

Tributes paid to Sarwar
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Armed Forces of Pakistan 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).



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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday.

Dar highlights Pakistan's diplomatic upswing and economic turnaround

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar, has stated that Pakistan is experiencing a significant positive boost in its standing on the world stage, saying it had emerged from a period of isolation and witnessing economic revival.

"We have made considerable progress, especially in political and economic fields, in the past three years, despite heavy odds--we are indeed a resilient nation," he said during a nearly two-hour interaction with the Pakistani community at the Pakistan Consulate in New York on Saturday.

The DPM/FM, who earlier in the day returned from Washington, DC, told the slogan-chanting audience that his meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday was held in a cordial atmosphere. "The meeting went very well. We discussed key global and regional issues", DPM/FM Dar said, hoping that US-Pak ties would be further strengthened.

Present on the occasion were Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Ifikhar Ahmad and the Consul General in New York, Aamir Ahmed Atozai.

In his remarks, DPM/FM

Dar asserted that Pakistan is no longer isolated and enjoys numerous friends within the international community. This is evidenced by recent high-level meetings with officials from China, the United States, and several other countries that focused on economic and strategic ties.

He painted an optimistic picture of Pakistan's economic trajectory, noting a significant drop in inflation from 40% to 2.4% as of January 2025 as evidence of effective government policies and robust diplomatic efforts.

Noting Pakistan's ongoing economic recovery, the DPM/FM cited the successful completion of the IMF programme, reduced inflation, and restored investor confidence, a fact the global credit rating agencies have acknowledged. He reiterated the government's aspiration for Pakistan to join the ranks of G-20 economies.

In this regard, Senator Dar credited PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif's leadership who he said continues to guide the federal and Punjab governments, calling him an able statesman.

Highlighting key government initiatives, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister briefed the community on the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which streamlines investment procedures across priority sectors. He also informed them that the government is actively working toward the

early resumption of PIA flights to New York, after restoring routes to Europe and the United Kingdom.

The DPM/FM expressed appreciation for the contributions of the Pakistani-American community to both Pakistan and the United States, acknowledging their vital role in strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing Pakistan's global image.

He also commended their solidarity during recent Pakistan-India tensions and their efforts to raise awareness on the country's core issues.

Senator Dar drew loud applause when he narrated the events of the standoff, including Pakistan Air Force's shooting down of six Indian aircraft, leading up to ceasefire and the nation's unity in support of the armed forces. He highly praised the leadership of the Army chief, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, in dealing with that crisis.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also highlighted Pakistan's active engagement on the multilateral front, particularly its current presidency of the United Nations Security Council, secured with the support of 182 countries-reflecting the international community's confidence in Pakistan's principled diplomacy. He especially referred to the unanimous adoption of Pakistan-sponsored resolution calling for pacific set-

tlement of disputes.

Pakistan, he said, was a peaceful country which believes in diplomacy and dialogue to resolve outstanding problems.

Referring to regional developments, he underscored Pakistan's outreach to Afghanistan with a view to enhancing regional connectivity through trade and rail corridors to Central Asia. He emphasized Pakistan's expectation that Afghan soil will not be used for terrorism, and noted assurances received from Afghan authorities.

Senator Dar said Pakistan will continue to work for the release of Aafia Siddiqui who is incarcerated in an American prison, citing a series of steps already taken in this regard.

He concluded by reaffirming the Government of Pakistan's firm commitment to partnering with the Pakistani-American community as strategic stakeholders in national development and in advancing Pakistan-U.S. cooperation rooted in mutual respect and shared aspirations.

Earlier, Ambassador Sheikh, the envoy to the US, said that Pakistan's image got a huge boost following its armed forces' spectacular performance in defending the country.

He also said, "To make our defence impregnable, our economy has to be strong," and urged the community to invest in their homeland.

The Frontier Post

Iran executes two

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran executed two members of the outlawed Mujahideen-e-Khalq opposition group for targeting civilian infrastructure with homemade projectiles, the judiciary news outlet Mizan reported on Sunday. Mehdi Hassani and Behrouz Ehsani-Eslamloo, "operational elements" of the MEK, were sentenced to death in a verdict upheld by the Supreme Court, Mizan said.

Naqvi briefs PM on Balochistan's security and pilgrims' policy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the security situation in Balochistan and a new policy concerning pilgrims.

According to details surfaced on Sunday, during the meeting, the interior minister briefed the prime minister on the updated policy for pilgrims. In response, the prime minister instructed the aviation minister to arrange special flights for pilgrims.

The security situation in Balochistan was also reviewed. The prime minister was briefed on current

PM expresses grief over martyrdom of innocent citizens in firing by Khawarij

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Sunday expressed grief over the martyrdom of innocent and peaceful citizens due to the firing by Khawarij in Bagh Maidan area of Tirah Valley. He directed authorities to provide immediate medical assistance to the injured. He strongly condemned the firing by Khawarij on peaceful citizens. "The heinous designs of terrorists cannot shake our resolve," he said adding, "We will eliminate terrorists and terrorism."

developments and directed the Interior Minister to commence work on the Gwadar Safe City project.

Separately, few days back, PM Shehbaz has announced the restoration of the educational quota

for the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in medical colleges and engineering universities.

According to details surfaced on Thursday, the announcement came during a meeting with a dele-

gation of tribal elders at the Prime Minister's House. The delegation, led by Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman, held a jirga with the prime minister to discuss public order and development in the merged districts. In response to longstanding concerns, PM Shehbaz confirmed that the federal government would reinstate the quota system to ensure access to professional education for students from these areas.

The delegation welcomed the decision and expressed satisfaction over the government's commitment to the region's development.

CM announces compensation for Tirrah victims

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has expressed deep sorrow and regret over the Tirah incident and extended full sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives and to the injured.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur stated in a press release issued here that a jirga (council) comprising tribal elders and public representatives has been summoned to Peshawar to hear the sentiments and concerns of the local people.

Meanwhile, the district administration and relevant institutions have been instructed to strengthen public engagement and maintain law and order.

The Chief Minister announced financial assistance of 10 million rupees (PKR 1 crore) for each of the deceased's families and 2.5 million rupees (PKR 25 lakh) for each of the injured.

He stated that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is committed to sustainable peace, public safety, and the promotion of mutual respect. He added that the All Parties Conference had seriously deliberated on such incidents and issues and formulated proposals accordingly.

The Chief Minister further said that the series of jirgas involving tribal elders will begin at the divisional level and then at the provincial level starting next week.

At least 38 killed in church attack in Congo

GOMA (Agencies): At least 38 people have been killed and 15 others injured in an attack on a church in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The attack, carried out by suspected members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) wielding guns and machetes, took place at the church in Ituri province's Komanda city early on Sunday.

The ADF, with ties to ISIL (ISIS), is a rebel group that operates in the borderland between Uganda and the DRC, and has routinely conducted attacks against civilian populations.

Several houses and shops were also burned down, and many people remain missing after the attack, which happened

while Catholic Christians were attending a prayer vigil at the church, run by the Caritas charity.

"The rebels mainly attacked Christians who were spending the night in the Catholic church," said Christophe Munyanderu, a human rights activist present at the scene in Komanda. "Unfortunately, these people were killed with machetes or bullets."

DRC's Radio Okapi reported the death toll as 43, blaming it on the ADF. "More than 20 victims were killed with bladed weapons during a prayer vigil in a church," the radio said. "Other bodies were found in burned houses nearby."

"What we know this morning is that there was an incursion by armed men

with machetes into a church not far from Komanda," DRC army spokesperson Jules Ngongo said.

A civil society leader told The Associated Press news agency that people were shot dead inside and outside the church, adding that they found at least three charred bodies.

"But the search [for bodies] is continuing," Dieudonne Duranthabo, a civil society coordinator in Komanda, told AP.

"We are truly disappointed because it is incredible that such a situation could occur in a town where all the security officials are present," Duranthabo said, adding that some people fled the area and moved to Bunia town.

Pakistan bans road travel for Iran, Iraq pilgrims

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major development ahead of the Arbacen pilgrimage, the government has announced that Zaireen (pilgrims) will not be allowed to travel to Iraq and Iran by road this year. The decision follows extensive consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Balochistan Government, and key security agencies.

According to an official

statement from the federal interior minister Mohsin Naqvi, released on X (formerly Twitter), on Sunday, the restriction has been imposed purely in the interest of public safety and national security, amid ongoing regional security challenges and threats along the land routes.

Despite the road travel ban, the government has ensured that Zaireen will still be able to perform their pilgrimage through air travel. Prime Minister

Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed the concerned authorities to arrange the maximum number of flights to accommodate pilgrims in the coming days.

This move aims to strike a balance between enabling religious freedom and ensuring the safety of citizens during the sacred journey. Further details regarding flight schedules and registration procedures are expected to be announced soon.

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Four Punjab cities to get 48 electric buses

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has announced the launch of a modern electric green bus service in Sargodha division, aimed at providing eco-friendly and affordable transport facilities.

Khalid Mahmood, Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA), told APP that the first phase will see 48 electric buses operating in Sargodha, while 12 buses will run in Khushab, and 6 each in Mianwali and Bhakkar.

The new service is scheduled to begin on August 14. In a move to support vulnerable groups, the green buses will offer free travel for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and students.

Khalid Mahmood expressed hope that this initiative will not only improve public transport but also promote cleaner and greener urban mobility across the region.

Two alleged human traffickers held

LAHORE (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore Zone claimed on Sunday to have arrested two suspects involved in human trafficking and visa fraud during the targeted raids conducted in Islamabad and Lahore.

FIA spokesperson told the media that the accused identified as Naveed Tahir and Zubair Muhammad were allegedly involved in defrauding innocent citizens by falsely promising overseas employment opportunities.

Naveed Tahir is accused of scamming a citizen out of Rs 1.68 million by falsely offering a job in Lithuania and Zubair Muhammad allegedly collected Rs 700,000 from another individual under the pretext of arranging travel to the United States.

After collecting large sums of money from their victims, both individuals went into hiding.

Further investigation was underway.

Second annual matric exam from Sep 10

LAHORE (APP): The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Lahore will conduct the second annual matriculation examinations from September 10.

BISE official sources told APP that the schedule for submitting the admission fee for the second annual examination has already been released.

Candidates will be able to submit their admissions with single fee till August 7, with double examination fee from August 8 to 11, and with triple examination fee from August 12 to 15.

All candidates' admissions will be submitted online, they informed.

Wildlife dept arrests 7 illegal hunters

LAHORE (APP): Wildlife Department DG Mubeen Elahi said on Sunday that on the instructions of Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, a combing operation across the province continued successfully.

Talking to APP, Mubeen Elahi said that the Wildlife Department has conducted a combing operation, in which 7 illegal hunters were arrested, and about a dozen birds were recovered. He said that successful operations were carried out in Gujranwala, Narowal, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh and DG Khan. During the operations, 7 illegal hunters were arrested and about a dozen pheasants, parrots and pigeons were recovered.

The accused were fined more than one lakh rupees for violating the Wildlife Act, and all the wild birds were released into their natural environment.

Wildlife Rangers Narowal rescued a pangolin that had strayed from its habitat in Zafarwal. The pangolin was also released in its habitat. The Wildlife Department DG said that illegal hunting, trade and smuggling are prohibited in Punjab, and the recovery of protected wild animals and birds would be ensured.



LAHORE: Workers busy in installed the new entrance gate of Lahore near shahdara at River ravi bridge in the Provincial Capital. —APP Photo

Marka-e-Haq is symbol of national unity: Tessori

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has said that "Marka-e-Haq" (Battle for Truth) was not just Independence Day event but a vibrant symbol of renewed commitment, national unity and public inclusion.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a 66-member delegation of MQM Pakistan Labour Division, led by Rizwan Babar here Sunday. Senior leaders including Dr. Farooq Sattar, Anees Qaimkhani and other officials were also present.

The meeting featured detailed discussions on the Independence Day event Marka-e-Haq", the challenges faced by the working class, employment

opportunities, welfare initiatives, and the strategy for future joint actions.

The Governor Sindh instructed the participants to ensure active, organized and enthusiastic participation of labourers in the celebrations, so their representation could be highlighted effectively at every level.

Appreciating the role of the working class, the Governor Sindh said that the foundation of national progress lied in the relentless efforts of labourers, and their welfare must be the government's top priority. He assured the delegation of full support in addressing the issues faced by workers.

Kamran Khan Tessori told that the Governor

House was no longer merely a government building, but a symbol of public representation, inclusion and partnership. Its doors remain open at all times for workers and all sincere Pakistanis, he added.

He further expressed his desire to see Pakistan's labour force become empowered, dignified, and prosperous a class that not only drives the economy but also holds a strong voice and active role in policy making.

He termed this meeting as a practical and positive step towards the promotion of labour rights, highlighting their issues at the highest level, and ensuring their robust participation in national celebrations.

PDP chief demands KTC revival

KARACHI (PPI): Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor today called for urgent action to address Karachi's inadequate public transportation system.

Highlighting Lahore's progress with an electric tram system, Shakoor contrasted it with Karachi's lack of a functional bus network. He demanded the Sindh government revive the Karachi Transport Corporation (KTC) and deploy its 200+ idled buses.

Shakoor stressed a comprehensive strategy to tackle Karachi's transit woes, encompassing infrastructure development, governance, finance, and

urban planning. He noted KTC's existing depots, workshops, and parked buses, suggesting their repair and deployment as a readily available solution.

The PDP chairman advocated integrated mass transit solutions, including the completion and expansion of current Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines like the Green and Red lines. He also emphasized the revival of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) with modern electric trains, connecting major city centers. Additionally, he proposed underground/subway lines for high-density locales such as Saddar, Gulshan, and Nazimabad.

Shakoor urged improvements to current transportation options, including stricter regulation of private buses and minibuses. He recommended enforcing route permits, fare regulations, and safety protocols. Reinstatement of government-operated buses with GPS tracking and fixed timetables was another proposal.

He highlighted the need for dedicated bus lanes to alleviate traffic congestion. Finally, Shakoor called for the establishment of a unified transport authority, such as a Karachi Metropolitan Transport Authority, to manage all transit systems effectively.

Traders stage rally against snatching of workers rights

KARACHI (PPI): The National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) in a rally today condemned the escalating suppression of labor rights in Karachi, highlighting death threats against union leaders as a chilling indicator of the deteriorating situation.

During a protest rally from Regal Chowk to the Karachi Press Club, NTUF leaders and representatives from various organizations denounced the increasing retaliatory measures against workers attempting to unionize.

NTUF General Secretary Nasir Mansoor criticized the criminalization of unionization efforts, while basic worker entitlements like minimum wages, social security, and adherence to legal working hours are disregarded. He cited M.I. Industries in Karachi's SITE area as a prime example, where employees were allegedly dismissed for forming a union, a female worker leader faced harassment and assault, and union leaders received death threats from hired thugs, allegedly with police inaction. Mansoor further accused the Labour Department of corruption, accepting bribes from factory owners to obstruct unionization.

Human Rights

Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Sindh Chapter Vice Chairperson Qazi Khizr affirmed that labor rights are fundamental human rights and that violations contravene both Pakistani law and international conventions. The HRCP pledged to continue advocating against such injustices.

IndustriALL Global Union Co-Chair Zehra Khan stressed that Pakistan's industrial advancement hinges on ending anti-worker practices. She criticized the misrepresentation of legitimate worker demands as anti-state activities and urged international brands and their local suppliers to uphold national and global labor regulations. Khan warned that if local employers continue to suppress workers through intimidation and financial influence, laborers will escalate their grievances internationally.

People Labour Bureau (PLB) President Habibuddin Junedi emphasized that international agreements like the EU Due Diligence Law, the Pakistan Accord, and GSP+ mandate strict labor standard compliance, and failure to comply could severely impact Pakistan's struggling economy.

Railways Workers Union General Secretary Rao Naseem denounced the proposed Sindh Labor Code 2025, alleging it legitimizes exploitative contractual labor. He accused the Labour Department of corruption and the destruction of labor welfare institutions, particularly the Sindh Workers Welfare Board. Naseem cautioned that workers' patience is waning and a strong response is imminent if the government fails to act. Numerous other labor leaders and activists also addressed the rally, echoing these concerns.

The protest concluded with a list of key demands, including an immediate halt to the suppression of unionization efforts, investigation and punishment of those involved in forming fake unions, reinstatement of dismissed workers, cessation of threats and harassment against union leaders, an end to police bias in favor of factory owners, abolition of exploitative contractual employment, consultation with labor organizations regarding the 2025 Labor Code, enforcement of labor standards under GSP+, the Pakistan Accord, and Due Diligence laws, and investigation and prosecution of corruption in labor welfare institutions.

CM orders visible, improved cleanliness

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to ensure visible cleanliness and active sanitation staff across all neighborhoods of the province.

She was chairing a meeting to review progress on the 'Suthra (Clean) Punjab Program', where she emphasized that as public expectations grow, performance must also improve. During the meeting, the CM was briefed in detail on various components of the program, including the introduction of e-invoicing and e-billing for sanitation fees, being implemented for the first time under the initiative. She was also informed about the Vehicle Trip Counting System and Vehicle Tracking Management System to monitor waste collection operations more effectively.

Highlighting international interest in the program, Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Development institutions from the World Bank, Europe, and other countries have expressed willingness to invest in the Suthra Punjab Program."

The CM said that while the initiative is progressing successfully, complaints from certain districts regarding cleanliness must be promptly addressed. "Contractors failing to meet performance standards should be removed," she asserted.

The CM further instructed the use of Safe City cameras to monitor sanitation conditions across Punjab.

It was agreed during the meeting that 136 additional waste disposal points would be established across the province to improve garbage collection and management.

Mushaal Mullick appeales world to end its silence on Kashmiris' plight

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, spouse of the imprisoned Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, once again raised her voice on Sunday against the relentless operations targeting innocent Kashmiris, urging global institutions to end their silence or face accountability, warning that continued inaction will allow the trampling of human rights to continue unchecked.

In a message to a local news channel, Mushaal Mullick appealed that Kashmir's plight will deepen if the world's silence endures. She emphasized that the continued indifference and inaction from the global community are only allowing the suffering of the Kashmiri people to escalate. Mullick warned that if the world continues to stay silent, the agony of Kashmiris will only intensify, leaving their struggle for justice unheard and unaddressed.

Mushaal Malik stated that the forced eviction of Kashmiris from their homes and the stripping away of their identity and lives through India's oppressive black laws is absolutely intolerable. She condemned the continued brutality faced by the Kashmiri people, who are being deprived of their basic human rights and dignity.

Mushaal Malik further emphasized that despite the growing suffering and the horrific conditions faced by Kashmiris, the international community has failed to provide any real assistance or recognition of their pain.

She lamented that the oppressed Kashmiris are being denied their rightful place as human beings, with their homes and livelihoods being ruthlessly taken away. She expressed

deep frustration over the world's silence in the face of such grave injustice.

She criticized the global community for its failure to speak out against the atrocities in Kashmir, which has only allowed the suffering of innocent Kashmiris to continue unabated. Mushaal added, "The world must wake up. The fate of martyred and imprisoned Kashmiris has already been sealed."

When the last breath is taken, the cries of the oppressed shake the very heavens. India is using guns and chains to silence the voices of Kashmiris, attempting to suppress their struggle for justice," she added. She added, "India has taken away the businesses, lands, and rivers from the Kashmiris, leaving them deprived of their means of livelihood and connection to their own land."

Karachi flyover to connect major arteries

KARACHI (PPI): Karachi is set to receive a significant infrastructure boost with the finalization of a new flyover project on Azeempura Road.

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) announced the development, which will create a signal-free link between Shahrah-e-Bhutto and Shahrah-e-Faisal, two of the metropolis's busiest thoroughfares.

This enhanced connectivity is expected to significantly alleviate traffic congestion and provide a quicker route to Jinnah International Airport. The roughly 500-meter flyover is designed to facilitate seamless traffic movement, benefiting thousands of commuters daily. A high-level meeting chaired by Mayor Karachi, Barrister

Murtaza Wahab, finalized the project's PC-1 document. Attendees included Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi, Chief Engineer Zulfiqar Abro, Financial Advisor Gulzar Ali, and other key officials.

With a budget of Rs. 1.4 billion recently allocated, the overpass will serve as a crucial alternative route, particularly considering ongoing construction along Shahrah-e-Bhutto. The initiative aims not only to reduce travel durations but also to contribute to the city's sustainable infrastructure development goals. Construction is slated to commence immediately after receiving approval from the Planning and Development Board, with a projected completion time of one year.

1,000 kg of donkey meat seized in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): A case has been registered in Islamabad's Sangiani Police Station following the recovery of a massive quantity of donkey meat from a farm.

According to police sources, the food safety officer lodged the formal complaint, leading to immediate action. A team from the Food Safety Department, along with local police, conducted a raid on the suspicious site.

During the raid, 1,000 kilograms of donkey meat was seized, while 45 live

donkeys were also found on the premises. All the recovered haram (prohibited) meat was destroyed on the spot by the food safety team. Authorities are investigating the matter further to determine the destination of the meat and whether it had already entered the local food supply.

The police emphasised that such illegal and unethical practices pose serious threats to public health and will be dealt with under strict food safety and criminal laws.

Farman selected as member of Forbes Business Council



Zia Qureshi

VIRGINIA: A great honor for Sindh for the first time, a Sindhi businessman, Farman Ali, has been selected as a member of the Forbes Business Council, a global business forum. The Forbes Business Council includes top business leaders and CEOs from around the world, selected purely on merit. Farman Ali, originally from Sindh, has made his mark in the real estate business in the United States. The Forbes platform has 5000 members globally, chosen on merit, among which seven are from Pakistan, and now Farman Ali has become the eighth and the first Sindhi to be selected. Farman Ali stated, "This honor and pride truly belong to Sindh." He further added that through this forum, he plans to share global ideas regarding real estate and business. "My goal," he said, "is to bring a revolution in the world of real estate and to encourage the youth of Sindh, paving new ways for their investment opportunities."

Abbasi highlights global respect for Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi said that Pakistan had earned unprecedented global respect, crediting Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir for the nation's elevated international standing.

Speaking at the "Meet the Press" event at the Lahore Press Club on Sunday, Abbasi asserted, "Pakistan today is a changed Pakistan. We now walk in the world with our heads held high." Highlighting Pakistan's foreign policy successes, Abbasi said that countries like Türkiye and Russia view overseas Pakistanis with respect, and nations such as China, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, and Bangladesh have stood by Pakistan in difficult times. He took a job at India, alleging its "proxy war" in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and claiming that the U.S. confirmed five Indian aircraft were shot down in the May conflict.

"India is licking its wounds," Abbasi remarked, sarcastically thanking India for "uniting the entire Pakistani nation."

The minister also addressed domestic critics, accusing some of ingratitude despite benefiting from Pakistan's resources. "Those who went from riding bicycles to owning BMWs are now badmouthing the country," he said, criticizing jailed individuals for "screaming and hurling abuses" unlike his own conduct in prison. On the economic front, Abbasi claimed inflation has

dropped from 38 per cent to zero due to government policies, though tough decisions were necessary to stabilize the economy. He vowed to crack down on "big crocodiles" looting the country and announced the closure of ten Independent Power Producers (IPPs), with fifteen more to follow.

Turning to Railways, Abbasi outlined sweeping reforms to modernize the sector. He highlighted improvements such as outsourcing cleaning services at seven stations across Rawalpindi, Karachi, and Lahore, enhancing food quality, and installing free Wi-Fi at Lahore Railway Station. Escalators and information desks have been introduced at stations, and a 105-kilometer railway track for coal transport is set to be completed by April 30, reducing electricity costs from Rs. 15 to Rs. 4.5 per unit. Additionally, a Business Train with Wi-Fi-equipped coaches and high-quality dining will be inaugurated on July 29 to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Abbasi emphasized infrastructure upgrades, including a soon-to-be-finalized agreement for the Rohri-Karachi railway section and a Rs 50 billion allocation from Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to improve the Lahore-Rawalpindi track, cutting travel time to two hours. He also announced plans to digitize the railway system, link sixteen banks to the Railway's app, and install ATMs at 348 stations. To

address inefficiencies, three railway companies have been shut down, and long-league employees will be recalled.

"Pakistan Railways is the pride of Pakistan," Abbasi declared, promising to make it profitable if the federal government covers pensions and salaries. He stressed that the railway's issues stem not from laborers but from unnamed individuals who looted the system. Reflecting on his personal journey, Abbasi shared that he was born in Lahore, studied at FC College, and began his political career as a student. He praised the Lahore Press Club as the largest in Pakistan and reaffirmed his good relations with journalists.

He emphasized the need for investment in Railways to boost the national economy, warning that major reforms are imminent and bureaucratic inefficiencies will not be tolerated. Hanif Abbasi announced that Pakistan Railways remains resolute in the face of challenges, emphasizing the continued operation of the Jafar Express and Bolan Express as a bold message to adversaries. "We are not afraid," Abbasi declared, highlighting the resilience of the railway network.

He outlined several initiatives to strengthen and modernize Pakistan Railways. Sports development is a key focus, with plans to promote football, cricket, and hockey. "Sports are among our priorities, and we will devise a comprehensive plan to support them," he stated.



PESHAWAR: Boys collecting woods from a field at Charsadda Road. — INP photo

Journalist’s suit against US dismissed again

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A local court has dismissed on technical grounds senior journalist Mehmood Jan Babar's \$20 million damages suit against the United States of America despite the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) earlier directive to restore the case for a fair hearing, ordering that the "learned trial court shall proceed with the same from the stage when it was dismissed in default."

However, the trial court, presided over by Additional District Judge Liaquat Ali, dismissed Jan's suit after hearing arguments on maintainability. The court held that the suit was not viable, primarily because a foreign state, such as the United States, cannot be sued in the ordinary courts of another state under customary international law. The court further noted that embassies enjoy diplomatic immunity and cannot be sued except in cases involving personal contracts, which did not apply here.

The lower court also found no actionable role attributed to Turkish Airlines, stating that the airline merely acted on information that Jan's visa had been cancelled. Similarly, the Immigration Desk at Islamabad International Airport was deemed uninvolved in the visa cancellation. The court concluded that the plaintiff disclosed no cause of action against any defendant and rejected it

without further discussion.

The PHC, in its 11th June 2025 judgment had overturned the lower court's earlier dismissal of Jan's suit on 19 July 2021 for non-prosecution, as well as the appellate court's affirmation on 31 March 2022. The dismissal stemmed from a procedural delay caused by the death of Jan's legal counsel due to stomach cancer, which led to missed court appearances.

Presiding over a single-member bench, Justice Muhammad Ijaz Khan emphasised that dismissing the case for a minor delay of seven days violated Jan's right to a fair trial under Article 10-A of the Constitution of Pakistan. The High Court directed the trial court to resume proceedings from the stage of dismissal, stressing that courts must prioritise substantive justice over procedural technicalities.

Background

The suit, filed by Jan-a senior journalist based in Peshawar with over 25 years of experience in print and electronic media-sought \$20 million in damages for what he terms as "humiliation, physical and mental torture, and financial loss" allegedly inflicted by U.S. authorities.

The dispute dates back to October 2020, when Jan was barred from boarding a connecting flight to New York at Istanbul Airport, despite possessing a valid five-year US professional visa (Type I) issued in 2016. He had planned to cover the US presidential

elections for his media outlets. After verifying his visa and travel documents in Islamabad, he was allowed to board a Turkish Airlines flight, but was stopped in Istanbul and forced to return to Pakistan "in an undignified and insulting manner."

Upon inquiry, Turkish Airlines informed him that the US Embassy had revoked his visa. The US Embassy later confirmed the revocation under Section 221(i) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act but gave no reasons. Jan claims he was not informed in advance, nor provided any explanation during or after the incident.

His counsel, Fida Gul, argued that all relevant agencies, including the airline, immigration officials, and the US Embassy, failed in their respective duties to inform Jan of the visa status and prevent unnecessary travel and public embarrassment. Jan later served a fresh legal notice to the US Embassy through Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to which the embassy responded, expressing regret for the inconvenience but reiterating that it was the US Department of State - not the consulate - that had declared him ineligible for travel.

On the other hand, the US Embassy took the plea that the legal documents were not sent to them through proper channels, "[the plaintiff] did not provide sixty days' notice and

did not include sufficient information about the case, the manner and timing of service were defective."

Besides, it argued that under the customary international law, a foreign sovereign is not required to file a responsive pleading or appear before the courts or other tribunals of another state, unless proper service of process is provided.

The High Court, however, found these procedural defences insufficient to override a citizen's right to fair trial, and has now reopened the case for regular proceedings.

On the other hand, Mehmood Jan Babar expressed disappointment and called the US decision to revoke his visa without explanation both unjust and personal. He said: "Whenever I travelled to the United States-in 2007, 2016, and 2018-I produced well-researched reports on human rights, religious and social freedoms, and political maturity, which were broadcast by media organisations in Pakistan and around the world."

For the US to suddenly cancel my visa without any explanation, in violation of its own laws, is certainly an injustice by American policymakers toward people like me, he observed.

He added that his legal struggle was not just for personal vindication but also about holding powerful institutions accountable and protecting the dignity of Pakistani citizens.

Swat tragedy - What needs to be done ?

Syed M. Ilyas

WE, as a nation, have the sadistic habit of obstinate refusal to learn from tragedies, let alone put in place systems and procedures to avoid these in future. Each calamity is routinely ruminated in the Press and Media for a few days and then silence, followed by business as usual. As a result, these keep visiting us one after another. Be it deaths due to collapse of dilapidated buildings, frequent outbreak of fire in factories or drowning of holidayers in flooding rivers, the cycle goes on unabatedly. There seems no organized attempt on our part to breakout-indeed a sad reflection on our state of affairs.

Each year, with the advent of the summer season, people make a beeline to the northern areas to escape the sizzling heat of the southern regions. Hence places like Swat, Kaghan, Naran, GB, AJ&K etc. routinely witnessed a surge in the number of visitors, a majority of whom comprise the youth. With the improvement in road network, influx of vehicles and rise of the urban middle classes, this trend has become more profound. However, it has been observed that the people in their zeal to enjoy, often throw caution to the wind. Fun-loving and adventure mostly becomes synonymous with risk taking. Hence the resultant mishaps. Previously, it was the Murree catastrophe which made headlines as a good number of visitors were found frozen in their cars due to extreme cold. Now it's the Swat tragedy causing a national outrage.

Both these tragedies have their roots in lack of planning, callousness on part of the visitors and utter neglect and mismanagement on part of the authorities concerned. A complete breakdown and collapse of authority was apparent. Nobody knew his duty as any worthwhile SOPs were starkly missing. A couple of simple steps and due diligence on part of the authorities could have saved all those precious lives. The Swat tragedy was compounded as much by nature's fury as by the systemic failure and human indifference and apathy. It's unfortunate that institutions with high-sounding names exist but awfully lack coordination and inter-agency cooperation when it comes to rescue and relief. This gap has to be bridged since time is of essence in emergency situations.

Since most of our touristic marvels are located in the Northern Areas specially KP province, there is a need to galvanise Tourism department into action. The Tourism Task Force in particular, must correspond to its name. Close coordination and liaison among some key departments, like the PMD, NDMA, Highways and Motorways is of utmost importance. These must regularly interact with the provincial departments concerned especially tourism to pass on regular updates on condition of roads, landslides alert etc. The Highways/Motorways department/ NHA must monitor the number of vehicles entering a particular tourist destination, whether it can accommodate this number and possess adequate parking space alongwith overseeing roadworthiness of vehicles. The same is also true of the hotel rooms.

Similarly, there should be some institutionalized arrangement for regularly relaying weather alerts through the FM Radio and digital media platforms. During peak seasons, the check posts must also have representatives from the tourism department to check whether the visitors have hotel bookings or not. It should not only monitor the inflow of visitors but also guide them where to stay and which route to take. They need to remain in touch with the management of hotels and motels to check availability of rooms to accommodate the swelling numbers.

It has also been observed that most of the boats plying in the lakes and rivers do not have adequate safeguards like life jackets, wireless sets etc. Most of the times these are overloaded with picnickers and holidayers. Similarly, the cable cars in the mountainous regions being utilized for taking the tourists to up stations are not well maintained. The quality and condition of wires/cables on which these normally run is seldom checked. These are mostly rusted and at times disjointed without any provision for emergencies. Likewise, the swings (Jholas) in parks and other recreational places are not properly checked.

Moreover, the make-shift bridges on torrential streams also pose a serious danger to the public. These are some of the hazards which need to be taken care off if the tourism industry is to flourish and prosper. Landslidings and flash floods especially during monsoon is a frequent occurrence in the Northern Areas as well as AJ&K. Pakistan is a victim of climate change. Glacial melting caused by high temperatures followed by heavy monsoon rains have played havoc with us.

Bodies like the Tourism Task Force, Tourism Police etc. must come out of hibernation and try to shoulder the responsibilities for which these are created and being paid for from the national exchequer. These must sensitise the public of the dangers inherent in indulging in activities like selfie-taking near the torrential currents of the flooding rivers. Their mere presence near these spots would be enough to deter the reckless adventurers. This force is supposed to be well trained and well equipped to effectively deal with the emergencies. It should periodically also examine the boats, cable cars, jeeps, jholas etc. to ensure safety of tourists.

Pakistan's touristic marvels including the K-2, Nanga Parbat, KKH, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, Indus valley civilization, Gandhara Art etc. are indeed most spectacular in the world. We also possess some precious sites of religious tourism especially for Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhist. However, we have been unable to attract a sizeable number of visitors. The northern areas are considered as the climber's paradise and our serene picturesque beaches, sandy deserts, lush green forests offer a bewildering variety to the world. So are the cultural heritage, flora and fauna. We need to ponder seriously on what we lack and why the country is not a preferred destination for international visitors.

It is also important not to lose sight of the larger picture. A well thought out, comprehensive and forward looking National Tourism Policy is direly needed for providing the much needed impetus to the tourism sector. The policy must have inputs from the relevant stakeholders and should provide a broad framework with quantifiable goals to take tourism industry forward. The public-private partnership model should be tried to give a big boost to tourism. We have seen that countries with a single touristic attraction like the Eiffel Tower in France, the Pyramids in Egypt, Great Wall in China, the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy and the Canals in Venice offer only attraction to visitors, yet earn millions and billions annually. In contrast, we have multiple attractions with a variety of seasons and most hospitable people on earth. Yet we have been unable to exploit these free gifts of nature. It is about time to have a dispassionate and realistic appraisal to bring tourism back on its feet.

Let us not wait for another Swat-like tragedy to jolt us into action. We should rather try to put our own house in order speedily and proactively. This will enable us to exploit the immense potential of the tourism sector. Remember a satisfied and happy tourist can be our unpaid ambassador and lobbyist. He or she can earn tremendous goodwill for your country internationally.

ICS restoration plan

Islamia Collegiate School must not be overlooked, demands teachers

F.P.Report

PESHAWAR: An emergency meeting of the Cabinet Members of the Islamia Collegiate School Teaching Staff Association was held under the chairmanship of President Kafeel Ahmad Khalil. The participants welcomed the decision by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, regarding the renovation and restoration of the historic Islamia College Peshawar. However, concern was expressed over the exclusion of Islamia Collegiate School from this restoration plan.

The meeting was attended by General Secretary Dr.

Muhammad Shehzad and all cabinet members.

During the session, President Kafeel Ahmad Khalil stated that the Chief Minister's decision to renovate the historic Islamia College Peshawar is commendable. The meeting held under the supervision of Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud - and attended by the Vice Chancellor of Islamia College University and Member of the National Assembly Arbab Sher Ali - reflects the government's seriousness about preserving educational heritage.

However, the association's office bearers demanded that Islamia

Collegiate School also be included in the restoration project. They emphasized that the school predates Islamia College Peshawar and is in no way inferior in terms of its historical importance and academic contributions.

The school has produced numerous renowned scholars, literary figures, and social personalities over the years.

It was also noted in the meeting that Commissioner Riaz Khan Mehsud will visit Islamia College Peshawar next week with project engineers to expedite the implementation of the restoration plan.

President Kafeel Ahmad Khalil, General Secretary

Dr. Muhammad Shehzad, and other members of the association appealed to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Member National Assembly Arbab Sher Ali, and Commissioner Riaz Khan Mehsud not to overlook Islamia Collegiate School. They urged that it should also be made part of the restoration and renovation initiative to ensure complete preservation of the educational heritage.

They further stated that this institution is not just a school, but a movement, a legacy, and a cradle of education for generations. Its restoration is tantamount to reviving the academic glory of Peshawar.

Journal showcases works of writers and poets from Kohat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Gandhara Hindko Academy, Peshawar, has brought out the latest issue of Kotal Rang, a literary and cultural journal that showcases the works of Hindko language writers and poets from the Kohat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A noted retired civil servant, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, is the patron of the journal. A known research scholar of the Hindko language and author, Muhammad Ziauddin, serves as the managing editor, while Ms Nusrat Naseem, a distinguished writer of Hindko and Urdu from Kohat, is the editor.

The latest issue features contributions from several prominent Kohati literati, including Syed Matiullah Shah, Muhammad Jan Atif, Hina Rauf, Syed Masoom Shah, Liaquat Ali, and Shujaat Ali Rahi. There are pieces as well by Dr Seema Shafee, Fazle Rabi Rahi, Jabbar Mirza,

Nayyer Sarhadi, Naem Iqbal Kohati, Dr Nisar Turabi, Syed Ibrar Hussain, Muhammad Ziauddin, and Nusrat Naseem.

The cover of the magazine features a portrait of Nusrat Naseem, an eminent literary figure from Kohat who has earned recognition for her contributions to travelogue writing.

In a tribute, writer Naem Iqbal Kohati lauds Nusrat Naseem as the first woman prose writer from Kohat.

He particularly appreciates her travelogue written in the Hindko language, calling it a compelling and valuable addition to the Hindko literature. "This travelogue is expected to inspire other writers, especially the emerging ones," he remarks.

The writer commends Nusrat Naseem for her committed service to Hindko language and culture not only in her native Kohat but also for maintaining active literary ties with writers in the

Peshawar and Hazara regions.

A former diplomat, Syed Ibrar Hussain, praises her engaging narrative style, saying it captivates readers and compels them to continue reading. He admires her keen eye for detail and vivid descriptions in the travelogue.

Muhammad Ziauddin offers high praise for Nusrat Naseem's literary command, describing her as a prominent figure in both Hindko and Urdu literature. He supports his admiration with excerpts from her various writings, highlighting her distinctive style and astute literary expression.

It is worth mentioning that Kotal Rang is among the regular Hindko literary journals published by the Gandhara Hindko Academy which is run by the Gandhara Hindko Board.

Other publications include Hindko Adab, Hindkowan, Sarkhail, Fatima, The Gandhara Voice, Sargi Da Tara (dedi-

cated to the Hazara Division), Gomal Rang (Saraiki), Khovar Nama (Chitrali), Watan (Kohistani), and the research journal, Mother.

Established in April 2015 under a public-private partnership in Peshawar, the academy has been operating on a self-help basis since the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government ceased funding to the research body beyond June 30, 2022. The board and the academy have published over 500 books and publications so far in 11 languages.

Hindko is one of the 14 officially recognized languages of Pakistan, as documented in the Seventh Population and Housing Census conducted from March to May 2023.

According to official data, Hindko ranks as the sixth major regional language of the country and is the second most widely spoken language in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Joint workshop of PBS, UNFFA on data-use and policy drafting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a landmark initiative to strengthen data-informed governance, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is organizing a three-day capacity-building workshop on 'Data Interpretation and Its Use', starting on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at a local hotel in Peshawar.

This initiative aims to equip planners, statisticians, and development

professionals from key departments of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) with practical tools and techniques for interpreting and utilizing demographic, social and economic data to support evidence-based policymaking.

The workshop reflects PBS's broader commitment to advancing data-driven development planning across Pakistan.

The training sessions will focus on practical applications of PBS's rich datasets, including the Population &

Housing Census, PSLM, HIES, LFS, Economic and Agriculture Censuses, in areas such as social sector planning, economic development and infrastructure management. Expert facilitators from PBS will guide participants through hands-on exercises in data visualization, project planning and preparation of project documents like PC-I, PC-IV and PC-V.

Senior Member PBS Muhammad Sarwar Gondal (Sitara-i-Imtiaz) will spearhead this

important initiative and will personally oversee the workshop.

Recognizing the critical role of data in driving national development, he has strongly urged all relevant stakeholders to ensure timely and active participation.

He emphasized that the workshop is a strategic step towards strengthening institutional capacity for evidence-based governance, as Pakistan advances toward achieving its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



In brief

Awareness campaign

CHARSADDA (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irrigation Department has launched an awareness campaign to address the issue of illegal constructions along province's waterways. On Sunday, the department began displaying banners alongside various canals and rivers, urging the public to refrain from building near these vital water channels and to voluntarily remove existing encroachments. The campaign aims to educate citizens about the dangers posed by such constructions, particularly in light of potential monsoon rains. By encouraging removal of these structures, the department hopes to mitigate flood risks and safeguard lives and property. Deputy Commissioner Charsadda, Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, echoed the department's message, warning property owners against the "malpractice" of encroaching on riverbanks. He emphasized that strict legal action would be taken against anyone who establishes illegal constructions in these areas.

AlKhidmat hospital block

DIR (APP): President, A l - K h i d m a t Foundation Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rehman Sunday completed two-day visit of northern areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North and inspected ongoing projects in Buner, Swat, Malakand and Lower Dir, disaster centers, hospitals, aghosh homes, orphan study centers. He also inaugurated newly constructed block in Al-Khidmat Hospital located at Zawar Baba in Dir Lower. Former Senior Provincial Minister and Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami North Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inayatullah Khan, President of Al-Khidmat Foundation North Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Fazal Mahmood and Provincial General Secretary Dr. Khalid Farooq and General Manager Programs A l - K h i d m a t Foundation Pakistan Hammad Akhtar also accompanied him during the visit. During his visit, President Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan, Professor Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rehman, also inaugurated second phase of Al-Khidmat Banu Qabil Program to provide decent employment opportunities to youth through free IT courses. In addition to attending a dinner hosted by the Doctor Community in Swat, he also inaugurated the new office of Al-Khidmat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North in Gulabad, Chakdara.

Couple injured in explosion

F.P. Report

NOWSHERA: In the Madina Colony Phase 2 area of Nowshera district, a husband and wife were injured due to a cylinder explosion. According to Rescue 1122 Nowshera, the control room received information about a gas cylinder blast at the location in Madina Colony Phase 2. Upon receiving the alert, a Rescue 1122 medical team was immediately dispatched to the scene. The explosion occurred in the kitchen of a man named Noor Al-Basoor. As a result, 43-year-old Noor Al-Basoor and his wife were injured. The Rescue 1122 team provided initial medical aid to the injured and then transferred them to Qazi Hussain Ahmed Medical Complex Nowshera Hospital.

Female students shine in BISE Swat matric result

Shafi ullah

MINGORA: The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Swat has declared the results of the annual matriculation exams, 2025. In a remarkable display of academic excellence, female students have dominated the top positions, with Kashmala Habib securing the overall top spot.

Kashmala Habib, a student of Al-Azhar Education Institute, achieved 1177 marks out of 1200, followed closely by Azlan Ali Shah and Amir Zeb Amir from Cadet College Swat, who secured 1175 and 1172 marks, respectively.

In the 9th Grade Science Group 46.89% success rate (20,664 students passed out of 43,985). Similarly in 9th Grade General Group 15.13% success rate (803 students passed out of

5,306)

In the 10th Grade Science Group, 79.24% success rate (34,376 students passed out of 43,380) and in 10th Grade General Group, 45.75% success rate (1,989 students passed out of 4,348).

In 10th grade of general group Saman Bibi (1043 marks) got first position, Government Girls High School, Chengali, Bunir and second position secured Sada Gul (1041 marks), Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Barikot, Swat, and 3rd Position Samreen Bibi (1013 marks), private student from Shangla District.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai attended a board ceremony as the chief guest, where he distributed certificates and prizes to high-achieving students.

The event was attended by prominent figures, including Chairman DEDEC Swat Akhtar Khan Advocate, Chairman Swat Board Professor Tasbeeh ullah, and Secretary Board Umar Hussain, along with teachers and students.

The speakers commended the Swat Board's ongoing reforms and transparent examination system. They encouraged students to work hard and strive for excellence, emphasizing the importance of education in serving the nation.

The ceremony highlighted the board's commitment to promoting academic excellence and merit.

The results are available on the Swat Board's website, and students have also received their results via SMS.

Board officials congratulated the top performers and wished success to all the students

Law Minister visits proposed interchange site in Kohat

F.P. Report

K O H A T : K h y b e r Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Aftab Alam Advocate, visited the site of the proposed interchange at Dhoda Chowk on the Indus Highway in Kohat. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Abdul Akram Chitrali, and relevant officials from the National Highway Authority (NHA). During the visit, the Minister conducted a detailed review of the ongoing work and the challenges currently hindering progress.

The Law Minister instructed the concerned authorities to avoid any further delays and to take

immediate and practical measures to ensure the timely completion of the project, keeping in view the convenience of the general public.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister emphasized that the issues faced by the local population would be addressed on a priority basis to improve travel and transport facilities in the area. He reiterated the commitment of the provincial government to allocate all necessary resources for the timely execution of public welfare projects. He further assured that the Kohat district administration would extend full cooperation to the National Highway Authority at every level to ensure smooth and timely

completion of the development work.

Officials from the NHA provided a comprehensive briefing on the current status of the project and outlined the future plan of action. They also assured the Minister of their commitment to ensuring the provision of all possible facilities to the public.

Law Minister also inspected the ongoing construction work on the Dhoda-Shadi Khel Road, which is being developed at a cost of Rs. 100 million. He directed the authorities to expedite the pace of work while maintaining the highest standards of quality and to ensure that the project is completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Jirga reviews implementation of Kohat peace accord

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In light of the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur and Chief Secretary Syed Shahab Ali Shah, a joint meeting of the Grand Peace Jirga and elders of Kurram and Hangu districts was held in Kohat today. The Jirga beside the General Officer Commanding 9-Div Kohat Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti and Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motsim Billah Shah, was also attended by the Deputy

Commissioner Kurram Ashfaq Khan, District Police Officer Kurram Habib Khan and other concerned officers.

The meeting took a detailed review of the general peace and order and implementation of the Kohat Peace Accord, besides detailed discussions on developmental activities, health, education, transportation, drinking water, voluntary surrender of weapons and local peace committees and peace agreements.

The participants reiterated their resolve to continue unconditional cooperation with all the gov-

ernment institutions for the establishment of lasting peace in the region and not to support any anti-state person or activity. They further reiterated to forgetting all the differences and ensuring the full implementation of the Kohat Peace Agreement in at all costs.

The participants appreciated the day to day efforts and sacrifices of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Pakistan Army, Divisional and District administration and police, as a result of which the establishment of peace has been made possible.

Balochistan corps commander holds interactive session with university students

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Corps Commander Balochistan, Lieutenant General Rahat Naseem Ahmad Khan, held a special interactive session with students from various universities across Balochistan.

During the session, Lt. Gen. Rahat Naseem provided a detailed briefing on the current situation and developments in Balochistan, offering insights into the province's challenges and progress.

Students asked a range of questions, to which the Corps Commander responded with thoughtful and comprehensive answers.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the clarity and depth of the responses.

INF



HYDERABAD: A large number of citizens enjoying at Indus River Jamshoro to beat the heat during a hot and humid weather.



KOHAT: General Officer Commanding 9-Div Kohat Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti and Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motsim Billah Shah, addressing the Grand Jirga.

Malam Jabba draws adventure sports enthusiasts

SWAT (APP): The monsoon beauty of picturesque Malam Jabba in Swat Valley here Sunday attracted paragliding and adventure enthusiasts, enjoying its serene environment following rainfalls turning weather pleasant.

The breathtaking landscape, accompanied by the chirping of birds amidst the pine forests and wildlife, sets the perfect stage for adventure sports enthusiasts enjoying the thrill of paragliding.

As the sun rises over the snowy peaks of Malam Jabba at Koh-e-Handukash range, the valley comes alive with the sound of excitement, as families and tourists besides adventure sports lovers.

Malam Jabba, Miandam, Matiltan, Utror, Gabral, and Loye Sar resorts in Swat are drawing adventure sports lovers from across the country, including visitors from Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad amid blossom of seasonal flowers in Malam Jabba.

At an altitude of 2,804 meters, Malam Jabba is renowned for its skiing runs, ice hockey, snowboarding, and curling on its two tracks, which stretch over 800 meters.

The region's winter sports, combined with the picturesque scenery, make it a unique destination for adventure sports enthusiasts. The tourists come to experience the snowfall, trekking, and to enjoy the famous brown trout fish with families and loved ones on honeymoon.

At an altitude of 2,804 meters, Malam Jabba is renowned for its skiing runs, ice hockey, snowboarding, and curling on its two tracks, which stretch over 800 meters making it the largest skiing slope of Pakistan.

In addition to skiing and snowboarding, the region is also known for river rafting, trekking, and the magnificent snow-clad mountain peaks besides scores of archeological Buddhists sites offering great opportunities for tourists to explore.

Swat motorways has further increased the accessibility of Malam Jabba, making it an ideal destination for adventure tourism and adventure sports in Pakistan.

Nasir Khan, property dealer of Wapda Town Peshawar said that he had visited many countries but could not find such distinctive tourism features together as being found in Swat especially at Malam Jabba.

"Malam Jabba is my favorite hilly station due to its diverse features, easy accessibility, pollution free cool weather and trout fish amid snowfall with high velocity. No hill station carries more natural and mountainous beauty in the world than this valley", he said, adding it was right time to take advantage of digital technology and showcase these hidden treasures before world through short videos on social media platforms.

Ehtisham Qaiser, a visitor from Nowshera district, highly praised the Malam Jabba monsoon beauty especially its snowfall, skiing and paragliding sports, which he found to be even more intense than that of Murree and Chitral.

He enthusiastically described the experience of enjoying fresh trout fish with his family while taking in the charm of Malam Jabba, Kalam and Mahudhand lake.

Beyond the natural attractions, Malam Jabba and Swat as a whole also attract those interested in the region's historical and archaeological significance.

Bakhtzada Khan, Assistant Director of the Archeology and Museums Department, highlighted Swat's importance in Buddhist history, with key sites such as the Saidu Sharif Museum and the Butkhara Buddhist Monastery, attracting tourists, monks and scholars from around the world.

He emphasized that these historical landmarks should be promoted on digital platforms to draw more international visitors imperative to bolster economy and alleviate poverty in rural areas of northern KP.

Dr Muhammad Naeem, former chairman Economics Department at University of Peshawar said Pakistan tourism's revenue was increasing with each passing year due to Govt pro tourism policies.

He said that Pakistan's tourism revenue remained \$1.3 billion in 2023, which was a 2.15 times increase from the previous year. Similarly, Pakistan's tourism revenue is projected to reach \$4.26 billion this year while from 2025 to 2029, the tourism revenue is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6.75% and by 2029 it is forecasted to reach \$5.53 billion.

To achieve these ambitious targets, he suggested use of digital and social media tools to highlight Malam Jabba treasures to attract foreign tourists.

eign tourists.

To further enhance Malam Jabba's tourism appeal, Shad Khan, Spokesman of the Culture and Tourism Authority, revealed that various projects are being developed to make Swat a winter capital of Pakistan due to its seven unique features including paragliding, river rafting, trout fish, swat expressway and snowfall.

New tourist spots in areas like Sola Tanar, Puchar, and Jargo valleys, alongside initiatives like ecotourism walking tracks are being developed in Swat.

Additionally, new camping pods at different tourist destinations are being established to minimize load on existing tourists zones especially in Kalam and Malama Jabba.

A significant portion of funding is also dedicated to infrastructure projects, such as new roads to connect these new attractions with the Swat motorway.

Omar Khattak, General Manager of the KP Tourism and Culture Authority, said that different plans were chalked out for linking Malam Jabba, Bahrain and Kalam with the Swat Expressway.

The development of an Integrated Tourism Zone at Mankyal Swat under World Bank's Integrated Tourism Project would help promote sustainable tourism.

The ongoing KP Integrated Tourism Project, supported by the World Bank, is set to bring boost to sustainable tourism and adventure sports in Swat.

Tourism Police has been deployed at key spots across Swat especially in Kalam and Malam Jabba, ensuring that visitors have a smooth and enjoyable experience.

To provide affordable accommodation to tourists and ice skinning lovers, he said a host tourism project was launched in KP, offering loans up to Rs three million to locals to create safe and comfortable lodging for tourists.

Malam Jabba continues to evolve into one of the top tourism destinations for adventure tourism in Pakistan, with its combination of skiing, snowboarding, trekking, trout fishing, and stunning monsoon beauty.

The experts underscored the need for proper projection of these tourism destinations on social media platforms to promote soft image of Pakistan.

Mardan chokes in protest against load shedding

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mardan witnessed intense public outrage on Sunday as residents protested against severe and prolonged electricity loadshedding. According to the channel report, the protest took place at Sheikh Maltoon, where angry demonstrators blocked the Mardan-Nowshera Road, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Residents from Mohabbatabad and nearby housing societies joined the protest, expressing frustration over the frequent and unannounced power cuts that have disrupted their daily lives.

Many of them said they had endured extreme discomfort throughout the day due to the unbearable heat and continuous outages.

The protest escalated further when demonstrators also blocked inner roads passing through Sheikh Maltoon, effectively cutting off access routes and halting vehicular movement in the area.

Protesters demanded immediate action from WAPDA and relevant authorities, warning that if the situation persists, demonstrations will spread across the district. "We've suffered in silence long enough. This is no longer just an inconvenience—it's daily torment," one protester said.

BISE Gujranwala announces Matric Exams

Hafizabad student secures 2nd Position

Hafiz Muhammad Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Hania Khan, a brilliant student of Government Girls High School No. 1 / Centre of Excellence (Danish School), Hafizabad, has secured second position in the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Gujranwala by scoring an impressive 1185 marks out of 1200 in the annual Matriculation examinations.

In a special ceremony, Commissioner Gujranwala, Syed Naveed Haider Shirazi, awarded Hania with a medal, cash prize, and certificate in recognition of her outstanding achievement.

The school's Principal, Ms. Shaista Aamir, along with Hania's proud parents, were also present at the event.

Hania Khan, who appeared in the Science Group, expressed immense joy over her accomplishment and attributed her success to the prayers of her parents and siblings, the dedicated guidance of her teachers, and the blessings of Almighty Allah.

"I am deeply thankful to Allah for this achievement. I aspire to become a neurosurgeon and serve humanity. I believe that worshipping Allah and serving mankind bring great

reward and satisfaction," she shared.

Her parents expressed their pride and gratitude, stating that Hania's success has brought immense happiness and honor to the entire family. Principal Shaista Aamir also praised the efforts of the students and faculty, stating, "The students of the Centre of Excellence / Danish School have consistently demonstrated excellence not only in academics but also in co-curricular activities. This remarkable performance in the Matric exams is a testament to the hard work of the students and the dedication of our highly qualified staff."



Thailand and Cambodia to hold talks on deadly border conflict in Malaysia

S I S A K E T, Thailand/PHNOM PENH (Reuters): The leaders of Thailand and Cambodia will attend mediation talks over their deadly border conflict in Malaysia on Monday, the Thai government said, even as both sides accused each other of launching fresh artillery strikes across contested areas.

Talks are scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. local time (0700 GMT) on Monday, with acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai leading the Thai negotiating team, the government announced in a statement on Sunday night.

Malaysia, which chairs the ASEAN regional cooperation forum, has informed the Thai government that Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet would also be attending the talks, the statement said.

Tensions between Thailand and Cambodia have intensified since the late-May killing of a Cambodian soldier during a brief border skirmish. Border troops on both sides were reinforced amid a full-blown diplomatic crisis that brought

Thailand's fragile coalition government to the brink of collapse.

Hostilities resumed on Thursday and, within just four days, escalated into the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in more than a decade.

The death toll has risen above 30, including 13 civilians in Thailand and eight in Cambodia, while authorities report that more than 200,000 people have been evacuated from border areas.

Monday's talks come after Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim last week proposed a ceasefire and U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the two leaders had agreed to work on a ceasefire.

Bangkok and Phnom Penh have each accused the other side of sparking last week's hostilities.

Cambodia's Defence Ministry said Thailand had shelled and launched ground assaults on Sunday morning at a number of points along the border. The ministry's spokesperson said heavy artillery was fired at historic temple complexes.

"For me, I think it is great if Thailand agreed to stop fighting so both countries can live with peace," Phnom Penh university student Sreung Nita told Reuters.

The Thai army said Cambodian forces had fired shots into several areas, including near civilian homes, on Sunday, and were mobilising long-range rocket launchers.

"The situation remains tense and Cambodian troops may be preparing intensified military operations to inflict maximum damage in the final stages before negotiations," the army said in an update.

In the Thai province of Sisaket, Reuters reporters heard shelling throughout Sunday and said it was unclear which side of the border it was on.

A government health clinic about 10 km (6 miles) from the border had shattered windows, collapsed walls and exposed wiring. Local media reported it was hit by artillery on Saturday, two days after the building and surrounding neighbourhood was evacuated.

Only a few men remained to look after their

homes, camping near a makeshift bunker they had dug for protection. Intermittent sounds of artillery fire could be heard in the distance.

"It's great that America is insisting on the ceasefire because it would bring peace," Sisaket resident Thavorn Toosawan told Reuters.

Thailand and Cambodia have bickered for decades over 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.

Preah Vihear was awarded to Cambodia by the International Court of Justice in 1962, but the situation worsened in 2008 after Cambodia attempted to list it as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Skirmishes over several years brought at least a dozen deaths.

Cambodia said in June it had asked the International Court of Justice to resolve its disputes with Thailand. Bangkok says it has never recognised the court's jurisdiction and prefers a bilateral approach.



EPPING, ENGLAND: Police gather in front of the Bell Hotel during a protest against the use of the hotel as migrant accommodation on Sunday in Epping, England.

Rain in northern China kills 2, forces thousands to relocate



HONG KONG (Reuters): Heavy rain around Beijing and across north and northeast China has killed two and forced thousands to relocate as authorities warned of further widespread rain and risks of disasters including landslides and flooding.

Two were dead and two missing in Hebei province, state broadcaster CCTV reported on Sunday morning. Overnight rain dumped a record 145 mm (5.7 inches) per hour on Fuping in the industrial city of Baoding.

China's Water Resources Ministry has issued targeted flood warnings to 11 provinces and regions, including Beijing and neighbouring Hebei, for floods from small and midsize rivers

and mountain torrents.

Floods and landslides affected many villages in the Miyun district of the capital, with the rural town of Fengjiayu the most severely impacted and electricity and communications cut in some villages, CCTV said. More than 3,000 people have been transferred out of the area, Beijing News Radio reported on Sunday.

The flow into the Miyun Reservoir has increased, hitting a record peak of 6,550 cubic meters (231,000 cubic feet) per second, Beijing authorities said.

Rain will intensify in most areas of the capital, with the expected

cumulative rainfall in some areas nearby including Miyun reaching more than 100 mm over six hours, Beijing's Meteorological Observatory said. Low-lying areas are prone to waterlogging, it said.

Beijing issued a warning on Saturday for geological disasters, including landslides and mudslides, after intense rainfall unleashed, for a second time, a year's worth of rain on nearby Baoding.

Northern China has experienced record precipitation in recent years, exposing densely populated cities, including Beijing, to flood risks. Some scientists link the increased rainfall in China's usually arid north to global warming.

The storms are part of the broader pattern of extreme weather across China due to the East Asian monsoon, which has caused disruptions in the world's second-largest economy. Baoding's Xizhuang station recorded 540 mm (21 inches) over an eight-hour period, exceeding Baoding's average annual rainfall of about 500 mm. The deluge affected more than 46,000 people, forcing 4,655 to evacuate, CCTV reported.

Chinese authorities closely monitor extreme rainfall and severe flooding are, as they challenge the country's ageing flood defences, threaten to displace millions and wreak havoc on China's \$2.8 trillion agricultural sector.

Crowd surge at Hindu temple in northern India leaves at least 6 dead

LUCKNOW, India (AP): A crowd surge at a popular Hindu temple in northern India left at least six people dead and dozens injured, local authorities said Sunday.

The incident in the pilgrimage city of Haridwar occurred after a high-voltage electric wire reportedly fell on a temple path, triggering panic among the large crowd of devotees.

Vinay Shankar Pandey, a senior government official in Uttarakhand state where the incident happened, confirmed the deaths and said worshippers scrambled for safety following the incident.

Some 29 people were injured, according to Haridwar city's senior police official Pramendra Singh Doval.

Thousands of pilgrims had gathered at the Mansa Devi hilltop temple, which is a major site for Hindu devotees, especially on weekends and festival days, local officials said. They were celebrating the holy month of Shravan.

Someone in the crowd shouted about an electric current on the pathway

around 9 a.m. "Since the path is narrow and meant only for foot traffic, confusion and panic spread instantly," said local priest Ujjwal Pandit.

"A wall along the path is also suspected to have worsened the crowd bottleneck," he added.

"The situation is now under control," Pandey told the Associated Press by phone from Haridwar. "But the panic led to tragic con-

sequences." authorities are investigating what caused the overhead wire to collapse, and whether proper crowd management protocols were in place. The town of Haridwar draws millions of visitors each year. The Mansa Devi temple, which is accessible by cable car or foot, is a major pilgrimage site that draws thousands of visitors daily during Shravan.

Crowd surges at reli-

gious gatherings are not uncommon in India, where massive groups often congregate at temples or pilgrimage sites, sometimes overwhelming local infrastructure and security measures. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences to the victims and their families in a social media post and wished for a fast recovery for those who were injured.



UK's Starmer to recall cabinet from summer break to discuss Gaza

LONDON (Reuters): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will recall his cabinet from their summer break to discuss the situation in Gaza, the Financial Times reported on Sunday, amid growing pressure on the Labour government to recognize a Palestinian state.

Starmer's office did not immediately reply to a Reuters request for comment on the report.

The paper said the move to recall his cabinet of ministers next week was set out on Sunday by Downing Street. The UK parliament and cabinet are currently in a summer recess until September 1. The recall comes after

Starmer said on Friday the British government would recognize a Palestinian state only as part of a negotiated peace deal, dis-appointing many in his Labour Party who want him to follow France in taking swifter action.

President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday France would recognize a Palestinian state, a plan that drew strong condemnation from Israel and the United States, after similar moves from Spain, Norway and Ireland last year.

More than 220 members of parliament in the UK, representing about a third of the House of Commons and mostly

Labour members, wrote to Starmer on Friday urging him to recognize a Palestinian state.

Successive British governments have said they will formally recognize a Palestinian state when the time is right, without ever setting a timetable or specifying the necessary conditions.

Starmer's approach to the issue has been complicated by the arrival in Scotland on Friday of US President Donald Trump, with whom he has built warm relations. In foreign policy terms, Britain has rarely diverged from the United States.

Israel has been facing growing international crit-

icism, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government rejects, over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where images of starving Palestinians have alarmed the world.



Turkey evacuates thousands as fire-fighters battle wildfires

ANKARA (Reuters): Firefighters battled wildfires across Turkey on Sunday amid a searing Mediterranean heat-wave, with authorities evacuating more than 3,600 people from settlements in two provinces.

Wildfires in the southern provinces of Mersin and Antalya as well as the central province of Usak were largely brought under control, but blazes in the northwestern province of Bursa and the northern province of Karabuk were still burning, Agriculture and Forestry Minister Ibrahim Yumakli told reporters.

A wildfire broke out in a forested area between the Gursu and Kestel districts of Bursa, home to much of Turkey's auto industry, on Saturday. Part of a highway connecting Istanbul with the western city of Izmir was briefly closed on Saturday night due to the fire.

Huge flames engulfed trees in areas close to homes in Bursa as smoke covered the sky over the city, footage showed.



Russia scales down celebrations honoring its navy as Ukraine launches more drone attacks

MOSCOW (AP): Russia on Sunday scaled down the festivities honoring its navy citing security concerns as continuing Ukrainian drone attacks posed a challenge to the Kremlin.

Russian authorities canceled the parades of warships in St. Petersburg, in the Kaliningrad region on the Baltic and in the far-eastern port of Vladivostok that are usually held to mark the annual Navy Day celebrations.

Asked about the reason for the cancellation of the parade in St. Petersburg even as President Vladimir Putin arrived in his home city to visit the navy headquarters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that "it's linked to the overall situation, security reasons, which are above all else."

The Russian Defense Ministry said that air defenses downed 99 Ukrainian drones over several regions overnight. Later in the day, it said another 51 drones were shot down near St. Petersburg. A woman was injured by drone fragments in the Lomonosov region, according to the local authorities.

St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airport suspended dozens of flights early Sunday because of the drone threat.

On a trip to St. Petersburg, Putin visited the historic Admiralty building to receive reports on four-day naval maneuvers that wrapped up Sunday. The July Storm exercise involved 150 warships from the Baltics to the Pacific.

Putin vowed to build more warships and intensify the navy's training, adding that "the navy's strike power and combat capability will rise to a qualitatively new level."

He also visited the Admiral Grigorovich frigate of the Baltic Fleet at the Kronstadt naval base just west

of St. Petersburg to hail its crew for fending off a Ukrainian drone attack in the region earlier in the day.

Reducing the scale of the Navy Day celebrations reflects Moscow's worries about Ukraine's sweeping drone attacks across the country.

In a series of strikes earlier in the war now in its fourth year, Ukraine sank several Russian warships in the Black Sea, crippling Moscow's naval capability and forcing it to redeploy its fleet from Russia-occupied Crimea to Novorossiysk.

And in an audacious June 1 attack code-named "Spiderweb," Ukraine used drones to hit several Russian air bases hosting long-range bombers across Russia, from the Arctic Kola Peninsula to Siberia. The drones were launched from trucks covertly placed near the bases, taking the Russian military by surprise in a humiliating blow to the Kremlin.

The raid destroyed or damaged many of the bombers that had been used by Moscow to launch aerial attacks on Ukraine, providing a major morale boost for Kyiv at a time when

Kyiv's undermanned and undergunned forces are facing Russian attacks along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.

Russia continued to batter Ukraine with drone and missile strikes Sunday.

In Sumy in Ukraine's northeast, a drone attack damaged civil infrastructure objects, an administrative building and nonresidential premises, leaving three people wounded. Elsewhere in the region, two men died after being blown up by a land mine and another woman was injured from a drone attack on another community in the region, the regional military administration said.

French President Emmanuel Macron had a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday and said later on X that he reaffirmed France's support for Kyiv and vowed to raise pressure on Moscow to force it to "agree to a ceasefire that paves the way for talks leading to a solid and lasting peace, with full European involvement."



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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

Email: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

US reaches deal with Japan, tariff cut

The United States, riding a tariff wave launched by President Donald Trump, has concluded a trade agreement with Japan, the fourth largest economy in the world, in Washington on Tuesday.

According to the agreement, the US will impose 15 per cent tariff on all goods imported from Japan. This is a much lower rate than the 25 per cent that Trump had threatened Japan with from August 1. Even as the deadline hovered over the talks, the two sides managed to arrive at an agreement much before the dreaded date.

Trump had declared on his Truth Social, his personal portal, "This Deal will create Hundreds and Thousands of Jobs – There has never been anything like it. This is a very exciting time for the United States of America, and especially for the fact that we will continue to always have a great relationship with the Country of Japan."

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said, "Since February, we have been negotiating with our national interests at stake. Both sides have engaged in all-out, close-to-the-edge negotiations over automobiles and other products. I believe this outcome reflects those efforts."

The trade agreement reflects interesting details. Though it appears that the United States has gained hugely going by the headline figures – Japan will have to invest \$550 billion in the United States, open its agricultural sector to American rice – the impact on the Japanese GDP would be a mere 0.55 per cent. Even if the tariff rate had remained at the apparently punitive 25 per cent, the impact on Japanese GDP would have been 0.85 per cent. The US was running a trade deficit of \$69.4 billion. And Japan will channel the investments in the US from state-backed institutions like Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) or through guaranteed loans. The Japanese investments are to be made in semi-conductors, pharmaceuticals, steel, shipbuilding, critical minerals, aviation, energy, automobiles, AI and quantum technology.

The sensitive area for Japan is the import of rice. Japan consumes seven million tonnes of rice every year. It maintains a tariff-free quota of 770,000 tonnes. And it will increase the ratio of US rice imports within this range. It is said that there is room for rice imports outside the free tariff quota, with the proviso of 341 yen (\$.2.33) per kilogramme of rice.

Prime Minister Ishiba referring to the opening of rice imports from the US, said, "You can think of it as increasing the proportion of rice procured from the United States, under the minimum access arrangement, but this agreement does not include any provisions that would sacrifice agriculture."

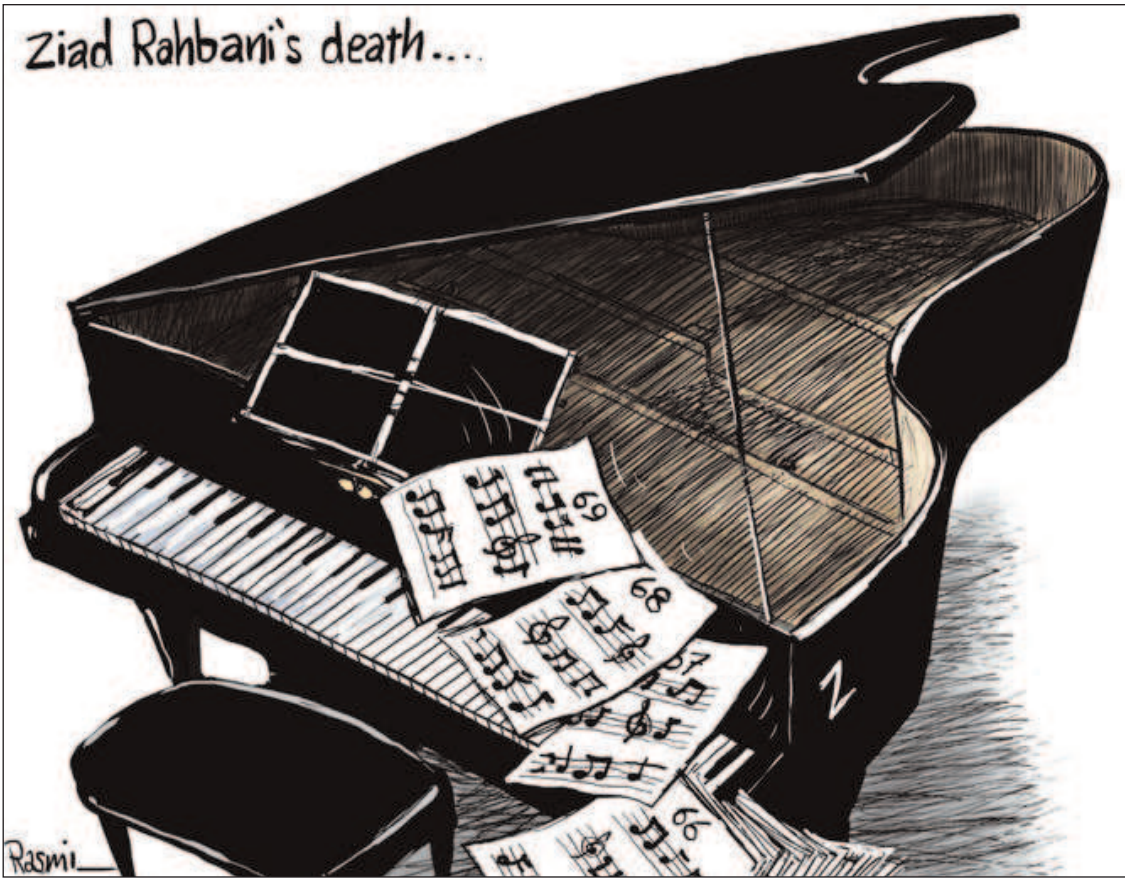
Both sides have bargained hard, and each side has claimed victory. The Japanese believe that that they have succeeded in bringing down the reciprocal tariff rate from 25 per cent to 15 per cent, a clear 10 per cent reduction. The US believes that it has managed to force Japan to necessarily invest in the US – according to the deal \$550 billion – and that 90 per cent of the profits made from the investments will remain in the United States, and that it has succeeded in prising open the protected agricultural market, especially with regard to rice.

It is expected that the US-Japan trade deal will serve as a template for the trade agreements with the European Union (EU) and China. The expectation is that the US will settle for a 15 per cent tariff with these two as well. The US is willing to be reasonably generous with big trade partners like Japan, EU, and China. But with smaller countries and economies like the Philippines and Indonesia it is playing tough. In the deal with the Philippines and Indonesia, the US has brought down the tariff regime from 20 per cent to 19 per cent. The trade balance of the US with these two countries is much lower, \$17.9 billion with Indonesia and \$4.9 billion with the Philippines.

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Ziad Rahbani's death...



A data-driven blueprint for a flourishing Africa

Hafed Al-Ghwell

International dialogues on African development remain fixated on redefining success rather than materially enabling its realization. Ground-breaking research across 40 African nations reveals populations consistently excel in nonmaterial dimensions of human thriving, even amid severe economic constraints. Consider Nigeria, ranked fifth globally in nonfinancial flourishing indicators despite its middle-income status. There, a majority of citizens report robust social relationships and exceptional levels of forgiveness, outperforming wealthier nations. Kenya and Egypt follow closely at seventh and 10th, respectively.

In Senegal and Ghana, over three-quarters of the population experiences daily enjoyment and laughter — testament to emotional resilience untethered from gross domestic product per capita. Rwanda and Ethiopia demonstrate similar strengths, with populations reporting high social well-being metrics such as feeling respected and engaging in daily learning, despite ranking among the world's least-affluent nations. This divergence is jarring: Sierra Leone, facing heightened food insecurity, ranks 135th in life evaluations globally, yet West African neighbors such as Senegal report surprising levels of optimism about living standards improving.

The contradiction exposes a fatal flaw in current development frameworks. While African societies organically cultivate profound human strengths — communal bonds in Nigeria's wazobia tradition, Ubuntu-inspired resilience in Southern Africa, or Ethiopia's dedication to collective learning — the global response offers mere measurement instead of meaningful support. Mauritius' relatively high global life evaluation ranking coexists with its paradoxical stress levels, proving economic stability alone does not guarantee flourishing.

This evidence demands a rethink: If 87 percent of Nigerians thrive socially without material abundance, why do development policies prioritize economic metrics over social infrastructure? When Kenya outranks industrialized nations in daily enjoyment, yet places 115th in life satisfaction, it reveals the inadequacy of single-dimension assessments. Africa's organic flourishing, rooted in community, character, and meaning, is not a footnote to development. It is the blueprint. Yet the machinery of international aid remains calibrated to inputs Africa has not requested, ignoring the outputs it demonstrably achieves.

The persistent refinement of well-being metrics, while academically rigorous, risks becoming a sophisticated form of inaction. Consider Tanzania, ranked 11th globally in multidimensional flourishing, yet grappling with systemic gaps in housing and education access. Or Nigeria, where nearly half report financial instability despite the nation's fifth-place global ranking in nonmaterial flourishing, 87

percent exhibit exceptional character virtues like forgiveness, and three in four maintain robust social bonds. These divergences expose a troubling reality: Cataloging strengths without addressing corresponding deficits is an analytical dead end.

The evidence is unambiguous: Thriving social ecosystems coexist with material deprivation. Kenya, ninth globally in

deploying resources toward the specific fissures revealed by the data: financial inclusion for Nigeria's struggling bottom half, educational infrastructure in Tanzania, and healthcare equity from Algeria to Chad. Until then, well-being metrics serve as epitaphs for potential, not blueprints for progress.

Documenting African resilience, while valuable, remains an insufficient academic exercise if divorced from concrete action. True partnership requires channeling resources decisively toward priorities defined by African communities themselves. The evidence is unequivocal: Populations are actively constructing well-being frameworks rooted in indigenous philosophies emphasizing communal bonds over individualistic metrics. Yet the transformative power of these organic structures is systematically throttled by deficits in foundational capabilities. Consider food insecure countries, where more than two-thirds consistently report lacking money for food. This crippling economic reality directly impedes the potential of community-driven support networks, however strong their cultural foundation.

Africa's organic wisdom, collective dignity, intergenerational support, and joy amid adversity, demands more than documentation. It requires deploying resources toward the specific fissures revealed by the data: financial inclusion for Nigeria's struggling bottom half, educational infrastructure in Tanzania, and healthcare equity from Algeria to Chad. Until then, well-being metrics serve as epitaphs for potential, not blueprints for progress. Documenting African resilience, while valuable, remains an insufficient academic exercise if divorced from concrete action. True partnership requires channeling resources decisively toward priorities defined by African communities themselves. The evidence is unequivocal: Populations are actively constructing well-being frameworks rooted in indigenous philosophies emphasizing communal bonds over individualistic metrics. Yet the transformative power of these organic structures is systematically throttled by deficits in foundational capabilities. Consider food insecure countries, where more than two-thirds consistently report lacking money for food. This crippling economic reality directly impedes the potential of community-driven support networks, however strong their cultural foundation.

daily learning opportunities, reports only 115th in life satisfaction — a paradox where intellectual curiosity flourishes amid broader systemic challenges. Ethiopia, ranking 121st in educational access, trails Kenya's emotional resilience. These societies do not require more sophisticated scorecards; they need targeted investment aligned with documented needs.

Yet the development sector remains seduced by quantification. Mauritius' positive life evaluation masks heightened stress levels, while oil-rich Gabon trails in emotional well-being. At the same time, Algeria's food insecurity rate of just under 20 percent still represents millions denied basic sustenance. In a nutshell, when indices celebrate non-financial flourishing while material suffering persists, they inadvertently sanitize inequality.

Africa's organic wisdom, collective dignity, intergenerational support, and joy amid adversity, demands more than documentation. It requires

African-conceived and African-led solutions.

This redirection demands targeted investment in areas proven to underpin dignity and agency, directly addressing the deficiencies quantified in the very surveys critiquing narrow approaches. Chronic underfunding of education, particularly in the humanities essential for ethical reasoning and civic character, must be reversed. The data reveals a continent-wide chasm: Kenya ranks ninth globally for daily learning experiences, reflecting vibrant intellectual engagement, while Algeria languishes at 125th, suggesting systemic barriers to personal development.

Financing educational models that intentionally marry skills training with moral and civic development is not a luxury; it is foundational for sustainable, self-directed flourishing. Similarly, investing in physical infrastructure that enhances daily dignity, for example safe housing, reliable sanitation and accessible clean water is non-negotiable. These are not abstract ideals, but tangible requirements highlighted by low rankings in perceived living standards improvement. Such investments directly tackle the environmental "livability" factors demonstrably linked to well-being.

Crucially, this shift necessitates accepting African definitions of success as legitimate policy blueprints, not anthropological curiosities. Mauritius' position as Africa's leader in life evaluations and the consistently high rankings for positive affect across West Africa, measured by, for instance, levels of enjoyment and optimism about the future, are not statistical outliers to be explained away. They are valid, contextually grounded expressions of prosperity emerging from distinct social, cultural, and economic realities.

Policies anchored in externally imposed definitions of progress will inevitably falter. Recognizing the strength inherent in communal orientations, as seen in Nigeria's high ranking for experiencing harmony with others, or the resilience reflected in Kenya's unexpectedly high enjoyment ranking despite lower life satisfaction, provides an essential starting point. Prosperity in Africa manifests diversely; policy must reflect this complexity rather than force conformity to foreign — and too often out-of-touch — paradigms. Enabling self-determined priorities means respecting the evidence of what already works within African contexts and scaling it through aligned, substantial resource commitment. The data provides the map; the will to follow it, investing in capabilities and dignity defined from within, is the test of genuine partnership.

When Nigeria consistently outperforms advanced economies on core human dimensions, the message is clear: Africa does not need the world to redefine success; it needs the world to respect and resource its pathways to sustainably achieving it.

In Gaza, water kills too

Ahmad Abushawish

In Gaza, we see death in every aspect of life. Death has become an inseparable companion, lingering in the streets, the skies, and even in our homes. It is no longer a shock — it is a grim daily reality which we have been forced to adapt to.

There are many ways to die in Gaza, although one does not have the luxury to choose.

You may be killed in a bombing, or be struck by a sniper's bullet as you try to collect food to stave off hunger, or starvation itself may claim your life. The Health Ministry says 116 people have died because of malnutrition, many of them babies and children.

In Gaza, the simplest, most basic necessity can also be lethal. Water is one of them. Every aspect of it can be dangerous: providing it, seeking it, drinking it, swimming in it.

Since the start of the genocide, the Israeli army has relentlessly targeted Gaza's water infrastructure. More than 85 percent of Gaza's water and sanitation structures are inoperable — including pipelines, wells, and treatment facilities.

Israel has blocked the entry of water-related materials to the Strip, making repairs difficult. It has also targeted the warehouse of the water utility authority, destroying equipment and spare parts.

Worst of all, workers trying to make repairs or operate water infrastructure have been directly targeted and killed. Working in the water sector has now become a deadly job.

Most recently, on July 21, the Israeli occupation forces attacked a desalination plant in the Remal neighbourhood of Gaza City, killing five people at the site. This was one of the few functioning water stations in the city.

The destruction of the water infrastructure in Gaza has forced us to go out in search of water on a daily basis. There are some war entrepreneurs who charge exorbitant amounts

Sometimes, water trucks are not available, so people are forced to drink water that is unfit for human consumption from local wells. It is contaminated with bacteria, chemicals and other contaminants and can trigger outbreaks of waterborne diseases. I myself felt victim to one. Months ago, after drinking from a local well, I contracted hepatitis A. My skin and the whites of my eyes turned a haunting shade of yellow. Waves of nausea left me unable to eat, and a persistent fever made every breath feel difficult. But the worst was the searing pain in my abdomen — a constant, twisting ache as if my insides were being wrung out by invisible hands. For weeks, I was bedridden, my body weak, my mind consumed with fear.

of money for delivering water to homes; the vast majority of people cannot afford such services.

So Palestinians are forced to walk long distances and wait in long queues, plastic jugs in hand, to fetch a daily ration of water.

The wait under the scorching sun is not just exhausting, but it can also turn deadly.

On July 13, 11 Palestinians — seven of them children — were killed and dozens more injured when an Israeli missile struck civilians as they queued to get water from water trucks in Nuseirat refugee camp, not far from my own home.

Sometimes, water trucks are not available, so people are forced to drink water that is unfit for human consumption from local wells. It is contaminated with bacteria, chemicals and other contaminants and can trigger outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

I myself felt victim to one. Months ago, after drinking from a local well, I contracted hepatitis A. My skin and the whites of my eyes turned a haunting shade of yellow. Waves of nausea left me unable to eat, and a persistent fever made every breath feel difficult. But the worst was the searing pain in my abdomen — a constant, twisting ache as if my insides were being wrung out by invisible hands. For weeks, I was bedridden, my

body weak, my mind consumed with fear.

A visit to a clinic brought me no relief — just a prescription for a painkiller and a "salamtek" (get well). I had to fight the infection on my own.

I survived, but others are not so lucky. Hepatitis, like other infectious waterborne diseases running amok in Gaza, kills.

Amid the unbearable summer heat, one would think that at least the water of the sea could bring Palestinians some relief, but that too is deadly.

In recent weeks, the Israeli military has declared Gaza's entire coastline a prohibited zone, effectively banning Palestinians from swimming, fishing, or even approaching the water. Anyone who gets near the sea is shot at.

Even before the ban, the Israeli army was attacking Palestinians who would try to get into the sea to fish and alleviate their families' hunger. As of December 2024, some 200 fishermen had been killed, according to the UN; many more have died since then.

While we are banned from the only place that used to bring us relief from the heat, just a few kilometres north, Israelis freely enjoy the same Mediterranean waves, sunbathing and swimming in peace. They also enjoy long showers and the privilege of running water. They use the luxurious 247 litres (65 gallons) per day per person.

According to the World Health Organization, a person needs 100 litres (26 gallons) of water per day to cover their basic needs. People in Gaza now get between two and nine litres (0.5 – 2.3 gallons) per day.

The struggle for water is just one of the many battles Palestinians in Gaza fight daily. There is no food to feed one's starving family, no electricity to power fans, and no medicine to treat the diseases that plague us. Every aspect of life here is a test of endurance. There is, quite literally, nothing to ease the weight of these

Sometimes, water trucks are not available, so people are forced to drink water that is unfit for human consumption from local wells. It is contaminated with bacteria, chemicals and other contaminants and can trigger outbreaks of waterborne diseases. I myself felt victim to one. Months ago, after drinking from a local well, I contracted hepatitis A. My skin and the whites of my eyes turned a haunting shade of yellow. Waves of nausea left me unable to eat, and a persistent fever made every breath feel difficult. But the worst was the searing pain in my abdomen — a constant, twisting ache as if my insides were being wrung out by invisible hands. For weeks, I was bedridden, my body weak, my mind consumed with fear.

brutal circumstances — no relief, no respite, not even the smallest comfort.

I still can't comprehend how, in the 21st century, a world of more than 7 billion people, where global leaders talk about prosperity, dignity and rule of law, we are still deprived of the most basic human necessities.

In December 2024, Human Rights Watch openly declared that Palestinians in Gaza are being subjected to a "genocide," and it based this conclusion on establishing Israel's "water deprivation as a deliberate act". It pointed out that "thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have died as a result of malnutrition, dehydration, and disease as of August 2024".

It has been a year since then. Countless people have died because of Israel's weaponisation of water — numbers that are not included in the official death toll because the health authorities simply lack the capacity to track them.

The truth is out in the open. It is broadcast on international media. It is visible on social media. And yet, the world remains idle, refusing to take action and stop Israel.

To this world, I want to say: Your silence echoes louder than the bombs that fall on us every day. You must act now, or go down in history with your complicity in the slaughter and starvation of the Palestinian people.

Turkiye stands to gain from waning Western support for Israel

Dr. Sinem Cengiz

Turkiye, which has historically relied on US-made fighter jets, had been for some time working on a deal to acquire Eurofighter Typhoon jets as part of its long-term goal to modernize and expand its air force. This week, those efforts finally bore fruit. Türkiye has reached preliminary agreements with both the UK and Germany for the potential purchase of 40 Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jets. British Defense Secretary John Healey heralded the agreements as bringing Türkiye “one step closer to a fully comprehensive agreement” that would bolster the air capabilities of both Ankara and NATO.

The signing of these deals has raised deep concerns in Israel, as opposition parties have criticized the Israeli government for failing to prevent the deal from moving forward. Some analysts and policymakers in Washington have also voiced discomfort with the deal, saying that it contradicts the German government’s previous decision to block the sale based on Türkiye’s support for some groups that threaten Western strategic interests. The Eurofighter Typhoon, produced by a consortium comprising the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain, had long been out of Türkiye’s reach. The deal had stalled for years, primarily due to Germany’s persistent concerns regarding Türkiye’s foreign policy.

Therefore, the recent development is far more than a simple military procurement transaction; it reflects a broader recalibration of European priorities at a time NATO recalibrates its approach in the face of potential future threats from Russia. So, it is not only about modernizing Türkiye’s air force, but also

about establishing Türkiye as a more deeply integrated player within Europe’s evolving defense framework. The move can also be interpreted as a message to the US that Washington must reconsider its position on excluding Türkiye from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program, from which Ankara was expelled in 2019 after its acquisition of the Russian-made S-400 missile defense system.

From Türkiye’s point of view, Ankara is clearly preparing for a long game. Türkiye is still exploring

Turkish officials and commentators, there is now a belief that Türkiye could be the next regional target of Israeli military assertiveness. The broader perception in Ankara is that Israel is pursuing a destabilizing military policy in the region, and Türkiye must prepare accordingly.

Moreover, Ankara has made clear that it will oppose any future NATO military collaboration with Israel until it ends its assault on Gaza. Türkiye, as a NATO member, holds veto power over alliance

number of Western countries that are increasingly frustrated by Israel’s war in Gaza and its destabilizing policies across the region. Just a day before the Eurofighter deal was made public, the UK issued a warning that it could take further measures against Israel if it refused to bring the conflict in Gaza to a close. This came after several European countries condemned Israel for restricting humanitarian aid deliveries and for allegedly killing hundreds of Palestinians at designated

has violated its human rights obligations under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, a 25-year-old legal framework governing the political relationship and trade cooperation between the two sides. But so far the EU has taken no action to suspend such ties. Full or partial suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement requires a unanimous agreement by all 27 members of the EU. Although such unity is hard to achieve, the talks over this signals shifting sentiment within EU corridors.

Thus, the Eurofighter deal with Türkiye is a test of European priorities and the cost of their support for Israel. Germany, which has long maintained its backing for Israel, has recently sharpened its tone, signaling greater discomfort with the war in Gaza. European capitals are reassessing their long-term approach as the political cost of unconditional support for Israel rises. The unfolding humanitarian catastrophe has shifted public opinion and forced many Western governments to reevaluate their approach toward Israel.

Amid this, diplomats from Germany, France, and the UK met with Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi in Istanbul on Friday to try to restart negotiations on Iran’s nuclear enrichment program.

Israel’s war in Gaza, coupled with its operations in Syria and Iran, is generating rising discomfort in European capitals. Given that Türkiye is hosting these critical talks between the West and Iran, and having signed the Eurofighter deals, it is becoming evident that the waning of Israel’s exceptionalism in Western strategic calculations is to Ankara’s benefit.

Now, Turkish leaders are openly signaling their position to use that veto power again to isolate Israel within NATO’s framework. This stance aligns Türkiye with a growing number of Western countries that are increasingly frustrated by Israel’s war in Gaza and its destabilizing policies across the region. Just a day before the Eurofighter deal was made public, the UK issued a warning that it could take further measures against Israel if it refused to bring the conflict in Gaza to a close. This came after several European countries condemned Israel for restricting humanitarian aid deliveries and for allegedly killing hundreds of Palestinians at designated food distribution sites. In May, the UK announced the suspension of free trade negotiations with Israel. British Foreign Secretary David Lammy recently said he was “sickened” by the suffering in Gaza, although he did not specify what concrete actions might follow.

avenues to rejoin the US-led F-35 program, but the signing of these deals will accelerate Türkiye’s arms buildup in a way that could eventually challenge Israel’s military edge in the region. Israel’s recent military actions, including its 12-day confrontation with Iran, Türkiye’s immediate neighbor, and airstrikes in the Syrian Arab Republic, have deeply concerned Turkish policymakers. According to several senior

decisions — a powerful tool it has exercised in the past. For instance, Türkiye previously blocked Israel’s bid for observer status within NATO, a decision it only reversed temporarily during a short-lived reconciliation era in 2023.

Now, Turkish leaders are openly signaling their position to use that veto power again to isolate Israel within NATO’s framework.

This stance aligns Türkiye with a growing

food distribution sites. In May, the UK announced the suspension of free trade negotiations with Israel. British Foreign Secretary David Lammy recently said he was “sickened” by the suffering in Gaza, although he did not specify what concrete actions might follow.

European capitals have also been reassessing their diplomatic and trade ties with Israel over Gaza. An internal report recently found indications that Israel

A new national climate vision for Arab youth

Leyla Hasanova

For young people across the Arab world, the climate emergency is deeply alarming. In the cradle of civilization, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are at their lowest levels in recorded history. Deserts are spreading; salt-water from rising sea levels is seeping into the Nile and Shatt Al-Arab, threatening farmers and food systems; city-dwellers toil under debilitating heatwaves, the intensity of which is magnified by their concrete surroundings. For those touched by conflict, the prospects are even more terrifying.

And these generations are bulging — over half of those living in the region are under the age of 25. This means a future with more demand on resources, more pressure on ecosystems and more demand for jobs that can withstand a changing climate. That young people are anxious about all of this is not only understandable; it is justified. Young people want — and deserve — a new vision for the future.

Fortunately, young people are determined to be a force for good. During COP27 in Egypt, the first youth envoy was appointed and given a seat at the table. At COP28, the UAE advanced these efforts by institutionalizing the Presidency Youth Climate Champion role, ensuring the voices of children and youth were amplified in high-level climate discussions.

As the COP29

Presidency Youth Climate Champion team, we helped ensure that negotiations in Azerbaijan on a new finance deal for developing countries addressed youth priorities. The Baku Finance Goal specifically addressed youth financial inclusion, committing donors to financing the well-being of future generations on the frontlines of

First, these documents are our last best chance to keep the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement in reach and stave off the worst effects of climate change. Second, by highlighting priority industries of the future, setting timelines and targets and demonstrating government commitment, they send powerful market signals which serve as green lights to green investment. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. And third, today’s young generation is not simply inheriting these plans; we will carry them out. We stand ready and determined to meet this responsibility. As governments enter the final few months before submission, they must focus on three essential pillars: consultation, integration and education.

the climate crisis. This year is pivotal. Under the Paris Agreement, countries must submit their updated national climate plans — known as Nationally Determined Contributions — by September. These must plot, in detail, how all sectors of national economies will cut carbon emissions over the next decade. In addition, countries must lay out how they will adapt to the relentless consequences of a warming world. Together, these NDCs form the backbone of our global

climate efforts.

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they send powerful market signals which serve as green lights to green investment. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. And third, today’s young generation is not simply inheriting these plans; we will carry them out. We stand ready and determined to meet this responsibility. As governments enter the final few months before submission, they must focus on three essential pillars: consultation, integration and education. Consultation underpins all effective policymaking,

and youth inclusion is no exception. We have proved we can help deliver better outcomes with the Baku Finance Goal at COP29. Now we believe governments must act on the concerns and priorities of their young people. Last year, our team led numerous consultations with youth groups across the world. This experience reaffirmed

that meaningful engagement with youth fosters a stronger sense of ownership over the processes we are expected to deliver. Next, climate plans must be fully integrated into national development strategies and policy frameworks. Across the Arab world, governments are rolling out ambitious national programs — Qatar’s National Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 are just two examples which emphasize environmental stewardship. However, as countries pre-

pare to submit their updated climate plans to the UN, we cannot let them sit on the sidelines — they must be embedded at the heart of national missions. Only then can we turn pledges into progress.

Of course, not all countries have sufficient resources or policy know-how. As COP29 host, Azerbaijan is working closely with the UN as COP29 host to ensure every country has the support necessary to produce the best version of their plans.

And finally, education and skills will be critical. Climate literacy is essential to help young people understand and navigate the challenges ahead. Equally, possessing skills in the industries of the future, from clean energy to regenerative agriculture, will help them seize tomorrow’s opportunities.

At COP29, we launched the Baku Initiative on Human Development for Climate Resilience, spotlighting the importance of integrating education, capacity building and skills into national climate strategies. If governments are truly committed to their pledges, they need to equip the next generation that will be doing the work.

Our generation may have our whole lives ahead of us, but we are in a race against time. In the next round of climate plans, young people want to see a new vision for our future. We want something positive. And we want plans that we can work towards.

‘Humanitarian city’ and ‘voluntary migration’ are inhumane and involuntary

Yossi Mekelberg

The Oxford Dictionary defines “euphemism” as “a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing.” Wars and conflicts that cause unbearable suffering have also become fertile ground for irritating euphemisms. After all, individuals or groups involved in inflicting pain and misery on others are trying to hide their sense of shame, embarrassment, guilt, or accountability by using “creative” and “imaginative” euphemisms in order to deflect from their responsibility for their ill-doings.

For example, one of the most used, though scorned, euphemisms from recent military history is “collateral damage,” a term first used during the Vietnam War. In reality, this refers to death, injury, or damage to property inflicted on non-combatants — sometimes unintended, but very often recklessly — during military operations. Two more examples are “extraordinary rendition” and “friendly fire.” The first refers to seizing terror suspects and whisking them away to remote places in order to use illegal interrogation techniques, including torture; while the second refers to being shot accidentally by your own side — and there is nothing friendly about that.

New wars bring with them new euphemisms or the dusting off of old ones, and in recent months Israel has increasingly been using two that are infuriating, but worse, pose a danger that if translated into reality are most likely to result in the committing of further war crimes. Let us start with the increasing use of “voluntary migration” regarding the people of Gaza. Nothing is voluntary in what is being suggested by Israeli officials. Cabinet ministers began floating this idea just weeks after the Hamas attack of Oct. 7.

The ultra-nationalist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who heads one of the religious ultra-nationalist parties in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s coalition, and happens also to be a prominent settler in the occupied West Bank, declared in November 2023: “I welcome the initiative of the voluntary emigration of Gaza Arabs to countries around the world, as the right humanitarian solution for the residents of Gaza.”

As the war continued, Netanyahu joined the chorus of supporters and endorsed this despicable idea, encouraged by the US president’s suggestion to push the entire Gaza population out of the enclave, while calling it “a remarkable idea,” and one that “should be really pursued.” To translate this idea into a practical plan, Israel’s Defense Minister Israel Katz announced the establishment of a new directorate in the Defense Ministry tasked with enabling Palestinians to “voluntarily” leave the Gaza Strip.

The use of the word “voluntary” is deliberately misleading because those who are plotting the operation are well aware that Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power or to that of any other country, occupied or not.”

The only exception is for the purpose of ensuring the security of the people displaced, and even the current Israeli government would find it impossible to convincingly advocate that this is their intention. Instead, experts in international law suggest that the constant displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and attempts to move them altogether out of the enclave are in breach of international law, and for the rest of us represent a cruel and immoral act of immense proportions, with serious political implications across the region.

Those who toy with “voluntary migration” know that they abuse the term voluntary, as it suggests doing something of one’s own free will. Gaza’s

on the ruins of Rafah. One wonders what sick brains have been brewing this evil plan to cram at least 600,000 souls into a new encampment on the border with Egypt, in a location that is already one of the most densely populated territories in the world. Audaciously, Israel’s defense minister made no attempt to hide the true intention of this huge camp, openly declaring that those who move there will be free to leave, but only to go to another country — once again this doublespeak of “free will” and “completely voluntarily.” For the rest of us, this is a plan to transfer as many Palestinians as possible out of Gaza.

The international community must not fall into the trap of these

As the war continued, Netanyahu joined the chorus of supporters and endorsed this despicable idea, encouraged by the US president’s suggestion to push the entire Gaza population out of the enclave, while calling it “a remarkable idea,” and one that “should be really pursued.” To translate this idea into a practical plan, Israel’s Defense Minister Israel Katz announced the establishment of a new directorate in the Defense Ministry tasked with enabling Palestinians to “voluntarily” leave the Gaza Strip. The use of the word “voluntary” is deliberately misleading because those who are plotting the operation are well aware that Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power or to that of any other country, occupied or not.” The only exception is for the purpose of ensuring the security of the people displaced, and even the current Israeli government would find it impossible to convincingly advocate that this is their intention. Instead, experts in international law suggest that the constant displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and attempts to move them altogether out of the enclave are in breach of international law, and for the rest of us represent a cruel and immoral act of immense proportions, with serious political implications across the region.

more than 2 million people were living in the world’s biggest open-air prison even before the war broke out, and since then have been experiencing a living hell.

Most have already been forcefully displaced several times, suffering from extreme shortages of food, water, medical help, shelter, and other basic needs. They are also traumatized by what they have experienced and witnessed in nearly two years of a war that hardly distinguishes between combatants and noncombatants, while every day they live in the constant fear that this might be the last for themselves and their loved ones.

And despite that, most do not want to leave what is their home, even if it is a devastated one. Who could blame them if in the face of this cruel reality, and with no end in sight, they did wish to leave? But fleeing from the horrors of a death trap hardly constitutes voluntary migration.

If this situation does not scare them enough to make them run for the border, the Israeli government has come up with the even more sinister idea of building a “humanitarian city”

euphemisms, and must call out these horrific ideas for what they are — cruel and inhumane, and aimed at pushing out of Gaza as many as Palestinians as possible, and leaving the place under Israeli control, along with the idea being floated of building settlements there for Israelis.

Those who supported Israel, and rightly so, after Oct. 7, should be brave and use what leverage they have to remove from the agenda any forced displacement or the building of what one former Israeli prime minister has called a concentration camp. The anger directed at Hamas for the hostages still held in captivity must not continue to be directed at innocent civilians as a justification for committing atrocities, and Israeli society must wake up and acknowledge this. After all, it is being done in their name.

A good start would be to call a spade a spade, and call out “voluntary migration” for what it is: an attempt to force the residents of Gaza out of their homes and push them into an inhumane camp and not a so-called “humanitarian city.”

Rebuilding Sudan begins by restoring people’s trust

Areig Elhag

Footage emerging from Sudan’s capital, Khartoum, defies belief. Once-bustling streets like Al-Jumhuriya Road and Al-Soug Al-Arabi now lie silent, covered in smoke and rubble. What was once a center of commerce, life, and resilience has turned into a ghost city, hollowed out by a war that has not only destroyed buildings, but also shattered trust.

This war, sparked in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, has left deep physical and psychological scars. But as calls for ceasefires and peace negotiations continue, a pressing question remains: What will it take to bring life back to Khartoum? Is the end of war enough? The answer is no. True

reconstruction starts not with cement, but with people, particularly the return and empowerment of Sudan’s middle class. Any vision for postwar recovery that overlooks this group is bound to fail. Teachers, engineers, doctors, journalists, small business owners, and civil servants — these are the people who sustained Sudan’s urban life, held communities together, and fueled the country’s economic engine.

Today, many of them have lost their livelihoods, been displaced, or fallen into poverty. Most are unwilling to return without serious guarantees: security, restitution, and a sense of belonging. Rebuilding physical infrastructure is possible, but restoring trust is far more difficult.

History offers powerful lessons on how nations rose from the rubble. From France and Germany after the Second World War, to Japan, China, and Malaysia, and even across Africa in countries such as Rwanda and Mozambique, the road to recovery was not merely paved with international aid. It was led by national strategies that invested in human capital, revitalized the middle class, and reestablished a sense of civic purpose.

Postwar France lost more than 600,000 people and saw the collapse of its infrastructure. Yet through investments in education, transportation, and rail networks — alongside partial support from the Marshall Plan — the state reignited economic momentum. Within 25 years, per capita

income rose by more than 170 percent, and France rebuilt its institutions on a socially and economically balanced foundation.

In Japan, despite the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and a death toll exceeding 2.5 million, the government launched its “Income Doubling Plan” in the 1960s. This focused on education, industrial innovation, and infrastructure development. By the 1970s, Japan had become the world’s third-largest economy.

In China, following the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), which resulted in the deaths of up to 2 million people, Deng Xiaoping launched sweeping reforms in 1978. These

included liberalizing the economy, creating special economic zones, and attracting foreign investment. The result was a rapidly growing economy and a reemerging middle class.

In Malaysia, after the severe racial riots of 1969, the country avoided descending into full-blown war by adopting a comprehensive development strategy in the 1970s, known as the New Economic Policy. It aimed to reduce economic inequality between ethnic groups, empower entrepreneurship, and expand access to education and housing — enabling a broad segment of the population to join a modern middle class.

In Mozambique, after a

15-year civil war (1977–1992) that claimed over 1 million lives, the country began rebuilding by repatriating refugees, reopening schools, and reforming its financial system. Despite limited resources, it achieved relative stability through phased and community-based recovery programs.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram’s insurgency has killed more than 35,000 people and displaced over 2.5 million, especially in the northeast since 2009. The government has responded by launching reconstruction projects in villages such as Ngom, focusing on vocational training, small enterprises, and building local markets and schools. This has helped to restore some

degree of trust between communities and the state.

In Rwanda, almost 800,000 people were killed in just 100 days amid genocidal violence in 1994. In its aftermath, the country implemented a bold national reconciliation strategy that emphasized anti-corruption, women’s empowerment, local governance, and a direct link between healing and development. This approach helped foster a new middle class and achieve notable economic growth, despite limited natural resources.

All these experiences share one core principle: no reconstruction project can succeed without placing the middle class at its center — as planners, participants, and beneficiaries.

What is happening in Khartoum is not just material destruction; it is a deep erosion of trust. The social fabric that once balanced poverty and wealth, state and society, has unraveled. The return of Khartoum depends not on the return of its buildings, but on the return of its middle class, which has always been the backbone of real and lasting stability.

Rebuilding Sudan must not begin with concrete and bricks, but with restoring people — restoring their roles, dignity, and confidence that war will not return, and that the state will work for them, not against them. Only this trust can bring families back to their homes, investors back to their businesses, and society back to life.



Bilour slams ‘unfair’ anti-encroachment drive

— calls for resolution of traders’ issues through dialogue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Leader of Businessman Forum Ghazanfar Bilour strongly reacted over the ongoing ‘unfair’ anti-encroachment campaign in the city and described the action of district administration economic-murder of the traders.

Ghazanfar Bilour asked the authorities to halt the operation immediately and emphasized formulation of business-friendly policies and initiatives in consultation with traders and stakeholders.

Businessman forum leader in the recent statement here on Sunday stated that the anti-encroachment drive that had launched to restore the glory of the walled city, which had brought economic destruction for the traders, particularly becoming the cause of ruining decade-old business, investment, hardwork and humiliating dignity.

The abrupt razing down an established business and business is a reflection of ‘anti-business’ policy and narrative that would give birth to a human and economic catastrophe, Ghazanfar Bilour remarked.

The BF leader vociferously stated that those relevant officials and departments who had issued NOC for construction of shops and markets are equally responsible and they must be brought to justice so that there should not be injustice and discouragement for the established business and trader in future.

Ghazanfar Bilour stated it is a great questionmark of authorities concerned which had issued NOC for construction of the shops and markets, now they are razing down.

He went on to say that despite fulfilling all legal requirements, procedures and documents, the businesses were destroyed,

which is extremely inappropriate, unjust, and unacceptable.

BF leader said there was unseen any strategy and arrangements for provision of alternate location and compensation for the demolished shops and markets.

Ghazanfar Bilour lashed out at the Peshawar’s elected legislators over their conspicuous silence on the ongoing anti-encroachment operation in the city, stating that the elected members didn’t deserve the public representation if they couldn’t stand with the public and traders in their difficult time.

He maintained MPAs have kept a complete mum over the situation, which is extremely awful and tantamount to hurting the trust of public and traders.

The BF leader made it clear that the business community didn’t want any kind of confrontation but it is a staunch supporter of

collaboration, consultation and transparent governance. He added traders fully believe to resolve all issues through table talk and mutual cooperation/consultation and are highly discouraged to build up any kind of collision with institutions.

Apart from restoring past glory of the walled city, protection of legitimate businesses and rights of traders is amongst their topmost priority, Ghazanfar Bilour said, adding that SCCI is the only institute which had always played a pivotal role in resolving traders’ issues.

He said the chamber is ready to cooperate for a meaningful consultation, constructive dialogue and policy making with government and relevant institutions and would continue to play its role in bridging the gap between business community and institutions in future.



SHANGHAI: GuoDong Group founder meeting with Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan’s ICT and new energy sectors.

TDAP equip entrepreneurs to tap global markets

LAHORE (APP): Convener of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food Shahid Imran has emphasized the need for targeted training programs to help Pakistani entrepreneurs access international markets.

Talking to a delegation of entrepreneurs led by former FPCCI Vice President Chaudhry Zahid Iqbal Arain, here on Sunday, Shahid Imran said that many SMEs in Pakistan face challenges such as limited understanding of export procedures, poor documentation, lack of certifications, and difficulty in negotiating with foreign buyers. These factors, he noted, significantly restrict their global outreach.

He urged TDAP to bridge this gap by organizing specialized workshops, mentorship sessions, and trade fairs that connect local businesses with international buyers. “Training in market research, compliance standards, and digital marketing, particularly on platforms like Amazon and Alibaba, can open up e-commerce-based export opportunities for SMEs,” he added.

With Pakistan’s economy in need of export-led growth, Shahid Imran stressed that TDAP must take on a proactive role as a facilitator, equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to compete globally.

Bilal held telephonic conversation with CM

— discussed problems faced by traders

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of Peshawar Traders Chamber and senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Ghulam Bilal Javid held a telephonic conversation with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. During the call, an in-depth discussion was held regarding the severe challenges faced by the trader community of Peshawar, especially the oppressive and authoritari-

an actions taken by the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar.

Ghulam Bilal Javid informed the Chief Minister that the ongoing unjust anti-encroachment operations are not only undermining the dignity of the traders but are also pushing the city’s commercial environment to the brink of collapse. He further highlighted that traders are already struggling with economic distress, political uncertainty, and adminis-

trative injustices-making further pressure absolutely unbearable.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur attentively listened to all concerns and assured that he is taking these issues seriously. He stated that Ghulam Bilal Javid and his delegation would soon be invited to the Chief Minister’s House for a meeting to formulate an effective, sustainable, and dignified solution to the problems of the trader community.

Foreign buyers flock to Lahore Carpet Exhibition

LAHORE (PPI): Over 100 international buyers are expected to converge on Lahore this October for the International Exhibition of Handmade Carpets, setting the stage for a regional showdown with a similar event in India. Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Chairman Mian Atiq-ur-Rehman and Exhibition Committee Chairman Riaz Ahmad stressed the importance of robust preparations and governmental backing to outshine the competing Indian exhibition.

The PCMEA leadership, speaking at a weekly review meeting, highlighted the urgency of securing

cooperation from government agencies. They revealed that the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is poised to unveil special travel incentives for foreign attendees, including those from the US, Europe, Russia, Italy, and Türkiye, pending official approval.

The meeting, attended by key PCMEA figures including Patron-in-Chief Abdul Latif Malik and Senior Vice Chairman Zahid Nazir, focused on strategies to surpass regional rivals through superior event management and product showcases. Chairman Riaz Ahmad briefed attendees on the ongoing preparations, while participants pledged their commitment to the exhibition’s triumph.

PCMEA officials urged TDAP to expedite its decision on the proposed incen-

tives, noting that India has already extended similar offers. They emphasized the need to promptly inform potential attendees of Pakistan’s packages, as many international buyers are contemplating visits to both nations.

The exhibition, deemed crucial for the local carpet sector and the national economy, is anticipated to generate substantial foreign exchange through export agreements. Participants vowed to elevate Pakistan’s global standing by presenting high-quality, distinctive carpet designs. Committee heads overseeing the event’s arrangements provided updates and sought guidance.

The exhibition will also feature meetings with international buyers to cultivate business relationships and glean insights into emerging global trends.

Tariff reforms can boost Pakistan-Kenya trade

FAISALABAD (INP): Tariff reforms can boost trade between Pakistan and Kenya. Rehan Naseem, President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), said that pharmaceutical, chemicals, food processing, information technology and other sectors are growing by leaps and bounds in Faisalabad, catching the eye of the Kenyan High Commissioner to Pakistan Lt General Peter Mbogo Njiru.

He said the High Commissioner visited FCCI a couple of days ago and had a productive meeting with the local business community. He said Mr Njiru appreciated the “Look Africa” policy of the Government of Pakistan.

Talking to businessmen, he said the High Commissioner urged the business community of Faisalabad to strike while the iron is hot by investing in Kenya and enhancing bilateral trade.

He acknowledged that while textiles were the most globally recognized sector of Faisalabad, other industries in the district are now stepping into the spotlight with impressive momentum.

Highlighting opportunities in Kenya, he said that Pakistani entrepreneurs could invest in producing different commodities in addition to its processing, packaging and exports to African and other countries.

APBF sees investor confidence rising, urges continuity of reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has expressed optimism over Pakistan’s improving economic trajectory, terming the surge in the country’s international bond prices as a clear indicator of growing investor confidence and macroeconomic stability.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, while commenting on the latest developments, welcomed the upward trend in Pakistan’s long-term dollar bonds, which climbed to their highest level in three years. The rally follows key diplomatic and economic engagements, including the high-profile visit of Pakistan’s Field Marshal to China, as well as overall improvement in Pakistan’s global financial image. He said such developments were encouraging signs of economic revival and international trust in Pakistan’s reform process.

Syed Maaz Mahmood stated that Pakistan’s return to financial favour among global investors signals a turning point. He said that

the momentum we are witnessing in international markets reflects the confidence that investors are placing in Pakistan’s policy direction, fiscal discipline and stability efforts. This is a milestone for the business community.

Pakistan’s outreach to China has sent a clear signal to international markets that the country is prioritising economic revival through strategic partnerships. He emphasised that political and economic stability is essential to fully benefit from this momentum

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi urged the government to continue engaging the private sector for policy consultation and business facilitation. They reaffirmed their commitment to working closely with economic managers to achieve sustainable growth create employment and improve the overall business climate.

Maaz Mahmood added that these trends must be capitalised on through continued economic discipline, export-led policies, domestic industrial revival, and investment-friendly govern-

nance. Our message is simple: Pakistan is open for business, and we’re moving in the right direction.

Ibrahim Qureshi also welcomed the bond rally and stated that while the international market has shown its trust, the government must now focus on removing internal bottlenecks to facilitate trade, industry and job creation. The global shift in sentiment must translate into tangible ease for our business community, especially SMEs. This is the moment to push ahead with structural reforms, he added.

He particularly lauded the strengthening ties between Pakistan and China, citing the recent visit of Pakistan’s Field Marshal to Beijing as a strategic moment. The deepening of bilateral cooperation, especially in areas of industrial investment, energy, and logistics, is a sign of long-term planning and mutual trust. Such high-level exchanges have sent a positive message across global financial circles, he stated.

He noted that the Chinese leadership’s com-

mitment to fast-tracking key economic corridors and energy infrastructure projects underlines Pakistan’s renewed strategic importance in the region. This will not only benefit Pakistan’s export potential but will also encourage technology transfer, skills training, and capital inflow,” he added.

APBF leaders urged the government to ensure consistency in its reform agenda, avoid ad hoc taxation, and promote digital governance, saying that without long-term economic policies and tax fairness, investor optimism may weaken.

The forum also emphasized the need for timely policy consultation with stakeholders from the business and industrial community. We must not lose this momentum by ignoring the voices of those who drive Pakistan’s economy, said Maaz Mahmood.

The APBF reiterated its full support for efforts aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit, strengthening foreign exchange reserves, enhancing exports, and improving industrial output.

PIAF urges recognition of traders’ tax role, calls to end discrimination

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has strongly demanded that the government formally acknowledge the consistent and growing contribution of the trade and business community to national tax revenues, stressing that traders are unfairly burdened while their input is often misrepresented or overlooked.

In a joint statement issued today, PIAF Chairman Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal, and Vice Chairman Tahir Masood Chaudhary criticized the long-standing and rigid taxation framework that continues to place a disproportionate load on a

few segments of the economy, particularly traders and the manufacturing sector, while failing to ensure equity across all sectors.

“Traders have long been contributing to the national exchequer through various taxes—be it advance income tax, withholding tax, or returns filed—yet they continue to face mistrust, harassment, and lack of recognition,” said Chairman Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol. “Instead of appreciation, there is always suspicion and confusing statements that distort the truth about what the business community is actually paying.”

The PIAF leadership emphasized that Pakistan’s current tax system is in dire need of reform based on fairness, clarity, and facilitation. They said the

outdated structure disproportionately relies on the formal and semi-formal segments, while large parts of the informal economy remain untaxed. The system is not only complex but also lacks transparency in reporting actual contributions made by various sectors—especially the trade and wholesale community.

Senior Vice Chairman Nasrullah Mughal said that tax authorities frequently issue broad and inconsistent statements about retail sector tax contributions, while the underlying numbers include substantial payments made by wholesalers, traders, and importers, unfairly clubbed under the retail heading without distinction.

He said, “The recent claims of massive income tax from the retail sector are misleading if the actual contributors—traders and wholesalers—are not accurately separated. Traders have paid hundreds of billions of rupees, but lumping their taxes into vague definitions does nothing but hide their real input and create confusion.”

According to data shared in public forums, the total income tax collection from this broadly defined “retail” sector crossed Rs600 billion, including over Rs300 billion in advance taxes paid quarterly by traders and wholesalers. In addition, billions were collected via withholding taxes on sales, imports, electricity bills, and other heads—all

of which were mainly paid by trading businesses, not conventional retailers.

Vice Chairman Tahir Masood Chaudhary added, “This blurred classification not only damages the reputation of the trader community but also discourages tax compliance. If those who are paying honestly are still ignored or wrongly represented, what incentive remains for further documentation?”

PIAF called on the government and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to review and restructure their approach. The association proposed a separate, clear recognition of traders’ contribution in all official statements and data, coupled with a fresh strategy to widen the tax base without overburdening existing payers.

The leadership also emphasized the need for consultation-based reforms. Any structural changes in the tax system must involve direct input from business representatives to ensure policies are both implementable and equitable.

PIAF reiterated its full support for digitization, documentation, and transparency in taxation, but warned that selective interpretation of numbers and vague definitions erode trust. The association reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with the government in building a modern, inclusive, and respectful taxation environment, but stressed that recognition and fairness are essential starting points for any successful reform.

BMP warns as inflation resurges 4.07% amid utility price shock

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Businessmen Panel (BMP) has sounded the alarm over a renewed surge in inflation, warning that recent hikes in utility tariffs and food prices are intensifying pressure on already struggling households and industries. The caution follows the latest figures from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), which reported a 4.07 percent week-on-week increase in the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) for the week ending July 24, 2025.

The increase, among the sharpest in recent weeks, was largely driven by a staggering 29.85 percent rise in gas charges and a 21.46 percent increase in electricity tariffs. Key food

items such as tomatoes and eggs also saw notable hikes of 22.93 percent and 3.96 percent, respectively. The lowest-income group, categorized as Q1 by PBS, was hit hardest, facing a 3.98 percent rise in their weekly cost of living.

Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman of the Businessmen Panel and former President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), responded to the data with serious concern, calling the current inflationary trend dangerous and unsustainable for both consumers and producers. He criticized the government’s policy approach, saying that the burden of fiscal reforms and IMF commitments was being unfairly passed on to the public and

private sectors without protective measures in place.

He said the removal of energy subsidies and subsequent price shocks are driving both households and manufacturers to a breaking point. According to him, the absence of a comprehensive policy to shield vulnerable segments and support industrial production has created a dual crisis of rising living costs and shrinking economic activity. The surge in inflation, he added, is not just an economic indicator—it is a warning sign that the broader structure of the economy is under strain.

The PBS report, which covers 51 essential items in 17 major cities, indicated that 14 items became more expensive during the week, 12 showed a decrease in

prices, while 25 remained unchanged. On a year-on-year basis, SPI-based inflation stood at 2.22 percent. However, non-food items such as ladies’ sandals and gas charges recorded significant annual increases of 55.62 percent and 29.85 percent, respectively. On the other hand, vegetables like onions and tomatoes witnessed substantial price drops over the year, but these were not enough to offset the recent inflationary pressure.

Anjum Nisar linked the latest surge to international energy price movements, domestic gas and electricity tariff adjustments, and disruptions in food supply chains. He suggested that monthly inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for July 2025 is

likely to reach 3.3 percent year-on-year. The CPI is expected to reflect a 15 percent month-on-month increase in electricity tariffs and a 22.7 percent rise in gas prices, as the government normalizes administered prices in line with fiscal reforms.

Anjum Nisar criticized this normalization process, stating that it ignores the realities on the ground. He said industries are being squeezed by high input costs, while consumers are struggling with the rapid erosion of purchasing power. He noted that food inflation, combined with utility price hikes, is making daily life unaffordable for large sections of the population. Meanwhile, the export sector continues to face setbacks due to rising

costs, refund delays, and international demand slumps.

He also expressed alarm over broader economic indicators. The country has witnessed a significant drop in exports, foreign direct investment, and remittances. At the same time, private sector borrowing is shrinking, and manufacturing activity has declined. He attributed these negative trends to policy instability, exchange rate volatility, and a lack of incentives for industrial revival. According to him, unless corrective steps are taken urgently, the country risks deeper stagnation.

He said the recent inflation surge is not a one-time spike but part of a dangerous cycle rooted in structural imbalances. He stressed

the need for agricultural reforms to stabilize the food supply chain, greater investment in storage and logistics, and improved coordination between federal and provincial authorities to manage market disruptions.

Regarding the upcoming monetary policy announcement by the State Bank of Pakistan on July 30, Anjum Nisar urged a cautious and balanced approach. He said that while inflation control is essential, monetary tightening must not come at the cost of choking industrial activity. He called for targeted subsidies for low-income households and special energy pricing mechanisms for export-oriented industries and SMEs.

The Businessmen Panel emphasized that fiscal

reform efforts should be paired with strong protection for vulnerable populations and productive sectors.

Anjum Nisar said the current focus on revenue generation through price hikes, without addressing cost-of-living challenges and industrial constraints, would only widen inequality and reduce economic momentum.

The BMP urged the government to take immediate steps to cushion the impact of rising prices, restore confidence in the economy, and adopt a reform agenda that prioritizes both fiscal discipline and social protection. As inflation continues to rise and economic indicators weaken, the call for a more responsive and inclusive policy framework is becoming increasingly urgent.



In brief

Pak team off to a fantastic start in World Jr Squash

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan team has got off to a fantastic start, winning their first group stage match in the team championship of World Junior Squash in Egypt, featuring 22 nations competing for the top spot. The individual event of the World Junior Squash Championships has concluded, and the team championship kicked off on Sunday, said a press release. In the individual event, Pakistan's Anas Ali Shah won the Plate Event final, while Egypt's Muhammad Zakaria won the Main Draw final. Pakistan Team has been declared the 6th seed and is part of Group F of Team Event. In the Match, Pakistan beat Brazil 3-0 and will play the next game against Kuwait.

McIntosh takes gold

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Canada's Summer McIntosh took gold in the women's 400m freestyle event at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore as American Katie Ledecky finished with the bronze. The event was seen as a battle between 18-year-old McIntosh - who has three Olympic gold medals - and 28-year-old nine-time Olympic champion Ledecky. However, McIntosh led from the start to win in three minutes 56 seconds, with China's Li Bingjie second and Ledecky 2.23secs behind the leader. McIntosh has a chance to join Michael Phelps as the only swimmer to win five individual titles at a single world championships as she is also set to race in the 400m and 200m individual medley, 200m butterfly and 800m freestyle. Speaking to Canadian broadcaster CBC, the teenager said: "It's amazing, day one is probably my biggest day in the meet. That 400m freestyle, I was so in control that entire race and super strong. Overall I felt I had the endurance. I'm just trying to take it one race at a time and day by day." Ben Proud beat his own British record as he recorded a time of 22.74secs to finish second in his semi-final, behind Switzerland's Noe Ponti, to reach the men's 50m butterfly final. Britain's Jordan Houlden came fourth in men's 1m springboard diving event, while Noah Penman finished 17th out of 59 divers in the preliminary round on his maiden senior world c'ships appearance.

Raducanu misses out

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Britain's Emma Raducanu has been beaten 6-4 6-3 by Russia's Anna Kalinskaya in the semi-finals of the Washington Open. The 22-year-old, whose run in the United States has ensured she will regain her British number one spot from Katie Boulter, served five aces early on, but could not convert any of her four break point opportunities. Kalinskaya, ranked two places below Raducanu at 48th in the world, capitalised with a break in the ninth game on her way to clinching the first set. The two exchanged early breaks in the second set before the 26-year-old Russian pulled ahead once more, taking a lead that proved decisive and breaking again to seal the win. "It was an interesting match. It's nice to play against Emma," said Kalinskaya, who is aiming to win her first WTA 500 title. "I'm proud of myself. I stayed aggressive and stuck to my plan." Kalinskaya will face Leylah Fernandez in Sunday's final after the Canadian edged out third seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in an epic encounter that included three tie-breaks.



BASEL: Leah Williamson and Kiera Walsh of England lift the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 trophy alongside team mates after victory over Spain in the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 Final match.

India dig deep with bat to draw fourth test against England

MANCHESTER (AFP): India's enthralling series in England is going all the way to the finish after the resilient tourists drew the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Sunday. Record-breaking skipper Shubman Gill scored his fourth century of the campaign before Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar also made hundreds as India finished on 425-4 in their second innings -- a lead of 114 runs -- inside the last hour. England remain 2-1 up in this five-match contest ahead of a quick turnaround to Thursday's start of an Oval finale. An India victory in south London would ensure a share of the spoils for Gill's men in a series where the first four Tests have all gone to the last day. Defeat, rather than a

draw, looked likely when India collapsed to 0-2 in the opening over of their second innings on Saturday as Chris Woakes struck with successive deliveries following England's mammoth first-innings 669. But Gill, in on a hat-trick, went on to score 103 in a marathon seven-hour stint as he turned the tide during a stand of 188 with KL Rahul that ended before lunch on Sunday. Jadeja, reprieved first ball when Joe Root dropped a tough slip chance, went on to make 107 not out, his first century of the series following four fifties, with fellow spin-bowling all-rounder Sundar unbeaten on 101 -- his maiden Test hundred. "Brave effort" "I am extremely pleased with our batting effort over

the past couple of days," said Gill. "I think we were put under a lot of pressure, but the way we responded, especially after losing two wickets, was a very brave effort." Sundar and Jadeja's unbroken partnership of 203 on a flat pitch frustrated a toiling England, despite the best efforts of inspirational captain Ben Stokes. This match was a personal triumph for Stokes as he became just the fourth England cricketer to score a hundred and take five wickets in the same Test, his 141 on Saturday following a haul of 5-72 in India's first-innings 358. But Stokes, who insisted "pain is just an emotion", repeatedly clutched the top of his leg - having had hamstring surgery earlier this year -- and also suffered a bicep strain.

"When you put in good performances for the team, the joy is dictated by how you feel at the end of the Test and the result," said Stokes. "Obviously, I'd give the bottle of champagne and the medal (away) in a heartbeat if we were on the right side of the result." India resumed on 174-2 with KL Rahul 87 not out and Gill 78 not out. Stokes, the leading bowler on either side this series with 17 wickets at 25.23, brought himself on at the start of Sunday's play after not bowling Saturday and had obdurate opener Rahul, plumb lbw for 90 to a nip-back ball that kept low. And when Gill was caught behind off Jofra Archer, India were still not safe at 222-4. But Sundar and Jadeja, after his first ball reprieve, were largely untroubled.

PSB forms inquiry body over irregularities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has constituted a three-member inquiry committee to investigate serious irregularities during the FISU World University Games 2025 held in Germany, including the reported disappearance or escape of two athletes, questionable selection of team officials, disciplinary breaches, and logistical issues. The committee, headed by Director PSB Lahore, has been tasked with submitting a comprehensive report within 15 days. According to a notification issued with the approval of the PSB Director General, the Pakistani contingent's participation in the Games revealed significant administrative failures. These included lack of transparency in the selection of team officials, discipline issues, logistical mismanagement, and the alarming disappearance of two student-athletes. All team officials, except for one coach, were officials from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) or affiliated universities -- a fact that has raised concerns regarding the transparency and merit of their selection. As per HEC, two student-athletes were reported missing or suspected of fleeing during the event. Additionally, the Pakistani women's 4x400m relay team was disqualified from the competition, and a judo athlete competed without proper coaching support and without an official competition uniform.

In light of these developments, the PSB has established a three-member inquiry committee comprising Director PSB Lahore Noor-us-Sabah as chairperson, with Nasrullah Rana and Saif-ur-Rehman Rao as members. The committee will thoroughly examine the selection process and transparency behind the nomination of athletes and officials by HEC. It will assess whether each official's inclusion in the delegation was in accordance with established procedures and clearly define their responsibilities. The investigation will also focus on the circumstances surrounding the disappearance or escape of the two athletes, develop a timeline of events, and identify any individuals responsible for negligence or misconduct. It will further analyze the reasons behind the disqualification of the women's relay team, including potential shortcomings in their preparation, selection, or oversight. As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToRs), the committee will also determine why the judo athlete was not provided with an appropriate competition uniform and why she competed without a coach. The committee will recommend disciplinary action against those found guilty of mismanagement, negligence, or dereliction of duty. The committee is required to present a detailed report within 15 days of the notification's issuance.

Australia beat Windies by three wickets in 4th T20I

BASSETTERRE (AFP): Cameron Green hit an unbeaten 55 and Josh Inglis added 51 to lift Australia to a three wicket win over the West Indies on Saturday in the fourth match of their Twenty20 International series. West Indies were 205 for nine after being sent to bat first after the visitors won the toss, but took five wickets after the midpoint to keep the pressure on Australia chasing 206 to win. The Aussies seized a 4-0 lead in the five-match series and can complete a sweep by winning Monday's finale at Warner Park. Green struck his half-century off 35 balls with three sixes and three fours while Inglis had one six and 10 fours in 30 balls and Glenn Maxwell had 47 runs off 18 balls, hitting six sixes and a four. But a night after Tim David bashed Australia's fastest T20I century off only 37 balls, he was rested from the Aussie lineup and the chase had some tense moments.

England beat Spain on penalties in Women's Euro 2025 final

BASEL (AFP): Chloe Kelly converted the decisive kick as England beat Spain 3-1 on penalties to win the Women's Euro 2025 after Sunday's final had finished 1-1 at the end of extra time, allowing the Lionesses to avenge their defeat in the World Cup final of two years ago and retain their continental crown. It looked as though Spain would repeat their victory over England in Sydney two years ago as they dominated the game at St Jakob-Park in Basel and led through Mariona Caldentey's first-half header. But England did not panic, having already trailed against both Sweden in the quarter-finals and Italy in the semis before finding a way to win. Alessia Russo headed in their equaliser just before the hour mark, and no further goals meant a shoot-out in which Kelly -- who once again had a huge impact off the bench -- netted the winner. It was an agonising way to lose for Spain, but they failed to score three of their spot-kicks, with reigning Ballon d'Or Aitana Bonmati seeing her effort saved. Sarina Wiegman's England are therefore back-to-back European champions, with this triumph coming three years after they defeated Germany in extra

time at Wembley to win a first women's major tournament. Defeating Spain here helps make up for the agony of losing that World Cup final in 2023, and the victory also confirms Wiegman's place among the coaching greats. She has now won three consecutive European Championships, having led her native Netherlands to victory in 2017 before doing the same with England three years ago. Spain, meanwhile, fell short in their quest to add a maiden European Championship title to the World Cup they won in Australia. La Roja dominated possession as expected, but ultimately paid the price for not putting the game to bed against an England side who never know when they are beaten. Wiegman's team had been 2-0 down against Sweden in the last eight before scoring twice to force extra time as they eventually won on penalties. Then substitute Michelle Agyemang's 96th-minute equaliser denied Italy in the semi-finals in Geneva, when Kelly netted the winner in extra time. England had ultimately not played well during much of their run to the final, but it did not matter.

Wiegman had taken a gamble on the fitness of Lauren James which paid off, but not quite as planned -- having come off with an ankle injury against Italy, the Chelsea winger did not last until half-time and was replaced by Kelly. Caldentey and Russo exchanged blows. By that point Spain were already in front, scoring when Bonmati and Athenea del Castillo combined to set up Ona Batlle and her cross from the right was headed in by Caldentey. Montse Tome's Spain, with seven players from Barcelona in their starting line-up, had already been in control before that and it felt like England's best hope was for complacency from their opponents. The best example of that came with the game still goalless, when Spain goalkeeper Cata Coll played a careless short pass to Laia Aleixandri in her own area. Lauren Hemp was alive to the opportunity and pounced, but Coll reacted well to make the save. Yet even at 1-0 it felt like England were still in the game, and they took their chance when it came in the 57th minute when Kelly crossed from the left for her Arsenal teammate Russo to level the scores.

Piastrri holds off Norris at Spa, extends c'ship lead



SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (AFP): Series leader Oscar Piastri grabbed an early lead and extended his title advantage on Sunday when he drove to a perfectly-controlled triumph ahead of McLaren teammate and title rival Lando Norris at a rain-delayed Belgian Grand Prix. The 24-year-old Australian managed his tyres expertly to remain out of reach in the closing laps as the Briton, 25, who had started on pole, closed in on a harder-wearing compound, finishing 3.415 seconds clear as McLaren reeled off their sixth 1-2 in a dominant season. It was Piastri's first win at the classic Spa-Francorchamps circuit, his sixth this season and the eighth of his career, extending his lead in the drivers' championship to 16 points after 13 of this season's 24 races. For McLaren, it was a 10th win this year. Charles Leclerc came a solid third for Ferrari ahead

of four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull, under the race leadership of new team boss Laurent Mekies for the first time, and Mercedes George Russell. Alex Albon clung on to finish sixth for Williams ahead of chasing seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari, who started from the pit lane, and Racing Bulls' rookie Liam Lawson. Gabriel Bortoleto was ninth for Sauber ahead of Pierre Gasly of Alpine. "That was lively!" said the cool Piastri, who swept past Norris on lap one. "Very lively. I knew that lap one was probably my best chance of winning the race. I lifted a little as I went through Eau Rouge and then it was enough. "The rest of the race we managed really well. Maybe the medium wasn't the best in the last five-six laps, but we had it almost under control! I was disappointed after yesterday, but it turns out that starting sec-

ond was not too bad." Norris conceded he couldn't have won. "Oscar just did a good job -- there's nothing much more to say. He was committed a bit more in Eau Rouge and that was it. Oscar deserved it today." Leclerc said: "Max was behind me all race within two seconds so it's never easy. I knew the first part was the trickiest and I'm pretty happy we managed to keep that third place." The race began, after an 80-minute delay due to heavy rain, with the entire field on intermediates to run for four laps behind a safety car, clearing standing water. Piastri's craft and calm Four drivers started from the pitlane -- Carlos Sainz, Fernando Alonso, Kimi Antonelli and Lewis Hamilton -- having made changes to their power units or set-up overnight. They began at the rear of the field ahead of the rolling start at the start of lap five. As the lights went green, Norris powered away to lead through La Source, but he was unable to resist when Piastri sneaked out of his slipstream to take the lead going into Les Combes chicane. "Why do I have no pack?" asked Norris, realising he lacked electric power. "We used a lot on the safety car re-start," McLaren responded.

Pogacar wins Tour de France for fourth time



PARIS (AFP): Tadej Pogacar closed out a supreme 21-day performance to win the Tour de France in Paris on Sunday, crushing his rivals in the 3,400km slog to rack up a fourth title.

Wout van Aert won the final-day cliffhanger on the cobbled roads of Montmartre, but Pogacar was spared any late challenge when rain forced times to be neutralised to avoid potential accidents.

Pogacar gamely tried for the stage win anyway before Belgian Van Aert pulled away from the Slovenian on the last climb. The winner was clearly enjoying himself as he played

to the delighted crowds, racing to the head of the peloton near the Moulin Rouge cabaret at the foot of the climb. Despite the rain, spectators packed Montmartre to follow his progress up and down the narrow lanes of the popular tourist spot in his leader's yellow outfit. Van Aert produced a well-timed attack to drop Pogacar and charge to the Champs-Elysees finish line, for his second last-day stage win there. Pogacar was fourth on the day but after wins in 2020, 2021 and 2024, he proved untouchable again in the world's greatest bike race. Jonas Vingegaard, the Dane who won in 2022 and 2023, suffered two shocking off-days and ended second overall, 4min 24sec adrift. Breakout German star Florian Lipowitz took third on his debut, rounding out the podium a distant 11 minutes off the pace in third. Turning the screw Defending his title Pogacar embarked from the start in

Lille clear favourite and won four stages along the way. In the first week, he struck on rolling runs in the north and west at Rouen and the Mur de Bretagne. He then turned the screw on the slopes of the Pyrenees on week two with his rivals as good as vanquished. Vingegaard suffered on the stage five time trial, and again in week two at the Hautacam mountain, leaving the Dane in shock as his form abandoned him. In need of a massive turn around in the Alps to overturn a four-minute deficit, Vingegaard was game enough to go all in on stage 18, producing a brave 71km attack as Pogacar sat on his rival's wheel. A barnstorming first week of the Tour revealed a raft of emerging stars. Lipowitz was given a run for his money for third place by 22-year-old Scot Oscar Onley, whose steady ride propelled him to fourth overall. Ireland's Ben Healy bagged a stage win and a two-day stint in the yellow jersey.

Adding a heroic near-miss on Mont Ventoux was enough to earn Healy the prize for combativity, voted for by the public. The return of Dave Brailsford from his role at Manchester United to Ineos Grenadiers was overshadowed by the team's Italian powerhouse Filippo Ganna falling early on stage one. He was withdrawn due to concussion. Having previously masterminded seven Tour de France wins, Brailsford dug in and the team's Dutch climber Thymen Arensman pulled off heists in the Pyrenees and the Alps with well-executed attacks to win two stages. Another Dutch rider, Mathieu van der Poel, lit up the first week, sealing a stage two win and twice wearing the yellow jersey. France's sole and unexpected stage win came on the lunar-like summit of Mont Ventoux thanks to Valentin Paret-Peintre. The 2025 Tour, however, will be remembered mainly for Pogacar's all-round dominance.



In brief

Six outlaws arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested six outlaws and recovered liquor, weapons and ammunition from their possession during crackdown here Sunday. According to police spokesman, Waris Khan Police arrested two liquor suppliers and seized 25 liters of liquor from their custody. Similarly, Kallar Syedan Police detained another liquor supplier and seized 10 liters of liquor from his possession. While Dhamyal Police held a drug dealer with 04 bottles of liquor. In another operation, Jatli Police arrested arm holder and recovered weapon from his possession. Police have registered separate cases and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs commended police team and stated that operations against those possessing illegal liquor and weapons will be continued without any discrimination.

ICT Police nabs three

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, Karachi Company station team successfully apprehended three members of an organized gang involved in a recent theft incident, including two women, during a major operation conducted on Sunday. A police spokesperson told APP that the arrested suspects were identified as Saadia Nauman, Abida Bibi, and Nauman. The police team also recovered stolen cash and a vehicle used in the crime from their possession. A case has been registered against them at Karachi Company Police Station. The arrests were made under the ongoing crackdown against organized and active criminal gangs. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq stated that all legal procedures will be completed to ensure exemplary punishment for the accused. DIG further emphasized that Islamabad Police is conducting large-scale operations against organized and mobile criminal gangs to ensure the safety and security of the federal capital.

Urgent call for support to QAU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The alumni of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad, Pakistan's top-ranked and internationally recognized higher education institution, have issued an urgent appeal for immediate financial assistance to rescue the university from an escalating budgetary crisis. In a collective statement, QAU alumni called upon the President of Pakistan (in his capacity as Chancellor of QAU), the Prime Minister of Pakistan (as the Controlling Authority of the Higher Education Commission), and the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training (Pro-Chancellor of QAU) to approve a special bailout package of PKR 5 billion to address the university's growing financial deficit. QAU stands as a national symbol of academic excellence and has produced generations of leaders, scholars, and professionals contributing to Pakistan and the global community. However, the institution is now facing a critical financial crisis that threatens its ability to maintain core academic functions, sustain research productivity, and support student facilities. "The financial deficit poses a serious risk to the university's infrastructure, academic integrity, and future development," stated a representative of the alumni. "This is a defining moment to reaffirm our commitment to education and safeguard a premier national institution."



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in construction work of a boundary wall along Srinagar Highway, part of efforts to enhance the beauty of Federal Capital. —APP Photo

NA Speaker condemns Israeli aggression

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday strongly condemned Israel's continued aggression in Gaza, describing it as a "grave humanitarian disaster" and urging immediate international action to halt the violence and protect innocent civilians. Reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people, the Speaker called on global institutions to fulfil their moral and legal responsibilities by working toward peace and safeguarding human rights. In his official statement, Speaker Sadiq expressed deep sorrow over the escalating crisis, stating that "Israeli forces have crossed all limits of cruelty and barbarism." He revealed that more than 60,000 Palestinians — including a significant number of children, women, and elderly — have been martyred since October 7, 2023. He condemned Israel's military

actions, which have targeted civilians, hospitals, schools, homes, and aid centers, calling the blockade of humanitarian assistance and medical supplies "unacceptable and inhumane." The Speaker emphasized that unarmed civilians are being fired upon while seeking food and aid, further intensifying the humanitarian emergency. Highlighting the worsening situation in Gaza, Speaker Sadiq said the blockade has led to severe shortages of essential goods, placing already vulnerable populations at risk of starvation. He appealed to the international community to intervene urgently to halt the suffering and ensure protection for civilian lives. The Speaker denounced Israeli atrocities, asserting that they defy humanitarian, moral, and international legal standards. He said the Zionist regime's false narrative and propaganda have been globally exposed,

and accused it of fabricating charges against innocent Palestinians to mask its acts of terrorism. He called the conduct of Israeli forces "inhumane and abhorrent." Urging global stakeholders to play a decisive role, Speaker Sadiq called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. He stressed the need for international pressure on Israel to end its occupation and recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination. He reiterated support for the establishment of a viable, independent, and contiguous Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Reaffirming Pakistan's consistent position, he noted that the Parliament has passed multiple resolutions in favor of Palestine and pledged continued advocacy for Palestinian rights across regional and global forums.

Honour killing, court awards police remand

RAWALPINDI (APP): A Rawalpindi court has awarded remand of three suspects to police custody in connection with the alleged murder and honor killing of a newlywed woman in Pirwadhahi. Police have arrested eight individuals, including the woman's husband, her brother, other family members, a gravedigger, a graveyard management official, and a rickshaw driver who reportedly transported her body. The investigation started secretly by the police after

reports of an alleged jirga (tribal customary jury) that was held and attended by both families. On the other hand, the husband of the woman filed a case under Section 496A, related to kidnapping of her wife on the same day the woman was allegedly suffocated with a pillow. Earlier, police have secretly collected the crucial information about the grave of the woman which was immediately erased after her burial, and also identified the main culprits involved in the crime.

Police chief, Syed Khalid Hamdani has said that the police have a complete picture of the incident, with all involved individuals identified. "Once legal requirements are met, comprehensive case details will be shared with the public through the media", announced the city police officer in a statement. The court of Judge Qamar Abbas also ordered for the post-mortem examination of the woman's body, which scheduled for July 28.

PIMA launches awareness campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) has announced a hepatitis awareness campaign to highlight the importance of prevention, timely diagnosis and effective treatment of hepatitis, in connection with World Hepatitis Day, being observed on July 28, 2025. As part of this campaign, awareness seminars, walks, free screening camps and CME programs will be organized across the country for both the general public and healthcare professionals. PIMA Islamabad organized a free medical camp on

Saturday in collaboration with the National Press Club Islamabad. The camp offered free screening and medical check-up for Hepatitis B and C, Hepatitis B vaccination, free referrals and further consultation with specialists for deserving patients, along with essential laboratory tests. Prof. Dr. Atif Hafeez Siddiqui, Central President of PIMA, stated that the leading cause of hepatitis transmission in Pakistan is the use of contaminated and reused syringes and unsafe injections. He added that about 90 percent of people

infected with viral hepatitis are unaware of their condition, and that testing is the first and essential step toward timely treatment. He further explained that Hepatitis A and E spread through contaminated water and unsafe food, while Hepatitis B, C, and D are transmitted via infected syringes, surgical instruments, and unsafe blood transfusions. Dr. Atif emphasized that timely diagnosis and treatment of Hepatitis B, C, and D can not only save lives but also prevent life-threatening complications such as liver cancer.

ICTP busts 840 active gangs in 13 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory Police (ICTP) has dismantled 840 active criminal gangs, apprehending 1,911 suspected members and recovering and handing over stolen properties worth Rs 654.52 million to lawful owners, in a sustained crackdown conducted between January 1, 2024 and February 16, 2025. According to official data submitted by Islamabad Capital Police in Senate, a total of 1,637 proclaimed offenders (POs) have been arrested from January 2024 to July 15, 2025 along with 2,503 target offenders (TOs) apprehended during the same period. The arrests follow an over year-long targeted effort to curb criminal networks across the federal territory, focusing on repeat offenders, inter-district rackets, and financial crime rings. Highlighting recent achievements, the ICTP shared that four incidents of bank robberies occurred in the federal capital on October 28 and 29, 2024, during which Rs 2.2 million were

snatched from various banks; the full amount was later recovered and returned to the banks. Police also recovered 20 stolen vehicles valued at Rs 34.5 million and handed them back to their rightful owners. In another case, a robbery at a PSO petrol pump in Sector I-8 under the jurisdiction of I-9 police led to a loss of Rs 2 million; two suspects were arrested and Rs 1.2 million was recovered from them. A total of 9,494 property crime cases were reported across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police stations between January 1, 2024 and February 16, 2025 — marking a 9% decline from the 10,303 cases recorded during the corresponding period starting January 1, 2023. Official sources credit ICT Police with sustained operational vigilance and effective public coordination, ensuring order across a diverse range of capital events. Their consistent efforts continue to reinforce institutional stability and civic peace.

Kundi attends farewell in honor of Austrian Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday attended a farewell lunch held in honor of the outgoing Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan, Andrea Wicke here on Sunday. The event, organized by Qaiser Nawab and Sardar Waqar Shahzad, brought together members of the diplomatic corps, senior media professionals, and other distinguished guests. Speaking on the occasion, Qaiser Nawab praised Ambassador Wicke as a strong advocate for women's empowerment and a role model for youth in Pakistan. He acknowledged Austria's constructive role in international diplomacy and shared his reflections on his visits to Salzburg and Vienna, drawing a cultural connection with Pakistan's own scenic Swat Valley. He extended an open invitation to the Ambassador to explore the region. Sardar Waqar Shahzad highlighted the Ambassador's efforts in fostering bilateral relations between Pakistan and Austria.

He commended her contributions in enhancing mutual cooperation and expressed hope that she would return to Pakistan in the future, especially to visit Swat. The lunch was attended by several high-profile dignitaries, including Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez,

Ambassador of the Philippines, Dr. Zuhair Zaid, Ambassador of Palestine, Diplomats from the U.S. Embassy, former federal ministers, and senior journalists. In her farewell remarks, Ambassador Andrea Wicke expressed deep appreciation for the hospitality she received during her tenure. She recalled her visits to various cities, including Peshawar, and said the city's vibrant culture and warmth had left a lasting impression on her. Addressing the gathering, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi extended best wishes to Ambassador Wicke in her future diplomatic assignments.

He also thanked her for recognizing the rich heritage and hospitality of Peshawar. Emphasizing the province's potential, the Governor underscored the importance of showcasing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the international community to attract foreign investment, boost tourism, and promote opportunities in education and employment for youth. He encouraged more members of the diplomatic community to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and explore avenues for bilateral and multilateral collaboration. The event concluded on a note of goodwill, with participants acknowledging the Ambassador's positive legacy in Pakistan-Austria relations.

NIH confirms three new polio cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, has confirmed three new polio cases.

According to official sources, two cases were reported from the districts of Lakki Marwat and North Waziristan in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one from District Umerkot in Sindh. A 15-month-old girl from Union Council Takhtikhel in District Lakki Marwat, a six-month-old girl from Union Council Mir Ali-3 in North Waziristan, and a 60-month-old boy from Union Council Chajro in District Umerkot, Sindh, are the latest polio cases confirmed by the laboratory.

With these new detections, the total number of polio cases in Pakistan in 2025 has risen to 17 —

including 10 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, five from Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan. Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause life-long paralysis. The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) for every child under five during each campaign, along with the timely completion of all essential immunizations. Despite substantial progress in polio eradication efforts, the continued detection of polio cases underscores the persistent risk to children, especially in areas where vaccine acceptance remains low. It is crucial for communities to understand that poliovirus can resurface wherever immunity gaps exist. Every unvaccinated child is at risk and can also

pose a risk to others. A special vaccination campaign is currently underway from 21 to 27 July in the bordering Union Councils, synchronized with Afghanistan's sub-national polio campaign. In addition, a fractional IPV-OPV campaign began in District Chaman on 21 July and will roll out in the other six districts of Balochistan from 28 July. Polio eradication is a shared responsibility. While frontline polio workers continue to deliver life-saving vaccines, it is equally important for all parents and caregivers to ensure that their children receive every dose of the polio vaccine. Communities can protect themselves by actively supporting vaccination efforts, addressing misinformation, and encouraging others to vaccinate their children.

Fake CTD inspector nabbed TikTok fame turns into handcuffs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, Lohi Bher station, arrested an individual impersonating an officer of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), who was using official-looking gear and false identity to harass citizens and build a misleading image of authority on social media. A police spokesperson told APP on Sunday that the accused, traveling in a black Toyota Corolla (registration BF-2421), was intercepted near Khanna Bridge on Islamabad Expressway during routine patrolling by ASI Muhammad Ramzan of

the Traffic Police. Upon inquiry, the suspect falsely claimed to be a CTD Inspector and threatened the officers with dire consequences. The police recovered from his vehicle a fake CTD uniform, blue revolving light (siren), an iPhone 16 Pro Max, a USB, and other materials used to impersonate law enforcement officials. A search of his mobile phone revealed numerous videos uploaded on TikTok and other platforms where he falsely presented himself as a CTD officer conducting raids. Further investigation revealed that the suspect was involved in creating

fear among citizens by projecting himself as a law enforcement agent and forming a fake gang to gain popularity online. He had no affiliation with any security agency. SHO Lohi Bher, Fawad Khalid, led the immediate action against the suspect and registered a case under sections 170, 171 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), along with relevant provisions related to impersonation and misuse of emergency equipment. The police emphasized that the misuse of official uniforms and impersonation of state institutions is a serious offense and will be dealt with strictly.

NADRA empowers women with family name choice

ISLAMABAD (APP): NADRA spokesperson & Director Syed Shabhat Ali disclosed that the department is leveraging advanced technology to transform its services, allowing citizens to swiftly obtain their Family Registration Certificate (FRC) and access vital family information with just a few taps on their mobile devices through the Pak Identity app. In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, NADRA spokesperson revealed that individuals will now be able to view a comprehensive list of their family members as registered in NADRA's database. This new feature aims to provide greater transparency and ensure that citizens have easy access to their family records, he added. Furthermore, the spokesperson emphasized that the NADRA mobile application plays a key role in this modernization, allowing users to access not only their Family Registration Certificate (FRC) but also complete registration details of their family. This move is expected to streamline the process and provide more convenience to the public. By incorporating these advancements, NADRA is making its system more transparent, user-friendly and accessible, he assured. The spokesperson also highlighted how these tech-

nological improvements are aimed at enhancing the overall experience for citizens, making it simpler to manage and track family-related information. The spokesperson also highlighted that NADRA is taking significant steps towards empowering women by providing them with the option to choose either their husband's or father's name, based on their preference. This flexibility in the Family Registration Certificate (FRC) is aimed at supporting women's autonomy and ensuring they have control over how their family records are represented. Additionally, the inclusion of women's names in the FRC will have a positive impact on legal and property-related matters, such as succession certificates and inheritance issues, he said, adding, this development will make it easier for women to claim their rightful share and navigate property disputes, further strengthening their legal standing. In response to a question, he explained that previously, the Family Registration Certificate (FRC) was primarily used as a reference for family composition and had no legal weight. However, under the new regulations, providing false or misleading information on an FRC can result in criminal charges. This change is designed to prevent fraudulent claims and strengthen the

integrity of identity data in the national registry, he added. Another significant update is the requirement for applicants to verify their entire family tree when applying for an FRC, he said, adding, now through mobile app they can also get the facility to apply for any corrections. Individuals will now be shown a complete list of their family members as recorded in NADRA's database. If the information is accurate, the applicant will confirm it through a signed declaration, known as an "Affidavit Bayan-e-Halfi," ensuring that all individuals listed are validated by the applicant, he added. Addressing a question, he added that NADRA is actively working to assist people living in slums or without a stable home. To ensure that no one is left behind, mobile registration vans are being deployed to these areas, making it easier for people to get registered and access vital services. He also assured that NADRA is fully committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their living situation has access to essential registration services, adding, the mobile vans are part of a broader initiative to bridge gaps in accessibility, bringing NADRA's services directly to marginalized and remote communities.

Teenage girl killed

MAIMANA (Pajhwok): One person was killed and six others were injured as a result of a traffic accident in northern Faryab province, an official said on Sunday. Information and Culture Director Maulvi Shamsuddin Mohammadi told Pajhwok Afghan News the accident took place after a corolla-type vehicle veered off the road and overturned in Qaramqol district on the Maimana-ANdkhoy highway Sunday morning.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 02, 1447 — Monday, July 28, 2025

10 school being reconstructed

MAIDAN SHAHR (Pajhwok): Ten schools are being reconstructed at a cost of 22 million afghanis in four districts of Maidan Wardak, an official said on Sunday. Wallis Salehi, press officer at the Education Department said these schools were being reconstructed in Narkh, Chak, Syedabad and Dairmard districts. The reconstruction work is funded by UNICEF and the project is being implemented in cooperation with "Sada" domestic organization, he added.

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

Muttaqi contacts Iranian counterpart

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Foreign Minister Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi has called the expulsion of Afghan refugees from Iran 'a matter of concern' and stressed the refugees should be deported gradually and in a dignified manner.

Muttaqi held a telephonic conversation with his Iranian counterpart and the two ministers discussed several issues, including humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the expulsion of Afghan refugees from Iran, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Muttaqi expressed concern over the expulsion process of refugees from Iran and stressed that the principles of gradualism

and dignity should be respected.

Moreover, Muttaqi referred to the humanitarian situation in Gaza as critical and emphasized that Islamic countries should take responsibility for addressing the issue.

He added: "The suffering of the people of Gaza, imposed by the Israeli regime in the form of hunger and genocide, must come to an end."

Iran's foreign minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, also promised to ensure that the expulsion process of Afghan refugees was carried out gradually and with respect.

Araghchi also stressed the necessity of organizing

a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to find solutions to the ongoing crisis in Gaza.

In related news, the head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Afghanistan Sunday met with the Minister of Refugee Affairs, Maulvi Abdul Kabir.

The UNHCR representative expressed that Iran had shown willingness to hold a tripartite technical meeting on the issue of Afghan refugees, and this meeting is expected to take place soon in Kabul with representatives from the Islamic Emirate, Iran, and UNHCR.

More than 200 projects implemented in past year

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) says that more than 200 projects in the areas of roads, bridges, tunnels, and railways were implemented last year, with some projects still ongoing.

During a presentation of its annual achievements, the Ministry stated that over the past year it implemented 50 projects related to roads and railways, 16 projects for road safety, 14 for mosque construction, and 50 for maintenance and upkeep of roads and railways.

According to the Ministry's spokesperson, around 400,000 people have benefited from these projects.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, the spokesperson for the MoPW, said: "In the past year, the Ministry of Public Works signed contracts for over 200 projects in areas such as road construction, installation of traffic signs, railway development, mosque construction, and other sectors."

The Ministry also highlighted several major accomplishments in the railway sector, including the signing of the feasibility study agreement for the AfghanTrans project, completion of the rehabilitation of the Aqina-Andkhoy route, extension of the quadrilateral railway agreement with China, and reconstruction of the Hairatan-Mazar-e-Sharif railway line.

The Ministry further noted that a \$500 million investment from Kazakhstan has been finalized for the Torgundi-Herat railway project.

Kabul to host trilateral meeting on Afghan refugees

KABUL (Pajhwok): Iran has agreed to join a trilateral meeting in Kabul aimed at addressing the growing challenges faced by Afghan refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced on Sunday.

The meeting, expected to take place soon in Kabul, will involve representatives from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Iran and the UNHCR.

Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Maulvi Abdul Kabir, met with UNHCR's representative in Afghanistan, Arafat Jamal, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) on X account.

During the meeting, Jamal described the recent visit of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, to Afghanistan as both significant and fruitful. He noted that the UN has intensified its efforts to mobilise the necessary financial resources to support Afghan refugees



and returnees.

Jamal confirmed that Iranian officials have expressed their willingness to attend the upcoming technical meeting. He explained that detailed discussions would be held concerning the challenges faced by Afghan returnees and those still residing in Iran.

He added that further multilateral meetings will continue to be convened in order to address the issues facing Afghan migrants. One such meeting is planned for the near future

in Doha, Qatar, where international aid agencies and Afghan officials will explore potential funding opportunities.

For his part, Maulvi Abdul Kabir emphasised the importance of the planned trilateral meeting and welcomed Iran's participation. He reaffirmed that the caretaker government is fully prepared for the discussions and stressed that international cooperation is essential for resolving the refugee crisis.

He reiterated the care-

taker government's commitment to supporting returnees and refugees, stating that it would not withhold any of its own resources in this regard.

The two sides also discussed the meeting's agenda, the number of participants, and other logistical arrangements.

Iran has recently intensified the deportation of Afghan refugees. Over the past month alone, more than 700,000 Afghan migrants have returned to the country.

Railway's initial phase to finish in two months

KABUL (TOLONews): Domestic and foreign engineers are currently engaged in surveying and designing the route of the Kandahar-Herat railway line passing through Panjwai district of Kandahar.

Project engineers state that the Kandahar-Herat railway project will be implemented according to international standards.

Mohsen Mojad, an Iranian engineer working on the project, said: "The standards we are following here are mostly international ones. We are committed to continuing our work in terms of design, construction, and quality accordingly."

Another engineer, Sher Mohammad, added:

"Overall, we have completed 35% of the work. We are maintaining high quality and adhering to the best international standards."

Officials from the Ministry of Public Works report that around 40% of the surveying and design work for the Kandahar-Herat railway has been completed, and the initial phase of the project is expected to take another three months.

Abdul Rahman Mujahid, a representative from the Ministry of Public Works, stated: "This project consists of two lots. One lot is 137.7 kilometers long and the other is 171 kilometers. Overall, 30 to 40 percent of the work has been completed, and it will be finished in

about two months."

The Kandahar-Herat railway project has also created employment opportunities for many people.

Wakil Ahmad, a worker on the railway project, said: "This project has provided jobs to dozens of people. We are very happy to be working here."

The 737-kilometer Kandahar-Herat railway line is being surveyed and designed by three local companies at a cost of 264 million Afghanis.

According to officials, once the survey and design work is completed, the construction phase will begin in five segments, with the railway ultimately connecting to Iran through Khaf in Herat.

FAO leads resilience effort amid climate threats to Afghan agriculture



KABUL (Pajhwok): Richard Trenchard, the Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in Afghanistan, highlighted the growing impact of climate change on the country's agricultural sector, as farmers struggle with recurring droughts, unpredictable weather and severe water shortages.

In response to these challenges, the FAO is working to bolster Afghan farmers through initiatives focused on resilience, sustainable farming, and environmental preservation, ensuring that Afghan agriculture not only survives but thrives in a changing climate.

In an exclusive interview

with Pajhwok Afghan News, Richard Trenchard provided in-depth insights into the ongoing climate crisis and the FAO's strategic response to support Afghan farmers.

Afghanistan's agricultural sector—long the backbone of its economy and livelihoods—is facing one of its greatest threats: climate change. Increasingly erratic weather patterns, rising temperatures, and diminishing water sources are disrupting farming systems that have sustained communities for centuries.

Changing climate, rising risks

Agriculture in Afghanistan has always been deeply tied to the seasons, but the predictability that once

defined the country's farming calendar is vanishing. "What we're seeing is that those weather patterns are changing," said Trenchard. "Droughts used to come every 10 or 15 years. Now, they come every two to three years."

In 2021 and 2022, and again in 2024, large parts of the country suffered devastating droughts. Rain-fed farming has been particularly hard-hit, and groundwater levels are plummeting due to overreliance as surface water supplies dwindle. The result? Crops are failing, livestock are undernourished, and food security is under threat across provinces.

FAO's multi-layered response

According to Trenchard, the FAO's work in Afghanistan is broad and multi-faceted, guided by three key pillars: emergency humanitarian response, resilience-building, and long-term adaptation to climate change.

In emergencies, FAO provides critical support—improved seeds, livestock feed, and veterinary services. "We've been vaccinating more than six million animals over the past two years alone," said Trenchard. This work is vital in preventing the spread of diseases like foot and mouth, lumpy skin, and PPR.

Meanwhile, resilience efforts focus on strengthening the foundations of agriculture. FAO is helping communities construct check dams and restore irrigation infrastructure to better manage water and prevent flash floods.

Additionally, farmers are being introduced to climate-resilient seeds and better crop diversification strategies.

For long-term adaptation, FAO has partnered with global climate finance bodies like the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support environmental preservation, pasture protection, and introduction of sustainable farming practices.

Farmers' mental health

Beyond the physical damage, the emotional toll on farmers is immense. Trenchard described heart-breaking scenes of farmers harvesting only a handful of wheat stalks in fields where crops had failed. "It can be devastating," he said. "When your livelihood, your family's well-being, your whole identity is tied to the land, and that land fails you—it causes deep psychological distress."

Though FAO does not offer direct mental health support, Trenchard noted that successful farming outcomes can restore hope. "I saw the joy on a young farmer's face in Kunduz when he realized he had enough wheat for the entire year, thanks to FAO's certified seeds," he recalled. "That sense of security is a powerful form of psychological relief."

Mechanisation

Mechanisation remains limited across most of Afghanistan, largely due to cost. FAO doesn't directly supply tractors but is working to make agriculture more investment-worthy for the private sector. "We are creating conditions where mechanisation makes economic sense," said Trenchard. "You need irrigation systems, crop diversity, and market access—

then businesses will see the value in investing."

The organisation also encourages the use of new technologies, such as drip irrigation and cold storage systems, to improve efficiency and post-harvest management.

Private sector: A key player for sustainability

With international aid decreasing—especially from countries like the US—the private sector is now seen as vital to the future of Afghan agriculture. "We've always known that Afghanistan's farming systems should become self-sustaining," said Trenchard. "The private sector will be the long-term engine for that transformation."

He urged Afghan investors to explore agriculture's untapped potential. "There are huge returns to be made—not just for profit, but for the country's prosperity," he said. "Whether it's pistachios, almonds, or pomegranates, Afghan products can lead in regional and global markets."

Challenges: Funding, frequency of shocks

Trenchard cited three major challenges: the increasing frequency of climate shocks, limited funding for long-term climate projects, and overreliance on short-term humanitarian assistance. "It's very difficult to help communities

adapt when they're constantly hit by one disaster after another—drought, flood, disease," he said.

Despite donor generosity, most funding has gone to immediate needs. FAO is advocating for a pivot toward medium- and long-term investment, both from international partners and the Afghan government.

Strengthening national capacity

FAO is also working closely with Afghanistan's institutions. The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) recently issued the country's first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) report in five years—a vital framework for climate policy. Coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and the Ministry of Energy and Water is key to ensuring nationwide adaptation.

Afghan farmers

Having worked in several countries, Trenchard had a special message for Afghan farmers: "You are among the most resilient and hardworking people I've ever met. You are the backbone of Afghanistan—its economy, its heritage, its future. We at FAO will continue to stand by you to ensure better production, better nutrition, and better lives."

Hamidullah Hemat, head of the "Excellent" company which implemented the project, urged the government to prioritise the use of surface water instead of underground water and to prevent the unregulated extraction of groundwater to preserve it for future generations.

Reports indicate that the drop in the water table, poor water resource management, and rapid population growth have created severe environmental problems in Kabul. The water shortage has forced many households in parts of the capital to queue for hours at tanker points or travel long distances to fetch water.

However, Kabul Governor Aminullah Obaid stated at the event that the government was working to supply drinking water to the city from the Shahtoot Dam and the Panjshir River.

Emphasis on water management

Acting Minister of Economy Qari Din Mohammad Hanif said: "We acknowledge the problem of water scarcity, but thankfully we have powerful rivers that carry millions of cubic metres of water out of the country. This issue requires proper management and dedicated effort."

He emphasised that Afghanistan has abundant surface water resources, and with efficient management, the country can avert a water crisis.

Nearly 2.9m malnutrition cases registered over past year

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has reported nearly 2.9 million cases of malnourished women and children across the country over the past year.

Doctors warn that malnutrition can lead to miscarriage, birth defects, delayed physical and mental development in children and even shock and death in mothers.

2.9 million malnourished women & children registered

Sharafat Zaman, spokesperson for MoPH, told Pajhwok Afghan News that from July last year to July this year, 2.9 million children and mothers suffering from malnutrition were registered at government health centres.

He added that these patients had visited 3,200 nutrition treatment centres.

What is malnutrition?

Professor Dr. Mohammad Arif Hasanizai, Head of the Internal Medicine Department at Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital in Kabul, explained: "Nutrition means receiving adequate food by a child, while malnutrition is an abnormal condition where a child does not receive sufficient and proper nutrition."

According to him, malnutrition occurs when the body does not receive or absorbs adequate and balanced nutrients, energy, protein, vitamins and minerals—or receives them in excess—leading to impaired health, growth, or bodily functions.

He listed symptoms of malnutrition in children such as severe weight loss, stunted growth, extreme thinness, swelling in hands and feet, fatigue, general weakness, lack of appetite, hair loss or thinning, skin

lesions and pale skin.

He added that one type of malnutrition causes extreme thinness (only skin and bone remain, and the child's face looks aged), while another type was characterised by water retention and bloating. A third form combines both severe chest wasting along with puffiness in limbs.

Widespread issue in developing countries

Dr. Nazifa Safi, Deputy at the Training Centre of Malalai Maternity Hospital, called malnutrition a serious challenge in developing countries like Afghanistan, predominantly affecting children and women.

She mentioned pale or yellowish skin, weakness, anaemia, and very low weight as common symptoms in pregnant women who could not get adequate nutrition during pregnancy.

Causes of malnutrition

Dr. Hasanizai explained: "Malnutrition is common in children, especially in poor or conflict-affected countries, or those hit by natural disasters like floods or droughts, where sufficient food isn't accessible."

He noted that most malnourished children were under the age of five.

"Every child needs food appropriate to their age. For instance, a newborn's complete nourishment is mother's milk for the first six months, which supports physical and brain development. Lack of adequate nutrients and vitamins leads to malnutrition."

Dr. Safi added that improper nutrition was the main cause of malnutrition in pregnant women, often due to financial hardships.

"In some families, cultural practices dictate that men eat first, and women eat later—sometimes leav-

ing them with insufficient food."

Consequences of malnutrition

Dr. Hasanizai said: "Short stature, extreme thinness, and delayed mental development are major consequences of malnutrition. One of the worst effects is when a malnourished child grows into a young adult with poor cognitive abilities and struggles in school."

Dr. Safi warned that malnutrition could lead to severe anaemia, persistent fatigue, miscarriage, birth defects, bleeding during childbirth, and low birth weight.

"One of the most dangerous outcomes is when a severely anaemic mother experiences haemorrhaging during labour, faces miscarriage, goes into shock—or even dies."

Recommendations of

doctors

Dr. Hasanizai emphasised: "If we can provide age-appropriate and adequate nutrition to children, we can prevent malnutrition."

He stressed exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years, along with complementary feeding after six months, including soft foods such as vegetable soup, broth, extra milk, and eventually transitioning to solid family meals after age one.

He also underscored the importance of hygiene, stating poor hygiene is another cause of malnutrition in children.

Dr. Safi advised that pregnant women must have access to good family support, prenatal care, and visit doctors at least three times during pregnancy.

She added that adequate nutrition during pregnancy

prevents anaemia—a leading symptom of malnutrition—and emphasised the importance of spacing births, as frequent pregnancies can lead to severe anaemia and malnutrition.

A case of an anaemic mother

Rogul, a resident of Kart-i-Naw area in Kabul and a patient at Malalai Maternity Hospital, said, "Doctors told me I have severe anaemia. I had surgery when I gave birth to my first child two years ago."

Although she received prenatal care and iron supplements, she still suffers from anaemia, largely due to financial hardships and a lack of nutritious food during pregnancy.

A malnourished child's grandfather views

Mohammad Zahir, a resident of the Kampany area of Kabul, said his grandson

was hospitalised at the Children's Hospital for malnutrition.

"He had a fever, severe abdominal pain, and was losing weight day by day," he said.

"Our request to the Ministry of Public Health is to distribute more nutritious food for malnourished children."

Services provided Sharafat Zaman said that prior to the current government's rule, there were only 800 health centres for malnutrition patients. That number has now increased to 3,200.

He said these centres provide nutritional supplements and iron medications.

The ministry aims to expand such centres so that no mother or child suffers from this preventable condition.



GAZA: Palestinians walk with sacks of flour delivered after trucks carrying humanitarian aid enter northern Gaza on Sunday, coming from the Zikim border crossing.

Pakistani delegation led by Saif visits Beijing

F.P. Report

BEIJING: A 12-member Pakistani delegation led by Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, arrived in Beijing following visits to Urumqi and Kashgar. The delegation comprises prominent religious scholars, academics, and political figures. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs received the group with a warm welcome.

During their stay in Beijing, the delegation visited China's first official mosque and held a detailed meeting with the leadership of the Islamic Association of China, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The delegation was briefed on the current state of Islamic affairs in China. Officials shared that there are approximately 35,000 mosques, 55,000 imams, and more than a dozen active Islamic centers across the country. Beijing alone hosts 72 mosques. Additionally, the Islamic Association operates eight sub-divisions nationwide and organizes various national-level religious competitions.

The briefing also highlighted the availability of Qur'an and Hadith translations in the Chinese language. It was noted that 10,000 Chinese Muslims performed Hajj this year, and several students are currently pursuing religious education at Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Barrister Dr. Saif expressed gratitude on behalf of Pakistan and termed the visits to Urumqi, Kashgar, and Beijing highly productive. Other delegation members included Mufti Zubair Ashraf Usmani (Vice President, Darul Uloom Karachi), Maulana Abdul Qudoos Muhammadi (Spokesperson, Wifaq-ul-Madaris), Mufti Anwar Shah (Head, Jamia Ahsanul Uloom, Karachi), Haji Muhammad Ibrar (Tablighi Jamaat), Maulana Muhammad Ahmad (Darul Uloom Haqqania) and Syed Shah Faisal (Sadat Movement).

The delegation invited Chinese Islamic leaders to visit Pakistan and offered free education, accommodation, and essential facilities for Chinese students in Pakistani religious institutions. They emphasized the importance of strengthen-

ing bilateral religious and academic ties and acknowledged the efforts of Israr Madani and the International Research Council for Religious Affairs in facilitating this initiative.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Religious Affairs Sahibzada Adnan Qadri and Minister for Social Welfare Syed Qasim Ali Shah praised the visit as a significant step in Pakistan-China relations. Syed Usama Ajmal (Chairman, Pakistan Peace Council) and Syed Shah Faisal also expressed their appreciation to the Chinese government and Islamic Association.

Dr. Zia-ul-Haq presented copies of the "Paigham-e-Pakistan" document to Chinese counterparts, highlighting its message of peace and unity.

The Chinese hosts also arranged visits for the delegation to the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, and other key historical and cultural sites.

The visit concluded with an exchange of souvenirs, marking a meaningful step towards enhanced religious, educational, and cultural cooperation between Pakistan and China.

President, PM pay tribute to Capt. Sarwar Shaheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid rich tribute to Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider), on his 77th martyrdom anniversary.

The president said that seventy-seven years ago on this day, during the first Kashmir war, Capt. Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed laid down his life for the motherland.

"The nation is proud of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed's courage, perseverance, and supreme sacrifice" President Secretariat Press Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

The president further said that today's safe and secure Pakistan was the result of the great sacrifices rendered by their heroes, adding the entire nation saluted the bravery and sacrifice of Capt. Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed.

He said Shaheed Sarwar Shaheed wrote an unforgettable chapter in the nation's defense by sacrificing his life.

The president said the sacrifices of the martyrs were the foundation of national defense and stability. The nation would always remember the sacrifice of Capt. Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed.

The prime minister, in his message, said that along with the entire nation, he paid heartfelt tribute to Capt. Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, the first recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, on his martyrdom anniversary for his courage and bravery.

"The brave son of the nation embraced shahadat while thwarting the enemy's evil designs of an aggressive occupation of Jammu and Kashmir," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

CAIRO (Reuters): Aid trucks started moving toward Gaza from Egypt, the Egyptian state-affiliated Al Qahera News TV said on Sunday, after months of international pressure and warnings from relief agencies of starvation spreading in the Palestinian enclave.

Israel said that it began aid airdrops to Gaza on Saturday and was taking several other steps to ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The Israeli military said "humanitarian corridors" would be established for safe movement of United Nations convoys delivering aid to Gazans and that "humanitarian pauses" would be implemented in densely populated areas.

Dozens of trucks carrying tons of humanitarian aid moved toward the Karam Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing in southern Gaza, the Al Qahera correspondent said from the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza. International aid organizations say there is mass hunger among Gaza's 2.2 million people, with food running out after Israel cut off all supplies to the territory in March, before resuming it in May with new restrictions.

Israel says it has let enough food into Gaza and accuses the United Nations of failing to distribute it. The United Nations says it is operating as effectively as possible under Israeli restrictions.

Israel's announcement on air-

drops came after indirect ceasefire talks in Doha between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas were broken off with no deal in sight. The Israeli military said in a statement that the airdrops would be conducted in coordination with international aid organizations and would include seven pallets of aid containing flour, sugar, and canned food.

Palestinian sources confirmed that aid had begun dropping in northern Gaza.

Israel's foreign ministry said the military would "apply a 'humanitarian pause' in civilian centers and in humanitarian corridors" on Sunday morning. It provided no further details. "The IDF emphasizes that there is no starvation in the Gaza Strip; this is a false campaign promoted by Hamas," the Israeli military said in its Saturday statement.

"Responsibility for food distribution to the population in Gaza lies with the UN and international aid organizations. Therefore, the UN and international organizations are expected to improve the effectiveness of aid distribution and to ensure that the aid does not reach Hamas."

Aid ship intercepted

The Israeli military stressed that despite the humanitarian steps, "combat operations have not ceased" in the Gaza Strip.

Separately, international activists

on an aid ship that set sail from Italy

en route to Gaza said in a post on X that the vessel had been intercepted.

The Israeli foreign ministry said on X that naval forces "stopped the vessel from illegally entering the maritime zone of the coast of Gaza," that it was being taken to Israeli shores and all passengers were safe.

The UN said on Thursday that humanitarian pauses in Gaza would allow "the scale up of humanitarian assistance" and said Israel had not provided enough route alternatives for its convoys hindering aid access.

Dozens of Gazans have died of malnutrition in the past few weeks, according to the Gaza Health Ministry while 127 people have died due to malnutrition, including 85 children, since the start of the war, which began nearly two years ago.

On Wednesday, more than 100 aid agencies warned that mass starvation was spreading across the enclave.

The military also said on Saturday that it had connected a power line to a desalination plant, expected to supply daily water needs for about 900,000 Gazans.

Israel launched its assault on Gaza after Hamas-led fighters stormed Israeli towns near the border, killing some 1,200 people and capturing 251 hostages on October 7, 2023. Since then, Israeli forces have killed nearly 60,000 people in Gaza, health officials there say, and reduced much of the enclave to ruins.

Two-state solution conference poised to convene at UN as famine spreads

NEW YORK (Arab News):

As the international community braces for the two-state solution conference in New York on July 28-29, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, expectations are high for renewed political will to end decades of conflict and push forward a viable peace. The conference arrives amid worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza and a historic diplomatic shift: France's decision to formally recognize Palestine as a state.

The event — officially titled the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution — is being described as both urgent and historic.

The backdrop is grim: since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks that killed approximately 1,200 Israelis, including 50 French nationals, the war in Gaza has taken an unimaginable toll. More than 56,000 Palestinians have died, and the Gaza Strip's infrastructure and social fabric are in ruins.

From the outset, Saudi Arabia has underscored that recognizing the State of Palestine is not merely symbolic but a "strategic necessity" for regional peace. Ahead of the conference, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan issued a statement saying that the kingdom "spares no effort in supporting all endeavors aimed at achieving just peace in the region and globally. It consistently stresses the importance of implementing the two-state solution through political, diplomatic, and international efforts, as it is a strategic

choice that ensures regional and global peace and security."

"From this standpoint came the Kingdom's presidency — together with the French Republic — of the international conference at the ministerial level to settle the Palestinian issue peacefully."

He stressed that the conference is aimed at pushing toward the implementation of international legitimacy resolutions that call for the establishment of a two-state solution "where the Palestinian people can exercise their right to self-determination. This will bring peace and stability to the region and support sustainable development and prosperity."

Riyadh had intensified efforts to galvanize international consensus ahead of the summit. Manal Radwan, counselor at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that a just resolution to the Palestinian question is "the cornerstone of a new regional order based on mutual recognition and coexistence."

Slovenia's permanent representative to the UN, Samuel Zbogar, told Arab News: "The main goal of the conference is to mobilize concrete political, security, and economic support for the implementation of the two-state solution. This should result in an independent, sovereign, and democratic Palestinian state that will coexist in peace and security with Israel."

Slovenia was one of 10 countries that during Israel's continuing war on Gaza has formally recognized Palestine, alongside Ireland, Spain and Norway.

UK Ambassador to the

UN Barbara Woodward also underlined the importance of the summit. She told Arab News: "The United Kingdom is resolute in our commitment to a two-state solution and my foreign secretary has been clear that we are prepared to take further action to prevent the forcible erosion of the only viable path to lasting peace. Next week's conference, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, is a vital opportunity to demonstrate the strength of international resolve to secure a better future for Israelis, Palestinians and the region."

One of the most consequential developments ahead of the summit is President Emmanuel Macron's July 24 announcement that France will formally recognize Palestine, with the official declaration to be made at the UN General Assembly in September.

"There is no alternative," Macron said on X. "We must immediately secure a ceasefire, release all hostages, and provide massive humanitarian aid to Gaza. But above all, we must build the State of Palestine ... demilitarized, viable, and coexisting with Israel in full recognition and peace."

Reactions were swift. The Palestinian Authority welcomed the decision, calling it a step toward justice and international legitimacy. Hussein Al Sheikh, vice president of the PLO, praised France's "commitment to international law and Palestinian rights."

Israel condemned the move. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it "rewards terrorism" and accused France of helping to

legitimize what could become "an Iranian proxy state." Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz called the decision "a disgrace."

The United States also criticized France's stance. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said it would embolden Hamas and complicate peace efforts.

Despite the pushback, analysts say France's move could tip the balance internationally. Already, 147 of 193 UN member states — nearly 75 percent — recognize Palestine, including nearly all of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. France would be the first G7 country to join that group. The US, Canada, Australia, Germany, and the UK still do not, citing the need for direct negotiations with Israel.

A French diplomatic official briefing journalists ahead of the summit described it as the start of a broader process, not a one-off event. The goal: revive the political momentum for a two-state outcome, even as that vision faces historic setbacks.

The conference will center around four key thematic areas, or "baskets," intended to remove obstacles to implementing a Palestinian state:

The first basket will focus on recognition of Palestine. France, Saudi Arabia, and their partners will seek to rally additional countries to formally recognize Palestinian statehood. Recognition, the organizers argue, will strengthen moderate voices, most notably the Palestinian Authority, and help push back against radical and extremist factions such as Hamas.

Ahsan, Chinese envoy discuss cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal met with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong here on Sunday.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry also attended the meeting, which was joined by senior officials from both countries, a news release said.

The two sides discussed the progress of ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and preparations for the upcoming Joint Cooperation Committee

(JCC) meeting, where key decisions are expected to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Ahsan Iqbal said the first phase of CPEC has been successfully completed, highlighting that the second phase focused on industrial cooperation, agriculture, information technology and social development.

"Connecting CPEC to Central Asian states will contribute to regional economic stability and economic cooperation," he said, and reiterated the government's commitment to improving and ensuring the security of CPEC projects.

The minister asserted that the development of Gwadar and the establishment of Special Economic Zones remained top government priorities, he said, adding that Pakistan was fully committed to utilizing optimally the port's full capacity.

He added that the Government was committed to fully capitalizing on the deep seaport's trade potential.

He pointed out the vast potential for mineral exploration in and around Gwadar. "With the development of modern infrastructure, its mineral resources can be fully capitalized," he added.

WB delegation visits Yellow Line BRT project site office

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Upon arrival at the site office, the delegation was received by Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Minister for Information I, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, Transport Secretary Asad Zamin, and Managing Director of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority, Kamal Dayo.

The World Bank delegation comprised Regional Vice President Mr. Usman Deoni, Country Director for Pakistan Bolorma Amangabazar, Regional Practice Directors Fadia Saada and Almoed Weitz, Operations Manager Gellius Draugelis, Special Assistant to the Regional Vice President Lubna Hadji, Operations Officer Hina Saleem Lotia, and Senior Executive Assistant Mr. Waleed Anwar.

A high level meeting also convened upon the delegation's arrival at the Yellow Line BRT project site office. At the meeting, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon briefed the delegation comprehensive-

ly about the project, highlighting its importance, effect, and current status.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Yellow Line BRT is a visionary and strategic project for Karachi, it will facilitate fast, affordable, and safe travel. The project will extend from Shahrah-e-Noor Jahan to the Korangi Industrial Area and Landhi and will serve millions of commuters on a daily basis.

He stated that the Yellow Line will not only enhance citizen mobility but also stimulate economic activity. "We aim to complete this project in line with international standards, with facilities comparable to those found in major global cities," he said.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that only electric buses will operate on the Yellow Line BRT to ensure it remains fully environmentally friendly. He noted that Pakistan's first electric bus service and the Pink Bus Service for women were introduced under their leadership and are now operating success-

fully. Electric buses, he added, will significantly reduce environmental pollution and lead to substantial savings in fuel costs.

He further said that an electric scooter program is being launched to give a boost to women, and in response to which, more than 8,000 applications were received.

A major food chain company is also coming on board with the government to offer training, making sure women are well-equipped to be part of the scheme.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon further said that this project is not merely a transport initiative, it's the groundwork for a social revolution. He also noted that work is progressing on the Karachi Circular Railway and the Karachi-to-Sukkur High-Speed Rail projects.

He stated that, to encourage investment, special economic zones have been established where investors are granted a ten-year tax exemption.

While the rising value of the dollar has undoubtedly



impacted the construction costs of the BRT project, the government remains committed to overcoming this challenge.

The World Bank team commended the speed,

vision, and quality of the Yellow Line BRT project and reiterated that Karachi, being a major city, needs more transport initiatives.

They also expressed interest in the public-private partnership model and described the Sindh government's efforts as positive and forward-looking.

On the occasion, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon also presented

commemorative shields and traditional Sindh gifts, Ajrak and Topi, to the distinguished guests.

The World Bank delegation visited the ongoing construction site of the

Yellow Line BRT near Jam Sadiq Bridge to review the progress. During the visit, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon briefed the delegation on various aspects of the project.