

Stranded tourists rescued
F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: A landslide occurred on the Saif-ul-Muluk Lake Road due to a cloudburst, resulting in more than 500 tourists from across the country and over 117 jeeps were stranded. Tourism Dept spokesman in a statement here said KP CM took immediate notice of the incident and directed Secretary of Tourism Dr. Abdul Samad to utilize all available resources to safely evacuate the tourists.

Israeli gunfire and strikes kill 42 in Gaza

GAZA (AP): Israeli airstrikes and gunshots killed at least 42 people in Gaza overnight and into Saturday, according to Palestinian health officials and the local ambulance service, as starvation deaths continued and ceasefire talks appear to have stalled.

Gunfire killed at least a dozen people waiting for aid trucks close to the Zikim crossing with Israel in the north, said staff at Shifa hospital, where bodies were taken. Israel's military said it fired warning shots to distance a crowd "in response to an immediate threat" and it was not aware of any casualties.

A witness, Sherif Abu Aisha, said people started running when they saw a light that they thought was from aid trucks, but as they got close, they realized it was Israel's tanks. That's when the army started firing, he told The Associated Press. He said his uncle was among those killed. "We went because there is no food ... and nothing was distributed," he said.

Elsewhere, those killed in strikes included four people in an apartment building in Gaza City, hospital staff and the ambulance service said. Another Israeli strike killed at least eight people, including four children, in the crowded tent camp of Muwasi in the city of Khan Younis in the south, according to the Nasser hospital, which received the bodies. Also in Khan Younis, Israeli forces opened fire and killed at least nine people trying to get aid entering Gaza through the Morag corridor, according to the hospital's morgue records. There was no immediate comment from Israel's military.

Ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas were at a standstill after the U.S. and Israel recalled negotiating teams on Thursday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering "alternative options" to ceasefire talks. A Hamas official, however, said negotiations were expected to resume next week and described the recall of the Israeli and U.S. delegations as a pressure tactic.

Egypt and Qatar, which mediate alongside the United States, called the pause temporary and said talks would resume. They did not say when. "Our loved ones do not have time for another round of negotiations, and they will not survive another partial deal," said Zahiru Shahar Mor, nephew of hostage Avraham Munder, one of 50 still in Gaza from Hamas' attack on Oct. 7, 2023, that sparked the war. Mor spoke at a weekly rally in Tel Aviv.

The United Nations and experts say Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of famine. And now children with no preexisting conditions have begun to starve to death. "We only want enough food to end our hunger," said Wael Shaaban at a charity

Dar calls for sustainable peace architecture in S Asia

WASHINGTON (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar underlined the need for a sustainable architecture of peace in South Asia and said the United States as a global power and a partner has a constructive and stabilizing role to play. He was speaking at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council in Washington.

Talking about ceasefire between India and Pakistan in May 2025, he said the US emerged as the credible arbiter of peace and stability in South Asia. He thanked US President Trump for facilitating ceasefire between India and Pakistan. "We are committed to sustaining the ceasefire unlike our neighbour. We believe in peace and we never escalated as the first mover and we only acted in self-defence according to the United Nations charter," he explained.

He said Pakistan's relationship with the United States was enduring, wide ranging and evolving. "It has proved to be a consequential partnership whenever the two countries converged on global issues. We are encouraged by the upward trajectory in our bilateral partnership since President Trump assumed office."

He said he held a very productive meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the two sides agreed on our shared commitment to deepen and broaden relations between Pakistan and the United States. "Our nations are coming closer and we have already made progress in relations in the span of six months." He recalled that in his joint address to the Congress, President Trump recognized Pakistan's vital assistance in battling global terrorism.

He said the world was changing at a rapid pace and old certainties were giving way to the new realities. Pakistan believed in peace through resilience and responsibility, he stressed adding Pakistan was a youthful nation of 240 million people, fifth largest in the world and a nuclear power. He said, "We are peace seeking and peace loving nation and stability in South Asia is vital for us and for the world."

Thousands rally in Malaysia to call for PM's resignation

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters): Thousands of people rallied in the Malaysian capital on Saturday to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, as public discontent grows over rising living costs and allegations of failing to deliver promised reforms. Protesters — mostly wearing black t-shirts and bandannas carrying the slogan "Turun

Anwar", or "Step Down Anwar" — marched through the heart of Kuala Lumpur, before converging in the city's Independence Square to hear speeches by top opposition leaders.

Police estimated at least 18,000 were in attendance. Anwar, who campaigned on a reformist platform before taking office in November 2022, has faced criticism

over measures aimed at boosting government revenue, including an expanded sales and services tax and subsidy adjustments that some fear could lead to a spike in consumer prices.

The premier this week announced a cash handout, increased aid for poor households and a pledge to lower fuel prices, in a bid to quell worries over rising costs.

President confers award on US Centcom chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday conferred the prestigious Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) on General Michael E. Kurilla, Commander of United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), during a formal ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The honour was awarded in recognition of General Kurilla's exemplary military service and his significant role in bolstering strategic defence ties between Pakistan and the United States. His leadership has been pivotal in deepening counterterrorism cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding, and reinforcing regional stability efforts, the Pakistani military's media wing said in a statement.

General Kurilla's visit highlighted the growing depth of bilateral military collaboration. The ceremony was marked by a Tri-Services Guard of Honour, underscoring the esteem with which he is held by the Pakistan Armed Forces.

During his visit, General Kurilla held high-level meetings with Pakistani leadership, including President Zardari and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff. Discussions focused on regional security dynamics, emerging transnational threats, and avenues for joint military engagement and training. The award, a rare distinction for foreign military officials, reflects Pakistan's appreciation of Kurilla's unwavering support and enduring commitment to strengthening defence cooperation.

271 dead as monsoon creates havoc

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As many as 271 people lost their lives in the ongoing monsoon season across the country, said the National Disaster Management Authority on Saturday.

The NDMA released a detailed report outlining the damages caused by monsoon rains from June 26 to July 26 across Pakistan. According to the latest update, 6 people lost their lives and 22 were injured in the past 24 hours alone. Since the beginning of the monsoon season, a total of 271 fatalities and 655 injuries have been reported.

Among the deceased are 132 children, 93 men, and 46 women. Punjab has recorded the highest number of casualties, with 145 deaths and 514 injuries. The report added that 63 deaths were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while 25 people lost their lives in Sindh.

Moreover, Balochistan reported 20 deaths while 2 people lost their lives in Azad Kashmir. As many as 8 deaths were reported in Islamabad in the monsoon season. The report said that 1,191 houses have been affected, 367 livestock have been swept away while 12 bridges have been damaged due to heavy rains and flooding.

Meanwhile, the fifth spell of monsoon rains is set to begin in Punjab on July 31, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). Widespread rainfall is expected across most districts of the province. The PDMA spokesperson has warned of potential urban and flash flooding, landslides in hilly areas, and damage to weak or poorly constructed buildings.

Rain is forecast in the following areas: Murree, Galiyat, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Narowal, Sahiwal, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Khushab, Sargodha, Mianwali, Nankana Sahib, Chiniot, Faisalabad, and Okara.

Between July 29 and 31, rain is also expected in Dera Ghazi Khan, Bhakkar, Bahawalpur, Khanewal, Pakpattan, Vehari, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, and Rajanpur.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review progress on FBR reforms.

PM okays formation of modern, digital ecosystem in FBR

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday granted approval for the formation of a modern and globally standard digital ecosystem in Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), besides directed hiring of internationally renowned experts.

During a meeting to review progress on the ongoing reforms in the FBR, the prime minister observed that the economy was moving in a positive direction due to the recent reforms in FBR. Ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahsad Khan Cheema, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, FBR Chairman, Chief Coordinator Musharraf Zaidi, economic experts and other senior officials attended the meeting. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was briefed on the progress regarding the formation of a modern digital ecosystem aimed at centralizing FBR's data and enabling real-time monitoring of the entire value chain. The prime minister, while chairing the meeting, emphasized that not only digitization, but a comprehensive digital ecosystem should be established to strengthen the new system and directed that all the relevant data, from raw material production and import, to manufacturing of goods and the final consumers' purchase, should be integrated into a single system.

The prime minister said the system should be made so effective that the entire value chain could be monitored digitally in real time. He further opined that the centralized data collected under this system should be utilized for the economic strategic decision-making. The prime minister stressed that the goal of reducing taxes for the common man could only be achieved by increasing the tax base and ending the informal economy.

Shehbaz strongly condemns Israeli blockade of aid to Palestinians in Gaza: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the Israeli blockade of aid to the Palestinians in Gaza resulting in food shortages.

He made the condemnation during a telephonic conversation with Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman. Both leaders expressed deep concern over the ongoing Israeli brutality against the defenceless Palestinians in Gaza. The Prime Minister also strongly condemned the increasing inhuman Zionist atrocities in Gaza.

He said Pakistan will continue diplomatic efforts at all levels to end the Israeli blockade of aid to Gaza and restore the supply of food items to the Palestinian brothers and sisters, including children and women who are starving.

Pakistan will continue to provide diplomatic and moral support to the defenceless Palestinian brothers and sisters who are victims of Zionist oppression and barbarism, he stressed. Pakistan, he added, will keep raising its voice against the inhuman atrocities being committed against its Palestinian brothers and sisters in Gaza at every forum of the world and before other nations.

While the government of Pakistan continued to provide relief goods to the oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters in Gaza through diplomatic channels, Al-Khidmat Foundation ensured the delivery of relief goods to Gaza by launching a nationwide campaign, he noted. The Prime Minister appreciated the noble initiative and efforts of the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami and Al-Khidmat Foundation to send relief goods to the victims of Gaza. The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami said that Palestinian leaders had contacted him and appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to play a leading role in reaching ceasefire and providing food aid in Gaza.

"The Palestinian people and the entire Islamic world have high hopes from Pakistan and its leadership," he said adding the Prime Minister should make special contact with the international community, including Islamic countries, and play a leading role.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), formally welcomed the distinguished defence delegations and reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to peace, stability, and constructive engagement across the region, the press release said.

"In an era defined by transnational threats and complex hybrid challenges, the imperative for deeper military-to-military cooperation, strategic dialogue, and mutual trust is paramount. Pakistan remains fully committed to working with partner nations to build a secure and prosperous regional environment," remarked the COAS.

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First dengue death reported
F.P. Report
KARACHI: A 48-year-old woman from Karachi's East district has become the first confirmed fatality from dengue fever in Sindh this year, health officials said on Saturday. According to the Sindh Health Department, the woman was admitted to the Aga Khan University Hospital on July 23 after exhibiting symptoms of the mosquito-borne viral disease.

Pakistan hosts Chiefs of Defence Staff Conference



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hosted the Regional Chiefs of Defence Staff Conference here Saturday, convening senior military leadership from the United States of America, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

This landmark multilateral engagement marked a significant stride toward advancing regional security cooperation, military diplomacy, and strategic dialogue among participating nations, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Held under the theme "Strengthening Bonds, Securing Peace", the conference sought to reinforce security collaborations, enhance training initiatives, and facilitate the exchange of best practices in counterterrorism and other

defence and security endeavours.

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security dynamics, the evolving strategic environment in Central and South Asia, and the necessity of joint training initiatives, counter-terrorism cooperation, and coordinated humanitarian responses during crises.

Delegates collectively reaffirmed their shared resolve to uphold peace, respect, national sovereignty, and confront common security threats including terrorism, cyber insecurity, and violent extremism among others. Participants commended Pakistan's leadership, hospitality, and initiative in fostering such inclusive and forward-looking defence diplomacy. This strategic convergence reflects Pakistan's enduring commitment to a secure, interconnected, and cooperative region, anchored in shared security interests and regional solidarity.

Martyrdom anniversary of Captain Sarwar marked

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly commemorate the 77th martyrdom anniversary of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider.

As the first recipient of the Nishan-e-Haider, Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed laid down his life on 27 July 1948 during the First Kashmir War at Tilpatra (Azad Kashmir), leading his men with extraordinary courage, tactical brilliance, and unflinching devotion to duty. His supreme sacrifice in the line of fire remains an enduring symbol of valour and patriotism.

The Armed Forces of Pakistan honour his timeless legacy and salute his unparalleled heroism, which continues to inspire generations of officers and soldiers. His life epitomised the core military values of duty, honour, and ultimate sacrifice.

On this solemn occasion, the nation pays tribute to its gallant son whose selfless act of courage became a foundational pillar of the Pakistan Armed Forces' spirit of sacrifice and martial ethos. The Armed Forces reaffirm their unwavering commitment to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan, drawing strength from the noble legacy of martyrs like Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider).



Sindh CM finalizes plan for Independence Day celebrations

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has finalized a comprehensive plan for the Independence Day celebrations across the province, scheduled between August 1 and August 14, 2025.

Chairing a meeting at the CM House here Saturday, the chief minister said that the independence celebration would start from 1st to 14th August 2025, and it would have a dual theme Independence Day and Marka-e-Haq.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, Sharjeel Memon, Sardar Shah, Saeed Ghani, Sardar Mohammad Bux Mahar,

Zulfiqar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Local Govt Waseem Shamshad, Secretary Education Zahid Abbasi, Additional IFG Karachi Javed Odho, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Information Nadeem Memon, representatives of Corps 5, Pak Navy and Airforce.

The meeting was told that the Prime Minister chaired the Committee planned events around six cardinal of success, including Uraan Pakistan (Diplomacy, Defence, Economy), Net Regional Stabilizer Status, Soft Power Image Projection,

Green Tourism & Sustainability and Civic Unity & Resilience.

Shah directed all relevant departments to ensure full-scale preparations for flag-hoisting ceremonies, parades, cultural shows, and community engagement programs throughout the province. Major cities including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, and others will host high-footfall events such as walkathons, youth rallies, and public gatherings.

The chief minister said, "Independence Day is a time of national pride and unity. We must ensure that families, youth, and citizens can participate in all

events without any fear," he said. The CM also called upon district administrations and educational institutions to plan local events, debates, and competitions to promote awareness about Pakistan's history and civic values among students.

The meeting concluded with clear directives to ensure inclusive, secure, and vibrant celebrations, anchored in the spirit of coordination, discipline, and unity. The Chief Minister reaffirmed the provincial government's full commitment to making this year's Independence Day not only memorable but also reflective of Sindh's deep-rooted patriotism and national spirit.

Governor KP, Chan hold informal meeting with senior Journalists

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Pakistan Peoples Party's Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan held an informal meeting with prominent journalists at the Governor House in Islamabad on Saturday.

During the meeting, the overall political situation of the country and key issues pertaining to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were discussed in detail.

Among the journalists present were Irfan Saddozai, Ahmad Nawaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Sohail Khan, Itarat Jafri, Usman Jabbar, and Furqan Ali. Governor Kundi spoke on matters related to law and order and public issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized the vital role media plays in strengthening democratic systems, saying that journalistic guidance and constructive criticism help governments make better decisions.

He appreciated the suggestions and feedback shared by the journalists and assured them that all possible resources would be utilized for the welfare of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has praised the establishment of industries abroad by Pakistanis and their investments back home, calling these efforts highly encouraging and beneficial for the country's economy.

He expressed these views during a special meeting with Sameer Munir Sheikh, Director of Nashwa Group, at his residence in Islamabad.

Governor Kundi said that the government encourages overseas Pakistanis to invest internationally while also contributing to Pakistan's economy through foreign exchange earnings.

MCPS in Healthcare Systems Management (HCSM)

CPSP announces admissions to the 11th batch of MCPS-HCSM Program

Eligibility criteria:

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Salient Features:

- Course duration: 2.5 years
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Who should attend this course:

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- Teaching institutes
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- Non-governmental organizations

Admission forms and brochure are available at CPSP website: www.cpsp.edu.pk. Forms and registration fee will be submitted online only. Last date for submission of admission forms is **August 31, 2025**.

For further details contact, HCSM UNIT, CPSP Karachi.

Tel: (021) 99266437 ext. 109

Email: mcpschscm@cpsp.edu.pk

Punjab govt appoints five officers

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has announced the transfer and appointment of five officers, according to

an official notification.

Mrs. Saulat Saqib, Member of the Chief Minister's Inspection Team, has been transferred and posted as Officer on Special Duty (OSD). Shanul Haq has been appointed as the new Member of the Chief Minister's Inspection Team.

The appointment of Asim

Raza, Additional Secretary Home, as Managing Director of the Punjab Government Servants Housing Foundation has been cancelled. Umar Farooq Alvi, Additional Secretary of the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department, has been transferred and posted as Managing

Director of the Punjab Government Servants Housing Foundation.

Samina Saif Niazi, previously awaiting posting at the DG Food Office, has been transferred and appointed as Additional Secretary, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department.



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ADMISSIONS Academic Session | 2026

The seats in each degree programme are allocated to provinces and regions as per the Government of Pakistan policy with respect to admission in national institutions.

► SPECIAL RESERVED SEATS

Sr.#	Quota	Seats	Requirements
1	IHK (refugees displaced before 1989)	2%	1. State Subject Certificate(AJ&K) 2. NOC from All Parties Hurriyat Conference (migrated before 1989)
2	Physically Challenged	2%	Certificate from Disability Board issued by respective authorized Government Hospital.
3	Foreign Nationals	11 Seats (LHR) 05 Seats (RWP)	1. Duly filled Foreign Student Information Sheet (available on NCA website) 2. Copy of passport 3. Evidence of Foreign Citizenship
4	Minorities	2%	1. Clearly indicate their request for minority quota consideration in the admission form. 2. Submit a separate written application along with the admission form. 3. Attach valid documentary proof of minority status (e.g., CNIC, community certificate, or other official documentation).
5	Overseas Pakistani (Self-Finance/Self-Support basis)	2%	1. Indicate their request for this quota in the admission form. 2. Submit a separate application along with the admission form. 3. Attach copies of their passport and Overseas Pakistani Identity Card (NICOP/POC).

► APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. To submit online admission application (Open Merit, Self Finance / Self Support Scheme & Foreign), Applicants are advised to apply directly on the NTS website <https://nts.org.pk/nca/>.
2. Applicants can use single application form in order to apply in multiple departments/campus/quota.
3. Online application printed version must reach the NTS Admission Centres within due date along with attested copies of required documents listed in the prospectus and online admission form.
4. Prospectus Charges, Courier Charges, Test Fee is required to be deposited by the applicant before the closing date of admission applications for admission on the electronic payment challan generated after online registration.

Visit the link <https://www.nts.org.pk/new/instructions.php> for instructions to pay the admission application processing fee which is as follows:

ADMISSION APPLICATION PROCESSING FEE (Prospectus and courier charges to be paid once in case of multiple applications on a single CNIC)			
PROSPECTUS COLLECTION FROM NTS CENTRES (MANDATORY)	TEST FEE		IN CASE OF PROSPECTUS THROUGH COURIER
	SINGLE DEPARTMENT	MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS	
PKR 3500/-	PKR 1500/-	PKR 1000/- EACH	PKR 300/-

5. Test fee shall be paid at 1Link 1Bill Participating Banks/ATM/Internet Banking/Mobile Banking/Easypaisa/Jazz Cash/TCS Express Counters.
6. For Self Finance / Self Support Scheme, the applicant should submit in person the online generated application form, admission processing fee, prospectus cost as mentioned above (as applicable), alongwith original Bank Draft/Pay Order of **PKR 764,500/-** (Seven Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Five Hundred) for Fine Arts, Design & Music and **PKR 963,600/-** (Nine Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Six Hundred) for Architecture, Multimedia Art and Film & Television, against tuition fee in favour of the "National College of Arts". NCA FTN/NTN No. 9010253-2
7. Roll Number Slip can be downloaded from NTS website at least one week before the test date and applicants shall be informed through SMS and NCA official website.
8. The applicants are advised to contact the NTS 051-8444441 OR email at query@nts.org.pk for any query / information related to filling Application Form/Fee Deposit/Admission Tests, display of provisional and final list of applicants, Roll number slips and Test centres etc.

► **NOTE:** NTS is collecting the fee on behalf of NCA. NTS does not stand responsible for the merit lists, results and paper development or the contents therein.

The online application portal will close at 11:59 PM on the last date, 12th August 2025.

► PROVINCIAL NTS ADMISSION CENTRES

Punjab	Balochistan	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/ Erstwhile FATA	Islamabad
Central Commercial Area, (CCA) Plaza 201, Block FF, PHASE IV, DHA, Lahore 042-35745161	Flat No B-1/5 Gull Center, Phase 1, Shahbaz Town Samungli Road Quetta 081-2825713	C-32/II/I, KDA Scheme No. 01, Karsaz Road, Karachi 021-34546928	9th Floor State Life Building, Mall Road, Peshawar Cantt. 091-5254343	Plot No. 96, St. 04, H-8/1, Islamabad 051-8444441 query@nts.org.pk

► ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

1. Applicants having passed F/A/F.Sc or equivalent qualification with minimum 45% (2nd division). Equivalence Certificate issued from IBCC is compulsory for qualifications other than Intermediate.
2. No age limit.

Note:

- i. According to the Prime Minister of Pakistan's notification, applicants domiciled Erstwhile FATA and passed F.A/F.Sc. or its equivalent with minimum 40% marks are eligible to apply for admission.
- ii. Application will be rejected if; a certificate from Nomination Board AJ&K/Gilgit Baltistan reserved quota seats is not received/attached with application.
- iii. Intermediate or equivalent qualification result awaiting candidates may apply with a copy of statement of entry/roll number slip/hope certificate.
- iv. Admission confirmation shall be subject to submission of attested academic documents of SSC/HSSC or equivalent from IBCC.

TEST, INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND VENUES WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER AT www.nca.edu.pk and www.nts.org.pk

LAST DATE TO APPLY

12th AUGUST, 2025

Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Indian occupied Kashmir, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/Erstwhile FATA, Balochistan and Physically Challenged quota seats, Self Finance / Self Support Scheme (All Pakistan Basis)

Applications for admission should reach the respective NTS admission centres not later than above mentioned date.

► IMPORTANT NOTE

Applications will be rejected if:-

- a. Eligibility criteria is not fulfilled.
- b. Application procedure is not followed as prescribed.
- c. Applicants are unable to produce attested copies of passed F/A/F.Sc or equivalent qualification examination certificates (with minimum 45% marks) without further notice.
- d. Applications are incomplete.
- e. Applications received after due date.

► INSTRUCTIONS

1. Applicants must bring their own graphite pencil, eraser, drawing board, colored pencils, markers, scissors, sharpener and gum sticks etc. for entry tests.
2. The college shall provide answer sheets, colored sheets (if required) and drawing sheets.
3. Applicants must bring their original Roll No. Slip alongwith original CNIC or Form-B, when reporting for tests at respective test centres.
4. No TA / DA is admissible to the candidates appearing for tests and interviews.
5. Applicants are advised to regularly visit <https://www.nca.edu.pk> and <https://nts.org.pk/nca/> to observe any change/updates in the admission schedule, otherwise college will not be held responsible.
6. Applicants must bring their own face mask, sanitizer and water bottle.

For further information please contact

LAHORE

Ms. Sana Javed / Mr. Waqar Anwar
Ph # 042-99210601, 99210599, 99210544
Ext: 108/175

RAWALPINDI

Mr. M. Ishtiaq / Mr. Mazhar Ali
Ph # 051-9334982, 9334984-6
Ext: 107

Prof. Dr. Murtaza Jafri
Vice Chancellor, National College of Arts

4-Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore – 54000
Ph: 042-99210601, 99210599 | www.nca.edu.pk



PESHAWAR: Chairman Jamil Ahmed presiding over a meeting of Kaghan Development Authority.

AD&SJ rejects alleged fraudulent pre-arrest bail

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge Bakht Zada Khan has rejected the pre-arrest bail application of Abdul Sattar, who is accused of swindling millions of rupees from people by promising them flats and plots. The police arrested the accused from the court premises after the application was rejected.

The court had heard the bail application of the accused Abdul Sattar the previous day. The complainant's counsel, Aminur

Rahman Yousafzai, argued that the accused had taken Rs. 40 lakh from the complainant, Khurshid Alam, on the pretext of providing a flat but failed to do so and instead misappropriated the money. The accused's counsel argued that the allegations were baseless and that the accused deserved pre-arrest bail.

The complainant's counsel informed the court that his client, a retired civil aviation employee, had handed over his entire pension to the accused to purchase a flat. The counsel stated that this was a busi-

ness in which people had lost billions of rupees and that the other accused, Sanaullah Malik, had absconded.

The counsel argued that the accused had taken money from people with great cunning and then disappeared, which was what had happened with the complainant.

The court rejected the pre-arrest bail application after hearing the arguments. The police then arrested the accused from the court premises and took him to the police station for investigation.

UAP unveils business, finance plan

PESHAWAR (APP): The University of Agriculture, Peshawar has taken a landmark step towards financial sustainability with the launch of its first-ever 5-Year Business and Finance Plan.

The plan was formally presented by Treasurer Dr Abdul Salam and his team to Vice Chancellor Professor Emeritus Dr Jehan Bakht and Registrar Dr Rizwan Ahmad.

Covering the fiscal years up to 2029-30, the comprehensive plan sets out strategic financial goals aimed at achieving long-term stability and enhancing the university's operational efficiency.

This initiative marks a significant move in aligning the university's financial planning with its academic and research objectives. Vice Chancellor Dr Jehan Bakht and Registrar Rizwan Ahmad lauded the efforts of the Directorate of Finance, noting that such forward-thinking initiatives are crucial to building a brighter future for the university.

They emphasized the collective responsibility of faculty and staff to transform the institution into a regional leader in finance, education, and research.

Present at the occasion were Director of Internal Audit Mujahid-ud-Din, Assistant Treasurers Goher Ali and Kifayat Khattak, who also played a key role in shaping the plan.

The newly launched financial roadmap is expected to serve as a guiding document for future policy and decision-making, ensuring the university's continued growth and excellence in the years to come.

KP govt promotes performing arts, music education, says Secretary

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary of Culture and Tourism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Abdul Samad here Saturday said that KP government was promoting music education and performing arts in the province.

He said plans are being developed to convert Nishtar Hall Peshawar into a specialized academy for performing arts and music education. He mentioned that no cultural events have been held at Nishtar Hall for several years, which is undoubtedly a disservice to the arts.

Addressing a meeting

held in his office regarding the Abaseen Arts Council, the Secretary of Culture and Tourism said that work is being done to design various courses related to fine arts, music and musical instruments, drama, theater, and literature.

This will allow the hall's infrastructure to be utilized positively. He added that this initiative will help educated and skilled artists emerge at both provincial and national levels.

The meeting was attended by Director General of the Culture and Tourism Authority, Arif Habib, Aj-

mal Khan, General Manager Culture, and other officials. Meanwhile, the President of Abaseen Arts Council, Abdul Rauf Rohaila, Dr. Nazeer Tabassum, and others provided a detailed briefing on the council's affairs.

The Secretary of Culture and Tourism urged the council members to expand membership to include skilled individuals from across the province, as the current council has very few members, most of whom are from Peshawar.

He emphasized the need to develop a mechanism to

ensure representation from all districts of the province so their work can gain recognition.

Dr. Abdul Samad further said that steps will be taken to make Nishtar Hall a hub for cultural activities, providing a platform not only for local artists but also promoting arts education in the province.

The goal of this project is to skill the youth and reduce unemployment challenges. This initiative is expected to breathe new life into fine arts education not just in Peshawar but across the entire province.

Anti-encroachment drive masked assault on traders' livelihoods

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali, has expressed serious concern and strong reservations over the ongoing anti-encroachment operations in Peshawar, terming them as unilateral, unjust, and deeply harmful to the trader community.

"Peshawar's administration presents a bizarre tale of misgovernance — who breaks their own backbone? Traders are the economic backbone of this city, yet they are being targeted under the guise of encroachment operations," he said.

He condemned the use of force, bulldozing of shops, and what he termed as blatant disrespect for traders' dignity and economic survival, stating that these actions are completely unacceptable and must stop immediately.

Haji Ghulam Ali emphasized that no government can succeed without the trust and cooperation of the business community, adding that the silence of



traders — including inflation, political uncertainty, power outages, and a fragile security environment — and criticized the current crackdown for deepening the crisis rather than resolving it.

He called upon the provincial government, district administration, and all concerned authorities to:

Immediately halt all ongoing operations targeting traders.

Engage in meaningful dialogue with market leaders and union representa-

tives. Uphold the dignity and economic rights of the business community. "True reform comes through consensus, not coercion. If traders continue to be pushed to the wall, unrest will grow and economic recovery will remain a distant dream."

Haji Ghulam Ali concluded by urging the government to prioritize economic stability, warning that no city or province can progress without protecting its business backbone.

Empathy fatigue and the Palestinian cause

Zoha Hussain

The Palestinian issue has been around for more than 70 years. Each decade, we witness a resurgence in the mass killings and the hard work of human rights activists to bring a revolution and end the systematic violence committed by the Israeli settlers.

We've always observed that these campaigns lose their momentum after a few months. Apart from the media routine and the agenda of the West—that is, to justify the violence committed by the Israeli settlers and military, and aided by Western powers—there is a deep-rooted psychological phenomenon that causes this, and that is: "Empathy Fatigue," also known as "Compassion Fatigue."

Empathy fatigue was initially observed among frontline medical workers. The psychologist Professor Mark Stebnicki identified it, and later, Charles Figley worked on it. It is a secondary traumatic stress where a person feels physically,

emotionally, and behaviorally exhausted because of constantly helping others or seeing them suffer. This causes a lack of compassion and empathy, and in turn, a withdrawal from the situation that is causing the stress.

When we observe people's behaviour when it comes to engaging with the Palestinian cause, we see the same lack of compassion after a while—which is totally natural.

Ever since 7th October 2023, there were many videos and news circulating about the genocide, and our social media algorithm was filled with graphic videos of violence against Palestinians. But after a while, we've all observed a decline in this form of content. There are many factors, like the agenda of the news agencies and the changing media routine, but it's also the people who felt this fatigue because of constantly being exposed to graphic content.

Their social media algorithm changed, and so did their preferences for the

content they wanted to consume.

Before that we saw a number of protest during and after the raids in Al-Aqsa by Israel and the forced eviction of natives in East Jerusalem. These events caused global outrage and many human right activists mobilized against it. However, these protests also lost momentum after some time because of similar psychological and political reasons.

Nevertheless, it is not that the voice for Palestinians has completely vanished. Even if the masses feel distant from the problem from time to time, they continue to voice their concerns about this genocide.

We can tackle this psychological phenomenon by recognising and acknowledging it, consuming content that produces hope, and engaging in actions that aid the cause as much as possible.

In the end, Palestine lives among the hearts and minds of people and will continue to do so until the day of the world.

'Technology transformed for better service delivery'

PESHAWAR (APP): The Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science and Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, has said that provincial government has transformed technology into an effective tool for public service delivery enabling citizens to access key government services online remotely.

In a statement issued here Saturday, he said that after the launching of Dastak Mobile Application, citizens no longer need to stand in queues at government offices. The government has brought all essential services to the people's doorsteps through technology.

Dr. Shafqat stated that citizens can now apply for new driving licenses or renew existing ones from home. Similarly, they can apply online for birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates. There is no longer a need to visit offices for arms licenses either adding that property transfers, vehicle registration and applying for vehicle number plates can also be done from home.

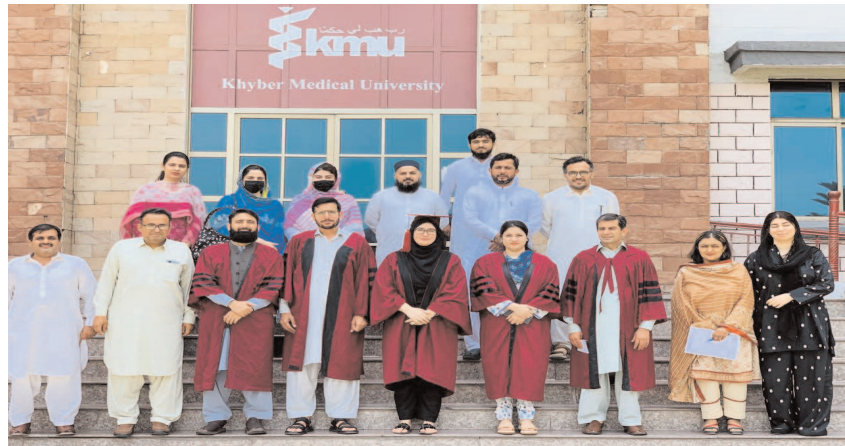
Dr. Wafa Naeem earns Ph.D. for pioneering cancer research in Pakistan

F.P.Report

PESHAWAR:Dr. Wafa Naeem, Ph.D. Scholar in Molecular Biology and Genetics (MBG), has successfully defended her doctoral research and been awarded the Ph.D. degree.

She carried out a pioneering study under the ICRG46 project on Oral Squamous Cell Carcinoma in collaboration with university of Sheffield UK—the first research of its kind in Pakistan.

This important work lays a strong foundation for future cancer research in the country, especially in



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Her achievement is a

proud moment for Khyber Medical University (KMU) and a significant

milestone for Pakistan in the field of cancer genomics.

Baking under sun: Bread makers turn to solar power amid load shedding woes

PESHAWAR (APP): As the summer sun blazes down on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the very same sunlight is becoming a savior for hundreds of small business owners especially bread makers like Barakat Ali.

At 42, Barakat has been running his tandoor (traditional bread oven) in the bustling bazaar of historic Qissa Khwani Peshawar for nearly two decades. But in recent years, his business has been battered by relentless power outages and the soaring cost of firewood.

"There were days we had no electricity for up to 10 to 12 hours," he says, wiping sweat from his brow while pulling steaming flat-breads from the tandoor. "My customers would wait, complain, and sometimes leave. I was losing hope."

But Barakat, like a grow-

ing number of small entrepreneurs in the region, decided to fight back with solar energy.

Last year, he took out a loan from his relative and installed a 4-kilowatt solar panel system on his tandoor shop's rooftop. The transformation, he said, was immediate and productive.

"My electricity bills dropped from Rs. 20,000 a month to almost nothing. More importantly, I could keep the oven running all day, even during power cuts."

He is not alone. Across Peshawar and Nowshera's peripheral areas, local bread makers, shopkeepers, and even household consumers are turning to the solar energy to escape the tightening grip of load shedding. Some do it out of desperation, others see it as

a smart investment. Either way, the shift is palpable and personal.

With three laborers now working under him and business booming, Barakat is planning to open a second solar-powered tandoor in Faqirabad Peshawar.

"People come from nearby streets just to get bread from my shop because I can deliver large orders even during weddings and celebrations," he says proudly.

This local solar revolution is part of a much larger wave sweeping Pakistan. According to the Global Electricity Review 2025, Pakistan imported a staggering 17 gigawatts of solar panels in 2024 making it the largest solar panel importer in the world. That's double the volume from just a year earlier.

The reasons are as

diverse as they are urgent as rising electricity tariffs, crippling power shortages, high fuel prices, and an emerging environmental threats attributed people shift to solar energy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Naeem, an economist at the University of Swabi, called it "an energy awakening." He said the affordability and accessibility of solar energy, coupled with rising energy demands, have made it one of the most viable tools for economic resilience.

"Solar supports small businesses, creates jobs, and reduces our dependency on costly fuel imports," Dr. Naeem explained.

The shift is not just grassroots rather it's institutional fully promoted by Federal and KP Govts.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is currently spearheading two mega solar projects worth Rs. 55 billion. These include solarizing 13,000 public buildings and distributing solar units to 130,000 low-income households half of them free of cost.

"This isn't just an energy program—it's an empowerment initiative," says Engr. Tariq Sadozai, Adviser to the Chief Minister on Energy.

Hospitals, schools, and police stations are among the public buildings slated for solarization, which will reduce long-term costs and improve reliability of essential services.

But while the sun shines bright, the road ahead is not without shadows. Dr. Naeem said, adding the national grid was not built for decentralized solar sys-

tems and sold mechanism required to purchase extra solar power from producers.

Dr. Naeem said legacy contracts with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), which guarantee fixed payments even if electricity isn't used, are creating bottlenecks. Experts warned that if not restructured, these contracts could worsen the circular debt crisis and offset the benefits of solar.

"We need smart grid upgrades, better forecasting, and most of all, political will," says Dr. Naeem. He also pointed out the urgent need for skilled manpower. "We need certified technicians, quality vendors, and training institutes to build a reliable solar ecosystem imperative for promotion of SMEs."

Still, momentum towards solar energy is growing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Banks are now offering tailored solar loans for households and businesses while Bank of Khyber has already partnered with the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) to facilitate solar installations across KP. Lower interest rates are making these loans increasingly accessible.

Zahid Shinwari, former president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce, said that the solar boom is creating a new job market in Pakistan due to Federal Government prudent policies. "From installation to maintenance to panel manufacturing, the solar economy is growing fast especially in rural areas of

Pakistan," he reiterated.

Experts estimated solar energy could contribute up to 10 percent of Pakistan's energy mix by 2030, with installed capacity expected to rise from 1.41 GW in 2024 to over 9.5 GW by 2029.

Back in Qissa Khwani bazaar, Barakat Ali looks at the solar panels on his shop with quiet satisfaction. "People used to say it is expensive, it is risky. But now even they are coming to me asking where I bought mine," he laughs.

For this humble tandoor-wala, solar power is more than a business decision rather it is about reclaiming agency over his life, his livelihood, and his future.

"The sun does not charge us a rupee," he smiles. "And now, I do not have to wait for the light—I make my own."

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SYMBOL OF PRIDE FOR THE NATION

**ONLINE REGISTRATION FROM 28 JULY TO 15 AUGUST, 2025****Candidates must be in possession of NADRA Smart Card****PERMANENT COMMISSION (PC)****160 GENERAL DUTY PILOT GD (P)**

Age : 16 to 22 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male / Female citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Vision : 6 / 6 each eye (without Glasses)

Qualification:

A Candidate must have passed with minimum 65% marks in aggregate in any of the following:-

- ❖ F.Sc (Pre-Engineering / Pre-Medical / Computer Science)
- ❖ 'A' Level with Physics, Maths, Computer Science / Biology
- ❖ F.Sc with Physics and any two Subjects i.e; Maths, Statistics, Computer Science and Biology
- ❖ Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Avionics / Electrical / Mechanical / Electronics / Instrumentation and Process control / Telecommunication / Automation / Computer Information / Software.

Training Period: 04 years

Award of BS Degree in Aviation Management / BE in Aerospace / Avionics (from CAE).

106 AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING COURSE

Age : 16 to 22 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male / Female citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Height (Female): 4 feet 10 inches / 147 cm

Qualification:

A Candidate must have passed with minimum 65% marks in aggregate in any of the following:-

- ❖ F.Sc (Pre-Engineering) or 'A' Level (Physics, Chemistry & Maths) with equivalence of Pre-Engineering
- ❖ F.Sc with Physics, Maths & Computer Studies or 'A' Level (Physics, Computer Science & Maths) with equivalence of F.Sc Certificate.
- ❖ Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Avionics / Electrical / Mechanical / Electronics / Instrumentation and Process control / Telecommunication / Automation / Computer Information / Software.

Training Period: 04 years

Award of BE in Aerospace / Avionics.

116 AIR DEFENCE COURSE

Age : 16 to 22 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm

Qualification:

A Candidate must have passed with minimum 65% marks in aggregate in any of the following:-

- ❖ F.Sc (Pre-Engineering / Pre-Medical / Computer Science)
- ❖ 'A' Level with Physics, Maths, Computer Science / Biology
- ❖ F.Sc with Physics and any two Subjects i.e; Maths, Statistics, Computer Science and Biology.
- ❖ Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Avionics / Electrical / Mechanical / Electronics / Instrumentation and Process control / Telecommunication / Automation / Computer Information / Software.

Training Period: 04 years

Award of BS Degree in Aviation Management / BE in Aerospace / Avionics (from CAE).

35 ADMIN & SPECIAL DUTIES COURSE

Age : 16 to 22 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm

Qualification:

A Candidate must have passed with minimum 65% marks in aggregate in any of the following:-

- ❖ F.Sc (Pre-Engineering / Pre-Medical / Computer Science)
- ❖ 'A' Level with Physics, Maths, Computer Science / Biology
- ❖ F.Sc with Physics and any two Subjects i.e; Maths, Statistics, Computer Science and Biology.
- ❖ Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Avionics / Electrical / Mechanical / Electronics / Instrumentation and Process control / Telecommunication / Automation / Computer Information / Software.

Training Period: 04 years

Award of BS Degree in Aviation Management.

18 LOGISTICS COURSE

Age : 16 to 22 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm

Qualification:

A Candidate must have passed with minimum 65% marks in aggregate in any of the following:-

- ❖ F.Sc (Pre-Engineering / Pre-Medical / Computer Science)
- ❖ 'A' Level with Physics, Maths, Computer Science / Biology
- ❖ F.Sc with Physics and any two Subjects i.e; Maths, Statistics, Computer Science and Biology.
- ❖ Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Avionics / Electrical / Mechanical / Electronics / Instrumentation and Process control / Telecommunication / Automation / Computer Information / Software.

Training Period: 04 years

Award of BS Degree in Aviation Management.

SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION (SSC / SPSSC)**05 GD (P) SUPPLEMENTARY COURSE (SSC)**

Age : 21 to 24 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Rank : Flying Officer
Vision : 6 / 6 each eye (without Glasses)

Qualification:

BS Maths / Physics / Chemistry / Biology.
BS [with FSc / ICS / A Level / IB (International Baccalaureate) background with Physics as major subject] Computer Sciences / IT / AI / Economics / Finance / Statistics / English or Equivalent degree.
BE (All disciplines) / BS (Engineering all disciplines) or Equivalent degree.
MBBS / BDS or Equivalent degree.

Note: Each qualification must be with Minimum 60% / 2.5/4 CGPA from a Pakistani / Foreign University recognised by HEC.

Training Period: 02 Years**EDUCATION BRANCH (136 CSC SPSSC / SSC)**

Age : 20 to 29 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male / Female citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Married / Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Height (Female): 4 feet 10 inches / 147 cm
Rank : Flying Officer

Qualification:

Maths : MS / M Phil in Maths
International Relations (IR) : MS / M Phil in International Relations
Artificial Intelligence (AI) : MS / M Phil in Artificial Intelligence OR Computer Science with AI Speciality

Management Sciences : MBA (18 years) / MS / M Phil in HRM / Project Management / Accounting & Finance

Statistics : MS / M Phil in Statistics

Note: Each qualification must be Minimum 65% or 2.7/4 CGPA from a Pakistani / Foreign University recognized by HEC.

Training Period: 24 Weeks**IT BRANCH (136 CSC SSC)**

Age : 20 to 26 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Married / Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Rank : Flying Officer

Qualification:

- ❖ BS/MS (Comp Sc) or BS/ BE / MS (IT) or BS / BE / MS (Software Engg, Comp Engg, Inf Sec) or BS / MS (Cyber Sec, Data Sc, AI Geo Info Sys) or BS / MS (Comp & Info Sc) or BSc / BCS (Hons) in CS or BE (Comp & Info Sys, CS) or BS/ MS (Cloud Computing, Big Data, Data Analytics, High Performance Computing) or M.Sc (Computer Science) / MCS or Any other equivalent (Emerging / evolving IT domains) with Minimum 65% or 2.7/4 CGPA from a Pakistani / Foreign University recognized by HEC.

Training Period: 24 Weeks**MET BRANCH (136 CSC SSC)**

Age : 20 to 26 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Married / Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Rank : Flying Officer

Qualification:

- ❖ BSc / BS / BE / BCS / (04 years) in Science subjects (Physics / Maths Compulsory)
- ❖ MSc / MS in Meteorology / Environmental Science / Physics / Maths

Note: Each qualification must be minimum 65% or 2.7/4 CGPA from a reputed Pakistani / Foreign University recognized by HEC.

Training Period: 24 Weeks**ACCOUNTS BRANCH (136 CSC SSC)**

Age : 20 to 26 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male citizen of Pakistan
Marital Status : Married / Unmarried
Height : 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Rank : Flying Officer

Qualification:

- ❖ B Com (04 years) / BBA (Finance 04 years) / BS Commerce / BS Accounting / BS Finance or equivalent 16 years education in Accounting, Finance or Commerce with minimum 65% or of 2.7/4 CGPA from a Pakistani / Foreign University recognized by HEC.

Training Period: 24 Weeks**FUTURE PROSPECTUS**

- ➔ **Highly competitive salary package.**
- ➔ **Free medical treatment self and family.**
- ➔ **Training and posting in different cities of Pakistan and abroad.**
- ➔ **Free accommodation and 50% waiver in fare by train and air travel.**
- ➔ **Internationally recognized courses.**
- ➔ **Membership of Air Force Officer Housing Scheme (AFOHS).**

JAG (LEGAL) BRANCH (136 CSC SSC)

Age : 20 to 30 years on **15 April 2026**
Nationality : Male Citizens of Pakistan
Marital Status : Married / Unmarried
Height : Minimum 5 feet 4 inches / 163 cm
Rank : Flying Officer

Qualification:

LLB minimum 65% (for annual system) or 2.7/4 CGPA (for semester system) from a reputed Pakistani / Foreign University recognized by HEC. Preference will be given to candidates having LL.M qualification and experience of minimum 02 years practices as legal practitioner.

Training Period: 24 Weeks**SELECTION PROCEDURE**

- ❖ Online Registration at www.joinpaf.gov.pk.
- ❖ Intelligence Test followed by Academic Test in the following subjects through e-Testing:-

All candidates with Pre-Medical background for Permanent Commission	English & Physics
All candidates with Pre-Engg / ICS / DAE background for Permanent Commission	English, Physics & Maths
05 GD(P) Supplementary Course / 136 CSC	Academic Test in relevant subject

- ❖ Initial Medical Examination & Interview at I&S Centre.

Initial Physical Test:

Test Type	Qualification Criteria	
Running	1 Mile	08 Minutes
Push-Ups	15	02 Minutes
Sit-Ups	20	02 Minutes
Chin-Ups	03	02 Minutes

- ❖ Only Shortlisted candidates would be called for ISSB.
- ❖ Test / Interview by ISSB Kohat / Gujranwala / Malir / Quetta.
- ❖ Final Medical Examination at CMB Lahore.
- ❖ Flying Aptitude Test (FAT) of GD (P) candidates only at I&S Rawalpindi.
- ❖ After the final meriting selected GD (P) / AD candidates would be inducted in CAE for BE degree program as per 'Service Requirements', while remaining candidates would undertake BS in Aviation Management. Upon successful completion of the BE / BS programs, cadets would get permanent commission in PAF and GD (P) Course would be detailed for 'Flying Training' at PAFAA.
- ❖ Interview by AHQ Selection Board for CSC Candidates only.
- ❖ Final Selection by Air Headquarters in order of merit.

Note:

- ❖ Appearing candidates are also eligible to apply provided they have obtained 70 % Marks in F.Sc / 'A' Level Part-I and bring a certificate from the Principal that they are likely to pass F.Sc / 'A' Level examination in the prescribed grades (F.Sc courses only). Candidates with 'O' / 'A' Level background are required to produce equivalence (Pre-Engg / Pre-Medical / Computer Science) certificate.
- ❖ Candidates who have completed their educational qualification (SSC / HSSC / O&A Level / Equivalency etc) from national / foreign academic institutions are required to get attestation of their educational documents from IBCC prior reporting to PAFAA.

INELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

A candidate is Ineligible if he is:-

- Rejected by ISSB / GHQ / NHQ / AHQ Selection boards.
 - Twice Rejected by ISSB for Post Graduate Entry.
 - Twice Rejected by ISSB for intermediate / graduate (PMA / Graduate / Equivalent) and once rejected by ISSB or GHQ / NHQ / AHQ based selection boards.
 - Once Rejected by ISSB for intermediate / graduate (PMA / Graduate / Equivalent) and twice rejected by ISSB or GHQ / NHQ / AHQ based selection boards.
- Twice Screened out by ISSB.
- Tested within four months (120 days) gap of previous appearance in ISSB except waiver granted by the competent authority. However, bar of 120 days will not be applicable to candidates appearing in GHQ/NHQ/AHQ selection boards.
- Dismissed / Removed / Debarred from Govt services including armed forces.
- Convicted in a court of law for any heinous offense (to be ascertained by the competent military authority).
- Permanently declared UNFIT by Appeal Medical Board (PUF by AMB).
- Declared medically unfit due to Hepatitis B & C (AMB cannot by requested).
- Withdraw from any bonded armed forces college / institution on disciplinary grounds.
- Withdrawn / Discharged / resigned or purchase release from any armed forces officers academy / training institution on any ground.
- Tempering of academic certificates / forgery / concealment to get undue advantage will make an applicant permanently ineligible for all types of commission in Armed Forces.
- Gives incomplete, false or wrongful information.
- Thrice screened out by Army / Navy/ Air Force during preliminary selection.

For further details, contact any of the following PAF Information & Selection Centres along with all original Educational Certificates and mark sheets, 04 passport size attested photographs and self NADRA Smart Card / Father/ Mother. Old NIC / Form B is not acceptable.

➔ ABBOTTABAD : 310-Mansehra Road, Near Ayub Medical Complex	Ph: 0992-385157, 385166
➔ FAISALABAD : Main Jhang Road, Near Airport Chowk	Ph: 041-9201199, 2577799
➔ HYDERABAD : 49-Salahuddin Road, Cantt	Ph: 022-9200936
➔ KARACHI : Main Shahrah-e-Faisal (Near PAF Base) Faisal	Ph: 021-99240999
➔ LAHORE : 14-Munir Road (Near PAF Cinema) Munir Chowk	Ph: 042-36687790
➔ MULTAN : 217-Sher Shah Road	Ph: 061-9201183, 9201795
➔ KHARIAN : Baharwal Road, Adjacent to Air University, Kharian	Ph: 0323-0411668

➔ MUZAFFARABAD : Shaukat Lines Near Army Public School, Cantt	Ph: 05822-923272
➔ MIANWALI : Fazaia Road, Opp Custom Office	Ph: 0459-350037
➔ PESHAWAR : 9-The Mall, Peshawar Cantt	Ph: 091-9210829, 5286329
➔ QUETTA : M.A Jinnah Road	Ph: 081-9201753
➔ RAWALPINDI : 3-The Mall, Opposite AFIC	Ph: 051-5701143, 5701257-58
➔ SUKKUR : Opposite Govt Islamia College, Minara Road	Ph: 071-9310409
➔ GILGIT : FC Road, Jutial Gilgit	Ph: 05811-930088
➔ D.I. KHAN : Fazle Elahi Shaheed Road, Near Bannu Bus Stand	Ph: 0966-9280311



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What the US-Japan deal means for Asia and world

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has called the agreement he reached with Japan the "largest trade deal in history". It might be premature to make such claims, but it's certainly the most significant deal since Trump announced his so-called Liberation Day tariffs in April which roiled stock markets and created chaos for global trade.

After months of negotiations, Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said he expects the deal will help the global economy. It is a big claim. The BBC examines whether it will and if so, how? Japan is the world's fourth largest economy, meaning it accounts for a large part of global trade and growth. Tokyo imports a great deal of energy and food from overseas and is dependent on exports including electronics, machinery and motor vehicles. The US is its biggest export market. Some experts had warned that Trump's tariffs could knock as much as a percentage point off Japan's economy, pushing it into recession. With lower tariffs, exporters will be able to do business in the US more cheaply than if Trump had stuck to an earlier threat to levy higher taxes.

And the deal brings certainty, which allows businesses to plan. The announcement also strengthened the Japanese yen against the US dollar, giving manufacturers more purchasing power to buy the raw materials they need to expand their businesses. The US agreement is particularly good for Japan's auto giants like Toyota,

Honda and Nissan. Previously, American importers had to pay a 27.5% levy when they shipped in Japanese cars. That is now being reduced to 15%, potentially making Japanese cars cheaper compared to the likes of rival China. Having said that, US automakers have signalled they are unhappy with the deal.

They are concerned they have to pay a 25% tariff on imports from their plants and suppliers in Canada and Mexico compared with Japan's 15% rate. In return for reduced tariffs, Japan has proposed investing \$550bn in the US to enable Japanese firms "to build resilient supply chains in key sectors like pharmaceuticals and semiconductors," Ishiba said. Japan is already a major investor in the US, but this amount of money should create jobs, make quality products and foster innovation. Under the deal, Trump said Japan will increase purchases of agricultural products such as US rice which could help the country's rice shortage - even if it might rattle local farmers concerned about losing market share.

The 15% tariff is also a benchmark for other countries like South Korea and Taiwan who are holding their own trade negotiations with the US. South Korea's industry minister said he will take a close look at the terms of what Japan has agreed with the US as he headed to Washington for crunch trade talks. Japan and South Korea compete in industries like steel and autos. More broadly, the US and Japan deal will put

more pressure on other countries - especially major Asia exporters - to secure better agreements before a 1 August deadline. Deals with Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines have already been announced.

But some Asian countries will suffer. Smaller economies like Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka are manufacturing exporters and they have little to offer Washington in terms of trade or investment. There were reports that the US had called on Japan to increase military spending. But Tokyo's tariff envoy has clarified that the deal does not include anything on defence spending.

Ryosei Akazawa added that steel and aluminium tariffs would remain at 50%. These both may be wins for Japan, since it exports more vehicles to the US than it does steel and aluminium. The pressure is also on the US to get as many of these deals over the line before its self-imposed tariff August deadline. Alongside negotiations with the US, countries might start looking for more reliable partners elsewhere. On the same day as Washington and Tokyo announced their agreement, Japan and Europe pledged to "work more closely together to counter economic coercion and to address unfair trade practices," according to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The European Union is yet to agree a trade deal with the US. "We believe in global competitiveness and it should benefit everyone," said Ms von der Leyen. — BBC

US Osprey makes emergency landing in Japan

WASHINGTON (AFP): A US Osprey military aircraft made an emergency landing in northern Japan, the latest in a string of mishaps and accidents involving the controversial tilt-rotor plane. The pilot contacted Hanamaki Airport in Iwate prefecture, saying that they wanted to land due to a technical glitch, an official at the airport told AFP.

The aircraft landed without incident and the crew did not request emergency medical assistance, he said. Officials from US Forces Japan could not be reached for immediate comment. Television footage from Hanamaki Airport showed a few uniformed US military personnel standing outside the parked aircraft. National broadcaster NHK also showed a video of the Osprey making a vertical landing at Hanamaki. The Hanamaki airport official said the incident did not impact the operation of the airport.

Ospreys can take off and land vertically like a helicopter and rotate their propellers forward to fly like a plane. The aircraft has been involved in accidents and several deadly crashes, including one off southern Japan in 2023 when all eight people on board were killed. The fatal crash prompted the US military to ground the aircraft worldwide. Regional Japanese military personnel were heading to Hanamaki to study the latest incident, a defence official told AFP.

Trump unveils AI plan

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration has unveiled a sweeping roadmap to develop artificial intelligence, pledging to boost US innovation while stripping away what it calls "bureaucratic red tape" and "ideological bias".

The 28-page AI Action Plan outlines more than 90 policy actions for the rapidly developing technology that administration officials say can be implemented over the next year.

"We believe we're in an AI race, and we want the United States to win that race," Trump administration crypto czar David Sacks told reporters. The AI plan promises to build data centre infrastructure, and promote American technology - but was panned by critics who consider it an ideological flex by the White House. The plan also calls for federal agencies to review and repeal policies that stand in the way of AI development, and encourage AI in both government and the private sector.

President Donald Trump is expected to sign three related executive orders. One order will promote the international export of US-developed AI technologies, while another aims to root out what the administration describes as "woke" or ideologically biased AI systems. "American development of AI systems must be free from ideological bias or engineered social agendas," the White House said. "With the right government policies, the United States can solidify its position as the leader in AI and secure a brighter future for all Americans." Crypto czar Sacks added that the plan is partially focused on preventing AI technology from being "misused or stolen by malicious actors" and will "monitor for emerging and unforeseen risks from AI".

The Trump administration has positioned the expansion of AI infrastructure and investments in the United States as a way to stay ahead of China. "AI is a revolutionary technology that's going to have profound ramifications for both the economy and national security," Sacks said. "It's just very important that America continues to be the dominant power in AI." But critics argued that the plan was a giveaway to Big Tech.

"The White House AI Action plan was written by and for tech billionaires, and will not serve the interests of the broader public," said Sarah Myers West, co-executive director of the AI Now Institute. "[T]he administration's stance prioritizes corporate interests over the needs of everyday people who are all already being affected by AI," West added.



GAZA: Palestinians gather to receiving a meal at a charity kitchen in al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis.

Ukrainians deported by Russia, stranded at Georgia border

KYIV: The deportees at the Georgian border checkpoint can only step outside when they need the toilet, and they must go in pairs under the watchful eyes of Georgian border guards. They are here because they can't cross the border directly from Russia to Ukraine due to the war, and Georgia refuses to let them in because many have criminal backgrounds, so they are stranded. Some have now been living in the basement for nearly two months.

Most of these men - along with a handful of women - are former prisoners in Russia who have been deported after serving their sentences, but some have been expelled for other reasons, such as problems with their immigration documents. They mounted a protest. "We're not allowed outside!" one of the men shouted as they were surrounded by security personnel on the premises. "We're being tortured here," called another. "It's damp, there's [disabled people] here without medical attention, there's nothing here at all," he added. A

video sent by the deportees to Al Jazeera shows one man very seriously harming himself during the protest. "He's been here more than a month," 45-year-old Nikolai Lopata, one of the other detainees, told Al Jazeera by phone. "He was promised twice [that] he would be taken away. He bought [travel] tickets twice, and both times no one returned the money," Lopata said, noting that the man, who suffers from anxiety, has repeatedly been denied permission to travel through Georgia to Ukraine. An ambulance arrived after more than an hour, and paramedics bandaged his wounds, then left without him. The man, who appeared in the video to be in his late 30s or early 40s, was not hospitalised and remains at the checkpoint, volunteers at the scene who are in contact with Al Jazeera said. The detainees, who have arrived from Russia or territories occupied by Russia and have been released from prison in recent months, are now stuck in limbo in this buffer zone, Lopata explained. "They [Georgian border

officials] took our documents. They won't let us in or out of Georgia. They keep telling us 'tomorrow, tomorrow'. Some people have been here for more than a month and a half in terrible, unbearable conditions," Lopata said. Originally from Dnipro in central Ukraine, Lopata said he had been living in Russia, where he has a Russian wife, two children and a sister, since 2005. But in 2010, he was convicted of murder. When he completed his sentence in 2024, he was sent to a deportation centre for another year. By then, the full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine was raging, so getting a one-way flight to Kyiv was impossible. "Last summer, they [the Russian authorities] promised to send me to Georgia. Then, in winter, they promised to send me to Ukraine through Belarus. Then, we were taken to the border of Georgia, which supposedly accepts us, but Georgia is not accepting," Lopata said. Instead, when he reached the border on July 4, Lopata said, he was photographed, fingerprinted

and had his documents confiscated by Georgian border officials before being taken to a cellar. "We don't do anything. We sit in the basement," Lopata continued, explaining that the men sleep in shifts because there are only 40 beds. The men are provided with very little and lack reliable medical assistance, instead having to rely on emergency care. "An ambulance comes almost every day, sometimes twice a day, because there are disabled people, there are sick people," Lopata said, adding that there is someone with epilepsy, a person with HIV, and another with tuberculosis. "But they don't offer anything besides immediate help. Yesterday, for example, they made an injection of painkiller, then said, 'That's it, we can't help with anything else.'" Activists and volunteers try to bring essentials to the detainees each week. Food, household items and personal hygiene products are delivered by Volunteers Tbilisi, an organisation helping Ukrainian refugees in Georgia. — Aljazeera

Civilians hurt as Cambodia, Thailand trade fire

PHNOM PENH (AFP): Thailand's army said three civilians were wounded in a Cambodian rocket strike as the two countries' militaries clashed again in an escalating row over a disputed border. The neighbours are locked in a bitter spat over an area known as the Emerald Triangle, where the borders of both countries and Laos meet, and which is home to several ancient temples.

The squabble has dragged on for decades, flaring into bloody military clashes more than 15 years ago and again in May, when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a firefight. Fresh fighting erupted near two temples on the border between the Thai province of Surin and Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey. "The Thai military violated the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia by launching an armed assault on Cambodian forces stationed to defend the nation's sovereign territory," defence ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata said in a statement. "In response, the Cambodian armed forces exercised their legitimate right to self-defense, in full accordance with international law, to repel the Thai incursion and protect Cambodia's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The Thai army blamed

Cambodian soldiers for firing first, and later accused them of a "targeted attack on civilians", saying two BM-21 rockets had hit a community in Surin's Kap Choeng district, wounding three people. According to the Thai army, the clashes began around 7:35 am (0035 GMT) when a unit guarding Ta Muen temple heard a Cambodian drone overhead. Later, six armed Cambodian soldiers, including one carrying a rocket-propelled grenade, approached a barbed-wired fence in front of the Thai post, the army said. Thai soldiers shouted to warn them, the army said, but around 8:20 am, Cambodian forces opened fire toward the eastern side of the temple, about 200 metres from the Thai base.

Thailand's acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said "the situation requires careful handling, and we must act in accordance with international law". "We will do our best to protect our sovereignty," he said. Thailand's embassy in Phnom Penh urged its nationals to leave Cambodia "as soon as possible" unless they had urgent reasons to remain, in a Facebook post. The violence came hours after Thailand expelled the Cambodian ambassador and recalled its own envoy

in protest after five members of a Thai military patrol were wounded by a landmine. Wechayachai said an investigation by the Thai military found evidence that Cambodia had laid new landmines in the disputed border area -- a claim denied by Phnom Penh.

Cambodia announced it was downgrading ties to "the lowest level", pulling out all but one of its diplomats and expelling their Thai equivalents from Phnom Penh. Recent weeks have seen a series of tit-for-tat swipes by both sides, with Thailand restricting border crossings and Cambodia halting certain imports. The Thai army said in a statement that one soldier lost his leg in the landmine blast, and others suffered ear injuries and chest pain. Cambodia's defence ministry "categorically rejected the unfounded accusations" made by Thailand.

The ministry said the border areas still contained "many landmines left over from past wars" which have not been fully cleared. The border row also kicked off a domestic political crisis in Thailand, where prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has been suspended from office pending an ethics probe over her conduct.

Criminology student who killed 4 jailed for life in US

NEW YORK (AFP): A criminology student who crept into a shared house and murdered four young people in their beds as they slept was told he would die in prison, in a case that has gripped and baffled the United States. Bryan Kohberger has never explained his motive for carrying out the murders and sat passively in an Idaho court as he heard heart-wrenching statements from families of the four students he stabbed to death in 2022 in the small town of Moscow.

But in a deal that took the death penalty off the table earlier this month, he agreed to plead guilty to the horrific killings of University of Idaho students Kaylee Goncalves, 21, Madison Mogen, 21, Xana Kernodle, 20, and Ethan Chapin, 20. At an

emotional sentencing hearing in Boise, Kohberger again refused to offer any justification when offered the chance to speak, telling Judge Steven Hippler: "I respectfully decline." Handing down four life sentences without the possibility of parole, Hippler said the heartbroken families may never know why Kohberger killed their loved ones.

"The need to know what is inherently not understandable makes us dependent upon the defendant to provide us with a reason, and that gives him the spotlight, the attention and the power he appears to crave," he said. "In my view, the time has now come to end Mr Kohberger's 15 minutes of fame. It's time that he been consigned to the ignominy and isolation of

perpetual incarceration. Kohberger was studying for a doctorate degree in criminology at Washington State University in 2022 when he drove to the small town of Moscow in the neighboring northwestern US state of Idaho.

There, he broke into a shared student house and went from room to room stabbing four of the six occupants to death. The investigation that followed was a national and international sensation, attracting lurid speculation from all corners of the internet, fuelled by a police policy of refusing to release details on the probe. Then, on December 30, Kohberger was arrested at his parents' house in Pennsylvania thousands of miles (kilometers) away, after DNA found on a knife sheath was traced to him.

Sudan's competing authorities are beholden to militia leaders

KHARTOUM: In June, the Sudanese Armed Forces appointed Prime Minister Kamil Idris to lead the civilian cabinet in Port Sudan, the wartime capital on the Red Sea coast. Idris wanted an overhaul, to appoint a team of technocrats to run the new government.

But Gebreil Ibrahim and Mini Arko Minawi - leaders of two powerful armed groups from Darfur - refused to leave their posts, and army leader Abdelfattah al-Burhan overruled Idris to keep them there. "Burhan's concession to Ibrahim and Minawi allows them to keep ministries that control [government] revenue,"

said Suliman Baldo, the founder of the Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker, a think tank. Al Jazeera sent written questions to army spokesperson Nabil Abdullah, asking him why al-Burhan overruled Idris. No response had been received by the time of publication. On the other side of the war is a coalition of armed groups that have, de facto, divided Sudan in half after more than two years of civil war.

The Rapid Support Forces paramilitary, which is battling the army, has formed an alliance with smaller armed factions and declared its intention to form a parallel government that will ostensibly repre-

sent all of Sudan. The RSF-backed coalition has already unveiled its leadership council, on which the leaders of armed groups feature in prominent positions.

Analysts told Al Jazeera that SAF and the RSF are trying to meet the demands of powerful militias in a bid to keep their respective battlefield alliances intact. In February, the RSF announced that it had formed an alliance with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), an armed group from the Nuba Mountains led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu. From the beginning of the war, it had remained neutral, shocking observers when it

allied with the RSF to form a new alliance and parallel government, which they named Tasis (foundation). The SPLM-N governs large swathes of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, and has been at war with the army - as well as the RSF, which used to be the army's ally before they turned their guns on each other - for 40 years. SPLM-N was born out of the SPLM, which emerged in the early 1980s to fight for southern independence and to end its marginalisation by the elites of northern and central Sudan. The Nuba - a group of about 50 communities from what was then central Sudan - was part of the SPLM. —Aljazeera

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Russian banks will fall

FOR more than three years, Russia's banking system has defied gravity. Crippled by Western sanctions, cut off from global financial markets and deprived of foreign capital, it has operated in a sealed economic vacuum. But it will not last. The ruble wobbled but held and the financial system continues to function. This improbable stability has been largely credited to Elvira Nabiullina, the astute technocratic head of the Central Bank.

But illusions do not last forever. The cracks are already forming and a reckoning is unavoidable. It is not a matter of if there will be a crisis - only how severe it will be. Russia's banks are increasingly propped up by artificial mechanisms: capital controls, forced lending, government intervention and creative accounting. As sanctions tighten and the war economy deepens, liquidity is thinning, foreign reserves are shrinking and risk is accumulating behind closed doors.

Bloomberg reported on July 17 that at least three of Russia's largest banks are poised to ask the Central Bank for a bailout as bad loans surge and balance sheets buckle under growing stress. Officially, overdue loans reached 10.5% for households and 4% for businesses in Q1 2025. But insiders say the true picture is far worse. The Bloomberg report did not name specific institutions but said at least three of Russia's 13 systemically important banks are seeking bailout talks. With giants like VTB, Alfa, Gazprombank, Raiffeisen and Rosbank fitting that description, even one collapse could trigger a financial crisis. Three would be catastrophic.

Even executives at Kremlin-controlled Sberbank and VTB admit the size of the bad debts is much larger and likely to climb. Bloomberg's sources within the banks reveal that much of the apparent stability is a façade, propped up by creative accounting and political pressure. "Everything is not as good as it looks on paper," one insider said. That reminded me of President Vladimir Putin's first post-invasion decree, which allowed state entities to cook the books by withholding budget and key commodity data - a Potemkin village illusion that is now beginning to crumble.

Since then, the Central Bank has followed suit, cutting off key financial disclosures, including the structure of international reserves and allowing banks and companies to conceal ownership and management details. Its balance of payments reports are now so delayed and distorted that some analysts have called on the regulator to stop publishing them altogether. Once reported to have tried to resign when the war began, Nabiullina now finds herself defending a system under overwhelming pressure.

Nabiullina is working hard to project stability amid growing signs of strain. "With full access to the banking system's data, I can say with complete confidence that fears of a banking crisis are unfounded," she declared at a financial congress on July 3. But not everyone is so confident. Putin's former Economy Minister, German Gref, had sounded the alarm at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum in June, warning that the toxic mix of soaring interest rates and an overvalued ruble is creating "a perfect storm" that could suffocate investment and drag Russia's economy into long-term decline. Gref now leads Sberbank, the cornerstone of Russia's banking system, which controls about half of all deposits and a third of consumer and corporate loans. While Sberbank is likely in a stronger position than many of its peers, it stands to benefit if weaker banks go under and capital flees to more robust harbors.

Yet the financial architecture that once seemed resilient now looks like a fragile shell: brittle, opaque and dangerously overleveraged. The risk of a banking crisis doesn't hinge on a single event but on the slow, relentless buildup of unsustainable pressure throughout the economy. Russia's top construction executive warned on Monday that the industry is heading for a wave of bankruptcies, as sky-high interest rates cripple access to capital. Alexei Krapivin, CEO of construction giant Natsproektstroy, said they are leaving firms unable to service debts or sustain ongoing projects. Corporate lending in Russia is clearly reaching a breaking point. Over 55% of loans now carry floating rates, and with interest rates staying high far longer than expected, many companies are slipping into pre-default. According to VTB chief Andrei Kostin, some companies are now borrowing solely to pay interest on existing debts. The analytical center CMAKS estimates that 13 major industrial sectors, accounting for 17% of national revenue, are already under severe financial stress.

A new EU sanctions package banning transactions with 22 Russian banks and tightening restrictions on oil exports also adds another layer of pain for a financial sector already creaking under wartime strain. That pressure comes on top of domestic overheating. Since mid-2023, Russia's war-fueled economy has overheated, forcing the Central Bank to hold rates at 21% to curb soaring inflation. Nabiullina warned the economy was "racing at full speed." Now the brakes are hitting hard, with retail lending stalled and corporate borrowing barely moving.

Headline interest rates, which were trimmed to 20% in June, are a ticking time bomb for Russia's economy. While they help contain inflation and prop up the ruble, they choke the economy by making credit unaffordable. Households and businesses cannot grow and defaults are rising. Banks are seeing demand for loans collapse while bad debt rises, squeezing profits and eroding capital. With much of the system already distorted by state-directed lending and wartime pressures, high rates are accelerating the rot. The longer they stay elevated, the more they push Russian banks toward a breaking point.

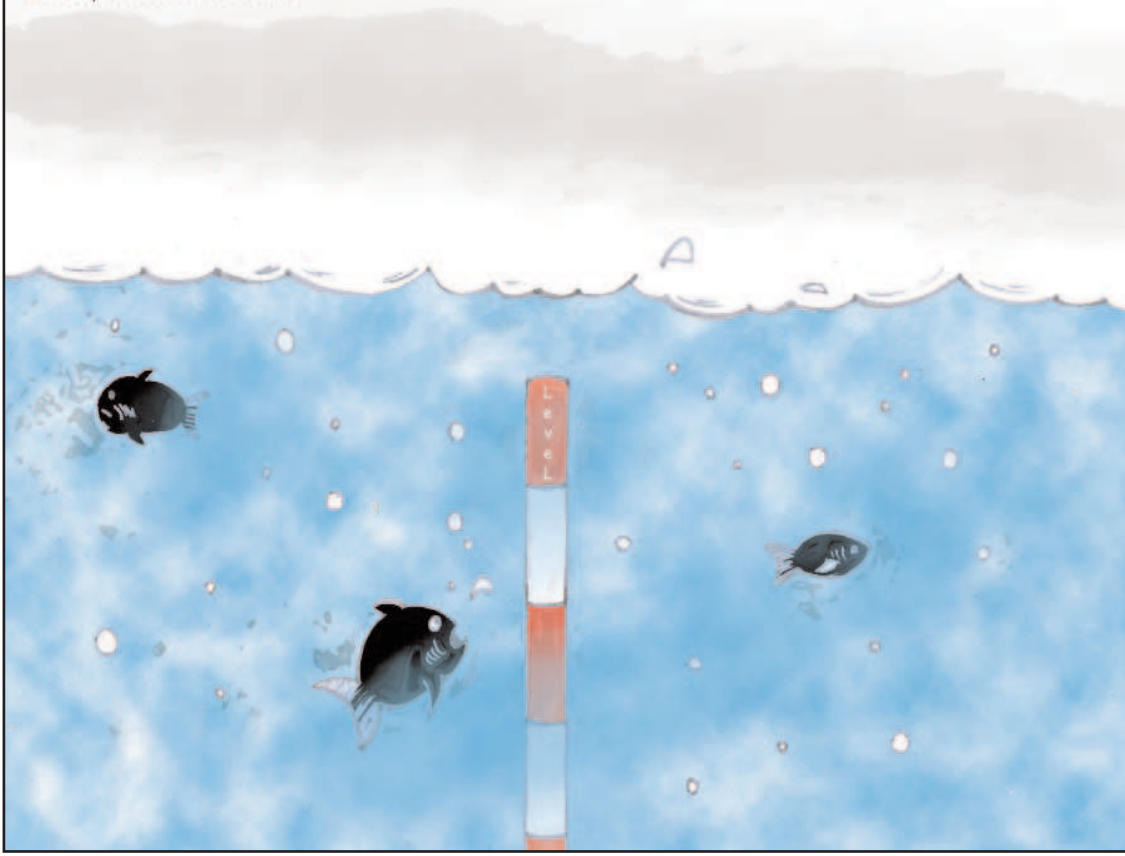
To rein in Putin's overheated war economy, Nabiullina is keeping interest rates very high, trying to rein in consumer and corporate lending amid soaring military spending that keeps inflation stubbornly high. Economic growth is slowing sharply. While a modest rate cut to 18 or 19% may come on July 25, any premature easing risks fuelling inflation further or destabilizing the already fragile ruble. It is an almost impossible balancing act. Nabiullina is attempting to land a burning plane on a foggy runway, with limited visibility and many critical controls stuck.

Adding to her worries, a 5% stake in Sovcombank, one of the nation's top banks, was last week put up for sale on Avito, a popular online marketplace run by a sanctioned billionaire. This unusual and desperate move reflects mounting pressure on the owners. Kommersant valued the stake at roughly 17 billion rubles (\$216 million). That a sizable share in a systemic lender is being hawked on Russia's version of eBay says it all. As the war economy grinds on, the cracks in Russia's financial system are no longer easy to paper over. When billion-dollar assets hit the bargain bin, it is clear the foundations of the banking sector are beginning to give way.

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MET dept. Warns more Rains...



Most Russians don't want to be soldiers

Sergei Shelin

THE majority of Russian citizens - especially young people - make no secret that being sent to the Ukrainian front is not part of their plans. Yet how can it be possible that the army has no shortage of contract soldiers, with new recruits arriving faster than soldiers are being killed? The answer lies in Russia's social divide: a complacent majority that supports the war from a distance and a highly belligerent minority willing to fight it.

The state-owned pollster VTsIOM published the results of a poll asking the public who they consider the real Russian "heroes of our time." They had clearly planned to release a report that would fit with the militaristic mania of Russia Day. But the results they got were likely not what they had in mind. The poll began innocuously enough. Respondents were first asked whether they agreed that real heroes of Russia include those who work "daily for the good of society," not only serving on the battlefield. Naturally, people agreed - especially the young. Among those under 25, 99% supported the supposition that one can heroically "defend the country" without weapons; other age groups were not far behind.

The second question was meant to demonstrate the unwavering patriotism of the Russian public, asking whether they would be willing to "serve the Motherland" in the event of natural disasters or war. Five options were offered, including "taking part in the armed defense of the country." But only 23% chose the "armed defense" option, which ended up fourth out of five options. Volunteering and working in other sectors and spreading patriotic messages - options that involved little upheaval to their ordinary lives - were more popular. The only option less popular than going off to fight was providing financial support. Respondents seem to know perfectly well that in a crisis, the authorities would seize their money without asking, and even those who promised to help with their own rubles likely did so just to appease what they view as VTsIOM's

officialdom.

Even more striking is the fact that those least likely to volunteer to fight were the young. Among those under 33, this option firmly occupies last place, selected by just 17-20% of respondents. The most eager to take up arms were those aged 50-60. But with only 33% saying yes, that hardly indicates a robust fighting spirit. To be fair, the poll numbers may be slightly skewed as they represent a holistic view of the Russian

The verified list of dead Russian soldiers maintained by Mediazona and the BBC already exceeds 115,000. About 5,000 names are added each month. The actual number of deaths is widely estimated at roughly double that. Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), for example, puts Russian fatalities at 250,000. Estimating all irreversible losses - killed plus wounded who never return to duty - is harder

Some analysts - including myself - recently thought Putin would be unable to find enough conscripts to cover losses this year, and that by late 2025, he would be forced to choose between a forced draft and a ceasefire. Unfortunately, the data paints a different picture. The verified list of dead Russian soldiers maintained by Mediazona and the BBC already exceeds 115,000. About 5,000 names are added each month.

public. Men across all age groups are more likely to express a willingness for combat than women. Since men comprise the vast majority of Russian forces, their responses carry particular weight. Yet even among men, volunteering and the vague "professional assistance" ranked highest. One must remember that war is not an abstraction for Russians today; every Russian has, in one way or another, already considered the possibility of being sent to the front lines. These answers, therefore, merit serious attention, as they were not given without due thought and consideration. The poll seems especially worrying for the Kremlin, considering that some respondents likely feigned belligerence just to curry favor with the authorities.

Some analysts - including myself - recently thought Putin would be unable to find enough conscripts to cover losses this year, and that by late 2025, he would be forced to choose between a forced draft and a ceasefire.

Unfortunately, the data paints a different picture.

at statistics for the fallen. Only three out of every 10,000 men aged 20-61 in Moscow died due to the war. But the same demographic in the republic of Tyva is 40 times more likely to die.

Yes, Tyva faces specific problems that make it a hotspot for military recruitment. As well as being one of the poorest of Russia, its high crime rate means there are many former convicts to recruit voluntarily or coercively. Even regions without these problems have higher death rates than Moscow. Many have demographics or regions that are targeted to supply troops en masse. This may be more than enough to sustain the Kremlin's war. There are no signs that the regime is panicking about recruitment. Even while sign-on bonuses have not only stopped rising, but have even started falling in some regions.

Measures such as allowing 18-year-olds to serve and scrapping the upper age limit for first-time recruits mostly streamline recruitment rather than greatly widen the pool. That pool is far from huge, but it is clearly sufficient for now. The Kremlin might be able to create its army of 1.5 million. But recruiting and deploying more than that is likely unrealistic, as people do not want to enlist. But the number that may conceivably be enough to continue fighting well into next year. There remains a faint hope that Putin is being deceived by his courtiers' flattering and that Russia, in fact, has no reserves. Yet this squares poorly with the evidence. Putin's refusal to make even minimal concessions in negotiations and his clear expectation that Russia will gain significant Ukrainian territory in its summer-autumn offensive show that he does not consider a manpower shortage a current problem.

An unwritten contract is in force with the majority of Russians. The majority can sleep at night without worrying about being mobilized and deployed to the front lines. In return, they do not hinder Putin's war effort and, like VTsIOM's suggestions, remain ever ready to help in other ways. They will do anything to continue the war, apart from putting themselves at risk.

Finally, justice has been done

Roberto Saviano

WHAT criminal organisations fear most is the written word. That is what a court in Italy has established for the first time. It has taken 17 years for me to see justice done, but it finally came on 14 July. The court of appeals in Rome upheld a 2021 verdict in which the mafia boss Francesco Bidognetti and his former lawyer were found guilty of mafia-related threats against me.

Bidognetti is the head of one of the most powerful and violent Camorra clans: the Casalesi. He is already in jail, serving a life sentence. Yet far from being merely symbolic, the new sentences (Bidognetti got a year and a half, his lawyer Michele Santonastaso a year and two months) are momentous. They are punishment for a case that involved no ordinary act of intimidation, but one that was unique in the history of organised crime. It was performed in public in March 2008, during the 10-year "Spartacus" maxi-trial, which involved 115 defendants and resulted in 27 life sentences, including Bidognetti's.

That day, through his lawyer, Bidognetti publicly expressed his own criminal truth by singling out two journalists - myself and Rosaria Capacchione - to be held responsible if he were convicted. Santonastaso read a document aloud in court - a "proclamation" that we later learned echoed statements made by terrorist organisations. It was an unprecedented act in the history of mafia trials. The message was chilling: if the two mafia bosses in the dock, Bidognetti and Antonio Iovine, ended up in prison - as they did - the guilt would be ours. Our reporting, our complaints and our influence on prosecutors would be to blame.

After reading out the document, Santonastaso removed his robes. It was a symbolic gesture to say from that moment on, the game would be played outside the walls of the court. The proclamation had served a specific purpose: to silence me and other journalists, and inform people outside the court that those responsible for Bidognetti's conviction had names. At the time, a murderous Camorra hit squad operated a reign of terror in Campania. It reported directly to Bidognetti. This armed gang, led by Giuseppe Setola, committed a vast number of heinous crimes intended to demonstrate that the power of the clan persisted, despite trials and convictions. In September 2008, for example, Setola spearheaded the Castel Volturno killing, in which six Nigerian migrants, who had no involvement in criminal activity, lost their lives.

To understand the scope of the proclamation against me it is important to also understand the history and savagery of its author. Bidognetti, nicknamed Ciccioetto di Mezzanotte - because anyone who stood between him and his business would see mezzanotte (midnight) descend on them - heads an organisation that built its power on blood, fear and the devastation of its territory through the illegal dumping of toxic waste all over Italy. In 1993 he ordered the murder of Gennaro Falco, an innocent doctor who had been treating Bidognetti's first wife, Teresa Tamburrino. Falco was accused by the Bidognetti family of failing to diagnose a tumour in time to save her life. The doctor was murdered by Bidognetti's son, Raffaele.

But the violence did not start there. In December 1980, during a shootout, Bidognetti used Filomena Morlando, 25, as a human shield. She was killed in the crossfire. In another incident, Antonio Petito, a young man who had no involvement with the Camorra, had an altercation with another of Bidognetti's sons, Gianluca. Petito was killed for "lack of respect for the boss's son".

After the proclamation in court, my protection was immediately strengthened, from level three (an armoured car and two agents) to level two (two armoured cars and five agents). Life under protection means existing in an eternal armoured present, in a home that is both a refuge and a prison. It means losing not only your freedom of movement, but also your interpersonal and emotional freedom. Every encounter is behind closed doors. There is no privacy. Intimacy evaporates. Spontaneity is erased. The consequences are not only practical, but profound. My romantic relationships have been compromised. Friendships have dwindled under the weight of my situation. Anyone who interacts with me feels the need to protect me, to absorb some of my tension. That is unbearable for anyone. For 17 years I have faced trials, hearings and efforts to smear my name. Not only by the clans, but also elements of the state that were meant to protect me but instead made my isolation worse.

Anti-mafia reporting has been isolated, criminalised, dragged through tribunals. In this silence, the mafia has won. It has disappeared from public discourse, but not from reality. It has morphed into an economic power, a form of criminal capitalism - invisible but pervasive. The 14 July verdict goes beyond symbolism: it was an act of judicial recognition that Bidognetti's 2008 proclamation was a threat, and directly related to his mafia enterprise. We can further deduce that it was a "fatwa", a signal to anyone in the clan who might want to climb the ranks by eliminating a named target.

For the first time in a trial involving a crime organisation, we can see that the mafia considers investigative journalists to be the main cause of its defeats. According to this criminal logic, to write, report or investigate means to interfere with justice. And so those who write about the mafia have to be punished. It is an acknowledgment that anything that might happen to me from now on will bear its signature. I emerge from this ordeal in pieces. I have sacrificed my life to an all-consuming battle. My existence is a form of life sentence, suspended between fear, isolation and surveillance. Solitude is the added punishment for courage. It is likely that nothing in Italy will change, but I can at least say I helped expose the ways in which the mafia operates. And believe me, it is not limited to Italy - it is a network that targets global financial centres, including London. I will remain under police protection indefinitely, because the judges confirmed that the mafia bosses fear what I write. But I don't want to go on living like this. Little by little, I will take responsibility for reclaiming my freedom - for taking my life back, even at my own risk. Enough of this half existence: neither fully alive, nor dead.

The Japan Times

Britain and Europe are changing together

Mark Leonard

Agreements. While the U.K. has made it clear that it will not rejoin the single market or the customs union, the question is whether it can persuade the EU that it can be counted on to help the bloc achieve its new trade goals or whether it will be given unfriendly treatment because it is seen as posing a risk to those objectives. This volte-face has seen mainstream European politicians shift focus toward defending national sovereignty - from Russia, China, Trump and migration - while they try to contain populist parties such as Marine Le Pen's National Rally and Alternative fur Deutschland. That is the backdrop for the ground-breaking deal that Starmer and Macron signed on migration returns. Starmer's approach to Europe is a marked improvement from that of former Conservative prime ministers Boris Johnson (who compared the

EU to Napoleon and Hitler) and Liz Truss (who questioned whether Macron was a friend or a foe). Starmer has proved himself, particularly with his deft diplomacy on Ukraine, to be a reliable partner and stakeholder, regaining the trust of EU institutions and member states. One senior German policymaker told me how impressed he was by the U.K. filling the leadership vacuum created by Trump's disregard for Ukraine.

In other words, the U.K. is widely seen in Europe as being "part of the team" again. The EU-U.K. summit in May provided a clear framework for deepening the relationship, not least through a Security and Defense Partnership that paves the way for British participation in European defense programs. But the U.K. government has remained far too cautious in other areas. Most notably, Starmer has been careful not to cross the Labour Party's self-imposed red lines: no freedom of movement, no customs union and no single

market. Future historians may well wonder why Starmer did not aim higher.

The changing international environment offers Starmer a clear opportunity to redraw Europe's political map, which would establish him as one of Britain's most consequential leaders. But to do so, Starmer must convince British voters that today's Europe is a different creature from the one they imagine: a defense community that is more focused on safeguarding the continent than on transcending the nation-state. And he must explain how the U.K. can help build this new European security order, so long as it banishes the Brexit mindset. As a post-liberal Europe emerges, Britain must stop clinging to the past and seize the chance to shape the continent's future in a way that advances its interests. That requires acknowledging that both the EU and the U.K. have entered a new era.

The fractured friendship behind fight at Thailand-Cambodia border

CAMBODIA and Thailand have a history of occasional conflict. The two countries share a long and forested border with areas that both sides claim. There have been serious exchanges of fire in the past, too - in 2008 and 2011, clashes on a similar scale saw 40 people killed. However, these were escalated relatively quickly.

Even as recently as this May, after an incident in which a Cambodian soldier was killed, both sides looked keen to prevent more violence, with meetings between army commanders from each country aimed at easing the tension. But on Thursday, it erupted. Thai authorities said at least 14 people, all civilians apart from one, had been killed so far, as fighting continued on Friday. Cambodia has yet to confirm whether it suffered any casualties. So why has this particular border skirmish - which kicked off after five Thai soldiers were injured in a landmine explosion on Wednesday - spread into something so much larger?

Relations between the two countries deteriorated sharply last month, when Cambodia's senior leader Hun Sen deeply embarrassed Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra by leaking a phone conversation between them about the disputed border. In the conversation, Paetongtarn called him "uncle", and criticised one of her own military commanders, sparking public anger. She has since been suspended as prime minister and Thailand's Constitutional Court is considering a petition for her dismissal. It is not clear why Hun Sen chose to do

this, burning a close personal relationship between their two families that goes back decades. Many people have faulted Paetongtarn for her conversation with Hun Sen. She appeared to believe that she could resolve their differences by appealing to his friendship with her father, former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. In the past that friendship was used by Thaksin's opponents to charge him with putting Cambodia's interests above those of Thailand. In 2014, when a government headed by Thaksin's sister Yingluck was deposed by a military coup, Hun Sen allowed scores of his supporters to seek sanctuary in Cambodia. The two countries have also cooperated in more shadowy areas. Last November, Thailand sent six Cambodian dissidents, together with a young child, back to Cambodia, where they were immediately jailed. All were recognised by the United Nations as refugees.

In 2020, a young Thai activist who had fled to Cambodia, Wanchalerm Satsaksit, was abducted and disappeared, it is presumed by Thai operatives. And the January gunning down of a Cambodian opposition leader in broad daylight in central Bangkok was also seen by activists as an outcome of this understanding between the two countries' security services. Against this background, the leaking of Paetongtarn's conversation appears to have caught the Shinawatra family completely off-guard. The responses from both Thaksin and Paetongtarn reveal a

sense of betrayal. This has led to an increasingly bitter war of words between the two countries. But it is more than just words.

Thai police have also begun investigating powerful Cambodian business figures alleged to be linked to underworld gambling and scam centres, while trade worth billions of dollars a year has stopped. At the border itself, there is a heightened risk of more serious clashes between the two armies. But rather than back off, Cambodia's Hun Sen seems to have jumped at the opportunity to ramp up rhetoric against Thailand and the Shinawatra family in particular. He claims to be in possession of secret documents that would incriminate Thaksin - documents he claims could even prove that he insulted the monarchy, an offence which comes with a hefty prison sentence in Thailand. The Thai government responded by expelling the Cambodian ambassador on Wednesday and recalling its own envoy, setting the stage for the latest confrontation.

For now neither side looks willing to step back. In both countries, there is a lack of leadership with the strength and confidence to compromise. In Prime Minister Hun Manet, Cambodia has the inexperienced son of a former strongman who does not yet have his own authority, while in his father Hun Sen it also has a man who appears willing to push this conflict further in order to burnish his own nationalist credentials. On the Thai side, the shaky coalition government centred on Thaksin's

party is dealing with a stagnant economy and reeling from the threat of punitive US tariffs. It cannot afford to show weakness in standing up to Cambodia. Cambodia too is dealing with a struggling economy.

It never fully recovered from the pandemic and tourism - a pillar of its economy - has suffered from the absence of Chinese visitors staying away for fear of being kidnapped and forced to work in scam centres. And - as with Thailand - now there is the threat of punishing US tariffs impacting the economy further. But both countries do have experienced politicians in Hun Sen and Thaksin who almost certainly can, when they are both ready, find a way out of this. We will also have to see whether other members of Asean weigh in on this conflict and try to persuade both countries to de-escalate. That was originally Asean's primary purpose - to avoid conflict among its members - and it will be a priority for some of the Asean states at the moment to help these two countries resolve the conflict. What remains a mystery at this point though is why Hun Sen decided to burn this friendship and inflame this conflict. Perhaps it was Thailand's decision to put pressure on scam centres this year, or Thaksin's ambition to legalize gambling, threatening Cambodia's own lucrative casino industry. Or perhaps it was something simpler: a Machiavellian move by one of Asia's wiliest political survivors, to abandon an ally in Thaksin who has lost much of his influence in Thailand, while at the same time burnishing his nationalist credentials in the eyes of his own people.

BBC

Trump finds a new way to taint office of presidency

Jackie Calmes

DONALD Trump has now thoroughly sullied the office of the presidency. I'm not talking about the Oval Office, with its new, gaudy gilt trappings that seem to spread by the day, as if the famously nocturnal president multitasks there while others sleep, tapping out his nasty late-night social media screeds between applying more layers of the gold leaf fit for a king. Those golden geeegaws are simply Trump's literal stain on the Oval Office.

I'm talking about the figurative taint: What Trump does and says there by day, in full view of the media cameras, reporters and fawning retainers invited for his performances. With that behavior he besmirches not just the actual Oval Office but the very idea of the office of the president of the United States.

Who can forget, as much as one would like to, Trump's bullying humiliation of Ukraine's war-hero President Volodymyr Zelensky in February, and, in May, his premeditated attack on President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, with false claims of that nation's genocide against white Afrikaner farmers? But Trump's performative power play on Tuesday arguably tops them all for shame. Alas, this time his target - President Obama - wasn't present to push back. The bully wouldn't dare get in Obama's face, knowing his predecessor's counterpunch against the lies could be a knockout. (In Obama's presence, in fact, Trump is all cringey banter and bonhomie, as at Jimmy Carter's funeral earlier this year, when the other former presidents snubbed him.)

The word "unprecedented" is used a lot, justifiably, to describe

Trump's actions, but never was it more apt: The sitting president baselessly alleged that the former president was "treasonous" - a crime punishable by death - and all but ordered his law-enforcement minions to arrest, prosecute and imprison the man. (Apparently Trump, convicted fraudster and adjudicated sexual abuser, forgot that last year - to avoid pre-election trials tied to his alleged crimes involving Jan. 6 and classified documents - he'd persuaded a deferential Supreme Court to give presidents virtual immunity from criminal prosecution. Narcissist that he is, perhaps Trump thinks the egregious ruling only applied to him, not to Obama and every other president past and future.)

"He's guilty. This was treason," Trump pronounced of Obama, falsely reviving conspiracies that the then-president and his inner circle lied about Russia's pro-Trump meddling in the 2016 campaign as a way of undermining Trump's legitimacy. But for eight years, Vladimir Putin's 2016 election interference has been a well-established fact, documented by multiple investigations, including one led by then-Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican who's now Trump's secretary of State. As Trump fulminated against Obama, seated beside him in the Oval Office's familiar wingback chairs was yet another foreign dignitary, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., making him just the latest witness to how fully Trump has extinguished the United States' beacon as a global exemplar of democratic norms and peaceful transfers of power.

Yes, Trump's rant against Obama

as well as Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and other Democrats was yet another of his manic attempts over the past three weeks to distract from the morass of his handling of what's known as the Jeffrey Epstein files - files in which his name appears, the Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday. The administration's refusal to release federal records of the pedophilia and sex-trafficking investigation of the late billionaire and Trump friend - despite past promises from Trump, Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi, FBI Director Kash Patel and Patel deputy Dan Bongino - is a mess of their own making, and the first to draw condemnation from Trump's otherwise loyal base. That's what's so unnerved the president. And yes, we should avoid taking the bait of Trump's distractions. But... For a president in power to falsely allege that a former president is a traitor, and to suggest that his lickspittles at the Justice Department and FBI should act against that former president, is a distraction that must command Americans' attention. Certainly Obama, who's long frustrated Democrats by his reticence about criticizing Trump, thinks so. On Tuesday he had a spokesman issue a stinger of a statement. "Out of respect for the office of the presidency," it began, "our office does not normally dignify the constant nonsense and misinformation flowing out of this White House with a response. But these claims are outrageous enough to merit one." It pointedly alluded to Rubio's supportive and bipartisan 2020 report to mock the "bizarre allegations" Trump is lodging.

The basis of Trump's claims of Obama's treason is a report released Friday by his Director of National

Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, the conspiracy-minded former Democratic congresswoman. Not coincidentally, Gabbard lately has been desperate to get back in Trump's good graces, having fallen from favor in recent months. Her report, along with her criminal referral to the Justice Department against Obama and others, seems to have done the trick, at least for now. Trump is singing her praises. Gabbard outlined what she calls a "treasonous conspiracy" by Obama and Democrats to bury findings that Russia did nothing to alter the 2016 result - Trump's victory - and to promote the "hoax" that Trump owed his election to Russia. But Obama and his aides repeatedly assured Americans that Russia did not manipulate the actual 2016 vote by hacking election machinery. Instead, Obama and his team consistently held, along with subsequent investigators, that Russia's interference was limited to an internet-based campaign of trolls and bots promoting Trump and denigrating Clinton to US voters. They never claimed that meddling determined the election outcome.

Here's the irony: Trump is building a false case against Obama to distract his restive base from the very real case involving his pal and fellow playboy Epstein, one in which he may or may not be implicated in wrongdoing, and from his failure to bring Epstein's elite accomplices to justice. Yet by doing so, Trump is again setting up his followers for disappointment and disillusionment. Because there is no Obama case, and so no "justice" for the salivating base. It's a sordid quandary that Trump deserves. Too bad he's brought it into the presidency.

The Los Angeles Times

Great opportunities mark 50th anniversary

Miguel Sebastián

MUCH has changed in both the European Union and China, politically and economically, in the 50 years since they established diplomatic relations. Although neither the Chinese nor the EU economy is the largest in the world in terms of GDP, they are the biggest players in global commerce. In global goods trade, the leadership position belongs to China, worth more than \$6 trillion, followed by the 27-member EU. Many people confuse the United States' economic leadership with its assumed leadership in global trade, but that is not true.

This is also important because, in the tariff war it has launched against the rest of the world, the US has, in principle, everything to lose if the EU and China were to form a strategic partnership or even a major free trade zone, which could later be joined by the rest of the US-targeted economies. It is important to understand that, unlike the tariff wars of the 1930s during the Great Depression, this is not a conflict of all against all, but rather of one country, the US, against the rest of the world. Therefore, the rational response should be coordinated action by the rest of the world against the US, following coordination between the two largest trading partners, the EU and China. Yet despite being the world's two leading trading powers, trade between the EU and China is not balanced. From being virtually nonexistent in 1975, Sino-EU trade grew significantly after the turn of the century. But since the EU has always imported more from China than it has exported, its trade deficit with the Asian giant has been widening. To reduce its trade deficit, the EU could

divert some of its potentially US-bound exports to China, and ensure the diversion is greater than any diversion of China's potentially US-bound exports to the EU. Such "asymmetric diversion" requires goodwill efforts from both sides.

Regarding the trade channels that should be strengthened, we have two options - the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the EU's Global Gateway strategy - which can complement each other. Since more than 150 countries have signed cooperation agreements with China, including Portugal and Greece, the EU should not view the BRI with suspicion. As for the Global Gateway, it is the EU's strategy to mobilize infrastructure investments worldwide, in order to promote smart, clean and secure connections in the digital, energy and transport industries, while strengthening the health, education and research sectors. Although the Global Gateway strategy seeks to compete with the BRI, offering an alternative of public and private investment that is expected to mobilize up to 300 billion (\$351.56 billion) between 2021 and 2027, it should be considered a complementary channel. As a matter of fact, the creation of a joint EU-China working group to enhance the complementarity of the two initiatives could be a highlight of the China-EU Summit that began on Thursday. Beyond trade, the two sides have multiple areas of cooperation in investment. The EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, though currently frozen, has the potential to boost economic ties between the two sides. And there are at least three regions where

Sino-EU cooperation could be particularly productive: East Asia and Australia, where China holds a clear leadership role; Latin America, where China is filling the void left by the US and where European countries such as Spain have a significant presence in the services sector; and Africa, which despite its geographical and historical ties to Europe, is witnessing Chinese presence in critical infrastructure.

In particular, since Africa is the continent of the future, the EU and China should work together with African countries to help build a promising future for the continent, especially because a quarter of BRI investments are focused on Africa, and the inaugural milestone of the Global Gateway was the "Africa-Europe Investment Package". As for green development, Europe aims to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, while China seeks to peak its carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. These goals demand shared innovation in clean energy, electric vehicles (EVs), and sustainable agriculture. China leads in solar panel and EV battery production, whereas the EU excels in green hydrogen and sustainable architecture. Together, they can accelerate the global energy transition, and create millions of green jobs. Examples of such collaboration already exist in Envision's investments in wind energy in Spain and battery plants in Germany, with potential for more projects in Spain.

Moreover, China boasts a highly dynamic fintech ecosystem and is a global leader in AI and e-commerce, while the EU contributes robust data protection frameworks, industrial

automation, and scientific research, which is suitable for the two sides to collaborate in smart manufacturing and Industry 4.0; artificial intelligence and ethical tech development; digital infrastructure in underserved regions; chip design, precision machinery and automation; and e-commerce, mobile payments, cloud computing, and research and development of AI. China and the EU should also work together to strengthen logistics networks, including ports, railways, industrial parks and 5G infrastructure, while securing strategic supplies in semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and critical raw materials. Such a partnership is equally vital in the auto sector, covering batteries, charging infrastructure, autonomous driving, sensors, and related technologies.

Apart from pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical devices and biotech start-ups, significant opportunities also exist in agricultural technology, food processing and food supply chain logistics, as shown by Chinese investments in dairy and meat processing facilities across Central and Eastern Europe. Despite their geopolitical differences, the EU and China, in the 50th year of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, have a unique opportunity to redefine their economic and trade partnership by jointly responding to challenges such as US tariffs and protectionist policies, and work together to build a new framework for governing regional and global trade and investment relations. May the China-EU Summit lay the groundwork for a new era of cooperation - one that is as transformative as the partnership that began half a century ago.

Precious 'white gold' fuel buried in Earth

Chloe Farand

and now runs an independent consultancy advising companies "who want to win the race for natural hydrogen". Exploratory drilling, he notes, has already taken place in Australia and the US. Prospectors like Gaucher argue the discovery of a commercially viable hydrogen reservoir could usher in a new age of exploration in the same way that Drake's 1859 find fired the starting gun for the oil economy. "The hope is to make a big discovery in the next three or four years," he says. "My dream is that this natural hydrogen can play a role, maybe as oil played in the past."

Still, Gaucher admits prospectors should currently remain "modest" about white hydrogen's potential role in the energy transition. Not least because huge uncertainties remain about how much of it could actually be recoverable from the Earth's mantle. "Currently, we really have no idea," says Ellis, of the USGS. "That's the big question. From what we know today, there's just too much uncertainty to really make any predictions about how impactful [natural hydrogen] might be." The only place where white hydrogen extracted from the Earth is currently used is in the village of Bourakebougou in western Mali. The local community's fate changed in 1987 when the cigarette of a worker digging a water well sparked a small explosion as he leaned over the edge. Nearly pure hydrogen was later found at the bottom of the borehole. It is now used to produce electricity for the village.

Odourless, colourless and tasteless, hydrogen is difficult to detect without specifically looking for it. But in early 2025, a team of geologists announced they found a clue for where to start looking. Using simulations of plate tectonic processes, they showed that rocks that had been pushed closer to the surface during the formation of mountains could be hotspots for white hydrogen. The researchers identified mountain ranges stretching from the Alps to the Himalayas as possible targets for exploration. Other researchers in the UK and Canada recently published a list of key ingredients needed to find hydrogen-producing underground systems. "We know for example that underground microbes readily feast on hydrogen," study co-author Barbara Sherwood Lollar, a professor of geology at the University of Toronto, said in a release. "Avoiding environments that bring them into contact with the hydrogen is important in preserving hydrogen in economic accumulations."

He worries about the hype, noting that "natural hydrogen production is currently tiny, the hydrogen that is found is rarely pure, [and] many discoveries are of dissolved gas, which is difficult to produce". Naturally produced hydrogen is also unlikely to be located where it is needed and hydrogen is difficult to transport and store, although proponents told the BBC it could support fuel sovereignty by powering local industries. But extracting white hydrogen could also come with unintended consequences, including impacts on the climate that could undo some of the benefits of replacing fossil fuels.

Hydrogen reservoirs can contain methane, which could offset the benefits of white hydrogen unless it were captured. What's more, once in the atmosphere, hydrogen competes with methane for hydroxyl, a compound which breaks down methane molecules. This means that any hydrogen that escapes during extraction would also make methane in the atmosphere last longer and cause even more warming. These methane emissions, alongside the emissions embedded in drilling infrastructure, mean white hydrogen production wouldn't be totally carbon free. One initial estimate suggests that, in cases where reservoirs have a high percentage of hydrogen and low amounts of methane, 0.4kg of CO2 equivalent (CO2e) would be emitted for every kilogram of hydrogen produced. That's less than the average 1.6kg CO2e generated with each kilogram of green hydrogen, which requires the construction of vast renewable energy infrastructure.

However, emissions associated with white hydrogen production would increase the more methane is in the reservoir and the less productive the well becomes. A well with 75% hydrogen and 22.5% methane would emit 1.5 kg CO2e per kg of hydro-

gen, according to the same study. White hydrogen proponents tell the BBC that methane emissions can be filtered, while extracting and burning hydrogen as a fuel would reduce the amount that naturally leaks to the surface and reaches the atmosphere. But Truche disagrees. Large-scale white hydrogen production would lead to increased hydrogen leakage into the atmosphere, he says. It could also impact underground ecosystems and the microbial life that rely on hydrogen as an energy source, he adds. These microbes play an important role in the cycle of the Earth's chemical elements and compounds - yet relatively little is known about the deep terrestrial subsurface, according to a scientific review by Rachel Beaver and Josh Neufeld at the University of Waterloo in Canada.

Even if a large discovery was made in the next few years, it would take at least another decade to develop an industry at scale, says Truche, meaning white hydrogen will not have an impact on the energy system anytime soon. Other experts have also argued white hydrogen extraction "simply won't be available" to replace the fossil fuel-produced hydrogen currently in use within the timeframe needed to meet global climate goals. For Emmanuel Masini, founder and chief executive of Mantle8, a French hydrogen exploration start-up backed by Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy, however, the urgent need for decarbonisation is exactly the reason for accelerating white hydrogen exploration.

"We are convinced there could be really significant [hydrogen] reserves, we need to go ahead and deliver them," Masini says. To do this, Mantle8 has developed a technology which uses geology, geophysics and geochemistry data and sensors to create 4D images (in three dimensions and across time) of the Earth's mantle to pinpoint the specific location of white hydrogen reservoirs and quantify and monitor the volume of hydrogen in each. The technology could be used to map the entire planet and take out the guesswork in exploration by identifying replenishing reservoirs, saving both time and money, says the start-up. Masini says it has already identified 12 promising locations across Europe and aims to identify 10 million tonnes of hydrogen reserves by 2030 - a goal he is confident it can meet. In February 2025, Mantle8 secured financing to pilot the technology in the Pyrenees mountains in southwest France. The company aims to begin exploratory drilling in 2028 and produce its first kilogram of hydrogen by 2030 at around \$0.80 (£0.60) per kg. That would make it cheaper than any other hydrogen form and at least five times less than the cost of green hydrogen. Researchers at Stanford University have also estimated that white hydrogen could be produced below \$1 (£0.74) per kg under optimal conditions.

Tools and expertise developed by the oil and gas industry could be adapted to extract the gas, argues Viacheslav Zgonnik, a pioneer in natural hydrogen exploration and chief executive of HyReveal, a start-up developing ways to detect and monitor hydrogen underground. "It presents an amazing opportunity for the hydrocarbon industry to make the pivot" to cleaner energy sources, he argues. Oil companies are indeed showing growing interest. In Brazil, Petrobras is researching the possibility of natural hydrogen extraction. Oil giants BP and Chevron have joined a consortium studying natural hydrogen, and BP recently invested in UK-based natural hydrogen start-up Snowfox. Discovery. Others are considering stimulating hydrogen production by injecting water into underground iron-rich rocks to produce "orange" hydrogen, a process which could theoretically be coupled with carbon sequestration but remains more complicated and uncertain.

Zgonnik is optimistic white hydrogen can provide "the missing link" to decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors, starting with the fertiliser industry. Still, even under a best-case scenario, he estimates it could replace "only a few percent" of global fossil fuel use by 2050. But others, like Truche, argue it is too early to determine what role, if any, white hydrogen could play in the energy transition. Whether replenishing reservoirs of extractable hydrogen exist underground "is a genuine scientific question", he says. "But it remains to be proven."



ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed EPZA CEO A.D. Khowaja meeting with Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Industries & Production Haroon Akhtar Khan to discuss reforms and international alignment of Export Processing Zones Authority.

Pak-US trade ties set to expand: LCCI president

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Mian Abuzar Shad said here Saturday that Pakistan's trade ties with the United States are all set to expand after a productive visit of Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

The LCCI President, in a media statement, commended the diplomatic and economic initiatives led by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy PM Ishaq Dar, adding that they steered Pakistan back onto the path of macroeconomic stability and international confidence. The recent visit to Washington DC by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar is a landmark step that reflects the government's seriousness in reviving economic momentum and enhancing global partnerships, he added.

The LCCI President said that during his visit, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar held a significant meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The two leaders discussed strengthening bilateral ties, particularly in trade, investment, technology, agriculture, and mineral development. He said it is very encouraging that they are committed working together to create structured and sustainable mechanisms for cooperation.

Mian Abuzar Shad also welcomed Ishaq Dar's remarks made during his address at the prestigious Atlantic Council in Washington, where he highlighted Pakistan's macroeconomic stabilization and a clear shift from aid dependency to trade-

driven progress.

Mian Abuzar Shad said the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry fully endorses Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's vision of replacing aid with mutually beneficial trade. His message at the Atlantic Council reflects a confident and forward-looking economic policy that resonates with the aspirations of Pakistan's business community. The commitment to open Pakistan's markets to American products and the pursuit of a comprehensive trade agreement with the United States is a highly strategic move that will significantly boost investor confidence and bilateral commerce, he maintained.

He added that this trade-centric approach is exactly what Pakistan needs to revitalize its economy, attract foreign investment, and position itself as a competitive player in global markets.

He said that it would also boost confidence of the US business community that Pakistan is undertaking significant reforms to attract foreign investment, improve ease of doing business, and enhance institutional transparency. His engagements signaled to global investors that Pakistan is ready to re-engage with the international economy on strong, stable, and mutually beneficial terms.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad pointed out that the United States is already Pakistan's largest export destination, especially for textiles, garments, leather products and surgi-

cal instruments. At the same time, he highlighted an important fact: Pakistan is currently the second-largest importer of US cotton, underlining the deep-rooted trade links between both nations' textile and agricultural sectors.

Mian Abuzar Shad also stressed that the textile sector, which accounts for a large portion of Pakistan's exports, can greatly benefit from more predictable trade frameworks and preferential access to US markets.

He said that a free trade agreement or a bilateral investment treaty with the US would be a game-changer for Pakistan's industry. He hoped that the recent dialogues pave the way for such developments.

The LCCI President praised the government for its strategic diplomacy and effective engagement with the global business and political community. "Thanks to the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team, the world is once again recognizing Pakistan's economic potential," he said.

He assured LCCI full support for the government initiatives aimed at enhancing trade diplomacy and foreign economic relations. He expressed hope that the outcomes of the US visit would soon be translated into tangible agreements, investment inflows, and expanded market access for Pakistani products.

"This visit is not just a diplomatic milestone, it is a strong statement of intent that Pakistan is back on the global economic map and ready to thrive," he added.

CEO EPZA calls on Haroon

ISLAMABAD (APP): A.D. Khowaja the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan.

Haroon congratulated Khowaja on assuming charge as CEO of EPZA and extended his best wishes for success in the new role, said a news release here on Saturday.

During the meeting, both sides held a detailed discussion on the potential of EPZA, the current challenges it faces, and strategies to make the authority more competitive and effective.

Haroon Akhtar emphasized that the Export Processing Zones Authority must be aligned with international standards in order to attract investment and boost exports.

He extended his full support to the CEO for initiating improvements and reforms to enhance the performance and standards of the authority upto international standards.

SEO training for entrepreneurs

SIALKOT (APP): The SME Training Committee of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) organized a seminar on "Training on SEO Tools and Research to Ranking" at the SCCI Auditorium.

The session was attended group leader of the Sialkot business community, Riaz ud-Din-Sheikh (SI).

Renowned speaker Usman Chughtai (Ecommerce Wala) conducted the keynote session, providing young entrepreneurs with practical insights on SEO tools, lead generation, and online growth strategies.

Chairman SME Departmental Committee on Training of SCCI, Fizan Akbar, and young entrepreneurs attended the session.

Gold prices decrease by Rs300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.300 and was traded at Rs.356,400 on Saturday as against its sale at Rs. 356,700 the previous day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China soared in the first half of 2025, recording a staggering 300 percent year-on-year increase in value, according to Ghulam Qadir, Trade and Investment Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing.

Ghulam Qadir highlighted that from January to June 2025, Pakistan exported 46,029,511 kilograms of sesame seeds to

PAJCCI welcomes signing of PTA between Pakistan, Afghanistan

E.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), under the leadership of Chairman Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, warmly welcomes the signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Formalized by Pakistan's Commerce Secretary Jawad Paul and Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce Mullah Ahmadullah Zahid, this agreement reduces tariffs on key agricultural goods such as Afghan grapes, pomegranates, apples, and tomatoes, and Pakistani mangoes, oranges, bananas, and potatoes from over 60% to 27%, with a special 22% rate for tomatoes and potatoes. PAJCCI acknowledges this progress, which builds on discussions from the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) meeting on December 17, 2024. This milestone reflects PAJCCI's long-standing demands, pursued through persistent efforts and reinforced during the SIFC meeting, marking a significant step toward

enhanced bilateral trade.

Despite this encouraging step, PAJCCI President Juanid Makda remains concerned about persistent challenges hindering bilateral and transit trade, which has declined from \$2.5 billion at its peak to \$1.2 billion in 2024. As outlined in our recent letter to the Minister of Interior, Mr. Mohsin Naqvi, these issues include the lack of a consistent, long-term trade policy from the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), creating uncertainty for traders and discouraging investment. Payment disputes, driven by banking inefficiencies, have led to undue pressure from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on legitimate businesses, affecting trader confidence. Temporary Electronic Import Form (EIF) waivers, without a permanent system, complicate trade planning, while delays in visa issuance for Afghan businessmen are highly discouraging, streamlining the process could foster greater economic collaboration.

The KP government's Infrastructure Development

Cess (IDC), though reduced to 1%, and continues to burden transit trade, contrary to international commitments, diverting some trade to routes like Chabahar, Iran. Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) from October 2023, including a 10% processing fee on Afghan goods, have significantly reduced trade volumes, despite recent relaxations. Frequent Torkham border closures due to security and administrative issues further challenge cross-border commerce.

Makda emphasizes the need for private-sector representation from both chapters (Pakistan & Afghanistan) in the newly formed PTA Implementation Committee, led by MoC (Afghanistan) and MoC (Pakistan). This committee, with representatives from Customs and Agriculture Ministries meeting monthly, would benefit greatly from PAJCCI's insights as a voice for businesses facing these challenges, ensuring practical and effective solutions.

To unlock the \$7 billion trade potential, PAJCCI encourages collaborative efforts to develop a long-

term trade policy with MoC and SBP, streamline payment processes to resolve FIA concerns, establish a permanent EIF waiver system, simplify visa processes for Afghan Businessmen, exempt transit trade from IDC, digitize trade processes through SBP and Pakistan Single Window (PSW), and review restrictive SROs.

Under the leadership of Chairman Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, and Co-Chairman Khan Jan Alokozai PAJCCI remains committed to working with the SIFC, MoC, Ministry of Interior, and SBP, and to address these challenges and strengthen Pakistan's role as a vital trade hub for Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. We look forward to a follow-up dialogue to ensure meaningful progress. PAJCCI extends heartfelt congratulations to the SIFC, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan - Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Mohsin Naqvi - Minister Ministry of Interior, and all stakeholders for their pivotal roles in achieving this milestone, adding a vital spark to Pakistan-Afghanistan trade relations.

Expo Centre in Faisalabad need of hour, says FCCI president

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Rehan Naseem Bharara said that Expo Centre in Faisalabad is the need of the hour to organize international exhibitions to showcase quality products of this export city.

Addressing the fifth meeting of the FCCI Standing Committee on "Council of Textile and Expo Centre" online, he said that efforts must be expedited in the right direction to materialize this objective as early as possible.

He said that Faisalabad has emerged as the export hub of the country which is

not only exporting quality textiles but also a long and diverse range of other products. He said that the expo centre would help exporters showcase their products in an internationally compliant environment.

He appreciated the efforts of Bilal Jamil, Convener Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Standing Committee, for the establishment of the expo centre in Faisalabad. Bilal Jamil briefed the committee about the progress made in this respect.

The meeting discussed in detail the allotment of land for the expo centre and



its related issues.

Dr Tanvir Ahmad, Rector National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF), Mian Muhammad Latif, Bao Akram Regional Chairman All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills

Association (APTPMA), Arif Ihsan Malik of All Pakistan Bed-sheets & Upholstery Manufacturers Association (APBUMA) and Gulzar Naveed of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA).

High power tariffs causing inefficiency in industrial sector

FAISALABAD (INP): High power tariffs are undermining productivity in Pakistan's industrial sector, particularly in the textile industry.

Salamat Ali, former central chairman of the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association said that textile mill owners are trying to convince the policymakers that they need a level playing field to compete with regional business rivals in the international market.

He said they had categorically informed policymakers that the high cost of energy is creating serious challenges for exporters in Pakistan, but unfortunately, the authorities have not paid any attention to the issue. He said that over the past few years, electricity rates have increased sharply, creating a range of challenges for exporters.

"The situation is quite difficult for us, forcing some textile mills to make huge investments in power generation just to keep their product prices competitive in the market.

Electricity is a major component of production

costs, and affordable rates would help exporters create more jobs, reduce poverty, and fetch the much-needed foreign exchange for Pakistan," he added.

He pointed out that whenever electricity prices rise, production costs also go up. Regional business rivals, such as Bangladesh and India, provide cheap electricity to exporters, but in Pakistan, the situation is completely different.

He explained that although international buyers are interested in placing orders with Pakistani exporters, they often ask for lower prices.

"When we are unable to offer such concessions, the buyers shift their orders to competitors in other countries," he claimed.

Besides, he mentioned that factories are unable to run machines during peak hours due to the high cost of electricity. To avoid a financial burden, many mills either reduce their working hours or operate only during off-peak hours, he added.

"This situation hurts productivity, causes delays in shipments, and damages our reputation and prof-

itability," he lamented.

Rehan Naseem, President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that due to the high cost of energy, industries try to save money in any way they can. Unfortunately, this often means saving by cutting corners on maintenance, upgrading old machinery, or avoiding investing in automation.

He said that information technology is changing business practices, and if companies don't upgrade their machines or processes, exporters will suffer from reduced productivity and lower quality of products.

Similarly, he said such companies will also struggle to deliver products timely, which results in lost orders, dissatisfied customers, and damaged trust—all of which are bad signs for the industry.

He said that it has been observed that many industries rely on backup generators to avoid power outages, which places a financial burden on them and pollutes the already damaged environment. He claimed that high electricity costs force millers into

inefficient practices, reducing overall competitiveness.

"To put it simply, high power costs discourage all sorts of industries from becoming more modern and efficient. This is harmful to Pakistan's long-term economic growth and job creation," he added.

It is extremely urgent to reduce energy rates, as Pakistan's textile exports are already losing ground to competing countries. He said these countries offer cheaper energy and better support to their industries, enabling them to secure more international orders.

He emphasized the urgent need for energy tariff reforms, warning that continued inaction could lead to more factory closures, increased unemployment, and further economic decline.

Given the current scenario, he stressed that energy reform is crucial for the development of Pakistan's industrial sector. Without affordable and reliable power, he said, we cannot grow our industrial sector or improve export competitiveness in a sustainable way.

NTU FSD hosts final-year fashion show



ISLAMABAD (APP): Final-year students of the BS Fashion Design program at the National Textile University (NTU) Faisalabad showcased their creativity, vision, and technical skill during an impressive fashion show held as part of their academic evaluation.

Emphasizing themes of sustainability and cultural relevance, the show reflected the growing global trend of conscious and innovative fashion.

The event, a key feature of the final semester, drew attention from prominent figures in the fashion and textile industry. A large number of fashion professionals, designers, and academics attended the show, offering praise and encouragement to the graduating batch for their originality and craftsmanship.

The students presented a diverse range of concepts—from deeply symbolic collections to garments inspired by Pakistan's cultural and architectural heritage. The runway featured themes that ranged from minimal modern aesthetics to bold experimental structures, with some students also exploring sustainable design practices and paper upcycled materials.

One of the standout presentations came from Laiba Javed Rai, who described her display as a symbolic tribute to the life cycle of an eagle. "My garments represent the strength and transformation of an eagle. When its beak breaks and wings weaken, it renews itself and rises again, soaring with even greater power. This metaphor reflects my own journey as a designer," she shared.

She added that her collection is entirely handcrafted, incorporating bead weaving techniques and created using upcycled paper materials to promote sustainable fashion.

Her work drew special praise from her mentors, Professor Afzal and Professor Umar, who declared her a 'future star in fashion design' due to her originality, skill, and thoughtful execution.

Another student, Roha, drew attention for her geometrically inspired garments. "My design takes its inspiration from the architectural form of Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. I translated that geometric beauty into textile art using the smocking technique," she said, explaining the detailed fabric manipulation used in her pieces.

According to university faculty, the show is an integral part of the students' final evaluation, and marks are awarded based on creativity, execution, presentation, and thematic coherence. "This fashion show is not just a display—it's a culmination of four years of hard work, learning, and evolution," said one of the supervising professors.

Fashion industry guests praised the emerging talent and noted that such events bridge the gap between academia and the commercial fashion world. Many participants were offered mentorship opportunities and industry networking leads.

The event concluded with applause from guests, recognition from faculty, and a shared sense of accomplishment among the students. For many, it marked not just the end of their academic journey, but the beginning of their careers in the competitive world of fashion design.

Pakistani sesame exports to China surge 300 per cent in first half of 2025

China, generating \$57.44 million in revenue. This marks a substantial leap from the same period in 2024, when exports totaled 8,608,260 kilograms worth \$14.39 million.

The remarkable growth is attributed to both a significant rise in export volume and a competitive pricing strategy.

While the average price per kilogram was \$1.67 in H1 2024, it dropped to \$1.24 in H1 2025, making

Pakistani sesame more attractive in the Chinese market.

"This exceptional growth underscores the successful efforts to enhance market access and the strong demand in China for quality Pakistani agricultural products," said Ghulam Qadir.

"The significant increase in volume demonstrates Pakistan's growing capacity as a reliable supplier."

During this period, Pakistan ranked as the fourth-largest sesame supplier to China. The top suppliers were: Niger: 348,175,624 kg worth \$471.53 million (Avg: \$1.35/kg); Togo: 113,331,626 kg worth \$166.92 million (Avg: \$1.47/kg); Ethiopia: 64,989,410 kg worth \$106.72 million (Avg: \$1.64/kg); Pakistan: 46,029,511 kg worth \$57.44 million (Avg: \$1.24/kg).

Change of Name & Correction of Father's Name

I HANZALA IFTIKHAR s/o IFTIKHAR AHMED Resident of H.NO.32AA, Street NO-8, Near Madrasa Khalid Bin Waleed, Sohan Islamabad, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

1. That I was registered with FBISE at SSC level under registration No 2214951023 and passed the SSC Annual Examination 2022 under Roll no. 10113378, where my name is HANZALA MUJAHID BIN IFTIKHAR and my father name is IFTIKHAR AHMED KHAN.

2. That I have decided to change my name from HANZALA MUJAHID BIN IFTIKHAR to HANZALA MUJAHID BIN IFTIKHAR which is written as HANZALA MUJAHID BIN IFTIKHAR and correction in my father's name from IFTIKHAR AHMED KHAN to IFTIKHAR AHMED KHAN which is written as IFTIKHAR AHMED KHAN in board's documentation/record. Hence the same may be changed /corrected.

3. That the statement given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing has been concealed or withheld.



In brief

Liverpool beaten 4-2 by AC Milan

HONG KONG (AFP): Former Chelsea midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek scored as Premier League champions Liverpool were beaten 4-2 by AC Milan on Saturday in a pre-season friendly in Hong Kong. Liverpool, with record signing Florian Wirtz making his first start, dominated possession under the closed roof at Kai Tak Stadium but a shaky defence was punished for all four Milan goals. Rafael Leao opened the scoring for the Italian side on 10 minutes with Dominik Szoboszlai's superb strike equalising 16 minutes later to make it 1-1 at half-time. But Loftus-Cheek, six minutes after the break, and two goals from substitute Noah Okafor, either side of Cody Gakpo's late header, gave AC Milan the victory. Liverpool's Hong Kong fans vastly outnumbered those supporting AC Milan in the 49,704 sellout crowd. They paid a heartfelt tribute to Diogo Jota, who passed away earlier this month in a car crash. Flowers were laid by Liverpool legend Kenny Dalglish in front of fans, who responded by holding up a mosaic spelling out "DJ20" in honour of Jota's number 20 shirt, which has been retired by the club. Leao, too, remembered his fellow Portuguese player Jota as he offered a silent prayer and formed the number 20 with his fingers after scoring the opener. Wirtz played 45 minutes and looked comfortable directing operations, showing hints of why Bayer Leverkusen were paid a reported British transfer record \$150 million for the German playmaker. Other new Liverpool signings left-back Milos Kerkez and right-back Jeremie Frimpong both came on as substitutes at half-time. But Striker Hugo Ekitike, who was signed from Eintracht Frankfurt for a reported \$92 million, was not ready to take part, having only flown in to join his new teammates two days earlier.

Arsenal sign Viktor Gyokeres

LONDON (AFP): Arsenal on Saturday announced the signing of Swedish international striker Viktor Gyokeres from Sporting Lisbon, bolstering their attacking options as they attempt to challenge for the Premier League title. The 27-year-old, who fired Sporting to the Portuguese title last season with 39 goals and netted a Champions League hat-trick against Manchester City, is reported to have signed a five-year deal in a transfer worth €55 million (€2.9m euros). Gyokeres' transfer, which could end up costing the north London club as much as £64m with performance-related additions, takes Arsenal's close-season spending to the region of £200m. "To come here to a club on Arsenal's level, I think it's going to help me perform even better with all the amazing players in this team. I'm really excited to get going," said Gyokeres. He becomes Mikel Arteta's sixth summer signing and follows defender Christian Mosquera (£13m), midfielder Martin Zubimendi (£60m), goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga (£5m), midfielder Christian Norgaard (£10m) and forward Noni Madueke (£48.5m) in moving to the Emirates. Gyokeres will be expected to meet up with his new teammates in Arsenal's ongoing pre-season tour of Singapore and Hong Kong.

Pakistan continues winning streak in FIVB Boys' U19 World Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan volleyball team delivered yet another dominant performance at the FIVB Boys' U19 World Championship 2025 by securing their third consecutive win, this time against a strong Turkish side.

In an intense match played at the championship venue in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Pakistan overcame a slow start to rally back and defeat Turkey in straight sets: 25-27, 25-19, 25-19, said a press release issued here Saturday.

This vital victory not only continues Pakistan's perfect winning record but also ensures their qualification for the Top 16 round of the tournament — a remarkable milestone in Pakistan's volleyball history.

Top Performers included Muhammad Saud who emerged as the match's best scorer with 16 points, demonstrating power and precision in his attacks.

Meanwhile Muhammad Yahya added 14 points, continuing his consistent run in the tournament and playing a pivotal role in both offense and defense. Pakistan will face Puerto Rico on Monday in the next game.

In a statement Chairman, Pakistan Volleyball Federation Ch. Muhammad Yaqoob said, "This win against a European powerhouse like Turkey is yet another testament to the rising standard of volleyball in Pakistan.

Our young athletes have shown great skill, discipline, and unity throughout this championship.

Qualifying for the top 16 at the world level is not just a team victory — it is a proud moment for the entire nation. We are committed to nurturing this talent and ensuring our presence remains strong in future international competitions."

PSB bans all federations from competing in India

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) on Saturday imposed a ban on all national sports federations from participating in events in India or agreeing to competitions scheduled there due to security concerns.

In an official notification issued to the federations, the PSB made it clear that no sporting body can commit to any event in India without prior consultation and approval from the board.

"Keeping in view the prevailing security concerns, the PSB Board in its 34th meeting held on 23rd July 2025 has decided that no National Sports Federation (NSF) shall commit to participate in any sporting event in India without prior consultation with Pakistan Sports Board," the notification stated.

It further directed all National Sports Federations (NSF) to seek clearance from the PSB before considering participation in any event across the border.

The move came amid heightened tensions between the two countries, which have often spilled over into the sporting arena.

Messi 'upset' over ban for skipping MLS All-Star game

MIAMI (Agencies): Lionel Messi is "extremely upset" after he and his Inter Miami team-mate Jordi Alba were given one-match bans for skipping Major League Soccer's All-Star game earlier this week.

Both players missed Wednesday's match in Austin, Texas where the MLS squad posted a 3-1 win against Mexico's Liga MX All-Stars.

"Per league rules, any player who does not participate in the All-Star Game without prior approval from the league is ineligible to compete in their club's next match," MLS said in a statement on Friday.

As a result, the duo will now miss Miami's home league fixture against FC Cincinnati on Saturday.

Inter Miami owner Jorge Mas said of Messi's response to the ban: "He's very upset, extremely upset, as expected. I'm hopeful it doesn't have an impact long-term. Will it have an impact initially, in the players' perception of how the league rules work? Absolutely no doubt."

Mas said of Alba and Messi: "The reaction was exactly as expected out of two competitive players who don't understand the decision, who don't understand why not attending an exhibition match leads directly to a suspension.

"The rule is what it is, but they don't understand it. I think that the punishment for the rule is frankly draconian." MLS commissioner Don Garber said suspending Messi was a "very difficult decision".

He added: "I know Lionel Messi loves this league. 'I don't think there's a player - or anyone - who has done more for MLS than Messi. I fully understand, respect, and admire his commitment to Inter Miami, and I respect his decision.

"Unfortunately, we have a long-standing policy regarding participation in the All-Star Game and we had to enforce it."

Argentina legend Messi, 38, has scored 18 goals in as many appearances for Javier Mascherano's side in the MLS this season, while Alba, 36, has featured 19 times in the league.

The duo, who also played together at Barcelona from 2012 to 2021, were also part of the Miami side's run to the quarter-finals of the FIFA Club World Cup.

Since their exit from the tournament at the hands of eventual finalists Paris Saint-Germain, Miami have played five matches this month with Messi scoring eight times.

Speaking to ESPN earlier in the day, Miami head coach Mascherano said the forward had "showed normal fatigue from the number of games and minutes he's been playing", adding that "players always have discomfort, especially when they play every three days".

World Cup winner De Paul joins Messi at Inter.

Argentina World Cup winner Rodrigo De Paul, 31, has joined Inter from Spanish club Atletico Madrid.

The midfielder spent four years at Atletico, scoring 14 goals and registering 26 assists in 187 appearances. He will join initially on loan for the 2025 season but the deal has an option to make the transfer permanent until 2029. He has played 78 times for Argentina and has won two Copa America titles, a Finalissima and the 2022 World Cup with his national team.

Pogacar set for Tour title as Groves wins stage 20

PONTARLIER (Agencies): Tadej Pogacar is set to secure his fourth Tour de France title after maintaining his overall lead, as Kaden Groves won the penultimate stage of this year's race.

Australian sprinter Groves claimed his first Tour stage win in Pontarlier after launching a solo attack with 16km remaining.

Pogacar completed the 184.2km hilly stage safely in the peloton meaning that, barring an accident, the 26-year-old Slovenian will seal his title defence on Sunday.

The final day of the Tour is a procession stage, where traditionally the general classification leader is not challenged.

Groves has now completed the trilogy of claiming stage victories on each of the three Grand Tour races, having also won at the Vuelta a Espana and the Giro d'Italia.

Alpecin-Deceuninck handed the 26-year-old his Tour debut this year and he has become the third rider from the Belgian team to win a stage on the 112th edition of cycling's biggest race.

Alpecin's star riders Jasper Philipsen and Mathieu van der Poel triumphed on the first two stages, before later being forced to abandon the Tour through injury and illness respectively.

"There are so many emotions to win here," said Groves. "The team, we came here with so many different plans with Jasper and Mathieu.

"In the end, I get my own opportunities and they haven't gone the right way. But today I had super legs. I just suffered to the line and, as a reward, we get a Tour stage."

The 160 remaining riders had to contend with rain soon after the start in Nantua and intermittently along the route.

Groves was then part of a 13-man breakaway that was formed after the second of the day's four categorised climbs.

His compatriot Harry Sweeney attacked over the day's penultimate climb and went clear of Jordan Jegat with 54km to go, but the EF Education-EasyPost rider was caught on the first slopes of the final ascent.

Local favourite Romain Gregoire and Spanish debutant Ivan Romeo attacked on the downhill but as they sped into a wet turn, both slipped to the tarmac, with 21-year-old Romeo coming off worse as he also slid into the kerb.

Groves was right behind them so watched it all unfold and sensed his opportunity, attacking with 16km remaining.

Frank van den Broek and British rider Jake Stewart merely looked at each other, with that momentary stalemate allowing Groves to go clear.

He gradually increased his lead to the line, where he was sobbing after clinching an emotional victory.

"The team gave me a free role in the last few days," Groves added. "We weren't sure if I should go for it today or wait until tomorrow. But when the rain falls, I always have a super feeling normally, in the cold weather. It's my first time winning solo - and it's in a Tour stage, [so] pretty incredible.

"There's so much pressure at the Tour. Having won in the Vuelta and the Giro, I always get asked whether I'm good enough to win in the Tour - and now I've shown them.

"I tried to play my cards

Asia Cup 2025 to start from September 9 in UAE

LAHORE (APP): The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) announced on Saturday that the 17th edition of the Asia Cup will be played between September 9 and 28, 2025 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) under hybrid arrangement.

The 17th edition will be played under the Twenty20 format and eight teams including hosts India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, UAE, Hong Kong and Oman. India is the designated host of the tournament but it will be stage in UAE under the hybrid model. The ACC has decided to play this year's edition under the T20 format in anticipation of the upcoming ICC T20I World Cup 2026.

It has been decided by the ACC that the tournament will be held at a neutral venue when it comes to India and Pakistan as both the cricketing nations are averse to playing at each other's cricket grounds. In 2023, India refused to play in Pakistan and played all of matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid arrangement.

As per the schedule issued by the ACC, arch rivals India and Pakistan will face off each other September 14 in Group A while Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Bangladesh are in Group B.

The Asia Cup opener will be played between Afghanistan and Hong Kong on September 9 while the last match of the Group Stage is scheduled between India and Oman on September 19. As per the tournament format, the top two teams from each group will move on to the Super Four stage. In the Super Four, four teams will compete again in a round-robin format. The top two teams from the Super Four will qualify for the final.

Earlier on Saturday afternoon, ACC President Mohsin Naqvi announced the Asia Cup 2025 in a tweet on the social media X "I am delighted to confirm the dates for the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025 in UAE. The prestigious tournament will take place from September 9th to 28th. We look forward to a spectacular display of cricket. Detailed schedule will be out soon."

The tournament schedule was announced later in the evening.

Too early to judge Gill, says Dev

NEW DELHI (AFP): Former India captain Kapil Dev on Saturday said it is too early to judge new Test skipper Shubman Gill and his young team in England despite two defeats.

Gill, 25, took over a team in transition after the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli ahead of the five-Test tour of England. The visitors, who trail the series 2-1, lost the opener before they bounced back to level the series. They then went down in a closely-fought third Test at Lord's.

Ben Stokes' England are in the box seat in the fourth Test and in sight of clinching the series. "The team came close to winning (at Lord's) and then lost," said Dev, who is the president of Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), on the sidelines of the announcement of the second half of the national golf calendar.

"It's a new team and it is getting an opportunity. In the coming days, these boys will come back with tournament victories.

"Any new team needs time to adjust. The new captain has to learn a lot and this series will be a learning step (for him)."

Gill, a top-order batter, leads the series batting with over 600 runs including three centuries and a career-best of 269 in the second Test in Birmingham. Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been India's best bowler with 14 wickets in five innings despite the collective decision that he play just three Tests to manage his workload. Bumrah, a yorker specialist who bowls with an unusual slingshot action has more than 200 Test wickets in his injury-prone career of 48 Tests.

But Dev, who never missed a Test due to injury in his 16-year-old career that ended in 1994 with 434 wickets, defended Bumrah's decision to skip matches. "I think everybody is different," the 1983 World Cup-winning captain told reporters. "Times have changed, bodies are different and they are working differently.

"He is one of the finest bowlers we have. His action is so awkward, and to sustain it this far, I think it's fabulous.

New Zealand beat South Africa by three runs

HARARE (AFP/APP): Matt Henry took two wickets in the final over as New Zealand beat South Africa by three runs in the final of the Zimbabwe T20 international tri-series at Harare Sports Club on Saturday.

Chasing New Zealand's total of 180 for five, South Africa were on the brink of victory when big-hitting Deward Brevis hit 15 runs, including two sixes, off the penultimate over from Zakary Foulkes.

South Africa needed seven off the last over.

It seemed Brevis might have hit another six off the second ball but Michael Bracewell on the deep mid-wicket boundary held a high hit and calmly tossed the ball up before crossing the rope and then stepping back to complete the catch.

Three runs were scored off the next two balls before Daryl Mitchell held a diving catch at long-on to dismiss George Linde.

Henry closed out the match with a dot ball.

Fast bowler Henry was named player of the match as well as player of the tournament after finishing as the leading wicket-taker with ten wickets.

"South Africa got off to a flier," Henry said of South Africa's opening stand of 92 between Lhuan-dre Pretorius (51) and Reeza Hendricks (37). "It's a credit to our team for staying in the fight, knowing wickets can change things."

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner also praised the ability of his players to "hang in there" on what he said was the best pitch for batting of the tournament.

"Guys stepped up on different occasions throughout this tri-series," said Santner. "There were a lot of challenges with the ball today but the guys were ready and really clear on how they wanted to operate."

Rahul and Gill frustrate England in fourth Test

MANCHESTER (AFP): India captain Shubman Gill starred in a remarkable rearguard action as his side checked England's bid for a series-clinching win in the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Saturday following a long-awaited century from opposing skipper Ben Stokes.

Gill came in with India in dire straits at 0-2 after Chris Woakes struck with successive balls in the first over of the tourists' second innings to have both Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan caught in the slips for ducks. That left India more than 300 runs behind England's mammoth first-innings 669 all out, featuring Stokes' superb 141. But an engrossing series of several twists and turns produced another as India reached stumps on the fourth day without further loss at 174-2.

KL Rahul was 87 not out and Gill 78 not out after the stubborn duo defied England's toiling bowlers for nearly five hours at an increasingly sun-drenched Old Trafford. India still face a deficit of 137 runs but have renewed hope of leaving Manchester with what would be a commendable draw after England, already 2-1 up in this five-match series, compiled their fifth-highest Test total of all time.

It was a return to form for Gill, who had started his first series as India skipper with three hundreds in four innings, only to manage 34 runs in total in his last three knocks. "We thought we could get a few more wickets after the start... but it was not to be," England assistant coach Marcus Trescothick told Sky Sports. "They (Rahul and Gill) stuck at it well," the former England opener added.

No bowling for Stokes

Stokes did not bowl himself Saturday -- a concerning sign for England following his history of hamstring trouble -- after taking an excellent 5-72 in India's first-innings 358. Trescothick, asked if Stokes, the pick of England's attack this series, would bow again in the match, replied: "We are waiting to see.

"He is obviously stiff and sore, has had a big workload in the last few weeks and again in this game and had a bit of cramp while he was batting mainly yesterday (Friday)."

In Stokes's absence, England's bowlers lacked penetration after Woakes' double strike, with recalled spinner Liam Dawson rarely turning the ball.

But the second ball after lunch saw Gill, still on nought, survive an impassioned lbw appeal from fast bowler Jofra Archer.

England's review proved inconclusive over whether the ball had hit bat or pad first and the original not out decision was upheld.

Gill had made two when Archer had another lbw appeal rejected, with the express quick down on his haunches in disbelief. The 25-year-old Gill then hit back with two boundaries in three balls from Woakes -- a dashing cut followed by a textbook straight drive.



PONTARLIER: Kaden Groves of Australia and Team Alpecin - Deceuninck celebrates at finish line as stage winner during the 112th Tour de France 2025.

right and get into an early move. But the uphill start made that incredibly difficult. When I made the decision, I knew that [Matteo] Jorgenson and [Tim] Wellens would watch each other, so I tried to distance myself from them.

"Then after the crash, Van den Broek goes full, so I closed



In brief

Constable arrested for harassing woman

RAWALPINDI (APP): A police constable was arrested for harassing a woman, blocking her path and hurling threats of dire consequences. The woman lodged a complaint accusing the constable's misbehavior and ill manner, informed police spokesman here Saturday. Following the complaint, SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar conducted an immediate inquiry. The investigation proved the woman's allegations, prompting the registration of a case and the constable's arrest. SP Khokhar confirmed that both departmental and legal proceedings have been initiated against the accused. Earlier, City Police Officer Syed Kahlid Mehmood Hamdani has taken notice of the incident and underscored the need that all police officers must act responsibly. He warned that misuse of authority or violation of the law by any officer would not be tolerated.

17 gamblers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawal Town Police have intensified operations against gambling resulting in the detention of 17 gamblers during crackdown. According to police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police successfully arrested nine gamblers and recovered Rs 15,120,06 mobile phones from their possession. In a separate operation, Waris Khan Police apprehended eight gamblers involved in similar betting activities. Police also confiscated Rs 10,000 playing cards used in gambling. SP Rawal Muhammad Haseeb Raja commended police teams for their swift action and underscored the need that zero-tolerance policy toward gambling. He remarked, "Gambling is a root cause of many social evils. We are committed to take strict legal action against those involved in such illicit activities." SP Raja further assured that all arrested suspects will be presented before the courts with substantial evidence to ensure accountability and justice.

Two drug suppliers jailed

RAWALPINDI (APP): The courts on Saturday have sentenced two drug suppliers to a collective imprisonment of 18 years besides Rs. 1,60,000.0 as fine. According to the details, Nadeem Mahmood was sentenced to 9 years in prison and fined Rs. 80,000.0 after Gujjar Khan Police recovered 2.4 kg of hashish from him in August 2024. Similarly, Muhammad Bilal was sentenced to 9 years in prison and fined Rs.80,000.0 following the recovery of 1.65 Kg of hashish by Taxila Police in July 2024. CPO Syed Khalid Hamdani commended the SSP Investigation and the investigative and legal teams for their efforts. He reiterated that all measures are being taken to eradicate the menace of drugs.

Over 7.5 kg drugs seized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested eight drug dealers and recovered more than 7.5 kilograms drugs from their possession during a crackdown here Saturday. According to police spokesman, Sadiqabad Police detained two drug pushers and recovered 3.8 kg drugs from their custody. Similarly, Bani Police held two drug suppliers and recovered 2.6 kg drugs from their possession. While, Dhamyal Police arrested two drug dealers and recovered 1.8 kg drugs from them. Following operation, Gujjar Khan Police detained another drug dealer and recovered 720 grams of hashish from him. Westridge Police nabbed drug supplier and recovered 560 grams of hashish from his possession.



ISLAMABAD: Doctors examine patients' eyes during a free surgical eye camp organized by Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital at the National Press Club. —APP Photo

Gov't committed to transparency in welfare programs: Tariq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Saturday that the government remains committed to transparency, accountability, and public welfare in all its social support programs.

Speaking to a private news channel, he clarified that the government's collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) is based on shared objectives of supporting vulnerable communities, particularly women and children.

Commenting on recent discussions around procure-

ment, he stated that the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules were not followed during the process, despite the funds being provided by the Government of Pakistan. He noted that the procurement was carried out independently by WFP, but the use of government funds requires strict adherence to local regulations.

He further explained that the matter is currently under review by the relevant parliamentary standing committee, which will assess whether the standard procedures were observed.

He emphasized that all government decisions are subject to established rules and oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability.

He also highlighted that Pakistan's partnerships with international organizations like the WFP and IMF have consistently spanned across successive governments and have made meaningful contributions to national welfare efforts. He reiterated the government's resolve to strengthen such collaborations while ensuring effective and transparent service delivery to those in need.

CDA steps up anti-encroachment drive amid of monsoon rains

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the direction of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, is ramping up efforts to remove illegal encroachments across the federal capital, particularly those obstructing stormwater drains, in a bid to avert flooding during the monsoon season.

An important review meeting was held at CDA headquarters on Saturday, where senior officials from the CDA, Islamabad administration, and Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) assessed the progress of the ongoing anti-encroachment campaign. The meeting followed instructions from Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to intensify action against unauthorized constructions on public land.

The officials reaffirmed that illegal structures built over natural drains and water channels pose serious safety risks. "Encroachments on drains are not just illegal—they are a disaster waiting to happen during the monsoon," Randhawa said. "We

are taking strict legal action and have begun sealing and demolishing such structures." The meeting was informed that authorities had already issued 24-hour notices for the voluntary removal of illegal constructions on stormwater drains. If owners fail to comply, the encroachments will be sealed and removed forcibly. These measures, officials say, are essential to prevent emergency situations like urban flooding, which has increasingly plagued the city in recent years.

To ensure coordinated action, the CDA, district administration, and DMA are jointly identifying and clearing illegal encroachments across all sectors of Islamabad. State land reclaimed from illegal occupants will be protected through long-term enforcement strategies. In a warning to the public, the CDA urged residents and commercial property owners to voluntarily dismantle any illegal structures. "Those responsible for such encroachments will be held fully accountable for legal consequences and any damages resulting from floods," Randhawa stated.

RDA expresses concern over unauthorized private housing schemes

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has expressed serious concerns over the unlawful activities of several private housing schemes operating within the district. These activities are obstructing sustainable and organized development, violating the Master Plan/Site Development Zone Plan, and posing threats to the environment.

In a letter written by the Director General of RDA, Ms. Kinza Murtaza, to the Director General of Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA), it was stated that PHATA has been granting permission to multiple housing schemes for development, advertisement, and marketing despite their failure to obtain legal approval or conform to the Master Plan. This is not only a violation of legal regulations

but is also causing significant harm to natural resources particularly water reserves, the land's natural structure, and the ecological balance.

RDA has recommended that the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), Rawalpindi, immediately initiate actions such as issuing challans, notices, and FIRs against these illegal activities, and work with the Cyber Crime Wing to impose a complete ban on illegal online plot sales, marketing, and transfers through digital platforms.

Immediate action should be taken against Blue World City, Faisal Town Phase 2 and other unapproved schemes. Attempts by some schemes to get approval from PHATA by withdrawing their applications by RDA are creating legal complications, which must be addressed.

RDA's position is clear

that all urban development should be done only under the Site Development Zone Plan and Master Plan.

There is no provision in the rules of PHATA that empowers it to grant permission without compliance in Rawalpindi Tehsil. The public complaints have clarified that several private schemes are continuing to sell plots, advertise and carry out development activities without approval, which is not only affecting the urban infrastructure but also causing financial loss to the public.

The letter also said that strict legal measures against illegal housing schemes that are hindering sustainable, balanced and planned development in Rawalpindi have become the need of the hour. The cooperation of the Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency in this regard is absolutely essential.

Rawalpindi's water supply master plan to be implemented

RAWALPINDI (APP): Secretary for Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering, Punjab Captain (Retd.) Noorul-Amin Mengal on Saturday said that Rawalpindi's sewage system would be expanded and made functional up to 100 per cent.

Presiding over a meeting to review the city's water supply and sewage master plan, he said that 40 percent of the sewerage existing system in Rawalpindi would be taken to 100 percent under the Punjab Development Program. The Secretary said that 28 million gallons of water would be supplied to the city after the construction of Charah Dam, while the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) would install water distribution networks and surface water treatment plants.

Nurul Amin Mengal said that underground water tanks would be built to conserve rainwater and wastewater treatment plants would be installed at sewage drain locations in Nullah Lai. The water from sewage and rainwater drains will be used for agricultural purposes, he said and added that work would be carried out in collaboration with relevant institutions, while smart use of resources would be ensured.

Director General WASA Punjab Tayyab Farid and Managing Director WASA Rawalpindi Saleem Ashraf also gave a briefing to the Secretary about the ongoing formation of the water and sewerage system master plan.

Murree blooms with 50,000 flowers

RAWALPINDI (PPI): The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi has launched a major beautification project in Murree, adding 50,000 flowers and new planters across the hill station. Director General PHA, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, initiated the campaign to enhance the tourist destination's appeal and improve recreational spaces.

Lower Topa Park has been significantly upgraded with extensive landscaping and decorative improvements, including seven new seating areas for visitors. New planters overflowing with colorful floral displays have been installed at Upper Jhika Gali, View Fourth Road, and Government House Road, adding to Murree's scenic charm. Roadside green belts throughout the "Queen of Kohsar" now boast almost 50,000 new flowers, creating vibrant displays.

Ranjha stressed the PHA's dedication to preserving Murree's natural splendor and offering top-notch amenities for tourists and residents. "We are dedicating all available resources to make Murree greener and more attractive," he affirmed. "There will be zero tolerance for any shortcomings in sanitation, beautification, or horticulture work."

He instructed PHA personnel to guarantee the proper upkeep and presentation of plants and flowers at all important locations in Murree. Ranjha also promised that current and future endeavors will continue to enhance the city's environment and requested public cooperation in maintaining Murree's beauty and tidiness.

Transport revolution: Minister announces 'Transport Card'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab's Minister for Transport, Bilal Akbar Khan Saturday unveiled two exemplary initiatives, under the CM's supervision, aimed at transforming the province's transport infrastructure including the Yellow Line project from Thokar Niaz Baig to Harbanspura and the launch of a tech-based "transport card" soon for improved service delivery.

In an exclusive interview with a state news channel, Punjab's Transport Minister, Bilal Akbar Khan shared exciting details about the upcoming Yellow Line project, which is set to revolutionize the transport system in Punjab.

He described the project as a state-of-the-art, multi-billion-dollar initiative that incorporates cutting-edge technology, promising a

significant leap toward modernizing public transportation. He emphasized that the project will feature electric vehicles (EVs) that run free of cost, covering a distance of up to 300 km, aiming to offer a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transport to the citizens.

He also highlighted that the government is taking an incremental approach, initially focusing on gathering valuable experience and feedback from the first phase before scaling up operations across the province. In addition to the Yellow Line, the Minister added that CM Maryum Nawaz hopefully from coming Monday will launch the "Transport Card" ceremony, which will further improve accessibility and convenience for commuters.

With these transformative steps, under the Chief

Minister's supervision, Punjab is poised to set new benchmarks in public transport, combining technological advancement with environmental sustainability to create a future-ready transport infrastructure.

Responding to a query, Minister Bilal Akbar Khan clarified that the "Transport Card" will be integrated across all metro lines, including the Green and Yellow Lines, adding, this initiative is designed to offer seamless travel for commuters, allowing them to access multiple routes with ease.

The card will not only simplify the fare system but also enhance the overall convenience for passengers, ensuring a smoother, faster, and more efficient commuting experience throughout the metro network, he added.

Senator Talha inaugurates two-day free eye surgical camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Talha Mehmood, on Saturday, inaugurated a two-day free surgical eye camp jointly organized by the National Press Club (NPC) and Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi. The initiative aims to provide free eye care services to NPC members and their families on July 26-27, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Senator Talha Mahmood, while inaugurating the camp, commended the efforts of NPC leadership and the president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Afzal Butt, for organizing the free eye surgical camp with modern facilities.

"Organizing a camp—free world-class medical facilities—for NPC's members and their families clear-

ly highlights the commitment of leadership regarding the medical care of media professionals," he said.

On this occasion, the president of PFUJ, Afzal Butt, said that arranging such facilities for the convenience of the members in this surgical camp is a great achievement of NPC President Azhar Jatoti, Secretary Nayyar Ali, Finance Secretary Waqar Abbasi and others.

In this camp, all the facilities are available to the members and their families under one roof and free of cost, he added.

Meanwhile, NPC President Azhar Jatoti also praised the services rendered by the expert medical team. He highlighted the rising prevalence of vision issues in this mod-

ern digital era.

"Vision problems are very common because of excessive use of mobile phones and computers, which affects their vision," he noted. He explained that journalists often neglect their own health due to demanding professional schedules. By organizing this camp, NPC hopes to facilitate access to essential eye care for its members and their families.

The camp features free eye examinations, medicines, eyeglasses, laboratory services and laser (phaco) surgery for media workers suffering from white cataracts. On the opening day, hundreds of members received these services free of charge, including surgical interventions where needed.



ISLAMABAD: IESCO workers busy installing new electric wires on a pole near Zero Point in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

PDMA: Awareness campaigns intensify as Punjab braces for more rain

ISLAMABAD (APP): PDMA Director General Irfan Ali Kathia on Saturday called on the public to strictly follow safety measures, avoid crossing flowing water, and refrain from unnecessary travel, especially for tourists and commuters in flood-prone or hilly areas, as the fresh monsoon spell is expected to begin on July 28 this year.

In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, the PDMA DG highlighted that, according to the latest meteorological predictions, parts of Punjab and other cities are expected to experience heavy rainfall from the 28 to 31 July.

DG PDMA further mentioned that the Chief Minister Maryum Nawaz is actively monitoring the situation and is committed to ensuring that effective measures are taken to safeguard lives and property.

The CM's focus is on minimizing any potential damage and maintaining public safety throughout the monsoon spell.

Kathia highlighted that the government is prioritizing awareness campaigns to keep the public informed about the risks and neces-

sary precautions.

In addition to the safety guidelines, PDMA DG Kathia emphasized the importance of media-driven campaigns aimed at spreading awareness about the monsoon-related risks, especially the impact on health.

He stated that the government is collaborating with local media outlets to run informational drives that educate the public on how to stay safe during heavy rainfall, prevent waterborne diseases and manage potential health hazards like flooding-related infections.

These media campaigns will focus on advising the public about maintaining hygiene, ensuring clean drinking water and using protective measures against vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue, he added.

He urged the public to stay vigilant during this period and follow all necessary safety protocols to minimize the risk of accidents, especially in flood-prone and hilly areas.

Kathia also advised unnecessary travel and emphasized the importance of avoiding crossing flooded roads or rivers.

To ensure public safety and a coordinated response, the PDMA DG has instructed all Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners across the province to remain on high alert. He called for close monitoring of the situation and quick action in case of any emergencies.

Kathia stressed that local authorities should be prepared to manage any potential disruptions caused by the weather conditions, especially in vulnerable regions.

Additionally, the PDMA Chief directed the Civil Defense, Rescue 1122, and other relevant departments to finalize their emergency response plans ahead of the monsoon rains.

He emphasized that these agencies must be ready for rapid deployment to assist affected communities and provide timely aid. With the forecast predicting significant rainfall, Kathia reassured the public that all necessary measures are being put in place to minimize the impact of the monsoon. In case of emergencies, the public can contact PDMA helpline 1129 for assistance, he concluded.

Masoud to visit Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday announced his readiness to visit Afghanistan, stating that the trip would aim to “open a new chapter” in the relations between the two neighboring countries. During a meeting with Foreign Ministry officials, Pezeshkian emphasized that strengthening ties with regional neighbors — including Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Gulf states — will be a cornerstone of his administration’s foreign policy.

8 tons of precious stones sold

NURISTAN (BNA): Eight tons of semi-precious stones, including kunzite and quartz, were sold in Afghanistan’s eastern Nuristan province for AFN 150 million through a public auction, according to the provincial mining department. The stones — including kunzite, beryl, tourmaline, and crystal — were extracted from various mines in the Mawi area of Doab district, said Maulvi Sayed Rahim Umair, head of the Nuristan Department of Mines and Petroleum.

Unprecedented challenges:

Afghan dried fruit exporters warned

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some exporters of dried fruits say that the challenges facing their exports have increased to an unprecedented level.

According to them, the absence of a clear export plan, high costs, and delays in the processing of export documentation have posed serious obstacles to the trade.

Trader Mahboobullah Mohammadi said: “Not only do we face problems at the Wagah crossing and other commercial ports, but the bureaucracy has become so excessive that our shipments are delayed by one or two weeks. One department is located in one place, another elsewhere, there is no organized export process.”

In addition, the Dried Fruit Exporters Association has also raised concerns over growing pressures in the sector. The closure of the Wagah border gate, high costs at the Chabahar port, instability of air corridors, banking issues, and challenges in obtaining trade visas are among the major barriers faced by exporters.

Abdul Qasim Amarkhil, head of the Dried Fruit Exporters Union in Kabul, said: “We’ve shared these concerns with the Ministry of Commerce, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and Investment. We urge the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to hold talks with airlines so that our goods can be transported normally via airports.”

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment stressed the importance of the Indian market for dried fruit exports and called on relevant authorities to resolve these issues as soon as possible.

Khan Jan Alokozai, a board member of the Chamber, said: “The domestic problems within Afghanistan can be solved, in our opinion. But the issue we face with India, especially the fees we are charged, must be reduced.”

Exporters warn that if these issues are not resolved quickly, Afghanistan’s dried fruit industry will face a decline, and tens of thousands of farmers and producers will suffer.

‘Rainbow’ art exhibition opened

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): An art exhibition titled “Rainbow” has been opened to promote visual arts and expand painting culture in western Herat province.

The day one of the five-day exhibition at the Allama Salahuddin Saljoqi Salon of Herat city was attended by a group of artists, culturists and Information and Culture Department officials.

Haroon Rahimi, organizer of the exhibition, said the exhibition featured a collection of diverse works of art, including paintings, calligraphy, miniatures, illuminations, calligraphy, and graphic designs.

Rahimi said the exhibition was aimed at introducing new talents and strengthening the position of visual arts in society.

On the other hand, head of culture and art at the Information and Culture department Maulvi Hamidullah Ghiasi emphasized the important role of art in culture advancement of society and added the Department supports programs and efforts of artists and is ready to pave the way for further growth of art in the province.

Meanwhile, some participants explained that holding such art programs was a great opportunity to get acquainted with diverse arts, and seeing the creativity and efforts of young artists was inspiring and encouraging. This art exhibition is open to visitors for five days, with Tuesdays and Wednesdays reserved for women.

Jawzjan families reconciled

SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): A 12-year-old enmity between two families has been resolved in northern Jawzjan province through mediation of local officials, scholars and tribal elders.

Head of Borders and Tribal Affairs Maulvi Ghulam Nabi Samim told Pajhwok Afghan News the feud surfaced 12 years ago over a land dispute between two families of Tor Khel village of Shiberghan city. The enmity came to an end after several jirgas Saturday.

According to him, the conflict was resolved with close cooperation of scholars, tribal elders, and emirate departments.

Tribal elders and parties to the conflict appreciated what they called effective efforts of officials of the Border and Tribal Affairs department.

Iran deports over 70,000 migrants

KABUL (Amu TV): Iran deported more than 70,000 Afghan migrants in the span of a week, according to data from the Taliban-run Commission for Refugee Affairs.

The figures, covering the period from July 19 to July 25, show that 70,830 Afghans were expelled and returned through two major border crossings: Islam Qala in Herat province and the Silk Bridge in Nimroz.

During the same week, Pakistan also deported 2,690 Afghans—both forcibly and voluntarily—through the border crossings of Torkham, Spin Boldak, and Angoor Ada in Paktika.

The sharp uptick in deportations comes amid mounting concern from international humanitarian organizations. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, said this week that more than 1.5 million Afghans have returned from Iran in recent months, many of them without shelter, support, or financial resources.

“These returns are putting unprecedented strain on the humanitarian system in Afghanistan,” Egeland said in a post on X. “The system is on the brink of collapse—just as critical funding has been slashed.”

Iranian authorities have set a new September deadline for undocumented Afghan nationals to leave the country or face arrest and forced deportation.

4.4m tonnes of goods transported via railways

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) says Afghanistan is currently connected by railways to Uzbekistan, Iran and Turkmenistan and 4.4 million tonnes of goods were transported via these routes last year.

As part of a programme outlining annual achievements of government entities, officials from MoPW presented its last solar year’s accomplishments on Saturday.

At the press briefing, MoPW officials said Afghanistan was currently connected via railways lines to Uzbekistan, Iran and Turkmenistan, facilitating commercial transport.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesman for MoPW, said Afghanistan was linked to the mentioned countries through a 396-kilometre railways line via Hairatan, Aqina, Torghundi and the Khaf-Herat routes.

He added that rail transport was also indirectly connected through these lines to countries such as China, Turkey, Russia and Kazakhstan.

He noted that 4.4 million tonnes of goods were transported last year through railways routes from the four ports of Hairatan, Torghundi, Aqina, and Rozanak.

This comes about a week



after the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Afghanistan’s Ministry of Public Works, Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Transport, and Pakistan’s Ministry of Railways regarding a feasibility study for the Trans-Afghan Railway project.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister Maulvi Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada said at the event that over the past year, the Ministry had initiated more than 200 construction and renovation projects related to roads, bridges, culverts, railway lines, maintenance and inspection, snow clearance, mosques, installation

of traffic signs, and procurement of goods — most of which have now been completed.

He added that of these projects, 54 involved roads and railways, 16 related to the safety of highways and roads, 14 for mosques, 14 for snow clearance, 50 for road and railway maintenance and monitoring and 54 involved the procurement of goods.

Haqshenas said last year, the Ministry launched 45 road maintenance and rehabilitation projects with a total budget of over 3.1 billion afghanis. Of these, 35 projects have been completed, four are still underway, and the rest have been delayed due to various reasons.

He further explained that under these projects, more than 572 kilometres of roads, 971 metres of bridges, 323 culverts, 2,929 metres of roadside drainage channels, 3,710 metres of stone masonry for retaining walls, and 562 metres of concrete retaining walls have been repaired and reconstructed.

He added that the Ministry plans to initiate 50 new projects in the current year.

Also at the event, the Director of Survey and Design said that last year the design work for over 126 kilometres of roads was completed, while the design of 1,395 kilometres of roads is still in progress — 66 percent of which has already been carried out.

Tajikistan launches crackdown on Afghan refugees near Dushanbe

DUSHANBE (Khaama Press): Tajikistan has begun detaining and expelling Afghan refugees near Dushanbe, seizing documents, issuing departure deadlines, and sparking urgent calls for international humanitarian intervention and protection.

Tajikistan authorities have begun a new campaign of arrests and forced expulsions targeting Afghan refugees near the capital, Dushanbe, according to a report by Radio Free Europe.

On Friday, July 25, the outlet reported that hundreds of Afghan refugees living in Rudaki and Vahdat were warned they have 15 days to leave the country or face deportation.

Witnesses described how, on July 15, vehicles carrying Tajik security forces entered Afghan neighborhoods in Vahdat, detaining dozens of men, women, and children.

Reports indicated that police confiscated identity documents and issued strict deadlines for departure, fueling fear and panic among already vulnerable families.

The UNHCR estimates nearly 9,900 Afghan refugees were officially registered in Tajikistan by the end of 2024, though unofficial figures suggest the total may be closer to 13,000.

This latest crackdown has sparked concern among

human rights advocates, who warn that displaced Afghan families—already fleeing war and instability—are being forced into another wave of uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the situation underscores the urgent need for international intervention and humanitarian assistance, ensuring Tajikistan respects refugee protections while addressing its own security and migration challenges responsibly.

Drought reduces wheat yield in Ghazni, farmers demand aid

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A number of farmers in southern Ghazni province say their wheat yields significantly declined this year due to drought, calling on the government and aid organisations to provide them with drought-resistant seeds and other forms of support. Ghazni is one of Afghanistan’s key agricultural provinces, with approximately 80 percent of its population engaged in farming and livestock rearing.

Ahmad Javed, a farmer from the Arzo area of the provincial capital, told Pajhwok Afghan News that his land used to produce more than 3,500 kilograms of wheat. However, this year he harvested only 1,400 kilograms due to the drought.

He added that in previ-

ous years, he cultivated 12.5 acres of land, yielding around 140kg per half-acre, but this year, due to a lack of rainfall, he harvested just 56kg per half-acre.

Similarly, Noor Mohammad, a farmer from the Sarda area of Andar district, said his wheat crop was weak this year due to drought, and he was unable to irrigate it at critical stages.

Sultan Mohammad, a resident of the Seh Kecha area in Muqur district, said rain-fed wheat relied entirely on rainfall, and this year’s shortage led to a severe drop in yield.

He added that although he had planted rain-fed wheat this year, the drought prevented him from even recovering the money he had invested.

Abdul Khaliq, a resident of Giro district, said that in the past, rain-fed wheat was widely cultivated in the plains of Zankhan, Deh Yak, Andar, Giro and even Qarabagh districts. Now, however, due to the persistent drought, little or no wheat was being grown in these areas.

He noted that farmers who sowed rain-fed wheat faced poor yield that even failed to meet their costs.

Several other farmers also complained to Pajhwok about the drought and its devastating impact on wheat production. They urged officials and aid agencies to support Ghazni farmers by providing improved seeds and reliable access to water.

Agricultural expert Eng. Faiz-ur-Rahman

Ibrahimi said the drought not only threatened wheat production in Ghazni but also posed a serious risk to food security across the country.

He explained that a lack of rainfall or irrigation prevented wheat plants from growing properly, ultimately leading to reduced yields. Drought also causes soil degradation and a decline in land fertility.

He urged the government to distribute drought-resistant seeds to farmers and to improve water resource management.

Maulvi Izatullah Saeedi, spokesman for the governor, also confirmed to Pajhwok that both irrigated and rain-fed wheat yields in the province had dropped significantly due to drought.

Spear throwing tournament held in Ghazni province

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A traditional javelin throwing tournament featuring 112 participants was held in the capital of southern Ghazni and three districts province, an official said on Saturday.

Bilal Mujahid, Head of Physical Education and Sports in Ghazni, told Pajhwok Afghan News that javelin throwers from Ghazni City, Andar, Giro, and Deh Yak districts took part in the competition.

The Mohammad Anwar team from Andar district claimed first place with 46 points.

The Rahmatullah Baidar team secured second position with 40 points, while the Mohammad Anwar B Group team finished third with 36 points.

Mohammad Anwar Andar, one of the partici-



pants, said: “Spear throwing is an ancient and traditional sport in Ghazni. It was once widely popular, but years of conflict have diminished its appeal.”

He urged the government to support the sport by

providing facilities for javelin throwers and ensuring proper training and care for horses used in the competition.

Spear throwing is not only a tradition in Ghazni but also in other provinces

across Afghanistan.

The sport typically involves horseback riders racing across open fields while using spears to lift sticks embedded in the ground—a display of both skill and strength.

Cooking oil, gold prices down; flour, fuel surge

KABUL (Pajhwok): The prices of cooking oil and Arabic gold decreased, while the rates of flour and fuel surged in Kabul during the outgoing week, market sources said on Saturday.

Food items Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders’ Association, said the price of a 16-litre bottle of Malaysian cooking oil went down from 1,600 afghanis to 1,550 afghanis.

However, the price of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakhstani flour rose from 1,420 to 1,450afs, he added.

He noted that prices of other essential food items remained unchanged. A 49-kilogram sack of Indian sugar stood at 2,500 afs, while a 24-kilogram bag of Pakistani rice remained at

2,600 afs — the same as last week.

He said one kilogram of African black tea sold for 400 afs and the same quantity of Indonesian green tea for 350 afs.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dahna-i-Bagh market, put the retail price of a 49-kg bag of flour at 1,500afs, a 24-kg bag of rice at 2,650afs and a 49-kg sack of sugar at 2,550afs.

A 16-litre bottle of cooking oil cost 1,600afs, while one kilogram of black tea was priced at 400afs and green tea at 450afs, he added.

Fuel prices A worker at the Ahmadyar fuel station said the price of one litre of petrol increased from 60afs to 64afs and diesel from 62afs to 65afs.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Jan, a shopkeeper in the Dahan-i-Bagh area, said one kilogram of liquefied gas went up from 47afs to 49afs — unchanged from last week.

Gold Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Russian gold remained stable 4,700afs and the same amount of Arabian gold fell from 6,000afs to 5,950afs.

Currency rates

Haji Hussain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange, said one US dollar was traded at 68.70afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 235afs.

Last week, one US dollar was exchanged for 69.10afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 235afs.

3-month training program for 300 youth started



FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): Hundreds of youth have been enrolled in a three-month training program in western Ghor province, an official said on Saturday.

Information and Culture Director Maulvi Abdul Hai Za’em told Pajhwok Afghan News about 300 students would learn religious studies, English and computers free of charge during the training program aimed at improving the capacity of youth and efforts were being made to provide more education for them.

He said these youths were taught religious studies, English, and computer

programs. This is the fourth batch the Youth Affairs Department is providing free training.

Meanwhile, governor spokesman Maulvi Mohammad Sadiq Rasas explained youth have a worthy role in all areas and should be presented to society in a professional and capable manner in all sectors.

He praised the activities of the Youth Affairs Department in providing educational opportunities for youth, adding that youth should take advantage of this opportunity and increase their knowledge.

“I appreciate the launch of this educational program. I was attracted to the computer learning sector and I am very interested in learning computer programs”, Abdul Khalil, one of the participants of the training program, said.

“I am doing my best to learn English and to increase my knowledge about the life of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). I also want to teach others what I have learned”, Noor Ahad, another participant, explained.

Both called for the expansion of such educational programs for youths.

Expulsion of Afghans causes labour shortage

KABUL (Pajhwok): Mass Builders Association Chief of Tehran province Iraj Rahbar says the expulsion of Afghan nationals from Iran has created a labour shortage in the country’s construction industry, leading to delays in several projects.

He noted that replacing Afghan workers with Iranian labourers would be both time-consuming and costly.

His remarks come as Iran continues to intensify the deportation of Afghan migrants, with reports indicating that thousands are

being returned to Afghanistan each day, according to the analytical news site Asr-e Iran.

Rahbar said that over 50 percent of construction workers in Tehran were Afghan nationals and their expulsion caused a severe shortage of manpower in the building sector.

He explained that since the departure of Afghan workers, construction activity has slowed down and some projects have come to a halt.

Replacing them with Iranian workers, he said, requires considerable time

and significantly increases costs — particularly for initiatives like the National Housing Movement, where pricing and contracts were set two years ago and cannot now be altered.

He also pointed out that Iranian construction workers typically demand nearly twice the wages of their Afghan counterparts.

Moreover, Afghan workers were not subject to social security contributions, making them a more economical choice for employers — who, as a result, preferred to hire them.

CASS roundtable discuss ‘unmanned mily revolution’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, convened a roundtable discussion on 'Unmanned Military Revolution: Contemporary



Drone Warfare and Anti-Drone Systems,' as part of CASS Tech Talk series on 23th July 2025. The discussion covered offensive drone capabilities, emerging technologies such as swarm drones and loyal wingmen, and critical anti-drone defence strategies. The event was attended by members of academia, and intellectuals. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context.

The moderator of the roundtable, Air Commodore Raza Haider (Retd), Director at CASS, introduced the Tech Talk as a platform to examine evolving drone technologies and their impact on recent conflicts. He reiterated CASS's commitment to shaping strategic discourse on drone warfare through timely and relevant analysis. Setting the stage for discussion, he highlighted three case studies: the Pakistan-India conflict involving

Harop drones, Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb that inflicted USD 8 billion in damage to Russian bombers, and Israel's Operation Rising Lion targeting Iran's air defences.

Air Marshal Farooq Habib (Retd), former Senior Director at CASS

Department of Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering at Pakistan Fachhochschule IAST Haripur, provided a technical briefing on counter-drone systems, emphasizing the necessity of integrated frameworks across four operational domains: detection, tracking, identification, and neutralisation. He advocated for multi-sensor integration including radar, EO/IR, acoustic sensors, and RF scanning for anti-drone systems reliability. In discussing tracking and identification, he outlined the critical roles of AI/ML, sensor fusion, and GPS manipulation technologies in monitoring flight paths and intent analysis. Dr. Malik warned against reliance on singular technologies and called for policy measures to promote the development of an indigenous, innovation-driven ecosystem.

Thanking the speakers for their insightful presentations, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd), President CASS, said in his concluding remarks that CASS is rigorously examining recent regional conflicts, particularly the Pakistan-India confrontation and the Iran-Israel-US tensions, to extract critical lessons in contemporary warfare. He also highlighted that the Pakistan-India conflict demonstrated Pakistan Air Force's operational excellence and marked a turning point in the integrated use of unmanned systems and advanced technologies.

The roundtable was followed by an interactive question-and-answer session with experts from academia and researchers. It concluded with a consensus that Pakistan must take proactive steps to boost its indigenous market of drones and anti-drones systems to stay ahead of its adversaries and to protect its assets and territory from deadly aerial threats.

Islamabad, focused on the strategic transformation driven by drone warfare. His address was structured around three key policy-relevant dimensions. First, he examined the implications of drone warfare for deterrence and escalation and its linkage to traditional deterrence frameworks.

Second, he reviewed the trajectory of drone development and the corresponding military adaptations. Third, he highlighted the democratizing effect of drone technology, enabling the mass proliferation of unmanned technology. Citing Ukraine's exponential drone production, from 5,000 units in 2022 to 2.4 million in 2024, he underscored the strategic implications for regional conflicts. He projected that hybrid warfare, complemented by sporadic conventional engagements, will dominate South Asia's future conflict landscape.

Dr. Sohail Malik, Chairman of the



QUETTA: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani participating in cake-cutting ceremony held in honour of President Asif Ali Zardari's birth at President House.

7 of a family killed in Saudi Arabia accident

F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as 13 members of the same family from Dagai, Totalai Tehsil, Khudukhel, have been killed in a traffic accident in Saudi Arabia, in which 7 people died on the spot while 6 people were seriously injured. The names of the deceased are Israr Ahmed, Israr Ahmed's wife, Ayaz Ahmed's wife, Ayaz Ahmed's son, Khalid Ahmed, Khalid Ahmed's daughter (first), and Khalid Ahmed's daughter (second).

According to family sources, the deceased were buried in Saudi Arabia on Friday after Isha prayers, while the injured were admitted to a hospital in Saudi Arabia. According to family sources, the accident-stricken family was going from Mecca to Medina in their seven-seater car after visiting Arafat during Umrah when it collided with another vehicle at Rand About.

Family sources have further said that in Dagai, Totalai, Khudokhel, this family is known as Lecturer Omar Bacha and his late father, Israr Ahmed, was the leader of the Tablighi Jamaat and his family members have been residing in Saudi Arabia for a long time due to business reasons. The condolence program has started after Friday prayers in Buner, Khudokhel, Totalai, Dagai.

Malnutrition in Nigeria killed 652 children

KATSINA: At least 652 children have died from malnutrition in the Nigerian state of Katsina in the first six months of 2025, according to Doctors Without Borders. The charity, known by its French initials MSF, said in a statement on Friday that the deaths were caused by funding cuts from international donors, as Katsina, located in the country's north, continued to suffer from violence and insecurity.

"We are currently witnessing massive budget cuts, particularly from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, which are having real impact on the treatment of malnourished children," said MSF. The NGO said by the end of June this year, nearly 70,000 children with malnutrition had already received medical care from the MSF teams in Katsina State, including nearly 10,000 who were hospitalised in serious condition. It, however, stressed that the need for prevention and treatment of malnutrition is enormous in northern Nigeria, and that urgent mobilisation was required.

In the north of Nigeria, other factors increasing malnutrition include disease outbreaks, which are pushed by low vaccine coverage, availability, and accessibility of basic health services, and other socioeconomic indices complicated by insecurity and violence. MSF said the number of children in Katsina with the most severe form of malnutrition has risen by about 208 percent this year compared with the same period last year, and "unfortunately 652 children have already died in our facilities since the beginning of 2025." — Aljazeera

Naqvi for durable peace in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday assured the Balochistan Chief Minister of the federal government's cooperation with the provincial regime to end Fitna-ul-Hindustan for establishing durable peace in the province.

He said this while addressing a meeting regarding improvement of law and order situation in Balochistan held at Chief Minister's Secretariat Quetta. The meeting was held in supervision of Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti and Federal Interior Minister.

The federal minister said that Indian-sponsored terrorists and their facilitators were not safe anywhere in Pakistan, they would be brought to a logical end at all costs. Those challenging the state writ will be dealt with iron hands, he said. Assuring the federal government's full cooperation for the establishment of peace in Balochistan, he said that we were standing with the Balochistan government in the fight against terrorism.

He also clarified that ground has been narrowed for the elements hostile to Pakistan and in this regard,



there is complete coordination between the federal and provincial governments saying that the end of the terrorists of Fitna-ul-Hindustan was a tragic death. Earlier, the meeting reviewed the overall public order situation in Balochistan, the ongoing operations against the Fitna-ul-Hindustan terrorists and the performance of the security agencies in detail.

The meeting was attended by IG Frontier Corps (North), DIG CTD, DIG Special Branch, DG Levies, officials of the Home and Tribal Affairs Departments and senior officers of other law enforcement agencies. Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti briefed the meeting on the current law and order situation, the strategy of the security agencies and the implementation of the

provincial action plan.

The meeting reviewed in detail how to overcome the obstacles stand in the way of the action plan. The chief minister said that this war was not only the war of the security forces but of the entire nation and actions against elements involved in subversion and terrorism have been intensified. "The state institutions are working with complete coordination and seriousness to establish peace and order in Balochistan", he said. He said that the sacrifices of the security forces and the people would not go in vain and the government could maintain peace in the province at all costs. The chief minister said that there was complete unity and trust in the nation to thwart the evil intentions of the enemy.

Thailand and Cambodia agree to hold talks: Trump

PRESTWICK: Scotland (Reuters): United States President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the leaders of Cambodia and Thailand had agreed to meet immediately to quickly work out a ceasefire, as he sought to broker peace after three days of fighting along their border.

In a series of social media posts during a visit to Scotland, Trump said he had spoken to Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Thailand's acting prime minister, Phumtham Wechayachai, and warned them that he would not make trade deals with either of the Southeast Asian governments if the border conflict continued. "Both Parties are looking for an immediate Ceasefire and Peace," Trump wrote as he gave a blow-by-blow account of his diplomatic efforts.

Before Trump spoke to the two leaders, clashes on the Thai-Cambodian border persisted into a third day, and new flashpoints emerged on Saturday as both sides said they had acted in self-defence in the border dispute and called on the other to cease fighting and start negotiations. More than 30 people have been killed and more than 130,000 people displaced in the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in 13 years.

There were clashes early on Saturday, both sides said, in the neighbouring Thai coastal province of Trat and Cambodia's Pursat Province, a new front more than 100 kilometres (60 miles) from other conflict points along the long-contested border. The two countries have faced off since the killing of a Cambodian soldier late in May during a brief skirmish. Troops on both sides of the border were reinforced amid a full-blown diplomatic crisis that brought Thailand's fragile coalition government to the brink of collapse.

As of Saturday, Thailand

said seven soldiers and 13 civilians had been killed in the clashes, while in Cambodia, five soldiers and eight civilians had been killed, said Defence Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata. Following calls for restraint on both sides from Trump's senior aides, he became directly involved on Saturday, speaking to each leader and saying he relayed messages back and forth.

"They have agreed to immediately meet and quickly work out a Ceasefire and, ultimately, PEACE!" Trump wrote, saying both countries wanted to get back to the "Trading Table." He has sought to reach separate deals with dozens of countries in response to his announcement of wide-ranging tariffs on imports to the US. "When all is done, and Peace is at hand, I look forward to concluding our Trading Agreements with both!" said Trump.

He offered no details on the ceasefire negotiations he said Thailand and Cambodia had agreed to hold. The Thai and Cambodian embassies in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment. In the Thai border province of Sisaket, a university compound has been converted into temporary accommodation, where a volunteer said more than 5,000 people were staying. Samrong Khamduang said she left her farm, about 10km from the border, when fighting broke out on Thursday. The 51-year-old's husband stayed behind to look after the livestock.

"We got so scared with the sound of artillery," she said. "But my husband stayed back, and now we lost the connection. I couldn't call him. I don't know what is happening back there." In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, the chair of the ASEAN regional bloc, said he would continue to push a ceasefire proposal. Cambodia has backed

Anwar's plan, while Thailand has said it agreed with it in principle. "There is still some exchange of fire," Anwar said, according to state news agency Bernama. He said he had asked his foreign minister "to liaise with the respective foreign ministries and, if possible, I will continue engaging with them myself — at least to halt the fighting".

Thailand's ambassador to the United Nations told a Security Council meeting on Friday that soldiers had been injured by newly planted land mines in Thai territory on two occasions since mid-July - claims Cambodia has strongly denied - and said Cambodia had then launched attacks on Thursday morning. "Thailand urges Cambodia to immediately cease all hostilities and acts of aggression, and resume dialogue in good faith," Cherdchai Chaivaivud told the council in remarks released to the media.

Cambodia's defence ministry said Thailand had launched "a deliberate, unprovoked, and unlawful military attack" and was mobilising troops and military equipment on the border. "These deliberate military preparations reveal Thailand's intent to expand its aggression and further violate Cambodia's sovereignty," the ministry said in a statement on Saturday. Cambodia called for the international community to "condemn Thailand's aggression in the strongest terms" and to prevent an expansion of its military activities, while Bangkok reiterated it wanted to resolve the dispute bilaterally.

Thailand and Cambodia have bickered for decades over the jurisdiction of various undemarcated points along their 817-km (508-mile) land border, with ownership of the ancient Hindu temples Ta Moan Thom and the 11th-century Preah Vihear central to the disputes.

No evidence Hamas stole aid from UN

LONDON: Israeli government claims that aid supplied by the UN into Gaza was regularly stolen by Hamas were not substantiated by evidence. The New York Times said it spoke to two Israeli military officials and two other Israelis with knowledge of the matter on condition of anonymity. They suggested that the UN's methods for getting aid into the enclave were "largely effective" before Israel sealed off access to the territory in March this year following the collapse of a ceasefire.

Israel and the US backed a new group, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, giving it a near-monopoly on delivering aid supplies into Gaza in May. The GHF has been fiercely criticized for its methods by the UN and other global bodies, as well as national governments including the UK and France, amid reports of mass shootings at its distribution centers and independent claims that famine has subsequently swept the enclave. Israel, which accused UN employees of taking part in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack on the country, justified the move by saying aid distributed by the UN and other groups were being taken and stockpiled by Hamas, with Benjamin Netanyahu saying in March: "Hamas is currently taking control of all supplies and goods entering Gaza."

But, the Israeli officials told the NYT, these claims ran counter to evidence the military had suggesting the UN's methods of aid delivery were robust. Hamas was able to steal supplies from smaller aid organizations, they said, because they lacked the planning and security capacity of the UN. A Reuters report on Friday said the US government had reached the same conclusion that Israeli claims the UN was failing to deliver aid because of theft by Hamas were untrue.

Israeli military officials met in March with government advisers to express concerns about the GHF's ability to distribute aid, urging them to allow continued UN access to areas the GHF was failing to sufficiently supply, the sources told the NYT. This request was denied by the Netanyahu administration, but the government later relented, allowing limited UN access to Gaza after the scale of hunger and the ineffectiveness of the GHF began to become apparent.

Since May 19, the Israeli officials told the NYT, half of aid entering Gaza has been overseen by the UN, which was previously the biggest supplier, and other groups, with the rest overseen by the GHF. Former UN official Georgios Petropoulos, who helped oversee aid coordination with Israel into Gaza for over a year of the war, said: "For months, we and other organizations were dragged through the mud by accusations that Hamas steals from us." — Arab News

Talk on future of Pakistan-China ties hosted

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a guest talk titled "Future of Pakistan-China Relations under China's Model for Global Development and Governance" on 24th July 2025. The event was attended by members of academia, and intellectuals. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context.

In her opening remarks, Maheera Munir, Research Assistant at CASS Lahore, highlighted China's distinct worldview, which is rooted in sovereignty, long-term planning, infrastructural connectivity and mutual development. She emphasised the need to diversify Pakistan-China relations by expanding cooperation in education and research to further strengthen the partnership between the two countries.

Mr Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Founding CEO of the Asian Institute of Eco-civilisation Research and Development, underlined that China's policy is based on the principles of non-



interference, constructive dialogue and proactive engagement. He noted that China's worldview is shaped by the concept of a 'community with a shared future', with a strong focus on green growth, market liberalisation and innovation. He explained that China has developed a cycle of progress by prioritising STEM education, which drives knowledge creation, scientific research and innovation. He emphasised that, like China, Pakistan must embrace a market economy supported by a strong and visible state role.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President of CASS Lahore, stressed that the China-Pakistan partnership stands as a beacon of strategic trust and mutual respect in a rapidly changing world. He highlighted that initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are not merely infrastructure projects but symbols of shared vision, regional connectivity and collective prosperity. He urged that both nations must continue to align their strengths, leveraging knowledge, innovation and cultural exchange to co-create a just, inclusive and interconnected global order.

The event concluded with an engaging session, where participants discussed China's evolving role in the global order and its strategic significance for Pakistan's future partnership with China.

PHC issues written verdict in petition

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a written order in the case filed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) decision to declare PTI lawmakers as independents. A two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Fahim Wali has sought a response from the Attorney General's Office.

The court has directed the Additional Attorney General to submit a response by the next hearing. The court will hear this petition along with other petitions filed by the Chief Minister and the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly. The case has been adjourned until August 5.

The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, has filed a petition against the ECP's decision to declare PTI MNAs as independents. The Chief Minister and the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly have also approached the court against the oath-taking of members elected on reserved seats in the Governor's House, seeking the court to declare the oath-taking process null and void.

The Chief Minister has argued in his petition that according to the rules, PTI is still a political party that holds a majority in the

Court extends physical remand of contractor in Kohistan scam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Accountability Court Peshawar has extended the physical remand of contractor Ayub Khan, a key figure in the Kohistan financial scandal, by two more days. The court accepted the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) request for an extension of the remand.

NAB's Deputy Prosecutor General, Muhammad Ali, represented the agency in court. The investigating officer informed the court that Ayub Khan had been involved in bank transactions and that illegal assets had been discovered. The accused had submitted a plea bargain application to NAB, but it would be considered later. The investigating officer stated that further investigation was necessary. The court extended the physical remand of the accused by two more days. The Deputy Prosecutor informed the court that the investigation into the Kohistan financial scandal was ongoing and that it involved Rs. 40 billion. NAB was working to identify the individuals involved and the extent of corruption. According to NAB, the Kohistan scandal is worth Rs. 40 billion. Eight accused have been arrested so far, and Rs. 25 billion has been recovered in the form of luxury cars, high-end bungalows, and flats.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly. However, the ECP has excluded it from the definition of a political party. The election rules state that a political party must have an electoral symbol, and if it does not have one, it will not be considered a party. However, the Election Act 2017 does not make an electoral symbol a necessary requirement for a political party.

The petition has argued that the ECP does not have the authority to declare PTI

candidates as independents. Therefore, the ECP's decision should be declared null and void, and PTI MNAs should be recognized as members of the party. Additionally, the allocation of reserved seats should be declared null and void because PTI was denied its rightful share despite having a majority. The petition also seeks to declare several ECP orders as unlawful because PTI was ignored in the allocation of reserved seats, and seats were given to other parties.