

Police official martyred

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: A police official was shot and killed by unidentified assailants in Utmanzai area of Charsadda district, police informed on Tuesday. The deceased cop identified as Imrannullah, was a resident of Haleemabad, Utmanzai. He was serving in FRP in Peshawar. Following the attack, his body was shifted to DHQ Hospital Charsadda for further procedures.

Earthquake jolts Punjab

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A 4.4 magnitude earthquake jolted Lahore and parts of Punjab on Tuesday, creating panic among citizens. Tremors were felt in Kasur, Okara, Sheikhupura, Muridke, Kamoke, Nankana and other areas of the province. People came out of their houses and offices out of fear following the powerful quake while there are no reports of damages so far.

Ulema delegation, Punjab governor discuss law, order



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider urged the religious scholars from all schools of thoughts to play a proactive role in maintaining peace and order during Muharram-ul-Haram. He stated this during a meeting with a delegation of Ulema led by Syed Osama Ajmal Qasmi, Head of the Pakistan Peace Council, at the Governor House, Lahore. The delegation comprised religious scholars of all schools of thought. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan highlighted the profound impact of Hazrat Imam Hussain's (AS) sacrifice, adding that it has preserved the true essence of Islam. He emphasized that love

for Ahle Bayat is an integral part of every Muslim's faith. Recalling the historic battle of Karbala, the Governor noted that it symbolized the eternal triumph of righteousness over tyranny. He further said that Islam teaches brotherhood, peace. Governor Punjab highlighted the historic significance of Karbala, where the forces of truth triumphed over falsehood, led by Hazrat Imam Hussain's unwavering resolve. He stated that there was a confrontation between right and wrong in Karbala and eternal victory was achieved by Hazrat Imam Hussain. He said that Islam teaches us the lesson of brotherhood and peace. The Punjab Governor urged the scholars to play a key role in maintaining peace and order during Muharram.

The Governor urged scholars to play a pivotal role in maintaining peace and order during Muharram. He also commended the success of Operation Banyan Marsus, noting that it has enhanced Pakistan's global reputation and prestige. While talking on the occasion, the religious scholars underscored the need for interfaith harmony. The delegation comprised Chairman of the Ulema Board, Maulana Muhammad Asim Makhdoom, Allama Dr. Badr Munir, Agha Sagheer Abbas Wark, Kamran Pervez, Syed Mahmood Ghaznavi, Allama Ghulam Abbas Shirazi, Qasim Ali Qasmi, Allama Qari Khalid Mahmood, Allama Muhammad Yousaf Johri, Allama Muhammad Yousaf Awan and others.

APHC-AJK delegation meets Sherry

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A delegation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter met senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader and Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman in Karachi and briefed her about the latest situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The delegation was led by APHC Secretary General Advocate Parvez Ahmed and included senior Hurriyat leaders Syed Yousuf Naseem, Raja Khadim Hussain, Zahid Ashraf, and Sheikh Abdul Majeed. The delegation held detailed discussions on the ongoing Indian state repression and grave human rights violations in IIOJK. During the meeting, the

APHC leaders also highlighted the objectives of the upcoming 'Bunyanum Marsous Rally' scheduled for July 8 in Karachi, marking the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Burhan Muzaffar Wani. They informed Senator Sherry Rehman that the event is not only a tribute to the martyrs of Kashmir but also a reflection of Pakistan's principled support and unwavering solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Senator Sherry Rehman reaffirmed that Pakistan will never compromise on the Kashmir issue and stated that a clear message has already been conveyed by the leadership of the Pakistan Armed Forces: "Even if ten wars are imposed, Pakistan will never accept India's illegal occupation of its jugular vein—Kashmir."

She described Shaheed Burhan Wani as a bright star of the Kashmir freedom movement, whose supreme sacrifice gave renewed international attention to the Kashmir cause. She also lauded Pakistan's efforts at global forums to counter Indian propaganda and to awaken the conscience of the international community on the plight of the oppressed Kashmiri people. The APHC-AJK delegation expressed deep gratitude to Pakistan's political and military leadership, democratic forces, and the people for their consistent support to the just cause of Kashmir. They reiterated their firm resolve to continue the peaceful and principled struggle for the right to self-determination until its logical conclusion.

PDMA warns of flash floods in several Punjab cities

F.P. Report

LAHORE: On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has written a letter to the Punjab emergency services and the deputy commissioners to prevent the situation like the one witnessed in Swat where more than dozen people lost their lives after they were swept away by swollen Swat River. In his letter, PDMA DG Irfan Ali Kathia had told the deputy commissioners of Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan that flash floods are feared in their

districts, so, therefore, they should take precautionary measures to deal with emergencies at places vulnerable to floods. "Keep the district emergency operation centers functional 24/7," the PDMA DG has directed. He has directed the irrigation department and Rescue 1122 to identify the picnic spots in these vulnerable areas. Kathia has told them that there is a complete ban on taking bath in rivers, canals and rain drains during the monsoon season. "So take strict action against those violating the ban," he has said, adding, "Run campaigns in vulnerable areas by installing signboards and

by making announcements from mosques so that the locals, especially tourists, could be made aware of the hazards of bathing during the rainy season." The DG has also told them that there is also a complete ban on cramming people into boats beyond their capacity and swimming without life jackets. "Hence, take strict action against the boat owners found involved in overloading." He has also directed that there should be patrolling at vulnerable areas by the police. "Deploy Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence employees at vulnerable places forthwith," he has ordered.

Punjab deploys over 232,000 cops for Muharram security

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Police have deployed more than 232,000 officers and personnel across the province to ensure foolproof security during the month of Muharram. According to a police spokesperson, the deployment covers 37,087 Majalis (mourning gatherings) and 9,171 processions being held throughout Punjab. Stringent security protocols have been enforced in line with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by the provincial government. The spokesperson said 749 provocative speakers have been barred from delivering speeches, while 1,161 individuals have been prohibited from entering the province. Additionally, 1,017 individuals are being monitored under the Fourth schedule, the spokesperson added.

During the last 24 hours, Punjab Police recorded 43 violations related to Muharram regulations. These included 34 breaches of the Code of Conduct and nine violations of scheduled timings. Six FIRs were registered, nominating 28 identified and 15 unidentified individuals.

Additional Inspector General (AIG) Operations Punjab, Zahid Nawaz Marwat, said that all security arrangements are being implemented in accordance with the law to ensure the peaceful observance of Muharram. He added that Punjab Police are fully committed to the safe and respectful conduct of all religious events related to Ashura, and are working under the provincial government's directives to ensure public safety.

Punjab blocks dozens of misinfo accounts

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In an unprecedented move, the Punjab government has initiated cyber patrolling for the first time during the sacred month of Muharram to curb the spread of fake news and inflammatory content on social media. Dozens of controversial social media accounts have been blocked based on a report by the Special Branch (SB) of the Punjab police. The crackdown targets individuals promoting sectarian hatred or sharing misleading news online.

Acting on directives from Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a dedicated control room has been established to monitor digital content and ensure law and order during Muharram. A special system for tracking and preventing fake news has also been launched to support these efforts.

Authorities have confirmed that strict legal action will be taken against those spreading false information or provocative content. To facilitate monitoring, a specialised portal developed by the PITB is now active, enabling users to report objectionable material in real-time. The newly formed special cyber cell is operational 24/7, tracing and disabling social media accounts posting sectarian or inflammatory content. Offenders are identified and tracked through the portal, ensuring immediate action.

Shrinking glaciers: A threat to ecological balance, clean water

KALAM (APP): Asim Ali, a 55-year-old resident of Oshu village in Upper Kalam, watched helplessly as water surged into his stone house, a result of the rising River Swat. The recent flooding, triggered by the accelerated melting of glaciers combined with heavy rains, forced many villagers to hastily place sandbags around their homes in an attempt to stem the gushing water and salvage belongings. "The water flow in River Swat has been increasing every summer due to the rapid melting of glaciers and erratic rainfalls," said Asim, who was rebuilding the outer wall of his house that was washed away by the floodwaters. Transporting stones on donkeys from nearby mountains, Asim and his family are trying to restore their damaged home. He recalled a time when glaciers were much closer to the village. "Our streams used to flow steadily. Now, they either dry up or flood unpredictably," he said.

He blamed illegal construction, glaciers melting, encroachment, and deforestation for amplifying the river's velocity and destructive power. For generations, villagers like Asim have mostly relied on glacier fed irrigation to cultivate crops such as wheat, barley, peaches, and apricots. But changing water patterns have made farming increasingly uncertain. "We now depend on rain, which is rarely sufficient. Sometimes, we lose entire crops to drought or sudden floods," he lamented.

The threat from melting glaciers, for Asim's community, is more than environmental—it's existential. "If the glaciers vanish, how will we survive? How will we feed our families?" he asked, his voice tinged with despair. Adding to their woes, the region's forests are under strain. "Climate change is disrupting plant growth. Native species are struggling, while invasive ones are spreading," he added, urging for small dam projects and large-scale afforestation to conserve water and reduce flood risks.

Swat's glaciers are vital to the Indus River system and its tributaries, supplying clean water to millions and sustaining the region's fragile ecosystem. However, their rapid retreat due to global warming is posing a grave threat. "As temperatures rise, glaciers are receding at an alarming rate, triggering ecological, social, and economic consequences," said Prof. Dr. Shafiqur Rehman, former Chairman of the Environmental Sciences Department at the University of Peshawar, in a conversation with APP.

Pakistan hosts over 7,253 glaciers—more than anywhere outside the polar regions. Notable among them are Baltoro (63 km), Biafo (67 km), and Batura (57 km) in Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as nearly 500 glaciers in Upper Chitral's Tirich Mir range, which feed major rivers such as the Swat, Panjkora, Kabul, and Indus. "Our irrigation systems depend heavily on these glaciers," said Dr. Rehman. "But with rapid population growth and shrinking glaciers, Pakistan faces an impending water crisis—and by extension, food insecurity."

Citing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), he noted that the Himalayan region is warming faster than the global average. Some glaciers are losing up to five meters in thickness each year. Since glaciers act as natural reservoirs, storing water and releasing it gradually, their accelerated melting is upsetting this balance. Dr. Rehman, who has spent over a decade researching the region's glaciers, warned, "If the current trend continues, we could lose up to 60% of our glaciers by the end of the century."

Beyond water shortages, glacier melt increases the risk of natural disasters like glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). These lakes, often held back by fragile natural dams, can burst due to minor earthquakes or temperature spikes, causing catastrophic flooding downstream. To

counter these threats, Dr. Rehman emphasized both global and local action: "We need to cut greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, but we also need reforestation, better water management, and early warning systems for GLOFs at the community level."

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the impact is already being felt through erratic water availability, biodiversity loss, and the formation of dangerous glacial lakes. Swat, once dubbed the "Switzerland of Pakistan," has witnessed multiple disasters—including a flood that swept away 18 tourists. Glacial retreat is also undermining tourism. "With glaciers shrinking, trekking routes are vanishing, and tourist numbers are declining," Dr. Rehman explained. He recalled Baltoro Glacier once being a prime destination for adventurers. "Now, it's dangerous to cross and parts of it are inaccessible."

This decline threatens local economies in regions like Swat, Chitral, and Gilgit-Baltistan, where many families depend on tourism for their livelihoods. Moreover, Swat's unique alpine flora and fauna, adapted to cold, high-altitude conditions, are at risk of extinction as glaciers vanish. Despite the challenges, hope remains. Local and international organizations are working together on sustainable solutions. Initiatives include installing early warning systems for GLOFs and launching reforestation projects to improve water retention and reduce erosion.

Given the far-reaching consequences of glacial retreat—from agriculture and tourism to water supply and biodiversity—Pakistan urgently needs effective adaptation and prevention strategies. Dr. Rehman praised national efforts, particularly large-scale afforestation programs, which have gained international recognition. He expressed optimism that the UN's COP27 climate fund would soon be operational, with Pakistan receiving a significant share due to its high vulnerability.

Bugti assures federal minister to implement Kachi Canal project

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday assured the Federal Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Mo'in Wattoo that the Balochistan government along with central regime and the Sindh administration to successfully implement the Kachi Canal project so that the foundation of an agricultural revolution could be laid in the areas.

He said this in a meeting regarding Kachi Canal which was chaired by Federal Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Mo'in Wattoo to make Kachi Canal Phase 2 and 3 feasible and to consider the challenges facing

the project in which the top leadership of Balochistan and Sindh and relevant experts participated.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah participated in the meeting via video link while Minister for Irrigation Balochistan Mir Sadiq Umrani, Minister for Irrigation Sindh Jamshoro and relevant federal and provincial officials also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, a detailed review was taken of the protection from possible mountain flood rails and environmental impacts of Phase 2 and 3 of the Kachi Canal project. CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti proposed the formation of a committee of experts to resolve outstanding

technical issues in the meeting which was unanimously approved by all participants.

The meeting unanimously decided to establish a Joint Technical Working Group which will include experts from Balochistan, Sindh and the Federation. This committee will submit a comprehensive technical report and actionable recommendations within three weeks so that the project can be made as flood-free and viable as possible. Speaking on the occasion, Balochistan CM Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the Kachhi Canal project is the backbone of Balochistan's economy and with the completion of its phases, millions of acres of land would be irrigated.

Punjab CM orders new monitoring system to curb fake news during Muharram

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered the establishment of a new monitoring system and a special control room to curb the spread of fake news during Muharram-ul-Haram, marking the first time such measures have been introduced in the province.

Under her directives, a comprehensive crackdown has been launched against those spreading false and provocative content on social media to maintain religious harmony and ensure law and order. Dozens of controversial social media accounts have already been blocked across Punjab based on reports from the Special Branch. Strict legal action is underway against individuals involved in disseminating inflammatory or sectarian content.

In a significant development, a Cyber Patrol Unit will be operational for the first time during Ashura to monitor digital platforms round-the-clock. A dedicated portal managed by the Punjab Information Technology Board

(PITB) has also been activated to report objectionable content. Once reported, such content is promptly removed, the relevant accounts are blocked, and the individuals behind them are traced.

The CM emphasized a zero-tolerance policy towards content promoting religious hatred and sectarianism. She directed authorities to enforce a complete ban on the publication and promotion of such material, as well as on the use of drone cameras during Muharram processions under any circumstances. To ensure foolproof security during processions and gatherings, she ordered the deployment of a Quick Response Force (QRF) and installation of iron barriers along procession routes. Facial recognition cameras will be placed at the entrance points of major processions for enhanced monitoring.

Special focus will also be given to the safety of female participants. Female police officers and personnel will be deployed for the security of women during Majalis and processions. Highlighting the spiritual significance of the month, CM Maryam

Nawaz stated, "The tragedy of Karbala teaches us the values of peace, sacrifice, and tolerance. All possible steps will be taken to uphold these principles and maintain peace during Ashura."

Punjab Police issue 30,626 driving licenses within last 24 hours: Punjab Police issued as many as 30,626 driving licenses within the last 24 hours as part of its ongoing efforts to facilitate the public and ensure strict enforcement of traffic laws across the province.

The spokesperson for Punjab Police informed that 43,911 traffic violations were recorded during the same period, with fines totaling Rs. 24 million. Additionally, 557 vehicles emitting excessive smoke were penalised, while 115 such vehicles were impounded.

So far this year, the Punjab Police issued 4.266 million driving licenses, while 6.297 million traffic violations have been recorded, generating Rs. 3.83 billion in fines. Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, stated that the campaign against traffic law violators will continue with full force.

ROSOBORONEXPORT hands over Project 11356 frigate Tamal, built at Yantar USC shipyard in Russia, to Indian Navy

F.P. Report

KARACHI: ROSOBORONEXPORT JSC (part of Rostec State Corporation) has handed over another Project 11356 frigate, built by United Shipbuilding Corporation, to the Indian Navy. The commissioning ceremony took place on July 1, 2025 in Kaliningrad. The eighth Project 11356 frigate, built in Russia for the Indian Navy, was christened Tamal, which means "Sword" in Sanskrit.

"The successful completion of construction, testing and delivery of the frigate Tamal to India demonstrates ROSOBORONEXPORT's readiness to effectively fulfill any naval contracts, taking into account current global market trends. The eighth Project 11356 frigate is a model of technology cooperation. It incorporates more than 20 Indian-made ship systems, including the BrahMos supersonic missile system, an automated communications system, a surface search and target acquisition radar, and a sonar sta-

tion," - said Alexander Mikheev, Director General of ROSOBORONEXPORT JSC. - "Today the Company is actively developing partnerships with Indian public and private enterprises to jointly develop and manufacture military products on the partner's territory. We are discussing 50+ projects for all services of the armed forces and are already working on a number of them".

Tamal is a frigate that meets all the current requirements of the global naval shipbuilding market. Its radars are capable of timely detecting all types of air attack weapons, including advanced low-flying anti-ship missiles. The ship has a reliable air defence system based on the Shtil-1 vertical-launch SAM system developed and manufactured by Almaz-Antey Air and Space Defence Corporation.

The ship's armament is sufficient to counter current and emerging threats. Its artillery armament, con-

sisting of 100mm and 30mm artillery systems, together with an EW system, can repel UAV attacks and effectively counter unmanned surface vehicles.

The ship has a reinforced helipad, enabling it to operate a Ka-31 long-range early warning helicopter. The delivered frigate Tamal has excellent seaworthiness: it is able to travel 4,850 miles without refueling and stay at sea for 30 days without resupply.

Currently India is already operating 7 Project 11356 frigates. In December 2024 a commissioning ceremony for frigate Tushil took place in Kaliningrad. In addition, India's Goa Shipyard Limited launched the ninth and tenth frigates of this project, which are being built by Indian shipbuilders with the assistance of ROSOBORONEXPORT.

ROSOBORONEXPORT aims to strengthen the Russian defence industry's positions in the Indian arms market through unique technology cooperation proposals that none of its competitors

can make today. Issues related to the continuation of ongoing projects in the field of joint development and production of naval equipment, aircraft, armored vehicles, small arms, ammunition are being actively considered, and new ones are also being discussed.

ROSOBORONEXPORT is Russia's sole state agency for export of the full range of defense-related and dual-use products, services and technologies. It is part of Rostec State Corporation. Rosoboronexport is among leaders in the global arms market. Rosoboronexport accounts for over 85% of Russia's exports of arms and military equipment. Rosoboronexport cooperates with more than 700 Russian defense industrial enterprises and organizations. The geographical scope of Russia's military-technical cooperation encompasses more than 100 countries.

Rostec State Corporation is the largest industrial company in Russia, uniting over 800 research and production organizations across 60 regions of the country. The company



plays a crucial role as a major supplier of armaments, military, and special equipment through the state defense order. Additionally, Rostec focuses on the development of high-tech civilian production in strategically important industries, including air-

craft engineering, engine building, transportation, power engineering, medical technologies, pharmaceuticals and innovative materials among others. In 2023, the corporation achieved a consolidated revenue exceeding RUB 2.8 trillion.

PHC issues notices in two PTI leaders cases

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has issued notices to the relevant parties in a petition filed by Sheikh Waqas Akram, Secretary Information of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), seeking details of cases against him, on Tuesday.

The petition was heard by a two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Naeem Anwar and Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel.

The counsel, Alam Khan Adezai, informed the court that the petitioner is the Secretary Information of PTI and that the court had sought a report in the case, but the Punjab government was not a party to the case.

The court issued notices

to the respondents, including the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, and the Director of Anti-Corruption, Punjab.

Speaking to the media outside the court, Sheikh Waqas Akram said that a new development had taken place in the Peshawar High Court, where a party had approached the court seeking a stay on the oath-taking of members on reserved seats.

He emphasized that PTI's legal team would work on the matter and that the party would pursue its rightful claims to the reserved seats.

Sheikh Waqas Akram criticized the Punjab government's decision to stop treatment under the health card scheme, alleging that

hospitals were being forced to demand payments from patients.

He also condemned the increase in fuel prices, warning that it would lead to higher prices of other commodities and burden the common man.

Sheikh Waqas Akram demanded that the Chief Justice inquire into the deaths of PTI workers in Punjab jails due to various illnesses.

Meanwhile, PHC divisional bench comprising of Justice Muhammad Naeem Anwar and Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel has sought a report from the federal government and other relevant parties in a petition filed by Faisal Javed, a leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), regarding details of cases against

him. The court also granted him two weeks of protective bail.

The counsel, Alam Khan Adezai, informed the court that the petitioner had filed the petition seeking details of cases against him. He stated that despite the federal government's submission of a report earlier, more cases had come to light, prompting them to approach the court again.

The court granted Faisal Javed two weeks of protective bail, directing that he not be arrested during this period.

The court also sought a report from the federal government and other parties regarding the cases against Faisal Javed. The court directed that Faisal Javed not be arrested until the next hearing.



Peshawar to launch 60-Day Urban Plantation Drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In line with special instructions from Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur, a major 60-day urban plantation campaign is set to begin in Peshawar from July 15 to September 15, aimed at addressing climate change and enhancing the city's beauty.

Under the initiative, a large number of tall trees and various types of plants will be planted along six major roads in Peshawar. A core committee, comprising officials from the district administration, Peshawar Development

Authority (PDA), Local Government Department, and the Forest Department, has been formed to oversee the project.

Plantation Sites Include: Ring Road (from Pir Zakori Bridge to Hayatabad), Charsadda Road, GT Road (from Chamakni to Karkhano Market), Dalazak Road (from Bacha Khan Chowk to Ring Road Kabootar Chowk), Warsak Road (from Machni Gate to Ring Road), Kohat Road (from Ramdas Chowk to Ghari Qamardin Bridge).

The committee has already identified suitable

and vacant spots along the central medians and surrounding areas of these roads. All planted trees will have a minimum height of 8 feet.

The Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) will be responsible for the care and protection of the trees, with forest guards appointed for this task. PDA will also ensure daily watering of the plants. In case any trees or plants are damaged within three years, the respective contractors will be obligated to replace them at their own cost.

To select appropriate tree species, the core com-

mittee has already conducted a study visit to Pattoki, Punjab, and finalized various suitable types of trees and plants for plantation in Peshawar.

A high-level meeting chaired by Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsood was held to review preparations. Attendees included Secretary Forests Shahid Zaman, Chief Conservator Forests, Director General PDA Muhammad Naeem, Additional Deputy Commissioner Babar Khan Tanoli, and other administrative officials from concerned departments.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Major Retired Sajjad Barkwal, handing over the agricultural machinery to the officials at Tarnab Farm.

50,000 cops deployed for Muharram security: IGP

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, has stated that foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for Muharram.

Speaking to *The Frontier Post* correspondent, he confirmed that over 50,000 personnels have been deployed across the province, with operations being monitored from the central command in Peshawar.

IG Hameed highlighted that the KP Police have always played a frontline role in the fight against terrorism. "Our brave personnels police have confronted militants with courage and determination. The issues faced by the force are being addressed, and special incentives are being introduced for KP police personnel, including benefits from other provinces," he said.

Speaking on the security situation in the southern

region, he acknowledged that incidents of terrorism still occur but assured that ongoing operations have dealt severe blows to terrorist groups. "The safety and protection of the public remain our top priority," he added.

He also emphasized that strict merit will be maintained within the police department. "There will be no tolerance for corruption. Officers and personnel involved in misconduct will have no place in the force," he concluded.

Condolence Reference held in honor of Late Sherin Zada Badr

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR A condolence reference and Quran recitation ceremony was held in memory of the late Sherin Zada Badr, a renowned figure known for his affable and good-natured personality. The event was attended by friends, family, and admirers who gathered to pay their respects to the departed soul.

Sherin Zada Badr was remembered for his significant contributions to society, particularly through the All Pakistan Badr Munir Foundation, which he founded in 1984. He remained the chairman of the foundation until his passing, leaving behind a legacy that will be cherished for years to come.

The speakers including Khiali Gul at the condolence reference highlighted the immense loss felt by the community with the passing of Sherin Zada Badr. They drew parallels between his demise and that of Badr Munir, emphasizing that just as the void left by Badr Munir could not be filled, the loss of Sherin Zada Badr will also be deeply felt and remembered.

The ceremony served as a tribute to Sherin Zada Badr's remarkable personality and his dedication to serving others. His commitment to the All Pakistan Badr Munir Foundation and his role as its chairman were particularly noted, underscoring his impact on the lives of many.

As friends and family reflected on the life and legacy of Sherin Zada Badr, they remembered him as a person who touched many lives through his work and his warm demeanor. The Quran recitation ceremony added a solemn touch to the event, providing comfort to those who mourned his loss.

Timber auction to be held soon in Chakdara Timber Market



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Forests, Environment, Wildlife, and Climate Change, Pir Musavir Khan has stated that practical steps are being taken for the development and prosperity of the people of the province. He announced that a timber auction will soon be held in the Chakdara Timber Market, which will create new employment opportu-

nities for the local Community.

He expressed these views while speaking with delegations from Chitral and other districts in his office.

The delegations informed the Special Assistant about their issues. Some problems were resolved on the spot, while for others, directives were issued to the concerned officials for timely resolution.

While speaking with the

delegation from Chitral, Pir Musavir Khan stated that instructions have been issued to the relevant authorities for the early auction of timber in the Chakdara Timber Market. He said that the auction will benefit not only the government but also individuals associated with the timber business and local residents. He also assured the delegation of a swift resolution of other issues.

Later, while speaking to other delegations, Pir

Musavir Khan said that the provincial government believes in practical measures. He highlighted that a "Green Budget" has been presented for the fiscal year 2025-26 in line with the vision of founding chairman Imran Khan. Billions of rupees have been allocated in the budget to make the province greener and to tackle the impacts of climate change.

He further emphasized that special attention is being given to public welfare sectors such as health, education, and others. Stressing the importance of tree plantation, the Special Assistant appealed to the public to plant as many trees as possible during the upcoming monsoon plantation campaign. He stated that tree planting is a guarantee of a healthy environment for future generations.

High-Level meeting on Swabi development projects held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, Muzammil Aslam, chaired a high-level meeting on Tuesday at the Civil Secretariat Peshawar. The meeting focused on key development issues related to District Swabi, including approval of posts for the Bada Dam project, tobacco cess, hydropower profits, and other related matters.

The meeting was attended by KP Minister for Irrigation Aqibullah Khan, Minister for Education Faisal Khan Tarakai, MNAs Asad Qaiser and

Shahram Khan Tarakai, Special Assistants Abdul Karim Tor Dher and Haji Rangez Ahmad Khan, MPA Murtaza Khan, and secretaries of relevant departments.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Muzammil Aslam stated that, as per the directives of the Chief Minister, funds for all ongoing development projects will be released in a timely manner. He added that the funds will be disbursed in two phases—July 2025 and January 2026.

Aslam further said that historic development funds have been allocated for the fiscal year 2025–26, and

full efforts will be made to complete the projects on time. He emphasized that pending dues from the current fiscal year should be cleared within the same year to avoid delays in development work and prevent carrying forward liabilities into the next fiscal year.

During the meeting, Minister for Irrigation Aqibullah Khan highlighted the shortage of staff for the Bada Dam project in District Swabi and called for the issuance of NOC for recruitment. He stated that adequate staffing is crucial to ensure the dam becomes operational on time and its

stored water can be used to make barren lands cultivable.

In response, Advisor Muzammil Aslam assured that surplus staff from inactive schemes would be deployed for the Bada Dam, including technical personnel and sub-engineers.

The meeting also included a detailed discussion on the tobacco cess issue.

At the conclusion, participants expressed gratitude to the advisor for listening to their concerns and assuring the release of funds. They also expressed hope for continued support in the future.

Rs248.52m worth land handed over to city govt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken action concerning eight kanals of commercial land valued at approximately Rs. 248.52 million, handing over to the Capital Metropolitan Government Peshawar.

Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received a complaint regarding this land in Nothia Peshawar, alleging that the Bacha Khan Educational Trust had failed to pay fifteen

years' lease dues to the Capital Metropolitan Government. A detailed inquiry revealed that during the tenure of the Awami National Party government, eight kanals and five marlas of land were leased to the Bacha Khan Trust Educational Foundation Peshawar for fifteen years at a monthly rent of Rs. 10,000. The lease, granted in 2009, expired in May 2024, yet the Foundation failed to return the land to the Metropolitan Government Peshawar. The inquiry further established

that not a single rent payment was made over the entire fifteen-year period. The Trust provided no satisfactory response regarding its activities during the investigation.

Consequently, Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along with relevant authorities, sealed the aforementioned land and formally transferred it back to the Capital Metropolitan Government Peshawar. The current market value of the land is approximately Rs. 248.52 million.

Sehat Kor: A sustainable healthcare charity model

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a province where access to affordable, quality healthcare is a growing concern, Sehat Kor has set a remarkable example of community health service combined with technology and sustainability. In just 16 months, Sehat Kor has registered over 15,000 families and provided medical care to more than 26,000 patients, transforming lives across Mardan and beyond.

Sehat Kor offers a wide range of outpatient services, including medical, dental,

pediatric, gynecology, and surgery OPDs. In addition to its well-equipped laboratory, pharmacy, and labor room, Sehat Kor also features a dedicated space for training, aiming to build capacity among healthcare workers and volunteers.

One of Sehat Kor's most notable achievements is its fully digital setup. From the moment a patient enters the clinic, their journey is managed electronically. Doctors record history, order lab investigations, and prescribe medicines entirely through software - no pens, no paper. The integrated system

allows for seamless coordination between departments, ensures accuracy, and minimizes errors. Most importantly, patient data and records are securely accessible from anywhere in the world, making follow-ups and remote consultations possible.

Sehat Kor combines compassion with strategic planning. Through a hybrid welfare and sustainability model, it ensures that the poorest receive care without charge, while nominal contributions from those who can afford it help cover operational costs.

108th meeting of Board of Directors of SIDB held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR The 108th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) was held on Tuesday at SIDB headquarters in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Abdul Karim Tordher, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries.

The meeting reviewed various matters pertaining to the development of industrial estates under SIDB, promotion of professional operations of the Board and sustainable industrialization. Several key decisions were made in this regard.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, Managing Director SIDB Abdul Hameed Khan, Deputy Managing Directors Nauman Fayyaz and Sahibzada Zulfiqar, President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Mugeem, Chairperson of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peshawar Rabia Basri, officers from relevant government departments and private sector members of the Board.

During the meeting, various proposals related to finance, income generation, industrialization, and professional operational matters were presented for approval. The forum deliberated and issued decisions accordingly. The participants were also briefed on the progress and implementation status of decisions taken in the previous Board meeting.

The Board directed the formation of a special committee to devise a viable and beneficial model for the commercial and financial utilization of unused SIDB-owned land located outside the industrial estates. Officers from concerned departments will be part of this committee. Similarly, budget estimates and revised estimates for the previous financial year were also presented to the forum.

The Board also discussed a proposal by the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to allocate a vacant SIDB building in Peshawar for the promotion of the



carpet industry. Conditional approval was granted for several options, with further action to be undertaken in accordance with rules and regulations.

The Board granted in-principle approval for the initial draft of the allotment policy and lease agreement.

It was directed that the Small Industries Development Board and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company further make better the policy/agreement. The forum also approved the new building by-laws of SIDB.

Conditional approval was given for a draft policy regarding the affiliation of private land adjacent to SIDB's industrial estates, with instructions to form a committee to thoroughly review the policy from all legal aspects.

The Board also approved a two-

year installment facility for payment of institutional dues and fees for investors interested in obtaining plots in the Industrial Park Peshawar. To make marble slurry reusable, SIDB was directed to collaborate with KPEZDMC to develop a workable model.

Similarly the forum granted approval to include a plug-and-play model in the proposed land for an industrial estate in Swat.

Regarding the commercial center at SIDB, the Board directed that the lower portion be rented out. The C&W Department should be consulted to determine rental rates and the matter should be advised following official procedures.

On this occasion, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister expressed that steps must be taken toward sustainability and self-reliance to overcome the financial challenges of the Board so that it can continue its efforts for industrial development in the province without interruption.

He further stated that the core objective is to promote industrialization and investment in the province, creating employment and business opportunities and uplifting underprivileged segments of society.

In this regard, efforts will be made to create a conducive and business-friendly environment for industries and investors.



In brief

Nurses hold strike in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: The female and male nurses have set up a regular camp in front of the emergency unit on under the leadership of President Zameer Khan and Vice President Sahib Zaman Khan on Monday. On the first day of the strike, the nurses led by their president and vice president took out a protest procession to the MS office and protested in front of the MS office and shouted slogans demanding the transfer of MS and an inquiry against him by making many allegations, otherwise they announced the suspension of all services except emergency from Wednesday and the suspension of emergency services from Thursday and also threatened to suspend services in all hospitals by making the protest movement province-wide. Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Zaman Khan said that MS has pushed everyone (doctors to class IV) to the wall. He said that the performance of radiology has deteriorated while due to MS attitude the Eye operation theater is close. He, the MS has been held responsible for many issues including being affected hospital services delivery and has alleged that MS is sacrificing the hospital for its own interests, which has also affected patients from Buner and neighboring districts of Torgar and Shangla. It should be noted that the President and Vice President of the Nurses Association had said in a press conference with female and male nurses four days ago that the issues between the nurses and MS were settled through a jirga by the DMS and doctors, but despite the jirga, MS took revenge and relieved the President and Vice President of the Association for the DG Office, which is reprehensible in every way and now the Association will continue and expand the protest for the transfer of MS and an inquiry. However, when MS Dr. Iqbal Hussain was contacted, he said that he would present his position at a press conference at the Press Club Buner some day with evidence.

Women protest against police F.P. Report

LARKANA: The residents of Murad Wahan locality of Larkana city staged a protest in front of the Press Club for the release of the arrested youth. On this occasion, women including Lal Khatoon Khirus, Dureen Khatoon, Jijan Khatoon and other innocent children protested in front of the media and shouted against the police, saying that we are extremely poor and we feed our children by traveling. The protesters alleged that 3 days ago, the SHO of Police Station Daro Mohalla along with his staff stormed our house, brutally tortured us innocent women and children, took away valuables from the house, and arrested our youth. Muhammad Achar Khirus and disappeared. We also complained to the SSP Larkana, but no action has been taken. We are concerned that the police did not half-fry or fry our arrested youth. They demanded the Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court to release the arrested youth and send him to Daro Police Station. We should take legal action against the workers and bring justice to them. Meanwhile, an IT lab was established in collaboration with Saint Corner Acute Youth Development at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Larkana to provide computer training to children of the Christian community.

Dozens of water pumps stolen from drinking water wells

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Unknown culprits deprived the entire population of its access to clean drinking water in the Sacha area in the jurisdiction of Khall police station where 15 water pumps were stolen from a drinking water well late Monday night.

According to locals, the water pumps were installed at a public well that served as the sole source of clean drinking water for the surrounding community. Residents woke up Tuesday morning to find the machinery missing, leaving the entire locality without access to water.

The affected residents have strongly condemned the theft and demanded immediate action from the police. They urged the Khall police to recover the stolen equipment and arrest the culprits involved. "This is a serious issue impacting every household in our area," said one of the residents, adding they relied entirely on these pumps for their daily water needs.

Local elders warned that if timely action was not taken, the situation could worsen, especially during the summer season when water demand is high. Police officials confirmed the incident and said that an investigation had been launched. A case will be registered against unknown persons, and efforts are underway to recover the stolen pumps.

According to local residents, such an incident had occurred in Qila Rabat, where unknown culprits had taken away 20 water pumps from a community dug well some days ago. They complained that despite such inhuman crimes, police failed to trace the culprits and get the water consumers rid of it.

Rescue 1122 services: Rescue 1122 Lower Dir provided emergency services in 585 incidents across the district during the month of June, rescuing and assisting a total of 508 injured persons and patients, the department said in a monthly performance report.

According to the report, Rescue 1122 responded to 60 road traffic accidents, 206 medical emergencies, 53 fire incidents, five cases of violence and gunshot injuries, five drowning incidents, one blast, and 40 recovery and miscellaneous operations.

The Rescue 1122 teams also transported 215 patients, referred by doctor, to various hospitals within and outside the district for advanced medical care. The Rescue 1122 control room received a total of 6,670 phone calls during the month, a significant number of which were reported to be fake or unnecessary, causing delays and potential disruption to genuine emergency services. Officials have urged the public to avoid making prank or non-emergency calls, stressing that Rescue 1122 resources should be preserved for real emergencies only.

Land dispute resolved through Jirga and local admm: A 52-year-old land dispute between the residents of Jabgai, Dheri, and Malkani Ghara was amicably resolved through the efforts of a local jirga and Assistant Commissioner (AC) Timergara, Zaid Safi.

A ceremony was held at the AC office where representatives from both sides signed a reconciliation agreement. Malkani Ghara was represented by Malik Aslam Parvez, Malik Ali Bakht, Malik Bakhtawar Jan, and Haji Sawal Muhammad, while Jabgai and Dheri were represented by Haji Pas Zamin, Naushad Khan, Zor Zamin Khan, and Maulana Samiullah. The jirga was led by Dir Quami Jirga president Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, JUI Lower Dir emir Sirajuddin, and former provincial minister Muzaffar Syed Advocate.

AC Zaid Safi said that the resolution would bring lasting peace and open doors for development. He added that demarcation of the disputed land, comprising four motai (traditional land unit) of Jabgai and five motai of Dherai, would begin in the presence of revenue staff. A 30-foot-wide road would also be established, with both sides contributing 15 feet each.

Illegal construction: On the directives of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, the district administration has launched an operation against illegal encroachments on the banks of Panjkora River in Timergara.

Acting upon the instructions of the Chief Secretary, illegal buildings and famous restaurants constructed along rivers, streams, and watercourses have been demolished. Under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Zaid Safi, officials from the irrigation department and Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) initiated a grand operation using heavy machinery to remove unlawful structures along the Panjkora River here.

Additionally, four restaurants were sealed by TMA officials due to the absence of No Objection Certificates (NOCs). These included popular eateries such as Zaiqa Mahal, Royal Dir Restaurant, Dir Hujra Restaurant, and others. The sealing of these establishments led to the spoilage of large quantities of chicken, fish, and prepared food worth hundreds of thousands of rupees.

PML-N election: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is gearing up for organizational elections in Adenzai tehsil, where two strong panels are contesting. One is led by Yusuf Khan (President) and Dawood Khan (General Secretary), while the other features Akbar Ali Khan and Manager Minhaj for the same positions.

The contest is seen not just as an internal vote, but a test of leadership, political vision, and principled politics. Both panels comprise senior, seasoned party workers with a record of strengthening the party at the grassroots level.

A total of 66 votes will be cast including 3 from provincial level, 4 from district, 16 from union union councils, and 43 from the executive body. The outcome, observers say, will hinge on candidates' conduct, commitment, and past rapport with workers. Party circles view the election as a turning point for local restructuring and a sign of ideological loyalty and organizational transparency. Political analysts expect a dignified and principled contest, with party loyalty and values playing a decisive role.

Monitorities uplift project launched

F.P. Report

WANA: In a noteworthy development aimed at uplifting marginalized communities, a significant initiative has been launched for the welfare of minorities in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This milestone was made possible through the visionary approach of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, and the dedicated efforts of Akash Masih, Senior Vice President of the Insaaf Minority Wing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As part of this initiative, a financial grant of Rs. 500,000 was awarded to the

local church in Wana, the administrative center of Lower South Waziristan. The distribution was facilitated with the support of Wazir Zada, the Minority Focal Person to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Representing the government on the occasion was Nawaz Khan, another senior official and the CM's Focal Person, who attended the event from Dera Ismail Khan.

This effort has been widely appreciated across the region. Ajab Gul Wazir, Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Lower Waziristan, and Zubair Khan Wazir, Member of the National

Assembly (MNA) representing Upper and Lower Waziristan, were both thanked for their active support in facilitating this progressive move for the betterment of the minority community.

Akash Masih has long been at the forefront of advocating for the rights and welfare of religious minorities in the tribal belt. Under his continued guidance, similar financial support packages—each worth Rs. 500,000—have already been distributed among minority communities in various parts of the former FATA region, including the Parachinar Church and other remote areas.

Awaam Pakistan party to fight for public

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Political and social leader Chaudhry Inaam Zafar said that the people have been burdened by inflation, fixed charges in Sui gas bills for domestic consumers, increase in gas prices for bulk consumers, the power sector and as well as a huge increase in the price of petroleum products will further increase everyone's problems.

The government urgently needs to review its decisions, it is feared that the current government will lose its mandate among the people in the upcoming elections. The future of the Awaam Pakistan Party is bright.

Expressing his reaction to the increase in gas prices by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), Chaudhry Inaam Zafar said that the government is going to

detonate a new inflation bomb on the public and the industrial sector from July.

The public is suffering from severe mental anxiety after the fixed charges of gas for protected consumers were increased from Rs 400 to Rs 600. Domestic consumers are already very unhappy with the government's performance after receiving bills of thousands of rupees despite the non-availability of Sui gas. However, the remaining gap has been filled by increasing gas prices for bulk consumers, the power sector and industry. The industry, which is already facing problems, will face more problems. After which economic exploitation will increase further.

He said that as well as a huge increase in the price of petrol by Rs 8.36 per liter and diesel by Rs 10.39 per liter, will fur-

ther increase everyone's difficulties. Unemployment and lack of resources have already left the youth segment extremely disappointed. Chaudhry Inaam Zafar said that the speed with which the current government is implementing the conditions of international institutions and grinding its people in the mill of inflation, there is a fear that the government will lose its popularity among the people in the upcoming elections.

He further said that the Awaam Pakistan Party is the only party where discipline and application of laws are equal for everyone.

Which believes in prioritizing the development of the country and nation based on performance. The growing popularity of the party in public circles is proof that the future of the Awaam Pakistan Party is bright.

Dr. Abdul Wajid named as Senior VP PDF



F.P. Report

PABB: Dr. Abdul Wajid Daudzai has been appointed as the Senior Vice President of the Peoples Doctor Forum Pakistan. The notification of his appointment has been officially issued.

The appointment of Dr. Abdul Wajid Daudzai as the Senior Vice President of the Peoples Doctor Forum Pakistan was made by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Dr. Abdul Wajid Daudzai hails from Addakhil Bala village in Nowshera district and is the younger brother of Sajid Iqbal Addakhili, Advocate, who is the PPP candidate for the Provincial Assembly from PK-88.

The notification of Dr. Abdul Wajid Daudzai's appointment was issued by Jamil Soomro, Political Secretary to Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Reserved seats verdict changed political landscape F.P. Report

BANNU: The political landscape in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been jolted following a significant verdict by the Supreme Court regarding reserved seats in the provincial assembly. The ruling has weakened the numerical strength of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), opening a clear path for the opposition alliance to potentially form the government.

According to reliable sources, internal divisions and defections within PTI have begun to erode the party's grip on power. Several PTI parliamentarians, reportedly disillusioned with the current leadership, are showing interest in aligning with the opposition. This shift has positioned the opposition alliance—particularly Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader and former Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani—to play a central role in shaping the province's political future.

The Supreme Court decision has effectively nullified PTI's claim over several reserved seats, paving the way for these seats to be allocated to other parties within the opposition bloc. With the potential redistribution, the opposition's strength in the assembly could rise to 70 or more. If disgruntled PTI lawmakers also switch allegiance, the opposition's total count could surge to between 75 and 80—well above the threshold needed for a majority.

Meeting on dengue prevention held F.P. Report

MARDAN: To review preparedness and preventive measures against the dengue virus at district level, a high level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Mardan at his office on Monday. Health department officials provided a detailed briefing outlining a comprehensive strategy which included identification of potential mosquito breeding sites, improved drainage systems, elimination of stagnant water, and ongoing fogging and spraying campaigns.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the readiness of isolation wards in hospitals and stressed the need for effective coordination among all relevant departments. He stated that dengue prevention is a collective responsibility and emphasized the importance of a robust public awareness campaign.

Workshop on media, information literacy held at KKKUK



F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak hosted a one-day training workshop on "Understanding Media & Information Literacy: A Practical Approach Towards Digital Journalism." The event, organized by the university's Media Section and ORIC in collaboration with the Deputy Commissioner's Office Karak and the District Youth Office, saw active participation from local journalists and media professionals.

The workshop was specifically designed to equip local journalists with essential skills and knowledge in the evolving media landscape. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khalily attended as a special guest, emphasizing the critical role of journalists as the "eyes and ears of society" and highlighting their increased responsibilities in the modern era.

He underscored the importance of providing local journalists with the latest media skills and knowledge to navigate the digital age effectively.

The Vice Chancellor commended the collaborative efforts of the Media Section, ORIC, the District Youth Officer, and the Deputy Commissioner's Office for organizing such a valuable initiative, noting that these programs help journalists stay updated with contemporary practices.

Dr. Anwar Mehsud (Lecturer, CMS) and Sha-beer Ullah (Lecturer/PRO) served as resource persons, delivering insightful lectures on important topics such as media literacy, identifying fake news, utilizing digital tools, and upholding journalistic ethics.

District Youth Officer Kamran Ullah and the Deputy Commissioner's Office were instrumental in

supporting the workshop. Mr. Kamran Ullah reiterated that training young journalists is a top priority for his office and committed to organizing similar programs in the future.

The workshop also featured an engaging Questions and Answers session, allowing participants to pose practical questions and share their professional experiences. The event concluded with the distribution of certificates of appreciation to all participants, along with honorary shields presented to the special guest and the District Youth Officer.

In his closing remarks, Media In-charge Sha-beer Ullah extended gratitude to all attendees and expressed confidence that the workshop would significantly benefit their fieldwork. He also announced plans for continued organization of such valuable training sessions in the future.

Monsoon downpour down temperature in hilly stations

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: The much-awaited monsoon showers have commenced in district Shangla, bringing welcome relief from the intense heatwave that had gripped the region for the past fortnight. Temperatures had soared to between 35°C and 40°C, even in the normally mild district headquarters, but rains have now restored pleasant weather conditions.

No human casualties have been reported; however, multiple roadblocks have occurred due to landslides triggered by the rains. The main Bisham-Khwazakhela highway, along with internal link roads such as PHA Roads Board to Martung and Karora to Ajmer, have experienced disruptions. Locals stressed the urgent

need for debris clearance to prevent accidents and ensure smooth flow of traffic. Tourists planning to visit scenic sites in Shangla are advised to keep themselves updated on weather forecasts and remain vigilant during travel, especially in rain-prone areas.

DEO stresses sports activity: District Education Officer (Male) Shangla, Muhammad Aurangzeb, has emphasized that "Nations whose playgrounds are filled, see their hospitals empty." He remarked that sports are a vital source of mental alertness and physical development, and essential for educational progress. He urged teachers to provide students with opportunities to engage in sports for their all-round growth.

He was addressing a

vibrant prize distribution ceremony at Government Primary School No. 1 Alpuri, organized as part of the Inter-District Primary Schools Sports Tournament. The event was also addressed by Sub-Divisional Education Officer Chakesar, Mr. Aurangzeb Khalil; Sub-Divisional Education Officer Alpuri, Mr. Ishtiaq Khan; Game Secretary and ADEO Sports, Mr. Shams-ul-Wahab; and General Secretary of the Tournament, Adil Shah.

During the prize distribution, trophies, certificates, and awards were presented to the teams and students who excelled in the tournament. Students securing first, second, and third positions were given special recognition for their performance.

Solar energy system installed at govt school

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In a significant step towards sustainable development and improvement of the educational environment, a 30-kilowatt solar energy system, worth Rs. 2 million, has been successfully installed at the Government Boys Model Higher Secondary School in Jalalpur Bhattian. This transformative initiative has been made possible through generous contributions from local philanthropists, showcasing the spirit of community involvement in uplifting public sector institutions.

A formal inauguration ceremony was held at the school to mark the occasion. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Education Hafizabad, Muhammad Akram Ashraf, and former Naib Nazim District Council, Mian Zahid Hussain Bhatti, jointly inaugurated the newly installed solar system. The event was attended by District Education Officer (Secondary Education) Muhammad Anwar Javed, District Education Officer (Women) Ms. Soofia Jabeen, school faculty, students, and a large number of notable figures and well-wishers from the area.

Speaking at the ceremony, CEO Education Muhammad Akram Ashraf commended the initiative and termed it a milestone towards providing a healthy, uninterrupted learning environment for students. He highlighted that the installation of the solar system would ensure a consistent power supply, especially

during power outages, thereby enhancing classroom productivity and comfort during hot summer days.

The newly installed solar system is expected to significantly reduce electricity costs for the school and provide a stable energy supply for fans, lights, and essential digital equipment. It also sets a positive precedent for environmentally friendly infrastructure development across the district's educational institutions. The ceremony concluded with prayers for the progress of the school, prosperity of the donors, and the continued success of such collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors.

Alleged murderer killed in encounter: A suspect involved in a double murder case was killed during an alleged exchange of fire between robbers and CCD Police on Chak Bhatti Road near Jalalpur Bhattian.

According to details, a group of armed robbers opened fire on a CCD Police patrol on Jag Bhatti Road. The police retaliated, leading to a brief shootout. During the exchange, one of the robbers was fatally shot, reportedly by gunfire from his own accomplices while the remaining suspects managed to flee the scene.

The deceased was later identified as Ali Raza, a notorious criminal who was wanted in more than a dozen cases of theft and robbery. He had been on the run since committing a double murder during a robbery in the Maghoki area two years ago.

Govt introduced reforms for women safe-

Muharram's security reviewed F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Provincial Law Minister, Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bherth, chaired a high-level meeting to review and finalize arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram in District Attock. The meeting was attended by Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Deputy Commissioner Attock, District Police Officer Attock, and heads of all relevant administrative departments. Public representatives from Pakistan Muslim League (N) were also present.

The Law Minister issued clear instructions to ensure the peaceful and dignified observance of Muharram-ul-Haram, in accordance with the vision of the Chief Minister. He emphasized the provision of essential facilities such as mobile sazeels and toilets for participants of the processions, and directed that any shortcomings in security or administrative planning be promptly addressed.



Algeria court upholds writer Sansal’s five-year jail term

ALGIERS (AFP): An Algerian court on Tuesday upheld a five-year prison sentence against dual-national author Boualem Sansal, whose case has strained ties with France. Sansal, 80, was first sentenced to five years behind bars on March 27 on charges related to undermining Algeria's territorial integrity over comments made to a French media outlet.

The appeals court confirmed the sentence after prosecutors sought to double his jail term, an AFP journalist reported from the hearing. Sansal was informed he has eight days to file a further appeal before Algeria's supreme court.

His newly appointed French lawyer, Pierre Cornut-Gentile, said he would consult with his client before deciding whether to pursue another legal challenge. Following the verdict, French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou said he hoped Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebbone would grant Sansal a pardon.

"Now that the sentence has been handed down, we can imagine pardon measures, particularly in view of our compatriot's health, will be taken," said Bayrou, calling the situation "unacceptable". The French foreign ministry meanwhile condemned the decision to uphold his sentence, calling it "incomprehensible and unjustified".

French President Emmanuel Macron has also urged Tebbone to show "mercy and humanity" to the author.

Some of Sansal's relatives have voiced hope he

could be pardoned, the 63rd anniversary of Algeria's independence. A prize-winning figure in North African modern francophone literature, Sansal is known for his criticism of Algerian authorities as well as of Islamists. The case against him arose after he told the far-right outlet Frontieres that France had unjustly transferred Moroccan territory to Algeria during the colonial period from 1830 to 1962 - a claim Algeria views as a challenge to its sovereignty and that aligns with long-standing Moroccan territorial assertions.

Sansal was detained in November 2024 upon arrival at Algiers airport. On March 27, a court in Dar El Beida sentenced him to a five-year prison term and fined him 500,000 Algerian dinars (\$3,730). Appearing in court without legal counsel on June 24, Sansal said the case against him "makes no sense" as "the Algerian constitution guarantees freedom of expression and conscience".

He defended his remarks by citing the African Union's post-independence declaration that colonial borders should remain inviolable. When questioned about his writings, Sansal asked: "Are we holding a trial over literature? Where are we headed?"

Sansal's family has expressed fears prison could jeopardise his health, noting he is receiving treatment for prostate cancer. Authorities in the North African country maintain that due process is being respected.

Commenting on his health on Tuesday, Cornut-

Gentile said he saw Sansal a day earlier and that "he is fine". The writer's conviction further strained already tense France-Algeria relations, which have been complicated by issues such as migration and Macron's recent recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a disputed territory claimed by the Algeria-backed Polisario Front.

Last month, the French National Assembly passed a resolution calling for Sansal's immediate release and linking future EU-Algeria cooperation to respect for human rights. While his case has become a cause celebre in France, among Algerians his past support for Israel has made him unpopular with a large segment of the population who back the Palestinian cause.

Sansal had faced charges including "undermining national unity", "insulting state institutions", "harming the national economy", and "possessing media and publications threatening the country's security and stability". His daughters, Nawel and Sabeha, told AFP in May they felt "a sense of total helplessness" over their father's imprisonment "simply for expressing an opinion".

"Enough is enough. The Algerian authorities must now understand that France defends its citizens," said the president of Sansal's support committee, Noelle Lenoir, in an interview Tuesday. "We are outraged by the attitude of the Algerian government, which has nothing to gain - neither at the European level nor in its relations with France."

Charities, NGOs call for end to Israeli-backed aid group

CAIRO (AP): Dozens of international charities and non-governmental organizations, including Oxfam, Save the Children and Amnesty, called Tuesday for an Israeli and US-backed aid mechanism for Gaza to disband over repeated incidents of chaos and deadly violence against Palestinians heading toward its sites.

At least seven Palestinians were killed seeking aid in southern and central Gaza between and early Tuesday. The deaths came after Israeli forces killed at least 74 people in Gaza with airstrikes that left 30 dead at a seaside cafe and gunfire that left 23 dead as Palestinians tried to get desperately needed food aid, witnesses and health officials said.

Next week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will travel to Washington to meet US President Donald Trump and other administration officials. Netanyahu's visit comes as Trump has signaled he is ready for Israel and Hamas to wind down the war in Gaza, which is likely to be a focus of their talks. The war has killed over 56,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but says more than half of the dead were women and children.

The Hamas attack in October 2023 that sparked the war killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and

took 251 others hostage. Some 50 hostages remain, many of them thought to be dead. More than 165 major international charities and non-governmental organizations, including Oxfam, Save the Children and Amnesty, on Tuesday called for an immediate end to the Gaza Humanitarian Fund.

"Palestinians in Gaza face an impossible choice: starve or risk being shot while trying desperately to reach food to feed their families," the group said in a joint news release. The call by the charities and NGOs was the latest sign of trouble for the GHF — a secretive US and Israeli-backed initiative headed by an evangelical leader who is a close ally of Trump.

GHF started distributing aid on May 26, following a nearly three-month Israeli blockade that has pushed Gaza's population of more than 2 million people to the brink of famine. In a statement Tuesday, the organization said it has delivered more than 52 million meals over five weeks.

"Instead of bickering and throwing insults from the sidelines, we would welcome other humanitarian groups to join us and feed the people in Gaza," the statement said. "We are ready to collaborate and help them get their aid to people in need. At the end of the day, the Palestinian people need to be fed." Last month, the organization said there has been no violence in or around its distribution

centers and that its personnel have not opened fire.

Israel's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday. According to Gaza's Health Ministry, more than 500 Palestinians have been killed around the chaotic and controversial aid distribution program over the past month. Palestinians are often forced to travel long distances to access the GHF hubs in hopes of obtaining aid.

The GHF is the linchpin of a new aid system that wrested distribution away from aid groups led by the UN. The new mechanism limits food distribution to a small number of hubs under guard of armed contractors, where people must go to pick it up. Currently four hubs are set up, all close to Israeli military positions.

Israel had demanded an alternative plan because it accuses Hamas of siphoning off aid. The United Nations and aid groups deny there is significant diversion. They reject the new mechanism, saying it allows Israel to use food as a weapon, violates humanitarian principles and won't be effective. The Israeli military said it had recently taken steps to improve organization in the area. Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, accusing the militants of hiding among civilians because they operate in populated areas.

Floods in China kill 9 and displace thousands

BEIJING (AP): Heavy flooding in central and southern China has killed at least nine people with and displaced tens of thousands as more rainfall was forecast on the way, state media reported Tuesday.

At least eight people were listed as missing in the worst-hit provinces of Henan, Hubei and Guizhou, where rivers overtopped dikes and poured into city streets, housing complexes and shopping malls. Although China experiences flooding each summer, the images were some of the most dramatic in years, many of them spread on social media to avoid official censors.

Rapid urban development appears to have worsened the problem, and the Communist Party authorities who control all media have been especially reticent in their news releases about the toll floods have taken. Information has been especially tight since 2001 flooding in the city of Zhengzhou killed 39 people below ground, including 14 who drowned inside a flooded subway train, although the true number of dead has been disputed. That led to popular protests against poor design, corruption and the government's slow response. Flash flood warnings were also issued for the northern region of Inner Mongolia, while the southernmost island province of Hainan was also told to prepare for heavy rains.

Japan had hottest June on record

TOKYO (AFP): Japan experienced its hottest June on record, the weather agency said Tuesday, as climate change prompts sweltering heat waves across the globe. "Japan's monthly average temperature in June was the highest for the month since statistics began in 1898," said the Japan Meteorological Agency.

With strong high-pressure systems in June staying in the region, the average monthly temperature was 2.34 degrees Celsius higher than the standard value, the agency said. The coastal water temperature near Japan also measured 1.2 degrees Celsius higher than usual, tying with June 2024 for the highest since data collection began in 1982, the agency said.

The body also had a further warning that is becoming routine for Japanese residents: "The next month is expected to continue to bring severe heat throughout the country." The announcement came as scientists say human-induced climate change is making heatwave events more intense, frequent and widespread.

Brutal heat waves are currently sweeping Europe from France to Greece, while global footballers' union FIFPro has called for longer half-time breaks at next year's World Cup to mitigate the effects of extreme heat. Japanese meteorologists have warned against drawing a direct link between specific weather conditions, like higher temperatures in a specific time, with climate change.

But they have observed a changing climate over many years that is causing unpredictable weather phenomena. Japan remains heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels and has the dirtiest energy mix in the G7, campaigners say.

Dynasty in distress: Thai Prime Minister’s fate in limbo

BANGKOK (Reuters): It was a Thai court decision last year that swept Paetongtarn Shinawatra into the prime minister's office and now, once again, the fate of the 38-year-old novice politician lies in the hands of the judiciary.

The Constitutional Court suspended Paetongtarn - Thailand's youngest prime minister - from office on Tuesday, pending a case that seeks her dismissal over a controversial phone call last month with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen. "I want to apologize to people who are upset by all of this," Paetongtarn told reporters on the steps of Government House in Bangkok, where she only took office last August after the shock dismissal of her predecessor by a court order.

"I will continue to work for the country as a Thai citizen," she said, "I don't have any bad intentions." The suspension order capped two tumultuous weeks in Thai politics, triggered by the leak of the call between Hun Sen and Paetongtarn, in which she appears to pander to the Cambodian strongman and then denigrate a Thai military commander.

Criticism of the military, which holds an outsized influence over domestic affairs, including politics, crossed a red line for many in Thailand and instantly drew a backlash, particularly from the conservative-royalist camp. The June 15 leak, and the subsequently release of the entire call by Hun Sen, came at a delicate time for Paetongtarn and her ruling Pheu Thai party, already struggling with a floundering economy and a shaky coalition as well as a festering border dispute with Cambodia.

Although Paetongtarn apologised for the call and described its contents as a negotiation tactic, a major coalition partner, the Bhumjaithai party, walked out of the government just hours after the leak, leaving her alliance's parliamentary majority hanging by a thread. Still, Paetongtarn - the daughter of Thailand's influential but divisive former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra - dug in, and managed to hold together the remainder of her coalition.

"The country must move forward," she said on June 22. "Thailand must unite and push policies to solve problems for the people." By then, a group of 36 senators had already submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court seeking the premier's dismissal.

The judicial push coincided with growing public discontent against the prime minister, which culminated in a massive anti-government rally. Several thousand people gathered in the heart of the Thai capital, braving intensive monsoon rains, to rally for hours.

"Ung Ing, get out," they chanted occasionally in unison, calling the prime minister by a nickname. In an opinion poll released, Paetongtarn's approval stood at 9.2% in June, sharply down from 30.9% in March.

The youngest of Thaksin's three children, Paetongtarn has spent much of her life in the shadow of the father's political career, which began in 1994 and led to him becoming prime minister in 2001. Thaksin was ousted in a coup five years later, but went on to push his younger sister, Yingluck into the premiership in 2011. But she was forced out of office by a court ruling.

The decades-long power struggle between Thailand's conservative-



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The decades-long power struggle between Thailand's conservative-

royalist camp and the Shinawatra clan featured in Paetongtarn's campaign to help her family win back power in the 2023 general election, where Pheu Thai only came second. After the election-winning Move Forward party was blocked by military-appointed lawmakers from taking power, Pheu Thai engineered a parliamentary majority to form a government led initially by Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin.

It was Srettha's dismissal last August that allowed Paetongtarn to take his place - although she had never held any government position before becoming prime minister. Educated at Chulalongkorn University and Britain's University of Surrey, she was primarily involved in the Shinawatra family businesses.

Much of her 10-month premiership has also been overshadowed by the looming presence of Thaksin, who returned to Thailand in 2023 after over a decade-and-a-half in self-exile to avoid a prison term - and now potentially again faces jail time. For Paetongtarn, however, that appeared to be of little concern. "I'm a daddy's girl," she told parliament in March, referring to Thaksin. "I am like that completely. I am a daddy's girl, 100%."

Poland to start controls on borders with Germany, Lithuania over migration

WARSAW (Reuters): Poland will introduce temporary controls along borders with Germany and Lithuania on July 7, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Tuesday, echoing several other European Union countries in reimposing frontier checks to stem illegal migration.

Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany itself have also brought back border controls, underlining a public backlash against undocumented migration that has strained the EU's Schengen passport-free travel zone. "We consider the temporary reintroduction of controls necessary to reduce the uncontrolled flows of migrants across the Polish-German border to a minimum," Tusk told a meeting of his cabinet.

Tusk's liberal government has been accused by nationalist and far-right opposition parties of accepting numerous illegal migrants being sent back from Germany. The government had argued that the numbers were limited. Debate over migration in Poland has turned increasingly heated in recent weeks, with far-right activists starting to organise patrols along the border with Germany.

Germany said in February that it was extending its own temporary border controls for six months. Tusk, who has previously called on Berlin to do more to help its neighbours protect the EU's external border, criticised Germany's approach to migrants at its own frontier, saying it placed excessive pressure on Poland. "Poland's patient position after Germany formally introduced unilateral border controls is wearing out," Tusk said.

He added that it had become difficult to deter-

mine whether migrants being sent from Germany to Poland should really be returned there under EU rules stating that migrants should apply for asylum in the first member state they enter. Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Tuesday Germany wants to preserve the Schengen system, which allows passport-free movement, but this could only work if it was not abused by criminals who smuggle migrants.

"We know that the Polish government also wants to impose border controls with Lithuania in order to limit illegal border crossings from Lithuania to Poland," Merz told a news conference. "So, we have a common problem here that we want to solve together." Knut Abraham, the German government's commissioner for Poland, was critical of the tilt towards border restrictions.

"The solution cannot lie in pushing migrants back and forth between Poland and Germany or in cementing border controls on both sides," he was quoted by Die Welt newspaper as saying. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys told a news conference that the Polish government had informed him about its decision, BNS news agency reported. ("We need to see) what measures should be most effective, while maintaining the expectation that they will not violate our common interest in having free movement of persons, and will also contribute to our goal of firmly and solidly protecting the external border of the EU and NATO." BNS quoted him as saying. Poland has been facing what it says is a migrant crisis orchestrated by Belarus and Russia on its eastern border since 2021. Both countries deny encouraging migrants to cross.

Angolans, Cape Verdeans want Portugal to return looted artefacts, poll shows

LUANDA (Reuters): A majority of respondents in Angola and Cape Verde believe Portugal should apologise for its colonial past and return artefacts and other items looted during that era, according to a survey released on Tuesday.

Pollsters from Lisbon's Catholic University, in partnership with public broadcaster RTP and a commission commemorating the fall of Portugal's

fascist dictatorship in 1974, surveyed more than 3,000 people across Angola, Cape Verde and Portugal. In Angola, 58% of respondents said Portugal should return artefacts such as masks, sculptures and ritual objects taken from its former colonies. Support was higher in Cape Verde at 63%.

The survey showed 54% of the Portuguese supported the return of such items, but

58% said Portugal did not owe its former colonies an apology. In Angola, 59% thought Lisbon should apologise with 58% in Cape Verde. Portugal's colonial history, which spanned Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Brazil and East Timor, as well as parts of India, remains contentious.

From the 15th to the 19th century, nearly six million Africans were forcibly

Will Syria normalise relations with Israel?

AFTER nearly 14 years of war in Syria, the new government is resetting its regional relations, and a lot of focus is on what will happen with Israel. There are reports of talks between Syria and Israel, with timelines even being floated for potential normalisation between the two countries, which have technically been at war since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Here's what you need to know about possible normalisation between Syria and Israel: Syria and Israel have held direct talks, according to Israeli media, about potentially entering into a normalisation agreement. Communication between the two states has reportedly been facilitated by the United Arab Emirates, which established a backchannel for contact.

Any agreement would likely be an extension of the Abraham Accords, an agreement brokered by the United States between some Arab states and Israel. The Abraham Accords were a

top-down approach by Donald Trump during his first term as US president to get Arab states to formalise relations with Israel. They were signed in August and September 2020 by the UAE and Bahrain, and soon followed by Sudan and Morocco.

Since then, Trump has worked to expand the accords by pushing more countries to sign agreements with Israel. Trump visited three countries in the Middle East in May, and, while in Saudi Arabia, he met Syria's new president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, and reportedly encouraged him to normalise relations with Israel. Possibly down the road, analysts say, but right now it would be nearly impossible, according to Syrian writer and author Robin Yassin-Kassab.

There is a deep enmity between Syria and Israel, which heightened during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights. Israeli Defence Minister Gideon Saar said his country would insist on its occupation of

the Golan Heights in any deal with Syria, and the Israeli army has gone deeper into the Golan, occupying homes and expelling people from the area. Many Syrians would oppose giving up the Golan to Israel, according to analysts. Still, many might welcome common-sense negotiations.

"Syrians are split ... because on the one hand people are exhausted, everyone recognises Syria cannot defend itself or fight Israel ... so it's good [al-Sharaa's] negotiating," Yassin-Kassab said, adding that a return to an agreement like the 1974 ceasefire is the most realistic option. About a week after then-President Bashar al-Assad fled Syria in December 2024, Israel's parliament voted on a plan to expand settlements in Syria - illegal under international law. There are currently more than 31,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied Golan Heights.

Syria, under al-Sharaa, has said it is open to peace with Israel and that it

would uphold a 1974 ceasefire agreement between the two states, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on December 8 - the day al-Assad fled to Moscow - that he viewed the agreement as void. Israel attacked Syria repeatedly, destroying much of its military infrastructure and seizing Syrian territory near the border with Syria's Golan Heights.

Syria would likely ask for Israel to withdraw from the newly occupied area under a new non-aggression deal, though reports say the Golan Heights have not yet been discussed. In recent days, Israeli officials have said they are open to a deal with Syria, and Netanyahu reportedly asked US Special Envoy Tom Barrack to help negotiate one. Israel's National Security Council head, Tzachi Hanegbi, has reportedly been overseeing discussions with Syrian officials. The talks include a US presence and are in "advanced stages", according to senior Israeli officials

who spoke to The Times of Israel.

Figures close to al-Sharaa are reportedly asking for an end to Israeli aggression without Syria having to accept full normalisation, Lebanese daily Al-Akhbar reported. Syria wants the Israeli attacks on Syrian territory to cease. There are concerns over Israel's expanded occupation of the Golan Heights among many Syrians; however, it's unclear if al-Sharaa's government will demand the return of the occupied parts. Syria would, however, want Israel to pull out of the Golan proper and the parts it occupied over the last year. Israel also threatened the new Syrian government not to deploy soldiers south of Damascus, a region near its border with Israel.

Israel has also tried to stoke sectarianism in this area, threatening to intervene to "protect the Syrian Druze" during sectarian-driven tensions between groups affiliated with the new Syrian government and Syria's minority Druze community.

While many in the Druze community have shown a distrust of Syria's new government, many have also denounced Israel's threats of intervention as a calculated stunt to cause further discord among Syrians.

Netanyahu reportedly wants a security agreement - an update on the 1974 text - with a framework towards a total peace plan with Syria. US envoy Barrack claims the issue between Syria and Israel is "solvable" and has suggested they begin with a "non-aggression agreement", according to Axios. Such a continued occupation of the Golan would likely upset many Syrians.

"It's too politically difficult [for al-Sharaa], even under American pressure and the continued threat of violence from Israel," Yassin-Kassab said. Israel also reportedly has additional conditions: no Turkish military bases in Syria, no presence of Iran or Iranian-backed groups like Hezbollah, and the demilitarisation of southern Syria. — Aljazeera

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Children must not remain casualties of war

CHILDREN are the most innocent victims of any war. While witnessing death and devastation of war at any age is likely to take its toll, the effect on young people, by all indicators, is especially harrowing.

In an annual UN report released earlier this month, 41,370 grave violations against children were documented and verified by the UN last year – a 25 per cent increase since 2023. While in much of the world where peace reigns, schools are now either out or about to close for the summer, there are hundreds of thousands of children in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, and millions collectively in conflict zones around the world, who are excluded from the privilege of even going a day without the terror of violence, hearing the sounds of explosions and encountering bloodshed. Summer holidays then are a far cry for these children, whose regular developmental milestones have been cut and swapped with desperation, tragedy and chronic hunger.

“Unimaginable horrors” is the phrase Edouard Beigbeder, Unicef’s regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, used in May to describe the situation where more than 50,000 children have reportedly been killed or injured in the Gaza Strip since October 2023.

Given the human cost of war and the resultant extensive suffering that children are left to deal with for the rest of their lives, the notion that modern warfare is focused is utterly misleading, as has been evident in several parts of the world. An unfortunate truth is also that prolonged conflict often brings about a fatigue and desensitisation to such bleak realities to the wider world. But such images must not be allowed to lose their power to compel international stakeholders, including world leaders, to push for ceasefires and long-term peace, implying then also a better future for children deprived of normality.

Already the stunted progress in the five areas of children’s rights spelt out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals – to survive and thrive; to receive quality education; to be protected from violence; to live in a safe and clean environment; and to have equal opportunities – should be a wake-up call for how adults all over the world are failing children caught in conflict zones, losing their homes and all too frequently their limbs, parents, and their right to normal childhoods.

The other grave crime is the recruitment of children in armed conflict. To prevent this heinous offshoot of war, child protection units must be strengthened so that their remit to protect children from being exploited and given arms can be more effective. To this end, the UN does have an action plan, which includes implementing national campaigns and getting access to military camps and bases to ensure no children are in the ranks.

Each day of continued war, with efforts to secure ceasefires being stalled or scuttled, is another strike in the tally of a collective moral failure to protect children from an increased risk of aggression and/or extremism. The plain fact that bears repeating, after too many months of “unimaginable horrors”, is that the air strikes and attacks on aid distribution need to stop. Killings need to stop. Children need to be able to live a normal life, not be casualties of war. Leaders everywhere must realise this and keep working towards diplomatic solutions to end all conflicts. As Mr Beigbeder said of this unconscionable reality that has continued for far too long: “How many more dead girls and boys will it take?”

No one to harvest fruits in California

PRESIDENT Donald Trump’s hunt for illegal migrants in California has precipitated an agricultural crisis. Large tracts of farms are left with crops, especially fruits, waiting to be harvested. Because of the raids by the officials of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), many of the workers have kept away. Farmers and farm supervisors admit that many of the farm labour was illegal.

They argue however that if these illegal immigrants are taken away, then the food supply chain, would be disrupted and there is a looming disaster. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican and former director of Congressional Budget Office, said an estimated 80 per cent of the farm labour in the US was foreign-born, and half of them were illegal immigrants. But if they disappear, then there would be a problem. “This is bad for supply chains, bad for the agricultural industry.” California is a key state for the production of fruits and vegetables.

Three-fourths of fruits and nuts grown in the US are from California, according to California Department of Food and Agriculture. The farms and ranches in the state generated \$60 billion in sales in 2023. One of the labour force, aged 54, old news agency Reuters, he had been working in the US agricultural fields for the last 30 years, he has a family and children. He explained the fear of the farm workers: “If they show up to work, they don’t know if they will ever see the family again.”

Another worker, an illegal migrant in the country, said, “Basically, we wake up in the morning scared. We worry about the sun, the heat and now a much bigger problem – many not returning home. I try not to get into trouble on the street. Now, whoever gets arrested for any reason gets deported.”

Trump’s raid have then pushed farm workers into a corner. They do not want to be seen by the officials even if it means they cannot work. But their absence from work is not a loss just for the workers but for the farmers as well. Without workers they cannot harvest their farm produce. The labour shortage is being felt acutely. A Mexican farm supervisor who did not want to be named said that he needed 300 workers to plant strawberries, but he got only 80. Another supervisor said that when he needed 80 workers in a field, there were only 17.

Trump has conceded that the ICE raids in California were creating problems. He admitted on his media portal, Truth Social that the raids were taking away farm and hotel workers who were good and long-serving were being taken away. He told reporters, “Our farmers are being hurt badly. They have very good workers. They’re not citizens, but they’ve turned out to be great.” But he is not willing to change his policy. Nor is he thinking of ways supplying the work force that the farmers need.

In the face of a real time crisis – if the fruits are not harvested in time they will be wasted – Trump does not seem to know what to do. He sees the problem, he wants to help the farmers. But he does not want to go back on the issue of illegal immigrants. And he cannot afford to force the farmers to face huge losses because of his anti-illegal-immigrants policy. It is a real dilemma. A seasoned politician would have known when to step back. No American has a quarrel with Trump over the issue of illegal immigrants. But they want the president to recognize the need for migrant labour. American economy cannot survive without migrant labour. Trump and his advisers have to think out a practical solution before it is too late.

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Netanyahu must be pushed to end Gaza war immediately

Osama Al-Sharif

US President Donald Trump has called on Israel and Hamas to embrace a deal that will end the war in Gaza and return all Israeli hostages. He said last Friday that he believes a deal could be reached within a week. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also hinted that the prospects of an agreement were strong. The Israeli army has reportedly said all military objectives have been achieved and that the time for a diplomatic solution has come. Tens of thousands of Israelis have returned to the streets to pressure the government to conclude a deal.

And yet, there is a foreboding sense of deja vu clouding the atmosphere days after an uneasy truce was reached between Iran and Israel. Since Oct. 7, 2023, Israel has succeeded in upsetting the regional geopolitical order in its favor. Netanyahu has utilized the Gaza war to secure a range of strategic gains across the region. But now, amid the euphoria, he finds himself in a position where he is pressured domestically, regionally and internationally to end the Gaza carnage. The 12-day Israel-Iran war was a game-changer. For Trump, the US intervention was tantamount to a great victory that ended Tehran’s nuclear ambitions. But for Netanyahu, the great strategic gains his war machine secured in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and now Iran are not enough. Ending the Gaza war will open a proverbial Pandora’s box for him. Yes, he has changed the geopolitical realities of the Middle East. Iran has been humbled and its proxies hamstrung. Syria has a new regime that is open to ending hostilities with Tel Aviv, while a hum-

bled Hezbollah is being pressured to hand over its weapons to the Lebanese army.

What more can Netanyahu ask for? The reality is that all such gains mean nothing if they do not serve the Israeli far right’s grand scheme: reoccupy Gaza and displace its inhabitants, annex the West Bank and enforce a humiliating political deal on the Palestinians.

With Iran badly hurt and side-stepped, Israel has run out of militant enemies. The Iranian leaders will have to reconsider their regional policies, rearrange their national priorities and try to reengage with the rest of the world, particularly the US. The Iranian public will eventually renew their demands for genuine economic, social and political reforms. Iran’s regional dominance will never be reclaimed.

That leaves Israel as the primary regional power. That is, after all, what the new Middle East means for Netanyahu and his cronies. Keeping Gaza on fire will serve several purposes. It will delay any investigation into the Oct. 7 calamity, which would end in assigning blame for the worst intelligence failure in Israeli history. It will mean Netanyahu does not have to call an early election, one that his party is likely to lose. And it will delay the verdict in his graft trial, protecting him from a possible jail term.

But there are other objectives behind waging war on Gaza, even when the Israeli army admits it has run out of military goals. The war has become a blackmail tool to secure political gains for Israel, such as expanding the Abraham Accords. The war has given

Netanyahu’s far-right government the momentum to clamp down on the West Bank, expropriate lands, destroy refugee camps, expel UNRWA and weaken the Palestinian Authority.

Such goals are known to Washington and other Western governments. But for these governments to look the other way while the Israeli army intensifies its genocidal war on Gaza is inexcusable and shameful. Only Netanyahu stands to benefit from the wanton killing of civilians in Gaza. Only he refuses to allow humanitarian aid to enter while tens of thousands of Gazans are on the verge of starvation. Only the Israeli prime minister ignores Hebrew press reports that the Israeli army is shooting at tens of aid seekers on a daily basis as they try to get lifesaving food from an agency that he created and funded.

Trump has lauded Netanyahu, a wanted war criminal, and has even said that he wants his corruption trial to end. He has invited him to the White House in July without underlining the need to stop the war in Gaza as a condition.

This may very well be Israel’s regional moment for many good reasons. But for Israel to emerge as the regional bully, many countries will and should be worried. Those countries should be thinking that, while humbling Iran might be a good thing, having Israel emerge as the primary regional power is even worse.

Not once did Netanyahu link his new Middle East vision to ending decades of conflict with the Palestinians. Not once did he offer the Palestinians anything. His approach to Gaza is one of extermina-

tion or displacement. His view of the West Bank is even worse. He sees no future for the PA, only complete annexation and an end to the dream of a Palestinian state.

Trump must become sensitive to the national security requirements of his Arab allies. At the center of these demands is a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian tragedy. Netanyahu’s dystopian vision sees the displacement of all Palestinians from their native lands. He believes in a “Greater Israel” that requires occupying all of historical Palestine, in addition to lands belonging to sovereign Arab states.

The Israel-Iran war may turn out to be the last major regional war with the Israel-Palestine conflict as its root cause. But the emerging Israel that Netanyahu now leads cannot afford to be without wars. It even looks suspiciously at countries with which it has a peace treaty, like Jordan and Egypt, while extremist lawmakers openly claim territories in these countries as theirs.

Trump is in a position to bring Netanyahu back to reality. Now that Israel has achieved all these strategic gains, it must also be ready to accommodate the concerns of Israel’s neighbors. Topping these concerns is ending the genocide in Gaza and offering the Palestinians a path toward an independent state of their own. That will be a tough sell. But only Trump can restrain a euphoric Netanyahu at this stage. If everything else fails, the world will continue to nonchalantly watch the killing fields in Gaza, while a megalomaniacal Netanyahu carries on with liquidating the Palestinians and their cause.

A century's journey proves China’s choice

Harvey Dzodin

AT the founding of the Communist Party of China in July 1921, China was a poor backward country, known as the “sick man of Asia”, wallowing in its century of humiliation. Today, under the leadership of the CPC, China has regained its position as a global leader. Having lived in China for most of this century, I’ve observed that China has become a global leader again due in large measure to the CPC’s strict self-governance and its ability to continually reinvigorate itself, thereby continuing to enjoy the trust of the Chinese people.

Strict self-governance means the Party accords the highest priority to serving the people with honesty and integrity. A great source of the Party’s strength is that it gets its inspiration not only from philosophers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but also from China’s 5,000-year-old history.

For example, the Party also learns from Chinese classics like the 2,000-year-old Book of Han, whose lessons include seeking truth from facts, and a government’s duty is to serve the people. The Party has also taken cognizance of imperial China’s recurring cycle of dynasties’ rise and fall, which were related to moral corruption and decay, and the need to continuously confront and address this weakness in order to hon-

estly serve the people.

A key element of China’s governance is the rigorous use of five-year plans as goal-setting and measurement tools to better serve the people. In a whole-of-government effort at all levels, China gathers input from all stakeholders for planning, sets targets, and then keeps reviewing the results in light of the five-year plan targets and making operational changes based on interim results.

China is now going to formulate the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30). The process reminds me of what Austrian management guru Peter Drucker once said: “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” China is creating the future on a daily basis.

Another factor for China’s success is the development and evaluation of government cadres and State-owned enterprises’ officials for their placement, performance and promotion. Only CPC members who have sincerely served the people can be promoted to higher levels of responsibility. While in China, the cream rises to the top, in the United States, comparable appointments, especially at the top, are often made on financial contributions, not on merit. In Washington the conventional wisdom is that “money talks and BS walks”, that is, you have to “pay to play”. As the father

of The Peter Principle, Laurence J. Peter, said, in the West, the “cream rises until it sours”.

Strict Party self-governance demands that Party members serve the people instead of serving their own interests. Unfortunately, human nature pushes many people the world over to be corrupt in the private and public spheres, especially in the absence of strong deterrents. From time immemorial, officials everywhere have been tempted to dip their hands in the cookie jar when they believe nobody is watching. China was no exception, but it is a rare exception in that it vigorously addressed the problem on an institutional level.

President Xi Jinping has targeted corruption as a major factor impeding China’s further development, launching a comprehensive anti-corruption campaign focusing on high-level corrupt officials (“tigers”) as well as lower-level corrupt officials (“flies”), vowing that any official suspected of corruption would be investigated, and if found guilty, punished accordingly.

One of the most unique ways strict Party self-governance is practiced is the periodic self-criticism sessions, right from the top ranks to the lower levels, with every Party member engaging in a self-examination, including self-criti-

cism, in regard to their individual conduct and collective responsibilities.

The bottom line is that China’s strict Party self-governance model is a success in the eyes of those to whom it matters most: its people. To me, of the many surveys that ask respondents to rate how their own government serves them, the most authoritative is the “Democracy Perception Index”, sponsored by the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, whose head is a former Danish Prime Minister and a former NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

According to the 2024 DPI, respondents in China have very positive opinions about their country’s political system, with 91 percent saying that the government serves the interests of most people (rather than a few), and 85 percent saying all people have equal rights before the law.

The respondents to this survey in China are more positive than those in the US and in most European countries on these points. Chinese people had some of the most positive results globally of the more than 100,000 respondents across 100 countries.

Strict Party self-governance clearly works, and works well under the CPC’s leadership. Here’s wishing a happy 104th birthday to the Communist Party of China and many more years of success in serving the people.

Trump betrayed the diplomatic effort, says Iranian FM

Michael Jansen

IRANIAN Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has dismissed US President Donald Trump’s declaration that their countries would re-engage in nuclear negotiations in the coming week. “If our interests require a return to negotiations, we will consider it. But at this time, no agreement or promise has been made, and no talks have taken place.” Araghchi made the point that they were negotiating when Israel launched its June 13th unprovoked attack on Iran.

Trump followed up last weekend by striking three Iranian nuclear sites with bunker buster bombs with the intention of finishing off Iran’s nuclear programme. Araghchi accused Trump of betraying the diplomatic effort to resolve differences. While Trump claimed the US had “obliterated” Iran’s main nuclear sites, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said the sites had been seriously damaged but suggested that Iran should be able to enrich uranium “in a matter of months.”

According to CNN, the Trump administration could encourage Iran to resume talks by offering \$20-30 billion to establish a civilian nuclear energy programme without Iranian enrichment of its own nuclear fuel. The finance, it is said, could be provided by the Gulf countries, naturally not the US.

The administration would also ease sanctions and unfreeze Iranian assets in foreign banks. While such a speculative deal has been deliberately leaked and widely reported, it is unlikely to materialise. It looks like “pie in the sky,” as the saying goes.

Tehran is unlikely to reject a return to talks, but Iran is still assessing its military, political, and diplomatic losses from Israel’s 12-day war and US strikes on its nuclear sites. Iran has to lay down its own conditions and decide when the atmosphere is propitious before re-engaging. Iran has laid down two red lines: low level uranium enrichment must continue on Iranian soil and Iran will not discuss its ballistic missile programme which Iran argues is essential for self-defence. Trump seeks to cross these red lines by eliminating both domestic enrichment and missiles.

Trust has not characterised Iranian-US relations since Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini overthrew Washington’s ally Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in early 1979 and, radical “students” seized control of the US embassy in Tehran and held staff for 444 days. They were not freed until Ronald Reagan had taken over the US presidency from Jimmy Carter. Unfortunately, this gesture did not clear the way for the restoration of relations due to US rejectionism.

The blow of losing the Shah, compounded by the humiliation of the embassy occupation made the US, particularly Congress, testy and unforgiving and easily influenced by domestic and Israeli anti-Iran hawks.

Iranian popular trust in the US was undermined during the decades-long rule of the shah who developed Iran’s economy and carried out modernising social reforms but ruled with an iron fist. His tool was his intelligence agency Savak which allied with the US Central Intelligence Agency and Israel’s Mossad.

The shah put Iran firmly in the Western camp during the Cold War with the Soviet Union and adopted pro-Israel policies.

Iranian resentment continues over the 1953 US-British coup against popu-

larly elected Prime Minister Mossadegh who nationalised the Anglo-Iranian oil company. Resentment intensified when in 1954, the shah reached a deal giving Western countries control of Iran’s oil industry. He also allowed US companies to play a dominant role in trade and Iran’s domestic markets. This was exploited by the Iranian opposition, especially Khomeini who mounted his “revolution” from exile in France. He returned to Tehran in early 1979 after the shah had fled to the US. After several years of turmoil, Khomeini installed the cleric-dominated model of governance.

A decade after the fall of Shah, Iran’s President Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) tried and failed to reconcile with the US and the West. He was followed by Mohammed Khatami (1997-2005) who in 1999 launched his “Dialogue of Civilisations” which he hoped would achieve this end. One effort in this campaign was a Cyprus conference attended by US scholars, policy makers, influential Iranians, and foreign correspondents. While Khatami’s call for dialogue failed to change Washington, one result of this conference was the creation of the website Gulf 2000 which continues to provide platform for information and comment on Iran, the Gulf and the region.

Khatami was succeeded by erratic hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013). His hostile attitude toward the US and the West gave a boost to the powerful anti-Iran lobby in Washington, which was heavily influenced by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who had tried for three decades to drag the US into a war with Iran.

The landmark 2015 agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear programme in exchange for lifting sanctions was negotiated during the presidency of reformist Hassan Rouhani (2013-2021). Iran carried out its commitments under the Obama administration deal and secured some relief from sanctions which had crippled its economy. At that time, IAEA chief Grossi said Iran’s nuclear programme was “primitive.” The deal restricted enrichment to 3.67 per cent for civilian power plants, reduced its stockpile, compelled Iran to export enriched uranium above the limit, and compelled Iran to use old model centrifuges for enrichment.

Iran was subjected to the most stringent and invasive regime of monitoring and inspections ever imposed on any country. However, in 2018, Trump aborted the deal and proclaimed 1,500 sanctions, disrupting the process of reconstituting US-Iran relations. Iran responded in 2019 by enriching uranium to 20 and 60 per cent, amassing a large stockpile, building advanced centrifuges, and curbing IAEA monitoring. Hardliners in the Iranian clerical establishment engineered the 2021 election of Ebrahim Raisi who reverted to an anti-US stance until he died in a helicopter crash in 2024. Iran again swung to the reformist faction by electing Masoud Pezeshkian as president who had pledged to clinch a new nuclear agreement.

Having failed to restore relations with the US, which remains Iran’s chief antagonist on the global scene, Tehran has cultivated ties within the region.

This process was expanded by the 2023 restoration of Saudi Iranian relations and promised the stability Gulf countries require to pursue economic and social advancement. This has been jeopardised by Israel’s war on Iran and US military and political intervention.

The attacks on Iran didn’t achieve anything more than harm nonproliferation

AFTER launching direct attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities, United States President Donald Trump was quick to declare victory. His administration claimed “the world is far safer” after the “bombing campaign obliterated Iran’s ability to create nuclear weapons”.

But in the aftermath of the strikes, there has been much deliberation about the extent to which the Iranian nuclear programme was really set back. As the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, pointed out, craters reveal little about what survived deep below layers of concrete. The Trump administration admitted that at least one site was not targeted with bunker-busting bombs because it was too deep underground. The

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fate of Iran’s centrifuges and stockpile of 60 percent-enriched uranium remains unknown.

While the extent of the damage that the Iranian nuclear programme sustained remains unclear, the nonproliferation regime that kept it transparent for years has been left in tatters.

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In the days after the bombing, Iran’s parliament started drafting legislation to quit the NPT. If Iran goes through with it, a withdrawal could rupture the cornerstone of global arms control.

For half a century, the NPT has limited the nuclear bomb to a handful of states. Iran quitting now would mark the treaty’s most consequential breach since North Korea, which walked away from the NPT in 2003 and tested a nuclear weapon four years later.

Outside the NPT, Iran would no longer be bound by any limits or inspections, leaving the world in the dark about its activities. An opaque Iranian nuclear programme would likely spur other regional powers to do the same, shredding decades of restraint.

Leaving the NPT is not meant to be easy. It requires three months notice, a public rationale, continued liability for past violations, and the handover or continuous safeguarding of all imported nuclear technology. These are steps the treaty depositories and the United Nations Security Council could

help pay off the salary backlog, but it cannot stem the tide of an economy that is collapsing under siege. Nor can it address the deep structural problems within the Palestinian political apparatus itself.

The EU and Arab countries correctly conditioned aid on reforms: governance improvements, anti-corruption measures and, crucially, leadership succession. The appointment of Hussein Al-Sheikh as vice president to President Mahmoud Abbas in April was one such step. But without elections or the meaningful rejuvenation of Palestinian institutions, the PA remains politically stagnant and increasingly disconnected from the people it claims to serve.

Meanwhile, the violence on the ground is escalating. Israeli settler attacks in the West Bank – often coordinated or shielded by the Israeli military – have

intensified in both frequency and brutality. At least four Palestinians were killed last month alone, including three in Kafr Malik, northeast of Ramallah, on June 25, when settlers opened fire on villagers. Despite five settlers being arrested, all were released without charge.

More than 80 such attacks reportedly occurred in the space of a week – many involving arson, destruction of property and physical assaults. Al-Sheikh has appealed for urgent international intervention and the UN has expressed grave concern, calling on Israel to protect civilians and hold perpetrators accountable. But words are not enough. The international community cannot remain a passive observer while armed settlers terrorize Palestinian communities with impunity in areas like Masafer Yatta and the Jordan Valley, regions long targeted for forced

displacement. At the same time, the Palestinian economy is buckling under the weight of inflation, liquidity imbalances and currency distortions. The Israeli society’s shift toward digital payments has left Palestinian banks overwhelmed with physical shekels, while Palestinians themselves remain largely cash-reliant. Price disparities are further distorting the market: cigarettes and gasoline are cheaper in the West Bank than in Israel, spurring cross-border cash purchases that deepen economic instability.

All this unfolded as the US Supreme Court ruled that lawsuits against the PA and the Palestine Liberation Organization could proceed in American courts, adding yet another financial and legal threat to an already beleaguered government.

So, while Europe’s 202 million package is certainly appreciated – and desperately needed –

Democracies rediscover the importance of bread, housing and a decent life

Eyad Abu Shakra

THE rise of Zohran Mamdani, who last week won the Democratic mayoral primary in New York City, the largest and most impressive city in the US, has jolted the American public out of their slumber, which had seemed endless since Donald Trump entered the White House.

To avoid drawing hasty conclusions, we must acknowledge that this young Afro-Asian Muslim who openly identifies as a socialist has only won a single round.

Just one round in the fierce battle that the moderate and progressive wings of Western democracies are waging with the rising far right in its conservative, fascist and racist iterations across Europe and its control over the world’s two largest democracies: India and the US.

On these pages, I have written about what a university professor of mine once told me: If the 20th century was the century of ideology, the 21st is the century of technology. His claim is that the incredible pace of technological progress in our era will, in practice, solve many of the economic and ideological struggles that once pushed humanity to develop theories and abstract solutions.

Of course, we cannot fully endorse or entirely reject this claim just yet. We are only a quarter of the way through the 21st century and technological progress continues at a truly astonishing pace. Achievements and discoveries that once took centuries or generations are now emerging in months, not years.

The whole is no longer what it was, and it will never again be what it is today, given the pace of economic shifts, innovations, shifts in professions, evolving beliefs and interests, the tremors shaking the structures of societies and their interactions, and the limbo that politics and value systems have entered.

Our societies, all of them, are intellectually teetering between extremism and counterextremism, and between isolationism and the collapse of barriers to invasions that had stood in their way regardless of pretext.

In short, these are uncertain times. And the wisest among us are those who place no bets, believe no one’s rhetoric and take no risks backing any political project.

Even in Western democracies that have long found comfort in the stability of their institutions, unlike our own “young” states in the so-called Third World, everything is changing before our eyes and the eyes of their citizens.

The very notion of the nation state, although it seemed firmly entrenched and secure after the end of the Cold War, is now threatened by populist and racist politics. The Ukraine war has sparked immense fear across Europe, which has become terrified of a power that is still nostalgic for the era of czars and red banners.

Meanwhile, the UK’s exit from the EU was driven by the far-right isolationists who now threaten to dethrone the country’s two major parties, the Conservatives and Labour, with the rising proto-fascist isolationists well placed to replace them. At the same time, a resurgence of the Labour left seems to be on the cards, as the credibility of the current Labour government declines. The state of affairs in Britain is part of a broader pattern across Western Europe: moderate forces on the right and left are in decline, while the extreme right and, to a lesser extent, the radical left are gaining ground. This is also obvious in France, where Marine Le Pen’s far-right and Jean-Luc Melenchon’s left-wing movements have gained ground.

Luc Melenchon’s left-wing movements have gained ground. In Germany, it can be seen in the rising popularity of the Alternative for Germany party, while Italy’s Giorgia Meloni is the leader of the Brothers of Italy party. In Portugal and Spain, the far right (Chega and Vox, respectively) are embracing the legacies of the fascist regimes, led by dictators Antonio Salazar and Francisco Franco, that imposed their rule for decades.

With its strategy for reversing the challenge posed by the far right’s upward trajectory, the traditional moderate left is losing its soul and ability to resist. Frankly, this outcome is not surprising at all. The most these anti-far-right forces can hope for is to build fragile, ad hoc alliances that have no credibility, principles or platform.

Yes, all the moderate Western left has done is evade honest conversations, buy time with empty rhetoric and seek to contain the rise of the far right, whose fervor drives its pursuit of wiping out its opponents entirely. The result? The far right is now dictating the political agenda and determining priorities.

In Britain, for instance, the far-right Reform UK party recently surpassed the ruling Labour Party in opinion polls. This is a telling message and a dire warning delivered to a party that has sacrificed its core principles in an attempt to appease power-

ful lobbies and temporarily broaden its appeal in the face of a populist force willing to ride any wave.

In the US, the Democratic Party has made serious mistakes, dragging its feet far too long and trying to cash in on empty slogans.

Democrats understood the nature of the battle they faced in 2016 against Trump and his populist “Make America Great Again” base. However, they have committed two grave errors. First, they underestimated the far-right’s capacity for stirring anti-immigrant sentiment among unskilled workers and the Rust Belt.

Second, they ignored the material demands at the heart of this struggle. The US’ most prominent left-wing politician, Sen. Bernie Sanders, did recognize this problem. He tried to appeal to disaffected working-class voters and bring them back into the Democratic fold to ensure they did not become easy prey for Trump and MAGA.

The Democrats repeated the same mistake later. This time, it was more egregious. The unconditional support of Joe Biden’s administration for Benjamin Netanyahu and his Gaza war cost the party’s 2024 candidate, Kamala Harris, tens of thousands of votes from the left, as well as the votes of Muslims and Arab Americans in key swing states ... votes that could have gone her way, at least in theory.

Mamdani may or may not win November’s mayoral race in New York – a city that remains the hub of Jewish American life. Nonetheless, he has shown his party that victory is impossible without clear principles, no matter how risky sticking to them may seem.

Mamdani understands that the people of New York face urgent material crises that need solutions, not the empty slogans of opportunists and domestic and foreign lobbies that are amplified by Fox News and the like.

Even in the century of technology and virtual worlds, people still need bread, jobs, medicine, employment and social security.

Without justice, no amount of aid will bring lasting peace.

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Europe’s lifeline to Palestine will not fix its bleeding economy

THE European Commission’s allocation last month of a 202 million (\$238 million) aid package to support the Palestinian Authority and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees comes as a rare moment of good news amid a sea of economic despair and political paralysis in Palestine. But while welcome, the European aid barely scratches the surface of a deepening fiscal crisis, exacerbated by both internal dysfunction and relentless external pressure, chief among them the destructive policies of the current Israeli government.

Of the total package, 150 million is earmarked for supporting the PA in providing essential services, from teachers’ salaries to public healthcare and civil administration. That might seem like a lifeline, but it is a frayed rope that risks snapping under the weight of political strings

and mounting debt.

Moayad Afaneh, an economist and adviser to several Palestinian governments, has been reported as saying that the aid is not a “breakthrough,” but rather it is part of a larger EU commitment of 300 million for 2025, which is trickling through at a rate of just 20 million a month – only enough to pay a fraction of public servants’ wages. Most PA employees currently receive only about 35 percent of their salaries.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin, newly sworn in on June 19, struck a cautious tone, saying that the EU package partially covers the gap in the Palestinian treasury. “Our treasury is suffering extremely due to the unlawful decision by the Israeli finance minister to withhold funds collected on our behalf,” she said.

These funds – taxes on goods entering the

Occupied Territories through Israeli-controlled ports – are a key pillar of the Palestinian economy. Under the 1994 Paris Protocol, Israel is obligated to transfer these customs and VAT revenues to the PA. But in recent years, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has chosen to withhold a significant portion of these funds, citing opposition to PA stipends paid to the families of Palestinians killed or imprisoned by Israel.

This Israeli financial chokehold is not a new tactic, but it is being wielded with renewed cruelty. Smotrich’s decisions are crippling the PA’s ability to operate, even at a bare minimum level. Most dangerously, he last month refused to renew a banking waiver that enabled financial transactions between Palestinian and Israeli banks, threatening to paralyze already-strained Palestinian financial institutions.

Daoud Kuttab

To be clear, this is not just an economic dispute. It is a calculated form of collective punishment, wielded not only against the PA but against millions of Palestinians who rely on public services, employment and stability. In an already volatile environment – one in which the war in Gaza has reignited flames of violence across the West Bank – such financial strangulation is akin to throwing fuel on the fire.

Palestinian businessman Samir Hulileh, a former Cabinet secretary, stressed that the financial crisis is as much political as it is economic. A high-profile Saudi-French UN conference, in which Riyadh and others were expected to announce renewed aid, was last month postponed due to Israel’s war with Iran.

So, Europe’s 202 million must be seen in this sobering context. It might

help pay off the salary backlog, but it cannot stem the tide of an economy that is collapsing under siege. Nor can it address the deep structural problems within the Palestinian political apparatus itself.

The EU and Arab countries correctly conditioned aid on reforms: governance improvements, anti-corruption measures and, crucially, leadership succession. The appointment of Hussein Al-Sheikh as vice president to President Mahmoud Abbas in April was one such step. But without elections or the meaningful rejuvenation of Palestinian institutions, the PA remains politically stagnant and increasingly disconnected from the people it claims to serve.

Meanwhile, the violence on the ground is escalating. Israeli settler attacks in the West Bank – often coordinated or shielded by the Israeli military – have

intensified in both frequency and brutality. At least four Palestinians were killed last month alone, including three in Kafr Malik, northeast of Ramallah, on June 25, when settlers opened fire on villagers. Despite five settlers being arrested, all were released without charge.

More than 80 such attacks reportedly occurred in the space of a week – many involving arson, destruction of property and physical assaults. Al-Sheikh has appealed for urgent international intervention and the UN has expressed grave concern, calling on Israel to protect civilians and hold perpetrators accountable. But words are not enough. The international community cannot remain a passive observer while armed settlers terrorize Palestinian communities with impunity in areas like Masafer Yatta and the Jordan Valley, regions long targeted for forced

displacement. At the same time, the Palestinian economy is buckling under the weight of inflation, liquidity imbalances and currency distortions. The Israeli society’s shift toward digital payments has left Palestinian banks overwhelmed with physical shekels, while Palestinians themselves remain largely cash-reliant. Price disparities are further distorting the market: cigarettes and gasoline are cheaper in the West Bank than in Israel, spurring cross-border cash purchases that deepen economic instability.

All this unfolded as the US Supreme Court ruled that lawsuits against the PA and the Palestine Liberation Organization could proceed in American courts, adding yet another financial and legal threat to an already beleaguered government.

So, while Europe’s 202 million package is certainly appreciated – and desperately needed –

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The cross-party event organised at the historic Churchill Room of the House of Commons was also attended by Nigel Huddleston MP Co-Chair of the Conservative Party; Labour Member of Parliament Afzal Khan CBE; Liberal Democrat Peer Lord Qurban Hussain; former Foreign Office Minister Lord Tariq Ahmed; Lord Dolar Popat & Lord Philip Smith amongst others.



Pakistan defeat Maldives to reach semifinal of Asian Youth Girls Netball C'ship



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan secured their place in the semifinal stage of the Asian Youth Girls Netball Championship 2025 after defeating Maldives 49-39 in their fifth and final group match at the Jeonju Hwasan Gymnasium, Jeonju-si, South Korea on Tuesday.

In a tightly contested match, Pakistan came from behind to seal the victory with strong performances from Leya Raza Shah, Alisha Naveed, Sumayya Kouser, Haleema, Jasmine Farooq, and Farah Rasheed. The match progressed with the following quarter-wise results:

1st Quarter: Pakistan 14 – Maldives 12
2nd Quarter: Pakistan 24 – Maldives 26
3rd Quarter: Pakistan 35 – Maldives 32
4th Quarter: Pakistan 49 – Maldives 39
Chairman of the PNF Mudassar Arain, President Sameen Malik, and Secretary General Muhammad Riaz congratulated the national team for their hard-fought vic-

tory and unbeaten run in the group stage. With five consecutive wins, Pakistan topped Pool-B with 10 points. According to the new format introduced by Netball Asia, semifinals will be contested between the top four teams of both divisions—Group A (Gold Cup Division) and Group B (Plate Cup Division)—with cross-group matchups: 1st vs 4th and 2nd vs 3rd. Pakistan will face Japan again in the semi-final of the Plate Cup Division on Thursday, July 3. The championship, being played under the aegis of the Asian Netball Federation, features eleven teams divided into two groups. Group A includes Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and India, while Group B comprises Pakistan, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Maldives and Saudi Arabia. The tournament runs from June 27 to July 4.



LONDON, ENGLAND: Alexandra Eala of Philippines acknowledges the crowd following defeat against Barbora Krejickova of Czechia during the Ladies' Singles first round match on day two of The Championships Wimbledon 2025 at All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club on Wednesday.

Alcaraz survives Wimbledon scare

LONDON (Reuters): Carlos Alcaraz survived Wimbledon's hottest-ever opening day although the Spaniard was far from his sizzling best as he began his quest for a hat-trick of titles with a scare against Fabio Fognini at the All England Club. With air temperatures soaring to 32 degrees Celsius, Alcaraz needed more than four hours to subdue veteran Fognini, winning 7-5 6-7(5) 7-5 2-6 6-1 -- the last set interrupted after a spectator became unwell in the heat and required assistance. Women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka, bidding to win Wimbledon for the first time, had no trouble as she dispatched Canadian qualifier Carson Branstine 6-1 7-5 but last year's runner-up, fourth seed Jasmine Paolini, was pushed hard by Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova in a 2-6 6-3 6-2 win.

While five-times Grand Slam champion Alcaraz, who won the Queen's Club title in the build-up, lives to fight another day, several high-profile players departed the men's draw. No arena at Wimbledon gets as hot as bowl-like Court Two and the conditions were clearly not to the liking of ex-world number one Daniil Medvedev as the ninth seed saw his hopes scorched by Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi, who won 7-6(2) 3-6 7-6(3) 6-2. Eighth seed Holger Rune of Denmark, yet to really make his mark at a Grand Slam, won the opening two sets against Chilean qualifier Nicolas Jarry but succumbed 4-6 4-6 7-5 6-3 6-4. Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas, twice a Grand Slam runner-up was left despondent after retiring with a back injury having fallen two sets behind against French qualifier

Valentin Royer. American fifth seed Taylor Fritz looked to be on his way out before battling back to force a fifth set against big-serving Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard before their match was suspended with the Grand Slam's 11 p.m. curfew looming. German third seed Alexander Zverev summoned up similar fighting spirit to draw level at one set apiece with Arthur Rinderknech in another match scheduled to resume on Tuesday. Only two defending men's champions had ever lost in the first round at Wimbledon, but there were moments when Alcaraz looked in danger of joining compatriot Manuel Santana on that short list as Fognini rolled back the years. Alcaraz arrived at Wimbledon on an 18-match winning streak, which included a spellbinding

French Open final win over Jannik Sinner. But the spark was missing on Monday in front of a Centre Court crowd that included David Beckham. Heat is second nature to Alcaraz, but it was Fognini who flourished in the sun and when he broke serve twice to level the match at two sets apiece a massive shock looked possible. But Alcaraz, regularly using an ice towel to cool down, found an extra gear in the decider and even charmed the crowd by offering his water bottle to the distressed fan. He then led the warm applause for former top-10 player Fognini, for whom this was his final Wimbledon. "I don't know why it's his last Wimbledon because the level he has shown, you know, he can still play three or four more years. It's unbelievable," Alcaraz said of Fognini.

Gill wants top order to take 'more responsibility'

L O N D O N (ESPNCricinfo): In the wake of two lower-order collapses in the first Test against England in Leeds, India's captain Shubman Gill has put the onus on the batters, starting with himself, to not give away starts on these flat pitches in England. India were 430 for 3 and 340 for 4 before losing 7 for 41 and 6 for 31, failing on both occasions to bat England out of the game. Eventually they lost by five wickets on the final evening despite getting into positions from where a draw should have been the worst result for them. "When we were batting, I felt I could have, now looking back at it... the kind of shot I played, I felt I could have batted a little bit more, added another 50 runs with Rishabh [Pant]," Gill said when asked what lessons he learnt from his captaincy debut. "That was my learning from when I was batting."

Gill was on 147 when he tried to hit Shoaib Bashir in the air, and ended up dragging it to the deep fielder on the leg side. What followed was some extravagant shots from the lower order, which didn't come off. Gill was asked if the lower order was spoken to regarding batting responsibly. He again shifted the spotlight more on himself and the batters. "Definitely [chats have been had]," Gill said. "It's been one of the things that we always talk about, especially with our batting depth... the lower order sometimes isn't able to contribute as much as the other teams. "Having said that, you can also look at the other side as well. I was batting on 147 and the way I got out, maybe I could have scored 50 more in partnership with Rishabh. If you get a good ball and you get out, that's fine, but once you are set and you know that you don't really have that much depth in your batting order, maybe the top order could take a little bit more responsibility and bat the opposition completely out of the game. So I think these are different

perspectives to look at the game, but definitely your lower order when your last five or six don't contribute as much, then it becomes easier for the opposition to come back in the game." The batting depth is what India seem to be grappling with Jasprit Bumrah available for Edgbaston but likely to be rested to manage his workload, which demands he play only three of these five Tests. The surface is dry underneath and Birmingham has been dry and warm in the lead-up to the match, which gives India an option to go with a second spinner. Indications are that the said spinner could be Washington Sundar to retain batting depth. "When we were bowling, there were learnings like once the ball is getting old and it's getting soft, there isn't much happening," Gill said. "So how do you contain? How do you control the run flow, especially with the way they bat? Maybe having an extra spinner might help

contain that run flow, especially in the third or in the fourth innings." Gill was asked if Bumrah's absence might encourage them to play a wicket-taking spinner in Kuldeep Yadav. "We will take that [final] call this evening, and I don't it will change the combination as such," Gill said, suggesting a direct swap between Bumrah and a fast bowler, and a spinner for Shardul Thakur, whom India played as a "bowling all-rounder". "We did play an extra bowler, I would say a proper bowling allrounder in the last match," Gill said. "And now having to look back at it, I think nobody really expects that your last six is going to get out in under 40 runs. Even if they play bad, you expect them to maybe score 100 runs or 80 runs. And these are things that you can't really plan or you can't really expect, but you can reflect on those things. And we have some things in mind if we are in this kind of situation again, how we can get better at it."

Al-Hilal shock Manchester City in Club World Cup

ORLANDO, Florida (Reuters): Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal stunned Manchester City 4-3 in extra-time in Orlando on Monday to pull off one of the shocks of the Club World Cup and set up a quarter-final against Brazil's Fluminense. Marcos Leonardo scored his second of the night in the 112th minute as Simone Inzaghi's side saw off the Premier League club, who had taken a ninth minute lead through Bernardo Silva. Quick-fire goals from Leonardo and Malcom in six minutes immediately after the restart put Al-Hilal in front before Erling Haaland equalised for City in the 55th minute. Four minutes into extra-time, Kalidou Koulibaly headed in Ruben Neves' corner to

put the Riyadh-based club back in front and while Phil Foden levelled again for City Leonardo netted with seven minutes left to take Al-Hilal through. "We knew it was a difficult game against one of the best teams in the world," said Koulibaly. "We wanted to show our ideas, our talent, our power and I think that we made a very good game. "Defensively we were very strong and offensively all of the opportunities we could put inside we put in, so we can be happy." Portuguese playmaker Silva had put City ahead when he pushed the ball over the line after Renan Lodi's attempted clearance ended up at his feet inside the six-yard box. Replays showed the

wrist of City's Rayan Ait-Nouri earlier in the move but the referee waved away the Al-Hilal protests. Al-Hilal goalkeeper Yassine Bounou then made a string of saves to deny City a second before the interval and within seconds of the restart the Saudi club levelled. Malcom drove down the right and found Joao Cancelo, whose ball into the six-yard box was initially blocked by a sprawling Ederson but Leonardo headed the looping rebound into the unguarded net. Six minutes later Malcom was released behind the defence by Cancelo's pass from deep inside his own half and the Brazilian showed composure to stroke his shot past Ederson.

The lead was to last only three minutes, however, as Haaland pounced on Silva's corner and the Norwegian was denied a late winner by a desperate clearance on the line from Ali Lajami. The Saudis went ahead four minutes into extra-time when Koulibaly rose to glance home a header from a corner but City levelled once again, substitutes Rayan Cherki and Foden combining for the England international to steer a sublime first-time volley across Bounou and into the bottom corner. Al-Hilal would not be denied and Leonardo claimed his second of the night after seeing Ederson save Sergej Milinkovic-Savic's header, the weary Brazilian stumbling as he steered the winner home.



NEW YORK (Reuters): The Atlanta Hawks plan to acquire shooting guard Nickeil Alexander-Walker in a sign-and-trade with the Minnesota Timberwolves, multiple reports said Monday. Alexander-Walker will receive a new four-year, \$62 million contract that features a player option and a trade kicker, according to ESPN. The deal will see Atlanta send Minnesota a 2027 second-round draft pick originally belonging to the Cleveland Cavaliers, along with cash, per the reports. Alexander-Walker, 26, averaged 9.4 points, 3.2 rebounds and 2.7 assists while shooting 38.1 percent from 3-point range for the Wolves in 2024-25. He played in all 82 games, starting 10, in his second full season in Minnesota. In six NBA seasons split among the New Orleans

Pelicans (2019-22), Utah Jazz (2022-23) and Wolves (2023-25), Alexander-Walker has career averages of 8.6 points, 2.5 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game across 381 games (68 starts). Knicks add veteran G Jordan Clarkson Jordan Clarkson agreed to a buyout from the Utah Jazz on Monday, and he intends to sign with the New York Knicks when he clears waivers, multiple media outlets reported on Monday. Clarkson, four years removed from being selected the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year, played just 37 games (nine starts) last season. He missed the final 10 games because of a medical procedure designed to alleviate plantar fasciitis in his left foot. The 33-year-old guard averaged 16.2 points, 3.7 assists and 3.2 rebounds in the 2024-25 season. He shot

a career-low 40.8 percent from the floor. Clarkson was part of the 2017-18 Cleveland Cavaliers team that reached the NBA Finals before getting swept by the Golden State Warriors. A second-round draft pick of the Washington Wizards in 2014, Clarkson was immediately dealt to the Lakers. He played 3 1/2 seasons in Los Angeles, then parts of three seasons in Cleveland before he was traded to Utah in December 2019. In 753 games (231 starts), Clarkson owns NBA averages of 16.0 points, 3.4 rebounds and 2.9 assists. Pistons reportedly land G Caris LeVert for 2 years, \$29M Caris LeVert, a former collegiate star at Michigan, reportedly is heading back to the Great Lakes State. The 30-year-old guard agreed to a two-year, \$29 million deal with the Detroit Pistons, multiple

media outlets reported on Monday. LeVert could take the place of free agent wing Malik Beasley, who reportedly is the subject of a federal investigation into gambling irregularities. According to the Detroit Free Press, the Pistons tabled a potential three-year, \$42 million offer for Beasley due to the probe. LeVert split last season between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Atlanta Hawks, averaging a combined 12.1 points, 3.4 assists and 3.2 rebounds per game. After playing for Michigan from 2012-13 to 2015-16, LeVert was selected by the Indiana Pacers with the 20th overall pick in the 2016 draft but was immediately traded to the Nets. He spent four-plus seasons in Brooklyn before returning to play parts of two seasons for Indiana.



In brief

FIA launches crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested multiple suspects involved in human trafficking, visa fraud, and large-scale corruption. The operations resulted in the apprehension of a key suspect in the 2025 Morocco boat tragedy, 11 individuals involved in human smuggling, and two LESCO officials accused of embezzling millions of rupees. The FIA Composite Circle Faisalabad arrested Ghulam Mustafa, a notorious land route agent declared a fugitive in the Morocco boat incident case. He was linked to the infamous African human smuggler Abubakar and was part of a network along with previously arrested suspects Abdul Ghaffar and Muhammad Sarfaraz. These traffickers sent dozens of Pakistanis via sea from Mauritania to Europe, but the boat tragically capsized, resulting in multiple fatalities. In a separate operation, the FIA Gujranwala Zone arrested 11 individuals — including a woman — for visa fraud and human trafficking. The arrested include Arsalan, Muhammad Shehbaz Ghumman, Asif Nazir Bajwa, Qasim Nadeem, Muhammad Suleman, Sikandar Adil, Shoaib Iqbal, Arsalan Abdullah, Muhammad Adnan, Asad alias Mitha, and Faiza Waqas. They are accused of defrauding citizens of millions of rupees under the pretext of overseas employment. Some victims went missing or faced life-threatening incidents due to fake visas or illegal travel routes.

291,840 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 291,840 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 449,989 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1504.65 feet which was 102.65 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 294,000 cusecs and 150,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1176.55 feet, which was 126.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 24,149 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Gudub and Sukkur was recorded as 210,988, 173,248, 103,609 and 52,650 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 51,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 48,090 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Hot and humid weather forecast

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast hot and humid conditions to continue across most parts of the country on Wednesday, with chances of rain, wind, and thundershowers at isolated locations in northern and upper regions. In Islamabad, residents can expect humid and partly cloudy weather, with a 35 percent probability of rain and thundershowers in the capital and surrounding areas. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, partly cloudy skies will dominate, while intermittent rain and thundershowers may occur in isolated areas including Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Malakand, Bajaur, Shangla, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, and Kohat.

ICT admin launches anti-encroachment operations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a sweeping effort to reclaim public spaces, Islamabad's district administration has launched a citywide operation to remove illegal encroachments.

From billboards to roadside stalls and vehicles parked on green belts, the ICT administration officials worked late into the night to clear key areas across the federal capital said the spokesman of ICT administration here.

He said that Islamabad's district administration has intensified its campaign against encroachments across the city, initiating a large-scale operation that continued well into the night. Assistant commissioners from all zones took part in the effort, targeting illegal structures, billboards, parking, and stalls in various sectors and busy roads.

As part of the operation, more than 100 billboards were removed from Lehrtr Road alone. Large hoardings were also taken down from Korang Road. The administration reported that these structures had been installed without permission and were obstructing both pedestrian and vehicular movement.

In PWD, unauthorized roadside stalls were dismantled, with officials clearing pathways and ensuring roads remained accessible to the public.

During the operation, over 20 individuals involved in setting up or maintaining encroachments were detained and shifted to police custody.

In the Koral area, construction material stored in the service lane was removed to clear the passage. Authorities emphasized that storing construction equipment in public areas was unlawful and posed safety risks.

Outside car showrooms in sector G-8, vehicles parked on footpaths were shifted to a nearby government school to free up the walkways. In sector F-10, an entire showroom was sealed due to illegal car parking practices. Six vehicles were confiscated and shifted to the local police station.

Green belt areas were also a focus of the operation. In sector G-5, encroachments on green spaces were completely removed, allowing for the restoration of the area to its original purpose.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad said that the operation will continue until all encroachments across the city are removed. The administration has issued a clear message that any obstruction in public areas—whether in the form of stalls, structures, vehicles, or materials—will not be tolerated.

The crackdown aims to ensure the smooth flow of traffic, pedestrian access, and the restoration of public spaces for their intended use. Authorities have urged residents and business owners to cooperate and remove any unauthorized structures voluntarily.

The administration has also indicated that future operations may expand to other sectors and markets, particularly in areas where repeated violations have been reported.

According to officials, this campaign is part of broader efforts to improve urban management, maintain public safety, and uphold the law within Islamabad's municipal boundaries.

The district administration has committed to monitoring cleared areas to prevent the return of encroachments. Regular follow-up inspections are planned to ensure long-term compliance.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that public complaints and reports of encroachments can be submitted to the relevant assistant commissioner offices or through the district administration's online platforms.

The ongoing operation signals a firm stance by Islamabad's authorities to maintain order and reclaim public infrastructure.

Police ensures foolproof security for majalis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Shoaib Khan on Tuesday visited various routes of Muharram processions and Imam Bargahs across the federal capital to inspect security arrangements.

An official told APP that the senior officers reviewed the deployment of security personnel and directed all officers on duty to remain on high alert.

They emphasized that all procession routes should be completely cordoned off, with adequate lighting and strict enforcement of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Muharram gatherings.

DIG Tariq said ICT Police is fully committed to ensuring foolproof security during the sacred month. He directed zonal SDPOs and SHOs to remain present in the field and coordinate closely to ensure peace and security.

DIG Tariq said special focus is being given to maintaining inter-sect harmony and promoting religious tolerance throughout the capital. Police officers have been instructed to implement the SOPs without any leniency and ensure uninterrupted security for both processions and Majalis.

DIG said the police will ensure that the peaceful environment of the capital remains intact in line with the vision of IG Ali Nasir Rizvi, while fostering religious harmony and tolerance during Muharram.

ANF arrests 14 smugglers with drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting nine operations across the country, recovered as many as 76.38 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 14.9 million and arrested 14 suspects, including a Nigerian and a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday.

He informed that 60 grams of heroin and 300 grams of crystal meth (ice) were recovered from the possession of two accused including a woman riding on a motorcycle near a college area, Saikot.

As many as 100 grams of cocaine were recovered from the possession of a suspect near a university

area on Kohat Road, Islamabad.

The arrested confessed to selling drugs to college and university students.

During another operation, 720 grams of cocaine concealed in 40 capsules were recovered from the stomach of a Nigerian national at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore arrived from Bahrain.

As many as 54 kgs of cannabis were recovered from three suspects travelling in a vehicle on the Zero Point highway, Quetta.

Similarly, 4.8 kgs of cannabis were seized from two suspects near Khanna Pul, Islamabad.

3.6 kilograms of cannabis were recovered

from a suspect at Ring Road, Peshawar.

As many as 3 kgs of cannabis and 5 kgs of ice were recovered from a car at Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore, and two suspects were arrested.

In another operation, 2.4 kgs of cannabis were recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist at Khanna Pul, Islamabad.

As many as 2.4 kgs of cannabis were recovered from the possession of a suspect near Tounmi Mor, Dera Ghazi Khan.

Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary ECP Omar Hamid Khan and VC Fatima Jinnah University for Women Dr. Bushra Mirza signing an MoU in presence of Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan.

IG Rizvi reviews Muharram security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IG) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited Imambargah Asna Ashri on Tuesday to review security arrangements for the central Muharram procession. Over 16,000 officers have been deployed across the federal capital, while 3,000 Safe City cameras, drones, and smart patrol vehicles are monitoring 181 processions and 965 Majalis to ensure foolproof security.

An official told APP that the IG Rizvi was accompanied by senior officers of Islamabad Police during the visit. He inspected the entire route of the main procession and held a detailed meeting with the Imambargah administration regarding security coordination.

IG Rizvi said that ten field vigilance teams, operating under senior police officials, are on ground to inspect and supervise security deployments across sensitive locations.

He said that security checkpoints have been established at 284 fixed points throughout the city, while special patrolling units have also been mobilized to ensure quick response and visibility in vulnerable areas.

IG Rizvi said that ICT Police have already conducted 17 search operations in different parts of the district, and these operations will continue till Chehlum as part of a pre-emptive strategy to eliminate potential threats.

IG Rizvi added that all processions and Majalis are being monitored live from the Safe City Command and Control Centre, which is connected with 3,000 surveillance cameras. He said that the monitoring is further reinforced through the use of drones and smart patrol vehicles.

The IG Rizvi emphasized that all law enforcement and emergency response agencies are working in close coordination to swiftly respond to any untoward incident.

He urged the public to cooperate with the police during Muharram, remain alert, and report any suspicious activity or emergency by calling the Islamabad Police helpline "Pukar 15."

CDA to seek legal guidance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) Board has decided to consult the Establishment and Cabinet Divisions for legal guidance on integrating maintenance staff transferred from the Public Works Department (PWD) into the CDA structure.

The decision was taken during the Board's 12th meeting, chaired by CDA Chairman and Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday. The Board directed that a set of recommendations be drafted after thoroughly reviewing all legal frameworks.

The meeting also approved a comprehensive feasibility plan to operationalize the Gandhara Heritage and Cultural Centre at F-9 Park.

Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa stated, "The revenue generated from this

center will be invested back into the city for public welfare, better civic amenities, and Islamabad's overall beautification and development."

Legal matters were also on the agenda. The Board approved the issuance of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for Plot No. 676D-12/2, in compliance with the Islamabad High Court's directive in Writ Petition No. 2214/2022 titled "Hasan Bano vs FGEHA and Others."

In another land-related decision, the Board accepted a request by the Motamar Al-Alam Al-Islami to return an allocated plot in Sector H-8.

CDA clarified that while it would refund the original allotment amount, the current market value of the returned plot is significantly higher.

Additionally, the Board approved an alternate plot

allocation in exchange for Plot No. 39 in Sector I-10/3, again in accordance with the Islamabad High Court's instructions.

Chairman Randhawa emphasized the CDA's commitment to making Islamabad a model city. "CDA is deploying all available resources to ensure the capital's growth, prosperity, and aesthetic appeal while meeting the residential, transportation, and recreational needs of its citizens," he said.

One of the key discussions centered on the transfer fee, registration charges, and stamp duty applicable to urban and rural properties within CDA and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) limits, including private housing societies.

Senior officials, including CDA Board members and the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, attended the meeting.

Experts urge unified national strategy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amid rising regional instability and India's increasingly confrontational posture, leading policy and security experts at a high-level roundtable held at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) called for a comprehensive, whole-of-nation approach to safeguard Pakistan's national interests and regional stability.

Co-organised by the NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) and the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), the roundtable titled "Indo-Pak Military Conflict: Implications, Challenges, and Opportunities for Regional Stability" brought together statesmen, former civil and military leaders, veteran diplomats, academics, and think tank experts.

The participants voiced deep concern over India's aggressive moves, including its attempts to undermine the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), and stressed the urgency of diplomatic, legal, and strategic responses.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Zamir Akram, Advisor to the Strategic Plans Division, highlighted the deterrent strength of Pakistan's nuclear capability while cautioning against India's persistent belligerence.

He urged long-term diplomatic efforts to counter India's "new normal" and called for crisis management mechanisms to avoid escalation.

Dr Arshad Mahmood of CIPS pointed to India's hegemonic ambitions under the Modi regime, warning about its use of false flag operations and strategic miscalculations regarding Pakistan. He stressed the need for economic resilience and technological advancement as key elements of national security.

Legal expert Ahmer Bilal Soofi, President of the Research Society of International Law (RSIL), drew attention to India's use of the term "abeyance" in the context of the IWT

services.

Citizens who previously obtained identification documents through false declarations have been given a unique opportunity under these reforms. NADRA has opened a one-time amnesty window where individuals can voluntarily surrender fraudulently obtained documents, be it CNICs, Child Registration Certificates, or juvenile cards without facing any legal consequences. Officials emphasized that those who come forward voluntarily will not be prosecuted, but this offer may not last indefinitely.

To reduce delays in identity verification processes, NADRA has also introduced a new timeline for decisions. Once an individual has submitted all required documents, the relevant NADRA officer must issue a decision within 30 days. This time-bound approach aims to curb bureaucratic inefficiency and ensure quicker resolutions for applicants.

Furthermore, NADRA

has standardized the definition of "biometric" information. Biometric data is now officially defined as any personal information based on physical or behavioral characteristics such as fingerprints, iris scans, or facial photos that can be used to identify a person. This definition is expected to be adopted by other regulatory bodies, including the State Bank of Pakistan, the Federal Board of Revenue, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority.

These sweeping reforms, guided by the Ministry of Interior under Mohsin Naqvi, reflect NADRA's commitment to closing loopholes, empowering citizens—especially women—and increasing the accuracy and accessibility of identity data in Pakistan.

As implementation continues, citizens are urged to review their family records and correct any discrepancies to avoid future legal complications.

NADRA declares FRC a legal document for first time

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a landmark shift in Pakistan's identity system, NADRA has, for the first time, declared the Family Registration Certificate (FRC) a legal document following Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's recommendation and Federal Cabinet approval.

This change brings the FRC into the same legal category as other core identity documents such as the Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and the Child Registration Certificate (B-Form). NADRA's Spokesperson and Director Public Engagement, Syed Shabhat Ali told APP.

Previously, the FRC was used merely as a reference for family composition and was not enforceable in legal terms. Now, under new rules, providing false or misleading information on an FRC can lead to criminal charges. This accountability measure is aimed at preventing fraudulent claims and reinforcing the integrity

of identity data in the national registry.

Another major change introduced is the requirement for applicants to verify their entire family tree when applying for an FRC.

Individuals will now be shown a complete list of their family members as recorded in NADRA's database.

If the information is correct, they will verify it through a signed declaration, known as affidavit "Bayan-e-Halqi". This process ensures that all individuals named in the certificate are validated by the applicant themselves.

Moreover, the reforms allow family members to be added to the FRC even if they are not physically present. This means that if a family member is abroad or otherwise unavailable, they can still be included based on the applicant's information, provided that necessary identification details are submitted. NADRA officials will then process the request and determine

its validity through internal checks.

A notable provision has been made to address the realities of polygamous marriages. Under the new framework, if a person has more than one wife, all spouses and their children must appear in the FRC. This ensures that no woman's rights are sidelined and that every child is properly linked to their biological mother, thereby maintaining the integrity of family data.

In another development, NADRA has made it possible for individuals to obtain a certificate that includes both their birth family and married family referred to in internal terms as Alpha and Beta compositions, on a single document. This is particularly useful for legal matters, travel documentation, and inheritance claims.

Despite the sweeping reforms, NADRA has announced that there will be no increase in the application fee. The cost remains

Rs. 1,000 for either the Alpha or Beta version, and Rs. 2,000 for the combined certificate.

Married women stand to benefit significantly from these changes. Under the new rules, women who wish to retain their father's name on their CNIC after marriage can now do so without facing administrative hurdles. Previously, such women were often required to update their records to reflect their husband's name before applying for official documents like passports. This reform reinforces a woman's autonomy in choosing how her identity is recorded.

In addition to reforms in family registration, NADRA has also upgraded its Tesla card—the non-chip version of the CNIC. These cards will now include English spellings of names alongside Urdu, making them valid for passport applications and other services that require English documentation. A QR code has been added to

the card, enabling users to link it to the digital wallet on the Pak Identity mobile application. The card's delivery time has also been shortened to 5–15 days, and the fee structure remains unchanged. Importantly, first-time applicants will continue to receive this card free of cost.

To make the process even more accessible, citizens can now view their family composition online through NADRA's Pak Identity app. After biometric verification through fingerprint submission, users can check their registered family details without visiting a NADRA center.

If a citizen finds an error, such as an incorrect addition to the family, they can report it via NADRA's complaint portal (complaints.nadra.gov.pk) or by calling the helpline at 1777.

NADRA officials have also confirmed that agents on the helpline are authorized to lodge complaints on behalf of users who are unable to access online

services.

Officials emphasized that those who come forward voluntarily will not be prosecuted, but this offer may not last indefinitely.

To reduce delays in identity verification processes, NADRA has also introduced a new timeline for decisions. Once an individual has submitted all required documents, the relevant NADRA officer must issue a decision within 30 days. This time-bound approach aims to curb bureaucratic inefficiency and ensure quicker resolutions for applicants.

Furthermore, NADRA

Nuristan man kills brother

KABUL (Pajhwok): A man has shot and killed his brother during a dispute over land in the Duab district of eastern Nuristan province, an official said on Tuesday. Police spokesman Ghulam Rahman Haidari told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident took place on Monday night in Badari village. According to Haidari, the shooting was the result of a longstanding disagreement over land ownership. He added that efforts are ongoing to arrest the suspect.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 06, 1447 — Wednesday, July 02, 2025

Young-man commits suicide

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): A young man has committed suicide by hanging himself to death in the capital of southern Kandahar province, security source said on Tuesday. A credible security source told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident took place in the Industrial Park area of the 5th municipal district of Kandahar city. The man hanged himself to death in his workplace. Mental health issues were cited as the reason behind the incident.

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

IE probes marriage of 7-year-old

HELMAND (TOLOnews): Four days after reports emerged of a seven-year-old girl being married to a 45-year-old man in Helmand province, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue of the Islamic Emirate has said it is seriously investigating the case.

The ministry's spokesperson told TOLOnews that both the child's father and the man involved in the marriage have been referred to judicial and legal institutions, and their case is under review.

Saif-ul-Islam Khyber, the ministry's spokesperson, said: "A few days ago in Helmand, a seven-year-old girl was married to a 45-year-old man. Once the case was reported to the Helmand office of the ministry, the girl's father and the offender were immediately summoned, and the matter was handed over to the court. We again empha-

size that underage marriages, if contrary to Islamic principles, are unacceptable, and our ministry supports women's rights."

Some residents of Helmand and doctors have expressed concern over child marriages, warning that such practices can have serious psychological, social, and physical consequences, particularly for girls.

They say that early marriage not only threatens a child's future but also negatively affects mental health, natural development, and educational opportunities. Qismatullah Zwak, a resident of Helmand, said: "Marriage at a young age can lead to psychological and physical challenges and may result in raising an underdeveloped child, which itself becomes a major societal issue."

Dr. Shah Mohammad Yousufi said: "Most young girls are unaware of family

life and unable to care for children. Therefore, we urge everyone not to marry off their daughters or sisters at a young age."

Meanwhile, religious scholars and legal experts have varying perspectives on the matter. Religious scholar Abdul Bari said: "In Islam, marriage for girls is permissible when they reach puberty, and it is considered appropriate at that age."

Legal expert Sayed Muqaddam Amin stated: "From a legal standpoint, a girl must be 18 years old for her consent to be valid. However, from an Islamic perspective, if there is no coercion, it may not be prohibited."

Earlier, the ministry spokesperson had also announced that the Islamic Emirate respects the rights of all citizens and had prevented over 1,130 cases of forced marriages during the current solar year.

Scholars urged to help environmental protection efforts

KABUL (Pajhwok): Participants of a gathering in Kabul identified excessive use of groundwater, burning of harmful fuels, use of weapons during the past wars and deforestation as key contributors to Afghanistan's environmental challenges.

They emphasised the need to raise public awareness through mosques and religious platforms to help address these issues.

The event, titled "Assessment of Afghanistan's environmental situation", was held in the capital and attended by government officials, religious scholars and representatives of an environmental NGO.

National Environmental Protection Authority (NEPA) chief Maulvi Matul-Haq Khalis said the environment affected all aspects of life and must be carefully managed across every sector.

He noted the past conflicts had significantly damaged the environment due to the use of various weapons.

Khalis further cited unregulated hunting, "ruthless" deforestation, burning of inappropriate fuels, and irresponsible extraction of groundwater as major causes of environmental degradation.

"In Islam, it is forbidden to harm others for one's own personal gain," he stressed.

He added that hundreds of thousands of deep wells had been drilled in Afghanistan, with water being extracted wastefully and excessively, day and night.

Meanwhile, Saeed-urrahman Baghlani, Director of Guidance and Preaching at the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, said: "Water, air and oxygen are blessings from Allah and must not be wasted."

He added that environmental protection was a religious obligation and every individual has a responsibility to contribute to its preservation.

Zabihullah Siddiqi, deputy head of the NGO Raha, which works in the field of environmental conservation, said the meeting was aimed at gathering scholars' views on the matter in light of Islamic teachings.

He mentioned that these perspectives would be incorporated into a comprehensive report on Afghanistan's environmental status in 2025, jointly prepared by Raha and NEPA.

Religious scholars present at the event welcomed the initiative and pledged to promote environmental awareness through mosque sermons and community engagement.

Int'l organisations must support new NHP: Jalali

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Public Health Maulvi Noor Jalal Jalali says international organisations must align their services with Afghanistan's newly developed National Health Policy (NHP) and ensure strict adherence to it during the delivery of healthcare services.

He said this at a meeting with a joint delegation from the WHO, UNICEF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said in a statement.

Jalali reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to eradicating polio and other communicable diseases, emphasising that effective vaccination and access to



primary healthcare services were vital in this effort.

He assured the ministry's partner organisations of continued cooperation in implementing polio vacci-

nation campaigns and addressing existing challenges, urging greater coordination and joint decision-making to improve outcomes. Meanwhile, Dr.

Chris Elias, Chair of the Polio Oversight Board, said the purpose of such meetings was to identify effective strategies for eliminating the poliovirus.

DI urges UN to stop mass Afghan deportations from Iran

KABUL (Pajhwok): Displaced International (DI) expresses grave concern over Iran's large-scale deportation, profiling, and scapegoating of Afghan refugees—a serious breach of the international legal principle of non-refoulement.

In a recent statement, DI highlighted that these developments follow the Twelve-Day War between Iran and Israel, which has further endangered vulnerable displaced communities, including Afghans. This concern builds on DI's previous statements issued on June 13 and June 17.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 640,000 Afghans have returned from Iran since March 20, 2025, following the announcement of a gov-

ernment-imposed return deadline.

Of these, over 366,000 were forcibly deported, including individuals holding valid documentation, legal refugee status, or visas.

On June 26 alone, a staggering 36,100 Afghans were expelled—marking the highest single-day figure to date, with the pace of expulsions continuing to accelerate.

DI is deeply troubled by Iran's politicization of the Afghan refugee population and its unfounded attempts to associate them with the recent conflict. These individuals fled Afghanistan to escape extremism, terrorism, and systematic human rights violations. To now be blamed for a war in which they played no part—while also suffering its conse-

quences in cities like Tehran—is both unjust and dangerous.

Such actions amount to collective punishment and represent a blatant violation of Iran's international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Afghan refugees have long contributed peacefully to Iran's economy, labor force, and society.

"Deporting refugees in violation of international law—while profiling and blaming them for geopolitical tensions they had nothing to do with—is morally reprehensible and legally indefensible," said Ambassador Ashraf Haidari, Founder and President of Displaced International.

"Iran is scapegoating vulnerable Afghans to deflect from its internal

challenges. These individuals seek only safety and dignity, and the world must not remain silent as they are cast out."

DI urgently calls on UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi to speak out against Iran's actions and press for an immediate halt to the deportations and discriminatory practices.

Iran must be held accountable and urged to uphold its international commitments to protect displaced populations.

DI also appeals to Afghanistan's political figures—particularly those in exile and the diaspora—to break their silence and publicly defend the rights of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan.

Baradar-led team travels to Azerbaijan for ECO summit

KABUL (Pajhwok): A high-level delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar departed for Azerbaijan on Tuesday to attend the 17th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).

According to a statement from his office on X, the delegation left Kabul following an official invitation to participate in the summit.

The deputy premier is expected to address the summit's plenary session and hold bilateral meetings with senior Azerbaijani officials to discuss enhancing cooperation between



the two countries across various sectors.

The 17th ECO Summit

will take place on July 3–4, 2025, in Khankendi, Azerbaijan, and will be

attended by presidents and senior representatives from ECO member states.

Public Health Ministry reaffirms commitment

KABUL (BNA): In a meeting with a high-level delegation from the WHO, the Minister of Public Health, Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali, reaffirmed the commitment to eradicate polio and other contagious diseases.

The meeting included representatives from UNICEF, the Bill &

Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, all of whom are currently visiting Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Public Health released a statement highlighting the importance of vaccination and access to primary healthcare services as essential for combating

these diseases.

The meeting featured key participants, including Mawlawi Abdul Wali Haqqani, Deputy Minister for Healthcare Services, Dr. Hanan Balkhi, WHO Regional Representative, and Dr. Tajuddin Avila, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan.

Chemical-laden snacks harm children's health: Medics

KABUL (Pajhwok): The rising availability of snacks like "papar," chips, and biscuits with appealing colorful packaging has boosted sales for shopkeepers, but health experts and the Ministry of Public Health warn that some of these foods contain chemical and artificial colors and flavor enhancers that pose long-term risks to children's health.

In most shops around Kabul, different types of chips, "papar," puffed snacks, and "samiyan" (local snacks) are stocked under various brand names and in colorful packets. Their spicy, sour, salty, and sweet flavors attract the attention of children.

Children fond of these snacks

Elyas, a 10-year-old from Qala-i-Fathullah in Kabul, holding a packet of "papar," told Pajhwok Afghan News: "I really like biscuits, cake, grilled fish, chicken, chips, biryani, and these kinds of things because each has its own special taste."

Eight-year-old Mohammad Hamza, who had purchased biscuits and "papar," said: "I really like biscuits, 'papark,' puffs, 'samiyan,' cakes, and chips. They taste good, everything

tastes good. I buy them every day because I like the taste."

He said that although his parents advise him not to consume such snacks, he still eats one or two packets of "papar" every day because he likes them.

Another child, Mohammad Ibrahim from Kart-i-Mamurin in Kabul, said: "I like everything – 'papark,' 'Shafa,' biryani. I eat them every day. I spend 10 or 20 afghanis to buy them."

Khalida, a 9-year-old girl from Taimani in Kabul, said: "I like biscuits, 'papark,' juice, cake – anything really. I eat chips, biryani, and Shafa snacks. They taste good. At home, they tell me not to eat them because they harm the stomach, but sometimes I listen to my mom, sometimes I just eat what I want. Every day, if I have money, I buy them."

Children who became ill
Fazila, 11, from Kolola Pushta in Kabul, said she used to frequently consume cake, "papar," juice, and other snacks before falling ill with stomach pain.

"I used to eat cake, 'papark,' juice, 'Khandan' (a local snack), and other stuff. My parents told me not to eat them, but I didn't

listen. I even drank soda. Then I got stomach pain and had to be taken to the doctor."

According to Fazila, her stomach pain was caused by eating those snacks. Now that she has stopped eating them, her health has improved.

Similarly, 10-year-old Hadisa from Qala-e-Zaman Khan in Kabul said: "I used to love chocolate cakes, 'papark,' chicken biryani, 'bolani,' chips (Lays and Mana brands), Arabic pilaf, and 'Salenti' snacks. I especially liked the spicy ones. But this year they made me very sick – I got a sore throat. The doctor told me to stop eating them. I stopped and thankfully, I got better."

Children who listen to their parents' advice

Subhanullah, 6, said: "I don't eat snacks from the market. I listen to my mom and dad. I only buy and eat biscuits."

Madina, 7, from Kolola Pushta, said: "I like to eat everything, but at home they say, 'Don't eat, you'll get sick'... so I don't eat them."

Yusra, 9, from Kunduz province, said: "I like 'papark,' biscuits, cake, and soda – anything really. But

my parents tell me not to eat them because I'll get sick. I listen to my mom and don't eat them."

Shopkeepers

Mohammad Tahir, a shopkeeper near Tajwar Sultana High School in Kabul, said he was running a shop in the area for the last 10 years, and most of his customers were children buying chips, biscuits, cake, puffed snacks, and soda.

He added that in the past, these snacks were mostly imported from neighboring countries, but now many were produced domestically.

Another shopkeeper, Mohammad Ayaz in Taimani, said his store carried a wide variety of biscuits, "papar," chips, cocoa-based snacks, cakes, and sodas. He earns about 1,000 afghanis daily from selling them.

Similarly, Noor Ali, a shopkeeper on 2nd Street of the Taimani Project in Kabul, said children mostly prefer "papar," chips, juice, cake, "Khandan," Arabic pilaf, chicken-flavored snacks, various "kaku" (sponge cakes), and soda. His daily income from these sales is around 3,000 afghanis.

Health experts' concerns

Dr. Lamer Jawid, a pediatric specialist at the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul, told Pajhwok that snacks like chips and "papar" contain food dyes, sugars, and fats that are harmful to children's health. Due to their strong and tangy flavors, children can become addicted to them.

He added that such snacks not only cause obesity, tooth decay, and hinder brain development, but in the long run, can also lead to heart disease, indigestion, stomach issues, and diabetes.

"Right now, we have five to ten patients who developed chronic illnesses from consuming foods like juice, 'papar,' chips, and puffs," he said.

He mentioned a child admitted to the hospital who was addicted to commercial juices, drinking three cans in 24 hours and refusing any other food. The child developed malnutrition as a result.

He recommended that families prepare a variety of snacks and juices at home, which not only prevent illness but also contribute to the child's development.

Nutritionist Dr. Moha-

mmad Humayun Ludin said: "Puffs and other colorful snacks on the market contain substances that suppress appetite in children, making them malnourished and anemic."

He said these products contain artificial dyes and trans fats, which are hard to digest and absorb, posing serious health risks. He labeled these snacks as addictive and added: "It's better if our children avoid market foods with unknown preservatives, oils, and colors."

He also noted that many of these items are stored for months in unsanitary conditions, allowing harmful bacteria to grow.

Officials

Ashrafullah Shafaq, Head of Food Surveillance Analysis at the Ministry of Public Health's Food and Drug Directorate, said that many food products sold in markets, shops, and even on the streets in colorful packaging are of very poor quality and often used by children and adolescents.

They contain substances with no nutritional value and artificial dyes that can cause cancer and chronic diseases.

He advised people to consume high-quality food

products, suggesting fresh fruits instead of commercial sodas.

"We go to schools in Kabul and districts with the Ministry of Education to raise awareness among students about the harms of snacks like puffs, chips, jelly, and various sweets. These low-quality products seriously affect students' learning and development," he said.

He added: "We've requested a list from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of all imported food products. For those deemed low quality and harmful, we've asked that they should not be allowed into the country."

He explained that some substandard sweets are imported from neighboring countries and contain substances not fit for consumption. Laboratory testing has shown they should not be used at all due to the presence of industrial dyes.

To prevent the import of harmful snacks, the ministry has held educational workshops urging investors not to finance the production of such items.

Shafaq noted that while some factories produce high-quality snacks, many low-quality items are made

in residential homes: "It's very difficult for us to control this, but we are trying to track them down."

He urged families to stop their children from buying carbonated sodas, unregulated sweets, and unhealthy snacks to prevent various diseases. He emphasized that combating the production and import of substandard food products, which can lead to health issues, requires coordinated action from all relevant agencies.

Shafaq also referenced a new law signed last week by the Islamic Emirate's leader to prevent the smuggling of food, medicine, and health products. This law will help block the entry of substandard and illegal food and drug products into the country.

Dr. Zabihullah Shams from the Nutrition Department at the Ministry of Public Health said that eating unhealthy food leads to digestive issues in children, creating a false sense of fullness. This causes weight loss and results in acute malnutrition.

He urged families to provide their children with healthy nutrition and to never waste their money on unhealthy foods like "puff," chips, and "papar."

CASS panel hails Iran-Israel truce

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: This was the consensus at the webinar on 'The Economic Fallout of Israel-Iran Conflict' organised by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad.

The distinguished panel of experts, including Dr Einar Tangen, Senior Fellow at the Taihe Institute, Beijing; Dr Manzoor Ahmad, Senior Fellow at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad; and Dr Usman W. Chohan, Advisor at CASS, Islamabad, analysed the far-reaching economic consequences of the Israel-Iran conflict, offering critical insights into global market disruptions, energy security, and regional stability.

The webinar was moderated by Research Associate Zahra Niazi, with introductory and concluding remarks by Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd), President of CASS, Islamabad.

The panel welcomed the Iran-Israel ceasefire as a timely measure that averted serious global and regional energy and security repercussions, especially in light of the threat of a Strait of Hormuz closure. Dr Einar Tangen was of the view that the world was very near the edge of a precipice, not by accident, but propelled by the reckless blindness of powerful actors, most notably the United States and Israel.

He said that their unilateral actions in Iran and 'disregard for established norms had shattered the fragile foundations of global security', forcing vulnerable nations towards the desperate, catastrophic 'solution' of nuclear weapons. He further stressed that the zero-sum path in which security was seen as terror and strength



through the deliberate insecurity of others, only offered perpetual fear and the certainty of eventual global catastrophe. Dr Tangen hoped that instead of Western short-sightedness, aggression, and self-interest, middle powers like Pakistan, would embrace the path of mutual security, collaborative development, and respect for sovereignty best articulated by China's vision.

Dr Manzoor Ahmad discussed the potential economic impact of a prolonged Iran-Israel conflict on Pakistan. Reflecting on how Pakistan has tackled similar crises before, he pointed out that kneejerk reactions tend to make things worse, drive up inflation, unemployment, and trade gaps. 'When international crises hit,' he said, 'we've got to learn how to deal with them proactively.' He argued for forwardthinking domestic policy changes to build stronger resilience against outside shocks.

Dr Usman W. Chohan provided a comprehensive analysis of both the direct economic costs of the Israel-Iran conflict, indirect costs and regional spillovers and specific impacts on Pakistan. On the direct costs, he noted that Israel had spent about USD 0.7-1 billion per day on military operations and rebuilding, so its deficits had widened, labour shortages emerged, and

civilian spending and tech exports were now suffering.

Meanwhile, Iran's 1.7-2.2 mbpd 'shadow' exports were persisting, but strikes on energy assets would now deepen its power crises, drive inflation to 40%, and channel funds into fuel smuggling and IRGC proxies. Pakistan, he shared, had felt the Iran-Israel tensions acutely through a surge in fuel smuggling and broader macroeconomic pressures. He pointed out that fuel already accounts for about 30% of Pakistan's import bill, and with 70% of oil transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Brent crude at USD 90-100 per barrel could have ballooned the current account deficit, weakened the rupee, stoked inflation further, and shaved an estimated 0.5-1.5 percentage points off the GDP.

The session was followed by an interactive question and answer session from participants from the UK and Pakistan. Concluding the session, President CASS, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd.), reiterated the urgency of securing Pakistan's energy infrastructure and diversifying strategic partnerships to mitigate external shocks since separating economic and geopolitical aspects in conflict situations was becoming increasingly difficult.

26th Amend being used to sideline Imran, says Aleema

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, the sister of PTI founder Imran Khan, has said that the effects of the 26th Constitutional Amendment are now becoming visible, and that efforts are underway to sideline the party founder.

Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail on Tuesday, she said Imran Khan had raised concerns over the 26th Amendment and said that those currently sitting in the assemblies had come into power through stolen votes. Aleema added that according to Imran Khan, the voice of the media has been silenced and now a 27th Amendment is being planned, gradually muzzling the public's voice as well.

She quoted Imran Khan as saying that living in jail was better than living in a system of slavery. Referring to recent developments in Punjab, Aleema Khan pointed out that 26 members of the provincial assembly were barred. She then reaffirmed her commitment to stand with her brother in every movement. She further alleged the former prime minister was being denied his basic rights, including the right to meet his family and legal counsel.

Pak assumes presidency of UNSC

WASHINGTON: Pakistan has assumed the presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), marking the country's eighth term on the 15-member body and the first time since 2013 that it is holding this position.

Pakistan takes on this symbolic yet strategic role at a time when the world faces escalating conflicts, deepening geopolitical divisions, and growing mistrust in multilateral institutions. The presidency comes during Pakistan's current two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the Council, which began in January 2025 and will continue through the end of 2026. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed emphasized that Pakistan is assuming this role amid a period of profound global uncertainty, marked by intensifying conflicts, complex strategic environments, and grave threats to international peace and security.

Although the presidency rotates monthly and holds no executive authority, it provides an opportunity to shape the Council's agenda and tone. At a time when the UNSC is struggling with paralysis over major crises such as Gaza and Ukraine, such leadership becomes especially significant. — Agencies

Ex-Russian minister sentenced

MOSCOW (Reuters): Former Russian deputy defense minister Timur Ivanov was found guilty of corruption on Tuesday and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

Ivanov was arrested in April 2024 on suspicion of taking bribes, and investigators added new embezzlement charges in October. His case is part of the biggest slew of corruption scandals to hit the Russian defense establishment in years. More than a dozen people, including two other former deputy ministers, have been arrested in a series of investigations.

Ivanov, who had pleaded not guilty, was also stripped of all his state awards. His lawyer said he would appeal. State media reported that the total sum alleged to have been embezzled by Ivanov and others was 4.1 billion rubles (\$48.8 million), mostly in the form of bank transfers to two foreign accounts.

The trial took place behind closed doors on grounds of state secrecy. A former subordinate of Ivanov, Anton Filatov, was sentenced to 12-1/2 years. Russian media said Ivanov and his wife owned a luxury apartment in central Moscow, a three-story English-style mansion on the outskirts of the capital and an extensive collection of classic cars including a Bentley and an Aston Martin.



WEST BANK: Mourners carrying body of Palestinian teenager Amjad Nassar Awad, 15, who was killed in an Israeli raid.

US woman converts to Islam, marries Pakistani man in Dir

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: In a real-life tale of digital-era romance transcending borders, Mindy Rasmussen, a 47-year-old woman from Chicago, USA, reached a remote village in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to marry her 31-year-old fiancé, a local resident of Ushera Dara in Upper Dir.

Mindy Rasmussen, who met Sajid Zeb Khan online nearly a year ago through Facebook, arrived in Pakistan earlier this week on a 90-day visit visa. After converting to Islam and adopting the name Zulekha, she solemnized her marriage (nikkah) with Sajid in Upper Dir here on Tuesday, in accordance with local customs and Islamic traditions. The ceremony was held in the Sadiqa Banda village, Ushera Dara valley, under the jurisdiction of Gandigar Police Station.

Police and family sources confirmed that the American national embraced Islam voluntarily and married Sajid Zeb Khan, the son of Anwar Zeb. The couple's story has captured local attention and prompted widespread interest in the region.

The relationship, which began with online chats and video calls, soon evolved into a committed bond. Mindy eventually proposed to Sajid



and, after receiving approval from both families, she travelled to Pakistan with the intention of getting married. Sajid, who runs a small medical store in Tarpatar Bazaar, welcomed Mindy with flowers at Islamabad International Airport. The two then travelled to his hometown, where villagers received the American guest with traditional hospitality, presenting gifts and celebrating the occasion.

Speaking to a local web channel, Mindy (now Zulekha) expressed deep appreciation for the warm reception. "It's my first visit to Pakistan, and I must say it's a beautiful and peaceful country," she said. "The kindness and hospitality I've experienced here are beyond anything I expected." She added that her family in the U.S., including her father, older sister, and

younger brother, were aware of her visit and supported her decision. "They know I'm here and are excited for me," she said. Mindy also encouraged other foreigners to visit Pakistan and explore its culture, hospitality, and natural beauty.

When asked about their relationship, she described Sajid as "a loving and humble man," whose sincerity and respect had drawn her closer to him. Sajid emphasized that Mindy's decision to travel to Pakistan and convert to Islam was entirely her own. "There was no pressure from me or my family," he said. "She is a mature woman capable of making her own choices. We are tying the knot of our own free will."

Rejecting any need for a formal security detail, Sajid said, "We are here to celebrate our love with simplicity and joy," adding they did not need any formal security. Local police officials stated they were keeping a close watch on the situation and were ready to provide protection if necessary. "The foreign guest's safety is our priority," a police source said. Residents in the area praised the union, calling it a sign of mutual respect and cultural openness. The story, they said, offers a heartening portrayal of the region's peaceful and welcoming nature.

Blow for Thailand's govt as court suspends PM

BANGKOK (Reuters): Thailand's Constitutional Court on Tuesday suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra from duty pending a case seeking her dismissal, in a major setback for a government under fire on multiple fronts and fighting for its survival.

The court accepted a petition from 36 senators accusing Paetongtarn of dishonesty and breaching ethical standards, based on a leak of a sensitive telephone call with Cambodia's influential former leader Hun Sen that was intended to de-escalate a territorial row and tense troop buildup at their border.

The leaked June 15 call triggered domestic fury and has left Paetongtarn's coalition with a razor-thin majority after a big party abandoned the alliance and accused her of undermining sovereignty, as protest groups threaten more demonstrations to demand a new government.

Paetongtarn's battles after only 10 months in office underline an intractable power struggle between the billionaire Shinawatra dynasty and an influential establishment backed by the army — a two-decade grudge match that has seen two military coups and court rulings that have toppled multiple parties and prime ministers.

She accepted the court's decision on Tuesday and apologised over the leaked call, during which she kowtowed before Hun Sen and criticised a Thai army commander, a red line in a country where the military has significant clout.

"My true intention in the leaked conversation, my true intention 100 per cent, was to work for the country to maintain our sovereignty and save the lives of all our soldiers," Paetongtarn told reporters. It has been a baptism of fire for political novice Paetongtarn, who at 37 was thrust into the spotlight last year as Thailand's youngest premier after the Constitutional Court dismissed ally Srertha Thavasin for a violation of ethical standards.

Paetongtarn, the fourth member of her family to hold the top post, has been struggling to revive a stuttering economy and arrest a sharp decline in popularity, with an opinion poll released at the weekend showing her approval rating sinking to 9.2pc in June from 30.9pc in March. Thai shares.SETI jumped 1.8pc after the midday break on expectations that political uncertainty could lead to further cuts in interest rates by the central bank.

Deputy Prime Minister Suriya Juangroengruangkit

takes over as caretaker premier while the court decides the case against Paetongtarn, who has 15 days to respond and will stay in the cabinet as the new culture minister following a reshuffle. Paetongtarn is not alone in her troubles, with influential tycoon father Thaksin Shinawatra, the driving force behind her government, facing legal hurdles of his own in two different courts this month.

Polarising tycoon Thaksin appeared at his first hearing at Bangkok's Criminal Court on Tuesday on charges he insulted Thailand's powerful monarchy, a serious offence punishable by up to 15 years in prison if found guilty. Thaksin denies the allegations and has repeatedly pledged allegiance to the crown. The case stems from a 2015 media interview Thaksin gave while in self-imposed exile, from which he returned in 2023 after 15 years abroad to serve a prison sentence for conflicts of interest and abuse of power.

Thaksin, 75, dodged jail and spent six months in hospital detention on medical grounds before being released on parole in February last year. The Supreme Court will this month scrutinise that hospital stay and could potentially send him back to jail.

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UK govt faces key test in welfare reform bill vote

LONDON: The United Kingdom's Labour government hopes to limit a rebellion over welfare reform from its own politicians in a key vote in Parliament, just days after attempting to win them over with concessions.

Almost a year after his party won a landslide election victory, Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces one of the toughest tests of his premiership on Tuesday, when MPs vote on his government's welfare plans. Angered by proposals to change the eligibility criteria of the country's main disability benefit and to reduce health-related support received by those on low incomes, more than 120 Labour politicians signalled last week that they would be voting against the bill.

In a bid to appease them, Downing Street announced a set of concessions on Friday, including a pledge that current claimants of the disability benefit, which is known as the personal independence payment (Pip), would not be affected by the cuts. The government also promised to launch a review into Pip, led by Disability Minister Stephen Timms.

Speaking on Friday, senior Labour backbencher Meg Hillier, one of the rebels, described the U-turn as a "workable compromise". However, shortly ahead of Tuesday's vote, it appeared that dozens of Labour politicians still opposed the bill, with British media reporting that at least 35 were planning to go against the government.

The vote comes after 86 disability and human rights groups issued a joint statement on Monday urging politicians to vote against the welfare reform bill. Rachael Maskell, a Labour MP and critic of the proposal, wrote on X on Monday evening that disabled people "have yet to have agency in this process". "It is time their voices were heard," she added.

The disputes around the government's welfare reform bill have led to questions being asked once more about Starmer, who has a working majority of 165 in the House of Commons. "It's a failure of leadership for a prime minister with such a big majority to not be able to get their agenda through," said Rob Ford, a politics professor at the University of Manchester. — Aljazeera

Trump to discuss Gaza, Iran with Netanyahu

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he will discuss the situations in Gaza and Iran when he meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House next week, adding that he hopes to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza soon.

Trump plans to meet Netanyahu on Monday. A senior Israeli official, Ron Dermer, has been in Washington this week holding talks ahead of the meeting. Trump and Netanyahu worked together on a military operation against Iran's nuclear sites in June that culminated with American B-2 bombing raids. Trump said the strikes "obliterated" Tehran's nuclear capability, although there remains a debate about the degree of damage done to the Iranian nuclear program.

Trump said he is hopeful that a ceasefire-for-hostages agreement can be achieved next week between Israel and Iran-backed Hamas militants in Gaza. "We hope it's going to happen. And we're looking forward to it happening sometime next week," he told reporters as he departed the White House for a day trip to Florida. "We want to get the hostages out."

Hamas has said it is willing to free remaining hostages in Gaza under any deal to end the war, while Israel says it can only end if Hamas is disarmed and dismantled. Hamas refuses to lay down its arms. The war in Gaza was triggered when Hamas-led 'militants' attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to

Israeli tallies.

Gaza's health ministry says Israel's post-Oct. The 7 military assaults have killed over 56,000 Palestinians. The assault has also caused a hunger crisis, internally displaced Gaza's entire population and prompted accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice and of war crimes at the International Criminal Court. Israel denies the accusations. A White House official, asked about Dermer's scheduled meetings and agenda, said: "Ron Dermer visits the White House regularly."

"This will continue as President Trump pursues a path to peace for Israel and Gaza," the official added. The official did not immediately identify the Trump aides Dermer would see during his visit.

Rubio hails end of USAID

WASHINGTON (AFP): The US foreign aid agency formally closed down Tuesday, with President Donald Trump's administration trumpeting the end of the "charity-based model" despite predictions that millions of lives will be lost.

Founded in 1961 as John F. Kennedy sought to leverage aid to win over the developing world in the Cold War, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has now been incorporated into the State Department — after Secretary of State Marco Rubio slashed 85 percent of its programming.

In a farewell to remaining staff on Monday, former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama — as well as U2 frontman Bono — saluted their work and said it was still needed. Bush pointed to PEPFAR, the massive US effort to fight HIV/AIDS that he considers one of the top achievements of his 2001-2009 Republican presidency.

"This program shows a fundamental question facing our country — is it in our nation's interest that 25 million people who would have died now live? I think it is," Bush said in a video message seen by AFP. Obama, who like Bush has been sparing in openly criticizing Trump, said that ending USAID was "inex-

plicable" and "will go down as a colossal mistake."

"Gutting USAID is a travesty and it is a tragedy because it's some of the most important work happening anywhere in the world," the Democrat said. A study published in the medical journal The Lancet predicted that more than 14 million people would die, a third of them small children, by 2030 due to the foreign aid cuts.

Rubio painted a drastically different picture of USAID, which was an early target of a sweeping government cost-cutting drive led for Trump by billionaire Elon Musk. Rubio said that USAID's "charity-based model" fueled "addiction" by developing nations' leaders and that trade was more effective.

"Beyond creating a globe-spanning NGO industrial complex at taxpayer expense, USAID has little to show since the end of the Cold War," Rubio wrote in an essay. He also complained that many recipients of US aid do not vote with the United States at the United Nations and that rival China often enjoys higher favorability among the public. A senior State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that The Lancet study relied on "incorrect assumptions"

and said the United States will continue aid but in a "more efficient" way.

He said that PEPFAR will remain, with a priority on stopping HIV transmission from mothers to children. But he acknowledged the United States was no longer funding PrEP medication, which significantly reduces the rate of HIV transmission and has been encouraged by high-risk communities. "No one is saying that gay men in Africa shouldn't be on PrEP. That's wonderful. It doesn't mean that the United States has to pay for every single thing," the official said. He said the Trump administration was looking at "new and innovative solutions" and pointed to food deliveries in war-battered Gaza staffed by US military contractors and surrounded by Israeli troops.

Witnesses, the United Nations and local Gaza officials have reported that Israeli troops have repeatedly opened fire and killed Palestinians waiting for aid — although the US-backed initiative, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, denies any deadly incidents. Bob Kitchen, the vice president for emergencies at the International Rescue Committee, said that the 14 million death prediction was consistent with what the humanitarian group was seeing.