's participation in the Asia Cup Hockey Tournament, stating that the event will be held in India.

The security situation, however, will be thoroughly reviewed before the team travels. "If we are not satisfied, we will not put the Pakistan team at risk," he stated.



LONDON: Chris Woakes had Shubman Gill caught behind.

Archer strikes on comeback in see-saw third Test

LONDON (Agencies): Jofra Archer took a wicket with the third delivery of his comeback on a memorable and fluctuating second day of the third Test between England and India.

After more than four years away with career-threatening injuries, Archer electrified Lord's by having Yashvi Jasirwal caught at second slip, wheeling away to celebrate with overflowing emotion.

Somehow, India suffered only one loss in Archer's opening burst, but England plugged away in the extreme heat for two more crucial breakthroughs.

Joe Root's magnificent catch at first slip not only ended Karun Nair's resistance at 40, but also gave Root his 211th grab in Tests, a record for an outfielder. The bowler was captain Ben Stokes, fit after a first-day injury scare.

Of more significance was the removal of prolific India captain Shuman Gill, caught behind off Chris Woakes for 16. KL Rahul remains on 53. Rishabh Pant is fit to bat after a finger injury and has 19. India

closed on 145-3, 242 behind England's 387 all out.

For all of the excitement around Archer, his was not the most influential spell of fast bowling of the day: Jasprit Bumrah tore through England with 5-74.

Bumrah bowled Stokes for 44, had Root play on after he completed his 37th Test century and took an edge to condemn Woakes to a golden duck, all in a seven-ball period.

England slipped to 271-7, but India crucially dropped Jamie Smith on five. The wicketkeeper was fluent for 51, adding 84 with Brydon Carse, who was impressive for his maiden Test half-century.

Action-packed at red Lord's

The first day of this Test was a grind, England battling their way to 251-4. The second day, as Lord's turned red for the Ruth Strauss Foundation, was action-packed. Whatever happens in Archer's career from now on, the wicket of Jaiswal, his celebration and the reaction of the crowd will go down in English cricket folklore. An "I was there" moment.

Even for the brilliance of Archer, who looked like he had never been away, England were struggling to make inroads under a burning sun and on an unresponsive pitch until the vital wicket of Gill.

That, along with the likely deterioration of the surface perhaps tips the balance towards the hosts. History is on their side: only once on this ground has a team made more than 387 batting first and lost, and that was a 1930 England team to an Australia side containing Sir Donald Bradman.

India might have been in a stronger position had they held Smith and not pushed to change the ball that gave Bumrah his first three wickets of the day.

The replacement did nothing and the tourists got it changed again eight overs later. The morning was, at times, a frustrating spectacle, with 15 overs fewer than scheduled bowled throughout the day. That was forgotten as the shadows lengthened in an arm-wrestle of an evening. These two sides are evenly matched, this Test and the series are beautifully poised.

Eight athletes selected for Asian Bodybuilding C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The First National PSB Bodybuilding and Physique Championship 2025 concluded here at the Pakistan Sports Complex with the selection of eight top athletes, who will represent Pakistan at the 57th Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championship later this year in Thailand.

Organized by the Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation (PBBF) with the support of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), the championship drew 122 participants from across the country, competing in 23 categories including Senior, Junior, Masters, Athletic Physique, and Sports Physique divisions.

Following a rigorous evaluation process conducted by a panel comprising international and national judges from the World Bodybuilding Federation, Asian Bodybuilding Federation, and provincial associations, the following athletes were shortlisted to compete at the continental level: Ejaz Ahmed, Firasat Ali, Mohsin Iqbal, Muhammad Shakeel, Bilal Ahmed, Usama Saeed, Haroon Rasheed, and Faizan Gul.

The event also featured the first-ever Anti-Doping Awareness Seminar, held alongside the championship to promote clean and fair competition in the sport.

Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation Secretary

General Sohail Anwar, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, praised the efforts of the PSB and organizing committee in hosting a successful event. "This championship marks a new chapter in Pakistan's bodybuilding scene. Our commitment is to promote bodybuilding nationwide with transparency and dedication. Our athletes will prove themselves on the Asian stage," he remarked.

Chairman of the PSB Organizing Committee Saeed Akhtar, along with committee members Nasrullah Rana, Farman Khan, Sohail Gil, and noted sports nutritionist Dr. Nabeel, also attended the event and congratulated the winners.

Palace demoted from Europa League over ownership rules



LONDON (Agencies): Crystal Palace have been demoted from the Europa League to the Conference League next season, Uefa have ruled.

The decision stems from Palace breaching multi-club ownership rules as American businessman John Textor owns a stake in the Eagles and is the majority owner of French club Lyon, who have also qualified for the Europa League.

Nottingham Forest, who finished seventh in the Premier League last season, could replace FA Cup winners Palace in the Europa League. Uefa said the Eagles could appeal its ruling with the Court of Arbitration for Sport and Palace are set to do so.

The rules of European football's governing body state that clubs owned, to a certain threshold of influence, by the same person or entity cannot compete in the same European competition. Uefa's rules set a deadline of 1 March 2025 to show proof of multi-club ownership restructuring - a deadline which Palace missed.

Palace argued Textor does not hold any decisive influence at the club, but Uefa have not accepted the Premier League side's defence. Lyon, who also qualified for next season's Europa League, take precedence over Palace because of their higher league position.

The seven-time French champions finished sixth in Ligue 1, with Palace 12th in the Premier League but qualifying for European competition by winning the FA Cup.

Earlier this week Lyon won their appeal against relegation from Ligue 1 after they were demoted for financial reasons, which affected Palace's chances of playing in the Europa League.

Had Lyon's relegation been upheld, they had agreed with Uefa to be excluded from the Europa League, clearing the way for Palace to play in the competition.

English football has two allocated Europa League spots, with Aston Villa securing the other after finishing sixth in the Premier

League.

How did we get here?

Palace were huge underdogs to win the FA Cup and their joy at qualifying for Europe for the first time quickly turned to unease when the club realised their spot may be in doubt.

Uefa's regulations around multi-club ownership and European competitions are in place to prevent collusion.

In the governing body's rulebook, a club is required to prove they are not "simultaneously involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of more than one club participating in a Uefa club competition".

Textor's Eagle Football owns a 43% stake in Palace and a 77% stake in Lyon, but the Premier League side argued they are an entity that operates entirely independently.

In June, Forest asked for clarity from Uefa on Palace's position in Europe with the club standing to gain if Palace were demoted to the Conference League.



In brief

7 drug suppliers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday continued the crackdown against drug suppliers and arrested seven accused with more than 11 kilograms charas from different areas. According to a Rawalpindi Police spokesperson, the Sadiqabad Police detained three accused recovering 4.65 kg charas from their possession. The Taxila Police nabbed with accused recovering some 2.47 kg of the contraband item from him. Similarly, the Rawat, Kahuta and Wah Saddar Police also detained one accused each with 1.68 kg, 1.65 kg and 760 grams charas, respectively.

Five accused caught with liquor

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Friday took five accused into custody recovering liquor and illegal weapons from their possession. Operations against the detainees were carried out in the areas of Chaklala, Dharmial, Kallar Syedan and Naseerabad police stations, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. Besides illegal arms, 25 litres of liquor were recovered from the accused, he added.

One killed in firing incident

RAWALPINDI (APP): One person was killed in a firing incident that took place near Chakri Road area of Rawalpindi, TV channels quoting police sources reported on Friday. According to initial reports, unknown motorcyclists opened fire and killed a person near Chakri Road area of Rawalpindi. The police team after receiving reports, rushed to the site and shifted the dead to hospital. Investigations are underway.

2 street criminals arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Wah Saddar Police on Friday nabbed two accused involved in street crime cases. Stolen money of Rs 13,000 and two mobile phones were recovered from the detained accused, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said. Meanwhile, the City Police Station also arrested a servant who had stolen valuables from his owner's flat two months ago. The accused the arrested person had decamped with mobile phone batteries, hands-free, AirPods and other items from the flat in the absence of the owner and gone into the hiding. The police used all resources to trace and arrest the accused, with some stolen valuables and Rs 5,000 being the sale proceeds of others.

PFA destroys substandard meat

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Rawalpindi on Friday destroyed some 500 kilograms meat worth Rs 0.5 million for not being fit for human consumption. According to a PFA spokesman, the substandard meat was being brought from Sargodha for sale at Bhabra Bazaar, Rawalpindi. The spokesman said the PFA continued to its crackdown against substandard meat. A PFA team stopped the vehicle full of meat at Waris Khan, which was later declared unsafe for human consumption by a veterinary doctor, he added. All the 500 kg meat valuing around Rs 500,000 was destroyed on the spot, the spokesperson said. A case was registered against the accused and the vehicle was handed over to the police, he said. The spokesman said the PFA team by taking timely action, saved the citizens from eating substandard meat. He asked the citizens to contact the PFA Helpline 1223 in case of any complaint.

Govt. unbothered by PTI's protest plans: Rana Ihsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan on Friday said the government had no concerns over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) call for protests.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that any such attempt would fail just like their previous efforts.

"This is yet another ploy

to mislead workers—a political stunt chasing false hopes," he said.

Commenting on PTI founder's legal cases, he stated that Imran Khan was imprisoned for corruption, not as a political prisoner. Linking court verdicts and cases with political protests is illogical, he added.

Rana emphasized that dialogue was always

encouraged only if the opposition fulfills its democratic responsibilities.

PTI had turned into a cult-like movement focused solely on its founder's personal interests, not national issues, he added. He added that the PTI was deeply entangled in corruption, with several scandals surfacing from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Minister emphasizes collective effort to tackle population surge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal on Friday advocated for collaborative action as the government escalates its initiatives to address the nation's alarming population growth, in alignment with the Prime Minister's vision, focusing on effective resource stewardship and enduring sustainability.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Federal Minister Kamal highlighted the dire consequences of unchecked population growth, warning that it could lead to severe socio-economic challenges.

Drawing comparisons with countries like Bangladesh and Iran, he emphasized how these nations had successfully implemented population control measures to avoid a "ticking time bomb" of overpopulation. He noted that these countries had recognized the need for proactive policies, focusing on family planning, education

and resource management to prevent unsustainable population surges.

"If we do not act now, we risk facing similar challenges," the minister said, stressing the urgency of collective action to mitigate the issue. Responding to a query, the minister highlighted the alarming statistics related to overpopulation, stating that there are currently 26.2 million out-of-school children in the country.

He further emphasized that more than 6 crore 50 lakh new jobs will be needed to accommodate the growing population. The minister also pointed out the immense strain on the healthcare system, with hospitals becoming increasingly overburdened due to the rising number of people. "Overpopulation is a crisis that our country cannot ignore any longer. The consequences are far-reaching, from education to employment to healthcare," he said, calling for urgent measures to address the situation before it spirals fur-

ther out of control.

To a question, Syed Mustafa Kamal responded that under the Prime Minister's guidance, the government has formed a dedicated committee to address the population crisis.

He mentioned that several conferences had been held, where all parliamentarians and ministers came together to reach a unanimous consensus on the urgent need to control the population. "It is a collective approach, and everyone is on the same page now, recognizing that this issue requires immediate and coordinated action," he said.

He pointed out how unchecked population growth is putting immense pressure on national resources, social infrastructure and economic stability.

To another question, he said that family planning awareness and a national debate will be key components of the government's efforts to address the population challenge.

Peace in South Asia must be earned, not imposed, says former CJCSC



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In its latest edition of the Thought Leaders Forum (TLF), the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI(M), HI(M), Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), as the Distinguished Speaker. The session focused on the theme "Peace and Stability in South Asia and Beyond."

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, highlighted the rapid transformation of the global order, marked by intensified great power competition, militarisation, erosion of multilateralism, and the rise of non-traditional security threats.

Focusing on the recent crisis in South Asia, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood drew attention to India's baseless allegations against Pakistan following a terrorist incident in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK), and the ensuing conflict dynamics that nearly escalated into full-scale war in May 2025.

He noted that Pakistan effectively countered Indian aggression with a calibrated and resolute response, while maintaining diplomatic composure. Emphasising the urgent need for crisis communication, ceasefire stabilisation, and eventual dispute resolution, he underscored the broader regional fragilities—including stalled

SAARC cooperation, regional securitisation, and unresolved disputes like Kashmir. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood further stressed that Pakistan must sustain robust defence preparedness and proactive diplomacy to navigate this complex strategic landscape and foster lasting peace in South Asia and beyond.

General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI(M), HI(M), Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), in his talk, cautioned that South Asia, currently lingers below the threshold of stability.

He underscored that the region is trapped in a complex security quagmire, aggravated by the absence of crisis management mechanisms, regional security frameworks, and meaningful exchanges across multiple domains. General Hayat raised pertinent questions about the nature of peace and concluded that true peace cannot be imposed, bought, or externally driven—it must be earned through justice, trust, and sovereign equality.

He warned that the doomsday clock for South Asia now stands at 30 seconds to midnight, highlighting the destabilising impact of India's evolving strategic posture, ideological shift, and military build-up. He called attention to India's grand strategic delusions, the shift from the 'Doval' to 'Modi doctrine', and the resulting "reverse deterrence" where

Pakistan's resolve has only strengthened. General Hayat noted that while Kashmir has long been recognised as a nuclear flashpoint in South Asia, the 2025 crisis has now brought water also into the equation—underscoring that South Asia stands at a critical juncture.

He urged Pakistan to use this moment to revamp internally, seize emerging global opportunities, and navigate future threats with clarity and strength. The address was followed by a thought-provoking and engaging question & answer session, during which participants delved deeper into the complex regional dynamics and benefitted from General Zubair Mahmood Hayat's strategic insights.

Earlier, in this introductory remarks, Director Dr. Talat Shabbir, highlighted the strategic significance of peace and stability in South Asia amidst a fragile regional security architecture marked by both traditional and non-traditional threats. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors, ISSI, presented a memento to General Zubair Mahmood Hayat. The event brought together scholars, diplomats, and policy experts to engage in an insightful discussion on evolving regional dynamics, strategic stability, and pathways toward enduring peace in the broader South Asian context.



ISLAMABAD: Clouds hover over the sky of the Federal Capital, signaling an impending spell of rain. —APP Photo

RDA holds balloting ceremony for Hajj 2026

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the directions of the Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Kinza Murtaza, a balloting ceremony for Hajj 2026 was held on Friday at the RDA Conference Room.

According to the RDA spokesman, the ceremony was chaired by the DG RDA and attended by Director Admin and Finance Qazi Sohaib Ahmed, RDA officers and staff, and representatives of the CBA Employees Union.

Two employees, Yasir Hussain (Junior Clerk, Grade 11) and Tariq Mahmood (FE Loader, Grade 5), were selected through balloting to perform Hajj. The officers, staff and union representatives present at the event congratulated the selected employees and extended their best wishes for the holy journey.

Participants expressed special gratitude to the DG RDA for promoting transparency and welfare initiatives within the organisation. In her address, the DG RDA Kinza Murtaza reiterated the importance of adhering to principles of transparency to strengthen the institution. She stated that integrity, professionalism, and compliance with rules and regulations are key to institutional progress, which builds confidence among both employees and the public.

She further announced that the RDA enforcement squad would soon be strengthened, and recruitment of surveyors for the Security Guards and Building Control Wing would be initiated.

Lady smuggler sent to jail

RAWALPINDI (APP): A court has jailed five criminals including a female drug supplier, with a combined sentence of 46 years in prison and fines totaling Rs.485,000.0

According to the information, the key criminal Jaweria, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and fined Rs. 125,000.0 for her involvement in drug trafficking. She was arrested by Saddar Wah Police in October 2024 after 1.6 kg of heroin was recovered from her possession.

Another convict, Jahanzib, received a 9-year sentence and a Rs.100,000.0 fine following his arrest by Sadiqabad Police in September 2024, with 1.636 kg of cannabis seized from him.

Similarly, Muhammad Waris was sentenced to 9 years in prison and fined Rs.100,000.0 after Saddar Beruni Police recovered 1.57 kg of cannabis in March 2025.

Zarneel, arrested by Dharmial Police in May 2023 with 2.2 Kg of cannabis, was also sentenced to 9 years in prison and fined Rs.80,000.0 Muhammad Naeem, arrested by Saddar Wah Police in December 2023 with 1.54 Kg of cannabis, received an identical sentence of 9 years and a Rs.8000.0 fine.

City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani lauded the police teams for their commendable efforts in securing these convictions. He emphasized that Rawalpindi Police are taking all necessary measures to eradicate the menace of drug trafficking in the region.

Drive launched to curb air pollution through vehicle emission testing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Friday formally inaugurated the vehicle emission testing campaign in Islamabad.

As part of the launch, a team from the Islamabad Transport Authority inspected the minister's own vehicle using advanced equipment. Speaking in the occasion, Talal Chaudhry said that both the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Interior had instructed the administration to implement reforms across Islamabad. These reforms, he added, include not just infrastructure improvements but also steps to protect the environment.

He highlighted that the air quality index (AQI) in Islamabad had been climbing steadily over the past few years. "In some areas, the AQI had even started to cross the 200 mark, which is concerning," the minister stated. Chaudhry said that the vehicle inspection initiative is part of a broader effort to improve air quality. The government has

imported modern testing devices that meet international standards to ensure accurate inspections of vehicle emissions.

The Minister of State thanked the Punjab government for sending a trained team to support the initiative. He also noted that Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon set a public example by starting the inspection drive from his own vehicle.

According to Minister of State for Interior, the testing campaign will begin with government vehicles. He announced that a dedicated testing setup will be established near the Old Parade Ground to facilitate inspections. Vehicles that pass the emission test will be issued barcoded stickers as proof of compliance. Chaudhry added that strict action would be taken against vehicles that emit excessive smoke, including financial penalties.

He said the capital has already witnessed improvements due to recent environmental actions. Traditional

brick kilns, which were a major source of air pollution, have been shut down. Only kilns using zigzag technology are allowed to operate now, he explained.

He emphasized that vehicle emissions remain one of the main causes of environmental damage in the city. The new policy aims to ensure that no smoke-emitting vehicle will be allowed to enter Islamabad without inspection. He reiterated that vehicles found polluting the air will face strict fines, and said this step is necessary to maintain public health and environmental standards.

In his remarks, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry once again thanked Punjab's Chief Minister for extending support through trained teams and equipment for the campaign. The event concluded with renewed government commitment to cleaner air and stricter regulation of polluting vehicles as part of broader reforms underway in the capital.

Fire contained at AC factory, investigation underway

ISLAMABAD (APP): A fire broke out in an air conditioning factory in Islamabad's Humak Industrial Area on Friday, damaging multiple sections of the facility.

The flames were brought under control after a prompt response by the district administration and CDA Fire Brigade.

According to the spokesman of Islamabad district administration, the fire erupted in a factory located within the limits of

Humak Police Station. Initial investigations suggest the fire was caused by an electrical short circuit.

The incident caused damage to a total of nine industrial sheds. Officials confirmed that the fire did not spread to nearby areas, and no casualties were reported.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Fire Brigade responded quickly to the emergency. A total of 12 fire trucks and three water tankers were deployed to

douse the flames. After the fire was controlled, cooling efforts were launched to prevent any further risk.

The Islamabad district administration has completed a preliminary inquiry and shared initial findings. Officials said legal action is being taken to determine responsibility for the incident.

Authorities have launched a formal investigation to hold accountable those responsible for any negligence.

Family planning needed to meet resource demands, warns DG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General (DG) Population at the Ministry of National Health Services, Dr. Soofia Yunus on 'World Population Day' Friday urged all sectors of society to come together through coordinated efforts, national-level discourse and proactive media advocacy to prioritize family planning, emphasizing that inaction could lead to overwhelming pressure on limited resources.

In an exclusive conversation with state-run news channel, Director General Population emphasized the urgent need for a unified national response to address population growth, adding, the importance of media campaigns, especially targeting those who hold myths and misconceptions about family planning.

She said that while the government is making efforts, collective action from all sectors of society is essential to effectively address the population challenge. She highlighted that all segments of society must be actively involved, including government institutions, budget plan-

ners, Islamic scholars, teachers, parliamentarians, and social media influencers to form a collective voice in support of family planning initiatives.

Dr. Yunus warned that failure to act decisively could lead to serious consequences, including increased pressure on health, education, food and other essential resources.

She stressed that only through inclusive engagement, policy commitment and widespread awareness can the country effectively manage its population and ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations. Responding to a query, she further stressed that "a healthy mother means a healthy child," underscoring the importance of maternal health for the well-being of future generations.

She expressed concern over the growing trend of anemia and poor nutrition among mothers, noting that lack of adequate blood and nourishment during pregnancy has become alarmingly common.

Addressing maternal health, she added, must go

hand-in-hand with population control efforts to ensure a healthier, more sustainable future.

To another question, DG added that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and the Federal Health Minister are giving priority attention to family planning, engaging all provincial departments and working closely with United Nations development agencies to implement integrated and effective strategies aimed at population control and maternal health improvement.

She noted that Pakistan currently ranks as the fifth most populous country in the world, and if population growth continues unchecked, it could soon move to fourth place. With one of the highest population growth rates globally, Pakistan is facing unsustainable pressure on its public services and resources.

She emphasized that Pakistan's resources are limited, and if population growth is not brought under control, the demand will far exceed the available resources, leading to serious economic and social challenges.

Five family members killed in road mishap

BADAKHSHAN (Amu tv): A traffic accident in the northeastern province of Badakhshan killed five members of a single family and injured another person, local Taliban officials said on Friday. According to Ehsanullah Kamgar, a spokesperson for the Taliban police in Badakhshan, the crash occurred late Wednesday on the Tashkan-Kishm highway when a Toyota Corolla veered off the road.

Uzbekistan committed to support Afghanistan development

KABUL (Ariana News): Uzbekistan reaffirmed its commitment to supporting sustainable development in Afghanistan during a meeting between Bakhtiyor Saidov, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister, and Abdul Ghafar Terawi, Afghanistan's Ambassador to Uzbekistan, on Friday. According to Saidov's post on X, the two diplomats discussed pressing bilateral and regional issues, emphasizing the importance of integrating Afghanistan into regional.

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

IE urges dignified deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): With the unprecedented increase in the deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran, the Prime Minister's Office of the Islamic Emirate, while appreciating Iran's four-decade-long hospitality, has called for a gradual and dignified management of this process.

The Islamic Emirate has asked Iranian authorities to avoid any humiliating behavior and violations of human rights during the deportation process.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, said: "Regarding Afghan migrants, based on the Islamic Emirate's responsibility, we have always requested the Iranian side to observe principles of gradualness, dignity, and good neighborliness in the deportation process, so that on one hand, the rights of migrants are upheld during deportation, and on the other hand, Afghan government departments can prop-



erly manage migrant affairs."

Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that in just the past 9 days, more than 264,000 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran.

Reports indicate that many of these individuals have returned to Afghanistan in the sweltering summer heat and without adequate access to basic necessities.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has also empha-

sized support for these migrants.

Jacopo Caridi, County Director for NRC in Afghanistan, said: "The last three weeks, 400,000 people returned without anything in their hands. They don't have a job, they don't have a future in Afghanistan. We are here to support the people on the border crossing with shelter and legal assistance. The needs are very high and we can't cover everybody. We ask the International Community to support us

more and to better dialogue between Iran and Afghanistan on the returnees process."

Some of the deported migrants, who are facing challenges, have appeals to the caretaker government.

"We made an effort and came to Afghanistan. We are uneducated; at least provide education for our children so they can have a brighter future. This is our request from the Islamic Emirate," said Najibullah, deported from Iran.

"We have no money now. We don't know what to do. We ask the Islamic Emirate government to help us. We are worried about our future," said Quadratullah, another deportee from Iran.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office of the Islamic Emirate announced at a press conference yesterday that since the beginning of June, over 500,000 Afghan citizens have returned from Iran.

IE, Kazakhstan seek long-term cooperation in trade



KABUL (TOLONews): A high-ranking delegation led by Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, arrived in Kabul yesterday to meet with officials of the Islamic Emirate to advance political, economic, and transit cooperation.

The delegation emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and stated that their country is ready for broad cooperation in areas such as stability, food security, transit, and development.

Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, expressed appreciation for Kazakhstan's positive stance toward Afghanistan during his meeting with the Kazakh delegation, stating that it is now time for this constructive engagement to evolve into sustainable and long-term cooperation between the two countries.

Zia Ahmad Takal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "The Foreign Minister expressed gratitude for Kazakhstan's positive stance on Afghanistan and expressed hope that

existing opportunities would be positively used to expand political and economic ties."

The Kazakh delegation, during a meeting with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, stated that their country plans to invest \$500 million in the Torgundi-Herat railway project.

The delegation also emphasized Astana's readiness to expand cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, and transit.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, said:

"The Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan stated that his country is committed to improving relations based on political, economic, commercial, and Islamic commonalities, and added that Kazakhstan will share all the issues raised by the Islamic Emirate with its relevant agencies to develop a clear roadmap for cooperation."

Economic experts believe that considering Afghanistan's strategic position as a regional transit hub, this visit presents a significant opportunity to attract major investments and strengthen regional cooperation.

"We can establish trade relations and export and import goods through Kazakhstan to other countries, including Russia, China, and European countries. Therefore, the more accurate and extensive these relations are, the more beneficial they will be for our economy, Kazakhstan's economy, and other nations," said Abdul Zohour Mudaber, an economic analyst.

"Based on these good relations, imports and exports between the two countries have increased, and to further boost these relations, trade between the two countries must be accelerated," said Abdul Shakoor Hadawal, another economic analyst.

In recent years, political, economic, and transit relations between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan have expanded, and exchanges of high-level delegations have increased.

Afghan Farmers Struggle Without Cold Storage

KABUL (TOLONews): Due to the lack of standard cold storage facilities in Afghanistan, farmers face serious challenges in preserving their agricultural products.

This issue has resulted in a large portion of their produce spoiling before reaching markets, which not only reduces their income but also weakens their motivation to continue farming.

Farmers in several provinces across the country report that the absence of proper storage facilities has forced them to sell their produce at low prices before it spoils.

Zainul Abideen, a farmer, says: "We have no cold storage. We sell a bag of fruit, which doesn't even weigh one kilo, for 30 Afghanis. That means the price per kilo is less than 5 Afghanis — we make no profit from this. If our products ripen and we have access to cold storage, the same fruit could be sold for 200 to 300 Afghanis."

Another farmer, Naqibullah, says: "We don't have cold storage. When our vegetables are ready, they are sold very cheaply, sometimes even one man (around 7 kg) of



vegetables sells for just 30 Afghanis."

Habibullah, another farmer, adds: "If a cold storage facility is built and our products like potatoes and onions are kept in it, it will help a lot. This is our request to the Islamic Emirate, to build cold storage units."

In response to this issue, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock has announced the initiation of construction work for six new cold storage facilities in six provinces.

According to the ministry's spokesperson, there are currently 32 operational cold storage facilities across the country, of which 9 are state-owned and the rest privately

operated.

Ghulam Mohammad Kazim Shahamat, spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, says: "The construction of six cold storage units in six provinces, each with a capacity of 5,000 tons, has been completed. With the completion of these projects, farmers will see a significant reduction in the problem of preserving their produce."

Although Afghanistan is an agricultural country, the lack of cold storage continues to cause substantial spoilage of agricultural products.

This is a recurring problem that farmers complain about every year, as it brings them heavy losses.

Berlin in 'technical contact only' with IEA, says German FM

KABUL (Ariana News): German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said on Thursday that Berlin was only in technical contact with the Islamic Emirate and does not intend to recognize the current ruling regime in Afghanistan.

During a meeting in Vienna, Wadephul added that Germany will continue to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

"There are serious concerns about the humanitarian situation there, the human rights situation in Afghanistan, and particularly the situation of women and girls, and we, as the federal government, will continue to make these clear to the Taliban's de facto regime," said Wadephul.

Currently, the Afghan consulate in Munich, Germany, operates in coordination with the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Emirate.

However, Kabul has repeatedly emphasized the need for diplomatic and meaningful relations and has stated that concerns over human rights violations in Afghanistan are unfounded. Germany's interior minister had said earlier this month that he wants to negotiate a direct agreement with the Islamic Emirate on receiving Afghan migrants deported from Germany.

Since the summer of 2021, only one deportation flight of Afghan migrants has taken place from Germany to Afghanistan.

In August of last year, 28 Afghan asylum seekers who had committed crimes were returned to Kabul from Germany with the assistance of Qatar.

Up to 30,000 Afghans return daily from Iran

HERAT (TOLONews): Government officials say that in order to address the challenges faced by these returnees, facilities have been established at the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat.

The Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, who visited Islam Qala, has called on the private sector and the general public to actively participate in providing food, water, and assistance in transporting the returnees to various provinces.

Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, stated: "My call to all citizens, traders, and wealthy individuals is to come forward and join the Islamic Emirate in showing solidarity and compassion with these people."

According to figures from Herat's local authorities, around half a million Afghan migrants have returned to the country through Islam Qala border in the past 20 days.

Abdul Ghani Kamil, the head of committees at Islam Qala and the district governor of Kohsan, also said: "Based on what we have seen over the past 15 to 20 days, nearly 500,000 migrants have likely returned, as around 30,000 people enter the country

every day."

Some of the returnees, referring to the difficult living conditions in Iran, expressed happiness about returning to their homeland. They called on the caretaker government to provide them with employment opportunities.

Ahmad Zia, a returnee from Iran, said: "We no longer intend to go to foreign countries. Even if we eat only a piece of bread, we want to live in our own country with dignity and honor."

Another returnee from Iran, Matiullah, also stated: "If these youth are provided with jobs, none of them will leave the country. They will work in their homeland and stay where they belong."

According to local officials in Herat, between 20,000 to 25,000 people return daily through the Islam Qala border.

Figures from the caretaker government indicate that, in addition to Islam Qala, more than 4,000 Afghan migrants return to the country daily via the Silk Bridge in Nimroz, Spin Boldak in Kandahar, and Torkham in Nangarhar, from both Iran and Pakistan.

Deported Afghans from Iran Face Food Shortages in Kabul Camp: A number of Afghan returnees deported

from Iran have complained about the lack of timely access to sufficient food at a camp in Kabul.

They say they are struggling with economic hardship and are unable to provide food for their children.

Mir Ahmad, one of the deportees from Iran, said: "In this hot weather, there are many problems. My children only ate at night; there is no food left. There is no one to help the poor and the migrants."

Shah Mahmood, another deportee, said: "So far, nothing has been provided for us to eat in this camp, and I don't know if anything will be provided in the future."

Meanwhile, the Ministries of Refugees and Repatriation, and Economy, assure ongoing efforts to provide services for the returnees.

Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, said: "We are in continuous and direct contact with international organizations, as well as national businessmen and investors, to play a key role in reducing the challenges faced by our dear migrants."

This comes as relief agencies have repeatedly pledged to support and deliver services to those deported from neighboring countries.

Tajik official denies reports of forced deportations of Afghan migrants

KABUL (Amu tv): A senior Tajik official has denied reports of forced deportations of Afghan migrants from Tajikistan, calling the allegations baseless and stating that no formal complaints have been received.

Musawer Bahadori, head of Tajikistan's Committee for Refugees in Dushanbe, said in an interview published Friday by local outlet Asia-Plus that his office had not been approached by any Afghan nationals regarding forced removals.

"No one has come to our committee to file a complaint, and we have received no official grievance from any migrant," Bahadori said.

His remarks came in response to earlier reports by Afghan media outlet Amu TV, which cited unnamed sources claiming that the Tajik government had detained and deported Afghan migrants in recent days, allegedly giving them a 15-day deadline to leave the country.

According to those sources, the majority of the deportees held valid residence permits in Tajikistan. Many were said to be former employees of the previous Afghan government who fled the country following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, fearing reprisal and persecution.

Sources added that over the past week, dozens of Afghan men were detained daily—often at their workplaces or homes in the Vahdat township and Rudaki district of Dushanbe—and deported without prior warning to their families.

Roughly 13,000 Afghans are estimated to reside in Tajikistan, many of whom are awaiting resettlement to third countries, including Canada.

This comes amid rising pressure on Afghan refugees in the region. Iran and Pakistan have already ramped up expulsions of undocumented Afghans in recent months, drawing international concern over human rights violations and the risks facing returnees.

Tajik authorities have not issued a formal statement addressing the claims, and international organizations working on refugee protection have yet to comment publicly on the matter.

178 needy families receive dairy cows

NANGARHAR (TOLONews): A humanitarian organization in Nangarhar province has distributed dairy cows to 178 poor families and widows.

According to officials, these cows have been distributed in five districts of the province with the aim of improving the economic conditions of these families.

Mohammad Wali Mohsen, Head of Agriculture and Irrigation in Nangarhar, said: "178 dairy cows are being distributed and handed over to 178 families. In Dara-e-Noor district alone, at least 47 families will receive cows to strengthen the dairy sector, particularly milk production and support these households."

Eslahuddin Etemadi, a representative of the supporting organization, said: "God willing, we plan to implement similar programs in other districts as well."

Recipients of the aid say they are facing serious economic challenges, and these dairy cows will help cover some of their daily needs.

Mohammad Qayum, a resident of Dara-e-Noor district, said: "Many households had no means of livelihood. These cows



have become a source of income for them—they make yogurt, sell milk, and support their families this way."

Kheir Mohammad, another resident of Dara-e-Noor, said: "These organizations helped us. We had no financial resources and used to do labor work. They gave us cows to improve our economic situation."

Several other residents of Dara-e-Noor have called on the caretaker government and aid organizations to initiate infrastructure projects to

improve conditions for poor families.

Mirbaz, a resident of Nangarhar, said: "There are many vulnerable people among us, orphans, widows, and the poor. The people of Dara-e-Noor are economically very weak. More support should be given, especially to widows."

The distribution of dairy cows to needy families in Nangarhar comes at a time when residents of remote areas in the province continue to face severe economic hardships.

WHO warns of rising infectious diseases among deported Afghan migrants

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 World Health Organization (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.

According to WHO, over 8,700 children received oral polio vaccines, and more than 8,300 individuals received injectable polio vaccines at the Islam Qala crossing alone. Thousands of returnee children have also been vaccinated against measles in high-risk border areas.

In total, nearly 29,000 people have been screened or vaccinated at major border points including Spin Boldak, Torkham, and



Islam Qala. WHO mobile health teams are stationed at reception centers and zero-point borders, conducting daily health checks on hundreds of returnees.

In just a short monitoring period, WHO identified more than 840 individuals showing symptoms of infectious disease, all of whom received immediate medical care. The organization emphasized the

urgency of increasing medical resources and staffing capacity to deal with rising health risks.

As the number of deported Afghan migrants continues to grow, WHO stresses that expanded funding and coordinated efforts are urgently needed to prevent large-scale disease outbreaks and provide adequate care for returnees in crisis.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur witnessing agreement signing ceremony between Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization and Pakistan Environment Trust.

Mily awards conferred upon Pak Navy personnel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Investiture Ceremony 2025 was held at Bahria Auditorium, Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the ceremony as Chief Guest and conferred various military awards upon naval personnel.

The recipients of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) were Cdr Rashid Mahmood Sheikh, Cdr Tasawar Iqbal, Cdr Aamir Iqbal, Cdr Rashid Nazir, Cdr Zeeshan Shahid, Cdr Dr. Nadeem Kureshi, Cdr Dr. Tariq Mairaj Rasool Khan, Cdr Dr. Attaulah, Cdr Muhammad Umair, Cdr Shahid Wasif, Cdr Saqib Habib, Cdr Faisal Iqbal Qazi and Capt Syed Atif Hussain Bukhari PN.

The recipients of Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military) were Capt Naveed Ahmed PN, Cdr Imran Raza PN,



Cdr Babar Ibne Saleem PN, Cdr Najeeb Ullah Khan Niazi PN, Cdr Rizwan Ullah PN, Surg Cdr Mohsin Raza Khan PN, Cdr Imtiaz Muhammad PN, Cdr Muhammad Anwer PN, Lt Cdr Syed Noman Masood PN, Lt Cdr Waleed Arif and Lt Cdr Muhammad Umar PN.

The recipients of Tamgha-i-Basalat (Military) were Cdr Munawar Ahmed Bhatti PN, Cdr Naeem Ahmed Khan PN, Saddam Hussain

PMT-I and Zain Ali PMT-II. 31 Awards of TK(M)-I, 53 awards of TK(M)-II and 99 awards of TK(M)-III were also conferred upon MCPOs, CPOs and Sailors of Pakistan Navy. Moreover, Letters of Commendation from Chief of the Naval Staff were awarded to 60 Officers, MCPOs/CPOs/Sailors and Navy Civilians. The ceremony was attended by a large number of senior, serving and retired officers of Pakistan Navy.

IHC grants time to govt for report in Aafia case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday granted time to federal government for submission of report to explain that why it is refusing to cooperate in the US court on Dr. Aafia's case. Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard the case related to release and repatriation of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui from a US jail.

The court expressed strong anger over the federal government's failure to submit a report. On this occasion, lawyer Imran Shafiq appeared in the court on behalf of the petitioner, while Additional Attorney General Rashid Hafeez and others appeared in the court on behalf of the federation. During the hearing of the case, the court said that a report was sought from you regarding the reasons for refusing to cooperate in the US court on Dr. Aafia's case. If the federal government's report is not presented, I will summon the entire cabinet, Justice Ishaq said.

The court said that in the month of June, it had sought a response. The court, while talking to the Additional Attorney General, said that I am giving 3 days, the report should be submitted to the court, on which the Additional Attorney General requested that he be given a time limit of next week. He said that five working days should be given, on which Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan said that I will have annual leave from next week. Later, the court accepted the Additional Attorney General's request for time limit till next week and adjourned the hearing till July 21.

Court serves notices to respondents in plea for recovery of missing student: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) served notices to respondents in a petition seeking recovery of a missing student of Quaid-e-Azam University. Justice Inam Ameen Minhas heard the case, the court also terminated the objections of the Registrar's Office on the petition filed for the recovery of Saeedullah.

During the hearing on the petition with the objection of the Registrar's Office yesterday, lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chathaa appeared in the court on behalf of the petitioner Jahanzeb Khan and took the position that a passerby can also file an enforced disappearance petition. The objection of the Registrar's Office is unnecessary. The court dismissed the objections of the Registrar's Office and issued notices to the parties, seeking their responses, and adjourned the hearing.

Court reserves verdict on Qureshi's plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad on Friday reserved its decision on a plea filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi seeking acquittal in the May 9 unrest case. The case was heard in the court of Judicial Magistrate Shehzad Khan at the Islamabad District and Sessions Court.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, along with others, is accused in a case linked to the May 9 incidents. During the proceedings, Qureshi's lawyer, Ali Bukhari, appeared before the court and argued that several co-accused have already been acquitted in the same case. He pointed out that on March 8, 2025, the court had acquitted other individuals involved in the matter.

Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Khurshid Iqbal directed NAB to examine the plea bargain request and decide according to the law and dispose of the writ petition.

PML-N approaches court for oath-taking on reserved seats: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has approached the Peshawar High Court, seeking a direction for the oath-taking of its elected minority and women members on reserved seats.

The petition has been filed by 7 members, including minority member Suresh Kumar, through lawyers Rahmanullah Shah and Ashfaq Dawoodzai. The Supreme Court of Pakistan's constitutional bench had restored the elected members on reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, the writ stated. The Election Commission of Pakistan issued a notification on July 2, restoring the members.

The petitioners have approached the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly for oath-taking, but the Speaker's Secretary has informed them that the oath will be taken during the assembly session. The petition argue that Article 255(2) of the 26th Constitutional Amendment empowers the Chief Justice to nominate anyone to administer the oath. The petitioners have also requested an early hearing, citing the upcoming Senate election schedule

announced on July 21.

The writ argue that oath-taking is essential for them to participate in the Senate election and exercise their constitutional right to vote. The petitioners contend that if the oath is not administered, their right to vote may be compromised. The petition has made the Election Commission and the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly respondents to the case.

Court can't directs NAB for play bargain: PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to examine the play bargain request of Muhammad Ayub, who is involved in the Kohistan corruption scandal as per law, on Friday.

The lawyer informed the court that the petitioner wants to enter into a plea bargain with NAB, but the process has not been initiated yet. NAB Deputy Prosecutor General informed the court that Muhammad Ayub is accused of embezzling Rs. 3.40 billion in the Kohistan corruption scandal.

Justice Sahibzada Asadullah observed that it is not the court's job to direct NAB to enter into a plea bargain with the accused. The court noted that it is up to NAB to decide whether to accept or reject the plea bargain request.

Justice Sahibzada Asadullah asked NAB's lawyer whether NAB wants to enter into a plea bargain with the accused. NAB's lawyer informed the court that they had written a letter to the Chairman NAB on July 2 regarding the plea bargain request.

The Chairman NAB has the discretion to decide on the request. NAB's lawyer also informed the court that they had filed an interim bail application in the accountability court, and any order passed by the high court would affect the case.

PHC divisional bench

Swat tragedy inquiry report presented to KP CM

Some officials hold responsible for negligence

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Inspection Team (PIT) has presented its inquiry report regarding the Swat incident to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here on Friday. The 63-page inquiry report identifies systemic shortcomings in dealing with such incidents and proposes measures to address these deficiencies. The inquiry report highlights the negligence of certain government officers and officials in the context of the Swat incident and recommends disciplinary action against them.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has approved disciplinary proceedings against those found negligent in light of the inquiry report, and the relevant departments will initiate action against the responsible officials and officers. These departments include the district administration, irrigation department, local government, and Rescue 1122. The concerned departments will fulfill all legal formalities and complete the disciplinary proceedings within 60 days.

Departments and institutions identified in the inquiry report for having shortcomings will, within 30 days, take corrective measures, including the issuance of new protocols and regulatory frameworks. Similarly, within 30 days, comprehensive regulatory frameworks for river safety and building regulations will be prepared, with immediate enforcement of new laws and rules, and strict implementation of existing ones ensured.

To ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Provincial Inspection Team's, an oversight committee headed by the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be formed. This oversight committee will also transform the recommendations of PIT into actionable KPIs. Moreover, oversight committee will submit a monthly progress report on the implementation of these recommendations to the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Furthermore, the oversight committee will incorporate river safety modules into the upcoming monsoon contingency plan and ensure the swift execution of plans to enhance Rescue 1122's capabilities.

To prevent such incidents during the monsoon season, a large-scale public awareness campaign will be launched throughout the province by the relevant departments including information, relief, and tourism. The report of the Provincial Inspection

Gandapur launches carbon asset inventory to enter global markets

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a landmark move toward climate action and sustainable development, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has officially launched the province's first Carbon Asset Inventory for its renewable energy portfolio. The launch event, held in Peshawar, marks a significant milestone in KP's journey to access international carbon markets and unlock new pathways for climate finance. Developed in collaboration with the UK International Development-funded Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) Programme, the inventory maps renewable energy projects owned by the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), assessing their potential for carbon credits and International Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs).

Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur stated: "This initiative is a bold testament to KP's leadership in climate action. It demonstrates our resolve to expand clean energy solutions, attract green finance, and ensure that the benefits of sustainability are equitably shared among our people." The Chief Minister termed the launch of the Carbon Asset Inventory as a historic moment, stating that this step is evidence that our province is ready to align with global environmental goals. He said this initiative also reflects the government's commitment to adopting market-based mechanisms for sustainable economic development. He appreciated the collaboration between PEDO and the SEED Programme, stating that it was through the collective efforts of all stakeholders that the province's first Carbon Asset Inventory was made possible. Ali Amin Gandapur stated that this inventory is a modern tool that maps PEDO's renewable energy projects and establishes a carbon emissions baseline, enabling PEDO to quantify the emissions it has saved. He added that this initiative will pave the way for the province's access to the international renewable energy market and will also lay the foundation for promoting climate financing in the province.

Team stated that the advisory issued by PDMA and the district administration was not effectively implemented in the context of the Swat incident. It also pointed out a lack of coordination among field departments including police, revenue, irrigation, rescue, tourism police, and others.

Due to the malfunctioning of the early warning system, there was a delay in communication. The regulatory mechanisms for approving building plans and defining encroachments were found to be ambiguous and inconsistent. The report also mentioned negligence on the part of hotel owners in alerting tourists about the dangers. Furthermore, delays in response by Rescue 1122, lack of trained personnel, and unavailability of necessary equipment were noted.

There was no clear designation of responsibilities among departments and institutions for riverside safety, and no risk classification existed for tourist spots along rivers. The report also stated that at the district level, there were no organized SOPs to ensure public safety during the monsoon season, and existing rules were violated in constructions along water-courses. It stressed the need for a special provincial law to effectively regulate activities along rivers.

Additionally, the report pointed out inadequate enforcement of Section 144. The report also included steps taken by the provincial government and local administration after the incident. According to the report, immediately after the incident, an indiscriminate operation was launched against encroachments along rivers across the province. In the last ten days, 127 illegal buildings were sealed, and constructions over 682 kanals of land were demolished. A total of 1,874 kanals of encroached land was identified, out of which encroachments over 1,019 kanals were removed. The demarcation of 609 kilometers of riverbeds was carried out, and 174 barriers were installed.

Coordination between Rescue 1122 and district administration was improved, and under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, a River Rescue Plan was approved. To deal with such incidents in the future, the establishment of 36 prefab rescue stations at a cost of Rs. 66 million, procurement of modern equipment worth Rs. 739 million for rescue operations, and setting up of 70 compact rescue stations costing Rs. 608 million were approved. Additionally, Rs. 200 million were approved for the establishment of a digital monitoring system.

Thousands attend funeral of slain ANP leader

F.P. Report

KHAR: The funeral prayer of Maulana Khan Zeb, senior leader of the Awami National Party (ANP) and Secretary for Religious Affairs, was held in his native town of Nawagai, a day after he was shot and killed.

A large crowd of mourners, including thousands of locals, political workers, and tribal elders, attended the funeral. Prominent attendees included ANP's provincial president Mian Ifthikhar Hussain, senior leader Sardar Hussain Babak, MNAs from Bajaur Nisar Baz, Dr. Hameed, and Anwar Zeb Khan.

Maulana Khan Zeb was laid to rest in his hometown, and emotional scenes

marked the funeral. Earlier in the day, the funeral of police constable Sherzada, who was also killed in the same incident, was held with a large public turnout paying respects to the fallen officer. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCPC) issued a statement condemning the killing, hailing Khan Zeb as "a leading peace campaigner and political leader of the ANP". "We demand a swift and impartial inquiry into this tragic incident," the rights body wrote in a statement on X.

"The federal and provincial governments must ensure that normalcy returns to the terror-stricken districts of the province and that people who have

suffered for decades can lead their lives peacefully and without fear."

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his grief over the assassination of Awami National Party leader Maulana Khan Zeb in a targeted attack in Bajaur that took place on Thursday.

Remembering the slain ANP leader as a "very fine soul, and a staunch advocate for peace," the prime minister wrote on X that he was "grieved to learn about the assassination of Maulana Khan Zeb in a cowardly targeted attack in Bajaur." He extended his heartfelt condolences to the grieving family, colleagues, and the people of Bajaur and prayed for peace for the departed soul.

President calls for promoting trade with Ukraine

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday called for promoting Pakistan's trade and investment relations with Czech Republic and Ukraine as Pakistan's ambassadors-designate for both countries called on him here.

The president, in a meeting with Pakistan's designated Ambassador to Czech Republic Shahryar Akbar Khan, said that the Czech Republic was an important partner for Pakistan in Europe. He emphasized the need to promote trade, investment, and people-to-people contacts between the two countries, as well as exchanges of parliamentary and cultural delegations.

In his meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ukraine Major General (R) Kunwar Adnan Ahmed Khan, the president said that Pakistan desired to expand the mutually beneficial cooperation with Ukraine further.

He instructed the designated envoy to play a role in promoting economic, trade, and cultural relations between the two countries.

President Zardari also congratulated Shahryar Akbar Khan and Major General (R) Kunwar Adnan Ahmed Khan on their new responsibilities and extended his best wishes.

Rubio meets China's Wang Yi

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, as the two major powers vied to push their agendas in Asia at a time of simmering tension over a US trade tariffs offensive.

Washington's top diplomat is in Malaysia on his first trip to Asia since taking office, attending the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum alongside counterparts from Japan, China, South Korea, Russia, Australia, India, the European Union and Southeast Asian states.

His meeting with Wang comes amid escalating friction globally over US President Donald Trump's tariffs, with China this week warning the United States against reinstating hefty levies on its goods next month. Beijing has also threatened to retaliate against nations that strike deals with the United States to cut China out of supply chains.

Rubio's visit is part of an effort to renew US focus on the Indo-Pacific region and look beyond conflicts in the Middle East and Europe that have consumed much of the Trump administration's attention. But that has

been overshadowed by this week's announcement of steep US tariffs on many Asian countries and US allies that include 25% on Japan, South Korea and Malaysia, 32% for Indonesia, 36% for Thailand and Cambodia and 40% on Myanmar and Laos.

Analysts said Rubio would be looking to press the case that the United States remains a better partner than China, Washington's main strategic rival, during the visit. The State Department said Rubio met counterparts of Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia on Friday.

Imran, wife being denied even basic facilities given to prisoners: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, stated that Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi are being denied even the basic rights and facilities typically granted to ordinary prisoners. He said Maryam Nawaz harbors a personal vendetta against Bushra Bibi and all PTI women. Under Maryam Nawaz's directives, Bushra Bibi is being kept under strict surveillance. The hardships imposed on her have been intensified, causing her severe mental distress.

Dr. Saif added that Bushra Bibi is being punished for her unwavering loyalty to Imran Khan. He also high-

lighted the dire condition of Dr. Yasmin Rashid, who is battling a life-threatening disease like cancer in prison, and even being deprived of basic necessities such as oxygen.

Despite all the oppression and brutality, Bushra Bibi and other PTI women remain steadfast and resilient. Dr. Saif emphasized that Maryam Nawaz's dream of breaking the resolve of PTI women will never be realized. He accused Maryam Nawaz of grave human rights violations driven by personal malice, and advised her, "Only commit as much cruelty as you yourself can endure tomorrow."

He reiterated that PTI is not merely a political party but a movement rooted in ideology—an ideology that cannot be crushed. PTI's women, too,

are fighting for that ideology, and Maryam Nawaz's cheap tactics will not be able to suppress them.

Barrister Dr. Saif stated that Bushra Bibi's loyalty to Imran Khan is unparalleled. He further praised Yasmin Rashid for enduring the hardships of prison with courage despite her illness and called her perseverance in the face of a tyrannical regime truly exemplary. He concluded by saying, "The day is not far when Imran Khan and all imprisoned PTI leaders will be released and will once again take the reins of the nation."

Meanwhile, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, paid an official visit to the historic

Peshawar Flying Club, where he was briefed on the club's operational capabilities, training infrastructure, and its longstanding role in promoting civil aviation and pilot training in the region.

During the visit, Barrister Dr. Saif was received by the club's Chief Executive Officer, Capt. (Retd.) Sohrab Khan, senior instructors, and administrative officials. He inspected the fleet of training aircraft, including the Cessna 150, Cessna 172 and Piper Aztec and toured the flight simulator lab, maintenance hangar, and academic block.

In his remarks, Barrister Dr. Saif lauded the club's contributions to Pakistan's aviation sector, terming it a "national asset with historic signifi-

cance and untapped potential." He emphasized the need to revive and expand civil aviation training in KP, particularly to empower youth, create high-skilled jobs, and develop human capital in frontier regions.

"A vibrant and well-supported flying club in Peshawar is not only a matter of heritage, but a matter of strategy. We must reconnect our young people with high-end professions like aviation and aircraft engineering," said Barrister Dr. Saif. The Advisor also pledged to explore avenues for government collaboration, including support for upgradation of training modules, restoration of grounded aircraft, and policy advocacy for better recognition of pilot licenses and flight instructors trained

at PFCL.

CEO Capt. Sohrab Khan briefed the delegation on the club's renewed focus under new leadership, including the revival of the Flight Instructor Training School (FITS) and plans to restore the Beechcraft King Air 200 for advanced training and charter missions.

Barrister Dr. Saif also met with staff pilots and appreciated the club's track record of over 60,000 safe flying hours and more than 900 licensed pilots trained over the decades. The visit concluded with the presentation of honorary shield to the Advisor and a commitment to further engagement between the provincial government and civil aviation stakeholders in KP.