

**Security officer martyred
F.P. Report**

QUETTA: An officer of Balochistan Constabulary embraced martyrdom when unidentified armed assailants targeted his vehicle on the National Highway in Mastung District of Balochistan on Friday. The incident took place near Choto area at the National Highway in Mastung. The targeted vehicle belonged to an acting Deputy Superintendent of Police.



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Pak reaffirms zero tolerance for terrorism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday strongly reiterated its unwavering commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, calling for objective and collective global action against the menace, while rejecting politically motivated narratives aimed at maligning the country.

In a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan emphasized that zero tolerance for terrorism and robust international cooperation remain central to its counter-terrorism (CT) policy. "Pakistan has been, and continues to be, a frontline state in the fight against terrorism," the statement read, highlighting the country's significant contributions to global peace, including the recent apprehension of Sharifullah — the terrorist

mastermind behind the deadly Abbey Gate bombing.

Commenting on the ongoing investigations into the Pahalgam incident in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K), the Ministry noted that the inquiry remains inconclusive. It categorically rejected any links to the banned outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), asserting that such claims do not align with ground realities.

"Pakistan has effectively dismantled such defunct organizations, arrested and prosecuted their leadership, and undertaken extensive deradicalization efforts," the statement clarified. The Foreign Office also criticized India for its repeated attempts to misuse international designations to propagate anti-Pakistan narratives. "India has a track record of exploiting such

matters to divert global attention from its own irresponsible and rogue conduct, particularly its grave human rights violations in IIOJ&K," the spokesperson stated.

Underscoring the need for an impartial and inclusive international approach to counter-terrorism, Pakistan urged the global community to adopt non-discriminatory policies. It also called for the inclusion of groups like the Majeed Brigade under global terrorist designations, noting its affiliation with the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). The statement concluded by reaffirming Pakistan's role as a counter-terrorism bulwark, achieved through unmatched sacrifices and operational successes, and reiterated the country's commitment to a peaceful and secure world through shared efforts.

Rift within PTI in KP over Senate election tickets

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Deep divisions have emerged within the PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the controversial distribution of Senate election tickets, with party organizers threatening protests if their demands are not met.

PTI's organizational office-bearers publicly demanded that Irfan Saleem be awarded the Senate ticket from Peshawar. At a press conference, they warned that failure to fulfill this demand would result in demonstrations outside the Provincial Assembly, the Chief Minister's House, and the residences of sitting MPAs.

Labeling the decision to deny Irfan Saleem a ticket as a betrayal of party ideology, the PTI workers said the move had angered long-time party loyalists. "Irfan Saleem will remain in the race — his nomination will not be withdrawn under any circumstances," they declared.

The office-bearers further stated, "We hope the party leadership will accept our legitimate demands. If not, we will stage a sit-in outside the Chief Minister's House, enter the Red Zone, and surround the assembly building on the day of the Senate election. No MPA will be allowed to enter the house to cast their vote. We will also protest outside the homes of those who attempt to vote." Accusing the leadership of sidelining genuine party workers, they said, "This is an ideological battle that was initiated by PTI founder Imran Khan — and we intend to finish it."

They strongly criticized the candidate selection process, alleging that tickets were being granted not to dedicated party members, but to wealthy individuals — referred to as "ATMs." "The party and its workers are being betrayed by rewarding these financial backers," they said.

Security forces thwart infiltration attempt

F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: Security forces thwarted an infiltration attempt and arrested all five alleged suicide attackers at the Pak-Afghan border. According to security sources, the operation began at 5:00 PM when forces received intelligence about the group, identified as "Khawarij", attempting to cross into Pakistan.

By 6:25 PM, the suspects had entered Pakistani territory near Azizkhel and Mandikhel, but security teams swiftly set up blockades at five locations, security sources added.

Sources further revealed that the suspects tried to hide in Besi Khel, but due to the forces' rapid encirclement and strategic response, they surrendered without resistance.



ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Commander in Chief of Libyan Armed Forces called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Libyan Commander, PM vow to boost ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Abu Qasim Haftar along with his delegation called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met, at the Prime Minister House here Friday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

On this occasion, the Prime Minister welcomed the Libyan Commander-in-Chief and his delegation to Pakistan. The meeting discussed cooperation between the two countries in various fields. The Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces thanked the Prime Minister for welcoming and hosting him in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif, Federal Minister for Defence Production Raza Hayat Hiraj, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Tauqir Shah, Special Assistant to the PM Tariq Fatemi and relevant senior government officials.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Commander in Chief of Libyan Armed Forces also called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff at General Headquarters. Meeting encompassed discussion on matters of mutual interest, evolving regional dynamics, security challenges and matters pertaining to defence cooperation. Both leaders agreed to undertake defense industrial collaboration and exchange of technical expertise to address contemporary security chal-

lenges.

Upon his arrival at GHQ, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar laid a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada to pay homage to the martyrs of Pakistan Army. He was offered a warm welcome, followed by guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Army.

Meanwhile, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief of Libyan Armed Forces was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. During the meeting, both leaders discussed matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security situation, and avenues for enhanced cooperation in training and defence. Admiral Naveed Ashraf highlighted Pakistan Navy's initiatives for ensuring maritime security and peace in the region through Regional Maritime Security Patrols.

Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's contributions and unwavering commitment to collaborative maritime security efforts in the region. Both leaders pledged to further strengthen and diversify the scope of existing bilateral defence relationship. Pakistan and Libya share longstanding brotherly relations marked by close naval cooperation. The visit of Commander-in-Chief of Libyan Armed Forces is expected to further enhance bilateral collaboration between the two countries.

Success of Shahida, Guralpal on KP reserve seats notified

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday officially notified the success of Shahida Waheed and Guralpal Singh on two seats reserved for women and non-Muslims in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

According to an official notification, Shahida Waheed of the Awami National Party (ANP) has been declared successful on the seat reserved for women, while Jamiat Ulema I Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F's) Guralpal Singh has secured the seat reserved for non-Muslims in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

It should be noted that Senate elections for seven general seats, two seats reserved for women and two seats reserved for technocrats and religious scholars ('ulema') from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly are scheduled to be held on July 21.

Meanwhile, The ECP appointed eight polling officers to oversee the Senate elections set to take place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on July 21.

Senate elections for 11 seats from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will be held on July 21, according to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The seats include seven general seats, two reserved for women, and two designated for technocrats and religious scholars ('ulema'). The polling will be conducted under the supervision of appointed officers to ensure transparency and adherence to electoral procedures.

According to the official notification, those appointed include: Syed Nadeem Haider, Additional Director General (Elections), Nazir Abbas, Additional Director General (MCO); Saeed Ahmed Khan, Regional Election Commissioner, Dera Ismail Khan Division; Zulfiqar Ahmed, Regional Election Commissioner, Hazara Division; Zaher Ahmed, Deputy Director (Admin), Provincial Election Commissioner KP; Fahad Ali Shah, Deputy Director (Admin), PEC KP; Muhammad Amjad, Deputy Director (Law) and Zia-ur-Rehman, District Election Commissioner, Peshawar.

Tarar requests IHC to restore SRBC

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Friday that he had requested the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to restore Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company.

Talking to the media outside the Islamabad High Court, he said that he had presented his position in the court. He said the process of SRBC liquidation had started much before he assumed office as Minister for Information and Broadcasting. "The company has more

than 300 employees, it is necessary to restore the company to protect their jobs," Attaulah Tarar remarked. The court has issued orders to submit a business plan, Tarar said, adding it has also directed the liquidator to pay the salaries of the SRBC employees.

Attaulah Tarar said a previous government caused billions of rupees of losses to Pakistan International Airlines by making irresponsible statements. He said by the grace of God that PIA flights to Europe and the UK have been restored due to the

efforts of the present government.

He said that Pakistani airlines' flights to Europe were being restored in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz era. To a question, he replied that incompetence was at its peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Corruption, mismanagement are on the rise in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government," Attaulah opined. The minister said the PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could not save the tourists stranded in the Swat River due to rampant corruption and inefficiency.

Senate abolishes death penalty for public stripping of women

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate voted Friday to eliminate capital punishment for publicly stripping women and harboring hijackers, replacing it with life imprisonment, asset forfeiture, and substantial monetary penalties. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, presented by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, sparked heated debate.

The legislative session, presided over by Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasir, commenced with prayers for victims of recent floods and heavy rainfall. A question period revealed a National Highway Authority (NHA) officer's 16-year deputation, drawing sharp criticism from Senator Shahadat Awan, who termed it a violation of Supreme Court rulings. Communications Minister Abdul Aleem Khan pledged

an inquiry.

Updates on the Lowari Tunnel project indicated completion of both phases, though legal issues between contractors had temporarily halted work on the North Access, which resumed in June. Allegations of corruption within the NHA also surfaced, with Senator Saifullah Abro accusing officials of deceit and large-scale graft. Minister Khan countered, citing increased NHA revenue under his tenure and promising zero tolerance for dishonesty.

The bill's passage saw strong opposition from Senators Ali Zafar and Samina Mumtaz, who argued that such offenses merit the death sentence. Mumtaz accused the administration of weakening protections for women to appease international bodies. Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar defended the amend-

ment, contending that harsher sentences do not necessarily deter offenses. He pointed to high crime rates in Pakistan despite numerous capital offenses, contrasting with lower rates in European nations without capital punishment. Tarar argued that the death penalty for these crimes, introduced during General Zia's rule in the 1980s, led to an increase in reported cases. He advocated for life imprisonment as a suitable punishment and urged legal revisions focused on justice, not retribution.

Amendments to extradition laws also passed, despite Senator Zafar's concerns about shifting authority from the Cabinet. Minister Tarar clarified that extradition necessitates bilateral agreements and now involves departmental consent, Cabinet approval, ministerial inquiry, and a final government decision.

Cabinet approves KP Agri Income Tax Rules



(Maintenance of Public Order) law. It was decided that the implementation of this law would be subject to prior approval from the Home Department to prevent its misuse. The Chief Minister remarked that the 3MPO is a law similar to the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), which is often misused.

Speaking on incidents of natural disasters across the country, the Chief Minister emphasized that such tragedies should not be politicized and reaffirmed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is always ready to assist other provinces in times of need, he added.

Barrister Dr. Saif said that the Cabinet approved financial assistance of Rs. 5 million each for the families of martyrs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who lost their lives due to Indian aggression. Additionally, Rs. 10 million in compensation was approved for the family of Maulana Khanzeb Shaheed, who was martyred in a terrorist attack.

Explaining other important decisions of the Cabinet meeting, he said that the Cabinet approved the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agriculture Income Tax Rules, 2025, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Audit Rules, 2025, and the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Protection (Sealing or Seizing) Rules, 2025. The Cabinet formed a cabinet committee on the agenda item related to the removal of the death penalty provision from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 2019. The Cabinet Committee will submit its recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet approved financial assistance totaling Rs. 48.1 million for four individuals - Rozina, Anas Khan, Muhammad Aman, and Muhammad Azlan - to help cover the cost of high-expense treatments for acute medical conditions that were

otherwise beyond their financial means.

The Cabinet approved the handing over of Dir Model School Doda for the establishment of a campus of Khyber Medical University's Institute of Health Sciences in District Dir Upper, so that the current academic session could begin at the building. The Cabinet also approved land acquisition, at a total cost of Rs. 38.69 million, through private negotiations for the supply of Swat River surface water to Mingora via gravity flow.

The Cabinet approved a cost enhancement from Rs. 318.501 mil-

lion to Rs. 375.210 million for the project titled Strengthening Health Management Information System / District Health Information System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Phase-II). It also approved a series of important administrative measures, including the appointment of members to the Board of Governors of the Paraplegic Center, and the posting and transfer of the Managing Director of the Health Foundation. Furthermore, the Cabinet approved the appointment of five members to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission.

Under the Provincial Action Plan, the Cabinet approved the installation of RFID systems and machine-readable number plates on already-profiled NCP vehicles in the province. The Cabinet also decided to limit the measure strictly to profiling of NCP vehicles, with no tax collection involved, he explained. He said that requests for relaxation of the ban and procurement of vehicles for various departments were placed before the Cabinet. It was decided that, on a case-to-case basis, the required vehicles would be arranged through the Excise Department.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur addressing a ceremony to honour Jawad Khan - first deceased organ donar of the province.

KP Youth Directorate unveils monthly progress report

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released its monthly performance report for June 2025, highlighting significant progress in three major youth-focused initiatives, including the Ehsaas Nojawan Program, establishment of Jawan Markaz and the Youth Development Package.

According to the report, the provincial government is actively implementing projects aimed at the skill development, economic uplift and social empowerment of youth across both settled and

merged districts of the province. Under the Ehsaas Nojawan Program, launched to enhance employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young individuals, the government has disbursed huge amount in interest-free loans during the fiscal year 2024-25 through two implementing partners; Bank of Khyber and Akhuwat Foundation.

For large-scale interest-free loans, through Bank of Khyber, Rs500 million were allocated for the fiscal year. A total of 12,739 applications were received, of which 191 were approved after scrutiny. These loans

amounted to Rs524 million, with Rs401 million already disbursed among eligible applicants.

The small-scale loan scheme under Akhuwat Foundation had a budget of Rs600 million, targeting 4,427 loans during the financial year. By the end of June, 5,931 applications had been received, resulting in the approval of 3,585 loans and Rs.602.65 millions disbursed. The report also notes a recovery of Rs42.88 million from beneficiaries during the period.

Similarly, the government through the Directorate of Youth Affairs, is moving for-

ward with the establishment of Jawan Markaz (Youth Centers) across various districts. These centers are envisioned as resource hubs, offering youth access to training, mentorship and networking platforms under one roof.

The Youth Development Package is an another flagship initiative, aims to equip young people with market-relevant skills, technical training and exposure to modern economic opportunities. The initiative focuses on both mainstream and merged districts to ensure inclusive growth and capacity-building.

Govt taking steps to empower women: Shakoor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour, Fazal Shakoor Khan, has said that the incumbent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is taking all possible steps to empower and skill the daughters of labourers and enabling them to become self-reliant.

He said that acquiring technical education is key to reducing unemployment, adding that skilled labour

is in high demand not only within the country but also abroad.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in honour of the female students of the Workers Welfare Board (WWB) who achieved prominent positions in the annual examinations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Board.

The labour minister said that the WWB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is playing a vital role in this important

mission by providing technical and vocational training to the children of workers across its various institutions in the province.

The ceremony was attended by Secretary WWB Muhammad Tufail Khattak, Director Education Arif Ali, Director Administration Saifullah Zafar, Deputy Director Education Fareeda Bibi, Deputy Vocational Humaira Ishaq, Assistant Director Technical Salman,

along with other officials, teachers, parents, and students.

The provincial minister distributed appreciation certificates and cheques among students who performed exceptionally in short vocational courses, including Aflak Parveen, Shumaila, Bibi Fatima, Yasmeen, Shafia Hameed, and Umeed while certificates were also awarded to principals of the respective institutes in recognition of their contribution.

High Court directs Jibran to cooperate in Kohistan scandal probe

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has directed Jibran Malik, a former Nazim and Chairman of the Zakat Committee, to cooperate with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) investigation in a mega financial scandal in Kohistan. The court also restrained NAB from arresting Malik.

Jibran Malik had filed a petition against the NAB notice, arguing that the notice did not specify the charges against him. His lawyer argued that there was a risk of arrest on a call-up notice, and the court should restrain NAB from doing so.

PHC two-member

bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshed directed Jibran Malik to join the NAB investigation and restrained NAB from arresting him. The court heard the arguments and passed the order after being satisfied that Malik was willing to cooperate with the investigation.

PHC extends Azam Swati bail till 9 September

The Peshawar High Court has extended the protective bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati till September 9 and restrained authorities from arresting him. The court also directed the authorities to provide details of cases registered against Swati, on

Friday.

PHC two-member bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshed heard the petition filed by Swati. The court directed the federal government and other authorities to provide details of cases registered against Swati and restrained them from arresting him.

The counsel, Ali Azeem, informed the court that the petitioner was appearing in courts in cases that were already known to him, but more cases had been registered against him without his knowledge. He requested the court to direct the authorities to provide details of all cases registered against Swati.

The Assistant Attorney

General informed the court that three cases were registered against Swati in Rawalpindi, and they would provide details. However, Justice Sahebzada Asadullah observed that the authorities were harassing people to the extent that they forgot everything and requested them to give people some respite.

PHC directed the authorities to provide details of all cases registered against Swati in the federal jurisdiction and also sought a report on cases registered in Rawalpindi.

The court extended Swati's protective bail till September 9 and directed the authorities to respond to the notices.

Digital transformation, skills initiative need of the hour: Shafqat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Science and Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, has said that digital transformation and skills initiatives have become a vital need of the hour for youth empowerment and self-reliance.

Dr. Shafqat Ayaz formally inaugurated the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board's flagship initiative titled "Employable Digital Skills Initiative for the Youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" today at the KPITB office in Hayatabad, Peshawar.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by IT experts, teachers, youth, civil society members, and media personnel in large numbers.

While addressing the ceremony, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz stated:

"It is the vision of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur to empower the youth through modern technology, digital skills, and freelancing so that they can become economically independent."

He emphasized that the KP government is taking practical steps to create better employment opportunities for the youth, and digital skills programs play a key role in this strategy. Through this initiative, thousands of young individuals will receive free training to connect with the global digital market and secure opportunities in freelancing and online jobs.

Dr. Ayaz further said "We are progressing towards a digital economy. The youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possess immense potential, and it is

the government's responsibility to harness and showcase this potential by offering them global opportunities." The Special Assistant added that the KPITB, in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology, will launch more such inclusive programs to benefit not just the youth but also women, persons with disabilities, and students from rural areas.

He said that "The dream of a Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can only be realized by equipping our

youth with modern training in technology, coding, graphics, web development, app development, digital marketing, and other essential skills."

Speaking to media representatives at the end of the ceremony, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz said: "We consider investment in youth our top priority. This skills development initiative will not only create employment for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also strengthen the national economy."



Donating organs after death CM honours Jawad's (late) family for exemplary show of humanity

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a historic and unprecedented act in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the family of Jawad Khan (late) from Mardan has set a remarkable example of humanity and altruism by donating vital organs after his death, giving a new lease on life to patients who had lost all hope.

A formal ceremony was held here at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar to honor the late Jawad Khan and his family for this noble act. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, was the chief guest at the event.

Jawad Khan, a 14-year-old boy, tragically passed away in an accident. Following his death, his family made the courageous decision to donate his organs—two kidneys, two corneal tissues, and a liver—marking the first-ever deceased organ donation in the province's history. These organs were successfully transplanted into five patients, granting them a new chance at life. These recipients, previously on the verge of despair due to organ failure, found hope and healing through this

extraordinary gesture. Jawad's parents, through their brave and compassionate decision, became a source of life for those who had none left to hope for.

Recognizing the significance of this act, the Chief Minister invited Jawad's father, Noor Dad Khan, to preside over the ceremony, stating that the honor of sitting in the chair of the chief guest truly belonged to him. He emphasized that no other Chief Minister had ever handed over the ceremonial seat to someone else in such events, and this gesture was a token of utmost respect for Noor Dad Khan's service to humanity.

In a gesture of appreciation, the Chief Minister announced that he would sponsor the entire family's pilgrimage to Umrah, calling it the most fitting reward for their extraordinary deed. He also committed to including a lesson about Jawad Khan's story in the provincial educational curriculum, fulfilling Noor Dad Khan's wish and aiming to inspire others to engage in such noble causes.

Additionally, Chief Minister announced the immediate construction of a road for Jawad Khan's native village and declared

that a local government hospital would be named in Jawad's honor. In line with the theme of the ceremony, he also announced the establishment of a Transplant Tower in the province to promote and facilitate organ transplantation efforts.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Chief Minister hailed the selfless and courageous decision of Jawad Khan's family as a landmark moment in the province's healthcare history. He stated that this act of bravery and humanity would serve as a foundation for saving countless lives in the future. "Though Jawad's life was short, the legacy he left behind would live on forever", he remarked. The Chief Minister urged the public to follow in the footsteps of Jawad's family and contribute to this life-saving cause. He also paid tribute to the team of doctors and the officials of the Transplant Regulatory Authority involved in the organ donation and transplantation process.

In his address, Noor Dad Khan expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur for the overwhelming appreciation and recognition. He shared the

story of his son's accident and how, seeing the suffering of patients with organ failure at the hospital, the family decided to donate Jawad's organs. He said it brought him immense joy to know that five patients were granted a new life through his son's donation. He also vowed to continue working to further this mission of serving humanity.

The ceremony was also addressed by the Chief Minister's Adviser on Health, Ehtisham Ali, renowned religious scholar Qibla Ayaz, and other speakers, who paid rich tribute to Jawad Khan's family for their unparalleled act of generosity. On this occasion, the province also officially launched its organ donation registration process. Rashid Durrani became the second individual in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to register for posthumous organ donation.

The event witnessed the participation of a large number of individuals from various walks of life, including prominent figures from different religious communities, minority representatives, social workers, healthcare professionals, medical students, and youth from across the province.

Pir Musavir Khan, pays surprise visit to Peshawar Zoo

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Wildlife, Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Pir Musavir Khan made a surprise visit to the Peshawar Zoo. During his visit, he conducted a detailed review of animal and bird care and existing facilities. He inspected the fish aquarium, wildlife museum, and

various animal and bird enclosures. He also met with visitors and gathered feedback regarding staff behavior and available facilities.

Director Zoo Sajjad Khan and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion.

The Director Zoo briefed the Special Assistant, stating that grass is being grown to provide a natural environment for the ani-

mals, foggers have been installed in the enclosures to reduce heat intensity, and the installation of a solar system for water tanks is saving approximately 700,000 rupees monthly.

Special Assistant Pir Musavir Khan expressed satisfaction with the overall management of the zoo, praised the staff's performance, and directed that more foggers be installed throughout the zoo and that

the fish aquarium be regularly cleaned.

He also mentioned that the provincial government is taking extensive measures to provide recreation for children.

Responding to complaints regarding the zoo's entrance fees, the Special Assistant issued directives to find the concerned contractor and introduce a modern ticketing system for entry to the zoo.

PHC Abbottabad bench transfer Kohistan scandal case to Principal bench

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Mudassir Amir and Justice Aurangzeb, has directed the transfer of cases related to the Kohistan scandal to the Principal Seat of the Peshawar High Court. The court observed that it had previously directed that all cases related to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) would be heard at the Principal Seat in Peshawar. The petitioners had filed a writ petition against the freezing of their company's accounts by NAB in connection with the Kohistan scandal. The petitioners' counsel argued that NAB's action was unjustified, while the Additional Prosecutor General of NAB, Muhammad Ali, informed the court that the cases were currently pending before the Abbottabad bench and needed to be transferred to the Principal Seat.

PHC noted that in 2015, it had issued a notification directing that all NAB cases would be heard at the Principal Seat in Peshawar. Therefore, the court directed that the writ petitions be transferred to the Principal Seat, and no further proceedings would be held at the Abbottabad bench.

July 19: Kashmir's chosen path, Pakistan's sacred trust

Amjad Fraz

Today, when most discussions about Kashmir are dominated by disputes and militarised zones, it is vital to recall the clarity that once existed before the noise: before the falsehoods; before the walls and wires. On 19 July 1947, as British colonial rule neared its end, the legitimate political representatives of Kashmiri Muslims made a historic and peaceful choice: to join Pakistan.

This resolution, unlike later events, carried popular backing and moral clarity. The Maharaja's hasty accession to India in October 1947, undertaken amidst revolt and violence, was never endorsed by the masses. A common language, familiar festivals, overlapping folklore and a collective sense of belonging tied the region to Pakistan. At that moment, Kashmir said, "We are with you," not in anger or fear, but in unity and vision.

When Pakistan came into being on 14 August 1947, the dream of Kashmir's accession had already taken root in the new state's political and emotional landscape. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah viewed the 19 July resolution as among the clearest affirmations of the Two-Nation Theory, not just in doctrine but in practice. The idea that Muslims

of the subcontinent had a distinct identity, deserving of self-determination, was nowhere more powerfully upheld than in the valleys of Kashmir.

Pakistan did not embrace Kashmir's call as a conquest; it responded to it as a gesture of trust, kinship, and fraternity. Kashmir was regarded as part of the soul of Pakistan. Its rivers may nourish Pakistan's lands, but a far deeper current connects the two: the current of history, heartbreak, and hope.

That is why every Pakistani child grows up knowing Kashmir is a living verse in our national story. As decades have passed, borders have hardened, wars have been fought, and ceasefires were made and sabotaged. But the spirit of 19 July endured. The echo of that first, fearless declaration continues: sometimes quiet; sometimes loud; but never extinguished.

It lives in the grief of mothers in Kashmir who light candles for their missing sons. It walks in the footsteps of schoolchildren from Kashmir Valley who pass soldiers and barbed wires on their way to class. It survives in the songs, the stories and the words whispered in curfews. Even now, they choose Pakistan, not only in slogans, but in small, persistent acts of resilience and resistance.

When Article 370 was scrapped in 2019 and

Kashmir was placed under an unprecedented lockdown, it was meant to silence the land. Roads were blocked, phones went dead, and the world watched in silence. But in that stillness, the heartbeat of Kashmiris echoed the rhythm of 19 July. Their lives may have changed under occupation, but their truth remained untouched: they chose, long ago, and they have not wavered—not by force, not by chance—but by a conscious, enduring act of collective will.

Recent skirmishes between India and Pakistan have put Kashmir back in the international spotlight. The silence is breaking, and questions are being raised. Even President Trump has reiterated that he is willing to help settle the dispute. This moment of reckoning is an opportunity to remind the world that Kashmiris have already written their will on July 19, 1947, with hope. Now, that hope deserves to be heard and honoured.

In an age of daily crises and fleeting headlines, one may ask: why remember 19 July at all? The answer is simple: remembrance resists erasure. July 19 preserves a truth that predates all political fog. It reminds the world, and ourselves, that before the people of Kashmir were silenced, they had spoken. Loudly. Clearly. Peacefully. And

Pakistan, even though its internal challenges, continues to honour that choice. Every time a flag is raised or a dua offered for Kashmir, this day lives on. It is not a ritual. It is a reaffirmation.

The July 19 resolution is not a day of provocation. It is a day of commitment and continuity. It tells the story of a people who, before the world fully grasped the storm to come, had already decided their path. It tells the story of a young nation, Pakistan, still in the making, yet carrying the hopes of those who believed in it even before it was born. Yes, much has changed. And yes, global powers may remain indifferent. But in Pakistan, Kashmir's pain is personal, felt not just in policy rooms but in every-one's hearts.

We remember July 19 because it reminds us that some promises are not broken by treaties, nor dulled by time, nor silenced by war: some are carved into the conscience of a people. As long as Pakistan stands, 19 July will remain a reminder, not only of what was declared, but of what is still waiting to be fulfilled. Of a hand still extended. Of a bond that remains unbroken. Of a pledge that time cannot erase.

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In brief

Massive poppy crop destroyed F.P. Report

CHAMAN: Authorities eradicated a substantial illegal poppy cultivation spanning over 100 acres in Chaman, a region bordering Afghanistan, a spokesperson for the Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) announced. The operation, a joint effort between the Balochistan Excise and Taxation Department and the ANF, targeted fields where the illicit crop was being grown. The spokesperson stated the action demonstrates the Balochistan government's resolve to combat drug production. The eradication effort represents a significant blow to the illegal narcotics trade in the area. This joint operation highlights the ongoing cooperation between provincial and federal agencies to curb the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. The statement emphasized that this campaign underscores the commitment to eliminate narcotics within the region.

FJA team visits Haripur Jail F.P. Report

HARIPUR: A delegation from the Federal Judicial Academy (FJA), Islamabad paid a detailed visit to the Central Jail Haripur, the other day said that a press release issued here on Friday. The delegation was led by Deputy Director Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad, Nadia Syed and Assistant Director Bushra while Senior Civil Judge Haripur, Shiraz Tariq also accompanied them. Superintendent Jail Haripur, Acting DIG Hazara Region, Hamid Azam gave a comprehensive briefing about the jail to them. The delegation visited sections of the prison, included the Drug Rehabilitation Centre, Video Link, E-Visit, Women's Ward and Jail Factory. The members of the delegation expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the jail authorities and appreciated the facilities provided to the prisoners at the jail.

Jl flays govt economic policies F.P. Report

ATTOCK: The current government's poor economic policies have made life miserable for the people. The prices of electricity, sugar, and petroleum products are skyrocketing, while the incompetent rulers have completely failed to provide any relief to the public. The speakers alleged that sugar is being imported and then re-exported at higher prices, which is a prime example of the worst kind of economic mismanagement. These views were expressed by Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Attock District, Sardar Amjad Ali Khan, General Secretary Hafiz Muhammad Bilal, and Ameer Tehsil Hafiz Mian Muhammad Junaid. They were addressing a protest rally organized by Jamaat-e-Islami Attock on the appeal of Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, against the government's economic policies. The rally started from Jamia Masjid Dar-ul-Islam Colony and concluded at Peoples Colony Chowk. It was led by Sardar Amjad Ali Khan, Hafiz Mian Muhammad Junaid, and Hafiz Muhammad Bilal. A large number of party workers participated in the rally, holding placards and banners inscribed with slogans against inflation, unemployment, and the government's policies. While addressing the rally, the speakers reiterated that the current government's flawed economic decisions have made people's lives unbearable.

JI protests soaring prices of fuel, sugar, and electricity

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: On the call of Jamaat-e-Islami's central chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, a protest demonstration was held in Timergara on Friday, the district headquarters of Lower Dir, against the sharp rise in prices of petroleum products, sugar, and electricity as part of a countrywide campaign by the party.

The protestors marched on foot for two kilometers from Ahya-ul-Uloom, Balambat to Gorgorai Chowk, chanting anti-government slogans throughout the rally. Holding placards and banners inscribed with slogans against price hikes, they condemned the government for what they called "unbearable inflation."

The demonstration was also addressed by JI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spokesperson Hafiz Yaqoob ur Rehman, district general secretary Shoaib Ahmad, and other local leaders. Addressing the protest, former MNA and Jamaat-e-Islami's Lower Dir district chief Maulana Asadullah Khan said that while oil prices were steadily declining in the international market, the government was continuously burdening the public with price hikes. He noted that the recent increase of Rs12 per litre in diesel and Rs6 per litre in petrol was intolerable for the common man.

He demanded that the government immediately rein in the sugar mafia and bring electricity tariffs under control. The speakers alleged that the sugar cartel was looting the public with the backing of those in power. They urged the government to reverse the recent price hikes and provide relief to people crushed under the weight of inflation.

Pay gap with federal employees causes resentment among KP government workers: A wave of disappointment has spread among Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government employees over the significant pay gap between provincial and federal employees, with federal workers reportedly receiving up to Rs30,000 more in monthly salary.

Rahmatuddin, Vice President of Malgari Ustazai, Malakand Division, highlighted the issue and urged the provincial government to address the disparity without delay. He emphasized the need to eliminate the gap in basic salaries between federal and provincial staff.

Talking to local journalists in Munda, he explained that the federal government granted employees a 30% Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) along with a 10% increase in basic pay based on the 2022 pay scale. In contrast, the KP government provided only a 10% increase based on the outdated 2017 pay scale.

As a result, provincial employees working in various departments are receiving significantly lower salaries than their federal counterparts, leading to a growing sense of deprivation among them.

People reject hike in Petroleum prices: The recent increase in petroleum prices has sparked widespread outrage

among the people of Lower Dir. Citizens have strongly condemned the government's sudden decision to raise prices in the dead of night, calling it a cruel and unacceptable act of economic aggression.

Speaking to the media on Friday, local residents said that while global oil prices are continuously falling, the Pakistani government has been increasing fuel prices every 15 days, making life increasingly difficult for the poor. They said the recent hike of Rs6 in petrol and Rs12 in diesel is absolutely unacceptable. According to the citizens, this increase will trigger a new wave of inflation, affecting everything from transportation to daily essentials, which are already unaffordable for many. They demanded that the current fortnightly price adjustment mechanism be abolished and replaced with a quarterly system to provide some relief to the public.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami Lower Dir General Secretary Shoaib Ahmad strongly condemned the hike in petroleum prices, terming it "economic terrorism." He said the ruling elite, under pressure from international financial institutions, has made life unbearable for the common man. He added that it has now become impossible for the poor to meet even their basic needs.

He demanded an immediate reversal of the recent hike and called for a transparent, permanent, and people-friendly policy for determining fuel prices. Public circles have urged the government to act wisely, warning that growing economic pressure and inflation have pushed the people's patience to the brink.

Meeting on traffic issues: To address growing traffic issues and the slow pace of work on the under-construction Munda-Samarbagh road, a stakeholders meeting was chaired by Assistant Commissioner Zeeshan Najeeb at his office here the other day. The meeting was attended by Tehsil Chairman Saeed Ahmad Bacha, former nazim Qazi Hussain Ahmad, officials of the KP Highway Authority, local contractors, traffic personnel, and representatives from traders' associations.

Participants expressed concern over the increasing congestion of traffic in bazaars and delays in road construction. To ease traffic, it was decided to ban the entry of heavy vehicles into markets from 6am to 4pm. Similarly, the transportation of granite from Mines sites to stock points will not be allowed between 12 noon and 2pm, while granite delivery from stock points will only be permitted from 7pm to 7am.

The road contractor was also directed to stay in contact with traffic and Levies officials to avoid any inconvenience to the public. The administration warned that strict action would be taken against anyone violating these orders. Assistant Commissioner Zeeshan Najeeb said the measures aim to improve traffic flow and ensure timely completion of the road project, urging the public to cooperate with the administration.

Monsoon plantation drive continues with full swing

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Monsoon Trees Plantation Campaign 2025, on the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur and Chief Secretary Syed Shahab Ali Shah, in the government offices and buildings is in full swing in the entire Kohat Division.

In this regard, Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah formally inaugurated the plantation campaign by planting fruit trees in the Agriculture Office, KDA Office, District Jail Kohat and other government institutions. He also distributed thousands of free fruit plants among the progressive landowners of Kohat District at the Agriculture Office. Additional DC (General) Kohat Hamid Iqbal, District Director Agriculture Dr. Shakirullah and large number of landowners were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Kohat said that tree plantation is not only a means of protecting the environment but also a guarantee of a safe future for the next genera-

tions. He urged all the government institutions to plant maximum trees within their premises and ensure its look-after. He added, with the joint efforts of the Divisional and District Administrations Kohat and MOL Pakistan, so far more than 15,000 fruit trees including guava, loquat and fig have been planted in various government offices of Kohat Division.

Commissioner Kohat said that human beings are the best of creation and Allah Almighty has chosen them for the wellbeing of all creatures. Not only humans but also animals, birds and other creatures benefit from tree plantation, therefore, maximum tree plantation is the need of the hour. He while stressing the need to fully participate in the tree plantation campaign for the sake of our new generation and other creatures, said that the survival of humanity lies in it. Similarly, we should love all the creatures of Allah Almighty, this gives us peace of mind and heart, he maintained.

Earlier, Commissioner Kohat also visited the government nursery and the office of the District Director at the Agriculture

Office where Dr. Shakirullah gave him a detailed briefing. He was very impressed with the cleanliness and management of the office and called it worthy of imitation for other government departments.

Later, Commissioner Kohat Division along with the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jail Superintendent and prisoners planted hundreds of saplings in the premises of District Jail Kohat under the monsoon plantation drive. The Jail Superintendent informed, during the current plantation drive, our target is to plant more than 1000 fruit plants, which will be achieved.

The saplings planted in District Jail Kohat will not only be a source of learning and practical training in gardening for the prisoners but will also help in making the prison environment green and pleasant. This practical initiative of the tree plantation campaign is being highly appreciated by the public and government circles and it is expected that this campaign will progress further successfully throughout the Kohat Division.

Irregularities uncovered in non-functional tube wells: MNA

F.P. Report

TANK: Member National Assembly (MNA) Dawar Khan Kundi on Friday strongly criticized the Public Health Department Tank, alleging serious financial irregularities in connection with non-functional tube wells across the district.

Talking to media persons, he revealed that at least 15 tube wells shown as completed on official documents are in fact non-operational on the ground.

"These tube wells exist only on paper, yet full payments have been cleared for them," Kundi claimed, calling the act a blatant misuse of public funds and a betrayal of the people of Tank.

The non-functional tube wells were reported in localities including Mohallah Phool Shah (City-II), Barra Khel, Durki, Gara Baloch, Ranwal, Kot Kat, Toran Sheran, Cheena, Pai, Kaka Khel, Koru Khan, Kirri Latti Jaffarabad, Rodi Khel,

Gulzar, and Bangal Khel. According to the MNA, the Public Health Department colluded with favored contractors to mint public resources.

"Not a single one of these projects has been completed, yet the bills were cleared in full a clear case of fraud," he alleged. Kundi added that he has formally submitted complaints to the Secretary of Public Health and the Anti-Corruption Department, seeking a full investigation into the matter.



HYDERABAD: A view of rainwater accumulated Eid Gah Mosque after heavy downpour.

Monsoon plantation drive launched F.P. Report

BUNER: Deputy Commissioner Buner kicked off monsoon tree plantation drive by planting a sapling in the Dr. Qadeer Khan Colony, Daggar.

He distributed various types of fruit plants among the government staff present on the spot and the youth and children of the area. He gave the message that according to the vision of Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, ten thousand fruit plants will be planted in Buner. He further said that during this campaign, the Forest and Watershed Division will plant fruit plants in all government departments, offices, schools, colleges, universities, police stations and courts so that these plants get water care and are also protection.

DC appealed to the public that every person should plant a plant in this campaign and make the environment healthy and the dear homeland clean and green. On this occasion, DFO Forest Abdul Majeed Khan, ADC Relief Syed Akram Shah, Journalist Abid, District Khatib, SDFO Daggar Bakshad Khan, SDFO Chamlia Amjad Khan also planted saplings. The district Khatib led collective prayer for the success of the planted saplings and the monsoon plantation campaign.

Hafizabad impacted by downpour F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: City and its surrounding rural areas have been severely affected by continuous and heavy rainfall over the past several days. The relentless downpour has inundated low-lying regions, damaging thousands of acres of agricultural land and destroying major seasonal crops such as paddy, vegetables, and fodder. The already burdened farming community, grappling with skyrocketing prices of electricity, diesel, and fertilizers, is now facing further devastation due to crop destruction and waterlogging.

According to local farmers and agricultural representatives, the situation has become increasingly desperate. They lament that while they were already struggling to survive due to the absence of fair government support prices, the latest spell of torrential rains has shattered their hopes and pushed them toward financial collapse. Entire fields have been submerged, wiping out months of hard labor and investment, with no immediate support or compensation in sight.

Farmer leaders have called upon the government to immediately declare Hafizabad as a calamity-hit region and provide urgent relief to affected farmers. They have demanded a comprehensive damage assessment followed by timely financial assistance, interest-free agricultural loans, and provisions of subsidized inputs for the next cropping cycle. They also stressed the need for procurement of affected crops at support prices to prevent total economic loss.

Five dacoits killed during encounters

F.P. Report

SIALKOT: As many as five notorious dacoits were shot dead in Lahore, Okara, Sialkot and Chiniot.

In the first police encounter, which took place in Nawankot area of Lahore, an accused who was in police custody killed by the firing of his colleagues. Sources said that a Crime Control Department (CCD) team was taking the accused Qasim Ali for recovery. The companions of the dacoit who were waiting for the police van started firing at the police van in a bid to free the dacoit from the police custody. The CCD team said that the police wanted the dead dacoit in more than two dozen cases.

The second police encounter occurred in the Chak No 135 located in the jurisdiction of Rajao Police Station of Chiniot, where one dacoit died after receiving serious bullet wounds from the firing of his companions. The other companion had escaped from the scene. Sources said that Crime Control Department (CCD) team led by ASI

Ejaz Asghar came face-to-face with the dacoits.

After noticing the CCD team, the dacoits started firing at them. During a heavy exchange of gunfire, one dacoit, later identified as Sarfraz, a Salutra caste resident of Chak No. 12, was killed. Police said that the accused, Sarfraz was wanted by the authorities because he was a police record holder.

The second police encounter took place at Iqbal Town near Railway Station under the jurisdiction of B Division Police Station, Okara in which three dacoits opened fire on the police van. Sources said police received information that three dacoits were looting the people after putting barricades on the road.

The police team that was on their routine round-up rushed to the spot. After seeing the police van, the dacoits started firing at them. The police team opened fire in self-defense. During heavy exchange of firing, one dacoit was killed by the firing of his colleagues, and two of their colleagues fled away from the scene, taking advantage of the darkness.

Soon after receiving the report, a heavy contingent of police rushed to the spot and cordoned off the entire area. The identification of dead dacoit is still unknown. Police after taking custody of dead body shifted it to the hospital. Police said that the remaining dacoits will be arrested soon. The fourth police encounter took place at Ladhar Chowk in the jurisdiction of Saddar Police Station, Sialkot. According to the details, a police team signaled three suspicious people who were riding a motorcycle to stop instead the dacoits started firing on the police party and escaped from the spot.

The police also started firing on the dacoits in retaliation and cordoned off the area. During the search the police party recovered two dead bodies of the accused. Police also recovered one motorcycle and two 30-bore pistols near the dead bodies. A spokesman of police said that one accused escaped from the scene, taking advantage of the darkness. A search operation is underway to apprehend the dacoits.

Tribesmen sit-in enters into 8th day

F.P. Report

WANA: The United Political Peace sit-in in Lower South Waziristan entered its eighth day on Friday and concluded with a major breakthrough, as the United Political Peace Alliance announced the temporary suspension of the protest following successful negotiations with both civil and military officials.

The alliance, which represents a coalition of local political leaders and civil society figures, had organized the protest to press for public demands centered on peace, economic revival, and natural resource ownership. Drawing significant support from tribal communities across the region, the sit-in became a powerful symbol of local unity and determination.

Throughout the week-long demonstration, the alliance persistently emphasized the urgency of restoring law and order in the region, reopening the Angoor Adda border crossing to resume trade, and securing public ownership rights over local mineral resources. Following multiple rounds of negotiations, officials agreed to begin implementing these demands immediately. A formal public announcement of the agreement was made in front of tribal elders and protest participants.

According to the alliance leadership, both civil and military authorities pledged to restore peace across the region, ensure the reopening of the Angoor Adda border within days after completing procedural formalities, and formally recognize local communities as rightful owners of natural mineral wealth. Officials further affirmed that the state bears full responsibility for guaranteeing security, safeguarding public economic rights, and maintaining transparent governance in resource-related matters.

During the announcement, the alliance made it clear that the sit-in is not being ended but merely suspended. They cautioned that if the government fails to honor its commitments, a larger and more decisive protest will follow. "We are giving the government time to act. But if promises are broken, we will return with a stronger protest that no one will expect," a senior alliance figure stated.

The alliance also confirmed that authorities had agreed to begin addressing all thirteen points of their charter without delay. They vowed to closely monitor implementation and ensure that the people's expectations are met in full. The reopening of the Angoor Adda trade route will proceed following administrative clearance, while mineral rights will be formalized in consultation with tribal stakeholders.

The alliance concluded by reiterating its commitment to peaceful democratic engagement but stressed that it retains the right to resume mass mobilization if progress falters.

Farewell gathering held in DC honour:

Following the transfer of Deputy Commissioner Nisar Khan, a series of farewell meetings were held in Wana by tribal elders, civil society representatives, and journalists, who praised his tenure and paid rich tribute to his contributions in Lower South Waziristan.

The farewell gatherings, held at the DC Office, drew participants from various segments of society—including tribal leaders, government officials, media personnel, and other influential figures—who came to acknowledge Khan's administrative efforts and public engagement.

Speaking at the occasion, Nisar Khan expressed deep gratitude for the support and respect he received during his posting. "It has

been an honor to serve in a region where the people are hospitable, dignified, and peace-loving," he remarked. "The love and cooperation extended to me by the people of Lower Waziristan will always remain in my heart."

Reflecting on his tenure, the outgoing DC said he had strived to maintain peace, advance development work, and improve governance despite limited resources. "We made every effort to address public grievances sincerely and resolved several critical disputes through traditional jirga-based dialogue," he added.

AG inspects DAO record F.P. Report

MARDAN: Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Khalid Mehmood, paid a detailed visit to the District Accounts Office Mardan. Upon his arrival, he was warmly received by the staff of the office.

During the visit, the Accountant General inspected all sections of the office and reviewed the ongoing work processes. District Accounts Officer Asad Khan gave a comprehensive briefing on various office-related issues. On this occasion, the Accountant General issued clear instructions to resolve the legitimate matters of the public and government employees without any unnecessary delay. He emphasized that safeguarding the national treasury and ensuring compliance with all financial protocols is a critical responsibility of the Accounts Office. He further directed all officers and staff to discharge their duties with utmost honesty and diligence, keeping in view the importance of transparency and accountability in financial matters.



EU mega budget hits immediate German opposition

BRUSSELS (AFP): The European Union executive proposed a two-trillion-euro long-term budget focused on tackling overseas competition and Russian aggression, but it was quickly shot down by Germany, the bloc's largest member. Germany said it was "unable to accept" the \$2.3-trillion budget for 2028-2034, which EU chief Ursula von der Leyen called "the most ambitious ever proposed". Farm unions also quickly came out against proposed reforms to the blocs huge agriculture subsidies.

The plan seeks to bolster Europe's security and ramp up competitiveness, against a backdrop of soaring trade tensions with the United States, while paying off debts from a massive Covid-era loan. The European Commission put 451 billion euros on the table under a broad "competitiveness" tag that encompasses defence and space -- together allocated 131 billion euros, a five-fold increase.

The budget earmarks up to 100 billion euros for the reconstruction of war-torn Ukraine -- as well as substantial new "flexibility" funds kept available in event of crises. But German government spokesman Stefan Kornelius said in a statement that "a comprehensive increase in the EU budget is not acceptable at a time when all member states are making considerable efforts to consolidate their national budgets." Germany also opposed the commission call to make companies with a turnover of more than 100 million euros pay more tax. While Germany says the budget is too large, many EU lawmak-

ers accuse it of not leaving sufficient funds for priorities such as climate adaptation and the agriculture subsidies that make up the biggest share of the budget.

Budget commissioner Piotr Serafin said under the commission's plans, 300 billion euros would remain to support farmers -- against around 387 billion euros, of which 270 billion in direct payouts, under the current seven-year budget. Brussels says there would be an overhaul of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies -- with some funding moved to other budget columns. But the future of the CAP is headed for a fight, with farmers warning against cuts to their slice of the EU pie -- and marching in Brussels to show their resolve. Hundreds of European farmers joined a protest outside the commission building in Brussels organised by a pan-European agriculture lobby group, Copa-Cogeca. The group described it as a "Black" for farmers, accusing Brussels of seeking to "dismantle the 'common' nature of the CAP through concealed budget cuts". The warning raised the spectre of another confrontation after last year's protests across Europe by farmers upset at cheap imports, low margins and the burden of environmental rules.

Hungary, a staunch critic of Brussels and Russia's closest ally in Europe, meanwhile tapped into the rural anger ahead of the plan's release -- while slamming the money for Kyiv. "Ukraine would get a massive funding boost, while European farmers lose out," Hungarian

Prime Minister Viktor Orban said. The announcement sets the stage for two years of fraught negotiations between the European Parliament and 27 member states. Already stretched thin, some states, such as Germany, are unwilling to contribute more to the common pot. Unlike in the previous budget, the EU has debts due from the Covid pandemic, when states teamed up to borrow 800 billion euros to support the bloc's economy. These are estimated to cost 25-30 billion euros a year from 2028.

The previous 2021-2027 budget was worth around 1.2 trillion euros and made up from national contributions and money collected by the EU such as customs duties. National contributions will grow slightly, from 1.13 percent of member states' gross national income to 1.15 percent plus 0.11 percent devoted to repaying the Covid loan. The commission will also seek to raise about 58 billion euros a year collecting money directly through five instruments, including its carbon border tax and a levy on electronic waste. Member states gave a sneak peek at the fights to come. France's Europe minister Benjamin Haddad hailed the commission's "ambition" but Dutch finance minister Elco Heinen -- representing one of the frugal states -- said the proposed budget was "too high". Members of the EU parliament, however, made it clear the budget was not enough in their view. "However you try to package this, what we have is a real-terms investment and spending freeze," said a joint statement from the EU lawmakers tasked with steering the budget through parliament.

Australia nears breakthrough canola deal with China

CANBERRA/BEIJING (Reuters): Canberra is close to an agreement with Beijing that would allow Australian suppliers to ship five trial canola cargoes to China, sources familiar with the matter said, a move towards ending a years-long freeze in the trade.

China, the world's largest canola importer, sources nearly all of its imports from Canada but those supplies could be limited by an anti-dumping probe Beijing is conducting. China imposed 100% tariffs on Canadian canola meal and oil this year amid strained diplomatic ties. Australia, the second-largest canola exporter, has been shut out of the Chinese market since 2020, mainly due to Chinese rules to stop the spread of fungal plant disease, but the trial cargoes could reopen trade and reduce Canada's market share.

Chinese and Australian officials are finalising a framework to address Beijing's phytosanitary requirements aimed at preventing the spread of blackleg disease, according to two Australian agriculture industry sources briefed on

the negotiations. "It looks like we've found a pathway that works for everyone," said one of the sources. "Now we need to run a few ships and see if it all works." The five trial cargoes will be handled by trading companies once the framework is agreed, the sources said. Two trading company sources familiar with the negotiations said the shipments would carry between 150,000 and 250,000 metric tons of Australian canola, also known as rapeseed, to China.

The sources declined to be named as they were not authorised to speak publicly on the matter. In response to a query from Reuters, Australia's agriculture ministry said: "This is an active and ongoing government-government discussion and details have not yet been finalised." China's Ministry of Commerce and General Administration of Customs did not immediately respond to a request for comment. China has bought an average of 4 million metric tons of canola, worth over \$2 billion, each year for the last five years, for use in cooking oil, renewable fuels, and ani-

mal feed. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is currently visiting China, underscoring a warming of ties since his Labor government won power in 2022.

The planned shipments follow smaller test deliveries last year, when Australia exported 500 tons of canola to China in both June and July 2024, according to Australian trade data. The negotiations have focused on addressing China's requirement that canola shipments contain less than 1% admixture - impurities such as chaff and broken seeds - and its concerns of blackleg contamination, the two sources briefed on the talks said. Unlike Canadian exporters, who clean their canola before shipping, Australian suppliers often exceed this limit. Additional demand from China should lift Australian canola prices, traders said, but Australia may not be able to fully replace Canadian canola in China. The Australian government expects the upcoming harvest later this year to produce 5.7 million tons of canola, the least in five years, due to unfavourable weather and a smaller planted area.

Ecuador's capital rocked by water shortage crisis

QUITO: Desperation is mounting in Ecuador's capital as thousands of people remain without drinking water a week into Quito's worst shortage in 25 years. The daily lives of some 400,000 residents have been seriously disrupted by the emergency, which happened after a landslide damaged a pipeline that supplied water to much of southern Quito.

"We can't live without water!" shout residents of the Chillogallo neighborhood as they line up along a street, waiting for a tanker to deliver water. Emergency crews have been racing to distribute water supplies to six affected areas and remove sludge from the damaged pipelines, all while officials in Quito city government and national government

officials bicker over how to address the crisis. With buckets, bottles, trash cans and other kinds of containers, residents wait in the street for a water tanker to arrive. Among them is Inés Castro, 74, who sits on a sidewalk under the sun. "We've been waiting in line since morning, and no one has arrived," Castro said, with tears welling up in her eyes when asked if anyone accompanied her. "I live alone, I'm all alone," she replies and said she hopes a neighbor will help her carry the bucket home if she manages to fill it. The municipality has mobilized some 70 water trucks, but they are not enough to serve everyone and don't always adhere to a schedule.

Erselinda Guilca, who is now retired, says her health

is failing and asks for a quick solution to the problem. "We're old and can no longer carry heavy buckets of water. We have been here in this cold since morning, hungry. We don't even have water to bathe," she said, adding that she would prefer not to have electricity than to be without water, which is essential. With a plastic washbasin and a pot from her kitchen, Elsa Sarango joins the neighbors' protest while waiting in line for the water truck. "If we were young, we wouldn't mind carrying it; this is very heavy, I just ask for a little water," she said. She insists that as the days go by, the sanitation and hygiene needs in her home increase. "They don't tell us the exact time. We have to make trips little by little, otherwise, how would we live?" — CNN

Pro-Palestinian demonstrator arrested at Tour de France

PARIS (AFP): A protestor wearing a t-shirt reading "Israel out of the Tour" was arrested after running onto the final straight of the Tour de France 11th stage. The protestor, who was also holding a Palestinian keffiyeh scarf, got past security barriers and ran towards the finish line in Toulouse as Norway's Jonas Abrahamson won a sprint finale.

The man was intercepted by a race staff member and arrested, the local prefecture said. Several police officers have been assigned to protecting the Israel-Premier Tech team during the Tour. The team was set up by Israeli-Canadian billionaire Sylvan Adams, but there are no Israeli riders in this year's race.

With the Gaza war causing international controversy, last year the team said it had asked its riders not to wear jerseys with any reference to Israel while out training as a precaution. The Gaza war sparked by Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Israel's retaliatory campaign in Gaza has killed 58,573 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

What led to the violence in Syria?

DAMASCUS: What started as a local conflict in southern Syria between local Druze and Bedouin communities over the weekend escalated into Israel bombing Syria's Ministry of Defence and other targets in the capital Damascus. At least three people were killed in the Damascus attacks, the Syrian Ministry of Health said. Other Israeli air attacks hit the southwestern provinces of Suwayda and Deraa.

Suwayda - where the majority of the population are members of the Druze religious group - had been the epicentre of the violence in recent days. Israel had already struck Syrian government forces there earlier this week. Israeli officials claim their attacks on Syria aim to protect the Druze community in Suwayda, where scores of people have been killed in clashes involving local armed groups, as well as government forces. However, local activists and analysts say Israel is fueling internal strife in Suwayda by continuing to bomb Syria - as it has done repeatedly since former President Bashar al-Assad was overthrown in December. And Israel has continued to attack Syrian government forces, despite ceasefire agreements between some Druze leaders and the Syrian authorities. "Not only is Israel now painting the entire [Druze] community as pro-Israel, but they are painting them as supporting Israel's bombardment of Damascus," said Dareen Khalifa, an expert on Syria and a senior adviser with International Crisis Group. The recent violence in Suwayda began after Bedouin armed groups kidnapped a Druze trader on the road to Damascus on July 11, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a United Kingdom-based monitor. The abduction quickly turned into more widespread violence between the two communities - which have a long-standing rivalry due to land disputes - eventually dragging in Syrian government forces. Syria's new government has been attempting to impose its authority after a 14-year civil war and the end of half a century of al-Assad family rule. However, it has found it difficult to do so in Suwayda, partly because of Israel's repeated threats against the presence of any government forces in the province, which borders the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Suwayda's Druze initially welcomed the deployment of government forces following the weekend's violence, but clashes soon began between some Druze fighters and those forces, with reports of the latter carrying out human rights abuses, according to civilians, local monitors and analysts. — Al Jazeera



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians carrying bags containing food and humanitarian aid packages delivered by the US-backed GHF organisation, in Rafah.

Zelenskiy wants half Ukraine's arms to be produced domestically

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that he was counting on his new incoming government to take measures to boost the proportion of weapons made at home to 50% within six months.

Zelenskiy has carried out a political reshuffle this week, nominating as his new prime minister Yulia Svyrydenko, the driving force behind a minerals deal with the United States. Outgoing prime minister Denys Shmyhal has been put forward as the new defence minister. The nominations,

which require parliamentary approval, came as diplomatic efforts to end the war with Russia, now in its fourth year, have stalled and as Ukraine seeks to revive its cash-strapped economy and build up a domestic arms industry.

Zelenskiy said he, Shmyhal and outgoing defence minister Rustem Umerov had decided at a meeting that the defence ministry would have "greater influence in the domain of arms production". "Ukrainian-made weapons now make up about 40% of those used at

the front and in our operations," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address. "This is already significantly more than at any time in our country's independence. The production volumes are truly large, but we need more. "Our goal is to reach 50% Ukrainian-made weaponry within the first six months of the new government, by expanding our domestic production. I am confident this is achievable, though not easy." Zelenskiy has long stressed the importance of boosting domestic production of weapons and developing joint produc-

tion of weaponry with Ukraine's Western partners.

It has focused on drone production and on providing air defences to withstand intensifying Russian drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities. Zelenskiy has in recent weeks stressed the importance of developing drone interceptors as a rational way of tackling swarms of drones. Kyiv's military authorities last week announced the allocation of \$6.2 million for a drone interceptor program to defend the capital's skies from Russian drones.

Hague Group announces steps to hold Israel accountable in Bogota summit

BOGOTA: A coalition of countries has announced at a meeting in the Colombian capital of Bogota that they will pursue accountability for Israeli abuses in Gaza, including by preventing the transfer of weapons to Israel. The two-day meeting concluded with two dozen countries agreeing to six measures to "restrain Israel's assault on the Occupied Palestinian Territories".

They include Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa. "We believe in protagonism, not supplication," said Varsha Gandikota-Nellutla, the executive secretary of The Hague Group, which organised the summit. "Today marks an end to the era of the impunity and the beginning of collective state action by governments of conscience." Founded in January, the Hague Group seeks to bring together countries from the "Global South" - a loosely defined region of developing economies - to pressure Israel to end its war on Gaza and the occupation of

the Palestinian territories. Among the steps announced by the group are the denial of arms to Israel, a ban on ships transporting such arms and a review of public contracts for possible links to companies that benefit from the Israeli occupation. The six measures also included support for "universal jurisdiction mandates", which would allow states or international bodies to prosecute serious international crimes, regardless of where they took place. "The delegates here that have been discussing these measures for two days are calling it the most ambitious, multilateral plan since the beginning of Israel's war in Gaza 21 months ago," Al Jazeera correspondent Alessandro Rampietti reported from Bogota.

The 12 countries that agreed to the measures, however, represent fewer than half of the 30 countries in attendance at the Bogota summit. And critics question how effective smaller economies can be in dissuading Israel from its military campaign, especially given the multibillion-dollar support it receives from the United States. Israel has

given little indication that international outrage has slowed down its attacks on Gaza, even after experts at the United Nations (UN) and major humanitarian organisations compared its tactics to genocide. Israeli forces continue to displace Palestinians and restrict their access to food, fuel and water. At least 58,573 Palestinians have been killed since the war began in October 2023. While the majority of the countries at this week's Bogota conference did not immediately sign on to measures, the Hague Group expressed optimism that more could join in.

In a statement, the group set a deadline of September 20 for others to participate - a date chosen to coincide with the start of the UN General Assembly. "Consultations with capitals across the world are now ongoing," the statement said. Officials attending the summit also hailed the six measures as part of a larger effort to chip away at Israeli impunity. "Ministers, the truth is that Palestine has already triggered a revolution, and you are part of it," said Francesca Albanese, the

United Nations special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories.

"Palestine has changed global consciousness, drawing a clear line between those who oppose genocide and those who accept it or are part of it." Albanese was recently sanctioned by the US for her outspoken criticism of Israel's actions. The summit has become a symbol of the growing calls from non-Western nations for world leaders to enforce international law in Gaza, where critics say Israel has consistently flouted human rights law. Developing nations such as South Africa and Colombia, which cohosted the conference, have been at the forefront of such accountability efforts. South Africa, for instance, filed a case in December 2023 at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) alleging that Israel perpetrated genocide in Gaza. And Colombia announced it would cut ties with Israel in May 2024 over its military campaign. "We came to Bogota to make history," Colombian President Gustavo Petro said in a statement. "And we did."

Researchers try new ways of preserving more hearts for transplants

WASHINGTON (AP): Two universities are pioneering new ways to expand lifesaving heart transplants for adults and babies - advances that could help recover would-be heart donations that too often go unused. The new research aims to overcome barriers for using organs from someone who dies when their heart stops. Called DCD, or donation after circulatory death, it involves a controversial recovery technique or the use of expensive machines.

Surgeons at Duke and Vanderbilt universities reported that they've separately devised simpler approaches to retrieve those hearts. In the New England Journal of Medicine, they described successfully transplanting hearts to a 3-month-old infant at Duke and three men at Vanderbilt. "These DCD hearts work just as well as hearts from brain-dead donors," said Vanderbilt lead author Dr. Aaron M. Williams. Most transplanted hearts come from donors who are brain dead. In those situations, the body is left on a ventilator that keeps the heart beating until the organs are removed.

Circulatory death occurs when someone has a nonsurvivable brain injury but because all brain function hasn't ceased, the family decides to withdraw life support and the heart stops. That means organs can spend a while without oxygen before being recovered, a time lag usually doable for kidneys and other organs but that can raise questions about the quality of hearts. To counter damage and

determine whether DCD organs are usable, surgeons can pump blood and oxygen to the deceased donor's abdominal and chest organs - after clamping off access to the brain. But it's ethically controversial to artificially restore circulation even temporarily and some hospitals prohibit that technique, called normothermic regional perfusion, or NRP. Another option is to "reanimate" DCD organs in a machine that pumps blood and nutrients on the way to the transplant hospital. The machines are expensive and complex, and Duke's Dr. Joseph Turek said the devices can't be used for young children's small hearts - the age group with the most dire needs.

Turek's team found a middle ground: Remove the heart and attach some tubes of oxygen and blood to briefly assess its ability to function - not in a machine but on a sterile table in the operating room. They practiced with piglets. Then came the real test. At another hospital, life support was about to be withdrawn from a 1-month-old whose family wanted to donate - and who would be a good match for a 3-month-old Duke patient in desperate need of a new heart. The other hospital didn't allow the controversial NRP recovery technique but let Turek's team test the experimental alternative. It took just five minutes to tell "the coronary arteries are filling well, it's pink, it's beating," Turek said. The team promptly put the little heart on ice and raced it back to Duke.

Vanderbilt's system is even simpler: Infuse the heart with a nutrient-rich, cold preservative solution before removing it from the donor's body, similar to how hearts from brain-dead donors are handled. That "replenishes the nutrients that are depleted during the dying process and helps protect it for transport," Williams explained, adding that Vanderbilt has performed about 25 such transplants so far. "Our view is you don't necessarily need to reanimate the heart." There's a huge need for more transplantable hearts. Hundreds of thousands of adults suffer from advanced heart failure, yet many are never even offered a transplant because of the organ shortage.

Every year about 700 children in the US are added to the transplant list for a new heart and about 20% die waiting. Turek said infants are at particular risk. Last year, people whose lives ended via circulatory death made up 43% of the nation's deceased donors - but just 793 of the 4,572 heart transplants. That's why many specialists say finding ways to use more of those hearts is crucial. The new studies are small and early-stage but promising, said Brendan Parent of NYU Langone Health, who directs transplant ethics and policy research. "Innovation to find ways to recover organs successfully after circulatory death are essential for reducing the organ shortage," he said. If alternatives pan out, "I absolutely think that cardiac programs will be thrilled, especially at hospitals that have rejected NRP."

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Trump toughening on Russia

TIRING of empty talks with President Putin, US President Donald Trump announced that he had secured a deal with NATO to purchase weapons destined for Ukraine. Trump signaled a potential end to his fruitless attempts to pursue a constructive dialogue with Moscow by ramping up Western arms transfers to Kyiv and threatening severe economic retaliation against the Kremlin. Trump set Moscow a 50-day ultimatum to agree to a new security arrangement or face a 100% levy on Russian goods, alongside secondary tariffs on states that continue to buy Russian oil. When asked about 500% tariffs previously proposed, Trump argued that once a certain threshold is crossed, the specific percentage becomes largely symbolic. But while Trump's change in position was hailed, the devil is in the details. Fifty days is a long time in war and a period that notably overlaps with the expected timeframe of Russia's summer offensive, making any breakthrough in Kremlin strategy or on the front line during this period highly unlikely. Moscow's immediate reaction was to shrug off Trump's announcement.

The deadline also has the effect of delaying the passage through Congress of the Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025, which would introduce some of the most far-reaching economic measures ever imposed on Moscow and enjoys bipartisan support in the Senate. The bill comes at a time when the United States has already tried all sorts of carrots with the Kremlin to no avail. Washington's efforts at active diplomacy and softened rhetoric from the White House have fallen on deaf ears. This 50-day deadline could suffer the same fate.

The bill would mandate freezing the assets of senior Russian officials, military personnel, oligarchs and other individuals deemed to be supporting the Kremlin's war effort. Major Russian financial institutions, including the Central Bank, Sberbank and Gazprombank, would face new property-blocking sanctions, effectively cutting them off from the US and potentially even the global financial system. US institutions would be barred from processing transactions involving these banks or facilitating the listing of any Russian securities on US stock exchanges. The bill also includes stringent prohibitions on the US energy trade with Russia, barring the export, re-export, or in-country transfer of all US-origin energy products to Russia. American companies would also be prohibited from investing in the Russian energy sector.

It goes even further by banning uranium imports from Russia and its affiliates. This restriction extends beyond direct imports to include third-party countries acting as intermediaries, reflecting an extraterritorial approach similar to past US sanctions regimes imposed on countries like Iran. This reinforces the 2024 uranium ban, which included similar measures but allowed limited imports under a waiver system until Jan. 1, 2028. While Russia once supplied about a quarter of the fuel used by US nuclear plants, the new restrictions are expected to accelerate investment in domestic enrichment, reversing a decades-long decline that began in the 1990s, when the US shifted from its own production to relying on down-blended Soviet-era weapons-grade uranium.

Foreign companies aiding Russian oil, gas and uranium production would also face secondary sanctions. The bill requires the Treasury Department to enforce existing sanctions laws under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Regardless of the actual level of tariff, their addition on top of any duties that already exist sends a clear message to the Kremlin that the courtship phase of Washington-Moscow relations is about to end - and it will be the Kremlin's fault.

Washington-Moscow relations often follow a five-stage cycle after each American presidential election: an initial reset and re-engagement, a phase of cooperation, growing disappointment and a cold period of mistrust before the cycle starts all over again. This time, the short gap between the initial engagement and disappointment could set a new record. The bill also provides the president with limited authority to exempt specific countries, goods, or services from these tariff provisions. This waiver can only be issued if it is determined to be in the national security interest of the United States. However, the discretion is narrowly drawn: each exemption can be applied only once per country, good or service, and the exemption may not exceed 180 days. This reflects a deliberate strategy to limit carve-outs and prevent the erosion of the bill's deterrent power.

The cumulative effect of these measures is designed to erode Russia's ability to finance its war in Ukraine by depriving it of energy export revenue and access to foreign capital, pressuring major energy consumers, particularly China and India. Senator Lindsey Graham, who introduced the delayed bill, argued that these measures would be "bone-crushing" for Russia and that the threat of massive tariffs on trade partners would force a strategic recalibration among nations that have continued to deal with the Kremlin despite the invasion of Ukraine. But some experts argue that secondary tariffs risk backfiring. If applied to China and India, they could destabilize supply chains, send prices soaring and drive up US unemployment to recessionary levels.

On the other hand, the tariffs could serve a dual strategic purpose: pressuring countries like China to decouple partially from Russia's war economy and supporting Trump's agenda of reindustrializing the United States by incentivizing domestic production and reducing long-term dependence on geopolitical rivals. It would be surprising if, during the next 50 days, the Kremlin agreed to a deal other than the one it has been relentlessly pushing for years. While Trump might be right that the precise level of tariffs does not matter after a point, the bill's passage would have a symbolic value he may find appealing. This could be the moment when Trump shows not only strength abroad, but domestically as well. After three years of war, nearly all of Russia's red lines have been crossed despite the fear of escalation that never came. While Washington is still reluctant to cross the few red lines that remain - notably Ukraine's accession to NATO - Trump's overdue recognition of Moscow's obstinate approach to negotiations is a welcome shift. Now, he has to follow through and prove that delaying the more ambitious sanctions package is worth it.

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Risk mitigation

Xiong Aizong

THE economic and trade policies implemented by the current administration of the United States have heightened the risks associated with dollar-denominated assets. While President Donald Trump's "reciprocal tariffs" policy is allegedly intended to reduce the US trade deficit, it has significantly undermined the dollar's global safe-haven appeal, triggering a wave of sell-offs of US Treasuries in the short term.

The surge in US debt default risks has sharply driven up its bond yields. In May, the yield on 30-year US Treasury bonds touched a high of 5 percent for several days - a level comparable to 2007 - reflecting the erosion of global market confidence in US bonds.

The US fiscal situation has also significantly worsened, undermining the confidence in the US dollar. On May 16, Moody's Ratings announced a downgrade of the US sovereign credit rating from Aaa to Aa1 due to wider fiscal deficits and higher interest payments, while revising its outlook from "negative" to "stable". With this move, all three major international credit ratings agencies have now stripped the US of its triple-A rating.

The US Congress has passed the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", which combines tax cuts with increased spending while raising the federal debt ceiling by \$5 trillion. Although this provides temporary relief from a debt ceiling crisis, it paves the way for even greater debt growth. US national debt has now surged past \$36.2 trillion, with interest payments becoming the fastest-growing part of federal expenditures.

The loss of top-tier credit rating has intensified global investors' concerns over the runaway fiscal deficits of the US and its unsustainable debt burdens, forcing markets to reassess the safety of dollar-denominated assets. As major holders of dollar assets, Asian economies are particularly prone to the growing US debt risks. According to US Treasury data, as of June 2024, Asian economies held nearly \$9 trillion in US securities, accounting for 29 percent of all foreign-held US debt. The largest holders include Japan, the Chinese mainland, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, and

China's regions of Taiwan and Hong Kong.

With rising US debt risks, Asian economies have gradually reduced their Treasury holdings. By April, Japan's US debt holdings fell to \$1.13 trillion, down \$32.6 billion from its 2024 peak. And the Chinese mainland's holdings dropped to \$757.2 billion in the same month.

Reducing dollar asset holdings is only one approach to coping with the eroded credibility of US

should further expand the CMIM, diversify its lending tools, and make these tools more flexible and targeted. At the same time, AMRO's governance structure and capacity-building must be reinforced, with the ultimate goal of merging CMIM and AMRO - or even establishing an "Asian Monetary Fund" - to bolster regional financial stability.

Second, the region should continuously promote the use of local currencies. Currency mis-

a memorandum of understanding to expand local currency settlement cooperation from current accounts and direct investment to all transactions, including capital and financial accounts, further boosting the use of local currencies in bilateral trade and investment.

Looking ahead, Asian nations should further refine the mechanisms for bilateral local currency settlement, currency swaps and direct currency trading. By jointly advancing the use of local currencies, they can deepen bilateral economic and trade cooperation, and reduce the reliance on external currencies. Third, regional countries should strengthen cooperation in digital currency. Digital currencies are not only reshaping the international monetary system, but also driving reforms in the cross-border payment system.

Currently, the digital currency sector in Asia is experiencing rapid growth. In the field of central bank digital currencies, China has expanded the use of the digital renminbi to more areas, and most Asian economies either have begun pilot programs for central bank digital currencies or are developing their own digital currencies. In addition to promoting central bank digital currencies at home, some Asian countries are actively advancing regional cooperation in digital currencies.

For example, China, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia are enhancing cross-border payment efficiency through the multi-central bank digital currency platform. In the future, more Asian economies should be encouraged to join the cooperation platforms to further facilitate cross-border payments within the region.

Cryptocurrencies and stablecoins are also rapidly developing in Asia. After Donald Trump's re-election, he has placed a high priority on the development of cryptocurrencies, particularly stablecoins, aiming to use them to maintain the dominance of the US dollar. This strategic shift of the US has fueled the development of stablecoins in Asia. Asia should improve its regulatory framework and strengthen regional regulatory coordination and cooperation, seeking a balance between innovation and financial stability, so as to gain the upper hand in the new global currency competition.

What happens when 16-year-olds get the vote?

Christine Huebner

THE government has announced it will lower the voting age to 16 for all UK elections in time for the next general election. In 1969, the UK became the first major democracy in the world to lower the voting age from 21 to 18. Few people knew what to expect from this change. Things are different now. In places such as Austria, Argentina and Brazil, as well as parts of Germany and, in the UK, Wales and Scotland, 16- and 17-year-olds are already allowed to vote in some or all elections.

We can learn a lot from these places about what happens when 16- and 17-year-olds get the vote. My colleagues and I have spent years researching this, and our main finding is simple: nothing bad happens when the voting age is lowered to 16.

Including 16- and 17-year-olds in the electorate does not change election outcomes and it does not make elections less representative. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds are just as qualified to vote as other, older voters. Research from Germany and Austria shows that they are able to pick a political party or representative that best represents their views to the same extent as other, slightly older voters.

But some things may get better for young people and for democracy overall, especially if young people are taken seriously as voters and receive good education on political issues. Here is what to expect when 16- and 17-year-olds get to vote in the UK general election.

When 16- and 17-year-olds get to vote at the next UK election, expect them to turn out in about the same numbers as other voters, and slightly more often than other first-time voters (those aged 18 to 20).

In Austria, Latin America, Scotland, Wales and German federal states that lowered the voting age to 16, my colleagues and I consistently find that, when allowed to vote, 16- and 17-year-olds turn out at higher rates than young people who were enfranchised at age 18.

We believe this happens because younger people who are in full-time education and often still live at home can make for better, more engaged first-time voters compared with 18- to 20-year-olds, who often experience their first election in a highly transitional phase of their lives, while moving out of the parental home, taking up work or further education.

A lower voting age is unlikely to change election outcomes. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds make up between 1.5% and less than 5% of the population in constituencies across the UK. They will have a very small impact on vote shares - and only in the most extreme (and improbable) scenario that all 16- and 17-year-olds turned out to vote and decided to vote in the same way.

Those who say that lowering the voting age to 16 is Labour's move to secure more votes at the next general election might be mistaken. Young people as a group have diverse political attitudes;

they do not all vote for the same political parties. In Brazil, young people voted quite similarly to other age groups in the 2022 presidential election and in Austria, where young people have been enfranchised since 2007, the inclusion of 16- and 17-year-olds in the electorate did not change the political landscape. Even for marginal elections, such as Scotland's 2014 referendum on independence, my colleague Jan Eichhorn from the University of Edinburgh showed that the inclusion of 16- and 17-year-olds did not change the outcome of the referendum as the youngest first-time voters cast their votes in diverse ways. Any political party can win the support of first-time voters. To do so, political parties have to engage with young people and offer attractive policy proposals, as Laura Serra shows.

We might also see the media show more younger voters in their reporting. In 2014, BBC Scotland raised the visibility of 16- and 17-year-olds by creating a diverse panel of young first-time voters, who provided input into programmes, were panelists on productions on different political topics, and audience members for the final referendum TV debate.

Young people who are allowed to vote also influence the adults in their lives. If young people are allowed to participate in elections at 16 and 17, when most are still living at home with their parents, they have the potential to shape political discussions within the family or household. In an ageing society, political parties and a media that engage with younger voters, and dinner-table conversations about political issues and across generations, can be a good outcome.

In the longer term, including 16- and 17-year-olds in the electorate might make democracy more resilient. In Austria and Latin America, young people who were enfranchised at 16 or 17 were more satisfied with democracy and democratic institutions - parliament or political parties.

The lowering of the voting age might also provide an opportunity to address inequalities in who participates in elections. Across all ages we see stark differences in who turns out to vote and who does not. After the lowering of the voting age in Scotland, however, we found 16- and 17-year-olds to be equally engaged with elections, regardless of their social background.

Schools and colleges play a crucial role in compensating for the lack of parents or peers to get young people voting. Good and statutory civic education for all young people makes a big difference for democracy in the long term. Austria has done well in combining the lowering of the voting age with a big reform of and investment in civic and citizenship education. In Scotland, young adults who remembered taking classes in school in which political issues were discussed were more likely to turn out in elections throughout their 20s.

Russian POWs' families accuse Moscow

Anastasia Tenisheva

RUSSIAN soldier Mikhail Surikov signed a contract with the Russian military "out of foolishness." In a video filmed while he was held captive as a prisoner of war in Ukraine in November 2023, he said he had enlisted because he "needed money." "They sent us here to die," Surikov, a former locksmith for an oil company, said of the Russian army. It was not possible to determine whether his comments were made under duress.

When asked a year later about what would happen to him if he were freed in a prisoner exchange, Surikov said his Russian commanders would send him back to the battlefield. Surikov, 49, appears to have been exchanged in a prisoner swap between Russia and Ukraine last year. He was later killed at the front.

Moscow and Kyiv have intensified prisoner

exchanges since the two sides held peace talks in Istanbul in May and June, where they agreed to swap more than 1,000 wounded or ill service members as well as soldiers under the age of 25. This month, the two sides held their eighth round of prisoner exchanges. These swaps came amid reports that Moscow is sending former prisoners of war exchanged by Kyiv back into combat - a move that violates the Geneva Convention on POWs, which states that former prisoners cannot be employed on active military service. As in the case of Surikov, some families have published video appeals asking Russian authorities not to send their formerly captive relatives back to the front after an exchange.

"I want to address Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin...with a request not to send former POWs back to the war zone," said Marina Frolova,

whose husband, Alexei Frolov, has been held as a POW in Ukraine for more than a year. "Our boys and we, their families, have gone through so much during this time. Enough. Return them home after the exchange, not to the war," Frolova said in a video that circulated online last month. Similar cases have been reported before. A family from Russia's Far East Zabaikalsky region told journalists that their relative was sent back into military service right after a prisoner exchange.

Kirill Putinsev, 23, who was recruited to fight in 2024 while serving a prison sentence for theft, returned to Russia after a swap in May 2025 - but he "wasn't even allowed to go home for a single day" and was "denied even a referral to a military medical commission," his sister Yana claimed. After suffering a nervous breakdown,

Putinsev was sent to a psychiatric hospital in Russian-occupied Donetsk, his sister said. In the Pskov region, Vasily Grigoryev, 32, and Dmitry Davydov, 45, were drafted into the 1009th Motorized Rifle Regiment following Russia's September 2022 mobilization. They were later sent to fight in Ukraine, where they spent over six months in Ukrainian captivity.

After being released in a 195-for-195 prisoner swap, Russian commanders redeployed them to the Kharkiv front where they were tasked with evacuating the wounded and the dead. The two men eventually escaped from their military base and hitchhiked to Moscow, where they sought legal assistance. According to lawyer Maxim Grebenyuk, who represented Grigoryev and Davydov, the Russian Defense Ministry argued that the servicemen did not

fall into the specific categories of prisoners of war subject to direct repatriation. These categories, according to the Geneva Convention, are the terminally wounded or ill and individuals whose physical or mental capacities have been severely diminished.

Yet Article 117 of the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War says "no repatriated person may be employed on active military service." It is impossible to estimate how many former Russian prisoners of war have been sent back to the front by order of Moscow, as official lists of those who have been exchanged and those currently serving in the Russian army are not publicly available. Last year, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a law that exempts former prisoners of war from mobilization.

According to the group Idite Lesom ("Get Lost"), which helps Russians avoid

participation in the war, "several dozen" former POWs who were forced back to the front after being exchanged contacted the organization last year asking for help. Sergei Krivenko, director of the Citizen Army, Rights group, told The Moscow Times that his organization has also received complaints from relatives of POWs who were sent back to the front after being exchanged, as Russian authorities continue to treat them as active-duty soldiers. The Moscow Times requested comments from Russia's Defense Ministry and human rights commissioner Tatiana Mosalkova, who handles POW cases and has said that "every search request goes through me personally." The Moscow Times also asked Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War for comment. None had responded to these requests by the time of publication.

Is Belarus coming in from cold following a US visit?

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Keith Kellogg met with Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk on June 21. The contested Belarusian leader marked the visit by releasing fourteen prisoners, mostly political detainees. More than half were nationals of Western countries, but the most high-profile and unexpected release was that of Siarhei Tsikhanouski, one of the leaders of the 2020 protests, who had spent more than five years in prison.

Kellogg's visit was made possible by the convergence of two complementary interests. The Trump administration is keen to revive at least some sort of regional diplomacy amid the stalled peace talks on Ukraine. For his part, Lukashenko has long made clear his desire to emerge from the isolation of recent years to play a more significant role in the region. To that end, he is prepared to make concessions. Releasing political prisoners is an easy win for him. After all, more than 1,100 remain behind bars - and more people can always be put in jail. So Lukashenko has bargaining power, as long as he can find a buyer.

Minsk released the first United States citizen in late January, during Trump's first week back in the White House. Though Washington had begun discussing with Minsk the release of US citizens and former employees of the US news service RFE/RL back in the fall of 2024, the timing sent a clear message: now that a pragmatic leader was in the White House, ready to make deals without liberal moralizing, he would start to succeed where his predecessor had failed. Two weeks later, three more political prisoners were released, including a US citizen and

Artyom Shraibman

RFE/RL journalist. When Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Smith came to Minsk to accompany them home, he met with Lukashenko, and The New York Times reported that they discussed a "grand deal" - a mass release of political prisoners in exchange for lifting some US sanctions.

In April, Lukashenko released the last political prisoner with US citizenship, Yuri Zenkovich, who was escorted from Belarus by Kellogg's deputy John Cole. It is likely that this is when Minsk began its dialogue with one of Trump's main negotiators on Ukraine. It is not yet clear whether Lukashenko will receive anything in exchange for the latest round of political prisoner releases. The meeting with Kellogg was in itself a breakthrough for Belarusian diplomacy by the standards of the last five years and may be enough to satisfy Minsk for now.

In any case, it is dangerous for Lukashenko to get ahead of himself at a time when US-Russian negotiations have come to a standstill. It is important to move in sync with Russia, where possible, or risk punishment from the Kremlin. By releasing Tsikhanouski, Lukashenko showed just how highly he values this level of US attention. Tsikhanouski, a popular blogger who was jailed shortly after announcing that he would run for president in 2020, was Lukashenko's most defiant opponent and the greatest threat to his three decades in power, having started the first regional protests even before the election. Following his imprisonment, Tsikhanouski's wife, Sviatlana, ran in his place and ultimately became the recognized leader of the Belarusian opposition.

Tsikhanouski did not become any less defiant once behind bars. Even in the pretrial detention center, at an impromptu meeting of opposition leaders with Lukashenko, he hinted that not only could the Belarusian autocrat himself face problems in the event of a change in leadership, but that his children could, too. Lukashenko would later publicly bring up those threats on more than one occasion. And yet, all of a sudden, despite these grievances, Tsikhanouski became the first of the opposition leaders imprisoned in 2020 to be released. Lukashenko is signaling to the West that he is, in principle, ready to release any political prisoner: there are no red lines, people just need to keep talking to him.

While Kellogg's visit is obvious progress, the ultimate outcome of such conversations remains unclear. Minsk still has plenty of prisoners to use as bargaining chips, while the United States can send more delegations or even reopen its embassy in Belarus. But diplomatic gestures alone will not be enough. Sooner or later, Minsk will expect sanctions to be eased, and then the EU's tougher position is likely to become an obstacle. Without the lifting of EU sanctions, American concessions will not be enough to unblock Belarus's key trade flows, but there are no signs so far that the EU has any inclination to follow in Washington's footsteps by resuming dialogue with Lukashenko.

Minsk is counting on Washington to intervene on its behalf in a future conversation with the EU, to implement the "Western" part of the grand deal. But for that to happen, Washington's interest in Lukashenko needs to be geopolitical as well as humanitarian. For example, Minsk

needs to show the White House it has a role to play in bringing peace to Ukraine. As special envoy on Ukraine, Kellogg is the best person to engage in such a conversation. But it is still unclear what exactly Lukashenko could try to offer him. Back during the earlier Minsk negotiations aimed at resolving the Ukraine conflict prior to Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, Belarus was at least a diplomatic platform, if not a mediator. Now, its role has been reduced to a location for Russia and Ukraine to exchange prisoners of war. No one is planning to move the latest peace talks from Istanbul to Minsk and Lukashenko has no levers of influence over either Russia or Ukraine.

It is possible that Washington has low expectations and simply wants to show that it is having at least some local successes amid the deadlock in talks between Russia and Ukraine. Or perhaps Trump's advisors have become so desperate to find an effective approach to Moscow and Kyiv that they are even prepared to consider following advice from Lukashenko, especially since those loyal to him like to describe him as a rare connoisseur of Putin's thinking, and therefore an extremely valuable interlocutor for the West. In any case, it is unclear how Minsk could influence the course of the war or the peace talks even if it wanted to. Until Moscow has sufficient incentives to abandon its maximalist demands or Kyiv has sufficient reasons to accept them, there will be no progress, regardless of Minsk's position. But Lukashenko is trying to squeeze as much out of the prospect of peace talks for as long as he can and, for the first time in a long while, Washington is prepared to play along.

How Old Dubai's historic streets beat extreme heat

Soumya Gayatri

circulated inside the building while warm air rises and leaves. In some cases, this effect is enough to reduce internal temperatures by nearly 10C. "Barjeels are one of the most effective approaches to cooling houses in the Gulf region," says Vrushali Mhatre, assistant professor in interior architecture and design at the Heriot-Watt University of Dubai. "That is why they have been widely adopted in modern buildings and complexes, including the modern Madinat Jumeirah and Khalifa Al Tjer Mosque, Dubai's Green Mosque that achieved Leed certification [a green building certification developed by the US Green Building Council] in 2016."

Most villas in the Al Fahidi Neighbourhood have inner courtyards that function as thermal regulators, allowing cool air to descend at night and spill into the surrounding rooms. Equipped with high walls, wide eaves and sometimes

layout, consisting of closely spaced buildings and narrow streets, maximises shade and harnesses prevailing winds for natural ventilation, lowering ambient temperatures by as much as 10C versus the surrounding environment. The buildings there incorporate passive cooling features, including wind towers and perforated facades, meaning they consume 40% less energy than conventional buildings in Abu Dhabi.

Officials say that such innovations have helped the city to cut its overall energy consumption by 38.4%. "Masdar City has smartly revived old Emirati design elements that reduce reliance on mechanical cooling," says Sherihan Alshahed, assistant professor of sustainable urban communities at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport in Egypt. "Because these techniques are low-cost and low-tech, they are easy to replicate."

As a result, many modern structures in the UAE

The district's urban layout, consisting of closely spaced buildings and narrow streets, maximises shade and harnesses prevailing winds for natural ventilation, lowering ambient temperatures by as much as 10C versus the surrounding environment. The buildings there incorporate passive cooling features, including wind towers and perforated facades, meaning they consume 40% less energy than conventional buildings in Abu Dhabi. Officials say that such innovations have helped the city to cut its overall energy consumption by 38.4%. "Masdar City has smartly revived old Emirati design elements that reduce reliance on mechanical cooling," says Sherihan Alshahed, assistant professor of sustainable urban communities at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport in Egypt.

dense foliage, such courtyards provide protection from dust and sand and minimise Sun exposure. A study in Spain found that this form of architecture could lower a dwelling's cooling demands by up to 18%. Furthermore, the villa walls in the Al Fahidi Neighbourhood feature perforated window screens called mashrabiya that are used to control lighting. One 2024 study that simulated the effect these devices can have found that they could also reduce indoor temperatures by at least 3C. "Old Dubai courtyards not only offer the comforts of natural light, cool air and shade but also provide a private, secure and tranquil inner space for the residents of the house, thus adhering to the local design principles of privacy and protection," adds Mhatre.

While Emiratis once used light-coloured coral to reflect light and reduce heat absorption by buildings, the UAE now prohibits the extraction of coral, in order to protect marine life. Using lighter colours on building exteriors, however, remains one of the best ways to reduce temperatures inside buildings. Old Dubai buildings also sport features such as cladding and vegetation including tall palms, which help to shade buildings. "Perhaps the most underrated, but equally essential, passive cooling mechanism at work in Al Fahidi is the sikka", says Al-Jaffrah. Sikkas, a traditional Emirati architectural feature, are narrow pedestrian walkways, not broader than 2-3m (6.5-10ft), that run among villas and lead pedestrians to open public spaces. They allow unrestricted circulation of air, often yielding a pleasant breeze from the Dubai Creek. "Tourists love to sit and relax in the sikkas on our walking tours. They are so cool and peaceful," adds Al-Jaffrah.

Architects in the UAE have used traditional design principles to create buildings that passively manage extreme heat. Take Masdar City, for example, a well-known urban community on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi that aims to be world-leading in sustainability. The district's urban

BBC

This data omnishambles is merely high water mark of MoD ineptitude

If Britain retains one superpower, it is its talent for building useless bureaucracies. No government department epitomises this quite like the Ministry of Defence. Once among the nation's most reputed institutions, inheriting the prestige of the victorious British Armed Forces when it was formed after the Second World War, the MoD has grown bloated and unaccountable. What senior politicians now regard as the most opaque of all departments seemingly holds public accountability in contempt. The UK defence "blob" has reached a point where it is imperiling national security. There must be a reckoning.

The MoD's omnishambles embodies everything wrong with the British state. It has abused both the legal system and its position as the guardian of national security to conceal an extraordinary error. The marine who leaked the list in question was working out of the headquarters of the elaborately covert Directorate of Special Forces.

And yet its protocols for email security apparently fall short of those enforced at British blue-chip firms. One insider tells me it would be "shockingly easy to be a Snowden in the Ministry of Defence". The blunder is not a freak occurrence, but rather the high water mark of the MoD's institutional failure. This is not the first major Afghan-related data leak. From laptop thefts to unclassified documents being left at bus stops, breaches have been all too common.

The MoD's dysfunction extends beyond the cybersphere. It is

grotesquely overstaffed: Finland, which commands a larger wartime force than Britain, has just 150 defence civil servants, yet the MoD has almost 38,000 on its payroll. Bureaucratic judgment has become pathological, swinging between "indecision, decision by default, and terrible decisions". It is not just in the realm of cyber technology that the MoD excels at building elaborate but inept administrative units.

The department is a Frankenstein's monster, possessing the worst attributes of both the military and civil service. The British Armed Forces seldom punish failure, in contrast with American forces, which routinely remove commanding officers who fall short. "In Britain you are more likely to be removed from post for having romantic relations with a subordinate than presiding over a blunder that endangers lives," one former Navy officer tells me. The MoD is equally imbued with the patrician impulses of the civil service. As the historian David Vincent tells me, the civil service's ethos of "honourable secrecy" goes back to the 19th century, summed up by the mantra: "A secret may be sometimes best kept by keeping the secret of its being secret." It won't be easy to bring an end to the chaos at the Ministry of Defence. Perhaps more than any other department, it has proved impervious to reform. The Tories failed miserably at the task - and may have made things more toxic.

Insiders wonder whether a tacit

arrangement set in, whereby politicians went along with officialdom's strategy for dealing with administrative blunders, while civil servants and senior military officers became "spinnemeisters" for a cash-strapped government in crisis, "bigging up" its achievements, even as it allowed military capacity to be dangerously run down. The chilling culture shift under the Conservatives is even said to be reflected in the changes to the design of the MoD's headquarters, which used to be open-plan but has, over the last few years, morphed into a "kind of souk, with certain floors hived off for niche things and enclaves locked off". Labour came to office vowing to get a grip on the MoD behemoth - but it has achieved little. Much of the dead-weight that Defence Minister John Healey tried to get rid of when he first got the brief were placed in lucrative holding posts - and are now being brought back in.

The "blob" has allegedly already neutered the consultants Healey has hired to drive reform: officials have manoeuvred to ensure that these disruptors will now merely "manage" the reform process. Top military brass nonetheless hope that Healey can get a grip. One adviser told me that they are encouraged by the contents of his reform strategy and the leadership team that he is bedding in. The incoming Chief of Defence Staff, Rich Knighton, is held in high esteem. Labour needs to get its act together and drive root-and-branch reform. Nobody has yet been held accountable for the

Afghan blunder.

All those implicated in a cover up must answer for their conduct. Super-injunctions need to be abolished so that it is no longer possible for officials to use them to shield themselves from basic levels of scrutiny. Healey must reverse the incredible disintegration of professional standards within the MoD. One former employee recalls that even 20 years ago, sending an intelligence document with a single wrong digit was a sackable offence. Apparently today, a mistake that costs taxpayers billions of pounds and puts national security and fragile social cohesion at risk only warrants a shift in posts. It's bad enough that intelligence services of hostile countries are dedicating ever-greater resources to penetrate this country's security, without our inept bureaucracy giving our secrets away for free. It is bad enough that public trust in the political class is at an all-time low, without officialdom resorting to celebrity-style gagging orders to cover up its errors.

Put simply, it is fundamentally unacceptable that those who are charged with minimising the dangers facing the realm should show such an impressive capacity to simultaneously aggravate all of the country's pressing problems. Keir Starmer is being sucked into a civil war with his party's far-Left as he seeks to re-establish discipline after the welfare reform fiasco. But he needs to turn his attention to the insubordination and chaos at the MoD. It is time for the Prime Minister to show some mettle and take drastic action.

The Telegraph

Lai's lectures blare division, no 'unity'

Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te's so-called "ten lectures on unity" - he has delivered only four - is not a call for "national unity" but a calculated "legal offensive" by separatist forces in Taiwan to systematically repackage the "Taiwan independence" agenda. By weaving together historical, cultural, political, legal and international rhetoric, Lai is trying to develop a new theory of "comprehensive independence".

As a self-proclaimed "pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence", Lai has made separatism his political identity and mission. His ambition is to exploit every opportunity to pursue "Taiwan independence" and position himself as a "player", not a pawn, in the geopolitics surrounding Taiwan. But his so-called "unity doctrine" is a disjointed compilation of political rhetoric, which lacks historical and legal basis. His rhetoric on subjects like "nationhood", "unity", "statute", and "national defense" is wrapped in populist language. Most alarmingly, his arguments distort the legal foundation of the 1992 Consensus, posing a serious threat to cross-Straits relations, the international legal order, and regional peace and stability.

Lai's legal claims for "Taiwan independence" are based on six main points: denying that "Taiwan has ever been part of China"; arguing that "Taiwan's modernization and international character are the result of Western colonialism, with deeper links to the Netherlands, Spain and Japan than the Chinese mainland"; claiming that "Taiwan is part of the Austronesian (language) family and not the Chinese family", and therefore "has the

right to national self-determination"; asserting that "UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 did not resolve Taiwan's status"; and hence "Taiwan has the right to join the United Nations"; claiming that "Taiwan and the mainland are separate, sovereign entities"; and insisting that "the future of Taiwan be decided solely by its 23 million residents". These denials and claims strike at the heart of the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China and, therefore, must be firmly refuted.

First, that Taiwan has been part of China since ancient times is based on historical facts that China has always been one unified country, and its territories, including Taiwan, are inseparable. In contrast, Lai's argument borrows from colonial notions of statehood, in which sovereignty is acquired through occupation, declaration and prolonged control. This Western legal framework, designed to divide colonial territories, doesn't reflect the organic formation of nation-states such as China.

Second, Taiwan's colonial past does not alter its legal status as Chinese territory. Lai highlights the influence of Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese cultures on Taiwan residents as if they granted Taiwan a separate global identity. This is both misleading and disgraceful. Colonialism is universally condemned today, and colonial rule does not confer sovereignty. UN resolutions on decolonization are based precisely on this principle. Although Taiwan was occupied by foreign powers for some time, none of this changed its legal identity

Tian Feilong

as a Chinese territory. Third, Taiwan's return to China was a direct outcome of the Allied forces' victory in World War II and its legal legacy. Despite foreign occupation and conflict, the Chinese nation never gave up its sovereignty over Taiwan. After all, the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait jointly resisted foreign invaders, reinforcing shared Chinese identity.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in World War II and the end of Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan. The Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Proclamation affirmed that Taiwan will be returned to China. And in 1945, the Chinese government took over Taiwan. Although political changes in 1949 led to the establishment of separate administrations across the Strait, it did not alter Taiwan's legal status as part of China. Lai has cited the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty to claim Taiwan is a "separate country". But this contention is legally invalid because the treaty excluded China and promoted Cold War agendas. And a unilateral agreement has no validity in international law.

The legal foundation laid by postwar treaties and the fact that both sides of the Strait belong to one China gave rise to the 1992 Consensus, which remains essential for the peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the motherland, which Lai is vehemently opposed to. And fourth, although the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, it had to wait until 1971 for rightful seat in the UN to be restored because of

Cold War divisions and Western intervention. UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 conclusively resolved the issue of Beijing's representation and Taiwan's legal status, restoring Beijing's lawful representation and expelling Taiwan's representatives from the UN.

Yet separatist forces on the island and their Western backers continue to twist the resolution's meaning, pushing the false narrative of "undetermined status". US laws such as the "Taiwan International Solidarity Act", and Lai's "diplomatic breakthroughs" are aimed at creating a legal basis for "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan". But the UN and most of the countries across the world continue to abide by the one-China principle, making "Taiwan independence" impossible. In short, that Taiwan is an integral part of China is a historical and legal fact. The international community rejects Lai's separatist claims. What Lai calls a legal theory is, in fact, an opportunistic fantasy, legally baseless, politically destabilizing and practically impossible.

By promoting this illusion, Lai is trying to not only undermine regional peace; he has also exposed the inherent contradictions and dangers of so-called "legal Taiwan independence". The more these ideas are promoted, the more clearly the international community, and residents on both sides of the Strait will accept the reality that there is only one China, and Taiwan is part of it. The march toward reunification is unstoppable. And no amount of rhetoric can change that.

The China Daily

PakWheels is redefining automotive experience in Pakistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: PakWheels has purely changed the way people buy and sell vehicles in Pakistan. What started in 2003 as a forum for car enthusiasts soon became country's pioneering online classifieds platform for used cars and bikes. Over the past two decades, PakWheels has steadily expanded its services, becoming Pakistan's No.1 automobile marketplace.

Innovating Trust & Convenience

One of the standout services PakWheels offers is the PakWheels Inspection Service. It provides a comprehensive 200+ point report on a car's condition, helping buyers make smarter decisions and avoid being taken advantage of by dishonest sellers. And for those looking at imported Japanese cars, their Auction Sheet Verification adds an extra layer of trust by confirming the authenticity of auction documents.

ticity of auction documents.

PakWheels knows how stressful selling a vehicle can be for new seller, so they created the Sell It For Me Service (SIFM). This hassle-free, all-in-one service takes care of everything- from listing the vehicle to handling negotiations. It's been a game-changer for sellers, allowing them to connect with serious buyers without the usual headache. Moreover, the company has sold over 1 million bikes and cars since the inception of Classified Service.

The company offers Finance and Insurance options, along with a "Managed by PakWheels Stock" service for pre-inspected cars, ensuring secure transactions. Their Auto Store is another bonus, offering thousands of automotive parts, accessories, and car-care products, all delivered straight to your doorstep. It's clear that PakWheels is not just a marketplace but a complete

automotive solution.

Beyond Buying & Selling

PakWheels doesn't stop at buying and selling. It has built an impressive social media presence with 13 million followers across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

They're not just posting car reviews; they share breaking automotive news, tips, and everything in between. Their platform and app collectively get over 200 million visits annually, with more than 10 million registered users, showing just how trusted they've become in the industry.

PakWheels is not just a platform for buying and selling cars; it also connects buyers and sellers through car melas and attracts car enthusiasts to auto shows across Pakistan.

Since its launch, PakWheels has organized several car melas and auto shows in major cities, providing thousands of car

lovers with opportunities to connect, share their passion, and enjoy the experience.

Expanding Horizons

PakWheels isn't stopping at Pakistan-they've expanded internationally with the launch of ArabWheels.ae in the UAE with an ambition to expand it in entire Gulf region. Just like the PakWheels model, ArabWheels offers a user-friendly platform for buying and selling new and used cars, along with automotive news and insights. In a short time, ArabWheels.ae has gained traction and is becoming a trusted resource for car buyers and sellers in the UAE.

From its humble beginnings as an online forum to becoming a leading enterprise, PakWheels has played a crucial role in transforming Pakistan's automotive industry with its commitment to trust, transparency, and convenience.



OSAKA, JAPAN: Pakistani delegation at World Expo 2025, Osaka to showcase investment potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pak-Qatar Group achieves successful Go-Live of New CRM System

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pak-Qatar Group is proud to announce the successful go-live of its newly implemented Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The milestone was celebrated in collaboration with Pak Qatar's technology partner, Maison Consulting.

This strategic digital initiative marks a significant step forward in Pak-Qatar Group's mission to elevate customer experience through innovation and operational efficiency. The new CRM system is designed to streamline internal workflows, deliver personalized engagement,

ment, and enhance responsiveness across all group companies.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Waqas Ahmed, CEO of Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Limited, stated: "This go-live represents more than just a technological upgrade, it reflects our unwavering commitment to serving our members better, faster, and in a more personalized manner.

The CRM system is a vital enabler in our journey to digitize customer interactions while staying firmly rooted in our values of Shariah-compliant excellence."

The successful deployment of this CRM solu-

tion reinforces Pak-Qatar Group's vision to lead with innovation while maintaining its ethical and faith-based foundations.

By integrating smarter tools and more intuitive processes, the Group aims to foster stronger relationships with its participants, ensuring that their needs are met with greater care, clarity, and convenience.

Pak-Qatar Group remains committed to staying ahead of the curve, investing in technology, people, and partnerships that support its goal to lead as the most trusted name in Shariah-compliant Takaful solutions across Pakistan and beyond.

About Pak-Qatar Group:

Pak-Qatar Group stands as Pakistan's Premier and Pioneer Islamic financial services group, offering a comprehensive range of savings and protection solutions that adhere to the principles of Shariah-compliant finance. With steadfast commitment to excellence and strong emphasis on Islamic values, the group encompasses companies such as Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Limited, Pak-Qatar General Takaful Limited, Pak-Qatar Investment (Private) Limited and Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited.

AKU's digital immunization solution recognized

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University (AKU) is proud to announce that its innovative digital health solution, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Electronic Immunization Registry (KP-EIR), has received a Merit honour at the prestigious Spring 2025 Digital Health Awards®. This international competition, presented by the Digital Health Resource Center (dHRC), recognizes the world's best digital health resources.

The KP-EIR, a customized version of AKU's foundational Hayat platform, was specifically recognized for its impactful contribution to public health. Developed at the

request of the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, this system has revolutionized the region's Expanded Programme on Immunization. By significantly improving data management, accessibility, and programme oversight, KP-EIR has directly strengthened vaccination efforts across the province. The Spring 2025 Digital Health Awards® featured 65 categories, attracting over 600 entities from across the globe. A distinguished panel of 68 digital health media experts meticulously judged submissions, selecting award recipients based on their innovation and impact.

"We are immensely honoured to receive this Merit

award for KP-EIR," said Dr Saleem Sayani, Director, AKU Digital Health Resource Center. "This recognition is a testament to AKU's commitment to leveraging technology for social good and public health advancement. The successful conversion and deployment of Hayat into KP-EIR highlights the adaptability and scalability of our digital solutions, directly contributing to stronger health systems and healthier communities."

This award underscores AKU's dedication to developing cutting-edge, practical digital health interventions that address critical health challenges and improve healthcare delivery on a broader scale.

OICCI shows concern over climate change

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives and widespread devastation caused by recent flash floods and torrential rains in various parts of Pakistan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and the many communities facing hardship as a result of these catastrophic events.

These recurring climate-related disasters are no longer isolated incidents, they are a reflection of a troubling new normal. Pakistan stands among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, bearing the brunt of environmental crises it played little role in creating. The impact is not only humanitarian but also economic, exacerbating the challenges of an already constrained national economy.

As highlighted at the OICCI's 3rd Pakistan Climate Conference held earlier in 2025, and echoed by the World Bank, Pakistan requires an estimated \$348 billion in climate investment by 2030 to effectively adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Meeting this target is beyond the capacity of a single country alone. It demands a concerted, collaborative response. OICCI urges the Government of Pakistan, international development partners, and global climate institutions to come together in addressing this growing existential threat. Climate change is not confined by borders, and neither should the response be.

ICCI stands firm for business community rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Nasir Mansoor Qureshi has emphasized the urgent need for long-term and consistent economic policies to ensure sustainable growth and stability in Pakistan.

Speaking to visiting delegations of traders and industrialists on Friday, alongside Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, the ICCI

President said that policy consistency, rooted in national economic interests, is the only viable path to steer the country out of the ongoing crisis.

He termed short-term and ad-hoc policymaking as a major cause of uncertainty, undermining investor confidence and hampering economic prosperity. "Unpredictable policies create hesitation among local and foreign investors alike," he added.

Nasir Qureshi stressed the need for creating an enabling business environ-

ment, calling for the elimination of coercive measures and the adoption of facilitative mechanisms to boost trade and industrial activity. "Ease of doing business must be a priority if we are to revive economic momentum," he added. He further underscored the importance of inclusive policymaking, stating that it is imperative for the government to take all stakeholders, especially Chambers of Commerce, into confidence before finalizing any major economic decision.

"Participation of the business community in policy formation ensures better implementation and ownership," he said.

The ICCI President reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to acting as a bridge between the business community and government institutions.

"We will continue to play our advocacy role to safeguard the interests of traders and industrialists and promote a business-friendly environment in the country," he concluded.

Textile exports rise by 7.39pc to \$17.887b in FY 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): Textile exports witnessed an increase of 7.39 percent during the financial year (2024-25) as compared to the last year 2023-24, said Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Friday. The textile exports from the country were recorded at \$ 17,887.038 million during the fiscal year 2024-25 against the exports of \$ 16,655.899 million during the last year. The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included knitwear, the export of which increased by 13.68

percent to \$ 5,010.467 million from \$ 4,407.573 million while the export of bed wear surged by 11.07 percent to \$ 3,112.848 million from \$ 2,802.670 million. The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included towels, the export of which rose by 2.61 percent to \$ 1,082.611 million from \$ 1,055.108 million, tents, canvas, and tarpaulin by 6.21 percent to \$ 124.870 million from \$ 117.564 million; yarn other than cotton yarn by 4.75 percent to \$ 34.042 million from \$ 32.498 million,

and the ready-made garments up by 15.85 percent to \$ 4,128.556 million this year compared to the exports of \$ 3,563.599 million last year.

Similarly, the export of art, silk and synthetic textile grew by 8.80 percent to \$ 399.515 million from \$ 367.199 million, made up articles (excl. towels and bed wear) increased by 8.45 percent to \$ 775.791 million from \$ 715.333 million while the export of other textile materials went up by 1.65 percent to \$ 727.764 million from \$ 715.955 million.

The textile commodities that witnessed negative trade growth included raw cotton, the exports of which declined by 98.45 percent to \$0.871 million from \$56.086 million.

Likewise, the exports of cotton yarn declined by 28.76 percent to \$680.700 million from \$955.510 million whereas the export of cotton carded or combed dipped by 99.28 percent from \$0.837 million to \$0.006 million during the period under review.

Pakistan showcases investment potential of KP at Expo 2025 Osaka

F.P. Report

OSAKA, JAPAN: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT), successfully hosted the Pak-Japan Trade & Investment Conference on July 17, 2025, at the World Expo 2025, Osaka. The event drew strong interest from the international Business community especially Japanese businessmen, as well as diplomats, investors, and Expo general visitors.

The conference served as a strategic business outreach, spotlighting the immense economic and tourism potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a province rapidly emerging as a key destination for foreign investment.

"With a renewed focus on economic development, industrialization, and regional connectivity, KP now stands as a prom-

ising destination for foreign direct investment across multiple sectors-including energy, mining, tourism, agriculture, and industrial manufacturing." Said Mr. Hassan Masood Kunwar, VC, KPBOIT, while opening the formal proceedings of the conference.

The session featured presentations and discussions by senior KP government officials and advisors on topics including:

"KP's competitive advantages as a destination for foreign direct investment

"Tourism and cultural heritage as economic growth drivers

"Infrastructure development and regional connectivity opportunities

Delivering the welcome remarks, Mr. Abdul Hameed, Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan/ Section Commissioner General for Expo 2025, emphasized the importance of economic diplomacy and remarked,

"Pakistan's future lies in sustainable partnerships. Today, we extend a sincere invitation to our Japanese friends to explore the business potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province with unlimited potential especially of mineral resources."

Mr. Muzzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister KP on Finance, highlighted fiscal reforms and incentives offered by the Government of Pakistan, stating, "KP is investor-ready. Our government is committed to create a conducive environment for the investors offering various incentives, unlocking private sector-led growth."

Dr. Abdul Samad, Director of Archaeology & Museums, showcased KP's archaeological treasures and cultural tourism routes through engaging visual content. Emphasizing on potential of religious tourism in Pakistan, he invited the

visitors to explore the remains Gandhara civilization specifically in KP region.

Attendees were also shown short documentaries on KP's mineral wealth, Gandhara Civilization and strategic sectors, offering a comprehensive overview of investment-ready opportunities as well as cultural heritage of the province.

"The conference concluded with a productive networking session between KP officials and Japanese counterparts. Discussions were held on potential collaborations in mining, hospitality, logistics, and heritage tourism. Participants expressed appreciation for the direct access to government leadership and the clarity of KP's strategic investment roadmap.

Following the official program, dance performances by the troupe from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa brought a piece of KP's

soul to Osaka. These performances were served a mean to invite international audience to experience Pakistan in a beautiful way. The traditional music of "Dhol" & "Shehnai" and Khattak Sword dance of the troupe reflected the resilience and warmth of Pakistani people.

Mr. Muhammad Naseer, Project Director of the Pakistan Pavilion, noted, "This was not just a conference, it was a genuine dialogue between potential investors and Investment departments. Platforms like this, held on the sidelines of the Pavilion, amplify Pakistan's voice at a global forum. The Pavilion's natural theme, anchored by the iconic Pink Rock Salt, continues to be a major attraction at Expo 2025."

In parallel with the business conference, the Pakistan Pavilion hosted three vibrant cultural evenings (July 14-16) at the Expo's Pop-Up

Stages. The Khattak Dance, traditional music, and regional performances from KP drew enthusiastic crowds and widespread acclaim.

These cultural showcases complemented the investment narrative by presenting Pakistan as a country rich in tradition, diversity, and hospitality. Set within the broader message of the Pakistan Pavilion at Expo 2025, the performances offered visitors a deeper emotional and cultural connection with the country and reaffirmed the Pavilion's role as a vibrant platform for showcasing Pakistan's identity, creativity, and global potential.

To explore the Pakistan Pavilion's experiences and initiatives at Expo 2025 Osaka, please visit: www.pakistanexpo2025.com

Follow the journey on Instagram, X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok: @pakatworldexpo

2025 Osaka:

Expo 2025 Osaka is a world exposition that will bring together nations, organisations, and individuals to address global challenges and showcase innovative solutions under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", with sub-themes "Saving Lives", "Empowering Lives", and "Connecting Lives". The Pakistan Pavilion will celebrate the nation's rich cultural heritage, innovative spirits, and philosophical depth under the theme "Universe in a Grain of Salt". Through immersive exhibits and interactive experiences, the Pavilion aims to inspire global audiences and foster international collaboration.

About Trade Development Authority of Pakistan:

The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is the premier government agency dedicated to fos-

tering, promoting, and enhancing Pakistan's international trade. With a mission to boost the country's exports and connect Pakistani businesses to global markets, TDAP plays a pivotal role in trade development. Our comprehensive services encompass market research, trade promotion, capacity building and facilitating business collaborations. TDAP is committed to creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive, driving economic growth, and contributing to the sustainable development of Pakistan. As the gateway to international trade opportunities, TDAP strives to empower Pakistani enterprises, encourage innovation, and build enduring partnerships on the global stage. We invite businesses, investors, and stakeholders to collaborate with us in shaping a vibrant and competitive future for Pakistan's trade sector.



In brief

Pak to feature in World Squash events

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan junior team departed to Egypt on Friday to feature in the World Junior Individual Squash Championships and World Junior Team Squash Championships, taking place in Egypt from July 21 to August 1. The Pakistan contingent is all set to make their mark on the world stage, led by Sqn Ldr Atif Kamran (Team Manager) and Coach Faraz Muhammad, the talented young players are ready to give it their all in the championships, said a press release. The players include Anas Ali Shah, Abdullah Nawaz, Umair Arif and Yahya Khan. The Pakistani contingent departed from Islamabad Int'l Airport, filled with enthusiasm and pride to represent Pakistan.

Pakistan begin training in Dhaka

DHAKA (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan national cricket team Friday held its first training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, gearing up for the upcoming T20 series against Bangladesh. After a day of rest following their arrival, the players took to the field for a comprehensive practice session. Under the watchful eyes of the coaching staff, the squad began with warm-ups before diving into focused fielding, batting, and bowling drills. Batters trained in the nets with tailored sessions designed to suit the local pitch conditions, while bowlers delivered spells with full rhythm and intensity. The energy at the ground reflected the squad's intent to make a strong start to the tour. The three-match T20I series kicks off with the first game scheduled for July 20.

Ince banned for drink-driving

LONDON (APP): Former Liverpool and Manchester United star Paul Ince has been banned from driving for 12 months and ordered to pay £7,085 (\$9,524) after a drink-driving offence. Ince admitted driving his black Range Rover while over the limit on June 28 in Cheshire. The ex-England captain had a reading of 49 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath when he was stopped by police, Chester Magistrates court heard on Friday. Nigel Jones, prosecuting, said: "On the day in question, the defendant was witnessed by an off-duty police officer driving a vehicle perceived to be swerving across the road." He said the 57-year-old's car swerved across the central reservation, hitting bollards and causing two tyres to burst. Frank Rogers, defending Ince, said: "My client finds himself today facing the huge impact of a ban, but he accepts he only has himself to blame for that. "He misjudged the fact he believed at the time he would be under the limit," Rogers said Ince had been at Heswall Golf Club and had not eaten before having two drinks in the clubhouse. "He felt fine to drive, of course we now know that he shouldn't have done," Rogers said. District Judge Jack McGarva told Ince: "The message has got to be if you're going to drive you don't drink at all." Ince, who also played for Inter Milan and West Ham, earned 53 caps for England, winning two Premier League titles among a host of trophies during his six years as a United midfielder. He moved into management after retiring, with his most recent spell in charge at Reading ending in 2023.

Pakistan to host South Africa for three ODIs in build-up to 2025 women's WC

KARACHI: Pakistan will play three ODIs at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore against South Africa from September 16 to 22 in the build-up to the 2025 ODI World Cup before leaving for Sri Lanka, where they will play all their group matches - as well knock-out matches, if they qualify for that stage. There is no other cricket scheduled for the team for the rest of 2025 apart from a three-match T20I series in Dublin in early August. The major part of the build-up to the T20 World Cup in England in June-July 2026 will be in South Africa, where they play three ODIs and three T20Is in February-March next year, and the same number of ODIs and T20Is against Zimbabwe at home in April-May. That series was supposed to include five T20Is in addition to the three ODIs according to

the future tours programme, but has been trimmed to three. Pakistan will then travel to Ireland for a triangular T20I series also involving West Indies in May-June before travelling to England for the World Cup. The women's Under-19 team is scheduled to play a national T20 tournament in Karachi from September 15 to October 6. The PCB has said in a statement that the tournament's top performers would be invited to a three-week skills development camp afterwards too. This, and a conditioning camp, will lay the foundation for the team for their tour of Bangladesh for a five-match T20 series in December this year. On the domestic seniors' front, the PCB is "actively engaging in discussions with various departments to introduce a departmen-

tal tournament for women's cricket" and "this initiative will provide additional playing opportunities for our women cricketers", PCB's head of women's cricket, Rafia Haider, said. The tournament, if it comes to pass, would slot into the domestic calendar alongside the women's one-day tournament, which takes place in Karachi from November 6 to 24. The international players are expected to take part in this event, played on a double-league basis and featuring 15 matches. The women's T20 tournament will be staged in Karachi from March 24 to April 17 next year. An inter-university tournament is scheduled for October 2025 as well, though no schedule or venues have been announced for it yet. —espnricinfo

Pogacar extends Tour de France lead with dominant time-trial win



PEYRAGUDES (APP): Tadej Pogacar powered to victory in an uphill time trial on stage 13 of the Tour de France on Friday to stretch his lead in the race to more than four minutes. Jonas Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel clung on to their places in the overall top three, but this 10.9km time-trial triumph was defending champion Pogacar's second crushing win in two days. Pogacar was last down the start ramp of the 171 riders setting off and stunned rivals by using a road bike instead of one typically used for time trials. "It's more comfortable and I ride that 95 percent of the year," he explained. "I went without a radio too, there are time clocks along the way so I just looked at them." Hulk and Spider-Man Deeked out in his overall leader's yellow kit, the 26-year-old Team UAE rider was faster from the off, despite his exertions from the previous day, when he finished over two minutes ahead of main rival Vingegaard. "I was feeling good all day, from when I got up. I

was planning to go all in from start to finish and that's what I did," said Pogacar, who won the Tour de France in 2020, 2021 and 2024. Pogacar had a sticker of the Hulk comic book superhero on his bike but said after the stage his hero was Spider-Man. "Hulk though, he's the one you don't want to make angry," said Pogacar. By the time he finished stage 13 at the Peyragudes Altiport where the opening scene of the James Bond movie "Tomorrow Never Dies" was shot, Pogacar was 36 seconds faster than Vingegaard, while Primoz Roglic was third at 1min 20sec. Evenepoel was overtaken close to the line by Vingegaard, but said he was too tired to care. "I was drained," he said, slumped in a chair. "I didn't give a damn when Jonas went past." "I just wanted to finish. To be honest I'm relieved it's over," said the double Olympic champion. Most riders warmed up for the time trial wearing ice jackets to combat the sizzling 30C temperature at the foot of the climb.

Australian champion Luke Plapp set the early pace and sat in the hot seat all day before suddenly packing his case and vacating it on seeing Vingegaard storm up the mountain. Pogacar was even faster. At 1580m altitude the ride remained beneath the clouds and below the tree-line, but even atop the hill it was punishingly hot. American Quinn Simmons gave hundreds of high-fives on the home straight as one of the rare riders appearing to enjoy the climb. Saturday's stage 14 is another punishing affair with around 50km of climbing but it will likely be raced in rain. It starts with the famous Col de Tourmalet and ends at the Luchon Superbagneres ski resort. Stage 15 is a hilly run to the walled city of Carcassonne but for Pogacar there remains the spectre of three more massive mountain stages in the final week. There is also the prospect of potential chaos in Paris with three ascents of Montmartre's old cobbled lanes on the final day.

Pakistan crush India to seal Asian U16 Volleyball final

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan secured a place in the final of the Asian Under-16 Volleyball Championship after a decisive 3-0 victory over India on Friday. The national side recorded a comprehensive win against their long-standing rivals, dominating the match in straight sets with scores of 25-16, 25-19 and 25-12. With this result, Pakistan advanced to the final of the continental competition. — PM extends felicitations to team on dominate win over India – Pakistan have advanced to the final of the tournament after securing an emphatic victory over India, maintaining an unbeaten record throughout the competition.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended his congratulations to the volleyball team, praising their performance and expressing pride in the achievement. "It is indeed heartening to see Pakistan reach the final by defeating India in such a convincing manner. The entire nation takes pride in the achievements of its youth. We pray that Allah Almighty grants success to the team in the final as well," he said.

Pakistan's Hasnain clinches IBSF U17 Snooker world title



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's rising snooker star Hasnain Akhtar clinched the title at the IBSF World U17 Snooker Championship with a dominant display in the final, defeating Wales' Riley Powell in a one-sided encounter on Friday. Hasnain outclassed his Welsh opponent with a straight-frames victory, securing the final 4-0. The 16-year-old Pakistani cueist produced frame scores of 86-7, 73-35, 50-31 and 98-4, showcasing his class and composure on the global stage. The match, officiated by Bahrain's Nadhem Ahmed, saw Hasnain deliver two notable breaks of 44 and 67 in the first and fourth frames respectively, underlining his control throughout the match. Powell struggled to make an impact, with Hasnain never allowing him to settle into rhythm. With this victory, Muhammad Hasnain has become the first Pakistani player to win the IBSF World U17 Snooker Championship. He adds this title to his growing list of accolades, having also won the Asian U21 Championship earlier this year. This is Pakistan's first IBSF title in the U17 age group since the global body restructured its junior categories in 2023, converting the Under-18 championship into the current U17 format. The last comparable triumph came in 2017 when Naseem Akhtar, another rising star from Pakistan, won the IBSF World Under-18 Championship. Hasnain's triumph adds to Pakistan's growing prominence in the global snooker arena and offers hope for a brighter future for cue sports in the country.

McIlroy eager for British Open glory on home soil

PORTRUSH (APP): Rory McIlroy said he will need to turn flashes of brilliance into firing on all cylinders for his final two rounds as he aims to win the British Open on home soil at Royal Portrush. The Masters champion sits at three under par, five behind clubhouse leader Brian Harman, after the opening two days of his return to Northern Ireland. After a rollercoaster first round that contained five birdies, four bogeys and a series of wild tee shots, McIlroy was more controlled on his way to a 69 on Friday. "I feel like my game's definitely good enough to make a run," McIlroy told reporters. "I'm excited for the weekend. "I've been somewhat close to my best over the first two days in little bits here and there. I'm going to need to have it all under control and have it sort of all firing over the weekend to make a run." McIlroy has at least ensured he will be around for the weekend, in contrast to six years ago when he failed to make the cut at Portrush in the first staging of the British Open on the island of Ireland for 68 years.

The world number two said he felt both the pressure and the privilege of enjoying the "support of a nation" during his opening round on Thursday, but is trying to harness the atmosphere to bring out his best. "It was 20 years ago that I played the North of Ireland here, and never in my wildest dreams did I think that I'd be coming back as a Grand Slam champion with the support of a nation behind me trying to win an Open Championship," added McIlroy. "I count myself very grateful and very lucky that I'm in this position."

Man Utd agree deal to sign Brentford winger Mbeumo



LONDON (APP): Manchester United have reportedly agreed to sign Cameroon winger Bryan Mbeumo from Brentford in a deal worth an initial £65 million (\$87 million) as Ruben Amorim steps up his overhaul of the team's misfiring attack. Mbeumo attracted Amorim's attention with 20 goals in 38 Premier League games for Brentford last season. Tottenham, now managed by former Brentford boss Thomas Frank, were also chasing the 25-year-old before United's improved offer sealed the deal after their two previous bids were rebuffed. United will pay an additional £6 million in potential add-ons to Brentford. Mbeumo is due to undergo a medical in time to travel to the United States on Tuesday as Amorim's men start their pre-season tour. He is set to become United's third signing since the end of last season, joining Wolves forward Matheus Cunha and teenage Paraguayan defender Diego Leon at Old Trafford. Amorim has been determined to revamp United's forward options after a woeful campaign. They suffered a toothless 1-0 defeat against Tottenham in the Europa League final and a 15th-place finish in the top flight that ranked as their lowest since

1973-74. Rasmus Hojlund and Joshua Zirkzee struggled as Amorim's main strikers last term. Amorim has reportedly told Alejandro Garnacho to look for a new club, while Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho are expected to leave following their loan spells at Aston Villa and Chelsea respectively. Mbeumo will be Amorim's latest new recruit in his bid to revitalise moribund United. Having already paid £62.5 million for Cunha, United's spending spree comes despite their failure to qualify for the Champions League costing the club a minimum of £70 million. The versatile Mbeumo is able to operate in a variety of roles on the flanks or in central attacking areas. His pace, creativity and clinical finishing should be a significant boost to United. Mbeumo blossomed in six years at Brentford, scoring 70 goals and providing 51 assists in 242 appearances in all competitions following his move from French club Troyes in 2019. He helped the Bees win promotion to the Premier League in 2021 and was instrumental in their impressive 10th-place finish in 2024-25.

Henry's three wickets set up the win as NZ cruise past Zimbabwe

HARARE: New Zealand took the lead in the Zimbabwe T20I tri-series points table after a second successive win, this time over the hosts. After New Zealand's bowling attack kept Zimbabwe to 120, the lowest first-innings total of the tournament so far, their batters polished off the required runs inside 14 overs, which helped their net run rate balloon to 1.919. Zimbabwe remain without a point, and with much work to do to avoid being knocked out of their own competition. They need to win both of their next two games, against South Africa and New Zealand, to progress to the final, and will need a major improvement in their batting to get there. Although Zimbabwe played more aggressively than in their opening match - according to ESPNcricinfo's ball-by-ball data, 27.5% of their shots were attacking in this innings compared with 20.83% in their previous game, against South Africa -

they hit the same number of fours (11), two fewer sixes (one in this innings, three on Monday), and scored lesser runs overall on Friday than against South Africa. Zimbabwe's highest partnership against New Zealand was the opening stand of 37, which could not stand up to New Zealand's two half-century stands. After the loss of Tim Seifert in the second over of the chase, Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra put on 59 off 44 balls before Conway and Daryl Mitchell combined for 58 off 32 deliveries to ease New Zealand to a win. New Zealand will also be satisfied with the performance of their bowling attack. Matt Henry followed up his 3 for 34 against South Africa with 3 for 26 against Zimbabwe, and used the short ball to good effect. On a surface that turned substantially, New Zealand's spinners Mitchell Santner, Michael Bracewell and Ravindra

claimed a wicket each, and conceded just 43 runs in nine overs collectively. Zimbabwe had no one to match either that wicket-taking or that economy. Blessing Muzarabani took a wicket, and conceded only at 6.75 runs an over. But that was good as it got for Zimbabwe. Their decision to leave out a spinner in Wellington Masakadza for seamer Tinotenda Maposa will also cause questions over their team balance. Madhevere's intent (almost) pays off Wessly Madhevere flicked the first ball off his pads and past Seifert to start Zimbabwe off with a boundary. Three balls later, he used his wrists to whip Henry behind square for four more. Zimbabwe had 11 runs from the opening over, more than double they scored against South Africa - and all of them belonged to Madhevere. He came into this match under pressure - with only one score over 20 in his last 11 innings - and

showed that he was willing to take things on, even if he didn't always get it right. In the second over, Madhevere advanced towards Jacob Duffy, swung hard but missed, and then tried to scoop. Together with Brian Bennett, Madhevere got Zimbabwe to 36 runs from the first five overs, and then with Clive Madande to 61 for 2 at the halfway stage. But his ambition got the better of him when he backed away and was too late on a shot off Adam Milne to be bowled for 36. At least, it was his highest score in 14 innings since his 43 against India a year ago. NZ scythe through the middle order Madhevere's dismissal came 14 balls after Madande was deceived in flight from Ravindra, and stumped in the middle of a collapse of 5 for 37 that put the breaks on Zimbabwe. Ryan Burl struck two fours before he tried to reverse sweep against Bracewell and was caught at back-

ward point. Sikandar Raza played across the line, and got a leading edge off Santner to be caught at extra cover. Tashinga Musekiwa tried to pull a short ball from Henry but top edged, and was well caught by Duffy at fine leg. Zimbabwe were 98 for 6 in the 17th over, and lost the middle order in the space of 43 balls. They scored just 21 runs off the last three overs, and could not finish with any kind of flourish. Ngarava, Muzarabani start well After reducing South Africa to 17 for 2 earlier this week, Richard Ngarava could have had a wicket with his first ball against New Zealand. He went on a back of a length, and got an outside edge off Seifert, but the chance fell short of Burl at slip. Four balls later, Conway, on 1 at the time, reached out for a wider delivery, and edged to short third but Blessing Muzarabani fluffed the chance. Muzarabani made up for

that when he removed Seifert with his first ball, albeit not his best one. He went short and wide outside off, and Seifert hit in the air to Musekiwa at cover. Ngarava was not quite as lucky, though. In his next over, Ravindra was beaten by a ball that moved away late, and then Ngarava thought he had Conway out caught behind but the umpire was unmoved. Muzarabani got Conway to miscue a pull, and then hit the ball in the air towards mid-off. But both chances landed safely. New Zealand were 19 for 1 after four overs, and had only hit one boundary until then, which showed Zimbabwe's ability to put them under pressure. But a hat-trick of boundaries from Ravindra off Trevor Gwandu meant Zimbabwe could not keep them there. Conway gets comfortable... eventually While Ravindra settled in the powerplay, Conway's stay at the crease was streaky. He top-edged Muzarabani for his first

boundary, and Maposa for his second. Maposa almost dismissed Conway off another top edge when he rushed Conway into a pull, but the chance fell short of fine leg. Immediately after that, Conway was nearly down on his haunches, and appeared to be struggling with his health. But later in the over, he sliced Maposa over backward point. Still, he was nearly run-out two overs later when Mitchell called him through for a quick single, and he was not in the frame when the throw came in at the striker's end. It was only when Conway smashed Ngarava over the deep-mid-wicket boundary for six that he looked like he was in control. He went on to send Raza over long-on for a second six, and brought up his fifty off 34 balls. It was Conway's highest score in six T20I innings dating back to last year's T20 World Cup, and his second half-century in his last 15 T20I innings. —espnricinfo



In brief

IRSA releases 386,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 386,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 423,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1530.00 feet which was 128.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 270,800 cusecs and 270,400 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.00 feet, which was 138.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,700 cusecs and 8,400 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 250,200, 196,400, 239,500 and 265,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 37,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 45,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seizes 37 kg drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations across the country seized 37.674 kg drugs worth more than over Rs 2.9 million and arrested four accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesperson, in an operation near Tarkai Toll Plaza, Jhelum, 674 grams ice drug was recovered from the possession of a female drug trafficker. Near Airport Road, Quetta, 14 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist and in another operation near Yaru area, Pishin, five kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist and in another operation near Yaru area, Pishin, five kg hashish was seized from the possession of a drug trafficker going on a motorcycle. Separate cases have been registered against the accused under the CNS Act, the spokesperson informed.

5 drug pushers nabbed

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during the ongoing crackdown against drug pushers nabbed five accused from across the district with more than 5 kilograms of charas. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the Sadiqabad Police detained an accused on the recovery of 1.8 kg charas from his possession. The Ratta Amral Police also arrested a suspect with 1.62 kg charas, while the Gujar Khan Police nabbed two accused, recovering 1.8 kg of the contraband item. Similarly, the Pirwadhai Police also detained an accused with 700 grams of charas.

CTP issues 1,074 challan tickets

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police Rawalpindi have issued 1,074 challan tickets for traffic rule violations in one day. During the ongoing special campaign traffic rule violators, fines were also imposed on the law-breakers on Thursday, a CTP spokesman said on Friday. Giving the break-up, he said 255 citizens were given challan tickets for driving motorcycles without helmets and 139 others for not having driving licenses. Similarly, he said, 72 vehicles owners were issued challans for non-standard number plates, and 69 for one-way traffic and 462 for lane and line violations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a high-level meeting. —APP Photo

Heavy rains, medical camps set up in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): In response to the flood crisis caused by heavy monsoon rains in Rawalpindi, the District Health Authority has accelerated its efforts to provide critical medical relief to affected communities.

A comprehensive operation is underway, with the setting up of a number of Medical Camps at various locations against the crisis. Allied hospitals including THQs have been put on high alert to combat any emergency situation. Spokesman DHA, Dr. Waqar Ahmad confirmed the proactive measures DHA has taken to reduce health risks amid monsoon. The camps staffed with doctors, paramedics, and supplied with medicines and first aid essentials have been engaged in medical relief activities.

Talking to APP, spokesman Dr. Waqar Ahmad highlighted the extensive preparations underway. "The health authority has established a network of flood medical camps to reach the most vulnerable areas, including area along Nala Lai, Chahan Dam on Chakri Road, Government Girls College Khayaban-e-Sir Syed and Gawalmundi,

Darya Abad", he said.

The network extends to Rawal Town, Rawalpindi Cantt and Pothohar Town, with locations such as Kattarian Bridge and Sharoon Colony at Sawan Camp ensuring comprehensive coverage.

"We have ensured a stockpile of 42,000 Aqua Tabs, 5,000 doses of Tetanus injections, 500 packets of Oral Rehydration Salts, 200 units of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV), 2,000 Primaquine tablets, and 53 units of Anti-Snake Venom (ASV), all ready for distribution from district stores," he said. To a question on resource allocation, he added that these supplies are critical to addressing immediate health needs in flood-affected zones. The authority's proactive approach aims to prevent outbreaks and provide timely care.

"Our teams include 5 Medical Officers, 5 Lady Health Visitors, 5 Dispensers, 5 Vaccinators, 5 CDC Supervisors, and 5 Support Staff, ensuring every camp is well-supported," he said. Despite the heaviest downpour of the year, the overall medical situation is under control as the district administration

implemented a coordinated multi-pronged strategy which was devised on the instructions of the Punjab government as a preemptive planning measures. The health authority clarified that while no mobile teams were currently active, the focus remained on strengthening fixed locations.

The widespread flood camp locations include Kattarian Bridge, Bangash Colony Pirwadhahi, Zia-Ul-Haq Colony Pirwadhahi, Boring Road, Dhoke Mangtal, Pirwadhahi Bridge Near PSO Pump, Dhoke Najju, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Dhoke Dalal Near Chungi # 4, M. Hussain Bridge, Mehar Colony, Dhoke Hassu, Dhoke Ratta, Dhoke Elahi Buksh, Sadiqabad, Hazara Colony Bridge, Ganjmandi, Gawalmundi, Javed Colony-Nadeem Colony, Tipu Road, Aslam Market-Tahli Mori-Faisal Colony, Bakramandi, Jan Colony-Tench Bhatta, Pulli Akhri Stop-Tench Bhatta, Banaras Colony, Range Road and Sharoon Colony in Sawan Camp.

The coordinated mechanism among the hospitals is also in place. DHQ Teaching Hospital, Holy

Family Hospital, Benazir Bhutto Hospital and THQ hospitals of the district have been put on high alert.

Dr. Ejaz Butt, MS, Holy Family Hospital, informed APP that the emergency department of the hospital has been further capacitated to receive the flood victims.

"Doctors and paramedical staff have assigned the duties in different departments to fully engage with the patients", he said.

Dr. Ikramullah Niazi, MS, DHQ Hospital, also confirmed the readiness of the hospital to combat any emergency situation with special deployment of the healthcare staff and sparing wards and beds for flood victims. Similar arrangements have been made in BBH. Moreover, THQ Hospitals have also been instructed to fully comply with the emergency protocols.

Since the Punjab government has declared an emergency in the province to combat flood situations in the flood zones, Pindi's district administration has also implemented the orders to impose section-144 in the district till 30th August amid predicted heavy monsoon rains.

Mohsin Naqvi orders improved coordination among departments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed all departments under the Ministry of Interior to improve coordination for better service delivery and performance.

Chairing a high-level meeting in Islamabad, the minister said there is a serious lack of coordination among the ministry's subordinate institutions, which must be addressed on an emergency basis.

He asked all departments to submit proposals within three days suggesting changes to rules and other necessary recommendations. A comprehensive plan is to be finalized and presented by the Federal Secretary of the Interior.

Naqvi emphasized the need for teamwork and stronger cooperation between departments. "We need to fully benefit from each other's strengths to improve institutional per-

formance," he said.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior Talat Chaudhry, senior ministry officials, and heads of various departments including FIA, NADRA, Islamabad Police, Passport and Immigration, Cyber Crime Investigation, and others.

The minister said that better coordination will ultimately benefit the public and ensure more efficient service delivery.

Pakistan and Denmark to strengthen bilateral cultural ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Denmark hosted a farewell reception in honour of the Ambassador Jakob Linulf, marking the conclusion of his diplomatic tenure in Pakistan.

The event was graced by the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, who attended as the chief guest.

During the reception, the Minister held a constructive dialogue with Ambassador Linulf, focusing on enhancing cultural

cooperation, promoting tourism, and exploring joint initiatives in the fields of arts and heritage.

Highlighting the spirit of cultural diplomacy, Mr. Usman Shah, CEO of Niftysphere Institute of Arts and Design, presented a traditional painting to Ambassador Linulf on behalf of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

The artwork, depicting the vibrant cultural heritage of Sindh, served as a symbol of appreciation and friendship between the

two countries.

The event underscored the growing partnership between Pakistan and Denmark in fostering people-to-people connections and artistic exchange.

On the sidelines of the reception, Aurangzeb Khichi also held a brief meeting with the Italian Ambassador, Ms. Marilina Armellini.

The two dignitaries discussed avenues for future collaboration in the preservation and promotion of cultural and heritage sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Human Rights, welcomed Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs, to discuss enhanced cooperation on minority rights and inclusive development.

NA Speaker pays tribute to martyred Constable Haider Ali

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of Constable Haider Ali, who lost his life while participating in rescue operations during the recent floods in Jhelum.

Expressing profound sorrow over the loss,

Speaker Sadiq lauded the constable's selfless service and unwavering commitment to duty.

"Constable Haider Ali has set a shining example of courage and devotion by laying down his life to protect others," he said in a statement.

Sardar Sadiq praised the bravery and sacrifice of the

late constable, saying that his heroism will always be remembered and will serve as a guiding light for future generations.

The Speaker extended condolences to the bereaved family and emphasized that the nation stands united in honoring the sacrifices of its brave sons.

He said the sacrifice of martyr Haider Ali would be remembered with reverence, and his bravery would continue to serve as a guiding light for future generations.

The Speaker prayed for the elevation of the martyr's ranks and for the family to be granted patience and fortitude.

Women police officers appointed as additional SHOs

RAWALPINDI (APP): As per the vision of Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar, three lady officers of Rawalpindi Police have been appointed as additional station house officers (SHOs). According to the police spokesman, Inspector Farsia Naz was appointed as additional SHO of the City Police Station. Similarly, Inspector Syeda Maria Batool and Inspector Amna Shoaib were posted as additional SHOs at Chaklala and Cantt police stations respectively.

City Police Officer Syed Khalid Hamdani, in a statement, said the appointment of women police officers as additional SHOs was an important initiative of Rawalpindi Police. It was a step forward towards implementation of the women empowerment vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, he added. The CPO said the appointment of female officers as additional SHOs was the first phase and in the next phase, they would be assigned the responsibilities as SHOs also. He said women were working at important positions in different fields. The female officers of the Punjab Police, he added, were also performing duties at par with their male colleagues.

Mashhood announces Pakistan's first 'National Youth Games' in September

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, announced on Friday that under the vision of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, extraordinary steps are being taken to host the inaugural National Youth Games in September, a milestone initiative designed to inspire and equip youth for Olympic-level competition in 2028.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Rana Mashhood disclosed Pakistan's first-ever National Youth Games will be held this September. He emphasized that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, PML-N-led government is committed to promoting quality and skilled sports among the youth. The National Youth Games aim to provide a platform for young athletes to showcase their talents and prepare for international competitions, including the 2028 Olympics, he mentioned.

Chairman Rana Mashhood highlighted that the initiative reflects the Prime Minister's focus on youth empowerment through

sports, encouraging a culture of discipline, fitness and healthy competition.

The Games will not only identify emerging sporting talent but also foster national unity and pride by inspiring youth to excel at the highest levels. This historic event is expected to be a major step forward in Pakistan's sports development and Olympic ambitions, he added.

Responding to a query, Chairman Rana Mashhood revealed that alongside the National Youth Games, the Prime Minister's Youth Programme will launch innovative initiatives like the Innovative Awards and Perfect Pitch-based programs. These high-level, merit-based initiatives will operate with full transparency and are set to be game changers in empowering youth across the country, he added.

These initiatives are designed to recognize and reward creativity, talent and excellence among the youth across various fields, including sports, entrepreneurship and technology, he said, adding, the aim is to encourage young people to think outside the box and develop skills that can contribute to their personal growth and

the nation's progress.

He further explained the launch of the Digital Youth Hub, alongside comprehensive online courses, job opportunities, and skill development projects under NEFDEC's rigorous training programs. He highlighted the commitment to empowering youth through scholarships, the expansion of Danish Schools Punjab, Laptop schemes and the establishment of the Pakistan Endowment Fund.

With a strong focus on ethical training and strategic collaboration with TEVTA, these initiatives are designed to integrate Pakistan's youth firmly into the national mainstream, driving transformative change and unlocking their full potential, he added.

In response to a query, he said that Punjab is recognized not only for providing the highest quality education in Pakistan but also as one of the leading regions in Asia in this regard. He acknowledged the PML-N leadership, including Shahbaz Sharif's provincial projects in Punjab and the federal initiatives, as well as Nawaz Sharif's role in making their party the first political force to launch large-scale programs dedicated to youth development.



ISLAMABAD: A view of an ancient mosque situated at the premises of Lotus Lake in the capital. The century's old abandoned structure was discovered during the development work of the lake in year 2020 in the area, once known as Parian village. —APP Photo

NHA reports record Rs 50 bln revenue surge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan informed the Senate on Friday that the National Highway Authority (NHA) achieved a historic increase of Rs 50 billion in revenues during the 2024-25 fiscal year, with earnings climbing from Rs 64 billion to Rs 110 billion—a remarkable 100% rise.

During the Question Hour, the minister also updated senators on progress regarding the Lowari Tunnel's access roads. He stated that the 35.2 km network is split into two phases. The first phase, covering 18.6 km, was completed in 2010 and has been serving traffic since. The second phase, stretching 14.6 km, saw its southern segment finished in December 2020, while progress on the northern section stalled at 61.6% due to a legal battle between contractors.

He said rigid pavement was laid on 2.6 km of the

7.3 km stretch before work was halted following a court stay amid contractor disagreements. The contractor has since demobilized.

Aleem Khan explained that after securing government funding, work on the northern access resumed in June 2025. With Rs 480 million approved under RMA funds, construction is now underway and is expected to be wrapped up by December 2025.

Responding to Senator Fawzia Arshad's concerns about Chitral's deteriorating roads, Aleem Khan acknowledged that several scenic tourist regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir are hampered by poor road conditions.

He said millions of local tourists visit these areas every summer, but damaged roads are undermining both their experience and local revenue generation. He said letters have been sent to

provincial Chief Secretaries and the Prime Minister of AJK recommending that these roads be transferred to the NHA. The authority will then oversee their maintenance, redevelopment, and resurfacing.

To maintain transparency and accountability, the minister stressed that the NHA's enhanced revenue base is critical for funding road maintenance, resurfacing, bridge repairs, and new construction, despite lower PSDP allocations.

On another matter, he assured lawmakers that any violations in NHA board appointments—especially those defying Supreme Court orders—will be dealt with firmly, including dismissal if necessary.

Aleem Khan invited senators to submit any specific cases for his direct inquiry, pledging to personally follow up on each one. "If you bring any case forward, I'm ready to investigate it myself," he said.

Blind Afghan runner, gets honorary doctorate
KABUL (Pajhwok): The University of Essex in England has awarded an honorary doctorate to the blind Afghan runner Wali Mohammad Noori in recognition of his achievements in sports, as well as his social and cultural contributions. Wali Mohammad Noori posted on his Facebook page today (Friday) that after much hard work and dedication, he was honored with the honorary doctorate by the University of Essex.

Police seize cache of weapons in Ghazni
GHAZNI (BNA): The Counter-Terrorism Police have seized a large cache of weapons and ammunition in Ghazni Province, according to a statement from the Press Office of the Ministry of Interior. Over the past four months, the Counter-Terrorism Unit of the Ghazni Provincial Police Command has conducted extensive operations across various areas of the city and its districts.

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

Haqqani, Uzbek FM discuss enhanced bilateral cooperation



KABUL (Pajhwok): Senior officials from Afghanistan and Uzbekistan have discussed ways to further strengthen political, economic and cultural ties between the two countries. According to a statement from the Ministry of Interior, Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani met with Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, Minister of Transport Ilhom, and their accompanying delegation. During the meeting, Foreign Minister Saidov shared updates on the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, including details of recent meetings and the signing of a trilateral agreement. He expressed satisfaction with the progress of the major regional initiative. The ministry noted that Saidov highlighted the growing cooperation

between Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan, particularly in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. He also pointed out that Uzbekistan's trade volume with Afghanistan has nearly tripled compared to last year—a clear sign of strengthening bilateral ties. Saidov expressed hope for continued expansion of relations between the two nations. He also reiterated Uzbekistan's support for the unfreezing of Afghanistan's overseas assets, resolution of Afghan refugee issues, and Afghanistan's active participation in international forums. Haqqani welcomed the progress of the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, calling it a significant step toward boosting regional economic development. He reaffirmed Afghanistan's commitment to deepening political, economic, and cultural relations with Uzbekistan.

Ministry of Refugees announces over 1 billion AFN in UK aid for Afghan returnees



KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation announced on Friday that Acting Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Robert Dickson, the Chargé d'Affaires of the British Embassy for Afghanistan, along with several other British diplomats in Kabul. According to a statement from the ministry, Dickson stated that the UK has allocated 1.1 billion AFN to support Afghan returnees from Iran and Pakistan. He added that the funds will be disbursed through United Nations agencies. Richard Lindsay, the UK's newly appointed Special Representative for Afghanistan, was also present at the meeting. The statement added that British diplomats assured continued humanitarian assistance from London to the Afghan people and affirmed that the UK will maintain dialogue and engagement with the Islamic Emirate. Dickson also spoke about international relations with the IEA, emphasizing that existing challenges should be resolved through dialogue. Kabir welcomed the British diplomats and expressed appreciation for the UK's humanitarian assistance to Afghans. He said the IEA is actively working to provide services for returnees and is currently offering essential support at border crossings. He stressed that Afghan returnees urgently need assistance to resettle in their home regions and that humanitarian aid must not be politicized. He further called on the British government to assist in the construction of housing settlements for returnees, stating that such efforts would help prevent further displacement. Kabir added that IEA has addressed the international community's concerns regarding Afghanistan and urged Western countries, including the UK, not to further delay in officially recognizing the Islamic Emirate.

Unprecedented water crisis in Kabul threatens 6 million residents, UN warns

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on Thursday warned of a water crisis in Kabul, stating that six million people in the city are at risk of severe water shortages. In a post on its X page, UN-Habitat said that water levels in Kabul have significantly declined. According to the agency, addressing the water crisis in Afghanistan requires large-scale investment and close cooperation and coordination with international organizations. The UN body also emphasized that raising public awareness on water consumption and management is essential to tackle the crisis. Kabul is among the cities in the world that is rapidly losing its underground water resources at an alarming rate. If the current trend continues, Kabul could become the first modern city in the world to run out of drinking water within a few years. Reports indicate that in some areas of Kabul, the groundwater level has dropped by more than 30 meters, and tens of thousands of families are facing severe drinking water shortages. This drastic decline is mainly due to excessive water use, unregulated well drilling, and reduced rainfall in recent years. Meanwhile, experts warn that if the situation persists, it could lead to the spread of infectious diseases, a decline in public health, and increased internal displacement. Other specialists believe that practical and sustainable measures must be adopted to manage water resources. They stress that without a national strategy for water resource management, not only Kabul but also other cities across Afghanistan could face similar crises in the near future.



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IE restructures provincial and ministry roles

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan announced a series of new appointments across government institutions, based on a directive from the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate. According to the statement, the following appointments were made: 1. Mawlawi Ziaur Rahman Madani, former Governor of Logar, as Deputy Minister for Professional Affairs at the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs. 2. Mawlawi Gul Zarin, former Director of Nomad Affairs at the Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs, as Deputy Minister for Housing, Construction, and Regional Development at the Ministry of Urban Development. 3. Mawlawi Mahmood Shah Zahid, former Deputy for Finance and Administration at the Office of Administrative Affairs, as Deputy Director for Policy and Oversight at the General Directorate of State-Owned Enterprises. 4. Mawlawi Sayed Hassan Shah Agha, former Deputy for Orders and Decrees in Kandahar, as Deputy for Finance and Administration at the Office of Administrative Affairs. 5. Qari Salahuddin Ayoubi, former Police Chief of Zabul, appointed as the new Governor of Logar. 6. Mawlawi Qudratullah Amini, former advisor at the Ministry of Interior, appointed as Deputy Governor of Kabul. 7. Mawlawi Abdul Haleem Halimi, former district chief of Gurbuz in Khost, appointed as Police Chief of Zabul. 8. Mullah Mohammad Younus Mukhles, former Deputy Governor of Kabul, appointed as advisor to the Ministry of Interior. 9. Mawlawi Jamaluddin Wahaj, former Intelligence Director of Uruzgan, appointed as Head of Security for the Baghlan Provincial Police Command.

Health challenges facing deported Afghans at borders

KABUL (TOLONews): Afghan deportees from Iran are facing health challenges at the borders and in internal camps. According to them, the heat has caused some to fall ill during the journey. Shah Mohammad, one of the deportees from Iran, said: "We haven't seen any doctors here. When we were in Nimroz and said we were sick, they just gave us a tablet and nothing more. There was no doctor there to ask what illness we had." Habiba, a resident of Kunduz Province who spent three years in Iran, was recently forcibly deported from the country. She is now staying in a migrant camp in Kabul with her sick husband and young child, waiting to be transferred to Kunduz. Habiba told TOLONews: "My husband suffers from head, stomach, and leg pain, and it's very difficult for us to take him outside." Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Health has announced that eleven health centers have been activated at the Islam Qala border to provide services to deportees. Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesperson for the ministry, said that 120 medical staff are offering services to deportees across various departments in these centers. He added: "Eleven health centers have been activated in the Islam Qala area of Herat by the Ministry of Public Health, and 120 staff members are providing services to their fellow citizens there." This comes amid a new wave of forced deportations and mistreatment of Afghan migrants in Iran, which has raised serious concerns among the United Nations and other international organizations.

Deported Afghans say life in Iran has become unbearable

KABUL (TOLONews): Afghans deported from Iran say that life for Afghans in the country has become extremely difficult in recent days. According to them, all social services have been halted, and shops and pharmacies are refusing to sell food and medicine to Afghans. Noorullah, a deportee from Iran, said: "The government must pay attention to the hardships people are facing. Iran has expelled all Afghan migrants." Ahmad Saber, another deportee, said: "I had 100 million toman with my landlord, but he only returned 40 million and refused to give the rest. No matter what we did, neither the judge nor the police commander in that country listened to us." Mahmood, another deportee, told TOLONews: "Life in Iran was extremely hard not just for me, but for everyone. We were all anxious and couldn't even leave our homes—especially the men—because Afghans were being arrested as alleged spies." Meanwhile, others say they were deported empty-handed and left behind all their possessions in Iran, as the police forced them out. They are calling on the Islamic Emirate to negotiate with the Iranian government regarding the return of Afghan assets. Samir, a deportee, said: "We urge the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to follow up on this issue, because all our belongings, money, and vehicles are still there." Up to 30,000 Afghan migrants enter Afghanistan daily from the Islam Qala border in Herat alone.

Uzbekistan eyes Afghanistan as Central-South Asia bridge

KABUL (Pajhwok): Strengthening regional ties, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister says his country is ready to expand cooperation with Afghanistan in infrastructure, transit, energy and education, viewing Afghanistan as a key bridge between Central and South Asia. Bakhtiyor Saidov, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister, wrote on X: "We had the great pleasure of meeting with H.E. Hasan Akhund, Acting Prime Minister of Afghanistan, and reaffirming Uzbekistan's strong commitment to deepening relations with our brotherly neighbor." According to him, the meeting focused on expanding trade, humanitarian cooperation, and improving regional connectivity — including the signing of a Framework Agreement for the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway line, which he described as a vital step toward regional integration. He reiterated Uzbekistan's readiness to strengthen cooperation in key sectors and stressed that Afghanistan must serve as a strategic link between Central and South Asia. The remarks came as a high-level Uzbek delegation, led by Saidov, arrived in Kabul on Thursday for an official visit to attend the trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. Alongside trilateral and bilateral talks with Afghan officials, the delegation also signed the feasibility study agreement for the Trans-Afghan railway project.



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KABUL (TOLONews): A number of families deported from Iran are deeply concerned about the educational future of their children. They are calling on the Islamic Emirate to provide educational opportunities for their sons and daughters. Abdul Qadeer, who was deported from Iran, said: "We ask the Islamic Emirate to create educational opportunities for our children so they can have a better future." Amir, a child deported from Iran, said: "In Iran, we weren't allowed to go to school just because we were Afghan. Now that we are in our own country, we ask our own government to provide us with education so we can have a good future." At the migrant camp in Kabul, children recently deported from Iran are kneeling on the ground inside tents, pens in hand and hope in their hearts, silently engaged in writing. Nazanin, a deported child, said: "I was in second grade in Iran, and I want to study here in Afghanistan and become a teacher." Roqia, another deported child, told TOLONews: "I was in third grade in Iran, and now that I've come to Afghanistan, I want to continue my studies." Worried mothers await the uncertain future of their children. Freshta, one of the

Deported Afghan families from Iran fear for Children's education

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returnee mothers who is illiterate herself, dreams that her children will have access to education. Freshta, deported from Iran, said: "I hope my children can study and become doctors in the future. I never had the chance to go to school myself." The Ministry of Education has previously pledged to facilitate education for returnees and has reviewed the academic documents of more than 8,227 students across 25 provinces.

Ghazni vendors and farmers struggle amid economic slowdown

GHAZNI (Amu tv): Food vendors and young entrepreneurs in Ghazni Province say their livelihoods have deteriorated in recent months, as demand drops and limited institutional support leaves small businesses and agriculture ventures floundering in one of Afghanistan's historically productive regions. "People just don't have money," said Madad Ali Mohammadi, who runs a small grocery shop in Ghazni city. A father of five, Mohammadi said he now struggles to cover basic household expenses. "We're just getting by, barely finding dry bread," he said. "There's no work, no movement. Everything has slowed down." Mohammadi is among many vendors who say daily sales have dwindled sharply over the past year. In the absence of broader economic opportunities, many young people in the province have turned to fruit farming — particularly apple orchards — hoping for a stable income. But that, too, has proven difficult. Yasin Mokhtarzada, a local orchard owner, said he invested heavily in developing his land, hoping to capitalize on Ghazni's favorable climate for apple production. "But we are drowning in debt," he said. "No matter how hard we try, nothing seems to change." Ghulam Hussain Jafari, another orchard grower, blamed the lack of coordinated market protections and government oversight for undercutting local farmers. "When our apples come to market, Iranian imports flood the shelves. Prices drop and we lose everything," he said. Local sources told Amu that while Ghazni's climate remains well-suited for horticulture — including fruit orchards and vegetable greenhouses — the absence of stable market access and institutional investment has pushed many growers to the brink of collapse. "There is potential here," one agricultural official said, requesting anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media. "But without support, farmers won't keep going. And if agriculture falters, so does the entire rural economy." Farmers and vendors alike say targeted support — including access to affordable fertilizers, transportation links, and protection from cheap imports — could revive the sector and provide much-needed employment in the province, where job opportunities remain scarce under the current economic conditions.

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Hamas says Israel blocking truce, hostage release talks

GAZA CITY (AFP): The armed wing of the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Friday accused Israel of blocking a deal in talks for a temporary ceasefire and the release of hostages in Gaza.

Abu Obeida, spokesman for the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said in a video statement that Hamas “always proposed a comprehensive deal that will return all the hostages at once.” But he said Israel “rejected what we proposed,” urging it to reconsider. “If the enemy remains obstinate in this round of negotiations we cannot guarantee a return to the partial-deal proposals — including the 10-prisoner (hostage) exchange offer,” he added.

Meanwhile, Palestinians and the Israeli army clashed on Friday during a march in a village in the northern occupied West Bank against a newly established Israeli settlement outpost. “We came to this area to express our protest and say: ‘this land is ours, not yours,’” Ghassan Bazour, head of Raba’s village council, told AFP.

While all Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law, only outposts such as the one established overnight in Raba are also prohibited under Israeli law. An AFP journalist at the scene reported that a group of men holding Palestinian flags and those of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas’ Fatah party walked from Raba toward a nearby hill on top of which settlers had established the outpost. After conducting the Muslim Friday prayer at the base of the hill, people continued toward the outpost, until Israeli soldiers arrived on the scene and dispersed the crowd with tear gas, the journalist said.

The army did not respond to an AFP request for comment on Friday’s events in Raba. The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that its teams had provided support to 13 people suffer-

ing from tear gas inhalation. Village council chief Bazour said that settlers had originally taken over the hill’s high ground to establish an outpost and deny Palestinians access to nearby agricultural lands.

“There is now a settler outpost here (which) will continue to devour the land and empty these areas,” Muayad Shaaban, head of the Palestinian Authority’s Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission, told AFP. Despite it being dispersed by the army, Shaaban was enthusiastic about Friday’s march, given that violence in recent years has made all protests against settlers dangerous for Palestinians.

“This model of resistance must be applied throughout the West Bank. I call for massive marches... to stop this aggression, this terrorism,” he said. Violence in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, has soared since the Hamas attack of October 2023 triggered the Gaza war.

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 956 Palestinians, including many militants, according to health ministry figures. Over the same period, at least 36 Israelis, including soldiers, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations, according to official figures.

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ISLAMABAD: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman talking to media persons.

PA speaker to drop reference against 26 Opp MPs

E.P. Report

LAHORE: A significant breakthrough has been reached between the government and opposition in Punjab Assembly over the suspension of 26 MPs.

According to sources, Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan has decided to drop the disqualification reference filed against the opposition members in the Election Commission of Pakistan. The assembly secretariat has prepared a draft to suspend the reference moved in the ECP, the sources said.

The final draft to withdraw the reference would be issued after formal approval from the speaker, who is currently on a foreign tour. According to sources, the ruling party lawmakers had earlier submitted applications to the speaker seeking disqualification reference against 26 opposition members.

The applications were moved by Chaudhry Ahmad Iqbal, Mian Mujtaba Shujaar Rehman and Iftikhar Chachar. Sources confirmed that the matter of reinstating the suspended opposition members would be addressed once the speaker returns from his foreign trip.

Moreover, the opposition has announced a boycott of the Punjab Assembly sessions until their suspended members are reinstated. Earlier, the Punjab Assembly had witnessed a political standoff after 26 opposition members were suspended due to disorderly conduct. In an effort to restore parliamentary order and resolve the issue, a negotiation committee—comprising members from both the government and opposition—was formed.

Pak’s current account surplus records \$2.1b

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s current account surplus has recorded \$2.1 billion in the fiscal year 2024–25 (FY25), reaching the highest level in 22 years and the first opening surplus in 14 years.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude for the achievement of this major landmark and lauded the economic teams of the government on their tireless efforts, stating the achievement is a result of sound financial management and policy improvements.

Shehbaz Sharif mentioned that Pakistan’s current account surplus was mainly supported by a considerable escalation in remittances from overseas Pakistanis, which rose by over 25% helping FY25 economic progress rise. A good year-on-year increase of 8% was also seen in exports in June 2025, supporting the surplus directed alongside imports and improved foreign exchange reserves, which now exceed \$19 billion.

“This surplus is evidence of our promise to economic stability,” PM Shehbaz Sharif said. “The government is aggressively working to improve the business and investment framework, and our financial indicators show that the economy is on a steady path.”

Shehbaz Sharif additionally emphasised that the FY25 economic progress determines the success of focused policy interventions, including high interest rates, import restrictions, and incentives for export-led growth.

AI will bring change in military affairs: CASS

E.P. Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled “Artificial Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Cyber Warfare, and Unmanned Aerial Systems: A New Paradigm of Next-Generation Aerial War”.

The event was widely attended by academics, students, intellectuals, and domain experts. In his introductory remarks, Air Commodore (Retd) Dr Naveed Khaliq Ansaree, Director - CASS Lahore, noted that advancements in emerging technologies mark a seismic shift in the character of warfare.

Their impact, he stressed, is critical to the future operational readiness and strategic posture of the Pakistan Air Force. Prof Dr Yasser Ayaz, Chairman of the National Centre of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI), while delivering the keynote address, stated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will bring a transformational change and represents the biggest revolution in military affairs since the advent of gunpowder and nuclear weapons.

He added that air forces have the greatest scope for AI application, particularly in refining the OODA loop and enhancing command centres. Citing the United States’ Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) system, he emphasised the need for armed forces to adopt a unified, cross-domain approach to AI. Group Captain Farhan Ahmed, expert on Cyber operations, noted that warfare has evolved from platform-versus-platform to systems-



versus-systems, with cyber serving as a critical enabler of network-centric operations.

He stressed that integration of sensors, shooters, and decision-makers is essential for modern warfare, and that the Pakistan Air Force has already integrated around 25,000 assets under the ambit of cyber security. While discussing Operation Zarb-e-Karar, he mentioned that the PAF cyber force targeted 100 adversarial organisations with 4,400 ICT elements, achieving an ICT destruction score of 67-0. This resulted in physical ramifications, including disruption in the energy, transport, and communication sectors. Air Commodore (Retd) Raza Haider, Director - CASS - Islamabad, observed that in fifth-generation warfare, the state that masters cutting-edge technologies inevitably commands greater economic and military power.

He warned that the world is drifting towards a “tech-polar” order, with countries such as Pakistan, Türkiye, and Iran striving for full technological sovereignty, particularly in drone and electronic warfare, to reduce strategic dependence.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman, President of

CASS Lahore, stated that modern conflict has transitioned from visible destruction to silent disruption. Three imperatives have emerged: technological sovereignty through indigenous systems, cross-domain jointness for synchronised response, and agility to adapt in real time. He added that Operation Zarb-e-Karar signalled Pakistan’s resolve to shape and secure the digital battlespace of the future through multi-domain operations. Spearheaded by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, the operation demonstrated seamless integration of artificial intelligence, cyber and electronic warfare systems, and unmanned aerial platforms.

Through pinpoint UAV strikes, strategic electronic disruption of enemy radars, and cyber-attacks that crippled the Indian Air Force’s air tasking cycle, Pakistan showcased not only operational precision but cognitive dominance.

The war highlighted the power of systems over firepower, where speed, resilience, and intelligent decision-making now define victory. The interactive session emphasised the imperative of tri-service synergy to harness AI, cyber-electronic warfare, and unmanned systems for effective execution of multi-domain operations.

Apex court overturns criticism of junior judge

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court on Friday invalidated critical observations made by Sindh High Court against an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) judge, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive inquiry and prudence before issuing critical pronouncements against lower court judges. The highest court affirmed that everyone makes errors, including judges, and malicious purpose must be substantiated before reaching such serious inferences.

A three-judge panel led by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar delivered a 12-page ruling. The tribunal maintained that severe judicial pronouncements, particularly when founded solely on spoken accusations, are inappropriate and can damage a judge’s standing and erode public trust in the judicial system.

The Supreme Court rejected the strong comments made by High Court judges about the junior

judge but did not restore the appellant’s administrative role, as a replacement had already been selected.

The court emphasized that judicial pronouncements documented in rulings or disseminated in the press become permanent public records, potentially impacting a judge’s career. It directed that reciprocal respect and decorum must be maintained within the legal system and recommended that concerns or claims should be communicated through private reports to the Chief Justice of the respective High Court instead of public rebuke.

Justice Mazhar stated in the judgment that courts should guide and counsel junior judges instead of censuring them. Refusing the petitioner an opportunity to defend himself was a violation of Article 10-A of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to due process.

The matter began when

Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Karachi Judge Zakir Hussain appealed to the Supreme Court against the Sindh High Court’s decision and observations. The High Court had earlier annulled two of his orders—one concerning judicial custody instead of police custody for a defendant, and the other regarding the establishment of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT). The High Court also questioned the presence of the defendant’s parent in the judge’s office, seeing it as indication of bad faith.

Consequently, the High Court suggested the revocation of administrative authority from Judge Zakir Hussain. Contesting these measures, the judge lodged a request with the Supreme Court, which has now found in his favor by setting aside the reprimands, strengthening the tenet of fairness, and promoting circumspection in the handling of judicial officials.

UK police hunt suspects after anti-migrant protests turn violent

EPPING, UK (AFP): Police promised Friday to track down suspects behind violence at a protest outside a southeast England hotel believed to house asylum seekers, after officers and vehicles were attacked. The violence followed several demonstrations in recent days in the town of Epping which flared after police charged an asylum seeker with sex offenses.

Eight police officers were injured and three vehicles were damaged, Essex police said. The

unrest, which police blamed on people from “outside of our community,” comes a year after anti-immigration riots rocked the UK in the wake of the fatal stabbings of three young girls in the northern town of Southport. Then, rioters targeted hotels housing asylum seekers in several different English cities, infamously attempting to set fire to one in Rotherham, northeast England.

Essex police on Friday insisted officers would

“continue to support those communities that want to peacefully protest” but would not tolerate “acts of violence and vandalism.”

“After last night I’ve got a team of specialist detectives today that are combing through the body-worn video CCTV to identify those who are responsible,” Assistant Chief Constable Stuart Hooper told AFP. “And what I can say is if you’re one of those individuals you can expect a knock on the door.”

PHC issues notice to ECP

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and other relevant parties in a court filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), seeking to declare the party a political party. The court has sought a response from the ECP and other parties till 21st July, on Friday.

PHC two-member bench comprising of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshed heard the petition filed by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur. The Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shah Faisal Utman Khel, and Bashir Wazir, counsel for the petitioner, appeared before the court.

The petitioner’s counsel argued that PTI is a political party that holds a majority in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly. However, the ECP has excluded PTI from the definition of a political party. The counsel pointed out that the Election Rules 2017 contradict the Election Act 2017, which does not require a political party to have an electoral symbol.

The petitioner’s counsel argued that the ECP’s decision to declare PTI candidates as independents is unlawful. According to the Election Act 2017, PTI is a political party, and a 13-member bench of the Supreme Court has also declared PTI a political party. The ECP does not have the authority to declare PTI candidates as independents.

The petitioner has requested the court to declare the ECP’s action as unlawful and recognize PTI members of the assembly as members of the party. The petitioner has also sought to nullify the allocation of reserved seats, which were denied to PTI despite its majority. The petitioner has further requested the court to declare the ECP’s orders as ultra vires. PHC issued notices to the ECP and other relevant parties after hearing initial arguments, and adjourned the hearing till 21st July.

Court seeks response on enlisting Shibli Faraz in PNIL: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a notice to the federal government and other authorities in a petition filed by PTI leader Senator Shibli Faraz, seeking removal of his name from the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL). The court has adjourned the hearing till 28th July, on Friday.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Farah Jamshed heard the petition. The Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shah Faisal Utamkhel, and the petitioner’s counsel, Bashir Khan Wazir, appeared before the court.

Monsoon rains claim 193 lives across Pakistan

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have released detailed figures on the damage caused by monsoon rains in Pakistan between June 26 and July 17, revealing a tragic toll across multiple provinces.

According to the report, as many as 15 people lost their lives in the past 24 hours alone due to rain-related incidents, including children. Additionally, fifty-three individuals sustained injuries during the same period. Nationwide, the total death toll from the ongoing monsoon season has reached 193, with 544 people injured. Punjab has suffered the highest number of casualties, with 114 deaths and 437 injuries reported so far.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, forty people have died and 57 have been injured. Sindh recorded 21 deaths and 40 injuries, while Balochistan has reported 16 fatalities and four injured. Azad Kashmir and Islamabad each reported one death due to heavy rains. The monsoon has also severely impacted property and livestock. In the last 24 hours, seventy-nine homes were damaged, and 67 livestock animals drowned.

Overall, since the start of the monsoon period, 689 homes have been reported damaged or destroyed, while 193 livestock animals have been lost due to flooding. The scale of destruction underscores the ongoing vulnerability of communities across Pakistan to extreme weather events and the pressing need for improved disaster preparedness and climate resilience measures.

Meanwhile, the water level in the Indus River continues to rise steadily, reaching the katcha (riverine) areas of Sehwan and triggering a low-level flood emergency.

According to irrigation officials, three union councils in Sehwan tehsil have now been declared under low-level flood conditions following the surge in river water. Floodwaters have inundated the katcha areas, cutting off more than 30 villages from the nearby cities of Sehwan and Bhan Syedabad. Villages including Bilawalpur, Daredeero, Jhundiani, Nayo Wahan, Mahi Otho, and Mahi Sehta are now completely surrounded by water.

In response to the worsening situation, local villagers have arranged private boats for transport, maintaining a link with

urban centres as all road access has been severed. The residents of the flood-hit areas have urged the district administration to provide government-operated boats to ease movement and support emergency needs.

The Irrigation Department has warned that the water level is expected to rise further in the coming days. In anticipation, an emergency has been declared on the LS protective bund, and continuous monitoring of the embankments has begun. Meanwhile, the flood control room has reported that the Indus River at Guddu Barrage is currently experiencing a low-level flood. Encouragingly, water levels are now rapidly declining.

A 50-foot-wide breach in the Pat Feeder Canal in Balochistan’s Sohbatpur district has submerged dozens of villages, as monsoon-triggered flooding continues to wreak havoc in the region. According to the details, the breach occurred near Jangi Mori in the tehsil of Mulguzar during the ongoing spell of heavy monsoon rains. As the canal gave way, water rushed out at high speed, inundating a wide area and leaving many villages underwater.

Israel kills 35 in Gaza

GAZA: At least 35 Palestinians have been killed since dawn across Gaza in Israeli attacks, medical sources have told Al Jazeera, as the besieged and bombarded enclave’s decimated health system, overwhelmed by a daily flow of wounded, is forcing doctors to make decisions on who to treat first.

In the latest killings on Friday, three people died in an Israeli attack on the Tuffah neighbourhood of eastern Gaza City. Five people were also killed in an Israeli air attack in Jabalia an-Nazla, in northern Gaza. Earlier, an Israeli attack hit tents sheltering displaced Palestinians in al-Mawasi, southern Gaza — previously designated a so-called “safe zone” — igniting a major fire and killing at least five people, including infants. Al-Mawasi has come under repeated, deadly Israeli fire.

The death toll also includes includes 10 people who were desperately seeking aid. Al Jazeera’s correspondent Hani Mahmoud said the injured, including children, were transferred to Nasser Hospital. Some showed wounds compatible with drone attacks. “Drone missiles are packed with nails, metals and shrapnel that explodes at high speed, causing internal bleeding,” Mahmoud said. “These attacks are on the rise and target people in large crowds, in markets or while

queuing for water.

“While Israel claims to be using sophisticated weapons, when we look on the ground, we see the number of casualties contradicting what Israel is [saying],” he added. Israel’s ongoing, punishing blockade of Gaza is forcing doctors in cramped medical facilities to make difficult decisions about who to treat.

Patients with chronic illnesses are often the first to miss out because emergency departments are overwhelmed by people wounded in Israeli attacks. “Before the war, I used to receive dialysis three times a week, with each session lasting four hours. At that time, the situation was stable, the treatment was effective, and we would return home feeling well and rested,” Omda Dagmash, a dialysis patient, told Al Jazeera at the barely functioning al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. “Now we can barely make the journey to the hospital, particularly since we are not eating well.”

At al-Shifa, the dialysis schedule has been scaled down to shorter and less frequent sessions. For some, it is a matter of life and death. “The journey here is long and costly,” said Rowaida Minyawi, an elderly patient. “After all this exhaustion, we sometimes can’t find treatment. I have heart disease, high

blood pressure and diabetes. Even the medicine we get is not good. What should we do? Die at home?” Besides prioritising patients, healthcare workers say they have to scale back operations to the minimum, as no fuel means no power — and no way to save lives.

“Only a few departments are working. We had to cut electricity to the rest,” said Ziad Abu Humaidan, from the hospital’s engineering department. “The hospital’s yards turned into graveyards rather than a place of care and healing. Without electricity, there is no lighting, no functioning medical equipment, and no support for other essential services.” The Palestinian Ministry of Health said unprecedented numbers of starving people of all ages were arriving at emergency departments with extreme exhaustion and fatigue. It said hundreds were “emaciated” and at risk of death due to malnutrition.

Mohammad Abu Salmiya, the director of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, said patients were “suffering from stress and memory loss resulting from severe hunger.” According to a public opinion survey conducted by the Israeli news outlet Maariv, about 44 percent of the Israeli public said the continued war in Gaza will not achieve the country’s goals. — Aljazeera