

Five foreigners remanded
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The lower court of Islamabad on Monday granted a two-day physical remand of five foreign nationals arrested by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in connection with an illegal call center operation. Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah approved the remand after NCCIA officials presented the suspects in court.



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Expanding tax base govt's top priority

PM says transparency in economy through digitization vital; PSX crossing 135,000 points reflects business community's trust

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that expanding the tax base and reducing the burden of taxes on the poor were among the top priorities of the government. He was chairing a meeting here to review progress on the digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the implementation of an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based system, and other reforms.

Hailing the availability of simple tax returns in Urdu, the prime minister said a helpline should be established to assist with the process of filing tax returns and digital invoicing should also be launched in Urdu. "In tax reforms, the focus should remain on the convenience of the common man," he added. The prime minister directed that third-party validation be ensured for all FBR reforms to maintain transparency. He stated that for the public's convenience, tax returns have been made extremely easy by making them digital, concise, and linked with a centralized database. He said salaried individuals will benefit the most from the new simplified tax returns.

The prime minister instructed that a public awareness campaign should be launched about the ease of tax returns so more and more people can file their returns under the new system. He also praised the finance minister, the economic team, the FBR chairman, and their teams, saying that the positive results of tax reforms are the outcome of their tireless efforts.

"For the first time in the country's history, the implementation of an AI-based tax assessment system is a big success, and the FBR's initiatives are commendable." He also instructed that small and medium-sized businesses should be given special support in joining the digital invoicing system. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Chief

Coordinator Mosharraf Zaidi, the Chairman FBR, and other senior officials.

The participants were briefed on progress related to digital invoicing, e-bilty, simplified tax returns, the AI-based assessment system, the establishment of a central command and control center, and the cargo tracking system. It was informed that bidding for the FBR command and control unit will be completed soon, and the system will be fully functional by September. This will not only provide centralized data but also help in decision-making.

The meeting was also informed about the AI-based assessment system. Traders are now allowed to submit advance goods declarations before the arrival of ships. Under this, they will get full exemption on upfront duties and taxes. With this system, the percentage of advance goods declarations is expected to rise from 3% to over 95%. This will also allow containers with advance declarations to be delivered directly from the port to factories. Regarding digital invoicing, the meeting was told that now all businesses, both large and small, will be required to issue receipts at the time of sale through the FBR's online system. Around 20,000 businesses are expected to join this system in the coming months. In just one month, 8,000 invoices amounting to 11.6 billion rupees were issued through this system.

This system includes a taxpayer portal and a monitoring dashboard. It was shared that businesses can use the system free of cost through PRAL (Pakistan Revenue Automation Ltd.). Training is also being given to traders. Once fully implemented, there will be no need to submit sales tax returns separately, as all transactions will be automatically recorded in the system. Additionally, the internationally recognized 8-digit HS Code will help eliminate fake and flying invoices. Digital invoicing will also make it easier to assess the performance of the sales tax system. Business training sessions are being

held to make the system effective.

The meeting was informed that simplified digital tax returns will be launched from July 15 for salaried individuals and from July 30 for other taxpayers. Urdu-language returns for salaried individuals will also be available by July 30. The process of filling out the new simplified tax returns was explained in detail. The meeting was also briefed about the progress of the cargo tracking system and e-bilty system.

It was explained that the system will allow real-time monitoring of the movement of goods and tax payment tracking. AI-based assessment will also be possible through this, which will make tax enforcement more effective and efficient. To ensure international standards for this system's implementation in Pakistan, assistance is being taken from Turkiye. After the prime minister's meeting with th Turkish President during his recent visit to Azerbaijan, a Turkish delegation has arrived in Pakistan and is working with local authorities to implement the system soon.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said top priority of the government was to bring transparency in the economy through digitization system. He was chairing the weekly meeting on cashless and digital economy.

He said digitization of the payment mechanism from government to people and people to government will create transparency and ease for consumers. He directed that the steps of digitization and cashless economy should be made easier for small and medium entrepreneurs.

He said the appointment of the Board of Governors and Chairman of Raast should be completed by September. Experts of economy and business should be included in the Board of Directors of Raast, he added. The prime minister said all State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) should also be brought under the purview of the digital system.

He directed that the progress towards digital economy should be



accelerated further. The meeting was briefed on the progress made in introducing cashless and digital economy. It was told that Raast has advertised for the appointment of its Chief Executive Officer. The number of users using mobile phone applications and digital banking will increase from 95 million to 120 million. Digital payments will increase from Rs 7.5 billion to Rs 15 billion.

A nationwide public awareness campaign on Raast and digital payments will be launched next month. While import duty on digital payment devices was abolished. The meeting was told that Digital Payments Index was being launched within a month to bring the economy at par with developed countries.

CDA Board had approved right-of-way for digital public infrastructure in Islamabad. It was told that the remittance system was also being digitized and all funds coming from foreign countries will be received through the banking system. The governments of all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir were also being partnered with on digital payments. Islamabad City mobile phone application had been linked with Raast.

Public Wi-Fi and e-libraries at designated locations in Islamabad will be completed by December 2025. As per

the Prime Minister's directive, third-party validation of digital public infrastructure will also be done and preliminary work was being completed in this regard. The State Bank of Pakistan has given necessary instructions to the federal government, provincial governments and regulatory bodies regarding the adoption of QR codes as an important payment method.

On the directives of the Prime Minister, the number of commercial points using QR codes and other digital payment methods was being increased from 500,000 to two million. Consultations were underway with all federal ministries, divisions, affiliated departments, regulatory authorities, provincial departments and district governments on a strategy to digitize the system of tax and non-tax payments from the government institutions to the public and from the public to the government and to link it to Raast.

In the first phase, all data on payments between the federal government and the provincial governments had been acquired and consultations were underway to convert all these payments into 100 percent digital. In the first phase of introduction of a cashless economy, salaries, pensions of government employees and payments for purchases and sales from

contractors will be made completely digitally. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Tauqir Shah, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani and relevant senior government officials attended the meeting.

Moreover, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed pleasure over the Pakistan Stock Exchange crossing a historic level of 135,000 points, saying that it reflected the confidence of the business community in Pakistan's economy.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that the current positive economic indicators showed the government's policies moving in the right direction. He said that providing a conducive environment to the business community was the government's priority. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the country had embarked on the path to economic growth after achieving stability. He said that the government was working tirelessly for the country's development and public welfare.

ECP reserves verdict in KP PA reserved seats case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday reserved its verdict regarding the allocation of reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly after concluding the hearing.

The case was reviewed by a five-member bench led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja. During the proceedings, legal representatives from major political parties—including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Awami National Party (ANP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P)—presented their arguments before the bench.

During the hearing, the PML-N's legal counsel urged the Election Commission to allocate nine reserved seats to the party—matching the count given to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F). In response, the JUI-F lawyer contested the claim, arguing that the independent lawmaker who joined PML-N did so after the official deadline and should not be included in the seat tally.

Meanwhile, legal representatives from the Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) emphasized that seat distribution should reflect the results of the general elections. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's counsel, Kamran Murtaza, raised a key question during the proceedings—whether the case concerning the allocation of reserved seats applies solely to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or could have nationwide implications.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) lawyer highlighted that the High Court's detailed ruling, following its initial short order, had been released. He noted that the candidate in question, Tariq Awan, was officially notified

on February 22. In line with legal requirements, a party membership certificate must be submitted within three days—Awan complied within two. The lawyer emphasized that Awan's vote on the minority seat was valid and counted.

The legal representative of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) maintained that both parties were entitled to an equal share of nine reserved seats. Citing relevant legal provisions, the lawyer noted that in situations where seat counts are tied, the law permits a toss to determine final allocation. Accordingly, PML-N formally requested the Election Commission to conduct a toss to resolve the matter on the basis of equality.

The lawyer representing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) contended that the allocation of reserved seats should be directly proportional to the number of general seats secured in the elections. He emphasized that the reserved seats must reflect the actual electoral strength of the party. Additionally, he highlighted that the most crucial aspect of the case is the determination of the cut-off date, which governs eligibility for reserved seat allocation. During the proceedings, Sindh Member Nisar Durrani raised a query regarding the possibility of reducing reserved seats for a party if its number of general seats dropped following by-elections. Responding to the concern, the lawyer for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) asserted that reserved seats, once allocated, cannot be revoked.

He also voiced objections over what he claimed was a miscount, noting that two of the party's representatives were erroneously counted as one. Based on the official notifications, he argued, PTI-P is entitled to two reserved seats. After considering the arguments presented by all parties involved, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) reserved its judgment on the matter.

PML-N demand equal reserved seats

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Counsel for the PML-N on Monday wondered how the JUI-F could be granted more reserved seats than the PML-N when both parties had an equal number of seats.

Speaking in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) during the hearing of the case related to the distribution of reserved seats among political parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), he said that the JUI-F had 10, while the PML-N had eight seats. "Both parties should have got nine seats each," he argued, adding that there could be a toss in case both parties had an equal number of seats.

A four-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard the case and later reserved its verdict. The PML-N's counsel said that the notifications for the successful PML-N candidates were issued in phases. "Every winning candidate then has three days to join any political party after the issuance of the notification," he said, adding, "Then each party's position in terms of its strength in the national and provincial assemblies becomes clear. And it is on the basis of these seats that the parties are granted reserved seats."

Speaking on the occasion, PPP's lawyer Nayyer Bukhari said that the nature of his party's case was different from both the PML-N and the JUI-F. "First, let these parties resolve their dispute," he added.

Bilawal honors party stalwart

F.P. Report

ISLAAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid homage to the late Nazir Hussain Dhoki, a prominent party activist and former Chief Media Coordinator, on his death anniversary.

In a statement shared on X (formerly Twitter), Bilawal described Dhoki as a "true and dedicated soldier" of his mother, Benazir Bhutto's, political vision.

6 dead as rains, lightning strike KP

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: At least six people lost their lives and a child was injured in separate incidents caused by heavy rains and lightning strikes across various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last 24 hours.

According to a report issued by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday, the incidents occurred in the districts of Bajaur, Kohat, Malakand, and Khyber. Among the deceased are one man, one woman, and four children. Additionally, three houses sustained partial damage due to the severe weather.

PDMA has directed the respective district administrations to provide immediate relief to the affected families and ensure the best possible medical care for the injured. The authority also warned that the current spell of monsoon rains is expected to continue until 17 July, urging residents to remain cautious during this period.

In a heartbreaking tragedy, which occurred in the Daulat Khel area of Lakki Marwat, four children were found dead after drowning in a rainwater pond on Monday. The children, all between the ages of 9 and 12, were believed to have drowned while swimming in the water-filled pond, with two of them being brothers. The

deceased children have been identified as Rahimullah, Faheemullah, Fahad, and Hammad. Sources indicate that rescue teams, following the incident, arrived promptly at the scene and moved the bodies to Government City Hospital Lakki.

Meanwhile, a spell of light to heavy rain continues across Lahore and several cities in Pakistan, submerging low-lying areas and severely affecting normal life due to widespread power outages in many areas. According to the Meteorological Department, the present weather spell is expected to persist until July 17. In Lahore, intermittent light and heavy rain has reduced humidity. The minimum temperature is 27° C, while the maximum could reach 33° C. In Faisalabad, rain with light breeze reduced the intensity of the heat and turned the weather pleasant.

Meanwhile, in Dera Ghazi Khan, Kamalia, and Kohlu, torrential rain has inundated low-lying areas causing hardship for residents. Rain has continued since last night in Dera Ghazi Khan, Taunsa, and the Koh-e-Suleiman mountain range, with water entering homes and shops in some areas.

In Kamalia, heavy rain has flooded major roads including areas around the courts, Assistant Commissioner's office, and Iqbal Bazaar. Several elec-

tricity feeders have tripped, cutting off power to many areas. The sewage system near Mamu Kanjan Road has also been severely affected. Rain was also reported from other parts of Punjab, including Gujrat and Hafizabad. Over 20 villages in the eastern parts of Taunsa have been submerged. Many families have started moving in search of safer places, fearing further flooding.

While the local administration claims that arrangements are in place, many residents are reluctant to leave their homes. Floodwaters have cut off ground access to several areas, leaving people and their livestock trapped in dangerous conditions.

Met Office forecast partly cloudy in Peshawar and other Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts. Rain is expected in Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Swabi, Dir, Chitral, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Abbottabad, Torghar, Mansehra, Battagram, Shangla, Kohistan, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Orakzai, Kohat, Hangu, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, D.I. Khan, Tank, and North and South Waziristan. It warned of flash floods in local streams and landslides in upper regions like Chitral, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Torghar, and Battagram. Authorities have been instructed people to stay on high alert.

89 perish in Syria sectarian clashes

DAMASCUS (AFP): At least 89 people were killed in the southern Syrian province of Sweida as clashes between Sunni Bedouin tribes and Druze fighters raged for a second day Monday, a monitor said.

As the violence escalated, Israel—which had previously warned that it would intervene in Syria to protect the Druze—said it struck "several tanks" in Sweida, without providing further details. The fighting underscores the challenges facing interim leader Ahmad al-Sharaa, whose Islamist forces ousted president Bashar al-Assad in December, in a country reeling from 14 years of war. The Syrian military and interior ministries announced troop deployments, safe corridors for civilians and a pledge to end the fighting "quickly and decisively". The violence began Sunday when Bedouin gunmen abducted a Druze vegetable vendor on the highway to Damascus, prompting retaliatory kidnappings.

Though hostages were later released, the fighting carried on Monday outside Sweida city, with mortar fire hitting villages and dozens wounded, said the Suwayda 24 news outlet. The streets of Sweida were deserted, with an AFP photographer reporting gunfire during funerals.

"We lived in a state of extreme terror—the shells were falling randomly," said Abu Taym, a 51-year-old father in Sweida. "Traffic on the streets is paralysed, and most shops

are closed." Suwayda 24 reported the arrival of "dozens of victims" at hospitals as a result of clashes in the province's western countryside and shelling of villages.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources on the ground, raised its death toll to 89, including 46 Druze, four civilians, 18 Bedouin fighters and seven unidentified people in military uniforms. A defence ministry source told Al-Ekhhbariya state television six security forces personnel were killed "during disengagement operations in Sweida".

An AFP correspondent on the outskirts of Sweida city saw vehicles carrying fighters, large interior ministry military convoys, civilian vehicles and motorcycles carrying armed men towards the front lines, as well as ambulances transporting the wounded to hospitals in Damascus. While Druze spiritual leaders called for calm and urged Damascus to intervene. Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri, one of the three Druze spiritual leaders in Sweida, expressed his "rejection of the entry" of general security forces into the province, demanding "international protection".

In a Sunday post on X, Interior Minister Anas Khattab said: "The lack of state, military and security institutions is a major reason for the ongoing tensions in Sweida. The only solution is to reactivate these institutions to ensure civil peace," he added. The latest bloodshed follows deadly violence in April and May,

when clashes between Druze fighters and security forces in Druze-populated areas near Damascus and Sweida killed more than 100 people.

The Observatory said members of Bedouin tribes, who are Sunni Muslim, had sided with security forces during earlier confrontations. Local leaders and religious figures brokered agreements at the time to de-escalate the tensions, putting Druze fighters in charge of security in Sweida since May, though armed Bedouins remain present in several areas.

Sweida governor Mustapha al-Bakur urged his constituents to "exercise self-restraint", while Druze community leaders urged authorities to step in. In response to the violence, the education ministry announced the postponement of Monday's scheduled secondary school exams in the province.

Syria's pre-civil war Druze population numbers around 700,000, many in Sweida province. The Druze, followers of an esoteric religion that split from Shiite Islam, are mainly found in Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Bedouin and Druze factions have a longstanding feud in Sweida, and violence occasionally erupts between the two sides. A surge in violence in March targeting the Alawite community—with more than 1,700 killed—and the subsequent attacks on Druze areas have undermined confidence in the new Syrian authorities' ability to protect minorities.

Tribal elder, driver shot dead
F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: The incidents of targeted killings continued to happen in N Waziristan, as according to the local police on Monday, unidentified gunmen shot dead a prominent tribal leader and his driver. Police said, the incident took place near Daud Pump Tapay on Miranshah-Bannu Road where unknown assailants opened fire on a vehicle, killing tribal elder Malik Rehman Dawar and his driver on the spot.

PHC orders action against Investigation Office in faulty probes

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Atique Shah has taken a strong stance against faulty investigations in narcotics cases, directing action against investigation officers who fail to conduct proper probes. Chief Justice S.M. Atique Shah observed that such faulty investigations not only affect the cases but also cause them to linger in courts for years, on Monday.

PHC remarks came during the hearing of a bail application of an accused person in a narcotics case. The counsel Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate argued that the police had raided the petitioner house and recovered narcotics while claimed that it is recovered at checkpoint.

The judicial assistant Barrister Amir Ullah Chamkani argued that in cases where videos are available and sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), the court should await the FSL report before granting bail.

The Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal Othomankhel informed the court that the province is establishing a laboratory and has allocated funds for it in the budget. The court reserved its decision on the bail application. PHC emphasis on taking action against faulty investigation officers is expected to have a positive impact on the justice system.

Indus Highway security plan report submitted at PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has received a report from police authorities regarding the security and traffic situation on the Indus Highway. The report highlights the steps taken to improve traffic flow and security on the highway, including increasing the number of traffic police and security personnel.

According to the report, there are currently only two mobile vans available for traffic control on the Indus Highway in Kohat and Kurram.

There are only 7 highway traffic police personnel deployed in Kohat and Kurram.

Following the court's directions, the number of traffic personnel in Kohat has been increased to 28, 16 traffic personnel have been deployed in Kohat Tunnel and Dara Adam Khel Bazar. 4 traffic personnel have been deployed each at Kohat Board and Lachi Bazar. Over 130 police personnel have been deployed at various points on the Indus Highway for security duties.

The court has directed that the number of highway traffic units be increased to 3 and the number of personnel be increased to 20 in Kohat and Kurram. Letters have been written to the police chief and other authorities to increase the number of security and traffic personnel.

CM reviews progress on important projects

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah conducted a comprehensive review of key ongoing infrastructure projects, including the New Link Road, Shahrah-e-Bhutto Expressway, and the Korangi Causeway Bridge near Qayyumabad, Korangi.

The meeting held at the CM House, Murad Ali Shah directed the PPP Unit to open the New Link Road by July 25, 2025, and the Shahrah-e-Bhutto Expressway by December 2025. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Saeed Ghani, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary Local Government Waseem Shamshad, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, PD Shahrah-e-Bhutto Niaz Soomro, Project Engineer Khalid Masroor, and other relevant officials.

The New Link Road project, aimed at connecting the National Highway (N-5) with Motorway M-9, is progressing, with a significant portion already completed.

“The project is set to transform connectivity for freight and commuter traffic between Port Qasim, Karachi’s industrial zones, and the broader national highway network,” the CM said.

The upgraded Link Road corridor is being developed into a four-lane dual carriageway, replacing the congested and underdeveloped existing routes that have long hampered industrial and commercial traffic in the area.

Murad Shah said that once completed, the road will provide a direct and efficient link between the M-9 Motorway (Karachi-Hyderabad) and National Highway (N-5), greatly reducing travel time and easing the movement of cargo from Port Qasim to the motorway network and other key destinations across the province.

The 22-kilometre New Link Road project is nearing completion, with significant progress on the new interchange at M9 (kilometre 34+740). This Rs. 3.53 billion project is being executed in collaboration with the National Highway Authority (NHA) and

its concessionaire, FWO.

The CM was told that the interchange construction is divided into three segments: Southbound, bridge over M9, and Northbound. Work on the Southbound segment is underway and expected to be completed by next month. At this, the CM directed the PPP unit to complete the work so that he could open it for traffic on July 25. He also said that once the new link road is opened the old link road would be closed.

Construction on the bridge and Northbound sections began on April 24, 2025, and is progressing steadily. The Chief Minister directed the PPP unit to complete the entire interchange by the end of October 2025 to improve connectivity and traffic flow on the M9 motorway. Upon the opening of the New Link Road, the old Link Road will be closed to traffic.

Shahrah-e-Bhutto Expressway: The 39-kilometre, state-of-the-art, 3x3 lane high-speed access-controlled Shahrah-e-Bhutto Expressway is 82% complete. This expressway con-

nects DHA Korangi to the Hyderabad Motorway (M9) near Kathore and includes six interchanges, multiple toll plazas, and modern facilities designed to enhance traffic flow and industrial connectivity in Karachi.

The first segment from Qayumabad to Quaidabad is 99% complete, while the second segment from Quaidabad to Kathore has reached 65% progress. Key interchanges such as EBM, Shah-Faisal, and Quaidabad are complete, with Jam Sadiq and Memon Goth interchanges making significant progress despite some delays caused by utility relocations and concurrent Yellow Line corridor works.

The Samo Goth elevated structure, a 4-kilometre stretch over the Malir River Bed aimed at preserving local villages, has achieved 48% physical progress since its start in August 2024. Preparations for the Kathore Interchange at M9 are underway, with the Finance Department approving a competitive bidding process to ensure

timely execution.

The Korangi Causeway Bridge project is progressing rapidly, with 80 per cent of the work completed. This Rs. 6.1 billion project, featuring a 26-meter wide bridge, is scheduled for completion by November 2025. The junction at Shahrah-e-Bhutto and Korangi Causeway has received administrative approval, with tendering underway and construction expected to commence by mid-August 2025. Once the Korangi Causeway Bridge is operational, the existing causeway road will be closed.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah underscored the critical role these projects play in enhancing Karachi’s infrastructure, alleviating traffic congestion, and promoting economic growth through improved connectivity. The Sindh government remains committed to delivering these landmark projects on schedule, fostering sustainable urban development, and strengthening public-private partnerships.

ATC convicts terrorist for 24 years imprisonment

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar has sentenced a convicted terrorist, Jamshir, to 24 years in prison for possessing explosives in Khyber district, on Monday.

The court’s decision was made by Judge Wali Muhammad Khan after the prosecution proved the charges against the accused.

The culprit Jamshir was arrested in Millward Bara, Khyber district, with a large quantity of explosives, weighing 127 kilograms.

A case was registered against him at Millward Bara police station, and he was charged with terrorism-related offenses.

ATC sentenced Jamshir to 24 years in prison under various sections of the law.



ISLAMABAD: A Pakistan Railways train from Rawalpindi to Lahore, passing through the Korang Tunnel, The tunnel is part of an integrated infrastructure - originating from the Murree Hills constructed by British engineers in 1914. —APP Photo

CM launches PERA, new force to tackle hoarding

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif formally launched Pakistan’s first Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) during a grand ceremony held at the Expo Center, here on Monday.

The authority is set to become fully operational in the Lahore Division next week and will be rolled out across the province by December.

As chief guest, CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif inspected the PERA Force, its operational vehicles, motorcycles, weapons, protective gear, and modern equipment. She expressed special appreciation upon seeing female Senior District Enforcement Officers

(SDEOs) as part of the force, noting their active role in this new initiative.

The CM also reviewed a 3D model of the PERA Station and personally experienced the complaint registration system by pressing a service button at the interactive kiosk. She inspected various sections of the Enforcement Station including the Control Room, Investigation Room, Arrest Room, Conference Hall, Waiting Area, and Barracks.

A smartly turned-out PERA contingent performed a formal march past, martial arts demonstration, and a mock drill on protest management, showcasing the operational readiness of the newly formed authority. CM

Maryam also observed a live enforcement simulation and awarded certificates to four officers for outstanding performance during the training phase.

PERA Director General Captain (Retd.) Farrukh Atique presented a detailed briefing on the mission, objectives, and structure of the Authority. He thanked the Chief Minister for her unwavering support in establishing PERA and highlighted that after Lahore Division, the authority would be fully functional province-wide by the end of the year.

PERA has been mandated to take systematic and forceful actions against hoarding, profiteering, and illegal land grabbing throughout Punjab. It aims

to restore public confidence, especially among vulnerable communities and investors, by ensuring fair enforcement and transparent accountability.

DG Farrukh Atique also stated that PERA will not only conduct operations but will also facilitate comprehensive investigations and effective prosecutions to ensure strict implementation of the law. With CM Maryam Nawaz’s approval, PERA will establish its own headquarters, field units, and training cells. Members of the provincial cabinet, parliamentarians, secretaries, and senior government officials attended the launch ceremony, marking a historic step in Punjab’s law enforcement and regulatory evolution.

MPA Farooq meets Water Corporation COO

KARACHI (APP): Member Sindh Assembly Muhammad Farooq Awan met with Chief Operating Officer of Water Corporation Engineer Asadullah Khan at his office on Monday and discussed key issues related to water supply and sewerage in the Korangi area.

According to spokesman of the KW&SC, the meeting was attended by senior officials of the Water Corporation, where detailed discussions were held regarding public grievances and possible solutions.

MPA Farooq Awan comprehensively apprised the Water Corporation officials on the challenges faced by residents in his constituency and proposed several suggestions for improvement.

COO Asadullah Khan issued strict instructions for the immediate resolution of all water and sewerage issues in Korangi. He emphasized the need for sustainable, long-term solutions to the problems faced by the local population.

The COO directed Water Corporation officials to take urgent and practical measures and to ensure prompt redressal of complaints raised by elected public representatives. He also stressed the importance of effective monitoring of all water and sewerage projects to ensure timely and efficient implementation.

Delegation of Punjab Agriculture dept visits Egypt

LAHORE (APP): A high-level delegation of Punjab Agriculture department led by Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani visited Egypt.

The delegation consisted of Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Usama Khan Leghari, Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo, and other senior officials, said a press release issued here on Monday.

During the visit, the delegation visited high-value agriculture model farms in Egypt and observed model farms of citrus fruits, dates, peaches, grapes, olives, mangoes, sweet potatoes and other crops.

The delegation also visited state-of-the-art fruit and vegetable packhouses.

Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani said that Egypt’s experience of practicing high-value agriculture in desert areas was commendable and worth replicating. He further emphasized that the Punjab Agriculture department would take practical steps to establish similar agricultural models. Models of irrigation systems implemented in Egyptian deserts would be introduced in the Thal and Cholistan regions of Punjab, he added.

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Usama Khan Leghari suggested providing facilities to farmers for setting up such model farms. Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo reaffirmed his commitment to promote mechanized and high-value agriculture in Punjab on the lines of Egyptian models. The members of the delegation gained valuable insights into modern agricultural practices during their visit to Egypt.

Protecting sanctity of the House highly important: PA Speaker

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said on Monday that he had encouraged both the government and the opposition to resolve matters through dialogue.

Talking to journalists here he said, "In recent days, an impression is being created that the speaker is eager to send references. However, the fact is that under the Rules of Business and constitutional provisions, the speaker’s role is both limited and clearly defined."

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan emphasized that there was no ambiguity in Article 63(2) of the Constitution.

He informed that he had received three applications from Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman, Ahmad Iqbal and Iftikhar Chhachhar. He clarified that these were

not references, but constitutional applications that must be decided strictly in accordance with the Constitution.

He said that discussions were held on five key points, with both sides agreeing that foul language, sloganeering and violations of human rights would be unacceptable in the House and that Article 223 of the Constitution must be fully respected.

The speaker also said that there had never been chaos in the House during a Chief Minister’s speech while the opposition had the constitutional right to protest, it was equally important to uphold parliamentary norms and the sanctity of the house. He reiterated that he does not believe in character assassination or humiliation of any member, nor would he stop anyone from speaking.

However, mob behavior, aggressive conduct and acts such as throwing books were completely unacceptable, he added. Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan further said that the speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly had sent him a letter regarding the suspension of opposition members, to which detailed responses along with constitutional interpretations were being sent.

The speaker asserted that his goal was not to undermine anyone but to protect the sanctity of the House while remaining within the constitutional framework. He said that a decision would be made soon, and whatever would be decided it would be in written form between the government and the opposition to ensure a more conducive atmosphere in the House.

PTI’s politics rooted in hate: Daniyal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, on Monday said that the politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was based on hatred, and threats rather than performance or addressing public concerns. Speaking to a private news channel, he said PTI leaders remain focused on personal attacks and divisive rhetoric instead of offering solutions to the people’s problems.

“They gained some public support in the past, but now the majority has seen their reality and rejected their hollow slogans,” he added. He further criticized PTI’s long rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that despite being in power for eleven years, their governance record is zero.

IGP orders inquiry against SHO Badhber

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, has directed Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar, Qasim Ali Khan, to launch an inquiry against the Station House Officer (SHO) of Badhber over allegations of violating the sanctity of chadar and chardiwari — a core cultural and legal principle ensuring respect for private homes.

The IGP emphasized that “no one is above the law” and assured that if the SHO is found guilty after a thorough investigation, strict action will be taken.

“Punishing officers without proper inquiry harms the morale of a force already on the frontline against terrorism,” said IGP Zulfiqar Hameed, underscoring the importance of a fair and transparent process.

The alleged misconduct by the SHO has triggered public concern, prompting

police authorities to promise full accountability following a comprehensive probe.

The provincial police chief reiterated that the police is a servant and protector of the people, and assured that all efforts will be made to uphold public trust and safeguard the lives and properties of citizens.

“This department will take every necessary measure to align with public expectations and uphold justice,” IGP Hameed concluded.

City’s crime situation reviewed in high-level meeting

KARACHI (APP): A high-level meeting on the law and order situation and crime prevention efforts was held at the Karachi Police Office under the chairmanship of Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi, Javed Alam Odho.

The meeting was attended by the DIGP - Investigation, zonal DIGPs, DIGP - CIA, district SSPs, and other senior police officials, said a news release on Monday. The session included a comprehensive review of the city’s prevailing crime situation, including street crimes, sale and distribution of gutka and mawa, narcotics, murder cases, and incidents of kidnapping for ransom.

Officials also analyzed the progress made in ongoing investigations of high-profile cases, as well as their legal proceedings in courts.

During the meeting, the Additional IGP - Karachi directed officers to accelerate targeted and indiscriminate operations against criminal elements. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing effective enforcement across all areas.

Rise and Shine network condemned rape of 13-year-old girl

F.P. Repprt

PESHAWAR: Rise and Shine Girls Education Leadership Network strongly condemns the brutal rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl employed as a domestic worker in Abbottabad earlier this month. This appalling act highlights the urgent need to protect girls from exploitation and to uphold their fundamental right to education.

According to the recently released Cruel Numbers 2024 report by Sahil, at least 3,364 cases of child abuse were reported from all provinces, Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. These included cases of sexual abuse, abductions, disappearances, and child marriages—averaging nine children abused every day. More than half of these cases (53%) involved girls.

“This heartbreaking tragedy is a stark reminder that our girls belong in classrooms, not in kitchens or behind closed doors as domestic workers. It is our

collective responsibility to ensure that every girl is safe, educated, and empowered,” said Maham Nafes, Convenor of the Rise and Shine Girls Education Leadership Network. “We demand immediate justice for the Abbottabad victim and call for the urgent enforcement of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2024 to guarantee free and quality education for every child.”

Child domestic workers are among the most vulnerable and invisible children in Pakistan. Deprived of education and subjected to violence and exploitation, they lose their childhood and future opportunities. Despite Pakistan’s commitments under international conventions such as the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and constitutional guarantees under Articles 11, 25-A, and 35, the continued prevalence of child domestic labour exposes critical gaps in law enforcement and policy implementation. “Violence against child domestic workers is a direct

consequence of systemic failures to prioritize education and child protection,” said Qamar Naseem, Program Manager at Blue Veins and a dedicated education champion. “The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2024 must be fully implemented without delay. Education is not only a right but a powerful shield against abuse and exploitation. By keeping girls in school, we break cycles of violence and build stronger, more just communities.”

Weak enforcement of existing laws, such as Section 328A of the Pakistan Penal Code, and societal acceptance of child domestic labour further perpetuate these grave violations. Pakistan’s failure to eliminate child labour and ensure universal education undermines its commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8.7 (eradicating of child labour), and SDG 16.2 (ending abuse and violence against children).



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Anti-Corruption, Musaddiq Abbasi chairing meeting regarding Amar Bil Maroof plan implementation.

PTI govt focused on public welfare: Qasim

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the Grow Up Build Confidence Organization Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Social Welfare, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, at the Directorate of Social Welfare, Peshawar.

The meeting was attended by the Director of Social Welfare and other departmental officials.

On this occasion, the representatives of the organization briefed the provincial minister in detail about the social work being

carried out across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the facilities being provided to the public.

They also shared the strategic plan for future initiatives aimed at the welfare and development of the province's people.

Addressing the gathering, the provincial minister stated that, in line with the political vision and philosophy of PTI founder Imran Khan, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is fully focused on the welfare and development of the common man.

He added that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin

Khan Gandapur, has issued special directives to ensure the effective execution of social welfare initiatives across the province so that it may serve as a model for other provinces.

He emphasized that the Department of Social Welfare has developed a strategic plan to complete ongoing social initiatives in a transparent manner aligned with public expectations.

The provincial minister also appreciated the steps taken by the organization regarding ongoing and upcoming projects and assured full cooperation from his department.

Girls in Peshawar celebrate Malala Day

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins, in collaboration with the Pakistan Education Champion Network (PECN), celebrated Malala Day by organizing a "Be Your Own Hero — Confidence & Leadership Workshop" for young girls in Peshawar.

According to a press release issued here on Monday, Malala Day, observed globally on July 12, marks the birthday of Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate and a global symbol of the fight for girls' right to education.

This day serves as a powerful reminder of the 12 million girls in Pakistan who remain out of school due to poverty, harmful social norms, early marriages, and the lack of safe and inclusive educational spaces.

The workshop provided a safe, encouraging, and inspiring environment where young girls were guided to discover their inner strength, develop essential leadership skills, and build self-confidence through interactive discussions and role-plays.

By learning to express themselves and share their dreams, the girls were empowered to think beyond traditional expectations and imagine a brighter, more independent future for themselves.

Qamar Naseem, Malala Education Champion and member of the Pakistan Education Champion Network, emphasized the importance of this day and the critical role of such initiatives in creating change. He said, "Malala Day symbolizes the courage and resilience of every girl striving for her right to education."

Today's workshop is a step towards equipping our girls with the confidence and leadership skills they need to shape their own futures and uplift their communities. Empowering young girls to believe in themselves is one of the most powerful ways to ensure lasting social change, he added.

Kundi advocates equal opportunities for special children

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said that ensuring a dignified life for children with disabilities is a shared responsibility of the entire society, adding without providing equal opportunities to special persons, a truly welfare-oriented society cannot be built.

He expressed these views while addressing a wheelchair distribution ceremony organized by the Asghar Mohmand Foundation at the Governor House Peshawar.

Governor Kundi attended the event as the chief guest. The ceremony was attended by Chairman Asghar Khan Mohmand, social workers, parents, children with disabilities, and people from various walks of life.

Welcoming the children and their families, the Governor distributed wheelchairs among eight children with disabilities.

He praised the efforts of the Foundation and its team of volunteers, who, according to the chairman, are serving the community with a spirit of selflessness.

In his speech, Governor Kundi lauded the foundation's efforts for raising awareness on rehabilitation, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for differently-abled individuals.

He highlighted that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has always taken practical steps to protect the rights of underprivileged segments of society.

He cited key initiatives such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Lady Health Workers program, reserved seats for women, and the establishment of the Women's Bank.

Better and timely measures during monsoon rains taken

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the special instructions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan, all concerned departments have been put on alert. Following the heavy rains on 13 July 2025 in Peshawar and other parts of the province, institutions operating under the Department of Local Government, Elections and Rural Development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, took immediate and effective measures, and teams remained active in the field to handle any emergency situation.

According to the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) report, around 4 PM, heavy rain and strong winds led to water accumulation on roads in various areas of Hayatabad; however, no blockage or obstruction was reported in any drain. All accumulated water was drained within 2 to 3 hours after the rain stopped. Locations where water accumulated included Bagh Naran Chowk, PSO Pump Phase 3, Phase 4 Underpass, Arameo Pump Phase 5, Tatara Park Chowk, near Zarghoni Mosque, and some roads

in Phase 1, Sector D-1.

As per the report of Town Municipal Administration (TMA) Landi Kotal, conditions remained normal in Tehsil Landi Kotal as well.

Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) launched a comprehensive planning and emergency response campaign during the monsoon, which included drainage, cleaning, solid waste transfer, and public awareness efforts. Across the city, dewatering pumps, jetting and suction machines, excavation machinery, and other necessary equipment were

promptly deployed. In all zones, after identifying low-lying and rain-affected areas, the cleaning of drains and removal of solid waste was completed on an emergency basis, which helped prevent major losses or emergency situations.

Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan appreciated the performance of the institutions, stating that the safety and convenience of citizens during the monsoon is our top priority, and all departments should remain alert to deal with any potential emergency situation promptly.

KP Junior Squash Championship 2025 begins

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Junior Squash Championship 2025, formally commenced at the Qamar Zaman Squash Court in Peshawar Sports Complex. The event was inaugurated by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Public Health Engineering Department and Chairman of Provincial Squash Association Daud Khan, along with Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tashfeen Haider.

The opening ceremony was graced by legendary squash players Jansher Khan and Qamar Zaman, Chief Organizer and Coach Munawar Zaman, General Secretary of the Squash Association Mansoor Zaman, Chief Coach Shafqatullah, Administrator of Peshawar Sports Complex and other notable dignitaries from the sports community. Over one hundred

young athletes from across the province are participating in the championship under the U9, U11 and U13 categories. Matches will be held in various age groups ranging from U9 to U13. During the inaugural ceremony, sports kits were distributed among the players on behalf of the Provincial Squash Association.

Addressing the ceremony, Secretary Public Health Engineering Daud Khan

emphasized the importance of identifying and nurturing talent at the grassroots level. He stated that focusing on children's development in sports at an early age can lead to the emergence of future legends.

He lauded the Provincial Squash Association for consistently organizing events, especially for age groups under 13, terming their efforts commendable.

On this occasion,

Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider reaffirmed the government's commitment to utilizing all available resources for the promotion and development of sports in the province. Similarly, Squash legend Jansher Khan praised the consistent efforts of the Provincial Association and said that such events play a vital role in refining the skills of young players and enabling their progression in the sport.



Entrance test for orphans, deserving students held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a remarkable step toward empowering orphaned and underprivileged youth through education, The Rahber Education Foundation Pakistan successfully conducted a comprehensive entrance examination for admission into Grades 8, 9 and 10 for the academic session 2025-2026. The test was held across various districts of the province and witnessed an overwhelming participation of talented students from low-income and orphaned backgrounds.

The impressive turnout is a testament to the public's growing trust and confidence in the Foundation's mission - to provide completely free education, accommodation, food, and other essential facilities to academically gifted yet economically disadvantaged children.

To ensure the smooth and efficient execution of this large-scale assessment, the Foundation's Executive Director, Dr. Ilyas Farooqi, formed dedicated teams who worked with full com-



mitment to handle every phase of the process in an organized and timely manner. Their dedication ensured the test was held with transparency, discipline, and care.

Based on the results of the entrance test, meritorious students will be selected to receive full scholarships, covering not only quality education but also free boarding, lodging, meals, clothing, medical care, and learning materials under the umbrella of Rahber Education Foundation.

The Foundation extends heartfelt congratulations to all the participating students and their parents for their commitment to academic excellence. Special

appreciation goes out to the hardworking staff and volunteers whose sincerity and devotion played a key role in the successful organization of this critical milestone.

As an institution solely dedicated to uplifting orphaned and source-less youth, Rahber Education Foundation reaffirms its commitment to transforming lives through education. The Foundation invites the public, donors, and well-wishers to continue supporting this noble cause so that no deserving child is left behind due to lack of resources.

Together, let us build a future where every child has the opportunity to shine.

KMU inaugurates Pak-UK cancer consortium, closes ICRG-46 project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, held a landmark event featuring the official launch of the Pak-UK Oral Cancer Research Consortium (POCRC) and the closing ceremony of the Innovative Collaborative Research Grant (ICRG-46) project. The event, held at the prestigious Alexander Fleming Hall, marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's oral cancer research landscape. The ICRG-46 research initiative was a collaborative effort supported by the British Council and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, bringing together distinguished experts, researchers, oncologists, surgeons, academicians, and policymakers from across Pakistan and abroad.

The objective of the event was to promote collaborative research, share outcomes, and discuss the future direction of oral cancer research in the country. The ceremony commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by a welcome address by Dr. Benish Aleem, Head of the Oral Pathology Department, KMU-IPDM. She outlined the project's journey, challenges, achievements, and the future vision of the consortium, while also expressing gratitude to all national and international partners



who contributed to the success of the project. Prof. Dr. Muslim Khan, Head of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Khyber College of Dentistry (KCD), Peshawar, delivered the keynote address on "The Current State of Oral Cancer Research in Pakistan". He highlighted research trends, existing gaps, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, from the Department of Histopathology, KMU, and Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, presented key findings from the ICRG-46 project, emphasizing results that could significantly inform future clinical protocols and national oral cancer screening guidelines. A dynamic panel discussion on "The Future of Oral Cancer Research and Clinical Collaboration"

included notable participants such as Dr. Irfan Shah (Principal, Hi-Tech Dental College, Taxila), Prof. Dr. Akif Ullah Khan (Director, IRNUM, Peshawar), Dr. Ali Talha, Dr. Irfan, Dr. Salman, and Dr. Najeib. The panel stressed the importance of early diagnosis, biomarker research, establishment of a national cancer registry, and evidence-based policy advocacy. A major highlight of the event was the formal inauguration of the Pak-UK Oral Cancer Research Consortium (POCRC) by Prof. Dr. Samrina Muhammad, Head of Oral Pathology at KCD, Peshawar. The announcement was met with enthusiastic applause and appreciation from the attendees. Dr. Syed Nasir Shah, Regional Director General of HEC, and Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Vice Chancellor of

KMU, addressed the audience as guests of honor. Both praised the initiative and reiterated their institutions' commitment to supporting cancer research. Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq stated that the successful completion of the ICRG-46 project and the establishment of POCRC would not only boost research in the field of oral cancer but also aid in understanding, preventing, and treating this life-threatening disease. Prof. Zia further identified brain drain of young researchers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a major challenge and urged relevant institutions to take necessary measures to address this concern. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of certificates and appreciation shields among the project collaborators and contributors in recognition of their outstanding dedication and efforts.

Sardar Mehtab plays monopoly of traditional political Parties

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Central leader of the Awam Pakistan Party and former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan, has said that the traditional political parties have utterly failed to resolve the country's issues because their sole objective is to gain power at any cost and then hold onto it. He stated that Pakistan today is not under a hybrid regime, but rather a completely one-sided system where the political government has no say in any matter.

He expressed these views on Monday while addressing a joining ceremony held in Hayatabad, Peshawar. On this occasion, prominent social figure Fahad Amin, along with his companions, announced his decision to join the Awam Pakistan Party. Party leader Gul Rukh Bukhari and other senior figures also attended the ceremony.

Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan welcomed Fahad Amin and his associates into the party and presented them with party souvenirs.

Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan emphasized that forming a new political

party is no easy task. He stated that in the past, political parties formed at the behest of the establishment failed to bring about any positive change in the country, as their sole aim was to gain and retain power. As a result, traditional politics has only increased the challenges faced by the nation over time and widened the gap between the public and the governments.

He pointed out that two or three mainstream political parties have had the chance to govern, both independently and in coalition, yet the problems of the country have only worsened. Particularly, he noted, there is a growing sense of despair among the youth, with a large number of young people determined to leave the country.

Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan further stated that despite being given multiple opportunities, political parties have failed to deliver or meet public expectations. He added that history across the world has shown that whenever existing political parties fail, new parties emerge.

He said that the Awam

Pakistan Party does not believe in traditional politics, nor does it rely on backdoor channels, undemocratic means, or the influence of electables to come into power.

He affirmed that the purpose behind establishing the Awam Pakistan Party is to provide the people of Pakistan with an alternative political platform. He vowed that his party would create opportunities for professional and educated youth from the middle class who have the potential to bring about real change in the country.





In brief

Minor girl killed in road mishap F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A tragic road accident occurred in the Yakh Tangay area of tehsil Puran, district Shangla, where a passenger vehicle lost control due to over-speeding and plunged into a deep ravine. According to Rescue 1122, a minor girl died on the spot while eight others sustained injuries. The injured include five women and three children. Emergency medical teams from Rescue 1122 rushed to the site with ambulances, administered first aid, and later shifted the injured to the District Headquarters Hospital in Alpuri for further treatment. Authorities said an investigation has been launched to determine the exact cause of the accident. Local residents also assisted rescue workers in the relief operation.

Admn holds Jirga with locals F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A high-level meeting was convened at the office of Deputy Commissioner Shangla, following crucial negotiations between the Shangla Qaumi Jirga and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the Karora Hydropower Project. The session focused on addressing the concerns of the local population and accelerating developmental efforts in the affected areas. The Jirga was led by renowned political and social figure Nawaz Khan Shangla (former NA-11 candidate) and Advocate Muhammad Naem. Senior officials from Education, Public Health Engineering, PEDO, TMA, Assistant Commissioner Alpuri, and Additional Assistant Commissioners were in attendance. In his address to the gathering, DC Muhammad Fawad Khan said: "Let me assure the people of the affected union councils that the district administration stands firmly with you. Your concerns are our concerns, and we are committed to resolving them with sincerity and urgency. You will be given your rightful share in development and employment." He further added: "True development is not just about electricity and roads—it is about dignity, inclusion, and opportunity. We will ensure affordable electricity, job opportunities, clean water, quality education, and road connectivity for your communities. This is our promise to the people of Shangla."

Event held F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A significant seminar on the theme "26th Constitutional Amendment and Rule of Law" was organized by the District Bar Association Hafizabad, drawing participation from prominent legal experts and bar representatives from across the country. Key speakers included former President of Lahore High Court Bar Maqsood Butt, Chief Organizer ILF Pakistan Intizar Hussain Panjtoha, former Secretary Supreme Court Bar Raja Javed Iqbal, President Lahore High Court Bar Malik Asif Niswana, former Vice President Rabiya Bajwa, President District Bar Hafizabad Usman Afzal Chatha, Secretary Ali Raza Bhatti, and other distinguished legal personalities. In his keynote address, Maqsood Butt emphasized the need for thoughtful legal discourse on the 26th Constitutional Amendment. He remarked that the Constitution is not merely a document but a dynamic contract between the state and its citizens. He cautioned against instant amendments driven by vested interests, stating that such changes can undermine democratic values and institutional balance.

Tribesmen demand reopening of Angoor Adda crossing

F.P. Report

WANA: Tribal elders from the Angoor Adda region held press conference at the District Press Club Wana to voice serious concern over the prolonged closure of the Pak-Afghan border gate and the persistent lack of basic civic facilities in the area.

Addressing the media, senior tribal leaders Malik Bobrai Wazir and Maulana Tasbeehullah said that the four sub-tribes of the Ahmadzai Wazir have been staging a peaceful sit-in at Angoor Adda for the past 23 months, demanding their constitutional and human rights. Despite multiple rounds of negotiations with authorities, they added, no meaningful progress has been made.

The elders underscored that the Angoor Adda border gate is a vital lifeline for

communities on both sides, facilitating not only familial and tribal connections but also access to shared lands, mosques, funeral services, and educational institutions. They said the enforcement of the One Document Regime (ODR) has severely disrupted daily life, leaving patients, students, and ordinary citizens struggling under restrictive travel policies.

Maulana Tasbeehullah reiterated the tribes' long-standing demand for exemption from the ODR law, suggesting a system based on CNICs, FID cards, or special passes, along with the establishment of a dedicated immigration counter. However, he noted with regret that none of these recommendations have been acted upon.

Malik Bobrai Wazir called on the federal government to officially designate Angoor Adda as a gateway to Central Asian trade and integrate it into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He also stressed the urgent need for basic infrastructure and public services, including education, healthcare, communication, clean water, electricity, and employment opportunities.

Additionally, the elders demanded the establishment of a NADRA office, Basic Health Unit (BHU), a TMA-operated drainage system, a Customs Free Zone, a sports complex, and the repair and construction of roads throughout the region. In a final warning, they cautioned that if their legitimate demands are not met without further delay, the ongoing national sit-in will escalate, and the scope of protest will widen significantly.

On this occasion, the relatives of the deceased girl protested and accused the doctors who performed the operation of negligence, saying that the team of doctors of the ENT department had killed the girl by performing the operation in a wrong way, which is a great injustice. They appealed to the higher administration of the Sindh government to file a murder case against the doctors and do justice to the innocent girl who died, otherwise they will be forced to take extremely difficult steps.

Meanwhile, the residents of Badeh city raised slogans of "rulers have fulfilled their promises, make Badeh city a taluka" demanding that Badeh city, which has a large population of Larkana district, be given the status of a taluka.

A protest rally was taken out from Badeh Media House to Town Hall in the presence of Deputy Convener of Badeh Taluka Movement (BTM) Zeb Ali Sario, wherein thousands of citizens and civil society representatives participated in the rally carrying placards and banners and chanted slogans against the elected members of the Sindh dipasembly. Addressing the protest rally, personalities associated with different scholars thought of the city, Ali Anwar Askari, BTM leader Zeb Ali Sario, Comrade Asghar Noonari, Safar Mugheri and others said that Badeh city, which has a population of more than one lakh, is a big city of Larkana district, if Badeh In comparison, Bakrani, Dokri, Nasirabad have been given the status of taluka, while they are cities with a much smaller population than Badeh.

Commissioner Kohat said that district-wise educational conferences are being organized in the Kohat division soon so that out-of-school children can be brought to the educational institutions. Stressing the importance of tree plantation, he said that we have to work collectively to make our environment clean and green.

Motasim Billah urged upon the people to put up the national flags on their homes, offices and shops and make their children aware of the history of Pakistan and its importance on eve of the upcoming independence day. The public welcomed the holding of the Kuli Katchery and said that such measures reduce the distance between the public and the administration and enable direct access to solve the problems.

Commissioner holds Khuli Katcheri in Sherkot

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali held Khuli Katchery in Sherkot, Kohat on Monday. The Katchery, beside others, was also attended by the officers of the district administration, heads of all the line departments and local people in large number.

The locals presented their issues, complaints and demands including land disputes, development of roads and infrastructure, shortage of teachers in government schools, spread of drugs, prolonged and unannounced load shedding of electricity, damaged transformers, poor medical

facilities, shortage of staff, medicines and machinery in basic health centers, non-construction of BHU in Alizai, presence of wild animals damaging crops and repair of damaged tube wells.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat, while addressing the Katchery assured that all public issues would be resolved immediately at the district level while remaining will be sent to the quarters concerned for early redressal.

The Commissioner directed the officers present on the spot, to resolve the public issues on priority basis and ensure their presence in the field. He added that the administration is serious enough to resolve the public issues and all departments should maintain close contact with the public so that their grievances can be redressed immediately.

Several political workers join PML-N

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Several political workers from different parties quit their affiliations and announced to join the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) during a public gathering held in Badwan Bala, Adenzai, here the other day.

The joining ceremony was presided over by senior party leader and former PESCO chairman, Engineer Faizullah Khan. Addressing the participants, Engineer Faizullah said the growing trust of the people in PML-N is both an honor and a responsibility for the party.

Among those who joined the party along with their families and supporters were Karimullah, Muhammad Zahir, Jamroz Khan, Sultan Zaib, Habibullah, Muhammad Ijaz Khan, Shah e Room, Asghar Khan, Naemullah, Muhammad Irshad, Waqas Khan, and Suhrab Khan. They expressed full confidence in the leadership of Engineer Amir Muqam and Engineer Faizullah Khan, and termed the party's policies as key to development,

peace, and public welfare.

In his address, Faizullah Khan said that the historic development work done by PML-N in Tehsil Adenzai, particularly in the energy sector, was acknowledged even by opponents. He declared public service as a form of worship and vowed to address local issues, especially electricity and basic infrastructure, on a priority basis.

He also announced that efforts would be intensified to secure special development packages from the federal government to resolve long standing issues in the region.

Local PML-N leaders including tehsil president candidate Yusuf Khan also spoke on the occasion and warmly welcomed the new entrants. He said the party would never disappoint its workers and would continue to serve needy communities in DIR despite the fact that the province was ruled by PTI which had badly ignored this area in development.

Scholar defence: Mr. Amir Alam, an M.Phil. scholar in Mathematics, has successfully defended his research thesis at the

University of Swat, under the expert guidance of Dr. Ghaus Ur Rahman, Associate Professor.

Amir Alam's thesis, titled "Mathematical Analysis of Malaria Disease Model via Decay in Mosquitoes Population," was examined by Professor Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Chairman, Department of Mathematics, University of Malakand, as the external examiner.

"I am deeply grateful for this incredible opportunity. I sincerely thank my supervisor, external examiner, and the university for their support and encouragement throughout this academic journey," the scholar said. On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, extended his warmest congratulations to the scholar and his supervisor for their outstanding academic contributions. He commended their rigorous efforts and scholarly dedication in advancing research in the field of mathematical epidemiology, particularly in the modeling and analysis of vector-borne infectious diseases.

Class-IV providing treatment at Ghula Mandi Hospital

F.P. Report

SAHIWAL: Due to the absence of a mail doctor in the mini hospital of Ghula Mandi, grade IV employees started treating patients. According to the details, due to the absence of a mail doctor in the mini hospital of Ghula Mandi and after the dispenser posted there went on leave, the grade IV employees ask the patients about their illness and give them medicines and send them home.

More than 200 patients come to the mini hospital every day to take medicines. There is a lady doctor posted in the mini hospital who only checks up on the ladies patients, while young boys and older men are forced to

get their treatment from the dispenser or grade IV employees. There has been no mail doctor in this hospital for several months, while only one lady doctor and one mail doctor have been approved to treat more than 200 patients daily.

The patients have demanded from the Chief Minister of Punjab that a mail doctor be immediately sent to the mini hospital of Ghula Mandi and that the lady and male doctors be appointed. The number should be increased and the shortage of medicines should be addressed by providing medicines for all types of diseases.

Mesnehile, Pakistan Peoples Party city president Sheikh Yasir Rauf has said

that the name of the founder of the Peoples Party and martyr of democracy, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, is still alive in the hearts of the people and there is no one today who would take the name of his killer.

Pakistan is currently going through the worst crisis in its history, from which it is necessary to strengthen the democratic process to get rid of it, for which the philosophy of Shaheed Bhutto must be made the torchbearer. As a result of the overthrow of the elected government of the Leader of the People, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the country had to pay a heavy price in the form of economic difficulties and other crises.



FAISALABAD: State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry long with Commandant FC Riaz Nazir Gara addressing a press conference.

Girl killed due to doctors negligence F.P. Report

LARKANA: A two-year-old girl, Ulfat Saddam Lashari, a resident of Jamali in Jaffarabad area of Balochistan, died during a throat operation in the ENT department of Larkana Civil Hospital.

On this occasion, the relatives of the deceased girl protested and accused the doctors who performed the operation of negligence, saying that the team of doctors of the ENT department had killed the girl by performing the operation in a wrong way, which is a great injustice. They appealed to the higher administration of the Sindh government to file a murder case against the doctors and do justice to the innocent girl who died, otherwise they will be forced to take extremely difficult steps.

Meanwhile, the residents of Badeh city raised slogans of "rulers have fulfilled their promises, make Badeh city a taluka" demanding that Badeh city, which has a large population of Larkana district, be given the status of a taluka.

A protest rally was taken out from Badeh Media House to Town Hall in the presence of Deputy Convener of Badeh Taluka Movement (BTM) Zeb Ali Sario, wherein thousands of citizens and civil society representatives participated in the rally carrying placards and banners and chanted slogans against the elected members of the Sindh dipasembly. Addressing the protest rally, personalities associated with different scholars thought of the city, Ali Anwar Askari, BTM leader Zeb Ali Sario, Comrade Asghar Noonari, Safar Mugheri and others said that Badeh city, which has a population of more than one lakh, is a big city of Larkana district, if Badeh In comparison, Bakrani, Dokri, Nasirabad have been given the status of taluka, while they are cities with a much smaller population than Badeh.

Court takes notice F.P. Report

SUKKUR: The Additional Sessions Judge Sukkur on Monday has issued notices to relevant officials, including DIG Sukkur, SSP Sukkur, SHO B Section, Mayor Sukkur, and others, in response to a petition filed by Abdul Qayyum Qureshi, a senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and a prominent businessman in Sukkur. The petition pertains to the alleged occupation of Qureshi's petrol pump on Minara Road by unknown individuals.

The court has summoned the respondents on July 17th to respond to the allegations. Qureshi's lawyer, Senior Advocate Pir Syed Sardar Ali Shah Jillani presented the case before the court, highlighting the occupation of the petrol pump and the alleged damage caused to the property.

Qureshi, in a statement, claimed that over Rs. 4 million was present in his office during the occupation, which has not been returned. He also alleged that the municipal and other authorities had caused significant damage to his petrol pump. The incident occurred on July 9, 2025, when SMC officials, with the help of police, took over the petrol pump and allegedly damaged the property.

PMS screening test Section 144 imposes to ensure transparency

Anees Takar

MARDAN: The district administration of Mardan has enforced Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) across the district ahead of the important competitive examinations scheduled for July 16, 2025. The decision was taken by Deputy Commissioner Wasef Rehman to ensure the smooth, peaceful and transparent conduct of the written exams for Provincial Management Service (PMS) and Assistant Excise & Taxation Officers, held under the supervision of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission (KPPSC).

According to the district administration, the written examinations will take place in 15 designated educational institutions across Mardan. These examination centers include Government Postgraduate College for Women, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Labour Colony, Government Girls Higher Secondary School No. 4 (Shah Dhand Baba), Girls Higher Secondary School No. 1 Shamsi Road, Girls Centennial Model Higher Secondary School

Canal Road, and Higher Secondary School Baghdada. Other centers include Postgraduate College Mardan, Higher Secondary School No. 1 near Bilal Masjid, Shaheed Adnan Arshad Higher Secondary School No. 1, GCMHS Boys Bank Road, GCMHS No. 3, Higher Secondary School Mohabbatabad, High School Labour Colony, Higher Secondary School Gujar Garhi and Government Islamia Higher Secondary School No. 4.

To maintain discipline and prevent any interference during the exams, the district administration has prohibited several activities under Section 144. Unauthorized individuals are strictly barred from entering examination premises. Use of electronic devices including mobile phones, smartwatches, or any kind of digital gadgets by candidates or visitors is not allowed. Moreover, public gatherings of five or more people within a 100-meter radius of examination centers have also been banned.

In addition, the order prohibits bringing any material related to cheating such as solved question

papers, pocket guides, unauthorized books and any kind of printed notes. Photocopying or distribution of exam-related materials and the sale or purchase of guidebooks in the vicinity of the centers is also banned. The Section 144 restrictions will remain in force for the entire duration of the examinations.

The Deputy Commissioner warned that anyone found violating these restrictions will face legal action under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). He further appealed to students, parents, teachers and the general public to cooperate fully with the district administration to ensure a fair and peaceful examination process.

The competitive exams being conducted are highly significant for candidates aspiring for key administrative roles in the provincial government, and the administration is taking all possible steps to protect the integrity of the recruitment process. The imposition of Section 144 reflects the seriousness with which the authorities are approaching the matter to prevent cheating, misconduct, or any form of disorder.

Why women continue to face violations?

Nazia Naz

EVERY other day, somewhere in the world, a woman becomes the victim of violence or discrimination. This reality persists despite national laws, international commitments, and specifically the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This treaty, adopted in 1979, is meant to protect women's rights globally. Countries like Pakistan have signed CEDAW and introduced laws such as the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and laws against honor killings and rape.

Yet, the ground reality is painful and frustrating. As someone who works in the human rights field and has personally witnessed many cases, I can say with confidence that violations against women continue because there is a serious gap between what is written in the law and what is practiced in real life. Women face violence in their homes, workplaces, and public spaces.

The court has summoned the respondents on July 17th to respond to the allegations. Qureshi's lawyer, Senior Advocate Pir Syed Sardar Ali Shah Jillani presented the case before the court, highlighting the occupation of the petrol pump and the alleged damage caused to the property.

Qureshi, in a statement, claimed that over Rs. 4 million was present in his office during the occupation, which has not been returned. He also alleged that the municipal and other authorities had caused significant damage to his petrol pump. The incident occurred on July 9, 2025, when SMC officials, with the help of police, took over the petrol pump and allegedly damaged the property.

The Choralaki Canal has been approved with the efforts of the Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, from the funds of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Unfortunately, the police and law enforcement agencies, who are meant to protect them, often fail to cooperate as they should. I have seen with my own eyes how women come forward with complaints, but instead of receiving support, they face delays, ignorance, or outright dismissal of their cases. Sometimes police officers refuse to register cases; other times, they pressure the victims into withdrawing their complaints.

Weak implementation of laws is a major reason why these violations continue. Departments responsible for women's protection lack resources, trained staff, and proper monitoring. Even when there are women's protection units or helplines, they do not function effectively. In addition to institutional weaknesses, cultural and social norms play a damaging role. In many areas, especially rural regions, women are controlled by family and community traditions that do not allow them to speak up. Fear of social stigma, honor issues, and the risk of further violence keep many women silent.

Another major issue is that many women do not know their rights. They are

unaware of the laws that exist to protect them or how to access support systems. This lack of awareness leaves them vulnerable and trapped in cycles of abuse and exploitation.

While governments prepare reports for international bodies like the UN and claim progress under CEDAW, these reports do not reflect the full truth. Civil society organizations and human rights workers try to fill the gap by exposing violations and helping victims, but their efforts are often limited by lack of funding, threats, and insufficient government support.

The reality is that women's rights are violated not just because there are no laws, but because those laws are not implemented with seriousness and dedication. It is not enough to make international commitments if local institutions, especially the police, do not fulfill their responsibilities.

As a witness to many cases, I believe this situation must change urgently. Women's lives and dignity are not negotiable. True development and peace cannot be achieved until women everywhere feel safe, respected, and protected not just in words, but in reality.

Expedition of work on canal directed

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Human Rights Aftab Alam Advocate has directed the authorities concerned to expedite work on the Choralaki Canal from Zamir Gul Dam and ensure its timely completion.

The Choralaki Canal has been approved with the efforts of the Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, from the funds of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Minister on Law and Human Rights Aftab Alam Advocate and MNA Shehryar Afridi and work on the construction of the Choralaki Canal from Zameer Gul Dam has formally been started.

The Zameer Gul Dam has been constructed at a cost of Rs.135 Million in the remote area of Ziarat Sheikh Allah Dad, Kohat. This dam has a storage capacity of 7971 acre feet of water and 27.43 km of the 41 km long canal has been completed, which will

irrigate 3535 acres of barren land. Its spillway discharge will be 34161 cusecs while the outlet structure discharge is 18 cusecs.

There is a program to bring millions of acres barren land under cultivation through small dams so that food autarky can be achieved. The construction of this dam will bring a green revolution in the area, usher in a new era of progress and prosperity, and improve the lives of the common people.



Cameroon's Paul seeks eighth presidential term

PARIS: Cameroon's president, Paul Biya, who is 92 years old, has announced plans to run for an eighth term in this year's presidential election on October 12. Biya, who is the world's oldest serving head of state, made the announcement in posts on X in both French and English.

"I am a candidate in the presidential election," he wrote. "Rest assured that my determination to serve you matches the urgency of the challenges we face."

Biya, who is seeking a new term that could keep him in office until he is nearly 100, came to power more than four decades ago in 1982, when his predecessor, Ahmadou Ahidjo, resigned. His health is the subject of frequent speculation, most recently last year when he disappeared from public view for 42 days. His re-election bid had been widely anticipated but not formally confirmed social media post. Biya had been posting regularly on his verified X handle in the buildup to the announcement. In 2018, in a first, he also used social media to announce his candidacy for that year's presidential contest, marking a rare direct engagement with the public on digital platforms. Members of the governing Cameroon

People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) and other supporters have since last year publicly called for Biya to seek another term. But opposition parties and some civil society groups argue his long rule has stifled economic and democratic development. Two former allies have quit the governing coalition and announced plans to separately run in the election. "President Biya's announcement to run again is a clear sign of Cameroon's stalled political transition. After over 40 years in power, what the country needs is renewal - not repetition. Cameroonians deserve democratic change and accountable leadership," Nkongho Felix Agbor, a human rights advocate and lawyer, told The Associated Press news agency. Announcement is sure to revive debate over Biya's fitness for office. He seldom makes public appearances, often delegating responsibilities to the powerful chief of staff of the president's office. Last October, he returned to Cameroon after a 42-day absence, which had sparked speculation he was unwell. The government claimed he was fine but banned any discussion of his health, saying it was a

matter of national security. Biya scrapped term limits in 2008, clearing the way for him to run indefinitely. He won the 2018 election with 71.28 percent of the vote, though opposition parties alleged widespread irregularities.

The cocoa- and oil-producing Central African nation, which has had just two presidents since independence from France and the United Kingdom in the early 1960s, is likely to face a messy succession crisis if Biya were to become too ill to remain in office or die. Besides Biya, several opposition figures have also declared their intention to run, including 2018 runner-up Maurice Kamto of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, Joshua Osih of the Social Democratic Front, lawyer Akere Muna and Cabral Libii of the Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation. All have criticised Biya's long period as head of state and called for reforms to ensure a fair vote in 2025. Under Biya, Cameroon has faced economic challenges and insecurity on several fronts, including a drawn-out separatist conflict in its English-speaking regions and ongoing incursions from the Boko Haram armed group in the north. — Aljazeera

Heavy rain triggers flooding in parts of NZ

WELLINGTON (Reuters): Some schools and roads remained shut on Monday as New Zealand's Tasman and Nelson regions started cleaning up after heavy rain over the weekend caused flooding, landslides and forced evacuations. The regions in the north of New Zealand's South Island were hit by significant rainfall for the second time in as many weeks.

Tasman Mayor Tim King told Radio New Zealand that about 40 people stayed in emergency accommodation overnight but many more were staying with friends because of damage. "I'm picking there are several hundreds of properties where at the very least it's very difficult to get in and out, if not impossible to stay in the house," King said. Local emergency authorities said teams had assessed 417 properties in flood affected areas and planned to visit a further 413 properties on Monday. Several schools were shut because of the floods and 51 roads were closed, authorities said.

Nigeria's ex-president Buhari dead

ABUJA (AFP): Former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari -- who led his country first as a junta strongman and later as an elected democrat -- died at the age of 82, the presidency announced. Current President Bola Tinubu said in a statement that his predecessor died in London at about 4:30 pm (1530 GMT) "following a prolonged illness".

Buhari governed Nigeria with a strong hand as a military ruler in the 1980s before reinventing himself as a "converted democrat", serving two terms from 2015 to 2023. "He championed discipline in public service, confronted corruption head-on, and placed the country above personal interest at every turn," Tinubu said. For critics, Buhari's time in office failed to turn around longstanding issues like graft, poverty and armed violence, and there were allegations of rights abuses by security forces. Tinubu said he had ordered Vice President Kashim Shettima to go to England to accompany Buhari's body back to Nigeria.

He also ordered flags to fly at half-staff. Buhari's frequent trips for medical treatment during his presidency attracted criticism about transparency and worries about leadership during some of his longer absences. Buhari spent nearly three months away receiving treatment in Britain. Although the nature of his ailment was never made public, Buhari once confessed he had "never been so ill" as during one trip and that he had received several blood transfusions. Last week Buhari's former spokesman Garba Shehu launched a book, titled "According to the President: Lessons from a Presidential Spokesperson's Experience", in which he reportedly confessed to fabricating a 2017 story about rat invasions at the presidential office, to shift Nigerians' focus away from the leader's health.

"When the surge in calls for explanation of why the president would be working from home, if truly he had recovered his health... I said to the reporters that the office, which had been in disuse, needed renovation because rats may have eaten and damaged some cables," he wrote in the book, according to local media. The rake-thin 82-year-old Muslim from Nigeria's far north made history in 2015 as the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent leader at the ballot box. Buhari was born under British colonial rule in the town of Daura in northern Katsina state, whose state governor Dikko Umaru Radda described him as "the embodiment of the common man's aspirations".

His election victory in a country where re-election for the incumbent had been taken for granted was seen as a rare opportunity for Nigeria to change course. But his time at the helm failed to halt corruption and jihadist violence, while the oil giant was further dogged by economic woes.

France's military pigeons race in memory of brave predecessors

PARIS (AFP): These days, French military pigeon number 193-529 is no longer needed to carry tiny messages during war-time communication blackouts. But the racing bird serves as a reminder of the brave service of its predecessors in World Wars I and II, and the 1870 siege of Paris. Inside Europe's last military pigeon loft, Sergeant Sylvain cradled 193-529, an alert feathered athlete with an iridescent green neck.

"He's a carrier pigeon, like the ones who served in World Wars I and II," said Sylvain, withholding his surname for security purposes. "But today he races," added the member of the armed forces, whose grandfather was also a pigeon fancier. In Mont Valerien outside Paris, Sylvain flits between doves, tending to some 200 pigeons -- cleaning their shelters and making sure they have enough to eat. These days, they only use their navigating skills when they are released during competitions, military ceremonies, or demonstrations for visitors, he said.

Humans have been using homing pigeons since Antiquity, but the French military started using them as a communication tool during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 after the Prussians besieged Paris. In October that year, the interior minister boarded a hot-air balloon to flee the French capital. Around a month later, the French military had elaborated a messenger pigeon plan to communicate with people still in the city, according to a French government account. Patriotic Parisians donated more than 300 pigeons to the war effort, which were loaded into the wicker baskets of hot-air balloons and transported southwards to the city of Tours. Upon arrival they were fitted with small tubes containing 3 to 4 cm (1 to 1.5 inch) of microfilm on which minute messages had been inscribed, called



"pigeograms".

They were then released as close to the capital as possible so they could carry them back inside. Only around 50 pigeons made it. Parisians who found the pigeons then placed the microfilm between sheets of glass and, using a magic lantern -- an early type of image projector, projected it onto a large screen to read it. They transcribed the contents and delivered the message to its intended recipient. During the two world wars, pigeons were used again when "modern means of communication reached their limits", such as "bombardments ripping down telephone lines", Sylvain said. During World War II, a French pigeon helped alert Allies that six German U-boats were undergoing maintenance in the French port of Bordeaux, leading to aerial raids that destroyed four of them, Sylvain said.

The pigeon, nicknamed "Maquisard" like some members of the French Resistance, received an award. A British pigeon too made headlines. Gustav, a homing pigeon in the British Royal Air Force, trav-

elled 240 km (150 miles) back across the Channel to break the first news of the D-Day landings in June 1944, according to the Imperial War Museum. He carried a message from a war correspondent, and was also awarded a medal. The French military last relied on homing pigeons during the war in Algeria from 1954 to 1962 that led to the North African country's independence from France. In 1961, the French armed forces ended the messenger pigeon programme.

Sylvain said the military continued to train the birds for a while, fearing an electromagnetic attack would bring down communications. But today there is no longer such a risk, he said, with the military having set up specialised shields to protect its communications from any such attack. Should the need for messenger pigeons however return, Sylvain says he is ready. "I have all the training manuals from World War I right up to 1961," he said. "It worked a century ago, so I don't see why it wouldn't again today."

'Las Vegas in Laos': The riverside city awash with crime

LAS VEGAS (AFP): Rising from the muddy fields on the Mekong riverbank in Laos, a lotus tops a casino in a sprawling city which analysts decry as a centre for cybercrime. Shabby, mismatched facades -- including an Arabian-style plaza replete with a church tower, turrets and statues -- stand alongside high-rise shells.

The Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (GTSEZ) is the most prominent of more than 90 such areas established across the Mekong region in recent years, often offering people reduced taxes or government regulation. Traffic signs in the GTSEZ are in Chinese script, while everything from cigarettes to jade and fake Christian Dior bags are sold in China's yuan. Analysts say the towers are leased out as centres operating finance and romance scams online, a multibillion-dollar industry that shows no signs of abating despite Beijing-backed crackdowns in the region. The GTSEZ was set up in 2007, when the Laos government granted the Kings Romans Group a 99-year lease on the area. Ostensibly an urban development project to attract tourists with casinos and resorts, away from official oversight international authorities and analysts say it quickly became a centre

for money laundering and trafficking. The city has now evolved, they say, into a cybercrime hub that can draw workers from around the world with better-paying jobs than back home. Laundry hung out to dry on the balconies of one high-rise building supposed to be a tourist hotel, while the wide and palm-lined boulevards were eerily quiet.

It is a "juxtaposition of the grim and the bling", according to Richard Horsey of the International Crisis Group. It gives the "impression of opulence, a sort of Las Vegas in Laos", he said, but it is underpinned by the "grim reality" of a lucrative criminal ecosystem. In the daytime a few gamblers placed their bets at the blackjack tables in the city's centrepiece Kings Romans Casino, where a Rolls Royce was parked outside. "There are people from many different countries here," said one driver offering golf buggy tours of the city, who requested anonymity for security reasons. "Indians, Filipinos, Russians and (people from) Africa." "The Chinese mostly own the businesses," he added. Cyberfraud compounds have proliferated in special economic zones across Southeast Asia, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Kings Romans' importance as a "storage,

trafficking, deal-making, and laundering hub (is) likely to expand", it said in a report last year, despite crackdowns on illegal activities.

The founder of the Kings Romans Group and the GTSEZ is Zhao Wei, a Chinese businessman with close links to the Laos government, which has given him medals for his development projects. He and three associates, along with three of his companies, were sanctioned by the US Treasury in 2018 over what it called "an array of horrendous illicit activities" including human, drug and wildlife trafficking and child prostitution. Britain sanctioned him in 2023, saying he was responsible for trafficking people to the economic zone. "They were forced to work as scammers targeting English-speaking individuals and subject to physical abuse and further cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment," Britain's Treasury said.

The same year and again last August, authorities in China and Laos cracked down on cyberfraud operations in the GTSEZ, raiding offices and arresting hundreds of suspects. With public anger in China mounting, over both scamming itself and alleged kidnappings, Beijing instigated raids this year on centres in Myanmar and

Cambodia. The operations primarily targeted Chinese workers, thousands of whom were released and repatriated, along with hundreds of other foreigners.

Some say they are trafficking victims or were tricked and forced to scam people online, but some authorities say they are there voluntarily. Scammers have adapted by shifting their locations and targets, specialists say, and Horsey explained that trafficking and abuses have reduced as the business model has developed. "If you're trying to scale and produce a huge business... violence doesn't always pay," he said. "It's better to have motivated workers who aren't scared, who aren't looking over their shoulder, who are actually free to... do their job." Beijing realises it cannot completely stop criminality in the region, so prefers to manage it, he added.

Chinese authorities can "pick up the phone" to Zhao and tell him: "Don't do this, limit this, don't target Chinese people", he said. That "is actually more valuable for China than trying to eradicate it everywhere and just lose all influence over it". The United States Institute for Peace estimated in 2024 that Mekong-based criminal syndicates were probably stealing more than \$43.8 billion annually.

Macron to raise defence targets, citing Russia threat

PARIS (AFP): President Emmanuel Macron called for a massive boost to France's defence spending, saying freedom in Europe was facing a greater threat than at any time since the end of World War II. "We are living a pivotal moment," Macron said in a speech to the armed forces on the eve of the national Bastille Day holiday, denouncing "imperialist policies", "annexing powers" and the notion that "might is right", all a reference to Russia.

"Never has peace on our continent depended to such an extent on the decisions that we take now," said Macron. France faced the challenge "of remaining free and masters of our destiny", he added.

Macron said France's defence budget should rise by 3.5 billion euros (\$4.1 billion) in 2026, and then by a further three billion euros in 2027. "If you want to be feared, you must be powerful," he said, calling for "mobilisation" for national defence by all government departments. "Everyone must be present at their battle stations," Macron said. "We are still

ahead, but if we remain at the same speed we will be overtaken tomorrow," he added. French military and security officials have been warning of global threats weighing on France, with Defence Chief of Staff Thierry Burkhard saying that Russia posed a "durable" threat to Europe and that the "rank of European countries in tomorrow's world" was being decided in Ukraine, invaded by Russia in 2022. Russia currently views France as its "main adversary in Europe", Burkhard said.

He also warned of the consequences of a diminished US commitment to Europe, along with cyber threats, disinformation campaigns and the risk of terror attacks. "We have to take account of the fact that there has been a change in strategic parameters," he said. Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu weighed in, telling the La Tribune weekly newspaper that "it's our job to provide answers".

France needed to make "a new effort" if it wanted to "depend on nobody" in the future, the minister said.

France's defence budget has already increased sharply since Macron took power, rising from 32.2 billion euros (\$37.6 billion at current rates) in 2017 to 50.5 billion currently, and is projected to reach 67 billion euros in 2030. If confirmed, the major defence spending boost could, however, threaten French efforts to cut deficits and reduce its debt mountain, amid pressure from the EU Commission on Paris to impose more fiscal discipline. The servicing of France's debt alone will cost the Treasury 62 billion euros this year. But Prime Minister Francois Bayrou, who is to outline his budget plan for 2026, has declared the defence budget to be "sacrosanct" and exempt from budgetary cuts.

In speech, Macron rejected any financing of the additional defence spending through additional debt. Several NATO countries are boosting their military spending, after the alliance's members agreed last month to spend five percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on security. Britain aims to increase its defence budget

to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2027, and to 3.0 percent after 2029. Germany plans to reach a defence budget of 162 billion euros by 2029, equivalent to 3.5 percent of its GDP, while Poland already dedicates 4.7 percent of GDP to defence. "Very clearly, we need to revise our programming and strategy today, in light of the changing nature of risks," Macron said. Lecornu this month detailed the most urgent needs for the French armed forces, including ground-to-air defences, ammunition, electronic warfare and space capabilities.

In interview, he said France was mostly worried about falling behind in "disruptive technologies" including artificial intelligence and quantum technology. Beyond budget increases, the French government is also seeking to boost "national cohesion" in the face of global crises, Elysee officials said. Macron is expected to outline a potential mobilisation drive for young people who should be given "an opportunity to serve", Elysee officials said.

German 'doctor death' goes on trial for 15 murders

BERLIN (AFP): A German doctor will go on trial Monday for killing 15 patients with lethal injections, in what investigators fear may just be the tip of a deadly iceberg. The 40-year-old palliative care specialist, named by German media as Johannes M., is accused of killing 12 women and three men between September 2021 and July 2024 while working in Berlin.

He allegedly injected the victims, aged between 25 and 94, with a deadly cocktail of sedatives and in some cases set fire to their homes in a bid to cover up his crimes. A co-worker first raised the alarm about Johannes M. last July after becoming suspicious that so many of his patients had died in fires, according to Die Zeit newspaper. He was arrested in August, with prosecutors initially linking him to four deaths. But investigations threw up a host of other suspicious cases, and in April prosecutors charged Johannes M. with 15 counts of murder. A further 96 cases are still being investigated, a prosecution spokesman told AFP, including the death of Johannes M.'s mother-in-law. She had been suffering from cancer and mysteriously died the same weekend that Johannes M. and his wife went to visit her in Poland in early 2024, according to media reports.

The suspect, dubbed

"doctor death" by German media, reportedly trained as a radiologist and a general practitioner before going on to specialise in palliative care. According to Die Zeit, he submitted a doctoral thesis in 2013 looking into the motives behind a series of killings in Frankfurt, which opened with the words "Why do people kill?" Prosecutors say that in all 15 cases, Johannes M. "administered an anaesthetic and a muscle relaxant to his patients... without their knowledge or consent". The relaxant "paralysed the respiratory muscles, leading to respiratory arrest and death within minutes". In five cases, Johannes M. allegedly set fire to the victims' apartments after administering the injections. On one occasion, he is accused of murdering two patients on the same day. On the morning of July 8, 2024, he allegedly killed a 75-year-old man at his home in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg. "A few hours later" he is said to have struck again, killing a 76-year-old woman in the neighbouring Neukoelln district. Prosecutors say he started a fire in the woman's apartment, but it went out. "When he realised this, he allegedly informed a relative of the woman and claimed that he was standing in front of her flat and that nobody was answering the doorbell," prosecutors said. In another case,

Johannes M. "falsely claimed to have already begun resuscitation efforts" on a 56-year-old victim, who was initially kept alive by rescuers but died three days later in hospital. Johannes M. has not commented on the accusations against him. Prosecutors say he had "no motive beyond killing" and are seeking a life sentence.

The case recalls that of notorious German nurse Niels Hoegel, who was handed a life sentence in 2019 for murdering 85 patients. Hoegel, believed to be Germany's most prolific serial killer, murdered hospital patients with lethal injections between 2000 and 2005, before he was eventually caught in the act. More recently, a 27-year-old nurse was given a life sentence in 2023 for murdering two patients by deliberately administering unprescribed drugs. In March, another nurse went on trial in Aachen accused of injecting 26 patients with large doses of sedatives or painkillers, resulting in nine deaths. Last week, German police revealed they are investigating another doctor suspected of killing several mainly elderly patients. Investigators are "reviewing" deaths linked to the doctor from the town of Pinneberg in northern Germany, just outside Hamburg, police and prosecutors said.

HK court hears appeals by jailed democracy campaigners

BANGKOK (AFP): A Hong Kong court began hearing appeals on Monday from 12 democracy campaigners who were jailed for subversion last year during the city's largest national security trial. They were among 45 opposition figures, including some of Hong Kong's best-known democracy activists, who were sentenced in November over a 2020 informal primary election that authorities deemed a subversive plot.

Critics including the United States, Britain and the European Union said the case showed how a Beijing-imposed national security law has eroded freedoms and quashed peaceful opposition in Hong Kong. Ex-lawmakers "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung, Lam Cheuk-ting, Helena Wong and Raymond Chan are among those contesting their convictions and sentences in hearings that are scheduled to last 10 days. Owen Chow, a 28-year-old activist who was sentenced to seven years and nine months in jail -- the harsh-

est penalty among the dozen -- has also lodged an appeal. Former district councillor Michael Pang withdrew his appeal application on Monday morning, leaving a total of 12 appellants.

Some of them have already spent more than four years behind bars. Amnesty International's China director Sarah Brooks said the appeal will be a "pivotal test" for free expression in the Chinese finance hub. "Only by overturning these convictions can Hong Kong's courts begin to restore the city's global standing as a place where rights are respected and where people are allowed to peacefully express their views without fear of arrest," Brooks said. Dozens of police officers were deployed outside the West Kowloon court building on Monday morning as people queued to attend the hearing. "They made a sacrifice... I hope they understand that Hongkongers have not forgotten them," said a public hospital worker in his thirties sur-

named Chow.

A 66-year-old retiree surnamed Chan said the case made him feel "helpless", adding that fewer people were paying attention as court proceedings dragged on. "I don't expect any (positive) outcome, but I still want to support them." Prosecutors began Monday's session by challenging the acquittal of lawyer Lawrence Lau, one of two people found not guilty in May 2024 from an original group of 47 accused. Lau's "overall conduct" showed that he was party to the conspiracy and he should be tried again because the lower court made the wrong factual finding, the prosecution argued. Lau, representing himself, replied that the trial court's findings should not be "casually interfered" with.

"... I have never advocated for the resignation of the chief executive, I have never advocated the indiscriminate vetoing of the financial budget," Lau told the court, referring to core tenets of the alleged conspiracy.

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Common ground prevails over differences

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's ongoing visit to China is not only of significance for the bilateral and trade relations between the two countries, it also sends a message about the remapping of the global trade landscape.

Albanese's visit, which began on Saturday and will last until Friday, is notably long for a state leader, highlighting Australia's commitment to deepening ties and fostering stability amid the uncertain global landscape.

Against the backdrop of rising tensions between the United States and many countries because of the US administration's recent threat to levy higher tariffs on them from Aug 1, Albanese's visit shows that the Australian side has a clearer judgment and understanding of China than it had under the previous Scott Morrison government. His itinerary includes Chengdu as well as the customary stops in Shanghai and Beijing.

That Albanese and the sizable business delegation accompanying him are meeting with representatives from the tourism and sports sectors in Shanghai and Chengdu points to the importance Australia attaches to expanding its economic cooperation with China.

Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province, gets 15 percent of the wine and beef China imports from Australia; its new energy enterprises are talking with their Australian counterparts about cooperation in the photovoltaic sector; and Chengdu's production of electric vehicle parts needs lithium supplies from Australia.

Albanese's stay in Chengdu shows that while consolidating traditional areas of cooperation such as agriculture and minerals, Australia is also keen on expanding ties in sports and tourism and exploring new areas of cooperation.

Chinese tourists are among the highest spending groups going to Australia. Australian official data show that as of March, about 860,000 tourists from the Chinese mainland visited Australia over the preceding 12 months, with their total consumption AS\$9.2 billion (\$6.04 billion), up 28 percent on the same period the year before.

Albanese's visit provides Australia with a good opportunity to engage in high-level discussions about strengthening cooperation including the possibility of restarting talks on upgrading the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement that were shelved by the Morrison government. Now, with the positive upturn in China-Australia relations, it is regarded as possible and desirable to restart the negotiations.

China accounts for one-third of Australia's total trade and Albanese's visit is conducive to further consolidating mutual trust for the steady progress of bilateral economic and trade relations.

It goes without saying that China and Australia have differences in terms of geopolitics and their bilateral relations have experienced ups and downs in recent years. However, Albanese's visit, his second since becoming prime minister, is intended as a "friendly gesture" to ensure the positive development of bilateral relations on a stable track, according to his office.

China, on its part, stands ready to work with Australia to take this visit as an opportunity to strengthen communication, enhance mutual trust, expand practical cooperation and push forward the two countries' comprehensive strategic partnership, as the Chinese Foreign Ministry indicated.

As the two countries enter the second decade of their comprehensive strategic partnership, Albanese's visit demonstrates that countries with different political systems can find common ground and develop long-term cooperative bilateral relations.

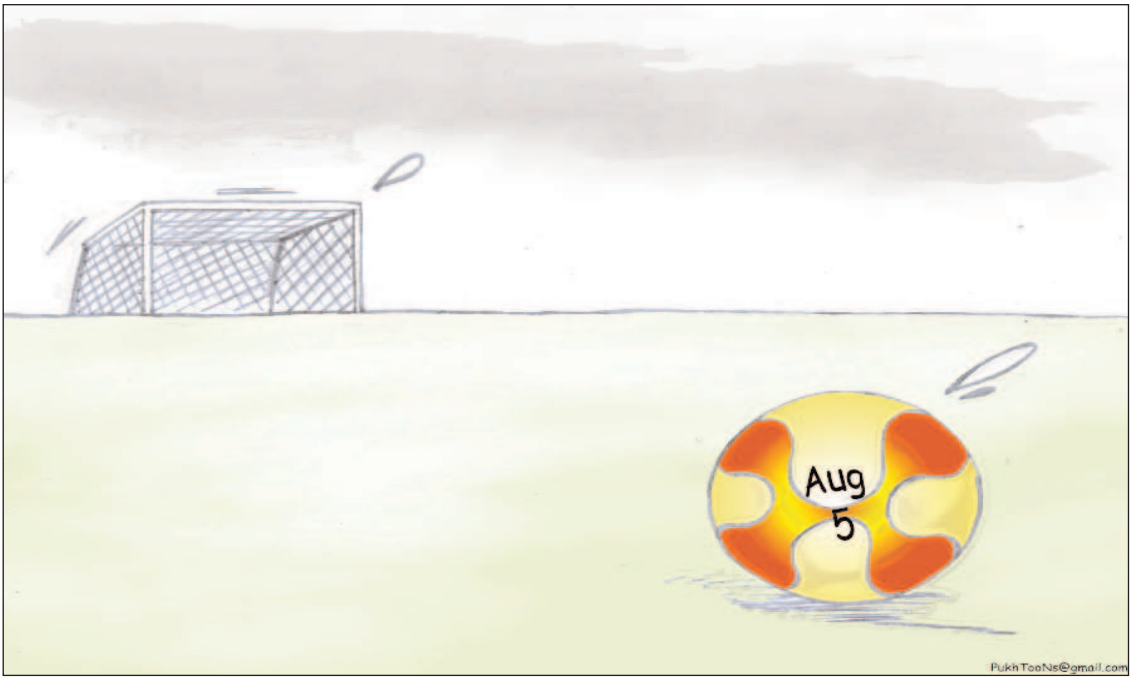
The current momentum in the development of bilateral relations between China and Australia shows that if differences are well managed the steady development of ties can be guaranteed, even at a time when the political landscape of the world is becoming increasingly uncertain and volatile.

The progress made in their economic and trade cooperation in the past two years has benefited the people of both countries, and provided an exemplary counterweight to the rampancy of unilateralism and protectionism.

Strengthening China-Australia relations is of pragmatic importance for the two economies, as it will contribute to the well-being of various industries and help keep the stability of global industry and supply chains in many strategic sectors, which also serves the common interest of the world.

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BLA and Mukti Bahini: Two names, one agenda

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

ALTHOUGH I was born four years after the Indo-Pak war of 1965, the stories I read and heard throughout my childhood spoke of a resolute Pakistan defeating India from all sides. That war was fought with valor and strategic brilliance. However, the battlefield was only the beginning. India, bruised yet unbroken, resorted to covert tactics after its defeat. It turned to a more insidious form of warfare—a proxy war that would, within a few years, dissociate the eastern wing of Pakistan apart and result in the creation of Bangladesh. History teaches us not to trust the intentions of an adversary whose very identity thrives on enmity.

After almost six decades, Pakistan once again found itself facing the same nefarious design, this time, on May 7, 2025, India committed aggression against Pakistan in the name of Operation Sindoor which forced India to hoist the white flag with the determined spirit of Operation Bunyan al-Marsus. This time too, defeated India cunningly continued the proxy war through stealth. The methods have not changed. Only the region. Where Bengali nationalism was once incited and armed, now Baloch nationalism is also being exploited with the same cunning. The agents are different in name but the same in function. The strategy of insurgency is familiar; fomenting ethnic division, creating distrust against the federation, and facilitating insurgency under the guise of independence.

This is no mere speculation. The statistics speak for themselves. According to the latest biannual data issued by the Home Department of Balochistan, terrorism has surged alarmingly. In just the first six months of this year, a staggering 501 terrorism-related incidents occurred across the province. These attacks resulted in the loss of 257

lives, including 133 security personnel, and left 492 injured—among them 238 security officials. Notably, the number of terrorist attacks rose by 45%, while the targeted killings of non-local settlers doubled, increasing by 100%.

In 14 separate attacks on settler individuals, 52 people were killed and 11 wounded solely because of their ethnicity or perceived affiliation. A total of 81 bombings, hand grenade assaults, IEDs, landmine explosions, and rocket attacks claimed 26 lives and injured 112 more. There were also 39 attacks directly targeting ordinary citizens, killing 11 and wounding 29. In one of the most horrifying incidents, two separate attacks on trains during this period resulted in the deaths of 29 innocent passengers. Even humanitarian efforts were not spared—a polio worker was killed in a targeted attack. Moreover, nine assaults on mobile phone towers injured two and aimed to disrupt basic communication infrastructure.

These are not random acts of violence—they are the hallmarks of an orchestrated insurgency aimed at destabilizing Pakistan internally. The Mukti Bahini, the so-called "Liberation Army" of East Pakistan, was not merely a local movement of discontent. It was a well-orchestrated and externally funded insurgency. Trained and armed under India's Operation Jackpot, the Mukti Bahini specialized in guerrilla tactics—ambushes, sabotage, and coastal raids—that left the Pakistani military overstretched and disoriented. The role of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Directorate of Naval Intelligence was no secret. Nor was the involvement of Israel, which clandestinely supplied arms in return for diplomatic favours. It was, in essence, an international campaign to dismember Pakistan. The political fuel came from the Awami League, whose leadership—

particularly Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—had long been agitating for autonomy and, eventually, secession. Following Mujib's arrest in 1971, his loyalists formed a sub-faction, the Mujib Bahini, which played an even more direct role in the insurgency.

In a startling moment of candour during his 2015 visit to Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi admitted India's decisive role in the events of 1971. His words—"We fought together, we sacrificed together, and we won together"—laid bare a historical truth that had long been whispered but seldom acknowledged so openly. That confession did not just echo through South Asia; it exposed a doctrine of interventionism that continues to haunt the region today.

The parallels between the Mukti Bahini and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) are too striking to ignore. The BLA, formed officially in the early 2000s but inspired by older Baloch separatist movements, mimics the same strategy of asymmetric warfare. The targets have changed—now it is Chinese nationals, infrastructure projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and Punjabi settlers—but the goal remains consistent: to fragment Pakistan by fomenting ethnic hatred and sabotaging national integration. Their ideology cloaks itself in Baloch nationalism and secularism, yet it reeks of ethnic cleansing and calculated terrorism. Pakistan has consistently charged and presented evidence of RAW supporting the BLA, drawing parallels with RAW's involvement with the Mukti Bahini decades ago. The 2016 arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian naval officer, in Balochistan added weight to these claims. His confession outlined how Indian intelligence financed and supported Baloch militants to destabilize the region. Reports have also surfaced about BLA opera-

tives receiving medical treatment and logistical aid in India. Just as East Pakistan's insurgents were provided with training camps and safe havens in the past, today's separatists are reportedly granted covert sanctuaries.

What is most alarming is the violence against civilians. In the name of liberation, the BLA has repeatedly targeted non-Baloch communities, particularly Punjabis. Innocent laborers, engineers, and traders have been massacred for the sole reason of their ethnicity—an act that betrays the very idea of political resistance and exposes the ethnic hatred that lies at the core of the movement. CPEC, a project vital to Pakistan's economic future, has become a battleground not just for geopolitical rivalries but for domestic terror, with Chinese workers being abducted and killed as a message to both Islamabad and Beijing.

It is easy to lay the blame solely on external actors, and while that blame is largely justified, we must also examine our own role in allowing such fissures to grow. Some state functionaries, through neglect or incompetence, may have allowed space for such insurgent sentiments to fester. Yet the ultimate cost has always been borne by Pakistan itself. It is our soil that bleeds, our citizens who suffer, and our unity that is threatened. In both 1971 and today, the enemy did not attack from across the border—it first entered the minds and hearts of our own people. This makes the challenge all the more profound. Pakistan cannot afford to ignore these warning signs, nor can it continue to treat them as isolated incidents. The battle is not merely for land; it is for the soul of the nation. Let history not repeat itself through our own silence or inaction. Let us remain vigilant, united, and wise to the lessons of our past. For if the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, then the cost of forgetfulness is national disintegration.

Israel seeks to bypass Palestinian leaders

ONE of the defining features of colonial regimes is a strategy of divide and rule. Successive Israeli governments have repeatedly resorted to this tactic to undermine Palestinian unity and erase any semblance of a collective Palestinian national identity.

Soon after its occupation began in 1967, Israel sought to empower Palestinian leaders more loyal to Jordan than to the Palestine Liberation Organization. But the tide turned in 1974, when the Arab League Summit in Rabat officially recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That same year, Yasser Arafat addressed the UN with his now-iconic speech, raising both an olive branch and a pistol. He urged the world to support peace and warned against those who would snatch away the olive branch. Rather than respond in kind, Israel signed a separate peace agreement with Egypt—one that deliberately sidelined the PLO.

Israel's efforts to marginalize Palestinian nationalism continued into the 1980s. A growing alliance of nationalist mayors, intellectuals and civil society leaders began to gain popularity in the Occupied Territories. In 1980, an underground Israeli settler cell planted car bombs targeting three prominent

West Bank mayors. While none were killed, the attacks left lasting scars: Nablus Mayor Bassam Shakaa lost both legs and Ramallah Mayor Karim Khalaf lost part of one leg. Rather than silence them, the attacks elevated these mayors to national hero status.

When intimidation failed, Israel turned to a different colonial tactic—pit-ting rural Palestinians against the urban leadership. Menahem Milson, a Hebrew University professor and Israeli official, spearheaded the creation of the "village leagues." These bodies were meant to act as an alternative to the overwhelmingly pro-PLO nationalist movement. While they managed to attract a few collaborators, especially around Hebron, they were widely rejected by the Palestinian public.

By 1988, the situation had reached boiling point. Inspired by nonviolent movements like those led by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., Palestinians launched the first Intifada—a largely nonviolent uprising demanding freedom. Yet even then, Israel's divide-and-rule strategy persisted. During the 1970s, Israel had allowed Islamist groups to grow in influence as a counterweight to secular nationalists. This led to the formation of Hamas in Gaza, a group that participated in the Intifada but soon took a more radical,

violent path. Even after the Oslo Accords were signed, Hamas worked to undermine the peace process.

That process unraveled entirely in 1995, when a right-wing Israeli extremist assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Benjamin Netanyahu, who opposed Oslo, was narrowly elected shortly thereafter. With Rabin gone and Israeli politics turning sharply rightward, the peace process ground to a halt.

In the post-Arafat era, Israel's right-wing governments—dominated by religious nationalists—have shown little interest in engaging with legitimate Palestinian leaders. This has been true under both Arafat and his more moderate successor, Mahmoud Abbas. Following the brutal Hamas attack in October 2023, the Israeli government used the violence not only to wage war on Hamas and the Palestinian people in Gaza, but also to further marginalize the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, as well as refugee camps in the West Bank.

Despite quietly relying on the PA for security coordination, Netanyahu and his far-right ministers—such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich—have consistently denied the PA any respect or political legitimacy. Their scorched-earth approach has extended even to UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees,

which they have sought to dismantle in the false hope that doing so will erase the Palestinian right of return.

Now, with international support for Palestinian self-determination growing—and as France and Saudi Arabia prepare to co-chair a high-level UN conference on the two-state solution—Israel is doubling down on its efforts to delegitimize Palestinian nationalism. The latest twist in this decades-old playbook? Reviving the old village leagues tactic. Some tribal and local figures are again being courted to normalize relations with Israel in exchange for economic incentives, such as work permits. This new scheme, like its predecessors, is designed to bypass the PLO and weaken the Ramallah-based leadership.

But such efforts are doomed to fail.

There is no path to peace that avoids direct negotiations with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, Abbas, for all his critics, remains a committed advocate of nonviolence and coexistence. If Israel and the international community are truly interested in peace, they must engage with Abbas and the PLO in good faith—and work toward a permanent agreement that includes the creation of a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The time to act is now.

No love, only strategy: China and Afghanistan's calculated ties

Rafi Ul Haq

AT the edge of the world lies a narrow strip of land known as the Wakhan Corridor, a thin connection between two vastly different nations: Afghanistan and China. One is a land shaped by centuries of war, tribal strength, and unwavering faith. The other is a rising global power with ambitions driven by the Silk Roads, steel, and commerce. For decades, their paths crossed rarely, and when they did, it was more because of geography than deliberate intent. But now, as traditional power structures shift and the region recalibrates, a quiet and unexpected story of connection is beginning to unfold.

This emerging relationship isn't based on warmth or shared history. Instead, it's a bond driven by necessity and geography, guided by the quiet logic of strategic interests. With the West's military presence pulled back and the Taliban now in power, China and Afghanistan are cautiously navigating a new chapter—one that could shape the future of this fragile region.

For China, the foremost concern is security. Though the border it shares with Afghanistan is tiny and treacherous—high in the Pamir mountains—it borders Xinjiang, a province that remains central to Beijing's internal stability. Xinjiang, with its significant Muslim population, remains a focal point of concern for Chinese authorities. Beijing closely monitors developments in Afghanistan, wary that unrest across the border could inspire separatist sentiments or offer a haven to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). As a result, maintaining stability in Afghanistan has become a strategic priority for China.

China's message to the Taliban is clear: prevent anti-China activity from Afghan soil. It's a message that echoes through history.

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Moreover, diplomatically, China has adopted a strategy of silent engagement. It hosts Taliban delegations and maintains open channels of communication, yet it stops short of full recognition. This nuanced stance allows China to protect its interests while avoiding the international backlash that could come from openly endorsing the Taliban regime. It's diplomacy without embrace—a message that says, "We are here, but cautiously."

Still, despite growing contact, the relationship between Afghanistan and China remains distant and devoid of emotional connection. Unlike Afghanistan's ties with countries like Pakistan or Iran, there are no shared linguistic, religious, or cultural bonds to deepen the relationship. China's influence in Afghanistan is administrative rather than affectionate—more transactional than transformational. On the Afghan side, China is not seen as a liberator or ideological partner. It is viewed more as a quiet guest, present, influential, but detached. China, in turn, seems content with this arrangement. It prefers influence without entanglement, presence without exposure. In this dynamic, Pakistan plays a pivotal role. A long-time ally of China and a neighbor deeply entwined with Afghanistan's political fabric, Pakistan acts as a conduit between the two.

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In this dynamic, Pakistan plays a pivotal role. A long-time ally of China and a neighbor deeply entwined with Afghanistan's political fabric, Pakistan acts as a conduit between the two. Both Islamabad and Beijing share an interest in ensuring that Afghanistan remains stable and does not become a breeding ground for terrorism or regional upheaval.

Meanwhile, India watches these developments with concern. From New Delhi's perspective, China's growing footprint in Afghanistan could tilt the regional balance and add another layer to its strategic rivalry with Beijing. Central Asian states, too, are cautiously observing—hoping Chinese investment will lead to prosperity, yet wary of its potential costs and conditions.

The road between Afghanistan and China—both literal and metaphorical—is a difficult one. It winds through history.

China's message to the Taliban is clear: prevent anti-China activity from Afghan soil. In return, Beijing offers diplomatic engagement, investment, and regional integration on its careful terms. Beyond security, China views Afghanistan as a strategic link between Central and South Asia, rich in minerals like copper, lithium, and rare earths. These resources could fuel China's industries and align with its Belt and Road vision, but only if long-term stability is ensured.

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If managed carefully, this emerging relationship could reshape regional geopolitics. It won't be smooth or quick, but over time, the mountains that have long separated these two nations might turn from barriers into bridges. Within that change lies the promise—not just of connection, but of something rarer in this region: shared progress built on cautious trust.

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UK’s steady, silent decline a worrying echo of the 1970s

IN July 2025, the question of whether the UK is in decline no longer feels rhetorical in nature, it feels like resigned recognition of the fact.

One year into Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s Labour government, the chaos and dysfunction of the Johnson-Truss era of Conservative rule have faded. But so too has momentum. A brittle, overstretched economic model, persistent under-investment and political caution have combined to leave the country in a state of quiet regression.

Britain in 2025 bears an uncomfortable resemblance to that of the 1970s, not in terms of the headlines but in the undercurrents. Back then, the UK faced a decade of stagflation, industrial unrest, a weakening global role and rising domestic disillusionment. The country suffered a brain drain, watched investors flee and relied on an International Monetary Fund bailout to steady its finances. By 1979, it had become, in the words of many commentators, “the sick man of Europe.”

Fast forward to 2025 and economic growth once again remains stagnant, with gross domestic product expected to rise by a mere 1.2 percent.

While the IMF is not directly involved this time, the UK’s fiscal landscape nevertheless appears increasingly precarious. National debt has soared to 105 percent of GDP, taxes are set to climb further and rising interest costs threaten to outstrip growth over the next five years. Inflation has subsided, yet public services continue to face significant strains.

The Labour Party has managed to stabilize political tensions but failed to inspire confidence in its ability to achieve long-term revitalization. Taxation levels have reached historic postwar highs, with threshold freezes subtly shifting middle earners into higher tax brackets. Much like during the 1970s, the middle class feels excessively taxed, inadequately rewarded and uncertain about the future.

And so, the similarities between the two eras deepen. In the late 1970s, the middle class, once the engine of postwar prosperity, similarly found itself squeezed between rising prices and falling

state performance. Half a century later, the same group is once again under siege. Wages are stagnant in real terms, mortgage payments have surged, rising energy bills are biting deeper into family budgets, and private education and childcare have become luxuries.

Homeownership, a once-solid symbol of middle-class stability, is increasingly out of reach. Professional families now live precariously on credit, vulnerable to shocks and increasingly disillusioned with the political class.

The outcome of all

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this? A demographic shift reminiscent of the brain drain witnessed in the 1970s. This decline, driven mainly by reduced work opportunities and study visa allocations, underscores a troubling issue: the UK is losing its upward potential while experiencing a contraction of its talent pool.

London, once a magnet for international capital, entrepreneurs and academics, is now seeing its allure dim. Paris, Frankfurt and even Amsterdam are claiming gains in finance and tech. The City of London remains resilient but its future feels encumbered by Brexit, bureaucracy and uncertainty.

An exodus from the London Stock Exchange marks a pivotal moment for the UK’s financial sector, the Confederation of British Industry has warned. Since 2016, 213 firms have delisted amid a wave of overseas listings, private takeovers and waning investor interest in UK stocks.

Since Brexit, exports of UK goods have lagged behind its G7 peers, investment has slowed and regulatory divergence has raised costs,

Dr. John Sfakianakis

cumulatively undermining business confidence, cross-border trade and the UK’s global competitiveness.

Meanwhile, both middle-class professionals and high-net-worth individuals have increasingly relocated to Canada, Australia, the UAE, Singapore and the US, driven in part by tax pressures and the erosion of the UK’s “non-dom” regime.

It is a quiet exodus reminiscent of the 1970s. Back then, disillusionment sparked radical

that its best days might be behind it and that no political force has yet made a convincing case for how to reverse the slide.

Driven more by ideology than evidence, the UK, unlike Germany or Canada, is now one of the few countries to impose a 20 percent value-added tax on private education, a policy that risks placing strain on the state sector without meaningfully reducing inequality.

What is striking is not the urgency of the decline, it is its normalization. As it did in the

late 1970s, Britain is adjusting to lowered expectations; it still functions but it no longer aspires. And while it continues to avoid collapse, it increasingly tolerates stagnation and mediocrity.

The lesson of the 1970s was not just about endurance, it was about transformation. That decade ended with a revolution in Britain’s political economy, one that reshaped its state, markets and global role for a generation.

In 2025, the question is not whether the UK can survive its decline, it is whether the nation can find the courage to confront it. Britain today has the institutions, human capital and democratic depth to recover. But that recovery will not come from managerial politics or minimal policy. It will require imagination and the willingness to once again ask what kind of country it wants to be.

Decline, when it is met with denial, becomes destiny. Acknowledged, it can become a moment of aspiration.

That was the lesson of the 1970s. It remains the lesson today. To reverse

this present course, Britain will need more than competent administration; it must abandon its reliance on short-term fiscal management and embrace a long-term economic and institutional strategy grounded in investment, productivity and social cohesion.

To revitalize the nation, the development of a fresh growth strategy, one that recognizes the difference between stable GDP figures and actual economic vitality, is critical. The stock market alone does not represent the health of the economy.

Secondly, comprehensive reform of the tax system is overdue. Threshold freezes and stealth increases have disproportionately hurt the middle and aspiring classes, while failing to restore fiscal strength.

Thirdly, the state must regain its strategic capability, not in the form of centralized bureaucracy but in institutional capacity.

Fourthly, a radical approach to human capital is essential. From early childhood to lifelong learning, Britain’s skills development system is fragmented and underfunded.

Finally, a national narrative is needed. For too long, the UK’s political class has offered the rhetoric of survival and slogans of heritage, rather than a persuasive account of the future.

Britain’s institutions remain intact. Its rule of law remains strong. Its people are creative, tolerant and adaptive. But these strengths must be mobilized, through ideas, investment and leadership that transcend the default settings of recent decades.

It was once said that Britain “muddles through” — but muddling has become a strategy, and it is one that can no longer cope with the demands of a complex and shifting world.

The 1970s did not mark the end of the UK, they were a turning point. What followed was a redefinition of the state, the market and Britain’s place in the world. In 2025, another pivot is required.

As Shakespeare warned, the fault lies not in fate but in our own hands.

The UK’s decline is not preordained, but the result of strategic drift and political timidity.

— Arab News

Peace process underscores existence of Kurds

Michael Jansen

THIRTY Turkish Kurdish Workers Party PKK fighters destroyed their arms on Friday in a highly symbolic ceremony celebrating the end of their four-decade revolt against the Turkish state and a halt to a century of Ankara’s efforts to Turkify the non-Turkish Kurds. It is significant that the event — attended by Turkish and Iraqi politicians, leading figures, and journalists — was held in the northern Iraqi semi-autonomous Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah rather than in Turkey due to security concerns.

Ahead of the ceremony, veteran Turkish Kurdish politician Leyla Zana called on Ankara to change its “terrorism” law: “I do not accept that Kurds be accused of terrorism.” She added, “For 100 years oppression has been inflicted on Kurds and for 100 years Kurds have resisted. In this 21st century, we say let neither of us, nor our partners, nor the oppressed people lose anything.” She argued that the most significant thing which the peace process has achieved is “from today onward, no one in the world arena can say the Kurds do not exist.” She made history in 1991 when she became the first Kurdish woman to take a seat in Turkey’s parliament. When she persisted with Kurdish activism, she was jailed from 1994 to 2004, and became an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience and won several human rights awards.

In a broadcast two days before the ceremony, the prime mover of the peace process, the PKK’s jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan called the shift from armed conflict to democratic politics as a “historic gain.” He said the creation of a Turkish parliamentary committee to oversee the step-by-step process should be “implemented swiftly.” In February, Ocalan proclaimed an end to the 40-year war which killed 40,000 people and in May the PKK announced the dissolution.

Peacemaking with the PKK provides benefits and poses risks for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been in power for more than 20 years. He seeks popular and parliamentary support for a fourth term in office in May 2028 and has cracked down on the opposition in recent months. Erdogan will take credit if PKK disarmament is peacefully completed but if clashes erupt and the process is disrupted, he will be blamed and could be held accountable at the ballot box.

Ahead of the ceremony, he told legislators from his ruling Justice and Development party, “Once the wall of terror is torn

down, God willing, everything will change. More pain and tears will be prevented. The winners of this [process] will be the whole of Turkey — Turks, Kurds and Arabs. Then it will be our entire region.” He added, “We hope that this auspicious process will conclude successfully as soon as possible, without any road accidents, and without it being sabotaged by dark and corrupt circles.” The end of the PKK revolt is a major development for both Turks and Kurds. The revered founder of the modern Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, promoted Turkification through assimilation of Arab, Circassian and Kurdish minorities, the latter forming 15-20 per cent of the country’s population. Turkey banned the Kurdish language, culture, and history, and massacred, oppressed and discriminated against the Kurds. They resisted. The PKK was established in 1978 to fight for independence while other Kurdish organisations and political parties lobbied for recognition and civil rights. PKK guerrillas fought a losing battle and took refuge in Iraq’s Qandil mountains where they were routinely bombed by the Turkish air force.

In 2005, the PKK began negotiations with Erdogan to secure Kurdish rights in a democratic system. This process has exerted pressure on Syria’s Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to merge with the Syrian army and return the area under SDF control, 25 per cent of Syria, to rule by Damascus’ Haya’t Tahrir al-Sham government. Last week Syria’s interim president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, met in Syria’s capital with SDF commander, Mazlum Kobane, and US special envoy to Syria Tom Barrack to discuss such a deal. Erdogan’s efforts to resolve Turkey’s current “Kurdish problem” may

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Erdogan’s efforts to resolve Turkey’s current “Kurdish problem” may

survive for some time but is unlikely to end the Kurds’ drive for an independent state in Kurdish majority areas in Turkey and its neighbours.

While Kurdish communities are scattered across Turkey, the Kurds predominate in the east and south-east of the country where the Kurds regard the region as Northern Kurdistan. Northern Iraq is dubbed Southern Kurdistan, north-western Iran becomes Eastern Kurdistan, and northern Syria is seen as Western Kurdistan. While Ankara, Tehran, Baghdad, and Damascus are the major obstacles to a potential Kurdish land grab, the Kurds are not united and dispute among themselves.

The Kurds’ host countries never addressed their recurring “Kurdish problem” which long pre-dates the existence of these states. The Kurds are neither of Turkic nor Arab stock. It is believed they descend from Indo-

European tribes that migrated to this region around 4,000 years ago, and partially merged with local populations while retaining their Indo-European ethnicity language and distinctive customs. The majority of Kurds are Sunnis, although there are significant Kurdish Shia and non-Muslim Yazidi and Alevi sub-minorities.

While Kurdish revolts have challenged Arab and Ottoman empires, Kurds have also played an important role in the region’s history. The great warrior Salaheddin who defeated the Crusaders at the Battle of Hittin in Palestine and drove them from Jerusalem in 1187 was a Kurd born and raised in Tikrit, Iraq. He is seen as the most famous and significant Kurd in history. Arab, Turkish, and foreign writers have largely excluded the Kurds from histories of the region.

This being the case, the Kurds are now staking their claim in the narrative of the 21st century.

Canadian universities too should be in Francesca Albanese’s report

Katherine Blouin, Nathan Kalman-Lamb and Derek Silva

“UNIVERSITIES worldwide, under the guise of research neutrality, continue to profit from an [Israeli] economy now operating in genocidal mode. Indeed, they are structurally dependent on settler-colonial collaborations and funding.”

This is what United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese wrote in her latest report “From economy of occupation to economy of genocide”, which documents the financial tentacles of Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza and beyond. Its release prompted the United States’ governing regime to issue sanctions against Albanese in a move the Italian legal scholar rightly described as “obscene” and “mafia intimidation tactics”.

The report reveals how universities not only invest their endowments in corporations linked to Israel’s war machine, but also engage in directly or support research initiatives that contribute to it. It is not only a damning indictment of the complicity of academia in genocide, but also a warning to university administrations and academics that they hold legal responsibility.

In Israel, Albanese observes, traditional humanities disciplines

such as law, archaeology, and Middle Eastern studies essentially launder the history of the Nakba, reframing it through colonial narratives that erase Palestinian histories and legitimise an apartheid state that has transitioned into what she describes as a “genocidal machine”. Likewise, STEM disciplines engage in open collaborations with military industrial corporations, such as Elbit Systems, Israel Aerospace Industries, IBM, and Lockheed Martin, to facilitate their research and development.

In the United States, Albanese writes, research is funded by the Israeli Defence Ministry and conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with various military applications, including drone swarm control.

In the United Kingdom, she highlights, the University of Edinburgh has 2.5 per cent of its endowment invested in companies that participate in the Israeli military industrial complex. It also has partnerships with Ben-Gurion University and with companies supporting Israeli military operations.

While Canadian institutions do not appear in Albanese’s report, they

very easily could and, indeed, we argue, should.

Canada’s flagship school, the University of Toronto (UoT), where one of us teaches and another is an alumnus, is a particularly salient example.

Over the past 12 years, the UoT’s entanglements with Israeli institutions have snowballed, stretching across fields from the humanities to cybersecurity. They also involve Zionist donors (both individuals and groups), many of whom have ties with complicit corporations and Israeli institutions, and have actively interfered with university hiring practices to an extent that has drawn censure from the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

This phenomenon must be understood in the context of the defunding of public higher education, which forces universities to seek private sources of funding and opens up universities to donor interference.

After calls for cutting such ties intensified amid the genocide, the UoT doubled down on them over the past year, advertising artificial intelligence-related partnerships with Technion University in Haifa, joint calls for proposals with various Israeli universi-

ties, and student exchange programmes in Israel.

The UoT also continues to fundraise for its “Archaeology of Israel

In the United Kingdom, she highlights, the University of Edinburgh has 2.5 percent of its endowment invested in companies that participate in the Israeli military industrial complex. It also has partnerships with Ben-Gurion University and with companies supporting Israeli military operations. While Canadian institutions do not appear in Albanese’s report, they very easily could and, indeed, we argue, should. Canada’s flagship school, the University of Toronto (UoT), where one of us teaches and another is an alumnus, is a particularly salient example. Over the past 12 years, the UoT’s entanglements with Israeli institutions have snowballed, stretching across fields from the humanities to cybersecurity. They also involve Zionist donors (both individuals and groups), many of whom have ties with complicit corporations and Israeli institutions, and have actively interfered with university hiring practices to an extent that has drawn censure from the Canadian Association of University Teachers. This phenomenon must be understood in the context of the defunding of public higher education, which forces universities to seek private sources of funding and opens up universities to donor interference.

Trust”, which was set up to make a “significant contribution to the archaeology of Israel” — a discipline that has historically focused on legitimising the Israeli dispossession of the Palestinian people. It also inaugurated a new lab for the study of global anti-Semitism, which is funded by the University of Toronto-Hebrew University of Jerusalem Research &

Innovation Alliance.

In addition to institutional partnerships, UoT’s Asset Management Corporation (UTAM),

which manages the university’s endowment, has direct connections with many companies that are, as per Albanese’s report, complicit in the genocide in Palestine, including Airbnb, Alphabet Inc, Booking Holdings, Caterpillar, Elbit Systems, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin, and Palantir Technologies.

A 2024 report found that 55 of these companies operate “in the mili-

tary-affiliated defence, arms, and aerospace sectors” and at least 12 of UTAM’s 44 contracted investment managers have made investments totalling at least \$3.95 billion Canadian dollars (\$2.88bn) in 11 companies listed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as supporters of the construction and expansion of illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories.

Furthermore, 17 of UTAM’s 44 contracted investment managers are responsible for managing around \$15.79 billion Canadian dollars (\$11.53bn) in assets invested in 34 companies identified by The American Friends Service Committee as benefiting from the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

UoT is not unique among Canadian universities in this regard. According to a report on university divestment, Western University, too, promotes ongoing partnerships with Ben-Gurion University and invests more than \$16m Canadian dollars (\$11.6m) in military contractors and nearly \$50 million Canadian dollars (\$36.5) in companies directly complicit in the

occupation of Palestine and the genocide of Palestinians. The list of complicit companies again includes Lockheed Martin, as well others listed by Albanese like Chevron, Booking Holdings, Airbnb, and Microsoft.

McGill University, another top Canadian university, has also invested in Lockheed Martin, as well as notable military industrial companies like Airbus, BAE Systems, Safran, and Thales, which have also been accused of providing weapons and components to Israel.

In the context of the ongoing genocide, students, staff, and faculty at such complicit universities — including at each of our respective institutions — have been demanding that their universities boycott and divest from Israel and companies profiting from its warfare.

They are not only explicitly in the right according to international law, but are actually articulating the basic legal responsibility and requirement borne by all corporate entities.

And yet, for raising this demand, they have been subjected to all manner of discipline and punishment.

What Albanese’s report lays bare is that university administrators

— like other corporate executives — are subject to and, frankly, should fear censure under international law.

She writes, “Corporations must respect human rights even if a State where they operate does not, and they may be held accountable even if they have complied with the domestic laws where they operate. In other words, compliance with domestic laws does not preclude/is not a defence to responsibility or liability.”

This means that those administrating universities in Canada and around the world who have refused to divest and disentangle from Israel and instead have focused their attention on regulating students fighting for that end are themselves personally liable for their complicity in genocide, according to international law.

We could not possibly put it more powerfully or succinctly than Albanese herself does: “The corporate sector, including its executives, must be held to account, as a necessary step towards ending the genocide and disassembling the global system of racialized capitalism that underpins it.”

It is our collective responsibility to make sure that happens at universities as well.



PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 2,202 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 2,202.77 points, a positive change of 1.64 percent, closing at 136,502.54 points against 134,299.77 points last trading day.

A total of 841,456,115 shares were traded during the day as compared to 765,079,448 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 37.051 billion against Rs 40.165 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 475 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 264 of them recorded gains and 195 sustained losses,

whereas the share price of 16 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Cres. Star Industries with 47,209,653 shares at Rs 4.34 per share, K-Electric Limited with 42,841,396 shares at Rs5.33 per share and First Dawood Prop with 35,579,177 shares at Rs 5.55 per share.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 2,615.29 per share price, closing at Rs 28,768.23, whereas the runner-up was SS Oil Mills Limited with Rs 91.82 rise in its per share price to Rs1,010.06.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs109.68

per share closing at Rs 2,019.99 followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs80.00 decline in its share price to close at Rs23,335.50.

Gold prices up by Rs1,600 to Rs359,700 per tola: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was traded at Rs.359,700 on Monday as compared to its sale at Rs.358,100 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs1,371 to Rs.308,384 from Rs. 307,013 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went up by Rs.1,257 to Rs.282,695 from Rs. 281,438.

Nasir urges youth to embrace future-facing skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has emphasized that in an era where automation is transforming industries at an unprecedented pace, it is crucial for the country's youth to equip themselves with future-facing skills to not just survive, but thrive in the evolving economic landscape.

He made these remarks while addressing a group of young entrepreneurs who visited the Chamber House on Monday.

On this occasion, ICCI Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui

and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry were also present.

Highlighting the immense potential of Pakistan's youth, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President stressed the urgent need for skill-based training to help the younger generation view rapid technological changes as opportunities rather than threats. "The future belongs to those who can adapt, innovate and lead in a tech-driven world," he said.

Nasir Mansoor Qureshi urged academic institutions to revamp their teaching methodologies by integrating problem-based learning, real-world case studies,

and simulations that foster forward-thinking, creativity, and confidence among students.

He further encouraged young people to become tech-agile and open to emerging career paths such as digital entrepreneurship, remote freelancing, and content creation—viable alternatives to conventional employment.

Reaffirming the Chamber's commitment to this cause, Qureshi said, "ICCI is dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and industry through strategic collaborations to prepare our youth for the challenges and opportunities of the future."

Exports increases to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 41.40 percent during the first eleven months the fiscal year 2024-25 as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$723.442 million during July-May (2024-25) against exports of US \$511.627 million during July-May (2023-24), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan decreased by 23.60 percent from \$74.407 million in May 2024, against the exports of \$56.843 million in May 2025.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan however increased by 31.23 percent during May 2025 as compared to the exports of \$43.315 million in April 2025, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 4.04 percent in the first eleven months, from US \$28.536 billion to US \$29.690 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$24.720 million against US \$10.188 million last year, showing an increase of 142.63 percent in July-May (2024-25).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for Afghanistan witnessed a decrease of 30.39 percent from US \$2.800 million in May 2024, against the imports of US \$1.949 million in May 2025.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Afghanistan into the country also decreased by 26.28 percent during May 2025, as compared to the imports of US \$2.644 million during April 2025, according to the data.

Stocks diverge after Trump's latest tariff warning

LONDON (AFP/APP): Major stock markets diverged and the dollar largely steadied Monday after President Donald Trump's latest trade war salvos that saw him threaten to hit the European Union and Mexico with 30 percent tariffs.

Trump's move followed his warnings last week of potential 50 percent levies on copper and Brazilian goods, 35 percent on Canadian goods, and a possible 200 percent charge on pharmaceuticals.

While observers warn the measures could deal a hefty blow to the global economy, investors are largely optimistic that governments will hammer out agreements before the White House's August 1 deadline.

Eurozone stock markets declined in midday trading Monday after leading Asian indices closed mixed.

Wafaqi Mohtasib opens AOA webinar: Ombudsman institutions play key role: Ejaz Ahmad

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, has said that the ombudsmanship and the UN Sustainable Development Goals pursue shared principles and purposes which together constitute the agenda for global action. He was inaugurating a webinar organized by the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) in cooperation with the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat at Islamabad on Monday. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi is the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association which is a 47-member strong non-political, professional body of ombudsman institutions in the Asian region.

Addressing the participants, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi said that the ombudsman institutions play a critical role in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He added that the efficient delivery of public services, respect for the rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights remain fundamental to the principles and purposes of ombudsmanship and the 2030 Agenda



for Sustainable Development. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi further added that the mandate of the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution is not limited to redressal of grievances alone, but also provides for ascertaining the root causes of maladministration, bad governance, arbitrary and discriminatory practices in public administration at all levels. He said that so far, 80 studies have been conducted which led to long term reforms and fixed the systemic issues faced by the general public. Inspection

visits of public agencies against whom frequent complaints are received has greatly contributed towards identifying the shortcomings and developing a culture of fairness, equality and professional propriety, he added.

Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Director General, National Institute of Policy Studies at the National University of Science & Technology (NUST), Islamabad in his keynote address, stated that the people are the ultimate stakeholders in all development

efforts including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He emphasized the need for stepping up cooperation between the ombudsman institutions and the UN Agencies for realizing the core values of the two programmes.

The Webinar was attended by over one hundred participants representing Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA), the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO), academia and members of civil society at home and abroad.

vivo unveils X200 FE 1st compact telephoto flagship in Pakistan

F.P. Report

LAHORE: vivo unveils the X200 FE, its first compact telephoto flagship in the X series, marking a new milestone in bringing flagship-level experiences to compact smartphones. It combines ZEISS 100x Telephoto Zoom, powerful imaging capabilities, advanced performance, and bold color expression - all in a compact, one-handed form factor. Priced at Rs. 219,999, the vivo X200 FE challenges the long-held notion that compact phones require a compromise in capability.

Imaging: The Compact Heir to the X Series' Telephoto Legacy

The vivo X200 FE's 100x ZEISS Telephoto Zoom delivers impressive reach in a compact form, combining high-quality optics, intelligent AI, and versatile shooting modes to suit both casual users and photography enthusiasts.

The vivo X200 FE introduces the Stage Mode, tailored for capturing dynamic live scenes with heightened energy and realism. Supported by the Sony IMX882 Ultra-Sensitive Sensor and AI Telephoto Enhance, it

brings out stunning details in foliage and architecture alike.

The newly designed trapezoidal prism periscope lens utilizes an M-shaped optical path to achieve a compact camera module with reduced height and lens volume perfectly aligned with the X200 FE's identity as a powerful yet sleek telephoto flagship.

With no compromises, the vivo X200 FE offers full Multifocal Portrait capabilities. Expanding beyond portraiture, the addition of Live Photo format ensures seamless compatibility with iPhone Live Photos, enabling richer storytelling and easier cross-platform sharing.

vivo X200 FE not only reproduces the world in front of the lens it also expresses the world within. The phone revives the century-old soul of ZEISS lenses with seven classic bokeh effects and cinematic flare rendering, allowing users to craft atmospheric and emotionally resonant portraits. In an age where perfection is the default, Street Photography Mode embraces imperfection-blurred, grainy, or overexposed-to preserve authenticity and



human essence. While the screen is off, quickly press the "Volume Down" button twice in succession to activate Street Photography Mode what you see is what you get.

Supported by AI Image Studio including new features as AI Magic Move, AI Image Expander and AI Reflection Erase, the X200 FE invites users to unleash their creativity through professional-grade tools in a compact, travel-friendly device.

Pak-Vietnam set \$1B trade target, finalize PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Vietnam have agreed to take bilateral trade up to \$1 billion and to finalize the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), during the recent visit of the Federal Minister for Commerce for emphasizing the strengthening of bilateral economic and trade ties.

During the four days visit of the Federal Minister Commerce Minister in last week, emphases was placed on establishing a bilateral banking channel, to finalize PTA, trade diversification in key sectors including textiles and fisheries, halal certification, civil aviation, healthcare, infor-

mation technology, pharmaceuticals, food processing, agriculture, leather and surgical instruments.

It is also decided that the sixth session of the Joint Trade Commission (JTC) will be held in Pakistan at a mutually convenient time in the coming months to further negotiate the different issued of bilateral trade and PTA finalization.

The Federal Minister for Commerce arrived in Vietnam for a four-day official visit from July 9-12, 2025, to mark the first high-level Pakistani ministerial visit in 15 years.

The Minister of Commerce had engaged in strategic meetings with top Viet-

namese officials, including the Minister of Industry and Trade, and engages with the Chamber of Commerce and key business leaders.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sahrif had assigned a special task the Minister for Commerce to explore the mechanism for enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Vietnam, besides following its model to promote and develop value addition to increase exports from the country.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan also had a meeting with Dr. Hoang Trung, Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam

(SBV) and discussed the different avenues for enhancing financial cooperation between Pakistan and Vietnam.

During the meeting, both sides recalled the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2004 between the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and SBV, and welcomed the proposal to renew and modernize the agreement, given evolving financial landscapes and growing bilateral trade.

The Minister appreciated Vietnam's advancements in digital banking and expressed interest in leveraging Vietnam's experience to support Pakistan's financial innovation efforts.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal. No. 03/12(2). Institution. 8/4/2024. Date of hearing. 29/7/2025. Title: Saud Wared etc VS Mst Menakha etc. Notice to No 8.Mehran s/o Malok resident of Pir Baba tehseel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 29/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Muhammad Adil Civil Judge V/Ilaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 86/1. Institution 29/4/ 2025. Date of hearing. 25/7/2025. Title : Hamayun VS Amerajan .Notice to no 1. Amerajan s/ Shah Jihan resident of Petaw Jangdara Torwarsak tehseel Daggar district Buber. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 25/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Muhammad Adil Civil Judge V/Ilaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 102/1. Institution 23/5/ 2025. Date of hearing. 29/7/2025. Title: Zakir Husain VS Saedur Rehman .Notice to no 1.Saedur Rehman 3.Mujibur Rehman sons of Said Kamal Shah resident of Daggar Kalay tehseel Daggar district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 29/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Shadab Civil Judge V/Ilaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 323/1. Institution 2024. Date of hearing. 24/7/2025. Title: Abdul Samad VS Mumtaz Gul. Notice to Mumtaz Gul s/o Khtab Gul resident of Cheena tehseel Gagra district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 24/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of district Judge / Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Civil Review No. 03/CR. Institution. 1/3/2025. Date of hearing. 23/7/2025. Title: Sahib Zada VS Zar Bakhti Khan etc. Notice to No 1.Zar Bakhti Khan.3.Sher Zaman Khan sons of Nasem Khan.4.Akbar Zaman s/o Naem Khan resident of Pezo Dhery Chaghorzai Buner as 1 & 4 out of country while 3 at Karachi.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 23/7/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan addressing a press conference.

SCCI throws heavy weight behind traders' strike on July 19 — Moqem warns of prolonged agitation movement, if harsh provisions weren't withdrawn

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Monday announced full support for the country-wide shutter down strike for July 19 against anti-business tax measures through Finance Act 2025-26 and warned the agitation movement would be prolonged, if the unjust and damaging provisions were not withdrawn immediately.

Fazal Moqem Khan, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan and members of the SCCI's executive committee at the chamber house expressed deep concern over the alarming provisions of the Finance Act, which came into force on

July 1, 2025.

President SCCI issued a strong warning to the government, stating that if the unjust and damaging provisions are not withdrawn immediately, the strike will likely be prolonged, and business owners may be compelled to take even more drastic steps, including suspending the filing of Sales Tax and Income Tax Returns. He noted that such sentiments are being increasingly echoed by SCCI's members, who have lost faith in the prevailing economic environment due to the government's oppressive policies.

Fazal Moqem Khan expressed deep concern over the alarming provisions of the Finance Act, which came into force on

Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), which has identified thirty harsh tax and customs measures that pose a serious threat to the survival of businesses across Pakistan.

He emphasized that the SCCI stands shoulder to shoulder with all business organizations demanding the immediate reversal of these unjust laws.

He highlighted, in particular, the extreme dangers posed by the introduction of Sections 37A and 37B of the Income Tax Ordinance, terming them as draconian and unprecedented.

"Another alarming aspect of the Finance Act is the amendment introduced through Section 21(S), which effectively disallows any cash transaction amounting to Rs. 200,000 or more for tax deduction

purposes.

This means that if a customer pays a supplier in cash, even by depositing cash directly into the supplier's account, the supplier could be penalized by losing 50 percent of the expense in tax calculations, he added.

Chairman, Anjuman e Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shaukat Ali Khan, former presidents Zahidullah Shinwari, Haji Muhammad Afzal, Fuad Ishaq, members of the SCCI's executive committee Junaid Altaf, Nadeem Rauf, Abbas Fuad Azeem, Mujeibur Rehman, Sajjad Zaeher, Saifullah Khan, Abdul Naseer, Shamsur Rahim, Adnan Nasir, Aftab Iqbal, Hassan Zahideen, former senior vice presidents Naem Butt, Sanaullah Khan, Imran

Khan Mohmand, former vice president Javed Akhtar and Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazal e Wahid, Ihsanullah, Monawar Khurshid, Sikandar Iqbal, Mushaq Ahmad, Perviz Khan Khattak, Qurat Ul Ain, Pir Dilawar, Tahir Nawaz, Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, and others were present during the press conference.

The SCCI chief also voiced serious reservations about the mandatory implementation of E-Bilty and digital invoicing systems for all sales tax-registered entities.

He criticized the FBR for attempting to enforce complex digital systems in a country where general and computer literacy remains significantly low.

Why taxpayers are being forced to perform the

FBR's duties at their own expense and warned that this would only widen the gap between the business community and the tax authorities, Moqem questioned.

In his view, he said businessmen should be encouraged to focus on productivity and revenue generation rather than bureaucratic red tape that stifles operations and increases costs.

The SCCI chief also condemned the government's complete disregard for the established consultative process traditionally followed before the passage of the Finance Bill.

Historically, the Business Anomaly Committee engages with stakeholders and the FBR in a series of meetings to address anomalies and formulate mutually agreed-upon recommenda-

tions. These discussions are held with the participation of Member Inland Revenue, Member Customs, and eventually the Finance Minister and Chairman FBR.

This year, however, the process was unilaterally bypassed for the first time, leaving no room for dialogue or consensus. In protest, several committee members resigned and walked out.

Despite vocal objections not only from the business community but also from parliamentary standing committees of the National Assembly and Senate, the Finance Bill was rushed through without incorporating key recommendations that had been previously agreed upon during deliberations.

In conclusion, President Fazal Moqem Khan

appealed directly to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to immediately withdraw Sections 37A and 37B, the Rs. 200,000 cash transaction penalty under Section 21(s), the digital invoicing requirement under SRO 709, and the mandatory E-Bilty provision under Section 40(c).

He also called for shifting exporters from the Normal Tax Regime (NTR) to the Final Tax Regime (FTR). He reiterated that the business community across the country is united in its demand for urgent and meaningful reforms. If the government fails to take corrective measures, the current protest movement will only escalate, with severe consequences for the economy and the state's relationship with its business sector.



In brief

Siraj fined for breaching ICC CoC

ISLAMABAD (APP): India fast bowler Mohammad Siraj has been fined 15 per cent of his match fee for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the fourth day of the third match of their ICC World Test Championship series against England at Lord's on Sunday. Siraj was found to have breached Article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match." In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to the disciplinary record of Siraj, for whom it was the second offence in a 24-month period, taking his tally of demerit points in a 24-month period to two, said a press release. Siraj received his earlier demerit point during the second Test against Australia in Adelaide on December 7, 2024. Sunday's incident occurred in the sixth over of England's second innings, when Siraj, after dismissing opener Ben Duckett, celebrated excessively at close proximity to the dismissed batter. Siraj admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Richie Richardson of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Paul Reiffel and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Ahsan Raza and fourth umpire Graham Lloyd levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

Bashir out of India series

LONDON (AFP): Shoaib Bashir was ruled out of the remainder of England's series against India less than an hour after taking the match-clinching wicket in the third Test at Lord's on Monday. The 21-year-old off-spinner spent much of the match off the field with a fracture to his little left finger -- on his non-bowling hand -- after dropping a hard-hit return catch from Ravindra Jadeja during India's first innings. But he returned to dismiss Mohammed Siraj after tea on Monday's final day when India's last man played a defensive shot only for the ball to trickle back onto his leg stump as England won a thrilling encounter by 22 runs. Victory left England 2-1 up in this five-match series but they are now set to call-up a new specialist spinner for the fourth Test at Old Trafford starting on July 23, with the likes of Liam Dawson and Jack Leach vying to take Bashir's place. "England spinner Shoaib Bashir has sustained a fracture to his left finger and has been ruled out of the remainder of the Rotherhay Test series against India," said an England and Wales Cricket Board statement. "He is scheduled to undergo surgery later this week. "England will name their squad for the fourth Test at Old Trafford in the next couple of days."

England take 2-1 series lead over India with thrilling Lord's win

LONDON (AFP): A thrilling series produced a gripping finale as England beat India by 22 runs in a nail-biting third Test at Lord's on Monday to go 2-1 up with two Tests to play. India were on the brink of defeat at 147-9, still needing a further 46 runs to reach a victory target of 193, when last man Mohammed Siraj joined Ravindra Jadeja in the middle.

Nevertheless, the pair batted on until after tea on the final day to give India hope of an improbable victory. But with India eyeing a stunning success, off-spinner Shoaib Bashir, who had been off the field for much of the match with a finger injury, had the final say.

As Siraj played defensively, the ball spun back past him to dislodge the leg bail with the faintest of touches to leave India 170 all out. As the England fielders celebrated, the fiery Siraj was crestfallen as was his partner Jadeja who was left stranded on 61 not out -- his fourth consecutive fifty this series -- after batting for nearly four-and-a-half hours.

England captain Ben Stokes bowled two lengthy spells Monday on his way to innings figures of 3-48 in 24 overs, with fast bowler Jofra Archer -- in his first Test after more than four years of injury-induced exile -- taking 3-55 in 16.

'Dark places' Lively medium-pacer Stokes, whose career has been blighted by knee injuries, again proved his worth to England as a fully-fledged all-rounder.

"I thought I had taken myself to some pretty dark

places before but today was... If bowling to win a Test for your country doesn't get you up, get you excited, then I don't know what does," Stokes told Sky Sports. "The game was on the line and nothing was going to stop me bowling."

Victory came exactly six years to the day since Stokes and Archer both starred in England's dramatic 2019 50-over World Cup final win over New Zealand at Lord's.

Both bowlers made early breakthroughs Monday, with player-of-the-match Stokes saying the anniversary was behind his decision to open the bowling with Archer. "Jof played a big role in that and I just had one of those feelings he would do something special," said Stokes.

The 30-year-old Archer added: "It was pretty hectic for the first game back. I probably bowled a few more overs than I thought I would have but every single one mattered today so I'm not too fussed about it." India were all but beaten at 112-8 when tailender Jasprit Bumrah came out to bat immediately after lunch. But Jadeja and Bumrah kept England at bay with a stubborn stand of 35 in 22 overs.

"I think the position in the morning, to make a comeback like this was tremendous from Ravindra Jadeja and the lower order," said India captain Shubman Gill. Bumrah, defying a run of four successive noughts in Test cricket, defended gamely while making five in 54 balls only for his innings to end when he top-edged a pull off Stokes to substitute fielder Sam Cook at mid-on.

India were now 147-9 -- a position that meant tea was delayed by 30 minutes.

But Jadeja, who overturned an lbw decision given against him on 26, went to fifty when a flashing cut off Stokes flew over the slips for the left-hander's fourth four in 150 balls faced. Shortly after tea, Archer struck Siraj a painful blow on the shoulder and it was not long before he fell to Bashir.

This match became a second-innings shoot-out after both teams made 387 in their first innings.

England then posted 192 before India slumped to 58-4 when Stokes bowled nightwatchman Akash Deep with what became the last ball of Sunday's play.

From 71-4 on Monday, the match swung England's way once more as India lost three wickets for 11 runs in collapsing to 82-7.

Rishabh Pant -- who only came into bat on Monday following Deep's departure -- charged down the pitch to drive Archer for a typically aggressive four.

But two balls later Archer, repeatedly topping the 90 mph mark, bowled the dangerman for nine with a superb full-length delivery that clipped the top of off stump.

India were looking to KL Rahul to anchor their chase after the opener's first-innings hundred.

But he had added just six runs to his overnight 33 when he was lbw on review to Stokes. Archer, who made his Test debut at Lord's in 2019, then reduced India to 82-7 when he held a sharp one-handed caught and bowled chance to dismiss Washington Sundar for a duck.



LONDON: The England fielders are ecstatic after Ben Stokes sent back KL Rahul.

Pak cueists qualify for last rounds of Snooker C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani cueists Shahid Aftab and Muhammad Asif have qualified for last 16 and last 22 rounds, respectively of the IBSF World Masters, U17, U21 & Men 6Red Snooker Championships 2025 at Manama, Bahrain.

According to details, on Day 2nd Masters, Shahid beat Abdullah Alyousef (Kuwait) 3-2 (25-70(44), 31-53, 79(48)-6, 58-13, 103(73)-25) while Brijesh Damani (India) outplayed Asif 3-0 (66-39, 66(42)-0, 79-41) and Shahid downed Manan Chandra (India) 3-0 (90(68)-17, 59-46, 105(48)-17).

Pak displays top notch in Asian Volleyball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan team continued outstanding performance in the 2nd Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship 2025, as they defeated Chinese Taipei in their third and final group match.

Pakistan clinched a straight-set victory (3-0) with set scores of 26-24, 25-14, 25-16, showcasing strength, skill, and resilience, said a press release. With this crucial win, Pakistan has topped Pool D, ahead of other strong teams including Korea and Saudi Arabia. The match was a gripping display of teamwork and tactical excellence.

Key players who stood out in today's match included Faizan, Talha, Junaid and Irfan. This victory places Pakistan in a strong position going into the Quarterfinals, where they are scheduled to face Indonesia (Pool B's second-placed team) on July 16. The Pakistan Volleyball Federation has congratulated Pakistan team and coaching staff for maintaining a perfect record in the group stage and wishes them the very best in the knockout rounds.

Ameer wins silver in Taekwondo C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani athlete Ameer Hamza won silver medal in the Over 14 Vertical Spinning Kick -- Male Individual category at the World Taekwondo Demonstration & Breaking Championship, held from 10 July 2025 in Chuncheon, South Korea. Ameer's powerful and precise spinning kick performance earned international praise, showcasing Pakistan's rising talent on the world stage, said a press release. President of the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation, Lt Col (R) Waseem Ahmed Janjua, congratulated Ameer Hamza on this remarkable achievement, calling it a proud moment for the nation.

Lahore Qalandars name Karachi boys, girls teams

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lahore Qalandars have taken a major step towards grassroots cricket development by announcing the Karachi boys and girls squads under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Cricket Talent Hunt, a move aimed at unearthing and nurturing young talent from across Pakistan.

According to Lahore Qalandars' CEO Atif Rana, the participation of thousands of youngsters in the trials reflects the trust of Pakistan's youth in the

Lahore Qalandars' vision, said a press release.

Rana highlighted that Lahore Qalandars began their journey of player development ten years ago, and today, many prominent players have emerged through this platform. He further shared that under this initiative, five teams from each province, including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, will be formed to participate in regional tournaments.

The Karachi Girls Squad includes Yasri Aamir, Alizay Sabir, Arijia

Haseeb, Amna Zahid, Taskeen Fatima, Kainat Iman, Aneza Arif, Syeda Batool Fatima, Shabnam Hayat, Masooma Jafri, Ubaira Riaz, Faiqa Tariq, Areej Aamir, Maryam Ahmed, and Isha Naeem.

The Boys Squad features Arman Shehzad, Abdullah Javed, Muhammad Siddiq, Umar Farooq, Zain Anwar, Hamza Malik, Ali Shoaib, Muhammad Shaheer, Muhammad Furman, Naveedullah, Syed Zain, Abdul Rauf, Moaz Shah Afridi, Abdul Jaleel, and Syed Rehan Shah.

McIlroy confident of handling emotional British Open

PORTRUSH (AFP): Rory McIlroy insists the emotion of his return to Royal Portrush for this week's British Open will not distract him from challenging for the title.

It will be the second time that Northern Ireland's McIlroy has competed in his own country in the British Open after the tournament was staged at Royal Portrush in 2019.

Back then, the world number two tried to block out the noise surrounding the event's return after a 68-year absence to the links where he set the course record of 61 as a 16-year-old.

But McIlroy struggled to handle the passionate support he received from local fans as he missed the cut by a stroke. "I think I remember the ovation I got on the first tee on Thursday and not being ready for how I was going to feel," the 36-year-old

told reporters on Monday. "I was a little surprised and a little taken aback. I was like, 'These people really want me to win'. I think that brought its own sort of pressure and more internally from myself and not really wanting to let people down."

"I learned pretty quickly that one of my challenges, especially in a week like this, is controlling myself and controlling that battle."

"I think in '19 I probably tried to isolate and I think it's better for everyone if I embrace it. I think it's better for me because it's nice to be able to accept adulation, even though I struggle with it at times." The five-time major winner has spoken of struggling for motivation following the completion of his career Grand Slam with a dramatic victory at the Masters in April.

McIlroy became just the sixth man to win all four

majors when he beat Justin Rose in a play-off at Augusta. After a disappointing spell following that memorable triumph, he is hopeful an encouraging joint-second place at the Scottish Open last week will be the springboard for a title charge at Royal Portrush.

"I'm certainly encouraged by how I've played the last two starts, especially last week in Scotland," he said. "I think the two weeks off after the Travelers (Championship) just to reset, to get over here, a bit of a change of scenery has been really nice."

"I'm excited with where my game is. I felt like I showed some really good signs last week."

"I feel like I'm in a good spot and -- not that last week was a pure preparation week -- but I definitely feel like it put me in a good spot heading into here."

Spain the stars as Women's Euro 2025 heads into knockouts

ZURICH (AFP): Spain have lived up to their billing as the team to beat at Women's Euro 2025 as the world champions prepare to take on hosts Switzerland in the quarter-finals, with a potential final with England on the horizon.

The most talented squad at the tournament, Spain rattled in 14 goals, including four for leading scorer Esther Gonzalez, on their way to topping Group B and remain red-hot favourites to win their first European crown.

Alexia Putellas has bolstered her claim for a third Ballon d'Or as the shining light of a Spain outfit which has sprinkled stardust over the competition. Barcelona star Putellas scored three goals and set up four more in Spain's three group games as she brought her sparkling club form to her national team.

Putellas told AFP last week that she is "enjoying" the tournament after roaring back to her best form last season following an injury nightmare which began with an ACL tear just

before the start of the last Euros three years ago.

"It was a tough time, like any injury that any athlete has if it's serious. They leave you with those lessons and you savour every moment," said Putellas.

"Maybe when you enter a cycle of competing, competing, competing, you don't stop to appreciate everything. But I'm enjoying every day here at the Euros."

The stars seem to be aligning for Spain who also have current Ballon d'Or holder Aitana Bonmati fully match fit after she started her first match of the tournament in Friday's 3-1 win over Italy.

Bonmati's chances of playing in Switzerland briefly looked in doubt when she was struck with a bout of viral meningitis days before Spain's opening group match against Portugal. But she recovered quickly enough to feature in the 5-0 hammering of the Portuguese and the following 6-2 beating of Belgium before making the starting XI for Italy.

"She did a good job

coming off a difficult situation, and she was really looking forward to starting some games," said Spain coach Montse Tome.

Spain will also have a full week to prepare for their clash with their Swiss hosts, which will be played on Friday in front of a passionate crowd in Bern.

England threat? However, for all that Spain are free-flowing and full of goalscoring dynamos, they can be got at, as shown in matches against Belgium and Italy who both created a series of opportunities against the high Spanish defensive line.

Among the teams standing in Spain's way are England and Sweden, who face off in a blockbuster quarter-final which is also a replay of the Lionesses thumping last-four victory on their way to winning the last Euros. England and Sweden are both on the other side of the knockout draw from Spain, who will face one of Germany or dark horses France in the semi-finals if La Roja get past the Swiss.



In brief

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Islamabad Circle, Scheme-II, Kand Rajgan, King Hamid University, CST, Flour Mill, Industrial-II Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, HPT, Amir Hamza, Officer Colony, I-14/2, I-14/3, Lakho Road, Pindhon, Ghousia Colony, Saidpur Road, Hyderi Chowk, Range Road, Saham, Chakra Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bisali, Jhatta Hathial, New Kaliyam, Bhal, Murat, Khasala, Jarar Camp, Fatima Jinnah Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Jeddah, F-9 Chak Daulat Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Murreed, Darya Jalap and surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 277,424 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 277,424 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 326,004 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1527.00 feet which was 125.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 213,700 cusecs and 174,900 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1184.85 feet, which was 134.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 17,780 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 227,594, 426,400, 315,558 and 225,260 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 41,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 26,745 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

4 drug suppliers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during the ongoing anti-drugs crackdown arrested four accused on Monday recovering more than 5 kilograms charas. According to a police spokesman, the Dhamial Police detained two accused with 2.16 kg charas, while the Sadiqabad Police recovered 1.83 kg of the contraband item from a accused. Similarly, the Bani Police also held an accused with 1,402 kg charas. Meanwhile, the Race Course Police detained an accused with 5 litres of liquor, while the Mandra Police recovered illegal arms and ammunition from two accused. Likewise, the Ratta Amral Police took two persons into custody for the violation of Tenancy Act.

Man arrested for injuring citizen

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Bani Police Station arrested a man for thrashing and injuring a citizen over some old dispute last month. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the Bani Police registered the case against the accused and his accomplices on the complaint of the victim. The accused had gone into hiding after the incident and the Bani Police used all means including human intelligence to nab him, the spokesman said. Other accomplices of the accused would also be arrested soon, he added.

ISSI, Casa Asia ink MoU to enhance bilateral ties



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Further promoting its international partnerships, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Casa Asia -- marking a vital step forward in strengthening closer collaboration between Pakistan and Spain, particularly in the academic, research and think-tanks domains.

The MoU was signed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director

General, ISSI and Mr José Pintor, Director General, Casa Asia. The signing ceremony was attended by Ambassador José Antonio de Ory, Spain's Ambassador to Pakistan, and senior representatives from both institutions.

The central element of the MoU is the commitment to organize joint events, including the "Pakistan-Spain Forum," which is aimed at strengthening ties in areas of mutual interest.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks

on the occasion, commended the leadership of Casa Asia as a formidable force in promoting intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange. He also lauded the support and facilitation provided by the respective ambassadors of Pakistan and Spain in forging the institutional relationship.

He highlighted the wide range of subjects for joint cooperation, including not only Pakistan-Spain relations but also engagement on broader regional and global developments such as the evolving global

order, the role of Europe, and future security relations and architecture. He reaffirmed ISSI's commitment to developing intellectual and institutional synergies with Casa Asia, and working towards realisation of practical goals.

Mr José Pintor described the signing of the MoU as a significant milestone. He expressed appreciation for the support of both Embassies and emphasized the importance of pursuing a practical and result-oriented partnership that enhances mutual understanding and cooperation. "Pakistan is a very important country for us," he stated, adding that the initiative would contribute to increasing knowledge about Pakistan and deepening bilateral ties.

Ambassador José Antonio de Ory expressed his satisfaction on the signing and reaffirmed the strong political and social relations between the two countries. Pakistan and Spain have excellent bilateral relations, and there is scope for further strengthening cooperation, especially in the areas of culture, arts, literature, and investment, he noted. He also praised Casa Asia and ISSI for working together to find new avenues of cooperation.

IIUI President calls on HEC Chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, called on Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Rector IIUI, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed to discuss key developments concerning the university's academic direction and institutional priorities.

The meeting focused on ways to promote academic excellence, uphold merit, and revitalise IIUI's Islamic identity and institutional integrity. Both agreed that the upcoming meetings of the Selection Board and Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) must remain top priorities, with a particular emphasis on transparency and fairness, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The two dignitaries also discussed IIUI's ongoing reform measures, including the digitisation of administrative systems, enhanced student engagement, and efforts to strengthen faculty development programs. Both sides reiterated the importance of protecting and promoting IIUI's unique role as a centre of Islamic learning and contempo-

rary scholarship—rooted in tradition, yet responsive to present-day academic and societal needs.

It was agreed that the new leadership must work to ensure transparent, rule-based, and equitable decision-making. The President affirmed his resolve to help build a system that is institutionally strong and not vulnerable to manipulation or hijacking by vested interests.

Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed also expressed his firm commitment to enhancing the university's research culture, fostering an environment conducive to innovation and scholarly inquiry. He emphasised that immediate attention would also be given to improving campus infrastructure and student facilities, recognising that a well-equipped and supportive physical environment is essential to the academic experience.

Both the President and the Rector also agreed on the need to improve the university's financial sustainability. They discussed the importance of generating new streams of revenue, encouraging public-private partnerships, and attracting investment to strengthen IIUI's long-term institu-

tional stability and autonomy.

Chairman HEC appreciated the student-oriented approach of the IIUI President, noting that he had worked sincerely from day one to reduce the gap between students and the administration. He observed that such a proactive and reform-driven leadership style would contribute meaningfully not only to IIUI's academic resurgence but also to further strengthening Pakistan-Saudi educational relations.

He reaffirmed HEC's full support for the university's academic and structural reforms, particularly in areas such as quality assurance, curriculum development, and merit-based faculty promotions. It was also agreed that the dialogue between IIUI and HEC would continue in the weeks ahead to align the university's institutional reforms with broader national higher education goals.

Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed thanked the Chairman for his continued guidance and support, reiterating his commitment to quality education, institutional transparency, and fostering a campus environment that truly serves students' academic and personal growth.

Admin continues to be on high alert with rain emergency imposed

RAWALPINDI (APP): The administration in the Rawalpindi city on Monday continued to be on high alert with emergency imposed in the wake forecast of heavy rains from July 15 to August 31.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, 33 mm of rain was recorded at Saidpur, 11 mm at Bokra, and 18 mm at Golra till Monday evening.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Amir Khattak chaired a meeting of the Divisional Coordination Committee to review the situation caused by persistent rains in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The Deputy Commissioner Murree, Additional Commissioner Coordination, Additional Deputy Commissioner

General, and officials of Rescue 1122, Civil Defence, Disaster Management Authority and other departments concerned participated in the meeting.

The officials of Rawalpindi and Chaklala cantonment boards were also taken on board.

The meeting was told that the Pakistan Meteorological Department had predicted heavy rains in Rawalpindi with flood situation from July 15 to August 31. It was further informed that with rain emergency imposed in the city, leaves of all the staff of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) had been cancelled. Commissioner Khattak directed the WASA staff to particularly remain on high alert and

ensure immediate drainage of water from low-lying areas during rains.

The commissioner noted that with digital monitoring of Leh Nullah, timely awareness about water situation was being provided to the public. The meeting was informed that round the clock monitoring of nullahs and storm drains was being done.

A central control room had been established for monitoring flood situation and taking steps accordingly, while Rescue 1122, WASA and other agencies were on high alert. Boats and life jackets had been provided to relevant agencies, the meeting was briefed. A mock exercise for coping with flood situation had also been done, it was told.

Seven flood relief camps

were established in schools near low-lying areas in the city, where food, water, medicines, shelter and security facilities were made available.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Forecasting Centre Islamabad warned that the water level in the Leh Nullah at Kattarian and Gawalmandi might rise to 11.4 feet and 8.3 feet.

According to WASA Managing Director Saleem Ashraf, the Agency was fully prepared to deal with any kind of emergency.

WASA staff with heavy machinery was already deployed in low-lying areas, including Committee Chowk Underpass on Murree Road, he added.

He said they were monitoring the drains across the city, where water flow at present was normal.



ISLAMABAD: candidates for police recruitment hold protest in favour of their demands outside NPC. —INP Photo

ANF recovers over 65 kg drugs in 9 operations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 65.278 kg drugs, worth approximately Rs 9.829 million and arrested nine suspects including three women.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesperson, ANF in a crackdown against drug smugglers also targeted the supply to the educational institutions across various cities of the country. In an operation in Peshawar, three kg heroin was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near a college on University Road and a suspect was arrested.

In another operation, a suspect was arrested near a

university in Peshawar with 1.5 kg hashish.

The arrested suspects confessed selling drugs to the students of educational institutions. In third operation, ANF recovered 1.378 kg crystal meth (Ice) at Faisalabad Airport which was hidden in a trolley bag of a Qatar bound passenger. The suspect was arrested during the operation.

On Warsak Road, Peshawar, 1.8 kg hashish was recovered from Gujrat and Karachi bound parcels being sent via a courier office. In an operation conducted near the Sohrab Goth bus stand in Karachi, two women were arrested with 12 kg hashish while near the Jamshoro Toll

Plaza, a female passenger with 12 kg hashish was also taken into custody.

In Lahore, near GT Road, Shalimar Bagh, a motorcyclist was caught with 13.20 kg hashish and 6 kg opium. In 8th operation conducted near Hijrat Colony in Karachi, another motorcyclist was arrested with 12 kg hashish.

ANF in an operation at the Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza recovered 2.4 kg hashish from the possession of a passenger going on a bus. Separate cases have been registered against the arrested individuals under the Counter Narcotics Force Act 1997, and further investigations are underway.

ITP uses drone technology to fine over 300 drivers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP), using modern drone technology, has initiated smart monitoring on major highways—initially the Expressway and Srinagar Highway—resulting in fines issued to more than 300 traffic violators and awareness provided to over 350 citizens.

An ITP spokesperson told APP on Monday that the enforcement campaign marks the first phase of ITP's strategy to ensure strict compliance with traffic laws through aerial

surveillance. Violations such as lane discipline, illegal overtaking (girafting), overloading, and one-wheeling are being continuously monitored.

He said that this ongoing crackdown involves real-time identification of violations via drones, followed by immediate action including issuance of fines and impoundment of vehicles. Several vehicles were shifted to police stations for serious infractions.

He said the initiative not only helps in enforcing

the law but also aids in spotting high-traffic zones, allowing ITP's special response teams to act promptly and manage congestion effectively.

Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider said that the next phase will expand drone operations across all sectors and additional major roads of Islamabad.

"Drone technology is proving highly effective in identifying violations instantly and ensuring swift, transparent enforcement," he added.

RIC ECG issues, staffer suspended for misconduct

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC) Administration has suspended the services of an employee amid social media reports complaining about ECG services at the hospital's emergency department. RIC constituted an inquiry committee and issued a statement on the culmination of the inquiry mentioning the suspension of the service of Shoaib Rasheed, a Helper/Honorary staffer for his misconduct.

"In response to a recent complaint circulating on social media regarding ECG services in the Emergency Department, the hospital administration constituted an inquiry committee to thoroughly investigate the matter. The detailed report has been submitted to the relevant higher authorities", reads the statement.

The statement unveils that the complaint was found to be partially baseless, but the behavior and conduct of Shoaib Rasheed, as recorded in the video reported, did not meet the professional standards required in a patient care environment.

Based on the inquiry committee's recommendations and to ensure discipline and high-quality patient care within the institution, Shoaib Rasheed's honorary work

permission has been suspended with immediate effect until further notice.

The hospital further clarified that the Emergency Department at RIC primarily receives critically ill patients requiring immediate and life-saving medical attention. The department handles 750 to 1,000 patients daily, making it essential to manage patient flow efficiently.

Therefore, patients who are not in critical condition are kindly requested to wait their turn in an orderly manner, and their attendants are also urged to cooperate to ensure timely and effective treatment for all patients.

Crackdown on tinted windows, fake plates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Excise Department has set up a checkpoint at Bhara Kahu Bypass under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner Secretariat, to inspect vehicles for violations related to window tinting and non-standard number plates.

During the operation, several vehicles were stopped and inspected.

The inspection teams identified multiple vehicles using dark tinted windows that obscure visibility from the outside, a violation of local traffic and security regulations.

Additionally, a number of cars were found displaying number plates that did not match the official format issued by the authorities.

After inspection, fines were imposed on drivers in violation of these rules.

The total amount of fines collected during the operation reached Rs 279,000. The purpose of the campaign was to ensure compliance with vehicle display standards and discourage the unauthorized modification of cars that could pose security risks or hinder law enforcement efforts.

The Assistant Commissioner Secretariat supervised the entire operation and emphasized the importance of enforcing these regulations to maintain public order and security. Officials stated that such violations not only breach traffic laws but can also complicate investigations

when vehicles involved in criminal activities use non-standard number plates or conceal identity through darkened windows.

Authorities have announced that similar operations will continue across other areas of Islamabad to prevent the use of illegally modified vehicles. The Excise Department has urged citizens to ensure their vehicles comply with the prescribed standards for window visibility and officially issued number plates to avoid legal action.

The campaign reflects a broader effort by the administration to enhance road safety, improve law enforcement monitoring, and curb the misuse of vehicles in sensitive areas.

British Council official visits Misaq & Tahafuz centres

RAWALPINDI (APP): Research Coordinator of British Council Kiran Rahim on Monday visited the Misaq Centre, and Tahafuz centers at Cantt and New Town police stations.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Admin Shahida Yasmin gave her a briefing about the Misaq centres, while respective sub-divisional police officers informed her about the working procedures of Tahafuz centres.

DSP Shahida said, "The protection of minority rights is our top priority."

She informed the Research Coordinator about the facilities provided at Misaq centres.

The establishment of Misaq centres was part of the steps taken by the government to resolve the problems of minority community immediately, she added.

The Research Coordinator, while appreciating their effectiveness, expressed satisfaction over the facilities being provided to the minority communities at both the Misaq and Tahafuz centres.

Husband turns out to be Wah woman's 'murderer', arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The husband of a woman, who was murdered with a knife in the limits of Wah Saddar Police Station a few days ago, turned out to be her killer, a Rawalpindi Police spokesman said on Monday. The accused along with his accomplice, maternal uncle, had been arrested, he added. The spokesman said the accused stabbed his wife to death with his maternal uncle and went into the hiding. However, the Wah Saddar Police used all resources to trace and nab them.

CJP for coordination to enhance justice delivery

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr Justice Yahya Afridi has urged bar representatives to sensitize their respective bar associations about the ongoing developments and to proactively engage in judicial reform initiatives. He further directed that all support and facilities extended to the bar associations by the Federal Government must be streamlined and structured to avoid duplication and ensure better cost for money spent.

The CJP, who is also the Chairman Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), said this while chairing a high-level meeting Monday at the Supreme Court Branch Registry, Quetta, to review institutional linkages between the Bar Associations of Baluchistan province and the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan in strengthening justice delivery.

The Chief Justice also called upon provincial law departments to remain actively engaged with the Resident Additional Secretary of the Commission for timely and effective implementation of district-level projects. He noted with concern the lack of infrastructure, including inconsistent power supply and digital integration, in less developed districts, and stressed the need for targeted interventions in these areas.

According to a press released issued here Monday, the meeting was attended by Mr. Justice Rozi Khan, Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan, Registrar, High Court of Balochistan, Mian Muhammad Rauf Atta, President SCBAP, Mr. Amanullah, Chairman Executive Committee, Balochistan Bar Council Quetta, Mr. Rahib Buledi, Vice Chairman Executive Committee Balochistan Bar Council, Mr. Yasin Azad, Chairman Executive Committee Pakistan Bar Council, Mr. Tahir Warraich Vice Chairman Executive Committee Pakistan Bar Council Quetta, Mr. Khalil Ahmed

Panezai, Member, Balochistan Bar Council, Mr. Qasim Ali Gojizai, Chairman Education Committee, Balochistan Bar Council, and Mr Attatullah Khan Langov, President Balochistan High Court Bar Association, Representatives of Ministry of Law and Justice, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan; Secretary Law department and representatives of Planning and Development Department, Government of Balochistan including Chief Economist.

The CJP acknowledged the role of the participants in justice sector, apprised them of his visits of the remote districts and the gap in coordination between the bar associations and the Law and Justice Commission as funds were available with the Law Commission but they were not properly utilized for uplift of district judiciary. Bar Associations requirements of funding are in development projects as they are in judicial complex. As the Law Commission has limited outreach capacity, the Commission has decided to post a senior level representative in every province who would sit in the High Courts. These representatives will serve as front disk and maintain liaison to raise awareness among district bar associations, identify local priority areas, and supervise ongoing justice sector initiatives at the grassroots level. The bars may present their development projects to District Development Committees. Moreover, representatives of Federal and Provincial Development departments have also been taken on board to ensure speedy execution to avoid duplication of resources.

The Chief Justice also announced that, under the auspices of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, a new initiative has been launched to provide assistance to poor litigants to hire legal representation, at State expense, at all levels of the judiciary, from Magistrate courts to the Supreme Court. Remuneration upto Rs50,000 will be given through

District Legal Empowerment Committees. It aims to ensure equitable access to justice for all citizens. The bars may nominate the qualified lawyers for this purpose to District Judges, High Courts, and send the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Moreover, the CJP encouraged the bar representatives to ensure that their members benefit from the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs offered by the Federal Judicial Academy. He instructed that the training calendar be widely shared among bar associations to promote professional development. The bars may appoint focal persons for liaison with the Federal Judicial Academy for training programs. He also briefed them about the decisions taken in the recent meeting of the National Judicial Policy Making Committee under the umbrella of the L&JCP.

The representative of the bar association expressed their point of view on various initiatives of the Commission. Their concerns were heard and noted and will be further discussed in the next meeting of this forum at Karachi. They thanked the CJP for acknowledging the challenges faced by litigants and legal practitioners alike. Mr. Attaulah Khan Langov, President High Court Bar Association Balochistan apprised the meeting about various facilities extended by provincial government to the bar association across the province and appreciated the provincial government of Balochistan for providing 100 scooties for female lawyers, digital library at High Court Bar, Shuttle services from High Court to District Court Quetta, Housing Scheme of 100 acres for lawyers of High Court of Balochistan and grant in aid by the federal government to 28 districts bars of Balochistan and the High Court Bar Association. All federal and provincial stakeholders present assured their full cooperation and support in advancing the shared objective of accessible and efficient justice.



ISLAMABAD: Shehryar Akbar Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan (Designate) to Czech Republic called on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

Azam Swati approaches PHC for relief

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati has approached the Peshawar High Court, seeking details of cases registered against him.

PTI leader Swati has filed a petition through his lawyer, Ali Azeem Afridi, making the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and the federal government parties to the case.

The petition states that Swati's involvement with PTI led to the registration of multiple cases against him following protests in Islamabad. Swati claims that while he is aware of some cases and is attending court proceedings, there are unknown cases registered against him, and he seeks details of these cases.

The petition requests the court to direct the authorities to provide details of all cases registered against him, including new cases. This would enable him to appear before the relevant courts and seek relief.

Registration of FIR: Court seeks report: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Ismatullah Wazir has directed the police to submit a complete response in a plea seeking registration of case against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, on Monday.

The court was hearing a petition seeking registration of a case against the Chief Minister under Section 22-A. The petitioner alleged that the Chief Minister had donated Rs. 50million to the Lahore High Court Bar Association from the provincial funds, which is a breach of trust.

The petitioner claimed that the Chief Minister's action amounts to corruption and violates the Supreme Court's decisions, NFC Award, and constitutional provisions.

During the hearing, the prosecution informed the court that the police had submitted a response. However, the petitioner's lawyer argued that the response was incomplete and requested the court to direct the police to submit a complete report. The court accepted the petitioner's request and directed the police to submit a complete response and adjourned further hearing.

FIA gets 3 days custody of PARC chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A local court on Monday granted the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) a three-day physical remand of Chairman Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council (PARC) Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Director Establishment Division Akhlaq Malik in a case pertaining to the illegal recruitment of 332 people in department.

The court of Judicial Magistrate Ahmed Shahzad Gondal has handed over the officials to the FIA custody. During the hearing, FIA officials presented PARC Chairman Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Director Establishment Akhlaq Malik to the court and requested a 14-day physical remand of the accused.

The prosecutor said that the PARC Chairman has been arrested on charges of illegal recruitment and misuse of authority. The FIA has also arrested the Director Establishment Akhlaq Malik involved in this matter. The PARC Chairman recruited 332 people illegally on 164 approved posts. The FIA is still investigating the matter further.

Iran says ‘no specific date’ for US nuke talks

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran said Monday it had “no specific date” for a meeting with the United States on Tehran’s nuclear program, following a war with Israel that had derailed negotiations.

“For now, no specific date, time or location has been determined regarding this matter,” said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei of plans for a meeting between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US envoy Steve Witkoff.

Iran had been negotiating with the United States before Israel began strikes on its nuclear facilities last month, which Washington later joined. Araghchi and Witkoff met five times, starting in April, without concluding a deal, before

Israel launched surprise strikes on June 13, starting a 12-day war.

“We have been serious in diplomacy and the negotiation process, we entered with good faith, but as everyone witnessed, before the sixth round the Zionist regime, in coordination with the United States, committed military aggression against Iran,” said Baqaei.

The United States launched its own set of strikes against Iran’s nuclear program on June 22, hitting the uranium enrichment facility at Fordo, in Qom province south of Tehran, as well as nuclear sites in Isfahan and Natanz.

The extent of the damage from the strikes

remains unknown. With its own strikes, numbering in the hundreds, Israel killed nuclear scientists and top-ranking military officers as well as hitting military, nuclear and other sites.

Iran responded with missile and drone attacks on Israel, while it attacked a US base in Qatar in retaliation for Washington’s strikes. Israel and Western nations accuse Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran has consistently denied. While it is the only non-nuclear power to enrich uranium to 60-percent purity, close to the level needed for a warhead, the UN’s atomic energy watchdog has said it had no indication that Iran was working to weaponize its stockpiles.

‘Avoiding trade curbs must for normalisation of ties’

NEW DELHI (Reuters): India and China must resolve friction along their border, pull back troops and avoid “restrictive trade measures” to normalise their relationship, India’s foreign minister told his Chinese counterpart in Beijing on Monday.

S u b r a h m a n y a m Jaishankar met Wang Yi in Beijing during his first trip to the country since 2020, when a deadly border clash between their troops led to a four-year military stand-off and damaged ties until a thaw began in October, when they agreed to step back. “Good progress” made by the countries in the past nine months for normalisation of relations is a result of the resolution of friction along their border, Jaishankar told Wang.

India and China share a 3,800-kilometre border that is poorly demarcated and has been disputed since the 1950s. They fought a brief but brutal border war in 1962, and talks over the decades to settle the border dispute have made slow progress. Last month, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told his Chinese counterpart that the two countries should seek a “permanent solution” to the border dispute, seen as a new push by New Delhi for a conclusive outcome.

“It is now incumbent on us to address other aspects related to the border, including de-escalation,” Jaishankar said, adding that it was also critical that restrictive trade measures and roadblocks be avoided to foster mutually beneficial cooperation. The minister was speaking against the backdrop of Beijing’s

restrictions in recent months on supplies of critical minerals such as rare earth magnets and machinery for the manufacturing of high-tech goods.

India holds the world’s fifth-largest rare earth reserves, but its domestic output remains underdeveloped. There was no immediate Chinese readout of the talks between Jaishankar and Wang.

Jaishankar, who is in China to attend the meeting of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, met Chinese Vice President Han Zheng earlier in the day, the official Chinese news agency Xinhua reported. India and China should steadily advance practical cooperation and respect each other’s concerns, Han told Jaishankar, Xinhua said.

Zelenskyy nominates Yulia as new Ukraine PM

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he has recommended Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko to become prime minister in a significant political shake-up for the war-scarred country. The announcement on Monday could herald a wider reshuffle in the government, three and a half years into the Russian invasion.

“I have proposed that Yulia Svyrydenko lead the government of Ukraine and significantly renew its work,” Zelenskyy wrote on social media. “I look forward to the presentation of the new government’s action plan in the near future.” The recommendation is part of what he called “a transformation of the executive branch” of government in Ukraine.

The two discussed “concrete measures to boost Ukraine’s economic potential, expand support programs for Ukrainians and scale up our domestic weapons production”, Zelenskyy said. Svyrydenko, 39, gained prominence this year during fraught negotiations around a rare minerals deal with the United States that nearly derailed ties between Kyiv and its most important military ally.If the change is approved, she would replace Denys Shmyhal, who became prime minister in 2020.

“The government needs a change because people are exhausted,” said Tymofiy Mylovanov, a former economy minister who worked with Svyrydenko. Mylovanov, who now heads the Kyiv School of Economics, said the changes would likely bring “a sort of freshness” after more than three years of

war.

Zelenskyy is also considering naming Defence Minister Rustem Umerov as Ukraine’s ambassador to Washington, he said at a news conference last week. Zelenskyy met Umerov over the weekend, after which he said, “Ukraine needs more positive dynamics in relations with the United States and at the same time new steps in managing the defence sector of our state.”

Svyrydenko, who is also a deputy prime minister, was appointed to manage Ukraine’s struggling economy months before the Kremlin launched its full-scale assault in February 2022. Her appointment will require approval by parliament, which has largely united around Zelenskyy since the invasion and is unlikely to vote against the president. — Aljazeera

Maximum relief granted to salaried persons in budget, says Minister

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Monday, reiterated the government’s commitment to transform macroeconomic stability into sustainable economic growth while taking all the stakeholders on board.

He expressed the views while addressing a press conference after a meeting with Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) here. The Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad, President OICCI Yousaf Hussain and Secretary General OICCI Abdul Aleem were also present.

The finance minister informed the media about his two separate meetings with executives of banking sector and overseas investors aimed at discussing the overall macroeconomic stability achieved in the previous fiscal year and role of banking, trade and industrial sectors in realization of objectives of sustainable economic growth. The overall improvement in economic situation has lowered the government’s dependence on borrowing from banking sector and resultant availability of private sector financing in the country has improved as well, he noted and commended the increase in financing to agriculture and private sectors.

The privatization process of PIA and other 24 state owned entities (SOEs) as well as revival of sick units and role of the banking sector in this regard were discussed in detail in the meeting, with banking sector executives that was also attended by Governor SBP, the Finance Minister informed, adding that big private sec-

tor companies were ready to participate in the privatization process while government is framing an industrial policy that comprises revival of sick units and key role of banking sector in the process. Minister Aurangzeb, referring to his meeting with senior leadership from major multinational companies operating in Pakistan at OICCI, said that we want to take national and international investors along in Pakistan’s journey towards sustainable growth.

He highlighted the transformation of the Federal Board of Revenue for simplification and automation of processes and said that it would help enhance confidence of the public and business community over the taxation system and policies. On the matter of delegating extended powers to tax authorities, the finance minister stated that the matter was reviewed in detail- clause by clause- in standing committees of both the lower and upper houses of the parliament and technical opinion was also sought from legal experts.

We have developed various safeguards in the law for dealing with the issue of Sales Tax frauds and the option of arresting the alleged fraudulent person would be enforced in the case if the amount under question surpassing Rs 50 million and that too with approval of three member FBR board at commissioner level, he clarified and informed that a meeting with representatives of business community is scheduled on Tuesday in Islamabad to address their reservations.

He said that maximum possible relief was extended through the budget 2025-26 in the income tax to the salaried class while tax return forms

were simplified as well. We wanted to facilitate the salaried class through simplification of the process and the same facility will be extended to small traders and SMEs in future, he added. The finance minister while responding to a media query, stated that engagements with trade and industrial community was a continuous process so that suggestions could be acquired for transforming the macroeconomic stability into sustainable growth.

To another question, he informed that commodity prices were being monitored by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), besides other relevant forums, so that necessary steps could be taken immediately. Prices of different commodities kept fluctuating and federal and provincial governments take necessary actions in this regard, he said, adding that he personally believed that pricing mechanisms should be deregulated and left to be settled as per market dynamics and demand and supply situation.

The finance minister, at this occasion, also highlighted the budget measures for the real estate and construction sector particularly for first time property holders and small housing units and said that the government was focusing on provision of easy loans and the State Bank is working on a comprehensive scheme in this connection that will be finalized soon. President OICCI Yousaf Hussain, at the occasion, acknowledged the government’s progress in stabilizing the economy and welcomed the improving macro-economic indicators and renewed signs of stability and government’s endeavor of engaging the private sector.

Trump announces new weapons for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Donald Trump announced new weapons for Ukraine on Monday, and threatened to hit buyers of Russian exports with sanctions unless Russia agrees to a peace deal in 50 days, a major shift in policy brought on by frustration with Moscow.

Sitting side-by-side with Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte in the Oval Office, Trump told reporters that he was disappointed in Russian President Vladimir Putin. Billions of dollars in weapons would be distributed to Ukraine, he said. “We’re going to make top-of-the-line weapons, and they’ll be sent to NATO,” Trump said, adding that Washington’s Nato allies would pay for the weapons.

The weapons would include Patriot air defence missiles, which Ukraine has urgently sought to defend its cities from Russian air strikes. “It’s a full complement with the batteries,” Trump said. “We’re going to have some come very soon, within days... a couple of the countries that have Patriots are going to swap over and will replace the Patriots with the ones they have.”

Some or all of 17 Patriot batteries ordered by other countries could be sent to Ukraine “very quickly”, he said. His threat to impose so-called secondary sanctions on Russia, if carried out, would be a major shift in Western sanctions policy. Lawmakers from both political parties in the United States are pushing for a bill that would authorise such measures, target-

ing other countries that buy Russian oil.

Throughout the more than three-year-old war, Western countries have cut off most of their own financial ties to Moscow, but have held back from taking steps that would restrict Russia from selling its oil elsewhere. That has allowed Moscow to continue earning hundreds of billions of dollars from shipping oil to buyers such as China and India. “We’re going to be doing secondary tariffs,” Trump said. “If we don’t have a deal in 50 days, it’s very simple, and they’ll be at 100%.” A White House official said Trump was referring to 100% tariffs on Russian goods as well as secondary sanctions on other countries that buy its exports.

Still, Trump’s announcement of a 50-day grace period was greeted with relief by investors in Russia, where the rouble recovered from earlier losses and stock markets rose. “Trump performed below market expectations. He gave 50 days during which the Russian leadership can come up with something and extend the negotiation track. Moreover, Trump likes to postpone and extend such deadlines,” said analyst Artyom Nikolayev from Invest Era, a financial information firm.

Trump, who returned to power this year promising a quick end to the war, said his shift was motivated by increasing frustration with Putin, who, he said, had talked about peace but continued to strike Ukrainian cities. “We actually had probably four times a deal. And then the deal wouldn’t hap-

pen because bombs would be thrown out that night and you’d say we’re not making any deals,” Trump said.

Since returning to the White House, Trump has sought rapprochement with Moscow, speaking several times with Putin. His administration has pulled back from pro-Ukrainian policies such as backing Kyiv’s membership in Nato and demanding Russia withdraw from all Ukrainian territory.

But so far, Putin has yet to accept a proposal from Trump for an unconditional ceasefire, which was quickly endorsed by Kyiv. Recent days have seen Russia use hundreds of drones to attack Ukrainian cities. Trump vented his frustration last week, saying: “We get a lot of bullshit thrown at us by Putin.”

Earlier on Monday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held talks with Trump’s envoy Keith Kellogg. Zelenskyy said he had discussed “the path to peace and what we can practically do together to bring it closer”, including “strengthening Ukraine’s air defence, joint production and procurement of defence weapons in collaboration with Europe.” An air-raid alert was declared in Kyiv shortly after Zelenskyy’s talks with Kellogg took place. Separately on Monday, Zelenskyy said he would replace his long-serving prime minister Denys Shmyhal with Shmyhal’s first deputy, Yulia Svyrydenko, in “a transformation of the executive branch”. Her appointment will require parliamentary approval.